



## **SISTER DOROTHY ANNE LENGERICH, OLVM**

Sister Dorothy Anne Lengerich slipped peacefully into the eternal embrace of God on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2014. She had been active and had asked me on Friday, December 5, if “we” were reading at mass on Sunday. We had shared that ministry for the last few months as a team. She still proclaimed the scriptures well and enjoyed being able to do it at the Sunday liturgy. I said I wasn't sure we were on the schedule but would check. Saturday morning she was not feeling well and told the nurses she was “going home.”

Sister Dorothy Anne was born in Decatur, Indiana, on October 26, 1915, and was the second oldest of five children born to Clement Alphones and Catherine (Gase) Lengerich. She was baptized Dorothy Anna on October 31, 1915 at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Decatur, Indiana. Her older sister, Mary Rosella, was also a Victory Noll sister and her younger sister, Theresa, joined the Congregation of St. Agnes and became Sister Ancilla. Her only brother, Vincent, became a priest and served in the Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend and then in the Diocese of Gary. Her sister, Rita, married and raised her family in Fort Wayne.

Sister Dorothy Anne was preceded in death by her parents, Clement and Catherine, her sisters, Sister Mary Rosella, and Sister Ancilla, who died just recently on November 17, 2014. She is survived by her brother, Rev. Msgr. Vincent Lengerich of Carthagen, Ohio, and her sister Rita Weber of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Sister Dorothy Anne entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on August 29, 1934, and made first vows on August 15, 1937. She served in 26 missions and lived in 14 states: California, Texas, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, New Jersey and Massachusetts. She was a mobile missionary serving in many missions only one or two years before being moved to the next mission. She served from the West Coast with her first mission in Monterey, California, to the East Coast with her last mission in New Bedford, Massachusetts. She came to Victory Noll in 1991 to be a part of the liturgy and music department. Although she retired in 2002, she never really stop being involved in liturgy and music. She often would play organ in chapel or the piano in the dining room. She was the lector at the celebration of her 80th jubilee on May 24, 2014. Liturgy and music were very much a part of her life.

During her early years in Texas from 1938 to 1943, Sister spent most of her summers preparing and teaching religion classes. In one area where there were ranches — big and small — they taught in a one-room schoolhouse and lived in a small trailer nearby. In the evenings after the migrant workers had finished in the fields they would come, no matter the age, young or old, to sing, pray, and receive sacramental instruction. Sister Dorothy Anne taught the children while Sister Mary David Miller instructed the adults using slides of the Old and New Testament stories. There was no electricity where they were teaching, so they attached the wires of the projector to the battery in the car and waited until dark to project the pictures onto the outside wall of the white school building.

One evening after they finished classes and the tired catechist had retired to their small trailer, they realized they had a visitor in the schoolyard. A stray bull had come to serenade the cows in a pasture across the road. Needless to say, the catechists did not get much sleep. Fortunately, they were not graced with any more amorous bulls, but they did have to watch out for sneaky rattlesnakes the next summer.

On a more spiritual note, a special incident Sister Dorothy Anne never forgot was at the end of summer school. While the people were gathering for closing service, a Mexican worker came up front and knelt. He prayed earnestly in front of the picture of Our Blessed Mother. It left a deep impression on Sister Dorothy Anne, and she often prayed for the faith to continue to grow in Texas long after she and Sister Mary David had left.

Sister Dorothy Anne had a great love for music and studied music along with theology. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, with a minor in Music from San Diego College for Women in San Diego, California, in 1969 and her Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies from Mundelein College in Chicago, Illinois, in 1972, She also earned a certificate in Church Music and Liturgy from St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana, in 1981.

Sister Dorothy Anne had a curious and adventurous spirit which was often displayed in asking questions. She also enjoyed showing people around the places where she lived, giving them the history and culture of the particular place.

She also had an eye for beauty which she demonstrated not only through her music, but also through her art. She was an artist at heart, whether it be with paint brush, charcoal or pen and ink. She did calligraphy, which took time and patience. She also created beautiful pictures, often of Our Blessed Mother, but also of flowers or of scenes of nature. Her pieta, seen below, is an example of her gift.

The community gathered on Sunday evening December 14, 2014 for Sister Dorothy Anne's vigil. Her sister, Rita, and Rita's husband Jim Weber, along with several other family members were able to join the community for her funeral on Monday, December 15, 2014.

At the funeral liturgy, Father Dale Bauman spoke about Sister Dorothy Anne going home and being home for Christmas. Yes, Sister Dorothy Anne you made your last journey home, in time for Christmas, where you will share all the joy of the season in your "Father's House."

May your love of the beautiful, whether in liturgy, art or music be fully realized as you now play joyfully before God, sing with all the choirs in heaven and gaze on all the beauty you could not see from this side.

With Peace and Blessings,



Sister Ginger Downey, OLVM

