

SISTER ANGELINA LIBERO (June 10, 1897 - July 15, 1936)

Sister Angelina was born in Castellamare del Golfo, Trapani, Italy, June 10, 1897, and baptized Josephine. She arrived in the United States as a secular aboard the ship "Argentine" in June of 1911.

In her early adult life, Josephine Libero had already begun her mission among God's little ones teaching at St. Patrick's Old Cathedral School in New York City. Interestingly enough, she would return to continue educating children of that area some years later as a Baptistine. On September 8, 1933, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St. John the Baptist at St. John Villa, Staten Island, New York and was received as a novice on September 8, 1934. The following year, on September 9th, after pronouncing her first vows, she began her teaching assignments as a member of the Congregation at Mt. St. John in Gladstone, New Jersey. January 1, 1936, brought her transfer to St. Lucy in Newark, New Jersey. From there she went to share her talents in the field of education at St. John Villa Academy, Staten Island, in September of 1937, and on January 3, 1941, went to Our Lady of Loreto in New York City where she taught kindergarten. In September of 1942, she was transferred to St. James, also in New York City, and five years later, in January of 1947, began a twenty-one year period of teaching first grade at St. Lucy in Newark which was to see the close of her labors in the classroom. Although Sister Angelina had reached the age of seventy-one, she was still a vibrant teacher, sending children ahead who were truly worthy, even at that young age, to be called students. However, shortly before the opening of the 1968 school year, she fell, breaking her hip. The long-term recuperation caused her retirement from teaching. She was moved to Providence Rest Nursing Home in the Bronx where she remained until her death on July 15, 1986.

It has often been said by those who lived with Sister Angelina during the fifty-three years of her religious life that she was a prayerful, cheerful religious, a mortified and truly charitable person. She was one who would listen, one who could advise, one who reached out to those around her, one who was really available. In school, teachers, students and parents sought her help. Her former students who would later visit her as adults were amazed at her ability to remember them and even where they sat in her classroom. Even until her death, eighteen years after she had left teaching, students would always ask for her, and out of all the teachers they had, they too could point out the room and seat that was theirs when they had her. Her simple, imaginative, honest ways made both the concrete and the abstract comprehensible to her young charges. Today, they still recall their First Communion with clarity and fondness of the regard for the sacred which she instilled in them. The source of strength of such a soul seemed to come from her deep devotion to our Blessed Lady. Her constant direction of others to Mary was as firm as her distaste for even the sound of anything that had to do with the devil, and everyone knew it.

During her years at Providence Rest, Sister Angelina continued her own apostolate among both the patients and the employees there. She would talk to the ladies, uplifting their spirits, spend time listening to them, pray the Rosary with them in Chapel, even if there were only two present. Later, when

her condition necessitated her staying upstairs, she still had the spirit to engage both employees and patients in conversation or listen to their problems. She was able to understand their desires and difficulties and their need to express them to someone. She was also well aware of the kind and gentle care that was given to her. With visiting Sisters she often spoke of the goodness and thoughtfulness of those who saw to her needs, and called the sister who attended her and the other sisters on her floor her "angel".

Sister Angelina's renewed recourse to the Blessed Mother is worth considering again when one notes the proximity of dates in this biographical sketch to feasts of Our Lady. As was said by numerous sisters upon hearing of her death, she always wanted to be ready for the Blessed Mother and she even "managed" to arrive in Heaven to be on time for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE!