



Sister Margaret Callahan, CSJ

August 11, 1920 ~ April 29, 2024

Sister Margaret Callahan, formerly Marion Agnes Callahan, was born on August 11, 1920 in Inglewood, California. Hugh Martin Callahan, born in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Anna Theresa Monnof, born in Sacred Heart, Oklahoma, were her loving parents. “My father was a stonemason and bricklayer like his father, who had come from Glasgow and established the first stonemason’s union west of the Mississippi in Denver. My mother was a professional seamstress.”

“I was the oldest of four; Hugh, Evelyn and Patricia were my siblings. The four of us were born in Inglewood, a quiet, pretty little town, which was anti-Catholic. I remember seeing a large burning cross west of town. I realized I was blessed with a feeling of closeness to each parent and of their great love for us. My childhood was very happy. We enjoyed Sundays together, often fishing. I have memories of wonderful vacation trips in wilderness areas of the High Sierras.” Marion always had a great love for the history of Inglewood, especially of St. Mary’s Academy. Even as an adult she deeply appreciated the profound beauty of nature and the outdoors.

Marion attended St. John Chrysostom Elementary School and graduated in 1933. She wrote, “I came to know the Sisters of St. Joseph in grammar and high school. Sister Teresa Louise Minnot was a cousin who usually visited in the summer. Sister Rose Gertrude impressed me as a Sister and teacher while in high school.” Marion graduated from St. Mary’s Academy in 1937. While at St. Mary’s Academy she became involved in Sodality activities. The ideals of dedication, caring for others, especially through education and loving generosity were impressed on the students by the Sodality and by Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J.

The example of her teachers led Marion to enter religious life on September 18, 1937. She received the habit on March 19, 1938 and was given the religious name Sister Margaret Alocoque. Her first profession of vows was on March 19, 1940, and final profession on August 15, 1943. In 2023 Sister celebrated her 85th Jubilee as the longest Jubilarian in the Los Angeles Province for several years. In 1970 Sister changed her name to Sister Margaret Callahan.

For the first eight years of ministry she taught primary grades and said she loved it. She then taught high school Spanish, history, and mathematics for 27 years. Her missions covered San Diego, Los Angeles, Prescott, Arizona, and the Pacific Northwest – Pasco, Washington and Eugene Oregon. Her love of the Pacific Northwest was very evident. She spent many happy days there teaching and assisting her mother before her mother died.

Sister ministered as a teacher, vice principal, secretary, tutor, chairperson of the Archdiocese Foreign Language Committee, pastoral minister, secretary of American Red Cross Cancer Society for Southern Arizona. As a volunteer Sister helped translate from English into Spanish for Community publications. A special memory for Sister were the years at St. Joseph Academy in Prescott. She greatly enjoyed a summer study grant to travel in Spain to study at the University of Madrid. Her hobbies included reading mysteries and Western stories, sewing, and doing crossword puzzles. Sister traveled to France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, England, Ireland and Mexico.

There were many funny stories about her years of teaching, especially before computers were available. Sister was considered an outstanding member of the administration team, who was hard working and could accomplish a great deal. She was especially helpful in a Marist High School, before the use of computers, when she assisted in the admission process of 380 incoming ninth graders. Sister was also well respected in a Holy Name School while living in the Northwest.

Sister Margaret walked straight, with pride. She was strong, dignified, and possessed an intensity that was softened by a usually calm and steady nature. She was extremely astute, and said what she meant. In describing her, many would use the word gracious to speak about her. Longevity was a gift given to her and her family. She lived to be 103 years old.

After her many years of ministry, in 2007, Sister was missioned to Holy Family Community at Carondelet Center, to begin her ministry of prayer and presence. At the age of 101 years, in 2021, Sister was among the first sisters to transition from Carondelet Center to St. John of God Skilled Nursing Center, where her gentle smile continued to greet visitors to her room. Sister often expressed gratitude for the loving care provided by the St. John staff and from Vitas Hospice.

Sister Margaret, may God now grant you eternal joy, resting in the fathomless and shoreless ocean of God's tender love.

~ Sister Frances Baker, CSJ