



SISTER MECHTILDE GOGEL, OLVM

SISTER MECHTILDE GOGEL, OLVM, age 94, died Monday July 1, 2013, at Holy Family Health Care Center at Victory Noll, Huntington.

Sister Mechtilde was born in Mariah Hill, Indiana on November 13, 1918, the second child of Paul and Theresa (Tretter) Gogel. She was baptized Mathilda Catharina on the same day at Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church. Her parents and four brothers, Alvin, Carl, Zeno, and Rev. Odo Gogel, OSB, precede her in death. One sister, Pauline Kern of Ferdinand, Indiana, survives sister. Pauline and her family would often visit Sister Mechtilde these last few years, bringing much joy to her.

Sister Mechtilde entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 28, 1941 and made first vows on August 5, 1944. She served in the missions in Michigan, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Florida and Texas. Sister retired at Victory Noll in 2007 to bake and volunteer.

In a letter to Sister Patricia Marie, dated November 11, 1969, Sister Mechtilde wrote of the Mexican-American students walking out of school in Abilene Texas. "The 'school walkout' has caused much good, but also much work ... On hindsight, I now wonder if I would have marched with them. That is if I knew then what I now know. I am glad that they brought the problem to the fore and that all was peaceful." Those were the years that many were standing with the minorities and taking a stand for justice. Many prayers and stances of solidarity were taken during those years of struggle for civil rights.

Sister Mechtilde ministered 31 years in Texas overall with 18 of those in Lubbock, Texas. She started her work in the fall of 1981 at a brand new parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, which had its origins in a converted warehouse. She saw "this beautiful new church arise from its foundation." Sister jumped right in as the first CCD Coordinator by visiting homes, training catechists, and setting up classes. Sister Mechtilde diligently performed those duties, all the time with an eye on a new vision, a new program that would stand the test of time. She saw the need for adult education and taught many adult Catholics who did not know their faith. These people did not really understand why they went to Mass week after week. She tried to stress the importance of the Mass in hopes that these lessons and a deepening of their own faith would filter down to their children. Sister Mechtilde saw the need to evangelize and took every chance she could to share her faith. Sister Mechtilde said, "People need help to find God in their

lives.” In some ways, reaching out to the adults in the parish was new and yet Sister Mechtilde knew it was the right thing to do. In 1988 she wrote. “We are again at a period of challenge. Catechetical journals all tell us that we must not only catechize the children but the adults as well. With God’s help and some younger energy, may the Church go forward.” What Mechtilde knew in the 1980’s, we still work to fulfill; to bring people closer to God and to find God in their lives.

Sister Mechtilde was very fortunate to have some of her family only a few hours away in southern Indiana and many were able to join the Victory Noll family for Sister Mechtilde’s wake and funeral. Her sister Pauline Kern and her two daughters, Mary Denning, Rose Pund and her sons, Ray, John and Dave along with Ray’s wife, Sylvia, and John’s wife Charlene. Sister Mechtilde’s brother Zeno’s family, Marilyn Hagedorn, and Joe Gogel were also present.

In his homily Father Thomas Fahey, reminded us all that Sister Mechtilde liked to bake bread, in fact when she returned to Victory Noll she listed her ministry as baker. He went on to say that she loved to bake bread and she would sometimes share the work of her hands with him. He remembered her bread as being good, very good. He connected her baking bread to Jesus the bread of life. Sister Mechtilde was nourished at the table of the Lord with the bread of life and was therefore able to nourish others. Others shared the same memory of her about bread and baking.

After the liturgy was complete the family and sisters accompanied the body to the cemetery. After the prayers at the gravesite all joined in singing “Dios te Salve” and “Adios Reina del Cielo.”

Sister Mechtilde, may you now be one with the saints in one unbounded peace, one with the saints in one unbounded love, more blessed still in peace and love to be one with the Trinity in unity. **

In the name of Jesus, the Bread of Life,



** paraphrased from *Lord, Who at the First Eucharist*

Steven Noble