

Elisabeth Bergeron Speaks to us...



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Women and Patriarchy



On November, 15, 2013, took place at the Mother House of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Saint Hyacinthe, an activity which underlined the importance of the women in the history of Saint-Hyacinthe and of its region. It was a wonderful occasion to learn more about Elisabeth Bergeron, Henriette Dessaulles, Rosalie Papineau, the daughters of the King and about the project of the regional museum of Saint-Hyacinthe. Sister Suzanne Gloutnez, s.j.s.h., responsible for the patrimony in our house, excellently brightened up the life and work of our Venerable Foundress. We thank her for giving us her text.

Elisabeth Bergeron and the Patrimony

I am happy to talk to you tonight about Elisabeth Bergeron in a brief account about the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Saint Hyacinthe, in the context of the patrimony of the country. For Elisabeth Bergeron, it was finding herself in the high class with Rosalie Papineau and Henriette Dessaulles!

This woman, simple and without pretention, completely occupied to « do the will of God; never thought that she was laying down the bases of a network of schools that would influence the education of thousands of children in Saint-Hyacinthe and the cities and villages surrounding the country, which would help the boys and girls to undertake superior studies by having access to a class of a better life and making them better able to serve society.

It was on the 25th of May, 1851, that Elisabeth Bergeron was born in the country row of the Presentation, village of the region (formed by the seigneurie of Delorme and Rosalie). Her mother was called Basiliste Petit and her father, Théophile Bergeron. Elisabeth was the fourth child of a family of eleven.

For fourteen years, we have been able to be in close contact with one of Elisabeth's sister, Clarisse, at our house where she dwelt as a "lady boarder". What a wonderful chance to have the privileged witness of Elisabeth's childhood! From her, we know that the young Elisabeth soon revealed a piety more than the ordinary... and I refer to the biography about Elisabeth: « God Chose the Humble » or « Star Perfume ». These are examples of audacity, ingenuity and almost temerity in her different pious and charitable initiatives.

Elisabeth attended the country school for a short time. The students learned catechism, counting, reading, and writing. But writing was not Elisabeth's case. Often at that time when the students did not intend to remain at school for more than three years, they simply did not learn to write. That is probably what happened to Elisabeth.

Right from the age of fourteen, Elisabeth dreamed of the religious life. She even requested her entry with the Sisters of Charity of Saint Hyacinthe, but she was not accepted because of her young age. She gave up the idea and followed her family who expatriated to the United States to increase their financial situation which was rather deteriorated. After five years of hard work, all the Bergeron family had acquired enough money to regain their lands.

We were in the year 1870 and the coming years:: 1870 to 1877 were probably for her the most painful of her life. She was then nineteen years of age and would not give up her dream of a religious life; but she had to endure deception after deception: trying life with the Misericordia Sisters in Montreal, and the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary! She tried every community in the city.

She was doing too much? Maybe! Her father, the good Théophile, told her: « You are losing your time, Elisabeth ». He ordered her to find a good partner and to wear more attractive clothes. For the clothes, that was fine, but finding a partner... no.

She became more discreet, but a new idea came to her mind. She thought of founding a community of Dominican contemplatives, a project she had to submit to the Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe, Louis-Zéphirin Moreau who did not agree with this idea and snubbed her instantly! We are sure that he had sized up Elisabeth and was not ready to forget her...

Noticing a shortage of teachers in the schools along the country roads and in the village schools of his diocese, Bishop Moreau considered the foundation of an institute which would assure this urgent educational work.

He invited Miss Bergeron to come and he exposed his worries to her as well as the solution that he envisaged! We can easily imagine Elisabeth's reactions! Yet, she accepted and searched for companions.

It was the end of August 1877 and four young girls, including Elisabeth, were preparing for a mission that seemed to surpass them!

On Wednesday, September 12th, 1877, four founders made their way towards a small abandoned school house of the village of La Providence that the school board of the place had asked them to be in charge of.

So, this is the story of the **Sisters of Saint-Joseph** very well launched with the arrival the following Monday on September 17th, of eighty students, boys and girls divided up in two classes. The first criteria probably was age and size.

And it worked: the first step had been taken. The institute existed; the school doors were open and the postulants were arriving. In two months, two new recruits arrived and nine others were announced...

In a short time, Elisabeth Bergeron, Sister Saint-Joseph was her name « in religion », started to memorize and pray the litany of the parishes where her daughters were at work : Saint-Hyacinthe, Saint-Antoine, Saint-Dominique, Saint-Roch, Sainte-Victoire, Saint-Robert, Sainte-Madeleine, Sainte-Rosalie, Saint-Liboire, Saint-Jude, Saint-Simon, Saint-Marcel, Saint-Barnabé, Saint-Nazaire, Saint-Théodore, Sainte-Hélène, Saint-Marc... She prayed even in English: Bedford, Pike-River, Knowlton, West-Shefford!

Elisabeth Bergeron had given the tone to her daughters. They must have had talent because they kept it. It is from their founder that they learned to translate the acronym of the community of Sisters of Saint-Joseph of Saint-Hyacinthe sjsh by **S**implicity, **J**oy, **S**ervice and **H**umility.

Gratitude to Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron

Comfort Brought: I want to thank Elisabeth Bergeron to whom my mother prays every day with limitless confidence. Because of her old age, my mother's autonomy is greatly diminished. She was hospitalized during five weeks. After a complete evaluation, she could not return to the centre for semi-autonomous persons. So, she was transferred to a for long-term care centre on November 22, four days only after having made the demand. Thank you, venerable Elisabeth, for interceding for my mother.
M. H-B..., Drummondville, QC

House Bought: My grand-daughter and her husband searched for a house to their taste at a reasonable price. I prayed Mother Elisabeth Bergeron and the purchase took place in July 2013..
F. É..., Saint-Victoire-de-Sorel, QC

Support Maintained: I am back to express my gratitude to my « *watchful mother* » who supported me for thirty-five years. I remember that my mother, who knew her, had a limitless confidence in her and she transmitted it to us.
M. L..., Laval, QC

House Sold / Another House Bought: Thanks again to Mother Saint-Joseph for listening and for her compassion. We had put our house on sale so as to be closer to the family and we had placed Mother Saint-Joseph's photo in view in the house as well as on a poster written « For Sale ». The house was sold in no time and we found it to be exactly where we wanted it to be. We are now very happy in our new house and we again thank Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron, begging her to continue answering our prayers and to protect those we love.
L. B... and G. D..., Saint-Jérôme, QC

Better Health: My little family is well; even better than before. My son has a new girlfriend who has a job and is very responsible. She gets along very well with my grand-son. My ex daughter-in-law returned to school and that helps her very much. My son will celebrate two years of sobriety on February 3rd. That is a great favor.

My daughter still feels some uneasiness in a leg, but is improving. Everything seems to be going for the best. My health is maintained. Thanks, Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron and all of you for your prayers.

By Email

House Sold: Thanks to Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron! I had invoked her for the sale of my house in Sorel-Tracy and, seven months later, it was sold. I had glued her relic inside on the door and Mother Elisabeth followed up!
L. N..., Sorel-Tracy, QC

Cancer Controlled: Special gratitude to Mother Saint-Joseph for the help given to François as his colon cancer seems healed.
M.-P. L..., Valleyfield, QC

Medical Help: I prayed Mother Elisabeth Bergeron for my husband so that the nurse could succeed in taking four bottles of blood without the veins bursting. That worried me very much. But Thursday, on November 21, 2013, everything went well. C. F.-P..., Sainte-Anne-des-Lacs, QC

Health Improved: Bless the Lord! Little Rose-Marie is back home. The doctors are happy about her improved health. We must continue to pray for her. She will return for a follow-up at Sainte Justine Hospital, but she will be home for Christmas.
By Email

Spiritual Aid: Thanks to Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron for her presence by my brother's side until the end of his life in August 2013. He had great confidence in her and visited her many times at her tomb even before his illness. He sent relics and novenas to his entourage to make Mother Elisabeth better known.
G. G..., Sorel-Tracy, QC

Help Brought: Recently, I fell. That could have immobilized me for the rest of my days. Getting up with the help of two solid students, I felt the presence of Mother Saint-Joseph. I am very grateful to her and I have much confidence in her. C. P...-M..., Laval, QC

Building Sold: Very grateful for the sale of my building. I would appreciate receiving a few relics and picture of Elisabeth Bergeron. D. G..., Saint-Paul d'Abbotsford, QC

Cottage Sold: Thank you very much, Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron! My son had a cottage to sell which was sold last September. I will have a Mass celebrated in gratitude to you. D. C..., Montréal, QC

Health Maintained / Trade for Young People: Sincere thanks to Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron for helping my daughter to sell her house at a reasonable price and at the opportune moment. M. G..., Sorel-Tracy, QC

Protection Assured: I am very grateful for Mother Elisabeth Bergeron's protection over the years. L. C..., s.j.s.h. pour sa sœur M.-P. C..., Saint-Simon, QC

Sale and Purchase of House: Gratitude for favors obtained through Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron intercession: the sale of a house and the purchase of another one. These transactions took place in a time unhoped for: a week and half. M.-C. C..., Saint-Hyacinthe, QC

Tomb

For many months, a committee is studying the transfer of the tomb of our venerated « Foundrice ». As the procedures for sale of our Mother House advance normally, the following decision has been taken:

The tomb of Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron will be located in a columbarium, in the cemetery of the Cathedral of Saint Hyacinthe, on Girouard Street East.

This place will be secure and open to the public. However, the construction of the columbarium will not be terminated before the month of July.



Every semester, a Mass is celebrated to the intentions of benefactors and friends of the cause of Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron. This publication in no way wishes to bias the judgment of Holy Church; it wants to conform in every way with its decision.

To make known favors attributed to the intercession of Venerable Elisabeth Bergeron, to recommend prayer intentions to her, or to receive the Newsletter:

Elisabeth Bergeron Speaks to us, by **Email or the postal system** free of charge, contact:

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Telephone: (450) 773-6067 Fax: (450) 773-8044
Email: ceb@sjsh.org Web site: www.sjsh.org

At all times you can read the electronic bulletin
“Elisabeth Speaks to us...” <http://www.sjsh.org/bulletins.html>
in the section “Centre Élisabeth-Bergeron”

With the permission of the Ordinary of Saint Hyacinthe