

**SISTER M. FLORA, O.S.F.**

**February 12, 1967**

Not since August had Death paused at the Infirmary, but when little Sister Flora came up on December 3d, she came for what she knew would be a final rendezvous. She would never leave, of that she was certain. Was she afraid to die? "Why should I be afraid?" she wondered. "I left everything a long time ago -- my home, my country." And with confident serenity she added, "Why should I be afraid to get the reward for teaching the children to love Him?"

In the weeks that followed December 3d, Sister Flora must have thought long and lovingly of those children for whom she had at 19 "left everything" in order to teach them "to love Him." Quiet, fragile, serene, she didn't look like a daring pioneer. But when the request came to her homeland for volunteers for the children of her people in the far-off land of America, little Margaret Mihelcic "left everything" to answer the call of the children.

Now she was literally dying by inches, growing a little weaker each day, knowing that it "couldn't be much longer," yet knowing with the wisdom of her 82 years that "it's hard for the soul to say goodbye to the body." But afraid? "Why?" So she wrote all her Christmas cards, personally answered her letters, went each day to Chapel -- until February 5th. That Sunday she couldn't make it through the Mass, and at Offertory she returned to her room. She never left it in the week that followed. Those final days she spent tying up the loose ends of her life: reminiscing of other times with the Sisters who were always with her -- talking with Msgr. Butala who came to OLA after his evening Mass on Thursday, just to see her -- visiting with Fathers Angelo and Gervase, remembering their kindness to her in the long months she had spent in Sunny Hill San fighting the stubborn "bug" that was trying to keep her "away from her Sisters."

She had one wish in her undemanding life: to die among her Sisters. It must have been utterly satisfying to her on what she must have recognized as her death-day to see her Sisters around her -- hear their prayers -- nodding her response when speech finally became too difficult. Until 8:40 when her tired heart suddenly stopped, Sister Flora was conscious and aware of those about her, and she must have been very happy to know that Sisters Hilaria and Perpetua were with her, those two friends who like herself had made in their youth the perilous journey to the mission land of America.

That Sunday was for Sister Hilaria "such a mixed-up day," because "Sister Flora's dying." Its close came suddenly, quietly, almost imperceptibly. She looked at Sister Peter -- "But I know she wasn't seeing me!" -- then the eyes closed and vision became reality.

"Everybody loved her, everybody!" And that included the Lord! Her meeting with Him is something to meditate on in hours of quiet desperation. Sister Flora probably could not have explained "commitment." She didn't have to. She lived it. She probably never wondered about "fulfillment." She didn't have to. She had taught the children "to love Him," -- and what else was life for?

**GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!**

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