

In Memoriam: Marie-France Dougherty 1951 - 2013

Francis C. Dougherty
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Marie-France Dougherty 1951-2013

Marie-France Germain Dougherty, amiably called Marie by her closest compatriots, passed peacefully on Saturday June 22, 2013 in the presence of her beloved husband, Jim, eldest son, and her friend. Dougherty is survived by her husband, Jim, and her four grown children: Patrick, Lynn, Eric and Francis. Towards the end of a year and a half battle with cancer, an infection ushered her beyond the final threshold into eternity at the Kingston Hospital. Her last breaths were the tokens of a peaceful going and a great legacy.

Marie, my mother, or Ma as I like to say, was and is a member of the Unification Church, commonly known throughout the Hudson Valley by its seminary in Barrytown. During her ordeal, many of its congregants and friends visited. They stopped by for tea, knitting, and literature—that thing women like to create and experience in the fluorescence of talk. It touched on all themes of life, from the pedestrian to the profound. Some were benefactors of her passion for scarves, hats, and baby-clothes. Many were moved by her insights into life. All were touched by her cheerful, vital spirit. During the most difficult and taxing period of her care, these visits turned into opportunities for foot-massages. Comforting her with his voice, my father devoted much of this time to reading from their newly acquired taste for pop-fiction: *Game of Thrones*.

Born February 19, 1951 to Jean and Marie Therese Germain in Paris, France, she was the eldest of four children: Michel, Monique, and Jean-Pierre. Her father Jean was an avid photographer and beachgoer. Her early childhood, family holidays, and many pets are well documented in her father's photography. Her father continued his service in the French army after World War II as a professional nurse. Consequently, her early childhood was partly nomadic, bringing the family throughout parts of French-occupied Germany, Northern France, and Belgium.



Dougherty at her home in Trivoli, New York, shortly before she ascended

Sadly, her parents' marriage ended when she was just ten years old. She and her sisters spent the rest of their teenage years attending Catholic boarding school, and spending summers with their father. The divorce of her parents and the breakup of the family proved to be a painful experience throughout the rest of her life.

Marie-France was a passionate student. She had a knack for language and literature, and I must say that

even with my education from Bard College, she has recommended the best literature I've ever read. She also had a penchant for the social arts, the subject she pursued when completing her degree in the United States at the age of 50. The subjects of her French degree, however, resonated strongly with her - particularly at a time when she was developing her faith, spirituality, and relationship with god. She told stories of being close to Jesus early in her life. The testimony she wrote to join the church suggests as much. [The testimony is available at the end of the page.]



Dougherty (third from left) in Mauny, France in 1975

Over the course of her studies at the University of Lille, she met her spiritual father Michel Taclet. Their encounter marks Marie-France's transition into a community that fostered her spirituality and shared the values she developed early on. She found in the Unification movement a shared awareness for the importance of having a personal connection to god, and the capacity to create a solid community around this core value. Her ability to share her passion inspired those she met along the way, whether it was through the many personal letters she wrote, her linguistic capacity to translate songs into French, the atmosphere she created with her voice, or not least of all the spirit she exuded in her smile, as well as the more pedestrian and rigorous activities such as cooking, cleaning, organizing, driving, and praying -- of which she did more than most second generation for the church. Passion, we all know, has a rich history of meaning.

The first person she ushered into the Unification movement was her very own best friend Myriam Mounier. Shortly after joining the church in 1973, she traveled to the United States and joined a One World Crusade bus team led by Rev. Reiner Vincenz. She spent nearly half a decade in the states participating in events such as the Day of Hope tours. She returned to Europe in the late seventies to continue witnessing, touring, and such projects.

Michel Taclet and her close friend Sylvie Perry possess many of the letters she produced over the decade, as she was fond of writing them. Sylvie notes the letters from Atlanta and Seattle, especially. Michel recalls the summer they spent together on the beach at Saint Marlo in Brittany in 1977. According to him, Marie's singing unfailingly set the mood for Michel's speeches; He told me she "created a peaceful and positive atmosphere with her voice."



Dougherty (second row, fourth from left) with young French Unificationists at Trocadéro in Paris in 1975

In one photo taken in Trocadéro, Paris, I noticed a smile different from the one I am used to. She possessed at that time a smile imbued with charm. She had a fancy for turning her eyes away from the camera not, however, without producing the most brilliant smile. The husband to whom she did not marry, Jean-Philippe Odent whom she always described to us as the man she couldn't marry because he was French, which recalls the sparkle in her eyes, in a letter he recently addressed to us. The matching

between them was broken voluntarily by Jean-Philippe, and it was an act not without consequences, as we know, and one that expresses the influence my mother held. Mr. Odent recalls that she was not a woman to be led by her nose, or, “Elle ne se laissait pas mener par le bout du nez.” Which is one way of saying she had a predilection for the future that gave her character its particular hue, which to many leaders came off as difficult. She desired to know the truth and God, Michel wrote us. Some of the substitutions she received in this regard, she preferred to ignore. Although perhaps too ambitious in her desires at times, she was a woman who knew what she was looking for and did not hesitate to make that known. As we all know, our greatest strength tends to be our greatest weakness, this one was hers.

However, she had other remarkable qualities. My mother possessed a keen spiritual sensibility buttressed by a simple hard-working sense. After a spiritual journey that brought her to the United States, the arms of my father, and the responsibility of raising four children, she returned to school and earned her bachelors in her fifties. She worked long hours standing in the hot sun to sell sunglasses for UV3 in Modena, NY along the throughway. Occasioned by delightful encounters with French-speaking Canadians, her work supported her family. Her spirituality consisted of group healing accompanied by activities such as Labyrinth walks, the bud of which sprouted in Barrytown's very own on the UTS property. Its branches spread into the maturity of her children and richness of her friends.

Blessed to my father James Horn Dougherty on July 1, 1982 in Madison Square Garden in New York City, the man whom she recalled with fondness, as the one who looked like he had “just gotten off a horse,” her mission for the church turned from the global to the local. Together, happily wed, they moved to the Hudson Valley, where my father attended the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York, and made the decision to focus on work instead of ministry to support the family. My mother's legacy continues to grow in the village of Tivoli, where she has created the meaning of home for my family. My three older siblings, Patrick, Lynn, Eric, myself, and my dad continue to live in the home in Tivoli nurtured by this marriage. My mother's sister, native of Belgium, Michele Germain, survives her.

Her passing marked by the beauty she inspired in others, its meaning returns to us now in the responses we receive from those she touched.

Francis C. Dougherty, 23, her youngest son and a recent graduate from Bard College.



Dougherty (third from right) at Le Maison Blanche in Paris in 1974 together with young French Unificationists.

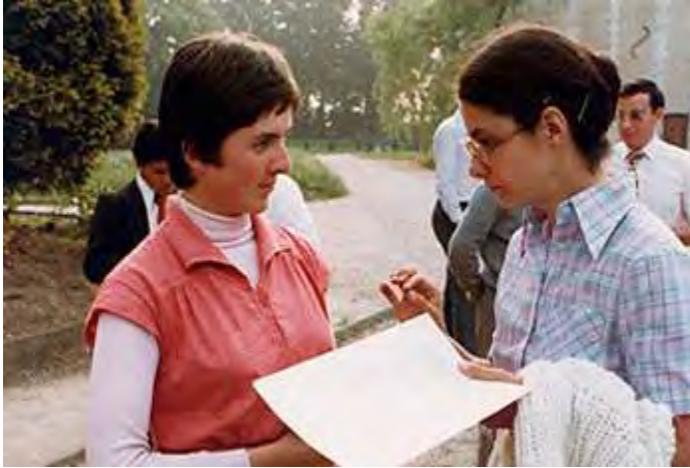
The following is a testimony written by Marie-France Dougherty on September 7, 1973 when she was in Paris.

My name is Marie-France Germain, and I am 22 years old. I was contacted in the north of France, in Lille, on May 16, 1973.

Because my father was a career soldier, from my birth, I was used to moving frequently and to living with many different people having the same purpose. Also, since he was deeply Catholic, he very soon tried to awaken in us a faith that became natural for me. But, when my parents were divorced at the beginning of my adolescence, I felt deeply that I had to seek a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Because I thought that my father was the cause of the divorce, I revolted against him, withdrawing all my love from him. To compensate for my troubles and this revolt against my father, I turned all the power of my love toward Jesus Christ and other people. I felt the affection of a brother and a mother in my relationship with Jesus and Mary, yet God remained far away and incomprehensible for me.

In the Catholic school where my father placed us, and also in the university, I could experience deeply the

difficulties which the Christians had in harmonizing a life of faith with their exterior attitude, and how impossible it is for them to be victorious in this fight. I wanted to center my natural energy and interest for others on God and Jesus Christ, because I felt that this was the only way to satisfy my requirement for perfection. Then, I became occupied with movements of young Christians in which we only reflected about and discussed our faith. But I also needed a more concrete activity. For this, I occupied myself with numerous social and cultural activities, while studying at the Faculty for four years for my degree in French literature. The, I was interested in questions concerning the religion, psychology, society, culture, economics, and even the politics of our time, with the help of many friendships in these various fields. But little by little, the gap between my faith and my life was widening. I felt more and more torn by the incapacity to reconcile the two. But my deepest hope was to relive the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter in body and spirit. I felt that there was a defect in my will.



Dougherty (right) in Mauny, France in 1983

The Feast of Easter, 1973 was the last stage of greatest contradiction between my life and my faith. Suddenly, I found myself totally free for the work of God in myself. For a month, I broke with all my past – my family, my habits, and my friends. I felt that I was prepared to work for a new world in which I would be a missionary, and where I could at last find a real family centered entirely on God within a community centered on God. But for this, I had to reconstruct my will in the direction of God. I was now that I met the Family, and then my motivation, purpose, and action were unveiled. But that which moved me most was the realization and feeling of how profound was the anguish and infinite pain of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane.

After this, I received the entire teaching in five days. But I only realized the divine and dramatic dimension of our movement when I heard the speech of our Master on July 1st. At this time, I was participating in the action of the Beach Team. His prayer and His speech suddenly revealed to me that He was the Messiah and the only person who could now help me to become closer to the Heart of Our Heavenly Father. It was at this moment that I finally broke the wall between God and myself. Since then, my only work has been to continue on this road of deepening my direct relationship with God, and in always understanding better the will and the desire of Our Master for the world. It is really the only way to get an action that is more and more efficient for the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom on Earth.

How can I thank Our True Parents for allowing us today to be able to fight directly and efficiently for the eternal rebirth of men and the universe?