



Voices of our Sisters and the Collaborators

**Casa Generalizia,
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00165, Roma, Italia.**

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Walking in the light of a living heritage

As we open this edition of our bulletin, we find ourselves standing on a familiar path that is also marked by grace. This year, we celebrate a very special milestone: **the 75th anniversary of the canonisation of Saint Emilie de Vialar**. Emilie, the lighthouse that continues to shine across generations, her life does not belong only to history, but continues to guide our steps today. Her flame, once lit in her own time, still warms and directs the journey of her daughters scattered across the world.

Yet, we are also aware that the sea on which we sail is not always calm. Our world today carries many storms; wars, suffering, uncertainty, and deep longing. In this context, the mission entrusted to Saint Emilie feels more urgent than ever. We, her sisters, continue to walk in her footsteps, like small boats following the steady light of the same lighthouse. **Let us also become voices of prayer**, asking the Lord of the harvest to send workers into His field; hearts ready to respond generously, as she once did, to the call of love and service.

Our shared journey is also built through the small but precious seeds we sow together. Each article sent to this bulletin is like a note placed into a shared tapestry, weaving our stories into one fabric of communion. So, we ask with joyful anticipation: *are you not excited to read about the canonisation of our mother foundress?* What we receive and share today becomes the memory and encouragement of tomorrow. As Saint Emilie once received and passed on the fire of mission, so too **we are called to leave behind words and reflections that will light the path for those who come after us**.

Finally, a heartfelt word of gratitude. Every contribution—whether a long reflection or a brief note—is like a puzzle piece carefully placed into a greater picture that is slowly being revealed. Each piece matters: some bring colour, others bring outline, and some quietly hold the image together.

Thank you for your generosity, your faith, and your willingness to share your journey. Together, piece by piece, we are forming a beautiful whole; a shared picture where memory, mission, and hope come together and remain alive. May this edition be for each reader a reminder that we are not walking alone, but as part of a great pilgrimage of faith, carried forward by the light we have received and are called to pass on.

Happy feast to all of us
Sister Vicky Giacaman SJA



**Canonization
of
Anne – Marguerite – Adelaide – Emilie
De Vialar**



Our Joy is Unbounded!

From its earliest days the Church has celebrated the memory of people who gave witness to the Gospel by their holiness of life and commitment to the good of their neighbor. They were imbued by an internal vision of Divine goodness and give us a glimpse of the face of God in the center of the human. By enlightening the way, they have become symbols of hope for us today and into the future. To recognize the heroic virtue of these disciples, a process of Canonization has been developed and codified within the Church. This year on the 24 June 2026 we mark 75 years since the Canonization of Blessed Emilie De Vialar. On this day her name was inscribed in the calendar of the universal Church and provides us with the opportunity to recall the event, rejoice and give thanks.

This woman, so richly endowed by God with extraordinary gifts and qualities, had placed her ability, her heart, all her material resources and the sum of her human and spiritual energies at the service of God's glory and the good of the neighbor. (Emilie's Story p. XIV)

Some years after the death of Mother Emilie there was a concerted effort undertaken to preserve information about her life and writings. In line with her predecessors, Mother Celina Le Bouffo and her Council were active in the work required for the eventual Canonization. One of the earliest actions was the transfer of the foundress's body from St Peter's cemetery to a chapel erected in the garden of the Mother House in Marseilles.

In 1923 the process of inquiry into the virtues of Emilie De Vialar began and in 1924 the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued a decree on her writings:

We are convinced that the beautiful, noble, impressive person of the venerable Emilie De Vilar has been presented to us in all its reality, manifested in her remarkable disposition. Occasions are not wanting for us to speak about Venerable Mother De Vialar; greater opportunities will emerge, even more joyful.

In December that year there was the pronouncement of the validity of the miracles, one in Tuscany, the other near Aleppo. The Beatification occurred 18 June 1939. This was attended by Mother Francis de Sales Le Gal and her Council.

Then came a time of waiting. Two further miracles were required.

The first was Sr Brendan, a 20-year-old novice in Marseilles. Having experienced severe pain, high fever and a ganglia abscess, the prognosis was not good and despite ongoing medical treatment her condition worsened. A novena to the foundress was begun. On the 22 October 1943 the Infirmarian came to change the dressing and found no trace of the abscess or discomfort. The doctors from the Hospital acknowledged the cure.



The second miracle was Sr Teresa Moran, 21 from Bowden, England who was paralyzed. On 7 March 1946 the diagnosis declared there was no remedy for her condition; multiple sclerosis. The community turned to prayer. At the foot of the bed was a crucifix and a picture of Emilie De Vialar. On the 10 March Sr Teresa called the superior and said, 'I am cured' and she responded, 'if you are cured get up'. Sister rose and together they went to the chapel and sang 'Laudate Dominus'. The doctor declared that he had never seen such a recovery.

A Telegram Arrives

On 5 April 1951 at 8.30 pm a telegram from Rome arrived at the Mother House in Marseille announcing the forthcoming Canonization of Mother Emilie De Vialar. Immediately Mother Theresita Moret sent a message to the Regional Superiors and later wrote to the Sisters:

Let us spend the intervening months in a spirit of renewed fervor and recollection, endeavoring to imitate more closely the example set before us by our saintly Mother Foundress. ... We are proud to be a subject of discussion throughout the Church; proud in the knowledge that our Foundress has been recognized as a true Saint of God. So, let us make renewed efforts to live worthily as her daughters, by a more intensified interior life ... To be the daughters of a Saint – Oh! what a glorious title indeed. A title which obliges us to walk resolutely in her footsteps.

On hearing the news Mother Francis Hevron responded with:

How our hearts overflow with gratitude...? Our joy is unbounded.

With the date set for the Canonization, 24 June, preparations proceeded. Mother Theresita Moret was very aware of the importance of keeping the Sisters informed and on 22 April 1951 she wrote:

The Canonization of Blessed Mother Foundress is to be celebrated as part of a double ceremony. Two Foundresses, Blessed Emilie De Vialar and Blessed Maria Mazzarello, Salesian Foundress.



Invitation to Canonization



Manchester Airport

Sisters around the world began to prepare to travel to Rome. Four Sisters from Burma and four from Australia prepared for the long sea voyage. Whilst in England a group of Sisters were to later board a flight from Manchester to Rome.

The Long-Awaited Day

On the 24 June 1951 there were nearly 500 Sisters in attendance. The ceremony commenced at 8.00am. Others followed the proceedings on radio. The procession into the Basilica and the accompanying chants captured the attention of those assembled. The banner that was the work of Professor Barberis was carried by the Superior General of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Fr Deschatelez into the Basilica.



The Banner, with Postulator and others who assisted in the Canonization process

Following the Litany of the Saints the Pope proclaimed:

In honor of the holy and undivided Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the expansion of Christianity; by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, after careful reflection and imploring heavenly help, we decree and define the Blessed Emilie De Vialar to be a Saint.

Immediately the bells of St Peter's and surrounding churches rang out. They echoed the gratitude and joy of those present and those listening around the world.



Departing St Peter's

A Sister, who was in attendance, wrote:

The crowd disperses and we find one another in the square dazzling in the midday sun ... our Holy Mother smiles on us and this smile is, for us, a call and an encouragement to follow her in the way she has traced.

A Garden Gathering

Following the ceremony, the Sisters returned to the House in Rome where Cardinal Tedeschini, who had been the 'Postulator of the Cause, gave a lengthy address. He began by saying:

Your Congregation has delighted me since I have known it.

Your Order honors the Apparition of the angel to St Joseph. In looking at you and reflecting I think that this Apparition (birth) must have excited many feelings in the heart of St Joseph.

And then he referred to St Emilie:

A great saint is she who set up works of charity, ... she filled herself with the charity of Christ and then let it overflow in thousands of ways as in breaking Divine Bread to the multitude, the abandoned, those so numerous who had need of any help and, to those more numerous still who needed everything.

The Canonization of St Emilie today is your joy and the joy of the Church, the joy of the land which gave her birth, and of the land which welcomed her daughters and representatives, the joy of the nations and of your numerous missions.

He concluded with:

It is time to part after an enchanting day, full of spiritual riches and joyful reunions.



Cardinal Tedeschini

Later that evening Mother *Theresita Moret* realizing that not all the Sisters could be in Rome wrote:

It seems to me that something would be lacking on this great and unforgettable day if you had no word from your Superior General ... The waves of the Vatican radio have made you vibrate in unison in transmitting from one end of the world to the other the words of the Pontiff Pope Pius XII and I have the impression that on hearing his voice you felt yourselves present.

Let us contemplate our Holy Mother glorified, we are proud to be her daughters but let us not forget that it is by the cross that she arrived at such heights. Sanctity is not acquired in treading along flowery paths but in tearing oneself in the thorns of the roadside, in these streets of Rome with an anguished heart and worried brow our Holy Mother prepared this triumph of the 24 June.

Let each one go over the history of her own vocation in her heart: our Holy Mother came to pick us isolated little flowers to put us together in a bunch ... daughters of a saint, let us renew on this day our resolution to go forward in her footsteps in faith, hope and charity.



Mother Theresita addressing the Sisters

Step by Step

On the morning of 27 June Mother Theresita Moret, her Council and several Sisters attended an audience with his Holiness Pius XI.

The Pope began by asking:

Well! Are you pleased?

He made special mention of how St Emilie slowly perceived her vocation, attraction for the missions and how she gradually discerned the future, 'step by step'.

During her days she goes from drawing room, where she is loved and appreciated, to hovels where her visits brightened and consoled. On reaching her thirty fifth year she begins to realize her ambition ... no difficulty or contradiction is spared her ... she advances by degrees but goes forward all the same on a difficult road.

In conclusion gifts from different parts of the Congregation were presented to the Pope.



Papal Audience

The Tridiums

An integral part of the celebrations was a series of Triduums. The first at the Church of the Gesu in Rome a Church which Emilie often visited. During the 26, 27, 28 June the relic of her heart was placed on the altar of St Ignatius. Records note:

It is a spacious Church and rich with gold, like most Roman Churches, it is a veritable marvel when illuminated. The Eucharist was celebrated on the second day by the Archbishop of Marseilles and attended by many dignitaries. On the final day the ceremony at 6.20 pm was packed and concluded with the choir singing 'Jesus Crown of Virgins'.

The scriptural theme for these days was:

My food is to do the will of My Father. (Jn. 4.34)

On the 26, 27, and 28 August 1951 a Triduum was held in Marseilles, the place where the remains of Mother Emilie were.

It was also the City which welcomed the Saint in August 1852. It had to be the harbor where at least her ship, that had been tossed about by events for nearly 15 years dropped anchor.

Sr George Sarkis, a member of the Bethlehem community, was a Postulant in Marseilles at the time and recalls the celebrations in the Cathedral and several of the Churches. Sr Andre Fournet and Sr Thomas D'Aquin were two of the speakers at these events. Sr Blanche Gatt and Sr David Borg who were Novices in Marseilles remember practicing the hymns for the celebrations.

The year 1952 was designated as a year of thanksgiving. In May of this year a Triduum was held in Gaillac. This three-day event was attended by large crowds and gave particular attention to children, youth and the sick. A commemorative plaque was unveiled by Cardinal Roques. Proceedings were written up in the Albi Diocesan newsletter with reference to the Church of St Michael's in Gaillac.



Procession in
Gaillac May
1952

Other Triduum's were held in numerous places in Europe and the Middle East. In England, Australia, Malta and Burma celebrations included members of the clergy, family, friends and benefactors. Records mention celebrations at Schools in Malta and England.

Snippets from Communities and Sisters

The History of the House in Fremantle provides a detailed account of proceedings on the 24 June 1951.

The 24 June was a day of glorious sunshine. After 7.00am Mass we sat down to a breakfast at which was served spaghetti. (A Roman touch) At 10.30 we assisted at a High Mass in St Patrick's Church where His Grace presided and Fr Purcell O.M.I. preached an inspiring sermon on St Emilie.

Dinner was a sumptuous affair and we enjoyed everything. Mother de Sales read to us the message sent by Mother General which was received with acclamation. How proud we felt at being Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition.

At 3.30 pm the ex-pupils, some 400 assembled on the lawn, on the pathways everywhere and the garden party began ... After refreshments were served, we went to the Parish Church to assist at Solemn Benediction. The large picture of St Emilie from the Community Room was placed at the foot of St Joseph's statue in the Sanctuary and the golden rays of the afternoon sun lit up the face of our Holy Mother who seemed to smile on her daughters who were endeavoring to honor her.

In Gisborne, a small country town north of Melbourne:

A large portrait of Mother Emilie was displayed, and Father Nowlan preached an inspiring sermon. We felt our dear Saintly Mother was smiling down on her children so far away from the Mother House and Rome where the glorious celebrations were enjoyed by the representatives of our beloved Congregation from all over the world.

A personal note from Malta:

When the Canonisation of Blessed Emilie De Vialar was to take place, I had expressed my wish to travel with the Sisters and some schoolchildren to Rome. I was 11 years of age and a pupil at St Joseph's in Valetta. Because I was not, yet 12 years of age, I had not been accepted. However, an older cousin of mine said she would take me under her care along with some of her Sisters. This was for me my first trip outside Malta.

We were lodged in California Gardens, Rome. A good distance away from the Vatican, at least that is what it seemed to me. On the day of the Canonisation, we set off at about 4.00 a.m. on foot. As the sun was rising, we could behold the beauty of St Peter's and we were divided into two groups those belonging to St Joseph's and those belonging to the Salesian Sisters. I together with our group were allotted to the right-hand nave in the Basilica. There were many, many Sisters of both Congregations.

When Pius XII proclaimed St Emilie Saint, we children stood on the benches and clapped, and clapped. I remember the banners with the miracles hanging in the

Basilica, and which many years later I recognised in Albums I saw in Manchester. I do not remember much more except that we had an audience with the Pope and that there were some coach outings organised on our way down including a visit to Amalfi.

When I was 14 years of age, somehow, admiring some of the works of some Sisters, I started thinking of the possibility of a religious vocation and personally, I linked it to a hidden, deep calling, which may have perhaps been traced back to the time of the Canonisation! Did Emilie have her eye on me??!! (Sr Cecilia Schembri)

Documentation

The narrative of the Canonization of St Emilie De Vialar has been well documented. Apart from the official records of proceeding there are numerous articles, pamphlets, photos and transcripts of homilies. The Superior Generals letters of this time allow one to follow the long and winding pathway towards Canonization. The early Entre Nous No. 1-11 succinctly summarize events and convey a sense of the joyful spirit which pervaded the preparations, the waiting and eventually the Canonization. A small booklet written by Paula Hoesl has a good summary of the occasion with many great photos.

Several months after the Canonization Mother Theresita again penned a few words to the Sisters:

The Canonization of our Blessed Mother, will I am sure, make our Congregation better known; it will be the means of a greater number of vocations to our Institute, souls of good will, that are ever ready to consecrate themselves to the service of God. The year 1951 is at an end; it has been a year of great consolation for the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition. Let us thank God very fervently for it and for the great graces bestowed upon us.



By Sr. Margaret Anne Beech

A Meeting Arranged by Divine Providence



It was an ordinary early morning. The prayer lamp flickered gently. Everything was quiet. The day's duties waited patiently to begin.

Then, in the silence of my imagination, I saw a radiant and beautiful woman inviting me to come closer.

She was dressed not in the fashion of our century, but carried something far more striking than elegant clothes: a heart ablaze with trust.

"Good morning, who are you?" I asked, my heart beating faster.

She smiled.

"I am Emilie."

Not Saint Emilie of the statues.

Not Saint Emilie of the framed portraits.

Not Saint Emilie of history books.

Simply Emilie: a woman who dared to believe that God's Providence would never abandon her.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of her canonisation, it is worth pausing to ask: What made this woman extraordinary?



- She was not powerful.
- She had lost her wealth.
- She did not possess guarantees for the future.

Yet she crossed oceans of uncertainty armed with little more than faith. Doors closed before her; she knocked again.

Resources disappeared; she trusted again. Difficulties multiplied; she prayed again.

For Emilie, Divine Providence was not a beautiful theory. It was the air she breathed. She believed that if God desired something, He would provide the way; even when the path was hidden.

As I listened to her, a sister entered the room.

For thirty-eight years she has walked the path of religious life in the Congregation founded by Emilie. Thirty-eight years of prayers whispered in faith, ministries offered with generosity, challenges accepted with courage, and countless acts of love known only to God. Yet, like all pilgrims, she still carried questions that remained unanswered.

The two women looked at each other.

- One had founded the Congregation.
- The other had carried its charism through nearly four decades of faithful living.

Separated by centuries, united by vocation.

I wondered what Emilie would say.

Perhaps she would not begin by asking about achievements, projects, or successes.

Perhaps she would simply ask:

"Do you still trust Providence?"

Because that question lies at the heart of every vocation.

Not only at the beginning, when a young woman says "yes" to God's call.

But after ten years.

After twenty years.

After thirty-eight years.

- Do you still believe that God is leading you?
- Do you still entrust your future to Him?
- Do you still dare to walk where He sends you?

The witness of this sister's thirty-eight years answers with a quiet but powerful "yes."

Her fidelity becomes a living continuation of Emilie's dream.

The story of the Congregation is not written only in the past. It is written every day in the lives of sisters who continue saying "yes" when God asks them to trust Him one more time.

As we celebrate seventy-five years since Saint Emilie was declared a saint of the Church, we do more than honour her memory.

We thank God because her spirit is still alive.

- Alive in every sister who serves with compassion.
- Alive in every act of courage.
- Alive in every hidden sacrifice.
- Alive in every renewed "yes."



Saint Emilie, faithful daughter of Providence, continue to show us the path God desires for us.

- When uncertainty clouds our vision, teach us to trust.
- When resources seem insufficient, teach us to believe.
- When challenges arise, teach us to persevere.

And we ask one grace in a special way: obtain for us new vocations.

- May young women hear the same invitation that once echoed in your heart.
- May they discover the joy of belonging completely to God.
- May they have the courage to follow Christ with generosity and freedom.
- And may the Congregation you founded continue to flourish through hearts willing to trust Divine Providence as you did.

Perhaps, if Saint Emilie were to knock on our door today, she would leave us with only one sentence:

“Divine Providence watches over us always”

Seventy-five years after her canonisation, those words remain as fresh, challenging, and hope-filled as ever.

That sister received a clear answer to the questions she had carried for so long.

"Thank you, Emilie," she whispered.

She gently opened her eyes. The vision had faded, but its message remained. With a peaceful smile, she stepped back into the world and the mission she had embraced thirty-eight years earlier. The road ahead was still unknown, but her heart was filled with renewed joy, deeper trust, and the quiet certainty that Divine Providence would continue to unfold God's plan at the right moment and in the right way.

And somewhere, she could almost hear Emilie whispering once more:



**“Divine Providence watches
over us always”**

Vicky Giacaman
Perth WA

Canonical Visit + personal reflection by Nadia sja, Héraclée
community, Greece, 2026

*The inner movements of LOVE that I discover in Saint Emilie, and
how do they challenge me in my own inner life?*

A VISIT TO EMILIE'S



Nadia : TOC, TOC, TOC.



Emilie: *Who is knocking at the door to my heart?*



Nadia: It's your daughter, Nadia. I'm on a mission in Greece with
my older sisters.



Emilie: *What do you wish for, my daughter? I have left you my
spiritual legacy, just as Christ inspired me and called me to live
according to His Word and to make it known.*



Nadia: Yes, exactly – tell me about that passion that drove you
from within. Where did it come from? Who helped you achieve so
much good?



Emilie: *Yes, my daughter, please refer to my letter to Father
Balitrand, dated 21 August 1844. In it you will find one of my
spiritual legacies, namely the inner bass line of each sja.*

**« The Lord kindles within me the very same fire that he lit long ago, and I
rejoice in this grace, for if God had not breathed his Spirit upon me...»**



Nadia: I would like to know how you might help me to experience these inner feelings—this love for myself and for my community—more fully.



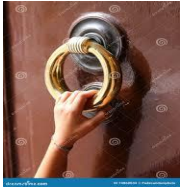
Emilie: *My dear, as I understand it, you're on a mission in Greece, in a community of elderly sisters.*



Nadia: Yes, that's right.



Emilie: *I would advise you to read Saint Paul's letter to the Colossians, chapter 3, verses 12–17. He went through the same experience. He described this movement of love, which flows down from God to humankind, bringing about an inner transformation. It is a love received by grace that must be the driving force of your inner life.*



Nadia: As for me, I need the grace of the Holy Spirit to be guided by him. Could you shed some light on this for me? How did you experience this?



Emilie: *Today, nothing has changed in the world. I encourage you to experience the prosperity of a community. Live constantly in love. Practise charity, and since you are in a retirement home for elderly sisters, I advise you to work once more for the greater glory of God. This time of rest must serve your greatest spiritual benefit, allowing you to deepen your knowledge and perfect yourself in the inner spirit.*



Nadia: Saint Emilie, you mentioned action verbs such as ‘to work anew’, ‘to renew’ and ‘to perfect’. How can I experience this inner movement? You emphasise action verbs that point to the mission.



Emilie: *Listen to me, Nadia. Above all, I urge you to foster a spirit of unity and charity within the home. These sentiments are at the forefront of my mind. Have true feelings of self-sacrifice in your heart, use love as a way of life, and cultivate it outwardly through good example, which is expressed through gentleness and your commitment to unity as a member of the community. »*



Nadia: I therefore understand that my inner life must always be guided by these three: the Word, Peace and Forgiveness.



Emilie: *Yes, exactly. I understand that you are part of a community of older sisters. So it is neither idealised nor stigmatised, but it can still achieve things through forgiveness.*

My daughter, ‘clothe yourselves with love’ – ponder that carefully.



Nadia: Yes, thank you! But these inner struggles have frightened me, and at the same time, I am aware that, as a baptised person, I am chosen and loved by God.



Emilie: *Take heart! I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Paul set out a practical ‘code of conduct’ for every Christian. You are invited to adopt the mindset of Christ. In today’s world, the Church sees this call to unity of life as an opportunity to ensure that faith and action are not separated.*



Nadia: Je I might also add that you too, Émilie, have experienced your own baptism. You have put charity into practice in a tangible way and have allowed the peace of Christ to unite hearts. In this way, you have been sanctified.



Emilie: *Yes, Saint Paul also reminds you that Christians are 'chosen, sanctified and loved by God'. Love begins with receiving God's love.*



Nadia: You quoted Saint Paul to me, who described some rather profound inner stirrings. I'm not used to that. How do you see it?



Emilie: *I suppose that Saint Paul places great emphasis on reconciliation, a vertical movement mentioned in the Letter to the Colossians, chapter 1, verse 21: 'Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil deeds.'*

Paul emphasises that God has reconciled people to himself, transforming strangers into friends.

If you want to take this further, there is an inner movement of love linked to the 'new nature, the new man'. This love is the result of an inner transformation through faith.

I'll quote Paul again, who speaks of a 'horizontal bond' in his letter to the Colossians, chapter 3, verse 14. He describes love as that which 'binds everything together in perfect unity'.



Nadia: Yes. You, too, emphasise love and unity among the SJA.



Emilie: *I would certainly rather own one house than ten, if love, charity and unity were not to be found there.*



Nadia: Love is powerful and acts as a binding force that brings out the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. So, Émilie, what is the driving force behind love?



Emilie: *“Love is motivated by Christ’s act of forgiveness.”*
Colossians 3:13

Let me remind you, Nadia: for Paul, love is an identity received from God (vertical) that manifests itself in communal unity (horizontal).



Nadia: Thank you Emilie.



Emilie: *Goodbye, dear Nadia. Lots of love.*



Coffee in Héraclée

A conversation about care and memory

Fabienne : Hello, Sister Nadia! I'm so happy to see you. I've been wanting to learn more about your daily life for ages... Tell me, what exactly does your work here in Greece involve?

Sister Nadia : Hello, Fabienne! It's so nice to see you. Listen, I'd like to invite you to visit our community in Heraclea. Come on in—let's settle in comfortably with a nice cup of coffee, and if you'd like, we can spend a few moments praying in our chapel.

Fabienne: Thank you for such a warm welcome... I notice that the community is mainly made up of older sisters. What is your role in caring for them?

Sister Nadia: It's true, they've gotten older. But you know, Fabienne, having these older sisters with us is a tremendous blessing for our entire congregation.

Fabienne: It's wonderful to see it like this. Tell me a little more: how do you balance your role as a nurse with your calling as a sister living among them?

Sister Nadia : Living here as a Sister of Saint Joseph of the Apparition (SJA) alongside my elder sisters means, above all, embodying compassion and spiritual care in my daily life. This allows me to build very deep, close relationships with them. By sharing their home, I can provide them with holistic care that goes far beyond mere medical treatment. My role as a nurse goes beyond



caring for the sick body. Over time, I have come to realize that there is an essential psychological and spiritual dimension to it.

Fabienne: What do you mean? How does that work?

Sister Nadia : It requires immense effort and constant fraternal support. The most important thing for me is to move at their pace, without ever hurting their feelings or undermining their independence.



Respect for their human dignity takes precedence over everything else. When I care for them, I listen to their life stories, their missionary journeys... To me, these stories are sacred... This story is very dear to me. In the face of dependency, memory loss, or fatigue, I am learning patience and adaptability. I

try to create a genuine atmosphere of emotional security. Ultimately, care becomes a true daily ritual, where every small gesture is imbued with love.

Fabienne: It's beautiful... You can really feel that caring for others becomes a prayer. Are there any passages from the Gospel or biblical examples that help guide you in this ministry?

Sister Nadia : Oh, you know, I draw all my strength from prayer, the Holy Scriptures, and the Eucharist. Spiritually, I draw on the biblical duty to honour the elderly. Leviticus 19:32 says: « *You shall rise before grey hair and honour the person of the elderly.* » The elderly are pillars of wisdom. And then there is the example of Christ himself: the Gospel calls us to care for the most vulnerable. To serve an elderly sister is to serve Christ himself.

In the Church, our elders are invaluable. They are the guardians of our family and cultural roots and, in our case, of the Congregation's history. C'est une transmission intergénérationnelle vivante. It is a living intergenerational bond. Even though they may be physically

frail, they remain a great source of support through their prayers, their advice, and their willingness to listen. Their old age is a fruitful stage of life, marked by a deep inner strength.



Fabienne: That's a beautiful vision of old age. But in practical terms, what is daily life like at the convent? How are the sisters still able to remain active despite their age?

Sister Nadia: They are incredibly active in their own way! They actively work to prevent one another from feeling isolated. For example, they visit the sister who is on oxygen day and night to keep her company, read spiritual texts to her, or share news from the congregation and our European province. We help one another: we push a sister's wheelchair so she can attend Mass, Vespers, meetings, or recreational activities.

We really take the time to prepare our communal prayers so we can savour God's Word. And then, each one has her own little task, depending on her strengths: washing dishes, setting the table, answering the phone, keeping in touch with the schools, or picking a few flowers from the garden to decorate the chapel.

Fabienne: It's an impressive organization—so compassionate. Are there specific rules within your order regarding the role of elderly sisters?

Sister Nadia : Quite so; it is enshrined in our Constitutions, in Article 106. It states explicitly that. « *The elderly sisters and those who are ill, by their lives and by their spiritual and apostolic experience, contribute to the building up of the community and share in its mission. The Sisters surround them with respect and with sisterly and tender attention* ». This article clearly shows just how essential their

presence is. The Congregation, particularly our province of Europe, relies heavily on their prayers and the sacrifices they offer in silence.

Fabienne: We're actually celebrating the 75th anniversary of your founder's canonization. Tell me, Nadia, what moves you most about Saint Émilie de Vialar?

Sister Nadia : Her entire life inspires me, but there is one thing she said that is engraved in my heart, and it speaks of unity. She insisted so strongly that we remain united. She said: « *May this spirit of unity and charity reign throughout the congregation! I have often told my sisters that instead of eleven or twelve houses, I would rather have just one than see the spirit of charity not reign in the others. These feelings are foremost in my heart...* ». This call for unity is what I strive to live out here in Héraclée.

Fabienne: That's a wonderful message for her feast of canonisation. So... can I count on all of you to pray for me?

Sister Nadia: You can definitely count on that—I promise!

Fabienne: Thank you so much, Nadia. I'm truly touched by your story and by Saint Emilie's words. I have to go now, but thank you again for the coffee and for this refreshing moment. See you very soon!

Sister Nadia: Goodbye, Fabienne! Listen, be sure to mark this in your calendar: I'll be waiting for you on June 29. That's when our annual spiritual retreat will end; we'll celebrate Saint Emilie and renew our vows. Big hug, and see you very soon!

June 3, 2026

Community of Héraclée -Greece

Sr Nadia LAHOUD



My Letter to Saint Emilie de Vialar

When I was young, I didn't know you very well. All I knew was your name and the picture of your radiant face hanging in the middle of the school hall, and your name got lost among the crowd of saints we knew by name from those around us. For this one was my mother's patron, that one my father's, another my grandmother's, and yet another my neighbour's; even the bucket at the well had a patron we would call upon if its rope broke and we used a hook to pull it out of the well. Therefore, we have fallen short in our duty toward you.

And after we grew up and went our separate ways, your memory would come and go like the joy of a holiday, the first half of which was wasted on a long, boring festive Mass (for me at the time), and we would make up for it with a Jerusalem cake whose scent and flavour still delight our memories.

I don't know exactly why we didn't get to know you well. Was it a shortcoming on the part of your missionaries (which I doubt), or was it our own indifference born of ignorance and lack of awareness?

What matters is that your care and the will of your missionaries in the Congregation of Saint Joseph brought us together again. They built a home founded on hope, love, and the pursuit of cultivating lilies to spread the fragrance of your message to this world. Some of them taught us through their own hands in the acquisition of knowledge, learning, and refinement, and some we have come to know recently, from whom we have learned perseverance, hard work, and generosity. (mostly sister Sara) They have been the best at translating the message into words and deeds, and in that we have found great joy.

So we agreed to be your friends, but how could we claim your friendship when we knew so little about you? We had to learn about your life story and delve into the goals of your spiritual, humanitarian, and social mission.

And truly, this mission was not foreign to us; for if I (speaking for myself) was negligent in my knowledge of preaching and guidance, I had already encountered it in the conduct and actions of your missionaries, our beloved sisters. They were role models in conveying the message with ease, through their awareness, love, and diligence in building the individual spiritually, culturally, humanely, and socially. And they succeeded in that.

And today, years after our encounters as your friends, and on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of your canonisation, we dare to ask for your intercession in the following matters:

- May the lilies of your field multiply and spread their fragrance throughout the world
- Spread the true faith that is lived out in imitation of our Savior Jesus Christ
- Peace for our homelands, for wars have worn us down

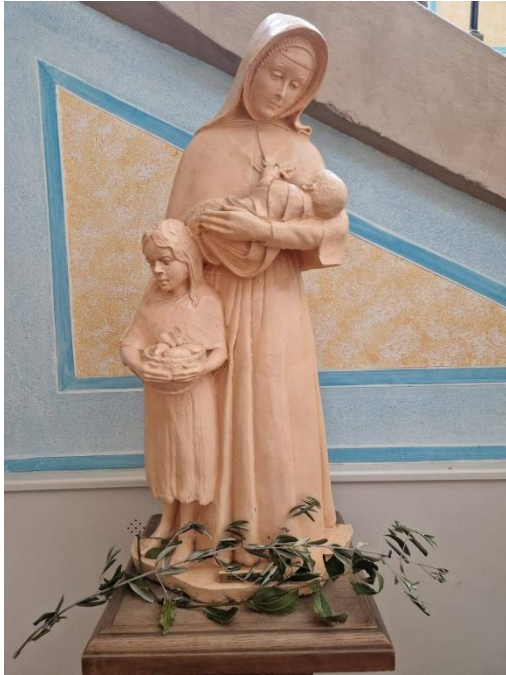
And may our beloved sisters, wherever they may be, be blessed with every good thing

And may the friends of Émilie de Vialar be blessed with every good thing.



A friend of Saint Emily
Jordan

Celebration of the 63rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations
Latin Church of Cyprus



The Latin Church in Cyprus experienced nearly 350 years without a Latin Bishop. Today, it is embarking on a new chapter, grounded in the conviction that fostering vocations must be a central priority for the continuation of evangelization in this land of Saint Barnabas and Saint Paul. In doing so, the Church seeks to carry forward the mission of these great Apostles.

Last year, the Latin Church in Cyprus launched its first Vocational Year under the theme: *“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”* This initiative reflects a renewed commitment to nurturing a culture of discernment and openness to God’s call.

The Pastoral Care of Vocations is currently entrusted to a team of four members, including two sisters from the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition: Sr. Bed Noel who is part the Province of Europe and Sr. Elizabeth who belong to the Latin American Province and is presently serving in Cyprus as part of her missionary experience before continuing to the International Juniorate in Gaillac.

A unique aspect of the Latin Church in Cyprus is its observance of two Fourth Sundays of Easter—one according to the Latin liturgical calendar and the other following the Orthodox tradition. For this reason, on April 25–26, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations was celebrated at Saint Nicolas Parish. The gathering brought together consecrated men and women, priests from Jordan, Jerusalem, Syria, Malta, and Cyprus, as well as married couples.

This was a joyful and grace-filled experience. Each community welcomed the consecrated with faith and gratitude. There was a strong desire among participants to deepen their understanding of their personal vocation, inspired by the testimonies shared. Although reaching all four parish

communities—Lefkoşa, Lefke, Kyrenia, and Famagusta—was challenging, it remains essential to maintain a visible and supportive presence among this remote portion of the People of God in a predominantly non-Christian context.

The same celebration continued on May 2–3 at Our Lady of Graces Parish in Larnaca, with participation from parishioners of Paphos, Limassol, and Nicosia. On Saturday, the program began with a Vigil Mass for vocations, followed by Eucharistic adoration, a time of worship, and moving testimonies from consecrated persons, priests, and a married couple.

On Sunday, the event expanded into a “vocational village,” where representatives from various religious and secular institutes, catechists, and prayer groups presented their charisms and missions. These encounters were meaningful and encouraged all present to pray for vocations and to support those who have already responded to God’s call.

The celebration concluded with a Sending Forth Mass presided over by His Excellency Bishop Bruno Varriano, who invited the faithful to recognize the beauty, richness, and holiness of consecrated and religious life within the Church in Cyprus.



My 20 years in religious life: 'The Missionary Experience with Young People'

From catechetical ministry to youth ministry, including the Young Sisters' Service

On completing my training in pastoral and catechetical theology in 1919, I had the joy of joining the diocesan team for Catechesis in the Diocese of Créteil, whilst also taking on responsibility for a community of four young Sisters and serving on the Executive Committee of CORREF-Jeunes in the Île-de-France region. My four years passed very quickly, filled with joy and many encounters, and with projects that we were able to bring to fruition. This threefold mission also allowed me to travel, both in spirit and in person, throughout the eight dioceses and our communities in the Paris region, beyond the Val-de-Marne, until the day my provincial asked me to leave it to meet another need of the Church in southern Italy.



Divine Providence saw to it that I did not go alone, but that I was accompanied by young people from the diocesan delegation to take part in the opening prayer of the Synod of Bishops in Rome. It was a missionary transition for me, from catechesis to youth ministry, about which I knew very little, even though I had a rough idea as I had been to World Youth Day in Madrid in 2011 and in Krakow in 2016.

I took an intensive Italian language course for a term in Florence before joining the community in Policoro, in southern Italy. Once I arrived, I learnt new ways of working with young people in pastoral care, collaborating with a team of three relatively young priests who are very involved in all parish activities. In this context, my role could only be to assist them in carrying out projects that they had already established or planned themselves. It was quite comfortable for me.



I also had the pleasure of being involved with the SJA Young Sisters' Service in Europe, first as a member and later as coordinator of the 'Cercle Allez'. In that role, I had to travel to quite a few countries across Europe...

A new role: Youth ministry at St JO and the parish of Gaillac

Two years later, I was called back to France for a new assignment, this time not in the Paris region but in Gaillac, to serve as 'youth chaplain for the whole of the Gaillac parish and St JO College'. As soon as I arrived, Fr Gaël, the parish priest, welcomed me with open arms into the heart of the Gaillac parish. I immediately felt at home, and this helped me to overcome my homesickness for Policoro, as well as for Créteil, which I had left behind with great sadness.

Today, despite these changes, I don't have time to get bored. Quite the opposite, in

fact; it opens up new horizons for me. For, through youth ministry, I also rediscover a sense of youthfulness within my current community, which is a 'house of formation' where young Sisters are preparing for their final vows. Whenever there is a need, I make myself available, particularly with regard to administrative paperwork, health matters, the French language, liturgical hymns...



As for the young people, I'm already discovering a new side to Pasto-jeunes—one that's less vibrant than the groups I used to meet in the Diocese of Créteil. I'm also discovering different ways of supporting them.

A few weeks ago, I took part in a pilgrimage to Rome with a group of sixth-formers from St JO, known as 'Emily's Friends', to explore the spirituality of the Congregation more deeply through visits to various sites, following in the footsteps of St Emily, as well as meetings with leaders of the Congregation who shared the stories of their own vocations with us....

But above all, I would like to talk a little more at length about this provincial gathering, known as 'Aquero', which we have just attended with young people from the secondary school chaplaincy. It was my first experience with teenagers. I thought I was there to support them. In the end, it was actually they who helped me to walk, to slow down my pace and my rhythm. In fact, the very day after we arrived in Lourdes, I had my first fall, then another later that same day, which meant I couldn't walk on my own. Our young people looked after me by offering me their arms, giving me plenty of advice, and finding somewhere for me to sit during the flashmob, right in the blazing sun.

After an evening of worship led by the band 'Praise', we suggested they say about ten Hail Marys in front of the grotto. Their spontaneous reaction still makes me laugh. 'Oh, are we saying the whole rosary?' It's true that these young people are growing in every way. They happily take part in the activities on offer, but they don't hesitate to demand their freedom, even going so far as to want to define our role as mentors in their own way. They even know how to use manipulative tactics to get what they want. At our next meeting, we'll take some time to share the moments that have left a lasting impression on us. Ils m'ont appris quelques expressions du midi avec un accent propre « *Hein, bien, enfin* » me disant qu'ils feront tout pour que j'arrive vraiment à m'exprimer avec cet accent au retour à la maison.



I remember the words I spoke during the parish's opening Mass when I first arrived here in Gaillac! 'It is no doubt because Saint Émilie would like me, as part of my life's journey, to get to know her hometown and its region well enough. I don't know what I can offer you, but I am sure that with you and thanks to all of you, I will be able to deepen my faith and bear witness to it, proclaiming God's infinite love, especially to young people, just as Saint Emilie might have done in her day.'



Today, I'm sure Saint Émilie is pleased to see me: walking around her beautiful region, getting used to the Gaillac accent thanks to these young people, even if I'm not doing much... I'm really sorry I couldn't go on the pilgrimage to Taizé with the school pupils, because of Mum's death...

And I would like to thank everyone who is helping me to grow in my faith alongside young people.

I shall conclude with today's psalm, giving thanks to God with the refrain... "Your love, Lord, I sing of it without end"!

1 May 2026

Gaillac Community

Silver Jubilee Celebration

I offer my sincere thanks to all the sisters in the Australia Delegation for their hard work and support in making my silver jubilee celebration possible.

“Remain in me.” The word of God has always strengthened me on my life’s journey. On 2nd May 2026, I celebrated 25 years in religious life. I believe it is only by God’s blessings and His boundless love that I have been sustained to this day. With a humble heart, I thank God for the blessings of each day.

In reflecting upon my journey as a religious, I recognize that the path has not always been without difficulty. It has been shaped by moments of both joy and trial, each contributing to my growth and deepening commitment. Throughout these experiences, I have been sustained by the companionship of those with whom I share my life—the sisters of our congregation. I am particularly indebted to the sisters closest to me, whose generosity of presence, understanding, and support has enabled me to persevere. I remain profoundly grateful for the steadfast encouragement and solidarity of all the sisters.

My 25th anniversary was celebrated beautifully and meaningfully at St Pius X Church, Manning, WA, with the help of Father Anthony Vu, the parish priest, and all the parishioners. They were joyful to take part, as such a celebration had not been held in their parish before.



MAY HIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN ALL WE DO.
ST. EMILIE DE VIALAR

Dear doctors and friends of the hospital,

We regret to inform you of the passing of our dear

Sister Thérèse Penhard,

Who worked for more than 50 years in the service of the sick with tireless dedication, in silence, discretion, humility, and above all with her deep faith.

In memory of her life, fully lived and wholly given to God and suffering humanity,

**We will celebrate a Mass on Sunday,
26 April 2026 at 10:00 a.m.**

in the hospital chapel, praying that God may grant her eternal peace and that the light of His Face may shine upon her.

May her memory be eternal.

The Sisters of the Hospital



*« Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground
and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat;
but if it dies,
it produces much fruit. »
John 12,24*

Funeral of Sister Thérèse Penhard
A message of welcome read by the family on 21 April 2026



There are some lives that pass quietly, yet leave a deep and lasting mark on the hearts of those they have touched. Aunt Thérèse was one of them.

Throughout her life, she devoted herself with great simplicity. As a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition, and during her nearly 60 years of service at Saint Louis Hospital in Aleppo, Syria, she was a discreet yet essential presence: a woman wholly devoted to others, attentive to everyone, faithful in everyday life as well as in the most trying times. She cared for, listened to and accompanied the sick in a country ravaged by war and suffering. Where many would have been tempted to flee, she remained, humbly, in the service of life and of the most vulnerable. Her faith was expressed in these simple gestures, repeated day after day, in silent and constant fidelity.

She often used to say, “By the grace of God.” These simple words sum up the essence of what drove her in the depths of her being: a voluntary commitment, a mission she had taken on, a profound trust, and that way of accepting everything as a gift, without ever claiming anything for herself. Her life remains a testament to humility, faithfulness and self-denial.

Dear Aunt Thérèse, we are here—your family, along with those who knew you, loved you, and crossed paths with you over the years. We are here, grieving your passing, but also filled with deep gratitude for your life. You have joined Grandad and Grandma, your dear parents, and Marie-Rose, your older sister—all of whom you loved deeply. From them, you had inherited a simple and upright way of life, a discreet concern for others, which you carried throughout your life in your work but also by forging a deeply rooted bond with your brothers and sisters, which neither distance nor the passing years have weakened. For us, your nephews and nieces, you were a precious, attentive and faithful presence. Even from afar, you never forgot anyone.

You knew how to reach out to everyone with simple gestures: a text message, a card, a discreet but thoughtful gesture. And then there were those moments when you came back to be with us, whenever life in Syria allowed you a brief respite. You would reunite with your family with simplicity, without fanfare, and you would take your place again naturally, as if you had never left. We remember your gaze, both gentle and mischievous... And that phrase you would say to us with a smile: “Just a moment, butterfly.” A way all your own of soothing, of making us wait, of restoring things to the peace of the moment.

Today, we entrust you to God, dear Thérèse. In the faith that guided you, in the hope that sustained you, in the love you sowed around you. And we believe that your memory will never fade. A gentle light, now entrusted to God, which continues to illuminate our lives.

May the Lord welcome you into His peace and guide you with His endless light

Farewell, Thérèse

A few words from Aleppo to be read at her funeral

Sister Thérèse,

The community in Aleppo that you loved so dearly, the doctors, the staff and your friends miss you terribly and mourn with us as you have passed from this earth into the **Father's house**.

Today, though far away, we are close to you; we are here to give thanks to God for your life, which you **devoted entirely to Him** in the service of the sick, where, with unwavering dedication, you worked, cared for and supported others for over 55 years...

You remained faithful to the very end, with devotion, in a love both received and given, in which there was no shortage of sacrifice and self-denial.

Together with you, we experienced times of joy and sorrow, yet you always had a look of peace about you, an inner serenity that gave us the strength to move forward with confidence and in surrender to God's will.

Cet You lived with this sense of letting go right to the end; the painful choice you made

to spend your final years with your family because of your fragile health—as you did not want to be a burden on the community—saddens us; we regretted your departure, yet you remained present amongst us, you left an indelible mark on everyone's heart, for to us all you were **'a sister' and 'a mother'** through your kindness, wisdom, discretion and thoughtfulness.

Now that you live in the Communion of Saints, continue to watch over the people of Aleppo and intercede for true peace. Continue to intercede for us; pray for us before Him as we look forward to seeing you again one day in the glory of the risen Christ.

Farewell, Sr Thérèse, and thank you again!



Sr Arcangela et Sr Anne-Marie

St Louis Hospital, Aleppo, 17 April 2026



A few words during Mass for the repose of the soul of
Sr. Thérèse Penhard, who passed away on April 17, 2026
Sunday, April 26, 2026
Chapel of St. Louis Hospital in Aleppo



Dear doctors, dear friends,

Thank you for being here. This Sunday's Easter liturgy invites us to celebrate the Good Shepherd and also the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. It is no coincidence that we are commemorating a great, strong and faithful vocation: our dear Sister Thérèse, who has gone to be with the One to whom she dedicated her entire life in the service of the sick in this hospital, where she lived for over 55 years.

Departure, death, is always a parting, a source of pain and sorrow, but we are certain that she lives on in the communion of saints. We give thanks to God for her life, which she devoted entirely to others until her very last breath.

We give thanks to God for the gift that the Lord has bestowed upon our community and the people of Aleppo. With her we have experienced times of joy and times of sorrow, of renunciation and sacrifice, yet in her there was always a look of peace, inner serenity and hope that gave us the strength to move forward with confidence, living God's present moment in surrender to His will.

She lived with that sense of abandonment right to the end. The painful decision she made to go to France to live in a community of elderly nuns because of her fragile health, always telling us that she didn't want to be a burden on the community. It caused us great sorrow; we regretted her departure, but she remained present amongst us, leaving an indelible mark on everyone's heart in the various departments of the hospital where she worked and during her final posting in the cardiology ward.

Sister Thérèse led a quiet, unassuming life, saying little, yet, according to the testimonies we have heard in recent days, she was to everyone 'a sister' and 'a mother' through her kindness, wisdom and thoughtfulness. The spirit of St Emilie was embodied in her:

How deeply satisfying it is to be able to bring joy to someone
and to bring relief to those who suffer. Saint Emilie de Vialar



Now that she is with Him, her happiness will be endless, for we believe that unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Let us join together in prayer that the Lord may grant her to behold his face of light in eternal peace, that she may intercede for us and for the people of Aleppo whom she loved so dearly, and that she may continue to watch over this mission as we look forward to meeting again one day in the glory of the Risen Christ.

A tribute read at the funeral of Sister Thérèse Penhard

Sister Thérèse, you were born here in Plouguenast on 9 March 1944 into a family of seven children.



From a very early age, you wanted to become a nun, and you joined our Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition.

It was in 1962 that you left for Marseille to begin your postulancy, and in 1964 that you took your vows. You were 20 years old.

Your first and only posting was in Aleppo, Syria, at our St Louis Hospital, where you spent almost your entire life – more than 55 years.

These health challenges will lead you to decide to join our community here in Plouguenast, where you will arrive in 2023.

We have been delighted to have you with us. You were thoughtful and reflective, a true sister, worthy of our foundress, Émilie de Vialar.

But let us hear the testimony of the Sisters who lived with you in Aleppo.

**The Community of Plouguenast
21 April 2026**



Sr. Janet Arrowsmith SJA

25th April 1947 - 5th April 2026

“Proclaim the wonders of the Lord among all the peoples “Ps.95.

Janet was a dedicated Sister of St Joseph of the Apparition for 45 years proclaiming “the wonders of the Lord among all the peoples” whom she served, blending a medical career as a doctor with profound spiritual leadership, theological study, and international formation work. She loved the Lord and joyfully followed him wherever she was called to serve according to the need.

Her vocation Story at the age of 30 years whilst serving as a Doctor in the hills of Yorkshire she discerned a strong call to surrender her life to the Lord as a missionary Sister of St Joseph of the Apparition. After her noviciate in Dublin and Rome, she made her first profession in the Formation House in Rome in June 1981 surrounded by SJA sisters from all over the world. She now belonged to the International family of the Congregation and continued to proclaim his name and sing his praises.

Sent on mission to the English / Irish Province, she continued her religious training for another five years, immersing herself into the missions of Wythenshawe, Mosside, and Bowdon Vale communities, serving as a doctor in the local hospitals and participating in many pastoral activities. In spite of many struggles, trails and obstacles, her vocation remained strong and sure, affirmed by an intense time of prayer, study and reflection. Throughout her life she contemplated the mystery of the incarnation and the majesty of God in the universe. She was caught up in the wonder of it all... Loved -called and chosen. She celebrated her final Profession here in this Church of St. Vincent's on 14th June 1986 with many sisters, friends and family members. It was a great day for all.

Her English Catholic Heritage: Living in international communities all her life and serving many peoples in Manchester and Liverpool, she was proud of her English Catholic heritage linked to the martyr St Edmond Arrowsmith. She celebrated his feast day and St George' day with great gusto. On St Patrick s day with many of her Irish sisters she joined in the dancing and singing.

Janet was a welcoming person, had a good sense of humour and a great capacity for fun and laughter. She



could entertain easily with songs and stories and a bit of drama. Her Christmas celebrations in Liverpool were famous and funny. She cared for her sisters and those in her care with attention, kindness and firmness. Over the years she carried the burden of her fragilities lightly and never complained as her health and mobility declined.

Family and friends: Janet was devoted to her family and cared for her parents until the end of their days and maintained connection with her brothers David, Geoff, and sister Joey throughout their lives and with their families. She was actively involved in the lives of her nieces and nephews, taking pride in their career achievements and never missing family events. She held her family close in her personal and community prayers.

She also had an "immense" capacity for friendship and was a faithful friend to many. She went on painting holidays with old school friends when possible. Her interests were vast and varied, she loved painting, reading sewing, cooking. She loved technology and keeping up to date in the latest scientific discoveries. She was always discovering something new to marvel about.

Available for mission: Responding to different calls, she served simply and



humbly in many leadership and administration roles both in the Community, Province and at Congregational level. She represented the Province many times in the General Chapter where her wisdom, deep theological thinking and practical experience of community Leadership was appreciated by all

She was a founder member of the Lay Associate movement

and organised many national and international gatherings and retreats. Spirituality, Fun and laughter mixed well together for Janet. **She served the Charismatic New Dawn community** for many years. She regularly joined other organisations in pilgrimages to Lourdes serving as a doctor and joining in the community activities. Janet was always ready for a new challenge. After emptying and closing the Liverpool community, settling in Wythenshawe, she accepted a new mission to serve the Congregation in France. She embraced her vulnerabilities and set out for a new adventure supported by her sisters.

Inspiration and guide Janet was a very a gifted teacher and appointed as one of the leaders of the international Formation community in Gaillac, she used her "doctrinal studies" to inspire and educate new sisters about our Charism and spirituality. She is remembered as a "fount of knowledge" and a mentor who shared her deep spiritual insights with everyone from young sisters to lay groups. She continued her teaching online when she moved back to Bowdon Vale. She was a Missionary to the end.

Singing The psalms: She loved to sing the liturgy wherever she was. As Janet died on Easter Sunday Morning unexpectedly, I imagine that she continues to proclaim the wonders of the Lord with the heavenly hosts, and with her family and friends and all her sisters who have gone before her. May she enjoy eternal bliss and sing forever of the love of her Lord.

Sr Anita Callaghan (Her companion on the way) Rome 7 May 2026



Sister Paul Fovet



Sister Paule was born in the Lyon region in 1927. Thanks to a family friend who would later become her godfather, she asked to be baptised at the age of seven. From that day onwards, her faith grew stronger and she eventually decided to become a nun, despite the opposition of her father, who had only this one daughter left.

She joined a Congregation that focuses particularly on young girls and women who come to work in Paris, far from their families. They are welcomed into hostels where the Sisters support them, create a family atmosphere that fosters friendships, teach them about their rights, and, for those who wish, help them to live out their Christian faith.

Through her openness and her willingness to listen, Sr Paule was a great help to these young people in the development of their personal and spiritual lives. One of them recalls: **“She knew how to help us grow by giving us responsibilities, by ‘forcing’ us to go beyond ourselves. At the same time, she showed us great kindness. I had some wonderful times with her!”** And another said, **“She helped me in an extraordinary way. She was very human, very attentive, and we also felt she was close to the Lord.”**

She has often served as a role model who inspired some of these young women to answer the call to religious life; today, they look back with gratitude on what she gave them, particularly an openness to the world, to the Church of Vatican II, and to a renewal of the style of religious life.

This is no doubt why, in 1966, Sr Paule was sent to Corsica, to L’Île-Rousse, to a new community dedicated not only to young people but also to sharing the faith. **“With Sr Paule, catechesis gained new momentum, both in the parish and beyond, in the surrounding villages, with home visits to families, introducing nursery school children to the faith, and so on,”** says a Sister from that community.

But don’t think that Sister Paule was all serious!!! She loved life, and at a time when the Sisters didn’t go to the beach (because of their habits),

she knew how to find a quiet spot to enjoy a swim. Or stay up all night to watch the first man on the moon!!!

And what can one say about Sr Paule as an artist! Again, in L'Île-Rousse: **"With her arrival, the girls' home, the nursery school and the various parish groups benefited from her artistic talents: large panels, sketches and more elaborate paintings breathed new life into our rooms."**

Recalling the time when Sr Paule used to come and teach painting to the residents of this home, one of them said: **'I really loved it when she taught us painting and art history. She gave her all and helped us appreciate this art form. Some of our paintings are on display in the corridors. It is to give thanks that I invite us all.'**

'Sister Paule has returned to the Father; she who was an artist is now immersed in wonder and heavenly praise.'

And finally, here's what Catherine, her art teacher, has to say

**Dear Paule, my dearest Paule,
I was your art teacher and we became friends, true friends.
I accompanied you here to Marseille just over 14 years ago,
and we both knew that you would spend the rest of your life here,
far from Lyon, but we had no idea that this final chapter of your life
would last so long.**

**I wish to bear witness to your keen yet humble intelligence,
your incredible patience, and your quiet, absolute faith.**

**I know that you are entering into true Life, that which is with
Christ, and this fills my heart with joy.**

**I hope to be worthy of all that you have given me during these
twenty years of unwavering friendship.**

Blessed be the Lord, our God.

Sister Paule, the Sisters of your congregation, both here and elsewhere, bid you 'FAREWELL' and pray that the Lord may reveal His face to you, so that you may watch over them and all those you loved here on earth.

Marseille Ste Émilie
13 Mai 2026

(From the family)

From Marie Ange, Françoise et Marie Claire

Rolande, you have just left us and are now reunited with the members of the POTIER and PLOUVIER families – your ‘real family’, as you yourself put it on 2 August 2012 during your diamond jubilee (60 years of religious life) at the church in Lesquin.

Your secret baptism at Saint Bartholomew’s Church in Lesquin, arranged by my great-grandmother, Marie Potier, led you to 74 years of religious life and positions of responsibility within your community.

But the bonds you formed with the POTIER and PLOUVIER families up until the age of seven were never broken, despite the war and the distances between you. Until 1939, you spent your two-month school holidays with the POTIER family and took an interest in the work on the PLOUVIER farm.

As early as 1945, you were delighted to be reunited with the family of your godmother and godfather, Auguste. You managed to forge a close and affectionate bond with his children, one that has endured to this day.

Whenever I went to see my son, I always made sure to pop in to see you.

I remember how religious communities changed over the years, as reflected in the different outfits you wore: from the nun’s ‘habit’ around 1964 to ‘civilian’ clothing, and finally to a nun dressed just like everyone else.

Repose-toi maintenant tu l’as bien mérité.

I can never thank you enough for everything you have given me in my life, for your wise and unwavering support; you were ‘like a mother’ to me. The same was true for my younger sister Françoise.

You are no longer in pain, and that is our consolation.

We know that from up there you will continue to watch over this family you loved so dearly.

Rest now; you have earned it.

Marseille Ste Émilie
13 Mai 2026

(From a former student)

Marseille 8 Mai 2026

Dear Sisters,

I am writing to offer you my support during this time of sorrow, which is also a time of bright hope, particularly during this Easter season and as we approach Ascension Day.

Sister Paule has returned to the Father's embrace; she who was an artist and a woman of wonder has now entered into heavenly praise.

I really loved it when she taught us painting and art history. She gave herself completely and helped us appreciate this art. Some of our paintings are in the corridors. I invite us all to give thanks.

Thank you, dear Sisters, for your witness, your presence, and for the genuine sense of community and sisterly support you have given me.

I send you my warmest sisterly greetings. May Mary, the Gate of Heaven, who was present at the Upper Room, accompany you until the coming of the Holy Spirit.

With best regards

Élisabeth. G
Resident EHPAD Ste Émilie



*In memory of Sr Rosita Azzopardi from
Rabat Community
7th May 1946 – 1st June 2026*

A Life of devotedness and Service, a life of
care and love.

After her Novitiate in Marseilles, Sr Rosita made her first Profession in the Congregation in 1967 and she was sent to Lyons in France and then to England for her Juniorate and studies.

After her Formation, her main mission was teaching in Malta and abroad. In our Schools, she was a great asset, using mostly her talents in preparing different activities and liturgical celebrations.

Rosita had an attraction for the foreign missions and gave herself wholeheartedly when she had the occasion to serve the poor, refugees and migrants. She also treasured her missionary experiences in India and Ethiopia.

One of Sr Rosita's strong experiences was her care for the Refugees which was crucial in Malta at one time. She committed herself wholeheartedly to them not only giving them money she used to collect for them but also accompanying them, helping them to improve their situation.

She contacted firms and factories to provide for them clothes, food, shoes, etc. She also managed to find shelter for them where to live or sleep. She would even walk alone even late at night to the Refugee Centre in Marsa. Her main intention was to help them regain their dignity. Very often, Sister managed, with her love and care, to see many of the them settled in life.

Sr Rosita also formed a group of Maltese youngsters, boys and girls who were eager to make a missionary experience in Ethiopia. During this mission, the group also met the families of the Ethiopian Refugees who were in Malta.

Sr Rosita was brave and she defended her ideals. She did not hesitate to speak out and act according to her beliefs.

Even though she spent the last years of her life in bed and in suffering, she bore this in faith, keeping alive her missionary spirit and her interest in all that was going on in the world and the Congregation. Her interior peace touched the heart of all especially that of her Carers.

Homily by Fr. Cecil AZZOPARDI S.J. (Rosita's Brother)
at Funeral Mass of **Sr Rosita Azzopardi** 3rd June 2026

My Dear Sister, Brothers, Dear relatives and friends,

On receiving the news through my sister Anna, that Rosita had passed away, I was aware, even as Anna was still talking to me, that a spontaneous serene peace was flowing in my heart.

And I knew that this was not simply because Rosita could now rest peacefully, after these long years during which she was totally bedridden. No it was not just that. But it was a continuation of that inner peace that Rosita radiated from her bed even through her fragile broken body.

Rosita was not always like this. She was an intelligent woman, very active, always alert in her mind even till her very last breath. She knew what she wanted and nothing would stop her until she got it. She was a perfectionist very principled even at times verging on a rather rigid attitude. And so initially it was not always easy for the helpers who were caring for her.

But God completes us before he takes us. As the days, months and years passed, and Rosita became more and more confined to her bed, there gradually unfolded from within her a serene surrendering spirit that also filled the room she was in, and touched those who visited her. How often we her brothers and sister remarked that we never heard a word of complaint from 'Rosy' as our deceased brother Joseph used to lovingly refer to her.

Yesterday when we brothers and sister gathered around her life-less body, together with her religious community and the wonderful lay staff who so generously and lovingly took care of her, my brother remarked, *'more than missing Rosita, what I will miss most is the grace I felt whenever I entered her room!'*

Here in this her room, as her body became more and more fragile and she became more and more weak, her inner peace found the space to radiate even more transparently. And from her bed, in her total brokenness, she started not only witnessing to the strength of life, but also became a counter-cultural witness to a culture of death that tries to force itself upon us.

How often in similar situations one hears questions and remarks such as, - Is this what we were born for? Is this life? X'hajja din?

Yes, it is true this does not make sense. And let us not try to fool ourselves by trying to make sense. Because life like anything that we experience deeply, beautifully and fulfillingly, does not make sense. This is why we cannot define what love is, we cannot define what peace is, we cannot define what life is. We might faultingly attempt to explain it but not define it, because it is only the experience of love, only the experience of peace and life that then sets free an energy within us that gives meaning beyond what does not makes sense. This is what ultimately makes the fundamental difference between living meaningfully or just existing.

Like the crucified risen Jesus who shows us the way to life, Rosita did not run away from the cross, she did not waste energy in fighting it, she did not even try to overstep it, but she fully absorbed her brokenness in her very being, as Jesus did on the cross, and allowed it to be penetrated with that spring of life that is present in each and every one of us, and which is nothing else but the very touch of God in us who is the source of all life, the source of our life.

This is why I often found myself saying to myself, that if I accepted euthanasia, I would not have had the right to step into her room, because that would have been a profanation of the life Rosita was witnessing to.

And so, with Rosita I want to celebrate life, and express my gratitude to her for being a tangible witness to what Jesus, - *the way, the truth and the life*, - assured us through his death and resurrection – **that life can break through any expressions of death, ... and give meaning. This is the faith that our presence here wants to witness to.**

Less than a month ago Rosita celebrated her 80th birthday, and for the occasion, my brother Raymond composed a poem that captured very penetratingly and sacredly the mystery of her life. He has adapted it for this occasion and I invite him to read it out for us.