

Rosemary Catherine Thompson, RSCJ
July 4, 1942-July 9, 2002

Rosemary Thompson was born in Managua, Nicaragua, daughter of John Harley Thompson and Mary Frawley, one of five girls and three boys. Her father was a British merchant born in Nicaragua, so Rosemary's citizenship was British. She was to retain it throughout her life as a link with her father, who died in 1960. Her mother was still alive at the time of Rosemary's death. She was baptized in Managua on July 6, 1942, and attended public schools there for her elementary education. Later, the family moved to Los Angeles. Rosemary then did secondary education at Menlo, followed by two years of college at Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, and worked for one year before entering the Society on September 1, 1963 at El Cajon. She took the habit on March 15, 1964 and pronounced her first vows on November 21, 1966. In keeping with the practice of the time, she subsequently renewed her vows in three-year increments on November 21 of 1969 and 1972. She completed her B.A. in Chemistry at Lone Mountain College in 1970, and was awarded a Masters degree in Administration from Notre Dame in 1979.

Her early years were spent in many places, in many different ministries. Her first assignment was as Fourth Grade teacher at Forest Ridge 1966-1967, then Eighth Grade at El Cajon in 1967, followed by Surveillante and Dean of Students at Stuart Hall, San Francisco for one year, Dormitory Resident at Lone Mountain College for one year, then back to Stuart Hall and Forest Ridge for short assignments through 1974, and one year as secretary to the principal at Forest Ridge. From July to November, 1975, she made her probation at Jette, Belgium, with profession there on November 1, 1975. After some time of travel, she returned to California to the resident school staff at Menlo until September, 1978, when she was named Principal of the high school. In 1983, she returned to the resident staff, also as a member of the board of trustees.

In 1985, she answered the call to international service, working as treasurer at St. Camillus Seminary in Manila, then as Academic Dean at the Sister Formation Institute there, and at one point member of the provincial team. She returned from the Philippines in 1988 to do theological study at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, through 1990. While there, she had the opportunity to visit the Holy Land on one of the CTU trips. From 1990 to 1992, she was Assistant Principal at Our Lady of Guadalupe School, Houston. From 1992 to 1994, she was Director of Oakwood, during which time she was also a member of the part-time provincial team 1993-1996. From 1994 to 2001, she was Director of Novices, first at Layton House in Cambridge, Massachusetts, then at Healy House in Hyde Park, Chicago. She oversaw the move of the noviceship in 2000. After this, she went to LaBelle, Florida, to do pastoral and Hispanic ministry from August, 2001 to July, 2002, and had just moved to the Casa Bonita community in San Diego to be Director of Sofia Immigration Program at her untimely death on July 9, 2002. She had spent three weeks in her new ministry.

Rosemary belonged to two cultural worlds. She was by temperament Latina and drawn to Latin America, the place of her birth and childhood. At the same time, she treasured her Irish/English ancestry and her British citizenship, and lived most of her life in the United States, therefore never able to vote anywhere. When she finally went to England for the first time at the age of thirty, she was for the first time not a resident alien but truly *home*.

She performed many different difficult tasks, and did them well: closing El Cajon and the boarding school at Menlo, moving the noviceship from Boston to Chicago. Someone noted that the reason she got so many tough jobs was that people knew she could do them. She was the valiant woman with open hands to the poor, to her friends, to anyone who needed what she could give. Some of her siblings described her as "the best possible older sister." Many RSCJ called her

“the quintessential RSCJ” because her love and generosity embodied all that the Society would want from its members.

At her sixtieth birthday on July 4 in San Diego, she danced to her favorite music and was full of joy. Her sudden accidental death from a fall down the stairs of her new community five days later sent shock waves around not only the province, but the world. Condolences poured in from the many provinces where she was known. A Resurrection Mass was celebrated in Founders Chapel at the University of San Diego on July 12, 2002, and she was buried at Oakwood the next day. Rosemary’s mother, sister Alice, brother John, four nieces, a grand-niece, and other relatives were present at the celebration of her life in San Diego, as well as friends colleagues, students, and associates from many parts of Rosemary’s life. During the wake and again at the liturgy, the five wishes from her living will were shared:

- I wish to have my family and loved ones know that I love them.
- I wish to be forgiven for all the times I have hurt my family, friends and others.
- I wish to have my family and friends know that I forgive them for what they may have done to me in my life.
- I want memories of my life to be a source of joy and not sorrow.
- I wish my family and loved ones to know that because of the faith I have, I do not fear death itself. I think it is not the end but a new beginning for me.