

Called Home

ON July 11 one of our zealous pioneer sisters was called home to heaven. Sister Mary Clare was killed in an automobile accident near Taos, New Mexico.

Sister Mary Clare, the former Clara Leutenegger, was born in Omaha, Nebraska, August 24, 1902, her parents being the late Mr. and Mrs. Albert Leutenegger. She entered Victory Noll February 14, 1926 and was professed two years later. In 1938 she was elected vicar general of the community and also served as councillor. Her mission life was spent in Indiana, Ohio, Texas and New Mexico. In each of these states she served some time as superior.

Sister is survived by three brothers and a sister: the Rev. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M., of St. Peter's Church; Chicago; Henry, Ralph, and Mrs. E.F. Igel of Omaha. The funeral was held from the Cathedral in Santa Fe Saturday, July 14. Father Benedict was celebrant of the Solemn Mass. The Most Rev. Edwin Byrne, D.D., Archbishop of Santa Fe, presided and gave the absolution.

Archbishop Byrne's brief talk at the funeral Mass brought much consolation to all of us. We are printing it here so that you may also reap spiritual fruit from it.

My dear Sisters and friends:

Contrary to our custom, the circumstances surrounding the death of our dear sister oblige me to externalize the sadness that is in the hearts of all of us this morning, and to offer our sympathy and condolence to her religious family and to her relatives and friends.

Death is always sad, because living as we do in natural circumstances, the

breaking of natural bonds causes sorrow to our hearts. But we who are of the Holy Faith, although we live a natural life, must try to see death with the eyes of the Church, and to realize that in death life is not taken away, but only changed. We ascend from a life of the world, in the order of natural life, to the supernatural life in God, our Creator, our Beginning, and our End. Death is therefore a blessed event, and we can cry out with St. Francis of Assisi, "Welcome, Sister Death."

Our dear little sister, who died so suddenly, was taken from us without any foreboding. Yet our Divine Lord in all that He does wants to teach us a lesson. When He takes a soul suddenly from our midst, it is to teach us that all of us must always be prepared for His coming; for the words that He spoke long ago are true today: that death will come as a thief in the night, when we least expect it. We have been taught from our childhood that we must prepare to see God face to face; we must be prepared to die, at all times. Even if this morning you or I were called by God, we should be prepared to leave all things and run to Him joyously, to His eternal embrace, our Lover! It is not the suddenness of death that is important; it is the unpreparedness. So we have been taught to always be prepared to see our Lord, our God, our Judge, our Savior.

And this dear little sister, taken away from us so suddenly, understood well how to die. She was prepared, and she went without any fear to her Divine Spouse; and I feel confident she is with Him, enjoying life eternal in heaven.

Therefore, we must try to lead supernatural lives, and try to ascend to



Sister Mary Clare, O.L.V.M.

those spheres of the saints, who look on death as the desire of their hearts, awaiting anxiously for the moment to die, because death means for them this union with our Lord, our God, our loving Jesus. Death is, then, "in the Lord."

This morning we have had the great privilege of offering up the Holy

Mass for this dear little sister. If there was some deficiency in her life, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, with all its power and tremendous effects, will take those little defects away and make her pleasing to God forever.

So, my dear Sisters and friends, we thank God for what He has done in this case, and in all that He does, for God always does what is perfect in all things. You and I, His children, should try to accept with a smile all that He does, and to will what He wills, for we know that He loves us and does all for our happiness and eternal blessedness. The Sister Catechists of Our Lady of Victory have now an intercessor in heaven. These good sisters who do so much for God's children now have one more to intercede for them. And she will do much more now than ever before, here in New Mexico where we need these sisters so much, where they are so appreciated and loved. If God takes one suddenly away from us, we know that He will use her more effectually than ever could be done on earth.

Nevertheless, I can understand the sadness of all this morning. I ask God, therefore, to soothe your hearts with the thought of His love, and to give you all the strength and fortitude to bear this cross, and the crosses that our loving Jesus will send you during life.

IN PARADISUM

May the angels lead thee into paradise;
May the martyrs receive thee at thy coming,
And lead thee into the holy city of Jerusalem.
May the choir of angels receive thee,
And mayest thou have eternal rest with Lazarus,
Who once was poor.

—From the burial service.