

MARIAN RESIDENCE

1104 Toluca Avenue
ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA 69301

March 31, 1987

Dear Sisters, Relatives, and Friends,

It was only fitting that Sister Aniceta, who had such a great devotion to the rosary, should quietly slip away to Heaven on March 24 while the rosary was being recited at her bedside. Sister Marion Rotherham had started the third set of mysteries, the Glorious, when she realized that Sister's breathing had ceased. The nurses of the Retired Sisters Unit, who were very attentive to Sister during her last days, were instantly there at her side. Sister has had heart problems frequently during the past years but one week before her death the heart problem was complicated by lung congestion and kidney infection. In those last days Sister was happy to know that the rosary was being recited each morning, even though she was not there to lead it, but she worried because she could not manage to recite her Office. She would have been 92 years old on Good Friday, and had been in religion almost 74 years.

Sister Aniceta, Mary Ellen Thomas, was born April 17, 1895. Her parents, Charles and Mary Ida Thomas, lived on a farm near Crawford, Nebraska. Mary Ellen was the eldest of twelve children; four sisters and one brother are still living. Her father, who came from Donnegal, Ireland, was one of the laborers who built the first railroad across northern Nebraska, and remained as a homesteader.

Mary Ellen came to St. Agnes Academy as a student in 1911 and entered the convent in Stella Niagara, N.Y., May 31, 1913. After making vows in June, 1916 she served as cook in convents and schools from Stella Niagara, N.Y., to Uniontown, Washington. Sister Aniceta spent her whole active life in feeding the hungry. Her longest assignments were in the two Indian Missions in South Dakota, a total of 28 years. In these large boarding schools, Sister was responsible not only for feeding as many as 500 people three times a day during the school year, but she also trained the high school girls during their allotted hours as helpers in the kitchen. Sister Aniceta spent some years in retirement at St. Mary Hospital, Scottsbluff and Marycrest Convent in Denver before coming to St. Joseph Gerontology Center in May, 1983.

We will miss Sister Aniceta's Irish wit, which everyone in the province enjoyed. Her mind remained clear in spite of her age. She enjoyed visiting, mail, and her family.

Office of the dead was recited when her body was returned to the Center Chapel on Thursday, March 26. The Rosary was recited that evening.

Our pastor and associate pastor con-celebrated the Mass of the Resurrection for Sister Aniceta in the chapel of St. Joseph Gerontology Center at 10:30 A.M. on March 27. Because of an unseasonable storm only a few Sisters from other convents were able to be present. Two of her sisters and several nieces and nephews braved icy roads to be present, but the rest of the family were unable to come.

May she live in peace.

The Sisters of St. Francis at Marian Residence