

Our Centenarians in 2002

SISTER IGNACE-MARIE SPRINGINSFELD

November 27, 1902 – November 13, 2004 - FRANCE

Sister Marie-Ignace Springinsfeld will be one hundred years old on the 27th November, 2002. She is French, she was born at Mulhouse (Upper Rhine) on the 27th of November, 1902, was baptized on the 20th of December of the same year and confirmed on the third of May 1915. She entered the Congregation on the 4th of July, 1923, and made her first profession in Paris on the 5th of August 1925. She pronounced her perpetual vows on the 5th of August, 1928. Throughout her life she has devoted herself to music, living in the communities of Paris, Yvetot, Rennes, Coussay, St. Servan, Sees, Le Mans, and also in that of Tongres, in Belgium. For the past few months (in 2002) she has been living in the Grand' Maison in Poitiers.

Here are Sister Ignace Marie's brief recollections.

"Bordering Alsace to the east is Germany which has often annexed it down through history. However, and I am saying this most resolutely from the bottom of my heart, an Alsatian is always French! We were 'crushed' by the Germans and freed with the French. I was born in a region "occupied" by the invader; the last of six children, four boys and two girls. In 1919 Alsace became French territory once again. We were awakened in the middle of the night: 'Look, the streets are full of French soldiers'. Joyfulness quite literally exploded... everyone was seized by an outburst of life ... learn French, speak French ... and at last be able to live what we were! And so my sister Rose Anne went to stay with an aunt in Paris and learn French. That is where she encountered Picpus and ... entered.

I decided to stay with my parents and help them all the way to the end. Once in Paris for Rose-Marie's taking of the habit, however, very strongly did I feel God's call. Matures through suffering, we sought the essential in life, God! But it was really terrible! My father specially did not want to let me go... and I to wanted to stay ... but a choice had to be made ... tears still flow when I think about it. My parents understood and said to me: 'We will not hold you back". My father held me closely in his arms and said to me: 'Go, and be happy'. So loved in family circles, I chose the love of the Sacred Hearts. The vocation came to me ... an inner summons from the depths of my heart ... I put up no resistance and acted with generosity.

In the community at Yvetot I played the organ. After the celebration of the Eucharist in the chapel on Sundays, I used to go out to the nearby villages, and I would play the organ wherever there was one. If there was no organ the priest would load an harmonium into his car, and me along with it. It was the life of a true missionary. I also gave organ lessons to young people and adults. O loved that very much and they were happy to be able to play in their parishes.

My message to those drawn by God is as follows: it is God who shows the way. It is God who gives the direction. I can say 'yes', I can say 'no', but great generosity is what always produces great happiness."

Sister Ignace-Marie died in Poitiers on November 13, 2004.