

SISTER M. KOSTKA, O.S.F.
December 29, 1964

"I never prayed for old age!" Sister Kostka protested, as though trying to explain her ninety-seven years. She wasn't anxious to reach the one hundred mark that others were hoping for her. Even the approaching Centenary failed to entice her. "I'm so tired," she said, "so tired!" And then, she would add pleadingly, "Ask Jesus to take me home!"

She felt on Christmas that He was finally coming. "I'm dying," she announced with matter of fact cheerfulness. But Christmas passed -- and Stephen's Day -- and though she was definitely weaker, she was still very much aware of everything and of everyone around her. "We're the two oldest members of the Community," she told Sister Cordula who sat with her through the evening recreation on Sunday. Later with an instinctive courtesy, she said, "Give my regards to Reverend Mother." It was as though she was repeating her Christmas goodbye to Mother. "I'm so tired," she had told her then. "I think if I could only get enough sleep, maybe I'd feel better." And she had repeated for her the old German prayer of resignation which she had learned long years ago from Sister Stanislaus, her novice mistress.

But still Sister Kostka lingered. The strength that had been hers for so many years was giving ground grudgingly. She took no medication until the last week of her life. She hadn't thought she needed a doctor at all, and finally accepted his routine calls only because "Sister Peter says I need you for my death certificate!"

On Monday the 28th, the Postulants who had entertained that day at OLA, stopped in to see Sister Kostka. Did she want them to pray for her? "Yes, please," she murmured, and when she was asked if she would pray for them, "I always pray for them!" Then, probably remembering her own postulants back in the years from 1912 to 1917, she added, "The postulants need prayers!" It was one of her last statements.

Tuesday morning she received what was to be her Viaticum. After that, she made no further contact with the world that still kept a tenuous hold on her tired old body. At 11:30 Sister Cordula relinquished her place to Sister Donald Marie, and slipped down to dinner, intending to hurry back to be with Sister Kostka. But at twelve minutes past noon, Sister Kostka's work was finished. Without struggle, almost imperceptibly, there was the final breath -- and it was over. The Lord had come.

Had she lived just a few months longer, she would have equaled the 97 years, 5 months that had been Sister Stanislaus' life. That fact, however, could hardly have interested Sister Kostka. As it was, being the second oldest member in the Community's history was nothing compared with having a Franciscan priest nephew! And in the long days as she waited for Eternity to dawn, Sister Kostka must often have contemplated happily the "In Paradisum" that her Father Brian would sing.

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!

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