

Appollonie Pellissier - Mrs Cure – Mother Saint Jean

A woman of courage and hope

Today I want to talk to you in a simple way about this woman, Appollonie Pellissier, born here in Murviel. My accent may be foreign, but in some way, it is appropriate that someone of Irish origin makes a speech about her. In fact, the first foundation of the Congregation was in Ireland. Step by step, Appollonie, Mrs Cure, M. St. Jean became a co-founder with Father Gailhac of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary who are present today in 14 countries of the world.

When I lived in St Génies during the years 1993-1999, my work for the church in the different parishes took me often to Murviel. Moreover, it would be difficult to remember the number of people (sisters and lay persons) that I accompanied here in the course of these last years to take inspiration from this original place for the Sisters of the SHM.

There is joy in welcoming here members of the human family of Appollonie and equally the family of Father Gailhac. As we meditated, in front of the house during the pilgrimage, all life takes its source there from the heart of the family before letting the richness of the heritage flourish. There are genes for generosity, the giving of oneself so to speak ! !

In order to speak about Appollonie, we have certain civil documents, and a series of letters that she has written to Father Gailhac. A large part of these documents can be found at the Motherhouse in Béziers. As to the civil acts, we have seen that they are here in the town hall of Murviel.

We are therefore going through this life rich in revival, a richness which owes its abundance to God's work ; rich because it still talks to us today and keeps us in firm hope. The Congregation consists of about 900 members and the hour that I have for this talk does not give the time to recount the multiple works throughout the world. My speech will follow a chronological order to present a life marked by important stages each of which lasted 20 years...

About this life one could say :

“To live is to continue to go on,

It is to make a journey”.

It is a life marked by radical choices ; also by a certain mystery. In fact, in his wisdom, our God counted on Appollonie to collaborate with Father Gailhac and thus founded the Congregation.

A lifetime :

A poet said :

“When your inner spirit expresses itself deeply in you, you have to have the confidence to let it guide you”.

Even if nothing in her childhood warned about the progress of her life, I find this phrase tells a lot about her destiny.

In 1809, the population of Murviel was 1,660.

At the beginning of the Revolution, the castle and lands of the Marquess Spinola (at Murviel, Jougran, Lemba) are sold by the husband of the latter to a Murviel inhabitant, Pellissier... There are already two brothers at least in the Pellissier family. These are middle-class owners, possessing a vast area or rather several areas.

We also know that in the Pellissier family, the brother of Etienne Baptiste possessed a large property on the other side of the main road. Also, speaking about her father, Appollonie refers to a great fortune or a rich heritage in recalling the properties of her family.

Etienne Baptiste Pellissier (1763-1831), is the son of Clemens Pellissier and Marie Dupont, married on the 22nd November, 1757.

This couple has a son Etienne Baptiste who marries Marie Durand on the 20th November, 1792... Marie Durand (1768-1830) is the daughter of Jeanne Pelié and Etienne Durand (middle-class) who get married in Caussignojouls on the 14th August, 1759.

Although the marriage of Etienne Baptiste and Marie Durand was a marriage within the same family, three boys, one girl... will be born at home... it was during Appollonie's childhood that the family would move to their actual home.

Two deaths marked her babyhood. Appollonie did not even know the eldest, deceased at four years. By contrast, Appollonie was 9 and Napoléon 15 when their eldest brother of 23 died... the 15th November. What a trial...!

But silence covers this period of the Pellissiers' life. One imagines however that this marks a family, and in a special way the children who remain... The brother, Napoléon, and his little sister are closely linked but evidently school separates them for long periods of the year.

In her home environment, Appollonie develops a faith, body and soul, and a sense of the Eucharist. It is in this family environment also that she acquires the sense of responsibility and an opening to the poor that she inherits from her mother. Her devotion to Mary is a treasure she keeps day after day.

Since her father is mayor from 1830 to his death, and afterwards some other members of the family will take the same position, one may conclude that the common good counted in this family.

We do not always know what motivates such a commitment but it is certain that a sense of others has to exist. Later we realise how she lives her Christian Faith in the details of her life.

At school :

It was not until the middle of the 19th century that an optional law asked communities to open a girls' school on the 28th June, 1848 ; so it is clear that Appollonie did not benefit from a school in the village ; by contrast, one can think that she must have received a first teaching in her own environment.

The characteristics of a good education are evident from a young age. Her book of catechism is dated, Béziers, 1821, in her own handwriting. We know that in 1824, '25 and 1826, Appollonie is registered in a boarding school for girls in Béziers. Pension Mathon ? and perhaps she went to Fénelon school ?

She had a very good level, considering the exercise books showing a great variety of literature for the period : elegies, verse, theatre, Greek authors, grammar. Already we can see the beautiful handwriting of someone benefitting from a conscientious education. This beautiful handwriting indicates a balanced personality, intelligent and sure of herself.

The boarding school also assured the continuity of her Christian education and it is in the cathedral of Béziers St-Nazaire that the young girl will receive her first communion in 1821 and then in 1823, her confirmation. These precise images of that period are testimony of the importance of Christian faith in the heart of the family.

Love visits

When she was around 20 years, Appollonie and her parents agreed on the choice of a husband in the person of Eugène Cure, land-owner at Autignac.

Eugène is the son of Jacques Cure, a local judge at Autignac, and Catherine Martin. Jacques himself is the son of Mr Charles Cure, King's Counsellor and Mayor of Autignac, and of Marie Anne Mas.

Besides Eugène, qualified as a lawyer in Toulouse, is the great friend of Father Gailhac whom he has known as a fellow pupil since they attended Henri IV school in Béziers. Eugène seems a good match : the families know this and are appreciative.

The Cure parents (middle-class liberals) regard Appollonie as the future woman of the house and when the mother of Eugène dies in 1830, this takes an even greater significance.

In the family Eugène is the sole inheritor, another brother having died at a very early age.

“When your inner spirit expresses itself deeply in you, you have to have the confidence to let it guide you”.

Trials

The 21st November, 1830, the mother of Appollonie dies and the 8th January, 1831, the father dies also suddenly... 50 days afterwards ! Appollonie was then 21 and her grief was great. Our human experience enables us to understand what the Pellissier family are feeling.

And life gets even more complicated : in fact the parents die without leaving any will. Appollonie inherits with her brother what she thinks is a great fortune. The figures for the time are considerable but what is important is to see the family problems in the context of this period.

According to the article 213 of the civil code : “The husband owes protection to his wife and the woman obedience to her husband”.

As Mirabeau said : “Women are made for the interior life, that is to say, the home”.

Or as somebody else has said :”They are the ornament of society”.

We are in a rural place, with middle-class owners : one can imagine easily what happens. The woman has certain rights to a dowry and the amount has been pre-established. But because her parents have died intestate, Appollonie has the right to 50% of their properties. Now, when she becomes a wife, the properties will go to her new family.

In addition, Eugène works as a jurist (in law), and could help Appollonie to protect her rights well. The uncle and the aunt are thinking of another partner for Appollonie which will allow her to keep the properties in their family but Appollonie persists in marrying Eugène and she is of age.

Then the date of marriage is fixed. So, not being able to validate fairly her part of the heritage, she signs the devaluated titles the 4th April, 1831, but she knows she is the injured party. Before signing the act of sharing, just before her marriage, she declares having received the territory of Liquière, and of Lantheric as well as a house in Bédarieux... and also money from other properties. Because she is aware that the value is not what she considers just, relationship with her family will be affected all her life.

The Community archives contain several documents from then but it is not necessary to develop this further now. Through that dilemma, the character of this young woman shows itself to be strong in this situation.

The historians of our Congregation agree on the fact that she has shown a strength of character in regarding what was her right. She has persisted in believing that Eugène would be the man of her life as was planned with her parents... To take her responsibility, pursue it to the end, all these characteristics rise to the surface and guide her conduct... In her letters, later, she would talk of trials... but we do not know the details.

“When your inner spirit expresses itself deeply in you, you have to have the confidence to let it guide you”.

Her civil marriage took place the 11th April, 1831, in the presence of her brother, and will be followed by a religious ceremony the 12th April in the church of Murviel with other members of the Pellissier family.

Mrs Cure

Appollonie, being now Mrs Cure, would go and live on the first floor of the house said to be in Autignac, 2 Rue de la Place du Dedans... Half the family house was given to the Cure son when the young couple got married... One can well imagine the very strong link that will bind her to Mr Cure, the father.

She will, later, express her feelings for Eugène with phrases that are a bit old-fashioned now, such as for example :

“In all my sorrows my Jesus has taken great care of me by sending me a liberator, a benefactor”.

After one year in Autignac, the young couple will go and live in 1832, in a beautiful mansion at number 42 Allées Paul Riquet which are being rearranged (statue of Paul Riquet in 1838, the Theatre was built in 1844).

It is there she will often welcome Eugène’s childhood friend, Abbé Gailhac. The latter is a Hospital Chaplain at Hotel-Dieu at that time. In 1834, he will open a Refuge for women exposed to prostitution and also an Orphanage named the Good Shepherd. Occasionally, Abbé Gailhac goes to Autignac to have a rest. The red room was kept for him.

As every young couple, their plans included starting a family. But, as time passed, the couple discover that no child appears, that they are sterile. It is yet another trial for them.

So, this couple become interested in Father Gailhac’s project. Let us not forget that Eugène is a childhood friend of the latter. Therefore they encourage Father Gailhac and now and then give him money always in the name of Eugène ; according to the period, it is the name of the husband that appears on the list.

I gladly think of this Cure couple when I read the acts of the Apostles, chap. 17. Several times a couple, Priscilla and Aquilas, are mentioned who start the Christian faith... They become loyal friends of Saint Paul and sometimes accompany him on journeys.

Friendship in faith is an important support... And this couple find themselves at Saint Paul’s side in danger and in trials... Similarly the Cure couple will support Father Gailhac. One can recognise there the feelings of a committed faith, far from being concerned only with oneself.

Another sort of abundance visits the house. Later Appollonie will write these magnificent words on the **“orphans so loved by Father Gailhac, so loved also by her husband”**. She knows it and tells her husband so.

In Appollonie’s heart Eugène is at the same time, **“friend, protector, comforter or guide, husband, beautiful soul”**. These are the words she leaves us in her letters which she did not

know would be read by others than Father Galhiac. Therefore let us welcome with a certain respect the intimacy of this couple.

Woman as widow

Eugène dies suddenly the 4th November, 1848, and here this woman is a widow. Appollonie suffers a great grief yet again. Her beloved Eugène, her comforter and guide is no longer. She knows a time of great distress.

The whole of her life, in her simple faith, profound and radical, a conviction was forged in Appollonie : the events are the messengers of God:

“Nothing ever happens except that is God’s will”.

We will not allow ourselves to interpret that in a fatalistic manner.

A theologian of today, Jean-Michel Maldamé, Dominican in Toulouse writes :

**“The word destiny does not enclose
the human being inside himself,
because the place of responsibility is that of relationship
and
the way of living a relationship
can give birth to a part of yourself,
which was unknown and which reveals itself in the surprise”.**

It seems to me that this text gives the key for the rest of the story. Our tradition speaks to us of the fact that this couple promised each other to dedicate themselves to the works of Father Gailhac if one of them came to die. In any case, Appollonie in spite of a profound grief... will do exactly that... she sees in this a new challenge.

For her, the death of Eugène opens another horizon. In dedicating her life to God, in giving herself to the daughters of the Good Shepherd, she would accomplish God’s will.

In fact she and Eugène had discussed such projects, certainly in a theoretical manner. They had financially supported these works and now she would understand that she had to go further.

In the meantime, she understood well the dreams of Father Gailhac who had the project of founding a community to take care of his works that he had created and which flourished in spite of some difficulties. He even knew women ready to accomplish this procedure but he lacked someone responsible... a director of some sort... Probably Appollonie knew these women well because the couple was often present at the events which affected the Refuge or the Orphanage.

And Appollonie expresses her availability to be founder of the group to Father Gailhac but he fears that her reaction is too quick, too hasty... with a human caution, Father Gailhac knowing very well the ties of love between Eugène and Appollonie... thinks that it is too soon. Appollonie persists and goes as far as consulting the bishop who recognises in her the

action of God... Also he reassures Father Gailhac. He must recognise the part that mystery plays in the role that Appollonie is called to live.

The moment has come to start a religious community for the works of the Good Shepherd.

Today we talk above all about Appollonie, but what a change of events also for Father Gailhac who had thought so much about that community !

Then, since nothing keeps her in the world any longer, the 15th February, 1849, she buys land on Boulevard d'Angleterre to realise these works... and the 24th February she arrives at the Good Shepherd. The 18th March, 1849, "Le Courrier de Béziers" announces her arrival at the Good Shepherd as well as others who will constitute the first team of the future community, Sacred Heart of Mary. A historic date for us ! It is because of that we are here today.

Later, Appollonie loves to remember this moment and goes as far as blessing God for the journey. Each stage of her life is marked by a test or rupture of some sort and she knows how to interpret God's ways in her life.

She leaves her beautiful home and arrives in a small and decrepid building to radically change her style of life. We can accompany her in spirit as she leaves her house and devotes herself to a religious life, inside the cloister.

Woman as nun :

Training :

Appollonie is generous but has little idea about the religious life... the same for her companions. So she is going to apply herself day after day to make the call from God real which involves life with others in a community. Her heart opens for a new adventure in faith.

Father Gailhac will progressively show her the way :

"Yes, truly, my only daughter, your vocation is large, you understand it, your sainthood, your level of perfection must be high : a mother, a superior, more than that, a founder, oh, how virtuous you have to be.

She has to be the model for all the family, her life has to be an example that the children only have to follow to become perfect.

She has to be the first in humility, in sweetness, in patience, in mortification, in equal humour, in renouncing, in the spirit of sacrifice, in obedience, in purity ; her charity must be immense, her union with God universal, she must be so disposed that she can say like the prophet : "My heart is ready for everything, Lord, it is ready to enter all your visions. Never will I withdraw from anything you expect of me." 20th September 1849.

She lets us guess the stages she has to live in her correspondence which in 1849 is frequent ; there we discover an itinerary where she expresses her feelings as wife and widow ;

“In my unhappiness he sent me my dear Eugène to be my comforter and guide in the little time that God gave us to stay together, and make me experience a terrible sorrow and pain, to prepare me for this great mission that God in all eternity had predicted.”

The 20th of September Father Gailhac writes to her :

“I have thanked God, my dear child, for the feelings which he has inspired in you, for the great sacrifice that He Himself expects of you... for your advancement in virtue because often the sanctification of the soul depends on one generous act, this act becomes for that soul as a great opening which leaves the way open to all graces of God”.

Making the journey, she herself discovers and interiorises the response that she is capable of expressing.

“How happy I am that the God of Compassion has placed into my soul the vocation that I have undertaken with so much courage, to associate myself with such a holy Father, who lives only to breathe for his children. Blessed be God, very good Father, I will work with all my forces and give you my best in this beautiful work.”

And she writes again on the 13th November, 1849 :

“Yes, my Father, I will not cease to bless Providence, which has never let me go. In my first unhappiness, He sent me my dear Eugène to be my comforter and guide in the little time God had left us to be together, and enabled me to survive a terrible grief and affliction to prepare me for a great mission that God of all eternity had predicted”.

Her mail also shows us the most humble aspects of her journey :

“Believe that I am very happy that my room is decorated with simplicity. As for the bed to which I am attached (you know why) in the case where it does not fit, I could replace it”.

Like each of us, she understands the calls, the demands but she surprises us, even today, in the radicalism of her answers.

“I will remind you again of your daughter, who gladly wants to be everything to God and who will do everything she can to offer Him her heart”. 21st September 1849.

“I would like to be worthy of such a beautiful vocation as that which God wishes to grant me, in giving Him the sacrifice that I have just made to Him because it was necessary for me to appeal to Him, who struck me in order that I might offer myself to Him. Blessed be God, He gave me this, He was the Master to take it from me.”

It was written of all eternity, His designs are impenetrable, I like to believe it, my God. Yes, I have the firm confidence that it is that beautiful soul which obtained me this great grace.

Also I hope, Holy Virgin, that you would pray to your dear son as soon as possible, to grant the crown that he will have merited. Yes, my Father, let us pray with Mary, our Mother, so that our friend can rejoice in the glory that has been prepared for him”.

The letters of September 1849, (ten months after the death) show us that Eugène was still very present in her heart, in her thoughts : in a letter of 5th September, 1849, she speaks of Eugène in the following manner

“If only he could mix his tears with ours”.

“Like our friend will rejoice in such a beautiful feast where his wife is admitted. Oh what an inestimable joy, oh my Father, if he could only make his voice heard, if he could only mix his tears with ours. Oh truly, my Father, we would be too happy. But something must console us, he but walked ahead of us, because we will soon have the happiness of seeing him. I like to believe that he wanted to prepare a place which was reserved for us in all eternity.”

Sometimes God acts quickly and here he has found a great availability to his call in the heart of Appollonie. To accomplish what God wants at every stage of her life... The ways of God are not always ours. Later, Father Gailhac will write that the Community **“was formed without a human plan”**.

Woman at work as a General Superior

In the minutes of the 24th February, 1849, Appollonie Pellissier, Rosalie Gibbal and Eulalie Vidal are in charge of establishing **the basis of the Institute**. Three other women are with them :

Rose Jeantet, Cécile Cambon, and Marie Roque.

The latter is, at that time, a servant of the Cure couple where she first met Father Gailhac. The only written mention about her life in this period is an invitation to prepare the red room in Autignac. The other two will be supports to the work at the Good Shepherd : Refuge and Orphanage where they are already working.

The original team of six on the 24th February, 1849, has grown to ten in September, 1849. On the 13th April, 1850, Appollonie with nine others will take the habit and then on the 4th May, 1851, they will take their vows. In February, 1851, there were 80 people in the house involved in the two works.

In this first community each had her role.

-M. St. Jean was in charge of the whole project.

-M. St. Croix is the assistant of M. St. Jean,

-M. St. Félix is responsible for the Orphanage and she makes it a place of harmonious education for the girls...

-it would be too long here to talk about all the others.

“When your inner spirit expresses itself deeply in you, you have to have the confidence to let it guide you”.

-During almost 20 years,

she is going to live **a communal life**,
a life where you share everything,
a life where you have to live the relationship with others
in everyday life...
a life accompanied by work.

Being a benefactor is one thing, serving is another.

She will be **director** of the other religious women who live with her :

-this first group grows quite quickly :

1850 : 8

1851 : 10

1853 : 14

1868 : 60, of which 12 are Irish...

The group seemed to be growing but there were some deaths too.

She has **to learn how to lead** this group in order to insure some unity, give conferences to explain the religious life she is living as she advances. It is not an easy task for her. Father Gailhac must help her with the first conference she will make for the Community. She merely asks him to write the text for it.

-As far as **the works** are concerned, by the years 1848-1849, economic changes bring a period of growth.

The middle-class families above all are concerned with education. The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary found a boarding-school of which M. St. Croix Vidal will be the director. So there are three distinct institutions of which two are charitable works. In 1853, there were 130 children involved in the two works : Refuge and Orphanage. And later, Sr. Agnès will create a dispensary for the poor and destitute of Béziers. These works have a common denomination.

In a mail of August, 1849, M. St. Jean let us see her activities in the following line :

“I have been visiting the girls in their classrooms”

And in the same letter she will talk about a staircase she is having built :

“Yesterday I had a few words with old Chaneau about the staircase building. He told me we had to build it as a whole, if not he would have to put wedges. There are four workers ; he made me hopeful that it would soon be done. The plasterers are still working, the crossbars are coming along”

In her responsibility for **the new Institute** M. St. Jean decides to extend and adapt the premises. They have all reached their final size and start to be known as : Convent of the Sacred Heart of Mary.

As it is ascertained in the documents at Béziers town hall, M. St. Jean has pursued purchase negotiations in order to extend the land according to the needs. She seems able and naturally at ease in all these responsibilities after the family training. Administering her properties... As a business woman she sells and purchases with a real will to pursue and make the project flourish. It is true that at that time the woman can above all fully express her potential only through works or religious communities.

-One must also think of her acknowledgement of the Institute.

Already in April, 1850, the bishop gives the religious acknowledgement. The file for the legal acknowledgement has to go the Department of Religions. The town hall gives support under the following point of view :

“Considering that this Institution provides excellent results and brings advantages to the population, the Town Council with full knowledge of the facts, gives advice for it being granted by the competent higher authority”

Thus a new stage opens. The Community Council in a letter of the 19th August, 1856, has to specify their existence and clarify legal aspects. M. St. Jean gives the town the property she has purchased before coming on the 15th February, 1849, and she makes a new will, bequeathing all her properties to the Institute. **The imperial decree is published.**

There will be an immediate result : the Martin family (Mrs Cure’s family perhaps) was hoping to get Eugène’s properties back... and the transfer to the new congregation was facing opposition.

And here again, a similar logic is applied : the properties do not stay in the family, and perhaps, or certainly, there is also the fact that these properties are going to charitable works. Some have mentioned a pressure from Father Gailhac but nothing seems to correspond with this idea.

Someone in the family writes to the bishop to intervene in the affair. Again there is a period of criticism and fighting against Appollonie’s decisions and she expresses her suffering in a letter at the time. Once again we notice the courageous strength of this woman who feels she is asked to give everything. The Community certainly took large benefits out of it... The gift of her life was accompanied by the gift of her properties. Why should we separate them ?

External relations

Also this task had to include all that was necessary **on the level of relations** with the town and M. St. Jean also developed a regular mail with Bishop Thibault as expressed in this note from his excellency :

“I am at your disposal, my dearest daughter, and ready to give you the attention of a father for all you have to tell me”

While she was alive, M. St. Jean had written to Holy Father Pius IX. We must not forget that it is time to think of going to other countries, being dependent only on the local bishop was not enough.

Appollonie in relation to Father Gailhac

A word always comes to her lips : *“courage !”*

Letters often show this support : *“Blessed be God, very good Father, I will work with all my strength and assist you of my best in such a beautiful work”*.

When she writes the 5th September, 1849, she has in mind this priest who is spending his energy endlessly for the projects in progress :

“How, dear Father, would we find resistance on our way. Oh no, Mary, our Mother, will come to rescue us, revive our hearts and help us to endure patiently all the trials the world and the devil want to have us support. You will always find your daughter so strong that she will do her best to make lighter all the grief and sorrow which will occur ; for you know you are telling me that nothing ever happens but that which the good Lord wants ; therefore one must be submissive in all to his holy Will. I would gladly write some more but I have to go and read for the Sisters”

By 1855, rumours of scandal abound especially around Father Gailhac. Proceedings will be started against him during those years of persecution, about the deaths of two sisters in not well-known circumstances. She becomes involved and writes to the bishop to talk about the matter... She always keeps confidence in the Founder and will be **a fortress of hope**.

Extension

Since the year 1860, the Institute has had the desire to found other houses... Tests have been made in England and in Lyon but they did not succeed. A project of foundation in Ireland failed in spite of great efforts from the Motherhouse. Even when in fragile health, M. St. Jean had the intention of accompanying a little group in Ireland.

“It will probably be our first superiors who will accompany the little colony” will write M. St. Croix the 28th February, 1869 ; but in fact M. St. Jean will not make the journey and she will not see the fulfilment of her dream either.

Her health

By the month of August, 1849, M. St. Jean has already had a slight health problem and around 1855 she suffered from pneumonia and for a month was at death's door... She recovered but would never find all her strength after this trial. During the last ten years of her life she suffered a lot from a bad stomach upset. Two other sisters will have to take over a part of her tasks : M. St. Croix deals with the mail and external relationships, and M. St. Félix Maynard nurses her and manages the house according to her instructions.

Last years of her life

She is concerned about training those who will succeed her especially M. St. Croix and M. St. Félix.

One can certainly say she kept her promises

“Yes, my Father, I will put all my strength into loving the Good Lord well and do nothing but his Will” 18th September, 1849.

Her health deteriorates ; on the 24th February, 1869, she lies in bed and cannot get up any more. Her brother Jean Clément Napoléon comes to visit her and brother and sister are reconciled.

As she could see her life coming to an end she confides :

“I did not think I would leave you so early. But Good Lord wants it so. His will be done”

She dies the 4th March and the 12th March “Le Publicateur de Béziers” in his article evokes some aspects of the life of M. St. Jean and ends with this sentence : **“a life totally devoted to serve the poor”**.

M. St. Jean gathered the capacities required as a General Superior in the politico-church context. But she never considered herself as a founder.

Always in her letters, she places herself as the one God calls to collaborate with Father Gailhac, and she will write to him :

“You have been chosen of all eternity to make the work in which God has been willing to make me share”

Or in this letter of the 5th September

“How happy I am that God of mercy has put in my soul the vocation I have taken so bravely, to make me associate with such a holy Father who lives and breathes but for his children”.

On his side Father Gailhac will attest :

***“No, I was not wrong, you really are the daughter I asked God for”...
29th August, 1849***

A prayer found in her book may let us understand to her feelings :

“All my life is yours, oh Lord, and all I do has to be in relation to you ; therefore do not allow anything in my deeds that you would not agree to. Adorable heart, I come to share the feelings and the merits of all those who fear you, even more of those who love you.

Allow, oh God, that I renounce from now on to all vanity, all pride, all human respect. Teach, Jesus, my Lord, perfect oblivion of myself, so that I only feel concerned with the means where I can deserve your love”.

It is because of this that today we celebrate her in the 14 countries where we are present. In fact, soon after her death, foundations developed. The banner shows these countries.

Today the Community strives to be faithful to this intuition from the beginning : work for the glory of God, be concerned with the condition of the poor. Her life is an example, an inspiration and a force for each of us. She indicates the path to follow God’s call, his project in each life.

In one of our last General Chapters we have written :

“The challenge of the Gospel, the spirit of faith and zeal which characterised our Founders, Father Gailhac, M. St. Jean and our first Sisters drives us to give answers to the needs of our time and to work actively with others serving the justice of the Gospel”

and also

“From now on we go ahead like dedicated women of our time. Our passion for Jesus Christ, for human kind drives us to become weavers of hope and life for all”.

Video excerpt : *“I will have the courage”...*

