

SISTER MARY THOMASETTE HAREZLAK, 91, died in Our Lady of the Angels Convent, Chicago, Illinois, after 72 years in religious life.

Sister Mary Thomasette was born in Rockford, Illinois on July 28, 1918, to Adalbert and Sophia Harezlak. At her Baptism in St. Stanislaus Parish Church on August 4, 1918, she was given the name Catherine. She shared many childhood memories with her ten brothers and sisters, including her dear sister, Sister Mary Aquinatta and her dear brother, Reverend Bernard Harezlak, OFM.

In 1934, Catherine followed her older sister into the aspirancy of the Felician Sisters. After completing her high school education, she was accepted in the Postulancy in 1937 and later given the religious name of Sister Mary Thomasette at her Investiture on August 12, 1938.

Sister Mary Thomasette was a gifted and charismatic educator. Her ministry assignments included education of children in all grades in elementary schools in Chicago and Joliet and in high schools in Pomona and Claremont, California.

When a new province was established in 1952 in Ponca City, Oklahoma, and later in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, Sister Mary Thomasette willingly accepted a transfer to this southwestern territory. She was a member of Assumption of BVM Province from 1952 to 1990.

During her time at Pomona Catholic High, Sister Mary Thomasette really made an impact on the lives of her students. She was approachable, sensitive, loving and motherly. A former pupil of hers from Pomona Catholic High School shared the following:

“She was the kindest teacher that I remember from my school days. She was truly a lovely person who cared for and encouraged her students to succeed. She sure lived her vows and will be with God.”

Sister Mary Thomasette transferred back to Mother of Good Counsel Province in 1990 to take care of her ailing sister, Sister Mary Aquinatta, and to minister as a sacristan at St. Mary's Home in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. In 2003 when both of their health needs and conditions became more challenging, both sisters became residents of Our Lady of the Angels Convent in Chicago, Illinois. Sister Mary Thomasette became involved with the stamp and cord rosary ministries.

Later Sister Mary Thomasette endured a long slow journey in her struggle with dementia. Even then she tried to understand what was going on around her and to contribute as much as she was able. On the morning of March 16, 2010, God called Sister Mary Thomasette to come home to her heavenly reward. Family and her sisters in community attended her wake and Mass of Christian Burial on March 19, 2010; her body was taken for interment to St. Adalbert Cemetery in Niles, Illinois.