



**Birth**  
Nov. 1, 1942

**Baptism**  
Nov. 22, 1942

**Profession**  
July 17, 1962

**Death**  
March 18, 2016

**Burial**  
Our Lady of Good  
Counsel Cemetery  
Mankato, Minnesota

*Precious and blessed is  
the death of the faithful  
before God... for  
they die in union with  
their dear Jesus, in the  
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger  
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister M. Thomasin Sergot, SSND

Sister Thomasin Sergot, 73, died Friday, March 18, 2016, at her home in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. For the past two years she journeyed with sinus cancer, and in January, entered Hospice. Her community member, Sister Donna Walerius, SSND, and her brother Tom and his family were with her at the time of her death.

Sister Thomasin was born on November 1, 1942, in St. Paul and baptized Elizabeth Louise three weeks later at St. Casimir Church. Betty, as she was called, had one brother a year older than herself, and later another brother and sister would join the family. In 1948, Betty enrolled in St. Andrew School, where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. Concerning her call to be a sister, she wrote that she had thought about it since second grade, "but even more so in seventh and eighth grade." Following her eighth grade graduation she entered the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy, Mankato, in 1956.

Betty became an SSND postulant on September 5, 1960, and took college classes. She was received into the novitiate on July 16, 1961, and given the name Mary Thomasin, a form of her older brother's name. She professed first vows in 1962 and spent that year at Good Counsel continuing her education. Her wish was to teach lower grades and, in 1963, she was missioned to Crucifixion School in La Crescent, where she taught second graders. In 1964, she moved to St. John the Baptist School, Jordan, where she taught second and third graders until 1969. From 1969 through 1976, she taught grades one and three and was principal at St. Joseph School, Red Wing. In 1970, she earned her bachelor's degree from Mount Mary College. She taught one year at St. Michael, Prior Lake (1976-77) and then, for the next two years, taught at Immaculate Conception School, Lonsdale, where she also served as a parish minister.

In 1979, she moved into full-time parish ministry at St. Gregory, North Branch, and Sacred Heart, Rush City. There she teamed with Sister Donna Walerius and Father Otto Neudecker to provide special outreach to the rural parishes. The three began a model of rural parish team ministry. She and Sister Donna wrote, "It isn't that we begin new programs in our rural parish vision, but three pastoral leaders can extend more service than a single priest. Our goal is to reach a high percentage of parishioner involvement. Home visitation is a highlight to come to know our parishioners. In this way, all three of us become known on an equal level as we continue to pick up on the challenges that we face today. We long to respond to our vision of building strong, spiritual parish communities amidst the closing of stores and shops in rural areas, the pairing of schools and churches, and the effort to impose the philosophy that 'Bigger is Better.'" The rural pastoral team blended the sacramental life with enriched programs that helped the community grow through the Gospel message. They "emphasized adult formation by praying together and by using excellent materials with parish councils, parish committees, RCIA programs and sacramental programs." Beginning in 1985, Sisters Thomasin and Donna continued this team ministry with Father

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister M. Thomasin Sergot*



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Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD  
THROUGH EDUCATION

Neudecker at St. Michael, Kenyon, and St. Michael, Pine Island. In a 1989 Catholic Spirit article, Sister Thomasin is quoted concerning community building: “That’s what the Lord calls us to do. We have got to be better at living together as Christians, really living the Gospel message. We can’t just sit back and say everybody else has to get their act together.”

Sisters Thomasin and Donna served at the two parishes until 1991, when they moved to St. Joseph, Montevideo, as directors of religious education and pastoral associates. In 1992, Sister Thomasin filled a different need, that of administrator at St. Raphael School, Springfield, another rural area. In 1997, Sister Thomasin returned to parish ministry and religious education, serving at the Church of St. Peter in St. Peter. Throughout her years in parish and school ministry, she served on many parish committees and advocated for social justice. She led a seminar for battered women and took a leadership role in nature workshops and youth rallies. In 2000, she became an instructor in the Sylvan Learning System in Rosemount. From 2002 through 2006, she managed Highland of Graham Senior Living Facility in St. Paul. Sister Thomasin’s final ministry was that of site coordinator and professional tutor in St. Paul’s East Side Learning Center.

In 2012, Sister Thomasin celebrated her Golden Jubilee as a School Sister of Notre Dame and summed up her SSND life: “I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with ministers and church members, parishioners, staff, parents and students throughout the many rural cities I have ministered in. All have been an overwhelming grace in my life that continues to permeate my heart with treasured memories.”

An avid gardener (she and Sister Donna named their SSND community the “Garden Community”), Sister Thomasin had a love for all of nature. One of her special interests was watching and feeding birds. She was especially close to her brother Tom, his wife, Joyce, and their family. Gratitude was a key point in her life, and her series of prayer requests throughout her illness reflected this value.

The funeral Mass for Sister Thomasin, with Father Andrew Olsem as presider, was celebrated Wednesday, March 23, in Good Counsel Chapel, Mankato, followed by burial of her cremains in Good Counsel Cemetery. A prayer service of remembrance was held at 9 a.m. on Wednesday. She is survived by her brother Tom and his wife Joyce, nieces and nephews, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Marion and Mary (Kerbel) Sergot, her brother, Dan, and her sister, Christine Schuster.

*By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND*