

Dear Sisters, Associates, Relatives and Friends,

On the cover of the booklet for Sister Marion Rotherham's funeral liturgy the following words were printed: "Through many long years the Spirit taught her that more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Those of us who lived with Sister Marion can say with certainty that this tells us a lot about her.

Sister Marion Rotherham died at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 4, 2000, at Good Samaritan Nursing Home where she had been a resident for almost two years. During her last days three of her sisters were with her. As her condition worsened several Sisters in religion, her three sisters, a niece, Father Tim Stoner, and a hospice nurse were praying and singing at her bedside. Another sister arrived a few hours after Sister Marion had died.

A vigil service was held at Marian Residence on Sunday evening, March 5. The Mass of Christian Burial was offered in Holy Rosary Church by Fathers Bryan Ernest and Tim Stoner on March 6. Burial was in Calvary Cemetery near 105 other Franciscan Sisters. Her four sisters and many of her numerous nieces and nephews were present.

Rita B. Rotherham was born June 1, 1924 in Ewing, Nebraska. Her parents were Michael Rotherham and Therese (Kalhoff) Rotherham. She had eight half brothers and sisters and six full brothers and sisters. Of the first family only the youngest, Lucille Rotherham survives. Her parents and two full brothers preceded her in death. Besides her four sisters she is survived by several cousins as well as a number of nieces and nephews.

From early years Rita fostered the idea of becoming a "scrub Sister". She entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Marycrest, Denver, Colorado, in January, 1945, received the habit in August that same year, and was given the name, Sister Marion. She professed her first vows in August, 1946.

Sister Marion was an efficient secretary and administrator in many institutions of our congregation. For several years she was the administrator of St. Mary's Hospital in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. This was followed by a term as provincial secretary-treasurer of the Denver province. In 1968 she established the House of Prayer in Denver and spent several years there. A year at the Sisters' mission near Mexico City was followed by a time as General Treasurer at the Generalate Motherhouse in Rome, Italy. Then she served as secretary-treasurer at Marian Residence in Alliance, Nebraska. While here she also spent time with the older residents, praying and supporting them. During those years the slow advance of Alzheimer's Disease was very stressful to her, as her memory slipped away and even prayer became difficult. In March of 1998 it was felt that Marian Residence could no longer provide the security she needed, and she was transferred to a secure unit at Good Samaritan. At least one Sister visited this unit every day and Sister often attended the weekly Mass at the Center.

Sister Marion was a perfectionist in her work, dress, and life. She also had her own private terrors; at her funeral Father Ernest said that now her life is perfect; she no longer has to be afraid of dogs.

The Sisters at Marian Residence