

## **A Marianist Moment - May 2022 Family Online**

### **206th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate: A Venture Blessed by God's Love That Mirrors Mary's Fidelity**

On May 25, 1816, the Feast of Mary, Help of Christians, Blessed Adèle and several companions embarked on a journey to Agen to begin an adventure that would change their lives. But preparations for this day started a couple of years earlier when Blessed Adèle and some members of the Association met in June of 1814 to discuss the cher project. The cher project was a plan for these women to live some form of religious life and to take religious names among themselves as a sign of the serious intention of moving toward living fully as religious. (In July of 1814, Blessed Adèle started signing her letters as Sr. Marie de la Conception) And during the months of waiting Blessed Adèle looked upon it as a time of novitiate where they would practice the virtues of religious life while remaining in the world.

But it was not until Napoleon's defeat and her father's death in June of 1815 that Blessed Adèle was able to move closer to her dream, which was present from the time of her youth when she considered entering Carmelites. And it seemed that events up to May 25, 1816, took place like a whirlwind. Decisions about property, finances and other temporal concerns were put into motion. The process of writing Constitutions and regulations for the new community started to take shape. Several letters written by Blessed Adèle in late 1815 and early 1816 are examples of her deepest desire for this foundation:

“May 1816 be a blessed year for us. The Lord is preparing great graces for us this year; his treasure house is open, and we must not force him to close it because of our infidelities. I hope that this year we shall consecrate ourselves to his service in a more special way. To what a holy state God is calling us, in spite of our unworthiness.” (12/28/1815 Letter to Agathe Diché, Agen)

“Let us continue to prepare ourselves, Dear Agathe, for the holy state which we shall soon embrace. It seems that Father [Chaminade] intends to establish us sooner than we expected. If only it could be right after Easter!” (1/3/1816 Letter to Agathe Diché, Agen)

“After all, dear friend, let us put everything into the hands of God. If it is God's work, he will see to it that it succeeds in spite of all our troubles.... Let us, therefore, abandon everything to the most lovable will of God and remain at peace. But the main thing is to prepare our hearts and to train them in the virtues of the holy state to which we aspire.” (1/11/1816 Letter to Agathe Diché, Agen)

Finally, as I was writing this Marianist Moment, I reflected on a couple of questions posed to me when I was in initial formation: If you were one of the last Marianists present in this world or even the last Marianist, how would you renew the Marianist Spirit? What would you do to revitalize the Family of Mary? So, I invite you to reflect, as well, on these two questions, and let me add a third: Would you have the desire, similar to Blessed Adèle and her companions, to engage in the process such as they did?

**See:**

**Adèle**, Joseph Stefanelli, S.M., Marianist Resources Commission, Dayton, OH 1989.

**Adèle, Aristocrat for the Poor**, Joseph Stefanelli, SM, North American Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton, OH, 1999.

**Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, Volume One: 1805-1816**, ed. by Joseph Stefanelli, SM, Monograph Series - Document No. 41, Volume 2, North American Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton OH, 1999.