

# KERIZINEN



## Historical record

The outlying countryside is entered through sunken lanes furrowed by cart-wheels, with embankments covered in gorse.

The hamlet of Kerizinen is situated about three kilometres from this market town. It consisted of three farms, well separated from each other, and in the smallest of these the Ramonet family lived.

Yves Ramonet was born on the six th of January 1874 at Plounevez-Lochrist. He married Marie-Yvonne Porhel on the seventeenth of May 1904. She was also born at Plounevez-Lochrist on the twenty-fourth of January 1878.

Yves Ramonet reoccupied a farm which was rented by his wife's parents from the owner, a native of Saint-Vougay.

Like many small farms of that period, the dwelling consisted of just one room, above which was a loft for storing grain after the harvest. This room had an earthen floor as was customary in the locality ; at the far end stood the fireplace, a dresser and three box-beds opposite the window, against which rested the table with seats. To the right of the window stood another box-bed, forming a partition. The fireplace was the centre of domestic life ; there the family meals were cooked and there they gathered in the winter- time for family prayer. From the rafters hung smoked pork, the base food along with potatoes, soup and porridge.

Attached to the house at the right gable stood a stable for the cows and a small shed for agricultural tools. On the other side there was a small piggery. As the years passed, Madame Ramonet gave birth to nine children, four boys and five girls. One of the girls, little Catherine, died at the age of seven months.

The fourth of these nine children was to be Jeanne-Louise. She was born on the seventh of October 1910, the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary and she was baptised on that same day.



*Jeanne Louise's house*

IN NORTH FINISTERE, THE ANCIENT ARMORICAN MOUNTAINS FALL SLOWLY TOWARDS THE OCEAN. WE ARE IN THE DEPTHS OF BRITTANY HERE, A PLACE TRADITIONALLY DEVOTED TO THE LAND AND THE SEA. IT IS RUGGED COUNTRY, BLOWN BY THE WINDS, WHERE THE FAITH IS ENGRAINED IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE. AMONG THE MANY VILLAGES, GATHERED AROUND THEIR CHURCH STEEPLES OF POINTED GRANITE IS THAT PLOUNEVEZ-LOCHRIST, A BOROUGH LIKE ALL THE OTHERS, FAR AWAY FROM MAIN ROADS AND LIVING ON CATTLE-REARING AND AGRICULTURE. PLOUNEVEZ-LOCHRIST MEANS "THE NEW VILLAGE OF CHRIST". IN FACT PLOUNEVEZ-LOCHRIST CONSISTS OF TWO VILLAGES -PLOUNEVEZ AND LOCHRIST ; THE LATTER WAS FORMERLY A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE AND HAS PRESERVED A FINE CHAPEL AND AN ANNUAL FEAST-DAY.





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She had a delicate constitution and also suffered an attack of paralysis in her right leg when she was about two years old. Later on she suffered from decalcification, so that she could not attend school until she was ten-and-a-half years old. She tried attending the nuns' school at Plounevez Lochrist for several months but this long walk was too much for her health.

Then her god-mother, who lived not far from this school at Tréflex, offered to keep her so that she could continue her schooling. Jeanne-Louise stayed there for about eighteen months. The nuns then suggested to her parents that they would keep her as a boarder, and this continued for about two years. She thus obtained her primary certificate and this marked the end of her studies, as it did for many at that time. She would have liked to continue to go to school as she felt called to the religious life but God, who wished to keep her humble and "little", had His plans and decided otherwise. Thus she returned home and helped her mother with the domestic chores, in so far as her poor health allowed.

Life was hard and the six acres of land insufficient to provide for such a large family. The soil was poor. Yves Ramonet grew buckwheat, rye, potatoes etc... He had learned the butcher's craft from his father and he used to travel around the neighbouring farms slaughtering their pigs, as was the custom then.

Gradually the children got work on farms, some boys stayed, others joined the navy. Jeanne-Louise stayed on the farm because of her health.

Life flowed by with the rhythm of the seasons and the work in the fields.

In Brittany the faith was alive and deep. The whole family would gather in the evening to pray together, just like on the majority of farms in the region. The children would join in as soon as they were old enough. A Rosary confraternity existed in the parish and the Ramonet family belonged to it. The prayers said were as follows : first a reading from the lives of the Saints, then the recitation of the Angelus, the litany of Our Lady and two decades of the Rosary daily, with three on Sunday so as to complete the full Rosary, finishing each day with the "De Profundis" for the dead.

Every Sunday the family walked to Plounevez to hear Mass. Some went to the low Mass while others attended the High Mass so as to allow for the care of the farm animals. After lunch some returned to the town for Vespers.

In the course of the year, there were two feasts to lift the monotony : Our Lady of the Armies on the 24th of May and the feast of the parish patrons, Saints Peter and Paul, on the 29th of June.

Madame Ramonet was a fervent Christian and used to gather the children of the area around her for catechism classes. Little Jeanne-Louise grew up in this atmosphere of deep and authentic faith. Gradually a love of God and the Blessed Virgin grew in her heart. At the age of twelve, while returning from Holy Communion, she heard an interior call coming from Our Lord: "Be My apostle. Love your brethern." At fourteen she consecrated herself to Christ.





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There was no well at Kerizinen and drinking water had to be carried from Feunten Ven (The White Fountain), a distance of more than 500 metres away. The people from neighbouring farms came there also. The children were given this task and they always went in pairs, as Madame Ramonet considered that the pitcher was too heavy for them to go alone. To reach Feunten Ven it was necessary to pass in front of Kermorvan Mill, at the lower end of Kerizinen on the other side of the road. The mill gave a little life to this isolated area. People went there to have their wheat ground and their bread baked in the oven. Next the children crossed land where heather and rushes grew. Back home, they placed the pitcher in the nook at the side of the window. The years passed by. From 1925, Jeanne-Louise went every winter to the hospital in Brest to follow a course of treatment. She kept herself busy there making beds, washing dishes and learning how to give injections. Back at Plounevez, occasions arose when she could thus help" others. She also gave catechism classes to sick children. The hospital was run by the sisters of Saint Thomas of Villeneuve and the Mother Superior took Jeanne-Louise under her protection. After having , given herself to Christ at the age of fourteen, she asked the Superior if she l' could be admitted to the convent but she was refused because of her poor health. At the age of 17 or 18 years, a new request was matched with a new refusal for the same reason. So each Spring she returned to Kerizinen.



When she was seventeen during one of these hospital stays in February 1927, her father suddenly fell ill with typhoid fever. Her mother nursed him and while he recovered, Madame Ramonet took to her bed, nursed by Euphrasie, who in her turn contracted the same illness, as well as her little brother Joseph. Madame Ramonet died first on the 14th February 1927, followed a few days later by her son and her daughter. The sorrow of this family, deprived so suddenly of three of its members, can only be imagined.

Monsieur Ramonet recalled Anne-Marie from the farm where she was employed, since Jeanne-Louise could not take charge of the household alone. He did not survive his wife by very long and died from a heart attack on the second of July 1930.

One by one, the Ramonet offspring married while Anne-Marie and Jeanne-Louise stayed at Kerizinen. Every winter she returned to the hospital up to 1936. That year Jeanne-Louise took part in the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes as a sick person. She returned partially cured and this allowed her to take on the work of the farm.

We are at the dawn of terrible events. Dark clouds were gathering over France and the world. And God chose this moment to send Our Lady to visit this unknown corner of the earth to give this humble Breton woman messages which can be considered among the most beautiful revelations of Divine Mercy.



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## WHAT HAPPENED AT KERIZINEN

Everything began on Thursday september 15th 1938. Jeanne-Louise was tending her cows in a meadow, not far from her house. She was seated on an embankment and knitting. Suddenly, she was startled by a very bright light and in the blaze of that light she saw a very beautiful lady, who looked about 17 or 18 years old. She was dressed in a blue gown bordered in white, and tightened by a double cord round her waist. Her veil and cloak were white, and she had a rosary with white beads and a golden chain on her right arm.

Instinctively, Jeanne-Louise recognized the Blessed Virgin, but shy and reserved as she was, she kept her heavy secret for more than one year, until the second apparition which took place on october 7th 1939. According to the demand of the Blessed Virgin, she then told her confessor about the apparitions. He asked her not to speak to anybody, and she always observed this. It is at the seventh apparition on october 7th 1940, that the Blessed Virgin declared : "I wish to be honoured and invoked in this place under the title of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary". In 1947, a little girl having overheard a confession of Jeanne-Louise, spread the news.

In 1949, a person from next village fell seriously ill, her state was desperate. Her neighbours said a novena of prayers for her at Kerizinen and, against all expectation, she survived a serious operation and recovered very quickly. From that moment people started to gather and say the rosary. On the very spot of the apparitions, an earthenware statuette of the Blessed Virgin was settled. At the end of the same year 1949, a person from Seine et Oise offered a small glass shrine to protect the statuette.

A small oratory was built in 1956. The permission for building was asked and granted verbally by a vicar general to the Bishop of Quimper. It was blessed privately, on its front three words can be read : Prayer, Penance, Trust. In the oratory, there is a statue of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, above the small glass shrine. There is also a statue of the Sacred Heart and, facing each other from the side walls, a crucifix and a painted representation of the United Hearts.

There was no water available at Kerizinen. On August 6th 1949, the Blessed Virgin promised to give water but asked the pilgrims to pray a lot for it. On July 13th 1952, water gushed out at the bottom of the field of the apparitions. Since then it has never dried up. Many cures have been obtained through this water.

In 1955 and 1956, for 21 months, Jeanne-Louise received a mystical communion given by a celestial hand in the field of the apparitions.

Jesus and Mary appeared together 15 times, showing their Hearts joined by the same sword, and requested that the world be consecrated to their "two Hearts United in the Holy Spirit".

The apparitions lasted from 1938 to 1965 (There were 71 of them), almost all of them were accompanied by messages that Jeanne-Louise wrote in notebooks.

As she was busy with her farmwork during the day, Jeanne-Louise used to say the rosary publicly only on Sundays. Since she retired in 1971 she said it everyday at 3 p.m. As more and more many pilgrims came now, she could no more manage alone the situation. So, to help her, an Association was founded at her request : the Friends of Kerizinen. Its purpose is to safeguard the rights and interests whatever they are, linked to the domain of Kerizinen.

The Association diffuses messages, medals, tracts tracing the main lines of what happened at Kerizinen. It manages the properties of the domain, and the progressive building of necessary facilities (fittings of the fountain, lavatories etc)

"I want a chapel to be built in this place" (message of August 6th 1949). Answering the demand of Our Lady, the Association began the construction. The foundation stone of that building was laid on september 12th 1976, and its inauguration took place on september 17th 1978, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first apparition. More than 10.000 people were present.

The following year, the oratory was ornamented with stained-glass windows representing the 15 mysteries of the Rosary. And for the 50th anniversary of the first apparition, on september 11th 1988, Stations of the Cross made of marquetry were settled in the oratory.

On september 13th 1992, that was the 54th anniversary, the "Accueil St Joseph" was inaugurated, with several thousand people present. A granite statue of St Joseph was settled. This Accueil building consists of a public part, with rooms opened to the pilgrims (documentation, audio-visual aids, picnic room, lavatories, baby-corner etc.), and a private part reserved to residing people.

Jeanne-Louise died on Sunday February 19th 1995 at Kerizinen, aged 84. Her funeral was celebrated in the church of Plounevez-Lochrist, her parish, on Thursday February 23rd 1995 in the presence of more than 2000 people. Her remains rest in the family grave in the cemetery at Plounevez-Lochrist.