



Sister M. Thomasine Byrne, O.S.F.

**Born:** May 17, 1931  
**Parents:** Christy James and Ethel J. (Jacobsen) Byrne  
**Entered from:** St. Mary, Joliet, IL  
**Postulancy:** September 2, 1952  
**Novitiate:** August 13, 1953  
**Profession:** August 12, 1955  
**Died:** Sunday, October 31, 1999 at Provena St. Joseph Medical Center, Joliet, IL at 8:10 a.m.

**Ministry:**

1955 - 1957 St. Boniface, Chicago, IL, Grade 4  
 1957 - 1960 Sacred Heart Englewood, Chicago, IL, Grade 7  
 1960 - 1961 St. Cyril and Methodius, Chicago, IL, Grade 7  
 1961 - 1964 College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, MN, Nurses Training  
 1964 - 1978 Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL, Nurse,  
 Congregation Health Director  
 1978 - 1983 Good Samaritan Hospital, Downers Grove, IL, CPE Training  
 Chaplain Residency  
 1983 - 1996 Good Samaritan Hospital, Downers Grove, IL, Staff Chaplain  
 1996 - 1998 Waukesha Memorial Hospital, Waukesha, WI, Volunteer  
 1998 - 1999 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Community Service

**Wake:** Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL, Tuesday,  
 November 2, 1999 from 2-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 4:30 p.m.

**Mass of Christian Burial:** Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL, Tuesday,  
 November 2, 1999 at 7:00 p.m.

**Burial:** Wednesday, November 3, 1999 leaving Our Lady of Angels at  
 9:30 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL  
 Section 8, Lot, 336, Grave 12

**Survived by:** her mother Ethel Byrne, her sister and brother-in-law Christine (Eugene)  
 Audette; her brother and sister-in-law James (Pat) Byrne and many  
 nieces and nephews

*For those who have been faithful, O Lord,  
life is not ended, but merely changed.*

Sister Thomasine Byrne was born in Joliet, Illinois on May 17, 1931 to Christy and Ethel Jacobson Byrne. Baptized at St. Mary Carmelite Church in Joliet. she was given the name Jane Ann. The Byrne family grew with the addition of two boys, James and Chris, and two girls, Christine and Patricia (Sister Killian). Jane attended school at the Cathedral of St. Raymond and St. Francis Academy.

After her high school years, Jane stayed home to help the family and worked at the Gerlach-Barklow Company. In a letter of recommendation, Madeline Glass wrote: "Jane has always shown herself efficient, trustworthy, and honest. She has a very pronounced sense of responsibility, and gave us a great deal of satisfaction by her quiet manner in accomplishing her work. I feel I can wholeheartedly give her the highest recommendation. I am happy she has chosen this vocation."

On September 2, 1952, Jane became a postulant with the Joliet Franciscan Sisters. On August 13, 1953, she was received into the novitiate and given the new name of Sister Thomasine. Following first profession of vows on August 12, 1955, Sister Thomasine taught in various schools in Chicago. In the fall of 1961, Sister Thomasine entered a program of nurses' training at The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota. After completing her R.N. Degree, Sister Thomasine served as a nurse for our Sisters in residence at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home and also served as Congregation Health Director.

In 1979 Sister Thomasine went to Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove, Illinois to begin her training as a Hospital Chaplain. In 1983, she was installed there as a Chaplain, the first Catholic sister in the Chicago Area to hold this position. During her many years of service at Good Samaritan Hospital, Sister Thomasine worked closely with Dean Williams who was chair of that department. Thomasine found the ministry of being with the sick and dying very influential in her own life. She had a special gift of listening to others. Thomasine shared her experience by writing and giving workshops. In 1985, she experienced the loss of her younger sister, Pat, who also had become a member of the Joliet Franciscan Sisters. In an article written after Pat's death, Thomasine reflected on her powerlessness to change the reality of her sister's death, "I thought I knew about grief because I had supported others in their grief...Nothing prepared me for the deep intense pain and anguish I felt when my sister died. Now I know about grief because I have lived through it."

In 1996, Thomasine began a volunteer ministry at Waukesha Memorial Hospital in Wisconsin, while living with her niece Barbara and her two grandnephews. Her condition was weak, and she went regularly for dialysis. After three years, Thomasine came to live at the Motherhouse in Joliet and renewed bonds of friendship with many of our sisters in the Joliet area. She continued to fight the fight against all that her body endured during her illness. During her last hospitalization, she continued to keep her spirits up and to listen to all who came to visit. Her family members, her sisters and her friends spent time in silence, in comfort and in prayer as they kept vigil with her. On October 31, 1999, Sister Thomasine gave herself back to God, holding true to the words she had written in 1955 when she requested to make vows, "I promise to give ALL to God."

Sister Thomasine, we thank you for the gift of your life among us. We ask that the gift of patience and devotion that you showed to so many may continue to brighten our world. Pray now for us, your family, your friends and your Franciscan Sisters, that we too may listen and follow God's God's call to each of us. May you live now in God's love and peace forever. Amen. Alleluia.

