

November 30, 2000

Andrew told his brother Simon, "We have found the Messiah, the Christ";  
and he brought him to Jesus.

(Communion Antiphon - Feast of St. Andrew)

Dear Sisters,

This morning, during the Liturgy for the sisters of Holy Family Community, our dear Sister Agnes Marie was brought home to rest forever in the Heart of her God.



Sister Agnes Marie - Agnes Marie Simmons

Born: February 27, 1931 in Johnstown, PA

Professed: August 19, 1952

Died: November 30, 2000 in Reading, PA

Sister Agnes Marie's strong devotion to the Sacred Heart led her to seek out our congregation. Throughout her life, she generously shared her love of Jesus with the sisters and those to whom and for whom she ministered. Like Andrew, she brought many to Jesus.

As a young sister, Agnes Marie taught and mothered the youth at Sacred Heart Home in Coopersburg. After completing her teacher training, she taught in the parish schools of Northampton and Philadelphia and then was principal and superior in Lebanon, Illinois, and Nazareth.

From 1975 to 1986, Sister Agnes Marie directed her energies to renewal and community building. She did this as a full-time member of the renewal team and the provincial council.

Sister had a great love for the poor and in 1987 she rejoiced in the opportunity to live and work in a shelter for homeless women in Washington, DC. She was then asked to serve as coordinator at St. Michael's.

In 1989, upon learning that the superiors were interested in taking over a poor school in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, Sister Agnes immediately volunteered for this new ministry. For

the next eight years she devoted all her efforts to the needs of the school and the local people in Mound Bayou. She took every human need to heart and did her utmost to respond.

Failing health brought Sister Agnes Marie back to Reading and eventually to the less stressful ministry of receptionist at Sacred Heart Hospital in Allentown and then a parish visitor. These times were difficult for Sister. Finally in July of 2000, it was discovered that she was suffering from an extensive brain tumor.

Sister Agnes Marie bravely faced the possibility of death or permanent paralysis and underwent surgery on September 8. At first we were all hopeful. To a large degree, Sister regained her memory and began the task of learning to walk once again.

However, in early November she was once again hospitalized, this time for an emergency colostomy. From that point on, Sister's general health greatly deteriorated. Yesterday, Sister Agnes Marie was transferred from the hospital to our Health Care Unit. Her last words told of her appreciation to be at home once again. Sister died quietly and peacefully, accompanied by the prayer of her sisters.

We are grateful to Sister for the example of her life of service and deep love of the Heart of Jesus. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Sister Agnes Marie on Tuesday, December 4, 2000, at 11:00 a.m. Afterwards, she will be laid to rest in our convent cemetery.

United in Jesus' love,

*Sister Marie Clark, u.s.c.*