

She Lived to Age 122

Jeanne Louise Calment (1875 – 1997) had the longest confirmed human life span in history outside of those reported in the Bible – living to the age of 122 years and 164 days. She lived in Arles, France, for her entire life, and outlived both her daughter and grandson.



Jeanne Louise Calment at age 20

Calment became especially well-known from the age of 113, when the centenary of Vincent van Gogh's visit brought reporters to Arles. She entered the *Guinness Book of Records* in 1988. In 1985, she moved into a nursing home, having lived on her own until age 110. She said she had met Van Gogh in 1888 as a 13-year-old girl in her uncle's fabric shop, where he wanted to buy some canvas. She recalled selling colored pencils to Van Gogh, and seeing the Eiffel Tower being built.

At the age of 114, she appeared briefly in the 1990 film, *Vincent and Me* as herself, making her the oldest person ever to appear in a motion picture. Three books have been written about her, and a documentary film about her life, entitled *Beyond 120 Years with Jeanne Calment*, was released in November 1995.

Medical scientists have researched her life to try to discover the secret of her longevity. They found that for years she ate two pounds of chocolate a week. She smoked moderately until age 117. She cooked with olive oil, poured it on all her food and rubbed it onto her skin. She took vigorous walks and even rode her bicycle through the streets of Arles until she was 100.

At age 110, Calment said with good humor, "I had to wait 110 years to become famous. I intend to enjoy it as long as possible."

By age 120, she was confined to a wheelchair. "I see badly," she said. "I hear badly, I can't feel anything, but everything's fine."



Calment at age 120

Someone asked Calment what kind of future she expected. Still displaying her good humor, she replied, "A very short one." She passed away on Aug. 4, 1997.

Jeanne Calment speaks for all of us. Even if we are young at this moment and have 100 years to live, the body has limits, and even a long life is short.

For the believer in Christ, however, there is another life where the soul never dies. Imagine that: to live forever!