



SISTER MARGARET THOMAS McGOVERN, OP

Entrance into Life:

July 4, 1923

Entrance into Dominican Life:

February 2, 1948

Entrance into Eternal Life:

January 10, 2016

[Full Obituary](#)

Anyone who was “born on the Fourth of July” was likely to be loyal, energetic, open to a life of service and delighting in celebrations! And someone who died on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord might well expect to hear the same welcome from her heavenly Father that Jesus heard: “You are my beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” These were the parameters of the life and death of our beloved Sister Margaret Thomas, who died peacefully on Sunday, January 10, following a steady stream of sisters and friends who came to pray with her and to be in her presence just one more time before she went to the Lord.

Well prepared by her extensive education—B.S. in Business from Caldwell College; M.A. in Theology from Providence College; and Ed.D. in Psychology from the University of Santa Barbara— Sister ministered for more than six decades as an elementary school teacher, college registrar and dean of admissions, member of the Congregation’s leadership team and Prioress of the Caldwell Dominicans from 1979 to 1989. Appointed Vicar for Religious for the Archdiocese of Newark in 2003, she continued her ministry in spiritual direction until very recently. She was awarded the distinguished Pro Ecclesiae et Pontifice Award in recognition of her service to the church and the pope. This is the highest award that can be presented to a member of the laity.

For all of her prestigious contributions, “Margie” (as she was affectionately known) never took herself too seriously. She was always ready to encourage celebrations, to laugh and entertain (a good dancer and a wicked imitator of many voices!). Yet it is Sister’s listening heart and contemplative spirit that will be most remembered and missed among us. May she rest in peace.

**In Memory of
Sister Margaret Thomas McGovern, OP
1923-2016**

From: Sr. Miriam MacGillis, OP
January 11, 2016

I want to share my thoughts on the death of Sister Margaret Thomas, a former Prioress of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell, NJ, and one of the most influential and supportive guiding spirits of Genesis Farm from its beginning.

It was probably her daring and faith-filled spirit that enabled a radically new ecological and cosmological vision to evolve here in 1980, giving us an uncommon freedom to develop the thought of Thomas Berry, cultural historian and ecological ethicist. The implications of his vision had a major influence in the emergence of Genesis Farm, the CSG, the Charter School, and a range of other ecological efforts in the bioregion.

I am sending this to you because in some mysterious way she watered the earliest seeds of Genesis Farm and out of that, the possibilities that evolved into the beauty and significance of your further endeavors. She gave trust and support to what was a radically experimental project in an unfamiliar, rural area of northwestern New Jersey.

Please join us in a simple moment of silence to honor the life of Sister Margaret Thomas. At a later date in the spring, we will have a tree planted in her memory in the Orchard of the Ancestors at Genesis Farm.

All good wishes,
Sr. Miriam MacGillis, OP