

SISTER M. ELIGIA, O.S.F.
September 5, 1967

It was just short of midnight that she died, but Sister Eligia had in reality been dying all summer. Her little body, always frail, seemed visibly to shrink with the passing days. But she remained alert, and her deep voice lost none of its resonance. It was always something of a surprise to hear her speak. One never quite expected those deep tones from such a tiny person.

That resonance had undoubtedly been developed over the years that Sister Eligia had spent teaching the music she loved. Did she miss it terribly when in the spring of '65 she finally "gave up" and came to Our Lady of Angels? Whatever her feelings, she kept them to herself. It was not Sister Eligia's way to inflict her emotions on others. She had loved her work; now it was finished. It was as simple as that.

Of course, there were the memories, memories of all the children she had known in the long years at St. Procopius, for instance -- children she had known at St. Ludmilla's -- at Freeport -- at Sacred Heart -- and the latter-day pupils who came to her studio at St. Francis Academy until that spring two years ago. She had pictures of some of those pupils of long ago, and memories of other, grown-up pupils, the nurses at St. Anthony's Hospital, with whom she formed a Glee Club. So many memories, so many pupils, so many years!

She brought her love for music with her to O.L.A. "That's a pretty tune!" she would observe, or "That's an old song!" Automatically she responded to the rhythm, and her thin little hand would begin directing Montavani and his Orchestra.

She must have known she was slipping away, but Sunday when it seemed that she would not live till evening, she could still say with characteristic cheerfulness, "Pretty good today!" And on the last morning of her life, though she could not receive the Lord sacramentally, she could still thank Father Dominic "for coming." To the end, Sister Eligia was gracious, and sensitive, and kind.

And she never lost her smile -- or her love for corn on the cob! She had the latter for one of her last meals, when she was so weak that holding the ear was an effort!

Her last weekend she had visited with her sister Agnes, and Sister Eligia had talked at length of their childhood days in Cleveland and of the family she loved. Forty-five years of convent life had not weakened that bond, and Sister still looked forward to the weekly letter from Agnes. "She's written every week since I'm in the convent!" was her happy boast. Her family was ever dear to little Sister Eligia.

Her cousin, Sister Francis Clare, beginning a new school year in Chicago, could not be with her at the end, but Sister Eligia understood. She knew what it was like to "get ready for school." Sister Francis Clare had visited her faithfully each day during the summer. She would come again when she could. Sister Eligia was content.

It was about 7:00 o'clock the evening of the 5th when she finally slipped into a coma. It was 11:48 when the thread finally snapped and little Sister Eligia went home to her God.

And how she must now be enjoying the music of Eternity!

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!
* * * * *