

Leocadie Romaine Gascoin – Mother Mary of the Seven Dolors



Leocadie Romaine Gascoin was born March 1, 1818, to Jean Michel Gascoin and Rosalie Renee Charlon in Montenay, France in the house of L'Osier. She was baptized the same day in the parish church, St. Gervais and St. Protais. She was the fourth of six children. Her mother died when she was four.

Leocadie attended elementary school in Montenay run by the Sisters of Notre Dame of Evron. Later she was sent to a boarding school in Laval to learn those things necessary to run a home and the proper way to maintain your social status. She returned to Montenay to care for her father's home and for her siblings. She volunteered in the parish church and was responsible for the sacristy and especially the linens.

In 1840 she attended a Lenten Mission in Larchamp, given by Fr. Victor Droulle, one of the Auxiliary Priests of Fr. Basile Moreau. She returned home and continued to write to Fr. Drouille, who encouraged her to come to Le Mans to make a retreat at the Good Shepherd Monastery.

June 23, 1841, Leocadie accompanied by her father arrived in Le Mans. She met Fr. Moreau the next day and began a retreat that same evening to discern her vocation. Eight days later, Father gave his decision –

“You are for Holy Cross; you will go to Holy Cross.”

She spent three months of intense preparation at the Good Shepherd monastery under the direction of Mother Mary Dositheus. Mother Dositheus made a lifelong impact on Leocadie. She is given the name Mary of Seven Dolors and known as the Assistant.

From 1841 -1844 worked to support the priests, brothers and sisters and she prepared many who left for new missions.

September 15, 1844, she professed vows as a religious of Holy Cross. She began serving as superior of the Sisters.

1849 she, like so many that she has trained, was called to leave France and assist with efforts in Canada. While in Canada she is named Superior General of the Sisters. Mother Mary serves in Canada for 14 years.

1866 – 18673 opportunities for growth:

- Resignation of Fr. Moreau
- Financial collapse of the Congregation
- Sister Mary of Egypt elected Superior General and Mother Mary served as assistant. Two years later, Mother Mary was named Superior General.
- Buildings of the Congregation auctioned and collaboration of Holy Cross in Le Mans ended.
- Need to find housing and ministry for the sisters according to the newly approved Constitutions.
- Succession of the Sisters in Indiana.



Over the years she visited the United States and Canada four times. Language is a major factor in the division of women religious. She was reelected twice and during that time accepted the succession of Sisters in Canada.



In 1894, she celebrated her Golden Jubilee. When asked what she would change in her life – Mother Mary quickly and courageously states:

“I would do it all over again.”

Mother Mary was known for her gentle and prayerful spirit. She never asked of another what she would not do herself.

In her final years in office, she secured the property of the Marianites of Holy Cross and created the Association Ave de Paris. The Association continues to serve the Congregation in 2026.

On January 29, 1900, surrounded by her sisters and having served most of her life in office, she promised to pray for each of them as she met Jesus to live eternally.

Mother Mary of Seven Dolours, pray for us!



Praying with the Sorrows of Mary and the Sorrows of Mother Mary of Seven Dolours

The Seven Sorrows of Mary are significant moments of suffering she endured, especially related to the life, passion, and death of Jesus. These sorrows reflect the deep pain Mary experienced as a mother, making her a compassionate figure for those who suffer. As a Congregation we are dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows and as we celebrate Mother Mary of the Seven Dolours, let us reflect on the 7 Dolours of our dear Leocadie.

1) Loss of her mother

As a young child Leocadie experienced the death of her mother.

Loss is part of LIFE – *how am I embracing loss currently?*

Our Lady of Seven Dolours and Mother Mary teach us to embrace the cross knowing that God’s faithful LOVE will lead us to the Cross our ONLY HOPE.

2) Sending others out on Mission while she stayed home

In the early years of Holy Cross Sr. Mary of the Seven Dolours was preparing others for mission and profession while she remained in Le Mans.

When did I wish that I were the one chosen when others were being sent? Can I let go of the hurt and move on?

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3) Being sent to Canada

Fr. Moreau asks Mother Mary to go to Canada to put “things” in order. For Mother Mary, leaving France and her family was difficult.

When have I been called to minister in a place that was not my choice? What did I learn?

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4) Resignation of Fr. Moreau

When Fr. Moreau stepped down as superior, life changed for the Marianites. The end of a DREAM- walking into the unknown.

The future can be terrifying or an adventure; with Jesus at our side, we decide.

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5) Finding a Home

Leaving LeMans and moving 31 miles to Precigne

Uprootedness is another part of life.

Can we be GRATEFUL for all that we are offered?

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6) The Sisters of the Holy Cross/ Sisters of Holy Cross

The Marianites in Indiana and Canada each form separate Congregations.

Loss – Betrayal – questioning.

Today, we experience the Family of Holy Cross as a blessing and pray that collaboration will grow.

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7) Death of Fr. Moreau

Mother Mary was present during the final hours. She was there as he breathed his last.

How do we experience the Paschal Mystery in our own lives?

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Dear Jesus, as you were with Mary, your mother, so you are with Leocadie Gascoin, our mother.

We reflect on her pain, but we also celebrate her joy.

When asked what she would do differently at her 50th Jubilee –

Mother Mary responds – “I would do it all over again.”

May these women of faith give us the courage as we journey to know that with each dolor there is Hope.

Amen.

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