

All for Jesus through Mary

Victory Noll
February 8, 1971

Dear Sisters

May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts!

I know that you were surprised at the news of Sister Eva's sudden death. Yet it is truly wonderful for her, and after the first shock, all of us experienced the peace that - we feel sure - Sister Eva herself is enjoying.

Sister discovered a small lump on her right breast the latter part of January. She went to the doctor immediately and he advised surgery. She also had a good examination and everything else seemed to be quite normal. No EKG was indicated. Sister had had several of these in late years but no great abnormality was ever detected.

Sister entered St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne Sunday afternoon, January 31, and had surgery the next morning. The mass was malignant so the doctor did a mastectomy. Sister's reaction was excellent. She had never had a serious illness during her whole life and she was determined to recover from this as soon as possible. She walked some each day and the doctors and nurses were pleased with her attitude and her progress. You can imagine, then, how we felt when a Sister called Thursday morning around 11:00 and said that Sister Eva's condition was critical. Even before Sister Gertrude and Sister Mary Rose could leave for the hospital, another call came to report that our Sister had died.

Death was attributed to cardiac arrest, but the doctors were so puzzled that they asked permission for an autopsy. We have not yet received the report so we do not know what the findings were.

Sister Eva Alberding was born in Remington, Indiana, January 21, 1898, the oldest of nine children. The family moved to Decatur where Sister went to St. Mary's school. For three years before she came to Victory Noll Sister Eva worked in Fort Wayne. Her letter of recommendation came from Msgr. Conroy (uncle of our Monsignor), then rector of the cathedral.

Sister Eva entered Victory Noll July 16, 1927 and was professed August 15, 1929. Most of her religious life was spent in the Southwest: New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California. In the spring of 1967 Sister felt that she could no longer keep up the pace in Las Vegas and asked to return to Victory Noll. But she really did not slow down very much after she came back. Sister Eva was always a hard worker, as many of us know. Even last month on her placement plans she offered herself for the position of cook either in Holy Family kitchen or in Our Lady of Victory building. She also wrote that she was willing to continue helping the nurses and taking care of the linens.

Besides these duties Sister visited one of the area nursing homes regularly. She entered into everything; "made" the Communications Skills Workshop during the holidays, never missed our weekly chorus practice, and took an active part in a study group. It might seem strange to speak of someone in her seventies "growing," but this is just what Sister Eva had been doing during the past three years. She read everything she could on renewal in religious life. We were in the same study group and it was really beautiful to see how open Sister was to everything we talked about. And she used to tell us how she discussed renewal in the Church with her family who came frequently to visit her.

We are sure we will never again have a funeral at Victory Noll like Sister Eva's. Her four brothers and four sisters live close by and all have large families. The chapel was practically filled with her relatives and with us, her religious family. John, Herman, Leo, and Dorothy (Mrs. Miller) live in Decatur. Edward lives in Columbia City. Lucille, a widow (Mrs. Favery), lives in Monroeville. Mary (Mrs. Fenker) and Marcella (Mrs. Hilger) live in Fort Wayne. Only Mary and her husband were unable to come. They had just gone to Florida a couple of weeks ago and had visited Sister before they left. Their sons and daughters were here, including Sister Angelita, OSF.

Many of Sister's brothers and sisters were with us when her body was brought to Victory Noll Friday afternoon. The rest of the family came after supper and were here for the wake. One of her brothers read the Gospel that night and also had one of the readings at Mass. The weather was so bad that our Huntington friends who usually come to our wakes did not get out - only Mr. and Mrs. Joe Stoffel from town.

It had been one of the worst weeks weather-wise; first snow, then an ice storm. Thursday night was so bad that we had three or four cars stuck at one time on our back road. Friday was not much better but gradually the temperature rose and a high wind dried up the water. Saturday was absolutely beautiful - cold but sunny and no wind. You can imagine how we praised the Lord for this favor! (Sunday was snowy again.)

Everything else was beautiful Saturday also. Father Cyril (Capuchin) and Father Nevins concelebrated the Liturgy of the Resurrection. Msgr. Schmitt, a native of Decatur, and now pastor there, was in the sanctuary. Father Gollner also came from SS. Peter and Paul. He is always so faithful. Capuchin novices served. Sister is buried between Sister Evelyn and Sister Catherine Ann.

So now let us all rejoice that our Sister has been reborn in the glory of the Risen Christ. Her faithfulness to the end is a sign of hope for all of us and we know that our perseverance, too, will be confirmed by our life, death, and resurrection in Christ.

Devotedly in Our Lady of Victory

Sister Elizabeth Anne