



Clara Marie Thompson
August 20, 1907 — September 24, 2008

Sophia Julia Thompson, named for her two grandmothers, was the second of three girls born to Charles and Clara Thompson on August 20, 1907, in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Sophia had an older sister, Mary Elizabeth, and a younger sister, Frances. Frances became a Sister of Loretto and was known as Sr. Charles Mary; she died in 1969.

The Thompson girls attended a country school and Sophia said, "We walked miles and miles across our farm, down a long railroad, and across another farm. When Mary Elizabeth was old enough to drive, Father let us have one of the horses and she drove us."

Sophie entered the Sisters of Loretto and was received on December 8, 1923, taking the name Sister Clara Marie. She made final vows in August 1929. Having entered the community with an eighth grade education, she completed her high school education with a diploma from St. Mary of Loretto School in Montgomery, Alabama. Clara Marie earned her A.B. degree in education from Webster College.

In 1925, she began teaching in schools in Alabama, St. Louis, and Kentucky. She especially loved her time at Visitation in St. Louis and her classes of black children who she described as "wonderful students who wanted an education." In 1974, Clara Marie moved to the Motherhouse and commuted daily to St. Augustine School in Lebanon. In all, Clara Marie taught for 50 years and felt privileged to have taught small children.

Clara Marie wrote that in 1976 she was asked by Sr. Rose Alma to work as a seamstress in the Loretto Infirmery. She was exceptionally skilled in this work, giving credit to her Mother who, she said, could see a garment and go home and cut a pattern for it.

Clara Marie says in her autobiography that she was grateful for the gifts and talents God gave her and grateful for the spiritual advantages she experienced in Loretto. She would have celebrated 85 years in Loretto in December of this year. She died at Loretto on September 24.

Thank you, Clara Marie, for your life in Loretto and the quiet and precise work you did forming little children through teaching them, and, later, using your skills to work for the community.