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Sister Francesca Dies

(Continued from Page 23A)

the splendid order and discipline of the girls during activities on the campus: May Day practices, Memorial Day Parade rehearsals, even fire drills. "You could see that Mercy was a well-run school."

First and foremost, Sister Mary Francesca was an educator. Her curriculum, faculty and facilities all kept pace with the times. Just before World War II, she added a new wing to the original school building.

The \$400,000 addition included a completely modern auditorium, gymnasium, music rooms, home economics rooms, library, science laboratories and new class rooms.

She subscribed to the best educational magazines and avidly read them all. Her travels were largely for self or school improvement: diocesan conferences, educational meetings, teachers gatherings, or visits to the State Education Department in Albany.

During part of her years as Principal, Monsignor Charles Boyle, now pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church on Humboldt Street, was both Assistant and Superintendent of Schools: "It was my happy privilege to know and work with Sister Mary Francesca over a period of 14 years. Her professional competence and willingness to explore new paths in education were known, not only in Rochester, but also in educational circles all across the State."

The ability to listen is the mark of a mature person. Sister Mary Francesca listened to everyone. If a request or suggestion had merit — no matter from whom it came — it was granted.

Mrs. Leo Calihan, the second president of the Mercy Mothers' Club was impressed with Sister's unselfish giving of time: "She forged a unique feeling of unity among students, faculty, and parents which has lasted through the years. Sister Mary Francesca had time for everyone."

Today, Our Lady of Mercy High School has an enrollment of over 1,000 students. The faculty, religious and lay, numbers 60.

According to Sister Mary Bryan, the present Principal at Mercy, there will be an addition to Our Lady of Mercy High School on the east campus, eventually. The new wing will be named for Sister Mary Francesca.

"This may seem a bit presumptuous to predict in these days when some of Catholic education's future seems so uncertain," explained Sister Mary Bryan, "but it was this kind of faith, and vision and daring, if

you will, that made Sister Mary Francesca such an innovating and progressive educator."

The only reward Sister Mary Francesca wished for was to see her girls living the Mercy way in other schools, in business, in their happy homes or religious communities; and to retain the graduates' loyalty to the school.

A former chaplain of Mercy, Father Richard Tormey, the Diocesan Coordinator of Communications believes that Sister has that reward: "Sister Mary Francesca was a rigorist in her ideals on womanly dignity. She deliberately shaped thousands of Mercy girls by her unswerving insistence that the curriculum, social life and spiritual tone of the school must mold each student into a future woman of quality. Her most valuable memorial is the legion of Mercy women she helped form for family life and religious careers."

Somewhere, sometime in this city, someone will be able to see again — literally — through the eyes of Sister Mary Francesca.

May that vision be as keen to beauty, as kind to hurts, as logical and penetrating in seeking truth, as full of hope and faith in the future as the great lady who first looked through them.

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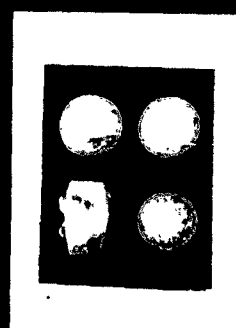
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