

Victory Noll
Huntington, Indiana 46750
October 1, 1982

Dear Sisters,

"One is holy, One is Lord: Jesus Christ, to the Glory of God the Father!"
(Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom)

In the early morning hour of 3:05 a.m. on Wednesday, September 29, the feast of the archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Sister Chrysostom passed through the mystery of death to begin another phase of her life in Christ. For us, death is still mystery, but for Sister Chrysostom, it is now revelation! Revelation of God's presence where there is only joy and peace forever!

The disease which claimed Sister Chrysostom's life within the year was diagnosed as pancreatic cancer in November of 1981, when she had undergone exploratory surgery at which time the doctors were unable to remove a mass attached to the pancreas. At that time radium was implanted from which Sister suffered intense pain. In the early months after surgery, it seemed as though Sister was experiencing a recovery, but it didn't last.

Sister Chrysostom returned to the Noll with Sister Frances on June 24, 1982. Both Sisters went for a short trip into Wisconsin, but had to return almost immediately because Sister Chrysostom became so ill. Her condition became worse in early August and the first week in September she became bed-fast, being up only short periods of time. At this time, Sister experienced very high temperatures. Her pain was almost constant and while she was most sensitive to pain, she never took medication for it.

On Tuesday morning, September 28, Father Jim Hast, ofm capuchin, anointed Sister after Mass. She was in a coma most of the day and evening and on Wednesday morning at 3:05 a.m., she died peacefully with Sister Frances, her constant companion during the long months of her illness, Sister Virginia Schmitt and Sister Helen Collis at her bedside. For the past two weeks before her death, the Sisters took turns keeping vigil beside her bed throughout the night.

I visited with Sister several times and one day she went with me for a short ride downtown and then over to the L and K motel so she could meet her family and ride home with them. The first time we visited, Sister talked of a possible recovery; the second time her thoughts were so different. From her heart, she spoke with gratitude to God for his gifts to her and for allowing her to use her gifts to teach others. Her whole being was saying a real "yes" to the Father after a tremendous struggle with herself. Her "yes" was truly verifying the death of Jesus! Her death, which was to become a reality so very soon, "was not a destruction coming upon her from without, but an entering into a situation where she embraced the will of God completely!"*

After her death, I listened to a tape she had made on September 6, Labor Day, for all VN Sisters; She had the same tone of gratitude to God for his creation and how it spoke to her. She ended her little reflection with an emphasis on teaching which was her greatest love.

Sister was well prepared in her ministry as teacher. She received her B.S. in Health Education at State Teachers College in Stroudsburg, Pa., in 1955; her MA ED in Counseling and Guidance at Loyola University of Los Angeles in 1970 and her Master of Religious Education (M RE) from Loyola University of Chicago in 1978. She served as a teacher in a parish setting; as a diocesan director; as a parish director; as a member of a pastoral team and as a campus ministry chaplain in three colleges in Pa.

Sister Chrysostom was born January 9, 1931 in Perth Amboy, New Jersey and entered the Congregation on September 9, 1955. She made first profession of vows at Victory Noll on August 5, 1958. When Sister Chrysostom entered the novitiate, she chose the name "Chrysostom" for the famous Doctor of the Eastern Church and patron of her family parish in Perth Amboy. Sister Chrysostom belonged to the Byzantine Rite, Russian usage. She received permission from the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches to be admitted to a Latin Rite community such as ours is. This did not mean a change of rite, but only that Sister was free to worship in the Latin Rite as long as she was a Victory Noll Sister. All of us are quite familiar with her profound bow instead of the genuflection. We will have a Byzantine cross cut into her pillow marker as she requested.

Sister Chrysostom was the third oldest in a family of five children. She is survived by three brothers and one sister: Mrs. Susan Jenco of Linden, New Jersey; Andrew and John of Perth Amboy and Eugene of Edison, New Jersey. The family arrived in time to attend all the services at Victory Noll. We appreciated their presence here so very much.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated by Father Jum Hast, assisted by Brother Gerry Pehler, ofm capuchin. Sister Chrysostom had planned the whole liturgy and the songs she selected from Glory and Praise were very meaningful. Sister Regina Marie Morrissey played Franz Schubert's "Ave Maria" before Mass and played and sang Caesar Franck's "Panis Angelicus" at communion time. Sister Marie Celine prepared the prayers of the faithful and Sisters Virginia Schmitt and Marie Welter did the readings. Sister Virginia led the prayers of commendation at the end of the Liturgy. The family took an active part, too. Andrew and John placed the pall on the casket at the beginning of the Liturgy; Eugene, Susan and John carried the gifts to the altar. Father Jim gave the homily which was a sharing of the reflections he received from the Sisters. He spoke of Sister's ability as an organizer and searcher of ways to minister to God's people - her deep spirituality and humility. "Her greatest challenge," he said, "was facing her own death."

Present also for the funeral were: Mrs. Catherine Ernst with her sister, Mrs. Jane Huser; Sarah Kuntz and Norma Pohler all of Huntington. These women knew and loved Sister Chrysostom when she was assistant coordinator with Sister Frances in the Holy Family community.

After the Liturgy of Christian Burial, as we walked to the cemetery for the final prayers, we enjoyed the beauty of the fall setting at Victory Noll. It was a perfect day! After the service was ended, we returned to the dining room for dinner.

Andrew, John, Eugene and Susan stayed with us until Saturday morning where they started on their journey homeward at seven o'clock.

Lovingly in Jesus and Mary,

Sister Germaine Stader

*

Father Thomas Kilduff's thought -