



SISTER JOHN FRANCIS RADLER, OLVM

Sister John Francis Radler slipped quietly into the hands of God around 2 p.m. on Saturday February 24, 2018, at Saint Anne Community at Victory Noll, Huntington. She was just a little over a month short of her 102nd birthday.

Sister John Francis was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on March 29, 1916, to Alfred Radler and Barbara Heindl Radler. She was baptized Dorothy Theresa at Saint Boniface Church on April 9, 1916. She had an older sister, Elizabeth Radler, who died in 1930, leaving Dorothy as an only child, which may have been why her mother was not in favor of her entering the congregation.

Going against her mother's wishes, Sister John Francis entered the congregation on March 12, 1938, professing first vows on August 5, 1940. After making her profession, she was missioned to Redlands, California. In 1942, she entered Immaculate Heart College. She graduated in 1944, earning a Bachelor degree in Education, with an emphasis in History and Sociology. She also received her California teaching certificate, which she kept active until 1951. After graduating from Immaculate Heart, she went to Washington, D.C., to begin her studies at the National Catholic School of Social Service. She received her Master's degree in Social Work in 1946, then returned to Fort Wayne, Indiana, to work at the Fort Wayne Diocesan office of Catholic Charities.

In 1961, she was asked to assist Sister Aurelia Jane McMahon in setting up Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic in Tucson, Arizona. She served there for 20 years in both administration and social services. Saint Elizabeth's, or "the Clinic" — as it was referred to in the community — provided medical and dental care for low-income families and individuals. Many patients were not eligible for public assistance, even though they were below the federal poverty level. They were often the working poor, who could not afford private insurance. The Victory Noll Sisters staffed the facility as nurses, social workers and administrators, always with the mission of the clinic in their heart. The mission and philosophy of Saint Elizabeth's was rooted in the Catholic Social Teaching of the dignity of every human person, regardless of race, nationality, gender or circumstances. There was a strong and vibrant dedication and motivation to assist all with an attitude of Christian charity and to provide services in an ecumenical spirit without discrimination. That continues to be the philosophy of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic to this day.

After caring for her mother for several years in Milwaukee, Sister John Francis and Sr. Beatrice Mott became co-administrators at Saint Barnabas Villa, in Northfield, Ohio. Saint Barnabas is a center for elderly adults. Sr. John Francis returned to Victory Noll in 1992 to be the coordinator of Holy Family Health Care, a position she held for four years. She also served as the activities director and during this time we would often see Sr. John Francis in the lobby with several other Sisters doing sewing, making rosaries and chatting about the day's events, the happenings in the world and in our community. This was part of evening recreation. She also loved to promote group singing of some of the old classics.

She fully retired in 2007, but she never gave up her nightly coordinator's task of securing the doors, pulling the window shades and making sure all lights were off before retiring to her room for the night. She continued this unofficial ministry until just shortly before her death.

The community gathered to celebrate the life of Sister John Francis with vespers on Tuesday, February 27, 2018. The celebration continued with the Eucharistic liturgy on Wednesday morning, February 28, 2018. Rev. Michael Lobo presided at the Eucharistic liturgy. In his homily, he spoke about Sister John Francis and how she often seemed stern, seldom smiling, and yet there was a warmth about her when she did smile. She also had a wonderful laugh. She had a deep sense of hospitality; doing small thoughtful things to make sure the Sisters were welcomed and remembered that Victory Noll was their home.

Sister John Francis was persistent and determined from the very beginning, first by going against her mother's wishes, then persevering through academic studies, and finally helping to found and run a successful health clinic and home for the elderly. Through it all, she always remained faithful to her commitment to be a missionary Sister. May she now be welcomed into paradise by her family, her Victory Noll Sisters and all who have gone before her, marked by the sign of faith and a life of dedicated service.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sr. Ginger Downey O.L.V.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM