

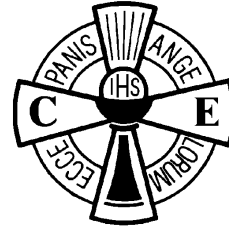
It became proverbial among the Church's authorities, even before she died, when there was a charitable work to do, to "ask the Grey Nuns; they never refuse a mission." This was indeed an honorable reputation; but in 1730 the twenty-six year-old widow of Francis d'Youville, seigneur of La Découverte, alone with two sons to bring up, could not have imagined such honor, nor what Providence was holding in store for her already strong and experienced charity.

Saint Margaret was living in Montreal with her two sons at the death of Mr. d'Youville. It was soon evident that the pious widow would seek no distraction amid the world's frivolities. She took in sewing and opened a little business, thus becoming known in the city; half of her earnings were always dedicated to her children's Christian instruction. Both of her sons would later become priests. These occupations were not enough, however, to occupy her time; she visited prisoners, cared for the dying, brought peace to many troubled households, and even aided the poor financially. Her work with the unfortunate soon brought to her three apostolic young hearts, to offer their assistance. The four young women put their savings in common, and kneeling before a little statue of the Blessed Virgin, vowed their lives to the care of the poor. They rented a house, and soon received five suffering members of the Mystical Body of Christ as their charges.

The young missionaries did not escape the harsh opinions which always test the perseverance of those who desire to serve God in the person of the unfortunate. Undisciplined tongues accused them of bootlegging alcohol and even of making abundant use of it themselves. Mother d'Youville prayed to the Eternal Father, to whom she would always have an outstanding devotion, that she might not, during her trials, lose her good spiritual director who was ill; she already had lost her closest companion by death. The director was cured, but the little hospital burnt down in January of 1745. The misery of the little group won sympathy for them, and soon lodging, clothes and food were offered them.

Their destitution drew the attention of city authorities, who at that time were wondering what to do about the city hospital, overburdened with large debts and without sufficient personnel to staff it. When Mother d'Youville offered to take on both the debts and the labors, they were very happy indeed to accept her offer. With five companions, nine indigents and two lady-boarders, she entered the hospital in 1747. There a new difficulty for the foundress would soon make its appearance; the work still had enemies, and in 1750 plans were made, without consulting her, to merge it with another of similar nature, staffed by the nursing nuns of Quebec City. Finally an appeal made by the Foundress to the king of France, Louis XV, elicited his command that the decision of the local authorities be canceled, and she was authorized in 1752 to keep the hospital and to found a Community.

It was not only the sick who were the object of Saint Margaret d'Youville's loving care. Foundling children, prisoners, orphans, the handicapped, the aged, were soon the cherished beneficiaries of the Grey Nuns' indefatigable solicitude. Their foundress passed to her reward in 1771; and that night a large luminous cross appeared in the Montreal skies, attesting the death of a Saint. But her community continued and has been richly blessed, not only by the poor it has strengthened for the combats of life, but by the Father of the Poor Himself, who in 150 years gave it extension to fifteen dioceses of North America. The Grey Nuns have labored in the most difficult missions of the extreme north of Canada, as well as in a dozen cities of the more southerly provinces and the United States. Their self-effacement, their missionary spirit, their hardy courage in the face of the rudest living conditions, have earned the admiration of all who know them.



Handmaids of Christ and Children of Mary

Supplement to the Bulletin of the Eucharistic Crusade in Ireland

December 2008
Month of the Holy Child Jesus

This leaflet is intended for high-school girls. Being part of the Eucharistic Crusade, you receive the bulletin of the Crusade and pray for the intentions of the Crusade. As girls, Our Lady is your special model. Therefore as well as being Crusaders and Handmaids of Christ, you are also Children of Mary. The purpose of these few pages is to help you in your spiritual life.

AN EASY WAY TO BECOME A SAINT By Fr Paul O'Sullivan, OP

Chapter 6 - AFTER HIS ASCENSION (2)

HE HAS DONE EVEN GREATER THINGS FOR US

But why complain? Our Lord has given each of us proofs of love as great and greater than those visible favors just mentioned, which He gave to the Saints. Does He not come to us daily in Holy Communion, if we allow Him? He, the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, comes, not into our arms or into our rooms, but into our very souls. He not only comes, but He comes with infinite love. He unites Himself to us so intimately that He, the great God, becomes one with us. Did He fold us in His arms and press us to His bosom, it would be much less than when He unites Himself to our souls in Communion. He does not come for a moment; He stays in our souls as long as the Sacred Host retains the appearances of bread.

Strange blindness of many Catholics who receive Communion and who do not enjoy it! As Martha and Mary longed for the visits of Jesus to their home in Bethany, as St. Rose longed for the visits of the Divine Child, so should we long for the visit of Jesus in Holy Communion and *enjoy it*. He is in our souls as really and truly as He is in Heaven.

What will He not give us in these precious moments if only we ask Him? He is not only in our souls, He is there with infinite love. He pours out His graces on us with infinite generosity. We eat His Flesh and drink His Blood. Our souls are bathed, purified, strengthened by this Precious Blood, the same Blood that flowed for us on Calvary.

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Oh, if Christians only understood the wonders of Holy Communion, they would not complain that God has not given them as intimate, personal proofs of His love as He gave to the Saints! The glorious Angels themselves, were they capable of jealousy, would envy us the wondrous grace of Holy Communion. These great Angels do not receive God as we do, but stand around us gazing with ineffable love as Jesus enters our hearts. As long as He remains in our souls, they adore and bless and praise Him in an ecstasy of delight. They see here something that they do not see in Heaven itself.

Oh, that we understood the unspeakable grace of Holy Communion! All Eternity will not be sufficient to thank God even for one Holy Communion. What more could God do for us than come into our souls and make Himself one with us! What more could He do than give us His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink. Holy Communion thus made will make us Saints.

Instruction upon meditation

Meditation, or mental prayer, is a devout and fruitful consideration of Divine things, and of all that is conducive to the acquirement of virtue and of eternal salvation.

It is not a difficult exercise; it requires attention and reflection, a desire to know God better in order to love Him more. It should be done in the company of Our Lady, the saints and our guardian Angel.

Refer to the previous issues of this bulletin to learn how to make meditation properly. Remember that as Handmaid, you promised to meditate 15 minutes every day. St Teresa of Avila says that he who spends 15mn a day in mental prayer cannot be lost.

Nothing so mars and defiles the heart of man as impure attachment to created things. But if you refuse external consolation, you will be able to contemplate heavenly things and often to experience interior joy.

Imitation of Christ, Book 2, Chapter 1 "On Meditation"

Meditation – The Cause of the Suffering in Purgatory - 2

It is not only our sins of commission, and the evil we have done, which will be punished hereafter; it is also the good we have omitted to do, or done amiss. We shall also be punished for the bad example we have given others, and the sins we may have caused them to commit, or neglected to prevent.

PRAYER TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF POPE PIUS XII

This prayer, dedicated to Mary Immaculate, was composed by the Pope for the Marian Year (December 8, 1953--December 8, 1954), which was proclaimed to mark the centenary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Enraptured by the splendor of thy heavenly beauty, and impelled by the anxieties of the world, we cast ourselves into thine arms, O Immaculate Mother of Jesus and our Mother, Mary, confident of finding in thy most loving heart appeasement of our ardent desires, and a safe harbour from the tempests which beset us on every side.

Though degraded by our faults and overwhelmed by infinite misery, we admire and praise the peerless richness of sublime gifts with which God has filled thee, above every other mere creature, from the first moment of thy conception until the day on which, after thine assumption into Heaven, He crowned thee Queen of the Universe.

O crystal fountain of faith, bathe our minds with the eternal truths! O fragrant Lily of all holiness, captivate our hearts with thy heavenly perfume! O Conqueress of evil and death, inspire in us a deep horror of sin, which makes the soul detestable to God and a slave of Hell!

O well-beloved of God, hear the ardent cry which rises up from every heart. Bend tenderly over our aching wounds. Convert the wicked, dry the tears of the afflicted and oppressed, comfort the poor and humble, quench hatreds, sweeten harshness, safeguard the flower of purity in youth, protect the holy Church, make all men feel the attraction of Christian goodness. In thy name, resounding harmoniously in Heaven, may they recognize that they are brothers, and that the nations are members of one family, upon which may there shine forth the sun of a universal and sincere peace.

Receive, O most sweet Mother, our humble supplications, and above all obtain for us that, one day, happy with thee, we may repeat before thy throne that hymn which today is sung on earth around thine altars: Thou art all-beautiful, O Mary! Thou art the glory, thou art the joy, thou art the honor of our people! Amen.

Spiritual Bouquet: Beloved, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1

St. John 4:11

SAINT MARGARET D'YOUVILLE

Foundress of the Sisters of Charity, called Grey Nuns
(1701-1771)

The oldest of six children, at seven years of age Mary Margaret Dufrost, born at Varennes near Montreal, had already lost her courageous soldier-father. After receiving only two years of excellent education in Quebec City with the Ursuline nuns, she was obliged to return to Varennes before her twelfth birthday, to assist her mother to bring up her five younger brothers and sisters. The Sisters had foreseen the heavy responsibilities which would come upon her, and under their tutelage, as they later testified, she had "redoubled her activity and application to all her duties." By means of a subsidy granted by the king of France to the families of his deceased military officers, the little family was able to remain together.



One day, some sixty years later, Mother Margaret d'Youville, Foundress of a Congregation of Sisters of Charity, would be known to the people of Quebec as "the Providence of Montreal."