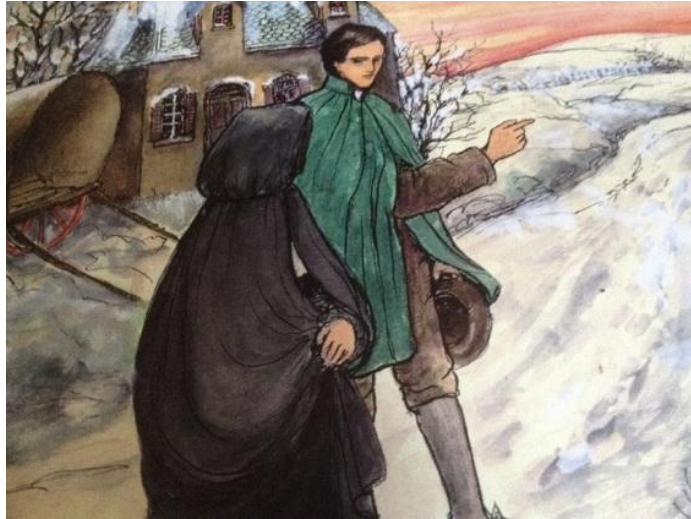


ST. JULIE BILLIART - NOVENA DAY 8
JULIE, WOMAN OF HER TIMES

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



JULIE'S VOICE

“The good God wants me to walk everywhere like a little blind woman.”

PRAYER

Hold our world in your heart. Listen to its cries, feel its concerns and uncertainties and let God's light shine on them as you slowly pray this passage from the Book of Wisdom

Despatch her (Wisdom) from the holy heavens,
send her forth from your throne of glory
to help me and toil with me
and teach me what is pleasing to you,
since she knows and understands everything.
She will guide me prudently in my undertakings
and protect me by her glory.
Then all I do will be acceptable.

Wisdom 9:10-12

JULIE'S STORY

Julie lived in turbulent and violent times. The year 1789 erupted with the storming of the Bastille and the overthrow of the French monarchy under the banner of Fraternity, Liberty, Equality. Heavy taxation and a failed harvest had meant many people living in dire poverty. Resentment grew against the aristocracy and the clergy of the Established Catholic Church. They enjoyed a wealth and privilege closed to the majority of the population.

Julie and Françoise were caught up in this social turmoil and political upheaval. Françoise, because she was a member of the aristocracy, was imprisoned in the Carmel at Compiègne and only saved from the guillotine by the death of Robespierre. Julie was hounded by the revolutionaries because of her commitment to her faith and to a Church that had been suppressed. We can only guess at the grief and anxiety all this would have caused.

In 1807 the small congregation of Notre Dame found a home in Namur, Belgium. This was a different kind of society. Belgium was the first country in continental Europe to experience the Industrial Revolution. This was of course accompanied by the growth of urbanization with ensuing ills such as overcrowding, poor sanitation, disease, low pay, terrible working conditions and child labor. These two revolutions, as well as the Napoleonic Wars, are the context within which Julie worked.

REFLECTION

We too live in turbulent times. We are moving to a new paradigm for understanding our world but the uncertainty of where it is leading is real. We too are challenged to rethink who we are and what we are about. An awareness of the fragility of our planet calls us to a renewed understanding and respect for the earth and its creatures. How am I called to respond?

What can you do to work towards eliminating racism from your heart, as well as from our country? What steps can you take to ensure that all people are respected and treated equally? How do you foster the care of God's creation here on campus and at home? What can you do to better protect the environment of the world that we live in today so that future generations can enjoy the blessings and richness of the beauty of creation?



REVIEW OF SESSION

What has touched you about this time of prayer?