

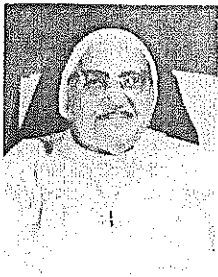
May 5, 1999

“If you loved me, you would surely be glad that I am going to the Father, alleluia.”

Antiphon for the Magnificat, Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Dear Sisters,

As sisters kept vigil with Sister Walburgis during the last days of her life, we were mindful of the proximity of her Jubilee. Sister M. Walburgis' long and fruitful life came to an end just minutes before the 76th anniversary of her reception into our congregation.



Sister M. Walburgis - Gertrud Meinert
Born: January 11, 1902 in Muenster, Germany
Professed: May 6, 1924
Died: May 4, 1999 in Reading, PA

Sister Walburgis was the second eldest and only girl in a family of eleven. When she wanted to enter our congregation her parents supported her desire, even though she was much needed at home. Her brother Bernard went on to become an MSC priest. Sister had already begun her missionary life at the time of his ordination.

Sister Walburgis came to the United States shortly after her twenty-first birthday and was received into the novitiate three months later. In September of 1924, Sister was assigned to teach very large classes of children in the primary grades in Lansford, PA.

In June of 1934, tuberculosis of the spine brought an early end to Sister's teaching ministry. After months of hospitalization, she joined a number of her sisters as a patient at St. Michael's in Reading. During four long years of severe illness, Sister was able from time to time to do some studying and writing which she loved. Her love of life was embedded in a deep faith and trust in God. On March 31, 1938, Sister was miraculously cured of the TB through the intercession of a holy Augustinian priest, Clement Fuhl, who had preached a

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retreat at St. Michael's in 1925. This event occurred on the third anniversary of Father's death. Our older sisters remember being called to chapel to pray the Te Deum and recall Sister Walburgis walking down the steps and declaring, "*Here I am.*" X-rays confirmed her cure and she went on to live a long and full life. It is no surprise that Sister had chosen as her epitaph: "*O Lord, my God, forever I will give you thanks.*"

A few months later, Sister took up a new ministry. For the next thirty-one years, she was very active as office manager in Good Samaritan Hospital in Pottsville. In 1969, Sister was assigned to St. Joseph's Health Resort in Wedron, Illinois where she continued in her ministry as office manager until 1978. Sister then joined the community of St. Michael's in Reading and retired to Holy Family Center in 1987.

Sister Walburgis' years of active ministry were characterized by a great compassion and care for her co-workers and the patients whom she met in the business office. She was very much interested in their lives and always willing to offer support in every possible way. Sister worked closely with the administrators to ensure the success of the institutions where she served. She was an excellent public relations person.

In recent years, Sister became more and more feeble. From time to time Sister Walburgis would be at death's door but her strong constitution pulled her through each crisis. Although we will miss her at the Province Jubilee next week, we rejoice that Sister Walburgis will celebrate her 75th anniversary of vows in heaven.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Sister Walburgis on Friday, May 7, 1999, at 3:30 p.m. She will then be laid to rest in our convent cemetery. Most of the province will be gathered here at St. Michael's as our Chapter of Elections will begin in the evening. The presence of so many sisters will be a fitting tribute to Sister Walburgis, our eldest professed sister.

United in Jesus' love,

Sister Marie Clark, n.s.c.