

Sister Mary Augustine Brentan, D.M.

Born in Manchester, NH -- something she was always proud of -- and then growing up in Springfield, MA, Sister Augustine came to know the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy and their charism while in her teenage years. It was this early association that nurtured her vocation and prompted her to enter the Community in 1936 at the age of almost 19. Sister Augustine made her first profession in 1938 in York, PA, and since that day, so many years ago, her commitment was total and she never wavered in her vocation or in her love for St. Mary Joseph Rossello. Maybe it was the practicality and the "down to earthiness" in both of their personalities that struck the first chords in the heart of Sister Augustine who chose the religious life in the style and spirit of our beloved Foundress.

In later years Sister Augustine would have the distinct privilege of translating a spiritual book on our Foundress entitled "The Spirit and Apostolate of St. Mary Joseph Rossello." With the undertaking of this important work, Sister's love for Mother Foundress, her charism and spirit, just kept gaining more and more depth. And with this, her love and loyalty for the Institute grew at an equal pace.

Upon reflecting on Sister Augustine's life, one would easily agree that she was one of those quick-witted people who refused to be compromised or easily influenced. She had a mind of her own, and her convictions were strong. In dealing with her, one always knew where she stood, what she wanted, what she liked or disliked, and what she was about. There seemed to be no hidden agenda and no "tongue-in-cheek" responses from her in any situation. In other words, "what you saw is what you got!"

Even in her relationship with God, it seemed that Sister Augustine was straightforward and right upfront with things. She probably prayed for what she needed and for what she thought others needed. She didn't beat around the bush even in her life of prayer which was constant and sincere. I guess God had no choice except to listen to her!

For 63 years she faithfully served the Lord to the best of her ability. Her confident assertiveness was always tempered by genuine humility. Never afraid to be the first to say, "I'm sorry," she was quick to make amends and quick to forgive and forget.

In her teaching career, she most likely didn't allow her students to get away with much. Yet, no doubt she encouraged the best from each one with her direct manner and her astute capacity to impart knowledge.

Her voracious love for books was quite noticeable and her involvement in Agatha Christie and other mystery books probably qualified her to be the chief character in "Murder She Wrote."

Sister Augustine was very close to her family and always had their concerns in her heart and in her prayers. Having lost her immediate family, she made sure she kept the lines of communication open with her nieces and nephews whom she loved very much. In turn, she relished the fact that they treated her so respectfully and lovingly. Her face would glow when she was expecting their frequent and much-awaited visits. At times like these, some of us would affectionately call her, "the proud matriarch of the family!" Of course, she loved this!

In the latter years of life, Sister Augustine confronted her illnesses just as she faced all other matters of her life. She always wanted the truth and didn't try to shield herself from it. Once she knew what the situation was, she set about how to manage things in the most sensible way possible.

Although we feel a deep sense of loss in her passing, there dwells in our hearts a genuine joy in knowing that now our sister's suffering is over and she rests contentedly in the Lord's loving embrace. For we can be sure that, early on January 15, 2002, when the Lord gently summoned Sister Augustine to Himself, he greeted her with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the place which I have prepared for you from all eternity."