

SISTER M. BENEDICT, O.S.F.

February 10, 1963

Her condition was critical -- Sister Benedict knew that. Surgery would involve a great risk -- she knew that too. She was almost eighty-three, and in her own words, "ready to die." Under the circumstances then, her first reaction was "Don't operate!"

But there was a tumor in the colon, and unless it was removed, she would certainly bleed to death. With surgery, there was a chance to stop the bleeding and ease the pain. And so, Sister Benedict agreed to the operation.

But she was under no delusion that she would recover. "Do you give me a day or two after surgery, Doctor?" she asked calmly. "Or do you think I might die on the table?" But there was nothing morbid in the questioning. She was ready for any alternative. "Whatever God wills," would be right, and Sister Benedict cheerfully accepted His decision.

But it was not easy to say goodbye to her old friends who streamed into her room at Our Lady of Angels the day she left for the hospital. They knew and she knew that the odds were against her ever coming back. They said goodbye; they promised their prayers; their old eyes were blinded with their tears. And Sister Benedict with a flash of her old humor could still exclaim, "This room is like a funeral dirge!"

She never came back. Wednesday's surgery was followed by a stroke, and Sister was never completely alert again. There was no response to the prayers said for her on Saturday morning--no response to the final anointing Friday night. The Infant of Prague which she had brought from Our Lady of Angels remained at her side, but her eyes were closed to it. Then, early Sunday morning, Sister Grace watching with her, saw the change occur. But before her hurried call could bring the other Sisters, Sister Benedict had quietly slipped away at 4:05. As Sister Grace prayed, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!" Sister Benedict suddenly opened her eyes for a long moment. The eyes closed, and it was over.

It was Sunday. And one of the first things she may have said as she adjusted to the blinding vision of Eternity was, "Well, the Sisters will be able to get to early Mass and then get some rest!"

For Sister Benedict who had never wanted "to cause any trouble," the Sisters' welfare would have been a prime consideration.

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!