



Sister Suzanne Goossens
20 February 1927 — 1 December 2017

EULOGY

**by Sister Moira Olliver FMDM
on 3 January 2018 at the Funeral Mass
held in Ladywell Chapel Godalming SURREY.**

Dear Susie, today we gather respecting your request for a simple farewell you beautifully prepared this celebration and you left us very personal, moving details of your journey.

Susie was born in Ostend, Belgium in 1927, the second of three daughters. She was educated in Brussels and Ostend. Susie was fluent in French, Dutch and German. Her dream was to be a teacher specialising in languages, history and geography. But her dream was shattered in 1939 when World War Two broke out and Belgium was subsequently occupied by the German army and the Gestapo.

She described the war years as very frightening and hard, not just the fighting, bombardments, enforced restrictions, rules, curfews, but also witnessing real brutality and cruelty. Relatives and friends suddenly disappearing, some of her friends particularly her Jewish friends were never seen again. In September 1944, two days after the liberation of Belgium began, Susie was injured by an exploding shell she spent a month in hospital recovering. All this was very traumatic for young Susie.



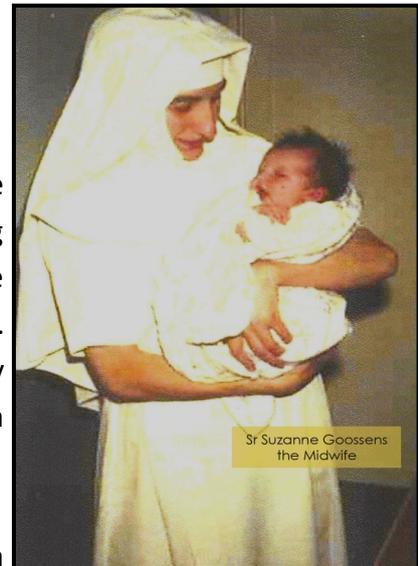
Kylemore Abbey, Ireland

Following the war, Susie continued her education in Ireland, with the Benedictine Sisters at Kylemore Abbey in Connemara. It was here that she first felt a calling to religious life, and following reflection entered with the Kylemore sisters. During her postulancy Susie required surgery and was admitted to Portiuncula Hospital in Ballinasloe Ireland, her first contact with the FMDMs. Susie convalesced with her family, fully intending to return to Kylemore, but God had other plans. As much as she loved the Benedictine life, she wondered if it was the right place for her, after a lot of prayer including a Lourdes pilgrimage, she decided to follow the Franciscan way entering the FMDMs.

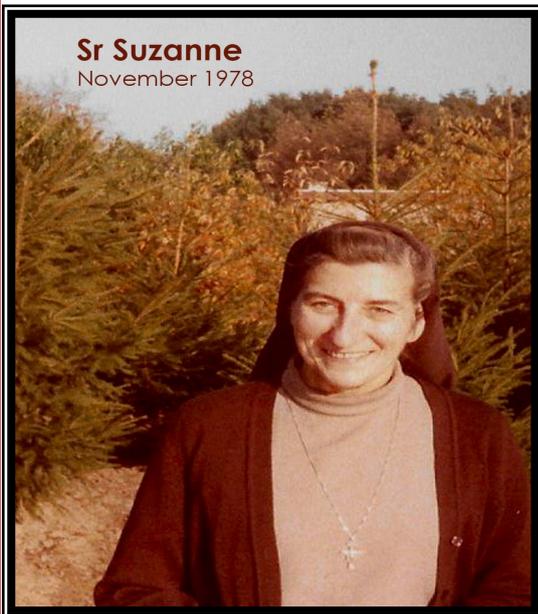


Religious life was hard, but Susie never doubted her decision. Following her First Profession she trained as a nurse and midwife.

She was assigned to Mount Alvernia in Guildford, where she remained for many years caring and supporting maternity patients. Susie was an excellent midwife she introduced many of us to the wonder of a baby's birth. She spoke of each birth as a miracle, treasured every moment, especially when handing a new born baby to a mother's gentle loving embrace.



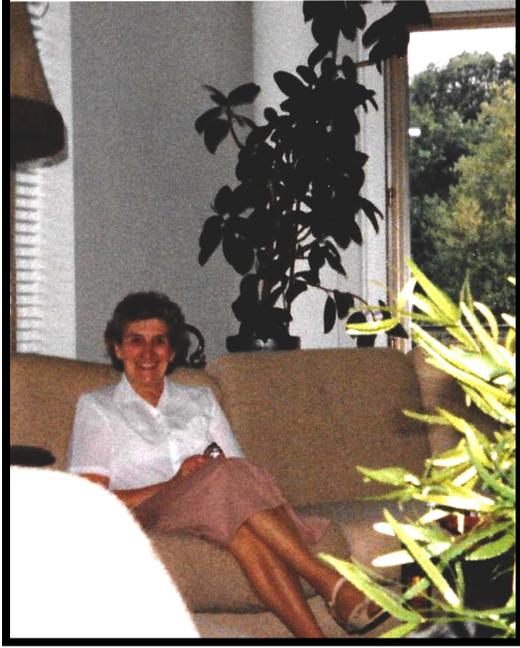
Susie was appointed Junior Mistress in Mount Alvernia Guildford. Many remember her making a home for the training sisters, her kindness and understanding. As one of those training sisters, I can still see Susie in the "bottom floor"



maternity duty room with a smile, a raised eyebrow, listening to how the day had gone, always with a ready ear and support in difficult times, even the occasional cup of coffee, a special bar of soap or finding you a quiet place to study.

Sadly following serious back surgery and rehabilitation, Susie was advised to stop her beloved midwifery ministry. She found it very hard to let go, but deep down she knew that this was the right thing to do. Throughout her life Susie continued to live with considerable physical pain which caused her suffering and difficulties.

Sr. Suzanne in Ladywell
1996



Susie moved to Ladywell, where she generously cared for visiting guests. When asked, she willingly undertook a challenging ministry in Ampleforth Abbey, Yorkshire as relief matron for twenty-five lively boys, a change from babies, but she loved it!

LADYWELL— MOTHERHOUSE

Many of us appreciated Susie's skills in Ladywell Library. Her great love for books, the enjoyment in sharing gleaned wisdom with other avid readers. Meticulously she catalogued, covered, repaired, purchased new books and preserved treasured classics.

She generously recommended or instantly found a specified book, supporting the needs of sisters, retreatants and associates. Borrowed books were

always returned on time! We all remember the reminders!

Susie loved craft work, be it knitting, crochet or making beautiful cards. She had an eye for detail and the ability to find sensitive quotations for her now greatly missed handmade cards.

Susie never went on the missions, though she prepared to go twice, once to Nigeria and once to Syracuse. She likened herself to Saint Therese of Lisieux, a home missionary. Faithfully she kept in contact by letter, card or email with many sisters. Daily in prayer she remembered special intentions, her great devotion being the Rosary.

Here I use Susie's own words, expressing her love and gratitude to us all...

"When I left home my mother was sure I would be returning within one month...but well... I have been an FMDM for over sixty years.

I thank God for all the graces He has given me over the years and for having persevered. No path is easy in life, but God is always there holding us in the palm of His Hand.

I thank all those who have guided and counselled me throughout the years and those who have been my companions on the way. Being continental and having a Latin temperament I may at times have hurt some sisters for which I beg forgiveness.

May God bless you all".

Thank you Susie, for your love, your kindness, your humility, your suffering, for being you, for sharing your journey with us.

May you now rest in peace.

