



Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

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From: Brian C. Blasco

Director of Communications and Archivist - Assistant Coordinator of Community Life

Date: April 10, 2025

RE: Sister Gerburgis Weiling, OSF

Birth	June 23, 1842 in Boesensell, Germany and named Elisabeth
Parents	Heinrich and Clara (Hundekamp) Weiling
Entered HSOSF	April 17, 1869
Profession of First Vows	August 12, 1871
Missionary to the USA	October 1875 at age 33

Assignments

Belleville, IL	St. Elizabeth's Hospital	November 13, 1875	
East St. Louis, IL	St. Mary's Hospital	1876	
Belleville, IL	St. Elizabeth's Hospital	1879	Superior/Administrator
Highland, IL	St. Joseph's Hospital	1887	Superior/Administrator
Streator, IL	St. Mary's Hospital	1897	

Entered Eternal Life

March 11, 1903, and buried in Calvary Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

-Belleville, November 30, 1875

P.b.J.Chr.

Dear Reverend Mother!

At this moment, while I am writing with a heavy heart and not particularly want to admit it, I feel quite depressed. I have not dared to think about it. It was like a dream when we departed and on the boat I once cried all night. Also when the Sisters left Alton I was overcome with emotions.

Dear Reverend Mother, how often did we say if only Reverend Mother could see us here, how delighted would she be. Oh, Reverend Mother, I don't believe that all Sisters have found such a Father as we did. Here we have a beautiful church and exemplary discipline among the students as if in a convent. Often I think if only I were a child and had such guidance to pray. I most certainly would have turned out quite differently.

Before the Holy Mass the children pray in unison the morning prayer as we pray the Prayer of the Hour, then the good opinion (?) before the Holy Mass, a short devotion and several times all answer: "Lord accept graciously our sacrifice". Then follows the transubstantiation, this prayer loud and solemn and during holy communion.

I wished, Reverend Mother, could see and hear it some time, it is so beautiful and devotional. Our Most Reverend Father accomplishes all of this and we also become more religious if we only follow his guidance. Oh yes, Reverend Mother, I again hope, that I yet can become religious. Our Most Reverend Father is very strict. The Holy Rules, the Order of the Day, the Silentium are all necessary. As long as I am in the convent, I daily failed often the Silentium. Now I shall learn to be silent and when there is penitence on Friday, he informed me about unnecessary words. Yes, we have a strict Father who I fear but also respect deeply and love. The Most Reverend would strive for more friendliness and paternal care, thus the heart is inclined to an innocent

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trust. For this reason His Eminence has declared, so that we are not jokingly called out during the night, that we should never go to patients without a definite sign from His Eminence. Most Reverend Father has repeatedly been in danger of losing his good name and life, when he was called with the blessed sacraments to patients at night.

We are so very fortunate to have someone watch over us in this careless world, though the egotism now already makes it difficult. Most Reverend Father says the habit is different from the worldly people, it also must be the life.

On Sunday a homily in church touched our hearts. Most Reverend Father said, you are my parishioners, you know that I love you and if I could save you with my life I would gladly do so. The people know that it is the truth and nobody will call Most Reverend Father's name. During All Saints' Day more than 1400 holy communions were distributed. On another Sunday there were approximately 400. And the same every Sunday and then Pentecost and every Sunday two to three homilies.

Religion lessons, Vespers, Evening Prayers and the people say, should we not get to heaven here. The Lord forgives the earned step.

Soon we will move to another house which belongs to the parish. This house leases monthly for 20 Dollars.

Most Reverend Father has it furnished like a little convent, simple and with a candle, where then occasionally a Holy Mass shall be celebrated. That is so unexpected for us, since the first Holy Mass is in the convent and when the Most Reverend Father speaks, he is so enthused. We are not to move in earlier.

Dear Reverend Mother, for already two weeks we are seeing patients and only can be on duty the other night. The people here are very generous. We get everything we need. They are quite hale and hearty. Only one thing cannot be replaced, we

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cannot go to our Most Reverend Father and our dear Mother.
Dear Reverend Mother, I wish you with all my heart a Merry
Christmas. I have seen a beautiful Christmas tree in the
Motherhouse. Daily the Sisters talked about it. Now we all
have to make the sacrifice. The dear Christ child will replace
it. Everything has been cut off, only mail we can receive.
I can safely pray to our Savior, since, as never before, the
world is now. We only find grace in our contribution to the
world and thus the Savior appears closer.
I also wish Reverend Mother a happy New Year with many Blessings,
without sorrow and grief.
In J. Chr., Jesus and Mary

greet you Sister Gerburgis

Dear Reverend Mother, please write often, we so much want to
hear from you. Oh, this dreadful ocean has so separated us.
I write from Alton. P.b.J.Chr.

Ich bin ein armer, elender Mensch, der sich nur auf die Güte Gottes verlassen kann. Ich habe mich sehr bemüht, meine Sünden zu bekennen, aber ich bin noch sehr weit von der Vollkommenheit entfernt. Ich bitte Sie, meine Bitten zu erhören und mich in Ihrer Gnade zu erhalten. Ich danke Ihnen sehr für Ihre Güte und Barmherzigkeit. Amen.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Diebstahl eines Kleides in der Kirche. 18. 10. 1890.

Gegenwärtig ist die Zeit der Ernte.

[illegible]

SR. GERBURGIS

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,

"Art thou sore distressed?

"Come to Me," saith One, 'and coming,

"Be at rest!"

She shared the joys and sorrows, laughter and tears, good and evil days with her Sister companions for upward of thirty-two years till it pleased divine Providence to lift the oppressive burden of a hospital Sister from her stooped and frail shoulders March 11, 1903¹⁹⁰³ to reward faithful Sr. Gerburgis for the sacrifices borne and hardships endured with the promised crown of heaven. She belonged to the band of pioneers of '75. As Elizabeth Weiling she originated from Boesensell near Muenster where she was born June 27, 1842. Being one of God's chosen favorites, she cheerfully complied with the call of the inner voice which beckoned her to service in the hospital as nurse of the poor sick and dying. Longfellow in dwelling on the world's misery exclaims:

"Oh suffering sad humanity

"Oh, ye afflicted ones who lie

"Stupid to the lips in misery."

To alleviate this misery and suffering she consecrated her life to God and humanity, undergoing her probationary test from June 17, 1869-Aug. 12, 1871, on which latter date she was invested with the Franciscan habit. In Oct. '73 and again two years later our Sister renewed her Consecration to God, during all the years as a Religious shedding lustre on that humble and severe habit. She acted as a prudent and economic Superioress at Belleville, and Highland. In the midst of her usefulness, Sr. Gerburgis suffered a paralytic stroke from which affliction she never fully recovered. Gently she expired at Streator surrounded by her sympathising Sister-companions on the above mentioned date. Her mortal remains were conveyed to Springfield for burial. R. I. P.

