

Victory Noll  
Huntington, Indiana 46750  
September 24, 1973

Dear Sisters

May Our Blessed Mother, Lady of Mercy, intercede for us all at the throne of her Divine Son!

Here we are again celebrating the death and resurrection of one of our Sisters. As time passes and our community grows older, we know we can expect this to happen more frequently. But little did we think that Our Lord would call Sister Mary Ann Seewaldt so soon after the deaths of Sister Anna and of Sister Aurelia Jane.

Sister Mary Ann became critically ill very early in the morning of September 14. She called Sister Mary Camillus who in turn summoned Sister Mary Colette but before much could be done, Sister lapsed into unconsciousness and was taken to St. Mary's hospital where her condition was diagnosed as a massive cerebral hemorrhage. There was no hope for her recovery.

The Tucson Sisters remained with Sister Mary Ann almost constantly, but she never regained consciousness. She died at 12:15 p.m. Wednesday, September 19. Death came quietly. Sister's brothers and sisters had, of course, been informed and the Tucson Sisters kept in touch with them. They accepted Sister's death beautifully but all wished to attend her funeral. Her remains were brought back to Victory Noll for the Mass and interment today.

Sister Mary Ann's two brothers and their wives, and her four sisters arrived in time for the wake Sunday night. Only John, a bachelor in his eighties, was not able to make the trip. All live not too far apart in upstate New York: Mrs. Anna Schwab and Mrs. Josephine Almeter, North Java; Mrs. Helena Lynch, Salamanca; Mrs. Cecilia Cook, Buffalo; Mr. and Mrs. Albert Seewaldt, Gainesville; and Mr. and Mrs. Julius Seewaldt, Johnsonburg.

Sister Mary Ann Seewaldt was born on August 5, 1906, in North Java, N.Y. Sister's mother died when she was ten. When Mary Ann was eighteen, she came to Waterloo, Indiana, to visit dear friends of the family, the Dietzens. Mrs. Dietzen and Sister Mary Ann's mother had gone to school together in Belgium and had kept in touch when they both came to this country.

It seems that Sister Mary Ann had in the back of her mind to go into nurses' training. For that she needed more schooling and some financial help. She enrolled at St. Catherine's Academy and worked at St. Patrick's rectory in Fort Wayne. It was the custom - as in many rectories, and St. Patrick's was a very busy one in those days - for the housekeeper, Miss Brigid Brennan, to have a young girl assist her in her duties. One of these girls was our Sister Genevieve Whitehead. In 1925 Sister Genevieve entered Victory Noll.

Several girls were engaged to help Miss Brennan but none of them came up to Sister Genevieve; that is, not until Mary Ann came along. To make a long story short, Msgr. Delaney, the pastor, Father Bennett (future Bishop of Lafayette), and Miss Brennan were so delighted with Mary Ann that they would have liked to keep her always. However, Miss Brennan talked so much about Genevieve that Mary Ann wanted to know more about the Catechists in Huntington where Genevieve had gone.

And that is how Sister Mary Ann came to Victory Noll in August, 1926, though she had not known Sister Genevieve personally - only by hearing so much about her from Brigid! Naturally they became very dear friends, a friendship that continued through the years.

Some of us still remember how Msgr. Delaney and Father Bennett used to accuse Father Sigstein - though in jest - of taking their best girls from them! They remained very much interested in both Sister Genevieve and Sister Mary Ann. They were always real benefactors of Victory Noll - a role that Msgr. Delaney bequeathed to his successor, Msgr. Monahan. Msgr. Delaney, in his letter to Father recommending Mary Ann Seewaldt, remarked especially on her happy disposition and spirit of helpfulness. All the Sisters who ever lived with her attest to this. Sister Mary Ann could always be depended upon to be the "life of the party."

Her mission experience was long and varied. Missions included Gary, Anton Chico, Santa Paula, Tulare, Coachella, Los Banos, Los Angeles (Soledad), El Paso, San Pierre, Ogden, Brighton, Colorado Springs, Montrose, Cheyenne, Winnemucca, and Elko. As you know, Sister was in Tucson only a short time before her illness.

All of our Arizona Sisters and many friends in Tucson took part in the wake there Friday night before Sister Mary Ann's remains were taken to the airport. Sister Louise Wilbers came over from Calexico.

And here at Victory Noll this morning the Indiana friends of the Seewaldts joined us for the funeral rite; Mr. and Mrs. Siebenaler who now live in Hicksville, Ohio, and Mr. and Mrs. Bender, Waterloo. Mrs. Siebenaler and Mrs. Bender, sisters, were Dietzens - girlhood friends of Sister Mary Ann. It was a perfect early fall morning, the trees just beginning to turn; sunny and warm but not too warm. Father John was the celebrant, assisted by two Capuchin novices. And - one more "coincidence" - Mary Seewaldt has a young cousin a Capuchin, ordained only recently, so Father John and the Brothers know him! Our Sisters know Mary from her Anti-Abortion apostolate.

Let us continue to pray for one another and support one another so that when the Bridegroom comes, we will all go out to meet Him joyfully as our Sisters have done before us.

Devotedly in Our Lady of Victory

Sister Elizabeth Ann O'Leary