

Sœur Emmanuelle: Nun of the order of Notre-Dame de Sion

From The Times October 22, 2008



Sœur Emmanuelle was one of the most popular figures in France. An outspoken and irreverent defender of the poor, to whom she dedicated her later years, she became a television favourite full of verve and joie de vivre, capable of speaking bluntly to politicians and celebrities alike, and without a hint of unction or moral hauteur.

A rebel, she greatly admired John Paul II but continued to dispense contraception to weary mothers in her Egyptian dispensary and to champion the right of Catholic priests to marry. Nor did she hide the difficulties of the life of celibacy, which she entered at the age of 20 in 1929.

Born Madeleine Cinquin in Brussels in 1908, she had a Belgian mother and a French father who was a manufacturer of lingerie. When she was 6, her father was drowned, and she witnessed the event from the beach. Later in life she would say that it was this tragedy that determined her future: "That Sunday morning, the little girl understood that you cannot hang on to the foam. In my unconscious, my vocation dates from that. I sought the absolute, not the ephemeral."

Not that the trauma kept the young woman from enjoying the pleasures of being a bright young thing (and taking up smoking in a typical act of rebellion) during the Roaring Twenties, or from being attracted to handsome young men. But in 1929, after studying religion and philosophy at the Sorbonne, she entered the order of Notre-Dame de Sion.

These nuns ran several renowned French schools around the Mediterranean. Emmanuelle worked in Istanbul, Tunis and Alexandria. For nearly four decades she taught the daughters of wealthy families. This was a long way from her childhood dreams of helping the poor, or even martyrdom.

In fact it was retirement that enabled Emmanuelle to fulfil that dream. With the blessing of her superiors, she settled in Cairo at the age of 62, hoping to succour the lepers. When this proved impossible (too many official obstacles), she settled for the rag-pickers, and was soon living in a metal hut in the city slums at Ezbet el-Nakhl.

It was a squalid, brutal world of rats, lice and poverty, of cheap alcohol and of violence between children and against women. Sœur Emmanuelle, as she soon became known, taught the children to read, helped mothers to regain their footing and their pride, took children to see the Nile. She opened a dispensary and kindergarten. The countless examples of male negligence and brutality made her a staunch feminist. Her experience led her to the conclusion that has since been spread by so many organisations and experts: education and the liberation of women are the best hope of poor countries.

At first, the majority of her flock were Copts, but she was soon working with Muslims as well, and refused to let religion get in the way of human need. On her door was a cross and crescent moon, with the words "God is love". She worked tirelessly to bring the religious communities together.

"Respect those who think differently," was one of her favourite maxims. Later she would be one of the rare public figures to speak out against the French Government's ban on wearing the veil, and on the creeping association of Islam with fanaticism:

"Today, if I were a Christian at school, I'd wear the veil simply out of a spirit of freedom," she said.

As her activities developed, in Egypt and across the world, she began travelling tirelessly to raise funds through her association, Les Amis de Sœur Emmanuelle. Obsequious she was not. At one meeting in Geneva, she told her smart audience: "If I can't find the \$30,000, I'll just have to do a hold-up." On another occasion she spoke of blowing up a plane she had taken to the Philippines because, as she had found out, it was carrying sex tourists.

Sœur Emmanuelle made her first appearance on French television in 1990, and her mixture of infectious enthusiasm, humour and the unquenched moral indignation with which she laid into bourgeois complacency and political corruption soon made her a firm favourite, identified by her uniform of grey blouse, grey headscarf and black trainers.

It may be her candour and unorthodox behaviour that prompted her superiors to put pressure on her to leave Egypt. She did so in 1993, with the greatest reluctance — "I wish I could have died surrounded by my rag-pickers". She moved to a retirement home for nuns in Callian, Var, in south east France. However, even at 85, she continued to travel and to campaign against poverty. She wrote several books about her experiences, her faith and her cause: *Richesse de la pauvreté* (The Riches of Poverty, 2001), *Secrets de vie* (Secrets of Life, 2000), *Yalla les jeunes* (Come on, you young people!, 1997), *Le paradis, c'est les autres* (Heaven is other people, 1995), and *J'ai cent ans et je voudrais vous dire* (I'm a hundred years old, and I want to tell you, August 2008).

Sœur Emmanuelle, nun, humanitarian, broadcaster and writer, was born Madeleine Cinquin on November 16, 1908. She died on October 20, 2008, aged 99

Sister Emmanuelle dies aged 99: Tribute

by Joffre Agnes

Culture <http://www.franceinlondon.co.uk/en-Article-browse-by-categories-9-Culture.html>



Born in Brussels on 16th November 1908, Madeleine Cinquin was the daughter of a bourgeois family who were lingerie manufacturers. Her mother was Christian and her father Jewish. When she was six, she saw her father drowning and in her life memoir she will confess that this tragic event is at the origin of her religious commitment and her willingness of absolute. However as a young girl Madeleine used to dance and flirt in 1920s Paris, beautiful and coquettish she was seeking for immediate pleasure. But she wrote that she always felt her vocation calling her and in 1929 she took her religious vows. She wanted to help poor people. Initially, however, she worked in Istanbul, educating rich diplomats' daughters.



In the 1970s and 1980s, when she could have "retired" she devoted herself to helping poor children in the slums in Cairo and living in the same conditions. She was then in her 60s and she continued her amazing work well into her 80s. She focused with her association " Les Amis de Soeur Emmanuelle" (Sister Emmanuelle's friends) on the health and education of children . She worked on opening dialogues with Muslim people. She lived without making any prozelytism. On her door in Cairo, a Christian cross and a Croissant were hang together with these words: " God is Love". With a passion for philosophy and religion, she was a sincere humanist who had a true faith in human beings.



women in the slums of Cairo.

French people loved Soeur Emmanuelle because she had this incredible freedom of speech and an unusual frankness. She confessed her religious doubts, her personal fights when she fell in love, when she was sick and couldn't help poor people, her own weaknesses... She became mediatic and exerted a general fascination. Her tantrums towards bourgeoisie, political skulduggeries were frequent. Nicknamed "Naughty Nun" by the French newspaper Libération or "French Mum Theresa", Soeur Emmanuelle was never afraid to voice her unorthodox views about the Christian religion. For instance she was in favour of priest marriage and considered taking the pill as necessecary for

Sister Emmanuelle and the Abbé Pierre

In 2002, she was awarded the Légion d'honneur by Jacques Chirac, Sister Emmanuelle is an example of bravery, open-mindedness, energy and faith not only in God but in human beings. Close to the Abbé Pierre, their two deaths plunge France into mourning. Hommage is paid all over France. Bernard Kouchner foreign minister and co founder of Medecins du Monde remembers the hope and joy she gave him and everyone who came in contact with her. She died serene maybe only with the regret of not having died amongst the people she helped in Cairo.



France Mourns Death of Sister Emmanuelle

DATELINE: Paris Released : Tuesday, October 21, 2008 2:05 PM

France is mourning the death of a popular Roman Catholic nun who spent her life working for the poor - particularly the poor in Cairo. From Paris, Lisa Bryant has more for VOA.

Sister Emmanuelle died at a retirement home in southeastern France, just a month before her 100th birthday. Her death was announced by her association, and it did not take long for the eulogies to pour in.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who helped found the charity Doctors Without Borders, said the sister's faith could move mountains. He said it had been a joy to work with her. Jewish and Muslim leaders also issued moving statements.

A prominent religion journalist in France, Henri Tincq, told French radio that Emmanuelle cultivated a media-savvy image, but she also traveled around the world to relay the plight of Cairo's poor to the public. She said things honestly, Tincq said, and she lived by her Christian beliefs.

Born in Brussels, Sister Emmanuelle lived and worked with a scavenger community in Cairo for more than 20 years. She founded an association that built a school and provided trucks for the Zabbaleen community there, which has become internationally known for its recycling practices.

But she was also a beloved figure in France, where she moved in 1993. Polls consistently ranked her among France's most popular personalities and she often appeared on television talk shows - like this one, hosted by well-known French intellectual Bernard Pivot.

Asked on the show what her favorite word was, Emmanuelle replied with the Egyptian Arabic word Yallah - or go ahead. She said stop was her least favorite word because you must always go forward in life.

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French nun promises 'confessions'

From correspondents in Paris October 23, 2008 01:59am

FRANCE paid tribute today to Sister Emmanuelle, a much-loved 99-year-old who worked with the poor and died this week promising candid memories in a book called *Confessions of a Nun*.

As President Nicolas Sarkozy led some of France's best known figures in a requiem mass amid the Gothic splendour of Paris' Notre-Dame cathedral, the deceased's publisher released a taped promo for her posthumous memoir.

Earlier, Sister Emmanuelle was given a private burial in the southern town of Callian, where she had died on Tuesday in a retirement home run by her order, the Congregation of Notre Dame de Sion.

"When you hear this message, I will no longer be there. In telling of my life - all of my life - I wanted to bear witness that love is more powerful than death," she said, according to the text.

"I have confessed everything, the good and the less good, and I can tell you about it. Where I am now, life does not end for those who know how to love."

The memoir was to be published in Paris by Flammarion on Friday.

Sister Emmanuelle, who had been called Madeleine Cinquin before taking her vows, was best known in France for her frequent appearances on television to campaign passionately for the poor and homeless.

She came to media attention here with her work with some of the world's poorest people, the residents of the Ezbet El-Nakhl slum in Cairo who eke out a living by scavenging through the garbage produced in the huge Egyptian city.

The nun also won many French hearts with her straight talk and her defiance of Catholic orthodoxy by backing contraception and marriage for priests.

In addition to the playful tape recording left with her publishers, Sister Emmanuelle also left a funeral address that was read out to the dignitaries who attended the service in Paris.

"Today, when you have once more taken the trouble for me, my soul and my heart are close to your soul and your heart. I want this dear meeting to go forward in joy," she said, in the message.

"I have chosen light-hearted hymns. Sing them joyously and will full voice. I want to give you thanks full of recognition for what you have done and what, I know, you will do again for thousands of children around the world.

"Yalla! Let's go," she declared, using the Arabic term she learned in Cairo.

Cinquin was born into a comfortable middle-class home in Brussels, to a French father - who died in a drowning incident that she witnessed when she was just six years old - and a Belgian mother.

She led a carefree life as a young woman, which she later described in a memoir that recounted her years studying at university in 1920s Paris and dancing and flirting in her free time.

But at 23 she decided to become a nun in the Congregation of Notre Dame de Sion, an organisation originally set up with the aim of promoting the conversion of Jews to Christianity.

Taking the name Sister Emmanuelle, she went to teach literature in Turkey, where she came into contact with Jewish and Muslim intellectuals.

She taught in a school for well-off Turkish children but made a point of showing them the hardships of life by taking her classes to carry out sociological studies in poor areas.

She later continued her teaching career in Tunisia and then in Egypt.

In 1971, when she was 62 years old, Sister Emmanuelle finally got permission from her congregation to start work on her cherished project to go and live among Cairo's poorest people.

She set up schools, clinics and play areas for the children of Ezbet El-Nakhl and later published a book about her experiences.

The association she went on to set up in 1980 - called the Asmae-Association Soeur Emmanuelle - eventually extended its work for the poor to Brazil, Burkina Faso, Haiti, the Philippines, Senegal and Sudan.

She was called back to France in 1993, at the age of 85, despite her wish to stay on in Cairo. In various television appearances, in her white veil and large glasses, she spoke out for the homeless and the poor of French cities.

France's beloved nun Sister Emmanuelle dies at 99

[FOXNEWS.COM HOME](#) > [WORLD](#) Monday, October 20, 2008

By PERRINE LATRASSE, Associated Press Writer

PARIS — Sister Emmanuelle, a nun who lived for years among scavengers in Cairo's slums and who has been compared to Mother Teresa for her fight to defend the rights of the poor, died Monday at age 99.

A spokeswoman for her association, Sandrine de Carlo, said the Belgium-born nun died in her sleep at a retirement home in Callian, a town in southeastern [France](#).

Sister Emmanuelle spent more than two decades working with Cairo's zabbaleen, or garbage collectors, who eke out a living through scavenging. She helped create a network of clinics, schools and gardens to serve the children of the slums, and an association she founded now operates in eight countries, from Lebanon to Burkina Faso.

"She was a particularly significant personality of our time," said the [Vatican](#) spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi. He compared her work with some of the most revered humanitarian workers of modern times, including Nobel laureate Mother Teresa.

He said Sister Emmanuelle's character was "similar to that of Abbe Pierre and Mother Teresa, who had the ability to show how Christian charity can speak to all men."

Abbe Pierre, one of France's most beloved priests, battled on behalf of the homeless, poor and disenfranchised for more than half a century. He died nine months ago at the age of 94.

Zeina Zarif, the Egyptian coordinator for Association Sister Emmanuelle, said her work there was crucial.

"When she arrived here the zabbaleen were marginalized and no one wanted to look at them, they were people who had no rights," Zarif told The Associated Press in Cairo. "Her work marked this country."

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, co-founder of humanitarian aid group Doctors Without Borders, said he would never forget Sister Emmanuelle's "faith, which could move mountains."

"I will always remember the joy of working by her side, and will always keep that life-force which she infused in me," Kouchner said in a statement.

President Nicolas Sarkozy called her "a sister to us all."

"She was a woman of high convictions, but also one of action," Sarkozy said in a statement. "We miss her already."

Jewish and Muslim leaders in France also issued emotional statements about her passing.

Born Madeleine Cinquin in Brussels on Nov. 16, 1908, she spent her childhood between the Belgian capital, Paris and London, according to the association's Web site. A member of the Notre Dame de Sion order, she lived many years in France.

She moved to Egypt in the early 1970s and founded the association in 1980, Zarif said.

Sister Emmanuelle initiated development efforts in the Muqattam, a peripheral Cairo slum, founding a primary school and providing scavengers with vehicles to haul garbage.

She eventually attracted broader attention to their plight, which led to new schools, [health care](#) projects and income-generating strategies for the slum dwellers.

"She was living right among them, the garbage collectors, the pigs, the whole mess. I had never seen anything like this in my life," said Dr. Mounir Neamatalla, a leading Egyptian expert in environmental science and poverty reduction who worked closely with her throughout the 1980s.

"You could see one of the worst qualities of life on the planet, but in this inferno was an enterprising population that worked like ants," he said.

Neamatalla worked with the nun on a composting plant to process the vast amounts of manure produced by the garbage collectors' pigs, which was then processed and sold as fertilizer.

Upon her return to France in 1993, Sister Emmanuelle continued to speak out for the needy, regularly appearing on French television, her white hair swept up into a gray habit and her eyes sparkling behind large glasses.

Association spokeswoman de Carlo said the funeral would be a strictly private affair but a public Mass in her memory will be held in Paris next month.

Associated Press writers Katarina Kratovac and Paul Schemm in Cairo, and Ariel David in Rome, contributed to this report. *Copyright 2008 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.*

You Tube

France's Sister Emmanuelle dies at 99

Monday 20 October 2008

Sister Emmanuelle, a Catholic nun who dedicated her life to helping the poor, has died at the age of 99, according to a statement from ASMAE, an aid organisation she founded

Click on link below

<http://www.france24.com/en/20081020-sister-emmanuelle-dead-99-religion-obituary-egypt-france-catholic-nun&navi=FRANCE>

Sister Emmanuelle, a Franco-Belgian nun known for her work with the poor in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere around the world, died Monday at the age of 99.

A representative from ASMAE, an aid organisation she founded, told AFP that Emmanuelle spoke of being tired but was not suffering from any particular illness. She died in her sleep overnight.

Born Madeleine Cinquin in Brussels on Nov. 16, 1908 to a French father and a Belgian mother, she spent her childhood in Paris, London and Brussels. In 1931 at the age of 22 she took her vows to become a nun at the Notre Dame de Sion congregation, choosing the name Sister Emmanuelle, meaning "God is with us".

In 1980, Emanuelle founded ASMAE, an organisation she described as "secular and apolitical", to provide health and education assistance to poor children and their families. Today, ASMAE is active in nine countries worldwide.

Noted in particular for her work with garbage workers in the slums of Cairo, in 1993 her superiors asked her to leave Egypt to retire in France.

A mass will be given in her memory in Paris. No date has been set as of yet.

France's 'Mother Teresa' reveals her bad habits

Lizzy Davies, Paris August 17, 2008



SHE was a bright young thing of the Parisian *annees folles*, the interwar "crazy years", who danced into the night with smartly dressed boys and lusted after the latest throwaway fashions.

Proud, wilful and flirtatious, she once fell in love with a man for his seductive intellect and beautiful handwriting.

Paris is in thrall to a scintillating new volume of memoirs, but they are not those of a bohemian writer or 1920s film star. After a life of devotion to charity and Catholicism, France's favourite nun is revealing her naughty side. "I'm no saint," declared Sister Emmanuelle in a collection of interviews to be published this week ahead of her 100th birthday. "I'm bad-tempered. I'm vindictive, angry, sometimes malicious."

For a country that views the nun as a national treasure, this self-criticism will be hard to swallow. Sister Emmanuelle, born Madeleine Cinquin in 1908, has been dubbed the French Mother Teresa for her work among the Third World's poorest. This month she was voted France's sixth-most-popular personality in a newspaper poll, ahead of Carla Bruni and Gerard Depardieu.

But the image she portrays of her youthful self is of a very different woman: one torn between a craving for "immediate pleasure" and an awareness that her vocation was calling her elsewhere.

"I thought only about having fun, dancing, going to watch films, going to the theatre," she said. "I loved dancing, preferably with nice-looking boys. My mother used to say, 'You want boys to like you, to surround you, to admire you, and if you become a nun ...' And I would tell her, 'For God, I will leave the boys alone.' "

Speaking from a retirement home in the south of France, the Belgian-born daughter of a lingerie manufacturer recalled hopping between European capitals in a quest for new thrills.

After taking her religious vows in 1929, Sister Emmanuelle travelled extensively, teaching for 40 years in the Middle East and north Africa. Working with girls who were regularly becoming pregnant in Cairo led her to write to Pope John Paul II in support of the contraceptive pill. This formidable spirit defines her, says author Jacques Dufresne, adding: "In a world where people feel they're being lied to, we love those who put into practice the ideas they proclaim."

GUARDIAN

Sister Emmanuelle, friend of the Cairo slums, dies at 99

InsideCatholic.com

[Zoe Romanowsky](#)

October 21, 2008, 2:55 PM



Sister Emmanuelle, whose work in the slums of Egypt was often compared to Mother Theresa's, [died yesterday](#) in France. She was 99; only a few days from turning 100.

Sister Emmanuelle was born Madeleine Cinquin in Belgium to parents who worked in lingerie manufacturing. Tragically, her father drowned during a family beach vacation when she was six. Madeleine excelled in her studies and by 12 years old knew she wanted to be a nun. One of her inspirations was Fr. Damien, the Belgian missionary priest who worked and died among the lepers of Hawaii. Educated at the Sorbonne, Madeleine obtained a degree in philosophy. Although she was regarded as a free spirit who enjoyed her social life, she could no longer ignore God's call and took religious vows in 1929.

Sister Emmanuelle taught well-off children in convent schools in Istanbul, but always desired to serve the underprivileged. In 1971, she moved to a garbage slum outside Cairo to live among the people called the "zabaleen," which means "filth or rubbish." The dump called Ezbet El Nakhl was home to not just the rubbish of Egypt, but the refuse collectors and their families who were considered the lowest of the low.

At 60 years old, Sister Emmanuelle was living in a small hut with few possessions among rotting garbage. She traveled into the city everyday at 5:00AM for morning mass at the city convent. She lived with little food, putting up with the hardships of the zabaleen -- worms in food supplies, fleas and disease.

During her 22 years in Cairo's slums, Sister Emmanuelle did a great deal to improve life for zabaleen, opening a school for children and for men, and a facility for youth called the Salam Center. In the slum of Mokkatam, which was worse than Ezbet El Nakhl, she set up a composting factory where rubbish was turned into fertilizer.

Sister Emmanuelle returned to France in 1993 where she was well-received and loved. She dissented from the Church on a number of positions, most notably in her support of contraception. Still, she was widely regarded as a heroic witness of service and charity. May she rest in peace.

Slum charity nun Emmanuelle dies

BBC NEWS / EUROPE 20 October 2008 10:39 UK

Sister Emmanuelle, a Belgian-born nun who dedicated her life to fighting poverty in poor countries, has died at the age of 99.

In the 1970s and 1980s, she devoted herself to helping poor children in the slums of the Egyptian capital, Cairo.

She focused on the health and education of children, often working with pregnant young girls.

She was often outspoken in questioning Vatican policy, especially in relation to contraception.

She died early on Monday at her home in the French southern town of Callian, one month short of her 100th birthday.

In her life memoir, published in August, she describes a youth spent dancing and flirting in 1920s Paris seeking "immediate pleasure".

But she wrote that she always felt her vocation calling her and in 1929 she took her religious vows.

She founded the Asmae-Association Soeur Emmanuelle in 1980 to fight poverty and homelessness in a number of countries, including Egypt, Sudan, the Philippines and India.

At the age of 63 she went to Cairo where she spent more than 20 years helping to build schools and clinics in the slums.

A spokesman for the Asmae-Association said she was not suffering from any illness when she died, but was tired.

A selection of your comments:

Sister Emmanuelle was a childhood friend of my mother, Mariette Buysse. When both studied at the Dames de Marie, in Brussels, Madeleine Cinquin was a mischievous redhead, and great fun. My mother, who was a rebel too, went to Louvains university and they did not meet again, except for a very kind letter for "my dear Mariette, so far away in Spain." Curiously, They shared the same upbringing with a similar result: two loving, free spirits. I hope the next generation will produce some people of the same stuff. As we say here, ¡Ojalá!

Teresa D'Outreligne, Torrelodones, (Near Madrid) Spain

In the mid eighties I met Soeur Emmanuelle on one of the projects I was assigned to as a civil engineer in Cairo, Egypt. I was a young man starting my career with this international consultant firm working on what the locals called the "Zabbaleen" Project.

Soeur Emmanuelle must have been in her seventies when we first met; on site, at the shanty town where the "Garbage Collectors" of Cairo lived. There were kids running in bare feet on mounds of garbage, garbage they sorted and lived off. The whole place reeked.

Worse yet in the summer heat of the desert, dust was everywhere. The mixed smells of dust, burning garbage and pig pens filled the air and in my sweaty shirt, those sights and smells even for this local young man were sometimes unbearable.

Yet this seemingly frail woman, just when I thought she had enough for the day, with her skinny hand on my shoulder and a wrinkled smile on her face would lean on me and in her loving voice say "yallah" let's go. Almost dragging me up the hilly dirt roads inspecting my work and demanding answers as to when will I finish building those shelters she financed.

God bless her soul, this caring nun, she left her mark on my heart, for ever. Soeur Emmanuelle was a living proof of a living God watching over us, all of us.

Nagi (Nagui) Rizk, Lake Cowichan, British Columbia, Canada

Soeur Emmanuelle was such a sweet lady. She cared a lot about people, the environment, and so much more! My grandmother was a friend of hers and introduced me to Emmanuelle when I was in Europe. She was probably one of the nicest people I have ever met in my entire life. When I went to my grandmother's funeral, Emmanuelle was there. She was comforting me. It was very sweet of her!

Alexis Bradford, Henderson, United States of America

I served with sister Emmanuelle at Ezbet el Nakahal, she never ceased giving people the best of herself, and she urged us to fight ignorance as well as poverty. I met her in France in September 2007, she was shining like a saint. She was very happy remembering everything about Cairo's "Garbage City", she asked about all the people she knew: the garbage collectors, the school, the hospital. She spoke Arabic with me and was very happy.

Sister Maria, Cairo, Egypt

Summer of 2002: as a student, I went to work with her association in the Cairo slum where she had started off her retired life with the poorest of the poor. A life-changing experience. Sister Emmanuelle was quite right: I received so much more from the people I worked with than what I could ever give them in a lifetime. I met her on her 93rd birthday: her undying faith and bubbly energy were amazingly contagious. A wonderfully outspoken personality with those sharp blue eyes, she had the knack for kicking fate and negativity in the teeth, reminding us that human dignity and freedom go hand in hand. Her motto sums her up perfectly: Yalla!! (in Arabic: "Let's go!").

Geraldine, Paris, France

I was lucky enough to meet Sister Emmanuelle about 20 years ago when she gave a lecture in my town in France. She impressed me very much with her huge and simple faith. She was in love with Jesus and made us feel like we wanted to know that Jesus better. I asked her to sign a book I had just bought and she did. She touched my cheek and told me I was a nice girl. I felt blessed by it.

Val, France

Soeur Emmanuelle was my teacher at Notre Dame de Sion French High School in Istanbul-Turkey (grade 7). I learned a lot from her. She used to call me petite Diane, because that year there were three Dianas in the same class. God bless her soul.

Diana M. Balaban Bogosyan, Toronto-Canada

I met Soeur Emmanuelle in Cairo, in 1985, while I was working for Canada's International Development Research Center. I was immediately taken by her straight-forwardness, dynamism and energy. There was no wasting time, she looked for anyone that was willing to put in work or money to help the poorest of the poor. My daughter volunteered for her when she was 17 and went to teach in Cairo's "Zabbaleen City" (Garbage city). I had instructed my chauffeur to stay with my daughter till she finished her volunteer work, I noticed he could not stand the stench and used to leave my daughter alone and only return to pick her up. Soeur Emmanuelle was a shining beauty in all this ugliness and misery, and a ray of hope for all those left away by mankind. She has

marked my life. I now volunteer in Armenia.

Antoine S. Terjanian, Ottawa - writing from Yeghegnadzor, Armenia

Mourning...

<http://karemelancholia.deviantart.com/>



Those who are in need are mourning her.

she was one of these persons the world needs.
Just like Mother Theresa or the Abbé Pierre.

She left us.

But we should continue her fight and devotion.

For those who don't know her see here : [\[link\]](#)

Soeur Emmanuelle est morte dimanche soir...



France's beloved nun Sister Emmanuelle dies at 99 By PERRINE LATRASSE

PARIS (AP) — Sister Emmanuelle, a nun who lived for years among scavengers in Cairo's slums and who won wide acclaim for defending the rights of the poor and marginalized, died Monday at age 99.

A spokeswoman for her association, Sandrine de Carlo, said the Belgium-born nun died in her sleep at a retirement home in Callian, a town in southeastern France.

Sister Emmanuelle spent more than two decades working with Cairo's zabbaleen, or garbage collectors, who eke out a living through scavenging. She helped create a network of clinics, schools and gardens to serve the children of the slums, and an association she founded now operates in eight countries, from Lebanon to Burkina Faso.

"The work Sister Emmanuelle did was crucial when she arrived here the zabbaleen were marginalized and no one wanted to look at them, they were people who had no rights," Zeina Zarif, the Egyptian coordinator for Association Sister Emmanuelle, told The Associated Press in Cairo.

"Her work marked this country," she added.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, co-founder of humanitarian aid group Doctors Without Borders, said he would never forget Sister Emmanuelle's "faith, which could move mountains."

"I will always remember the joy of working by her side, and will always keep that life-force which she infused in me," Kouchner said in a statement.

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"She was a woman of high convictions, but also one of action," Sarkozy said in a statement. "We miss her already."

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Association spokeswoman de Carlo said the funeral would be a strictly private affair but a public Mass in her memory will be held in Paris next month.

Associated Press writers Katarina Kratovac and Paul Schemm in Cairo contributed to this report.



'French Mother Theresa' dies aged 99

By John Lichfield in Paris

Soeur Emmanuelle, the "French Mother Theresa", who was once described as a "nun with attitude", died today aged 99.

In the last four decades of her life, after her official "retirement", Soeur Emmanuelle worked tirelessly for the poorest of the poor, starting with 20 years among the rag-scavengers of Cairo. Her humour and tough-talking – she once threatened to rob a bank – pushed Soeur Emmanuelle late in her life into the leading places of lists of the most popular people in France.

Soeur Emmanuelle was hailed by the Vatican yesterday as a "personification of Christian charity?whose actions, like those of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, erased national frontiers".

However, Soeur Emmanuelle was also a constant thorn in the side of the Vatican.

She often spoke out in favour of married priests. In the last of her many books, published in August, she revealed that she once wrote to Pope John Paul II to say that the best gift that he could bestow on the Cairo rag-collectors would be the contraceptive pill. ("J'ai 100 ans et je voudrais vous dire?" I am 100 and I want to tell you.)

She also revealed that, as a young nun, she had fallen in love with a "charming, handsome" young man. She said nothing to him at the time. Twenty years later, she received a letter which she knew to be in his hand-writing. She was, she admitted, "a little disappointed" to find that it was an official letter on a routine, administrative matter.

Soeur Emmanuelle died 26 days short of her 100th birthday at the retirement home of her order in Callian, in south eastern France.

"I am scared of dying in agony," she said in her final book. "People talk of the horror of death. Horrors are horrid. I never liked suffering. I never thought that suffering was a useful thing."

At the age of 23 – abandoning a fun-loving young womanhood – Madeleine Cinquin took the vows of the sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion and became Sister Emmanuelle. She asked to be sent to work with the poor but was ordered by her mother superior to become a teacher of daughters of the Turkish aristocracy and bourgeoisie. By influencing the minds of the rich, her superior insisted, she would do more good for the poor than by teaching the poor.

Soeur Emmanuelle accepted this decision until she "retired" at the age of 62 in 1971. She set off to Cairo to work with lepers but ended up living with the poorest of the Cairo slum-dwellers, the rag-pickers, who were a mixture of Coptic Christians and Muslims.

In her books, Sister Emmanuelle wrote of the squalor and violence but also the humanity and humour of the Cairo slums. From nothing, she started an organisation which created slum schools, a children's garden and a drug dispensary.

Her assistance was open to all, muslims and copts, with no attempt at conversion. On the door of her rough hut, little better than those occupied by the rag-pickers, she placed a cross and a crescent and the words "God is Love."

In 1976, after enlisting the aid of an Egyptian nun, who was named Sister Sarah, to look after her Cairo work, she began to tour the world to gather funds for the Association Soeur Emmanuelle.

In one fund-raising meeting in Geneva, when little cash was offered, she told her audience: "I need Dollars 30,000 and if I can't get it hear I will have no choice but to rob a bank."

She raised the money (legally) and used it to fund a factory for re-cycling Cairo waste: a more lucrative form of the rag-scavengers' profession.

When she "retired" a second time in 1993, at the age of 84, she continued to tour the world to raise money for the poor.

Among many tributes yesterday, President Nicolas Sarkozy said that Soeur Emmanuelle was "everyone's sister? a woman of action, for whom charity meant concrete acts of solidarity? which spanned the world."

Soeur Emmanuelle, France's unorthodox nun, dies aged 99

October 21, 2008

<http://clericalwhispers.blogspot.com/2008/10/soeur-emmanuelle-frances-unorthodox-nun.html>

Soeur Emmanuelle - who became a chat show star late in life but spent much of it helping rubbish sweepers in the slums of Cairo - died on Sunday, less than a month before her 100th birthday.

Born Madeleine Cinquin in Brussels in 1908, she appeared in recent years alongside the likes of Zinedine Zidane and far more glamorous women as one of France's best-loved figures.

But she never let her fame get to her head: "They're not going to ask for my popularity ranking at the gates of heaven. No one is going to inscribe my score on my tombstone," she once said.

With Catholicism in free fall, the popularity of the bespectacled, hunched and wizened figure of Emmanuelle, who was often likened to Mother Theresa, has led to suggestions that the French are thirsty for philanthropic values in a consumer-obsessed society.

Renowned for her no-nonsense, maverick approach to religious orthodoxy, Emmanuelle approved contraception and the idea of priests marrying, and always kept her charity work independent of the church.

She raised puritanical eyebrows this summer by admitting to dancing into the night with dapper boys during the interwar years, falling in love with a man for his seductive intellect and lusting after the latest fashions.

"I'm no saint," she declared in a set of memoirs published this summer called *I'm 100 Years Old and I'd Like to Tell You ...*

Revealing the naughty nun behind her lifelong devotion to charity and Catholicism, she admitted to being torn early on between the desire for "immediate pleasure" and her religious calling. "I loved dancing, preferably with nice-looking boys. My mother used to say to me, 'You want boys to like you, to surround you, to admire you. And if you become a nun ...' And I would tell her, 'For God, I will leave the boys alone!'"

She had the habit of dubbing frequent comparisons with Mother Teresa "ridiculous". "It's like comparing a mouse and a mountain," she once said.

Bernard Kouchner, the French foreign minister and human rights champion, described her as "the youngest, the most beautiful, the most obstinate of activists."



*Soeur Emmanuelle
(Madeleine Cinquin)*

1908 - 2008



'Mother Teresa' of Cairo slum dies aged 99

AFP on 20 October 2008 <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/535263-mother-teresa-of-cairo-slum-dies-aged-99>



LONG LIFE: Sister Emmanuelle, pictured at the Nativitas homeless care centre in Brussels in 2001. (AFP)

Sister Emmanuelle, a Belgian-born nun who devoted her life to helping the poor in North Africa and in France, has died aged 99, the association she founded said Monday.

The Roman Catholic nun, whose real name was Madeleine Cinquin, had spent 20 years working with children in a slum in Cairo as part of a lengthy career helping the dispossessed.

Her outspoken comments and passionate campaigning on behalf of the poor and homeless upon her return to France won the hearts of many French.

Sister Emmanuelle died peacefully in her sleep in a retirement home in the southern French town of Callian, said the Asmae-Association Soeur Emmanuelle.

The Vatican said her work, like that of Nobel peace laureate Mother Teresa, "showed how Christian charity was able to go beyond differences of nationality, race, religion".

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said his "heart was heavy" on learning of the death of a woman whose "faith made mountains tremble".

The association she set up has opened clinics and schools across the world, from Sudan to the Philippines to India.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C5%93ur_Emmanuelle

Sœur Emmanuelle (November 16, 1908 – October 20, 2008), born **Madeleine Cinquin**, was a [Belgian nun](#) living in [France](#).



Born November 16, 1908
[Brussels](#), [Belgium](#) Died October 20, 2008 (aged 99)
[Callian](#), [France](#) Occupation Nun and humanitarian

Life

She was born in [Brussels](#), Belgium, the daughter of a family of lingerie manufacturers. At the age of six she saw her father [drown](#). She was educated at the [Sorbonne](#), earning a degree in [philosophy](#). In 1929, she took her religious vows and became a nun.

She worked in Notre-Dame de Sion high school in [Istanbul](#) in the 1930s.

In 1971, she witnessed the impoverished conditions of the [trash collectors](#) in [Cairo](#), [Egypt](#), and decided to live among them. She remained there until 1993, when she returned to [France](#). It was upon her return that she gained the status of a media sensation in France, as she was well received by audiences and talk-show hosts.

In addition to her charity work, she is known for her unorthodox religious views, including approval of the use of [contraception](#) and favouring the idea of allowing [priests](#) to [marry](#). She was voted one of the most popular people in [France](#), and has been compared to [Mother Teresa](#). (She regarded the comparisons with Mother Theresa as "ridiculous"). In 2003, French [television](#) broadcast *Soeur Emmanuelle: An exceptional woman*. In 2005 she ended on the 5th place in the [Walloon](#) version of [Le plus grand Belge](#) (The Greatest Belgian).

She died on October 20, 2008 in [Callian](#)^[1], aged 99, in her sleep from natural causes.^[2]

Les Amis de Soeur Emmanuelle (The Friends of Sister Emmanuelle) is a charitable organization based in Brussels.

She was originally [jewish from Alsace](#) by her great grand father, [Herz-Löwel Dreyfus](#), who represented the jewish community^{[\[citation needed\]](#)}.

References

1. [^ Article on Le Figaro \(French\)](#)
2. [^ « Soeur Emmanuelle dies aged 99 »](#), *peoplestar.co.uk*, Retrieved on 2008-10-20.

External links

- [95-year-old nun is France's favourite woman](#)
- [France's beloved nun Sister Emmanuelle dies at 99](#)
- **(French)** [De Madeleine Cinquin à Sœur Emmanuelle](#)