

Victory Noll  
Huntington, Indiana  
March 4, 1977

Dear Sisters.

"I believe that my Redeemer lives . . . I myself shall see him. My own eyes shall gaze on him. This hope of mine is cherished in my heart!"  
(Job 19:25-27)

As we walked silently to the cemetery this morning, the rain continued to fall, clearing away the debris of winter. It struck me that the rain was preparing the ground for all the new life that was already showing signs of bursting forth to freedom and fruitfulness.

So it seemed with Sister Bernice; with this long period of suffering came her preparation to new life. When that preparation and transformation was complete, she passed through the mystery of death in confidence and peace to gaze on Him whom she cherished in her heart!

The disease that ultimately caused her death last Tuesday evening at 11:35 p.m., was detected after abdominal surgery at Rocky Ford in 1972. At that time Sister Bernice was not aware of her condition. It was only after she returned to Victory Noll that she learned from Sister Gertrude of her malignancy. However, here at the Noll she continued to live life in complete abandonment to the Father with the quiet peace so characteristic of her.

Eventually, Sister became strong enough to get back into her beloved ministry. She spent part of a school year in Beattyville and almost two years in Kendallville during which time she was made lector in Rome City. She was a gifted person who had an intense enthusiasm for all the aspects of ministry. Monsignor Faber of Kendallville praised her as a real blessing in the parish and an inspiration to all who met her.

In June of 1976, Sister had to return to Victory Noll from Kendallville because of much abdominal discomfort. She was receiving weekly injections of a cancer control drug which made her very ill. She would hardly recover from the effects of one injection when it was time for another. Except for short periods of abstinence, this drug schedule continued until her death.

A short time before Christmas her family asked if she could spend Christmas with them as it had been many years since she had been with them during the holiday season. Sister made the trip and returned to the Noll in extreme pain and complete exhaustion. It was after this that a noticeable change took place in her. The "seeming" personality change was confirmed by her physician who noted drastic changes in inter cranial pressure. This pressure permitted her a certain freedom from pain, but because of chemotherapy her mouth became sore and a constant nausea and vomiting caused much discomfort. Because of all this, she took little nourishment. Her coordination was severely affected and she could do little to help herself. Through all this Sister never complained, and accepted in gratitude the loving help of her sisters.

When Sister's condition became worse on Sunday, February 27th, Father Reginald anointed her just before the celebration of the Eucharist. Many of us were present to pray with her.

Sister was totally conscious up to the time of her death; she was also very nauseated. It was during such a time when Sister Mary Loretta was trying to make her more comfortable that she slipped into eternity.

She was born on October 31, 1916, in Detroit, the fourth oldest in a family of seven. Sister entered the Congregation August 27, 1935, and made first profession of vows at Victory Noll August 21, 1938.

Surviving her are two brothers and three sisters, all of whom were present for the funeral. John of Union Lake; Raymond and his wife, Virginia, of Garden City; Elizabeth Bruschi and her husband, Joseph, of Dearborn Heights; Mary Gasior of West Dearborn, Michigan; Florence Farkos and her husband, Stephen, of South Holland, Illinois; George Crosariol, a brother-in-law, with his daughter Georgeanne, of Lansing, Illinois; John Gasior, a nephew, and his wife, Carol, of Lavonia, Michigan; and James Gasior of Chicago, who arrived too late for the funeral, but stayed to visit his mother and the rest of the family.

Father Michele, ofm.cap., concelebrated the Liturgy of Christian Burial with Monsignor Faber of Kendallville and Father Burn of Rome City. As all the prayers for the graveside services were prayed in chapel because of the weather, Father blessed the grave, commended Sister's body therein, and we returned to the house for dinner.

Lovingly in Jesus and Mary

*Sister Germaine Stalle*