

June 10, 1971

victory Noll
June 22, 1971

Dear Sisters

Peace and love to you in the Holy Spirit!

We are indebted to Sisters Agnes Kozla, Nora O'Reilly, and Colette Corcoran for details of the last illness and death of our Sister Celine Montoya who died Thursday, June 10, in Las Vegas. And we are indebted to all the Vegas Sisters and especially to Sister Mary Colette for the loving care they gave our dear Sister.

Sister Mary Colette gave up her position in the hospital in Lubbock to take care of Sister Celine when Sister Muriel brought her to Vegas from San Angelo on April 5. Without Sister Mary Colette's help it would have been impossible for the Sisters in the mission to give Sister Celine the constant attention she needed.

On May 23 Sister's serious condition was compounded when she suffered a stroke. She was taken to St. Anthony's hospital where she remained until May 29 when the doctor advised that she be brought home. As the days wore on, Sister's pain increased. Early in the morning of June 10 Father Griego gave her the sacrament of the sick once again. That evening the Sisters prayed with her and it was evident that Sister Celine was aware of everything even though she could not speak. Her relatives had left and some of the Sisters had gone to their rooms for a little rest before taking their turns at watch through the night. Sister Nora was with Sister Celine when she just seemed to slip away quietly. It was about 9:30.

Five priests of the area concelebrated Sister's funeral rites Monday, June 14, in Our Lady of Sorrows Church where Sister Celine had been baptized, confirmed, and where she made her First Communion. Many of Sister Celine's friends from Las Vegas, Santa Fe, and El Paso accompanied the body to Rosario Cemetery in Santa Fe where Sister's remains rest in the same plot where Sister Mary Clare Leutenegger and Will Frey are buried. Msgr. Tournier gave a beautiful homily at the grave. A member of Sister's family also spoke in Spanish.

Sister Celine (Marcelina) Montoya was born in Upper Las Vegas, known also as the village of San Antonio, July 17, 1912. She entered Victory Noll in January 1931 after having first spent some time as an aspirant at Victory Mount. Sister Celine was professed on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1934. She spent her missionary years in New Mexico, Texas, and California.

She is survived by her brother Miguel and her sister, Mrs. Carlos Sanchez of Las Vegas. Another brother, Gabriel, lives in Oakland, California. Mrs. Sanchez and one of Sister Celine's nieces, Lucy Griego, often stayed at the convent to help care for Sister during her illness.

May the death of each of us be in the peace of Christ so that we might share in his glorious resurrection.

Devotedly in Jesus and Mary

Sister Elizabeth Ann Elford