



SISTER BETTY LORENZ, OLVM

SISTER BETTY LORENZ died Sunday March 8, 2015, at Holy Family Health Care Center at Victory Noll, Huntington. She had not been responding to treatment the last few weeks and became critical on Saturday afternoon. The sisters were going in for short visits and Sister Martin Ksycki and Sister Angeline Walczyk were with her when she entered into eternal life.

Sister Betty was born in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, on December 27, 1917. She was the third child of Joseph and Mary Dvorak Lorenz. She was baptized Elizabeth Mary Lorenz on March 24, 1918, in St. Margaret's Catholic Church, Minnetonka Township, Minnesota. She was preceded in death by her parents; two brothers, Joseph Lorenz Jr. and Francis Lorenz; and four sisters, Magdalen Lorenz, Alice Lorenz, Beatrice Gardner and Margaret Haworth. She has two surviving sisters, Bernice Fasnacht of Shoreline, Washington, and Edith Hefflinger of Portland, Oregon.

Sister Betty entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 29, 1940, and made first vows on August 5, 1943. Her first mission was Ida, Michigan, and then after four years she was missioned to Salt Lake City, Utah. Along with those two missions she also served in Colorado, New Mexico, Missouri and California. In 1965, she moved to Wyoming and served the people of the Diocese of Cheyenne for 39 years.

Sister Betty spent most of her missionary life being a catechist and helping people to come to a deeper understanding of God. Her definition of a missionary was "carrying the Word of God not only to foreign lands, but also to spiritually deprived areas of our country." She never lost her zeal for carrying the Word of God, and her former pastor, Father Thomas Sheridan, commented that she helped to bring more than 100 people into the Catholic Church during her time at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Green River, Wyoming. Green River was her last mission before returning to Victory Noll in the summer of 2011.

Sister Betty received her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with a minor in Speech from the University of Wyoming in July, 1976. She worked diligently in Cheyenne, Wheatland, and Green River through prayer, invitation and cajoling, to recruit a wonderful team of teachers everywhere she served. She embraced the mission of the Victory Noll Community by working directly among the poor through teaching, visiting the sick, and providing social services.

In 1988, she moved to Riverton, Wyoming, to help in the parish office. Not long after, she decided to take a course in cosmetology. In 1990, after a year of study, she received her license as a registered cosmetologist. The story hit the wires and it was printed in

newspapers all over the country with headlines like “Beauty is not a Sin,” “This nun’s career isn’t all ‘washed up’ ” or “Don’t ask for a ‘Madonna Do.’ ” Sister Betty volunteered for several years at Victory Noll helping with hair care for the sisters.

In 1993, she went back to Wyoming and ministered in Green River, where although she was officially “retired,” she continued to teach English as a second language, taking the Eucharist to homebound people, and teaching RCIA classes. She especially enjoyed teaching the second language classes and spent time in 2001 in Cuerna Vaca, Mexico, studying Spanish to help her students. She felt the Hispanic students gave of themselves so freely and were willing to share their gifts and talents with others.

Sister Betty’s wake and funeral were during our Community Assembly and many sisters from outside Victory Noll were able to be at the wake on Wednesday, March 11, 2015. During the sharing after the vigil service, Sister Betty was remembered as a gracious lady who had a loving presence and was a generous host.

Her niece Beatrice Nelson and grandniece Kathie Wallin were able to join us for Sister Betty’s funeral on March 12, 2015. Father Dale Bauman was the presider and homilist and he spoke of the beauty of Wyoming as a little bit of heaven on earth. It was her love for Wyoming and the beauty of the landscape along with her definition of “missionary,” that was reflected very fittingly through the saying on her worship aid: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation...” Isaiah 52:7

In the original article about her cosmetology career, which was printed in the Riverton Ranger on September 27, 1990, she is quoted as saying, “I feel the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Sister Betty always believed not only in the beauty of her dreams but in the beauty of everyone’s dreams, whether they be her family, her community, her students or her God. May her dreams now be realized as reality, her joy complete and she celebrates upon the mountain all the beauty heaven can give.



With peace and joy,

Sister Ginger Downey, OLVN