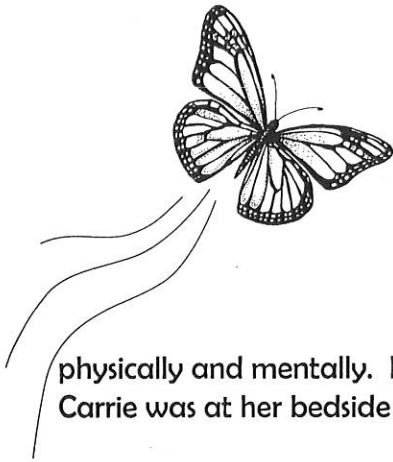


June 25, 2007



Dear Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends,

SISTER JOACHIM STETAR retired to Victory Noll in 1995. In 1999, when she was ninety years old, she moved to Holy Family Health Care Center. She was suffering from memory loss and needed personal attention and nursing care. She lived there for eight years and slowly diminished physically and mentally. Her sufferings came to an end on Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:15 AM. Her sister, Carrie was at her bedside when God called Sister Joachim home. She was ninety-eight years old.

Sr. Joachim was born Ann Stetar in Burgettstown, PA on May 19, 1909 to Matthew Stetar and Mary Ann Hucik Stetar. Her parents were immigrants from Czechoslovakia and Sr. Joachim spoke Slovak from her childhood. She was the second of nine children: Matthew, herself, Stephanie, Ludmilla, Alexander, Ludwig, Margaret, Edward and Caroline. All preceded her in death except Carrie.

Joachim attended eight years of grade school and two years of high school. With seven younger siblings at home, I am sure there was a lot of work to be done. Later on, she worked outside the home to help her family. When she applied to enter Victory Noll at age 33, she listed her work as packer in a biscuit factory and supervisor in the icing department. One of her fellow novices recalls being envious that Joachim had had access to so many chocolates!

It was the middle of World War II, 1942, when Ann Stetar applied to Victory Noll and was accepted. Her pastor wrote that he had known her for twenty-seven years and was happy to recommend her for the religious life. At the end of her first year, before she became a novice, it was required that she be interviewed by a Church official, to make sure she was joining religious life voluntarily. The one who interviewed her was Archbishop Noll himself. Joachim happily answered all the questions put to her.

The three years of formation went by quickly with prayer, study, learning to live community life and growing intellectually and spiritually. She was part of a group of twelve who made first profession in 1945. Her religious name was Ann Joachim, traditionally considered the names of the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Sr. Ann Joachim's first mission assignment in August, 1945 was Ida, MI. In October of that year, her father became seriously ill and Joachim went home to visit him. He died in December and Joachim went to be with her family for the funeral. She returned to Ida to continue her ministry until March, 1947 when she was missioned to Goshen, IN. Two years later, she was assigned to Santa Fe, NM where she made perpetual vows in 1951. Archbishop Byrne of Santa Fe, in the interview, asked her: "Do you realize that by taking Perpetual Vows you are binding yourself for life? Are you determined to persevere in them until death?" Joachim answered "yes" and she fulfilled that promise.

In 1952 she was sent to San Angelo, TX for one year, to Lubbock, TX for one year, to Durant, OK for one year and then to Hightstown, NJ where she stayed for two years. During the summers, the sisters taught summer school in various locations. One of Joachim's assignments was Union City, PA. She certainly had much practice in the virtues of availability and adaptability!

During 1957-58, she worked in Richmond, KY. In May of 1958, her mother died and Joachim went home to be with her family. The next year, she was assigned to Lubbock where she worked for three years. After that, she went to El Paso and stayed for five years. We hope that life was easier for her when she didn't have to move so often. However, in 1966 there was one more one-year assignment: Belle Glade, FL.

In 1967, Joachim began her ministry in California and stayed in California until her retirement. She was assigned to Redlands, our regional house that served a large geographical area. The work of religious education was plentiful, with release-time classes and hundreds of children to walk to and from school. Times changed and seven years later, there were fewer sisters living in the large Redlands house. It was decided to close it. The decision was difficult for the sisters who still lived there. Perhaps that was the reason Joachim took a month off and went to Slovakia to revisit her roots.

Joachim then went to work in Hemet, CA. Five years later, she moved to Winchester but still continued her ministry in the Hemet parish. She lived near a turkey farm, which is a story in itself. There was a hall next to her small apartment where she had classes for the children. She enjoyed getting visitors and would always serve them a good cup of coffee. She was known for her love of coffee!

When Sr. Kim (as she was known) slowed down from teaching, she continued visiting the sick in their homes and bringing them Communion. She also did volunteer work at the Hemet Convalescent Center. Sr. Kim was always cheerful and had a great rapport with the residents and staff. She was named "Volunteer of the Month" in 1991. One of the parishioners wrote: "I am always so glad to see you whether serving as Eucharistic Minister or in your same pew in church or busy on the altar. You are a gem among the pebbles." Deacon Jim wrote: "You have my thanks and my appreciation of a lady truly dedicated to her vocation." Sr. Kim worked in Hemet for twenty-one years.

When she retired and returned to Victory Noll in 1995, she continued to give and receive much joy by visiting nursing homes in the area. Her health began to fail in 1999 and she moved to Holy Family Building for nursing care. She also spent time in our Camilla Center for sisters with memory loss. Her sister Carrie visited her at Victory Noll at various times and came again when the end drew near. Sr. Joachim died peacefully on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

We laid her to rest on Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. Family members who were present for the funeral were her sister Carrie Connelly and Carrie's daughter, Theresa, a nephew Peter Schwimer, his wife Mary and their children Matthew and Jessica and a nephew, Charles Stetar.

At the funeral, we read from the Prophet Isaiah: "...God will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the pall enveloping all nations; He will destroy death forever. The Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces;...On that day, it will be said, 'Look, this is our God, in whom we put our hope that He should save us; this is the Lord for whom we looked. Let us rejoice and be glad for He has saved us.'" (Is. 25:7-9) We know that Joachim truly put her hope in God. She looked for God all her life. And God, who always fulfills His promises, has saved her.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Sr. Melanie*

Sr. Melanie Persche, OLVM  
General Secretary