



**SISTER JOSEPH ANN KOSTKA, OLVM 93**, died May 7, 2020, at 6:30 PM at Saint Anne Communities at Victory Noll in Huntington, Indiana.

Sister Joseph Ann was born in Arlington Heights, Illinois, on November 13, 1926, the eldest child and only daughter of Joseph Kostka and Vilma Ondrejka Kostka. She was baptized Elsie Alice on November 21, 1926, at Saint James

Parish in Arlington Heights, Illinois. She spent the majority of her early life in Arlington Heights and graduated from Arlington Heights High School in 1945. She worked as an IBM keypunch operator before entering the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 5, 1950. After making first vows on August 5, 1953, her first mission was in Elko, Nevada. She served in the missions in Brigham City, Utah, and Montrose, Colorado, before going to the missions in California in 1959. She ended up serving in California for a total of 54 years. For 30 of those years, from 1983 to 2013, Sister Joseph Ann ministered in Religious Education for St. Linus Parish in Norwalk, California. At Sister Joseph Ann's funeral, Sister Lucille Martinez remarked in her reflection that Sister Joseph Ann took the vow of stability very seriously!!

Sister Joseph Ann was preceded in death by her parents and two younger brothers, Edward and Robert Kostka. Several nieces and one nephew survive her along with her Victory Noll Sisters with whom she shared life and community for almost 70 years.

The entrance application to OLVM asked if the entrant spoke a foreign language. Sister Joseph Ann responded that she spoke Slovak. She never lost her ability to speak the language, nor would she let anyone forget that she was Slovakian and not any other nationality. Both of her parents were born in Czechoslovakia and immigrated to the United States. Sister Joseph Ann was very proud to be Slovakian.

Sister Joseph Ann attended Mount Saint Mary's College in Los Angeles, California, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 1971. Her main ministry focus was Religious Education. In later years, as a Director of Religious Education, she also became very involved in pastoral work. This ministry included home, hospital and nursing home visitation; evangelization; and training liturgical ministers, her favorite being altar servers. She also participated in small faith sharing groups, helped in transporting elderly parishioners to appointments, and taught sixth grade, which she said was her "BEST." In reality, her ministry was just "being there" for the people. She made friends who became her second family. They were in continual contact with her until the last few weeks, when she was no longer able to communicate with them. One long-time friend from Saint Linus wrote, "I have

not written to her as often. However, she is always in my heart.” Sister Joseph Ann’s memorial service was live-streamed from Saint Linus Catholic Church on May 18, 2020. Among the comments offered during the service were, “Sister Joseph Ann was a straight talker and a fun-loving sister,” “She loved to dance!” and “She loved Saint Linus and Saint Linus Loved Sister Joseph Ann!”

Sister Joseph Ann abided by the congregational directive and kept a house history. In the “house” history of her apartment in Norwalk, California, she wrote about all the people who visited her and the places she went, including the trips she took with the Golden Agers from Saint Linus. The history also illustrated her commitment to her religious community. She recorded all the gatherings of Victory Noll Sisters in the Southern California area for feast days like the Feast of Our Lady of Victory on May 24, or our Jubilee and Vow day on August 5. She also wrote about coming to Victory Noll each summer, the regional gatherings in the fall of the year and her own Mission Group gatherings of Victory Noll Sisters who met for congregational business. These events were important and she rarely missed the chance to be with her Sisters in community.

The rules limiting gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to change our usual rituals of a vigil and a Eucharistic liturgy. The Victory Noll Sisters honored and celebrated Sister Joseph Ann’s life on Monday, May 11, 2020, without the gathering of all the community and family and her friends. In this different atmosphere, we brought her earthly remains to the OLV Chapel where she had professed her first vows and started her journey as a Victory Noll Sister nearly 70 years ago. On this day, we sent her not to an earthly mission, but to her final mission, to her eternal home with God. There will be a memorial Mass for her at Victory Noll at another time.

As we heard in the Gospel reading that Sister Joseph Ann chose from John, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me.” Sister Lucille commented on this line in her reflective eulogy, saying “That gives us a promise and a mission. These words remind us that Jesus’ resurrection gives witness to the ultimate victory of love. Now Sister Joseph Ann, in her new life, can testify that truly God in us is enough.”

With blessings and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sr. Ginger Downey OLVM". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial 'G'.

Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM