

## **OSP-IHM Presentation to Grey Nuns of the Cross of Ottawa**

**“It is the heart that does the giving, the fingers only let go.”**

This Nigerian proverb serves as a powerful reminder of the genuine nature of generosity. Emphasizing that the act of giving is driven by the heart's intention, it is a fitting backdrop for our IHM -OSP gratitude for the solidarity shown to our Congregations by the courageous generosity of the hospitality extended for eighteen years to Theresa Maxis by Elizabeth Bruyere and the Grey Nuns of the Cross of Ottawa.

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The philosopher and poet David Whyte defines courage as the measure of our heartfelt participation in life — in one another, in community in the work entrusted to us, and in the unfolding of a future not yet seen. It is not the absence of fear, but the presence of love — love that shows itself in fidelity to the moment, to the need, and to the call. Courage is what love looks like when it is tested by the simple, everyday necessities of being alive.

Elizabeth Bruyère's life was a witness to such courage — a prophetic, visionary response born from deep compassion. In her time, she confronted the malignant effects of racism, colonialism, and political division — not with weapons of war, but with the healing balm of mercy, solidarity, and presence. She stood with and for the most vulnerable in times of crisis, allowing herself to be compelled by need rather than comforted by ease.

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Elizabeth led not by might, but by wisdom — the wisdom that anticipated principles of Catholic social teaching: the balance of responsibility and the common good, the stewardship of limited resources, the humble power of subsidiarity, and the unshakable claim of solidarity.

Elizabeth's life also anticipated Pope Francis' call for a new kind of neighborliness — one that dares to seek out renewed encounter with those most impoverished and vulnerable, forming a social friendship committed to the eradication of poverty, not merely in word, but in sacrificial action.

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For Theresa and for all who witness Elizabeth's story, her legacy is clear: compassion is not sentiment. It is justice. It is equity. It is courage that risks everything, even our own safety and certainty, for the sake of another's dignity and survival.

Elizabeth courageous generosity strengthened Theresa 's courageous resolve to stay close to the way she was made — vulnerable, compassionate, and responsive to the cries of the world. May the strength of Elizabeth and Therese continue to give us courage to risk proximity with pain, to stand where others turn away, and to trust that grace meets us there.

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It is with profound gratitude that we offer this picture of Theresa Maxis to our sisters, the Grey Nuns of the Cross of Ottawa, as a symbol of our indebtedness and deep gratitude to Elizabeth Bruyere for her courageous generosity to Theresa and prophetic witness to that unshakable claim of solidarity which is ours as Sisters today.

May we, too, stay close to the way we are made.

May we, too, measure our days by love.

May we, too, risk our lives — and shape our futures — with courage.