

## *Elaine Smith, OFS*

**Elaine Smith, founder of Therapy Dogs International**, passed away on Monday, April 2, 2012 after a lifetime of serving others. She passed away peacefully in her home surrounded by her three dogs.

Elaine was born on May 13, 1930, and was nearly 83 when she died. She was born in Newark, New Jersey. Her parents, though not Catholic, sent Elaine to Catholic schools. Sometime during her youth, she became a Catholic, and then a Secular Franciscan. She made her profession on November 23, 1947, at St Francis of Assisi Church in New York City. Elaine joined the San Luis Rey Secular Franciscan Fraternity in 1995.

Elaine was a nurse, but her real passion was animals. Per [OES](#), Elaine Smith was the Founder of Therapy Dogs International. OES states that 'millions of people around the World are benefiting from Therapy Dog visitations because of Elaine Smith's idea. She had the persistency to realize her vision that dogs should be allowed to visit with the patients in hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions to bring comfort and companionship and increasing emotional well-being, promoting healing and improving the quality of life for the people being visited and the staff that cares for these people.'

As described by [DogChannel.com](#), 'In 1976, while observing the positive reaction to a chaplain who brought his Golden Retriever with him on visits, Smith had a thought. A thought that would blossom into the founding of TDI, the world's first organization dedicated solely to testing, certifying, insuring, and registering dogs for use as therapy animals.'

One blogger commented about Elaine, 'Imagine leaving such a wonderful legacy. That is a life well lived.' May the same thing be said of us all.



*Elaine Smith, a nurse and founder of TDI, with Philia, the first Therapy Dog*



*May the Angels  
lead you into paradise.*

*Calligraphy by Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM*