

## Prayer

Lord, help me accomplish in my own life what Rosalie lived during this phase of her life, through Jesus, the source of Life and Mary, Mother of Mercy.

**Amen**

God of tenderness, you who know my heart and my desires, grant that I may live in your mercy. May the courage and compassion of

Rosalie Cadron-Jetté

be a constant inspiration for me and may I obtain the favor I ask for through her intercession, which

is:

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Lord, I beseech you; glorify your  
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Our Father...

Hail Mary, full of grace...

Glory be to the Father...

## Rosalie's Childhood

**B**orn at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century on January 27<sup>th</sup> 1794, Rosalie grew up in a rural, pious and modest milieu though she lacked for nothing. Raised according to the principles of the Catholic faith, Rosalie evolved in a welcoming family filled with love. At the age of 17, she married Jean-Marie Jetté in October 1811.

Witness accounts, obtained fifteen years after her death, indicate that she was a special child. Her daughter, Léocadie, states that, "According to my grandmother, Rosalie was a remarkable child in every way - by her obedience, her piety and her work. Charity was her fondest virtue since early childhood. The poor were her closest friends. She often gave some of her clothes to the poor. She cared for the sick with utmost tenderness." Two of Rosalie's granddaughters added: "It is said that Rosalie was a good child throughout her childhood."

During this phase of her life, Rosalie contributed in a unique way to God's love project. She was attracted by the poor, the lonely, the hungry, the poorly clothed and the sick. She respected her parents, loved her neighbor and lived a life of faith daily.



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## The Experience of Utter Deprivation

Rosalie's first years of marriage are spent peacefully between looking after her fast-growing family and performing acts of charity with the poor, the destitute and the homeless while her spiritual life deepens.

Then Rosalie and her loved ones face increasing difficulties: being uprooted from their home, experiencing financial and legal problems, loss of property, total deprivation and finally, exile in Montreal in 1827. Five years later, the death of Jean-Marie, as a result of the terrifying cholera epidemic, comes as a devastating blow for Rosalie. Later, she suffers the deaths of five of her very young children.

Despite grief, trials, losses and difficult renunciations, Rosalie relies on God, places her trust in Him and keeps hope. As one of her children said, "She recommended that we never hold a grudge against anyone (...) adding that, "We must forgive if we want to be forgiven some day." Rosalie forgave every stroke of fate and every injustice. She also accepts the gradual dispossessions these events bring her way. Her heart remains open to faith and hope. Her charity and love of others blossoms as she begins serving the needy.



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## Rosalie, Apostle of the Derelict

Rosalie's widowhood began in 1832 when Jean-Marie dies of cholera within twenty-four hours. From that moment, up until 1845- the year of foundation of the Sainte-Pélagie Hospice which was destined to provide shelter for single mothers - Rosalie evolves with Bishop Ignace Bourget. Attentive to the needs of her family, Rosalie is equally available to anyone who needs her. She is a "woman of prayer and action".

She is a woman of prayer because of her deep spiritual life that leads her to faithfully attend religious celebrations in her parish. She takes part in pilgrimages to Mont Saint-Hilaire and becomes a member of the Archiconfrérie du Très-Saint et du Coeur Immaculé de Marie, that prays for the conversion of sinners. She is a woman of action because she never misses an opportunity to do charitable acts, embodying the virtue of loving one's neighbor through many small acts of generosity and daring impulses which honor her.

Testimonies obtained after her death abound with examples of the people she helped, took in, converted, accompanied and saved from a dissolute life. Her wide open mind and heart "as big as the world" made her the ideal person for the mission Bishop Bourget was about to entrust to her: that of sheltering and caring for single mothers, a very bold undertaking, among many.



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## Rosalie, Cornerstone of a Work of Mercy

**B**ishop Bourget entrusts a very delicate mission to Rosalie, that of providing shelter and caring for single mothers. Rosalie begins her charitable works in a very modest attic by founding the Sainte Pélagie Hospice. In a total and "unconditional yes" she is committed to the mission of love entrusted to her by Bishop Bourget.

She will need all sorts of resources to get in touch with the energy needed to resist the disapproval of her family, the insults of short-sighted conformists, and the uneasiness raised by her works in a society marked by strict religious practices. Numerous misunderstandings, refusals to provide assistance, great poverty and deprivation await Rosalie. Because of these trials, the early years of her new mission are quite difficult and arid.

What sustains Rosalie is her deep faith and trust in God. As a woman living the beatitudes, Rosalie is on the right path. She is happy even though everything seems to oppose her charism of mercy, the essence of her work. She remains faithful to God, as she lives the charism of unreserved welcome for pregnant women in need. During the difficult early days of the burgeoning community of the Misericordia Sisters, Mother Rosalie looks at those who come to her with eyes of tenderness and understanding. The riches of her own being are hospitality, simplicity, great humility and authenticity.



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## Rosalie, Mother of the Nativity

**R**osalie, Mother of the Nativity, this is the beautiful name Rosalie received when she became a religious. "Nativity", is like that of Christ our Savior, born of a woman, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Nativity as in that of all the children conceived out of wedlock, children who are often considered a source of disapproval and rejection for their mothers. Nativity, as it is in the 2244 deliveries of single mothers sheltered by Rosalie during her mission and until her death in 1864.

By her loving kindness, her unlimited devotion, her unfailing availability and hospitality she is a haven of peace, a beacon of light for young mothers who are in distress or who may be revolted. Rosalie often said that these mothers "were her heart", in other words, they were the central focus of her life, her essence, her reason to live and to hope. For the mothers, she would have been willing to start over again even if it meant a more laborious life.

With the single mothers, Rosalie experiences a strong and generous spiritual maternity, similar to the one she lived with her own children and numerous grand-children. Fertile in her womb and then in her works, Mother of the Nativity embodies love for life, mercy towards the underprivileged and love for those in need.



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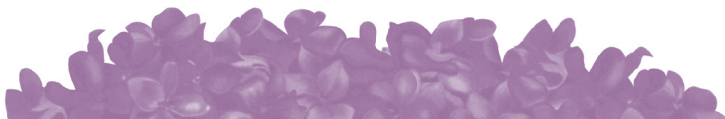
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## To Serve and to Love

Counselor and Assistant of the Superior, but most of all, Rosalie is an Angle for the mothers sheltered at the Maternity of the Misericordia Sisters. Her prayer is constant and was adjusted to what she is living in daily life. She fulfills the tasks entrusted to her as best she can. She fills shoemaking orders to help her poor community, reflects on the Gospel while caring for the boarders living in the Maternity. After her death, several witness accounts state that, "Everything was simple and united for her."

She is not very talkative and like the Virgin Mary whom she loves so much, "She kept all these things and pondered them in her heart". (Lk 2:19) Although recollected, she spares no effort for the good of the community. Victim of the persecutions of the Superior and a few companions, Rosalie remains faithful to God and relies on Him for guidance and support.

Her good discernment, whenever solicited, enlightens her companions in terms of the community's operations. She insists on the importance of adequately evaluating the love that new postulants have for single mothers. She would say, "It is better to have a poor candidate with a good spirit, than to have one who does not have a religious spirit." Rosalie had a loving heart. She was a woman of wisdom, a devoted woman.



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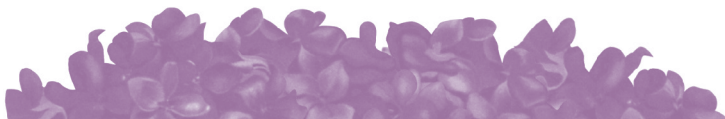
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## Suffering and Hope

The extreme poverty, at the outset of the Misericordia Sisters' Institute founded by Rosalie, affects every aspect of the life of the Sisters and the boarders. However, this does not stop Rosalie from welcoming single mothers who are unable to contribute financially for their lodging. She would say, "No one should be refused because they cannot pay rent. We have to accept these poor children. The house is for them and God will provide for their needs. Let us deprive ourselves instead." Rosalie's altruism and generosity are a source of inspiration for her religious companions.

Poverty is not the only source of suffering for the community. The obligation to walk to Notre-Dame Church to baptize the babies is a source of humiliation for the novices and the Sisters who do this task. The jeers and severe judgments of passersby overwhelm the Sisters. Rosalie, who also carried many of these children to the baptismal font, encourages and supports her companions. Her faith and her love for the young mothers and their children help her to bear these trials with hope... a Christian virtue which she practiced with so much love and faith in a God of Mercy.



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## Hidden in the Crucified Christ

Although Rosalie became more and more limited by ill-health, she continues to fulfill her mission despite her suffering. Christ's total sacrifice for us in the garden of Gethsemani is the model that shapes her life and her final years. Like Him, she also said "Father! Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it." (Mk 14: 36)

Acceptance of her burdens, whether it be illness, suffering, abandonment or slander, many times over serves to lead her to an exceptional degree of self-renunciation by which she becomes a model of holiness to be proposed for canonization.

To all those who are inspired by Rosalie, she represents a simple and discreet path leading to a unique way, that of following Jesus Christ. In her authentic life with the Lord, she brings us to the source of our faith, to our reason for hoping, to the motivation of our charity. By her unconditional love, constantly renewed by the young women she cared for, Rosalie becomes an incarnation of the love described by Saint Paul, a love that "is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes." (1Cor: 13, 7).





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## Rosalie's Prophetic Calling

Rosalie fulfilled her vocation by giving her whole life to God. Her life totally dedicated to her mission still speaks to the people of today's society. She collaborated with God's mercy to help single mothers dear to her heart and this continues to inspire religious men and women, laypeople, men and women of prayer and all the members of the International Misericordia Family. Rosalie worked tirelessly to build a better world. She is a role model for the seekers of beauty and truth and for zealous souls who want to share their love with the underprivileged.

The Lord said: "Come, you whom my Father has blessed. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." (Mt 25: 34-36) Rosalie is truly a blessed child of the Father, for in every woman she welcomed, sheltered, took care of and loved, it was the Lord she saw and loved.

Rosalie was a simple and well-balanced person. In utter simplicity, we see in her such an authentic incarnation of the teachings of Christ. May she be our role model, now and always.

