

July 17

Sister Alice Theresa Gumbleton
1895-1986

John and Julia (Manns) Gumbleton reared their family of four sons and four daughters, one of whom died young (1906) in the growing city of Detroit. Here Irene was born February 27, 1895, the youngest daughter and always the darling of the entire family. The Gumbleton children enjoyed a truly Catholic home environment, as later developments proved without a doubt - three daughters eventually became I.H.M. Sisters: Loretta (Sister Julia), Mary (Sister Mary Urban), and Irene (Sister Alice Theresa). Furthermore, the Sisters could proudly claim a priest nephew, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, as well as a niece, Sister Irene Therese, I.H.M.

Irene's early grade school education, from 1902 to 1905, was obtained from Newberry School, Detroit. As soon as Holy Redeemer School was ready, she was transferred there to complete her grade school and two years of high school. Her junior and senior high school years were spent at St. Mary Academy, Monroe, where she earned her diploma in June, 1913.

Within a few weeks after graduation, on July 2, 1913, Irene followed her two older sisters into the I.H.M. Convent "across the street." She was received as a novice December 30, 1913; received the name Sister Alice theresa and donned the blue habit. Her first profession of vows took place on December 30, 1915, and final profession on the same date in 1918.

Sister Alice Theresa's on-going education continued with her formation as a young religious. Her B.A. degree was earned from St. Mary College, Monroe, in 1922; her Life Teaching Certificate was dated 1925; and several of her summers were utilized studying intensively at the University of Notre Dame, where she received her M.A. in 1929. It is noteworthy that in all her higher education, she majored in English, with

history as a minor. This concentration gave her a firm professional foundation which coupled with her love for good reading, provided the incentive for a lifetime of inspirational teaching.

Classroom experience, for Sister Alice Theresa began at the Academy, where she taught Grades 3 and 4. As soon as she was sent on mission, beginning in 1915, Sister Alice Theresa was primarily the English Instructor on the secondary and college level. Other subjects were deftly handled, too - - religion, history, Latin - - but always English ranked first. Her love for literature had flourished in her own high school years, and on her first mission, Holy Trinity, Detroit, it was carefully nurtured by Sister Celesta, her superior. This far-seeing mentor was greatly loved and admired by the youthful beginner. English, to Sister Alice Theresa, meant much more than a accumulation of a number of credits, just as teaching was much more than a step-by-step lesson plan. Her classes were an adventure, an inspiration. She taught as Jesus taught - - by being and doing what she led her pupils to be and do. Her inspiration obviously extended beyond the world of good reading, for many of her pupils followed the call of Christ to religious life or to the priesthood.

When Sister Alice Theresa returned to the mission schools in 1945 after fifteen years as Dean of Students and English professor at Marygrove College, she continued her uplifting influence in several Michigan high schools. Marygrove College English teachers could discern those students who had been touched by her magic wand.

None of her successes with students or with anyone in her charge came without effort on her part. Sister Alice Theresa was a true religious to whom prayer was highly important. Her extra-curricular works reflect her

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spiritual, cultural, and educational influence on others. These included sodality groups, student council, counseling, debating clubs and future teachers. Professional up-to-dateness was never neglected. In 1953, as principal at St. Frederick, Pontiac, her in-service summer program consisted of a Wayne State University course, "Problems in School Administration." One of her outstanding qualities was her ability to listen. She gave full attention to one who came to her for consultation, or even casual conversation.

Sister Mary Urban was the first of the Gumbleton trio to be called to her eternal reward in 1950; Sister Julia's life on earth continued until 1972. These losses took away some of the loving support that had been so freely bestowed on the younger Sister Alice Theresa. Meanwhile, the latter had retired to the Motherhouse in June, 1971. She was, though, "rehired" as part-time English teacher at the Academy. She remained semi-active until age and illness compelled her to become an infirmary resident in the early 1980's

As a patient, Sister Alice Theresa's infirmities kept her more and more confined as she moved from wheel chair on the main floor to the less active third floor. From her chair; or even from her bed, when conversation became impossible, she still claimed, and received attention from her friends who sat with her and held her hand - - this was all she needed. When anyone responded to her call "Sister, please" the grasp of the hand was firm and unyielding. One was really caught!

At last, the voice was stilled and the hand no longer able to grasp. Sister Alice Theresa's frail-appearing but sturdy frame clung to life until that summer day, July 17, 1986. She was 91 years old. Fittingly, her nephew, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton administered the Sacrament of the Sick to the religious who loved him so much.

By- Sister Marie Angela Kreitz