

August 29, 1998

“May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere.”

Dear Sisters,

As dusk gave way to darkness yesterday evening, our dear Sister Rita Marie was released from the great suffering of her final hours with us. The sisters who accompanied her through this difficult time rejoiced in the sure knowledge that our sister, Rita Marie, was called to the eternal light of God's kingdom.



Sister Rita Marie - Mary Cherhit
Born: January 27, 1914 in Lansford, PA
Professed: August 26, 1934
Died: August 28, 1998 in Reading, PA

Although Sister was diagnosed with cancer some years ago, and was visibly failing these past months, her last days came upon her suddenly. On the anniversary of her profession, Sister was still very alert. After receiving Holy Communion, she and another member of her group renewed their vows. Sister bore her last sufferings as she had borne the difficulties of life, with quiet peace and joyful resignation to the will of God.

Sister Rita Marie first came to know our congregation in her home parish of Lansford. She entered our aspirancy in 1928. After novitiate, Sister immediately began her ministry of teaching in our parish schools. She taught the primary grades in SS. Cyril & Methodius School, Reading as well as in Northampton and Lansford. From 1954 until 1966, Sister generously accepted the added responsibilities of principal and local superior in Reading and in Slatington. Her gentle, resolute ways are fondly remembered by former students, associate teachers, and community members.

In 1966, Sister Rita Marie was elected to the General Council. This sudden move to Rome was not easy for Sister. However, during the course of the next twelve years she endeared

herself to many throughout our MSC world. Dedication and love for the sisters motivated her to become conversant in Spanish. Long after her years in Rome, the people and sisters whom she met in her world travels held a special place in Sister's heart. Her life was animated by a fervent desire to make the Heart of Jesus known and loved EVERYWHERE.

Shortly after Sister's return to the province, she enthusiastically took up the ministry of archivist. During this period, she also taught religion in the local parish and worked part time at Holy Guardian Angels School. In 1982, Sister returned to Lansford and served as the school librarian.

From 1989 until 1995, Sister reorganized the province archives, spent endless hours in translation work, and always had time to tutor an eager immigrant in English. In fact, she kept up with the latter until cancer forced her to discontinue this ministry just a few months ago.

Sister Rita Marie's concern and interest in the world empowered her to participate actively in letter writing efforts to effect change through congressional lobbying. Her generous spirit prompted her to ever more intercessory prayer for our troubled world, as well as for the congregation and future vocations.

We are grateful to Sister for the inspiration of her life and hold fond memories of her generous, dedicated, and prayerful spirit.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for our dear departed Sister Rita Marie on Monday, August 31, 1998, 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.