

OBITUARY OF THE LATE REVEREND PAULETTE HOLLY

(16 April 1927- 23 June 2013)

Paulette Holly was born in Saint-Marc, Haiti on April 16, 1927. Since her childhood, she was a devout Roman Catholic, neglecting no opportunity to go to mass even in the very early morning hours. In her pursuit of salvation from hell, even when she has become a nurse, Paulette has maintained the same fervor in her religious practice, believing that salvation could be achieved by works. Having been introduced to the Gospel by a friend, she converted to Protestantism during an evangelistic service in a Protestant denomination. Later, she joined the Methodist Church in Port-au-Prince where she was welcomed by the Rev'd Ormonde McConnell. Soon after, she became member of the choir of the Church, and after the preparation period was received in the full membership of the Church. After, she served as Sunday school teacher.

After studying at the State Nursing School, Miss Paulette began a great career as a Registered Nurse (RN) within the Ministry of Public Health, as she served as the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Deschapelles, the Inter American Health Services, as well as other organizations promoting mother and child health. Paulette was faithfully fulfilling her duties. She obtained a scholarship in the United States and got promotions within the Public Health Sector.

Later, Miss Paulette answered the call to the diaconate in the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, while the Rev. Hugh B. Sherlock was Chairman of the Jamaica District of which Haiti was a Sub-District.

After three years of preparation at the Caenwood Theological Seminary (Jamaica), Sister Paulette was stationed in Haiti, in the Circuit of Port - au-Prince as of September 1961. This marked a date in the history of the Methodist Church of Haiti as Sister Paulette became the first ever Haitian Methodist Deaconess, to the great joy of the faithful and the clergy of the Church. Accustomed to work, Sister Paulette was put to the task and was soon in charge of the preparation of the Sunday school lessons, seminars for Sunday School teachers, as well as coaching the Boys' and Girls' Brigades. While doing all these and since there were a great shortage of ministerial staff in Haiti, Sr Paulette was performing her pastoral charges to some congregations of the Port-au-Prince Circuit. Sister Paulette was soon to join the medical program of the Saline church and area, which she developed and led faithfully during more than forty years, offering not only physical health, but also spiritual care to all patients and staff members who attended the clinic.

Although officially attached to the Circuit de Port-au-Prince, Sister Paulette remained always available for other circuits who needed her services whether in training and workshops on Christian Education, the Organization of post-hurricanes mobile clinics and reliefs in Jérémie, in Petit-Goâve, and Cap Haitien, the motivation of women and young people, etc.. Her work is not limited to serve the faithful of her Church, but all Haitians. She has led for more than thirty years the Haitian Committee of the World Day of Prayer. In 1996 Rev. Holly was in charge of coordinating and organizing all

activities, including choosing the Year theme and the Liturgy as Haiti was in charge of the WDP, for Haiti and the World.

Loyalty, constancy in the service, her vision in the pursuit of the medical work of the Church, her dynamism in the exercise of her Ministry, the love to serve the neighbour and her master, have earned her rightly, the name of "Mother Theresa of Haiti".

Life was not always easy for Sister Paulette. She has known pitfalls, trials, but her great faith allowed her to stand firm in her determination to serve. Still, she shows a cheerful, upbeat personality with a candid and charming smile, always ready to listen, to advise and to pray. In spite of some challenges, she always managed to remain a good colleague and advisor especially to the youngest ministers.

When she retired in 1994, she remained actively involved in the La Saline clinic and project. When her health began to decline, she used a "walker" and each time she was entering a meeting room, her younger colleagues in the Ministry always welcomed her in a cheerful "here is our Doyenne".

She never married, but remained very attached to her biological brothers and sisters, nephews, nieces. With their blessings, she donated to the Church a building in Port-au-Prince, a way to encourage the Methodist work in Haiti.

We bless the Lord for her life, her time, her dedication to the service of her country and her Master, and she is a fine example to future generations to the glory of God. She spent her last years between Haiti and the USA, finally, weakened by a recurrent and merciless illness, she remained in the USA, where she passed away on Sunday the 23rd of June, 2013.

The Reverend Paulette Holly, RN, died in the 86th year of her life and the 52nd year of her ministry. May her soul rest in peace, and the Perpetual Light of Christ shine upon her!

June 27, 2013.
Courtesy The Rev. Marco Depestre