



SISTER ALMA BILL, OLVM, a resident of Heritage Pointe of Warren, Indiana, died on the afternoon of January 30, 2026, just two months shy of her 105th birthday.

Sister Alma was born in Arcadia, Wisconsin, on March 24, 1921, to Joseph Bill and Ida Schank Bill. She was baptized at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, also in Arcadia on April 10, 1921, the ninth of 10 children. She had four brothers, Simon, Linus, Werner, and Alban Bill; and five sisters, Armella Bill, Bernetta Bill, Eileen Bill, Mary Margaret Runkel and Therese Sgarlata. She is preceded in death by her immediate family.

Sister Alma taught school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, before she entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 30, 1947, making her first vows on August 5, 1950. She served in the states of California, Florida, Missouri, Arizona, and Indiana. She also served the OLVM community as a counselor to the President and as the East/Mid-West Area Coordinator from 1971-1979. Even when not in elected leadership, Sister Alma was always a leader and full participant in the community's governance and life. After 25 years in Arizona, the last state where she had a ministry position as the Director of Religious Education at Saint Agnes Catholic Church, she returned to Victory Noll in June, 2010, to volunteer and be a joyful presence.

Sister Alma was a lifelong learner. She earned a bachelor's degree from Saint Catherine's College in 1964, and master's degrees from Dominican College in San Rafael, California in 1966, and from Barry College (now the University of Miami, Florida) in 1973. She attended countless workshops, on-going formation sessions, and continued to read and stay current in her areas of interest.

Most will remember Sister Alma as a great storyteller. We can see her "holding court" telling stories of her early days of life on the farm in Wisconsin, her time teaching in Milwaukee where she would dance with the soldiers at the USO during the Second World War, or stories of her early ministry experiences that had wild and unforgettable adventures. In the early 2000's, the Leadership Team of the Congregation asked her to write the second volume of our history, told through the stories of the Sisters. As a storyteller, she decided to write these stories down, for her family, her community and for herself. It was important to her to pass on the stories to the next generation. After retiring to Victory Noll, she wrote her life story. It can be found in the Allen County Genealogy Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana. There is also a copy in the OLVM archives.

Although Sister Alma was a storyteller, in her heart she was — and always will be — a catechist. She was recognized for this, and in the early 1960's was asked to write a religious education text, the *On Our Way* series, for W. H. Sadlier, Inc. The series was produced for religious education classes and not for the Catholic School curriculum. The writing of the series took place during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and took several years to complete. She had companions who helped with the research and the writing. She told the story of finishing a section only to have the theologian write back saying “part of the section needed to be revised due to the latest document coming out of the Council.” Along with this catechetical series, Sister Alma also recorded three albums of music for use with the series. These albums were produced “to demonstrate that public school children can learn to sing both Latin and English hymns.” (quoted from *The Missionary Catechist*, May 1962) The article goes on to say, “The recordings were made simply to encourage other public-school children to learn and love these well-known hymns of Mother Church.” Sister Alma's philosophy always was that Religious Education students are as capable as Catholic School children. They only needed to be given the opportunity to have good instruction and teachers.

In her later years, Sister Alma continued to do all the things she enjoyed — writing, reading, and putting puzzles together. She would sit for hours at the puzzle table. Before moving to Heritage Pointe, she would put in pieces on her way to and from meals in the dining room at Saint Anne's at Victory Noll.

Sister Alma's family, friends, and OLVM Sisters gathered at the Chapel at Heritage Pointe on February 6, 2026, to celebrate her long and faithful life as a Catholic and as a Victory Noll Sister. Fr. Tony Steinacker from Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Huntington presided at the funeral mass. Sister Alma was buried at the OLVM cemetery in Huntington.

We all have wonderful memories of this spunky, funny, and wise woman. Some of us called her aunt or sister, and if you were lucky, friend.

God bless you Sister Alma for who you were, for all you did and for all the stories and memories you leave behind. Now rest in peace, good and faithful servant.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Ginger Downey OLVM". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM