



SISTER RUTH ELLERT, OLVM died February 3, 2020, at Saint Anne Community at Victory Noll, Huntington, Indiana. She was 92 and had been a member of the congregation for 68 years.

Sister Ruth was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on July 12, 1927, to John Ellert and Victoria Royal Ellert. She was the youngest of three girls. She was baptized Ruth Marcella on July 24, 1927, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. Her parents and both of her sisters, Constance Lindsley and Jo Ann Freygang, preceded her in death.

Six years after graduating high school, Sister Ruth entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on September 6, 1951. She made first vows on August 5, 1954, and her first mission was in Monterey, California. She continued to serve in the missions of California for the next 20 years. She then went to Brigham City, Utah, and also served in missions in New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Oregon and Wyoming before returning to California for seven years. She moved home to Victory Noll in 2009.

Sister Ruth was involved in Religious Education throughout her mission years. She served as Director of Religious Education and Adult Formation before she became a Pastoral Coordinator for several parishes in Wyoming. Sister Ruth earned her Bachelor's degree from San Diego College for Women in 1968. She went to school during the summers at the University of Saint Thomas in Houston, Texas, and received her Master's in Religious Education in 1974.

Sister Ruth loved working with adults, and especially enjoyed teacher training. While serving at Our Lady of Victory Parish in East Los Angeles, California, she teamed with Father (later Bishop) John Steinbock of Fresno, California, to provide catechist formation. Fr. Steinbock taught the theology and Sister Ruth taught the methods for catechists. Many years later, Bishop Steinbock said, "Everything I know about catechist formation I learned from Sister Ruth." It is a great tribute to Sister Ruth.

Sister Ruth is quoted as saying, "As Victory Noll Sisters, we have always entered into the struggle of the people we serve; our charism, from the beginning has been to minister to those who are involved in the struggle for justice and a better life. Justice demands that we enter into the struggle. Only if we participate in the suffering of others can we bring comfort." This became very real for Sister Ruth while serving at Holy Cross Parish in Morenci, Arizona. Morenci is a company town for the Phelps Dodge Copper mine. The vibrant parish served both union workers and the company's management leaders. There were struggles, but Sister Ruth listened diligently to both

sides and offered comfort and healing for the benefit of the workers, families and parish.

Sister Ruth was our own mystic and poet. She wrote beautiful poetry about her experiences or to illustrate what she was thinking or feeling. She could write her vision and prayers in a way that helped others to grow. She studied the theology of Han Urs Von Balthar, a 20th century Catholic theologian who stressed beauty, truth and goodness. These were very important virtues for Sister Ruth. She also liked the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. She found his idea of nature compelling and comforting. As she prepared for her move back to Victory Noll she commented on what gave her hope in the community. "I see the growing desire for a deeper spiritual life," she said. "It is not the basics of what we did in the past nor religiosity, but leading others in the deeper paths of the spiritual life, into the mystery of God found in nature and the people around us."

Sister Ruth never lost her desire to teach, especially the Gospel of John. She took a course on the Gospel of John from Sister Sandra Schneiders, IHM, and from there developed her own way of helping others to deepen their faith through her classes and reflections on this gospel.

Sister Ruth's cousin, Anne Braun, was able to join the community for Sister Ruth's vigil service on Wednesday, February 5, 2020. One of her other cousins, Patricia Harter, was able to be present for her funeral on February 6, 2020. It was wonderful to have both of them with us to celebrate Sister Ruth's life.

I close this letter of remembrance using Sister Ruth's own words, because they speak of who she was and most certainly who she is in her own resurrection.

***Heralds of the Word
Free as the wind radiating light which is life,
Living the Vision we were first given,
Women of Sacrament; consecrators of earthly things,
Sharing bread of presence and of life.***

May you now know the Living Vision first hand and be free as the wind to radiate light and be the presence of life.

With gratitude and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sr. Ginger Downey O.L.V.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM