

# Thea News

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER 2005



I was  
what people  
called an  
“old folks”  
child” . . .  
I was taught  
to do  
my best, try  
my hardest,  
and  
keep striving  
up the ladder.  
But,  
at each rung,  
I was  
to reach back  
and help a  
brother, sister,  
or stranger  
receive a gift  
and pass it on  
and thus  
help create  
a more  
caring,  
sharing world.

—From *Sister Thea Bowman: Shooting Star*, as excerpted from a piece Sister Thea wrote for *CUA Magazine* in 1990, published just before her death.

## Classmate & Friend Becomes Thea “Groupie”

by Lee Etta Clark

I knew Bertha Bowman (Sister Thea’s birth name) because we grew up in Canton, Miss. Before attending Holy Child Jesus Catholic School (HCJS), Thea was a classmate of mine through third grade. I remember a chubby third grader with long braids and big bows. I remember if you were Thea’s friend, you had an early lunch. She would share corn flakes and milk, oranges, apples, and bananas. I remember at school we played doctor and nurse. She was the doctor first, then the nurse. Her playmates were the patients. Bertha would take the peel of an orange, rub it on your skin, and pretend to give you a shot. After, she would rub on the orange peel again and say, “You’re okay now.”

I remember her red tricycle that she shared, and hot summer days, swinging on her swing hanging from a large tree in her backyard.



*Sister Thea Bowman at age 15 in the summer of 1953.*

Contributed Photo

*“Classmate & Friend. . .” continued on page 4*

## A Shooting Star—Still Rising

by Jennette Wilson

One of my few memories of Thea is watching her get out of her father’s car in front of the public school all black children attended. When Bertha, as she was known then, stepped out of the car, she always looked happy carrying her books. Her easy smile blended in with those who surrounded her. Later, in the 1980s, when we were adults, I and so many others began to learn more about the works of Thea Bowman through her speaking engagements, workshops, and lectures. She introduced the African-American culture—the dances and songs of her people—to Catholics and to the world.

In 1987, in the interview with Mike Wallace that aired on CBS *60 Minutes*, Wallace referred to Sister Thea as the “African-robed priest.” On television, Thea was introduced to 60 million people, and they heard her say, “We believe in God, in ourselves, in the future, and in the possibility of working together to make this troubled world a better and more joyful place for all of us.” It was probably one of the most memorable times in the life of Thea and a great crossing over for African-American Catholics. An African-American nun garbed in the clothing of her African sisters and brothers and speaking with authority about her Catholic spirituality— bringing hope and significance to what it

*“A Shooting Star. . .” continued on page 5*

# From the TBL Coordinator

September 1, 2005

Photo: Jolyca Greeman, FSPA



Charlene Smith, FSPA

Coordinator  
Thea Bowman Legacy  
912 Market Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601-8800  
Tel: 608.791.5618  
Fax: 608.784.7390  
csmith@fspa.org  
www.fspa.org

Dear Friends of Thea,

Thea Foundation is 15 years old!

Readers of *Thea News* know the Sister Thea Bowman Black Catholic Educational Foundation awards scholarships to qualifying African-American students. Since its inception in 1989, more than 75 scholars received grants to Catholic universities, including the Catholic University of America, Duquesne University, University of Notre Dame, St. Francis University, Xavier University in New Orleans, and the College of St. Mary in Omaha. Talented students and world-class mentoring ensure a remarkable 98 percent retention rate for Thea Bowman scholars.

Several Thea scholars have gone on to graduate school and completed master's degrees.

With pride, we share good news about our 2005 fundraiser. On March 10, 2005, Mary Lou Jennings, executive director, welcomed more than 300 persons to the 9th annual scholarship dinner at Duquesne University. Several alumni and current Thea scholars attended.

Event highlights included:

- ◆ Greetings from our host, Charles J. Dougherty, Duquesne president.
- ◆ Invocation by Rev. Gabriel Zeis, TOR, St. Francis University president.
- ◆ Presentation of the new Sister Thea Bowman Foundation Award by John Murray,

Jr., Duquesne chancellor, to Pittsburgh Bishop Donald Wuerl. This award saluted Wuerl's implementation of the Extra Mile and

Crossroads programs, which assist African-American youth in attending city Catholic schools.

Guests bid for popular and valuable silent auction items, enjoyed a Southern cuisine dinner, and were spritely entertained by Pittsburgh's Kuntu Repertory Theatre's *Bubbling Brown Sugar* under the direction of Vernell Lillie.

Photo by Stacey Ponton



Left to right: Thea Foundation board members Dr. Leonard Jennings (Minn.); Rev. Fred Washington, C.S.Sp. (NY); Rev. Tom Schaeffer (Penn.); Mary Lou Jennings (Minn.); John Murray (Penn.); Greta Stokes Tucker (Penn.); Rev. Gabriel Zeis, T.O.R. (Penn.); Wolguine Stervil (Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and N.Y.); Lynne Banks (Penn.); Charlene Smith, FSPA (Wis.); Auntie Boker (Monrovia, Liberia, and N.J.). Absent: Vernon Tipton (Penn.).

Photo by Charlene Smith, FSPA



John Murray, foundation president, Nellanita Whitehead, the first Thea Scholar and graduate of Catholic University, and Mary Lou Jennings.

## Remember Thea, Celebrate Locally

The Thea 15th anniversary celebration in the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Maria Angelorum Chapel was a splendid success. (See p. 7) The Thea 20th "Flavor of Soul" will be in 2010 in La Crosse. In the intervening years, we invite Friends of Thea to celebrate locally. Choose either or both days: Dec. 29 (birth anniversary) or March 30 (death anniversary). Create Thea occasions! Gather for prayer services, memorial liturgies, retreats, fundraisers, Thea storytelling times, soul food! Tell *Thea News* what you plan. Send us announcements, articles, and photos for publication (theanews@fspa.org).

Photo by Stacey Ponton



Board members Sister Charlene Smith and Rev. Tom Schaeffer with fundraiser honorary chairperson Cecile Springer at the event.

*Charlene Smith FSPA*

# A Gift from the South

by Bishop William Houck

In May 1979, I was ordained by Pope John Paul II to serve as auxiliary bishop in the Diocese of Jackson, Miss. In the course of my first summer there, one of the persons I met who made a huge impression on me was Sister Thea Bowman.

Sister Thea, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, had been given permission by her superior to return to her hometown of Canton, Miss., for ministry and also to take care of her aging parents. For many years, she served as the diocese's director of intercultural awareness.

What a dynamic person she was! What a talented woman religious! A convert, she had her first contact with the Catholic faith as a student in Holy Child Jesus School in Canton. She eventually entered the convent.

I recall Sister's tremendous ability to speak, to garner, and to keep people's attention. I remember her ability to sing and to get other people to sing. I remember her deep flashing eyes and her ability to move with such grace and determination.

As an African American in Canton after the days of civil rights demonstrations and progress, Sister Thea made a powerful impression not only on hometown folks and the Catholic Church in Mississippi, but even more so in parishes and groups of Catholic people of various ethnic backgrounds by her "preaching" in such diverse circumstances.

Sister Thea loved her faith. She loved God. She felt comfortable with God and with Jesus. She was at ease in talking about Jesus and expressing her love for and commitment to Him and inviting others to share that love and commitment. She taught black children to be self-confident and to

live their Catholic faith with pride.

I recall the year Sister Thea and several other African Americans appeared on a panel at the National Bishops Conference meeting at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. She succeeded in getting all of the bishops to stand, embrace arm-in-arm, and sing *We Shall Overcome*. It was a touching

and moving experience, made especially poignant because, at the time, Sister Thea was slowly dying of cancer.

I know the black people of Canton still love and revere her. They lift her up as one to be admired and imitated, as one who motivates them to appreciate their faith, sing joyfully about it, and be willing to share it with others. What a gift she was to the church.

As we reflect on black Catholic history, Sister Thea certainly has a warm niche in that history. May we have more individuals of her caliber to continue the joyful work of evangelization, to help us be aware of various cultures, and to relate respectfully with the many children of God who come to us in various colors and from various persuasions and backgrounds.

Our Catholic Extension family can be grateful for the many ways we assist evangelization of all cultures in our home missions. Catholic Extension gave an annual grant to cover Sister Thea's salary the years she served so joyfully and effectively as director of intercultural awareness for the Diocese of Jackson. May we catch her spirit, live it, and share it in our time for the future. •

*The Most Reverend William R. Houck, former bishop of the Diocese of Jackson, is president of the Catholic Church Extension Society. This article is reprinted with permission from Extension magazine.*



This ink rendering of Sister Thea Bowman was created by Brother Michael "Mickey" McGrath.



## Modern Day Saints

Sister Thea Bowman makes an appearance on the Modern Day Saints Cards produced by Franciscans International. The cards offer a picture, quote, and explanation of these 12 modern day saints, which also include social activist Father Louis Vitale, peacemaker Sister Emmanuela Micallef, missionary Father Theo van den Broek, and peace and justice advocate Sister Joyce Yarrow. These cards are currently out of stock but Franciscans International hopes to reprint the series.

For more information, explore [www.franciscansinternational.org](http://www.franciscansinternational.org).

## Thea Retreat

The Tabor Retreat Center, in conjunction with the Sister Thea Bowman Diocesan Gospel Choir, in Oceanside, NY, held a Sister Thea retreat called “Keep on Keepin’ on,” Feb. 18-20.

Retreatants explored the inspirational life and work of Sister Thea Bowman, with particular emphasis on her work as a caregiver, peace-maker, and evangelist who used black sacred songs in her teaching. Marie Watson facilitated the retreat and presentations were made by Barbara McFadden, a nurse and vice president of resident care at Buena Vida Rehabilitation Center; Margaret Melkonian, a United Nations representative for the Hauge Peace Appeal; and Darcel Wilamoski, director of the Sister Thea Bowman Diocesan Gospel Choir from the Diocese of Rockville Centre in New York.

In the mid-1940s, the Franciscan nuns from La Crosse came to Canton and opened a Catholic school for black children. Thea was one of their very early students. I didn’t follow until my sophomore year. I remember how devoted Thea was about attending daily Mass and how she had her mother make her uniforms so that the pockets on her blue jumper were deep like the nuns’, who carried a prayer book, rosary, handkerchief, and sometimes a ruler. I recall always trying to make the same grades as Thea.

In 1953, Thea left. After I graduated from HCJS in 1955, I went on to Viterbo College, still following Thea. But, she was out of reach, a novice preparing to be a nun. After two years at Viterbo, I went to Chicago to study commercial photography.

I was out of touch with Thea for a number of years, until I received a letter telling me Thea would be speaking at St. Anselm Catholic Church in Chicago. I went and there she was—dressed in a long black dress with a white panel. Very few people attended. “That’s all right, Lee Etta,” said Thea. “We will just have a joyous ol’ time, singing, praying, and preaching.” That was the first time I heard Thea in concert. What a beautiful voice! She also spoke about our roles in the church. “Hold on to your black heritage in the Catholic Church, your songs, your expressions, your dance. Praise God from your soul in the Catholic Church,” she said.

After that, I became a Thea Bowman groupie! It did not take me long to realize that God had a higher calling for her. Who was this religious woman? She was a charismatic evangelist, calling black Catholics to their rightful place in the church. She was a scholar and master teacher who profoundly touched children, college students, professionals, and bishops. Her themes were, “Let your light shine” and “Each one, teach one.”

Thea wanted us to know that being black and Catholic meant that, “I come to my church fully functioning. I bring myself, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become. I bring my culture, my experiences, my African and American songs, dances, gestures, movements, teachings, healings, and a

responsibility as a gift to my Catholic Church.”

Thea was invited to give a seminar at Quigley South, a Catholic school for boys in Chicago. *I was there.* She mesmerized those young men with teaching, singing, and life stories. Sister Thea was invited to St. Sabina Church in Chicago. *I was there.* She used her knowledge to tell the congregation to stay strong in faith.

She spoke at Holy Name Cathedral in downtown Chicago. *I was there.* Thea came down the aisle singing *Blessed Assurance*, dressed in a beautiful African print. She had us calling on our ancestors to join us in this celebration, praising Jesus our Savior.

In 1984, Thea was diagnosed with cancer. After treatment, she was in remission for a couple of years. When the cancer came again, although she was wheelchair bound, it didn’t stop her. She was invited back to Holy Name to speak at the Black Catholic Revival. She came. *I was there.* Thea came one more time to Loyola University. This time, the cancer had taken such a hold on her that she had to be carried onto the stage. *I was there.* Her voice was strong. Her songs were as beautiful and powerful as always. She was the embodiment of holiness, singing and preaching right through the pain. Instead of us lifting her up, she was lifting us up.

In 1988, on a trip to Canton, I was shopping with my youngest sister, Vera. From a distance, I saw a lady in a wheelchair. There was Thea! She had lost all of her beautiful hair. I froze.

Vera said, “It’s all right. Let’s go speak to her.” We greeted each other with smiles, hugs, and laughter. Thea said, “Well, Lee Etta, at least now I can save money on Ultra Sheen.”

I visited Thea before I went back to Chicago. She was lying on a couch at the convent in Canton, eating bagels and peanut butter. She said, “Lee Etta, I worry about the children. I live for the children. Let me live until I die.” Thea was here on this earth in a physical body for 52 years, and she did all she could to teach as Jesus taught. •



Lee Etta Clark, Thea Award banquet speaker, in Cleveland with Vanessa Griffin, director of the African-American Catholic Ministry.

*Lee Etta (James) Clark, from Chicago, is a retired commercial photographer and former classmate of Sister Thea’s from public school and, later, Holy Child Jesus School in Canton, Miss.*

## “A Shooting Star—Still Rising,” *continued from page 1*

## Keep on

means to be black and Catholic. I began to take notice of this person from my hometown who had attended the same school as I. I went with my sister, Lee Etta, to Thea's Chicago talks.

I admired Thea's capacity for understanding and loving all people, her creative way of involving people, no matter their status in life. She often expressed herself by stretching her arms in praise and thanksgiving

as she delivered the Good News—spreading her wings and flying above negativism and prejudice. She took her gifts of song, dance, and words of wisdom to many cities, large and small, in the United States, Canada, and abroad to Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and the Caribbean islands.

When the occasion called for it, she could be very humorous, but her message was always warm, uplifting, and inspirational. Her spirit electrified and empowered many audiences.

In 1988, after seeing Sister Thea at the Black Catholic Revival in Chicago and learning that she was diagnosed with cancer, I wrote to her for the first time. I wanted to share hope with her because I, too, had been diagnosed with cancer and was on the road to recovery. She responded so graciously as was true to her character.

Today, Sister Thea, your light continues to shine and it is not little anymore. It shines in the schools, institutions, and programs named in your honor. It shines in the speeches, videos, and songs you sang and recorded. It shines in the books and papers you've written, in icons and paintings by great artists. It shines in **Thea News**.

Yes, Thea, your light continues to shine in the many award ceremonies, symposiums, scholarships, and in the countless accolades of honor too numerous to mention. It shines in books that are being written about you today so that future generations will know about you. It shines in the

memories and hearts of so many people who remember the gifts of an African-American nun who gave back to her community. Yes,



Contributed photo

Sister Thea, it even shines in stained-glass windows in St. Benedict the African Church in Chicago and in a church in Cleveland, Ohio.

On March 30, 1990, God called his best home. Sister Thea left this world. It was not the end, but a life with God

forever. There is an African saying: “As long as someone mentions his name, he lives.” In this case, “as long as someone mentions the name of Sister Thea Bowman, she lives.” •

*Jennette Wilson, Lee Etta Clark's sister, knew Thea from Canton, Miss. Jennette lives in Chicago and spoke, with her sister, at the 2005 Cleveland Thea Awards.*

### 2005 Cleveland Thea Awards

Presented March 6, 2005 at the International Hotel & Conference Center in Cleveland, the awards honor African-American women in service to community and are sponsored by the Diocese of Cleveland's Office of Ministry to African Americans. Recipients were:

**Lifetime Achievement:** Leola Wilson. **In the Spirit:** Sister Mary Kendra Bottoms, Jean Beasley-Bowers, Delores Breckenridge, Gloria Cornelius, Mary Evans, Dora Grace, Anne Greene, Sister Rosella Holloman, Mabel Madlock, Verna Moore, Dorothy Newman, and Margaret Reed. **Shining Star:** Tiffany Baker, Stacey Collier, Phliss Edwards, Rita Hargrove, Pearl Harris, Sylvia Little-Harris, Denise Jordan, Barbara Moore, Daria Reed, Victoria Robinson, and posthumously, to Leatha “Mother” Little.

**Rising Star** (young women 13-21): Melinda Jennings, Marlynda Harland, and Alicia Ramona Jordan.

*We are Church  
and we are called.  
Keep on keepin' on!  
To know who  
and whose we are.  
Keep on keepin' on!  
We are called  
to celebrate!  
Keep on keepin' on!*

*Heard an  
Old Folks Child say,  
Keep on keepin' on!  
Each one teach one and  
that way—  
Keep on keepin' on!  
We shall  
overcome some day.  
Keep on keepin' on!*

**Refrain:** *Thea, we will  
share your songs of  
worship, love,  
and peace.  
In this world  
so full of strife,  
we sing 'cause  
we are free!*

*They told me things to  
the last.  
Keep on keepin' on!  
But God invited  
me to dance.  
Keep on keepin' on!  
Live until  
my time is past.  
Keep on keepin' on!*

*Sista', she done  
made her vow.  
Keep on keepin' on!  
Christ has set us free  
and now—  
Keep on keepin' on!  
Her shooting star  
is smilin' down.  
Keep on keepin' on!*

Copyright Patti & Steve Anderson, 2004.  
Written for the Praying with Sister Thea retreat at Tabor Retreat Center in Oceanside, N.Y., Feb. 18-21. Reprinted with permission.

# Thea Notes . . .

## People

Congratulations to the people of Canton, Miss., and to **Father Joseph Dyer**, a friend of Thea and New Orleans native. Father Dyer became the new pastor for Holy Child Jesus and Sacred Heart parishes in Canton recently.

**Brother Michael "Mickey" McGrath** has been busy preaching the news of Sister Thea this year. On April 20, he spoke about her at the Development Office in Wilmington, Del., and on May 9, he presented at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Alexandria, Va. On Nov. 13, he will again share his stories of Sister Thea in Queens, N.Y.



Michael McGrath

On April 2, **Sister Barbara Rastatter**, a Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Dubuque, Iowa, received the Sister Thea Bowman Award given by the Holy Angels-Corpus Christi Knights of Peter Claver. The award is given to persons who live Sister Thea's mission of serving the poor, especially among the African-American community and for putting others before themselves.

As part of the Thea Bowman Teaching Series at St. Sabina Church in Chicago, the **Reverend Dr. Dennis Proctor** spoke on April 26. The series exposes the congregation and friends to spiritual development programming. Proctor is pastor of historic Pennsylvania Avenue A.M.E. Zion church in Baltimore, president of the Congress of National Black Churches, and the first vice president of the Ministers and Lay Association of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

**Sister Marlene Weber**, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, will give a talk about Sister



Contributed photo

Thea Bowman on Sept. 20 from 5:30-9 p.m. during a women's program at Monte Alverno Retreat Center in Appleton, Wis. The suggested offering is \$22, including the evening meal. Call 920-733-8526 or e-mail [montealverno@juno.com](mailto:montealverno@juno.com).

## Places

Congratulations to **Xavier University** in New Orleans, which is celebrating 80 years of higher education. Xavier is home to the Institute of Black Catholic Studies, established in the 1980s and one of Sister Thea's favorite places.

The stained-glass windows of **St. Benedict the African Church** in Chicago, by Chicago artist David Lee Cscisko, including one of Sister Thea Bowman, were featured in the Jan. 9, 2005, issue of *Sunday by Sunday*, distributed in Catholic parishes throughout the United States.



Photo by Charlene Smith, FSPA

*Thea stained-glass window, by artist David Lee Cscisko, at St. Benedict the African Church in Chicago.*

## On Air

Telecare, the Catholic television station for the Diocese of Rockville

Centre in New York, is planning a television pilot show on the **Sister Thea Bowman Diocesan Gospel Choir**. Plans are in process and the station is currently gathering information to include on the show.

## In Print

The **Celebrating Women Witnesses** packet includes essays and prayer services honoring women of faith— biblical and historical—including Thea Bowman, Teresa of Avila, Mary of Magdala, Dorothy Day, and more—who resisted what was unjust and lived their faith. Notecards are also available in two sets. Set one includes Sister Thea. The packet can be ordered for \$10 plus \$2 shipping and handling, and the notecards are \$6 per set or \$10 for both sets. Order from FutureChurch of Northeast Ohio, 216-228-0869, e-mail [info@futurechurch.org](mailto:info@futurechurch.org).

**Catholics Speak Today**, a perpetual, daily reflection, stand-up calendar, features quotations by Sister Thea Bowman as well as John XXIII, Fulton Sheen, Mother Teresa, Padre Pio, Edith Stein, and others.

For information, contact [www.wordamongus.org](http://www.wordamongus.org).

Tell us your Thea news: **Thea News**, 912 Market Street, La Crosse, WI 54601-8800 or e-mail [theanews@fspa.org](mailto:theanews@fspa.org).

# THEA 15TH "FLAVOR OF SOUL"

by Beth Erickson

**M**arch 15, 2005, was the 15th anniversary of the "home-going" of Sister Thea Bowman (1937-1990). Honoring that occasion, a "Flavor of Soul" remembering fest was held at St. Rose



Doris O'Leary shares her memories as the Viterbo Concert Choir listens.

Convent in La Crosse.

The event began with drumming by Laura Nettles, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration associate, in

the Gathering Room and was highlighted by a service of music and reflection in Mary of the Angels Chapel.

Spirituals were laced throughout and were led by Thea friend Daniel Johnson-Wilmot with the Viterbo University Concert Choir.



Daniel Johnson-Wilmot leads the Viterbo Concert Choir in spirituals.

Doris O'Leary, a former classmate of Thea's who lived with the Bowman family for a time after a fire at the O'Leary family home, was on hand to share her memories of Thea. O'Leary, of Compton, Calif., recalls when she lived with the Bowmans as special. "Did you ever see *Touched by an Angel*?" she asked. "That was what it felt like to enter the Bowman home. The light inside was like that."

She recalled how she believed Thea's spirit was beautiful due to the library in Thea's bedroom. "Books, books, and more books. I was so excited!" she says. A friend and mentor, Thea taught O'Leary how to pray the rosary. Thea was sharing her gifts, even then, says O'Leary, and Thea went on to share

black Catholics' gifts with the whole world. "She encouraged people to share their gifts with the world and let their light shine!"

After a rousing chorus of *This Little Light of Mine* and other spirituals, Maryam Gossling, FSPA, shared her memories of the formation years she

shared with Thea. Gossling, an artist who created a painting of Thea for this event, used a moment she recalled when she and Thea were in a talent show as inspiration for the painting. Thea was preparing to sing *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*. "I thought of that moment before Thea started singing. She'd gather all of this energy and look down and you just knew something wonderful was going to happen," she says.

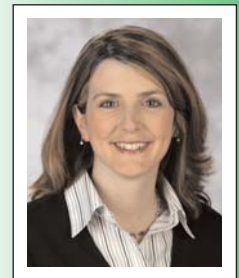
The event closed with the spiritual *Ride On, King Jesus*, and was followed by a "Flavor of Soul" lunch in the convent dining room and at

Viterbo University. •



"Bright Glory," an original work of art, commissioned for the 15th anniversary of Thea's home-going, by Maryam Gossling, FSPA.

Thea art photo by Charlene Smith, FSPA. Inset photo by Charlish Badzinski.



Beth Erickson

Beth Erickson is a freelance writer. A graduate of Viterbo University with a major in English and a minor in communications, Beth is also a cancer survivor and met Sister Thea Bowman when the two were in Washington, D.C., to receive a National Courage Award from the American Cancer Society in 1988.

Mueller Photography



Charlene Smith, FSPA, and students and staff from Kuemper High School in Carroll, Iowa, who made the trip for the day's events.

Photo by Beth Erickson

## Want to read *Thea News* on the Web?

You'll find it at: [www.fspa.org](http://www.fspa.org). Click on "FSPA News" and scroll to "*Thea News*."



Thea Bowman Legacy  
912 Market Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601-8800

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**Paid**  
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*

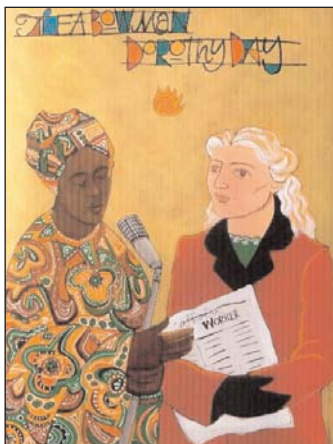
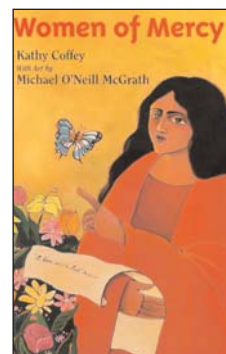
912 Market St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601-8800  
Tel: 608.791.5299  
Fax: 608.784.7390  
[theanews@fspa.org](mailto:theanews@fspa.org)  
[www.fspa.org](http://www.fspa.org)  
Executive editor:  
Charlene Smith, FSPA  
Managing editor:  
Beth Erickson  
[berickson@fspa.org](mailto:berickson@fspa.org)

To subscribe, send us a note with your address. Donations are accepted to cover costs of printing and mailing.

## *Thea Included in Women of Mercy*

A new book, *Women of Mercy*, in print from Orbis Press features the lives of 16 saints and contemporary women considered models of Christian virtue and compassion. The late Sister Thea Bowman is among them.

The text, written by Kathy Coffey, accompanies a series of 14 murals commissioned from Brother Michael "Mickey" McGrath by Merion Mercy Academy in Merion Station, Penn., in 2004. McGrath worked with students to create the murals, which, in addition to being featured in the book, are on display



in the second floor chapel at the academy. According to McGrath, "The paintings depict saints through the ages who demonstrate the spiritual and corporal acts of mercy. Thea joins them! She stands with Dorothy Day as exemplifying 'feed the hungry.' Dorothy fed the body with soup. Thea fed the soul with music." Others featured include: Sarah, Mary, Mary Magdalen, Catherine of Siena, Therese of Lisieux, Elizabeth Ann Seton, Kateri Tekakwitha, Frances Cabrini, Josephine Bakhita, Dorothy Day, and Mother Teresa.

The book is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).