

NEWSLETTER OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY MISSIONARY SISTERS

Visions

July 2025

www.olvm.org



Bishop Noll

**His life, legacy
and century-long
connection with
the OLVM Sisters**



Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters is a community of women religious founded in 1922 by Father John Joseph Sigstein. The Victory Noll Motherhouse is located in Huntington, Indiana.

Victory Noll Sisters:

- Proclaim the Word of God
- Stand in solidarity with those living in poverty and oppression
- Foster justice
- Promote the development of leaders

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ON THE COVER

A portrait of Bishop Noll given to Our Sunday Visitor by the OLVM Sisters, who commissioned renowned artist Sr. Mary Stanisla, SSND, to produce the painting.

This spring and summer have been a busy time for me, trying to juggle a number of projects, one of which is this expanded issue of *Visions* looking at the life of Archbishop John Francis Noll, his special connection to Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, and their shared moment 100 years ago.

PERSPECTIVES ALONG THE JOURNEY

While he was a monsignor, Noll adopted a newly-formed community of women religious started by Father John Joseph Sigstein. He promoted them through his national *Our Sunday Visitor* publication and arranged to have a motherhouse built in Huntington on land given the name “Victory Noll” to represent both the Sisters and their benefactor.

The building was completed in December of 1924, just about the same time the Bishop of Fort Wayne died. Noll was notified that he had been chosen as the new bishop, and would be installed on June 30, 1925, just four days before the official dedication of the OLV Motherhouse on July 4.

Talk about a busy first week on the job. It kind of makes me wonder if my own to-do list is really all that hectic.

The timelines of Bishop Noll and the Victory Noll Sisters not only run in parallel, but are entwined with one another, beyond the linked moniker, or even Noll’s grave located on the campus.

They share a moment in time that happened in one week 100 years ago, a nexus that was a point of embarkation for both. As bishop, Noll became a national figure and voice for the nation’s Catholics. And from their new home, the OLVM Sisters reached out across the country to serve marginalized people living in poverty or oppression and advocating for social justice, impacting generations over the next century.

Bishop Noll always championed the Sisters, calling them the “apple of his eye.” Through their work and mission the Victory Noll Sisters affirmed the faith he initially saw in the community. ❖

— Paul Siegfried

CONGREGATION LEADER

Sr. Jenny Howard, SP

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OLVM Charism remains a living legacy

As you read through each page of this July issue of The Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters Visions newsletter, I trust that you also will experience a deep sense of gratitude for the life and mission of the Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters congregation and for the generosity of Archbishop John Francis Noll and his impact on the Catholic Church in the United States. Perhaps what will also become quickly evident is the significant relationship Bishop Noll formed with the congregation from the time of its establishment and continued as a life-long connection.



Sr. Jenny Howard, SP
Congregation Leader

Those who met and knew Bishop Noll described him as a peacemaker, and a creative problem-solver. Perhaps his hunger for truth led him to establishing the national publication, Our Sunday Visitor. As you will read in these next pages, he was overwhelmingly generous, with a sensitivity and caring outreach toward others. He stands out as a truly remarkable person. May his life and legacy continue to be an inspiration for each of us to carry forward the mission and charism that has been entrusted to each of us.

The Our Lady of Victory Missionary Charism proclaims:

The OLVM charism is a Divine gift igniting men and women to serve in solidarity with God's people, especially those marginalized by society. The fundamental orientation of this gift is showing compassion by working for justice and acting with simplicity and adaptability.



As we reflect on the founding history of The Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters and their living of the charism today, I would like to once again invite everyone to view the special video created at the time of the Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters' 100th Anniversary. The video is entitled "To the Poorest First: The Journey of the Victory Noll Sisters." The video may be found on the Victory Noll website at www.olvm.org. The video makes a beautiful connection from the early establishment and founding of the OLVM Sisters to the creative and collaborative ways in which the Sisters actively engage today with others, partners like yourselves, to carry forward the mission God has entrusted to them.

Also in this issue, three Victory Noll Sisters are recognized for milestone anniversaries of their entrances to OLVM.

On May 24th, the Our Lady Of Victory Missionary Sisters community celebrated the 70th Jubilee Anniversary of Sr. Jeanette Halbach and the 60th Jubilee Anniversary of Sr. Lucy Regalado. On August 5th, Sr. Mary Jo Nelson will celebrate her 50th Jubilee Anniversary as a Victory Noll Sister.

We are grateful to these Sisters for their steadfast commitment through these years. ❖



OLVM Archives

Bishop Noll, shown at his desk at the OLVM Motherhouse in Huntington in 1944, established himself as a national figure and advocate for the Catholic Church through his publication, *Our Sunday Visitor*. Funds from OSV helped purchase the land for the motherhouse.

Early events shaped Noll's path

Skills as a peacemaker and communicator served him in ministry

By Jeff Hoffman
OLVM Archivist

John Francis Noll was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on January 25, 1875. He was the sixth of seven children of John George Noll and Anna Ford. Tuberculosis claimed Anna when John Francis was just three years old. With a half-dozen young children, John George knew they would need a mother's caring hand. He married Mary Josephine McCleary of Bluffton, and this union produced another 11 children. John Francis received his early education at the Cathedral Elementary School in Fort Wayne before entering St. Lawrence Seminary in Mount Calvary, Wisconsin. It was there he picked up the German language because most classes were taught in that language. While there he also learned French, Latin, and Greek. He finished his seminary training at Mount St. Mary's in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was ordained as a priest on June 4, 1898.

In his early assignments, Father Noll developed a reputation as a peacemaker when there was disunity in the parish. While stationed at Ligonier with missions at Kendallville and Millersburg, he found that Kendallville



OLVM Archives

A young John Francis Noll as a seminarian.

had most of the Catholic families living in town, while those in Ligonier were spread out through the countryside. He wanted to relocate his residence to Kendallville but hesitated because his predecessor had done that without any forewarning of the Ligonier parishioners. Fr. Noll came up with a list of pros and cons for the relocation of his residence and submitted them to the administrator of the Diocese. The administrator saw the merits of his arguments and wrote a letter for the relocation of the rectory “for the good of the souls.” The parish accepted the directive from the chancellery.

A dispute arose at Besancon over the building of a school. The pastor wanted to start a school in accord with the Council of Baltimore. Many members of the parish, like the pastor, were born in France. In Europe it was customary for the state to support schools, including religious ones. In the United States it was the parish that provided support for the school. Many members of the parish did not like the idea of them paying for the support of the school and stopped attending church. The pastor ended up resigning due to the ongoing discord. The parish was left without a pastor for six months before Fr. Noll was asked to reconcile the opposing parties.

He began a process of visiting the aggrieved parties and listening to concerns patiently. He was able to make progress with the families that were no longer attending church. He pointed out that the Bishop had died and the priest was no longer at the parish, and he had nothing to do with affairs that had estranged them from the church. He was only concerned about their temporal and spiritual good.

When they slowly came back to church, Fr. Noll noticed that many of them were taking up the pews in the back. Pew rental was the main source of revenue for the parish and was always paid in the Fall. Fr. Noll figured that if they wanted to use those pews

there might be a way to coax some of them closer to the front. He appointed members of the parish to consider pew rentals. He suggested that those pews that are in higher demand have a higher cost, and that the money would be used for the upkeep of the church property. This resolution passed unanimously. Many of the parishioners decided to occupy the less

expensive pews in the front.

It was while at Besancon that Fr. Noll began his writing career with a small book for his parishioners titled “Kind Words of the Priest to his People.”

He wrote the brochure to address a school problem that was not fully solved. He took the main points of the problem and answered the questions that might be raised. With his writing style, no one recognized the brochure as it was a defense of the actions of the previous pastor or bishop. Most households did not have much in the way of reading materials and Fr. Noll

realized that it would be read. With the booklet’s success he realized there was a hunger out there for the truth that could not be found in the Sunday sermon. Fr. Noll figured parishes within the Diocese and the greater Church would be interested in it. After using the Catholic Directory to obtain addresses to mail samples of his brochure, he received an avalanche of favorable replies. Some asked for up to 2,000 copies to distribute.

At his next assignment in Hartford City, his first monthly magazine was published. The overwhelming response for The Parish Monthly caused its printing to overwhelm both print shops in Hartford City, and



OLVM Archives

Father Noll on the day of his ordination as a priest on June 4, 1898.

printing ended up being moved to a larger print shop in Muncie.

In 1910, Fr. Noll was transferred to St. Mary's Parish in Huntington. The difficulty there was the transferal and implementation of the vast amount of printing done at Muncie and Hartford City. Good fortune came his way when the printer of a newspaper in Huntington offered to sell his equipment because the town could not support two papers.

At that time there was a growing anti-Catholic sentiment rising in the United States. There was a growing immigrant population from southern and eastern Europe that was predominantly Catholic. It was feared the immigrants would pledge their allegiance to the Pope. This was one of the factors that led to a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the early 1900s.

There was also an increasing number of anti-Catholic publications whose subscriptions grew due to their repeated attacks on the Catholic Church. The Menace was one anti-Catholic publication that reached 1.5 million subscriptions. The Catholic press at the time did not have anything to compare to this. Fr. Noll wanted to counter these attacks on Catholicism with his own journal. A weekly publication called *Our Sunday Visitor* was Fr. Noll's response. The initial press run in May of 1912 was 35,000, a number that reached 200,000 by the end of the first year of circulation. By the end of the second year, it doubled to 400,000. Fr. Noll was soon able to pay off his debts obtained in purchasing the printing equipment. However, with subscriptions continuing to rise, he set it up so that all proceeds coming in above operating expenses would be used for religious, educational, and charitable causes.

One of his first ventures was an idea to start a seminary to supply priests from the eastern United States for the missionary districts within the U.S., primarily in the South and West. He was approached Fr. Francis Kelly of the Catholic Church Extension Society and Archbishop Mundelein of Chicago to start one in the Huntington area. Fr. Noll bought a 135-acre farm just outside of Huntington for this purpose through funds provided by *Our Sunday Visitor*. However, many western bishops thought homegrown priests would be a better option. They thought these men knew the language and mentality of the local population and were better suited to deal with extreme temperatures and loneliness. The project was eventually dropped.

On a vacation to the St. Joseph Sanitarium in Hot

Springs, Arkansas, Noll — who had been elevated to monsignor, met Peter O'Donnell, a former Chicago police officer from California. He explained to Fr. Noll that when he and his wife moved to southern California, they saw the parochial schools filled to capacity and there were thousands of Mexicans who were unable to attend. O'Donnell was looking for the formation of a religious community of women to meet this challenge. He explained it had to be a large community and recruited rapidly, and that *Our Sunday Visitor* was the best medium of publicity for securing the needed vocations. He and his wife wanted Msgr. Noll to erect a motherhouse, training school, and novitiate in the Huntington vicinity. If Noll could make it happen, the O'Donnells would supply \$50,000 for the endeavor.



OLVM Archives

Construction of the OLVM Motherhouse in Huntington took place throughout 1924. Bishop Noll provided the land and Peter O'Donnell the initial funds for the building, which was dedicated on July 4, 1925.

Msgr. Noll informed the O'Donnells he knew a priest in Chicago working on a project they might be interested in. After leaving Hot Springs, Msgr. Noll called upon Fr. John Joseph Sigstein, who had created the Society of Missionary Catechists of Our Lady of Victory in 1922. He told him of O'Donnell's proposal for his young community and financial support and nationwide publicity through *Our Sunday Visitor*. With Fr. Sigstein's acceptance of the offer, ground was broken in the spring of 1924 on the Motherhouse of the community later to be known as Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception that winter, eight members of the community took up residence in their new home. ❖



OLVM founder Fr. John Joseph Sigstein (in straw hat) and Bishop Noll (left) at the dedication of the OLVM Motherhouse in Huntington on July 4, 1925.

OLVM Archives

Finding a home for the Sisters

Supporting Father Sigstein's community was a passion for Noll

By Jeff Hoffman
OLVM Archivist

Archbishop John Francis Noll had a closeness in his heart for the Society of Missionary Catechists. One of his first instances of contact with what would become the Victory Noll Sisters was when he facilitated a meeting of Peter O'Donnell and Father John Joseph Sigstein, founder of the Society. This connection provided the idea to move the Society of Missionary Catechists to Huntington, Ind., from Chicago with the building of a Motherhouse and training school in 1924. Fr. Sigstein decided to choose the name of Victory Noll for this location in honor of Our Lady of Victory and Noll.

Noll, then a monsignor, publicized their work through his weekly *Our Sunday Visitor* Catholic newspaper. Each issue had a weekly column in which one of the catechists detailed their work of visiting homes, locating children in need of religious instruction, and starting new parishes. The Missionary Catechists also advertised in *Our Sunday Visitor* which allowed for others to support their ministry financially and spiritually, as well as serving as a recruitment vehicle for vocations for the new religious order.

While the Motherhouse was being built with funds

from O'Donnell and *Our Sunday Visitor*, the Catechists were stationed at the Gary-Alerding Settlement House to administer the needs of the Mexican-Americans who were working in the steel mills of Gary.

Once the Motherhouse was far enough along, the first group of Catechists were able to move in. One of the Catechists wrote in the *Chronicles* describing the evening that at "about 7:30 p.m. Msgr. Noll, Fr. Kelly, and Mr. Dougherty paid us a visit. As the trucks with our furnishings from Gary had not arrived, Msgr. Noll went over to his summer cottage and brought bedding for us."

Apparently, the Catechists left the Settlement House 48 hours after the moving trucks and still arrived before the trucks. The trucks finally arrived in the afternoon of the next day.

Just before their arrival in Huntington, word was received of the death of Herman Joseph Alerding, bishop of the Fort Wayne Diocese. Although he was not looking to leave his home in Huntington, Msgr. Noll received word that he had been chosen to succeed Bishop Alerding with his installation scheduled June 30, 1925. The official dedication of the Victory Noll Motherhouse had been set for the July 4th weekend. The dedication was Bishop Noll's first public act as bishop. The *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* reported there were 7,000 in attendance for the dedication that

Bishop Noll frequently presided over events at Victory Noll, including Reception Day in 1949 (top photo) and the 25th Jubilees for OLVM's first two members, Sr. Julia Doyle and Sr. Marie Benes in 1947.

OLVM Archives



weekend. The Erie Railroad even ran a special passenger car from Chicago for the event.

In the early 1930s money was tight for the Missionary Catechists, just like the rest of America in the midst of the Great Depression. Our Sunday Visitor was unable to provide their monthly allowance to the community. Bishop Noll made the offer to give the title of the farm that consisted of Victory Noll to the Catechists for \$20,000. The monthly allowance that the Catechists were receiving was credited to this total.

Two years later, the Bishop offered to transfer the buildings to the Missionary Catechists. With the monthly allowance of \$1,000 being credited to their amount, the Catechists received the title to the buildings in six years.

Fr. Sigstein's response was, "Isn't it wonderful when you consider that our good Bishop has practically given us the money to buy this building? No one knows better than you, dear Father, what a struggle it has been for us to make ends meet, but now, thanks to the unspeakable goodness of our dear Lord, we are facing the dawn of a better day."

The Catechists arrived in Redlands, Calif., in 1932, and the mansion that they rented provided space for semi-annual retreats for other Catechists from California. As their number in California increased, larger accommodations were needed. In 1937 they moved into the Burrage Mansion that had been unoccupied for 20 years. It required much work to get it into a livable state, but it was possible with the assistance of the local St. Mary's Parish. The Catechists were under the constant threat they could be forced to leave if the property was sold and did not make any substantial repairs to the building. In 1940 Bishop Noll purchased



the building and gave it to the Victory Noll Catechists for Christmas that year. He also provided the funds for a new roof and furnace.

Bishop Noll assisted the Victory Noll Sisters in seeking recognition from Rome once they held their first canonical election in 1938. He helped in the long journey which culminated in December of 1965 with the Congregation's definite approval by the Vatican.

He also assisted their survival through the financial difficulties of the Great Depression. He was able to get the Dioceses that were being served by the Catechists to be reimbursed for the services that they were providing. Before this, the Catechists were not to seek reimbursement from those that they were serving. Although some Catechists did not like this change initially, Bishop Noll insisted that the payment was coming from the Diocese.

Bishop Noll enjoyed taking Sisters to his cottage on an island in Sylvan Lake in Rome City, Ind. OLVM Sr. Martha Wordeman made a drawing recalling experiences with the Bishop, including a fishing “mishap.”

OLVM Archives



The number of women entering the community continued to grow after World War II. Bishop Noll knew that Victory Noll would need to expand. He started to save money for an expansion to the grounds. After his death the Sisters found out he provided a start for the expansion with money he was setting aside. The funds went to the building of the Holy Family Building and the Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel.

Once he was installed as Bishop, he had access to a cottage on an island in Sylvan Lake that was acquired during Bishop Alerding’s time as Bishop of Fort Wayne. Bishop Noll invited the incoming group of novices to the cabin each spring. The postulants spent their time opening the cabin after it had been closed for the winter.

Sr. Alma Bill described the experience:

“We knew that Bishop Noll had planned to come sometime during the week, and we knew that it would be a great experience. However, we didn’t know exactly what to expect. To see a Bishop without his mitre and crosier? It would definitely be a new experience.

“We needn’t have feared! The Bishop immediately made us feel at home; there was no mitre or crosier in sight! Days were filled with boat rides on the lake; with fishing poles extended in the water; with radio programs in the evening. He expertly rowed us in the flat boat; he baited our hook and helped us disentangle the fish that wandered too close; he entertained us in the evening with allowing us to listen to ‘The Lone Ranger’ radio program. The latter was a special treat, as radio programs were off limits during our postulancy. In return we provided him with some light entertainment ourselves!

“Sometimes in the afternoons we played indoor horseshoes with the Bishop. Pegs were set up on the



Sister Wordeman’s drawing: Sister Marie hooks “the Bish”

porch, and we each took turns trying to outdo the Bishop. We visited, told stories, cooked and cleaned, and the week went much too fast.”

Because of all his responsibilities as Bishop of the Fort Wayne Diocese, which included the northern half of Indiana in the first part of his episcopacy, and as editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*, Bishop Noll sometimes left the hustle and bustle of Fort Wayne for solitude. Many times, he showed up at Victory Noll unannounced and took up residence in his apartment in the wing where the Leadership Team had their offices. The Catechists/Sisters would not know he was around until the smell of his cigar wafted down the hall.

Bishop Noll saw Victory Noll as his home away from home. He also had a large family, and the Victory Noll Sisters hosted many of the Noll family gatherings over the years. He enjoyed the grounds so much that he wished to be buried in their cemetery. He felt that he would have more people praying for him at Victory Noll than at the Cathedral in Fort Wayne with his predecessors. ❖

Bishop Rhoades stands in front of the grave of Bishop Noll during a visit to Victory Noll in Huntington.

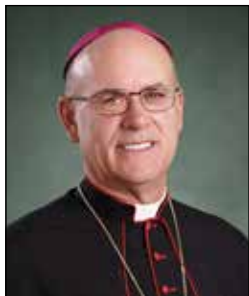
Photo by Paul Siegfried



Bishop Noll's legacy: Renowned teacher, defender of the Faith

By Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

One hundred years ago, on June 30th, 1925, Cardinal George Mundelein of Chicago ordained Father John Francis Noll a bishop and installed him as the fifth bishop of Fort Wayne at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception,



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

which was Father Noll's home parish, in Fort Wayne. Appointed bishop by Pope Pius XI, Father Noll was already nationally renowned and known in Rome for his writing and publishing, instructing Catholics throughout the country about the teachings of the Church and defending the

faith against the anti-Catholic bigotry and deceitful accusations which were quite rampant at the time. Through *Our Sunday Visitor*, which he founded in 1912, Father Noll educated both Catholics and non-Catholics about the truths of the Catholic faith. The weekly *Our Sunday Visitor* newspaper became immensely popular throughout the country and expanded through the years with magazines, pamphlets, and books with the same aim.

During his episcopacy, Bishop Noll continued his publishing activities, teaching, spreading, and defending the faith in the Diocese of Fort Wayne and beyond. His national stature grew even more as he was called upon to serve in numerous capacities. Bishop Noll was elected secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the forerunner of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and was a long-time member of the Administrative Committee of the Conference. He was also elected treasurer of the American Board of Catholic Missions, a natural fit considering his missionary zeal as well as his financial acumen.

Bishop Noll actively promoted Catholic lay apostolates and organizations and hosted in Fort Wayne national conventions of the newly established National Conference of Catholic Men and of the National Conference of Catholic Women. He was the chair of the NCWC's Committee on Lay Organizations.

Through *Our Sunday Visitor*, Bishop Noll educated Catholics in the United States about the fierce persecution of the Catholic Church in Mexico and anti-Catholic forces growing in Europe before the Second World War. He was an outspoken foe of atheistic communism. After the Second World War, Bishop Noll, especially through funds from *Our Sunday Visitor*, actively supported the resettlement

of immigrants to the United States who had been displaced by the devastation of the war.

Bishop Noll was troubled by certain cultural currents of the time which he believed were leading to the nation's moral decline. He was especially concerned about the moral content of motion pictures and popular fiction in magazines. He joined a group of bishops in forming the Legion of Decency to evaluate movies and to classify them according to their moral content, urging Catholics to pledge not to attend morally objectionable movies. Bishop Noll was also instrumental in the founding of the National Organization for Decent Literature to work to ban immoral magazines.

It is not a surprise that in 1946, given his financial abilities and the reach of *Our Sunday Visitor*, Bishop Noll was elected chair of the bishops' committee to raise \$7 million to complete the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The crypt church had been completed in 1927, but funds ran out and the building of the upper church was postponed during the Great Depression and the Second World War. It took eight years, but the funds were raised and the construction of the upper church resumed in 1954.

In 1953, Pope Pius XII gave Bishop Noll the title "Archbishop," even though the Diocese of Fort Wayne was not an archdiocese. He did so as a recognition of Bishop Noll's service to the Church in the United States and his contributions to the Catholic press and publishing through *Our Sunday Visitor*.

One may wonder how Bishop Noll served as a local bishop, given his many national commitments and his leadership of *Our Sunday Visitor*. A man of great energy and capacity for work, Bishop Noll did not shirk his diocesan responsibilities. He was truly a pastor of the local church. He was the first native son of the Diocese of Fort Wayne to serve as bishop of the diocese. He was an active shepherd who regularly visited parishes and schools. He was a good organizer and delegated competent priests to serve in diocesan administration.

The Diocese of Fort Wayne encompassed 42 counties, the northern half of the state of Indiana. Due to the growth in the Catholic population, 24 counties were separated from the diocese in 1944 to form the new Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana.

During Bishop Noll's tenure, the diocese grew not only in numbers, but also in vitality. Bishop Noll established 25 new parishes. A strong advocate of Catholic education, he oversaw through the superintendent of schools the establishment of dozens of new parish schools and the recruitment of religious sisters and brothers of several congregations to teach



OLVM Photos

Bishop Noll posed in the courtyard of the Our Lady of Victory Building during its dedication in 1925 (right). Bishop Rhoades (left) recreated the photo when he presided over the 90th anniversary of the building in 2015.

in the schools. Bishop Noll vigorously promoted the establishment of central Catholic high schools mandated by the 1926 diocesan synod. He raised funds and established Central Catholic High School in Fort Wayne in 1939 and Saint Joseph High School in South Bend in 1953. He set up scholarships to assist needy students whose families struggled to afford tuition.

Bishop Noll's zeal for evangelization, catechesis, and apologetics was evident on the local as well as the national level. He started our diocesan newspaper as an insert in *Our Sunday Visitor's* national edition. He promoted many Catholic lay organizations, including the Knights of Columbus, the Holy Name Society, the NCCW and NCCM, and many other lay

groups. Bishop Noll expanded Catholic Charities in the diocese and promoted the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and the Legion of Mary. Bishop Noll also arranged for the funding and construction of new buildings for the Saint Vincent Villa for Orphans in Fort Wayne after a fire heavily damaged the original 1886 building.

The number of priestly vocations in the diocese grew under Bishop Noll's tenure as well. Using Our Sunday Visitor funds, as he so often did for diocesan building projects, Bishop Noll purchased an old hotel at Lake Wawasee to be a new high school seminary in the diocese named Our Lady of the Lake and funded the addition of a beautiful chapel to the building.

The diocesan and national accomplishments of Bishop Noll were many. Behind all his accomplishments was a man of deep faith, nurtured by his devout father, mother, and stepmother and his large family. His formation for the priesthood was rigorous at Saint Lawrence Minor Seminary in Wisconsin and Mount Saint Mary's Seminary of the West in Cincinnati. He was diligent and excelled in his studies of philosophy, theology, and languages. The spiritual discipline of the seminary further formed his heart and soul.

As a young priest, Father Noll served in mostly rural parishes where Catholics were small in number and where many non-Catholics had stereotypes and misinformation about the Catholic Church. The Catholics also needed better education in the faith as they encountered anti-Catholic prejudice and bigotry. Father Noll felt called to educate his people, to counter the lies and misinformation circulated by anti-Catholic individuals and groups. I believe it was his experience in these first years of his priestly life that Father Noll found his personal mission to evangelize and catechize, leading to his founding Our Sunday Visitor and his creative publishing ventures that reaped great success locally and nationally.

The priestly life and ministry of Bishop Noll would not be complete without mentioning "the apple of his eye," the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory.

They were a missionary society of women catechists founded by a Chicago priest, Father John Sigstein, to teach and serve the poor, mostly Mexican, children and their families in the southwest United States. Bishop Noll became their principal financial benefactor and built a motherhouse for them in Huntington called "Victory Noll." Bishop Noll was not only their benefactor, but a friend and spiritual father. He truly enjoyed the Sisters' company and visited with them often, and he also invited the Sisters and those



OLVM Photos

OLVM Sister Joan Arnold's religious life spanned from Bishop Noll (left) through Bishop Rhoades (right). Sr. Joan and Bishop Rhoades were from the same hometown of Lebanon, Penn., and shared stories during his visits. Sr. Joan passed away in 2022.

in formation to his summer home on Sylvan Lake for recreation and relaxation, including teaching them how to fish! Bishop Noll chose to be buried in the Victory Noll cemetery, rather than the cathedral crypt, to be near the Sisters and to be the beneficiary of their prayers.

Bishop John Francis Noll chose the second line of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* as his episcopal motto: *Mentes Tuorum Visita*. It is a prayer to the Holy Spirit to "visit the minds of your own." The mind is a power of the soul. We give thanks that the Holy Spirit indeed inspired Bishop Noll's mind and soul. Bishop Noll's legacy lives on in our diocese and in our country through the many fruits of his labors, including Our Sunday Visitor. As we remember the 100th anniversary of his episcopal ordination may we be resolved to carry on his mission of spreading the truth and beauty of our Catholic faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ! ❖

Jubilarians 2025

Three members of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters are celebrating Jubilees in 2025.

Sr. Jeanette Halbach is celebrating 70 years as a Victory Noll Sister. Sr. Lucy Regalado is celebrating 60 years and Sr. Mary Jo Nelson 50 years. Sr. Jeanette and Sr. Lucy were honored at a special Mass on May 24, at the Chapel at Heritage Pointe in Warren. Sr. Mary Jo's Jubilee Mass will be held August 5, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Fort Wayne.

Sr. Jeanette Halbach was born in 1930 in Primghar, Iowa. She entered Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on September 6, 1955, and made first vows on August 5, 1958. She received a Bachelor's Degree in English from Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, and a Master's Degree in English from the University of Notre Dame. Sr. Jeanette served in leadership at Victory Noll in Huntington, first as vice president from 1977-1980, and then three terms as president from 1980-1984, 2000-2004 and 2004-2008. Her ministry work has taken her to Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts and Illinois. She has taught English, music and Social Encyclicals at the high school and college level. She served in immigration ministry and with four other Victory Noll Sisters founded Julia Center in Chicago, which served as an education and enrichment center for immigrant families.



Sr. Lucy Regalado was born in 1937 in California, and entered Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on September 8, 1965, making first vows on August 5, 1968.

She received her Bachelor's degree from St. Francis College in Ft. Wayne and her Master's degree from Loyola University in New Orleans. Sr. Lucy served two terms as Leadership Team President at Victory Noll in Huntington from 1992-2000. She also served the congregation as formation director and as a board member of Victory Noll Empowerment Grants. In her ministry work she was director of religious education at mission centers in Indiana, Utah and Texas. She served in Bolivia, working with youth and as director of a family counseling center. While working in Phoenix, Arizona, Sr. Lucy was an adjunct faculty member of the Kino Institute.



Sr. Mary Jo Nelson was born in Logan, Utah and grew up in Oregon. She entered Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters in 1975, and made first vows in 1976. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Inter-Divisional Studies from Regis University in Denver, a Master's Degree in Religious Education from the University of San Francisco, and a Master's Degree in Organization Development from Loyola University in Chicago. After a short time in parish ministry, she served as Director of Catechetical Formation, Vicar for Religious, Diocesan Pastoral Planner, and Chancellor in the Diocese of San Bernardino, CA. She then served on the OLVN Leadership Team from 2000-2008, and from 2016-2022 served as President of the Congregation. For the last 25 years she has also served religious congregations throughout the United States as a facilitator and consultant. Currently she ministers with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Silver Springs, MD. ❖





OLVM Archives

Bishop Noll often invited novices, postulants and Sisters from Victory Noll to his cottage on an island on Sylvan Lake at Rome City, Indiana.

An inspiration for mission

Bishop John Francis Noll was a main benefactor of the OLVM community, providing them with a home and motherhouse in Huntington, Indiana. In 2018, Victory Noll Sisters Valeria Foltz and Alma Bill discussed their memories and inspirations of Bishop Noll. Sr. Valeria passed away on May 13, 2025, at the age of 105. Sr. Alma turned 104 last March.

What do you remember about Bishop Noll?

Sister Alma: From my earliest age, I was somehow afraid of the hierarchy. Living in a farming community, we saw the Bishop only once every four years when he came to our parish to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. However, after I entered Victory Noll and had the opportunity to meet Bishop Noll, and after hearing stories of his interest and generosity in the founding and growth of our community, my attitude completely changed. Perhaps it would be interesting if I recall some interesting incidents that “broke the ice.”

The Noll family had a cottage on Sylvan Lake, about 40 miles from Victory Noll. Every summer the postulants and novices would go there for a week of vacation. Invariably, Bishop Noll would come to spend time with us. When I saw him in his overalls,



Sr. Alma Bill



Sr. Valeria Foltz

baiting our hooks for fishing, taking us for a ride in his boat, playing horseshoe on the porch — well, I was never afraid of Bishops again!

I will always remember his humility, good humor, naturalness, kindness, care for people, and deep spirituality — a profoundly human member of the Hierarchy.

Sister Valeria: I remember that he had a deep faith in God and trusted God and he saw Christ in everyone regardless of whether they were rich or poor. He would come in once a month or so when we were novices and postulants. Victory Noll was a special place to him. It was like home for him. He did so much for the community.

What about Bishop Noll inspired you?

Sister Alma: At the time when the hierarchy was sometimes viewed as “a notch above” the rest of us, Bishop Noll broke the pattern and proved his relationship with “every man — and woman” He was someone who reacted fearlessly in defending the Faith and generously in providing for the means of spreading the Faith. At the same time, he never neglected the ordinary means of helping others.

Sister Valeria: He inspired me to have a great devotion for our Blessed Mother and to God. Our motto was “All for Jesus through Mary,” so he taught us to stay close to our Blessed Mother. He had a great love for the poor. He saw Christ in them. He inspired me through his kindness to others.

Describe how you witnessed Bishop Noll’s care for the poor and devotion to Mary?

Sister Alma: According to my experience, Bishop Noll’s care for the poor was demonstrated by his support for our community in our efforts to serve the poor in whatever circumstances we may find them. He originally founded the means for our living situation by managing the purchase of land and buildings for our motherhouse; he supplied the funding for Redlands, the large home base for Sisters ministering in the Southwest; he provided advertising space in Our Sunday Visitor, the means by which many of our Sisters first learned of our ministry; he constantly lent his support and encouragement by spending time with us at Victory Noll.

“Devotion to Mary” was one of the spiritual highlights of our dedication as Victory Noll Sisters. From our early beginnings, we were introduced to this devotion by Father Sigstein, and it continued as our public demonstration of devotion.

Sister Valeria: I remember as a child they were

building the Basilica was being built in Washington DC and they ran out of money. Bishop Noll stepped in and led the way to raise the rest of the money needed to finish the building. I was in elementary school in Humphrey, Nebraska, and the Sisters would



OLVM Archives

The only way to get to Bishop Noll's island cottage on Sylvan Lake was by boat. Postulants and novices from Victory Noll would spend a week each summer there for vacation.

have a jar for us to put in our coins to help complete the Basilica. That’s how I got to know Bishop Noll through Our Sunday Visitor asking us to send money. Sometimes it was only pennies but we knew we had a hand in it.

How did Bishop Noll influence your spirituality?

Sister Alma: Bishop Noll was a well-known bishop throughout the country. Through his writings, his publication of Our Sunday Visitor, he strengthened the Faith of the people and provided for their development and celebration.

Sister Valeria: We used to have talks with him in the summer we would go to his lakehouse. He was very fatherly and very understanding and kind and helpful getting us prepared for the work we were going to do. He was filled with knowledge of spreading the gospel. ❖



Setting the course for Catholic media

Bishop Noll's efforts through OSV provided a voice for the Church

By Scott P. Richert
Publisher
Our Sunday Visitor

Like many of my colleagues in Catholic media today, my first exposure to the Catholic press occurred when I picked up a copy of *Our Sunday Visitor* from a table just inside the entrance



Scott P. Richert

of my family's church. I can't say exactly when I did so, but by the time I made my First Communion nearly 50 years ago, I was a regular reader of the weekly newspaper founded by Fr. John Francis Noll, which lent its name to the media apostolate whose growth in the first half of the 20th century paralleled the growth of the Catholic

Church in the United States, in large part because *Our Sunday Visitor* drove that growth.

At its height, about five years after Archbishop Noll's death and right around the time that OSV dedicated its new headquarters in Huntington, Indiana, in September 1961, the weekly circulation of *Our Sunday Visitor* reached one million copies — which, given the average size of Catholic families at the time, meant somewhere in the range of five million weekly readers. Shortly thereafter, the circulation of *Our Sunday Visitor* began to decline, but in the 1960s, that decline was largely driven by the fact that OSV used its resources to help dioceses around the United States to create their

own diocesan newspapers, which carried articles from *Our Sunday Visitor* and, in many cases, were printed and distributed by OSV.

That dynamic was in keeping with Archbishop Noll's vision.

The first edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* (center) printed in 1912. Bishop Noll's publication was produced at the building in downtown Huntington until 1961 when they moved to a new facility in town.

The first edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* was published on May 5, 1912, with 35,000 copies sent to priests and parishes across the United States. By 1961, the circulation reached one million copies, making OSV one of the world's largest Catholic publications.

He didn't create his newspaper or his publishing apostolate to be the biggest and the most profitable Catholic media company in the United States (though it eventually became that). His passion was to form Catholics in their faith, and to inform both Catholics and non-Catholics about what the Church teaches and why. And by doing so,

he created channels through which God’s grace could flow, drawing people closer to Christ and His Church. If some of those channels fell outside of OSV, it was still within the mission of OSV to support them and to fund them.

Throughout the nearly four and a half decades between his founding of OSV in 1912 and his death on July 31, 1956, Archbishop Noll dedicated himself to that vision. The publishing activities of OSV grew to include (among many other things) multiple magazines, pamphlets for church literature racks, and books, which started as collections of columns from *Our Sunday Visitor*. One of those collections, “Father Smith Instructs Jackson” (a catechism in narrative form), eventually sold over three million copies and remains in print today in two separate editions.

As OSV expanded beyond publishing into parish products and services, it did so in continued service to Archbishop Noll’s vision. The proceeds from products such as church envelopes fueled further evangelical and catechetical activity, both through OSV’s publishing operations and outside of OSV, through what came to be known as the OSV Institute, which has funded the activities of the Catholic Church and Catholic apostolates in the United States and abroad to the tune of \$100 million over the last century. Archbishop Noll also used the reach of *Our Sunday Visitor* to multiply the charitable activities of OSV, most notably by raising \$3.5 million (the equivalent of approximately \$45 million today) for the construction of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

All of this is well known, though perhaps not as well known today as it was when I first began reading *Our Sunday Visitor* in the early 1970s. What is less well known is how many tens of thousands (literally) of people have dedicated their lives to Catholic media, to the evangelical and catechetical activities that lie at the heart of the Church’s missionary discipleship, because they, like me, picked up a copy of *Our Sunday Visitor* and were themselves formed and drawn closer to Christ and His Church by what they read therein.

The publication that Father Noll founded continues today, though in a different form — no longer a weekly newspaper but a monthly Catholic lifestyle magazine. That transformation, which took place in 2024, reflects both the changing realities of the media landscape — people get their news, including Catho-



Photos provided

Above, Father Noll (top left corner) poses for a photo with the staff of *Our Sunday Visitor* in Huntington during its early years. Below, Bishop Noll enshrines a statue of the Sacred Heart in the room with the printing press in 1950.



lic news, online today from sources such as *OSV News*, which we launched at the end of 2022 — and the enduring vision of Archbishop Noll that we must meet people where they are, if we are to walk with them on their pilgrimage toward our heavenly home.

After decades of decline, the circulation of *Our Sunday Visitor* is once again expanding — evidence both that the magazine is filling a need just as the newspaper did in 1912 and that Archbishop Noll continues to intercede for the apostolate that he founded. And I like to think — or rather, I know, with the certainty of faith — that among those who are picking up copies of *Our Sunday Visitor* today near the entrances of their churches will be found the next generation of Catholic media professionals who, inspired by the vision of Archbishop Noll, will dedicate their lives to continuing his ministry. ❖



Photos provided

Below, Bishop John Francis Noll, assisted by school Principal Father Alfred Junk, on Oct. 5, 1947, dedicates the building addition to the high school renamed in his honor. Today, Bishop Noll Institute is the largest Catholic high school in the Diocese of Gary.

Champion of Catholic education

Noll continues to be celebrated at high school bearing his name

By Paul Mullaney
President
Bishop Noll Institute

There is great reason to celebrate the 100th anniversary of John Francis Noll’s appointment to bishop – even many miles west of Huntington, Fort Wayne, Ligonier or wherever else his imprint remains today.

Here in Hammond, Ind., fewer than three miles from the Chicago city limits, Bishop Noll’s legacy is alive and well at the Catholic co-ed high school that bears his name. After all, who knows what might have happened (or not happened) here had a different prelate been appointed?



Paul Mullaney

Almost immediately after his appointment, Bishop Noll became an ardent and pivotal supporter of the small school, founded in 1921 (enrollment 40) as Catholic Central High School by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. He made his first official visit to Catholic Central two months after his appointment to dedicate the newly built convent and school auditorium/gymnasium. Another two months later, in October 1925, he returned to address the students



on the urgent need of Catholic leadership. Much to the delight of the students and faculty, he stayed to attend the football game that evening! (And we won!)

Bishop Noll would celebrate many Baccalaureate masses and hand out diplomas at many commencement ceremonies. His determination to see Catholic education thrive in the northwesternmost corner of Indiana was consistent with his drive to educate all people in the truths of Catholicism. And his frequency of visits to Hammond was impressive when

considering in those days the Diocese of Fort Wayne stretched from the Ohio line to the Illinois line, and traveling that wide geography wasn't easy.

As time passed, Bishop Noll's impact on the school would only grow.

"His most crucial contribution to Catholic Central occurred at the end of the 1933 school year," offers school historian Therese Putz, also an alumna and former teacher. "That's when the Poor Handmaids, impacted by the Great Depression, were forced to leave their ministry and thought the school would close.

"But Bishop Noll avoided a crisis and enlisted the services of the Holy Cross Sisters from Notre Dame, ensuring that Catholic Central would continue its mission. He also elevated Catholic Central's status from a quasi-diocesan school to a full diocesan school."

With the student population increasing at Catholic Central after World War II, Bishop Noll gave his consent to start a fund for an addition to the school, a two-story expansion with 18 classrooms and three offices. On July 7, 1946, the cornerstone was set into place and Father Alfred Junk, principal, announced that Catholic Central was officially renamed Bishop Noll High School.

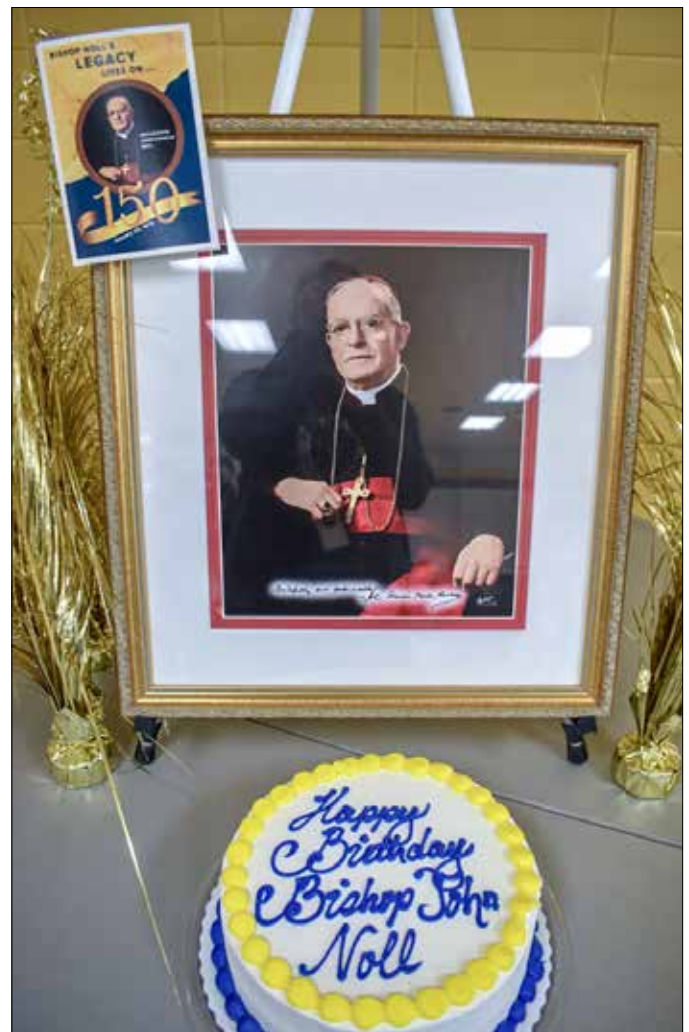
On Oct. 5, 1947, Bishop Noll dedicated the addition and stressed the importance of Catholic education. It was through his staunch moral and financial support that the early visions of a bigger and better Noll became a reality.

After Archbishop Noll's death in 1956, the Diocese of Gary was created to serve four counties in northwest Indiana. And in 1962, a new school building was added on the campus to serve the continued growth. When it opened in 1963, the Diocese of Gary dedicated it as Bishop Noll Institute.

In the fall of 1966, with a state-of-the-art facility and the Baby Boom reality, a record 2,593 students started the school year here. BNI was then the largest Catholic high school in Indiana and the 17th largest in the country.

Fast forward to today: Though the playing field has changed greatly from our early years, the mission remains the same and the foundation built on faith has endured the test of time. Archbishop Noll's vision remains alive, as BNI will begin our 105th school year with a 25-year enrollment high as the largest Catholic high school in the Diocese of Gary.

And to recognize our origins, we share the Archbishop Noll story with each year's freshman class – a story



Photos provided

Principal Lorenza Jara Pastrick (left) and President Paul Mullaney, both alumni of Bishop Noll Institute in Hammond, pass out cupcakes at lunch to students on Friday, Jan. 24, 2025, in celebration of Archbishop Noll's 150th birthday the following day.

that includes all the trendsetting achievements he accomplished across our country. We want our students to know about the man who championed their school, and that this institution remains one of many lasting monuments to a legend of our Church. ❖



OLVM Archives

Bishop Noll (center) was joined at Victory Noll in 1948 by his large family during the Golden Jubilee celebration of his ordination. Bishop Noll had six full siblings and 11 more half-siblings.

Cracker Jacks and reunions

Relatives remember gatherings with Bishop Noll and the family

“

St. Irenaeus, in the 2nd century, expressed my childhood memories of Archbishop Noll in the phrase “The glory of God is a Man Fully Alive.”

Bishop loved children and at family reunions he greeted each one of us individually with conversation, a bottle of Pepsi and box of cracker jack. He listened to us and understood us. He’d tell us stories and laugh with us. Oh, how his laughter embraced me! You always knew where to find Bishop, you just listened for the laughter. If there was another pocket of laughter on the grounds, that’s where you’d find my dad, Harry Noll, also a great storyteller.

Joyce Noll Racine is part of the family of Bishop Noll and a Victory Noll Associate. She offers this remembrance.

The “Book of Joy” by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminds me so much of Bishop Noll’s joyful spirit, his wisdom and wit, his search for understanding. His episcopal motto was: Visit the Minds of Your People.

Bishop Barron’s book 2 of “The Pivotal Players: 12 Heroes Who Shaped the Church and Changed the World” is also reminiscent of Bishop Noll as I remember him and as I’ve learned through stories of family members and others who knew him and in reading about him. Like all 12 heroes, Bishop Noll was abundantly blessed with and astutely used the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. ”

“

“You are related to Bishop Noll?” I have heard that question many times throughout my life. And yes, he was my great-great uncle. A wonderful man! A joy to be around!

I have many fond memories of “Bishop” at our family events. He came to our house for my First Communion Party and we got our picture taken in the backyard! My grandmother and mother were especially close to him. They took us to visit Bishop at his house. Sometimes we had breakfast or lunch. The Victory Noll Sisters managed the house and always had treats for the children.

Leanne Mensing is a great-great niece of Bishop Noll. She offers this remembrance.

At Easter, they baked beautiful lamb cakes for our families.

After we kissed his ring and he gave us a hug, he asked each of us about ourselves — family, school, fun activities.

Sometimes we visited him at the Lake House which was on an island!!

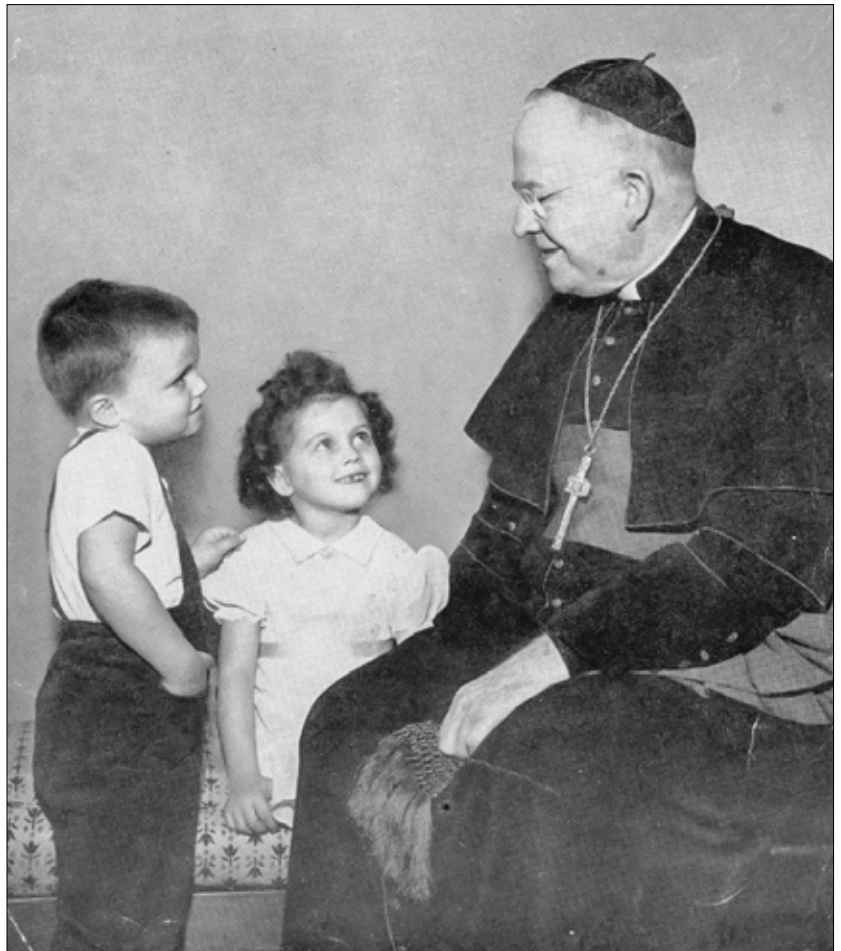
On Christmas Night, we all went to his sister Lorretto’s house to celebrate together and enjoy her special Christmas dessert. Such a fun time!

Busy as he was with all of his Bishop/Archbishop duties, he always took time to talk to all the children. He always encouraged us to be the best we could be! I think he was as excited as I was when I earned a Bishop Noll Scholarship to Saint Francis College.

At any of his special celebrations, he made sure visiting Priests, Bishops and Cardinals were introduced to the children. Yes! We were honored and astonished to meet Bishop Fulton Sheen, Father Patrick Peyton (of the Fighting 69th), Cardinal Stritch, including several other dignitaries and Papal Representatives.

Bishop Noll was a strong supporter and cheerleader for all of us — a very special Man! I thank the Lord for our relationship.

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OLVM Archives

Bishop Noll enjoyed spending time with children, especially his own family. He hosted numerous family reunions, with events often held at Victory Noll.

Passion for mission endures

Collaborative efforts provided framework for century of service

By Sr. Beaty Haines

OLVM Social Justice Coordinator

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of Archbishop John Francis Noll's service to the Church as a Bishop reminds us Victory Noll Sisters of the tremendous role he played, as well as his friendship, from our beginnings. Knowledge of the new Society was spread through his national publication, *Our Sunday Visitor*. Financial aid from the same source was also given.

This anniversary is also a reminder of how the Holy Spirit works by bringing together people, in unexpected and wonderful ways, to accomplish the ongoing Mission of God. The intersection of the lives of three men, Archbishop Noll, Father John Joseph Sigstein and Peter O'Donnell, in the early history of the Victory Noll Sisters is a striking example of this.

Father John Francis Noll, Founder and Editor of *Our Sunday Visitor* and Pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Huntington, had a passion for sharing the faith when he met Father John Joseph Sigstein, our Founder. Fr. Sigstein had a similar passion joined with a heart for those who are neglected and forgotten. When Fr. Sigstein encountered the needs of the people in Northern New Mexico, where he had gone to recuperate from an illness, he was moved to action. On his return to Chicago, he began the long process of establishing the Society of the Missionary Catechists. Fr. Noll



OLVM Archives

Primary figures in the early history of the Victory Noll were Father John Joseph Sigstein (right), founder of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters; Bishop Noll (top, left), who had a passion for the fledgling community and provided the land for the Motherhouse in Huntington; and Peter and Julia O'Donnell, who provided financial support for the building construction.

was observing the beginning of the new Society and gave evidence of being interested in it. He visited Fr. Sigstein twice at St. Bernard's Hospital in Chicago where he served as Chaplain, after John had approached him in Huntington to ask him to publish an article in his paper about the fledgling group.

Enter Peter O'Donnell, retired Chicago policeman living in Long Beach California. He and his wife, Julia, moved there for her health. Peter invested \$3,200 in land, which he soon discovered was often under water. Fearing they had

lost their money, the couple prayed to Our Blessed Mother and promised that if the investment would be successful they would give half the sum to a worthy charity. Soon the city of Long Beach bought the property for \$32,000 and subsequent investments yielded profits. The O'Donnell's were anxious to keep their promise to the Mother of God. Meanwhile, in Chicago, Fr. Sigstein and the Catechists were praying fervently to Our Lady of Victory for the financial help his Society needed so badly.

Fr. Noll met Peter O'Donnell in

Hot Springs, Arkansas, when he went there for a much needed vacation and to celebrate his silver jubilee of ordination as a priest. They had been in contact for some time without having had the opportunity to meet each other personally. Peter was anxious to talk to Fr. Noll about a concern he had as well as the fact he had not been able to fulfill his promise to Our Blessed Mother. Peter was very involved with the apostolate of outreach to Catholics, to whom he distributed thousands of copies of OSV pamphlets. He observed how many poor Mexican children were attending public schools and were not given the religious instruction that they needed to preserve their Catholic heritage and he worried about it. So he went in search of priests or sisters who could give instruction to these children, but found none. This was the concern he brought to Fr. Noll who informed Peter of a Chicago priest who had just organized a community of young women whose purpose was to do the very work that he had in mind. To make a long story short, Peter sold some ocean-front property he owned for \$90,000 and turned the amount over to Our Sunday Visitor for a motherhouse and novitiate for the Society of Missionary Sisters. (Note: Fr. Sigstein chose the name "Victory Noll" for the motherhouse. It was the highest point for miles around. Monsignor Noll's name lent itself to a play on the word "knoll." And what could be more appropriate than to link the name of the Society's patroness, Our Lady of Victory, with its greatest benefactor?)

These buildings presently have a new purpose, a new mission. The continuity is seen in the renaming of the buildings as the O'Donnell Center. The buildings now house Huntington County Community Corrections "Restorative Programming Residential Services and Treatment." Their mission is to provide the local court system with alternative sentencing while making the community a safer place through sound practices and services for offenders. These services include employment, mental health, substance abuse, and cognitive

based programs for persons who are often challenged by poverty, low self esteem and lack of education.



OLVM photo

Victory Noll is a lasting legacy to the vision and passion of the people who built it, and to those who have been dedicated to the ongoing mission of the OLVM Sisters.

I have always been awed by how God was at work through these three men and so many others at the beginning of the story of Victory Noll and through the more than 100 years since its founding. Thousands of lives have been touched and will continue to be touched in ways we may never know.

At the time the Victory Noll Sisters

celebrated the Centennial of the Congregation in 2022, the following quote by Sr. Alma Bill appeared in the Centennial Memorial Book:

“ *Each of us has a story. In fact, each of us IS a story. We are an ongoing story which connects us with our past, giving us a sense that we have come from somewhere and are going somewhere. ... Although yet hidden from us, (the future) is already inter-laced with gratitude for God's care of the past and confidence in his providence for that which is yet to come.* ”

Life is a journey and cemeteries in general remind us of completing life's journey and arriving at our true home in God. The cemetery at Victory Noll, however, symbolizes much more. It is laid out in a circle and at the center on a small hill with an altar, are the graves of Bishop Noll and Fr. Sigstein. The sisters' graves form concentric circles around this center. I understand that Bishop Noll often came to Victory Noll to rest from his many labors. How fitting that he and Fr. Sigstein have been laid to rest along with the Victory Noll Sisters, in this holy ground blessed by their presence and dedication to God's mission. May their lives continue to "seed" the future of this same mission well into the future. ❖



OUR LADY OF VICTORY
MISSIONARY SISTERS
1900 W. PARK DRIVE
HUNTINGTON, IN 46750-8957



Visions

FROM THE VICTORY NOLL ARCHIVES



Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters and Bishop Noll will be forever linked. Noll was instrumental in the OLV Motherhouse being built in Huntington, and he was their most fervent benefactor, to the point where he wanted to be buried alongside the Sisters in the OLV Cemetery. This photo was taken in 1956 shortly after Noll's death and burial. The cemetery has continued to be a place of prayer and reflection for the Sisters and many visitors to Victory Noll. ❖