

Walk
in
Newness
of Life

Victory Noll
Huntington, I
May 2, 1989

ELEANOR GERHART
April 30, 1989

Dear Sisters and Associates,

"May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you!"
(Responsorial Psalm - sixth Sunday after Easter)
(Ps. 67)

It was shortly after our Eucharistic celebration of this Sunday's Liturgy, in the shadow of the feast of the Ascension, that Sister Eleanor Gerhart heard the call to "come" and behold the radiance of the Risen Christ.

On this Sunday morning, there was a decided change in Sister's condition. The Sisters gathered before Mass to pray the prayers for the dying. Father Jim Hast anointed her and at 11:40 a.m., Sunday, April 30, 1989, Sister Eleanor died quietly in the Lord. Her love, now perfected through long suffering, forever beholds the reality of the presence of Jesus!

Although Sister Eleanor retired in 1974, she spent almost a year in Albion, MI., as homemaker for Sister Mary Jane before she returned to Victory Noll. In March of 1977, she returned there to spend more time with Sister, but after two months, she had to return to Victory Noll because of illness. She lived on 2nd floor of Holy Family Health Care Center. Since her return to Victory Noll, she had been hospitalized several times; once because of a broken hip and several times with pneumonia. Sister also suffered from a chronic lung condition. After Sister fell and broke her hip, she was taken to the third floor for proper care. The cause of Sister's death was congestive heart failure.

Sister Eleanor spent the first four years after her profession at Victory Noll where she was buyer. She also worked in the sewing room. Then for the next forty years, she was missioned in Indiana, Nevada, Utah, Missouri, Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas and Michigan. I guess whenever I think of Sister Eleanor, I always think of her in the missions of Nevada as she spent 15 years in that State. Two of her very fine mission stories of TMC express her love for Nevada.

In one of her articles, Sister gave a typical run-down of a day from the Elko mission: "Our day would begin at 6:00 a.m. Our first stop would be North Fork, fifty miles from Elko. The Catechists would teach two children before they went to school. At noon, a class of four would be taught in the mining town of Rio Tinto, twenty-six miles from North Fork. After lunch, they went to Mountain City, three miles from Rio Tinto, where they would visit adults who were trying to learn more about their faith through correspondence courses. About three o'clock, three children would welcome us at Gold Creek, a small settlement fifteen miles from Mountain City. An hour later, we would set out for our final class of the day, ten miles farther on, where three children were preparing for their first communion. At seven o'clock, the Catechists would be home in their convent in Elko. The day had been long; they had taught few children, but God's message of love had been given to eager hearts!"

Sister also wrote of their system of correspondence courses. "These courses enabled them to reach the students and parents regularly. It required much time spent by the teacher on each individual lesson. Each exercise was corrected, explanations added and at times encouragement given by the teacher. For them, in their situation, this system was effective. At the end of one religious vacation school, eight children were baptized from four different families. All of the parents had taken the course by correspondence during the year. It was always the hope of the Catechists, that, through the grace of God, and the correspondence courses supplemented by a religious vacation school, the knowledge and love of God and the faith would grow in these people living in such isolated places."

Sister Eleanor was born September 28, 1901 in St. Louis, Missouri, the second oldest of five children. Her mother died of pneumonia on Christmas Eve when she was only 29 years of age, leaving five small children under the age of ten. Her father had a dairy farm and was unable to care for the family so the children were separated. Sidonia (Sadie), Helen and Alphonse went to live with their Aunt Lena Kruepler, while Eleanor and Wilhelm went to live with their Grandmother. Eleanor cared for her Uncle's small girls, Joan, Mary and Kay Sanders. These cousins retained a very close relationship with Sister Eleanor through the years. After the Gerhart children were old enough to care for themselves, they went back to live with their father. Sister Eleanor entered the Congregation from Corpus Christi parish in St. Louis, October 28, 1928 and made first profession of vows April 4, 1932 at Victory Noll. She celebrated her Golden and Diamond Jubilees in 1978 and 1988. Last summer, Mary Serra, her niece with her two daughters, Stephanie and Betsy, Dorothy Zykan and Florine Franke, nieces, came for Sister's Diamond Jubilee celebration. Sister Eleanor enjoyed a nice visit with them at that time.

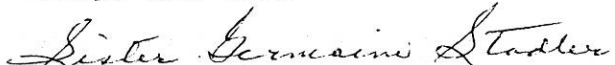
The wake service was celebrated Monday night at 7:00 p.m in Memorial Chapel. Sister Gertrude led the Night Prayer of the Church in memory of Sister Eleanor. Sister Frances Kowalewski did the reading. The service ended with the seasonal anthem, "O Queen of Heaven!"

The Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated by Father Jim Hast, OFM, Cap. Sisters Camilla and Regina placed the pall on the casket, Florence and Christopher did the readings, Germaine sang the Responsorial and the Gospel Verse, Lorraine gave the homily, Carolyn I. offered the prayers of the faithful and Kathleen L. and Marie Schene brought up the gifts. Sister Lorraine spoke briefly of Sister Eleanor's answering the call to serve in a missionary life, and of the excellent care she received from the nursing staff and of the love expressed by the Sisters in their care for her.

Sister Mary Louise Rowney led the prayers of Commendation at the end of the Liturgy. After that, we walked to the cemetery for the graveside prayers. The wind was cold and that made the walk a bit uncomfortable. We didn't stay long at the grave, but came in out of the cold to enjoy a tasty meal prepared by Vince and the cooks.

Again, we pause to thank God for the reflection of his love shown through the kindness and thoughtfulness of Sister Eleanor. How graced we have been by her peaceful preparation to meet the Lord. What faith she has shown to all of us! In the words of the Church we pray, "May the angels lead you into paradise. May the martyrs come to welcome you into the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem; may the choirs of angels welcome you . . . and may you have eternal rest!" Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Always with love,


Sister Germaine Stadler, olvm

P.S. Sister Eleanor's death is the ninetieth to date.