



Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

4849 La Verna Road • Springfield, IL 62707 217-522-3387 • hospitalsisters.org

From: Brian C. Blasco

Director of Communications and Archivist - Assistant Coordinator of Community Life

Date: April 10, 2025

RE: Sister Cyrilla Witte, OSF

Birth February 5, 1832, in Cappeln, Germany, and named Anna

Parents Bernard and Bernardina (Mumke) Witte

Entered HSOSF January 11, 1856 Profession of First Vows January 23, 1858

Missionary to the USA October 1875 at age 43

Assignments

Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	Novembe	r 11, 1875
Effingham, IL	St. Anthony's Hospital	1876	Superior/Administrator
Belleville, IL	St. Elizabeth's Hospital	1880	
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1881	
Effingham, IL	St. Anthony's Hospital	1882	
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1892	
Green Bay, WI	St. Vincent Hospital	1894	
Sheboygan, WI	St. Nicholas Hospital	1897	
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1904	

Entered Eternal Life

May 9, 1911, and burial in Calvary Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

1

P.B.J.Chr.

Dearest Reverend Mother!

You surely are thinking often how the Sisters in America are faring. Thank God quite well.

We are still with the good Sisters, and are quite well and content. We hope to soon move to our House. Dear Reverend Mother, I often think, if I had not crossed the big ocean I could not be lieve to be in America. I imagined it quite different and I believe the dear Lord wants us to be here. When we only can speak and have sick people, then nothing is left outstanding and I hope the dear Lord will not deny us this plea. He is omniscient also that I always loved the sick and I am totally convinced, that we soon will be busy. We are so happy, we are working for our new House. We hope we move into the apartment soon.

Already I told the Sisters it is here almost as in Silesia, even the hymns in the church. If the big ocean would not exist, it would not be so bad, but that big water.

I have been so sick and three weeks endured a lot. I was convinced that I would find my final resting place in the ocean. I also was so weak. I could not breathe for weakness. I prayed to the dear Lord I truly wanted to die, but the dear Lord did not want this. I will very much want to work to the glory of God.

When we traveled from Alton to Springfield the Most Reverend Bishop met us. We were with the Ursulines. He talked a long time with us and gave us the house for 2000 which the blessed Bishop had built as the Episcopal See. He said right away it should become the Motherhouse, and he gave us Father Sauer as our Director and now Sister Angelica is our Reverend Mother.

Oh, dear Reverend Mother, what I experienced at the beginning I cannot describe, only I know what I felt. The other Sisters are all so young and most likely had not the same emotions.

Springfield, November 29, 1875 page two

We practice diligently English, English is mostly spoken. Here are about thirty churches, one German church. Our Director takes alone care of the congregation. Sundays two H1. Masses and Homily. In the afternoon Prayers, and all Confessions. The Priests are very busy here. The people are all surprised that the Most Reverend Bishop is so good to us.

He is so fond of us. We are his darlings. Right away in his first Homily he told us that we should not regret to have left our country. We should find here a second home, and he would do everything to help us.

Dear Reverend Mother, we cannot get here any dark bread. Usually we eat meat three times a day. We eat in the Refectory with the Sisters. Meat is here the main course. They have here such thick potatoes, they taste quite sweet. Horses and cows are outside all winter. The people have no stables for them and often they freeze to death.

Dear Reverend Mother, there is no more space. I wish you with all my filial heart a very merry Christmas and a very blessed New Year. The dear Lord make you strong. Many greetings to the remaining Sisters.

If Bismarck would know how they joke about him here he would be quite mad.

Cyrilla

I only ask for your devout prayers.

I remain always your loving daughter

An integral to mind grittles

Air Inchangening of offer agin muga July down Blanch Strange of me without aprefly got of your rong reformation on mice toffine Into unit hald in infant 2 of y infant Saile friendige Mille English of the war of inthister day of filler but. Port or your boll a engage till in the glowing Say 3 had well all that are the last last Commence with rough from the himselinker following Soul Hafre wir with with on the Toffer tak day trader Gall and and by with sail of the the about the sol of the first got allo money full soil fails and animitation

mati with a life in water to some land Then I'm I'm doubt you enclost have in interest he with their promofuffers state upid de Style my ming in four, the faith of his the wind of freque The har left again I and Of many of the ob in inch I have gradiensid in chilosient single explore and Single Agree out another moffer will ig is at love is seen ab quel wings or i many where en courte de enforce . in in the at employer her come grandant in falle Lie Lowerly 3 de sofon 'son chiba aplantant, if minimal fafor tall informal dog has history last land on Brand of where wiene There to defence, if winder a we for introppe min laft come for mer, if to his day I alone you Lyound if an will a for got to got or , where in to be will gullle ab weeth with in a ste way and and you a world will give of lovery oftal the backane Cell in is man Altan and afring tile Driftshow, come and fact bear heren By Left of your the west, as is incorned but don't broful in commen Port lit lange and and deter forther, at his de Buildy on I tak wood de Walty a Lief of my all Pofy

his gat a pleasing grantenes of " I delly ful dance glingly of agt and at Mail a find upon dutita, it have y owner detect into otherwise graning in for if the land of get ities infor thirding the Chalin Cally Today a Middles, mind out wing in de. n uflan I rangem which gir Mintellang amalow if , downly den Condenne Wil muf sie de nait, Orthoung in Brogardas of marth suffe to acces himidras flores Dais for a gample quite Change is for half as Louis wird for and faid og estherington gofather The amendment aby or and wire to the Fish Mine miller, if land lander to the finite of militing Took at Ifter forferen gameral is, at if jan to in Arilla Go tai granofan; wifth house you magnific willed bound as and colome for. Porce Carrow of suffig Englisch, any findence will be engineer, at find in the Sotting and sain in now I will for sinfar Similar fort is going from entitaine; and ongto marche to you of how is to wind Harefrietleigh Buteraft, allot Lough form allin 16 Britains fater fix for for ing the

Find In the man Daved fing a liter Der Dig. Laffin Byong and all forget find, for if day pelanter week yagan internet fine fine Linklings, Le fait with in day orgland hange got ning palongly at follthe with wirft y women and inform friends sources; y so forbard, min forther of ins aired your with if in and it By my will be well at of in ab with laift got more form. Links Oginadige Miller at gill frien gen hair tof much ogis offen gray of light 3 mm le onin't orga Minifely wir file and down topin in the afort. That of yet fine down fong flow, at quell fine for distribe forwerffel - , and Works Bar, aft ale die form with on going fings. I'm I fords -21. diffe wifts on fine dans gung and Asidas drings Periform, I'm Inde for long good bains the alla dough all ly in war Din Part. Links On word of the ther day Doning off good forder if on inf of off form with hindless forgon and rought freeft if ah Brain our fil fall Blain ninang Gens gerburger ward for for Sas links got with this . Grand of anglifa grainfor und allowed outer Vifor . Or man I'm Lib mondo, at og a fiche maid any find mil das thong at, forfollow inflas or or invoidiffatod Trong on in little in If of from I gold if fur being of for a fall line was to flow of Good Plat

SR. CYRILLA

Angel of the Battlefield

"Who does God's work will get God's pay, "However long may seem the day "However weary be the way."

Desirous of following in the Master's footsteps, Sister Cyrilla, (Anna Witte, a native of Cappeln born February 5, 1832) determined at the age of twenty, to forsake the world and live henceforth the life of a poor Franciscan Sister, ministering to the sick and dying in hospitals and private homes when she presented herself as probationer to the Mother Superior at Mauritz. She was gladly accepted, inducted into the Novitiate January 17, 1857, promised loyalty to her heavenly spouse January 23, 1858, and renewed this promise twice afterward, Sept. 1, 1860, and Sept. 30, 1862. When in 1875 the call for volunteers to sail for America was made, Sr. Cyrilla was among the first to petition the mother to be sent thither. Her petition was favorably acted upon and she constituted one of the valiant twenty who were to transplant a branch of the old trunk on American soil. How she and her companinons fared during the voyage and on her arrival in the new world, has been noted elsewhere. Sr. Cyrilla was sent as Superioress to Belleville and Effingham and served as nursing sister at Green Bay and Sheboygan. Notwithstanding her advanced age, she was always gay and happy in company especially when surrounded by Sisters of a younger generation. On January 23, 1883 our faithful nun celebrated her Silver Jubilee. The Silver wreath which then crowned her brow was even to ripen into a golden one, which occasion was observed with great festivity and rejoicing in 1908. Good old Sister Cyrilla went to her eternal reward to receive God's pay May D, 1911.

Worthy of note is the fact that our good Sister served on the battlefields of three sanguinary wars, viz. the Austrian, Danish and Franco-Prussian, where her heroism and devotedness to the wounded and dying soldiers received official recognition. Who can gauge the amount of good she performed by her kind, gentle sympathetic ministrations to the wounded soldiers who often confided to her their last message to a gray haired oid mother who daily waited in vain at the garden gate for the return of her soldier boy or when she knelt by the side of the dying in field and hospital, helping and comforting the struggling souls by her prayers in their last supreme moment of dissolution. At one time she became a captive in the hands of the French, was conveyed to nearest divisional headquarters and subjected to a most rigorous examination. When satisfied that she really was what she seemed to be, a Sister of Mercy and not a spy masquerading under a guise of one, she was promptly dismissed. "But that wild ride before our party was overtaken," she said, "I'll never for-The Prussian victors of Sedan, a few short years afterward, turned her out of her native land to find a more congenial home across the ocean. God has spoken during the World War. May she rest in Peace.