



Sister Mary Elmo Ulibarri
January 22, 1910 — December 14, 2008

Ramona Ulibarri was born in Las Vegas, New Mexico, on January 22, 1910, to Eduardo and Gabrielita Ulibarri — she was one of 14 children in the family. She attended elementary school at Our Lady of Sorrows in “Old Town” Las Vegas and completed her high school education at Loretto Academy in El Paso. In an interview with PJ Manion, she recalled that she and her sister, Margarita (later to become Sister Gabrielita) worked for their tuition by helping Justine Martinez in the kitchen and Evangelista in the laundry. Both these young girls were very happy being around the sisters and Ramona credits Claudine Short with her wish to become a Sister of Loretto.

Both Ramona and Margarita entered the Novitiate the same day in June 1928, and their train trip to Kentucky was the first time they had been anywhere outside of their hometown. Ramona said they had no idea who helped with their preparations to enter Loretto, as she knew her father couldn’t afford it. At her Reception into the Community in December 1928, she took the name Martiniana and later changed it to Mary Elmo.

Elmo spent over 50 years teaching children in schools in El Paso, Texas, and in Socorro, Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Mora, and West Las Vegas, New Mexico. In an interview at the time she celebrated her 75th Jubilee in Loretto, she said that although she taught third, fourth and fifth grades, her favorite was fifth and she taught all the subjects including geography, history and math.

Many of us in Loretto remember that Elmo enjoyed making small *Ojo de Dios* (Eye of God) – charms thought to bring happiness, good health and fortune. At the time of her 75th Jubilee, she made 22 of them but, unknown to her, Co-member Jane German, principal of Loretto Academy Elementary School had enlisted the help of the third, fourth and fifth graders to make 100 *Ojos* to distribute to Elmo’s guests at her Jubilee Mass and celebration.

In 1981 Elmo retired from teaching and moved to Loretto Academy in El Paso where she tutored individual students for almost ten years. In 2003 she moved to Nazareth Hall Nursing Center where she remained active and welcomed those who visited her in her room or in the dining room. She chose to continue to wear the Loretto habit and will be missed by Nazareth Hall staff and friends.

Sister Elmo died in El Paso on December 14, 2008, a week after celebrating 80 years as a Sister of Loretto. We are grateful for the gift of your life in our Community, Elmo. Your love of children, prayerful presence and good wit touched those of us who knew you.