

SISTER M. ALBINA, O.S.F.  
February 23, 1968

According to her record, Sister Albina officially retired some eight years ago. But records are sometimes too statistical to tell the whole story. Sister Albina's, for instance, shows that from 1951 to 1958 she was organist and teacher at St. Francis Assisi, Chicago. What the records don't tell is the dedication which at 70+ she brought to the people of an alien culture. The records don't tell us that she was "on call" day or night whenever she was needed for the Masses, the processions, the festivals that were part of the "Mexican Liturgy." Before "Inner City" and "Urban Apostolate" became standard terminology, Sister Albina, without fanfare and without pretense, was touching the lives of the poor of Chicago's Assisi, and bringing to them the understanding and the love of a missionary heart.

She was 78 when she finally left Assisi. But she still remained active, still retained the energy, the enthusiasm she had brought to her first classroom in Streator, back in 1898. That interest was to remain a part of Sister Albina's life to its very end. The past was very real to her, and Community history was something to be proud of, something to pass on to the Sisters who did not know "how it used to be."

But if the past was real to her, so was the present, and no one was more conscious of the world's activities and the world's needs than Sister Albina. She read extensively, poring over her books with a magnifying glass, writing out excerpts that pleased her, and including them on occasion in her copious correspondence.

She did not live in a tight little world of her own. There were others to consider, others to be included. "How's your father?" she asked Sister Andre on Monday. "I know it must be hard for him without your mother!" She visited the patients in the infirmary -- and the Lord in the Chapel. For prayer was never a secondary thing for Sister Albina.

She was preparing her March Bulletin Board for the infirmary, laying out the pictures and the lettering in her room. St. Joseph, naturally, would take precedence, and Sister Albina was happily getting ready for "his month." She was proud of her Bulletin Board, happy to be able to "do something for the Sisters." Then on Tuesday she suffered a stroke. She had talked to Sister Urban after breakfast, remarking that it had been "so good." Shortly afterwards she was found lying on the floor. From then on, she remained in a stupor, turning helplessly toward the sound of a voice, her eyes unable to focus, her lips unable to speak. She lapsed into a coma on Thursday. On Friday evening occurred what was very likely another massive stroke, and at 8:25 the labored, painful breathing finally stopped, and little Sister Albina was "home."

She would have completed her 88th year on March 1st. That was her feast day as well. Her Bulletin Board will go up then in the Infirmary -- her last service for the Sisters, -- on earth, that is. For Sister Albina has merely moved her apostolate to a new location, and from the vantage of Eternity is carrying on, as usual, her work of dedication and of love.

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!

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