



Dear Sister

Assuredly the headline story this week is also the saddest story: Sometime last week Sister Rosemarie's two lovely sculptures, Daphne and Persephone, were stolen from the studio. So far there's only a slim suspicion and really very little to go on. Because there was no forced entry, the thief must have had a key. I should think he'd be afraid he might turn into a laurel tree or, on the other hand, be snatched into the underworld. What makes me write "he"? Could be a "she" who absconded with the pieces. In any event, absconding with them took some doing; those two sculptures weren't lightweight. I told Rosemarie her Persephone may have been such a perfect likeness that the old boy Hades may have come up and snatched her away. In fact, when I see all the foliage around here dying up or drooping miserably I'm not so sure I'm not onto something. A policeman, the friend of one of the Dominican sisters, is coming this week to draw a composite picture of the two pieces so he can be on the look-out for them in pawn shops or elsewhere.

Rosemarie's sculptures theft was one among a rash of recent thefts around here: Not long ago about 40 newly-purchased sheets and pillowslips were stolen from Southwest; last Monday Jeff Sztukowski's room on mezzanine was broken into. Both Rosemarie and Jeff believe these robberies were inside jobs, and a number of people here think the same about the linen theft.

St. Louisans' deaths from the unremitting heat is now well over 150, and the morgue here reports being overburdened trying to deal with all these bodies. It's the poor elderly who are dying in such large numbers. Right now the National Guard both here and in Kansas City are going from door to door trying to discover elderly who're suffering from this oppressive heat. Many of these old people are most reluctant to leave their homes or don't know there's help available to them. I can't remember anything like these days of fierce unremitting high temperatures. Often we've had readings of 100° or 102° even as late as 8 pm! The predictions are for some kind of relief by Tuesday. If it would only rain copiously and then snow just as copiously!

Sister Dorothea remains in the hospital still undergoing more tests. Her doctors have now diagnosed her problem as pancreatitis; they still haven't, as far as I know, ruled out the gall bladder as another source of trouble. She has been on intravenous and antibiotics since her arrival at St. Mary's almost two weeks ago. Today the sisters who visited her said she was feeling better and even said she was hungry. That may be a good sign because up until now she hasn't mentioned being hungry. I know she appreciates our prayers.

Sister Agatha Joseph returned last night from Wisconsin where she thoroughly enjoyed all that state's beauty. She had high praise for Alberta Anne's and my alma mater, as well as for my birthplace, refreshing Green Bay on the shores of the magnificent Fox.

James Lorene returned on Friday from Cuba, Missouri and Mary, of course on Monday from the West. Mary Hugh returns from Kansas City tomorrow. So you see, it's just as I wrote last week: the trek back to the Gateway to the West has begun in earnest. But we haven't yet seen an end to departures. Alfred and Marilyn go on retreat next Sunday; Clarice goes to the Cenacle the same day. And I think a few others will go on retreat pretty much the same time. Sister Ligouri leaves Tuesday for Tucson. Jane Frances leaves next week for a visit with cousins in the East. Some of us still have home visits in late July and early August.

What can I add about the chapel? Precious little. I think Bob the painter has taken permanent sanctuary there. The scaffolding remains, but I can't tell what kind of progress has or hasn't been made. I'm just glad Mary is having a jubilee August 15. That fact just may spur the workers to a completion soon. Who knows?

This fifth issue of "The Dust Mop" is your final one; your sojourn hasn't ended but mine begins this Thursday when I leave for Chicago in time to celebrate Lorraine's birthday the following day. Sister Josephine is due to arrive on the same day I'm departing. (Josephine, Sister Mary Gaydos will meet you at the airport; she'll wait in Medaille for your call from there.)

I hope the weekly "Dust Mops" helped keep you in touch, banal as their dust frequently tends to be. Take care and return home safely. Bye.

With love,
Sister Margaret

PS: Has my dust mop shown any improvement since the first issue? I have a feeling it has.