

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MOTHERHOUSE
JACKSON AVENUE
HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON
NEW YORK 10706

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(914) 478-3930

SISTER M. BERCHMANS-----SUSAN COREY

Born: May 30, 1883 on Staten Island

Baptized: June 10, 1883-St. Mary's Church, Clifton, Staten Island

Father: William Corey

Mother: Mary Smith

Entered Srs. of St. Francis: July 14, 1904 at Mt. Loretto, Staten Island

Received Habit: February 2, 1905, also at Mt. Loretto

Made Profession of Vows: February 19, 1907 at Mt. Hope, Westchester Co.

Died: April 16, 1962 at St. Agnes Hospital, White Plains, NY.

Buried: Sisters Cemetery on the grounds of St. Clare Academy. In 1982, in anticipation of the sale of much of the property, the Sisters buried in this cemetery were transferred to the Sisters Cemetery on the grounds of Mt. Loretto in Staten Island. So that is where Sister M. Berchmans is now buried.

Also in our records is the information that Sister had a B.A. Degree from the College of New Rochelle as well as a Masters Degree from Fordham University.

As you can see from the dates above, Sister came to Mt. Hope as a novice, probably in 1906. There was a small boarding school located here at that time and it is my understanding that Sister, because of her educational background and also because of those qualities of leadership which she so clearly had, became both teacher and principal for the growing school. She did much to improve the quality of education offered and was very instrumental in opening a small high school for which she obtained state accreditation in 1913. Sister served as Principal of St. Clare's until 1945.

Sister was very close to her family. In fact, some of her nephews attended school here at St. Clare's. A shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes was erected on the grounds and dedicated to the Corey Family. When the property was sold, the shrine had to be dismantled. The statue of Our Lady is now on the grounds of Mount Loretto as you enter the grounds.

The school was not torn down but renovated into forty small condos. It is still there, a reminder of other days and other events and wonderful people who were part of them.

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Recollection of Sister M. Berchmans by Sister M. St. Mark* 7/20/91

My earliest memory of sister Berchmans was as principal of both the elementary and high school of Saint Clare Academy. She was very dedicated to education and was determined to make Saint Clare's an outstanding and accredited school. She was the first principal of the school which the sisters opened for the benefit of the boarders(both boys and girls) who had come to reside at the Sisters' new Motherhouse at Mt. Hope.

Sister Berchmans was instrumental in obtaining a charter for the School from the State of New York. Her records were always well kept in those early days and many a student who attended the school wrote back for information or a transcript and these were readily available.

Sister also taught math and science in the high school while acting as principal. She was excellent in these fields and was willing to give individual help whenever needed. She continued in both capacities for many years.

One recollection of mine of Sister Berchmans was her interest in bees. Clad in a black straw hat, veil over her face and gloves on her hands, one would see her on the lawn taking care of a beehive which produced delicious honey.

Sister suffered many infirmities and was severely crippled with arthritis. However, these afflictions did not lessen her indomitable spirit and generous help to all. She was intensely interested in her Franciscan Community and was very happy when a beautiful grotto of the Blessed Mother was erected on our front lawn. The grotto was a gift from the Corey family.

*In the 1920's Sister St. Mark was a young girl and one of the boarders at the Academy. She was here for both elementary and high school education so she knew Sister Berchmans quite well.