

Responding Wholeheartedly: Sister Germaine

Victory Noll
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January 31, 2002

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family Members and Friends,

Evening had settled over the city of Huntington on January 14, 2001 when Sister Germaine Stadler quietly entered into a "new world" called Eternity. It was 7:15 PM. Family members and Sisters had gathered around her bed in a blessing prayer for a dying Sister and then smoothly moved into a blessing prayer at the death of a Sister. It was a grace-filled moment climaxing many months of suffering.

Sister Germaine's wake on January 16th and Mass of Christian Burial on January 17th were joy-filled events because she had gone to the place that Jesus had prepared for her. The air resounded with the words of Father Thomas Fahey's homily: "As we mourn her loss, we give thanks for the gift of her life among us and for her pursuit of excellence. She aimed at perfection in all her work. May the good seed she has sown bear fruit in many lives."

The wake provided happy "remembrances" of Sister Germaine. Among them were her historic words during a Community General Chapter. When reporting on the depleting numbers of Victory Noll Sisters, Sister stated, "We are becoming older, we are becoming fewer, but we are becoming more beautiful." Another reminisced about Sister's favorite word "Kiddo" used to address someone. On one occasion she responded to a Sister who was beginning a new ministry, "Don't forget, Kiddo, be not afraid!" She herself witnessed "be not afraid" when she chose to terminate dialysis about two weeks before her death. Others recalled her sense of humor, her love of music, and her gift of an alto voice for harmonizing in singing. Her choice of the Deiss hymn On This Day and Salve Regina during her Burial Mass gave insight into her love of melody and song.

Catherine Stadler (Sister Germaine) was born to John Peter and Catherine Mary Stadler on July 3rd, 1917 in St. Paul, Minnesota, the third of eleven children. The family later moved to Topeka, Kansas. She entered the Congregation in 1945 and professed first vows on August 5, 1948. Sister was assigned to missions in California, Michigan, Nevada, Utah before coming to Victory Noll in 1965 to minister in the Registrar's Office. Her appointment as General Secretary began in 1974, a position she held for eighteen years. She retired in the year 2000. For ten years during her tenure at Victory Noll, she coordinated the Parish School of Religion at St. Joseph's Parish, Roanoke, Indiana which included St. Catherine's Parish at Nix Settlement.

Sister Germaine's sisters Mary Stadler of Dayton, NV and Regina Matheny of Annandale, MN along with her niece Jean Stolpespad of Monticello, MN were present at time of death. Her sister Sophie Trull and husband Stan of Topeka, KS along with niece Laurie Fletchall of Shawnee, KS were present for the wake and funeral. All participated in the Liturgy. Sister Germaine's sisters Cecilia Stadler, Susan Stadler, Barbara Knoebber, Theresa Fletchall, all of Topeka, KS were unable to attend. Sister was preceded in death by her three brothers, John, James, and Paul. Sister is survived by her seven sisters, her nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. Many Indiana friends from Columbia City, Roanoke, Huntington and North Manchester gave tribute to Sister by attending the Mass of Burial.

While we as a Community continue to grow "older, fewer and more beautiful", our Faith tells us that Sister Germaine now enjoys a fullness of beauty in the place prepared for her by Jesus. She might now be saying to us "Don't forget, Kiddo, be not afraid! There are many places in God's dwelling place..."

In God's peace, joy, love,

Sister Dolores Tringl

Sister Dolores Tringl
General Secretary
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters