



Name: Sister Thereselle Arruda  
Date of Birth: April 27, 1930  
Place of Birth: Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii  
Parents: Manuel and Mary (Kuliaka) Arruda  
Religious Profession: August 15, 1958  
Date of Death: February 24, 2021  
Age: 90  
Years Professed: 62

Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Evangeline Kuuleimanna Arruda was born to + Manuel + and Mary (Kuliaka) Arruda on April 27, 1930 on the Island of Maui in Wailuku, Hawaii. Manuel died in February 1930, two months before Evangeline was born. She was baptized at St. Anthony Church in Honolulu on May 11, 1930 and received the Sacrament of Confirmation on February 16, 1945 in St. Theresa Catholic Church, Kekaha, Hawaii.

Evangeline's mother married Tsuneo Nicholas Nitta on April 11, 1931 in St. Theresa Church, Kekaha, Kauai, Hawaii. According to the Hawaiian custom and tradition, when the oldest daughter married, she replaced herself in the family by giving her oldest daughter to her parents. Therefore, Mary Arruda, gave her daughter, Kuulei, (Evangeline's Hawaiian name) to Mary Nitta's mother and father, Manuel and Tutu Arruda to raise. They lived about two blocks away from Evangeline's mother and father, Nicholas T. and Mary Nitta. Evangeline has five brothers and one sister.

Evangeline and her family belonged to St. Theresa Parish in Kekaha, where she met the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Kuulei and her cousin, Dixie, looked forward to helping Sister Emerita Holup, Sister James Ellen Woolsey and Sister Brigetine Gauthier. The Sisters often asked them when they were going to the Convent to be Sisters. Father Flynn and Father Jones, Marist Priests at St. Theresa, also repeatedly asked them that question. Kuulei attended Waimea High School, receiving her Diploma in 1948. A classmate, Anna Gandia (Sister Mara), entered the Convent, three years after graduation. Another friend, Sister Rosealani Gomes had entered the Convent previous to Sister Mara.

Kuulei had part-time summer jobs packing pineapples for the Kauai Pineapple Company. She also had four months experience working in a hospital. In 1957 Kuulei discerned that it was time for her to enter the Convent. She had read about the Ursuline Community in *Our Sunday Visitor*, and not wanting to be like everyone else who went to Manitowoc, she went to Belleville, Illinois and entered the Ursuline Sisters of Mount St. Joseph. Father Flynn checked up on her every week and knew she was not happy, so after three weeks he arranged for Kuulei to take the bus to Manitowoc to enter the Community of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity.

Father Flynn sent the following letter of recommendation to Mother Edna:

*Kuulei is not an introvert, but, in my opinion, is more long-suffering. She is generous, a hard worker and works well with others. She is given, I believe, more to prayer. She is even-tempered and can be a lot of*

*fun once she gets adjusted to her environment. She is thoughtful and very observant. I am sure she will make a wonderful Nun. I am very happy that God has led her to your Community, for I have a high regard for the Franciscans and their wonderful spirit. God bless you!*

Another recommendation, dated July 2, 1956, came from the Principal of Waimea High and Elementary School: *To Whom It May Concern:*

*Evangeline Arruda, who is requesting admission into your school, is a young lady of excellent character and has the potential of a successful college career. I recommend that she be accepted for admission.*

*Sincerely,*

*Shizuo Tsuchiya, Principal*

Evangeline entered Holy Family Convent on September 4, 1956. Her first impression of the Motherhouse was that it was so big. As a postulant she began taking classes at Holy Family College. When the postulants had home visit time, Sister Emerita would take the young women who could not go home because of distance, to the mission in Oshkosh. This is when Evangeline met the Mathe Family. Sister Carol Mathe was an aspirant and Mr. Mathe would give them a ride when he picked up his daughter. On Reception Day, June, 13, 1957, Evangeline received the name Sister Thereselle, which meant "Little Theresa." She was happy and honored to have been named after her home Parish, St. Theresa.

Sister Thereselle earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1972, with a Major in Elementary Education and a Minor in Humanities. Sister used this degree to teach Primary Grades for 56 years. When Sister Thereselle "retired" from full classroom teaching she became a Pre-K Teacher Aide. Sister Thereselle was always open to learning and improving her teaching skills and took additional course work at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, The University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ, Chaminade College of Honolulu and the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. Sister Thereselle would say that her most influential teachers were the children that she taught! She learned so much wisdom from them about how to live with simple, unconditional love and trust.

In a Jubilee reflection Sister Thereselle wrote that she "saw God in the faces of His children, in the interaction of the people, in their sufferings and joys. Meeting God in His people has made her more compassionate and loving, more like Jesus!" Sister Thereselle went on to write, "Living Community with my Sisters, praying, working and laughing with them has been a real source of joy in the Lord and an encouragement for me when I was missing my family. Community is hope for me and is life-giving! I pray that we can always witness to God's love through Community living."

Sister Thereselle spent her last earthly days at Bapchule teaching many life lessons as she prepared for her journey home! The Sisters at Bapchule shared that Sister Thereselle demonstrated over and over again to always be thankful! Sister Martha Mary wrote, "Sister T. thanks us for every little thing...a glass of water, fixing her blanket, stopping to chat etc. Take nothing for granted.... everything is a gift! Accept God's will happily.... and there will be no fear! All time is God's Time...we live by His Grace. All prayers for Sister T. were very much appreciated." Sister Thereselle ended her reflection with, "I say thank you for my family and for Father Flynn who got me to Manitowoc! I say thank you to our entire Community who has accepted me, educated me and missioned me. Thank you everyone for your love and hope and faith in me!" Sister Thereselle, we your Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity say, Mahalo Nui Loa, for all you have been for us. May you enjoy your eternal reward with God and rest in peace.