

Thea News

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1 2004



“Black sacred song has been at once a source and an expression of Black faith, spirituality, and devotion. By song, our people called the Spirit into our hearts, homes, churches, and communities. Seeking to enrich our liturgies and lives with the gift of sacred song, we pray:

‘Spirit, Sweet Holy Spirit, fall afresh on me. Everytime I hear the Spirit Moving in my heart I will pray.’”

– from “The Gift of African American Sacred Song” by Sister Thea Bowman, as published in *Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal*, copyright 1987.

“Saint” Thea Remembered

by Mary Queen Donnelly

In the beginning, our lives ran as parallel as the Illinois Central railroad tracks that divided the town. Sister Thea Bowman and I grew up in the 1950s in the county seat of Canton, Miss. Our parents were simple folk who lived modest lives. They were not wealthy but taught us valuable lessons. They taught us how to pay attention. Taught us to respect and love learning. Taught us God-reliance. Taught us to look back and reach for those coming up behind us. Taught us how to enjoy the day. And they taught us all this without saying a word.

But there were differences. Sister Thea grew up the only child of a physician. I was one of six children, the daughter of a farmer. After her conversion to Catholicism, Thea attended Holy Child Jesus Catholic School and Church. I attended the public schools and Sacred Heart Church. At 15, Thea left her family and friends to go north and enter the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in La Crosse, Wis. Later, I joined the Dominican Sisters in New Orleans. Over the years, we learned of each other through our parents and the Catholic community at home. We grew to adulthood, we went separate ways, and our lives seldom crossed.

So it was a shock to find our beloved Sister Thea confined to a wheelchair in August 1988 when I was assigned to write an article about her. She was on the teaching faculty at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans. I was a columnist for *The Times Picayune*. Harry Belafonte was scheduled to visit with her about a movie he planned to produce about her life.

I had heard that Sister Thea had been diagnosed with cancer in 1984, but I had no idea of the devastating progression of the disease. When I saw her interviewed by Mike Wallace on *60 Minutes*, she looked so vibrant. I learned later that the vibrancy she exuded from some deep spiritual well within her in no way reflected the severe pain and exhaustion she endured constantly.

The next summer, while staying with my mother who still lived on the farm outside Canton, I decided to visit Thea in her home on Hill Street. My mother was always game for a good old-fashioned home visit to the sick. She had long been friends with the Franciscan Sisters at Holy



“Are you a saint,” asked an awed, 10-year-old Ann when she met Sister Thea in 1989. Photo by Mary Queen Donnelly.

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From the TBL Coordinator

March 1, 2004

Photo: Jolyce Greteman, FSPA



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Dear Friends of Thea,

Oxford, Miss.—Thea’s home state was the site of an important event Jan. 22-24, 2004—the annual Winter Scholar Symposium sponsored by the Alliance for Graduate Education in Mississippi (AGEM). AGEM comprises the state’s four doctorate-granting institutions: University of Mississippi, “Ole Miss,” Oxford; Mississippi State University, Starkville; Jackson State University, Jackson; and University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg—in partnership with historically black colleges and universities. AGEM goals include:

- Increasing the number of students from under-represented minorities in graduate programs.
- Increasing the number of these students who successfully complete a Ph.D.
- Bringing about a systemic change in faculty and student attitudes.

This winter’s symposium is noteworthy to readers of *Thea News* because Thea was saluted at the presidential banquet. According to AGEM Statewide Coordinator Juanyce Taylor, “Sister Thea is recognized as a scholar who gave back to the community. She brought her students to Ole Miss often. She participated in the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conferences here.”

“Thea as Scholar,” the keynote address at the symposium Friday evening, was given by Father Joseph Dyer. Father Dyer, a friend and partner in ministry with Thea, had been pastor at St. John’s Parish, Oxford, the last several years. In January 2004, he was appointed pastor at Holy Child Jesus parish in Thea’s hometown, Canton, Miss. “In the past, we have highlighted themes of culture and, after 9/11, patriotism,” Taylor said. “Our leadership team felt it was time to focus on someone spiritual. Thea’s name came up.”

From all over the U.S., more than 350 university professors, student affairs personnel, and graduate students attended the event. A large portrait of Sister Thea by Mississippi artist Marshall Bouldin was displayed where the sessions were held in the Gertrude C. Ford Center. Unbeknownst to me in advance, AGEM presented Thea its 2004 High Achiever award, posthumously, for “outstanding dedication and commitment to service and community.”

Chicago, Ill.—On March 6, *Thea News* Managing Editor Beth Erickson will bring stories of Thea to Retreat Day for the Ladies of Peter Claver Court 361 at St. Benedict the African Parish.

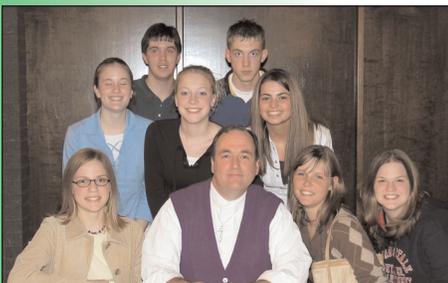
Pittsburgh, Penn.—The 8th annual fundraiser dinner sponsored by the Thea Bowman Black Catholic Education Foundation takes place at Duquesne University on March 25. Donations are welcome. Currently, 17 students receive tuition, and room and board from the foundation. They attend Duquesne, Seton Hall University, St. Francis University, University of Dayton, and Xavier University of New Orleans.

La Crosse, Wis.—March 30 is the anniversary of Thea’s passing. We look forward to the fourth annual “Flavor of Soul” marking the occasion. At Viterbo University, Elissa Kamaka, FSPA, and Lesley Stugelmayer will lead discussions and showings of Thea videos. At 11:30 a.m., on Tuesday, March 30, at St. Rose Convent, Carlene Unser, FSPA, artist, will unveil her new Thea icon, “This Little Light of Mine” and speak about the new image. Music will be provided by Harpist Malinda Gerke, FSPA. The popular “Flavor of Soul” Southern cuisine lunch follows in St. Rose dining room and at Marian Hall, Viterbo University campus. Everyone is welcome.

Meeting readers of *Thea News* at Ole Miss was a pleasure. We look forward to seeing more of you in Pittsburgh and at “Flavor of Soul.”



Photo: Beth Erickson



Correction: In *Thea News*, September 2003, students from Kuemper High School in Carroll, Iowa, were incorrectly identified in the above photo. Those in the photo are, first row (l-r): Emily Berger, Br. Michael McGrath (Thea artist), Sarah Koster, Ema Berger; second row (l-r): Anna Sander, McKenzie Weitz, Kelly Loughran; third row (l-r): Nicholas Buelt, Andru Meiners.

“Saint’ Thea Remembered” *continued from page 1*

Child Jesus Parish and knew Dr. and Mrs. Bowman who had since died—in the same little family home on Hill Street. We took my niece, 10-year-old Ann Sherberger.

Of course, we felt the need to prepare Ann by giving her a brief history lesson of Sister Thea. At first, Ann was all aglow with excitement about meeting someone living such an unusual life. Besides, there was no telling what surprises lay in store on the way home. Maybe a trip to Wendy’s for a hamburger and chocolate milk shake, quite an outing by Granny’s (my mother’s) standards.

So off we went. Granny gave perfect directions. As we walked up to Thea’s home, I noticed Ann growing cautious. Only then did it occur to me that we had probably “prepared” her too well by describing Thea as very sick and possibly confined to her bed. Ann had never seen anyone really sick before, and she had never been inside the house of a black person. In fact, she recalled later, “I don’t think I ever had a conversation with a black person before that day.”

Dorothy Ann Kunding, FSPA, Thea’s friend and caretaker, appeared at the door. Her smile was as warm as the day, and I could see Ann becoming more comfortable. Still, there was the living room to go through. And then into the bedroom where this Sister Thea lay. Later, Ann recounted her feelings. She was nervous and afraid. How should she act? Nonchalant? Chatty? What would she say? Why was she even there? All this for a hamburger and a chocolate shake?

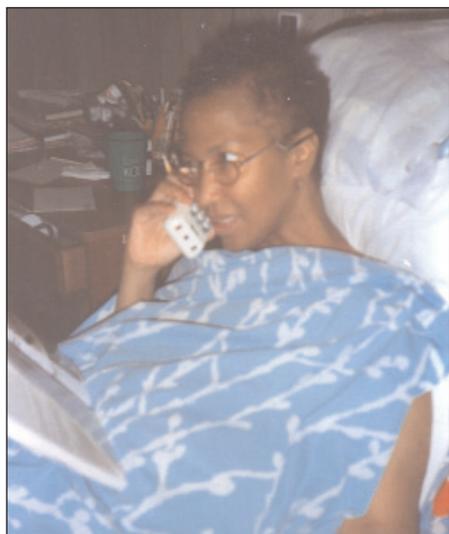
Granny took Ann’s hand. Yes, it was Granny. She knew about all things god-like. With Granny, she would go anywhere. Before she could think further, she was there. Right in front of her. Sister Thea was beautiful. She knew their names. “Hello, Mrs. Queen. Hi, Ann.”

Granny sat in a chair that Sister Dorothy Ann had brought for her. Sister Thea asked Ann to sit

beside her on the bed. She did. She was no longer afraid. Ann remembers looking at the little fuzz on Thea’s head, her perfectly shaped head. Her beautiful, large brown eyes, her smile. Thea talked softly. And laughed. Ann remembers her laughter. Then, the phone—which stayed within reach on her bed—would ring. She always answered. She did business like a CEO. Even at this young age, Ann knew what a CEO was. This nun was definitely a CEO. Clearly, she was everything Granny and Aunt Mary said she was. She was an important person. Without explanation about the phone call, she resumed the conversation with Ann and Granny as if they had never been interrupted. As if they were the only ones in her thoughts. The phone rang again. This time she took notes on a yellow legal-sized pad, answered questions, always attentive, clearly loving that person on the other end of the line.

Who were these people on the other end of the phone line? That’s when it hit Ann. You know what? I’m in the presence of a saint. A saint. My God, wait until I tell them at Immaculate Heart of Mary School (IHM). I had a conversation with a real live saint! They will never believe me. They will say I am exaggerating. They always do. Everybody always says I am exaggerating. Even after I tell them everything Granny and Aunt Mary said about her, they won’t believe me. So she decided then and there to verify.

“Are you a saint?” Ann asked. Ann wasn’t expecting anything profound. She just wanted verification. It was like *The National Inquirer*; she just wanted to know! She was expecting something like, “Yep, sure am.” And then Ann would go home to IHM in Atlanta with the goods. “You bet your life she is. I heard it with my own ears. And I have witnesses. My Granny heard it, and I think my Granny is something of a saint herself. Everybody in the room heard it. I sat on the bed



When young Ann first saw how “in demand” Sister Thea was, she thought Thea was a high-powered CEO. Photo by Mary Queen Donnelly.



Mary Queen

Like Thea, Mary Queen Donnelly was born and raised in Canton, Miss. As a columnist for the New Orleans newspaper, The Times Picayune, Donnelly finally met Thea while covering a lecture series Sister Thea was giving at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University. Donnelly ended up attending the Institute. After Thea’s death, Donnelly wrote a Memoriam in her honor for America magazine, April 28, 1990 issue. Sister Thea graced the cover—the first time a woman, let alone a Black woman, had been on the cover. Presently, Donnelly is writing a book of reflections about Sister Thea.

Contributed Photo

“Saint’ Thea” *continued on page 7*

“SHE SANG BECAUSE TH

by Beth Erickson

Daniel Johnson-Wilmot and Sister Thea Bowman had one thing in common when they met—their love of music. It was that passion that would serve as a bond across all racial and cultural divides to bring them together in friendship. “I was her little brother and she was my big sister,” says Johnson-Wilmot of their relationship.

A music teacher, Johnson-Wilmot was working at Viterbo College when he first met Thea in 1973. She was taking voice lessons in the Fine Arts Center and approached him to ask how he taught breathing. “She put her hand directly on my diaphragm and said, ‘Breathe,’” he says. “It was a personal gesture, but Thea was a very open person. One thing she always said was, ‘If you want to know something, ask the question.’ It was her philosophy of teaching, and her philosophy of life. I didn’t know when I met her what kind of journey it was going to be.”

Bringing out the spirit

The friendship between Johnson-Wilmot, who still teaches at Viterbo, now a university, and Sister Thea began out of mutual respect.

“We liked each other’s voices,” he says.

It progressed when Thea visited his classroom or used his choir as backup during her speaking engagements.

When she came to sing with the choir, she tried to get them to openly express what they were singing. Johnson-Wilmot likens her work with the Viterbo choir to her work at the Institute

for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans. It was there that Thea taught priests the finer points of preaching—how to communicate what they were saying, not only with words but with their body language.

Although he was uncertain of taking his choir in this direction that was very new to him, let alone new to the students, he put his trust in Thea. “It was intimidating in every possible way. Some kids did not want to express themselves. They were comfortable in their own box,” he explains.

Eventually, the choir performed as backup to Thea. According to Johnson-Wilmot, that task presented many additional challenges as scripts for performances with her often had few lines with very little information. The majority was improvisation.

“She let the Spirit take her wherever she was going and with whomever she was speaking to. My choir didn’t do it very well. There was a lot of improv in being her backup. They wanted scripted notes,” he says with a laugh. “She would often ask them, ‘Why are you afraid of being joyful?’”

For Johnson-Wilmot and his choir, it was a totally different journey from the one they had been on. For Thea, it was all business.

Teaching each other

As their friendship grew, the two exchanged ideas and taught each other out of their rich knowledge of song and music.

“Over the 17 years that I knew her, I learned to be a lot freer in using my body and energy to express spirituality,” he says. “Now, when I see people singing spirituals with no expression, I wonder why they’re singing them. You need to see the history of them. If you don’t understand the history, you do the music and the history a disservice,” he says.

In her paper, “The Gift of African American Sacred Song,” published in the preface of the songbook, *Lead Me, Guide Me*, Sister Thea explained some of that history: “African Americans in sacred song preserved the memory of African religious rites and symbols, of a holistic African spirituality, of rhythms and tones and harmonies that communicated their



Thea often used Johnson-Wilmot’s choir as backup for her performances. Photo contributed by Dan Johnson-Wilmot.



THE SPIRIT MOVED HER™

deepest feelings across barriers of region and language.”

As slaves brought over from Africa, African Americans gained strength through their sacred songs—whether in the fields, secret meetings, at church, revivals, or anywhere else, she added.

What it meant to her

And pass along her people’s rich history, she did—through spirituals, hymns, all types of music. “Song was like speech to her. She would sing anywhere—even in the middle of a public room. She always said ‘If you have a gift, give it away. Don’t hang on to it.’ I think she sang because the spirit moved her,” Johnson-Wilmot says.

In her own words, she said, “Song is not an object to be admired so much as an instrument to teach, comfort, inspire, persuade, convince, and motivate. Music is chosen precisely for its effect upon the worshipping community. The aim is effective worship. Black sacred song is designed to move. It moves because depth of feeling gives it ‘spiritual power’” (“The Gift of African American Sacred Song,” *Lead Me, Guide Me*, 1987).

But her delivery of song was also a large part of her talent. “She had this unashamed way of performing where it doesn’t matter if you’re in tune, rhythm, or what the words are. The only thing that matters is if you’re portraying the emotion and feeling at the time. Most teachers don’t do this. Music serves a practical function in teaching expression,” says Johnson-Wilmot. “Music was her way of communicating, expressing, and dealing with emotions, moods, joy, and laughter. She knew all of her music from being an ‘old folks’ child.”

Indeed, growing up in Canton, Miss., Thea learned about faith and spirituality through song. In the preface to *Sister Thea: Songs of My People*, she wrote, “The songs were passed on, taught, learned, and prayed in an environment of love and celebration... Sharing the songs brought hope and consolation and joy. I did not realize I was receiving a religious education—that I was being taught prayer, salvation history, morals and values, faith, hope, love, and

joy... I did not realize that the songs would bring to me and to those I love, comfort in sorrow, solace in grief, refuge in time of trouble, relief even from physical pain—always strength and hope, peace and joy.”

When she couldn’t sing anymore

Music and Thea went hand in hand over the years, but as she neared her death, there was a time when she couldn’t sing anymore. Cancer had left her very ill and her breathing shallow.



Thea loved to be surrounded by friends. Above, she is shown with (l-r): an unidentified friend, Sister Dorothy Ann Kunderinger, and Dan Johnson-Wilmot. Photo contributed by Dan Johnson-Wilmot.

Two weeks before her death on March 30, 1990, Johnson-Wilmot and the Viterbo College Choir were on tour throughout the U.S. They stopped in Canton, Miss., because he wanted his choir to meet her. Calling ahead, he spoke with Dorothy Ann (Dort) Kunderinger, FSPA, Thea’s companion. Of course, Thea wanted to see them. When the group got to Thea’s, they crowded into the small house and sang “Roll, Jordan, Roll.”

“There’s this line in the song, ‘I want to get to Heaven.’ After we sang it, she burst into tears and said how beautiful it was. We provided something that day because she couldn’t sing and wanted to. She had a need to sing and a need to express,” he says.

After that powerful experience, the choir head-

“She Sang” continued on page 7



Thea Notes . . .

Serving the Needs of Children

In Utica, N.Y., there is solid evidence that the good works of Thea Bowman are being carried out daily through the efforts of those dedicated to keeping her spirit alive.

What started as a child care center for low-income and at-risk children has blossomed into a program that helps children through their precarious teen years. The Thea Bowman House offers child care; an after-school program for children and teens in grades 7-12 that offers tutoring, job and college assistance, career information, service projects, and more; a meal program; food pantry; and individual, family, and group counseling for school-age children with domestic violence in their homes.

Last year alone, 469 children were enrolled throughout the year; 3,481 individuals benefited from the food pantry; and almost 35,000 meals were served. A non-profit program, the Thea Bowman House is supported, in large part, through donations.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Jane Domingue, executive director, at 315-797-0748, 731 Lafayette Street, Utica, NY 13502.

IBCS has New Director

One of Thea's cherished works was being a part of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies (IBCS) at Xavier University in New Orleans.

We're sure she'd be pleased to know that a friend of hers, Jamie Phelps, O.P., Ph.D. is now at the



Jamie Phelps

helm.

A member of the Adrian Dominican Congregation since 1959, Phelps took over as director when Sister Eva Regina Martin stepped down in 2003. Sister Martin was elected Vicar General of her religious order, the Holy Family Sisters, in July 2002. Phelps was previously a professor of theology with Loyola University in Chicago.

The IBCS offers a master's degree program in theology, and separate certificate and enrichment programs in youth ministry, leadership, eldership, lay retreat, and catechetics. The institute began in 1980 with three faculty, a director, and 16 students. Today, it boasts over 40 faculty, a full-time director, and over 100 students. This is the institute's 24th year. The summer session will be held June 27-July 17, 2004. For information, contact IBCS at Xavier University, 1 Drexel Drive, Box 49A, New Orleans, LA 70125, ibcs@xula.edu.

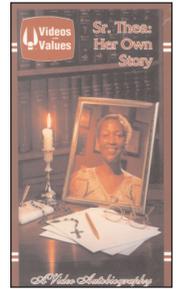
Finding Thea

Frequently, we at the Thea Bowman Legacy Office get requests for resources on Sister Thea. Most recently, those requests have come from Minnesota, Canada, and Italy. Although there are many resources, the ones listed below are most often requested.

Sister Thea: Ole-Time Religion: A series of four videos designed for grade 6-adult, there are eight 15-minute segments that capture Sister Thea's unique style of singing and preaching. \$29.95/video Treehaus Communications, Inc. 800-638-4287; www.treehaus1.com; treehaus1@fuse.net.

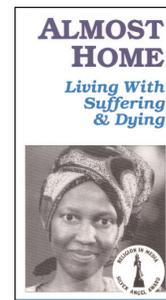
Sister Thea: Her Own Story:

Made shortly before her death, this video explores Thea's childhood, calling, and aspirations for humanity. It contains interviews with Thea and her friends. 50 minutes. \$29.95. 800-233-4629.



Almost Home: Living with Suffering and Dying:

An Emmy, Gabriel, Wilbur, and Angel Award winning video, this shares Sister Thea's own words about her personal experience of living with a terminal illness. 30 minutes. \$39.95.



Liguori Publications. 800-325-9521.

Sister Thea Bowman Shooting Star: Edited by Sister Celestine Cepress, FSPA, and with a forward by Mike Wallace, this book has selected writings and speeches of Sister Thea's. \$9.95. ISBN 0-9671699-0-9. Viterbo University Bookstore. 800-482-2455.

Thea, Joyous Troubadour of God:

Created by Sister Maryam Gossling, this icon is available in greeting cards for \$1 per card; 11"x14" posters, \$15; 4"x5" plaques, \$12.50; 11"x14" plaques, \$25. Add \$3.50 for shipping and handling for orders up to \$15—\$4.50 for larger orders. Send to Maryam Gossling, 2060 Edgewood Road, NW #10, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405; call 319-360-2559; or email gosslingmaryam@mcleodusa.net.



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“SHE SANG BECAUSE THE SPIRIT MOVED HER” *continued from*

ed to New Orleans for more singing engagements. On their return, they stopped at a McDonald’s outside Canton. Dort drove Sister Thea over per Thea’s own request.

“She wanted to see the choir one more time. How desperately she wanted to sing. Our choir was very special to her because she had trained us ‘white folks’ to do her music,” says Johnson-Wilmot.

Saying Goodbye

As Thea would have wanted, music was a tremendous part of her funeral, and Johnson-Wilmot played a role, singing “There is a Balm in Gilead” at her wake and “Deep River” at her funeral liturgy.

During the three-hour wake at the Holy Child Jesus Church, national figures gathered to talk about Thea. Johnson-Wilmot was nervous about singing—not only had he had laryngitis the week

before, but he was insecure about singing among this group of people who knew Thea in her professional capacity.

When his time arrived to sing toward the end of the wake, the pianist had gone outside. For a split second, he wondered what to do, and then just began singing “There is a Balm in Gilead.” After a short while, the pianist returned and began to accompany. “I was crying and suddenly the whole room started singing. She gave her gift back. It was like magic.”

Johnson-Wilmot was honored to be part of Thea’s homegoing and, although she remains in his heart, he still wishes she was here. “I miss talking to her . . . I miss her singing. I’m a changed person because of her life,” he says. “Some people leave behind scripts or tapes. The joy of singing is what she left for me.” ●

“Saint’ Thea Remembered” *continued from page 3*

with a saint! Eat your heart out, Catholic classmates.”

Two years later, Ann was ready for Confirmation—she had chosen her Uncle Bob as sponsor, and like all candidates, she was expected to choose the name of a saint for her Confirmation name. She was told to choose a saint with whom she could identify. She was given a pamphlet of names of respectable saints. But Ann knew the name she wanted. “I want the name of Thea,” she told her Uncle Bob. “Well, now Ann, I must tell you they will want you to take the name of a canonized saint,” said Uncle Bob.

“No, all they told me was I am supposed to take the name of a saint. Sister Thea is a saint. That’s the name I want to take because I want to be like her in every way and that is what they said. I should take the name of a saint I want to be like. I want the name of Thea.”

Uncle Bob, something of a Jesuit non-traditionalist, took a deep breath. He knew Sister Thea. He knew Ann. He said, I think we can get around it. Thea means “of God.” It will work.

I asked Ann if she ever thought about Thea after her Confirmation. “Oh, yes,” Ann said. “One year we had this dude come into our science class with a bucket full of wood pulp. He was to show us how to make paper out of wood pulp. It doesn’t sound real interesting, but it turned out it was

Anyway, we each made a sheet of paper out of the pulp. Then our teacher told us to write something significant on the piece of paper we had just made. Something private, but significant to us, and we should keep it for all time. It came to me. I just wrote the word Thea across my paper. I still have it.”

Years have passed. Little Ann is now a beautiful 26-year-old. She has an equally beautiful “little” sister Beth, who has been diagnosed with Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Whereas the prognosis is good, the chemotherapy treatments have been a challenge to Beth and all her family. Ann told me that she thinks of Sister Thea more than ever. She remembered Sister Thea talking about being sick—maybe to Granny. She said, “You just pray on through it.” Ann said, “That’s what we are doing. We’re just praying on through it.”

Ann reflected a moment. I asked if she remembered what Sister Thea said when she asked her if she was a saint. “Oh, yes,” Ann said. “I’ll never forget it. She looked at me with those big brown eyes and said, ‘Ann, do you know what a saint is?’ Of course, I hadn’t a clue. I was grateful she wasn’t expecting a Baltimore Catechism answer. She said, ‘A saint is a sinner who keeps on trying.’” ●

Thea Bowman 1937-1990



Photo: Patricia Tekampe, FSPA

Sister Thea (nee Bertha Bowman) was a native of Canton, Miss., and the granddaughter of a slave. At age 9 she chose to become Catholic and then attended a new mission school taught by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. At 15, she went to La Crosse, Wis., to become a Franciscan Sister.

She is known for helping bring the richness of black culture and spirituality, as well as the message of community and equality, to the Catholic Church and to society.

A scholar, teacher, singer, poet, storyteller, preacher, and performer, Thea traveled the country, spreading her message in hundreds of venues. She developed breast cancer at 46, but continued her public appearances choosing, as she said, “to live until I die.” She died in 1990 at 52.

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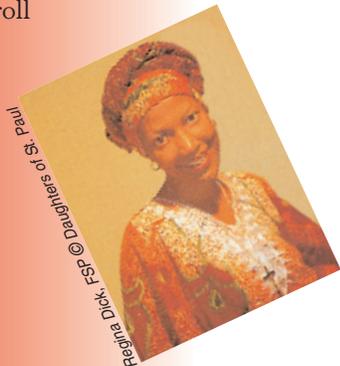
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Permit No. 535
La Crosse, WI



Thea News

is a publication of the
Thea Bowman Legacy Office
and is published by the
Franciscan Sisters of
Perpetual Adoration, the
community of which Thea
was a member. Each issue is
printed on recycled paper.

Thea News

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Donations are accepted
to cover costs of printing
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From Those Who Know of Thea...

"The first time I met Sister Thea was on a Mother's Day at St. Clement's Church in South Ozone Park, Jamaica, N.Y. I brought my mother, daughter, and granddaughter with me to hear her speak. Sister Thea hugged my mother and said, 'Child, you have four generations here.' My mother always remembered that."

—Rita Darden
Brentwood, N.Y.

"I am nine-years-old. I am writing a report about Sister Thea Bowman. I just read a quote from Sister Thea that I liked a lot. It talked about not doing a giant thing for God, but everyone having a little light that will combine to make a bright light. I am in fourth grade, and I can do good things now, not just when I am a grownup."



Contributed Photo

—Ethan Falasco
Valley Forge, Penn.

"Sister Thea came to La Crosse the summer before she entered St. Rose. She stayed with my grandparents, Edward and Pauline Schelble... My grandmother told me to 'help entertain' Thea during her visit... I believe she was about 13-14 years of age and I was a couple of years younger. As I recall, Sister Thea entertained me, but my drawing card was a bike! Sister did not know how to ride a bike, and I was going to teach her. We started out on the sidewalk in front of Grandma's house one morning...she was going a mile a minute with a big grin on her face."

—Mary Miller
Vernon, Conn. •