

ST. JULIE BILLIART - NOVENA DAY 5 JULIE, WOMAN OF FAITH AND COURAGE

Take a moment to center yourself and go into the sacred space deep within
"Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here"



JULIE'S VOICE ON FAITH AND COURAGE

"Leave all to God who can make all the events of life
which seem to us most intolerable turn to his greater glory"

PRAYER

Slowly pray the psalm and let it take you into that quiet place where you can rest in God's presence
and let his light shine on your joys and sorrows. Open your heart to trust.

A song of joy, a symphony of praise.
Would I had the skill to celebrate God's glory
and his power
with music and with verse!
God's word is life, is joy, is love.
And we who listen to his voice are filled with peace.
Out of chaos beauty is created
and out of suffering joy.
Whoever trusts in his love finds
compassion and healing
and courage to walk his ways
forever singing his praise.
How good you are God!
May your love be with us always
as we place all our trust in you.

Adapted from Psalm 32

JULIE'S STORY

The community of Notre Dame came to birth in Amiens while Julie was still an invalid. It was a time of religious renewal. Churches were once again open after the Revolution and the Fathers of the Faith were conducting missions in the parishes of Amiens. They asked for the assistance of Julie and her sisters and while the younger members of the community instructed children and young people, Françoise and Julie instructed the adults. Julie, because of her disability, was unable to visit the parishes but instructed people from her bed as she had done all those years ago in Cuvilly. Fr Infantin, one of the Fathers of the Faith, was convinced Julie would do more good if only she could walk and so asked her to make a novena to the Sacred Heart for someone he was concerned about. Julie readily undertook this and when, on the fifth day, Fr Infantin asked her to take a step in honour of the Sacred Heart she did so. She knew immediately that she had been cured. Now she was able to assist at Mass in the parish church, something she hadn't been able to do for 23 years. She was able to begin a life of journeying to towns in France and Belgium to work with the Fathers of the Faith or to set up communities and open schools at the request of Bishops. Now Julie was the walking saint as well as the smiling one. Julie was very clear about her call to form a community that would respond to the needs of the times and be prepared to go wherever it was needed. This was a different kind of religious life from the past when sisters stayed in their convents and were under the jurisdiction of a priest. It was too much of a novelty for some clergy. This was particularly so with Fr de Sambucy who had been appointed spiritual director of the sisters in Amiens. Not only did he interfere in the affairs of the burgeoning congregation but he wanted the sisters to restrict their work to Amiens and have no communication between the various houses that Julie had set up. He tried to dismiss Julie as Superior General and expel her from Amiens; he wanted control of the community's money and tried to turn the Bishop against her. For Julie, now able to fulfil her dream of setting up communities and schools this must have been a great suffering but she bore it with equanimity and courage, believing all the time in the goodness of God.

REFLECTION

Reflect on the two moments in Julie's life - the joy and freedom of her cure, her delight in pursuing her call; the opposition that wanted to imprison her in another way; to control her vision and define her work. Where have you experienced those moments in your life? Have you had an experience of healing, liberation that allowed you to pursue some calling or practice only to find your hopes dashed by criticism, refusal or control? How difficult is it to believe that those with the opposite vision from you mean well and desire goodness and wholeness just as you do? How open are you to the possibility of change?

How does St. Julie's cure give you hope that those who are sick in our midst can find healing? How can you relate to the opposition and criticism she faced and how can this make you a better person?



REVIEW OF SESSION

What has touched you about this time of prayer?