

SISTER M. ALMA, O.S.F.
July 19, 1966

The heart attack came on July 3d in the early morning hours, and Sister Alma was rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital from St. Francis Academy where she had been spending the summer busy with the rosary making that had been her hobby for so many years. She was never to return to take up again the unfinished work.

The rest of July was thoroughly miserable. She was in pain; she wanted to get back to the Academy; she had rosaries to finish. Again and again she asked the doctor, "Why can't I go home?" Finally, however, she bowed to his decision. "All right, doctor; I won't ask anymore. I know when I'm ready, you'll let me go." He had hoped, the doctor told Sister Miriam Edward, to dismiss her to OLA on Tuesday. Tuesday had hardly begun, however, when Sister Alma received orders from a higher command, and at 12:20, still in St. Joseph's Intensive Care, Sister Alma "went home."

The day before, a hurried call had brought Mother Borromeo and Sister Clementia to her side. Sister Alma no longer spoke of leaving the hospital, though she did rally, talking briefly to Mother and answering the prayers. Before her lay the night. There is no way of knowing whether she felt it would be her last. Sister Clement Marie, on volunteer night duty, looked in; the nurses in Intensive made their careful checks. When they took her pulse shortly before midnight, they found it surprisingly good, stronger than it had been during the day. But in the interim between just-before-midnight and twenty-after-twelve, Sister Alma quietly slipped away.

There could not have been a struggle. It was all too quiet, too quick. A momentary stab of pain, perhaps -- an "O dear Jesus!" -- and then the ecstatic wonder of Eternity.

If at that moment she could have had any regret, it would probably have been that she had not completed her summer's project. "I don't have your rosaries finished," she told Mother at an earlier visit. "But I'll try to get them ready for the 13th." Of all the activities that had crowded her long life, perhaps this is the one for which she would be best remembered. It's the way she would have wanted it. For rosary making was more than a hobby for Sister Alma -- it was an apostolate.

That's why it isn't just fantasy to suppose that when Time stopped for Sister Alma early Tuesday morning, the gracious Lady of the Rosary was at her side.

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!

* * * * *