

SISTER M. ALINE, O.S.F.

July 8, 1964.

Death did not come as a surprise to her. "I faced this a year ago January," she said shortly before she went to Our Lady of Angels for the last time. Originally the doctor had doled her a time-table of months, and matter-of-factly Sister Aline counted the days. She was living on a short term loan, and no one knew it better than she.

She wasn't tragic about her "fate" -- a melodramatic role didn't fit her. She made no bid for sympathy. It was enough for her that others knew how things were -- and didn't ask too often how she was. And as long as there was any vitality in her wasting body, Sister Aline used it. "I want to keep busy," she said. And she did. There were books to mend and catalogue; there was tutoring to do; there were the phone and door to answer.

But finally she reached the point of no return. "I'm finished now," she said. On June 1st she left the Motherhouse to keep her rendezvous with death at Our Lady of Angels. "I'm not afraid of dying," she told Mother Borromeo, and she added, "I'm a firm believer in the Resurrection and life everlasting, and it can't start soon enough!" She made that profession of faith almost nonchalantly, in the off-hand way that masked her deeper feelings. "I'm a go-away-and-leave-me-alone type," she once remarked. "Even as a child I resisted being fussed over."

When her classmates trooped into her room at O.L.A., she welcomed them with voluble gratitude. "I'm glad my class can be here," she said. Did she have much pain? "No -- it's just uncomfortable and hard to breathe." To the very end there would be no heroics for Sister Aline.

But there was one final desperate struggle, a struggle she kept locked within her, a struggle that showed briefly in her eyes and in her rigid features. Then, suddenly, quietly, she relaxed; the tension was gone. "Pray for us," she answered as Sister Cyrinus led the Litany of St. Joseph. "Pray for us!"

There were many to take up that refrain after she lapsed into a coma in the late afternoon. She could not hear Father Dolan when late that evening he thanked God for permitting him to participate in "this wonderful moment." She could not hear his murmured, "Such serenity! Such peace!" nor his words, "You have a great daughter here, Mother!" The world had closed for Sister Aline. The battle was over.

She lingered on until just before midnight. In that borderland between the Now and the Forever did she dream of the beauty Earth had given her? "I love every tree and bush on campus!" -- Or was she already eagerly anticipating the Dawn surpassing every sunrise?

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!