

Sister Aurelia, Agnes Bodetti, born on November 8, 1910, is one of those religious who saw the Congregation grow from a small nucleus of eager pioneers to the well established, rapidly growing Community spreading its beneficent influence on four continents. Admitted to St. Lucy's Orphanage, in the early twenties, Agnes attended St. Lucy's School, from which she was graduated and then returned home, only to find out that the seed of her religious vocation had become stronger and she firmly determined to pursue holiness as a Sister of St. John the Baptist. Thus on September 8, 1934, fully aware of the great step about to be taken, Agnes Budetti was received into the Congregation. On September 7, 1935, she donned the holy habit of the Sisters of St. John the Baptist and taking the name of Sister Aurelia, her youthful heart aglow with fervent love for Christ.

After her profession, Sister Aurelia began her apostolate at Our Lady of Pompei Convent, Brooklyn, N.Y., where she did parish work, preparing children for first Holy Communion and Confirmation, taking the parish census and endeavoring to bring Christ and His love into the lives of the parishioners. Her next assignment was the Superiorship of Mount Carmel Convent, Brooklyn, now closed, where she and the Sisters also did parish work, with zeal and assiduous diligence. From Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Sister Aurelia was transferred to St. John's Villa Academy, Staten Island, N. Y., where she dedicated herself to domestic work. Ever submissive to the commands of holy obedience, Sister Aurelia was later transferred to St. James School, New York, where she served as kindergarten teacher and Community cook. At Mount St. John Academy, Gladstone, N. J., Sister tried to multiply her energies, serving as kindergarten teacher, community bursar, camp registrar and bursar, and Arts and Crafts instructor.

Sister Aurelia's last assignment came to her a few years before her immature death, holy obedience commanding that she dedicate herself to comforting the good old ladies, who at life's sunset, seek love and peace at Providence Rest Home, Bronx, N. Y. This was quite a change for good Sister Aurelia who leaving her darling kindergarten angels, at Mount St. John Academy, accepted the good ladies, eager and happy to console them, wipe their tears, and help them find peace in the love of Christ. Her specific mission - occupational therapy - but the ladies found in her not merely a cold proficient instructor but a dedicated religious possessed of a tender heart, willing to give of herself freely, to counsel, listen to sad stories of deep sorrow, disappointment, rejection, unfulfilled desires and, sometimes, despair. But such feelings did not linger long for Sister Aurelia, having learned mastery over self, under the most trying circumstances, knew how to put peace in turbulent hearts and rebellious souls.

But the hour was about to sound and Sister Aurelia must cease all activity and make ready for "home". A severe stroke, in the spring of 1962, affecting her right side, incapacitated her for several months. Difficult as the trial might have been, Sister accepted it cheerfully for she was seasoned in the sublime art of suffering, her portion, a long time now. She found it hard, at first, to resign herself to a life of complete inactivity but what is too hard for Christ? Sister Aurelia poured out her soul in prayer that, if it pleased Him and it were for the glory of God, He grant her the grace to "be up and around", and back with the dear old ladies, in the occupational therapy room. The good Lord hearkened to her plea and Sister Aurelia, using her left hand, resumed her labor of love. She was living on borrowed time, however, for on July 3, 1963, she retired never to see the light of dawn again. During the night, the angel of death,

gently whispering his message of love, took her by the hand and ushered her into the realms of bliss, there to celebrate her eternal nuptials with the King of glory. Gently, peacefully, as she had lived, did Sister Aurelia, pass from earth to heaven, leaving behind a scion of unusual virtues.

Indefatigable worker, dedicated soul, forgetful of self, Sister Aurelia sought only the glory of God and the progress of the Institute, she had grown to love. Humble, obedient and charitable, she will long live in the memory of the Sisters who learned many a lesson from one who had trod the path of virtue with fidelity and love. She left a rich heritage, a life spent wholly for God, unselfish, unassuming, dwelling in heaven while struggling on earth to preserve her soul unsullied for the Eternal Spouse.

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE!