

Sister Therese Reynolds, OP
1935-2018

In that first reading today,[1] St. Paul exhorts the Colossians, and exhorts us, to clothe ourselves in Christian virtues. So many of them, as they were listed there, remind us of Therese. And at the end, he says "give thanks to God the Father," and we do that in this funeral liturgy in a very unique way for the many, many ways we have experienced the presence and the love of God, the goodness of God, in her long life and ministry. I am so very grateful.

So spoke Father John "Jed" Patrick, who worked for many years with Sister Therese Reynolds at All Saints Parish in Gladstone, Michigan, in his homily as he concelebrated Therese's funeral Mass on July 13, 2018.

Sister Therese spent eighteen years, many of them alongside Father Patrick, at All Saints as its coordinator of music and liturgy, and in his homily Father Patrick remembered her for her respect of other people and their gifts; for her encouraging way, contagious smile, and positive attitude; and as someone who greatly loved her Adrian Dominican community and treasured the support and connection her Sisters gave her.

Sister Therese was born on September 4, 1935, to Montague and Therese (Sciez) Reynolds, in Norway, Michigan, a city in the Upper Peninsula. Montague came to America at age 10 with his parents, while his future wife's parents came from France. The two families both settled in Iron Mountain, Michigan, where Montague and Therese met at the company where they both worked. They married in 1931 and had three children in all: Therese (baptized Mary Jane Therese), Dorothy, and Marcel.

The family was a close-knit one. "My father was just a grocery man so we did not have a lot materially but a lot of love," Sister Therese wrote in her autobiography.

There were no Catholic schools in Iron Mountain at the time, so Sister Therese attended public schools but had Adrian Dominicans as teachers in her Catechism classes. "I loved the sisters and would often do little jobs for them," she wrote. "In grade school I sang in the choir and in the fifth grade began taking piano lessons from the sisters so they were a big influence in my life."

After graduating from Iron Mountain High School, she went to work as a junior clerk-stenographer for the Wisconsin Michigan Power Company for a year before entering the Congregation on June 27, 1954.

Her first teaching experience came while she was still a postulant and was sent to Holy Name Parish in Detroit to teach third grade for four months. She was received as a novice and given her religious name, Sister Therese Marcel, in December 1954.

After making first profession in December 1955, she stayed in Adrian until August 1956 to begin work toward her bachelor's degree at Siena Heights College (University). She earned her degree

[1] Colossians 3:12-17

in music education in 1964 and in 1974 received a master's degree in music education from Michigan State University.

Her next teaching assignments took her to Illinois: St. Patrick's in Joliet from 1956 to 1962 and Our Lady of Loretto in Hometown from 1962 to 1970. In both locations, she taught elementary school as well as teaching some music and giving piano lessons.

Then, in 1970, she was sent back to her hometown – which gave great delight to her parents – and spent the next eight years teaching in the Dickinson Area Catholic School, followed by six years as the music minister in her home parish, St. Mary and St. Joseph.

Her work at All Saints followed. "Liturgy and music are very close to my heart and I really enjoyed my ministry there," she wrote. "I was also privileged to minister with wonderful pastors." She also cared for her parents during these years, until her mother died in 1996 and her father in 2000.

Finally, after eighteen years at the parish, Sister Therese felt it was time to move on to new things. She was granted a one-year sabbatical by the Congregation and then went to Neenah, Wisconsin, to work at St. Margaret Mary Parish. It was a ministry she found life-giving and affirming, and she spent eleven years there before deciding to retire. She continued to live in Neenah for four more years, keeping busy by volunteering at the parish school and office, singing in the choir, and occasionally playing the organ for Mass.

After being diagnosed with cancer of the lower jaw that spread rapidly, she returned to Adrian in May 2018 to live at the Dominican Life Center. She died there on July 5, 2018.

"She loved her family," said Dominican Midwest Chapter Prioress Kathleen Klingen in her eulogy at Sister Therese's wake service the evening of July 12. "I was thinking about that because Therese loved her ministry too. Wherever she was missioned she shared her goodness, kindness, love and acceptance in monumental ways. The love that was modeled and instilled in her as a child grounded her in love of others."

Father Patrick echoed Sister Kathy's words during his funeral homily the next day, remembering how much Sister Therese loved her Adrian Dominican community and how respectful she was in all her interactions with others no matter their age.

"She had such an encouraging way," he said, "always respectful of others' gifts. … Her smile and her positive attitude were contagious."

He concluded his homily with a reflection on the Gospel reading, John 14:1-7.

> *In the Gospel that I proclaimed to you, Jesus promises that he has gone before us, that he goes before us, to prepare a special place in eternity for each one of us. On July 5, Jesus came to embrace Therese and to lead her safely home. … Well done, good and faithful servant, Sister Therese Reynolds, Order of Preachers.*





Center: Sister Therese Reynolds plays the piano for her mother. Right: During her high school years, Sister Therese enjoys one of her favorite pastimes: ice skating.




From left: Sisters Marilyn Francoeur and Therese Reynolds as Junior Professed Sisters; From left, Sisters Therese Reynolds, Peg Fornicola, and Sabina Jabour





From left: Sister Therese celebrates her 80th birthday with parishioners from St. Margaret Mary Parish, Neenah, Wisconsin. Sister Therese in the classroom in Iron Mountain, Michigan





Left: Spending time together at the Iron Mountain, Michigan, convent are Sisters Joyce Rybarczyk (seated), and from left, Lenore Boivin, Theodora McKennan, Ethel Detz, Therese Reynolds, Peg Fornicola, and Jo Ann Jauquet.



Members of the Divine Province Crowd celebrating their Golden Jubilee in 2004 are, back row, from left, Sisters Marianne O'Neill, Ellen Murphy, Marlene Ptaszynski, Marilyn Francoeur, Clarice Moyle, Esther Kennedy, Margaret Andrezik, Rose Ann Schlitt, Jeanne Stickling, Gail Himrod, and Norlee McDonnell, and front row, from left, Sisters Evelyn Piche, Teresita Ruiz, Mary Ann Letzgus, Ellen Schmitz, Therese Reynolds, Rose Irene Calvert, Joan Baustian, Kathleen Watt, Virginia Kleckner, and Janet Capone (Prioress).