Tribute to Sister Diana Wauters October 2, 1942 - June 2, 2024 Superior General from 2006 to 2012



Mass celebrated in memory of Sister Diana General Chapter 2024 Tuesday July 2, 2024 in the Chapel of Auteuil

As former Superior General, Sr Diana had a personal relationship with the whole Congregation. Some of the persons, sisters and lay people, who knew her more closely, give us here testimonies through which we find the person of Sr Diana.

A beautiful tribute to humanity, simplicity and holiness!

May these testimonies help us to sanctify our daily lives, to live each experience with care and love.

Thank you, Diana! With God, you remain present in our hearts!

Eulogy for Sr. Diana Wauters of the Annunciation, RA

Philadelphia, June 17, 2024

Sister Diana was born October 2, 1942, in Greensboro, North Carolina, the second of three children. But Diana considered Allentown, PA where she grew up and made her first friends, her home town. She attended Catholic schools and tells us that her young years were marked by "an interior search for meaning in life- at a time when nobody else was talking much about this." Having decided to join the Religious of the Assumption, she came to Ravenhill Academy in Philadelphia for her senior year of high school, in order to know the sisters better and be known by them. She graduated in June 1960 and in July, Diana entered the Assumption at Ravenhill, which was also the place of the Provincial House and Novitiate. I had been her fourth-year Latin teacher and although I didn't manage to make her love Virgil, I'm confident that the class helped her with the liturgical hours that, in those days, we prayed five times a day in Latin.

As a novice, she enjoyed her theological studies, her religious formation and the experience of living in community with sisters of different nationalities,. Her first apostolate was teaching - at St. Hugh's parish school in Miami and then back at Ravenhill Academy in Philadelphia. There she also obtained her BS at St. Joseph's University.

The years after Vatican II were a time of great hopes and creativity. We were the generation imbued with the ideas and ideals of men like the Brazilians Paolo Freire and Dom Helder Camara, proponents of what



Attiékoubé 1972

became known as Liberation Theology. Their ideas of education fired the apostolic desires of the young Sister Diana. In 1970, she expressed the desire for a radical way of life and asked to go to Africa.

There she would live her particular grace and vocation: on one hand, an unassuming, simple presence among the poor; on the other, a decided will

to promote their dignity and growth as agents of their own destiny. The decades after Vatican II were also a period of turmoil in the American church as well as in religious congregations. I think she was happy to leave the conflict and stress of that situation and - as she put it – to seek to "live my faith in a foreign culture."

In French West Africa, Sister joined experienced missionaries in a small community in the capital of Ivory Coast, the teeming city of Abidjan. She taught in the local Catholic High School and held a post



Burkina Faso Bobo 1980s

in a parish as the Community Social Service Worker. There she discovered "a new way of knowing and a way of communication without much ado."

With her community, she also launched the "Bible Camps," a twoweek summer Bible formation program for children led by older youth. The program subsequently became successful and popular in other parts of the Congregation. Of that experience, she noted: "I spent five years tasting the delicacy and simplicity of the African poor."

Returning to the US Province in 1976, Sr. Diana helped found a community in Worcester, MA near our Assumption brothers. She began studies for a Masters in Social Work at their Assumption University and completed her degree at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Her goal in resuming studies was to help Africans "with the transition from their traditional civilization to the modern one, integrating the old with the inevitable new."

In 1980, she once again set off for Africa – this time to Burkina Faso where her role was to implement and evaluate the social programs of a local parish and to give leadership training. She was also Provincial Councilor and Superior of a community in the poor neighborhood of Sarafalao.

Young African sisters who lived with Sister Diana appreciated her sisterly presence. As one wrote: "I remember her being so simple and human, very kind and so very, very fraternal, so close to people."

In 1987, Sister Diana returned again to the U.S. Province, this time to a community in West Philadelphia. This was a rich period again of studies, of deepening women's spirituality and role in the Church, of spiritual community with sisters and lay friends. She worked as a family therapist and social worker in North Philadelphia and in Reading. It was also a period of evaluating her choices and the journey thus far traveled.

In 1994, she went to Paris as delegate to the General Chapter of the Congregation and was elected one of four Councilors to the Superior General. As councilor, she got to know the congregation and to be known by the sisters around the world.



Foundresses of Chaparral

After her term of six Sister vears. Diana returned to the USA to participate once more in a new foundation, this time in Chapparal. New Mexico, a large unincorporated but town composed of "Anglos" chieflv ex-

military from Fort Bliss and Mexican immigrants- Chaparral is twenty minutes from El Paso, Texas and the Southwest border with Mexico. The Sisters of the Province believed that our internationality and international experiences made us particularly apt to serve that population. "A key component in our thought, " Sister Diana later wrote, "was the desire to collaborate in evangelization through the formation of Base Christian Communities. Accompanying the faith Journey of the people in and through their day to day struggles and joys." This, she did, discovering the joy of the Gospel with them. Her spiritual life of which she spoke little nourished and radiated in her relationships and activities.



CGP in Ivory Coast, October 2009

In 2006, the US Province once more sent Diana as their delegate to the General Chapter and she was elected Superior General. At age 64, this was not a mission of her own choosing. During her mandate she initiated the fusion of the Congregation of the Augustinians of Notre Dame with our Congregation, thus adding Madagascar as a new province on the Assumption map. In 2007, she had the privilege of presiding over the Canonization of St. Marie Eugenie Milleret, our foundress. The sisters who served with her as Councilors and the Provincial Superiors recount her style of leadership as being participative and encouraging.

On her return to the US Province, Sister Diana was eager to return to her beloved people in Chaparral. But soon after her return to the Border, she was increasingly troubled by symptoms usually associated with Parkinson's disease. Brought to Philadelphia for more expert care, she was treated for Parkinson's until an MRI revealed a far more serious neurological condition.

Her health continued to deteriorate and soon she needed constant attention and skilled care. Early in 2023, the nursing care she was receiving at home was no longer sufficient.

This was the period of the pandemic and we were grateful to find a place in the Sisters' of St. Joseph's own retirement home, St. Joseph Villa.

There, Sister Diana lived the crowning stage of her religious life. Always affable and gentle, Sister Diana also had a stubborn and independent streak. This would be a final and severe preparation for the next life. As the Lord spoke to St. Peter,

"Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go."

At first, it was very hard for her to leave the community and she sometimes remarked: "This is a terrible disease" or "Take me home." But that phase passed quickly and I sometimes wondered if she had not made a pact with the Lord not to complain. She began to lose both her mental and physical faculties. Able to express simple needs or thoughts, she could no longer initiate or entertain a conversation. It was painful for us not to know exactly what she was experiencing.

Despite these handicaps, Sister Diana endeared herself to those around her with her smile and her eyes, especially, I believe, by her peaceful and accepting attitude. We knew she appreciated our presence and took turns visiting her daily. At the end, we relayed each other so she was never alone. From the Sisters of St. Joseph and the staff she received not only competent care but also loving attention.

Sister Diana uttered her last breath peacefully and went to the Lord on the feast of Corpus Christi. It was the consummation of the word chosen in youth to direct her life: ""My Beloved is mine, and I am His."

We are grateful to the Sisters of St. Joseph, residents and staff of the 2nd floor of the Villa, to all who visited and cared for Sr. Diana. We express our gratitude with Sr. Diana's words: When we would ask her what message or reply to give someone, she would say: "tell them I love them."

Sr. Clare Teresa, RA

My experience with Diana at Bobo-Dioulasso (1984 – 1986)

It was in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, when I was finishing high school and staying in the Foyer de l'Assomption, that I caught a glimpse of Sister Diana from time to time. She had just arrived from the Ivory Coast, having lived in the Attécoubé insertion community with Sister Jeanne Catherine and many others. I got to know her better during my first year of novitiate (1981-1982), thanks to the course she taught us. Sister Diana had just founded, with three other sisters, another insertion in an unserviced area of the city of Bobo-Dioulasso. At that time, the only property we owned in the city housed the Provincial House and Novitiate.

At the end of my Novitiate in May 1984, Sister Marie Danielle and her Council sent me to Sr Diana's community called "Bobo-Cana". It was the start of a short two-year adventure with her. Sister Diana, who was also a provincial councillor, was my first community superior. I spent two wonderful years with her, Sr Bernadette Lefort and Sr Cecilia Teresa Parlato. As a young sister, I learned from Diana to be myself, without worrying about what others think, to feel free in the face of achievements and successes, recognition and ingratitude, to accept that they may refuse what I think is good for them, that they may not always meet all my expectations... Sister Diana was present in the present moment, ready to welcome the unexpected, in a neighborhood where we lived to the rhythm of everyday life. Although I was very young in my religious life, my opinion and my word counted for her in discernments, as much as those of others.

With her, I understood what I'd learned in class about the power and hegemony of the United States in the world, through her way of being and quietly expressing certain feelings and impressions about the situations we were experiencing. But this never rubbed off on her choice of life as an R.A. in the poor, working-class neighborhood we lived in. Diana valued relationships with people, and she made everyone feel welcome, especially the children who loved to take part in vespers. Some of them would rush out as soon as they heard the bell, dressed as Adam. Diana would graciously dismiss them, firmly advising them to get dressed before returning, or risk missing the prayer. But they managed to be there for the Magnificat, which she had taught them to sing by clapping their hands.

Although I was more involved in children's catechesis and youth work in the parish, I also took part in the activities Diana organized with and for women in two neighborhoods. She had a wonderful relationship with them and their families. With the parish pastoral team, we also experienced a wonderful collaboration that I haven't found elsewhere.

Sister Diana often told us that she was a woman of single action, and it's true. When she did an activity, she invested herself completely in it and couldn't "run after two hares at once." Her humility helped me to be myself without complexes, with my differences, which she respected and tried to understand. She didn't express her feelings very much, but I knew that a strong bond of affection had grown up between her and me, beyond words and gestures, even at a distance, until I found her again in Paris as her Councilor, at the service of the Congregation. Farewell my beloved sister!

Sister Martine Tapsoba, Abidjan 12th June 2024

What I remember most about Sister Diana is her kindness, her patience and, above all, her simplicity. Diana was so close to people, especially the very young. When she was in Bobo Cana, I was at the provincial community, and when she passed through their community, the room that served as chapel was crowded with children whom she gathered...

It was she who introduced me to English at Auteuil, and with what patience! We owe her a great deal, the "we" being Africa, especially West Africa, which is very grateful to Diana. We will never forget her. May she intercede for us.

Sister Marie Thérèse Kansolé, Religious of the Assumption, WA

I knew Sister Diana in Attécoubé. I remember her openness, her pragmatism in what she did. Above all, I remember her ability to adapt. When she left Attécoubé in Côte d'Ivoire, in Bobo Dioulasso, she was a zealous missionary, working with women, mobilizing them, training them.

She had joy in her work. I can testify that she gave me a lot of support on the council, precisely because of her openness. It was together with Sister Marie Danielle.

Sister Evelyne Marie Kabore, West Africa

It is with gratitude and joy that I would like to give this testimony about our dear Mother Diana. I met Mother Diana when I was at the Novitiate in Bobo-Dioulasso. From 1980 to 1982, Mother Diana was provincial councilor to Sister Marie Danielle. Being in the Bobo Cana community, she was part of the Novitiate formation team. It was she who received my application to enter the novitiate on December 24, 1980. What I received from her was her kindness to all the novices. She knew us personally and helped us to get to know each other. She surrounded us with her maternal tenderness and constant care. Each novice was unique to her. I thank her for the legacy of simplicity, tenderness and fraternal love she was a messenger of. She was even more so when she was Superior General of the Congregation: a happy Mother in the midst of her daughters. May God welcome her into his home, and may she enjoy his peace.

Sister Josée Myriam, West Africa

Diana was my first superior in the Bobo Cana community, after the novitiate. I spent two wonderful years in community with Sister Diana. We worked with the Christian Base community and with the women. Sister Diana was uncomplicated and totally committed to her mission. When I received the news of her death, images of our life together came back to me. I remember Sister Diana dancing. One day, we were at a party. A woman started dancing to the rhythm of the balafon. Sister Diana was ecstatic: 'Look at that suppleness!' She got out and started dancing. That was Sister Diana, a simple woman, it's an American brand, she knew how to express what was inside her. Another memory. I had very bad malaria, terrible malaria, I couldn't move, Sister Diana washed all my clothes, all my panties. I think that's a rare thing, and it's something that really impressed me. After that, she accompanied me when she was a provincial councillor. I think Diana was really simple, able to adapt, with no complexes. Frankly, those two years with the base community, with the parish priests, left an indelible mark on me. We used to prepare homilies together, and it was wonderful, very, very wonderful. When it came to cooking, she was extraordinarily simple, even when people brought us food, she ate everything, she didn't fuss.

I thank God I met her.

Maylis KANKO, Ex Religious of the Assumption of the Province of West Africa

Diana,

On hearing of her death, I wrote these few lines to Sr Virginie: "Diana was an invaluable help to me, competent, discreet and positive. I remember the first exchanges when we asked her why she had wanted to come to Africa. She would reply: "I need the new faith of the Africans, I need to revive my faith". After six years, Diana asked me to let her return home, no doubt conscious of an accomplishment".

These four qualifiers mark the decisive collaboration between her and myself during my first term as Provincial (1980 - 1986), thanks to which our Province of West North Africa experienced particularly well-organized times of Assemblies, Chapters or Sessions. It was a time

when Sr Clare urged us to acquire a "Project mentality" in all our commitments.

On a more personal note, I remember Diana as someone who was reserved in her judgments: rarely negative, she was always looking for solutions "for more life" in the difficulties associated with a situation or a person. An expression she inherited from Sr Jeanne-Catherine, with whom she worked so hard in Abidjan (as described in Sr Christopher's letter).

When, in 2006, on the last day of the General Chapter that elected her as Superior General, she asked me to be



her secretary, how could I refuse to give her back a little of what I had received from her?

A few expressions from her early days in Bobo-Dioulasso that come back to me often and make me smile:

- « the sex of words is difficult in French! »
- « I need to repair my bridge," she said to me one day. ... your bridge?" I asked her.
- « Yes, it broke," she replied, showing her teeth. Ah, your bridge!" In French, we say "bridge".!! ...

I'm glad you've crossed the final bridge, dear Diana.!

Sr Marie Danielle Romet, France missionary in West Africa



I first met Diana as a missionary in North West Africa (what we called AON at the time!). At that time, she "worked" a lot with our sister Jeanne Catherine to launch Bible Camps, which attracted quite a number of young people, including some of our R.A. vocations. Diana also led sessions on "self-knowledge", and we who were from AOS (South West Africa) were invited! I really appreciated the way she passed on what she herself had received, and the simplicity with which she interacted with us. THANK YOU to Diana for her missionary "fervor" and may she now enjoy God's Peace and Joy...

Sr Joseph Myriam Carpentier, France, missionary in West Africa

It was in Africa, in Ivory Coast, then in Burkina-Faso, that I lived with Diana. Two sharing experiences:

-Overgrowing Biblical Camps:

In the Attécoubé neighborhood (a working-class district of Abidjan), young Catholics were complaining that Protestants were making fun of their ignorance of the Bible! That's when Diana told us about a traveling missionary in a mountainous region of the U.S.A. He formed teams of young people from slide shows on the Bible, then sent them off to pass on the message to village children over a period of several weeks. On their return home, the children would tell their parents and classmates about it, and so the Good News was passed on.

The Sisters of her small community saw this as a good example, and the Bible Camps Project was immediately launched. A team was formed around Diana, with Jeanne Catherine and Cécile Bernard, to carry out this great project! A great team effort, with the means at hand, which, after several years, began to bear fruit in Ivory Coast and spread as far as France! Thank you, Diana, for this wonderful initiative!

- A little anecdote:

Having recently arrived at the Cocody community in Abidjan (lvory Coast), Diana sees our sister cook. Filiberta, returning by cab from the market and helps unload her her purchases.

Suddenly Diana exclaims: They're chickens," replies



Filiberta, "but I've never seen them like that, only in stores, wrapped in plastic!

You can imagine the laughter and the humorous adaptation! Thank you, Diana, for all those fond memories!

Bernadette Myriam Lefort Issoudun, who was a missionary in WA

In hope and faith, we entrust Sr Diana Wauters to her Creator, as He has just called her. Sr Diana was part of the team called by His Excellency Archbishop Bernard Yago, then Archbishop of Abidjan, for the intellectual formation of young women.

The Collège Notre-Dame de la Paix in Abadjin Kouté, baptized Collines Blanches by the students themselves, had just opened. And it was necessary to instill in them good morals, a solid and firm education and also, in terms of intellectual knowledge, to find people who could open their minds to the things of life. Sister Magdalena, alias Hermana, naturally taught Spanish, as she is of Spanish nationality, as well as mathematics. Then there was Sr Diana Wauters, who stood out from the rest by the way she dressed. She wore a skirt and blouse. I don't recall ever seeing her dressed as a nun in the manner of the sisters of the Assumption. But one thing is certain: she was selfeffacing, discreet, modest. She may not have been loguacious, but her words came at just the right moment. She knew how to make students love, appreciate and memorize English without too much difficulty. Perhaps it was her way of being that contributed to this: gentle, discreet, modest but rigorous in her work. It was her virtues as a teacher that helped the girls to love English.

She has just left us, and on their behalf, I say a sincere and profound Thank You. May all she has done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ be given back to her in felicity, peace and joy in the Kingdom of God, where she is ahead of us. In their name, in the name of all the generations she formed at Abadjin Kouté: Thank you, Sister Diana Wauters. May she rest in the peace and joy of having served Christ her Lord. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Sr Joséphine Notre Dame de la Paix, Abidjan June 2024

Diana,

To remember you, to share a little of what I have lived with you, dear Diana, you who have now been called to the definitive happiness we all hope for, gives me great joy. Memories that go from the first three years lived with you in Attécoubé to the few months when, in Auteuil, you arrived as Superior General and I was leaving after 12 years of setting up the Solidarity Office. I always admired your dedication, your determination, your creativity in the service of all, especially the poorest of the poor.

After Vatican II, Cardinal Bernard Yago, Archbishop of Abidjan (Ivory Coast), convoked a synod in which at least our Sr. Jeanne Catherine

(JC) of the Cocody community participated. The decision was made: to go to the poorest. It was in this community that the foundation of Attécoubé was forged with a third sister, Cécile Thérèse Bernard, a privileged witness who still lives in Issoudum.



Diana was preparing herself by going to university! to learn the basics of the vehicular language spoken throughout West Africa: She Yullah. alreadv understood how essential it was to communicate in one's own language with the people among whom we were going to live. At that time we were beginning to talk about inculturation....

The Cardinal agreed that we should transfer to the State the dispensary-maternity we had founded in Cocody (which sheltered rich and poor), but on certain

conditions: to maintain the Home for Young Women Workers (our second social work there). In addition, the new community was to work part-time at the newly created college d'Abadjin-Kouté, of the Sisters of Notre Dame de la Paix, founded by him. This school was 20 km away from our insertion. Contract signed for three years.

Diana ensured a half-day in English and was truly loved by her students, including the nuns.

At the beginning of the 1973-74 school year, the four of us sisters were installed in our neighborhood, on the 2nd floor of an unfinished house that Diana and JC had furnished in the style of small African families



with bamboo furniture, mats, cushions... and others, given as gifts. I remember our tabernacle: the bag of the "treasures" of the Tuareg...

We started by getting to know the people, their aspirations, their needs; observing, listening... Attécoubé, a suburb at the bottom of the Ebrié Lagoon, populated by migrants from all over West

Africa, with a nucleus of locals: the Ebriés.

To know, to feel, to listen, to learn (from the vehicular language, Yulá, to the kitchen!). Visiting, greeting, the ethnic communities and their traditional chiefs, the catechists,... This was the task of the early days with the help of the parish.

Then came the Bible Camps, the Christian Base Communities (CCB), of which we will talk about...

I just want to add a personal memory. During those three years, we shared the same room (our beds were at right angles); the same closet (each with its own shelf and hanger). I never heard Diana make a remark, a comment, a complaint, a grievance. This never ceased to amaze me!

... And hundreds of other anecdotes!

In 1982-83, I belonged for a few months to the community of Sirafalao, a semi-rural district of Bobo-Dioulasso. Diana was a provincial councilor and founder of this insertion. I remember her being so reflective, leaving nothing to improvisation and so "down to earth"!

This foundation did not prosper according to Bishop Sanon's prediction: "You were not founded for the rural milieu".

We met again in Auteuil in 1994: she as General Councilor and I trying to start up the Solidarity Office.

The General Community and the Auteuil Community were leading "parallel" lives. But I remember one detail: Diana, like herself, had Chaparral on her mind. She did not want to lose the Spanish she was learning. I was watching the porter's lodge in the afternoon and she asked me to come and practice it during that time. Her obligations and her travels didn't allow much, but her intention was clear.

Twelve years later, she returned to Auteuil as Superior General. Before leaving, I was able to



renew my consecration in her hands: 50 years of vows at the Assumption.

And again, in 2009, she asked Carmen Escribano, my provincial, if I would not go to Chaparral to live the experience of emigration. I spent some intense months there and I understood better why she had her heart there.

Before I finish, I would like to return to Attécoubé. When we withdrew because of readjustments in the then province of West Africa, the people of the village and, above all, of the CCB told us: "Sisters, go quietly. We have understood. You have to build a house for your young people....". To build the house and to understand, with the meaning it has among them,... it endures to this day.

I want to thank mr. Anne Christopher for allowing me to live a little close to Diana in her last months. Thank you for all that you have shared with me.

Sr. M^a Magdalena de Cristo, ra, Missionary in West Africa Collado Mediano (Spain)



Chaparral



Chaparral Communauté 2019



Assumption Together Congress León, Spain 2010

NI SŒUR DIANA YE, DO KERA TERI YA LA ! (WITH SISTER DIANA, A LOT HAS HAPPENED IN FRIENDSHIP!)

It was with these words that Madame DARGA Thérèse introduced her testimony, very moved, holding in her hands the photo of our dearest sister Diana, whom she remembers very well.

I am Madame DARGA Thérèse, one of the women who knew Sister Diana and worked with her. Many of them have now gone to the Father's house, while others, under the weight of age, have lost their memory and even their speech.

I live in the Sarfalao Sud district, a working-class neighborhood in the city of Bobo-Dioulasso in Burkina Faso. The community of Assumption Sisters, to which Sister Diana belonged, used to live in the same neighborhood. Sister Diana lived among us from 1981 to 1987. Her memory is still vivid in my mind, all the more so as she was particularly close to my family. As soon as I moved into the neighborhood, the community spotted me because every Saturday I would come and sell them bean fritters, the means by which I tried to support my family. One day, Sister Diana suggested that I should of course continue to deliver the doughnuts to the community, but that payment should be made at the end of each month, so that I could account for a slightly larger sum. This was a great help in managing my small resources. Sister Diana remained attentive to me after learning of my difficult situation in providing for my family. Through her, I was enrolled in the social action program, which provided me with a great deal of material assistance, to the joy of my whole family.

I was born into a Muslim family. When I converted to Christianity, I was confronted with the hostility of my parents and relatives, who wanted nothing to do with my new religion. I was abandoned because I no longer counted for anything in their eyes. No more material help from them. If today I'm deeply attached to my Christian faith, it's because I was supported and accompanied by Sister Diana and the whole community, who understood my situation. That's how I came to accept my conversion. This was also the origin of my integration into the local Christian community.

In our small, grassroots Christian community, Sister Diana was very involved with us women, despite the difficulty of the language. She had difficulty expressing herself in Dioula (the local language), but we knew she understood what we said to her. However, she had even mastered the customary greetings and was happy to greet us in our own language. We were delighted. We too made the effort to understand what she was saying in French, as we hadn't gone very far at school ourselves. We understood each other and were happy to be together. That was the most important thing!

Visits to families, both Christian and non-Christian, were something we really enjoyed with Sister Diana. It taught us to get to know our neighbors and to create bonds of fraternity and solidarity. She accompanied our Catholic women's group and helped create the Association Catholiques des Femmes du Diocèse de Bobo-Dioulasso (A.C.F.D.), which is still very active in the diocese today. She was always present at women's activities, and we could count on her advice and expertise.

Catechesis was one of the activities we shared with the men of our basic Christian community. In those days, we were known as mom and dad catechists. We were well prepared to help school-age children understand the Word of God. Sister Diana was happy to be with us, and we appreciated her too. Personally, I was able to confide in her. It was a good experience of collaboration and friendship in the neighborhood. She was open to everyone.

May she rest in peace, and may all the good works she accomplished among us here in Bobo-Dioulasso accompany her. May the earth of her native land be light to her.

We remember this song that Sister Diana loved to sing in Dioula:

NI YELEYELENA TUN BE ALA LA, NE TUN NA YELE KA BARIKA DA (if there was a staircase attached to God, I'd climb it to give thanks)

Mme DARGA Thérèse, St Joseph Christian Community, Archdiocese of Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, West Africa

Diana, a woman full of humanity forever in our hearts, you will remain alive.

Diana had an ability to understand and share the emotions of others, and therefore an ability to relate easily with others. She brought salt and light into the lives of her sisters. A woman of value who knew how to bring out the best in others.

I first met her in Abidjan, in 1994 or 1995. I was a junior and she was a general councillor. In 2007, I went to Auteuil for the 3rd Year, Diana was General Superior. We were experiencing a lot of leadership difficulties in the region. When I spoke with her, I felt great empathy. She listened to me, with a big heart, understood what I was feeling and fully sympathized. I was so relieved. Later, the young sisters of the Region who went to Auteuil for the preparation session for perpetual vows had the same experience as me. They told me that Diana cried with her as she listened to them recount difficulties with leadership in our Region. She couldn't understand how sisters could suffer at the hands of their superiors. Her closeness during the 3rd YEAR helped me to overcome the difficulties I mentioned above, and I was able to welcome the mission to go to Cameroon with great joy.

Working with her as Regional Superior was a wonderful experience. She was very trusting, a kind of trust that builds confidence in others. I felt well accompanied and supported in taking on this role. After Diana, I had a bit of a hard time, but I've adapted to new leadership. Working with her as Regional Superior was a wonderful experience. She was very trusting, a kind of trust that builds confidence in others. I felt well accompanied and supported in taking on this role. After Diana, I had a bit of a hard time, but I've adapted to new leadership.

In 2012, during the General Chapter, just after the election of the last General Councillor, I saw her crying with joy and emotion as she left the chapter hall. I took her by the hand and accompanied her to the chapel. I left her at the door. She thanked me with great simplicity. She felt she had accomplished her mission, and was ready to leave her post at last, for the new council was complete. She could thank God even with her tears. I have wonderful memories of Diana as a woman full of humanity and a great sense of responsibility. I saw her again at the General Chapter in 2018 and we reminisced with laughter.

So many memories with Diana! The canonization in Rome! All the preparations for the merger with the ANDP sisters! Thank you so much Diana! You'll always be in our hearts!

Thank you for having been our sister. May the Lord give you the rest you deserve. Rest in peace dear beloved sister.

An anecdote

Diana came to visit Cameroon in 2010, we were in assembly. Ana Catalina was finishing her term as Regional Superior and I was replacing her. I wrote to Diana that it was cold in Bafoussam in August. So she travelled with winter clothes and shoes. Naturally, she was warm from Yaoundé to Bafoussam. The next day, she told me gently: "Generose, you've deceived me" I opened my eyes wide to hear the rest of the lie. She continued: "You wrote me that it was cold, that's the humidity, it's very humid but not cold." In fact, it rained every day. We laughed, but Diana was warm throughout her stay in her winter clothes.

Sr Générose Thérèse, Central Africa

Sr Diana was a woman who listened with empathy. She accompanied to the end the person who sought her help. She was attentive to the most vulnerable, the materially, intellectually and psychologically poor. Passionate about research, she nourished her thinking with ideas drawn from the authors she appreciated. She was open to the thinking of others. Highly sensitive to justice, immigration and the role of women in society and the Church, she encouraged the Congregation to let itself be challenged by these realities. In community, she was pleasant and attentive to the needs of others. She knew how to handle difficult situations with patience and endurance. Her leadership was participative. She loved "international" liturgy and was attentive to minorities. She was creative in this liturgy.

Sr Césarie Marie, Rwanda Tchad, who lived with Diana from 1994 to 2000 at the General Council



Visit to Rwaza in Rwanda

My first very concrete memory of Sr Diana is of a book title: " La joie spacieuse" ("The spacious joy " She was reading this book at the same time as I was writing the conclusion to my dissertation on the pedagogy of desire, and she shared with me what this title was meaning for her: the importance for us to open interior spaces in order to renew our way of looking at life, and to be able to welcome what is unexpected, the joy that arises from life's surprises that surpass and challenge us... I remember that this conversation, on the way to the chapel, was like a sudden light... It helped me discover how important "spaces" are, both internally and externally, for desire and joy to emerge. Later, I discovered that she herself knew how to offer these spaces to others:

*A space for listening, during a difficult moment, when she knew how to be accessible and benevolent, even from afar.

*A space of confidence, since she was the first person to assign me a work about Marie Eugénie (the little booklet "Vienne ton Règne") when I didn't even know I was capable of doing it! It was the first step of a long journey for me. And she did it all with great simplicity, considering each person's gifts and fragilities... with gratitude. Finally, I remember her emotion on the day when, having gathered the Auteuil community together, she read us the request of our Augustian Sisters to join us. I was touched by her simplicity, and the humility she communicated regarding this news. Thank you, Diana! May you live forever in "God's spacious joy"!



Sr Véronique Thiébaut, France

Visit to a Muslim family in Bondy, France 2007

A short message about Sr Diana, who has just passed away.

It was with some emotion that we former Augustinians learned of her death... When we received the announcement and saw her photo, I personally couldn't help remembering that great day in 2008 when I accompanied Sr Danièle to present our request for fusion. What a wonderful first response we received, as she spontaneously linked this first approach to a "gift" of canonization! Of course, that was only the first step and her spontaneous response. A long road lay ahead in 2009...

As her earthly pilgrimage draws to a close, I wanted to share with you the feelings that stir us all, I think, when we think of Diana... And a prayer of gratitude rises up from our hearts towards her... May she help us all, now that she has reached the end of her pilgrimage, to build a beautiful big family, attentive to the calls of the Spirit, focused on the Reign of God and the love of the Church, following in the footsteps of Marie Eugénie and Saint Augustin.

May she obtain many graces for the Chapter that is close at hand....



Sisters Diana, Danièle and Françoise with Sr Marie Chantal

Sister Jeanine Bertrand, former Superior General of the Augustines Notre Dame de Paris

I met Sr Diana in 2007, when the 3rd Year was opened to other Congregations. I remember her great wisdom, her availability and her joy in welcoming us.

Shortly afterwards, we asked for a rapprochement. And Sr Diana said it was a gift from Marie Eugénie, as she had no communities in Madagascar...

And also her Faith saying that it was a service to the Church to welcome us...

You certainly remember... Jeanine or Jeanne would talk about it even better, as they were part of the process at the time.

Sister Sylvie Alain, France

"I got to know our sister Diana a little during my service as provincial from 2006 to 2012 and I remember her as a close, simple and free sister. She spoke little, her word was her life. As Superior General, she carried out her mission "with the scent of the sheep", in the words of Pope Francis. She learned this from her missionary experience with the little ones and the poor. I sensed this particularly during the CGP discernment process in view of the merger with our ANDP sisters. I remember the human and evangelical quality of this journey together. I keep in my heart her discreet and humble presence, the conversations with her during the last General Chapter in Lourdes, and during our canonical visit to her Province in the United States, full of wisdom and love for the Congregation. We are sure that like the little ones and the simple ones Jesus speaks of in the Gospel, she is already enjoying the revelation of the face of God and continues to accompany us from the Assumption to Heaven!"



Sr Sandra Durán, Central America Cuba

A sister from the Itapaci (Brazil) community, who was with Sr. Diana during the formation year at Auteuil in 1979, recalls with gratitude Diana's tenderness and care for all. Always fraternal, she accompanied the sisters from America on walks during their free days.

Another sister recalls that during her Third Year, in 1995, Diana was always close and straightforward in her dealings. She was welcoming, cheerful and always ready to help the sisters.

We had the joy of Sr. Diana's accompaniment and support during the process of the union of the Provinces of Brazil and Argentina. Diana came for a visit and organized the big assembly, with the participation of all the sisters in Brasília, during which we celebrated the creation of the South Atlantic Province, in 2008.

Visit to Central America Cuba

Faced with the challenge of a dwindling number of sisters and the restructuring of the Province so that there could be more life, a simple word from Diana warmed our hearts: "Our most beautiful and strongest capital is the sisters".

Sister Diana didn't write long circulars, but she was very attentive to accompanying the sisters in the context and reality of the Province.

Sister Diana appreciated and paid attention to all cultures, even the smallest details. She loved the Brazilian aperitif "caipirinha". !

We thank God for Sister Diana. She has marked her passage through fraternity, tenderness and service to the Congregation.

Sister Judite Alves Pereira

Sister Diana impressed me with her simplicity, her openness and her welcoming of Brazilian culture with the eyes of someone who wants to learn. Even though she didn't know our language, she was able to understand the path taken by the Province.

Sister Maria Teixeira Filho

She went about doing good...

She was free, and in her wake she left an air of freedom, unassuming, approachable and determined.

I remember when Sister Diana was Superior General. Her personality marked her government.

She transmitted convictions, but she did not impose, she did not control. She respected the person of others and trusted in their responsibility. From the province of Argentina, we felt "comfortable", respected and valued, she valued other cultures, other contributions and incorporated them. It was a shared, synodal government.

We felt accompanied on our path of preference for the poor and in the struggle for justice and equality.

Her inclination towards the most disadvantaged was another facet of hers, sensitive and close, she did not feel more than anyone else.

Maricarmen Parúas, San Miguel, Argentina

LOVE AND GRATITUDE, DIANA ...

I knew Diana as a young sister when she came to Rome to give us a session on Journal Writing...as one of the General Councilors. But it was really in Paris during that same Young Sisters' Session when I got a glimpse of her genuine concern, generosity and thoughtfulness particularly for us foreigners always wanting to make sure we were alright and did not lose our way.

There were other occasions when our paths would cross, such as when she came to the Philippines to run a session for the sisters. I was a Provincial Councilor then and would be asked to drive for her. It was always the same Diana – no frills, keeping everything simple but always mindful of little details to make sure no one was lost nor left out.

But God gave me a chance to get to really know Diana, when as our Superior General, she asked me, whom she dared to appoint as Provincial of the Philippines-Thailand Province then, to accompany Vietnam with her more closely. Our visits to Vietnam together every year for six years really gave me the chance to experience the heart of Diana that was always kind – but had a real soft spot for the weak, the voiceless and the fragile. Diana was always authentic. She was simple and said what she felt without frills that made our visits to Vietnam always something to look forward to.

In her last years, I had the privilege of witnessing her physical diminishment but not her spirit that even when speaking became difficult, she would manage to muster the little strength she had to utter words of love and gratitude. In the end – that is the essence of who Diana was and who Diana will always be – LOVE and GRATITUDE.

Diana was a real sister. I could count on her to be there not only when I was Provincial but even after. I could call her anytime and her words and thoughts would always come from her heart that mirrored the HEART of GOD whom she adored.

I will always cherish the gift of her person – for the Congregation and for all of us who were blessed to have gotten to know and love her. She had a favorite song that I know eased her passing as a fulfilled longing

to being with "her friend, the King of all kings...who walked beside her... and who is there at the end..."



Sr Marjo, Asia Pacific, Japan Ossaka June 2024

With great sadness, I learned of Sr. Diana's passing from the Religious of the Assumption Facebook page.

I have fond memories of her visit to the Thabom community in northeastern Thailand, where she spent the entire day on a very long road trip with us from Bangkok. And again, I remember her as the Superior General when Pope Benedict XVI canonized Mère Marie Eugénie in Rome, amidst a heavy downpour of rain.

It was my first encounter with a non-Asian RA Sister, and I enjoyed discussing various topics with her during the road trip. She was a remarkable religious woman and a dedicated servant of the Lord. Each of her words was like a precious gem, drawing me into a closer relationship with God.

Sr. Diana is now at home with the Lord, reunited with St. Marie Eugénie and the Assumption Sisters in heaven. Please allow me and my family to join the RA Sisters, especially the Thabom community, in prayer, asking God to grant her eternal peace.

Requiescat in pace.



General Chapter 2018 in Lourdes

Sr Diana, we remember you with affection and gratitude for the life, love and mission you shared with us. Thank you for being a faithful disciple of Jesus and a committed religious.

I remember fondly conversing with her on biblical and theological issues when I was a student at the Catholic University of America. Her openness, humility to learn from others, and daring spirit were incredible. I have always been inspired by her simplicity of life and passionate love for the poor and marginalized, whether in the United States, West Africa or elsewhere. She has led the Congregation forward, exploring new paths and touching the lives of sisters and laity. May the legacy of Sr Diana – her legacy of love, daring spirit, true ascetic life, and whole-hearted commitment – be a source of inspiration and life for all of us! May she live forever in our hearts!

Sr Rekha Chennattu, RA

Our experience with Sr Diana.



Text written by Sr Brigitte Coulon and reread together, Brigitte, Martine, Maria Emmanuel and Katrin Goris, Sr Diana's council when she was Superior General, in video conference.

I've put off sharing about Diana until the end, because on the one hand there's a lot to say, but what's also important is this day-by-day account of these 6 years of Council with her and us, her Councillors.

How to describe Diana? Above all, what defined her was her simplicity, her joy, her freedom... and the way she interacted with us, repeating throughout the Councils how much she counted on each of us to think and discern together the big issues and the not-so-big ones. With her, I learned about synodality in the concrete reality of life. Like any Superior General, she worked a lot... and she shared her work with us Councillors and with Sr Danielle, her Secretary. With her, I learned to take my place, to discern, to suggest, to write in good French... She was so humble and kept reminding us how important it was to complement each other. She was a great listener and knew how to be silent.

Canonization! Diana has inherited all the previous work of Sr Clare and especially Sr Cristina... and this has been a great gift for the beginning of our Council. So many things to work on! So many meetings! And on the very same day, the celebration with Pope Benedict XVI and the moment of the Offertory when Sr Diana, accompanied by Risa and her mother, presented the Holy Father with a model of a school, a gift that the Pope immediately received with gratitude and expressing the wish that it be in Africa. For a long time, the Council had been looking for the Province, but it turned out to be Tanzania, and the place, Chekerini, school is flourishing today.



It was a moving celebration that marked a turning point for everyone, and it did so under the most beautiful rain in the world, according to one Filipino participant!!!! Sr Martine expressed it as the tears of joy of St Marie Eugénie and the whole Assumption of heaven! And then the magnificent meeting of all the sisters presenting themselves by Province and where Diana invited us to punctuate with this cry of joy: "María Assumpta est!"

After the canonization, we had to mark the occasion by renewing our Chapel and giving a special place to our new Saint. A symbol had previously spoken volumes to Sr Diana at our first CGP, so we took a day out and went with all the Provincials to St Benoît sur Loire. In the crypt, the Body of St. Benedict is in a column that supports the whole building, and Diana wanted to take up this symbol by placing the coffin of St. Marie Eugénie in the wall that supports the large central crucifix. The whole chapel has been given a new look. Katrin, on behalf of the Council, was the driving force behind the project, together with enthusiastic young architects: a space for meditation and prayer, another for exhibitions and a pilgrimage path to enter.

The beginning of her Generalate was marked by a health ordeal that weighed heavily on her, both physically in terms of the medication she had to take, and in terms of the fatigue and preoccupation it produced in her. We prayed a lot for her and with her, and she was sure that M. Marie Eugénie (not yet canonized) would perform a miracle for her... which was confirmed after several weeks by her doctor. It was a long tunnel for her, which she courageously and simply carried with us when she felt she was at the end of her strength.



By the time of the 40th anniversary of the merger with the Sœurs Gardiennes Adoratrices, she had already received a request for a merger with the Augustinian Sisters of Notre Dame de Paris, and as a Council we also had a meeting with them. Diana then wrote the circular to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Guardians, and with lucidity and audacity, she dared to ask: perhaps in the future we'll have other proposals of this kind? ... Which provoked certain questions in the Council.... The point remained in suspense until the Augustinian sisters wanted to meet the whole Council and explained their request, which they had already told Sr Diana about. It was from this meeting that we reflected on how to present the request to our two Congregations, with the various stages leading up to the 2012 General Chapter. After Sr Diana's announcement to the Congregation, we embarked on the long road of discernment that led to the Merger, which today contributes to the dynamism of the Congregation.

The Restructuring movement had already begun with Sr Cristina, but she strengthened it, starting with the South Atlantic Province, trying not to hasten or slow down the process... It was quite an art, to take the time for each sister to express her positive and negative reactions, her concerns, her view of the future... Then, after this first meeting, and especially after the Council's visit to Thailand and the Philippines, we met several young Vietnamese sisters who were having great difficulty with English... Diana and Marie Emmanuel made several trips there before beginning a more extensive restructuring to integrate the 3 countries... and keeping at heart the concern for Japan...



Another highlight of our Council was the preparations for the Chapter. Each of the Councillors did her part to enrich the preparatory document... The moment of election is always an intense time of discernment and prayer... Thanks to the help of Jesuit Fr. Mark Rotsaert, we learned to live what Jesuits themselves live in their Chapter: the murmuratio. The murmuratio includes a time of exchange on the aptitudes needed for this responsibility at the precise moment the Congregation is living. Then we think about people who might have these aptitudes, first by continent, then through personal meetings from sister to sister. All this, accompanied by the prayer of the Congregation, contributed to a "new" election in the person of Sr. Martine Tapsoba, the first African sister to become Superior General. Our Assumptionist brothers have described this as a prophetic choice... and now they too have just caught up with us on the same path.

Former council of Sr Diana 2006-2012

Sharing of Sr Martine Tapsoba



After my two years with Diana, then my departure for Paris for the Juniorate, the Bobo-Cana Community, reduced to two sisters, had to be closed and Sister Diana returned to her home Province. We didn't exchange many letters, but we kept in touch with each other through other people, so that we never lost touch. Nevertheless, I never imagined I'd see her again.

And then, at the 1994 Chapter, which was my first Chapter, Diana was elected General Councillor for Sister Cristina. Thanks to this event, I was able to see her again during the visit of our Province. Between 2000 and 2006, she had the joy of founding the Chaparral community - with others, of course. She shared this with us with great enthusiasm at the 2006 Chapter, during which she was elected Superior General. I was one of her four Councillors, 20 years after we parted company. I was determined to stand by her side with the others, and to help her as best I could in her mission. This decision came back to me more than once, in difficult situations. With her, I learned to tell myself every morning that "our" mission had to succeed, even if she was the one primarily responsible. It gave me a boost to do everything I could, because the mission was a heavy one, but she never complained, after her "fiat", like Mary at the Annunciation. Diana knew she could count on all four of us, and today I can say with pride and gratitude that we were united in our mission to serve the Congregation, regardless of our affinities with her. She humbly accepted to be helped and to ask for the help she needed, according to the qualities of each of us. I often had to go beyond myself to discover abilities and gifts I didn't know I had.

On the Council, Sister Diana knew how to recognize and value the talents of each and every one of us, and how to make the most of them in her work for the Congregation. She didn't express her affection for us verbally, but she took advantage of every occasion, such as liturgical feasts or our birthdays, to write us a note in which we could feel her delicacy, her recognition of what each one contributed to the life of the community and her gratitude for each one.

Diana could be frightening with her categorical way of giving her point of view on an issue, but when you had the courage to give her your point of view frankly, she was able to hear it and change her mind.

She was aware of her physical limitations, and knew how to faithfully take the necessary steps to see her through. A good example of this was her compulsory daily nap, even during visits to the Provinces. It kept her going.



When I was elected Superior General. Sister Diana was the first to make her obedience. her hands in mine. promising to live obedience for the life of the Congregation. She was happy to renew her yows for her 50th anniversary in my hands.

In this 2012-2018 Council, each of us took on our share of the Council's tasks according to our personalities and the graces of the moment. I felt Diana's support, in self-effacement, and respect, without trying to know what we were doing, but simply welcoming the news we sent her, with joy. I gave her the information she needed about the initiatives she had started, but I didn't tell her about certain difficulties that had arisen. Because here too, I was aware that I had to move forward with the Councillors I had been given, without weighing Diana down, or making her do memory work that would have tired her out.

Diana hid a certain childhood spirit, and often surprised us with her spontaneity at the closing parties of the sessions in Auteuil, with stories or games she would suggest to the sisters. She loved to tell me stories about me during our two years in Bobo that I had forgotten.

Indeed, when she was no longer Superior General, I heard her introduce me to people as her friend, during the last months of her illness, on the occasions when I was able to communicate with her through Sister Anne Christopher, her Provincial. I was very touched by the card she wrote me through Sister Anne Christopher's hand, thanking me for my prayers and thoughts for her. Diana also wanted to thank me because she remembered so much from our time together, and promised to pray for me. She also sent me her affection from Anne Christopher, who said that when asked what she wanted to say to someone she knew who was asking about her, she would reply: "tell them I love them". This news was passed on to me, as it was to so many others. It was undoubtedly the beginning of the farewell.

There's so much more to say, but I'd like to conclude with this little story. In the 2018 Chapter, she asked me to invite her to an African restaurant where we could eat dishes from the West African countries she knows best. Not knowing any restaurants, I asked one of my nephews who knew Paris well and he found us a simple and beautiful place in the 16th arrondissement, close to Lubeck. At the exit of the léna metro station, I was walking fast and she called out to me because I was walking fast. So I slowed down and realized that she was tired; I gave her my arm because of the gutters dug for the city's landscaping work, and we arrived at the restaurant arm in arm. We didn't have much money, but we were able to order food we liked, which we enjoyed together. It was her last African meal. All these little signs prepared us for the end of her time on the African soil she had loved and carried in her heart.

With her and all the people she has loved, we will remember all that remains to be shared when we meet again with God in his eternal Kingdom. Diana has certainly already begun with Mother Marie Eugénie and all those who have gone before us to the Father!

Rest, dear Diana, and may the earth be light to you!

Sister Martine TAPSOBA, Abidjan June 16th

Sharing of Sr Maria Emmanuel

Yes, Sr. Diana's mandate as General Superior began with physical illness that she carried with quiet strength. This seem to have marked the 6 years of her mandate. She counted much on her Councilors and sent them to the different missions in the Congregation.

Her term is noted with important historical events for the Congregation. These have already been shared above. It was her listening capacity, her attentiveness to the realities of her time that gave her the audacity to respond to the different challenging situations.

God leads us, and no wiser and more loving hand Can guide our destiny. St. M. Eugenie

On the human level, Diana kept a balanced life, taking time to rest, spending days for our community vacation and even celebrating the small personal events of her Sisters and friends that made you feel you mattered, that you were important.

Sr Maria Emmanuel

Sharing of de Sr Katrin



These 6 years at Sister Diana's side, at the General Council, introduced me to this long time, this time that passes quietly and surprisingly. In the midst of the many things, files, activities, visits, Diana pursued her path, relying on her sisters; she made them true partners in trust and delegated enormously. I remember St Gervais, our first vacation, when we took the little train up Mont Blanc, high enough to have a breathtaking view, and there we sat on the grass and began a 'serious' but soul-soothing reading. Diana's blend of beauty and poise, of artist and non-conformist, can also be seen in her choice of the Stations of the Cross in the chapel at Auteuil. She wasn't afraid to step out of the workbench to see things differently. Thank you Diana, I continue to take these untrodden paths that open up life.

Sr Katrin Marie

Sharing of Sr Brigitte

She knew she was slow and hated making decisions too quickly. Her slowness also showed in the way she walked. I found it very difficult to walk beside her... I was always three or four steps ahead of her when we sometimes went to Sunday mass in Saint Merry... We both loved to find a very lively Eucharist, led by lay people and with beautiful songs, very much in tune with reality, and for me a little nod to Latin America... During the time our chapel was being renovated, we even took advantage of the opportunity to live Holy Week in a different way: instead of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday, we listened to the Passion with Péguy's words from "Les Mystères de la Charité de Jeanne d'Arc", proclaimed by an Artist... This "she wept elle pleurait..." resonated in our hearts in another way, in a very special way... I can't remember if it was that same day that we experienced a time of ecumenical sharing in the nearby Lutheran Church.

In this part of Paris, she also introduced me to an old church: Saint Denys du St Sacrement... There's a painting by Eugène Delacroix that impressed her greatly, and which she showed me. It's the Virgin Mary, her arms on the cross, standing behind the dead Christ. A beautiful symbol of her participation in the Paschal Mystery of her Son, and the full realization of Diana's chosen Mystery of the Annunciation. Perhaps it's a reflection on the long illness that took her to the arms of her Beloved (her word).

Sr Brigitte



Pietà by Eugène Delacroix





Sr. Diana Wauters of the Annunciation, R.A. « My Beloved is mine, and I am His."» Song of Songs 2,16



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