



Sr. M. Lois Best: a gentle presence to the sick

As a member of the Chardon province, Sr. M. Lois Best made a significant impact during her years of ministry to the sick and homebound through St. Paschal Baylon Parish, Thousand Oaks from 2004 until 2010.

Notre Dame Associate Madalyn Horton recalls with gratitude how Sr. Lois mentored Madalyn's formation for and participation in NODA (No One Dies Alone). NODA is a national volunteer program that provides the reassuring presence of a volunteer companion to dying patients who would otherwise be alone. With the support of a nursing staff, volunteers give patients the most valuable human gift – a dignified death in the comforting presence of another.

Madalyn remembers, "When Los Robles Hospital was preparing to start the program, Sr. Lois invited me to attend the training with her. Sr. Lois had already taught me the gift of bringing the Eucharist and Christ's love to the homebound, but she was aware that I had always felt called to work with the dying. I was grateful to have the opportunity to be a NODA volunteer. Sr. Lois also introduced me to a one-year End of Life Ministry class, which culminated in my commissioning as an End of Life Minister. Witnessing to the gentle and loving way Sr. Lois approached each person

was a gift – I learned so much from her. She truly was, and is, a blessing in my life!"

Sr. Lois herself is grateful for her time in Thousand Oaks. Since then, she has lived in Winter Garden, Florida, a 55-plus community where there are many needs. She muses, "It's good to not have responsibility for all the sick Catholics in the area, but to be open to any need our good God places in my day. 'Retired?,' people ask – that just means I'm not on any payroll! I always said I hope I never have to retire, that I always want to do my part. Our SND charism includes God's provident care, and don't we usually experience it through one another? So, 'behold the handmaid of the Lord' is for all of us."

Currently, Sr. Lois also gives talks on behalf of Notre Dame Global Missions in various parishes. During these talks, she first comments that we who are baptized are all on mission, to be Jesus for one another. She continues, "wherever we are, we can keep trying to let God's goodness be shared through us, especially with those in need." In this vein, to all in Thousand Oaks who remember her fondly she affirms, "Thanks to each of you, too, for living your mission and letting me share in it when I was in Thousand Oaks."