



OBITUARY NOTICE



Sister Gertrude Rondeau
Saint-Alain

entered eternal life October 23, 2018
at the age of 91 years
and 71 years of religious life

+ 2445

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Psalm 103:2

“Bless the Lord, O my soul,” was often Sister Gertrude Rondeau’s song, for the Lord had truly blessed her. Sister Gertrude’s soul sang and was joyful from her youth. She sang in gratitude for all God had done for her. Joy and gratitude for her gentle mother, Beatrice Trudel who as a hard-working and creative seamstress wrapped her daughter in tenderness right through her adolescence! Joy and gratitude for her father, Alcibiade, sought-after carpenter and courageous farmer, calm, kind, one who enjoyed teasing. What security to have such Christian parents gifted with such talent and courage!

Filled with the love of her family, Gertrude became tenderness for all those who were entrusted to her care and was ever grateful for God’s kindness.

The Lord’s joy was part of her and made of her a joy-filled and serene woman revealing God’s Spirit, ever ready to be of service. What were the origins of this peaceful woman religious?

Gertrude was born in Fugèreville, Temiscamingue County, Québec. She was the second-last of six children. She grew up surrounded by nature and the beauty of creation and could appreciate the lively song of the birds. Her older brother, Clovis filled the long winter evenings with his creative games. She loved life within the family and thrived on it.

Once her schooling began, Gertrude had an advantage on the other students because her mother had taught her to read from the first grade book. Certain events were significant in her life as she notes in her journal: at the age of six she received the Eucharist for the first time. Thus grew in her this desire to love and please Jesus throughout her life and to work for Him. Gertrude’s childhood was happy with her parents, her two older brothers and three sisters.

She spent two winters living with her Aunt Aurore who lived close to the church. Thus, she had the pleasure of attending mass each morning and also of playing the player-piano.

In 1937, the Sisters of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary arrived in the parish. This brought Gertrude much joy. She attended their catechism classes and loved the Gospel stories. The Transfiguration of Jesus awakened in her a greater love for Jesus; she memorized these words: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him.” Gertrude desired to be this beloved daughter of the Father. She sang over and over, “Bless the Lord, O my soul,

and forget not all his benefits.”

At the age of fourteen, she left home to continue her studies as a boarder at Our Lady of Lourdes Convent in Ville-Marie. She longed to become a religious and clearly heard the call during a retreat when the following words touched her soul: “The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few.”

At the age of eighteen, Gertrude did respond to the call. She entered the Mother House and began the first year of her formation. She was filled with fervor. Her spiritual life became more intense each day.

On July 16, 1947, filled with God, Sister Gertrude took her first vows which she knew would be forever. Her chosen name going forward would be Sister Saint Alain.

The Spirit blows where it wills, and for her it was to our convents in the United States for eleven years. In her personal notes, she writes: “This sojourn to the United States prepared me for my future missionary life: learning detachment, another language, adaptation to different ways and mentalities. Sister Gertrude spent five years at St. Joseph Convent in Lowell, six years in Haverhill and one year at Holy Cross Convent in Ogdensburg, New York. Throughout these years, she was entrusted with students at the primary level.

In 1959, year of Marguerite d’Youville’s beatification, an assignment awaited her for Central Africa. Sister Gertrude responded with a hope-filled and loving “yes” in spite of the challenges that lay ahead.

She boarded the flight to Nyassaland (now Malawi) on September 5, 1959. Divine Providence placed her at the service of the seminarians, a culinary service which she carried out with enthusiasm and dedication for three years. In 1962, when a new mission opened in Kasiya, Zambia, she was among the chosen ones, along with Sr. Florence Lalande and two African Sisters: Sister St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and Sister Mary Immaculata. She taught home economics classes, visited the families in the villages and learned the Tonga language in the midst of a very sympathetic culture.

In 1965, while on leave in Canada, Sister Gertrude took a period of rest, then, in January, 1966, she honed her gifts in home economics with a time of study at the Marguerite d’Youville Institute in Ville Marie. Returning to Malawi, in July, 1967, she taught sewing at Ludzi Secondary School and was much appreciated by her students.

Her favorite assignment was in 1970 when she journeyed with twenty families of catechists in Monze, Zambia. Teaching homemaking came easy to her and was a very encouraging task as she helped these mothers better care for their children, clothing and feeding them.

In 1975, returning to Africa from a time of rest in Canada, Sister Gertrude was assigned to the Mpanshya Mission in Lusaka, Zambia. The following year, she was back to Ludzi in Malawi as local bursar, all the while teaching in the Secondary School.

Whether her mission took her to the United States, to Malawi or to Zambia, Sister Gertrude was always ready to serve in various tasks according to the needs: home economics, housekeeping, and bookkeeping. Wherever she went, she radiated kindness and compassion. She would often pray quietly, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

In 1980, her health brought her back to Canada for good. After a time for convalescence and rest, she once more donned the apron of service and accepted an assignment on Daly Street with young boarders in May, 1981. She also worked on Parent Street for ten years.

From 1991 to 1996, Ste Marie Residence in Sudbury, Ontario, solicited her help in working with the needy, a service she fulfilled with much caring. Is she not the Father's beloved daughter?

Health concerns required some time for rest. In 1996, she was asked to serve at La Maison on Charlotte Street where she also saw to the upkeep of the property as well as to the food shopping for the Sisters and the boarders.

From 2005 to 2015, she retired to Mount Saint Joseph where she gladly offered her help as her health allowed. She would care for the Mass intentions and collect the stipends offered to this purpose.

In 2016, she relocated to Marguerite d'Youville Community where she was lovingly received.

On October 23, 2018, Sister Gertrude Rondeau offered her life to God one more time, that Lord she had so courageously served in gratitude for all His benefits through her ninety-one years. She left us in total serenity, surrounded by her family and friends. She now eternally contemplates God the Father whose beloved daughter she always dreamed of becoming from her earliest years.

