

March 13, 1965

All for Jesus through Mary

SISTER LORETTA MARIE BERGERIE

March 15, 1965

Dear Sisters,

Sister Loretta Marie's funeral today incorporated the latest ritual changes in the diocese. The recited Mass with song, offered at 10:30 A.M. included an Introit procession, the reciting by all the Congregation of the Introit, Gradual, Tract, and Communion Verse; as well as Offertory and Communion processions. It was our Community Mass, and our Sisters from Kendallville, Washington Court House, Paulding, Wheatfield, and West Lafayette attended. Sister Loretta Marie's sister, Maurine, arrived at Victory Noll on Saturday evening.

After undergoing surgery in San Antonio on August 27, 1964, Sister Loretta Marie was able to come to Victory Noll on September 22. One month later, she received the Sacrament of the Sick for the first time. After the anointing she recovered her strength somewhat and was able to spend Thanksgiving weekend at Lake Wawasee. For her feastday, December 12th, (celebrated on this day at her request) a little party was held in the third floor dining room of Holy Family Infirmary. She enjoyed the Spanish serenade by the Sisters, accompanied by Sister Rita Ann's guitar playing. Sister Loretta Marie herself, served a delicious cake she had baked, and said it was the best celebration she had ever had.

Sister enjoyed the evening recreations at Victory Noll and showed interest in what was going on, even to watching some TV programs and to helping with a puzzle or a game of Scrabble. She especially enjoyed the visits with her sister Maurine, who came to Victory Noll in September, December, and again early in March.

During January, Sister became very ill. The doctor thought at that time that she would not live more than ten days. She received the Sacrament of the Sick for the second time on January 23. After a few days she again showed signs of improvement and was able to be up and about in her room. Sister assisted at Mass almost daily from the balcony in the Infirmary. She attended Mass for the last time on February 28. She was able to receive Holy Communion daily until March 10, when she was no longer able to swallow the Sacred Host.

Sister expressed a preference for the prayers for the dying and made no secret of her intense longing for heaven. Having become very weak, she asked for the Apostolic Blessing, which was administered to her by Father Howard, O.F.M.Cap. on March 5. A week later, on March 12, Sister's condition was decidedly worse, and she received the Apostolic Blessing three times: from Father O'Connor of St. Mary's, Huntington, in the afternoon, from Monsignor Conroy early in the evening, and from Monsignor Crowley later in the evening. They spoke encouragingly to Sister; Monsignor Conroy recited the prayers for the dying, and Monsignor Crowley recited the Rosary. Later, another Rosary was led by Mother Florentine. The Act of Consecration was recited, and Mother then intoned the hymn of St. Louis de Montfort.

After a long-drawn-out period of suffering, during which she was apparently entirely conscious, Sister Loretta Marie was taken to heaven on the anniversary of Our Father's death, at 3:45 A.M., March 13. Sister Camilla was with her when death came very peacefully. A group of Sisters immediately gathered in the room and recited the rosary together.

Sister Loretta Marie entered the Congregation from New Iberia, La., in July of 1927, and made her Profession on August 15, 1929. She spent two years in New Mexico, 16 years in California, and 15 years in Texas. During six of her years in California and during twelve of the years she spent in Texas, Sister was superior of the local convent.

Now that her work on earth is finished, may her intercession help us to continue our part in the apostolate for which she gave her life so generously to Jesus through Mary.

Devotedly in Jesus and Mary,

Sister Margaret Ann

General Secretary