

October 6, 1988

Dear Sisters, family, and friends of Sister Theresa:

The Angel of Death visited Marian Residence twice in one day, leaving us all a little stunned. We knew that Sister Xavier Kirscht was near her journey's end; she was on oxygen and drifting in and out of consciousness. But Sister Theresa Hupgen seemed to be making a good recovery from a broken hip, and no one dreamed that she would go before Sister Xavier. She had a checkup by her doctor September 20; her condition was pronounced satisfactory. On September 23, she was running a high temperature. Blood tests showed that her system was not reacting to infection; her white blood count was abnormally low. New medicine was prescribed but nothing helped. A little after noon, September 24, we were called to her bedside. When she breathed her last at 12:30 p.m., almost all the Sisters of the three local houses were praying in her room. A little more than an hour later, Sister Xavier was mercifully released, after months of suffering.

Our pastor, Fr. Edward Cortney, helped us to plan the double funeral. On Monday, September 26, the bodies of the Sisters were brought to Holy Rosary Church at 5:00 p.m. Sisters, relatives of Sister Xavier, and friends were there to receive them. Sisters from O'Neill and Denver had arrived during the afternoon; Sister Xavier's family came from Pueblo, CO. Fr. Cortney led the rosary at 7:30 p.m. Quite a few people attended; many of them stayed after the prayers to view the remains and to express sympathy to the Sisters and relatives. Sister Theresa's family lives in Germany, but she had many friends here and elsewhere to mourn her.

The next morning, Sisters from the two Missions in South Dakota joined us. The Mass was concelebrated at 10:00 a.m. by Fr. Edward Cortney, Fr. Stephen Deaver of Gering, NE, and Fr. Michael Guevara of North Platte, NE. Fr. Deaver gave a beautiful homily. Members of the parish choir led the singing; the choir director, Agnes Kunsman, sang the Ave Maria at the Offertory. Under a gloomy sky, we laid our Sisters to rest in Calvary Cemetery. The ladies of the Altar Society served lunch when we returned.

Sister Theresa Hupgen was born in Germany September 9, 1906. Her parents were Franz Josef and Agnes Wollgarten Hupgen. Out of their family of ten children, two daughters entered religious life at the Franciscan Motherhouse of Nonnenwerth. Two sons studied for the priesthood and one became a Trappist monk. One of the seminarians, serving in the medical corps in World War II, was killed before he finished his studies.

Sister Theresa entered the convent August 1, 1930, and made vows February 15, 1932. In 1933, she was one of the last group of German Sisters sent as Missionaries to the United States, before the German government forbade immigration. For many years, she cooked in various convents of the order, feeding the hungry in schools and hospitals. In 1976, she moved to the Denver motherhouse, Marycrest, and found a new vocation. For the next ten years she visited

the sick in St. Joseph's and Presbyterian Hospitals, besides caring for the chapel at Marycrest. Her words and prayers seemed to comfort the sick; she made many friends.

In February, 1986, Sister Theresa suffered a ruptured aneurysm at the base of the brain, which is usually fatal. She survived it, and was sent to St. Joseph Gerontology Center, Alliance, NE, in March. Partly paralyzed, unable to walk, talk, or swallow food, she was not expected to live. But good care and her own strong will power brought her, in time, to recover most of her faculties. In spite of an attempt at corrective surgery, she remained unable to swallow food, and was fed through a tube implanted in her stomach.

In August, 1986, Sister Theresa enjoyed a visit from her brother, Fr. Ignatz Hupgen, and her sister, Sister Cecilia. Fr. Hupgen a parish priest in West Germany, died suddenly March 19, 1988. Sister Cecilia, four other sisters, her Trappist brother, and nieces and nephews survive her. May she live in peace.

Peace and All Good

The Sisters at Marian Residence.