



Sister Mary Agnita Chonko

Entered eternal life on January 21, 2017

When I begin to reflect on the life of our Sister Mary Agnita, my mind takes a long trip down memory lane across 70 years to high school days at St. Aloysius Academy, Jersey City, where then Julia Chonko and I were classmates.

Julia was the youngest of the four Chonko children brought up in Bayonne, N.J. She was lively, full of fun and very active in every area of school life, taking part in the Sodality of Our Lady, the Athletic Association, Glee Club, Eucharistic Committee and yearbook staff.

Under her picture in the yearbook, her classmates had chosen this quotation to describe her:

“Your heart and mind are full of light,
Your spirit shineth clear and white.”

How beautifully appropriate now as she enters God’s kingdom!

After graduation, Julia worked at an office in New York for a year and then asked Sister Elizabeth Rita to sponsor her for entrance into our novitiate. We had known Sister Elizabeth as a fun person whom we volunteered to help clear the kitchen and refectory when we had a study period after lunch.

Early in her religious life Sister Agnita taught in elementary schools. She was not immune to sorrow – soon suffering the loss of her brother and mother. Later, after her 25th jubilee, the tragic death of her sister Ann was a cross difficult to bear.

Due to her illness, Sister Agnita spent many years here at the Villa. During the last few days I have been so happy to hear from staff and volunteers of Sister’s many acts of thoughtful kindness.

At the last, Sister Agnita died in the hospital, and although we could not be with her, I like to think, since it was the Feast of St. Agnes, that her patron saint was nearby, accompanied by our own Blessed Sister Miriam Teresa whose Slovak heritage and hometown of Bayonne Sister Agnita shared.

Rest in Peace, dear Julia. Pray for us.

Sister Clare Mary Roden