



Eulogy of Sister Mary Ernest Rothe, BVM
Marian Hall Chapel, March 9, 2018

Good afternoon and welcome to the celebration of life of our Sister Mary Ernest Rothe.

Dorothea Marie Rothe was born on Aug. 19, 1927, the first of five children of Ernest and Henrietta Meck Rothe of Burbank, Calif. Her father was a native of Los Angeles; her mother, a charming woman, hailed from Belleville, Ill. While her father owned and operated a Pontiac dealership in Burbank, her mother cared for Dorothea and younger siblings Ernest, James, Lorraine, and Frank. Dorothea was especially close to her brother James, a priest in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, who died in 2013.

Dorothea attended public school in the early grades and then transferred to St. Robert Bellarmine. Many years later in her *On the March for God and America, a Reminiscence of St. Robert Bellarmine School*, she wrote, "It was a very good year; my first as a Bellarmine-Jefferson Guard, and there were four more years equally as good, if not better. Looking back, I realize that the curriculum . . . was unique. Military training. Opportunities to meet Americans from all denominations. Frequent participation in the liturgy. Visits from Church dignitaries. Lessons in patriotism . . . Thus, we Guards were convinced that by our lives we testified to our belief in the American ideal: 'In God We Trust.'"

Dorothea was in the sixth grade when the new St. Robert Bellarmine Church was under construction. She was selected to model a female student for a stained glass window. Her image appears in the window that features St. Robert Bellarmine surrounded by students from the school, all in school uniforms.

Dorothea graduated from Holy Family High School in Glendale, Calif., and attended Immaculate Heart College in Hollywood for one year before pursuing a religious vocation with "the earnest desire to serve Christ and His Church . . . and the wish to assist others that they may better know and love God." She entered the BVM congregation on Sept. 8, 1946, and received the name Ernest upon her reception on March 19, 1947. She professed her first vows on March 19, 1949, and lived 71 years as a BVM.

Ernest was an elementary school teacher for 39 years. She was missioned in Chicago at Our Lady of Angels and Our Lady Help of Christians; in Arizona at St. Agnes and St. Matthew in Phoenix, All Saints in Tucson, and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Tempe; and in Missouri at St. Catherine in Kansas City. In California, she served at Assumption in Los Angeles, St. Anne in Santa Anna, Holy Redeemer in Montrose, Presentation in Stockton, St. Didacus in Sylmar, and Incarnation in Glendale.

Ernest was a good teacher known to be well prepared and always fair. She was prayerful and kind, a pleasant person with whom to live and work. As many of you know, one of her greatest pleasures was talking; the topic of conversation never seemed to matter. Another pleasure was reading. She devoured books and remembered everything that she read. After a visit to the public library, she would stay up half the night reading. Ernest lived simply; what she had was good enough. She suffered from digestive problems for many years. While this kept her away from the dining room, it did not stop her from living and giving.

During her later years in Glendale, Ernest ministered as the director of religious education (DRE) at Holy Family Parish and volunteered as a tutor in the grade school. Being community-minded, she reached out to the

parishioners far beyond her responsibilities as DRE. She welcomed all, came to know family names and backgrounds through several generations, and faithfully visited and brought communion to the sick and homebound. Ernest was always happy to do anything for anyone. In his first letter, St. Peter instructs, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others." For Ernest, generosity of spirit was her special gift.

As a farewell to Ernest, a Holy Family parishioner wrote, "I just want everyone to know what a wonderful treasure Sister Mary Ernest Rothe has been to [me] and the community here at Holy Family . . . She has given of her time, treasure, and talent unselfishly. We will miss her at Catholic Charities Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, where she always gave dignity and respect to the poor and homeless in Glendale. Working hard consistently, listening to their story with her heart, she was a quiet moment of peace in a busy world for so many people. We miss you, but hope the joy you have given so many be yours at this time of your life. Thank you."

Last Monday, Ernest quickly and quietly passed away. A peaceful death, truly a great blessing. As we celebrate her life, we echo the Holy Family farewell. Ernest, we miss you, but hope the joy you have given so many may be yours in your new life in heaven.