



## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Eymard Marie Singletary

Sister Eymard Marie Singletary, 89, died on Wednesday, October 17, 2018. She was born in Gulfport, Mississippi and was the oldest daughter born to Charles and Viola (Guenther) Singletary. She was given the name Lucretia Joy. Sister Eymard Marie reflected on her life's course, "I have always been lucky because God governs my life." Then with her characteristic humor she added, "I have always been lucky; I was almost born on Friday the thirteenth."

Sister Eymard Marie wrote affectionately of her father, who had traveled around the world, settled in the Philippines to teach school and then became a statistician for the U.S. Agricultural Department assigned to Gulfport, Mississippi. "He was so proud to carry me to St. John's Church where I was baptized and named Lucretia. Because Daddy was Baptist, the Holy Ghost knew I needed special help. He became my Patron because my second name was Joy, one of His fruits."

Her sister, Annalie, was born when Lucretia was almost three years old. Lucretia came very near death because of a ruptured appendix when she was seven years old. Sister Eymard Marie said, "Death did enter our home, but it took Annalie, not me. My parents were grief-stricken. I did not realize what had happened. I was only nine. It seems strange, but Daddy was the first to talk to me then about God."

Lucretia attended the public elementary school in Gulfport, Mississippi, and enrolled in the high school there. Most of the account of Sister Eymard Marie's early life through her novitiate follows in her own words. "It was during the Christmas vacation of my freshman year that Daddy died. And the funeral was on Christmas Eve. I thought of death as something that suddenly and permanently deprived me of love. I did not know of Daddy's happiness in Heaven or that God had removed the obstacle that kept me from being a Catholic."

"My Mother and I moved to New Orleans the following June. Mom enrolled me in Sacred Heart School. It took me three months to begin to like the school. Sacred Heart was Catholic, all girls and taught by the Notre Dames. By divine providence I was placed in Sister Eymard's homeroom. She never thought my after-school questions about religion foolish nor laughed at my mistakes. She instructed me during the Christmas holidays, and I made my first Holy Communion on January 6, 1945. It was then that I learned of the One Love that death cannot take away."

A testimony to Lucretia's spiritual development occurred in her senior year. The high school's newspaper headlined, "Crown Virgin Mary Queen of the May," and continued, "Lucretia Singletary will offer the Virgin Mary a May Crown... Lucretia and the other girls in the court were chosen by student vote and faculty approval for their Mary-like qualities."

When Sister Eymard Marie was asked how she became interested in her vocation she traced, "I greatly admired Sister Mary Eymard Grewe; I wanted to

Birth  
September 14, 1929

Baptism  
October 13, 1929

Profession  
July 29, 1950

Death  
October 17, 2018

Burial  
Chatawa Cemetery

*Precious and blessed is  
the death of the faithful  
before God... for  
they die in union with  
their dear Jesus, in the  
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger  
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Eymard Marie  
Singletary*

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be like her as a good person and as a devout Catholic, and I knew that entering SSND in 1947 meant being a teacher. I arrived at Sancta Maria in Ripa to begin my candidature of initiation into college work, convent customs and living with a large group of people. In the second year candidature, I was sent to teach second grade at Holy Angels, East St. Louis, Illinois, but in March, I was sent to teach fourth grade at Sacred Heart, New Orleans. What contrast: Holy Angels, nine sisters, 800 miles from home; Sacred Heart, 33 sisters, three blocks from home!”

In July 1949, Lucretia received the School Sister of Notre Dame habit and the name Eymard Marie. “The happy year passed all too quickly. I made the holy vows in July 1950.”

Teaching assignments took Sister Eymard Marie to schools in New Orleans; St. Louis; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; San Antonio; and Jackson, Mississippi. Journeys to towns and cities to teach would sound quite ordinary to a School Sister. But Eymard’s journey had detours. She taught for five years then studied for some time. Another six years of teaching followed, and it was off to university for two years. After a long 18-year stretch of teaching, she was asked to apply her mathematics experience to being the Dallas Province treasurer. After nine years in this position, there was a year of study and reflection.

During this journey, Sister Eymard Marie again spoke of her family, “My mother’s death in 1981 was a great loss. Only God knows the sacrifices she made for me to become and remain an SSND.” In 1992, she returned to the classroom. Her last seven years of teaching were at St. Joseph High School in Jackson, Mississippi.

During those seven years at St. Joseph, Sister Eymard was honored as teacher of the year. Testimony given at that time profiled her half-century journey of dedication to youth. The school’s principal explained, “She taught math, but also provided her students with learnings that were transferred into life-skills.” The home school president, whose three teenagers Sister Eymard Marie had taught, said of her, “One of her strong points is that in her teaching she is able to reach children of all abilities and bring out the best in them. She is an example and role model, not only for the students, but for our teachers as well.” After retiring in 1999, Sister Eymard Marie continued teaching mathematics to private students for six years in Marrero, Louisiana.

In 2005, Sister Eymard Marie, with her decades-long friend Sister Audrey Mae Kihnemannn, retired to St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Mississippi, after Hurricane Katrina caused devastation in the New Orleans area. At St. Mary’s, she oversaw the finance office, was active in prayer and community activities, created wood structures and crafted gifts. She also enjoyed sharing jokes and networking with sisters. She gradually became limited in activities and in mobility but was still active until shortly before her death.

Her desire to know that she was dying was granted to her. For some weeks before she died she became aware that the medical community could do no more for her. She peacefully prepared for death and peacefully died while sisters were praying with her. May her patron, the spirit of joy, accompany her throughout eternity!

*Taken from Sister Eymard Marie Singletary’s autobiography.  
Edited by Sister MarieClare Powell, SSND*