

THE CARMELITE SISTERS FOR THE AGED AND INFIRM CELEBRATE 75TH ANNIVERSARY

On September 3rd of this year, the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm will mark 75 years since their Congregation was founded in New York City by the Servant of God, Mother Mary Angeline Teresa McCrory, O.Carm.

Mother Angeline, born in Co. Tyrone, Ireland, was a woman ahead of her time. While still in her teens, she entered the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor. After her initial training in France, she was assigned to the Home of the Little Sisters in Brooklyn, New York.

Although having a great love for her Congregation, Mother Angeline had a growing sense of the need to adapt the care of the elderly to the American culture with its varied, meaningful customs and less restrictive ways. She also saw the need to provide care for the elderly of all economic classes, not just the destitute aged. Moved by the spirit of Hospitality which she vowed as a Little Sister, Mother Angeline envisioned homelike residences that would reflect a spirit of warmth, welcome and the freedom to enjoy life to its fullest during the later years.

And so it was in 1929, the year of the Great Depression, that Mother Angeline Teresa approached New York's great "Cardinal of Charity," Patrick Cardinal Hayes, and explained her desires to him. The Cardinal recognized that Mother's solicitude for the aged of all classes was a divine inspiration and a great need in the Archdiocese. Since such work could not be conducted within the existing structure of the Little Sisters, the Cardinal told Mother Angeline that it might be necessary to start out on her own. He reassured her: "If this be the work of God, it will prosper."

Thus it came about that Mother Angeline and her six companions, all former Little Sisters, embraced the challenge God set before them. They moved into what was St. Elizabeth's Rectory on Broadway in New York City. Their first guests were seven elderly people who helped with chores around the household and enjoyed a real sense of "family" under the loving care of the Sisters. God rewarded Mother Angeline's trust by allowing her to sow the seeds of her vision in many other parts of the United States and even back in her native Ireland. He gave her successors to carry on the important work she began. Today, Carmelite Sisters number over 200 and continue to serve the needs of the elderly with joy and compassion in facilities that emphasize respect for the individual, hospitality, and wholistic care that affirms the sanctity of life despite the infirmities of advanced age.

On her 91st Birthday — January 21, 1984 — God called Mother Angeline to her heavenly reward. In 1985, the Promotion of the Cause of Mother Angeline was begun, and in June of 1989, Mother Angeline was declared: *Servant of God*. It is hoped that one day she will join the ranks of the blessed and ultimately be among the saints of Carmel, giving final glory to God not only by her lifetime's works, but more importantly, by her lifetime of holiness.

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