

August 4, 2008

Dear Sisters, Family, Associates and Friends,

SISTER VICTORIA GRABLER had been ailing for several years and in 2004 she moved from Holy Family 1st floor to the 3rd floor to be closer to nursing. She had been suffering from hearing loss as well. She still loved staying connected with people, however, and always greeted each one courteously. When it became more difficult for her to walk, she began to use a wheelchair. This did not keep her from going to the lounge each day where she enjoyed reading the paper. Her appetite began to fail and she became weaker. When death drew near, the sisters took turns staying at her side. She died peacefully at 3 AM on July 29, 2008. She was 87 years old.



Sr. Victoria, baptized Catherine, was born on January 5, 1921 in Milwaukee to Emil Grabler and Josephine Schmidt Grabler. She was the oldest of four children: herself, Gertrude (Krause) who died in 2005, Edward, who died at 9 months and Eva (Check) who died in 2001. She is survived by a niece, Carol Baker and a great-niece, Caitlin Baker.

Victoria was of German descent and spoke some German. She attended St. Elizabeth Grammar School for eight years and the Girls' Trade and Technical School for 4½ years. She then began to work as a typist for general and medical librarians and later did bill typing. She applied to enter Victory Noll when she was 25 years old. (Her cousin, Sr. Mary Eva Geiskopf, was a member of the congregation.)

In reading her application form, it sounds like she knew herself pretty well. She answered the questions honestly, saying that she would not care to do nursing to a large extent. Also, it would be hard for her to work in a foreign mission, should the congregation ever branch out that way. Her spiritual director also knew her well because he wrote: *Catherine is "pious, honest and sincere, with a great deal of enthusiasm for her cause.... I know she will make a zealous religious and an obedient member of your community."*

Victoria studied at Victory Noll Junior College for three years in preparation for missionary work. She made first vows on August 5, 1949 and was missioned to Ontario, California. In order to get experience, newly professed sisters were moved often. Victoria was sent to San Pedro, to Redlands, back to Ontario (where she became the local councilor) and to Redlands again. Redlands was an especially busy mission and covered a large geographical area.

In 1959, after ten years in California, she had a change of scene when she was missioned to Clifton Forge, VA. Then it was on to East Chicago, IN (where most of the people worked in the steel mills), Delhi, IA (in the farmlands, where she was the local councilor) and Greeley, CO (in the Rocky Mountains). She certainly lived in many and varied mission settings.

In 1964 she returned to Victory Noll to become the assistant to the librarian. It was during that time that her father died (1965) and her mother (1966). It was a consolation for Victoria to be able to go to Milwaukee and attend the funerals. After five years as assistant librarian, Victoria was assigned to the sewing department at Victory Noll. She was a meticulous worker and gave great attention to details. She did an excellent job with any sewing project that came her way.

Victoria had a great love for music and one of her favorite hobbies was listening to the Metropolitan Opera broadcast of the Saturday afternoon opera. She could always be found in the sewing room on Saturdays, working with her hands and listening to the radio. She began to collect classical records and opera magazines. In 1984 she gave a summer workshop to our sisters entitled "Opera Samplers."

Another hobby that began during those years was collecting thimbles. By the time she retired from the sewing room, she had a lovely collection of over 250 thimbles, ranging from antiques to tourist souvenirs. She said that we could dispose of them in whatever way we wanted. They are now on display at Victory Noll outside the pharmacy and we enjoy stopping by to admire them.

In 1982, Victoria, while continuing in the sewing department, also became part of the receptionist staff at Victory Noll. Again, with her attention to detail, she was able to answer questions and direct visitors and phone calls accurately and efficiently. She seemed to enjoy that ministry very much. She also helped with bulk mailings and then became proofreader for congregational publications. She was an integral part of the staff at Victory Noll.

Living in Huntington for so many years, Victoria made connections with local people. She participated in a Craft Fair at Good Shepherd United Brethren Church, where she displayed her decorative pillows. She enjoyed attending artistic events at Huntington University and used to organize car pools so that other sisters could also attend. She then wrote columns in the Huntington Herald Press, reviewing a ballet, a band concert or a theater production. Her positive comments were always appreciated. Towards the end of her life, Victoria donated all her classical records and opera magazines to the Huntington University music department.

In all, Victoria spent forty-four years at Victory Noll. She did her varied ministries quietly, and efficiently. At the funeral Mass, Fr. Fahey said that Sr. Victoria had a great life. "*She loved Victory Noll, she loved music and she loved her God.*" That is so true! We know that now she is enjoying heavenly music, even more beautiful than what she enjoyed on earth.

We laid Victoria to rest on August 1st. Family members were not able to attend the funeral. However, her niece Carol, great-niece Caitlin and brother-in-law Alfred Krause sent flowers to show their love. Sisters who had come in from the missions, several associates and some friends were also present.

Victoria's memorial card had a quote from the Book of Revelation that is a fitting close to her life of love and service:

*"And I heard a voice from heaven saying,
'Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.'
'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'They will rest from their labors,
for their deeds follow them.'"*

Revelation 14:13

Sincerely in Christ,

Sr. Melanie

Sr. Melanie Persche, OLVVM
General Secretary