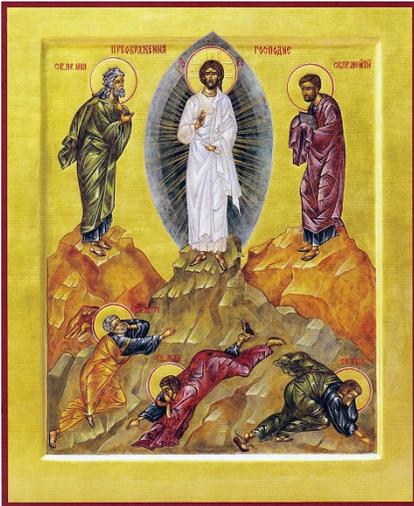


SR. JEANNINE BOUTIN, DW
Sr. Hilaire du Sacre Coeur
75th Jubilee Celebration



SHY AND QUIET? (1926-1943)

Sr. Jeannine, now 92 years old, was born in Abitibi Canada. Of her childhood, she wrote: "I was not an angel; I was independent in spirit and fussy in eating." She grew up in a warm and nurturing family, and even now she keeps close ties with them. Last year, at the age of 91 she made the long journey to Canada to visit five of her eight remaining siblings.

Jeannine will tell you that she was quiet and shy in her childhood and even in her novitiate. But consider this. She left her home to begin her journey of religious life at the age of 15! Jeanne was and is small in stature and thin besides, and, as a novice in Eastview, she had never rocked the boat. But when the Father General dared to suggest that she had been too young to make profession at 17 and was too young to make her final vows at 22, she surprised the life out of him by saying, "I beg your pardon.

I know a lot. I knew what I was doing when I made my vows, and I have been very happy!"

Quiet and shy, she may have appeared, but this was a determined young lady who knew her own mind. And so, she made her first profession as a Daughter of Wisdom in August 6, 1943 as planned! In her response to a recent questionnaire sent to the jubilarians, she has noted that she is happy and proud to be the second oldest in profession of the entire American Province.

BRAVE DEPARTURES AND ZIG-ZAG PATHS (1945-1970)

Incredibly, four days after her first vows, and still only 17 ½ years old, Sr. Jeannine, was missioned to the United States, the U.S.A., which, two years later, would become a province in its own right. Because she was still a minor, she actually had to argue with officials to get a passport, which they reluctantly issued. Little did she know then that she would still be here with us for her 75th anniversary of religious vows.

She began at the tiny St. Charles Hospital on Hicks Street in Brooklyn where she lived for six and a half years. She then became a pioneer at the new novitiate in Litchfield, Connecticut where she worked for 13 years. Jeanne has the happy distinction of being the only member still alive from that first community of the U.S. novitiate. During that time she also worked part time at the Montfort Seminary in Litchfield while still living at our novitiate. After a replacing a sister for three months at St. Mary Gate of Heaven in Ozone Park, N, Y., and then serving at Bay Shore for a year and a half, it was back to Litchfield in the Daughter of Wisdom Community there from 1967 to 1970.

THE LOVE OF HER LIFE (1970 to THE PRESENT)

In 1967, she was reunited with the Montfort Fathers, but this time at the Montfort Spiritual Center, Bay Shore, NY where she provided varied services for more than 45 years until her retirement. She has always done the chapel with tender loving care, and still helps out there. When the boys were here, she supervised the cleaning, saw to the annual washing of blankets, mattresses, curtains, windows, etc. and often did a huge share of the work herself. She has sewn all kinds of things for the gift shop in order to make money for the missions, and she has always been at the heart of hospitality. Though she retired last year, she is still an official consultant, because nobody knows more about the buildings of Bay Shore Spiritual Center than she does.

Jeannine has a great sense of humor and is as honest as the day is long. Consider this exchange. Fr. John McCrann appeared one morning with a sign that he attached to her door. It read: SR. JEANNINE BOUTIN, EXECUTIVE HOUSEKEEPER. When she read the sign, Sr. Jeannine's spontaneous reaction was, "I not only have the title. I execute!"

Even now in the year 2018, in reminiscing about her life, Jeannine wrote: "My years of service with our sisters at the Litchfield Novitiate Community and with the Montfort Fathers in Litchfield Seminary and in Bay Shore were years of growth and fulfillment. They were for me, Montfortian works."

A WOMAN FAR AHEAD OF HER TIME

Long before Catholics and other Christians were into the treasures of Eastern Spirituality, Sr. Jeannine found a way, with the permission of her superiors, to enter into the disciplines of Zen Meditation. She took part in more than 30 sessions or retreats with Zen Buddhists. About this aspect of her life, wrote: "It was a source of energy in soul, body, and mind. Could this be the reason why I am still so strong? Zen Meditation was a great help to understanding my own Christian spirituality... It taught me to live the present moment, and to be at peace and at ease with myself."

THE PILLARS OF HER LIFE

Of Marie Louise, Jeannine wrote: I believe that I have been following in the footsteps of Mother Marie Louise of Jesus for 75 years!

Of Montfort she said that his words were a source of hope, strength and peace in her life, and she cited in particular these words of his:

*"If you know everything, and you do not know Jesus, you know nothing.
If you know nothing, and you know Jesus, you know everything."*

The ideals of both our founders have played a huge part in her life: She wrote:

*"God Alone has been my motto since my novitiate days!"
"Jesus, Incarnate Wisdom has been and is my model!"
"Mary has been and is my mother!"*

THE CROWN OF HER ACHIEVEMENTS

We have with us today more than ten people from this Montfortian Spiritual Center, and all of them are excited to be here to celebrate Sr. Jeannine's life. Any Montfort Missionary, who passed his high school years here, waxes eloquent when her name is mentioned. She has countless friends from within and outside of her past ministries. There is no better testimony of Sr. Jeannine's innate goodness and generosity and unique ability to say what she thinks. Here is a woman whose 'yes' is 'yes' and whose 'no' is 'no'. Here is a woman who is greatly loved.

Thank you, Sr. Jeannine Boutin!

