

Victory Noll
Huntington, Indiana
March 19, 1984

Dear Sisters,

"Thanks be to God who has given us the victory through Our Lord Jesus Christ!"
1 Cor. 15:57

Having experienced the mystery of death again at the Noll, we came together this morning in faith and love on this feast of St. Joseph, to lay to rest the body of Sister Therese Marie Stech and to thank the Father for the reflection of his love in her whose life with her sisters was a sign of her love for Him.

Sister's death was due to an acute myocardial infarction. It seems that her health record was rather uneventful until the sixties and seventies. She suffered many years from asthma and hypertension. It was not until 1978 that any heart problems were noted -- enlargement of the heart. Sister returned to the Noll from East Chicago in 1981 and it was then that her hip was diagnosed. She returned to East Chicago for some months but came back to the Noll March 8, 1983. At this time she was diagnosed as having congestive heart failure. The pain in Sister's hip was so great and her desire for a hip replacement seemed stronger than the risk of dying during surgery because of the condition of her heart and general health, that on December 16, 1983 a total hip replacement was done and after some touch and go moments, she was able to return to Victory Noll. She had been in the hospital for one month. Sister was very determined to improve her leg condition and with the help of Sister Mary Joan began a strong therapy program. Soon she was able to take care of herself with minimum assistance from the nursing staff and seemed to be progressing well in spite of all her ailments. In the evening of March ninth, Sister was admitted to the Huntington Memorial Hospital because of chest pains. The diagnosis was a massive heart attack. Her condition changed almost every day. During this time, the Sisters took turns sitting with her so that she would not be alone. Sister received Holy Communion each day. On the morning of March fifteenth, after she had eaten her breakfast, Doctor Carnes came in to see her and told her he thought she might be able to return home on Friday, the next day. Doctor Kay was just outside the door and had stepped in to speak to her and Doctor Carnes. Both Doctors said she took a few short breaths and was gone . . . unexpectedly.

Sister Therese Marie spent twenty-seven years in the missions of California and Indiana. Her work was limited to a certain degree because of her asthma attacks and lack of energy. She was also in charge of the magazine mailing office for nineteen years at Victory Noll. Sister had a lot of creative talent and made rosaries for many years. Recently, she has been crocheting baby clothes for the Right-To-Life group with yarn provided by friends.

I recall the time Sister decorated the auditorium for the Community's Silver Jubilee. I remember her climbing up and down ladders to cover all the unsightly pipes. That was quite an undertaking and she accomplished a real transformation of the place.

Sister Therese Marie was born January 8, 1901 in Chicago. She entered the Community from Sts. Cyril and Methodius parish September 3, 1930 and made first profession of vows September 8, 1934 at Victory Noll. Sister celebrated her golden jubilee August 5, 1980.

Sister's three brothers and sister preceded her in death. Some of her family were able to be present for the funeral. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. Joseph (Mildred) Stech of Chicago, her son Joseph and his wife Nancy with their son Douglas of Somonauk, IL, and two nieces, Judy and Kristin Zasadil of Lyle, IL. They arrived on Sunday afternoon just before Mr. Hart brought Sister's body at four o'clock. Another niece, Rita Trzyna, her husband Walter and their son-in-law Mickey of Palos Heights, IL arrived on Monday morning in time for the funeral.

The liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated by Father Jim Hast, OFM Cap., who also gave the homily. Father spoke of the spiritual pilgrimage of Sister Therese Marie which began at baptism and ended with her entrance into eternal life. Then he shared comments he had received from those who chose to share their reflections with him. The comments were a wonderful tribute to Sister. The family also took an active part in the liturgy with Mildred and Sister Maria placing the pall on the casket, Joseph taking the first reading and Sister Frances the second, and Rita, Walter, Douglas and Nancy bringing up the gifts. Sister Mary Joan said the prayers of the faithful.

Sister Jeanette led the prayers of commendation at the end of the liturgy. It was a raw, rainy day, but many of us walked out to the cemetery. Before the short ceremony at the grave was over, it started to rain quite hard, so before we could get to the house, most of us were very wet.

The family stayed for dinner and left shortly afterward for their trip home.

We are reminded again that death gives meaning to our lives just as conversly, life gives meaning to death. Sister Therese Marie suffered a lot in her life and those "happenings" had meaning only because of Christ Jesus. Because of Him, her life reached fulfillment in the experience of this mystery of death. Truly we can say: "Thanks be to God who has given us the victory through Our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Sincerely in Jesus and Mary,

Sister Germaine Staller