

Sister Sarah Scanlan
(b. Sara Scanlan)
(1880-1962)

Sarah Mary Scanlan left her native land of Ireland about the age of sixteen. Like all the Irish who were migrating to the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century she left behind her mother, father and a few younger brothers and sisters to join the members of her family who had preceded her to the "Land of Promise." Coming to Detroit she found a home with an aunt until her entrance into the community on November 5, 1901.

Not much is known about the years prior to her coming to Monroe. Those who knew her intimately have said that she rarely, if ever, mentioned those years. Was this because she did not love her family? No, it was because when Sarah Mary Scanlan made a sacrifice, it was whole and entire. This was to be her motto for many long years of her religious life. The names of her brothers, Michael and Stephen, were often to cross her lips but only to those who knew her because of contact in school with their children. Her love for them was strong and ardent. As she relinquished each one of them in death, -- Michael, Stephen, Margaret, and even Lily, who died two weeks before her own meeting with God, she felt the pangs of separation even though here she had very few contacts with them, due to their various locations from Michigan to New York, the United States to Ireland where only Ann is left of the large Scanlan family of fourteen children.

On June 10, 1902, Sister Sara was clothed in the habit of a Sister Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and two years later in the same month, the bride of Christ vowed her life to Him.

Sister Edwardine, who knew Sister intimately says:

"Sister Sara was known and loved for her Christ-like and charitable soul, her sympathetic, generous, understanding heart. She was entirely devoid of anything crude or harsh, keenly thoughtful of the feelings of others, possessed a high social intelligence prompted by her sensitive nature. She was dedicated to her work of teaching, to her work of love; a perfectionist in a high degree. Many can trace their success in life, their vocation to the priesthood or religious life, to the training and interest of Sister Sara. She planned her life as the valiant women of the gospel, and I am confident that the loving Father she served so well has welcomed her with His benign smile to her eternal home."

Not much more can be added to the above to give an exact picture of Sister except perhaps to mention her love of teasing. She was fond of giving it and delighted in receiving it. Through her life there was many a wholesome joke played on her because of her good nature. She in turn took every opportunity to make recreation just that. Quite frequently when a superior, she would enter the community room for recreation with a box of candy under her arm, set it down on the table in front of her. During the course of the hour she would frequently lift the cover and pick up the box and sniff the contents, all the while watching the effects on her young community; finally, at the appointed time she would let up on her teasing and all would

enjoy the contents.

During the teaching years of Sister's life, she served the Lord in the schools of St. Vincent, Pontiac; St. Thomas, Ann Arbor; St. John, Jackson; St. Mary, Mt. Clemens; St. Mary, Akron; St. Agnes, St. Catherine, Holy Trinity, Immaculata High, Detroit. She opened St. Felicitas, Chicago as the local superior and is still loved and venerated. She was superior of St. Matthew and Epiphany, Detroit, holy Name Birmingham and St. Mary, Monroe. In all these places she was noted as a disciplinarian and outstanding teacher.

In 1959, because of age and ill health, Sister was missioned to the Motherhouse, and then began the years of her Gethsemane. Not only a break in physical health but a mental break from time to time portrayed to those who loved her what sacrifices God can ask from those He loves.

After years of loving devotion to Mary through a daily recitation of the fifteen decades of her rosary, on October 1, 1962, Sister Sara gave her soul to God which for eighty-three years had been entirely in His Hands. She, who literally had given up father and mother, sister and brother, home and country to follow Him had walked out of the darkness of death into the light.

Sister Bridgetta Huot