



## Sister M. Barbara Froehlich, MM

Born: September 14, 1894

Entered: October 14, 1919

Died: April 3, 1972

On April 3, 1972, Sister Mary Barbara Froehlich died at Bethany. Her health had been declining for several weeks. The wake and Office of the Dead were held at Bethany on April 4 and the Mass of the Resurrection was concelebrated also at Bethany by several of our Maryknoll Fathers on April 5 followed by burial.

Clara Barbara Froehlich was born on September 14, 1894, in Merrill, Wisconsin. Her home parish was St. Francis Xavier in Merrill. She attended grammar school and a year of high school in Merrill at which time her father's failing eyesight was the cause of both Clara and her brother going to work for ten years in their father's factory. She entered Maryknoll on October 14, 1919. Father Owens, the pastor of her parish church, wrote in his recommendation that Clara Barbara was "modest and humble, a strong character, always cheerful and pleasant." He added that "if no provision can be made for Miss Froehlich to labor in the foreign field under American auspices, she will place herself at the disposal of the Fathers of the Divine Word for their missions."

Sister Barbara was received on March 25, 1920; made her temporary vows on August 5, 1921, and final vows on August 4, 1924, in Yeungkong, China. She had been sent to China with the first group of Maryknoll Sisters in 1921.

Sister Barbara spent the years from 1921 to 1927 in South China, followed by a year in the Philippines. From 1928 to 1939 she was in Hawaii and then was assigned to the U.S.A. mainland and served at the Venard, Motherhouse and finally at Bethany from 1945 until her death on Easter Monday.

The numerous letters she wrote to Mother Mary Joseph, during her years in China, the Philippines and Hawaii, begin and end in gratitude, and are characterized by a joyous humor, service, concern, and a deep faith supported by prayer. Her spirit of "aliveness" is obvious in the correspondence and one gets the impression that she found it easy to love people and accepted others in a beautiful appreciative way, always conscious of their good qualities.

Reading her thoughts which were written over a period of 46 years, I am struck by the simplicity and the joy of a person whose life was filled with personal dedication to building the Kingdom through ordinary tasks and who never seemed to doubt the eternal significance and transcendent meaning of service to others in Jesus. Whether this task was caring for a sick baby in Yeungkong, teaching a poor woman how to cook in Loting, or preparing meals for her Sisters, there is joy, contentedness and a sense of dignity in service which stands out in bold relief.

Her Maryknoll was a family of people, whose preoccupation was the mission of carrying the joyful Gospel message of salvation to the ends of the earth. She knew that she belonged to a group who shared her life ideal.

May she enjoy the peace, light, and life of Jesus in His eternal presence and intercede for all of us who share her vocation.