



SISTER ELIZABETH (BETTY) ANDERSON, OLV M, 88, died peacefully in the early morning of November 21, 2022, at Saint Anne Communities at Victory Noll.

Sister Betty was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 29, 1934, to Archibald Gabriel Anderson and Elizabeth Ann (Rouhan) Anderson. She was the youngest of three children and was baptized Elizabeth on April 22, 1934, at Saint Patrick's Catholic Church in Brooklyn, New York. When she was young, her family moved to the borough of Queens, where she spent her early life growing up. Preceding Sister Betty in death are her parents, her sister Jane Coleman, and brother Dennis Anderson.

Sister Betty entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on September 6, 1954, and she made first vows on August 5, 1957. She served in the states of Florida, California, Texas, Massachusetts, and Indiana. In 1978, she moved diagonally from the northeast corner of the country in Massachusetts to the southwestern corner in California to care for her mother. She remained in Southern California until she returned to Victory Noll in 2008 to serve on the Leadership Team as General Secretary. After her term in leadership, she continued to live at Victory Noll, volunteering and serving the congregation.

Sister Betty wrote, "Growing up I was friendly and outgoing; always concerned about anyone in need, be they human or animal. Many a stray kitten or dog I sought shelter for." These attributes continued to be a part of Betty for her entire life. She had an outgoing and warm personality, evidenced by the way she always greeted people, whether they were a stranger or a friend. Her love for animals was demonstrated in her words and actions, and by pictures she had of her dogs. Sister Connie Lewandowski commented, "She was a great dog lover and no doubt there is a dog with her in heaven."

Sister Betty served in religious education until she earned her bachelor's degree in Sociology in 1971 from Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York. She followed with a master's degree in Urban Pastoral Ministry from Emmanuel College in Boston in 1976. She utilized her skills in chaplaincy and hospice work. She once wrote, "Of all my educational endeavors, the one that had the most impact on me were the four summers I studied at Emmanuel College for my master's in Pastoral Ministry."

Sister Betty wrote while her immediate family was Catholic, her extended family members were from other Christian denominations, and she always had an interest in learning about other religions besides her own. "I was always ecumenical at heart," she said. This served her well throughout her life as a Victory Noll Sister. She was comfortable working in places where she might be the only Catholic on staff, such as her experience in Inter Church Pastoral Care and Counseling Center in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

In 1981, she moved to El Centro, California, to be part of an intentional cluster of the Sisters and to work as parish outreach coordinator for Catholic Charities. Sister Betty was asked by the director of Catholic Charities to assist in establishing a residence for homeless women and their children. House of Hope became a reality in the Imperial Valley, and Sister Betty worked for the next two years to ensure House of Hope was on a firm foundation and able to meet the goal of assisting women to become employed, independent, and have the skills to take care of their families. House of Hope is still serving the homeless women in the Imperial Valley.

Sister Betty went back into Religious Education and worked for 10 years at Saint Joseph's parish in Holtville, California. Her heart remained in the pastoral social work and counseling area of ministry. She joined Helping Hands Hospice for four years and moved into social work and chaplaincy with Gentiva Health Services until her election to congregational leadership in 2008. No matter what ministry Sister Betty served in, it was always a ministry of presence. She said in a reflection for her Golden Jubilee, "My work is ecumenical and I have been blessed by so many good and wonderful people of different cultures and religions. Their witness has broadened me and made me a better person."

The community gathered on Sunday evening, November 27, 2022, to begin our celebration of Sister Betty and her life. Unfortunately, none of Sister Betty's family was able to join us at Victory Noll for the evening vigil. However, friends and family were able to join the funeral liturgy on Monday morning, November 28, 2022, via livestream. Fr. Phil De Volder presided at the funeral liturgy and gave the homily. He had become a friend of Sister Betty during the last few years after becoming the chaplain for Saint Anne Communities at Victory Noll.

Sister Betty wrote, "About the age of 15 I began to be interested in the spiritual life. Jesus became the center of my life and I gradually realized God was calling me to religious life where I could be totally available to God and God's people." Over the next 73 years Sister Betty "shared the Good News of God's love" to those who live in poverty and oppression. It was sometimes a challenge, but she always served with the sense that God was with her. Now she is enjoying the blessings of the final call, the Call to be with God for eternity.

With Gratitude and Blessings,



Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM