



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: July 18, 2024

RE: Sister Macaria Rottkemper, OSF

Birth	April 2, 1845, in Liesborn, Germany, and named Elisabeth
Parents	Herman and Gertrud (Eckernkemper) Rottkemper
Entered HSOSF	July 16, 1870
Profession of First Vows	August 31, 1872
Missionary to the USA	October 1875 at age 32

Assignments

Alton, IL		1875
Belleville, IL	St. Elizabeth's Hospital	1875
Effingham, IL	St. Anthony's Hospital	1877
Litchfield, IL	St. Francis Hospital	1883 Superior/Administrator
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1887 Mother Superior
Litchfield, IL	St. Francis Hospital	1895
Lincoln, IL	St. Clara's Hospital	1899
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1920

Entered Eternal Life (age 85)

April 26, 1928, and buried in Crucifixion Hill Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

Alton, November 30, 1875

III. Mother Superior in America

Dear Reverend Mother!

First of all I would like to wish you, dear Reverend Mother, with all my heart a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The end of the year 1875 is approaching and a new year follows - what will it bring?

Fateful the old year has been, the new one will not be much less. The old year brought us the convent law accompanied by many other stirring happenings. Yet it brought us, but not without God's guidance, to America. The dream disappeared, it is the truth, the ocean has separated us from our dear Superiors and Sisters. But we must not take this separation too seriously, one would get lost.

We barely have made this sacrifice. Not even in our hearts shall we take it back, because the dear Lord cannot be surpassed on generosity. His most holy Will be done.

Dear Reverend Mother, thank God we have a good little place. We are quite satisfied and happy in Alton. Homesickness has not much happened. Although we would wish to be active in our profession. To practice patience is also very good, time will tell. This is a large city and work will be plentiful. Until now we could not have done very much, first we have to study English. For a week I have taken care of a sick German gentleman in the country. We have done nothing else. Two weeks we have gone to the Ursuline Convent to study English, and still go every day.

Dear Reverend Mother, you cannot imagine the kindness of these Sisters, especially Rot. Modder Mari. Every day she holds classes for us from 9 - 11 and in the afternoon from 2 - 4 o'clock. For our Sister Angelika the quarter hour walk on this hilly road is hard. Almost every morning Father Gansen walks to this convent. Father Gansen is also Director. The gentlemen have to take a lot more in America than in Germany. The Reverend Mother told

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us they were religiously moderate men. The Most Reverend Bishop is strict with the men, because the Irish like to drink, even the priests; terrible. Then His Eminence takes in the ones who have failed. Because he instantly knows everything; but if they violate only once they have to go to Manseid convent as . The Germans are men pleasing to the Lord's heart. But now I am off the subject and have lost my point.

Ten years ago the Reverend Mother, about who I spoke, has been in Germany on collect. She and Reverend Mother Josephine in Litchfield, where Sister Fridoline is, are also from Germany. They also have been in the Motherhouse. The earlier Mother was still here. But they failed to receive the honor, in spite of their urgent pleas to speak to the Reverend Mother, even though they had seen her in the garden. This hurt us very much, but we excused it and said, that other religions have been so kindly received and dear Reverend Mother with all her love has accepted them. Who could have known, that these Sisters would be our benefactors in America. With no larger joy could you present us, dear Reverend Mother, if you could write a few lines to the one who carries the same load, please dear Mother. Now I have to start over again. There is just not enough paper.

The Most Reverend Father is so good to us. His Eminence a few days ago told Sister Angelika he always had such high regard and opinion of us even before we knew each other, and until now he has not been disappointed. Hopefully the Reverend Father will not be disappointed in us and we truly shall be what we appear to be. We will try real hard to be humble and obedient Franciscans. Our Most Reverend Bishop and the good Father Gansen point out that nothing is more urgent as the faithful observance of the Holy Rules.

Dear Mother, I also thank you very much for this good little place and Sister Angelika and Sister Yosima. We also want to be

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of good support to Sister Angelika. Many times we are sorry that she has to work so hard to learn the language. To study English is quite difficult, however less for us than for Sister Angelika. We already speak a broken English and can read quite well. Also we pray the Lord's Prayer, but to translate German into English, that is difficult, and the conversing. Now we have an Irish child in our house so that we have to speak English constantly, although we are embarrassed because it sounds so strange. On Sunday we understood the homily a little. The Reverend Father says almost all the time everything twice, then we understand the Reverend better. During the week he usually reads the Holy Mass and most of the time gives us the *dear* Savior. Another Father celebrates the Patene, everything is very solemn. The service, I have never experienced anything like it, one assumes to be in heaven, beautiful hymns, everything puts one in a devotional mood. Should Sister Angelika have questions for the Reverend Bishop, she has to go to his residence and he sits on his chair and he lets her kiss the Ring and it is such a homey atmosphere.

Dear Reverend Mother, there is not enough paper, more next time. I have not been very bad, only I have been inattentive during contemplation and reflection.

I also ask for the Sisters' prayers. I remain most respectfully with love

your spiritual daughter
Sister Macaria

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