

CULLMAN--Sister Florence Veigl, O.S.B., one of the oldest Sisters at Sacred Heart Monastery, recently died in her 94<sup>th</sup> year and the 73<sup>rd</sup> year of her monastic profession. She had suffered a fall some weeks earlier and was receiving physical therapy at the Cullman Rehabilitation Center. Though she longed to come home, she accepted an extended period of rehabilitation, hoping to achieve her usual level of independence. Walking back to her room in the Center with an aide after a therapy session, she suddenly collapsed. She was literally “on her feet” to the day of her death.

Solemn Vespers of the Dead, with Bishop Robert Baker presiding, was led by Sister Janet Marie Flemming, O.S.B., Prioress, on Friday, August 27, in Sacred Heart Monastery Chapel. It was followed by a time of remembrance after supper in the Sisters’ dining room. Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated on Saturday, August 28, by the Most Reverend Cletus Meagher, O.S.B., Abbot of St. Bernard Abbey. Rev. Marcus Voss, O.S.B. gave the homily. Sister Janet Marie presided at the interment in Sacred Heart Monastery Cemetery.

Born Anna Lee Veigl on February 3, 1916, to a devoted Catholic family, she was the eldest of the two daughters and three sons of Adolph John and Elizabeth Schaffer Veigl. She was baptized and received her First Holy Communion from Rev. Ignatius, O.S.B., at Sacred Heart Church in Cullman, where she was later confirmed. She attended Sacred Heart Elementary School and Sacred Heart Academy, and then, some months later, entered the Benedictine Community at Sacred Heart.

Prepared for the ministry of education, she earned a B.S. in Education with a minor in English at Florence State Teachers College and then an M.A. in Elementary Education Administration at the University of Notre Dame. For some fifty years she taught various grades in elementary schools throughout Alabama and northern Florida; for many years she also served as principal in schools and superior in mission convents. In the summers, at the Community’s two-year college, she often taught arts and crafts for teachers, displaying her own considerable talents and nourishing the gifts of her students.

Always something of a history buff, Sister Florence developed for a Community program a history of the school at Elberta, AL, and wrote a riveting account of Hurricane Frederick when it struck that town. She carefully preserved and gave to the Community archives the commemorative picture given her at her First Holy Communion and the little golden medals she received for achieving the highest average in her class for several years. She had a wide acquaintance in

Cullman and a number of relatives, and it was a ministry of hers to attend wakes and funerals for as many as possible.

Still energetic in her retirement years at Sacred Heart Monastery, she found countless ways to serve the Community. She taught calligraphy to Elderhostel groups who came to Sacred Heart a few summers. She cooked breakfast until well up in her 80's, often adding a special touch to ordinary meals. She washed dishes, table-waited, cleaned the serving area, staffed the telephone switchboard, and—a special joy—took Communion to the sick both at Mass and in the infirmary. She learned to use the computer in her last years and carefully kept a record of her wins in various kinds of solitaire.

Sister Florence was a constant presence in the Community, at prayers and Mass, at meals, at recreations. She added joy to celebrations, especially when Hallowe'en or Mardi Gras parties called for her unique costumes. Few will forget her miming as an “accompanist” with an “opera diva.” And she loved visiting her siblings and having adventures with them and their families.

Joining the Sisters in their joyful remembrance and in the funeral rites were family members: her brother Adolph and his wife Marilyn; a host of nephews and nieces and grand nephews and grand nieces; and many friends from Cullman and beyond.