

Enjoying Humor with Sister Florence

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Dear Sisters, Associates, Family members and Friends,

One of Sister Florence Russell's quotes was, "Sometimes you have to paint your own rainbow." Sister painted the last hue of her rainbow of life on Wednesday, February 27, 2002 at 7:35 a.m. when she passed through the arch of death to claim the "gold" at the end of her rainbow prepared for her by God from all eternity.

Family members spoke of how Florence loved and lived life to the full—always with a sense of humor. As she left this life she held tightly on to the hand of the Director of the Camilla Center at Victory Noll and gently breathed her last breath in peace and joy. God gifted her with 87 years in this life, having celebrated her birthday two days previous to her unexpected quick death. The name "Florence" will perdure in her family because a niece was named in her honor.

Sister Florence loved the Victory Noll Community. On the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee in 1993, she is quoted in the Durango Herald as saying "I go back [to Victory Noll] every year. It's also a privilege to live the religious life in the spirit of your congregation. We form a bond, and our gatherings strengthen it" (May 7, 1993 issue).

The states of Indiana, California, Colorado, Texas and Wyoming were graced with her ministry in the fields of religious education, social services and health care. In Durango, Colorado she was named the citizen of the year in 1989 for her "dedication to her life's work, especially with the elderly, the needy and the homeless". Many knew her as "The Little White Haired Lady with the Beautiful Smile."

Florence Russell (Sister Florence) was born to Charles A. and Mary E. Russell in Winamac, Indiana on February 25, 1915, the second of six children. Sister entered the Congregation in September, 1933, professed first vows on September 8, 1936 and Perpetual Vows on August 5, 1942. A highlight of her missionary life was in Durango, Colorado where she ministered from 1974 until 1998 when she retired to Victory Noll.

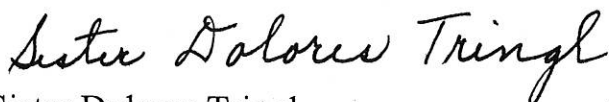
Sister's desire for education prevailed throughout her life as evidenced by her earning diplomas and certificates in various areas including Computer Skills, Graphoanalysis, Doctrine and Methods, Arboriculture, Executive Housekeeping, Hospital Management for Supervisors, Medical Terminology. When she arrived at Victory Noll in 1998 she is reported to have said, "I want to keep learning." And.. she did.

Present for the wake were Sister's sister Charlotte Dolezal and her husband Arthur of Winamac, Indiana. Her brother Gerald Russell and his daughter, Barbara Plucinski of Knox, Indiana, Charlotte's daughter and her husband, Charlene and Astro Hinojosa of Hobart, Indiana, joined the family for the funeral Mass. Family members along with the Victory Noll Sisters participated in the liturgy. Sister is preceded in death by her brothers Williard Russell, Kenneth Russell, and Kermit Russell.

Father Thomas Fahey, the celebrant of the Mass, states, "The creation of the world wasn't finished in six days. So, our creation was not finished at birth. The making of the human soul is a life-long operation which needs more than this lifespan to complete. ... Sister Florence is a woman who struggled all her life to grow in the Faith, to grow in love, and to do what God expected of her. ... God is good and Sister Florence has earned a golden crown. Now she is beginning to reap the fruit of a long and busy life. Her death is the door to her eternal life."

Sister Florence wrote: "Every evening I turn my worries over to God - because God is going to be up all night anyway." Now she is with God in a special way taking care of our worries and our struggles to grow in Faith.

In God's peace, joy, love,



Sister Dolores Tringl

General Secretary

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters