

Sister Mary Justina (Edith) Bieganek, 100, died on July 20, 2012

Sister Mary Justina (Edith) Bieganek, 100, died on July 20, 2012, at St. Francis Convent, Little Falls, Minn.

A Mass of Christian Burial will take place at St. Francis Convent on Tuesday, July 24, 2012. Friends may call at St. Francis Convent on Monday, July 23, from 4:00 – 8:30 p.m. and from 8:30 a.m. until the time of the funeral on Tuesday. Arrangements are by Emblom Brenny Funeral Service, Little Falls.

Sister Mary Justina was born on January 16, 1912, in New York City, New York. She was orphaned at three weeks, placed in the New York Foundling Home and in 1913, rode one of the early 1900s orphan trains to Holdingford, Minn., where the John and Mary Bieganek family accepted her into their family. When Mary died, their son and his wife, Joseph and Rose (Deering) Bieganek, took Edith into their home. She was accepted as a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Minnesota, on August 12, 1929. She made first profession of vows on August 12, 1931, and final vows on August 10, 1934. She was a Franciscan Sister for 82 years.



Sister Justina had a very strong love for her family and for her religious Community. This was evident in her solicitude for her family and from the strong spirit of sharing her talents with her Community. She showed adaptability by frequently moving from mission to mission as directed by her superiors and accepting any ministry she was given. A priest who assisted the bishop in visiting the parishes of the diocese attested to that when he said to her, “Sister Justina, every place we go, you are there!” She was once told, “She who loves work is always on vacation.” Since work was always a source of joy for her, she figured she was on vacation most of her life. She was faithful to prayer, especially the Eucharist, and her vowed life and hoped that through them she shed a bit of happiness in the pathways of the many people with whom and to whom she ministered. She was willing to go the extra mile and in so doing made the person she was helping feel they were doing her a favor. When she celebrated her 60th anniversary, she said, “Deepest gratitude fills my heart when I think of God’s great goodness to me and the countless persons whose lives have touched mine and helped me to grow in Christ’s love.”

Sister Justina attended the St. Paul Teacher's College, St. Paul, Minn.; St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn. and Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kans., during summer schools where she earned various certificates. She ministered as an office clerk, religion teacher, parish worker/visitor, pastoral care worker, organist, and secretary. She served in St. Cloud, Foley, Elk River, Osakis, Browns Valley, Royalton, Flensburg and Lastrup. When she returned to Little Falls, she worked in the Music Center until the last year of her life.

She was preceded in death by siblings: Elphege, John, Theresa, Theodore, Leo, Stanley, Helen, Anthony and Marian. Survivors include brothers: David (Ann), Kelliher; Thomas (Marge), Beaverton, Mich.; and sisters: Rita (Don) Kainz, Rice; Dolores (Henry) Preimesberger, Pierz; nieces and nephews and her Franciscan Community.

Donations to Franciscan Sisters Ministries preferred.