

Sister Thecla Simon, CSA

Sister Thecla (formerly Sister Mary Alphonsus) Simon, CSA, 94, died on Saturday, January 8, 2011, in St. Francis Home where she resided.

Thecla was born May 12, 1916, to Frank and Margaret Schrauth Simon of St. Kilian, Wisconsin. She was the fifth of ten children born to this farming family in rural Wisconsin. As the middle of the nine children who survived to adulthood, she joked about being the “centerpiece” of her family. Thecla’s education began in the St. Kilian Catholic Grade School and continued in the St. Agnes Convent High School. She attributed her religious vocation to her parents’ prayers and the living of their Catholic faith, especially their attendance at daily Mass.



Thecla entered the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes in 1933 and made profession of first vows as Sister Mary Alphonsus in 1936. With a B.S. degree in Education and Social Studies from Marian College (completed in 1950), Sister Mary Alphonsus began ministry as a grade school teacher in 1936. For twenty-one years she taught first in primary grades, then in middle school, and finally in junior high, all in various towns in Wisconsin. Her secret desire was to be assigned to a country parish. After receiving her Masters degree in Library Science from Rosary College (1956) however, Sister served as librarian in high schools in New York, Illinois, Kansas, and Wisconsin. In 1986 she became librarian for the curriculum library at Marian College and in 1987 added the role of librarian at St. Agnes Convent. She was an excellent librarian, kind and helpful, and loved by the students she served. (After Vatican II, Sister had returned to her baptismal name and was known as Sister Thecla.)

In all she did, Sister Thecla was careful, precise, orderly, and organized. She possessed a creative talent which she enjoyed using to design bulletin boards, make all-occasion cards, design book covers for books she bound, and to create beauty wherever she could. By her own account, she enjoyed short walks, playing cards, reading, swimming, and the beauty of nature. She had a wry sense of humor that brought a smile to her face and made her eyes twinkle when she played with words or came up with a droll remark. She liked to sew and was good at it, but found that it could get tiring when she put her all into it. Putting her all into things was the only way she knew how to be, she once said, and that included her life with God.

After more than sixty years of service, Sister Thecla retired to Nazareth Court and Center, where she continued to help serve community needs. With declining health, she

moved to St. Francis Home and a life of suffering. She who had served so many was in need of being served. Still she could smile when she recognized a face, a name, perhaps a German phrase. She slept peacefully away Saturday afternoon to enjoy the order and peace and beauty of God to whom she had given her all.

Sister Thecla is survived by one brother, Father Ambrose Simon, OFM Cap, of Kaukauna, Wisconsin; one sister, Sister Roseann Simon, CSA, of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; nephews, grandnieces; and the Sisters of St. Agnes with whom she lived, prayed, and ministered.

Preceding her in death were her parents, Frank and Margaret Schrauth Simon; five brothers: Anthony who died as a child, Joseph, Andrew, Bernard, and Conrad; and two sisters: Odilia Simon and Sister Angelica Simon, CSA.

Visitation: Visitation for Sister Thecla will be held on Tuesday, January 11, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. and on Wednesday from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac. A prayer service will be held on Tuesday at 6:00 p.m.

Services: A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, at 9:15 a.m. in the St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac. Father Ken Smits, OFM Cap, will preside. Burial will follow at St. Joseph Springs Cemetery, weather permitting.

Memorials may be directed to the Sisters of St. Agnes Development Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54937.

The Sisters of St. Agnes are grateful to the nurses and staff of Nazareth Court and Center and of St. Francis Home for their care of Sister Thecla in her retirement years.