

MARIAN RESIDENCE

1104 Toluca Avenue
ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA 69301

December 29, 1987

Dear Sisters, friends and relatives of Sister William

Sister M. William Schnitzmeier, born in Marty, Minnesota on February 15, 1906, was called forth into eternity on December 24, 1987 at 5:15 a.m. As a child, she moved with her parents, four brothers and five sisters to the Havre, Montana area. As a young woman, she trained as a Professional Nurse at Sacred Heart Hospital in Havre, Montana. On February 15, 1925, Clara Schnitzmeier entered the novitiate of the Sisters of St. Francis at Stella Niagara, New York. She made her first profession August 29, 1927.

Sister William was an excellent nurse and became a nurse anesthetist. Many remember her as an obstretical Nurse, another clinical specialty. She spent many years at St. Joseph's Hospital in Minot, North Dakota before coming to work at St. Joseph's Hospital here in Alliance. Sister also worked at Sacred Heart Hospital, Havre, Montana and St. Mary Hospital, Nelsonville, Ohio. Her nursing talents were utilized at the Generalate in Rome as infirmarian and school nurse. These last twelve years Sister has lived at Marian Residence and spent time caring for the little extras for the infirm Sisters. She spent much time in prayer. We are certain that in the stillness of prayerful silence, life took on a deeper meaning for Sister William so that when death became a reality for her, she was prepared by weeks of patient, prayerful living and waiting.

In June, Sister William celebrated the 60th anniversary of her religious profession. In late July, a diagnosis of cancer of the ovary was made. During the next, nearly four months, Sister made frequent trips to the Doctor to have the fluid drained off. She had two series of oral chemotherapy. The first seemed effective but the second series did not help. During that time and almost until the end, Sister experienced no pain but was uncomfortable. She understood she would soon die but was not afraid. Her outlook remained optimistic and her concerns were for the other Sisters in the Nursing Care Unit. At times during the last week Sister would be disoriented but always knew the Sisters and the staff and expressed gratitude for each visit.

In the quiet stillness of Christmas eve, while the world waited for the word to become flesh, Sister William joined her parents, two brothers and three sisters in heaven. Two sisters, Anne Tingley of Nipiwan, Saskatchewan, Canada and Theresa Nelson of Havre, Montana, and two brothers, Ed of Havre, Montana, and Leo of La Crosse, Wisconsin, and many nieces and nephews remain to miss her.

On Sunday, December 27, her body was returned to Marian Residence while snow was falling heavily. Calls came in from various convents in South Dakota, eastern Nebraska and Denver, Colorado, telling us that roads were impassible and the Sisters could not come.

Fathers Thomas Reimers, Edward Cortney, and Stephen Deaver from Gering concelebrated the Mass of the Resurrection at Holy Rosary Church in Alliance at 11:00 a.m. on December 28, 1987. Several nurses in complete uniform, formed an honor guard. The pall bearers, a few parishioners, choir group, and two Sisters from Mission, South Dakota, who arrived before the storm, were with us, the Sisters of Alliance. Because of the icy streets, the committal services were held in the Church following the mass. The hearse, a mortician, Father Cortney, Sister Miriam, and a car with pallbearers went to the cemetery.

May she live in peace.

The Sisters at Marian Residence