



2007

Mother

M. Aquinata Fiegler, O.P.

1848-1915

The Dominican Sisters

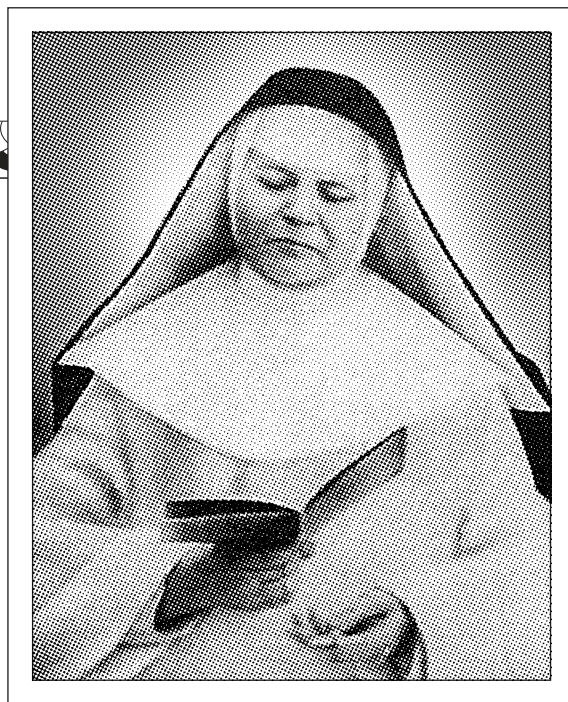
"This remarkable child will be a leader someday..." predicted a teacher in Germany. In later years a prominent cleric would note, "When the history of Michigan is written, Mother Aquinata's name should stand in Letters of Gold."

Mother M. Aquinata, a native of Worbis, Germany, immigrated to America as a young girl. She sought admission as a postulant at Holy Cross Convent, Brooklyn, New York, and received the habit of St. Dominic, August 4, 1864.

At age twenty-four, Sister Aquinata became superior and oversaw construction of St. Dominic Academy in Jersey City. In 1877 she accompanied five sisters to Traverse City to open a school on October 29 in response to Father George Ziegler's letter.

As more sisters came from New York to establish schools in Adrian, Muskegon, Bay City and other areas, Mother Aquinata would oversee them, considering it a labor of love to set up the chapel for the Blessed Sacrament in each new house.

Mother Aquinata embarked on building Holy Angels Convent and Academy on Tenth Street in 1883. It became the Provincial House and novitiate for the



Dominican Sisters in Michigan in 1885. The Sisters still fondly refer to Holy Angels as "the Cradle" as it was where the Marywood Dominican Sisters originated.

Natural leadership, an understanding nature and solid piety fitted Mother Aquinata to lead the Michigan foundation as first Prioress General in 1894 when the Sisters in the Grand Rapids Diocese became independent of New York.

In 1915 at the time of her death at age 67, her community numbered over 300 sisters in charge of forty-two parish schools, two central high schools, two academies, and one orphanage. Certainly a good start toward Mother Augustine's prediction of that "fair Peninsula dotted white" with Dominican Sisters.

