



Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

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From: Brian C. Blasco

Director of Communications and Archivist - Assistant Coordinator of Community Life

Date: April 10, 2025

RE: Sister Crispina Topp, OSF

Birth	May 24, 1850, in Warendorf, Germany and named Catharina
Parents	Bernard and Johanna (Menge) Topp
Entered HSOSF	October 2, 1869
Profession of First Vows	March 9, 1872
Missionary to the USA	October 1875 at age 25

Assignments

Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	November 11, 1875
Effingham, IL	St. Anthony's Hospital	1876
Decatur, IL	St. Mary's Hospital	1878
Belleville, IL	St. Elizabeth's Hospital	1882
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1883
Streator, IL	St. Mary's Hospital	1887 Superior/Administrator
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1888
Highland, IL	St. Joseph's Hospital	1895
Sheboygan, WI	St. Nicholas Hospital	1896
Eau Claire, WI	Sacred Heart Hospital	1901

Entered Eternal Life

January 26, 1926, and buried in Crucifixion Hill Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

Springfield, November 21, 1875

Praised be Jesus Christ

Dear Reverend Mother!

Finally, dear Reverend Mother, I too will let you hear from me, and hope that this first letter from America certainly will be answered. First, dear Reverend Mother, how are you since we left you? Have you also been quite sick after the journey? Have you again recuperated somewhat now? Often have we spoken about you on the ship and mentioned that if you, dear Reverend Mother, had to make a sea voyage, you would not be able to tolerate it, or the dear Lord would have to especially strengthen you.

We would have loved to have had you, dear Mother, with us on the ship, but when we felt so sick and were so terribly pushed and shaken, we were glad that you were not with us. You, dear Mother, would not have made it to New York. We had so much stormy weather on the water, that if a storm was announced, we went to bed until the weather improved and one could stand upright again. We always said, the black Casper blows so much storm together, if he does the same in America, we will have to struggle with a lot. With great difficulties we finally arrived at our destination. But, dear Mother, we have never been received in any Daughterhouse as here in America. From the time we said foot in America, a guardian angel steadily accompanied us. When we arrived in New York the Sisters and Pastor Sauer were there to receive us. That day the Sisters welcomed us so friendly, they could not have done more. They gave us five bottles of wine, a large traveling bag, and a few small bags with sandwiches and cake to take along. They had already expected us a few days earlier. For four days, four times each, they went to the harbor not to miss us and cause us distress. They were sorry that we could not stay a night, but we could not since the train does not run on Sunday and thus we arrived Saturday night in Alton.

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Yes, dear Mother, they had already prepared twenty beds for us. Should more Sisters follow us from Germany. They asked us, dear Mother, to again see them, because they were delighted to see the Sisters from Germany. But then, dear Mother, they would have to know earlier. They did not know about us except for my letter, and I wrote quite illegibly.

Dear Mother, my aunt picked us up from the harbor and in the evening brought us to the train. The whole day I was able to talk to her. Truly I was very happy there..

Dear Mother, when we arrived in Alton the Most Reverend Bishop had us picked up from the train station and he and many other Pastors received us in front of the Cathedral. After that we were led into the church, which was illuminated brightly, since it was evening, close to 8:00 P.M. Then the Bishop made a little speech and almost all of us cried. We were so moved when he said he would make every effort and pray for Sister Josepha, that the dear Lord might make her listen to reason. I reminded then ? Schwester Josepha, who had her own laundry, and then I want to say that I don't want to be blamed, when a Sister should go the wrong way.

Dear Reverend Mother, don't be cross with me that I write about this from America. I felt not at peace unless I had written to you about it. Many things have happened and I will pray dilligently.

Dear Reverend Mother, these past days we talked about that some Sisters in the Daughterhouses use the laundry for themselves. I think a Sister who always selected the laundry which she used before and again chooses it for herself, thus has her own laundry. This is very wrong and through that many Sisters went astray and risked their salvation.

The Most Reverend Bishop wants to assist us when we now enter our second home, that our task will not be too heavy. The sacrifices which we brought should with the sacrifices which we would

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bring in America, unite and renew our vows and if we had to face temptation, we would be strong.

Oh, dear Mother, it was as if the Most Reverend Bishop felt what it meant to leave the dear Mother Superior and Sisters and everything else, to make a far, hard, troublesome journey and not to know how one would be received. After that a solemn Tedeum was sung and the episcopal blessing was given. For several days we stayed together in Alton and then were sent to the different houses. But, dear Mother, you cannot imagine how kind the people are here, quite the contrary to Germany. They are only thinking about our happiness. This noon, dear Mother, were several women here who asked us what we would like. They wanted to do everything if we could only say that more Sisters were coming. These few, they thought, were not enough. We would have enough work after we were established and food and beverage and everything else we should have enough for the sick. When we left Alton, they pleaded with us to leave all 20 Sisters in Alton. They wanted to make sure that we would like it there. You cannot believe it, dear Mother, the well-meaning friendliness the people here show us. With a whole cart full they arrived here in Alton.

Here in Springfield we live for two weeks already with the Ursuline Sisters and probably have to stay another two weeks until the people who live in the house which we will occupy move out. In the meantime we study English, which is quite difficult for us. Who would have done that in Germany? To have four healthy Sisters around and to struggle all day to make it pleasant for us, that the Reverend Mother and the Sisters make every effort, because if this would have happened to them and they were asked to leave the country. Oh, dear Mother, what a kind Mother she is. You cannot fathom how she cares for us. She provides for everything and tells the people

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or writes letters to them. We receive beds out of which we can make pillows. A cart-load straw for mattresses. A piece of material she asked for so that we can make sheets and more. For a week we have used her sewing machine. Every hour she sends a Sister to give us English lessons. Should all the Sisters be in school, she sends some children and sometimes we go along to school.

Dear Mother, when we have washed our things, she takes care of us as if we were her children and more. Where they can give joy to us, they do it and yet they know that we possess nothing to reciprocate, so one can see that they are doing it out of pure love and compassion. If the dear Lord continues to help as he did until now.

Dear Mother, the paper has been used up too early, I would have had so much to write about yet. If I only could sit a few hours with you just like the last evening in the much loved Motherhouse - - but that is past. Soon, by God's grace, we shall have a Motherhouse here, but still we shall miss you, dear Rev. Mother, and our Most Reverend Father. Here we have now a Director but, dear Mother, what shall we do with two Directors? - The paper was used up too early and so I attach a note.

Dear Reverend Mother, we are not writing again before Christmas and so I would like to wish you a very happy Christmas and may you, dear Reverend Mother, celebrate it in the best of health and not under great pressure as before, but may the Christ child be merciful and finally hear our prayers which day by day are sent to it. Oh, if you would celebrate the triumph of the church at Christmas.

Also, dear Mother, a happy New Year and God's rich blessings upon all your undertakings, for this I will pray every day to heaven. And thousand good wishes to the dear Sisters and to all

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of Germany.

I almost forgot, dear Mother, to inform you, that Father Lewer is our Director for America. He was born in Warendorf and I know very well his parents and his family. He is approximately eight years in America and three years ago he went to Germany. Earlier he was Chaplain in Luedinghausen.

Dear Mother, I have to close now but soon will write again. Please, let us hear soon from you or we might become homesick.

Deep in my heart with Jesu and Maria, I remain

respectfully,
your obedient, spiritual daughter
Schwester Crispina

Health Sister of the Holy Franciscans

[illegible]

G. F. D. M.