

August 3, 2012

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends,

Sister Ann Shirley Kelly passed away at 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, July 25, 2012, at Holy Family Health Care Center at Victory Noll. Sister fought a long and courageous battle with terminal cancer. She was caring for her own needs and ministering to our sisters on third floor Holy Family until the day God called her home. Sister Ann Shirley had a lovely visit the week prior to her death with her sister Rose and brother-in-law Gil. The Sunday before her death her niece Mary and her husband John and their children joined Rose and Gil for Mass and dinner at Victory Noll. Ann Shirley was so happy to have her family here and was able to say her goodbyes to them. On Wednesday morning Ann Shirley was unable to be up any longer. After Mass, Sister Monica brought her Holy Communion. When Sister Millicent went into the room shortly after Ann Shirley had received Holy Communion she found her smiling angelically, her eyes closed. Her Spiritual Director, Sister Maureen Mangen, CppS, went in and spoke with her briefly. Ann Shirley was unable to respond, but Maureen felt she had heard her words. Father Fahey was called and administered the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Sister Ann Shirley died peacefully after the Anointing. Sister Monica was present for the Anointing. Father remained, seated in the chair by her bed praying. Sister Lucille came in and they realized Sister Ann Shirley had died peacefully.



Sister Ann Shirley was born in Belle Plaine, Minn., on November 23, 1924, to John Kelly and Mary Frances O'Neill Kelly. One brother, Neil Kelly, and four sisters, Kathryn Reiner, Mary Teresa Ryan, Margaret Kelly, and Frances Kelly preceded her in death. Two sisters Constance Manning of Portland, Ore., and Rose Scherzinger of Hillsboro, Ore., survive sister.

Sister Ann Shirley entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 27, 1945, and made her first Profession of Vows on August 5, 1948 at Victory Noll and her Perpetual Vows on August 5, 1954, in Redlands, Calif.

Sister Ann Shirley received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Loyola University in Los Angeles, and her Master of Arts in Theology from Saint Mary's College of California. She spent most of her Religious life in California ministering in Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. She also spent nine years in Bolivia. She served in Parish Ministry as a Team member in Buena Vista and Mora Bolivia in Pastoral Ministry and the Formation of Adults and Children. Ann Shirley studied at the Instituto de Idiomas de Maryknoll in Cochabamba. Later, in San Bernardino, Calif. she used her skill in the Spanish language as a Resource Person for the Hispanic Community. In 2005, Ann Shirley was one of those receiving the Our Lady of Guadalupe Award from the Diocese of San Bernardino for her ministry among the Spanish Community. Wherever she lived or worked Sister Ann Shirley was experienced as a warm, loving, gentle and kind person to all with whom she worked or ministered.

In 2005, Ann Shirley returned to Victory Noll to work as a Personal Needs Assistant for our sisters living on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Holy Family Building. She lovingly assisted these sisters with many personal needs such as helping them with contacting their families through letter writing or phone calls, helping them to keep their clothes in order, keeping in touch with family members about the sister's health especially as they declined. She also informed the family when a sister was critically ill or had died, and many more acts of friendship and loving service. Sister Ann Shirley continued this ministry until her death.

At the Vigil Service on Thursday, July 26, 2012 Ann Shirley's niece Mary, her husband, John, and their children were present. The opening hymn for the Vigil was "The Evening Hymn to Our Lady." This hymn was so meaningful to Sister Ann Shirley and to many of our sisters who learned it as Novices and sang it together around the statue of Mary before retiring each night. The reading chosen was Romans 11:33-36. This reading reminds us of the vastness of God's wisdom and knowledge, yet despite our being undeserving of His gifts, God gives us all that is good. To God be glory forever.

The Eulogy was given by Sister Francesca. Francesca was a classmate of Ann Shirley and said that she cherished many memories of their years together in formation and later in our Mission in Azusa, Calif. Francesca states that Ann Shirley was reserved but fun loving, cheerful and was willing to do more than her share in every project that came along. She said Ann Shirley was fun to team up with in preparing skits and countless programs for feast day celebrations that Novices were expected to carry out in those days. Francesca said "Ann Shirley was a spiritual powerhouse for many of us through the years and a loving companion on our shared journey." Francesca concluded by saying "Thank you Ann Shirley, for your beautiful life of love and service as a Victory Noll Missionary Sister. We rejoice with you as you enter the fullness of resurrection life with our loving God and all your loved ones who have gone before you. We will miss you, but we know that your loving and generous spirit will continue to be with us and inspire us as we continue our own life's journey until we meet again."

In the dining room during refreshments, sisters and family continued to share their memories of Ann Shirley.

Many shared that they experienced Ann Shirley as a kind, gentle and uplifting person. Millicent called her the servant of the servants of God, and said she will be greatly missed. Grace Marie said she never heard Ann Shirley say no. She did not know this word. Alodia shared how upon her request Ann Shirley visited a young man from Texas who was in jail in Riverside, Calif. Ann Shirley not only went but continued to visit, bringing great comfort to the young man who was so far from his home. Ann Shirley's nephew-in-law John shared how all the children remember visits with Ann Shirley over many years. They remember driving down on side roads to Victory Noll for these wonderful visits. Leora shared that she was blessed having lived with Ann Shirley in San Bernardino. She recalled having asked Ann Shirley to be the Retreat Facilitator for the Religious Education Coordinators. They were so touched by her deep spirituality and love of God that they sought her out for spiritual counsel and advice. Alma shared that when Ann Shirley and Virginia spent an overnight at Alma's sister's house on their way to Minnesota, Ann Shirley left a lovely remembrance gift to show her gratitude for the hospitality. Her sister always treasured that little gift. Mary Helen shared that when Ann Shirley came into her life recently as a special companion on the journey, it was a great blessing for her. Ann Shirley was a real

spirit-lifter. She directed all attention away from herself and one could not help but be aware of her deep spirituality. Mary Helen said, "I am grateful to have known her." Alane Eckert, our Activities Director, sent a message stating that she was blessed to know Sister Ann Shirley for three years. She said there is one word that says it all about Sister Ann Shirley. The word is gracious, which means to be compassionate, polite, and at ease.

On Friday July 27, 2012, we celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. There was a closed casket since this was our first green burial. Sister Ann Shirley's niece Mary and her daughter Kathryn placed the Pall on the casket and Sister Monica placed the crucifix. Sister Ann Shirley's grandnieces Kathryn and Caroline and her grandnephew Danny were the Gift Bearers.

The Scripture was proclaimed by John O'Callaghan, the nephew-in-law of Ann Shirley. In this Scripture, Isaiah 55:1-3, God tells us if we are thirsty come to the water of God's life and love. God tells us if we come we will have life and God will renew with us an everlasting covenant. In the Gospel, John 15:4-12, 16-17, John tells us to live in God as He does in us and thus we will bear much fruit. He also tells us as the Father loves Jesus, Jesus has loved us and asks us to live on in His love, and to love one another. This was the life Ann Shirley lived. In his Homily Father Fahey said, "Sister Ann Shirley led a holy life and bore much fruit for God's kingdom. She was an inspiring servant, faithful in her efforts to be a comfort to many people. She tried to make life more pleasant for others whenever she could. She was a very caring person even throughout all her sufferings until God called her home. She was an inspiration to us all."

After Mass we processed to the cemetery where we laid Sister Ann Shirley to rest with the final prayers, blessing of the casket and singing of the hymn to Our Lady, "Tu Eres La Victoria." A delicious dinner to celebrate Ann Shirley's life followed.

Sister Ann Shirley, you were truly an inspiration to us. We are grateful that you shared your life of loving service with us. We rejoice that you are now with the God you loved and served so well.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Betty Anderson OLVM

General Secretary