

SISTER MARGARET HEWELCKE
of the Infant Jesus



October 31, 1915 - June 17, 2010

“Come, come unto Me; I will make you a jewel. Precious and rare the glory you’ll bear in the crown of God.

There are deeds you alone must do; there are words only you can say. Trust in me and do not tremble, for I go with you to show you the way....”[

Sister Margaret Hewelcke of the Infant Jesus was called by her Lord to His eternal presence on Monday, June 14, 2010 at 9:45 p.m. Sister would have been 95 years old in October, 2010.

But Sister Margaret’s call into this world began October 31, 1915 in San Francisco, California, the joy of her father Herbert H. Hewelcke of San Francisco and her mother Margaret M. Hughes Hewelcke of Sacramento.

Little Ruth Elizabeth joined the family with her sister, Frances, now deceased and her brothers, James Edwin and John Joseph, both deceased. She was baptized at St. James Church in San Francisco on November 4, 1915. Early in her life, Sister Margaret recalled as eventful the family’s move to a new neighborhood where there were few children. Sister also remembers her street car rides to St. James and Immaculate Conception Academy. As time progressed, she added other schools to her educational life including Queen of the Holy Rosary College, the University of San Francisco, and St. Louis University in Missouri.

Sister Margaret noted that her religious vocation was fostered by her home, by Sister Redempta Prose at ICA and by the promise of a daily Hail Mary by Sister Mary Helen Bauer. Sister met Sister Mary Helen on their senior picnic at Mission San Jose. Even as an infant Sister Margaret had contact with the Dominican Sisters through Mother Dolorosa Walrath who carried baby Ruth into the cloister at Immaculate Conception Priory. Mother always claimed that Sister Margaret cried when she was returned to her mother.

Ruth Elizabeth Hewelcke entered with the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose on August 30, 1933, received the habit June 5, 1934, receiving the name of Sister Mary Margaret of the Infant Jesus, made her first profession on August 12, 1935 and her final profession on August 12, 1941. Sister eagerly looked forward to her final profession writing to Mother Bernardina Michel: “...there is nothing else that I would rather do than be His unto death.” This year of her final vows held the trial of her beloved brother Edwin’s mortal illness, during which Sister was not

allowed to visit him because of fear of infection. Sister turned to prayer and asked others to join in this only remedy for Edwin's grave illness.

After final profession, Sister Margaret was sent in 1937 to teach at Immaculate Conception Academy in San Francisco until Christmas of 1946 when she was sent to the University of Notre Dame in Missouri to work for her master's degree in Biology. Her attempts to lead a regular religious life and ask permission for attending night lectures off campus were admirable. Sister completed her work on her master's in September of 1947. At that time, Dr. John Campbell wrote to Mother Bernardina that he was convinced that Sister Margaret continue her studies toward a doctorate stating that "...it is only through the advancement of such talented individuals that the cause of Catholic Education will be advanced." But this was not to become a reality.

Sister Margaret returned to California and resumed her teaching at St. Elizabeth High School in Oakland, Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy in Pasadena, Marycrest High School in Portland Oregon,, Sacred Heart High School in Los Angeles, Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy a second time. In 1984 Sister Margaret came to the Motherhouse to be superior of St. Martin's Residence for a year.

During all her teaching years, Sister Margaret was loved by her students. As was stated by Sister Reginalda years before, "Sister is a wonderfully successful teacher. Her students love her, yet she does not spoil them." Another testimony to this was given by Sister Mary Peter Traviss in a letter to Sister Margaret in which she recalled her memories of summer convent college classes when she took a Biology class taught by Sister Margaret. Sister stated: "I loved Science that summer—never before and never since." And further on: "Teaching is hard work and you have born heavy burdens in your devotion to this great apostolate--probably the most far reaching and change-effecting of any work we do in the vineyard of the Lord. There are generations of young people who feel indebted to you for their early formation," In June of 1992, Sister Margaret completed her teaching career at Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy and moved to Queen of Peace community at the Motherhouse in Mission San Jose to assist Sister Ellen Mary Cunningham in the finance office, where her precision, accuracy and attentiveness to detail were greatly appreciated.

Sister Margaret had always been devoted to her patron, Blessed Margaret of Citta di Castello. Blessed Margaret was born into a noble family, but where her father expected a son to stand by his side, he received a small, deformed and blind daughter. For years she was hidden away from the sight of the family friends and finally after many trials became a Dominican Tertiary who had great influence upon all whom she met. Sister Margaret, too, had great influence on all whom she taught and cared for, especially the resident students at Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy where she not only taught, but cared for one of the resident cottages which housed at least 20 students.

There were two incidents in Sister Margaret's life where I (Sister Dorothy Casper) was involved, one at Marycrest in Portland, Oregon and one at Flintridge where we both taught and where for a number of years I worked in the finance office. One evening at dinner in our farmhouse convent at Marycrest, I looked across the table and noticed that Sister Margaret's lips were turning blue and she looked frantic, I stood up, reached across and hit Sister in the middle of her back,

dislodging the meat that had become caught in her throat. Sister forgave me the hefty wallop I gave her and credited me with saving her life, which needless to say, I was happy to do. Sister was also the treasurer at Marycrest, where lack of money was definitely a continuing problem. A few times I had to beg Sister to find enough money to pay our monthly salaries, especially when our convent bank account showed a balance of 96 Cents. She always somehow came through. At Flintridge on Saturdays, I drove Sister Margaret up to the high school to bake a cake for the Sisters' Kaffe Klatch (an old German custom) on Sunday afternoon. This one day, we had completed our work (I washed and dried pots and pans) and were coming toward our car when we heard a barking dog rapidly approaching; we thought it was the security guard's Doberman Pincher! I opened the car door and literally threw Sister Margaret into the front seat almost breaking her nose on the steering wheel. Again, she merely thanked me. I think we saved the cake.

As we sat reminiscing on Sister Margaret after her death, we recalled that she was always welcoming, grateful, kind, serene, devoted to her friends. Sister had strongly renewed her vows on the 75th Anniversary of her Profession as we gathered in the Motherhouse chapel for Mid-day prayer on May 30, 2010, Pentecost Sunday. Present were her cousins, Paul and Lois Mayer and a number of her dear lay friend including: Mike and Tony Gillespie of La Canada Flintridge, Victor and Maureen Hermosillo of El Paso Texas, Salvador and Maria Salguero of Glendale, and many of our Sisters from our branch houses.

Then Sister Margaret's health began to deteriorate more pronouncedly. On Tuesday, June 8, 2010 after the celebration of the Eucharist, Father Jeffrey Finley, CPPS., anointed Sister Margaret. The Lord sent Sister Margaret one last testimony to Margaret the Teacher. A Sister had been sent by Dominican Father Sweeny to make a retreat here at Mission San Jose. We found out that this Sister, as a child, had been taught religion classes by Sister Margaret, who with Sister Marie Therese Weishaar, went every Saturday for years to Sandy, Oregon to teach CCD. The Sister had somehow gotten involved with an heretical group, had been a professed religious with them, had left them and been received back into the Roman Catholic Church and now was with us at this particular moment. She visited with Sister Margaret after the anointing of the sick, completing the circle of God's beneficent and mysterious grace.

As Sister Margaret was so eager to make her Final Vows many years ago, she now seemed eager to be with her beloved Blessed Mother Mary and her Son, Jesus. While Sister Karen Elizabeth Zavitz was keeping vigil on Monday, June, 14, 2010, Sister Margaret peacefully died at 9:45 p.m, running into the embrace of her loving Lord.

Live in the love of your God!

--Sister Dorothy Casper