

March 20, 1999

St. Joseph, model and patron of those who love the Sacred Heart,
pray for us.

Dear Sisters,

In the late hours of the night on the feast of St. Joseph, the Sacred Heart of Jesus called our dear Sister Osfrieda to the eternal banquet.



Sister M. Osfrieda - Elizabeth Schnitzler
Born: February 10, 1904 in Byfang, Germany
Professed: September 2, 1931
Died: March 19, 1999 in Reading, PA

Sister Osfrieda came to the United States only eight months after she had professed her first vows as a Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart. Seven years later, she received her second call to mission. Together with Sisters Oswalda and Apollinara, she set off for the island of Puerto Rico to assist the Marianist Brothers in a boarding school for boys, Colegio San José. In 1944, the mission in Puerto Rico was given up because war conditions made it impossible to guarantee the availability of additional sisters. Letters in our archives attest to the love the sisters had for their mission, as well as the affection and respect they earned from the local bishop and the Marianist Brothers with whom they worked.

A few months after her return to St. Michael's in 1944, Sister Osfrieda was sent to St. Joseph Health Resort in Wedron, Illinois. She learned to give various treatments and with time became the manager of an extensive physical therapy department. Sister's characteristic kindness and gentle calm pervaded the department. Each Saturday afternoon, she made herself available to the sisters and offered them the same quality treatments offered to the guests.

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Thirty years later, Sister returned to St. Michael's in Reading where she lovingly continued her ministry by assisting in various ways in our Health Care Unit. In 1987, at the age of 83, Sister Osfrieda retired and became a member of Holy Family Center where for twelve years she had served so generously.

Even in retirement, Sister Osfrieda found ways to be of service. She graciously cared for the small dining room and was most generous in providing for the needs of the sisters. Osfrieda always greeted them with a beautiful smile and, until weakness overcame her, always showed a keen interest in the sisters and their ministries.

In her last years, Sister was keenly aware of the Christ within her own heart and of the Christ present in those around her. This devotion to the In-dwelling Christ had grown in her during the many years in which she served Him in a personal way through the exercise of massage. Her gentle touch was accompanied by prayerful awareness of the Christ in others.

St. Joseph's link to Sister Osfrieda continued until the end. The last few days of her life she waited quietly for Joseph, the patron of a happy death, to take her home to Jesus. He did not disappoint her and accompanied by the prayer of one of our senior sisters, she returned her soul to Jesus.

We are grateful to Sister Osfrieda for the example of her life. Her friendly spirit and cheerful smile will continue to brighten our hearts and inspire our spirits.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Sister Osfrieda on Monday, March 22, 1999, at 3:30 p.m. She will then be laid to rest in our convent cemetery.

Yours in Jesus' love,

Sister Marie Clark, n.s.c.