Early in the morning of September 30, 2017, God called Sister Margaret Cavanagh home to her eternal rest. Sister was 90 years old and had devoted 70 years to her religious life as an Amityville Dominican Sister.

Born in Brooklyn, NY on June 2, 1927, Margaret Cecilia was the daughter of Irish born parents James and Anna (McGovern) Cavanagh. The family lived in the parish of St. Vincent Ferrer, Brooklyn from which she entered the Dominican Novitiate in Amityville on September 8, 1947. On August 4, 1948 she received the habit of the Dominican Sisters and her religious name, Sister James Veronica. She pronounced her vows on August 6, 1949. Her first ministry was in Education. She taught in the parish schools of St. Fidelis, College Point, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Albans, Christ the King, Springfield Gardens, and St. Agnes, Rockville Centre. In 1963 Sister received word that she was being transferred to Academia Santa Teresa in Naranjito, Puerto Rico. For many Sisters this was a difficult assignment to accept. A Sister who lived with Sister James Veronica has mentioned that she took the transfer with peace and tranquility which were hallmarks of her life. With peace and the desire to do God’s Will, Sister went to Santa Teresa for three years to teach English in the High School in Naranjito. In 1966 Sister came back to the States to teach in the parish school of Sacred Heart in Cambria Heights. During this time she returned to her baptismal name, Margaret and she also earned a degree in Education from St. John’s University. From 1967 to 1970, she was principal of Our Lady of Sorrows in Manhattan, NY. Margaret then taught in the English Department of St. Nicholas High School in Brooklyn where she remained until 1977.

After almost thirty years in the ministry of teaching, Margaret followed the call to use her abilities in a way to be of service to the sick. Margaret worked as a Health Care Administrator and Coordinator for the Nursing Sisters Home Visiting Services from 1977 through 1990, first in Brooklyn, then in Rockville Centre. In 1990 she assisted in St. Francis de Sales School, Brooklyn as Personnel Director. Margaret became the Secretary in the elementary school of Holy Child Jesus parish in Richmond Hill in 1992.

Once again, Margaret heard God’s call to a new ministry, becoming a Pastoral Minister in St. Dominic’s parish in Brooklyn from 1993-1999. On October 4th of 1994, Margaret received the call that her beloved sister, Sister Anna May, C.S.J., had died. Anna May’s death was a real blow to her, yet she maintained her peace and acceptance of God’s plan. For one year, 2000-2001 Margaret worked as a Secretary in SS. Joachim and Anne Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Brooklyn. A year later she worked in Secretarial Services in the Motherhouse in Amityville but sensed it was time to retire in 2002. She remained living in her beloved convent at St. Frances Cabrini, Brooklyn until 2011, volunteering to help in any way she could, often functioning as a substitute teacher when needed. In addition, Margaret visited Holy Family Home, several blocks from the convent, on Saturdays, frequently stopping in to visit one of her Dominican Sisters’ brother.

In 2011 Margaret recognized her need to come to Amityville for full retirement. Rosary Hall at the Motherhouse was in the process of being renovated when she moved to Amityville and was ready in 2013. Margaret could be said to be a “pioneer” as she joined the first group of Sisters moving into the renovated building and taking advantage of the various activities and opportunities then available. As the months passed, however, her health deteriorated necessitating a move to Carlin Hall for more assistance. Margaret was a quiet but friendly member of every convent in which she lived, a truly fine community member. She was appreciated for her deep prayerfulness, beautiful smile for all she met, and constant gentleness. One Sister wrote that Margaret was a “lovely, holy woman of great kindness” wherever she was. She will be missed by all who knew her, lived with her or had simply met her.

Margaret’s siblings have predeceased her. She is survived by an extended family, her friends and the Amityville Dominican Congregation.

All services will take place in St. Albert’s Chapel at Queen of the Rosary Motherhouse, Amityville, NY. The wake will begin with a Prayer Service at 3pm on Tuesday, October 3, 2017. Morning Prayer will take place at 10:10am on Wednesday, October 4th followed by the Mass of Christian Burial. Burial in the Sisters’ cemetery will follow immediately after Mass.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

- John 5:24

SISTERS OF SAINT DOMINIC OF AMITYVILLE, NY