

December 15, 1979

"I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the Land of the living". Ps.116  
(Evening Prayer)

Dear Sisters,

Last evening our dear Sister Bertilla was called to "walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living".

Sister M. Bertilla, M.S.C.  
Susanna Stefanko  
Born: October 10, 1896 in Honey Brook, Pa.  
First Profession: November 21, 1915  
Died: December 14, 1979 in Reading

Sister Bertilla entered with our first American aspirants in 1911 and was among the first group to be received in our U.S. Novitiate in 1914.

She had a very short teaching career and then spent most of her apostolic life doing domestic work in seminaries in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Shelby, Ohio, and also in Malvern Retreat House, and in Villa St. Elizabeth and St. Clara's homes for the aged. In 1962 Sister came to the Motherhouse where she continued to help out wherever needed.

For the past few years Sister Bertilla lived in Holy Family Villa, our retirement community here. Officially she was retired, but her love for the poor kept her very busy making caps, scarves, sweaters, and anything else she felt they could use. When she wasn't crocheting for the poor and needy she was making rosaries to help to spread her deep and beautiful devotion to Mary. The rosaries too were given to the poor, or sent to the foreign missions.

Sister was usually in Chapel very early in the morning to make a Holy Hour before the community Mass. She had just finished a Holy Hour and was leaving Chapel about five weeks ago, when she suffered a blood clot in the brain. During the past weeks of her hospitalization she improved slightly, but never fully regained consciousness. Last evening, it was about 6:15 p.m. when she peacefully slept away.

The Mass of the Resurrection will be offered on Tuesday, December 18th at 10 a.m., followed by burial in our convent cemetery.

In prayer, especially at the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we will remain united with our dear Sister Bertilla.

In the Heart of Jesus,

*Sister M. Thomasita, M.S.C.*