



SISTER MARY ADELE MASSARO, OLVM 94, died October 27, 2019, at Saint Anne Community Victory Noll, Huntington, Indiana. One of the nurses was with Sister Mary Adele as she passed peacefully from this life into eternal life at 6:50 AM on that Sunday morning, exactly 70 years to the day that she first walked through the doors of Victory Noll and began her journey as a Victory Noll Sister.

Sister Mary Adele was born in Poggio Piacenze, Italy, on October 24, 1925, to Joseph and Angelica (Ferrari) Massaro. She was baptized as Adele at Saint Felix the Martyr Church on December 6, 1925. Her parents, three brothers Primo, Antonio and Martino, and her sister Josephine Ruschell, all preceded her in death.

Sister Mary Adele came to the United States with her family in 1927. The family settled in Clairton, Pennsylvania. At confirmation she took the name of Jean, but afterward she went by Della Jean. She entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 27, 1945, and professed first vows on August 5, 1958. Her first mission was in Middlesex New Jersey. In true missionary style, she also served the missions in Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Texas.

In 1954, Sister Mary Adele wrote to Mother Cecilia, "At last the day has come when I can write the letter that I have been waiting for so long to write. Mother, I would like your permission to renew the vows on August 5, for life. May it be God's will!" She professed her perpetual vows on August 5, 1954.

Sister Mary Adele ministered in Religious Education, and in 1970 graduated with a degree in theology from Siena Heights College in Adrian, Michigan. She was missioned to Abiquiu, New Mexico, in 1971. She became very involved in the parish, even flying with the pastor in his airplane to the missions since they were very far apart and the roads were not easy to travel. She also was active in the SEARCH program, a retreat for teenagers and young adults. She introduced SEARCH to the Sisters working in East Los Angeles during her time in Abiquiu.

After caring for her Mother until her death in 1988, Sister Mary Adele began her last ministry placement as a Pastoral Assistant at Saint Alphonsus Parish in San Antonio, Texas. It is there that she would spend the last years working in a parish and being the "resident sister."

Sister Mary Adele was referred to the "miracle nun" by Archbishop Patrick F. Flores after she survived an Amtrak train crash in an Alabama bayou in 1993.

Sister Mary Adele wrote of the accident:

“I was going to see my sister’s family who lived in Florida and enjoy train travel to relax and see the sights. I was asleep when the train derailed around 3 am. It felt like we were on a roller coaster. We were in total darkness when the train came to a final halt, in water up to my waist. A young man helped many out a window and he swam with me 30 feet to where others were holding onto a barrier. It was dawn when we finally got out of the water and onto the floating office of the Scott Paper Company. Our families were contacted, and after a short stay at the hospital we were taken to a hotel. It was amazing how many people were volunteering to be of help. It was very moving and traumatic for me having so many people tell me they prayed, wept and rejoiced for me. I keep wondering, pondering, and continue to reflect more clearly on my 'new' life, or some say, my new 'baptism.' ”

Sister Mary Adele’s experience was captured in the book by Tom Sheridan, *“Small Miracles; The Extraordinary Stories of Ordinary People Touched by God.”*

Ten years after her new baptism, in 2003, she “officially” retired. However, she continued to minister in the parish of Saint Alphonsus for another 10 years as a pastoral volunteer until she returned to Victory Noll in 2013 after 24 years at Saint Alphonsus.

Sister Mary Adele always had a smile on her face and a story to tell. Many of the stories she would tell were from her times in ministry and of the traumatic event of the Amtrak train wreck. She celebrated her survival again during a visit from the young man who rescued her, Michael Dopheide, when he and his wife Monette visited Victory Noll in 2017. It was a delightful visit for both Michael and Sister Mary Adele. They continued to stay connected through Sister Mary Adele’s nephew Keith Massaro.

Keith and his wife Jane, along with two of her nieces, Sandra Dady and Cheryl Horgos, joined the community for Sister Mary Adele’s vigil on Tuesday, October 29, 2019, and also for the Eucharistic liturgy on Wednesday October 30, 2019. These celebrations were a reflection of Sister Mary Adele’s life.

Sister Mary Adele’s enthusiasm and love of life was always evident, especially in the way she showed her love for God through her ministry to God’s people in 70 years of religious life. Now as she begins her new life may she fully understand that it was God’s will for her to be a Victory Noll Sister!

With gratitude and Blessings,

