



SISTER CAROLYN ORTEGA, OLVM

Sister Carolyn Ortega, 94, slipped quietly into eternal glory on March 18, 2013 at Holy Family Health Care Center at Victory Noll, Huntington.

Sr. Carolyn was born on July 4, 1918 in Pastura, New Mexico, to Alberto Cristobal Ortega and Maria Carolina Clancey. She was baptized Ernestine Carolyn Ortega on September 17, 1918 at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Santa Rosa, N.M. She was preceded in death by her parents, three brothers, Albert, Victor and Howard Ortega and one sister, Mary Isabel Snyder. She is survived by nieces and nephews in the United States and in South Africa.

Sr. Carolyn entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 30, 1947, and made first vows on August 5, 1950. She served in the missions in Texas and California and taught Spanish at Victory Noll, before volunteering to go to South America in 1966. After investigating and exploring different countries and places for Victory Noll sisters to have our foreign mission, it was decided we would go to Bolivia. Sr. Carolyn ministered in Oruro, Bolivia, for nearly forty years, from 1967 to 2006 when she returned to Victory Noll.

During those many years in Bolivia she became immersed in the history and culture of her adopted country, in later years she truly considered herself a Boliviana. She loved to share the history, culture and beauty of Bolivia with the sisters who would visit, especially a trip to Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world. Here she would invite the visitors to embark on an adventure to the Isle of the Sun, walk along the beach or visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Copacabana.

Sr. Carolyn also became very involved in religious education & pastoral ministry with the university students, realizing that education was the way forward for those born into poverty. She founded Center for University and Secondary Students (CESU), a library that provides an atmosphere suitable to study. Many graduates know that part of their success is due to CESU.

Her understanding of the prophetic mission of the Church took her to work with the miners and teachers for better wages and better working conditions. She also was a strong supporter of the campesinos, the poorest social class, in their struggle for human rights and liberation. She went on many marches to protest all the different types of injustice and the maltreatment of the campesinos, miners, prisoners, teachers and virtually anyone whose basic human rights were being violated.

Over the years she made enemies as well as friends, was jailed once or twice, caught the attention of some extremist groups and continued to have an enthusiastic and youthful spirit. Among her friends in high places was President Evo Morales, the current president, in whom she had great confidence as one who would raise up others as he had been raised up.

In Sr. Carolyn's own words, "It has been my privilege to work with leaders, especially Aymaras and Qhechuas. They plan and analyze. I am sometimes present for these sessions, but the action is theirs. I think that mine is more a 'presence of solidarity,' hopefully a sign of hope, of life in the midst of so many signs of death."

Sr. Carolyn was remembered by family and her Victory Noll community at the wake on March 26 and her funeral on March 27, 2013. Fr. Thomas Fahey presided.

To be a missionary is to give your heart to the people you serve and to carry the gospel wherever you go, whether in the home missions or in a foreign land and Sr. Carolyn was a missionary in both places. May she now be welcomed home from her missionary work into the arms of a loving and generous God.

In Christ's Peace,

Sr. Leger Brown OSM

