



SISTER LORRAINE MASTERS, OLVM

Sister Lorraine Masters, OLVM, died early Friday morning, May 15, 2015 at Holy Family Health Care Center at Victory Noll, Huntington, Indiana.

Sister Lorraine was born in Humboldt, South Dakota, on July 13, 1923, the youngest child of Claude Barton Masters and Susanne Menth Masters. She was baptized Lorraine Susanne on August 6, 1923 at St. Anne's Catholic Church. She was preceded in death by her parents; her two brothers, Donald Masters and Loren Masters; and two sisters, Hazel Hipschman and Vera Masters.

Sister Lorraine worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, (FBI) in Washington, D.C., as a fingerprint specialist before entering the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 26, 1945 and making first vows on August 5, 1948. Her first mission was San Paula, California. She was at various mission centers in California until 1966 when she went to Las Vegas, New Mexico, for two years before transferring to Tohatchi, New Mexico. In 1974, she went to minister in Bolivia where she served for three years. After returning to the United States, she spent the next 20 years serving in Utah and working with the native Americans and becoming the founding Diocesan Director for Native American Ministry, which became Director of Ethnic Ministries for the Salt Lake City Diocese. After caring for her sister Vera for several years, Sr. Lorraine came to Victory Noll in 2004.

Sister Lorraine's various ministries in her early years prepared her for the ministry that most people remember her for as the Director of Ethnic Ministry for the Diocese of Salt Lake City. However, it was her time in the missions of California, New Mexico and Bolivia that gave her the foundation and the personal comfort to be with people of other ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It was her formal education that helped her to be able to minister with the variety of people and cultures. Sister Lorraine received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1966 from Ursuline College in Louisville, Kentucky, and her Master of Religious Education degree in 1975 from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas.

Sister Lorraine began her ministry among the Native Americans in Tohatchi, New Mexico, working among the Navajo. After returning from Bolivia she went to Brigham City, Utah, in 1979 to work as Director of Religious Education for the Catholic Indian Center. After the student center closed in 1983, she moved to Salt Lake City where she became Diocesan Liaison with Native Americans and served the people of the five tribes who live in the state. The position involved a lot of travel throughout the state doing needs assessments. Her persistence paid off when the Diocese established a Native American Commission to help in her ministry. During her time in Utah and working among the native peoples, she advocated for indigenous people to have the right to practice their traditional spiritual rites, protections of ancient sites from exploitation and desecration, along with the passage of laws that protect Indian treaties throughout the nation.

The mysterious workings of the Holy Spirit, along with the change in demographics started to have an impact on Sister Lorraine's ministry and the people with whom she ministered.

The Diocese expanded her responsibilities to include all the different minorities in the diocese and her title was changed to the Director of Ethnic Ministry. The expansion included a small group of Hmong Catholics, then “a small in number, but strong in faith” African-American group, and finally, the Korean Catholics. Her ministry with the diverse culture was a challenge but it kept her happy and fulfilled in her ministerial vocation. She traveled to Korea twice as part of her ministry. She often said, “All of the ethnic groups I worked with enriched me both culturally and spiritually.”

In Sister Lorraine's work she often attended the Tekakwitha Conference and worked with the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, now the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church. In their 1995 newsletter Monsignor Paul Lenz wrote, “I began this letter with the name of Sister Lorraine Masters who has been a inspiration to the Native people of the Diocese of Salt Lake City besides the Native Americans she has been instrumental in uniting folks from the Hmong, African-American, Korean and Vietnamese communities with the Church. In the State of Utah where the Catholic population is a definite minority, Sister Lorraine has been a dedicated leader, and more a close respected friend of the minorities. In the four visits I have made to the State her name has always come up with affection because of the love and care she has shown in her ministry to the people.”

On Monday, May 18, 2015, as the sisters gathered for the vigil for Sister Lorraine, there was a loud clap of thunder, then rain and not before long a rainbow appeared. All these were reminders to the sisters of Sister Lorraine's love of nature and creation, especially in her work with the Native Peoples. After the vigil there was much sharing of stories about Sister Lorraine and her influence on the sisters and her life as a Victory Noll sister.

Father Dale Bauman presided at the funeral liturgy for Sister Lorraine on Tuesday morning May 19, 2015. In his homily he talked about how he would have liked to have had more time to read Sister Lorraine's book, *The Blessings of the Four Winds*, because it would have helped him understand her better. However, he felt that she was imbued with love for the diverse ethnic groups she worked with and it helped to form her spirituality and become one with the earth and all of creation. At the end of his homily he placed her book alongside the gospels on her casket.

Sister Lorraine, you worked tirelessly with people of different cultures and traditions to deepen their love and relationship with God may you now celebrate in the fullness of God's love in many magnificent ways.

With Peace and Blessing,



Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM

