

BLESSED M. LUDOVICA DE ANGELIS

Antonina De Angelis was born in St. Gregorio d'Aquila, Italy, on October 24, 1880, daughter of Ludovica and Santa Calaiani, the first of eight children. She entered the Institute on November 14, 1904 and received the habit of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy on May 3, 1905 at which time she was given the name of Sister M. Ludovica. In 1906, a year after her first Profession, she was sent to Argentina. After a brief stay at Buenos Aires she was assigned to the Children's Hospital in La Plata. She served first in the kitchen and pantry and later in various departments of the hospital. At that time, the hospital was just two wooden pavilions; the equipment was most modest and there were only six doctors on the staff.

Sister Ludovica's simplicity and humility soon attracted the attention of the doctors who recognized her sense of responsibility, her spirit of sacrifice, her untiring work, and the facility with which she collaborated with doctors and hospital personnel. They found in her rare qualities of prudence, foresight and the ability to assume the direction of business affairs and in 1915 they requested that Sister Ludovica become the administrator of the hospital.

With humility and complete confidence in the power of obedience, Sr. Ludovica accepted the assignment. Under her direction the hospital grew rapidly. The two wooden pavilions constructed in 1907

evolved into a large hospital complex. Sr. Ludovica most worked assiduously on two other projects: a "solar camp" (a beach house) in Punta Nogotes (Mar del Plata) where children could convalesce once discharged from La Plata Hospital and a farm which would provide healthy and wholesome crops for every season.

Sr. Ludovica was a "strong", wise, prudent and courageous woman. Even though her duties and worries were many, she was the good and attentive mother for each little patient and their families.

She was moved by charity, which in turn was nourished by her ardent devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist. She was always the first in the morning in adoration before the Tabernacle and returned frequently during the day to be near Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She required and did her utmost so that the Eucharistic Sacrifice would be celebrated with the greatest splendor and that everything in the chapels of the Hospitals of Punta Nogotes and City Bell were appropriate and becoming: the lamp, fresh flowers and vestments.

When she learned of the option to celebrate evening Mass, she immediately arranged to have Masses celebrated in the chapel of the hospital, especially for those who could not come on Holy Days.

Always with renewed enthusiasm, she prepared the children for First Communion. She provided them with clothes, books, holy cards, medals. She even thought of chocolates as a special treat for them!

In addition to her devotion to the Eucharist, she had great love for the Passion of Christ. Every morning she made the Stations of the Cross, which gave her the strength to bear the many injustices on the part of the government, the physical pain and the many sufferings and trials known to God alone.

Sister Ludovica had a tender love for Mary, Mother of Mercy. The Rosary was the companion of her life; she had it always in her hand; she distributed holy cards and medals and objects of devotion to Mary because she wanted everyone to know and love the most Blessed Virgin. During her long illness, the sisters always found her with the rosary beads in her hands. She also showed her love for the Blessed Virgin by her spirit of penance and devotion with which she visited, when possible, the Marian shrines.

She was a devoted and faithful Daughter of Mercy: Holy Mother Foundress was her beloved model; the Constitutions and Vows were her guide and rule of life; Superiors and the Generalate were held in high esteem.

She was very attentive to the practice of poverty; for her everything was superfluous. She looked for the poorest in bed linens, clothing, etc. At her death it was found that she had even deprived herself of things which were necessary, so much so that there were not enough objects for the sisters to have as remembrance of her.

Sr. Ludovica's charity was remarkable. She could never do enough for her little patients; she wanted them to be well-fed, well-protected from the cold and provided with the necessary medicines. She also thought of their families. The secret of her exceptional charity was found in her faith which enabled her to see God in everyone and everything. Her charity reached countless souls, "she was the cloth that wiped the tears of the afflicted; she was the loving mother of generations of children; she was the friend and collaborator of generations of doctors; she was the teacher and counselor of generations of families of the city of La Plata; she was an example for generations of religious."

Her competence in administration gained for her praise and admiration which she used to the benefit of those who were in greatest financial difficulties.

Everything that Sister Ludovica did was a manifestation of her great heart, her charity and concern: homeless families were helped in finding a place to live, as well as young people in pursuing their studies or finding jobs. She also helped seminarians by providing for their various needs. She lived the maxim: "do good to others without looking to see who they may be" and she did it by sacrificing herself, her sleep, rest, nourishment - by forgetting herself and by overlooking her own physical suffering.

As evening fell on Sunday, February 25, 1962, in the Children's Hospital in La Plata, Sister Ludovica,

known to all those who loved her as *Mother Ludovica*, breathed her last.

At her death the words of Sacred Scripture, "*God exalts the humble*" were fulfilled. Everyone unanimously recognized in her a chosen person - a saintly woman!

On December 20, 2001, Pope John Paul II declared Ludovica DeAngelis, a Servant of God and on December 20, 2003, she was numbered among the Blessed.

PRAYER

Father, rich in mercy, You called Blessed Ludovica to continue your mission on earth in loving service to the sick, the poor and the needy and especially the children. You gave her the strength to offer herself joyfully and without rest. You called her to be a mother to many generations of children. You made her a woman that lived the Gospel faithfully, humbly and silently. We ask you, through her intercession, that we may following her example may be of service to all those we meet and may those who suffer in body and spirit experience the goodness of your merciful love.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF MERCY
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Daughter of Our Lady of Mercy
St. Gregorio (Italy) 1880 - La Plata (Argentina) 1962