

Singing with Sister Anna Rita

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January 8, 2002

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family Members, and Friends,

Strains of the hymn "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" concluding the Community Mass were heard in Sister Anna Rita's room on Saturday, December 29th at 11:35 a.m. when she entered into her heavenly home. Sister was 92 years old.

It seems fitting that this hymn was being sung when Sister Anna Rita died because song and joy were integral to her life. Her request for music during her wake and funeral liturgy was "The happiest songs!"

It was evident to people to whom Sister ministered that she was a person of happiness. A family member stated that she always wanted "song and dance". While students in her religion classes knew she was a firm teacher, they experienced joy in her presence.

Sister's smile was electric! It triggered warmth! Nurses on the third floor of Holy Family Health Care Center at Victory Noll were most aware of her smiling face as they cared for her. Even the morning of her death, the nurse asked Sister for a smile and she responded! She graced the nursing staff with her smile for over twelve years,--since 1989, when she came to Victory Noll to retire.

On November 26, 1909 in the *Land of Enchantment*, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Ezequia Montoya (Sister Anna Rita) was born to Valentine and Agapita Montoya. She had one brother, two sisters and three half brothers, all of whom preceded her in death.

Sister Anna Rita entered Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters in 1932. She made her First Profession in 1935 at Victory Noll and Perpetual Vows in 1941 at Blessed de Montfort Convent in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Sister ministered as Pastoral Minister directing religious education programs and doing social service work in Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas and Utah. For twenty-one years previous to her retirement, St. Mary's Parish in Ogden, Utah was privileged to have her as a Pastoral Minister.

The wake on January 1st and Mass of Christian Burial on January 2nd were attended by the Victory Noll Sisters, Sister's niece, Irene Bailey of Modesto, California and grandniece, Diane Moore of Douglasville, Georgia. Sister has another niece and five nephews: Maida Durr, Jose C. Montoya, John A. Montoya, Richard Montoya, all of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Ernest Montoya of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Ben Montoya of Cocoa, Florida. Some of the flowers sent by relatives and friends had tinges of silver glitter—perhaps indicative of the glitter she gave to their lives.

Father Thomas Fahey, celebrant of the Mass of Christian Burial, stated that "To die during the Christmas Season is a good sign. Christmas is a great sign of salvation. It is a time when we celebrate our Savior coming to us with all the signs of love to save us and to show us the way home to heaven. So, when God calls someone at Christmas time, it is a special sign of God's love. And, God did call Sister Anna Rita during the Christmas Season." Father further stated that "Sister Anna Rita has just gone home, and I am sure she is saying 'It is good to be home at last.'"

In Sister's wake and funeral wishes she states, "Please, NO 'Adios' Songs." And so, Sister Anna Rita, we do not say "Adios", but we do say, "We are united in song."

In God's peace, joy, love...

Sister Dolores Tringl

Sister Dolores Tringl
General Secretary
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sister