

# Bas Reliefs

*There are six bas reliefs of holy men and women inside St. John Church.*

*Read on to learn about each of these inspirational people that help guide us in the faith.*

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# Cardinal Bernardin

*"I hand on to you the gift that was given to me: a vision of the Church that trusts in the power of the spirit so much, that it can risk authentic dialogue." - Cardinal Bernardin*

Joseph Louis Bernardin was born in Columbia, South Carolina on April 2, 1928 to Joseph, known as Bepi, and Maria (Simion) Bernardin. Both were from the village of Tonadico, located in the Dolomite Mountains of Northern Italy, where his father was a stonecutter. His parents and several uncles immigrated to the United States to work in a quarry in Columbia, SC. Shortly after settling in Columbia, Bepi became ill with cancer. He died in 1934 and Maria worked as a seamstress to support her young family, which included Joseph, and a younger daughter, Elaine. Growing up in poverty-stricken Columbia, SC during the Depression was not easy. Maria Bernardin's strong faith, sense of family and emphasis on education, together with her common sense and keen wit, prepared Joseph well for what was to become his life-long service to others.

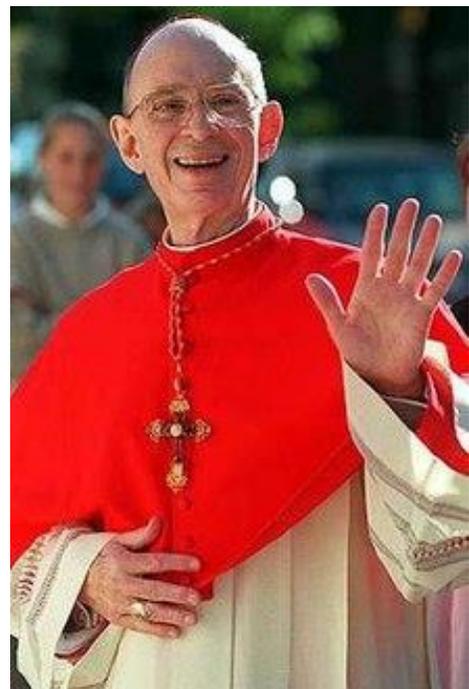
He attended both Catholic and public schools and for one year was enrolled in the University of South Carolina as a pre-med student. Encouraged by classmates, he entered St. Mary's Seminary in Kentucky to study Latin before going to St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore where he earned a BA (summa cum laude) in philosophy in 1948. In 1952, at Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., in addition to his theological studies, he received the Masters of Arts degree in Education.

On April 26, 1952, Joseph Bernardin was ordained at St. Joseph's Church in Columbia. He was assigned to that parish and to a teaching position at Bishop England High School. Within two years, he was moved to the Charleston chancery and eight years later was elevated to Monsignor.

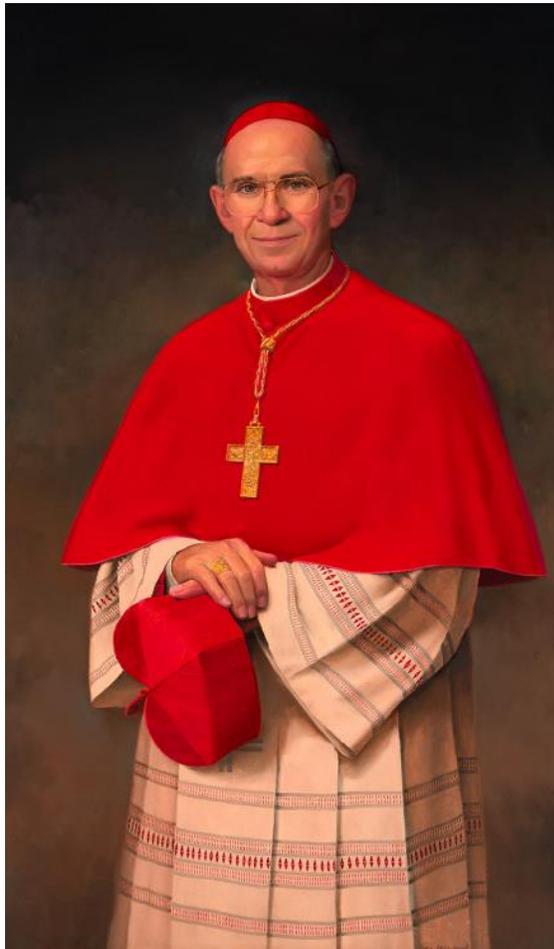
During his ministry, Cardinal Bernardin made significant contributions to the numerous positions he held. A few of the highlights of his vocation (he did not look upon his ministry as a career) include:

- Auxiliary Bishop of Atlanta
- Youngest bishop in the country at age 38
- General Secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference (USCC)
- Archbishop of Cincinnati
- President of the NCCB/USCC
- Archbishop of Chicago
- Elevation to the College of Cardinals
- Albert Einstein Peace Award
- Presidential Medal of Freedom

These accomplishments are testimony to Cardinal Bernardin's ability to minister and administer. He was a well-respected leader and loyal churchman whose peers praised his conciliatory, non-confrontational approach to consensus building. He was instrumental in forming new models



of dialogue with both priests and laity. Yet he did not shy away from controversy. Nationally, Bernardin strongly influenced teachings on pro-life issues, nuclear weapons, the pursuit of peace and equitable economic policy.



He was immovable in his belief that good and bad are always present, but if we "let go" and place ourselves totally in the hands of the Lord, the good will prevail. This was never more evident than in the much-publicized sexual abuse allegations brought against him by a former seminarian. Alone, but with dignity and honesty, Joseph appeared on national television to answer every question addressed to him. His sincerity and veracity convinced even his non-supporters that he was falsely accused. His accuser recanted and Bernardin was vindicated. Typical of Bernardin and in a Christ-like gesture, he prayed with his accuser, forgave him and blessed him.

Cardinal Bernardin lived and died by example. His final months were spent as he planned and predicted: in loving, compassionate and gentle service. Diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 1995, he eventually relinquished his duties as Archbishop of Chicago to spend time comforting other terminally ill cancer patients. "I feel like a priest again", he said in the summer of 1996. He died on November 14, 1996.

Already acknowledged as one of the most influential bishops in the history of the American church, it is because of his gentleness, his spirituality and his ability

to reconcile that we honor Joseph Cardinal Bernardin in the Communion of Saints at St. John's.

The 10' x 3' Bas Relief of Cardinal Bernardin is part of our Worship space and was sponsored by Parish Council from the proceeds of the 50/50 Celebrations. This piece of art is donated as a Lasting Tribute to Fr. Jim Meade and Fr. Ray Favret.

## Dorothy Day, Servant of God

*"The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution that has to start with each one of us."* -Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, was born in Brooklyn, New York, November 8, 1897. After surviving the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, the Day family moved into a tenement flat in Chicago's South Side. It was a big step down in the world made necessary because John Day was out of work. Day's understanding of the shame people feel when they fail in their efforts dated from this time.

When John Day was appointed sports editor of a Chicago newspaper, the Day family moved into a comfortable house on the North Side. Here Dorothy began to read books that stirred her conscience. Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle*, inspired Day to take long walks in poor neighborhoods in Chicago's South Side. It was the start of a life-long attraction to areas many people avoid.

In November 1917, Day went to prison for being one of forty women in front of the White House protesting women's exclusion from the electorate. Arriving at a rural workhouse, the women were roughly handled. The women responded with a hunger strike. Finally, they were freed by presidential order.

Her conviction that the social order was unjust changed in no substantial way from her adolescence until her death, though she never identified herself with any political party.

As a young journalist in New York, she would sometimes make late-at-night visits to St. Joseph's Catholic Church on Sixth Avenue. The Catholic climate of worship appealed to her. She saw the Catholic Church as "the church of the immigrants, the church of the poor."



In 1928, Day was received into the Catholic Church. She tried to find a way to bring together her religious faith and her radical social values. She prayed for some way to use what talents she possessed for her fellow workers, for the poor." Day met Peter Maurin. He suggested that she start a paper to publicize Catholic social teaching and promote steps to bring about the peaceful transformation of society. Her kitchen was the paper's editorial office. She sold the paper for a penny a copy, "so cheap that anyone could afford to buy it." Today's circulation is over 80,000.

For the first half year *The Catholic Worker* was only a newspaper, but as winter came, homeless people began to knock on their door. Maurin's essays in the paper called for renewal of the ancient Christian practice of hospitality to those who were homeless. In this way followers of Christ could respond to Jesus' words: "I was a stranger and you took me in." Maurin believed every home should have a "Christ Room" and every parish a

house of hospitality to receive the "ambassadors of God." Day's apartment was the seed of many houses of hospitality to come.

Many were surprised that, in contrast with most charitable centers, no one at the Catholic Worker set about reforming them. A crucifix on the wall was the only unmistakable evidence of the faith of those welcoming them. The staff received only food, and board. The Catholic Worker became a national movement. Today over 140 Catholic Worker communities exist. The movement is grounded in a firm belief in the God-given dignity of every human person. Today over 140 Catholic Worker communities remain committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, and hospitality for the homeless, exiled, hungry, and forsaken. Catholic Workers continue to protest injustice, war, racism, and violence of all forms.

1967, when she made her last visit to Rome to take part in the International Congress of the Laity, she found she was one of two Americans -- the other an astronaut -- invited to receive Communion from the hands of Pope Paul VI. On her 75th birthday the Jesuit magazine *America* devoted a special issue to her, finding in her the individual who best exemplified "the aspiration and action of the American Catholic community during the past forty years." Notre Dame University presented her with its Laetare Medal, thanking her for "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable."

Long before her death November 29, 1980, Day found herself regarded by many as a saint. No words of hers are better known than her brusque response, "Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed so easily." Nonetheless, having herself treasured the memory and witness of many saints, she is a candidate for inclusion in the calendar of saints. The Claretians have launched an effort to have her canonized.

If I have achieved anything in my life," she once remarked, "it is because I have not been embarrassed to talk about God." Her grave stone has engraved on it a design of loaves and fishes and the words "Deo Gratias" - Thanks be to God.

Excerpts of this biography were taken from an essay by Jim Forest on Dorothy Day as prepared for *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*.



## Dr. Tom Dooley



*"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do, and what I ought to do, by the grace of God, I will do."* - Dr. Tom Dooley

Thomas Anthony Dooley was born in St. Louis January 17, 1927, the first of three sons born to Thomas and Agnes Dooley. As a child pianist, he often soloed with the city orchestra. His family urged him to consider a career as a concert pianist and enrolled him in the Julliard School of Music during his teens, but by this time he intended to pursue a medical career. From 1940-1944, Dooley attended St. Louis University High School where he developed into a swimming and track star. After high school, Dooley began his undergraduate studies at Notre Dame. He interrupted his undergraduate studies by enlisting in the United States Navy as a Medical Corpsmen in 1944. Dooley received an honorable discharge from the Navy and resumed studies at Notre Dame. Dooley received his Doctor of Medicine degree

from St. Louis University in 1953 and accepted a medical internship as a lieutenant in the Navy. He volunteered aboard the U.S.S. Montague, a cargo ship used to transport refugees from North to South Vietnam.

In August 1954, Dooley transferred to Task Force Ninety, a unit participating in the evacuation of over 600,000 North Vietnamese known as the "Passage to Freedom." Here Dooley served as a French interpreter and medical officer for a Preventative Medicine Unit in Haiphong. Dooley eventually oversaw the building and maintenance of refugee camps in Haiphong until May 1955, when the Viet Minh took over the city. Dooley returned to the United States later in 1955 and published his first book, a Vietnam memoir, entitled *Deliver Us From Evil* (1956). The book climbed the best-seller lists and appeared in a condensed form in *Reader's Digest*, which also reprinted it in eleven languages. The United States Chamber of Commerce listed Dooley among the ten "Outstanding Men of America." He became the youngest United States Navy Medical Corps officer in history to receive the Navy's Legion of Merit. Dooley also received the highest national decoration of the South Vietnamese government.



In 1956, Dooley resigned from the Navy and persuaded the International Rescue Committee to sponsor bush hospitals in Southeast Asia. Donating the royalties from *Deliver Us From Evil*, Dooley and three former Navy corpsmen, established a hospital at Nam Tha, a village five miles south of the China border in Laos. Dooley said they chose Laos because the country, with 3,000,000 people, had only one "bona

vide" doctor. St. Patrick's hospital in Nam Tha consisted of a surgical ward with 15 beds, a medical ward with mats for 30 people, an operating room, and an out-patient clinic. Dooley's team constructed the buildings in the style of the indigenous architecture, using bamboo and thatch. The hospital had no electricity, x-ray equipment, plumbing, or air-conditioning. Dooley treated about 100 patients a day for such diseases as tuberculosis, malnutrition, diphtheria, dysentery, pneumonia, small-pox, and burns.

In October 1957, Dooley and his staff turned St. Patrick's over to the government of Laos, to be run by Dooley-trained Laotians. During his stay in Nam Tha, Dooley wrote a second book, *The Edge of Tomorrow*. That year, Dooley started the Medical International Cooperation Organization, or MEDICO. A non-sectarian group, it wanted to build, stock, supply, and train staff for small hospitals along the Iron and Bamboo curtains. MEDICO planned to turn over the hospitals to the host country's government. The organization received hundreds of thousands of dollars in medicine and supplies from pharmaceutical houses throughout the United States.

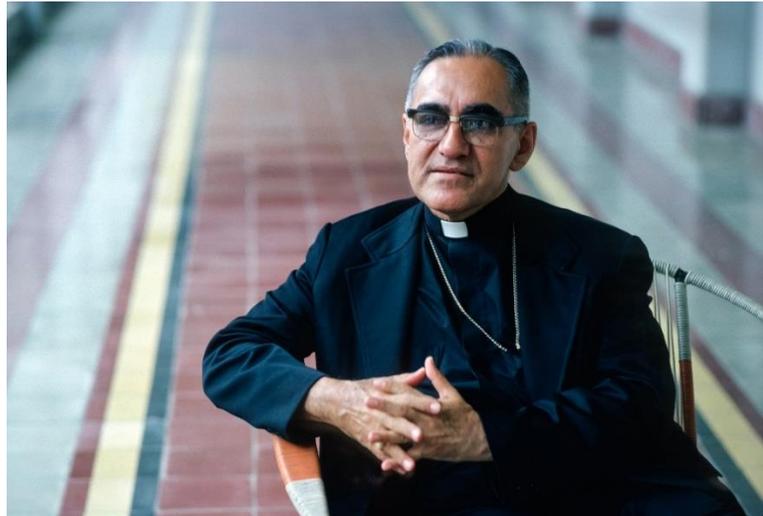


Early in 1958, Dooley established his second hospital in Laos at Muong Sing near the China border. In August 1959, Dooley underwent chest surgery for melanoma, a rapidly spreading form of cancer. Dooley announced afterward, "I am not going to quit. I will continue to guide and lead my hospitals until my back, my brain, my blood and my bones collapse." Dooley returned to the lecture circuit in October, raising one million dollars for MEDICO. In 1960, Dooley published his third book, *The Night They Burned the Mountain* (1960). In June 1960, Dooley received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Notre Dame University. Seven months later, Dooley flew back to New York Memorial Hospital. The cancer had spread to his lungs, liver, spleen, heart, and brain. Dr. Tom Dooley died January 18, 1961, one day after his thirty-fourth birthday.

## St. Oscar Romero

***"Poverty is a force of liberation ... It invites us not to fear persecution because believe me, brothers and sisters, the one who is committed to the poor must run the same fate as the poor ... And in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies--to disappear, be tortured, to be captive--and to be found dead."*** - Blessed Oscar Romero

Oscar Arnulfo Romero was born on August 15, 1917 in Ciudad Barrios, a small town in the Province of San Miguel, El Salvador. He began his religious career pursuing studies in San Salvador and Rome. In 1967 he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop to Archbishop Luis Chavez y González, in the Archdiocese of San Salvador.



At the beginning of 1977, in the midst of violence, repression and political confusion, Romero was chosen to succeed Archbishop Chávez. Once

Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador, he began to truly understand the injustice and repression against innocent people. He became the spokesperson of thousands of poor Salvadorans and those persecuted by the military.

Soon after becoming Archbishop, Romero's close friend, Father Rutilio Grande, was assassinated by a paramilitary death squad. This had a dramatic and profound effect on Romero's life, changing him from a status quo moderate to a fierce activist against injustice.

Father Grande's assassination resulted in Romero's determination to redefine the nature of the Church as the defender of the poor and to denounce from the pulpit the evils of state-supported death squads. As a gesture of solidarity with the preaching of Father Grande, Archbishop Romero refused to appear in any public ceremonies with army or government personnel until the true nature of his friend's murder was brought out and true social change begun. Never before had such a high-ranking Church leader made such a bold movement. Archbishop Romero became the voice and conscience of El Salvador. His words and actions were heard internationally. His fight for human rights led to his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. He spoke words of peace, but they were a threat to the tyrannical policies of the government. With the world as a witness, it was harder to terrorize, torture and murder, so thought the Archbishop.

The three years Romero was Archbishop were a period of horror to El Salvador. 1979 and 1980 were perhaps the worst period in the history of the country. Security forces began a mass campaign of violence where death squads had the mission of "cleaning up" whatever or whoever became troublesome. During the first months of 1980, there was one assassination every three days. Archbishop Romero could do no more than denounce the atrocious events and pray for peace in his country.



His opposition to violence and repression came to a climax on March 23, 1980. During his Sunday homily, he called the National Guards to obey the law of God and not the law of their superiors who were ordering them to kill their sisters and brothers. "In the name of God and in the name of this suffering people.... I plead with you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God: put an end to this repression!"

Shortly after this call came his enemies' reaction: on Monday, March 24, Romero was assassinated while celebrating mass at the small chapel of the Divine Providence Hospital in San Salvador. As he elevated the Eucharist, a shot from the back of the church struck him in his chest, killing him instantly.

An unyielding determination to do what was right, true and just was the guiding principle for Archbishop Oscar Romero. He sacrificed his life for peace, a peace found in human rights and assurances of basic dignities. He

told the world about all the people who had been tortured and slaughtered and, in the process, became a victim himself. Romero's spirit lives on and his teachings remain. The people of the world must remember him and continue to strive for the realizations of his dream: truth, justice, dignity and human rights.

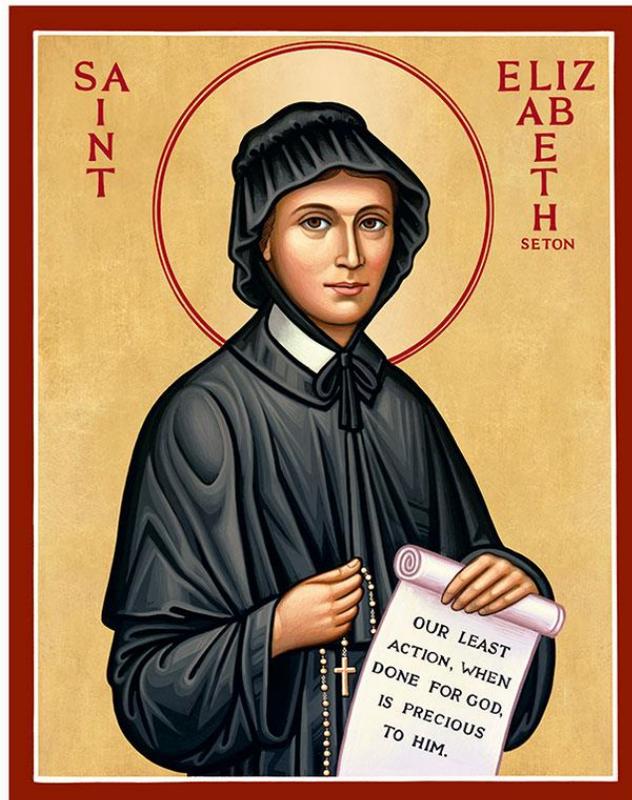
Oscar Romero was canonized as a saint on October 14, 2018.

## St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

*"Be children of the Church. Be children of the Church."* -Last words of Elizabeth Ann Seton

Elizabeth Ann Seton is the first American-born saint. To begin her story, picture the world in 1774. The scene is bustling New York City, a principal trade center of the colonies, and it is 2 years before the American Revolution. The time period is one of plots and secret meetings and concern for the future of the New World. Her father is a doctor who becomes New York's first health officer. They are a devout Episcopalian family. Her mother dies when she was only three years old.

In 1794 Elizabeth married William Magee Seton, a rich businessman. They had five children, three daughters and two sons. Elizabeth became good friends with her sister-in-law Rebecca Seton and together they went on missions of mercy to help the poor of New York. They did so much work for the poor, they were called the 'Protestant Sisters of Charity.' Before her last child was born, Elizabeth's life changed dramatically.



Her father-in-law died, leaving Will with a failing business and Elizabeth with Will's seven brothers and sisters to add to her already full household. She took over the bookkeeping for her husband's business, working long hours at night. They cut expenses every way possible, but eventually had to declare bankruptcy.

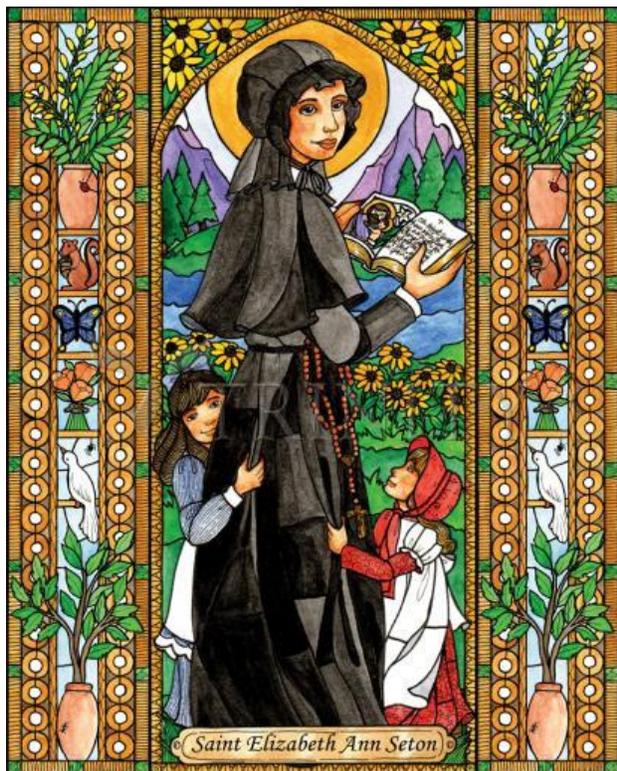
William became very ill with tuberculosis. Some business friends encouraged William and Elizabeth to sail to Italy in an attempt to save William's life. Her husband died on that visit. The friends they stayed with, the Fillichis, were Catholics, and while Elizabeth was in Italy, she learned about the Catholic faith. Seeing how the Fillichis' Catholic faith sustained them, she longed for their certainty, and the sight of the Blessed Sacrament passing in procession by her window created in her a great desire to believe as they did. When she returned to New York, she continued to learn about the Catholic faith, and was baptized into the Catholic Church. She returned to the United States, a homeless single parent with little worldly goods and no income. Most of her family and friends did not approve of her conversion. After her baptism, they stopped visiting her, and would not help her support her family.

It was a bleak time, but Elizabeth's faith was strong. With the encouragement of a priest and Archbishop Carroll, she moved with the children to Baltimore. Elizabeth needed a way to support her family, so she opened a school for girls in Baltimore. With her spiritual life steadily deepening, Elizabeth felt called to

religious life. She faced new obstacles and misunderstandings. An arrangement was agreed upon where she could care for her children and receive the habit, a modified version of her widow's garb. She wanted to teach children and help the poor. Other women helped her, including her sister-in-law Rebecca, who also converted to Catholicism. The community of women grew.

After a few years, they were organized into a religious community called the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph. Elizabeth Ann was chosen to be their first superior. She was called "Mother Seton." The Sisters of Charity are still active today, teaching children and helping the poor.

Elizabeth also did a great deal of writing. She translated many French spiritual works, composed hymns and other music, and kept detailed diaries and journals of her spiritual progress and struggles.



The nuns and students were often sick. Tuberculosis struck one after another of Elizabeth's family. She was holding her daughter, Anna when she died, then she buried her much loved sister-in-law, Rebecca Seton, and just a few years later, her fourteen-year-old daughter, also named Rebecca, died.

She was 46 when the disease that had taken so many of her loved ones attacked her, too. As she suffered with the tuberculosis, her sick bed was placed so she could see at all times the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament. Only her daughter, Catherine, and her Sisters were with her when she died. Her last words to them were "Be children of the Church. Be children of the Church." By the time she died on January 4, 1821, the Sisters of Charity had 20 houses in North America.

The first miracle credited to her intercession was the cure of a nun who suffered from cancer. This occurred in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1935. She was declared Blessed in 1963 by Pope John XXIII, the first step toward her canonization. She was canonized as a saint in 1975 by Pope John Paul II.

# Sister Thea Bowman

*1937-1990, Evangelization*

Sister Thea Bowman was born December 29, 1937, in the small rural town of Canton in Central Mississippi. Her grandfather was a slave; her father was a physician and her mother, a teacher. Thea was reared as a Methodist until at age nine when she asked her parents if she could become a Catholic. At the age of fifteen, she joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

In 1965, Sr. Bowman received a B.A. in English, Speech and Drama from Viterbo College in La Crosse, Wisconsin. In 1969, she received an M.A. in English and in 1972, a Ph.D. in English Language, Literature, and Linguistics, both degrees from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She was the first black woman to receive a doctorate in Theology from Boston College.

Gifted with a brilliant mind, beautiful voice and a dynamic personality, Sr. Thea shared the message of God's love through a teaching career. After 16 years of teaching, at the elementary, secondary and university level, the bishop of Jackson, Miss., invited her to become the consultant for intercultural awareness. In that position, Sister Thea frequently worked with children to help them grow in awareness of their gifts and of their cultural heritage. Through song, dance, poetry, drama and story, she communicated joy, freedom and pride, using traditional Black teaching techniques that were holistic, participatory and reality focused.

Sister Thea made more than 100 public appearances each year, giving lectures, recitals, short courses, workshops, and conference presentations, spreading the message that people are gifted. In Nigeria, Kenya, Canada, the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, New York to Florida, Mississippi to California, Louisiana to Illinois, thousands of people worked with Sister Thea. She made doers of watchers, made people more aware of their own gifts and potentials, and put races in touch with one another. Her ministry was a ministry of joy.

On March 30, 1990, Thea Bowman died of bone cancer at the age of 52. In the last ten years of her life, Catholics everywhere experienced her as an extraordinary Gospel singer, liturgist, preacher, and human being. Veteran journalist Mike Wallace interviewed her for a "60 Minutes" profile in 1987. Wallace later wrote, "I don't remember when I've been more moved, more enchanted by a person."





We should not be surprised that Thea's spirit continues to blossom in those who knew and loved her and in numerous programs of care initiated in her name. Many clinics and schools have been named for her. As recently as March 13, 1998, an editorial in the National Catholic Reporter recalled Thea's appearance before the American bishops at their spring meeting the year before her death. Calling her a prophet, the editorial noted the irony of her being "prohibited by church law from preaching in church," yet she "preached up an earthy, elegant storm."

Thea did not see herself as a writer, and the power of her personal presence obscured her accomplishments as one. Nonetheless, she left behind a significant corpus of written works including such pieces as "Black History and Culture," and "Forged by Our History: A Cultural Perspective." The extensive, scholarly introduction to *Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal* recalls the history of African American sacred music.

When planning her funeral, Thea requested that someone read from the writings of Sojourner Truth.

*I am not going to die.*

*I am going home,*

*like a shooting star.*

Thea Bowman spent her lifetime building the Kingdom of God, preaching the Good News in the language of her people, and reclaiming the virtues and values that were her inheritance.