

Sister Thea Bowman



Sister Thea Bowman, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, lived life with hope, love and justice.

Born December 29, 1937, in Yazoo City, Miss., Thea was reared as a Methodist until at age nine when she asked her parents if she could become a Catholic.

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 her role as consultant Sr. Thea, an African-American, gave presentations across the country; lively gatherings that combined singing, gospel preaching, prayer and storytelling. Her programs were directed to break down racial and cultural barriers. She encouraged people to communicate with one another so that they could understand other cultures and races.

In 1984, Sr. Thea was diagnosed with breast cancer. She prayed "to live until I die." Her prayer was answered, and Thea continued her gatherings seated in a wheelchair. In 1989, the U.S. bishops invited her to be a key speaker at their conference on Black Catholics. At the end of the meeting, at Thea's invitation, the bishops stood and sang "We Shall Overcome" with gusto.

Thea lived a full life. She fought evil, especially prejudice, suspicion, hatred and things that drive people apart. She fought for God and God's people until her