

November 26, 2011

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends,

Sister Priscilla Wilke went peacefully to God at approximately 1:30 P.M. on November 21, 2011. Sister went to the hospital at 12:30 A.M. with shortness of breath. It was determined after tests that Priscilla had suffered a heart attack. In the early afternoon the medical staff was at the door of Priscilla's room when Sister Ann Shirley arrived. She was told that Priscilla was dying. Ann Shirley went in and prayed with Priscilla. She went home to God shortly after Ann Shirley arrived. Priscilla had declined in health and had her share of suffering recently. God released her from suffering and care and took her to himself.

Sister Priscilla was born in St. Rose, Ill. on November 15, 1927 to Stephen Wilke and Mary Agnes Tebbe Wilke. She was preceded in death by her parents, two brothers Raymond Wilke, and Andrew Wilke, and one sister, Sister Henrietta Wilke, OLVM. She is survived by four sisters, Sister Martha Wilke, OLVM at Victory Noll, Mary Ann Hempen, of Breese, Ill., Bertha Kluemke, of Breese, Ill., and Irma Korte, of Highland, Ill.

Sister Priscilla entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 30, 1947. She made her first Profession of Vows on August 5, 1950 at Victory Noll, and her Perpetual Vows on August 5, 1956 in Santa Fe, N.M.

Priscilla served God and God's people in the missions of California, Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Florida, Indiana, and Wyoming. Sister began her missionary life in San Pedro, Calif. Here she and other sisters taught Religion Classes to over 700 students a week. Priscilla said at times she felt like, "a voice calling in the wilderness, but we plant and water and God brings forth the fruit of this labor of love." Sister Priscilla was an excellent Catechist and her love for catechesis was obvious to anyone who had the privilege of being in her class. She made the scriptures come alive, and motivated the students with a desire to learn more of their faith tradition. She was always eager to learn more. She received a Masters of Religious Education from St. Thomas University in Texas, and attended many workshops and courses in Scripture, Catechetics, Catechist Formation, and Spirituality. It was a great joy for Priscilla when she became more involved in Adult Education and Catechist Formation. In 1965, she was part of a team in the Miami Diocese that traveled throughout the diocese teaching Vatican II Theology to Adults. The team of Victory Noll Sisters and the Diocesan Director would meet for a weekend in Miami once a month to prepare their lesson for the month ahead. Those were exciting times and all were enthused to go forth and share the Good News in parishes throughout the diocese. In her years in the Imperial Valley, El Centro, Calif., one of Priscilla's great loves was the formation of new Catechists. As a Master Catechist, she imparted to her classes the skills, techniques and love for this ministry that was her own. Many Catechists spoke of the inspiration they received in her classes. In addition to her love for Catechetical Ministry, Sister Priscilla showed a concern for the plight of those suffering from poverty and oppression. In El Centro she became a board member of the Imperial Valley Food Bank. She also volunteered at the Sister Evelyn Mourey Center as bookkeeper, and at Catholic Charities. She completed training in Domestic Violence, and in Mediating Interpersonal Conflict. Her desire was to assist those confronted with these issues. Sister returned to Victory Noll in 2006, and ministered as assistant librarian, and volunteered in other areas of need.



At the Vigil Service on Friday evening many family members were present. Among those present were Priscilla's sister Mary Ann Hempen and her daughters Phyllis Crippen, Deb Gall and her daughter-in-law Geralyn Hempen; her

sister Bertha Klumke; her sister Irma Korke and her daughters Theresa Voss, Tammy Keltner and her husband Ken Keltner, her sons Ted Korte and Craig Korte, and her grandchildren Ryan Keltner and Christine Keltner. Also present was Priscilla's friend from high school days, Arlene Neff and her husband Tony Neff. Sister Priscilla chose "Christ Be Our Light" as the opening Hymn for the Vigil, and John 15:9-13, 16-17 for the Reading. In this reading Jesus tells us that He loves us just as the Father has loved Him, and He wants our joy to be complete. Jesus says that He has chosen us to bear fruit that will endure, and that He will give us whatever we ask in His name, if we but love one another. We are grateful Priscilla that you chose these readings and made them part of your daily journey.

After the service we went to the dining room for refreshments, and continued sharing our memories of Priscilla. Family, sisters and her friend Arlene shared memories of their relationship with Priscilla. All spoke of the fact that she loved fun and could be daring despite her quiet demeanor. The following are a few of the memories shared. Her nephew Craig said while Sister Priscilla was visiting with them he asked her if she would like a ride on his new motorcycle. He expected a "no, thank you," but instead she said yes and hopped on. Nephew Ted recounted how he loved her laugh. He invited her to go canoeing with family members, mostly young ones. She enjoyed the ride and even when the canoe tipped over, he could hear Priscilla laugh and wave at him as she floated past him in the water saying, "That was delightful, I'm closer to my Heavenly Father." Her niece Theresa shared that when she was experiencing great grief over the death of a friend, Sister Priscilla's words were a comfort to her. Priscilla sensed that there was something bothering Theresa. She took her out to the Labyrinth and told her to put one step in front of the other, God walking with her. Some of our sisters shared, the following is one shared by Alodia. Several years ago when several of our sisters participated in a protest against nuclear proliferation at the Nevada Test Site, Priscilla was among them. She and others were arrested for crossing a specified line and placed in a holding cell for several hours. It was hot and there was no water offered to drink. Priscilla was happy to be part of this protest for the abolishment of nuclear weapons.

On Saturday November 27, 2011, we celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Members of the family took part in the various Rites like placing the Pall and crucifix on the casket, the Liturgy of the Word and the Intercessions, and the Procession with the Gifts. Father Fahey shared in his Homily that Priscilla had chosen a beautiful reading, John 17:1-3, 5. Jesus is praying to His Father and asking to return Home and be with Him in glory. He had finished the work God had sent Him to do. Now He asks for eternal life for all God had given Him. God has given Sister Priscilla eternal life in Heaven. This is eternal life, to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Sister has spent her whole life striving to know and love God, and impart this knowledge to others. St. Paul says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human mind has conceived all that God has prepared for those who love Him." Now sister is experiencing an eternity of love and joy.

After Mass we processed to the cemetery, where we laid Sister Priscilla to rest with the final prayers, blessing of the casket, and the singing of the Hymn, "Tu Eres La Victoria." A delicious dinner to celebrate Priscilla's life followed.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Betty Anderson". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Sister Elizabeth Anderson, OLVM
General Secretary