



## Sister Therese Marquis, OSF

Born: July 8, 1930

Entered our community: October 8, 1949

Returned to God: December 15, 2017

In one of her journals, Therese wrote: “Weaver God, I, your thread, approach you with reverence, awe and infinite respect. Accept the offering of myself, that separate strand, to be woven in and out, over, under and through as I seek to become part of you and consequently become more who you meant me to be.”

How clearly we can see Therese, the contemplative artist, in these words. Telling her story is looking at the tapestry of her life while realizing that events only hint at the depth of her personality and spirituality. But let us begin:

**Marie Therese Cecile Marquis** was born on July 8, 1930 in Daigle Maine to Marie Violette and Edwin Marquis, the first daughter after four brothers, Leo, Louis, Marc and Alton (who only lived 11 months). Baby Cecile followed Therese but sadly, died at birth. Brothers Lorn, Maynard and sister Gabrielle would complete the Marquis family.

In her journal teenager Marie Therese wrote of her responsibilities in her home since her mother was sickly and Therese needed to care for her younger brothers and sister and do much of the cooking and cleaning. It was a difficult time. The tapestry was being woven.

Therese met our sisters during her first two years at Holy Trinity High School after the family moved to Hartford (she finished high school at a public school). In her “Vocation Story” Therese wrote: “While at Holy Trinity, one Sister had been very friendly towards me and I liked her because she was up-to-date and not old fashioned with her head bent down and her hands folded.” Further she wrote: “Once, while dancing with two- inch high heels, swinging skirt and waist-length blond hair, feeling great, I began to scold myself wondering why I was wasting my time dancing while I could be doing something better with my life.”

That “something better” for her began on October 8, 1949 when Therese entered our community. She received the name Sister Mary Teresita and after novitiate began teaching primary grades for the next 13 years. In 1964 she was asked to be principal while teaching both first and second grades in Coopersville MI. It is always a challenge for us to understand how a principal can handle emergencies, leave her young children and just say “Keep practicing your letters” or better still, “Children, it is time to take a nap.” But Therese did this in two other schools until in 1970 she was missioned to South Catholic High School in Hartford. What a leap of faith that had to be – from teaching primary children to high school teenagers. She loved her years at South Catholic but in 1978 Therese was asked to return to Pittsburgh where she taught religion and French at St. Francis Academy for four years and then went on to be vice-principal and then principal.

Therese’s educational background is impressive having attained a Bachelor and Master of Education from Duquesne University, a Master of Arts in Religious Studies from St. Joseph

College in West Hartford. She also had a wonderful opportunity to study French at the University of Poitiers in France.

Writing about her companion French teacher for Therese's Golden Jubilee in 1999, Sister Louis said: "Teaching religion was extremely important to Sister Therese. She saw it as a journey whose goal is the realization that God loves us infinitely and, as we accept this love, we express it through a loving relationship with God and tenderly bring it to others whose lives we touch."

In her journal, Therese wrote of a challenging time following those years of ministry when she was offered a sabbatical. She wrote: "Die and rise, you say, die and rise; and you fill my life as I am shuttled back and forth, back and forth. Out of my pain you weave joy and out of my Good Fridays, you weave Easters and an Emmaus." The contemplative Therese continued to use her artistic talents in painting and sculpture during this time. Some artistic pieces are displayed about this room.

Then for several years, Therese was engaged in internal ministry as secretary for various motherhouse departments and sacristan. In 1997, she ventured to Danbury CT where Msgr. Wallin greeted the Sisters with a parish announcement, "This week a new era in the history of our parish will begin. We are anticipating the arrival of the first three Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. There is great need of their pastoral skills." It was during this time that Therese participated in an adult education program and was introduced to icons – how they were written and how to pray with them. Was this experience a deepening of her relationship with God weaving new threads for her tapestry?

During the 2000 General Chapter, Therese was elected to our General Leadership team and following her term she was asked to organize our motherhouse library. By 2010 showing signs of some confusion she began her final ministry – that of prayer. When our motherhouse was sold Therese moved with our other sisters to the skilled unit at Presbyterian SeniorCare in Oakmont. There she royally entertained the staff and our sisters with her stories about her life. Just last month the ophthalmologist suggested that she have cataract surgery on both eyes which was just completed. Therese loved identifying family members in her photo collection and telling stories about her early life.

When the call came on Friday that our dear Therese had died suddenly, we were all shocked because she had been in such good spirits and was talking and laughing with all, even getting her hair done. She certainly seemed ready to meet her God face to face though none of us were prepared! Some other sisters were so much older and had more serious health issues, but Therese was called and she answered the call – just as she had all through her life.

Dear Therese, we will all miss you but we know that your tapestry is finally completed and you now walk with your God in an eternal Emmaus.

Eternal rest grant unto Therese, O Lord. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Prepared by Sister Peg Markey  
Read by Sister Janet Gardner (12/20/2017)