

MARIAN RESIDENCE

1104 Toluca Avenue
ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA 69301
March 18, 1986

Dear Sisters, Relatives and Friends,

Our pastor, Father Francis Curran, in his homily at the funeral of Sister Raineldis Hense, compared her life to a journey. He indicated that it was a "journey of faith", but also a journey in a very literal sense. The journey began in Germany with the birth of Sophia Hense in 1893. In 1921 she entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity at Nonnenwerth, the motherhouse on an island in the Rhine. As a novice she came to Stella Niagara, New York, in 1922, and in the following year she made her vows. Sister has served the Lord with prayer, dormitory supervision, needlework, sewing and portress work at the motherhouse until 1939, when the North American province was divided into three provinces. Like a real pioneer she came to Marycrest, Denver, where the new province was formally opened on New Years' Day.

For the next thirty years Sister Raineldis served as portress, sacristan, and seamstress at Marycrest. She enjoyed a close relationship with the young postulants and novices, who always found in her a role model and teacher. After a year at Queen of Peace Oratory, she came to the plains of Nebraska in 1970 to complete the last lap of her long life's journey.

In Alliance, Nebraska, Sister became a member of the St. Agnes Academy community, living in the former nurses' home of St. Joseph's Hospital. This convent became a home for retired Sisters, Marian Residence, in 1980. Here Sister Raineldis was busy with needlework and sewing. To raise funds for the community, she held a needlework sale each year before Christmas. People of the city soon began to look forward to the lovely gifts they found at these sales, and to the warm welcome they always got when they attended them.

In January of 1985 Sister Raineldis was seriously ill and spent some time in the local hospital. She returned to Marian Residence on recovery, but on Good Friday her illness recurred. This time, she was transferred to the Retired Sisters' Unit at St. Joseph Gerontology Center. During the following months, although Sister Raineldis had many bad spells, she was usually able to attend Mass in a wheelchair and to join in community prayer and recreation. Since she often expressed the hope that she would not die without a priest, she received the Sacrament of the Sick several times. On March 7, she received the sacrament with all those present in the chapel for afternoon Mass. Saturday she was ill again; her condition worsened the next day. Though she was acutely ill on Sunday evening she greeted the pastor and responded to the prayers for the dying. The Sisters remained with her for several hours; some of the staff members then stayed with her and called the Sisters at the time of her death at 3:10 A.M. Monday, March 10.

The Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated in a crowded chapel at 10:00 A.M. on March 13. Sisters came from Denver, Colorado; Harrison and Gering, Nebraska; and Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to attend the funeral; those farther east could not come because of a snowstorm. Lillian Krejci, an old friend of Sister Raineldis, played the organ. Burial was in Calvary Cemetery.

Sister Raineldis was the last survivor of her immediate family. She has several nieces and nephews living in Germany; one of them is a missionary priest, just returned to his native country from Brazil. Sister Raineldis' prayerful presence will be missed by those of us who knew and loved her. May she live in peace.

The Sisters at Marian Residence