

Sister Thoma Swanson, OP

Interviewed by Amy Thomas and Dr. Kathleen Riley



Talk about 'your call' and/or 'your discernment'

- Sr. Thoma remembers her 4th grade teacher as the first 'nice' teacher
- Sr. Thoma felt her calling when she was younger and had a friend who was open about wanting to be a Sister, but Sr. Thoma never talked about it with others. When she told her mother, she wasn't happy and insisted she go to college and get a degree (which she did)
- Her father signed her up to attend Sr. Mary of the Springs to go to college, later she would enroll at a school in Milwaukee, but would eventually return to St. Mary's

Do Sisters ever think about leaving?

Sr. Thoma has a friend who has left; however, her decision to leave has no impact on how she feels about her or the good work the friend continues to do. The rumor that Sisters who leave are 'looked down on' or cut off, is completely untrue

Name some of your ministries you were involved in; tell about one in detail.

- She has a passion for art and has a bachelor's degree and two masters
- Sr. Thoma has taught art and several other disciplines in high school
- She continues to do art on her own – silk painting and stain-glass are her favorites
- Sr. Thoma lived in Peru for 11 years working with women and teaching them how to make tapestry – she loved her time there

It seems religious life is 'dying,' what do you think? Why do you stay?

Sr. Thoma doesn't believe religious life is dying, in fact, she believes it's very much alive. She believes you stay because it's a calling, it would be like asking a husband or wife why they stay with their spouse.

What would you like to share with the group?

Sr. Thoma would like to share the joy of being able to do good things for people, trusting God and being true to yourself, it's important to leave yourself open to seeing what the possibilities are.