

Victory Noll
Huntington, Indiana
November 19, 1983

Dear Sisters,

"I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you . . . to myself!"
(Ex. 19:4)

In this rather somber time of the year when the daily readings tend to remind us of the parousia and we look forward to the last great feast of the Church Year in the celebration of the Kingship of Christ, we pause to rejoice with Sister Bertha in her celebration of love made perfect and victorious in her quick entrance into new life with Jesus!

This morning, as we gather in faith, hope and love in this Liturgy, to bring to final rest the remains of Sister Bertha, we give thanks to the Father for the reflection of his love in this quiet woman whose trust in the Lord's will for her always filled her with peace.

Sister Bertha has been close to death before and always recovered. She has had bouts with cancer in 1938 and again in 1979. Diabetis became apparent in 1976. But a history of peripheral vascular disease contributed to the eventual amputation of her right leg just below the knee in March of 1977, and her left leg at the knee joint in June of 1982.

In spite of this handicap of being an amputee, which was a radical adjustment to make, Sister Bertha never complained about her condition. Her days were very normal. While she required a lot of nursing care, there were many things which she could do and did for herself. Sister was always most courteous in acknowledging the kindnesses of the nursing staff in her regard.

Tuesday, November the fifteenth, was a very normal day for Sister. Her routine went on as usual. Sister Madelon prayed the liturgy of the hours and the angelus with her at 3:30 p.m. Sister Helen Marie came with the ritual of blessing with holy water around 4:45 p.m. Sister Camilla prayed Compline with her around 8:30 p.m. and everything was normal and as usual. Then, at 8:30 p.m. her vital signs changed and by 9:15 p.m. the nurse aide called Sister Maria who came at once. Sister Maria spoke to Sister and she was very clear in her answer. Sister Maria stepped out of the room to call Sister Camilla and as she returned and approached the bed, Sister Bertha expired. Nurse Aide Helen Krumanaker was with Sister Bertha when she died.

Most of Sister's religious life was spent right here at Victory Noll. Some ten years were missionary years for Sister Bertha. The rest were busy years at the Noll and those who have spent time here can know and understand what that means. For many years, Sister Bertha was in charge of the laundry in St. Joseph's building and it was here that she endeared herself to the novices. Everyone loved her for her patience with their mistakes and the kindness and understanding she had for them. Everyone was always happy when assigned to the laundry under Sister Bertha.

Sister was also the chaplain's housekeeper from 1963 until 1967 when she retired and moved over to Holy Family building. Because of her age and infirmities, she was no longer able to manage the steps, etc. but at Holy Family community, she helped with daily tasks until she could no longer do so.

Sister Bertha was born October 20, 1888 in Cincinnati, Ohio one of twelve children. Prior to her entrance to Victory Noll, Sister worked as a medical assistant for a specialist in nervous disorders and also helped at home to care for the family after the death of her parents. Five of her sisters entered religious life, three in the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor in Cincinnati and two in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis at Oldenburg, Indiana. Sister Bertha changed the number of religious to six when she entered our Community from St. Boniface parish February 10, 1928 and made first profession of vows at Victory Mount in Las Vegas, New Mexico on March 25, 1930.

Sister is survived by a sister, Sister Gratia, SFP and a brother William also of Cincinnati.

Present for the funeral was her brother William and the following nieces and nephews: Father William Dorrman, Margaret Mary Sanders; Genie and Ed Reinert; Mary and Paul Bruening; Carolyn and Jim Beck; Mary Margaret Kraming; William and Dorothy Cannava; Anthony Dorrman; George and Florence Dorrman and Frances Klosterman. All were from Cincinnati except Carolyn and Jim Beck who live in Dayton, Ohio.

The Mass of Christian Burial was concelebrated by Father William Dorrman and Father Jim Hast, OFM cap. In his homily, Father William spoke of Sister Bertha as coming into life from the creative hand of God and of being received by that same loving and creative hand, and of the love of the Sacred Heart shown to Sister Bertha through the loving kindness of all those who took such good care of her and helped her to adjust to the loss of both limbs. God called Sister at the end of the day when all tasks were finished - the sun had set and the call came quickly - another act of love from the loving Father for one who was perhaps just a bit fearful of death.

The family along with the Sisters took an active part in the liturgy. Sisters Mary Ellen Dooley and Camilla placed the pall on the casket, Sister Marie Celine did the first reading, Margaret Mary did the second reading and Frances prayed the prayers of the faithful. Genie and Mary carried the gifts to the altar, George was the cross-bearer and Sister Jeanette led the prayers of commendation at the end of the liturgy.

Although it was still wet from the morning's rain, we all walked to the cemetery for the prayers at the graveside. After the service was ended, we went directly to the dining room where the cooks had dinner waiting.

"The Lord bore her up on eagle wings and brought her to himself!"

Sincerely in Jesus and Mary,

Sister Germaine Staller