

November 30
Sister M. Regina Therese Suess
(1905-1991)

Born January 26, 1905, in Detroit, she was the daughter of Joseph and Florence Horn Suess. Baptized Sarah Loretta Wilhelmina she grew up known as Loretta. To her father, she was always Etta. In her autobiography she writes of her close relationship with her father:

"For as long as I could recall, my dad and I were the best of chums. We were often together, took walks up and down the street and always patronized the ice cream parlors we met on the way. It was hard to say which of us had the sweetest sweet tooth...He was a good provider with a generous heart. Some of his willingness to give had rubbed off at least a bit on me."

She attributed her vocation largely to the prayers of her mother who deeply prized a religious vocation and desired that one of her children would enter the convent or become a priest.

After attending St. John the Evangelist Elementary School in Detroit, she enrolled at St. Catherine's High School, where she first met the IHM's. She recalled that "Almost as soon as I was in High School, I was asked if I wanted to be a Sister." A visit to Monroe with the pastor of St. Catherine's, Reverend Joseph Brokaw, confirmed her in this direction. When she entered St. Mary's Postulate on June 24, 1922, her mother's "joy knew no bounds." On January 2, 1923 she received the habit and the name, Sister Regina Therese by which she would be known until her death.

The day she was summoned as a novice to go out on mission it was a case of "not ready" and hurriedly "packing as many clothes as her laundry bag would tolerate, leaving the strings of her corset and shoes to decorate the outside."

The "not ready" novice, however, quickly became the "ever-ready" professed Sister who in her long list of mission experiences would take on almost every

single house or school responsibility with confidence and generous service.

Most of her teaching career was in the middle grades and junior high level in schools of Michigan and Ohio. She also taught CCD and became active in Sodality work. Looking back over her years of active ministry she writes: "I always loved my teaching career in whatever grade I was assigned." She was particularly grateful for an early assignment to Holy Cross, Marine City where she had a brother living whom she was able to help be reconciled with his God and Church.

Later in her golden years she returned to Holy Cross, Marine City, a time she recalls among her "most cherished memories." Her only living sister, Florence lived there and she was grateful for the "opportunity to exercise a filial apostolate" as well as engage in the foster grandparent apostolate which she regarded as "a golden highlight of her years at Holy Cross."

Fidelity to prayer and a grateful heart continued to characterize Sister Regina Therese in her final retirement years. Despite her handicaps and illness she looked forward to her holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament. She cherished her room in the infirmary with its location right next to the chapel.

If Sister Regina Therese were asked when she would have liked to experience her first real glimpse of a "new heaven and a new earth", it would not have been too surprising if she had chosen Our Lady's Saturday and near the dawn of the day. In reality, that was God's appointed time for her to enter eternity to be lovingly re-united with her beloved family and friends who had gone before her.

Sister Helen Oprysek