

Mother Eduviges Portalet (Life and work)



Foundress of the
Congregation of
Dominicans of the
Immaculate
Conception

Eduviges Portalet was born on December 3, 1826 in the city of Lyon (France). She was baptized three days after her birth with the names of Francisca Genoveva Eduviges (the latter was designated by her family).

His parents were, Gastón Portalet, lawyer of the Royal Court of Lyon and Zelié Eleonore Couturier, Parisian of exceptional human qualities, standing out her clear intelligence, perseverance and virtue. Her parents were exemplary Christians, Eduviges inherited the most important virtues of his parents.

She received his First Communion in 1838, being a student of the religious Ursulinas of Villefranche. This first encounter with Jesus left in his soul indelible traces and from there she did not sigh but for the Divine Spouse to whom he consecrated his virginity. The Holy Spirit enriched her with all her gifts in the sacrament of Confirmation that she received with much anointing.

When she was fifteen, she entered the Marcellín Visitation Convent as a student to finish her education.

In November 1862, she entered the Congregation of "Sisters of Mary Immaculate" recently founded in Marseille.

She took the holy habit on Christmas night, a month after her admission, and was later named Master of Novices, a position she exercised with great skill until her departure to Toulouse. Three years he was still in the novitiate house, being a model of observance, virtue and sacrifice.

But the Lord had other designs on this privileged soul. He wanted her for Mother of a new religious family that would extend his Kingdom of Love on earth. Thus, on June 25, 1866, she was appointed to found an institute for blind children in Toulouse, of which she would be superior.

The beginnings of this foundation, like every work chosen by God, had great proofs that Mother Eduviges Portalet endured with a great spirit of faith, love and sacrifice.

Mother Eduviges abandoned herself to Divine Providence and did not wish to do anything but the will of God. It was the same Lord who took the direction of the institute and directed the events. Thus, in August 1868, the Ecclesiastical Curia obliged our Venerable Mother to separate herself from the house in Marseille, for serious and powerful reasons of the Administration of the Institute, leaving this foundation independent and established the "Congregation of the Tolosana of the Immaculate Conception", under the auspices of Monsier l'Abbé de Pons, Vicar General.

On October 3, 1868 two months after these events, Mother Eduviges renewed her Temporary Vows. Meanwhile, other generous souls desiring to congregate themselves to the Lord entered the recent Institute, whose community life became a hotbed of virtue. Faithful collaborator was Mother Maria Francisca Lohier, who displayed great apostolic zeal by supporting Mother Foundress in her activities and relieving her in her fatigue with true filial affection. She is considered as Co-founder of the Congregation and his memory is very close to the beginnings of this new religious family.

Animated by the Spirit of God that guided all her actions, Mother Eduvigis began the construction of the Institute for Blind Children in Rue Montplaisir (1870), moving to the new building on September 30, 1871, with the Community and the blind children.

On May 21 of that same year, inflamed with Divine love, Mother Eduvigis made her Perpetual Profession and on September 30 was unanimously elected canonically Superior General.

After her appointment as Superior General, her first wish was to undertake the construction of the Mother House in Rue Montplaisir, beginning the works in the month of May 1878.

Eager to extend her apostolate for the benefit of the blind, she founded an Institute for Blind Workers in Saintes and later also opened a School there. In the Mother House he created an Externado in April 1882.

Mother Eduvigis who had always admired this Order of Saint Dominic for being the favorite children of Mary Immaculate and also the recent Congregation under the patronage of such a loving Mother, wanted by divine inspiration, to affiliate her young family to this Glorious Order, manifesting her great wish to Father Cormier (1883).

There were not any words to describe the joy of Mother Eduvigis, when on December 8, 1884, the feast of the Blessed Virgin, Patroness of the Congregation, became affiliated with the Dominican Order under the title of "CONGREGATION OF RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE THIRD ORDER OF SANTO DOMINGO DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCIÓN », enjoying all the privileges of the Order. From that day the Congregation considers Father Cormier, (today Blessed) as its Founder.

The works were extended guided by the Divine Providence beyond the seas to new horizons of America. Mother Foundress had received repeated requests for a foundation in Ecuador (America), to take charge of the administration and assistance to the patients of the Leprocomio de Cuenca. Knowing that this was the will of God, she made the preparations for the trip, sending six of her sisters who, after a long journey, set foot on American soil on July 14, 1889, settling in Cuenca (Ecuador). They quickly spread throughout that Republic with flourishing works of Beneficiencia and Education. Some years later, requested for a foundation in Peru, a group of nuns went to the city of Trujillo (1898) where they started the "Santa Rosa" School, which was the first of a series of flourishing schools.

The Founding Mother remained indefatigable working on new foundations. On March 19, 1894, he founded in Fanjeaux a School in the Convent of so many memories of our Blessed Father Santo Domingo and verified the purchase of said Convent. On August 8 of the same year, he moved the Mother House to Mazères and opened the School and Workshop.

On November 4, 1894, the venerated Mother falls seriously ill. The Lord claimed it for himself. She had fulfilled the mission Jesus had commissioned her. The Divine Bridegroom called her to the Eternal Weddings to crown her and she presented herself to him with her hands full of good deeds.

On November 16, 1894, after 12 days of seriousness surrounded by all her daughters who cried her, her soul opened like a flower for heaven. At the age of 68 years and 31 of religious profession, she left the winter of the earth, to enter the eternal spring of the happiness of heaven.

The perfume of his virtues and the seed of his holy life, would be the germ that would fertilize the garden of the Dominican Order.

READING COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY

Activity 1: Read the article again and match the questions with their answers. Write the correct letter.

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|---|-----|--|
| 1. Eduvigis Portalet was born on | () | a. Her parents were exemplary Christians. |
| December 3, 1826 in the city of Lyon | | b. she entered the Congregation of "Sisters |
| 2. Mother Eduvigis inherited the most | () | of Mary Immaculate" |
| important virtues of his parents. | | c. an institute for blind children in Toulouse |
| 3. Mother Eduvigis received his First | () | d. renewed her Temporary Vows |
| Communion in 1838 | | e. being a student of the religious Ursulinas of |
| 4. In November 1862, | () | Villefranche |
| 5. She was appointed to found | () | f. obliged our Venerable Mother to |
| 6. in August 1868, the Ecclesiastical Curia | () | separate herself from the house in |
| 7. On October 3, 1868, Mother Eduvigis | () | Marseille. |
| 8. Mother Maria Francisca Lohier was a | () | g. faithful collaborator |
| 9. Mother Maria Francisca Lohier | () | h. Mother Eduvigis began the construction |
| 10. Animated by the Spirit of God that | () | of the Institute for Blind Children in Rue |
| guided all her actions | | Montplaisir |
| | | i. on December 3, 1826 in the city of Lyon |
| | | j. is considered as Co-founder of the |
| | | Congregation |

Activity 2: Read the article again and answer True (T) or False (F)

1. Mother Eduvigis started the construction of the Mother House in Rue Montplaisir after her appointment as Superior General.
2. She founded an Institute for Blind Workers in Saintes because she wanted to extend her apostolate for the benefit of the blind.
3. She became affiliated with the Dominican Order under the title of "CONGREGATION OF RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE FIRST ORDER OF SANTO DOMINGO DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCIÓN »
4. Mother Foundress had received only one request for a foundation in Ecuador to take charge of the administration and assistance to the patients of the Leprocomio
5. Santa Rosa" School is considered the first of a series of flourishing schools founded in Peru.
6. On November 4, 1894, the venerated Mother falls seriously ill and died after three weeks
7. At the age of 68 years and 31 of religious profession, Mother Eduvigis passed away.