

May 29, 2012

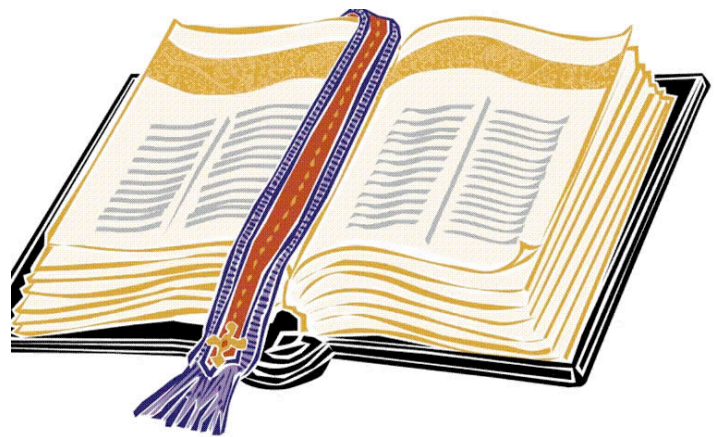
Dear Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends,

Sister Margaret Ann Altmiller passed away at 5:48 a.m. on Monday, May 14, 2012, at the Holy Family Health Care Center, Victory Noll. Sister gradually declined, but more recently was hospitalized with congestive heart failure. Margaret Ann went peacefully, to God and Sr. Irene was at her side praying her into heaven.

Sister Margaret Ann was born in Fort Smith, Arkansas on October 17, 1926 to Henry and Mary Regina Ferrari Altmiller. Sister was preceded in death by her parents and on brother, Henry Altmiller and one sister, Mary Regina Ruttle.

Margaret Ann entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 28, 1948 and made her first Profession of Vows on August 5, 1951 at Victory Noll and her Perpetual Vows on August 5, 1957 in Redlands, Calif.

Sister Margaret Ann spent most of her missionary life in the San Diego area of California. She received a B.A. degree from San Diego College for Women and a Masters in Theology from St. Mary's College of California.



Margaret Ann had a great love for catechetics and was known as an excellent catechist. On an evaluation of her ministry, her Pastor, Monsignor Charles P. Young of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Chula Vista wrote, "Sr. Margaret Ann runs one of the largest, most successful religious education programs in the diocese of San Diego." He went on to write, "Sr. Margaret Ann is an outstanding member of our staff. She sets high standards and challenges for all of us to meet. She knows what is needed and yet she is flexible and accommodating. She is a team player. She offers effective leadership to her extremely large staff of lay teachers and is on top of the whole process."

In 1967, Sr. Margaret Ann obtained the position of Diocese Director of Religious Education and worked in the Diocesan Office of Religious Education. It was here that Margaret Ann met Sr. Dolores Molina (Mama Dee) who also was on staff at the Diocesan Office. The two of them became good friends and worked and lived together until Mama Dee died of a heart attack in the 1990's, while they were both living and working at the St. Rose of Lima Parish in Chula Vista, Calif. They had joined the staff at St. Rose of Lima in 1973 after six years at the Diocesan Office in San Diego. Margaret Ann, served as Director of Religious Education and Mama Dee as Outreach Coordinator to the poor across the border in Tijuana, Mexico. They supported each other's ministries by their active presence and by assisting each other as needed.

Margaret Ann continued her dedicated service at St. Rose of Lima for 34 years. She trained numerous catechists and parents in the religious education of their children. Her untiring efforts continue to bear fruit at St. Rose until the present.

At the Vigil service on Wednesday, May 16, 2012 Margaret Ann's niece, Ann Russell, her husband Woody from Springfield, Missouri and her nephew, Ken Ruttle and his wife Mary from Florida were present. The opening hymn for the Vigil, "Eye Has Not Seen," speaks of the wonderful things God has prepared in heaven for those who love God. Margaret Ann experiences now this new presence of God that our eyes and ears have yet to see and hear. The reading chosen was from Revelation 21: 3-5. This beautiful scripture speaks of a time when God makes His home among us. God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and there will be no more death, mourning or sadness. This is the reality for Margaret Ann, and is our hope as we continue our faith journey.

The Eulogy was given by Sr. Rose Frances. She shared that Margaret Ann's dream was to help children realize that God is very close to us and we can know God personally. To fulfill this dream Margaret Ann trained men and women, mostly parents, to become catechists. Sr. Margaret Ann said, "There is a need to get more parents involved. Faith comes from our homes. It has to be there for children to get to know our Lord." In 2007 at the annual fund raising dinner for the poor, the parish honored Sr. Margaret Ann who would be leaving to retire at Victory Noll. Many parishioners were there to say their farewell and Margaret Ann had a wonderful time. It was very hard for her to leave after many years of service, and the growth of many deep friendships. Rose Frances closed by saying, "We are grateful, Sr. Margaret Ann for your faithful service in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus and rejoice that you now share eternal life with God and with all the Saints."

In the dining room during refreshments, sisters & family members continued to share their memories of Margaret Ann.

Sr. Joan Arnold, a classmate of Margaret Ann shared about their class visit to Boston after their 25th Jubilee. They rented a van and drove to Olean, N.Y. and spent the night at Joan's sister's home. They continued their excursion along the Hudson River where they encountered beautiful scenery. They drove on into Connecticut where they visited Pat & her husband Neil Klepfeld. They had a delicious lobster dinner on Cape Cod and finally reached their destination, Boston, Mass. This was great fun and a bonding experience for Margaret Ann Altmiller, Joan Arnold, Monica Haines, Rose M. Miller and Grace Golenberke.

Sr. Monica shared how Margaret Ann loved San Diego and made a real effort to have sisters living and working there. After all the Victory Noll sisters left San Diego and the clinic had closed, at Sr. Margaret Ann's invitation Sr. Monica and Charlene moved to San Diego to live with Margaret Ann. Later they moved into an apartment and were joined by sisters Millicent and Beverly.

Finally, Sr. Rose Frances joined them where they relocated to a convent in Chula Vista, the town where Margaret Ann continued to minister at St. Rose of Lima Parish for many years.

Dulcinea Salas sent an e-mail and spoke of Margaret Ann's beautiful dancing ability. Dulcinea shared how she was missioned to Nozales, Ariz. where Margaret Ann was Superior. One evening when they were dancing during recreation, they were interrupted by the news flash of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Dulcinea concluded by saying "I hope we all get to enjoy music and dance in heaven."

On Thursday, May 17, 2012, we celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Sisters Mary Jo Maes and Sister Alodia Carney placed the Pall on the casket and Sister Ruth placed the crucifix.

Margaret Ann's nephew, Ken and his wife Mary were the Gift Bearers.

In the Scripture, John 12: 24-26 proclaimed at Mass, Jesus said "Unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a simple grain, but if it dies it yields a rich harvest." Fr. Fahey said, Sr. Margaret Ann was the grain of wheat and she died by giving up her own ambitions to work for the Church as a servant of God." The attitude of Margaret Ann was, "Use me as you can." "She produced much fruit that will last forever." She directed so many people to God, she wanted God's people to be holy." Father concluded, "Only by service comes greatness, and Sister Margaret Ann was great."

After Mass, we processed to the cemetery where we laid Sister Margaret Ann to rest with the final prayers, blessing of the casket and singing of the hymn to our Lady of Victory, "We have a Holy Mother." A delicious dinner to celebrate Margaret Ann's life followed.

Sister Margaret Ann, we are grateful for your faithful service in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus and rejoice that you now share Eternal Life with God and with all the Saints.

Sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Betty Anderson, O.L.V.M." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Sister Betty Anderson OLVM

General Secretary