

All for Jesus through Mary

Victory Noll
Huntington, Indiana 46750
September 17, 1976

Dear Sisters,

"COME WITH JOY INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD!"

Sister Jeannette did indeed enter with joy into the presence of the Lord as she stepped across the threshold of the mystery of death into new life on the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, the sign of our redemption.

This morning, with the Liturgy of Christian Burial, we brought her to final rest, giving thanks and praise to the Father for her presence among us and her loving example of faithfulness in her commitment to Jesus through Mary during her fifty-one years in this Congregation.

Sister's health had been failing during the greater part of this year and this past June, she underwent surgery for the removal of a kidney due to a malignant tumor. She had to return to St. Joseph's hospital in mid-August because of extreme pain. In the weeks that followed, Sister Jeannette suffered almost unbearable pain and she did this with edifying patience and serenity. Her calm acceptance of death could only be the culmination of many personal "dyings" throughout her life because she was so completely ready for her last "Amen!"

When it became apparent that death was imminent, Sister wished to return to Victory Noll and was brought home via ambulance in the early afternoon of September 14th. She died at 9:35 p.m. that evening surrounded by her Victory Noll Sisters (crowded into her room and down the hallways) praying with her until the end. Her death was caused by cancer which had spread to many parts of her body.

On Monday, September 13th, in late afternoon, Sister received a very small particle of the Sacred Host as Holy Viaticum because she could hardly swallow and suffered severe thirst. That evening she received the Sacrament of the Sick for the last time. Father Fortkamp asked her to remember us in her prayers and she said that she would; then, with Sister Bridie, she renewed her Act of Consecration and her Vows.

During the last days of her life, Sister's speech had become almost inaudible but she was fully conscious. Her request for prayer to any sisters around her was done by making the sign of the cross. It was also the last gesture she tried to make even though there was no other outward sign of communication. She raised her right hand in one last effort to bless herself: the crucifix fell from her hand and her hand came down slowly to rest upon the crucifix and she was in eternity. It was a real meditation on the feast of the Triumph of the Cross!

Sister's retirement in 1972 from Kentucky to Victory Noll was only the transition to another apostolate which among other things included her work at the Veteran's Hospital in Marion; chauffeuring anyone who needed a driver for an appointment or a simple pleasure; making quilts for the poor and keeping the linens mended. She even volunteered and worked in the greenhouse at the Veteran's Hospital to become more knowledgeable in plant life in the event Victory Noll decided to have a greenhouse of its own.

Sister Jeannette was born November 3, 1902, in Ogdensburg, New York, the second oldest of twelve children, two of whom died in infancy. Six brothers and two sisters are still living, although one brother's address is not known. She entered the Congregation September 5, 1925 and made her first profession of vows at Victory Mount, Las Vegas, December 8, 1927.

Her brother Theodore of Newington, Connecticut, and her sister Margaret of Flushing, New York, flew into Fort Wayne while a nephew Philip Gratton drove from New Jersey. Theodore and Margaret returned with Philip directly after the funeral without waiting for dinner. They had a long drive and were anxious to be on their way.

Fathers John Holt and Michel Antoine, OFM, Cap., concelebrated the Liturgy of Christian Burial. It seemed that the theme of the readings: God's call to celebrate love and the need of the seed to die in order to be transformed and bear fruit, was interwoven with the theme of the feast of the Triumph of the Cross. Romano Guardini reminds us that ever since Jesus walked the way of the cross, each one of us finds it firmly planted on our way through life. The element of dying and transformation is part and parcel of the cross.

Sister's stance in life, in imitation of our Blessed Mother, was a complete openness and trust in God's will for her. Her cross toward the end of her life was most difficult. But with, in, and through Our Lady, her last personal act of self-surrender was one of complete trust and love. Truly, she came with joy into the presence of the Lord!

Lovingly in Jesus and Mary,

Sister Germaine Stadler