

# Living Life With Gratitude: Sister Vivian

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Dear Sisters, Associates, Family Members and Friends,

The first weekend Sister Vivian Lembeck spent in her heavenly home began on Saturday, April 27, 2002 at 9:45 AM. Much earlier that morning she may have been talking to God when she said, "Come on now, I want to go home!" Then came many expressions of gratitude to the nurses and Sisters around her for "everything you did," and she gently ended her earthly visit.

On a chilly morning about two days before Sister died she asked the nurses to take her outside in a wheelchair to see the tulips. This was an exciting event for the Sisters at Victory Noll who joined her in spirit as she appreciated God's gift of nature. She was grateful for many things people take for granted as shown in the note she wrote to the liturgist, "Thanks a million for all the beautiful liturgies. To think that I have all this in my old age! How good God is!"

Family members came from the St. Louis, Missouri area to celebrate Sister Vivian's "winning her way into eternal life" as Father Thomas Fahey spoke about during the Mass of Christian Burial on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Sister's sister, Helen Frances Ralph of Wilton, Connecticut was unable to come to Victory Noll. Sister's nephew John Lembeck, his wife Ellen, and Becky Lembeck, the wife of her nephew, Ted, came for the Vigil Service on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Sister's niece Joan VonderHaar and husband Paul joined them the next day for the Mass and burial during which family members participated in the liturgy. Friends from Huntington and Roanoke, Indiana also attended the Mass.

Sister Vivian (Margaret) Lembeck was born 91 years ago on April 9, 1911 in St. Louis, Missouri to John Tobias Lembeck and Magdalen Lembeck. She was preceded in death by five brothers, John, William, Henry, Walter and Joseph. Sister entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on August 28, 1935 and took first vows on August 21, 1938. Sister's ministries took her to the states of Arizona, California, Indiana, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Although she previously served at Victory Noll as an Assistant Superior, Local Councilor, cook, she retired there in 1986 to do volunteer work.

From the "memory" shared by her nephew, John, during the Vigil Service, it is evident that Sister Vivian knew how to enjoy life in her mission experiences. While John's family was on vacation in Long Beach, California, they ate at a Mexican restaurant there. Sister asked him if he had some of the restaurant's good salsa on his eggs and if he then visited the little church up the street from the restaurant. And... they had enjoyed the eggs with salsa plus visiting the church. John stated that "no matter where we went, Sister had already been there!" She knew about the "happy" places in her mission territory. Many Sisters spoke about the "fun" times spent with Sister. A recent one was about two weeks before Sister died when another Sister shared with her a cookie from a "cookie bouquet" she had recently received. Sister Vivian enjoyed the cookie, and humorously responded, "This was really good because they did not give me any dessert with my supper tonight."

In Sister's note to the liturgist about being grateful for the good liturgies, she further wrote, "I don't know what God looks like—but God must be very, very beautiful." While we keep striving to know and love an unseen Spirit-God, faith tells us that Sister Vivian has already won her way into the enjoyment of God's beauty, perhaps by "Living Life With Gratitude!"

In God's peace, joy, love,

*Sister Dolores Tringl*

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Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters