

SISTER M. LUCILLE, O.S.F.  
January 20, 1964

She would have been 82 on Candlemas Day. On February 12th she would have completed 63 years of religious life. Then on December 23d a stroke paralyzed her right side and little Sister Lucille began the inexorable march down hill. Until then she had been up every day for Mass. In spite of the paralysis, she was still able to receive Holy Communion, and she may very well have guessed on Sunday morning, January 19th, that the Lord was coming for the last time.

For although her speech was impaired, Sister Lucille never lost contact with reality. She retained her hold on consciousness just as tenaciously as she gripped the crucifix. Her right hand was useless, but her left was still functioning, and whenever the crucifix slipped from her grasp, Sister reached for it again. "Can you kiss the crucifix?" asked Sister Dorita, her Novice-niece during the Christmas visit. And Sister Lucille's wrinkled little hand brought it carefully to her lips.

Speech was impossible, though on January 10th she managed to say distinctly, "My Jesus mercy!" But if her lips were silent, her eyes were eloquent, and they said as plainly as words that Sister Lucille was aware of those about her. And in the month of days that followed December 23d, they rested hour after hour on Sister Bertille.

Sister Bertille kept untiring, heartbreaking vigil. "Can't you talk to me today?" she would ask. "Can't you say my name?" Sister Lucille would look at her, and Sister Bertille would settle down at her side to finger over and over again her rosary. Before she left, she would anxiously check with Sister Peter, "Will she be all right?"

On January 11th Sister Bertille wheeled her for twenty contented minutes up and down the hall. It was Sister Lucille's last ride.

But Sister Bertille was not to be there early Monday morning when Sister Lucille's breathing finally began to falter, and her sturdy old heart began to quiet at last. She haunted Sister Lucille's room during the day. On Saturday she told her, "I'm asking the Blessed Mother to take you home." But Saturday passed, and Sunday waned into evening. Sister Bertille had made a pact. "I told Our Lord," she confided, "that if He wanted me to be with her, He should see to it that it happened during the day."

That was why it was not until Monday morning, when Our Lady of Angels began another day, that Sister Bertille learned that her sister, still clutching her crucifix, had taken one last deep breath -- and gone Home.

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!

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