

Vita
Sister Margaret Verhoff



On New Year's Day, January 1, 1937 Apollonia (Siebeneck) and Sylvester Verhoff awaited the birth of their fourth child. During the early hours of the night, a baby girl was born at home in Cuba, Ohio.

Two days later, on January 3, 1937 Margaret Eleanor Verhoff was baptized at St. Isidore Church, Cuba, Ohio by the Rev. Anthony M. Moes, Pastor.

Margaret's siblings were: Lucille, ten years old, Henry, eight, and James, three.

Of her childhood, Margaret writes: "Mom was very critically ill and nearly died when I was five years old. She was having her fifth child, which was a 'stillbirth'. We were called to her bedside and I remember kneeling down and telling Jesus, 'I can't do without my mother.'"

"My sister told me that when I was one and a half or two years old, Dad was supposed to be taking care of me while mom went to church. I climbed on top of the table and there was a fly ribbon hanging from the ceiling and I got my long hair tangled in the ribbon. Mom said she had to use kerosene to get it out and to get the stickiness out of my hair."

"Uncle Charlie stayed with us. He was 3 years older than Dad. Sometimes Mom would let me go along with him to the other farm and it was fun to play house in his Model A Ford that had a Venetian blind in the back window."

Margaret went to grade school in Glandorf, Ohio and fondly remembers several of her teachers: Precious Blood Sisters Severina and Yvonne, and Dorothy Uphaus and Mrs. Leopold. The Sisters of Divine Providence in Kalida prepared Margaret for the Sacraments. She was confirmed on May 4, 1948 by the Most Rev. Karl J. Alter

When she was in the eighth grade, Margaret spoke with her friend and fellow parishioner, Marcille Liebrecht, who was attending high school at St. Francis Convent High School in Tiffin, Ohio. Marcille, who is now Sister Marcille, encouraged Margaret to also come to high school at Tiffin because it was closer than Dayton. Margaret came.

In 1954 Margaret entered the Sisters of St. Francis in Tiffin, Ohio and on August 12, 1955 she became Sister Mary Martha. She made her Temporary Profession on August 12, 1957 and her Final Profession on August 12, 1962.

Sister Martha studied nursing at St. Rita School of Nursing in Lima, Ohio where she earned her RN. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree at Mary Manse College in Toledo, Ohio.

During the late 1960s Sister Martha returned to the use of her Baptismal name and has been known as Sister Margaret since that time.

For her entire religious life, Sister Margaret's ministry has been that of serving in a variety of nursing positions:

1961	Motherhouse Infirmarian
1962-1968	Nurse, Lourdes Hospital, Paducah, Kentucky
1969-1983	Nurse in various supervisory positions, St. Francis Home, Tiffin, Ohio
1984-1986	Charge Nurse, Autumnwood Care Center, Tiffin
1987-1994	Nurse and Director of Nursing, St. Francis Home, Tiffin
1994-2016	Motherhouse Health Care Coordinator, Tiffin

Love of the elderly has been a hallmark of Sister Margaret's life. When she was at Lourdes Hospital in Paducah, the nurses said of her:

“She is small but could accomplish what the strongest orderly was required to do. One of her big jobs was working to get elderly people places to go when they left the hospital.”

Love of the elderly and geriatric nursing are also very obvious from her own words in her annals:

“The aged everywhere are dependent on others to care about them and to care for them. Our infirm are the poor...”

“Taking care of the sick and elderly is a work of mercy; Christ's work. These, at times, have been the forgotten ones.”

Sister Margaret had an obvious sense of humor and a gleeful giggle. In an interview in 2000, she notes: “I know I do my best when I am nursing, for I love people and I care. I enjoy doing floral arrangements and caring for plants. I like visiting my family, and I LOVE glazed donuts.”

On the occasion of her 50th Jubilee, Sister Margaret's words speak for her: “I am grateful for God's love, mercy, and compassion throughout these years. Ministry to the sick and dying has been a grace and opportunity to give of God's compassion to others, especially to our own sisters.... I'm grateful for the many people who have enriched my life through my ministry and life's journey.”

Sister Margaret has been preceded in death by her parents, Apollonia (Siebeneck) and Sylvester Verhoff, and by her brothers Henry and James Verhoff. Surviving is her sister Lucille (Verhoff) Ellerbrock and nieces and nephews.

She was welcomed home by Sister Death on Monday, August 8, 2016. With St. Francis, Sister Margaret can now truly say, “I have done what is mine to do, may Christ now teach you yours.”