

A Valiant Woman: Sister Karen

Victory Noll
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April 1, 2002

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family Members, and Friends,

Sister Karen wrote in an issue of *Challenge*, the Victory Noll publication, "Every call from God... is special and unique. Mine is no exception." Sister's call from God to enjoy heaven began at 6:55 PM on March 15, 2002 at Holy Family Health Care Center. Her death was special and unique because as the Sisters beside her bed prayed, she peacefully slept away although she was "aware" up until about two hours previously.

Love for her religious vocation was uppermost for Sister Karen. She writes that it began initially in the second grade. "Jesus seemed so real to me one evening when I knelt to say my night prayers. It was as if I heard Him say, 'I want you to be a Sister.'" Her love for being a Sister, especially a Victory Noll Sister, motivated her to accept ministry as a Vocation Coordinator/Team Member, seeking out and encouraging women to join her in this call from God.

The family rosary said each evening after supper contributed to Mary having a special place in her life. Sister writes, "I remember one particular prayer asking Our Blessed Mother to grant me her spirit of faith, trust and courage." Mary granted these gifts to her as with faith, trust and courage she valiantly surged forward each day carrying out her ministries even though she had the handicaps of diabetes and difficulty in hearing.

Mary Jane Knecht (Sister Karen) was born February 15, 1936 in Louisville, Kentucky to George Adam Knecht and Catherine Cecilia Knecht. She had two sisters, Janice K. Curry and Georgette M. Knecht, and one brother, William Joseph Knecht, all of whom preceded her in death.

The Vigil Service was held on Sunday evening, March 17th and Mass of Christian Burial on Monday, March 18th. Her brother-in-law, James Curry, from Clarksville, Indiana and sister-in-law, Susan Knecht, from Shelbyville, Kentucky were present for both events and celebrated a festive meal with the Victory Noll Sisters.

Sister entered Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on September 6, 1955 and made first vows on August 5, 1958. She ministered as a Director of Religious Education and Coordinator of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Nevada, Utah as well as Vocation Team Member/Coordinator while residing at Salt Lake City, San Bernardino and Victory Noll.

Sister seemed to enjoy her Kentucky accent. In spite of much teasing, she held on to it. It was one of her unique characteristics. Driving a car appeared to be fun for her as she sped up the mountains of Colorado and Utah. She was a splendid "AAA" Automobile Person, always coming to the rescue of a Sister stranded with a broken-down car and knowing directions to reach destinations in big cities.

John 21:15-19 was chosen by Sister Karen as her Gospel reading for the Mass of Christian Burial. Father Thomas Fahey, celebrant of the Mass, stated: "Jesus' words to Peter 'Follow Me' must have brought joy and love to Peter's heart." Jesus' call to Sister Karen to be a Missionary Sister must have brought joy and love to her heart because from second grade onward, she heard God's voice—and responded with faith, trust and courage.

Sincerely yours,

Sister Dolores Tringl

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General Secretary
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters