

MARIAN RESIDENCE  
ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA

October 28, 1995

Dear Sisters, Relatives, and Friends of Sister Victorine Downes

After more than two years of sickness and suffering, Sister Victorine Downes slipped quietly away to Heaven at 11:45 a.m. on October 18, 1995.

Mary Loanthea Downes was born March 20, 1908 in Bangor, Maine. Her parents, Henry and Agnes Mary (Watters) Downes later migrated to Havre, Montana. There the young woman entered nurses training at Sacred Heart Hospital, graduating in September, 1928.

In February, 1929, Mary entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Stella Niagara, NY. She received the habit and the name of Sister Victorine in August, 1930.

While at Stella, Sister Victorine helped care for Sisters in the convent infirmary. Later she worked in hospitals of our Sisters in Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, and Brazil. She spent five years at a clinic in Orizabita, Hidalgo, Mexico, where she is credited with saving the lives of many mothers and newborns among the Otomi Indians. She loved the work and returned to Mexico several times to help out for a time.

In 1914, Sister Victorine prepared for the work of Pastoral Ministry at St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver, Colorado, and returned to St. Joseph's in Alliance to practice her new ministry.

In 1981, Sister Victorine was accepted as Parish Minister in Christ the King Parish, Gering, NE. Father Stephen Deaver, who was then pastor, said in his homily at her funeral, he had reservations about her because of her age, but she put so much effort and charity into her work that, "she endeared herself to the people of Gering and Scottsbluff and the Regional West Medical Center alike."

She continued this apostolate until 1993, when her health began to fail. After having knee surgery, she began to have problems with a slow paralysis of her extremities. After many tests, the doctors in Scottsbluff diagnosed "stenosis of the spinal column," due to fractures of cervical vertebrae. She underwent surgery for that condition in August, 1993, at University Hospital in Denver. Recovery was slow and she returned to Marian Residence after a few months.

In August, 1994, after a number of tests were done at the hospital in Alliance, she was admitted to Regional West in Scottsbluff and found to have Hodgkin's disease.

Living at Marian Residence in Alliance, she was taken to Scottsbluff about .. times for chemotherapy treatments until the end of January this year, when her doctor decided that they were no longer beneficial.

Four priests concelebrated Sister Victorine's funeral Mass in Holy Rosary Church here in Alliance. Many of her loyal friends, who had visited her and suffered with her all those months, were present for the rites. She was buried in the family plot of Father Joseph Hergarten, with his parents, a brother, and his sister, Sister Agnesine, who died in 1985. Her parents, two sisters, and a brother preceded her in death.

May her soul live in peace.

The Sisters at Marian Residence.