

November 16, 1995

We hold a treasure
not made of gold

In earthen vessels
wealth untold.



Dear Sisters:

These beautiful words at the wake service for Sister Agnes Kozla are from *Earthen Vessels*, our opening hymn. The music and voices of those gathered and the liturgical artistry of Sister Ann Shirley Kelly carried a message so clear: "Light has shown in our darkness; God has shown in our heart" through the life of our Sister.

Sister Agnes Kozla died Saturday morning, November 4, 1995. She was born March 26, 1901 in Chicago, Illinois and was baptized May 5, 1901 in SS. Cyril and Methodius Church. She entered Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters Congregation August 14, 1924 at the Junior Mission Training House in Gary, Indiana. She pronounced her first vows October 7, 1926. She has ministered in missions in Utah, New Mexico, California, Michigan, Texas and Indiana.

A papar written by Sister Agnes describes some of her life decisions so well.

"During my youth and as a young woman my heart was set on serving my Lord Jesus in some way. I tried to put it out of my mind and joined interesting clubs that would distract me from this thought but it always persisted."

Her sister's friend (who later became her brother-in-law) gave Agnes a lead. He told her of Caroline Meister from his neighborhood who was attending the Academy of Our Lady in Chicago. She had plans to be a missionary and join a band of workers called Catechists.

Through Caroline it was arranged that Agnes have an interview with Father Sigstein.

"I went one Sunday afternoon on my way to the beach for a swim. Father spoke with me for some time and then asked what I was carrying under my arm. I told him it was my bathing suit and he laughed. I did not know then why he laughed."

Years later I wondered about this. There were not many places in the missions at that time where one could go for a good swim. He also knew there was very little water in the New Mexico area and that I might as well chalk it down as a lost art."

The first weeks in the Settlement House were a time of waiting for the completion of Victory Noll. When it was ready the missionary-to-be was sweeping plaster for days. The story continues with the new missionary, No. 13, beginning an exciting new life in Anton Chico, New Mexico.

An interview in The Harmonizer in the 1980's of Bishop McManus with Sister Agnes after she retired to Victory Noll narrates the life and spirit she lived. She had already read the Documents of Vatican II and taken very seriously the liturgical reforms encouraging the use of "all appropriate art forms." She was soon putting them into practice.

Sister Agnes Kozla had been in a wheel chair in Holy Family Health Care Center for a few years. Her health had been failing but not seriously until a day before her death. She was alert and visiting with the sisters in her room on Saturday morning. Quietly and peacefully, she died during Mass about 11:00 o'clock.

Sister Agnes' body was returned Sunday afternoon to the Memorial Chapel for rosary at 4:30. Our sisters from Fort Wayne and several nurses joined us for the evening wake.

Sister Agnes Kozla is survived by two sisters: Betty Fischer of Worth, Illinois and Emily Smith of Lemont, Illinois. Both were present for the funeral with 12 of Sister's nieces and nephews.

Father Thomas Fahey was celebrant at the inspiring Mass Monday morning. Sister Judith Turnock presented a liturgical dance; Sister William Ann Maloney gave an interesting homily. Commendation prayers were in the gathering space. A number of sisters walked to the cemetery with the family though weather was inclement.

Sister, continue to light our darkness and help us show Christ from our hearts. Thank you and Christ's Peace.

Sincerely in Jesus and Mary,

General Secretary