

SISTER ROBERTA BASCHNAGEL

April 6, 1967

Dear Sisters,

Sister Roberta's funeral Mass was offered at 10:30 A.M. today by Father John Bosco, O.F.M. Cap. Our sisters from nearby missions were present. Sister Roberta's twin sister, Catherine Baschnagel, and her brother, Frank, had arrived in time for the Bible Vigil Wednesday evening. It was after consulting with Sister Roberta's family that Mother Florentine decided to have Sister's body brought to Huntington from Winnemucca. Rosary was recited by all the sisters when Sister Roberta's body arrived at Victory Noll at 1:00 P.M. on Wednesday, and the sisters kept vigil during Wednesday night.

Sister Roberta had left Victory Noll for Nevada on Easter Monday, March 27, after attending the historic Superiors' Workshop here. To have visited with her so shortly before her death is a special comfort to all of us. She returned to Nevada only to come back again in less than a week. One marvels at the plan of Our Heavenly Father in arranging that Nevada, and Winnemucca in particular, be the place in which Sister Roberta, dedicated missionary to that isolated area, would offer her final response to His Infinite Love. We all know how much she loved Nevada; we are sure she was happy to die there.

Born on July 24, 1908, Sister Roberta entered our Congregation on September 3, 1936, and was professed on August 5, 1939. The first three years of her mission life were spent in Indiana Harbor. Of the rest, she was active in Los Angeles' inner city for six years, and in Winnemucca for four years. In Salt Lake City, Utah, and in Santa Paula, California, she served as superior for six years each. After a year divided between Victory Noll and Imlay City, Michigan, Sister Roberta became superior of Winnemucca convent in 1965. It was there she died on Friday, March 31, at 10:30 P.M.

When Sister Roberta arrived in Winnemucca on Wednesday morning, March 29, Sister Gertrude noted that she looked very tired. Sister Roberta told her that the coach had been so hot that it had been difficult even to breathe. However, Sister Roberta seemed all right on Thursday, and on Friday, the day of her death, she had been busy doing many things. In the evening she played scrabble and watched the news on TV, although she remarked several times that she was very tired. She and Sister Agatha waited up until 9 P.M. to greet a visiting sister who was to stay with them a few days. Sister Gertrude got ready for bed. Shortly before ten o'clock, Sister Gertrude heard a hacking cough, and then Sister Roberta came to her room to say that she had a pain in her chest and couldn't breathe lying down. Her kleenex showed that she was coughing up blood. Sister Gertrude phoned the doctor and made ready to take Sr. Roberta to the hospital. Sister Roberta grew rapidly worse and was in great pain during the short trip to the hospital. Arriving there, three nurses took care of her and put her into an oxygen tent. When Sister seemed, to Sister Gertrude, to quiet down, two of the nurses began massaging her heart. One nurse suggested that Sister Gertrude call Father, and she did, although Sr. Agatha had already phoned him from the convent. The doctor came in and felt Sister's pulse, but she was gone. It was 10:18 P.M. They had been in the hospital only about five minutes. The diagnosis was pneumonia. Father anointed Sister Roberta. Sister Gertrude returned home and phoned Victory Noll.

The sisters from Elko and Hawthorne joined the Winnemucca sisters on Saturday evening. Together they prayed the rosary in the funeral parlor. Although Sister's body left Winnemucca on Sunday morning, the rosary was prayed for her in the church there on Sunday evening, and Mass was offered on Monday, feast of the Annunciation. The children were dismissed from school so that they could attend the Mass.

Sister Roberta's Easter Alleluias are being continued in the eternal Easter of heaven. We rejoice in her joy. We pray that we may be found worthy to follow her. Her life of devoted service inspires us; her unexpected summons alerts us. We trust in her continued help in all the problems that surround us. May Our Dearest Mother receive her and present her to Our Saviour-- He Who has opened to us the gates of heaven where the vision of the Triune God awaits us all.

*Sister Margaret Ann, General Secretary*