

M A R I A N R E S I D E N C E

Dear Sisters, Relatives and Friends,

Sister Flores Marquez died in Highland Park Care Center, Alliance, Nebraska, on December 19, 1997. She had been in retirement at Marycrest until she suffered a fall during the night in May, 1996, and was moved to Marian Residence, Alliance, Nebraska, May 28, 1996. Here she was able to attend community exercises and meals until late October, when her last illness set in. She became acutely ill on October 31 and was taken by ambulance to Box Butte General Hospital in Alliance. Tests and X-rays done there indicated some type of blockage in the common duct. Sister Flores was moved to St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver by ambulance on November 3. What was first thought to be a stone blocking her bile duct was found to be a malignant tumor, inoperable because of the condition of her heart. Returned to Alliance on November 10, she was admitted to Highland Park Care Center for skilled nursing care. For a time her condition seemed to be improved, but in December she began experiencing much pain. During the last three days Sisters remained at her bedside during the day, and employees of the Sisters Care Unit at Marian Residence volunteered to stay during the night. Increased pain medication made her last days peaceful.

Maria Refugia Marquez was born in Tularosa, New Mexico, September 8, 1906. She was the first of six children of Baltazar and Josephine (Castro) Marquez; all members of her immediate family preceded her in death. In the early 1920's several young women from Tularosa were admitted to the high school at St. Agnes Academy as boarders. Refugia entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Sella Niagara, NY, in August, 1924 and finished her high school studies in the convent. She received the habit and the name of Sister Flores in 1925, and professed vows in August, 1927, so she lived over 70 years as a professed religious.

Sister Flores went from teaching elementary classes to specializing in music. She earned a Nebraska Music Certificate in 1949, a B.S. in Education in 1958, and a Master of Arts in Teaching Liturgy in 1966, in between years of teaching in at least five states. She not only directed outstanding singers in choirs and glee clubs but also wrote and arranged music. Music was her life. The arrangement of the Peace Prayer of St. Francis, which she composed, was sung at her funeral. Fittingly, the hymn "A Time Will Come For Singing" was also sung as a tribute to one who helped many with their singing and musical endeavors.

The Resurrection Mass was offered at 10:00 A.M., December 22 in Holy Rosary church with Father Bryan Ernest as principal celebrant. Four priests concelebrated, and Aggie Kunzman and Sister Jeannine Hershiser sang solos. The parish choir sang. Nineteen Sisters from other houses joined those living in Alliance for the service. Employees in the Sisters Care Unit cooperated to take all the Sisters who felt well enough to go to the Mass; several of them in wheelchairs.

During her recent hospitalization in Denver, close relatives and friends visited Sister and some came to visit her at Highland Park. None of them were able to come to Alliance for the funeral.

As we sang "Alleluia, The Strife is O'er" at the cemetery, it seemed as if Sister Flores was there directing us.

Blessings of Holiday Peace.

The Sisters at Marian Residence