



SISTER MARY MAGDALEN HEIM, OLVM

Sister Mary Magdalen Heim died about 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 5, 2014. She had been slowly slipping into the eternal embrace of God for the last week. Sister Pat Knapp was praying the prayers for the dying at Sister Mary Magdalen's bedside when she gently entered eternal life.

Sister Mary Magdalen was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on June 6, 1912, to Herman Heim and Louise Reich Heim. She was baptized on June 16, 1912, at All Saints Catholic Church in Bridesburg, a section of Philadelphia.

Sister Mary Magdalen was preceded in death by her parents and all her siblings. She had six brothers Herman, Francis, Walter, Sebastian, Joseph and David Heim, and five sisters, Helen Heim, Florence Green, Mildred Heim, Margaret McDevitt, and Dorothy McDade.

Sister Mary Magdalen entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 28, 1942, and made first vows on August 5, 1945. Her first mission was San Pierre, California. After two years she moved to Redlands, and later in her mission work she was in Calexico California. She spent time in serving in other missions centers in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Colorado, Wyoming, Indiana, Nevada, Utah and Arizona. She retired in 1987 to Victory Noll to share her love of music, most especially the violin.

Sister Mary Magdalen was a catechist at heart, serving in catechetical ministry in all the missions where she served. She also served the congregation as regional vocational promoter for the mountain states. Every place Sister Mary Magdalen ministered she shared her love for music.

In 1973, Sister Mary Magdalen completed her Bachelor's degree from Regis College in Denver, Colorado, and in 1977 she earned a certificate in liturgical music from St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana. She never stopped wanting to learn, especially in the area of liturgy and music. She took workshops and courses that were offered in the various dioceses, along with violin lessons. In one letter to Sister Germaine Staddler, the General Secretary, commenting on the classes she had taken that year she said, "I asked for a pass mark as I didn't think I needed any more A,B, or Cs, etc."

After many years in the west, Sister Mary Magdalen returned to Victory Noll and had several different ministries. However, what she seemed to enjoy the most, and what most people remember her for, is for her love of music, especially liturgical music and classical music. She also enjoyed being able to serenade the sisters with her violin. She played for special liturgies like Christmas and Easter and on our congregational feast day on August 5, as well as just for the fun of it. One memory shared was of her serenading the sisters in the Camilla Center. She would set up her music stand and play her violin for the sisters. They loved to listen to her play.

In a tribute to Sister Mary Magdalen, Martha Barker, her violin teacher, came to Victory Noll to play at both the wake and funeral for Sister Mary Magdalen. She also shared how much she enjoyed Sister Mary Magdalen as a student. Martha mentioned Sister's enthusiasm, her commitment and joy when she played, and also the happiness of a teacher who had a student who practiced. Even as Sister Mary Magdalen's mind became more forgetful and simple things were not as easy, once she picked up the violin and began to play, it all came back to her. The music floated through the air and the bow brought forth the beautiful elegant sound.

The funeral liturgy was celebrated on February 11, 2014 with Father Dale Bauman as the celebrant. In his homily he spoke about how St. Augustine said that when we sing we pray twice. "With her music, Sister Mary Magdalen was praying twice. She brought her love of music to her religious education, her pastoral care, and in serenading us. She touched souls with the beauty of music. She used the instrument the Lord blessed her with." At the conclusion of his homily he placed the scriptures on her casket saying, "for by her music she brought them (the scriptures) to life."

The heavenly orchestra now has one more violin player. May Sister Mary Magdalen forever make joyful noise unto the Lord.

With joy and peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sister Ginger Downey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sister Ginger Downey, OLVM

