

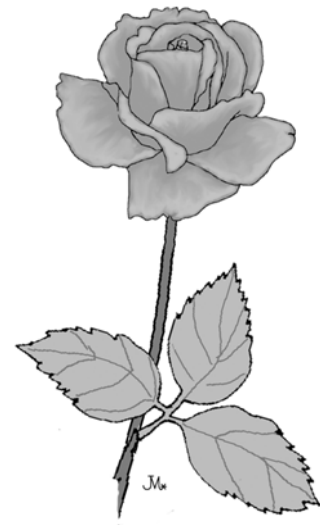
March 28, 2010

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends,

Sister Margaret Gutierrez went peacefully home to God at 4:10 a.m., on March 18, 2010, at Holy Family Health Care Center, Victory Noll. The Nurses were with Sister when she died. Sister Margaret's health had been declining. However, she embraced her sufferings with great faith and acceptance of God's will. She participated at the Eucharistic Celebration every day and was at Mass the morning before her death. At times Margaret would be in her wheelchair in the foyer on third floor, and her presence would be one of peace to anyone who stopped to talk with her. Margaret's smile and quiet gentleness was a blessing to others. She always showed concern about how her visitor was doing and seemed not to want to concentrate on herself.

Sister Margaret was born in Duarte, California, on February 23, 1915, to James Gutierrez and Estefana Monges Gutierrez. She had ten siblings, two older brothers John and Reginald, an older sister Lucille, four younger sisters Gertrude, Georgia, Maria and Frances, and three younger brothers Lawrence, Carlos, and James. Sister Margaret was preceded in death by four brothers John, Reginald, Lawrence, and James and two sisters Lucille Taylor, and Frances Guerrero. Surviving are one brother Carlos Gutierrez, and three sisters, Georgia Urrea, Maria Consuelo Angel, and Gertrude Romero.

Sister Margaret entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on February 16, 1934. She made her first Profession on February 11, 1937, and her Perpetual Vows on August 5, 1942, in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Margaret pursued her college education and received a BA Degree in Spanish, Cum Laude and a MA in Religious Education in 1973. She served in the missions of Indiana, Texas, California and Bolivia. Most of Sister's missionary life was spent in California and Texas. Her primary ministry was Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. Margaret had a great love for and commitment to the people where she ministered, and worked tirelessly to meet their spiritual and temporal needs. In Brawley, she set up a clinic where the poor could come for free health care. This clinic was in a building behind the convent, and doctors and nurses volunteered their services to assist the sick people who were unable to afford medical care. On the day clinic was scheduled, Margaret would stay at the clinic and assist in any way she could.



Sister Margaret had many gifts that she used generously for the glory of God and the good of people. Before ESL was even heard of, Sister Margaret was assisting priests who were Spanish speaking to learn English, so that they could more effectively minister to all their parishioners. Margaret also gave her time generously as counselor to younger sisters helping them with their ministry and any other difficulties they might encounter. She was a great seamstress and would help anyone with their sewing needs especially some of the young sisters in making over their Habits. Sister Margaret had a beautiful alto voice and participated in the choir both in the missions and at Victory Noll. As a Superior, Sister Margaret tried to create an atmosphere of joy, love, and peace in the Convent. In Brawley, she would plan trips with us to visit our sisters in Indio and would arrange to meet them at the Salton Sea where we would have a picnic and enjoy the day together. Almost every Friday she would make chile rellenos and invite anyone into the kitchen to learn how to make them. Margaret was an excellent cook and never failed to take her turn and also helped others not as skilled in the culinary arts. Another gift that she had and loved was gardening. Anything she planted grew and bloomed beautifully. She would spend her free time creating a lovely garden, and would often ask the help of others in the house who were so inclined. Sister Margaret's generosity was obvious both to the people where she ministered and to the sisters in the missions. Each year just before our summer trip to Redlands, Calif., for Retreat and Renewal, she would go out to the packing sheds with the sisters to ask for grapefruit, oranges, lemons, and any other fruit to bring with us to share with the Community. She would also share with the people any food or fruit we could offer those who had little to eat. Her generosity also extended to sisters from other Congregations. Each year, in Brawley she extended hospitality for about a week to sisters who would come to the Valley to beg for financial help from businesses, farmers and churches for their Congregation.

After 61 years in the missions, Sister Margaret retired to Victory Noll in 1998. After a year on third floor Holy Family following a serious surgery, Margaret moved to second floor and began a ministry as translator of Spanish. Later, Sister Mary Bernarda Marquez joined her in this ministry. They would translate articles into Spanish for *Visions*, also pamphlets, brochures, peace and justice articles and the monthly Reflection for our Web site. They also translated certificates of Baptism and Confirmation of our sisters from Bolivia from Spanish to English. Sister Margaret continued with this ministry until 2008. At that time her health was declining and she moved to third floor Holy Family where her ministry was one of gentle presence and kindness to all the staff and sisters.

At the Vigil Wednesday evening, sisters, family, and a member of the nursing staff shared about Sister Margaret's quiet, gentle presence and gracious smile to all who approached her. Her brother Carlos shared that Margaret was the apple of her mother's eye. He said he was only seven when she left and he thought that she would be coming home in a few days. He said the family loved her visits home and looked forward to them. Carlos shared that Margaret

told them about the love and care she received at Victory Noll. This was a great comfort to the family and he said, "We thank you for your care of Margaret." Diane Biggers shared that Sister Margaret was a very special person, and a joy to care for. She said Sister Margaret shared with her the great love she had for her family. Sister Mary Helen Rogers recalled that though Margaret was a quiet, gentle person she could also see the light side in a situation and had a great sense of humor. She said she thanked God for giving her Margaret as a companion during their many years of Religious Life.

On Thursday, March 25, we celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Members of Sister Margaret's family were present, her brother Carlos and his wife Eneida, and their daughter Michel from Filmore, Calif. After the sprinkling with Holy Water, Carlos and Shelly placed the Pall and the Crucifix on the casket. In his homily, Father Fahey spoke of Sister Margaret as a beautiful, gentle person. He said, "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God. Sister Margaret will see God, no doubt about it." He said that Sister Margaret chose Revelations to be proclaimed at her funeral. In this reading God said, "He would wipe away every tear from our eyes, that there would be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain. God promised to make all things new, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. I am the Alpha and Omega, and to all who thirst I give to drink without cost life giving water." Father spoke of Sister Margaret as a Victor. He said, "She suffered a lot, but she was thirsty for salvation. She did hang on the cross with Jesus, but now she will someday share His Resurrection. This was her faith and her hope."

After Mass, the final prayers were said at the gathering area because of inclement weather, however, many of us processed out to the cemetery. We laid Margaret to rest with prayer and the singing of the hymn "O Maria Madre Mia."

Thank you Margaret for your faithful journey with us and your love for God's people. The Eternal One says to you, Come drink from the Spring of Life giving water, for you have won the victory, I will be your God and you shall be my daughter.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Sister Betty Anderson, O.L.V.M.*

Sister Elizabeth Anderson, OLVM

*General Secretary*