

Mother Elisabeth Bruyère, S.C.O. (1818-1876)

Born on March 19, 1818 in the village of L'Assomption, just a few kilometers from Montreal, Elisabeth loses her father when she is only six. She suffers deeply and experiences the poverty and sacrifices which result from this loss. She has move to Montreal with her mother who courageously accepts to become a domestic to provide for her family. Elisabeth attends the school run by the Congregation of Notre-Dame, located near Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel. Father Caron, Elisabeth's mother's cousin, offers hospitality to the young orphan and provides such an excellent education that the young woman is able to pursue a teaching career.



In 1839, she enters the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, founded by Mother d'Youville, and she makes her first profession on May 31, 1841, at the age of twenty-three. At this time, the General Superior, Mother McMullen is asked to found a community in Bytown (Ottawa today). Sister Elisabeth, who was professed only four years before, is designated to assume responsibility for this foundation. Filled with the charism of Mother d'Youville, Mother Bruyère and her sisters intend to continue the ministry with the poor and the care of the neediest. Only three months after their arrival, the sisters had already founded a school, a general hospital, a senior's residence, an orphanage and a home for abandoned children. However education is the most urgent need. Mother Bruyère strives to make her sisters become more competent in this field. Though, their commitment to education does not take them away from other works, such as the ministry with the poor, the destitute and the orphans. Mother Bruyère widely opens her heart to the elderly and to the disabled. The care of the sick is not neglected either. All the ministries offered in Montreal resonate in Mother Bruyère's soul. Only the education provided in the boarding schools is added to respond to the specific needs of Bytown, at that time.

Mother Bruyère did her very best. She dies on April 5, 1876, at the age of fifty eight. The congregation which she directed for thirty-one years counted ninety-eight members. Her last words « my beloved Jesus », reflect her confident abandonment and summarize her whole life.

LINK : <http://www.soeursdelachariteottawa.com/index-en.php>