

SISTER CATHERINE CONTI

(June 9, 1965 - From:Sept.15'91)

Sister Catherine was born at San Lorenzo Maggiore in Benevento, Italy, on September 15, 1891, of Lorenzo Conti and Angela Tacinelli. At almost twenty years of age she entered the Institute in Rome. Of her former life we know little, only that which her Pastor had written by way of recommending her to the Congregation: ". . . she is a young woman of praiseworthy and altogether irreprehensible conduct, who has always lived a quiet life at home, and has been assiduous in frequenting the Church and the Holy Sacraments." She did not excel by reason of any special gift, but she was good and prayerful.

On October 5, 1911, she received the holy habit together with the name Sister Catherine. It so happened that that very afternoon the community celebrated the return of the Superior General Mother Artemisia Cirillo from the United States. At the end of the musical entertainment, Mother Artemisia told the Sisters about the mission the Baptistines were engaged in in two houses across the ocean, one in Newark, another in Albany. She spoke so movingly and with such enthusiasm that many present, especially the new novices, were inflamed with zeal, envisioning the vast new field of apostolate where, unfortunately, the laborers were still so few. Sister Catherine was not to forget that day on which she had first heard the call to her work in America.

During the novitiate year she showed herself prayerful, obedient, humble and willing, and on October 6, 1912 was admitted to first profession. Shortly after, on November 2, her desire began to be fulfilled: she sailed for the United States in company with three other Sisters. Mother Bernardina D'Auria herself, foundress of the American houses, had come to accompany them.

So began for Sister Catherine long years of humble, silent labor. She closed within her heart the remembrance of her dear Fatherland so far away, and became acquainted with the difficulties, fatigue, joys and anxieties of the Congregation's beginnings on a new continent. She always accomplished her duties enthusiastically, sacrificing herself generously for the religious family she loved so well.

The last years of Sister Catherine's life were passed at White Plains, where she still tried to render herself useful in whatever way she was able, bringing joy to the other Sisters with her jests and joviality.

She suffered patiently through her last painful illness, giving edification to the Sisters who lovingly assisted her. Toward the end she received the Sacraments, and at dawn on June 9, Ember Wednesday after Pentecost, she went serenely to heaven. She had passed 54 years in the religious life, 52 of which were spent in the United States.

After the requiem Mass her remains were buried in the Congregation's cemetery in Gladstone.

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE!