

Sister Magdalen Lossen died Wednesday, June 10, 1987, at St. Joseph Gerontology Center, Alliance, Nebraska.

She was born August 22, 1895, at Darmstat, West Germany to Dr. and Mrs. Herman Lossen. She entered the convent at Nonnenwerth, Germany, on August 11, 1922 and came to Stella Niagara in February, 1923. She made her novitiate there and made her first vows in 1925.

Sister Magdalen's first stay at Holy Rosary Mission was from 1925-1926. Then she spent some years at St. Vincent's Orphanage at Columbus, Ohio, caring for the small boys, and at St. Agnes Academy, Alliance, Nebraska, where she sewed and did domestic work. In 1944 she returned to Holy Rosary Mission and stayed there until she celebrated her 90th birthday August 22, 1985. She spent her remaining days at St. Joseph's Gerontology Center in Alliance.

When Sister Magdalen came to Holy Rosary she was given charge of the boys' clothing and the boys' dormitory. With the help of two Indian ladies she took care of the incredible amount of clothing for two hundred boys. She also took charge of the weekly distribution of sheets and towels for them. She did this for 27 years until the dorm for the small boys was closed in 1971.

By this time Sister Magdalen was 76 years old and well-deserving of a rest. However, she was still quite energetic, so she entered upon a ten-year period of doing needlework. Felix Walking, an Indian artist, had beautifully stenciled an Indian design throughout the Holy Rosary Mission Church. Sister Magdalen transferred this design to altar cloths for the church. Pastors from the reservation churches and other visitors began to put in orders for altar cloths as soon as they saw this beautiful and exquisite work. She once got a request for a stole, so that was the beginning of filling many orders for stoles with Indian design.

But there was more to Sister Magdalen than being a humble worker and designer of artistic stoles and altar cloths. She deeply loved and respected the Indian people for whom and with whom she worked. The Indian ladies who assisted here became like sisters to her and they loved her. But not only did her co-workers feel valued, so did her community of Sisters and anyone who came to visit her. Her spirit of hospitality was indeed marvelous.

She lived a life of prayer in which she was always searching for a closeness to the Lord. We who lived with her could only divine something of her marvelous spirit as she suffered many physical impairments in the last twenty years of her life. She suffered the loss of hearing, diminished eyesight, the ability to walk or hold anything. In the last month of her life she was rarely able to speak. In the last few weeks her physical sufferings were acute and she often wondered why it was taking so long for the Lord to come. Now at last she knows his closeness.

Elizabeth Marie Lossen came from a distinguished family in Germany. She willingly relinquished her family heritage, and, in receiving her religious name, Magdalen Lossen became like another Magdalen Daeman.

Your Sister in St. Francis  
Holy Rosary Mission  
Pine Ridge, South Dakota