

February 26, 1989

Victory Noll
Huntington, Indiana
February 28, 1989



Dear Sisters and Associates,

"Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit." Isaiah 42:1.

Sister Bridie O'Sullivan died quietly in the Lord, Sunday morning at 7:05 a.m., February 26, 1989 in Holy Family Health Care Center Infirmary. She was 77 years of age.

Sister Bridie retired from the Pastoral Care Staff at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Ft. Wayne, December 31, 1983. Her retirement was brought about because of poor health, specifically, her short attention span and failing memory. She continued to have increasing health problems and in September of 1986 it became necessary to transfer her to Holy Family Health Care Center. During this past year, Sister was unable to speak and for the last six months she had been a bed patient. The final diagnosis of her death was that of pneumonia. The nurses had been with Sister Bridie and had just stepped out of the room, when she slipped across the mystery of death into eternity. The Sisters came immediately and all prayed for the deceased. I quote in part: "Lord God, we entrust our Sister Bridie to your mercy. You loved her greatly in this life; now that she is freed from all its cares, give her happiness and peace forever. The old order has passed away. Welcome Sister Bridie now into paradise where there will be no more sorrow, no more weeping or pain, but only peace and joy with Jesus, your Son, and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever, Amen."

Sister Bridie spent 30 years of her religious life in the missions of California, Texas, New Mexico, New Jersey, Ohio, Iowa and Vermont before returning to Victory Noll from San Antonio in 1968 to serve as coordinator of Victory Noll for six years. During her years at Victory Noll, she and Sister Elizabeth Ann ministered to an ecumenical group of women in the Huntington area by giving retreats. They usually lasted from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and were well received by all who attended.

Sister Bridie began negotiations with Sister Kathleen Quinn of St. Joseph's Hospital regarding her new ministry while she was in the last year of her ministry as coordinator of Victory Noll. She and Sister Clarice, PHJC, were to be members of the Pastoral Care Team at St. Joseph's and would receive their CPE training in Columbus, Ohio in the fall. She and Sister Clarice, PHJC, left Ft. Wayne September 19, 1974 to attend classes at the Riverview Methodist Hospital in Columbus. They returned December 15, 1974 and began their formal work in Pastoral Care at St. Joseph's January 1, 1975. Sister Bridie retired December 31, 1983 and was honored by the hospital staff with an afternoon tea and an evening party, January 4, 1984.

Sister Bridie, daughter of the late Patrick and Julia nee O'Donovan, O'Sullivan, was born May 16, 1911 in Reenascreena, County Cork, Ireland, and came to the United States on the ship Andania when she was not quite seventeen years of age. She entered the Congregation from Chicago, February 5, 1931 and made first profession of vows February 11, 1934 at Victory Noll.

Sister Bridie is survived by her sisters: Mary Dunlea of Dublin, Sheila Crowley of County Cork and Eileen Gallagher of Wantagh, New York. Her sisters were unable to come because of health. Four brothers, Jack, Patrick, Andrew, Cornelius and two infants preceded her in death.

A wake service was held Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. in Memorial Chapel. A number of the Sisters and nurses from St. Joseph's Medical Center attended. Pastor Ronald Goetz and his wife Joy were present and also a number of our employees. Father Leopold led the psalm prayer and the rosary, Sister Bernadette did the reading and Pastor Goetz gave the homily which was a beautiful tribute to Sister Bridie. He ended by saying that Sister

Bridie saw Jesus in all those with whom she worked, now, she sees Him face to face!

The Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated by Father Leopold, OFM, Cap. Sisters Mary Lucille, Virginia Schmitt were candle bearers and Lance Steffen was cross bearer; Sisters Bernadette and Camilla placed the pall on the casket; Frances K. and Christopher did the readings; Sister Rita sang the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel Verse; Father Leopold gave the homily; Sr. Florentine offered the Prayers of the Faithful and Sisters Joan and Helen Marie brought up the gifts.

Father Leopold drew from the readings which had been chosen by Bridie for this day. (Isaiah 42:1-7; Rev. 21:1-5; John 1:1-5, 8-14) He said that Sister Bridie allowed herself to be called, formed and molded by Jesus throughout her formative years and continually throughout her religious life. She wished to be "a light for the nations," and "for those who live in darkness." St. John speaks of the "real light which gives light to every one coming into the world." "Anyone who did accept him, he empowered to become children of God." "these are they who believe in his name -- who are begotten, not by blood, nor by carnal desire, nor by man's willing it, but by God." He reiterated what Pastor Goetz had said, namely, that Sister Bridie saw Jesus in all persons and now she sees him face to face.

Sister Mary Louise began her remarks with a little verse which Sr. Bridie kept in her personal file: "I believe that Life never ends . . . because I met a beautiful person once . with beauty too great to be anything but Eternal."

"Bridie O'Sullivan emigrated from County Cork, Ireland and arrived in Boston, Mass. on December 5, 1927. She was not yet 17."

"Three years later, Bridie came to Victory Noll, joining a struggling group of missionary sisters who had more vision than money and much hopeful determination. Bridie was not unlike her patron saint, Brigid of Ireland. A life of this great saint written in the 7th century, represents her as a new type of Irish woman. It likens her to a modern missionary sister, since St. Brigid often "left her monastery at Kildare to do the Lord's charity in distant parts---teaching, reconciling, healing." During her 58 years of service in our congregation, Sister Bridie was to minister in California, Texas, New Mexico, New Jersey, Ohio, Iowa, Vermont and Indiana."

"Bridie, like her patron, St. Brigid, was generous and energetic with both a seriousness and a lighthearted gaiety about her. Her spirit of hospitality and compassion was an example to us all, and the people responded to Bridie with trust and love. This was especially so during her years as Pastoral Associate at St. Joseph's hospital in Ft. Wayne where I suspect her ministry was not only with the sick and dying, but also extended to the colleagues she dearly loved."

"Sister Bridie's personal papers included her 'Covenant of Fidelity,' hand written in 1983. She quotes a verse from Hosea, 'I will espouse you in fidelity and you will know the Lord'. The statement that follows is a summary of her spirituality. Let me share just these three lines with you: 'My mission is to live and reveal the Father's love. I desire that every day of my life be a vowed moment -- a covenant of love. Mary, my dearest Mother, teach me to ponder and treasure the Divine mystery of the Trinity within me.' During her years of sickness and suffering, we, her sisters, were touched profoundly by Sr. Bridie. When she could not articulate her thoughts, her smile continued to welcome us and her eyes sparkled love. It is true - death and life stand close together. It is difficult to see where one begins and the other ends. Sister Macrina Wiederkehr writes: 'Once again death's mystery holds us in its arms, and we are memoried with a thousand things your were and are, and now always will be. We celebrate this journey with a quiet shyness, always a little uncomfortable with a mystery so deep. But with hearts full of life we hold out our hands to receive the mystery of death'"

"We, Sr. Bridie's sisters and friends, receive this mystery with confidence for there is really no death for those caught up in God, only a moment of passing over - and with Bridie, this is what we celebrate!"

The journey to the cemetery was cold, but a large crowd of us went out to lay Sr. Bridie remains to rest. Now, Sister Bridie, who was 'light' to so many, enjoys her new life in Christ Jesus. Alleluia!

With love in Jesus and Mary,
Sister Germaine Stadler
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