

Marian Residence
Alliance, Nebraska
September 8, 1982

Dear Sisters,

Sister Laurissa, Mary Jane Tierney, was born at O'Neill, Nebraska, on June 20, 1895. She was the third in a family of eleven children, five of whom died in infancy. Her mother, Laurissa Tierney, died young, leaving six daughters, the youngest not yet of school age. Since their father, Thomas Tierney, was crippled and unable to care for his children, they came under the guardianship of the pastor, Monsignor Michael Cassidy, and became boarders at St. Mary's Academy.

In 1915 Mary Jane entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Stella Niagara, New York. She received her mother's name, Laurissa, the following year, made her vows September 1, 1917, and entered on a lifetime of teaching. Her two older sisters married; the three younger ones followed her into religious life, becoming Sister Florissa, Sister Casilda, and Sister Constance. Sister Laurissa was destined to outlive them all.

Her field of teaching was mainly in English and Latin. She worked in Ohio, New Jersey, California, Colorado, North Dakota, and South Dakota, as well as at St. Mary's, O'Neill, and St. Agnes, in Alliance, Nebraska. From 1955 to 1958 she taught English in the International School at the General Motherhouse in Rome. She returned to St. Agnes Academy in 1958, where she continued to teach until her retirement in 1975. She was honored by a gift from the Msgr. McDonald Foundation and a luncheon by the Home School Association on her retirement.

In July, 1976, Sister Laurissa fell on the rain-wet floor at Marycrest, Denver, and fractured her hip. She underwent surgery at St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver, but the break did not heal properly. In March, 1977, Sister underwent a total hip replacement at West Nebraska General Hospital in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. She recuperated at Marycrest and at St. Joseph Gerontology Center, and returned to Marian Residence.

Sister Laurissa lived to celebrate her 50th anniversary of profession in 1967, her 60th in 1977, and her 65th in 1982. She was active here at Marian Residence but slowly failing; on July 5th she fell in her room and fractured her shoulder. She was hospitalized at Box Butte General until July 12, then transferred to St. Joseph Center to spend her last days.

On September 3rd Sister Laurissa appeared to be weaker. Our pastor, Father Francis Curran, administered the Sacrament of the Sick in the morning. By noon she was up in her wheel chair and asked to be taken to the chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. At three the following morning the nurse on duty called to say that her condition was critical. Sisters went to her room at the Center and were with her when she died at 4:20 a.m.

Office of the Dead was recited as Sister Laurissa's remains were returned to St. Joseph chapel on Sunday, September 5. Two of Sister Laurissa's surviving relatives, Jane Brittan and Bob Mains; Sisters from Marycrest; St. Mary's, O'Neill; Holy Rosary Mission; and Harrison joined us at the funeral at 10:30 a.m. September 6, 1982. Bob Mains and Sister Margaret took Sister Laurissa's body to Denver to be laid to rest beside her three sisters in the Franciscan plot in Mt. Olivet Cemetery where together they await the final resurrection.

The Sisters at Marian Residence