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Sister M. Floriana Molitor

At the call of Eternal Beauty, Sister M. Floriana, artist, ended her earthly quest of beauty early Thursday morning, September 7, 1961. Her departure was swift and sure. - Though Sister had not been in robust health for years, her natural vitality seemed never to desert her, and she repeatedly overcame illness. This last incident, beginning with a heart attack at Guardian Angel Home the previous Saturday, grew grave on Wednesday when a recurrence brought pain and blackout. She was anointed and given Viaticum by Father Then, chaplain, and was brought to the Motherhouse infirmary about noon.

Sister was weak and in pain, with a low blood count and evident internal bleeding. Asked if she wished the prayers for the dying said, she replied, "I would appreciate it very much." These prayers she followed fervently and continued to say ejaculations the rest of the day. She was cheerful and responsive to the Sisters who called, and her niece, summoned because of the emergency, felt she could return home that evening. But Sister was not to survive the night. She followed the midnight rosary which the Sisters recited at her bedside. Conscious, but with quickened respiration, she continued to kiss the crucifix. At 12:50 she quietly died.

The former Rosalia Molitor of Norwood Park, Illinois. She had entered the convent in 1902 and been professed in 1905. She was at her death seventy-six years of age. - The Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated on Saturday, September 9th, in the Motherhouse Chapel, with His Excellency Bishop Martin D. McNamara presiding. Sister was laid to rest at Resurrection Cemetery, Lockport Township. - The children of the Guardian Angel Home attended the Mass and were present at the cemetery.

In Sister Floriana the Community had had an esteemed member and an active, apostolic worker. After ten years in the grade school, she began the chief work of her career with her appointment to St. Francis Academy Art Studio. Here she spent twenty-three years, with two additional years at St. Francis Preparatory, and 17 years at St. Peter's, Mansfield. Her last five years were given to general work at Guardian Angel Home.

Sister Floriana's life and character could well be viewed in the light of her chief interest - art. Pursuing through the years an inner vision of beauty, she was keenly aware of the loveliness of all creation. She marveled at the beauties of nature, she appreciated beauty in architecture, she recognized it in design and composition wherever it occurred, and she sought to pass this appreciation on to her friends and her students. She loved and eagerly responded to that higher beauty - beauty of soul and nobility of character. Hers was a warm and genial nature, and her generous outgoing spirit made friends everywhere -- in the Community, in the classroom in the parish, in the market place.

For Sister Floriana there was beauty in work. It was a gift of God, and she received it joyfully. In her art she worked in the different media: water color, pastel, oil. In oils, her "Last Supper," "Saint Anne," and the novitiate's "Immaculate Conception" were outstanding. During her Academy days when china painting was in vogue, she with Sister Beata worked early and late to fill orders. During the Christmas and Easter seasons they would fire the kiln three times a day, besides teaching their regular classes and directing their private students. In the crafts, Sister guided many projects, and the students' lamps and book-ends added to the beauty of their homes and lent the personal touch as well. - At Mansfield, she found a different approach practical. She directed commercial art courses with success, and finding Mechanical Drawing appealed to the boys, she made a hobby of it.

Sister was always lavish with her special gift in floral painting. In her "spare time" she illuminated mottoes and verses for a wide clientele, thus earning an additional income for the Community. With the Sisters, too, she was generous, providing innumerable leaflets on innumerable occasions as "house gifts" for the Sisters. The last years when she had given up most of her art work, she still painted leaflets, saying, "I can't see to paint pictures anymore, but I can feel how to paint roses and forget-me-nots."

Her last five years at Guardian Angel Home, though no longer devoted specifically to art, were the "finishing touches" on a glowing picture of service. Her Superior designated her "a most pleasant, social, approachable person, whom everybody loved, saying she was Willing and helpful even beyond her strength." She assisted with the Pound Party, with the Guild; she sorted and distributed clothes; she acknowledged all gifts, not merely with a conventional 'thank you,' but with kind words that won further favors from benefactors. "She would do anything for the home," Sister Gerarda said; "and even now, when we run short of bread, we just pray to her, and it comes in loads." Though others now purchase art objects, Sister Floriana, it seems, is still active in the market place.

Finally, Sister watched the new Our Lady of Angels rise from its foundations. She loved its fresh beauty and anticipated living there herself some day. But this intermediate was not for her. -- How happily must she have opened her eyes to the splendor of God, with the glad cry of, "How long have I loved Thee, 'O Beauty ever ancient, ever new!'"