

**Victory Noll, Huntington, IN  
September 30, 2003**

Dear Sisters, Family, Associates and Friends,

Sister Mary Elise Allmaras was unexpectedly called from this life into eternal life on September 21, 2003 at 4:25 PM. She was 92 years old and had been suffering from a heart condition. The morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> she went to chapel for the Eucharist, although she wasn't feeling well. In the afternoon, when she tried to wheel herself out of her room, the nurses noticed her effort and came running. She was put to bed but her vital signs were low. Sr. Jean Brosnan and one of the nurses were present when she died twenty minutes later.

Sr. Mary Elise entered our congregation from New Rockford, North Dakota when she was twenty-seven years old. Her parents were Frank Allmaras (born in Germany) and Hermina Beitel Allmaras (born in Austria). She had three sisters, Mary Ann, Ida and Rosie. Ida joined the Visitation Sisters and was known as Sr. Mary Rosario. Her four brothers were Frank, Bernard, Anthony and Edward. Her sisters and brothers preceded her in death.

Sr. Mary Elise was a Victory Noll Sister for sixty-five years. The year she entered, 1938, was a historic year. It was that summer that the first General Chapter was held and the first superior general was elected. Our founder, Fr. Sigstein, who had directed the congregation until that point, stepped down. Sr. Mary Elise experienced first hand the big changes that took place in the congregation.

After she made first vows in 1940, she was missioned to Redlands, California for three years. She was then asked to begin nurse's training. She received her RN degree from Queen of Angels Hospital in Los Angeles (1946) and her Bachelor of Science degree from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame (1948). The next six years were spent at Victory Noll as infirmarian. She also taught the postulants and novices in Home Health Care to prepare them for their missionary work. When our sisters did home visiting, they often encountered people with health needs. It was important to have some background in this field and Sr. Mary Elise prepared them well.

The years 1953-54 were a break from nursing for Sr. Mary Elise. She was missioned to Redlands to do catechetical work. From there, she returned to nursing, working at Our Lady of Guadalupe Clinic in San Diego, CA for over five years (1956-61). Our clinic in San Diego was closed in 1961 because a freeway was built through that part of the city. So Sr. Mary Elise was assigned to Redlands to do catechetical ministry again.

In the meantime, our clinic had moved to Tucson (St. Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic) in 1964, Sr. Mary Elise was asked to do nursing there. Like in San Diego, the clinic served those unable to receive health care, those who slipped through the cracks. *It was truly a needed ministry and an essential expression of our charism.* Sr. Mary Elise spent the rest of her active life at the clinic except for two breaks: from 1971-75 she nursed our sisters at Victory Noll and in 1976, she spent a year at the University of Denver, studying to be an Adult Nurse Practitioner. In 1988, at age 77, she left Tucson and retired to Victory Noll. The clinic awarded her a plaque showing their appreciation for her work. Even in her retirement, she still kept up to date in nursing and attended various workshops for continuing education.

While at Victory Noll, she helped in the pharmacy, distributed medicines, took turns with the care of the sisters and was available in many ways. Every evening she spent an hour relaxing with the sisters. Her hobby was making rosaries for the missions and she could finish a rosary in one hour. She also had a magic touch with African violets.

Sr. Mary Elise moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Holy Family when she herself needed more nursing care. She kept her calm spirit and quiet ways and still continued making rosaries for various people and for the missions. She received all visitors with her beautiful smile and thanked them for stopping by. Her life ended suddenly on September 21<sup>st</sup> but she was prepared.

The vigil was held the evening of September 23<sup>rd</sup> and the Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated on Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, with Fr. Thomas Fahey presiding. Mrs. Anna Allmaras, a sister-in-law from New Rockford, ND and two nieces, Elizabeth Allmaras and Noel Evans from Eagan, MN were present for the funeral. Although the day had begun with much rain, the sun came out by the time we accompanied her body to the cemetery.

The Gospel passage at Mass, Luke 23:42-43, was the dialogue of Jesus and the Good Thief, as they both were dying. Jesus promised him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." This promise has been fulfilled for Sr. Mary Elise. We hope that one day we too, will hear those words and receive that promise. Let us pray for each other that we, like Sr. Mary Elise, may be faithful until the end.

Sincerely in Our Lady of Victory,

*Sr. Melanie*

Sr. Melanie Persche, OLVN  
General Secretary