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SISTER M. HERMINA, O.S.F.

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To everyone she was "Little Sister Hermina," and when she finally "took to bed," everyone at OLA was shaken. It was unthinkable that Sister Hermina should be willing to stay in bed! But 93 years were beginning to weigh too heavily on her little shoulders. Now Sister Hermina was sick; Sister Hermina was tired; but Sister Hermina was still "Fine and dandy!" when her Sisters came to see her.

She had only one wish. Mother Borromeo had asked her, "Is there anything you want, Sister Hermina?" Sister was forming her words with difficulty then, but there was no hesitancy in her answer. She wanted "Sister Edith." That was the 19th of October, and the next morning when Sister Edith walked into the room, Little Sister Hermina knew the reason for her night ride from Mansfield. "Because she loves me and I love her too!" It was as simple as that for Sister Hermina, but Sister Edith was blinded with tears. She knew she was saying a last goodbye to Sister Hermina.

But days wore on, and life lingered. Sometimes she would rally to the sound of Sister Peter's voice. But she could no longer say her traditional "Many thanks!" and though the worn beads remained in her hand, she could no longer make her promise, "I say a rosary for you!"

It was evident that she was approaching the end. The Sisters who came to see her during the day hesitated to leave -- death seemed so close. But the hours went on. She was not struggling; she was simply waiting -- quietly, and it would seem, consciously. She answered Sister William -- her Number Two -- and patted her cheek in a final gesture of appreciation.

When she finally slipped into unconsciousness, no one ever knew for sure. Saturday night after Office she formed the word "Fine!" for the last time, and after that she simply waited -- through Saturday midnight and into the early hours of Sunday morning. Then as Sister Jacinta watched, there came a subtle change.

It was 3:15 when, in Mother Immaculate's words, "Sister Hermina closed her own eyes!"

And as she crossed the bridge of Time, Little Sister Hermina must have whispered to the Sisters who knelt at her side in the chill of the November morning, "Many thanks for coming!"

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!