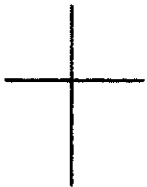


April 10, 1995

"This day you will be with me in Paradise."
(Passion according to St. Luke; Palm Sunday liturgy)

Dear Sisters,

These words were fulfilled in Sister Anna Mary at 3:35 p.m.
yesterday, Palm Sunday.



Sister Anna Mary Erkinger (Franka)
Born: July 4, 1909 in Olbendorf, Austria
First Profession: August 26, 1930
Died: April 9, 1995 in Reading, PA

Sister Anna Mary, the second eldest of thirteen children, came to the United States in 1923 and entered our congregation in 1928. After her novitiate, she served in the domestic departments at a number of our houses and institutions, including those in Beacon and Rockaway Park in New York; Dayton in Ohio; and Pottsville, Coopersburg, Malvern, Norristown, and St. Michael's in Pennsylvania. Sister Anna Mary was always an unassuming, kind, and cheerful sister who did her work quietly and prayerfully. She evinced an unmistakable childlike quality, marking her as one fit to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Since 1967, she has been at the Motherhouse where her waning strength and diminishing eyesight gradually required her to relinquish most of her former activities. However, her gentle, prayerful spirit flourished, and she seemed to spend more and more time in prayer--especially before the Blessed Sacrament and to Our Lady. She was a true child of Mary, praying many rosaries each day.

Last June, shortly after being transferred to Holy Family Center (the infirmary), she was diagnosed with inoperable cancer which had already metastasized to the liver. She told one of the sisters that she knew she would soon die but was not afraid. When asked

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how she pictured her death, she replied: "Mary will come and take me by the hand (I love the Blessed Mother) and will introduce me to Jesus. Then Jesus will introduce me to the Father and the Holy Spirit. After that, I will sing "Here I am, Lord..." She often used to practice this hymn during her illness.

As the months went by, there were also some difficult days of physical and mental suffering. Toward the end, she often seemed to be in a deep sleep from which it became increasingly difficult to rouse her for feeding and medication. On Palm Sunday, her condition deteriorated rapidly. She was anointed around 3:20 p.m. and died quietly a few minutes later. Those of us who were with her were astonished at how quickly the end finally came.

Sister Anna Mary was truly blessed with a loving family who visited her frequently and showed their love for her in so many ways. They will join us for her Mass of Christian Burial at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12. After that, her frail body will be laid to rest in our convent cemetery, even as she sings her Easter alleluias in heaven. We are grateful to God and to Sister Anna Mary for her many years of gentle presence among us.

United in the Heart of Jesus,

Sister Rita M. Ehemann, M.S.C.