



OBITUARY NOTICE



SISTER JEANNETTE ROUSSY

entered Eternal Life on March 16, 2023
at the age of 77
with 55 years of religious life

+ 3347

(2135)

"Come, follow me." Mk 10:21

It was with these words that Sister Jeannette went to be with the One whom her heart loved so much, the One to whom she had given everything. These same words of Jesus would motivate the significant moments of her life. Then, as always, she answered: *"Yes, you know that I will follow you!"*

Jeannette Roussy was the only child, the dream child, loved and cherished by Gilbert Roussy and Yvonne Kingsley. Her parents, fundamentally Christian, gave their daughter a priceless legacy: a faith rooted in absolute trust in God, despite the pitfalls of the road.

The cross was at the center of Jeannette's life, a cross that shaped her into the beauty we know. When she contracted polio at the age of six, she refused to be defeated by illness and disability. She quickly developed a will to heal that was unusual for a child of her age. Her parents, worried, entrusted her to the maternal care of Notre-Dame-du-Cap. One day, thanks to the miraculous intervention of the Virgin Mary, she was able to walk. Her mother, in gratitude to the Blessed Virgin, dressed little Jeannette in blue. When she grew up, Jeannette wanted to "get out of the blue"! This ordeal in her childhood would have a decisive influence on Jeannette's life and character. It is not surprising that the love of the Cross, the Eucharist and the Virgin Mary had a special place in her life.

From her youth, Jeannette always felt an irresistible call to give herself to Christ. However, she was careful not to reveal this desire to her parents. In elementary school and at Notre-Dame College, she was in contact with the Grey Nuns, who confirmed her life's dream. Then, one day, she courageously spoke to her parents, who, out of faith and for their daughter's happiness, gave her permission to leave. *"Come, follow me."*

After her novitiate, Sister Jeannette began her studies at the Faculty of Education and then at Laurentian University, where she specialized in school rehabilitation. She was the perfect person to teach children with learning difficulties. Her gentleness, her love for this mission and her fine pedagogy contributed to the success of many young people.

Then, in December 1972 and January 1973, she suddenly lost both her parents within a month of each other. In the midst of her ordeal, she remained upright, stoic, her faith anchored in God, her eyes fixed on the Cross. "*You, God, are my strength and my inheritance,*" she wrote.

After this great ordeal, in 1979, she heard again a "*Come, follow me,*" that of the missionary vocation. She went to Basutoland for two years, happy to contribute to the mission of the Congregation. Then, for 30 years, she would bring her compassion, her gentleness and her zeal to Haiti. Her love for justice and her solidarity with the less fortunate, led her to daring actions that could have put her life in danger. In the face of injustice, she was indignant and unafraid to take up her pen and sharpen her words in defense of the weak before the episcopal authorities.

She was a great missionary who was willing to sacrifice her life and face the dangerous turbulence of political life to be in solidarity with the Haitian people who needed her strength to support them. Like Mother Bruyère, love for the weak was part of Sister Jeannette's nature. In fact, at the height of the storm in Haiti in 1991, the authorities wanted the sisters to return to Canada, at least for a few months. Sister Jeannette took up her pen again and asked the then Superior General, Mother Agathe Gratton, to allow them to remain in Haiti, boldly quoting this Word of God: "*I will be with you all the days of your life,*" a Word and a convincing argument that would win her case. After this impassioned plea, Sister Agathe, Sister Jeannette's former teacher, agreed to her student's urgent request. She and the Sisters stayed with the Haitian people in their time of need. This gesture speaks loudly of the quiet strength of this woman of God.

The Word of God, "*I will be with you all the days of your life,*" quoted first in 1973 at the time of her mother's death and then in Haiti in 1991, will have been an anchor in her life, for in Chapter 2022 she chose the same Word as the one that she especially loved.

In 2012, after her definitive return from Haiti, the Congregation still needed the precious services of Sister Jeannette, first as Provincial Secretary from 2014 to 2016, then as Assistant and General Secretary from 2016 to 2022. Her

sound judgment, her great love for the Congregation, her vision for the future will have been precious contributions to the Congregation and to the Sisters of her local community. Her warm smile, her quiet strength, her discretion made her a person with whom it was good to live and share.

Sister Jeannette was an eloquent missionary of God's love. Her life of self-giving drew its strength and energy from the Eucharist and the love of the Cross. Eucharistic beings are people who allow themselves to be broken and loved completely by Christ. So was Sister Jeannette!

Last March 16, at dawn, the "*Come, follow me*" took on a new profound meaning. And she answered "yes" in her own way: in the stillness and silence of the night. With the Psalmist, she said, "*I will take the wings of the dawn and go to the end of the sea; even there your hand leads me and your right hand holds me.*"

Thank you, Sister Jeannette, for the radiant person you were and are in the bright light of your God. You enter the blessed light of those who are passionate about God and passionate about the lowly and the weak. You were a beautiful giant of the Congregation, for all of us, for your family and your friends. Thank you for adding beauty to our journey. Your mission is not over, it continues: to watch over us and over the Congregation. Au revoir!

