

May 17

Sister Mary Thoma Curtin
1891-1979

Loretta Catherine Curtin was born on August 14, 1891, in Akron, Ohio. Her parents were Michael and Bridget (Gilhooley) Curtin. Loretta had five brothers and five sisters. All received their education at St. Vincent School in Akron.

Loretta Curtin entered St. Mary Convent in Monroe on June 25, 1910. She was received into the I.H.M. Congregation on February 2, 1911 and received the name, Sister Mary Thoma. Her vows were made on July 15, 1913.

As a young sister, late in the first decade of the twentieth century, Sister Mary Thoma was permitted to return to St. Vincent, Akron, for the funeral of her mother. She was accompanied by Sister Mary Ellen Bader, also from Akron, who was then a novice. This was rather unusual, at that time; but it was a concession that might be satisfactory to Bishop Scremb, who had expressed his wish that young ladies with a religious vocation might remain within the Cleveland Diocese.

Sister Mary Thoma was small and fragile in appearance. During her early religious life, she suffered for a time from tuberculosis so prevalent in that time period. This did not deter her activity though, for she was always devoted to duty and she loved teaching.

Her teaching career began in 1912 in the primary grades at St. Vincent School, Detroit. She became recognized as one of the best educators in the Community. Her discipline was precise and clear, but her students loved and respected her. She was successful even when teaching as many as 100 first graders.

After receiving her Master of Education Degree from Wayne University on 1947, Sister Mary Thoma taught high school classes. Her earlier methods also worked well with high school students, and her students

achieved high scholastic results.

After twelve years of teaching in Detroit, Sister Mary Thoma returned to Akron, where she continued high school teaching. She served as assistant principal in 1963 along with her part time teaching.

Sister Mary Thoma began her retirement from school in 1968, continuing to reside at St. Mary, Akron. She made herself generously useful in the convent as well as in the school. Her special charge was hospitality and she is remembered as "flitting about" to see that everyone was comfortable for an overnight stay. Sisters from Akron were always greeted with special warmth, whether visiting in Akron or at the motherhouse during summer vacation.

Sister preferred to live her retirement years in Akron because of her family. Her sister, Gertrude, and niece, Mary Jean, lived next door. After Gertrude's death in 1972, Sister Mary Thoma did return to the Motherhouse.

Sister Mary Thoma was noted for her energetic devotion to the duty of the moment. Perhaps the characteristic which most endeared her to everyone was her witty and lively conversation: "Good morning to you and many of them," was her favorite greeting.

Sister was a prayerful person. Daily Mass and her rosary were constant companions. She tried to attend funerals of sisters' relatives, friends and benefactors, and of parishioners with whom she had become acquainted. She was faithful in saying the prescribed prayers of the Legion of Mary. Sister had a special talent in constructing artistic Christmas cribs for the convent chapel, using paper, paint, crayon, and mirrors to achieve a pleasing project. If she herself did not have charge, she was always willing to share her time and expertise with the sisters who did.

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In 1977 Sister Mary Thoma became an infirmity patient. It was very difficult for her to accept dependence on others, but she was a PATIENT patient, always cheerful and most grateful for any attention offered her. While in the infirmity she continued and intensified her prayer life, appreciated visits from her niece, Mary Jean, and from the IHM Sisters. Sister Mary Thoma lived out a beautiful lifetime of eight-seven years until her death on May 17, 1979.