

St. Michael's Convent  
Bernharts  
Reading, Pa.

January 11, 1955

Dear Sisters,

Since dear Mother M. Hildburg is for her retreat in Wedron, I have to inform you of the tragic death of our dear Sister M. Thekla who went to heaven today at 1:00 P.M., in Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown, Pa.

Sister M. Thekla, Anna Lauterbach;  
born at Crefeld, Germany, August 22, 1883;  
entered our Congregation October 17, 1906;  
pronounced her first vows May 13, 1908;  
made final profession May 15, 1913.

Since dear Sister M. Thekla came to this country already on March 14, 1909, she is like Sister M. Emma who died less than three months ago, one of the pioneer Sisters of our Congregation in the U.S. During the forty-five years of her activity she taught in many of our parochial schools of the diocese and kept herself young in body and spirit with the little ones. Since 1948 Sister was in charge of the Kindergarten in Palmerton and thus went back to her first mission post of 1909. Many of the pupils of that time, now grandfathers and grandmothers, still remember her lovingly. In spite of her advanced age, Sister M. Thekla loved her little charges and shared their joys and sorrows in a childlike manner. In addition to her work in the Kindergarten she considered it a privilege to instruct converts; until she was about 70 years, she also taught catechetical classes in Berlinsville one of our first places in the U.S. How Sister loved to retell in her vivid way the amusing incidents of pioneer days!

About her last days Sister M. Elizabetha, her superior in Palmerton, writes the following:

"At the beginning of the evening recreation on Saturday, January 8, Sister asked permission to do some little work in her bedroom before coming to the community. Suddenly we heard on top of the steps a scream and before I could open the door and rush to the scene, Sister lay at the foot of the steps before the chapel door. I tried to lift her, but noticed immediately the seriousness. The doctor and Father were called and came in a few minutes. Sister M. Thekla was unconscious, but could hardly speak. When being questioned whether the effects might be serious, the doctor answered in the affirmative. Sister consented to receive Extreme Unction and was anointed at the place of the accident. Then the Palmerton Community Ambulance brought her to Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown. On the way she would say to us 'Pray'. Though she could not talk much, she moved her lips and said every word with us."

On Sunday morning Sister could receive Holy Viaticum. She was conscious on and off, prayed fervently in her lucid moments and kept smiling. On that day she showed yet something of her old fighting spirit and thought she could make it, but the internal injuries were too serious and brought about a quick but happy and peaceful death. Let us fervently pray for Sister that St. Michael, the standard-bearer of the Sacred Heart, may soon bear her soul to heaven. There Sister will continue her work of doing good to others.

The funeral Mass will be at the Motherhouse chapel on Saturday, January 15, at 10:00 A.M.

Sincerely yours in Corde Jesu,

Sister M. Elizabeth, M.S.C.