

SISTER M. HORTULANA, O.S.F.

February 26, 1964

"If I could only SEE!" Sister Hortulana remarked to Mother Borromeo, "I would be all right. I'm strong and healthy otherwise." And although she faced cataract surgery with trepidation, the thought that she might be able to see again buoyed her as she entered the hospital last fall. For, if she could see again, there was a possibility that she might be able to return to Guardian Angel Home -- and the children.

She never went back. On November 24th she came to Our Lady of Angels to recuperate after an apparently successful operation. All that remained was to fit her with new glasses, but Sister Hortulana was never able to get down to the doctor's office for the fitting. Then on December 16th, she suffered her first heart attack.

It happened as she was on her way to chapel, and she was anointed later in the day. From that point on, it was all down hill, but Sister still clung to the hope that eventually she would get better. She had prayed to St. Lucy -- a favorite with her -- for sight. It was hard to believe that now with sight almost a reality, her heart would keep her from the Home and the children she loved.

At last, however, she admitted, "If this keeps on, I think I'm going to die." If she thought fleetingly of the children she would never see again, it was without bitterness. "I'm ready," she said, and that was all. There had been nothing ostentatious about her life -- there would be nothing ostentatious about its end, as far as Sister Hortulana was concerned. She faced the moment of dying as she had faced everything else, calmly, prayerfully.

There was now a particular urgency in her prayers. A special work had to be done; a special request had to be granted, and this was the burden of her prayer as time began to slip away from her.

In the early hours of Wednesday morning, Mother Immaculate came to pray at the bedside of her classmate. Together they had celebrated a Golden Jubilee two years ago; now it was apparent that Sister Hortulana was on her way home. She was conscious at 2:30 when Sister Alice Emile roused Sister Peter; she was still conscious at 6:45 when Father Louis made his first morning call to her and imparted the final absolution.

Then, very quietly, with no obvious struggle, Sister Hortulana was gone. It was 6:50 when the old heart which had betrayed her hopes stopped beating.

Sister Hortulana would never be blind again.

GOD GRANT HER REST ETERNAL!!

\* \* \* \* \*