

June 15, 2003

“How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!  
How inscrutable His judgments, how unsearchable His ways!”  
(Romans 11:33 - Evening Prayer of the Vigil of Trinity Sunday)

Dear Sisters,

Last evening, following a relatively short illness, Sister M. Hilda was taken into the fullness of the Paschal Mystery. Sister was a model and an inspiration in her unwavering and joyful surrender to God’s unsearchable ways. She knew deeply the riches and mercy of the Heart of Jesus and embraced His plan for her.



Sister M. Hilda - Theodora Henk  
Born: November 20, 1911 in Essen-Steele, Germany  
Professed: August 16, 1933  
Died: June 14, 2003 in Reading, PA

Sister Hilda arrived in the U.S. on the Steamer Albert Ballin just a few months after her first profession. Shortly thereafter, Sister was missioned to teach the elementary grades in Northampton’s parish school. In 1940, Sister Hilda was sent for further studies and shared her talents with the students of the University of Dayton. For 22 years, Sister taught mathematics, cooking, sewing, and art at Central Catholic High School in Allentown.

In 1973, Sister returned to elementary school and taught the older children in Philadelphia and Coplay. Her last teaching assignment was at Holy Guardian Angels School near St. Michael Convent.

Fifty years after Sister Hilda began teaching, she took up the role of seamstress at St. Michael’s. Failing vision and difficulty with her hearing forced her to retire in 1988. Since then, Sister kept up a keen interest in the community and the world situation. Despite her ever-worsening sight and hearing, she was a happy and resolute person. She was often found with the rosary entwined around her fingers. Sister Hilda was a tall woman who always held herself erect and walked with a special elegance and grace.

On May 17, Sister Hilda celebrated her 70th Jubilee. It was an especially joyous occasion. At this time she remarked that she believed her death was near. Just a few days later, Sister was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She accepted this news with characteristic calmness and even temper. She spoke freely of death, of her firm belief in God's goodness and mercy, and her lack of fear.

Sister Hilda's last day was also her first full day in bed. She was ready to meet her Bridegroom. We thank God for the inspiration that Sister Hilda has been for us and for the talents she shared so generously with so many of God's children.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Sister Hilda on Wednesday, June 18, 2003, at 11:30 a.m. She will then be laid to rest in our convent cemetery.

United in Jesus' love,

*Sister Marie Clark, USC.*