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Interview no. 1693

Elisa Rodriguez Sister

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee:	<u>Sister Elisa Rodriguez, S.L.</u>
Interviewer:	<u>Eva Antone Ross</u>
Project:	<u>200th Anniversary of the Sisters of Loretto</u>
Location:	<u>El Paso, Texas</u>
Date of Interview:	<u>July 21, 2010</u>
Terms of Use:	<u>Unrestricted</u>
Transcript No.:	<u>1693</u>
Transcriber / Summary:	<u>Jessica Molinar-Muñoz</u>

Elisa Rodriguez was born on May 15, 1936 during a home birth in the Segundo Barrio. She and her family lived on Santa Fe Street. Her father was born in Torreon, Mexico. His father died when he was 1, and his mother remarried and had two other children. Her mother was born in San Elizario. She was one of seven children. Sisters of Loretto started in San Elizario in 1878. There was an early connection between her mother and the convent. She went from El Paso High School to St. Joseph High School and graduated from there. Rodriguez speaks about accomplished alumni from High School. In 1956, Rodriguez entered into the Motherhouse. Rodriguez has a B.A. in Elementary Education, an MAT in Biological Sciences and MED in Multicultural Education and Pastoral Certificate From the Mexican American Cultural Center which trained her to do Pastoral work for the Diocese. At the time of the interview she was currently working on Mission integration and received her Administrator License to work at Nazareth Hall. She talks about the three main vows they take as sisters. Poverty – the sisters have all goods in common. Their salary does not belong to them it belongs to the community. The second vow is Chastity – the sisters will not go looking for a partner. The last vow is Obedience. Rodriguez also discusses Vatican II and how the council, including bishops, priests and the whole hierarchy in the Catholic Church met to discuss what changes needed to be made at the direction of the Pope. One of the main changes, was the mass changing from Latin to the language the community was speaking. She talks about how the sisters were not forced to wear “habits” the veils they wore on their head and the transition she had to overtake with the students because some parents did not like the sisters not wearing the “habits.” Rodriguez discusses the time she spent in Latin America in the late 1960 and early 1970s. She was a principal in at a school in Bolivia. The school was used to teach vocational skills to the students. She describes her time in Bolivia as life changing. She talks about priests in the area who had a large influence on how her

attitude was shaped during this time. She also worked in San Antonio. She also talks about her education and the projects she has worked on throughout the years. She tells a story about how she decided to become a sister at the age of four because her mother would take her to daycare and sisters took care of her and her brother. The Loretto complex on Hardaway Street in El Paso was built in 1923. She discusses the changes the property has undergone throughout the years. She also did outreach with other religions and worked for different organizations all towards helping the community. One group was comprised of five different religions. The interview ends with her describing the Spirit of Loretto and their co-members, their mission and how they are focused on assisting the community.

Length of interview: 123 minutes

Length of Transcript: n/a