

Province Center
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March 11, 1996

"My soul is longing for the courts of the Lord;
my heart sings for joy to the living God."
(Psalm 84:3 - Entrance antiphon for today's liturgy)

Dear Sisters,

This morning about 7:25 a.m., Sister Gratia's longing found fulfillment, and now in heaven she sings with joy to the living God.

In her 97th year, Sister Gratia was the most senior member of our province, by virtue both of age and of religious profession. In recent weeks Sister's health was failing visibly, though she still insisted on doing many things for herself. (She wrote and addressed her own letters, loved to read, and even attempted to mend her own clothing.) This past week her chronic congestive heart failure grew steadily worse, and she often spoke of going home to heaven. She frequently thanked the sisters and nurses for all their kindnesses, and seemed to be bidding us all farewell. Sister's mind was clear to the end; she read her morning prayers from her favorite prayer book just minutes before returning her beautiful soul to God.



Sister M. Gratia - Mary Ditsky
Born: May 28, 1899 in Lansford, PA
First Profession: November 22, 1918
Died: March 11, 1996 in Reading, PA

Already in 1914, Sister Gratia was received as an aspirant. After her profession in 1918, Sister was assigned to teach successively at our parish schools in Philadelphia, Bethlehem, Coaldale, Allentown, Palmerton, Hilltown, and Limeport--a total of 56 years in this ministry. Sister Gratia was a kind and thorough teacher, ever eager to lead another group of little ones to the Lord.

Since 1977, Sister had been retired at the Motherhouse, However, she remained interested in community and Church affairs, always active and independent to the best of her ability. She made it a point to read every issue of the diocesan newspaper. Sister was a deeply prayerful person, eager to attend Mass even when confined to a wheelchair.

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Sister Gratia was blessed with a loving and devoted family. She was delighted to be visited by a large group of relatives, especially children, to celebrate her 96th birthday. She is survived by two sisters, Margaret and Agnes. Sister was extremely proud of her nephew, "Father Bob" (Msgr. Robert Kozel). Monsignor will be the principal celebrant at the Mass of Resurrection for Sister Gratia on Thursday, March 14, 1996, at 3:30 p.m. in our Motherhouse chapel. After that, she will be laid to rest in our convent cemetery.

We are so grateful to God and to Sister Gratia for the legacy of her long and beautiful life among us!

Yours in the Heart of Jesus,

Sister Rita M. Ehmman, M.S.C.