



Photos by Susan McKinney

Sister Felicita Almanza is relieved that her classes can be taught in Spanish since she has had to attend classes in order to learn English.



Sister Soledad Cruz breaks into a smile during her "cataquesis" class at St. Francis Xavier.

'El Tiempo' Proves To be a Problem

By PAT PETRASKE

The city was decked out in its familiar white coat and the street was crusted with ice. In the middle sat a petite Mexican Sister whose feet hadn't mastered the necessary gingerly winter walk. But her companion, Sister Soledad Cruz, who was caught up in the excitement of this northern winter wonderland, forgot to give her a hand and began to yell "alto!" although there were no approaching cars.

"El tiempo" was one of the biggest problems faced by the Sisters of Guadalupe when they arrived in Rochester in 1968. Four of the five sisters who gathered at their comfortable home on Watkin Terrace, giggled about their first encounters with Rochester's snow. One anecdote revealed that a Sister's enthusiasm for shoveling led her to unbury the wrong driveway when the Sisters were in the process of moving from one house to another.

Her eyes bright with the memory, Sister Felicita Almanza had to pantomime her sliding in the streets since she speaks very little English. Sister Aida Sansor explained that the Sisters are now taking daily English lessons.

Despite their language and climate problems the Sisters have blended into the mainstream of diocesan life and teach the "cataquesis" as part of the Spanish apostolate. "The community knows us now and they love us," Sister Aida said. They conduct religion classes at six area parishes which are predominantly Puerto Rican.

Other weekly duties include visiting Puerto Ricans in the hospital and working with migrants. Their attention also is devoted to the Christian Family Life movement for married couples headed by Father Octavio Esquivel.

The establishment of the second convent in the United States for the Missionary Catechists of Our Lady of

Louis Cassels Dies Columnist on Religion

Aiken, S.C. (RNS) — Louis Cassels, religion columnist for United Press International and author of several books on religion and ethics, died of a heart attack at his home here at the age of 52.

An Episcopalian, Cassels enrolled at Duke University, a United Methodist school, with the aim of studying for the ministry. After he began writing for the student newspaper, he

Guadalupe began with Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen "who saw it as a necessity for the Spanish-speaking people," according to Sister Aida.

A former coordinator of the Spanish apostolate discovered the congregation at their other convent in Miami when he was seeking prospective Spanish-speaking religious for work in the Rochester diocese.

Good health and the willingness to learn English were prerequisites for an assignment in Rochester. "My superior asked me if I wanted to go. I came to the convent just for this so I agreed to go to Rochester," said Sister Aida who has been here for two years.

The congregation to which the Sisters belong is a 38-year-old group founded in Maralia, Michoacan, a province in Mexico. Sister Aida had been working in the province of Yucatan before she left. "My family lives in Mexico City so to them it seemed just as far for me to be in Rochester as it did for me to live in Yucatan," she smiled. Two months ago she returned to Mexico to visit but "was glad to come back."

An enthusiastic neighborhood greeted the Sisters. "The parents all sent their kids over to help us. Our neighbor was going to take a movie of all the kids that paraded through here," Sister Aida laughed.

Their complete "neighborhood" is composed of approximately 9,000 people in the Rochester area and another 1,000 are scattered in other parts of the diocese with a heavy concentration in Geneva and Newark.

Not knowing a word of English was only a hindrance when shopping, getting "gas" or going to the doctor. Since the Spanish-speaking people "prefer that their children pray in Spanish" the classes are easily conducted.

The Catholic Church in

Rochester is very similar to the type of church the Sisters were familiar with in Mexico. Sister Aida believes, however, that there is a difference in the way the Church in the United States is organized. "In Mexico you find there is one parish but the United States has a lot of small churches. But this is good because it makes the people more close," Sister Aida observed.

She told of the Puerto Rican custom of a "parranda" or party, which begins with a Mass in someone's home and develops into an evening of discussion and socializing. "One evening I opened the door to find people singing a song," Sister Aida recalled. A song at the front door announces the beginning of a parranda so the Sisters discovered that they were hosting the night's celebration.

In spite of their almost total involvement with the Spanish, the Sisters have developed some American preferences. "Sesame Street," replied Sister Felicita when asked about her favorite television show. Sister Aida described her reaction to the latest movie she has seen, "Brother Sun, Sister Moon" (the story of St. Francis Assisi). "The life of the saint was much better than the movie."

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