



## **SISTER MILLICENT PEASLEE, OLVM**

On March 19, 2021, Sister Millicent celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with a party and was very happy and alert. It was not quite a month later she peacefully slipped into the eternal embrace of God on April 17, 2021.

In looking through Sister Millicent's file, it was interesting to see she was born in Gary, Indiana, on March 20, 1921, the second of four daughters born to Oliver Peaslee and Marie Mosgrove Peaslee. Her birth certificate states her name as Millicent Marjorie. Her baptismal certificate from Holy Angels in Gary, Indiana, dated April 24, 1921, has her name as Marjorie Melissa. Finally, on her application to the community she is listed as Millicent Agnes. No matter what the forms say, she will always be Sister Millie.

Sister Millie was preceded in death by both her parents and her three sisters, Sr. Mary Oliver, BVM, Anne Boller and Kathryn Willson. She has many nieces and nephews who survive her along with her Victory Noll Sisters with whom she lived and shared life for almost 82 years.

Sister Millie entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 28, 1939, after graduation from Saint Francis Academy in Joliet, Illinois. In her senior year of high school, she created a booklet of her original writings titled "The Vigil Light." On the first page is a poem that in looking back describes her life: "All the thoughts that I here write, are like a little vigil light. They flame and flare, glimmer and glare but they are offered as a prayer."

After making first vows on August 5, 1942, Sister Millie's first place of ministry was Flagstaff, Arizona. She would go on to serve in Michigan, Indiana, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and Colorado, but Sister Millie spent the majority of her missionary life serving the people of Southern California. She worked in parish and diocesan religious education. In a reflection on her vocation, Sister Millie talked about working in East Los Angeles and having 2,000 children in the religious education program. That meant each of the four sisters there had roughly 500 children. There was very little spare time, but what extra time they had was filled with handing out food or helping find solutions to other desperate situations of the people living in the area.

In their many conversations during her time in the Diocesan Religious Education office in the San Diego diocese in the 1970s, Sr. Millie and her colleagues realized the overwhelming hunger for spirituality in the adults with whom they were working in catechetical formation. These people wanted a place where they could deepen their

relationship with God. Sister Millie and her friend, Sister Patricia Hanson, CSJ, began dreaming about the possibilities of what they could offer to adult Catholics in the area of spirituality. The dream became a reality when they started a house of prayer they named La Providencia in 1978. They started with no money, just a determination and belief that “If God wants it, God will provide,” hence the name La Providencia. The house of prayer started small and grew over time to offer spiritual renewal by giving retreats and prayer sessions. They also offered personal spiritual direction for Catholics, and eventually included other denominations. Sister Millie and Sister Pat embraced a love and concern for the earth and the cosmos which was reflected in their programming.

Over the next 29 years, the programs broadened to include assistance for the homeless, for those living with AIDS, and helping people in many different types of transition. One of the tools they used in these programs was the labyrinth to teach meditation and reflection. The labyrinth offers a path that echoes life itself. The path that you travel, winds through different directions, leads only to the center, always closer to God.

In 2010, Sister Millie left Southern California and returned to Victory Noll. She continued to offer spiritual guidance through the Victory Noll Center and to share her gift of life through her smile and wonderful sense of humor.

The community gathered to celebrate Sister Millie on April 20, 2021, in Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel. In his homily during the funeral, Father Dale Bauman spoke of the delight he had when sharing a meal with Sister Millie and her beautiful smile, a smile that many of us will remember fondly. In her eulogy, Sister Rita Musante shared how Sister Millie had a great love and devotion to Saint Therese of Lisieux and tried to practice her “Little Way” throughout her life by trying to be the Love of Christ to everyone she met.

Sister Millie, you are no longer a vigil light of flame and flare, glimmer and glare. Now you are part the eternal light of Christ, a light that no darkness can ever dispel.

With gratitude and blessing,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sr. Ginger Downey, O.L.V.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Ginger Downey, O.L.V.M