



Eulogy of Sister Noella Cavallero, BVM

Marian Hall Chapel, Dec. 28, 2017

Ida Cavallero was born on June 2, 1919, in San Francisco. She joined her sister Elda as a daughter of John Mario and Ernestine Reggiardo Cavallero. Ida graduated from St. Brigid HS in May of 1936. She entered the congregation on Sept. 8 that same year, writing, "I desire to give my life to God that He may do as He wills." She received the name Noella upon her reception on March 19, 1937, professed first vows on March 19, 1939, and lived 81 years as a BVM. In an interview, Noella commented, "I always admired the nuns. Since around sixth or seventh grade, I knew I would like to be one of them . . . I just loved them, and here I am one of them."

In her 50 years in elementary education, Noella taught every grade from kindergarten to eighth and never missed a day because of illness. Junior high was her preferred level, especially when teaching her favorite subjects, history and English. Noella was missioned at Immaculate Conception and St. Ann in Butte, Mont.; St. Francis Xavier in Council Bluffs, Iowa; St. Catherine in Kealia ("Kay-ah-lee-ah"), Kauai, Hawaii; and, in California—St. Leo in San Jose, St. Thomas More and St. Vincent de Paul in San Francisco, and All Hallows in Sacramento, where she also served as principal for 19 years.

In an article for the Diocese of Sacramento newspaper, the pastor at All Hallows remarked, "The BVM sisters have left their mark here at All Hallows and none more than Sister Noella. She has faithfully and conscientiously served the parish for a quarter of a century and has been dedicated totally to the school. During this time, she has exercised a strong, firm and fair model of leadership. She has been a very principled and hard-working principal who has a great feeling and passion for Catholic education."

Noella was very conscientious both in and out of the classroom. She dressed professionally and spoke precisely at all times. Although she had a strict demeanor, she could perceive when tenderness and mercy were in the best interest of the child. As Jesus instructed, "Let the children come to me . . . for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these," Noella saw the holy in all children and desired to help them live up to their God-given potential. No wonder she was so kindly remembered with greetings from former students on her 95th birthday.

In 1989, after 10 years as the only woman religious at All Hallows, Noella decided to retire. "I'm leaving on a sad but happy note," she reflected. "The support of the parents here has been outstanding; they are special. The children are the main thing, and we all work together beautifully." As a sign of their gratitude, the All Hallows parishioners gave Noella a three-week trip to Italy, the birthplace of her parents. It was a major highlight in her life, the trip of a lifetime.

Returning from Italy and anticipating her move to San Francisco, Noella commented, "The thing I'm really looking forward to most is living back in community. I'll be going back to St. Paul convent and be with about 15 sisters and pray together and make community decisions." She lived at St. Paul convent for the next seven years, teaching and volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul and serving as the secretary to her BVM Regional Representative.

When St. Paul convent closed, Noella moved to St. Philip in San Francisco and volunteered in the parish for several years. St. Philip was also the home of Schatze, a fluffy white dog who belonged to Sister Pat Lucy until her death in 1999. Noella loved dogs and quickly befriended Schatze. She, along with her housemates Sisters

Dorita Clifford and Patricia Lynch, agreed to move to Mount Carmel in 2004 only after another BVM agreed to take Schatze.

Noella was kind and loving to all. Her gentleness and compassion touched many lives. One All Hallows parent in a troubled marriage found a dear friend in Noella. Noella hired her as an aide after her divorce, supported her when she returned to college, and again hired her as a substitute teacher when she completed her associate's degree.

One of Noella's teachers wrote, "She was always very encouraging. She made me feel good about myself again and that I could successfully accomplish anything that I set my mind to . . . [She] was someone I could always talk with . . . I can't tell you how I love her."

With gratitude, we celebrate our sister, Noella and the blessing she has been in our lives. We rejoice for and with her as she embarks on a new "trip of a lifetime," joining her parents, her sister, and our deceased BVM sisters in God's loving presence.