**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**



**Sister Dorina Chassé**

*(Sister St. Julie-des-Anges)*

April 27, 1928 - August 14, 2020

1780th death

*"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*In verdant pastures he gives me repose;*

*Beside restful waters he leads me;*

*He refreshes my soul."*

*(Ps. 23:1-3)*

 Sister Dorina Chasse, formerly known as Sister St. Julie-des-Anges, was born in Madawaska, Maine on April 27, 1928, to Eddie Chasse and Artheline Lausier Chasse. She was the oldest of nine children in the family. She received her elementary education at Evangeline School in Madawaska and then attended Madawaska High School until the tenth grade when her family moved to Van Buren. She completed her high school education at Sacred Heart High in Van Buren.

 Sister Dorina entered the Congregation of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, also known as the Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec, on August 25, 1946 in Biddeford, Maine. After her initial training in religious life, she spent a year studying at the Mother House in Quebec City. She later graduated from St. Joseph College, Windham, Maine.

 Sister composed a brief autobiography which she placed on our Community website which follows:

*"I was born in the northernmost part of Maine that borders the St. John River. Edmundston, New Brunswick is the city on the Canadian side of the St. John River. The Frasier Paper Mill (co-owned by the U.S. and Canada) attracted many workers and their families. Soon, the town of Madawaska, Maine, was established with a church and school.*

 *Like many of the families residing there, my parents were strong Catholics. They had little formal education, wonderful creative talents, and a faith that could move mountains—ablessing they passed on to their nine children. As the oldest, my parents taught me responsibility at an early age. I learned how to sew, knit, crochet and cook as a child. I can still remember standing on a chair near the table to bake my first cake!*

 *In this atmosphere of love, faith and happiness, God started weaving a tapestry that wove secretly in my daily living. I remember seeing the Sisters of St. Joseph when my mother and I visited my father in the hospital. At the age of 3 years, I didn't appreciate the loving attention the Sisters gave to me and would often cry when they fussed over me. However, when I got home, I would put a towel over my head and walk about like a Sister. My role-playing became more focused after my First Holy Communion when I would play "school" with my siblings. I played the teaching Sister on a mission in China. This fantasy stayed with me for some time.*

 *When I was sixteen, we moved to a farm in Van Buren. That is where I met the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, popularly known as the "Good Shepherd Sisters.” Although I had thought about becoming a Daughter of Wisdom (the Congregation my aunts had joined), I soon discovered that God's tapestry was weaving a different pattern—a desire to become a Good Shepherd Sister.*

 *Upon my graduation from high school, I entered the novitiate and happily pronounced my first vows in 1948. I was a teaching religious for ten years in Maine and often thought about my childhood fantasy of doing missionary work. By this time my attention was turned to Southern Africa to a small country called Basutoland (later named Lesotho). In 1953, I traveled there to dedicate 35 years of service as a teacher and principal of a girls' high school.*

 *I was occasionally joined in mission by students from Grinnell College, located in Iowa. In 1995,*

*the College showed their appreciation by giving me an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree.*

As noted above it was in 1995 that the Grinnell College faculty voted to award an honorary degree of Doctor ofHumane Letters to Sr. Dorina Chasse at its Commencement Exercises. It was Dr. George Drake from Grinnell College who, after having spent two years at St. Rodrigue, recommended that Sister Dorina be recognized. In his letter to her, Professor Gerald Lalonde wrote: "Among the reasons for which the Faculty recommends honorary degrees are service to humanity, service in education, including service that is rendered quietly rather than famously, and in all cases service that encourages a standard of excellence that is exemplary to our students for the conduct of their lives. The devotion of your life to teaching and your mission in Lesotho fulfill these criteria in a very special way."In accepting the award Sister Dorina summarized her 35 years in Lesotho in the following way:

*“In Lesotho, St. Rodrigue High School was born and gradually attained its present status as a reputable institution. In carrying out its mission, St. Rodrigue has remained faithful to its commitment to the poor and disadvantaged. We have given preference to rural young women living in the villages on the slopes of the surrounding mountains. I am proud to say that through the years, St. Rodrigue has educated well over 4000 young women. I look back with pride at all our young women graduates who were empowered by our efforts to take their rightful place in society and I look forward with great hope for a brighter future for their country when it also can find its rightful place in the world.”*

In 1993 when Sr Dorina was preparing to leave Lesotho, Sister Claudia Pekosela took the occasion to summarize the life and ministry of Sr. Dorina in Lesotho:

 “*Sister Dorina arrived in Lesotho in 1958. She had left her beloved parents, Mr. Eddie, who died in 1990, and Mrs. Atheline whom she left in Northern Maine and her siblings and their families. When she arrived in this tiny, beautiful country of Moshoeshoe, she was appointed to teach in the mountainous part of the country, Auray in Mantsonyane. It was there that her talent of leadership as headmistress bloomed. There she was known by the name of Sister Julie, her name as a religious. Not knowing Sesotho has never been a problem for her. She actively started teaching in the higher primary school. One of her standard 6 pupils said "'M'e Julie teaches all in English, even catechism." It was a bit surprising. Amazingly, she had already translated the whole book into English. She trained solid women and men in that area.*

 *In January 1960, Sister Dorina was transferred to St. Rodrigue, which was at that time a secondary school. It is here where she offered herself completely for the good of our country. Students received the spiritual, moral and family education (many have become good housewives and mothers as a result). "All daughters o 'Madaeboso ke basali ba Mankhonthe, ha u batla mosali ua sebele u ee St. Rodrigue." (If you need a real woman, all the daughters (students) of Sr. Dorina are good women). This is the common saying we used to hear from young men. ('Madaeboso’ ….an English woman who loves black people and has no Apartheid).*

 *'M'e Dorina has done wonderful things in this school. She has helped and provided the leadership for religious education teachers, not only here at St. Rodrigue but also for Lesotho's religion teachers through seminars. She was one of those who prepared the Syllabus. This is another result of her dedication.*

 *At St. Rodrigue, orderly, encouraging and pleasing activities were common. Each year we had a courtesy week during which 'Miss Courtesy' was chosen from our girls. This program helped our girls live as Basotho girls should. It is still helping them to be good women in the society and the Church. Knowing and accepting themselves and one another, they are ready to face the future. Many enjoyed this event and still appreciate it. A seed has been planted and it cannot be taken out of their hearts.*

 *Through her love and initiative, many Basotho girls have received this lasting treasure—education. Many were unable to finish their Form I because of economicproblems, but Sister Dorina found the means. She sent letters of appeal everywhere, especially to associations in America. As a result, many girls received financial help from donors. In addition, she kept the fees very low to enable parents to pay for the education of their daughters.*

 *She also provided another valuable assistance to education: Sr. Dorina helped many teachers of this area to further their studies by upgrading their certification which improved their salaries. Through her efforts, nearly all the teachers are certified and in good standing.*

 *Through Sister Dorina's intelligence, prudence and zeal, there are wonderful accommodations at the school. She built a large hostel for the girls. Today, students have a suitable residence on the school premises. This allows for good upbringing of Basotho children—whichwas her goal.*

 *As you finish your time with us in Lesotho, we extend our deepest gratitude and praise to you. It will take at least ten people to replace you, dear Sister Dorina. As you return home we fittingly say "Pholoana boela haeno, u holile, Sentle ke ho boes le marumo le thebe," Ngoana Mofokeng. (Go back home our dear Sister. You have worked hard and you deserve to go home and rest.) Today we give you a new name. It is not closing your history in this country, but continuing forever. You are our 'Malerato Mohau’. (Mother of Love and Charity).”*

 When Sister Dorina returned home to Maine after her 35 years of missionary work in Lesotho, she enjoyed a year of rest in Quebec and followed the program of“L'Année Doctrinale”.She then continued to serve the people of her own country with whole-hearted love and zeal. In 1995 she was named Superior of St. Bruno Convent and later saw to the closing of our convent there in 2001. From there she served in leadership positions at Bay View Convent and at St. Joseph Convent in Biddeford.

 From 2006 to 2013 she was assigned to St. John the Evangelist Convent in So. Portland. She was on a team of three people with Sister Elaine Lachance as Coordinator and Sister Maureen Egan. Here, Sister Dorina was an active participant in all phases of community life. She served a local treasurer and annalist. She continued to contribute her artistic talent in sewing, knitting and crocheting producing beautiful items for the Province Craft Fair at Bay View and later at St. Joseph Convent. She was a beloved leader of the South Portland Good Shepherd Affiliation Group of twelve members. She was also an active supporter of the vocation ministry. At the St. John the Evangelist Parish, Sister was a choir member and participated in many parish activities. Sister Dorina was valued for her wisdom and experience which she generously shared.

 We return to Sr. Dorina’s brief biography which she concluded with the following words:*“God has woven the years of my life into a tapestry filled with multiple colors of love, prayer, service, community and friendship. I love my religious life and I am very happy that I answered the call of the Good Shepherd. Of course there are sacrifices. I might have liked to become an opera singer...? But, I can still sing to God's glory in the convent and wait to perform my aria in His heavenly choir.”*

 On August 14,2020, Sister Dorina answered the call of the Good Shepherd to join the heavenly choir assembling to sing the praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the feast of the Assumption of Mary was celebrated in Heaven on August 15.

 Sister Dorina is survived by three sisters: Viola Beverage of St. Agatha, Maine and Alouida Dubay of Caribou, Maine, Wilma Madore of Old Lyme, CT and two brothers: Harold Chasse of Yountville, California and Gerard Chasse of Van Buren, Maine.

 Due to the Corona Virus, there were no visiting hours. The burial service took place on Monday, September 21, 2020 at St. Joseph Cemetery, Biddeford, Maine. Reverend Norman Richard officiated. A

small group of Sisters attended at the graveside service. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at a later date at the conclusion of the pandemic.

*Addendum:* Several Sisters of Lesotho sent notes of sympathy on learning of the death of Sr. Dorina. I have enclosed some of them. The impact she had on their lives is clearly notable in what they have written.

Sr. Johanna Mokhoro writes: *Sister Dorina was a loving, caring person. In 1998, when Lesotho was preparing for the Papal visit, I was a student at St. Rodrigue High School. Sister knew that not everyone could take part. She tried by all means to make sure that everyone could take part. She was a shoulder to cry on. Every student was important to her. That is why she worked tooth and nail for their success. May the Good Lord accept you, Sr. Dorina, in his holy place where you can sing Alleluias unceasingly with the choir of angels. We will continue to love you till the end of time.*

Sr. Maria Goretti Khasoane shares the following:*I extend to you my deepest condolences on the loss of our dearest friend, Sr. Dorina Chasse. Sister was dear to us all, especially Basotho in every corner of Lesotho. She can only be physically gone, but never the life lived and the memories shared. To me, it is an honor to have known such a great woman and I will truly miss her.*

Eliza and Clement Matekane and their family and family of World Wide Marriage Encounter Lesotha write:*We have heard about the sad news of the departure of Sister Dorina, our legend and mother. It was time, she had completed the mission dedicated to her by God. She will be in the minds and hearts of the Basotho women who have known her especially those who attended St. Rodrigue High School during her days and the parents of students as well. She will be remembered for all the good things she did for us. We are with you in prayers for the repose of her soul.*

The Sisters from the Lesotho Infirmary share their sentiments: Sr. Claudia Pekosela, Sr. Calextina Putsoane, Sr. Anna Leteba and Sr. Edwina Chake describe Sr. Dorina: *She worked with joy and touching love in her life. She was a real mother and teacher to the children at St. Rodrigue High School. She was an excellent model of a Good Shepherd Sister for she touched the hearts and souls of people as Jesus, the Good Shepherd did on earth.*

Sister Armelina Tsiki contributed the following: *Sr. Dorina was a "Jack of all trades." During the holidays she would help the Sisters to make lovely seasonal decorations for the Church and our convent. She was always ready to help everyone everywhere—evenin the kitchen. She even joked that she had no time to be sick. She was unique and lived our SCIM charism very well. Her love for the poor children was exceptional. She saw to meeting their needs and truly loved them.*

Sister Angela Sekete shares the following: *Sr. Dorina highlighted the importance of beginning and ending everything with prayer: "ALL FOR YOU, O LIVING CHRIST; WE THANK YOU, O LIVING CHRIST." Even today this is still the daily routine here at St. Rodrigue High School.*

 *Though Sister Dorina has gone--Gone to the land of no return,*

 *Her memories will never depart of our trueFriend, Mother of all,*

 *An Advisor to the wicked, a Protector of orphans.*

*Sister Courtesy, your new journey has just begun.*

 *There is no summer without winter; happy times follow sad times.*

*Little did I know that death would separate you from us.*

*Though I cannot see you anymore, your smile, your beauty,*

*Your modesty will always be remembered.*

*ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL!*

*Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary Sister Sharon Leavitt, S.C.I.M.*

*October 7, 2020*