

Welcome address at the funeral of Sister Emma Portael

Aalst, Saturday 11 January 2025



On behalf of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph and in particular on behalf of Sister Marie-Antoinette and the other sisters present, I thank you for coming to celebrate this Eucharist of thanksgiving for the life of our sister Emma.

We would also like to thank the parish priest as well as family members and close friends who prepared this Eucharist with great care and concern.

Sister Emma died quite unexpectedly a few days ago at the age of 86, having just celebrated her jubilee of 60 years of religious life.

During her long career, Emma taught at the Dames de Marie primary school with skill and generosity. She was also active in various social and charitable organisations serving the less fortunate in our society.

Simple, discreet and courageous, she nevertheless lived with great pain for many years, and it was surely her small community with Marie-Antoinette that made her happy, enabling the two of them to remain independent while taking care of each other.

She didn't like to sit in the front row or speak at congregational meetings. Her response was simply: 'Marie Antoinette will do that'.

We are grateful that we were able to celebrate her jubilee of 60 years of religious life a few months ago in Brussels. She was particularly joyful that day, and perhaps she was able to forget her sorrows for a few hours to give thanks to the Lord, all together in Uccle.

Emma was gripped by God's love and she wanted to bear witness to it simply by her life.

Yes, Emma :

God is faithful and throughout your life, in the good days and the bad, you have said 'YES' to this Love which you now live in fullness.

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