

June 5, 1948

Sister M. Joanna Hackett
1907 - 1948

Sister Joanna, born in Dowagiac, Michigan, April 20, 1884, was the oldest of the six children of Michael Hackett and Mary Conway Hackett. Father Broger baptized her Catherine Veronica. She received her first Holy Communion April 23, 1895, and was confirmed the same day by Bishop John S. Foley.

At this time her musical education began, as she received a piano from her grandmother as a First Communion gift. She continued her music along with her school work in the public school of Dowagiac. For three years after her graduation from high school in June, 1902, she continued her study of German and French with professors of these languages who held classes in the evening for young people who desired to take advanced work. Once a week she went to Kalamazoo for vocal lessons.

After passing a teacher's examination she was qualified to teach in the city schools of her home town. In 1907 she resigned her position, as she had made plans to become a Sister. Before making her final decision in regard to her choice of a community, she visited several places in order to learn the spirit, and to know something of the various communities. It was merely by chance that she met the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters. One day she had accompanied her mother to Toledo, Ohio, to attend the funeral of a relative. They had to change trains in Detroit, and while waiting in the depot she met three or four of our Sisters who were on the way to their Missions. She was thrilled at this meeting, and having learned that they were from Monroe, she was

not satisfied until she visited St. Mary's and had an interview with Reverend Mother Mechtildis. The latter assured her that she belonged to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters on account of her great love and devotion to our Blessed Mother.

Plans were made for her entrance on August 19, 1907. Her mother brought her to Monroe and remained for a couple of days before parting with her daughter. Sister Roberta Wall, a life-long friend of the family, assured her mother that Sister would be happy in her new home. This made the parting somewhat easier for the lonesome parent.

Sister received the Holy Habit on December 27, 1907 and the name Joanna was given in honor of Bishop John Foley. Her profession was on December 28, 1909.

Sister Joanna endeared herself to all who came in contact with her. Her ready wit and keen sense of humor relieved many a tension both in the classroom and at community recreation. Her unending fund of wholesome jokes and stories made her a delightful member of any group.

One of her happiest days in religious life was July 2, 1911 when she attended the Ordination of her brother at Detroit. As we did not attend the first Masses of our relatives in those days, her brother came to Monroe and said his first Low Mass in our Community chapel on July 3d.

In July, 1913, Sister Joanna had the great happiness of welcoming her loved sister, Sister Marie Eugene, to the Community. From then on their joys and sorrows were shared for many years, as they had been in their childhood.

Sister Joanna served her Community in every sphere and activity. She was superior in Ann Arbor and Flint, and at St. Vincent and Holy Rosary, Detroit. Her versatility made it possible for her to be placed either in high school or in the music department.

Sister's great love for the Blessed Sacrament was manifested by her reverence in chapel, her desire to promote preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion, her best attention to the choir at First Communion time; her constant plying of her needle to make something beautiful for the altar - all these are traceable to her close imitation of her patron - St. John - whom she shared with her beloved brother, Monsignor John Hackett.

From early childhood the devotion to the Rosary was a part of her family life. Family Rosary was said in her home after the evening meal the year round. For five years previous to her death she said the fifteen decades daily for a special intention, which was granted shortly after her death.

Sister's last sphere of active duty was at Girls' Catholic Central High School, Detroit. She had been in poor health for several years, but only at Christmas time of 1947 did she acknowledge her inability to continue work. She returned to Monroe where it was hoped that rest and care would strengthen her heart, but God ordained otherwise. She remained up and around, sewing and crocheting lovely things for Home and the Missions.

On May 29, 1948 she was taken to St. Vincent Hospital in Toledo for closer observations. Her condition grew so serious that she received the Last Sacraments. The priest who anointed

her said to Sister Marie Eugene, "Your sister is a saint, so have no fear."

Friday evening Sister Marie Eugene returned to Monroe, On leaving Sister Joanna she said, "Sister I am going Home, and I will pray for you all night." Sister replied, "No, go Home and get a good sleep, as that is the best prayer for you."

When Mother Ruth told her that she was seriously ill, she answered, "That's all right with me, Mother, whatever God wants." Her sense of humor remained to the last and her resignation was an inspiration to all around her. Saturday morning, June 5, 1948, she passed away peacefully, happy that she was going to her celestial Home to be with God and her loved ones for all eternity.

Sister M. Andrea