

October 3, 2006

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends,

SISTER ANNA MARIE RICHTER led an active life here at Victory Noll, when she lived in the main building as well as after she moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Holy Family. Her health became worse and it was decided not to do invasive testing because of her age. She rested in bed when she wasn't feeling well but otherwise was up and around. She was bedridden for only three days and died quietly on September 28, 2006. She was 94 years old.

Anna Marie was born in Breese, IL on February 10, 1912 and baptized Anna Frances. Her parents were Henry B. and Theresia Maue Richter. She was the fifth of six children: Catherine, Anthony, Marie, Edward, herself and Dorothy. Anna Marie attended grade school at St. Augustine's in Breese. After that, she devoted herself to helping her family on the farm. Her love of nature was sown in her heart early on.

In December, 1935, she and her sister Dorothy applied to enter Victory Noll. Their pastor, Fr. Eckert, wrote briefly and succinctly: "...they are both members of St. Augustine's Parish and good young ladies. I recommend them highly." They were received as candidates on February 11, 1936. However, because of her health, Dorothy returned home on August 4, 1936.

Anna Marie continued her formation for three years, studying the many subjects in preparation for missionary life. She had difficulty hearing, which was a cross for her. However, it did not keep her from being a diligent student. One of her teachers noted in the records that Anna Marie had "excellent application and attitude". Others also commented that her memory was unusually good. Anna Marie made her first profession on August 5, 1939.

Her first assignment was to stay at Victory Noll and care for a section of our farm – chickens and bees. She became proficient in both areas. Many sisters recalled how they helped her gather eggs or smoke the bees. Anna Marie was even aware when a chicken wasn't feeling well or when a bee was straying across a driveway. All of God's creatures were special to her.

In 1951 she was sent to her first mission, San Pierre, IN. She stayed for two years and did catechetical and pastoral ministry. In 1953, she went to South Bend and worked there for five years. Then she went back to San Pierre for one year and then to Richmond for two years. From 1962-1966, she worked in Durant, OK. The town was located just north of Texas. It was a real change of pace from Indiana. Another cultural adjustment was her next mission, Salt Lake City where she worked from 1966-1969.

In 1969 she was sent to San Pedro, CA where she stayed for sixteen years. San Pedro was the harbor of Los Angeles and our sisters had worked there since 1935. It was a busy place and Sr. Anna Marie spent her days teaching, home visiting, serving in pastoral ministry and as assistant in the religious education office. She was especially zealous in getting parents



involved with the religious education of their children. Many evenings were spent contacting them by phone.

During those busy years, Anna Marie also continued her education. From 1958 until 1985, she took courses not only at Victory Noll Junior College (where she received a Certificate in Religious Education) but also at Harbor College in Wilmington, CA, Holy Names College in Oakland, CA and various workshops and classes in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (where she earned a certificate in catechesis). She spoke Spanish well and was dedicated to serving the Hispanic people.

We closed our mission in San Pedro in 1985 and Anna Marie moved back to Victory Noll. The people of St. Peter's Parish as well as Mary, Star of the Sea Parish were sorry to see the sisters go. There are several certificates in Anna Marie's file expressing their appreciation of her work.

Anna Marie did not stop her ministry when she returned to Victory Noll. She took a course in the Laubach Method for literacy training and began tutoring students. She visited nursing homes. She helped in the dietary department and with household duties. But her favorite work was recycling. She began collecting paper from the various offices, cardboard boxes from the kitchen, aluminum, tin and plastic. There was an old coal bin in the basement and she made it her recycling center. She especially enjoyed a trip she took to the county recycling plant. Her love of nature and her frugal way of life found expression in the recycling she did. She wanted to save God's beautiful earth and use only what she needed.

In 2002 her health was failing and she moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Holy Family to receive nursing care. When her memory was getting worse, she spent her days in the Camilla Center, our memory care center. Even there she helped wherever she could – leading prayers, helping with songs (she could remember all the verses!) and conducting the wheelchair traffic from the Camilla Center to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. When she was very sick and could no longer eat, she was still up and around, reading the paper and greeting each person with a smile. She died quietly and peacefully the evening of September 28<sup>th</sup>.

The funeral liturgy was celebrated on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, with Fr. Thomas Fahey presiding. None of her family could be present but they sent a beautiful bouquet of flowers. If you looked close, you could see bees on two of the big flowers. I am sure Anna Marie would have loved that.

We will miss Sr. Anna Marie and we thank God for the life that she shared with us so generously. We know she is receiving the reward of all her labors. May she rest in peace.

Sincerely,

*Sister Melanie*

Sr. Melanie Persche, OLV  
General Secretary