

Transcription of Audio Files: Sister Callistus Andrea Doria- a—ac; Sister Callistus

Andrea Doria-b—ac

Recorded: July 26, 1987

Location: London, Ontario

Creator: Sister Callistus Arnsby

Sister Callistus Andrea Doria- a—ac

Thank you and good evening Sisters.

I'm very happy to have been asked to talk to you about the Andrea Doria. It will be thirty-one years in a few weeks, July, since the tragedy happened, and I only spoke about it once to the community and that was shortly after the event and to my knowledge I haven't really spoken to any group in the community except a couple of years later I did tell the junior professed to the lake one night sitting out under the moon and that was the only other occasion. But about two years ago, I was asked by a friend who lives in St Thomas, would I mind speaking to the Rotary Club of St Thomas and telling them about the Andrea Doria. And I hesitated for a moment, it had been so long since this had happened although it was still very vivid. But I felt to present it to a group such as the Rotary Club I would need to do a little bit of more planning than I did in the first sort of improvised...improvisatory session when I first came back. So I did a little bit of research on the background too and so that is the account that I am going to give you this evening.

Now I think what I will do is hopefully go right through it as I have it here. I might interject a few things here and there but I might think of as we go along and at the end then if you have any

questions, I'll be happy to share my own feelings with you on some of the things that you might be interested in further.

But in writing this personal account of the tragedy I have drawn freely from such sources as the book *Saved* by William Hoffer. I have here a paperback copy of it, but I do have the original hard.. uh.. paper.. uh.. hard cover pa--uh-- edition. And um just moment about this book, William Hoffer is an American and he was asked by *Some Books* of Washington would he write a book on the Andrea Doria and one of his tasks was to try to contact all survivors of the tragedy. So I received a letter first, asking me would I cooperate, and then a telephone call from Washington at which we set up an interview here at the Mount. And he questioned me a lot about the boat and he recorded my replies and the whole interview on a tape. And so he took that tape away and had my permission to use it in whatever way he liked in his book, so I am quoted in the book. Just before the book went to print, he contacted me again and over the telephone he read passages from the book, just to make sure that he had quoted me correctly, and I was able to correct him on one or two small points, but otherwise I think he had done, I think he's done a very fine job in this book called *Saved* by William Hoffer. I also had resourced to the newspaper reports of the time and magazine articles to obtain additional data which would the story more complete.

3:30 Now, I'm going to begin with a quotation from a column in one of the New York papers by Robert Rouark(?). Robert Rouark said this about the Andrea Doria after viewing it in the New York harbour in 1953, he saw it. And William Hoffer uses this quotation at the beginning of his book and I think it's rather lovely.... I'll give it in full:

4:02 "Her name is Andrea Doria and she is as beautiful a new piece of marine construction as I ever saw. A ship is a wonderfully solid thing, making sense in a shaky world. A ship doesn't hurry too much, it's nearly impossible to sink one or set it painfully afire; it works faithfully for its master and takes on a portion of his personality. The man, in turn, is influenced by his vessel and comes to be like her. It is ladies like the Andrea Doria that I kiss in print." The end of the quotation.

4:49 The Andrea Doria was launched on June 16 in 1951 at Genoa, Italy. The liner, the pride of the Italian Merchant Navy was named Andrea Doria after the famed Genoese navigator who was born in 1466 and died in 1560. He was a great admiral of the fleet and one of the most outstanding men of the sixteenth century. The ship was like a beautiful floating palace. Italy could not compete on the basis of size nor speed, with the great liners of America, France, and England, but it could tap into a classical heritage second to none. When the Andrea Doria was outfitted for transatlantic service in 1953, she was big, nearly 700 feet long, from bow to stern, but not the biggest; fast, at 23 knots, but not the fastest. What she was, was beautiful.

5:59 Her black hull held a gleaming white superstructure. It was the interior decor, however, that made her unique. Stepping inside the ship brought a sudden encounter with Renaissance glories. The Italian Line had commissioned scores of artists to decorate the ship with a wide variety of original canvasses, murals, frescoes, tapestries, sculpture, and mirrors. The focal point of its artwork was the first-class lounge on the Promenade Deck. Here artist Salvatore Fume had created a giant mural that surrounded passengers with a tribute to Raphael, Michelangelo, and other Italian masters. Near the mural was a massive bronze statue of Admiral Andrea Doria, clad

in battle armour, a huge sword at his side. Overhead hung a large silver crest of the man who was perhaps the most famous Italian admiral after Christopher Columbus, having been the father of Genoese independence. The crest had hung for centuries in the admiral's Genoese mansion and was donated to the ship by the Marquess Gian Baupista Doria.

7:24 The ship had ten passenger decks. Topmost was the small Belvedere Deck, crowned with a single stack that proudly displayed the red, white, and green colours of Italy. Below this was the Sun Deck, which was the command centre where Capitan Calimai and his officers directed the ship. Then came the Liedo Deck, a first class area with children's playroom, gymnasium, solarium, massage parlour, and swimming pool, surrounded by buffets and bars. Some of the officers' cabins were also here. Below this was the Boat Deck where the sixteen aluminum lifeboats hung from davits. On the front of the Boat Deck, directly beneath the bridge, was the first class Belvedere Lounge. Next came the Promenade Deck, the social heart of the ship, housing the ballrooms and lounges for the first and cabin class passengers. At the rear, was the popular village square for the immigrants and the tourist class swimming pool. Walkways, closed in from the sea by large windows, circled the Promenade Deck. Below this was the Upper Deck, curiously named because there were five decks above it [laughter], here were located the majority of the specious-- spacious rather-- first class cabins. Then came the Foyer Deck, the ship's Main Street; it featured a row of specialty shops, clothing stores, a bank, and the purser's office. Just forward of the main foyer was the beautiful Gothic chapel, with Romanesque columns and original frescoes. Here we were able to attend Daily Mass and Benediction. I must tell you that all ships of the Italian Line have a beautiful Chapel and always a Chaplain who is on hand because Italy is, at least nominally, a Catholic country. And so this is their feature that

they do have Chapel. When I was going over to Italy we had 30 priests on board on their way to study in Rome, so Masses began at 5 in the morning. On the way back, we had about 8 priests who were saying Mass in that lovely Chapel. Very beautiful chapel.

9:56 On either side of the Chapel were four deluxe first class suites, each appointed by a different Italian designer. The first class Dining Room was also on the Foyer Deck. A deck, beneath this, held cabin class passengers, and I was one of those. As well as the ship's ten-room hospital staffed by two doctors and five nurses. The lower B and C Decks housed tourist class cabins then engine room and a garage. Below these decks cargo holds were filled with silks, woolens, cottons, furniture, olive oil, wine, Olivetti business equipment, and Mecchi sewing machines. Below the holds were the deep tanks for fuel and water.

10:48 On July 17, 1956, the three-year-old Andrea Doria departed from her home port of Genoa and headed for Cannes, Naples, and Gibraltar, en route to New York. I considered myself to be most fortunate in being able to secure a passage on this beautiful ship. In the previous September, I had sailed to Italy on the Doira's sister ship the *Christoforo Colombo* and was told that the Doira even surpassed her sister for beauty and elegance.

11:23 The purpose of my going to Italy was to do special studies in music at the Pius XII School of Fine Arts in Florence. This is a small school, once the villa of Myran Taylor, American Ambassador to the Vatican. Actually the villa that I stayed at dates back to the sixteenth century. Very close to the villa that was partly owned by Boccaccio and the famous poets that we hear about: Dante had a residence not far from there. On his retirement, Mr. Taylor presented the

Villa Schifanoia to the Vatican to be used as a school for American girls gifted in the fine arts, music, painting, and sculpture. The school then was turned over to the American Sisters, the Dominican Sisters of Rosary College, River Forest, Chicago and these Sisters are the ones who operated the school, some of them taught in the school. Some of the finest artists of Florence were invited to teach at the school. I was greatly privileged to be given this opportunity to study music at the very centre of Italian culture.

12:36 When the courses were completed in June 1956, I had to plan my return trip to Canada. An American Sister who had also been studying at the Villa was able to book a double cabin on the Andrea Doria, sailing July the 17th and invited me to share it with her. This was Sister Marie Raymond of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids. As the time suited me very well, I gladly agreed. This allowed me two free weeks to spend with my father in England whom I had not seen for many many years.

13:12 On July 16th, then, I flew from London to Genoa where I joined Sister Marie Raymond and boarded the Andrea Doria the following day. Across the blue waters of the Mediterranean, under sunny skies, we sailed. At Gibraltar, the last mail was taken ashore and included in it was a letter to my sister telling her of the glorious weather we were having. "The sea is like glass," I wrote. Then for four days the great ship ploughed gently through blue-grey waters of the mid-Atlantic. I was looking forward to my return home; I felt enriched musically and from the varied experience which the year had brought. I was eager to share with my students all that I had learned. My trunk was full of books, music scores-- well marked by my teacher - class notes, etc.

as well as small souvenirs of the many countries I had visited. The restful days at sea afforded me the quiet I needed to complete my diary, and large photo album and to begin the work of cataloguing about 700 coloured slides which I had taken. The loss of all these personal treasures had... has been a painful one and I still feel it even now. I think it's dimming a little bit. [laughter]

14:33 On Wednesday, July the 25th, the weather pattern changed. Fog now replaced the sunshine, and throughout the afternoon and evening the ship's foghorn sounded ominously. There was talk among the passengers about the possibility of our being delayed should they have to reduce speed. But it was generally felt that present-day navigation equipment, which included radar, eliminated any chance of danger on this magnificent unsinkable ship. You see the parallel with the Titanic there. By evening we were only about 200 miles from the port of New York and preparations were under way for disembarking the next day. On the Upper Decks, farewell gatherings, dances, small parties were taking place. Many passengers were watching movies, others playing cards and various games. From the Belvedere Lounge on the Promenade Deck, the strains of "Arreivederci Roma!"-- Farewell Rome-- could be heard. This was quite a popular song in Rome that summer. And the tourists loved it. Arrevederci Roma. These sounds floated out into the night. After dinner, Sister Marie Raymond and I went up into the open Boat Deck for a stroll. Outside the fog had come up, blanketing the ocean. Nothing could be seen, not even the water below the deck. Even the upper decks were shrouded in mist as the weird mournful sound of the foghorn sounded and the ship approached Nantucket Island.

16:17 The incredible fact was that even now, we did not sense danger. If anyone at this point had expressed fears or wonders we should certainly not have decided to return to our cabin and go to

bed. Meanwhile, the Andrea Doria sliced through the ocean at full speed. And an awesome wall of north Atlantic fog closed in around her. Not many miles away, passengers aboard the Swedish-American liner *Stockholm* were testing their first night at sea. The 12,644 ton *Stockholm* had sailed shortly before noon that day from Manhattan, bound for Copenhagen. After she slipped out into the Hudson River, she idled in the stream while the larger 44,356 ton *Ile de France* swung from her pier down the Hudson. Then, in file, the two ships passed Manhattan's towers out into the open sea. The more powerful ship soon outdistancing the *Stockholm*. By 11 PM, the *Stockholm* and the Andrea Doria were both churning through the busy, angry waters south of Nantucket, each going in a different direction.

17:48 Through the stretch of the Atlantic from Sheepshead Bay to the Nantucket Bearing and beyond, runs what is known as Track Charlie - at this time of the year, one of the principal transatlantic shipping lanes. By routine, but not rule, westbound vessels follow the northern side of Track Charlie, eastbound ships, the southern. But that evening, the eastbound *Stockholm* was holding to the northern edge. On a clear night, the course holds no serious hazard. But for three days there had been heavy fog, and the view from a ship's bridge was scarcely farther than the boat. Radar says search the seas ahead and longtime masters of the ship, the captains, with tight schedules reduced speed only slightly for fowl weather.

18:47 Shortly after 11 PM, one of the Andrea Doria's card players looked idly out of the starboard window and gasped. Erie lights of another ship were glinting and sprinting out of the darkness towards the Andrea Doria. A moment later, with a grinding, crunching roar, *Stockholm's* knife-sharp prow, reinforced for ice in northern waters, ground thirty feet deep into

the starboard quarter of Andrea Doria, just abaft her flying bridge. Two thundering crashes, like explosions, brought the great liner to a shuddering stop.

19:31 Sister Marie Raymond and I were awakened by the crash. I was in the upper berth of the cabin and as I tried to get out of my berth, the ship suddenly lurked sideways and I was thrown to the floor. Out in the corridors, we heard screaming and shouting: "put on your lifejackets." Later we heard that on the upper decks the explosive collision hurled card players to the floor and ripped their tables from the sockets. Bar patrons were showered by flying glass, movie watchers were hurled into screaming heaps. Sister and I threw on our large black habits over our nightdresses, put our head linens on quickly then reached for our life jackets. We forced ourselves to remain calm not realizing really what had happened and assuming that it was probably some minor explosion in the engine room which would soon be righted.

20:28 We left the cabin wearing the life jackets, taking nothing with us, so certain were we that we would be soon returning. A notice in our cabin directed us to go to our muster station in any emergency, so we started out for the cabin class ballroom, which was our station. Up four flights of stairs, we climbed, with some difficulty owing to the listing of the ship. Here I must mention that we had never had a boat drill. On all ocean liners, this is a routine event. When we had been out at sea for a few days, we were ordered one afternoon to report to our muster station for a boat drill. Carrying our life jackets, we all reported to the ballroom where we had considerable amusement teasing one another about our strange appearance in these orange coloured life jackets. No official came to give us any instructions, so after an hour or so, we left.

21:28 After the accident, when Sister and I arrived at the ballroom, we found it filled with stunned and shocked dazed passengers. The Italian passengers, many of whom were emigrants, and very frightened ones, among them was much screaming and crying. American passengers, of a different temperament, were generally controlled, though probably hiding their fears intentionally. The heavy furniture was sliding across the room, bar tables with their glass tops and profusion of bottles and glasses were a considerable hazard. The orchestra had been playing so that music stands and instruments had fallen over. The ballroom had four large pillars which served as a support for some of the furniture. Many of us were able to brace ourselves against these chairs in a sitting or standing position, other people sat on the floor wherever they could find support.

22:27 We did everything possible to calm the fears of the frightened passengers. Praying aloud seemed to have a calming effect. I prayed the Rosary in English, while another Sister further away, Sister Angelita from Rome, who was fluent in Italian, led it in Italian. During all of this time, we heard no message from any official of the ship. We could only speculate on fragments of information received from passengers. One crew member, the cabin class bar steward who had been on duty here, worked heroically to help us. He cleared away broken glass, helped to secure furniture against pillars and walls, then he got some heavy rope and proceeded to tie it from pillar to pillar so that people moving around could have something to hang onto. 23:19

23:23 A middle-aged man who was quite distraught, tears rolling down his cheeks-- I had a suspicion he had been drinking-- could not tie up his life jacket and appealed to me for help. I supported him while we investigated the situation and discovered that he had it on upside down.

[laughter] We finally got it on properly. Perhaps the most difficult thing to bear with was our knowing nothing. What had happened? What might happen? Was anything being done about it? At one point a hysterical woman tried to crash through the glass window of the deck thinking-- see the Promenade Deck or the Cabin Class deck had windows all around it-- thinking I supposed that she might be saved by leaping over the side of the ship. Fortunately, people around her were able to restrain her. While some people were wailing and crying, many others were very controlled and brave. I shall never forget one little family, Americans, a mother, father, two small children, and twin babies only six weeks old. Throughout the whole ordeal, they sat very quietly together. When the time came for them to go down the rope ladder, much later, sailors tied ropes around the two children and lowered them into the boat; the mother and father went down the ladder, each of the babies strapped on the back. There were many brave people on the ship that night, each risking their own lives to save others. William Hoffer's book *Saved* gives many stories of personal bravery. Four Catholic priests, returning from studies in Rome, did heroic work; going down into the lowest decks, in great danger, to look for people and to find life jackets for those who were without them.

25:09 Three of these priests had decided not to go to bed early and have one last game of Scrabble together, had they not made this decision, they would have been killed because the cabin which they shared was completely demolished by the collision. Since my cabin was on the port side away from the disaster area, I was not fully aware of the danger at first, nor of the extent of the tragedy and suffering on the starboard side. However, the serious listing of the ship, the dimming lights, and the fragments of information which reached us gradually convinced me that we were indeed in serious danger. This was confirmed when one of the priests came to the

ballroom and calling for silence, proceeded to tell us the seriousness of the damage and announced that he was about to give *all* passengers General Absolution. "Anyone who wishes to receive this," said the young priest, "has only to express in his heart sorrow for any wrongs of his life." After a few moments of silence, he then blessed us and pronounced the Words of Absolution. It was then that I realized that I would likely go down with the ship. I experienced a moment of panic and then a great wave of peace came over me and I was able to remain calm and to accept the reality of the situation. I remember recalling too-- was a great sort of consolation to me-- that that afternoon up on deck there was a movie showing in one of the ballrooms and a couple of the other Sisters had gone to the movie, and I wasn't too interested in going to the movies and I sat on the deck-- um-- continued cataloguing my slides. And then I decided-- uh-- Benediction was at five o'clock and the Chaplain always heard Confessions before Benediction if you wished to go. And the other Sisters said, "Well, we're going to have plenty of time in New York on the day we land, cause we get there early in the morning and-- you know-- we can easily go to Confession there." But I began to think, I think I would *like* to go to Confession; so I went down, there was nobody in the Chapel but the priest. And so I had a very peaceful Confession and then attended Benediction and that thought came to me and I remember when I had the idea that I would likely not come out of this-- um-- thinking, well, you know what more can I do? This is life. And this other people have to accept tragedies, sudden deaths and so on and I thought well you know the thing to do is just take it and keep calm. Anyway, some passengers close to me asked me to explain what the priest had said and I did so briefly assuring them that they would share in the blessing. We then prayed the Lord's Prayer together. For some time, this young priest moved around among the passengers, talking quietly and

calming their fears and hearing Confessions among the open cabin they were as close to each other as they could be.

28:10 On the decks of the Andrea Doria as I have said, passengers were lost in a fog of ignorance. Captain Calamai's decision to withhold information deliberately was contrary to the accepted practices of ship captains and airline pilots. In command of a stricken craft, most captains would share at least some of the details with their passengers, but not once did Captain Calamai take the ship's microphone to reassure the 1,700 people who waited in darkness. And at no time did he inform the passengers over the loudspeakers that the ship was in danger of sinking, that half the lifeboats were useless, or that the passengers would have to abandon ship. As a result a pervasive feeling of helplessness spread through the ship. I did learn later that Captain Calamai had a most marvelous record as a captain on the Italian Line, he had never encountered any kind of disaster and this was, I believe, his last trip. And he was so utterly shocked at what had happened that he simply became totally useless and could give no commands. So that was one of the reasons for the great disorder on the ship.

29:32 Paradoxically, there was more reason for hope than the despairing passengers realized. The Andrea Doria's SOS was picked up at 11:22 PM by the Long Island Coast Guard radio station which notified the New York Coordination Centre. It was impossible to send rescue planes or helicopters because visibility was reported as nil. But within minutes, Coast Guard cutters were dispatched from various ports on the eastern seaboard. Only 15 miles from the site, the United Fruit Company freighter Cape Anne, en route to New York, answered the distress signal and the captain steered his ship towards the distress area. Other small ships reported in

saying that they were on their way. Some of these only had two or three lifeboats. Two hours east of the crash site, Captain Raoul Boudwin(?), the vacation replacement master of the great French luxury liner Ile de France, puzzled over the distress signal he had received shortly after 11:20 PM. He knew the Doria and he could never imagine what she would be in serious danger. The Ile de France was far away from the collision site, at the edge of responsibility. The decision to answer or ignore the call rested entirely with the captain. He had more than 900 passengers on board who expected to arrive at Le Havre, France on time. 31:06

Sister Callistus Andrea Doria-b—ac

If he did not respond, he risked living with a pained conscious for the rest of his life. At 11:54PM, the Captain made his decision. He would go to the Andrea Doria. As the great French Liner moved into a sweeping turn that headed it back west, Captain Boudwin ordered his engine crew to increase speed to the maximum. He doubled the watch and asked for volunteers to man 11 of the ships 32 lifeboats. At the area of disaster after seemingly endless wait, out of the fog, came the purr of motors and the slap of oars. Lifeboats arrived first from the Stockholm-- now that's the ship that collided with us-- where Captain Nordenssen had sealed his crumpled bow, found his vessel seaworthy, it had tremendous damage, it went into New York with the most dreadful shattered front, but he found the vessel was seaworthy and he turned to rescue. Andrea Doria's radio crackled as other ships reported positions and the old but agile Ile de France promised to reach the Doria within two hours. But the passengers waiting the long vigil in the Cabin Class ballroom knew nothing of this. From my position against a pillar in the ballroom, I noticed that looking through the glass windows of the Promenade Deck, I could see the water,

this showed the extent of the ships listing. As I watched, I noticed lifeboats being lowered and I also saw that people in the boats were wearing the dark blue jackets of crew members. I did not want to announce this as I feared it would cause more panic; however, the situation was soon noticed by others and everyone began shouting and yelling because they saw that people were being taken off the ship and it looked as though no one was doing anything about our plight. Our steward tried to calm the people and told them that he would go and investigate. Within five minutes he returned with the good news that rescue ships had arrived and assured us that he would help us to get to the open boat deck. In an orderly fashion, he led us in single file, swinging along the slippery floor holding firmly to the ropes which he had hung earlier, we finally reached the stairway. By this time, the ship was completely on its side, or so it seemed to us. Try to imagine yourself climbing a stairway on its side. It was a slow, tedious climb. However, when I reached the top and stood upright, a glorious sight met my gaze. The fog had lifted, the sky was clear, and only a short distance away stood a magnificent ship, all illuminated with brilliant lights across the skyline the large illuminated letters spelled the name "Ile de France". At once, I turned back to the stairway and spread the good news to those still struggling to reach the top.

3:19 Once at the open rail, we waited our turn to be put into a lifeboat. At this section of the ship, we had a strong rope ladder. Later I was told that many people suffered serious burns to their hands and fell as they tried to slide down to the boat on the single rope. In some areas they used the nets off the swimming pools and would get caught in the netting. So, I was very very very blessed and fortunate that night to be on the side of the ship where we were able to have a rope ladder and we hadn't did not experience the terrible tragedy as so many people did. Many of

these people fell into the boats or into the water suffering serious injuries and broken bones. We had a couple of good seamen to help us and when my turn came, I was helped over the railing, all the time the sailor cautioned *piano piano* which in Italian is slowly, slowly. And these seamen were very very good. Mind you none of them were officers, we didn't see an officer. These were the seamen, the steward of the bar, and the seamen who were on hand to help people.

4:35 As I glanced down to see where the lifeboat was, the water seemed to be a very long distance away because we were up on one of the highest decks, you see. However, grasping the rope ladder with both hands, I went down slowly until after the last step I dropped into the boat. Our lifeboat, which filled to capacity, was manned by about six sailors of the Ile de France to whom it belonged. So I think had we tried to bring anything from our cabins, it probably would have been useless you could hang something around your neck because you had to hang on for dear life to this thick thick rope going down. The sea was quite rough and they had to exercise caution so that we would not capsize. But it was not long before we were at the side of the Ile de France.

5:20 I remember one little incident I could mention here, in this lifeboat. There was a young lady, a teenage girl I suppose, she had nothing but a very flimsy nightdress on which really wasn't too adequate and she was *terribly* upset by that. And her father was with her and he thanked me afterwards the next day, because he said, "Oh you gave her such assurance." I said to her, "Don't worry about what you look like, you know, your life is saved. So, why worry about you lo- I said we all look terrible you know." So [laughter], I think that did kind of comfort her.

5:55 Here we were taken-- oh, yes-- it was not long before we were at the side of the Ile de France. Here we were taken in through an opening in one of the lowest decks, so it was only a few steps up on a small ladder. Inside, we were met by French crew members who were very sympathetic and helpful, bringing us to a nearby elevator on which we ascended to the Promenade Deck. Row upon row of deck chairs and blankets had been prepared for us and we were offered steaming hot coffee and sandwiches. Apparently the captain had done *all* of this very secretly and very silently without alerting any of their passengers who were already in bed. I did not take anything until later because as soon as I reached the deck, suddenly a reaction from the whole experience took hold of me and a great weakness zapped all of my strength so that I had to be lifted onto the deck chair. At the same time, I totally lost all power of speech. Which is unusual for me [great laughter]. I remember the strange feeling of opening my mouth to say something to Sister Marie Raymond and absolutely nothing happened. I do not know how long I was in this state, sometime later, I recall I had coffee. And I remember many other passengers coming in and people being brought on stretchers to the hospital as the early hours of the morning went on.

7:21 At about 7 AM I think it may have been, the Chaplain of the Ile de France announced that he would offer a Mass in the Chapel for anyone who would like to attend. Many passengers grateful to be alive went to this Mass in thanksgiving. I'm sure we were a motley looking crew, with the mud and the water on our skirts and it was - we were at terrible sight I think. On leaving the Chapel, we discovered that permission had been granted for us to send one cable without any charge. I sent a cable to Mother Margaret, it was a brief, just stating that I was on the Ile de France and asking her to notify my relatives. On board the Ile de France, everything possible was

done for our comfort. The Promenade Deck was turned over completely for our use and it was here that we were served hot coffee and rolls and at noontime, soup and sandwiches. Captain Boudwin had not told his own passengers about the events of the previous night, nor did they know till next morning that the ship was returning to New York. [audience reaction] As the passengers of the Ile de France arrived on the decks on Thursday morning they were shocked to discover the strange crowd of people who had taken over their Promenade Deck [audience reaction] No one was fully dressed. Many were in night attire, by now this flimsy clothing was torn and dirty, particularly those, and that was then that we realized, what the terrible tragedy had been in some parts of the ship. Some of them in the lower decks and the parts of the ship that was damaged, were covered with the oil and grease from leaking pipes and everything else that had happened and they looked pretty terrible. Others were scantily dressed in whatever they had been able to put on quickly, like ourselves; many were barefoot. Those who had made their way from the damaged parts of the ship were covered with oil, grease, and dirt. Passengers of the Ile de France were most generous, giving away all the clothing they could possibly spare. Sister Marie Raymond and I went among the people distributing the clothing, shoes, and even cigarettes which had been donated. We were invited by, later in the day I think it was some time in the afternoon, a very lovely lady from the Ile de France who obviously was quite a wealthy woman, she and her husband were travelling to uh- had been on their way to France, of course, and had been turned back. She invited the two sisters to go to their cabin and freshen up and that was a great great boom to be able to at least wash off your face a little bit. And they were all very kind to us.

10:02 We tried to comfort and reassure the many distressed people, still ignorant of the fate of loved ones with whom they had lost contact. That was one of the saddest parts because you'd find a father who didn't know where a child was or a mother and so on. I recall one elderly man sitting by himself barefoot, disheveled and weeping quietly head in hands. As I tried to comfort him, he kept repeating "My wife is gone." I tried to tell him that he should not give up hope as she could quite likely have been put on another rescue ship. "Oh no," he said, "I was with her, I saw her, she is dead." Later, when I read many of the stories of personal tragedies, I realized that this man must have been Dr. Thur [?] Petersen, whose wife Martha had been crushed when the elevator shaft fell on her bed. He had made heroic attempts to free her with the help of a faithful steward and one of the priests. 11:04 The whole story was written up in one of the magazines and it was called "Three Tragic Hours in Cabin 50" or something like that. And I read the account and I recognized who that man was. He tried with the help of the priests and everybody to try to free her, but she died while they were trying to remove the shaft with a heavy jack. They had nothing to lift this elevator off her and they radioed the ship's officers didn't seem to be doing much for them at all, but finally this Dr. Peterson just simply insisted and insisted and somebody radioed a ship, a nearby small boat, and sailors were able to bring on a heavy jack which they thought would lift the shaft off her, and it would have but it was too late. And she died while they were trying to remove the shaft with the heavy jack; she was a very brave and very wonderful woman because she was conscious the whole time and kept telling her husband to leave her. She said, "I am finished. You go." And he wouldn't leave her until she died, and then he just quietly put a sheet over her or something that was there in the cabin.

12:18 The story of the Petersons is a strange and sad one. The doctor and his wife were returning from a medical conference in Europe. Knowing that her husband was quite exhausted and badly in need of a holiday, Martha suggested that they cancel their air tickets and take a leisurely trip home on the lovely Andrea Doria. An unexpected cancellation on the Doria made available to them one of the luxurious first class cabins and they were delighted. Then the night of the collision, the maid had, by mistake laid out their night clothes on the opposite beds, since they were tired and this was the last night, they thought they might as well sleep in each other's bed; so when the collision occurred, Dr. Peterson was thrown from his bed some distance into the darkness but not injured, and his wife was pinned under the elevator shaft. So there were many many such stories.

13:13 It was a day of celebration and thanksgiving, for others there was yet more anguish to encounter. The decks were full of human beings caught up in the emotional complexity of deliverance from great peril. Many were stupefied with shock and exhaustion or sometimes hysterical in relief. Some were angry over lost possessions and very bitter and angry over what they thought was culpable negligence on the part of those in command of the Andrea Doria. Others were in anguish over missing relatives. The ships hospital was filled to capacity with survivors. Doctors were operating setting broken bones. It was a long day and the hours dragged on.

14:00 I must say I don't think I have it mentioned here, that we left the scene of the Andrea Doria at about ten in the morning. The boat we still had not given hope that the boat would be saved because we were all thinking of what we had on the boat naturally. And we not had not given up hope. It was completely on its side, but everybody was very optimistic saying "Oh they would be able to somehow get it to shore" and it wouldn't sink. So it was about noon when we heard the

news came on the ship's the Ile de France's radio that the ship had sunk. So that was a great blow to everybody.

14:43 At about three pm we were finally entering the New York harbour, tugboats came out to meet us and a number of immigration officials and newsmen boarded the ship. Mention of the newsmen reminds me that the Ile de France's passenger list included a large number of American newsmen travelling to Paris for a press conference. The captain alerted them on Wednesday night as soon as he knew he was going back to the scene. And this was a real break for the media, allowing them to get to cover the rescue story at first hand and to get excellent photos of the whole operation. So any photos that you saw of the disaster and there were very very many, ah very close up pictures of the tragedy, they were due to the fact that it was just a coincidence that all of these newsmen and cameramen were on the decks of the Ile de France taking pictures while we were struggling to get off the boat and so on. So they had perfect pictures.

15:48 The immigration officers interviewed each of the Doria passengers individually, it took all that time, several hours. We had no passports as we'd handed them over to the purser of the ship when we embarked. We were given a paper authorizing our entry into the United States. The Ile de France was the first rescue ship to reach the port. We had left the site of the collision about 8 am as I recall. Not sure about that time I think 8 am probably. My last picture of the Andrea Doria is that of the great ship laying completely on its side. As we approached the pier in New York, the Ile de France was given a hero's welcome. Thousands of people lined the dock. Many relatives of passengers anxiously waiting to see if their loved ones would walk off the ship. Sister Marie Raymond, a Dominican sister with whom I travelled, whose order had convents in

New York, was sure that someone would be there to meet us and she was right. See they knew that we were coming on that boat. Her Reverend Mother had telephoned a priest in New York, a Dominican priest, and asked him to take us to one of their convents. We had first to be identified by officials of the Italian Line. It was their responsibility to see that each passenger was provided with whatever he or she needed and they did ask you what have you got, where would you go, where will you stay, etc. Before leaving the offices here, I was able to send a cable to my father who was still living in England and whom I had just left a few weeks before. At the Dominican convent we were welcomed warmly and shown great kindness. And here I telephoned Mother Margaret in London and she was able to arrange for a friend of a relative I think of Mother Margaret's in New York to purchase a new ticket for me to take the Friday evening train to St. Thomas, Ontario as had been previously planned. Now I remember saying to Mother Margaret when she seemed so grateful to hear my voice I said, but I look terrible, I'm in the habit with a nightdress under it and I have linens on but no gamp and all this, and I said, "what shall I do?" She said, "Come home! Doesn't matter what you look like!" [laughter] So anyway, she arranged see, and I said I have no tickets, our train tickets for the New York Central Line was going to take us from New York to St. Thomas had been lost of course. So she said she would get in touch with her relatives in New York and they would arrange it with the New York Line. As it happened I think he had to pay our way and the community reimbursed him later or something like that, but anyway, he telephoned ah the convent where I was staying and said that everything was all right, he would personally take us to the train, and we were allowed by the officials to go in a back way so that we avoided all the publicity that was at the- all the people- at the station to try to get a view of any passengers from the Doria you see, and we were very thankful for that. It

was about six in the evening when we got to the train and they took us in a back way. And we had a private cabin to ourselves or private compartment on the train.

19:05 Anyway I arrived in St Thomas at 5 am on Saturday morning. I was met by two sisters from the convent here. Um I must say, that from the time of the of the accident which happened at 11:20, and we had just scarcely gone to sleep on the Doria, from the time of the accident till I got back to London, on Saturday afternoon, the accident happened on the Wednesday night, I had absolutely no sleep because the night we arrived in New York at the convent there was a terrible thunderstorm, the heat was *unbearable*, and there was just no sleep, I guess our nerves were so taught there was no way of relaxing. They did everything to be kind to us, the next day we had to put the whole day in that convent and I remember getting up getting into the chapel for the Mass the next morning and I could hardly walk. It was like both legs were made of iron, I just had to shuffle along to get to the chapel for Mass. And so then coming then on the train of course there's no sleep there. And the men –they- the conductor and people were very nice to us, they wanted to talk a little bit about it of course and they did. But anyway, so my first sleep was when I got home Saturday afternoon.

20:28 Anyway, to get back now. Yes. I arrived in St Thomas at 5 AM on Saturday morning, was met by two sisters from the convent here. Now that was I think Sister Baptista and Sister Immanuel if I remember rightly. Sister Baptista and Sister Immanuel. They were absolutely wonderful, they met us at the train, took us immediately in a car to the convent at that hour and Sister Clara immediately put me to bed and took he habit and the nightdress washed everything fitted me out with underclothing and fresh linens. And I felt just as dressed up as any nun when I

was coming home to London. Anyhow, they were very very kind. We went to Mass, the 8:00 Mass in St Thomas and a then had a little breakfast. And then Mother Margaret and Sister St. Martin came in the community car to bring us home. And I think some of you remember the welcome at the front door. It was all very it was all very... Sister Julia remembers.

[Sister Julia speaking, cannot make out the conversation; Can hear some of Sister Callistus' conversation with audience]

So that's the way it happened. Then the Andrea Doria sank under clear skies at 10:10 AM on July the 26th 1956. Not quite 11 hours after her collision with the Stockholm. The Italian vessel went down 45 miles south of Nantucket. Through the early hours of a perfect morning, the stricken ship listed to starboard. Meanwhile nearby helicopters buzzed over the stern of the Stockholm removing seriously injured survivors, there were some there, until the very last many who flew over the scene, admiring the intact port side where the line of lights gleaming brightly along the Promenade Deck were hopeful, even confident that she would stay afloat, but the Doria was hiding her fateful wound and she slowly sank below the surface of the water.

22:49 So that is the story. It has been longer than I expected. It would be but I think I enlarged a little bit when I interjected certain things, now I'm willing to answer any questions if there is anything you would like to ask.

23:00/31:07

[The audience has questions here. This portion has not been transcribed.]

[Corrected Feb. 2/16]