



All to Jesus, all to Mary,
By the Mother to the Son
Wondrous road to grace and glory
By Her, Heaven is found and won.

Dear Sisters and Associates:

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, May ¹¹~~17~~ 1994, very quickly and quietly Sr. Bertina Espinoza took the "wondrous road to grace and glory." When the nurses had checked with Sister at 3:00 a.m. she was awake and talked with them. When they returned to her room about 4:40, they found her soul had gone to the Lord. Since Sister had shown no unusual signs of failing health the past weeks, this came as a sudden sadness to the nurses and the community.

Sr. Bertina was born September 22, 1902 in Ocate, New Mexico to Santiago and Sofia nee Trujillo Espinoza. She was baptized in Santa Clara Church, Wagon Mound, New Mexico. She attended schools in Ocate, Mora and Las Vegas. She entered Victory Mount as an aspirant on October 22, 1926 for preparatory training. She was accepted into Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters community in Huntington, Indiana on July 14, 1927 and was received July 16, 1927. Her consecration was August 15, 1927 at Victory Noll. Her first profession of vows was August 15, 1929 at Victory Mount.

Sr. Bertina was stationed in various missions of California, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Nevada for 59 years. She spent busy days in those areas in administrative positions, religious education programs, giving assistance to the poor and her special program of Knights of the Altar (altar boys). She prepared herself well to introduce her God to others. The programs of Knights of the Altar acquainted so many young men not only with the privilege of serving in the sanctuary but a respect for and appreciation of the character training they were receiving. Some men at the altar today give much credit to Sr. Bertina for their vocation to the priesthood.

Holy Family Health Care Center at Victory Noll welcomed Sister to the Noll in 1989. Her health was failing but it was a difficult move for her to leave the missions.

On Tuesday morning May 10, Sister attended Mass as usual. In the afternoon Father Fahey anointed all of the Sisters who wished for the sacrament and Sr. Bertina was present to receive the graces. For some reason it seems as if Our Lord took her at her word. She is known to have said that she hoped to "die with her boots on in the missions." Her spirit was a ministry in the mission of Victory No11 and she had been up and among the Sisters every day.

Ascension Thursday, May 12, at 4:00 p.m., we met the body and proceeded to the chapel. The Office for Ascension Thursday and rosary were prayed.

The Night Prayer of the Church (wake) was 7:00 o'clock in the evening. Sr. Beatrice Haines introduced the family to us and our prayer service began with At That First Eucharist. So appropriately included in the service was Psalm 139, O Lord You Are The Center of My Life. Two of the nieces, Alicia and Bertina, and some of our Sisters shared fond memories of Sr. Bertina. She had loved much and been loved much. The service closed with Bendito, .Bendito. Afterwards Sisters and the family visited, renewed old acquaintances and refreshments were served.

Liturgy of the Eucharist was offered by Father Thomas Fahey at 10:30 on Friday morning, May 13. Eight relatives from Colorado were present: a niece, Alicia and her husband Benjamin Martinez from Pueblo; their sons, Ben and Eppie; their daughter, Ramona and her husband, Anthony Vigil, and their son; and a niece, Bertina Normandine, Arvada. Our Sisters from Fort Wayne were also present. Sister Dorothy Anne and Anthony played the organ and violin before Mass and led us in the hymns during Mass. Anthony also was lecturer. Father Fahey spoke of the religious life Sr. Bertina had lived. He left us with this thought: "I wonder how many souls are in heaven today because they were touched by Sister's life and work." At Preparation of the Gifts we sang, Sing My Soul to Jesus' Glory. Hopefully many in heaven could answer of Sr. Bertina, in imitation of Mary, by her heaven was found and won.

It was a very pleasant day to walk to the cemetery. The bell tolled. Father Fahey led us in prayer and blessed the grave.

The family joined us for dinner.

Though we are stunned by your sudden exit from our presence, Sr. Bertina, we do appreciate those years we lived and worked with you. They have been special.



In Christ's Peace,

Sr. Marjorie Susan