

BLESSED MARIE-ROSE DUROCHER, SNJM



Welcome to the Marie Rose Center, named for Eulalie Durocher, foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Eulalie (later Blessed Marie-Rose) was born on October 6, 1811, in Saint-Antoine, a farming village along the Richelieu River in Quebec. She was the youngest of ten children in a devoutly Catholic household. Eulalie spent two years at boarding school with the Sisters of Notre Dame and hoped to enter that community but was deterred by poor health.

Later Eulalie moved to Beloeil to be the housekeeper in her brother's rectory, decorate the church altars and minister to the poor and sick. In 1834 she was joined by Mélodie Dufresne (later Mother Marie-Agnès), who shared her desire to enter religious life. Among the parishioners Eulalie was known as the "Saint of Beloeil" for her piety. She was kind, charming and an excellent listener known for wise counsel.

Eulalie and Mélodie saw the limited opportunities for local girls and established a club to offer moral guidance. Eulalie proved a successful leader and her spiritual advisor encouraged her to enter a religious community with an educational focus. In 1843 Bishop Bourget of Montreal asked Eulalie and Mélodie to establish such a community patterned on a French order.

On October 28, 1843 Eulalie and Mélodie traveled to Longueuil, on the St. Lawrence opposite Montreal, to join Henriette Céré (later Mother Marie-Madeleine) in founding the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Eulalie received the name Sister Marie-Rose. The Sisters and their boarding students lived in the small parish



school. Money was scarce, illness befell the household and the locals were unwelcoming. Despite these challenges, the Sisters persevered and the school grew. Because of her leadership and organizational skills, Sister Marie-Rose was named superior of the community and was henceforth known as "Mother."

Skilled in discerning people's gifts, Mother Marie-Rose guided them to meet their potential, assigning duties based on ability, not seniority. She helped disparate personalities work together for the good of the community. In the classroom Mother Marie-Rose advocated supplementary tasks instead of corporal punishment for infractions. Her own behavior and spiritual practices inspired emulation by both Sisters and students. She began an annual spiritual retreat for the pupils that continued for over a century in Holy Names schools.

During Mother Marie-Rose's six years as superior, the community opened schools in the villages of Beloeil, Saint-Timothée and Saint-Lin. The number of Sisters rose from three to thirty. When Bishop Bourget founded the community he told the Sisters that "union will be your strength." Creating unity was Mother Marie-Rose's strength and her lasting legacy to the community. Her leadership and demeanor drew people to her and inspired respect and confidence. The ideals she instilled in the Sisters and pupils continue to inspire and guide the Sisters of the Holy Names today. As a former student remarked, "One never left her presence without the desire of becoming better."

Mother Marie-Rose died on October 6, 1849 and was beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 23, 1982.