



SAINT MARY EUPHRASIA PELLETIER

(1796 to 1868)

AND HER HERITAGE

Rose Virginie Pelletier was born during the French Revolution on 31st July 1796, in Noirmoutier, off the coast of France. The Pelletier family often took in hungry children, sick people and refugees whom her father, Dr Pelletier looked after. His death in 1806 was a great loss for everyone.

Her compassion for those hurting grew within her and on 20th October 1814, Rose Virginie joined the Refuge of Our Lady of Charity, an order founded in France, in 1641 by St. John Eudes, providing care and protection for women and girls who were homeless and at risk of exploitation. She took the name of Sr Mary Euphrasia, and made her religious profession on 9th September 1817.

While in her twenties, Sr Mary Euphrasia was elected Mother Superior. As Mother Superior, she founded a contemplative community, today known as the Contemplative Sisters of the Good Shepherd. These Sisters express their charism in a life devoted to prayer, solitude, work and austerity.

Reflecting on the great numbers of homeless children and women in need Mother Euphrasia initiated varied programmes to meet the needs of various groups of children and women. She also recognised the universal demand for this work, the need to create a network and expand internationally.

On 9th January 1835, a decree was passed by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia is recognised as Superior General of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers. On 16th January 1935, approval of this decree was received from Pope Gregory XVI – thus began officially the existence of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, modelled on the compassionate ministry of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

In her lifetime, she established 110 communities, expanding the outreach to every continent.

“Nothing was too small, too arduous or too costly to put into action day or night for one of God’s little ones.”

“Now that we have received the grace of the generalate with all the blessings of the head of the Church, worthy successor of St. Peter, who wishes us to multiply our houses throughout the universe, you will go and pitch your tents from one end of the world to the other. One city, one foundation must not satisfy your zeal; it must embrace the whole world.”

“We must rouse ourselves, we must be ever ready to march...., we must not be attached to one little corner of the earth. As for myself, I do not wish it said any longer that I am French. I

am Italian, English, German, Spanish, African, American, Indian, Singaporean, Malaysian etc. I belong to every country where there are souls to save.”

Today, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd have spread their reach to 69 countries worldwide with a total of 589 communities.



Important Dates in the Congregation

1796 – 31 July	Birth of Rose Virginie Pelletier
1814 – 20 October	Rose Virginie enters the Refuges of Our Lady of Charity of Tours
1817 – 9 September	Rose Virginie makes Religious Profession
1825 – 26 May	Rose Virginie is elected Superior
1825 – 11 November	Foundation of the Sisters Magdalens at Tours (Contemplative Sisters)
1829 – 31 July	Foundation of the Monastery of Angers
1931 – 21 May	Nomination of Mother Mary Euphrasia as Superior of the Monastery of Angers
1935 – 9 January	Decree passed by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars that Mother Mary Euphrasia is recognised as Superior General of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers
1835 – 16 January	Approval of decree received from Pope Gregory XVI
1868 – 24 April	Death of our holy Mother Foundress
1933 – 30 April	Beatification of our holy Mother Foundress
1940 – 2 May	Canonized by Venerable Pope Pius XII