



# *Discipleship of Zeal*



The Spiritual Heritage of  
St. Mary Euphrasia

*Sisters of the Good Shepherd*

Washington Province  
Baltimore, Maryland 21227-4099  
1996

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*Fontispiece:*  
A painting of Mary Euphrasia Pelletier,  
Tours, France, 1825.

To the members of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd: the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Contemplative Sisters of the Good Shepherd, and the Companions of the Good Shepherd.



To our lay associates, our board, and staff members, and all who participate in the work of the Good Shepherd throughout the world.



In a special way, to those who, through reflecting on the words and actions of St. Mary Euphrasia, will come to know, love, and mirror more zealously in their lives the love of the Good Shepherd for his people.

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# *Acknowledgments*

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Our model and mentor, St. Mary Euphrasia, had a delightful quotation to respond to such generosity and goodness: "Gratitude is the memory of the heart."

# *Introduction*

Pope John Paul II has proclaimed a period of preparation for the year 2000 "aimed at an increased sensitivity to all that the Spirit is saying to the Church and to the churches, as well as to individuals through charisms meant to serve the whole community. . . .The jubilee celebration should confirm the Christians of today in their faith in God, sustain their hope, which reaches out in expectation of eternal life, and rekindle their charity in active service to their brothers and sisters."<sup>1</sup>

This portrayal of some traits manifested in the life and work of St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier was initiated to share her spirituality with all who participate in the "holy work" of Jesus Good Shepherd, that is, all who reach out with compassion to others to support them on their pilgrim way. We are, all of us, as followers of the Lord, called to discipleship.

The inspiration of Mary Euphrasia's life, her prayer and her teachings, can impact the reader today with the same dynamism it has always held for the sisters of the congregation. What a powerful model Mary Euphrasia can be to people in the third millennium for renewal in the culture of life, love, and hope!

*1. Tertio Millennia Adveniente, Apostolic Letter for the Jubilee of the Year 2000, nos. 23 and 31; cf. Rev 2:7fi.*



To make St. Mary Euphrasia accessible to a wider audience, the texts of her conferences and other materials have at times been edited to omit phrases such as "my dear daughters" and to broaden references for applicability to the laity. Quotations are taken from one or another of the different editions of the Conferences. Citations of chapter and pages are made both to the 1907 edition (identical to the 1943 Newman edition) and to the 1994 translation.

Mary Euphrasia's teachings are applicable to all who pursue life as sons or daughters of God and heirs to eternal life. She related to people as partners. She relied on diversity of talents, engaged each person at the level of his or her interest and expertise, risked prudently and audaciously whatever was required to achieve God's will: "Abandon yourselves completely to divine providence, but at the same time labor as if you did not have this same providence to depend on."<sup>2</sup>

As Mary Euphrasia both utilized her gifts of nature and grace, her culture, experience, and inspiration, and also rooted herself in prayer and the life of the Church, she grew to fullness humanly and spiritually. In each of the chapters we have considered Mary Euphrasia's teaching and example and, as she herself instructed, "illustrated what we say by citing Holy Scripture." Pope John Paul II noted that in our times "a great impetus has been given to making God's Word more and more the criterion of evangelization, of personal and ecclesial life and of ecumenism, from the promulgation of the Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*."<sup>3</sup>

After presenting St. Mary Euphrasia's vision and example of a particular teaching and giving a scriptural context, we provide some exercises to facilitate application to the individual reader in a call to discipleship. These practices, to be chosen according to individual taste and opportunity, are intended for use over a period of time, even as Sacred Scripture and the lives of saints reserve evidence of God's action in the world and in souls for different times and situations.

References to selections in the Catechism of the Catholic Church form part of the discipleship applications, corresponding to Mary Euphrasia's own emphasis on study of the catechism throughout life. The *Catechism*, moreover, provides references to further material on all aspects of the spiritual life.

Finally, we close each chapter with a prayer, both as a symbolic gesture of the incomparable place of prayer in Mary Euphrasia's life and as an incentive to nurture the seeds of her word and example in fruitful reflection and good deeds in our own pursuit of holiness.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 33 (1907) 218.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 2 (1907) 16, (1994) 25; *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 8, 1995.

# *St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, 1796-1868*



St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier was born near the turn of the century following the French Revolution, with its upheaval of Church and society, so the two hundredth anniversary of her birth occurs in the approach of the great jubilee year 2000. Following the inner call of the Spirit of God in her time, she responded in faith, in hope, and in love. Her only desire was to achieve the will of God, which she clearly perceived as the promotion of God's glory and the salvation of souls, in the particular path toward which she felt drawn.

St. Mary Euphrasia's early life singularly prepared her for the pioneering work she would do. Born on July 31, 1796, on the island of Noirmoutier, off the coast of France, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, Rose Virginie Pelletier was the eighth of nine children of Dr. Julien Pelletier and his wife, Anne-Françoise-Aimée Mourain, herself the daughter of a physician. Two of the children died before Rose Virginie was born; a sister and brother died during her youth, and a third brother died in her early adulthood.

Dr. and Mrs. Pelletier had been arrested in Soullans and imprisoned on the island of Noirmoutier in 1794, under suspicion because of their charitable work and, as loyal Vendéens, their sympathies with Church and king. According to her grandson's testimony, Mrs. Pelletier was on the point of being shot for giving refuge to priests and religious

when she was saved by a farmer who held her in great reverence. The Pelletiers were released after three months and Dr. Pelletier was constrained to remain on the island, where he continued treating the sick regardless of their political stance. Dr. and Mrs. Pelletier were well known for their piety and virtue, visiting the sick and the poor and on occasion welcoming them into their own home, for, they said, "This is our brother, our sister; we must help them."<sup>1</sup>

Rose Virginie's baptism on the day of her birth was later solemnized by a priest, according to family tradition, as related in the process of canonization. Her nephew and great-grandniece both reported in the process that Rose Virginie's family and companions described her as a happy, lively, intelligent, and much-loved child. She led her little friends in pranks, like mounting the toupee of a sleeping neighbor on his doorpost, and in adventures, such as restoring a shrine to the island patron, St. Philbert. She spent long days on the rugged beaches and rocks of the coast; she watched as ships passed through the harbor with merchandise and slaves, speaking years later of her anguish at seeing their plight. She witnessed the Christian virtues lived daily by her parents and sometimes accompanied her mother in serving the poor in their homes: "Madame Pelletier is charity personified," one of the aged inhabitants of Noirmoutier testified.<sup>2</sup>

When Rose Virginie was nine, her older sister and dear friend, Victoire Emilie, died. Her beloved father died the following year. At twelve, Rose Virginie went to school to the Ursulines, who had recently come to the island. "I shall have to be tamed, but I mean all the same to be a nun," she told her teachers, who were somewhat astonished that a vivacious character like hers would lean toward the cloister, for one of them had said, "You will be either an angel or a devil."<sup>3</sup> From the time of her first Communion she felt a strong desire to dedicate herself to Christ.

Rose Virginie herself relates, "At thirteen years of age, I was sent to a boarding school in Tours. The superior, Mme Chobelet du Bois-Boucher, foundress of the Christian Association, was an old friend of my mother. She promised to take good care of me. I cried a lot; I could not understand why I was sent so far away. There were no rail roads in those

1. *Portals*, 1:42.

2. *Pasquier*, 1:12.

3. *Portals*, 1:55.

days and to reach Tours it took us three days and three nights." "In passing through Nantes, I heard people speak of the religious of the Refuge, of their vocation of zeal. . . spontaneously I said to myself, I will be a religious of that Order."<sup>4</sup>

"I was not pious; I did not like to go to confession. And I do not know why God permitted my confessor to treat me so harshly; my faults seemed like enormous offenses and all my temptations like serious sins. Fortunately, Mile de Lignac, the assistant, saw my sufferings and spoke to me with gentleness and kindness. The boarding school was nourishing at that time; there were ninety girls. It was very edifying that most of them went to the sacraments every two weeks, some even weekly. I witnessed the greatness of that house and a little later I saw its fall. One boarder, one alone, spoiled the whole group of good-hearted girls. Disorder, I would even say corruption, soon made terrible ravages. Some distraught parents withdrew their children. Many who remained went from being angels to devils."<sup>5</sup>

In 1812 Rose Virginie's brother Constant died. In 1813, still separated from her family, she learned of her mother's death after the burial had taken place. Years later, she related that the sorrow she felt at the loss of her mother, whom she loved passionately, endured throughout her life.

Rose Virginie continues her story: "A religious community set up a boarding school in the city and Mile de Lignac went there. I was not able to go with her and was obliged to remain and live with my companions, who treated me very badly because I refused to be influenced by their behavior. Being an orphan I cried for Mile de Lignac, who had taken the place of mother. I was very unhappy.

"Then I turned seriously to God and sought for consolation in piety. I felt a great attraction to religious life. An old building at the back of the garden of our boarding school was often pointed out to us. Discreetly we were told that some good religious had opened a refuge for young girls who had behaved badly and that these people did a lot of good there working for the salvation of souls. That thought often came back to my mind and inspired me with a desire to join the community. But how could I manage it? ...

4. Pelletier, "*Jeunesse et Vocation*" (*Mother Foundress's account of her youth and vocation told to the sisters in 1866*); Pecard, 2:37.

5. Pelletier, "*Jeunesse et Vocation*."

"Finally, after a lot of struggles and resistance, I achieved what I longed for so ardently. I left my teachers, who had affection for me in spite of their severity. One in particular said to me some time later, 'My child, you did not understand my conduct. I had to act strongly towards you because you are one of those persons who could go towards good or evil, depending on the direction given them. You are strong now. Go with confidence where God is calling you.' All the dear Sisters of the Refuge received me tenderly like a beloved child. I felt I was in heaven and soon forgot all I had suffered."<sup>6</sup>

Completing her school work in July 1814, Rose Virginie entered the novitiate of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge at Tours. The Order had been founded in Caen in 1641 by John Eudes. While nurturing plans for an institute for the formation of priests to work in the Lord's vineyard, so urgently needed in those days, he also prayed for some years over the plight of "penitents," repentant women who had nowhere to turn in their effort to lead a stable life. He responded to the call of the Spirit; and to the voice of Madeleine Lamy, one of the pious women into whose care he had sent some of these penitents. One day while he and several charitable persons were passing her house, Madelaine Lamy challenged: "Where are you going? I suppose to the church to mumble your prayers before the statues; and then you'll be highly pleased with yourselves, thinking you are very devout. You would do better if you would build a house for these poor girls who will be lost for want of direction and resources."<sup>7</sup>

From the first House of the Refuge in Caen, other houses were founded, and still others from these. The convent of Tours was established in 1714. While living by the same Constitutions and sharing in the common heritage, charism, and customs, each house remained independent. Periodic communications took place among them.

Rose Virginie received the name Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia at her clothing in the religious habit on September 8, 1815. She speaks of her novitiate as a kind of springtime: "I must admit from my entry into Religion, I was so eager to know about the origin of the Order, and everything to do with it, that while still a young novice at Tours, I sought out the older religious to talk with them. After the lives of the saints, it was my delight to read the lives in manuscript of our first mothers, the letters

6. *Pelletier, "Jeunesse et Vocation."*

7. *Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, 5-6.*

of Father Eudes, and the abridgment of his life, which at that time was not yet printed. When a circular letter came from one of the Refuges, I was so delighted that I could not sleep at night for thinking of it." And again: "Our superior told me to use my spare time in reading the lives of the saints and Holy Scripture, for the time would come when I would be overwhelmed with work of all kinds, and this would prove very helpful. Indeed, I can truly say that the more I have read the Holy Scripture the more I have loved its beauty."<sup>8</sup>

On September 9, 1817, with the permission of her brother-in-law and guardian, who had initially opposed it, Mary Euphrasia made her profession, taking the three vows of religion and a fourth promising to labor for the salvation of souls. She was appointed the directress of the "penitents," having been prepared for this apostolate during her second year of formation. "It is there," she says of her experience with the young women, "that I became a religious."<sup>9</sup>

After fruitful years of learning by example and by personal experience, in 1825, at age twenty-nine, she was elected superior of the convent in Tours. Her first act was to found the Sisters Magdalens, forming them in a life of prayer and penance for the salvation of souls. She was re-elected for a second term in 1828. Mary Euphrasia said, "I had even then a desire to see many houses of the Order established, and I said to a dying Sister Magdalen, 'My child, if, as I hope, you will have the happiness of going to heaven, promise me to ask God to let me know whether my desire to found houses for souls who wish to forsake the path of sin is inspired by him.' 'But how can you doubt it? Yes, Mother, leave it to me, I will remember it before our Lord.' Shortly after her death we were called here to found this house of Angers."<sup>10</sup>

One of the sources of inspiration for the foundation in Angers came in the form of a letter to Bishop Charles Montault in behalf of a dying penitent in the Refuge of Caen who longed for the establishment of a "hospital for souls" in her hometown. The bishop received an offer of financial support from Count Augustin Le Roy de la Potherie de Neuville, whose mother, Countess Innocente de Lentivi, had already set aside

8. *Conferences*, ch. 65 (1907) 408, (1994) 481; ch. 23 (1907) 172, (1994) 208.

9. *Pecard*, 2:38.

10. *Conferences*, ch. 62 (1907) 389, (1994) 458-59.

funds for this work. Meanwhile, five priests of the diocese, under the leadership of the cure of the Cathedral of Angers, M. Jacques-Louis Breton, recognized the need and worked together on a plan for the establishment of a house in Angers. On the advice of Countess Genevieve d'Andigne de Villequier and having obtained the permission of the archbishop of Tours, Augustin-Louis de Mont-blanc, M. Breton made the request for the foundation to Mary Euphrasia, who immediately discerned in it the will of God. With some difficulty, she obtained the consent of her council.

After an initial exploratory visit and with the permission of the Archbishop of Tours, Mother Mary Euphrasia accompanied the founding sisters to Angers and established the enclosure on July 31, 1829. She returned to Tours to complete her term as superior. In May 1831 she was elected superior "of the new house called the Good Shepherd" in Angers, with the signed permission of the Archbishop of Tours releasing her from his diocese. Within three months after her arrival she had established the Sisters Magdalens.

With funding and prophetic encouragement from Count de Neuville, in 1832 the first stone was laid for a chapel to meet the needs of the growing communities. The novitiate for the apostolic sisters blossomed, attracting some fifty-eight postulants in less than three years.

Unable to recruit an experienced director for her "penitents" from the houses of the Refuge in Nantes and Tours, she saw more clearly the advantages she had begun to consider in the establishment of a generalate. A central house could lend itself favorably to the expansion of the work by a strong formation program and the sharing of material and personnel. Mary Euphrasia engaged the community in her inspiration to pray that she might know whether the idea of a generalate came from God and to ask for good vocations if it did.

In April 1833 she established in Le Mans the first of her foundations from the house of Angers, at the request of the bishop and the director of the seminary. In extreme poverty and other difficulties and at the request of the local bishops, she founded houses in Poitiers and Grenoble in December 1833.

Bishop Montault approved the plan of a generalate as expressed in a new Constitution, the fifty-second; and in May 1833 he formally petitioned Rome for its establishment. On the whole, Mary Euphrasia's own community and a number of priests and lay persons strongly

supported her zeal for strengthening the work through the generalate; and the increasing flow of admissions to the novitiate was an external sign of its feasibility. Opposition became intense, however, among a few sisters in Angers, the Caen and Tours Communities, the Bishop of Tours, who regretted his loss of Mary Euphrasia, and some priests and religious of the Le Mans foundation, which later separated from Angers. Their concerns gradually spread to other foundations, resulting in letters to Rome attacking the establishment of the generalate.

On August 15, 1834, Mary Euphrasia felt inspired to write to Cardinal Odescalchi recounting all that she, the community, and the ecclesiastical superior had considered: "I desire nothing but God's greater glory. If the Sovereign Pontiff and your Eminence perceive that there are obstacles to the erection of the generalate, I humbly submit myself."<sup>11</sup> The bishops of Angers, Grenoble, and Metz, once convinced, were steadfast in supporting the generalate.

Mary Euphrasia's stance was expressed in her letters: "If, in spite of the calumniating reports fabricated and sent to Rome, our Holy Father permits the continuation of this great work as it was described to him fourteen months ago by our bishop, then the time will have come for us to rise above all contradictions. People of great enlightenment and full of hope for us are working for us, praying without ceasing and without wavering for a moment."<sup>12</sup>

On May 14, 1834, with votes taken by mail from the first three foundations, Le Mans, Poitiers, and Grenoble, Mary Euphrasia was elected superior general for six years at the Angers chapter, and her election was ratified by Bishop Montault. In 1834 she began to make visits to the foundations in France.

In January 1835 the articles of the decree for the generalate were fixed by the Assembly of Cardinals and approved by Pope Gregory XVI. By a brief dated April 3, 1835, Gregory XVI approved in its entirety the earlier decree, defining the powers of the superior general of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers to found houses throughout the whole world. By apostolic note he appointed Cardinal Charles Odescalchi to be Protector of the congregation.

11. *Pasquier*, 1:179-181; *Conferences*, ch. 3 (1907) 19-20, (1994) 29-30.

12. *Mary Euphrasia to the Sisters in Metz, October 23, 1834*, in *Pasquier*, 1:211-212.



From that moment the generalate was a dynamic force in the imitation of the zeal of the Good Shepherd for souls. Foundation after foundation was made in France; then, in 1838, Mary Euphrasia journeyed to Rome, accompanied by Mme d'Andigne and several sisters, to establish the first house on foreign soil. En route she visited foundations already established in France.

In future years there was rapid expansion of the work in Europe, North and South America, North Africa, Asia, and Australia. Zeal knew no frontiers in Mary Euphrasia, and she constantly updated her methods to adapt to the emerging needs of the apostolate. Languages, arts, and sciences were taught in the novitiate to prepare sisters for service in various circumstances and countries. She brought persons into the motherhouse and sent sisters out for training, recognizing and using talents wherever manifested.

"Do everything well," she said. "Now, in order to do all things well we must apply ourselves more to recollection ... to the exercises of the spiritual life, especially hear Mass well. . . . You should not aspire to performing brilliant actions . . . but to do faithfully all that duty requires." "You must each perfect yourself in your special work."<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the years there were great successes, great consolations. Underpinning them there were always crosses, conflicts, obstacles within the congregation and outside, from well-meaning persons and from others hostile to the changing demands of the "holy work." Mary Euphrasia had a dynamic understanding of the cross. In an effort to save the house in Paris, for example, she traveled to it several times. "To say that the work of Paris is not proper to our Institute," she wrote, "is a false accusation, of which God will one day vindicate me. My first inclination has been to justify myself with my ecclesiastical superiors, especially with Rome, but after several hours of silence and prayer, I chose to say nothing and to suffer."<sup>14</sup>

Mary Euphrasia met and shared stories of the challenges and frustrations in the "holy work" with saintly women outside her congregation: Mother Javouhey, foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny; with Mme Madeleine Sophie Barat, who, hearing of Mother Euphrasia's

13. *Conferences*, ch. 23 (1907) 170-76, (1994) 205-12; ch. 29 (1907) 203, (1994) 244-45.

14. *Saudreau, Graces et Fidelite*, 91; Morrison, "Secret of Sanctity," 171.

trials, exclaimed, "Oh, crosses, crosses, I am bound from head to foot with them!" And she met with Pauline Jaricot, foundress of the work of the Propagation of the Faith and of the Living Rosary.<sup>15</sup>

After the foundation of the generalate the greatest threat to the survival of the congregation came from the diocesan bishop, Guillaume-Laurent-Louis Angebault (1790-1869). In the process of the beatification of Mary Euphrasia, those who knew him personally spoke of him as obstinate, impressionable, and jealous of his authority.

Auguste Saudreau, noted French writer on the ascetical and mystical life and chaplain of the motherhouse in Angers for nearly fifty years, felt personally loyal to Bishop Angebault because of the impelling influence on his priestly vocation. Yet, noting first that Bishop Angebault was a pious man, Canon Saudreau stated: "The bishop wished that good be done, but that it be done by him or under his control, and only in the way he judged right and permitted by him. Lacking certain interior light, he thought he was doing right even when opposing the designs of God and causing suffering to those who desired conformity to them. He had the illusion that the religious vow of obedience was made to the bishop as well as to religious superiors; and because of that he could give orders to all religious who made profession in his diocese. He changed the Constitutions of the Religious of the Cenacle, whose motherhouse was in Angers. . . .

"He thought it should be the same in the case of the Good Shepherd; that it was his right to rule the motherhouse as he pleased, and through it, the whole congregation. 'I command you in virtue of obedience' he wrote to Mary Euphrasia, 'to tell me if you have written to Rome against me.' In a letter of November 21, 1842, to Mary Euphrasia he expressed the desire that the Pope suppress the Constitution, which submitted the congregation to the Cardinal Protector, or to change its interpretation. . . . At this time in France there were a number of bishops still imbued with the vestiges of Gallicanism, with its confusion of powers between the national Church and the Pope.

"Mary Euphrasia understood, however, that her duty was to follow the will of the Holy Father. Moreover, she had seen that the interests of the congregation, spread over the whole world, required the direction of a cardinal residing in Rome and not that of a bishop who had

15. *Portais*, 1:386-87; *Pasquier*, 1:390.

no authority outside of his own diocese. She remained faithful to the Pope and desirous of maintaining the Constitutions of the congregation. To the end of her life, Bishop Angebault did not forgive this."<sup>16</sup>

Cardinal Patrizi wrote on May 12, 1845, that no change would be made in anything that concerned the powers of the superior general or of the Cardinal Protector. After the decree of 1845 there was an interval of peace, and Cardinal Patrizi invited Bishop Angebault to preside at the election of a superior general, delayed by Rome because of the tension. Bishop Angebault refused but sent word to the sisters that he did not want Mother Euphrasia elected, and he named his choice. With Mother Euphrasia's re-election another period of displeasure erupted, for the bishop's request that the election be nullified was denied by Rome.

The leadership exercised by Mary Euphrasia was manifested in the charity, peace, and order of the motherhouse and the relations with the foundations. Jean Marie Cardinal Mastai, Archbishop of Imola and later Pope Pius IX, who welcomed the sisters into his own home in 1845 until the opening of their convent, said to them, "I have seen proof that there is between the mother and daughters the most perfect accord. As long as this union lasts, your congregation will endure: it will accomplish great conquests in the world, because union gives strength."<sup>17</sup> These predominant characteristics were cited by many religious, clerical, and lay witnesses during the process of canonization.

Humility, charity, zeal, confidence in God, and fidelity to the Church were for Mary Euphrasia indispensable to Christian life. Prayer, she asserted, is essential to the follower of Jesus. Without prayer it is impossible to know and accomplish the will of God. "Be consoled; be at peace. Rest assured, that providence will complete this great work."<sup>18</sup>

Above all, she exhorted the sisters to charity among themselves, with those they served and everyone involved in the "holy work." " 'The just live by love.' Happy those who live by love! It is true they do not live without sorrow, but love delights to suffer, and nothing is hard to one who loves. We should all live by love. Fear should never trouble nor constrain

16. Saudreau, *Graces et Fidelite*, 104-6; Morrison, "Secret of Sanctity," 94-97.

17. Portals, 1:378.

18. Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Stanislaus Bedouet, May 20, 1836 (MS).

your hearts. This is not the spirit of the Good Shepherd. . . . We would guide you only by love."<sup>19</sup>

When discord arose in the early days in the house in Grenoble in February 1835, for example, Mother Euphrasia wrote: "Oh, my dear daughters, it is just after Holy Communion when I possess the God of peace in my heart, that I come, although unworthy, to beg you for the love of Jesus Christ to possess that divine charity and that intimate union which is the secret of happiness in our exile. Poor children, you have been tried and shaken. Alas, the devil has come to sow weeds in your field. I beg you to pull out this poison of discord. Then all will be peace. . . Paul and Barnabas at one time had a little dispute but divine charity soon caused them to forget it entirely. Surely this divine charity is still in your hearts and in your letters."<sup>20</sup>

Mary Euphrasia guided the congregation at home through word and example and abroad through prolific correspondence with the houses. Many of her letters are extant. She cited Sacred Scripture continually in her conferences and letters and gave examples from the words and lives of the saints to encourage fidelity and to engender zeal in the hearts of her sisters. The conferences that were recorded by the sisters, her letters, and the accounts given in the process of canonization reveal that, with St. Paul, she recognized that "everything is grace." She carried every foundation in her heart, filled with love and compassion for each of her daughters and for each person they were privileged to serve. She suffered the privations of the houses, keenly feeling the failures and shortcomings of her shepherdesses, excusing, pardoning, forgetting infidelities, strengthening, advising, encouraging new bursts of zeal as God inspired her.

She organized an orderly filing system to aid her in keeping abreast of developments in all of the houses. She recommended that her sisters implant themselves firmly in the culture and customs of the place where they were established. "Beautiful Africa, oh God, how I love it!" "Please send us stories of three or four of your children, then of your culture, and of your two camels."<sup>21</sup>

On the recommendation of the Holy See and following the de-

19. *Conferences*, ch. 5 (1907) 39, 42, (1994) 52, 56.

20. *Saudreau, Graces et Fidelite*, 59; *Morrison, "Secret of Sanctity"*, 60.

21. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Francis Xavier Richard, May 30, 1854, and October 15, 1847, in Spirituality/Historical Commission, Our Heritage*, 2:32, 35.

cree of July 21, 1855, Mary Euphrasia divided the houses of the congregation into provinces and established novitiates in the various countries. She had already resolved her personal concerns about the change in structure in January 1855 through correspondence with Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Propaganda. The confusion in Rome about Mary Euphrasia's cooperation regarding this issue was complicated by Bishop Angebault's failure to respond to several letters from the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops. The matter was settled with the Holy See through Mary Euphrasia's letter of July 2, 1855, to the Cardinal Protector, Cardinal Patrizi, asking him to present her full acceptance and that of her council to the project of division into provinces. On July 3, 1855, she communicated the same sentiments to Bishop Angebault: "Our Holy Father has expressed the wish that the congregation should have provinces; therefore, before God, I desire and request them."<sup>22</sup>

Mary Euphrasia received letters and personal visits from many bishops and state leaders or their representatives requesting foundations around the world; other heads of state and leading citizens visited and supported the foundations. She was not daunted from responding with zeal to every possible request, neither by the deficiencies she recognized in herself, nor by the poor health she suffered, nor by misunderstanding and calumny, nor by mistakes and even disloyalty of a few of her sisters and others on whom she counted.

Witnesses at her canonization process claimed that she seemed to respond more kindly and compassionately the more poorly she was treated. Her virtues were so evenly manifested that many of the sisters with whom she lived could testify under oath that they had never seen her commit a fault or her love and zeal diminish. She lived, they said, what she taught them. And yet she spoke of her own shortcomings, especially her fear in the early days in the face of such awesome responsibilities. Mary Euphrasia said of herself, "I was not possessed of riches, talents, or any exterior attractions; I only always loved the children; and I loved them with my whole soul." Our end, she said, is "not only to sanctify and save ourselves; it is still more to work for the sanctification of others."<sup>23</sup>

The Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep was

22. *Portals*, 1:418-27; *Conferences*, ch. 35 (1907) 221-22, (1994) 267-68.

23. *Conferences*, ch. 4 (1907) 29-30, (1994) 41; ch. 2 (1907) 9, (1994) 18.

her model. In 1858, the writer Charles Jourdain described Mary Euphrasia as "a remarkable woman, great of heart and mind, and greater still in will, uniting lofty and broad ideas with a constancy nothing could weary and which became bolder in the face of obstacles." Later, the cure of St. Etienne-du-Mont said, "Mother Euphrasia has been one of the most remarkable women of our time. She would have been capable of governing an empire; hers was a vast and firm intelligence at the service of a great heart."<sup>24</sup>

Following the way marked out for her, she established 120 houses throughout the world, 110 of them still operating at the time of her death. Mary Euphrasia used all of her persuasive powers to encourage everyone she met to pursue that same path of fidelity, according to the particular light and grace granted each one by God.<sup>25</sup>

At the close of her life, she was deeply touched by the prayers and visits of sisters from throughout France, Belgium, and England. Of the novena begun nine days before her death, she said, "Saint Joseph doesn't do anything except the will of God." She was grateful for these and all the attentions she received, "Oh, our good contemplatives! I can truly say that I am their foundress. How much St. Magdalen helps me. You know that she is my patroness." From her deathbed she was still engaged in making foundations, in sending words of encouragement to her sisters, in expressing her love for the children, in expressing her gratitude and in giving example of Christian faith. "In the midst of acute suffering she repeated, 'O my God, may your will be done! I wish for nothing else except your holy will.'"<sup>26</sup>

On April 20, she said aloud, "Oh! how beautiful heaven is! I see our Lord in the midst of his elect, giving them to drink at the torrent of his delights! Oh! if only I had the strength to pass that torrent, and to go to the mountain! ... I feel the Blessed Mother is here at my side. She is telling me that I only have a lake to cross, but how many cliffs, and then I'll be at port."<sup>27</sup>

On April 24, 1868, the doctor indicated that the foundress would not live through the night. Mary Euphrasia called for several of the superiors. To a sister who had been appointed to the Institute in Algeria,

24. *Portais*, 2:383.

25. *Conferences*, ch. 37 (1907) 231-36, (1994) 278-84.

26. *Necrology*.

27. *Necrology*.

she said, "We name you superior at Oran" and she sent a message to the bishop, "As the last sigh of my heart, I send you a superior for the house of Misserghin." She had the little group of missionaries who were to leave for Aden come, and those who were to leave for India. Finally, realizing that her hour had come, she said, "Adieu, adieu, adieu, my daughters. Adieu to the Institute." There echoed in the hearts of the sisters, "My dear daughters, I leave you as my last will and testament love for the salvation of souls."<sup>28</sup>

With the permission of the Mayor of Angers, Mother Mary Euphrasia was buried on Monday following the feast of the Good Shepherd, within the enclosure of the motherhouse, in the chapel of the Immaculate Conception, just outside the convent of her beloved contemplative sisters.

"The first thing I shall ask of God when I go to heaven will be the introduction of the cause of our good Father Eudes."<sup>29</sup> It was in fact introduced at Rome in 1874. On January 6, 1903, Pope Leo XIII proclaimed the heroicity of the virtues of Venerable John Eudes, "author of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary." On April 25, 1909, Pope Pius X elevated him to the ranks the Blessed, calling him the "father, doctor, and apostle of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary." On the feast of Pentecost, May 31, 1925, John Eudes was canonized a saint.

The members of the General Chapter, meeting in Angers in 1886, were unanimous in requesting the opening of the cause for beatification of Mary Euphrasia, by individually and secretly signing the document. Ninety of the ninety-five sisters present had personally known the foundress. The Ordinary Process was opened in Angers in February 1887. Pope Leo XIII signed the decree of opening the Apostolic Process, in 1897. Pius XI signed the decree on the heroicity of her virtues, which was promulgated in March 1924. On April 30, 1933, Good Shepherd Sunday, Mary Euphrasia was beatified. On Ascension Thursday, May 2, 1940 Pope Pius XII canonized Mary Euphrasia Pelletier; it was his first canonization.<sup>30</sup>

The judges of the cause for Mary Euphrasia's beatification were impressed that Protestant and secular authorities requested foundations

28. *Necrology; Conferences, ch. 62 (1907) 392.*

29. *Bulletin of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Angers, August, 1902; 253.*

30. *Warnig, A Rose Unfolding, 52-66.*

of the Good Shepherd in their countries and that children of all religions and races were served by the congregation. In the Cairo house at that time, for example, there were children of fifteen nationalities and nine different religions.<sup>31</sup> The original charter of the Good Shepherd in Baltimore, founded in 1864, stated that "persons are to be received without distinction of creed, age, or place of birth or residence." The 1875-1876 annals of the same house noted that "the Sisters of the Good Shepherd require liberty, in order to be able to accomplish the great work for which they were established. We receive the poor outcasts from every grade of society, no matter what may be their nation or creed, and all are left perfectly free to choose for themselves the religion they wish to follow."

St. Mary Euphrasia's legacy of zeal opened doors as well as hearts with compassion for all who suffer, with hope for those in sorrow, with love for the poor and the abandoned. She invited the collaboration of everyone who heard the call of the Good Shepherd to follow him with the courage to overcome obstacles, relying not on human forces only but confident that God, who began the work, would see it to completion. Often citing the beauty and magnificence of creation, with St. John Eudes St. Mary Euphrasia recognized the greater value to be found in each human person. Her zeal embraced everyone in the world. She promised to continue in heaven her work on earth.

31. Warnig, *A Rose Unfolding*, 47.



## *Zeal*

It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

Mt 18:14 NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"I feel a great ardor for the salvation of souls, an interior flame, which penetrates and consumes me. It is not a passing moment of exaltation which dissipates and leaves nothing. No, it is a love filled with tenderness, dedication, sacrifice---My soul is filled with delight and consolation at the thought of the good that is being done through our weak efforts sustained by the grace of God. But at the same time, my heart is torn by sorrow at the sight of so many souls who may perish."<sup>1</sup>

### *Her Action*

"Outside the gates of Angers, the community owned a farm called Nazareth, which it was now Mother Euphrasia's plan to convert into an agricultural colony for young female prisoners. She hoped to make it a school of Christian education, the complement of all her other works of charity, where these poor children would learn the meaning of religion and morality, would be taught the duty of self-respect, and might hope

1. St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier quoted by Sr. M. Holy Name of Jesus Duchesne, AP Witness 21, Canonization, 1209-10.

to regain the respect of others. She sent the sisters employed in the gardens, from her own convent, to prepare Nazareth, and used to visit them frequently to encourage them in their work, and told them what to plant and cultivate. In a very short time the place wore a new aspect. . . .

"Having obtained government sanction it was ready to receive 75 young prisoners who arrived late on May 2, 1853, from Rennes. Mary Euphrasia had spent the night at Nazareth, as it was her wish to be present when the arrival took place. . . . Next day she went back to her convent and soon afterwards gave her daughters the following account of what had occurred:

"I would have liked you all to have been at Nazareth to receive them. At first they seemed in low spirits and afraid; but once seated by the crackling fire of vine branches which was blazing away on the kitchen-hearth, our little birds began to chirp. We served them some hot soup, meat, and wine, and that melted their poor hearts; it was a long time since they had enjoyed such a banquet!

"Next morning we had a new surprise ready for them. Their prison uniforms were replaced by the dresses you made for them with such eagerness and love. They gazed from one to another, overcome by the transformation. When they were allowed to run about in the garden, they quite recovered. Aren't we in prison any longer?' one of them asked. 'Children, you are at the Good Shepherd to learn to love the good God and serve him, and to learn how to work, so that later on you may be able to help your families.' Thank you, sister,' replied one of them. Whereupon an older girl immediately corrected her, 'You mustn't call them sisters; here they are mothers,' accompanying the words with an energetic nudge.'"<sup>2</sup>

### *Inspiration*

To the weak, I made myself weak, to win the weak. I accommodated myself to people in all kinds of different situations, so that by all possible means I might bring some to salvation.—1 Cor 9:22 NJB

2. Pasquier, 2:375-77; *Conferences*, ch. 34 (1907) 219, (1994) 264-65.

### *Our Discipleship*

"Oh, my God! What are we doing in this world, why are we here if not to contribute to the salvation of our neighbor?"<sup>3</sup> What is your personal daily awareness of the call to be a presence of God among those with whom you live and work? What invitation is being offered now that will make your life fruitful for the salvation of your neighbor? Ask for the grace to respond with generosity.

Mary Euphrasia counseled: "Look at athletes! What makes them so strong and vigorous in the combat? It is their sobriety, and the continual, severe, hard, indefatigable exercise of their strength. That is how we should act in the spiritual life; not allowing ourselves to be dominated by unworthy affections . . . and listening to the call of grace, which makes itself heard in the depth of the soul."<sup>4</sup> Talk with St. Mary Euphrasia about the level of your zeal. Is there a spiritual exercise to which you are invited that will make you "strong and vigorous in the combat?"

When you reflect upon the zeal of Mary Euphrasia what happens in your heart? Be specific. Using paper and pencil, let your hand, guided by inspiration, express the thoughts and images that come to mind.

Reflect upon a passage in Scripture that speaks to you of the zeal in the heart of Jesus for the salvation of the world. Some suggestions: Mt 18:12-14; Lk 7:36-50 and 15:8-10; Jn 3:16-21, 4:5-42, and 10:1-10. Allow the Word to touch your mind and heart, moving you to pray for the salvation of the world.

Read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 605, 863-65, 871-73. Is there a concrete way in which you can unite yourself to the mission of Jesus today?

3. *Conferences*, ch. 4 (1907) 33, (1994) 45.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 44 (1907) 272, (1994) 325.



O my God, may every beat of my heart be a prayer to obtain mercy and pardon for sinners. May all my sighs be so many appeals to your infinite mercy. May each look have the virtue to gain to your love those souls whom I shall look on. May the food of my life be to work without ceasing for your glory and the salvation of souls.<sup>5</sup>

*5. Adapted from St. Mary Euphrasia, Our Venerable Mother's Own 'Words, 149-50.*

## *The Good Shepherd*

I am the good shepherd;  
I know my own  
and my own know me,  
just as the Father knows me  
and I know the Father;  
and I lay down my life for my sheep.

Jn 10:14-15 NJB



### *St. Mary Euphmsia's Vision*

"Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd is the true model whom we must try to imitate. ... He is the divine original that we must strive to reproduce in our whole conduct. We must endeavor to form ourselves to the spirit of this adorable Master and live his very life, since he has deigned to associate us with his work, to allow us to discharge his office, so to speak. . . . You will effect no good . . . until you become animated with the thoughts, sentiments and affections of the Good Shepherd, of whom you should be the living images. . . .

"Now what did Jesus Christ say of himself? 'I have come to save the lost.' How did he act? ... He pursued sinners with fatherly solicitude. Remember the ineffable goodness with which he received Magdalen. . . . See him on another occasion seated by Jacob's well, waiting for a soul, waiting to save the Samaritan woman. . . . Again, in Jerusalem when they brought to him a guilty woman who had incurred stoning, he said, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.'

"Consider him after his resurrection, always acting the part of the Good Shepherd, pursuing the two sad and discouraged sheep. He joined the two disciples who were filled with consternation and whose faith was

wavering. He walked with them, accommodating his pace to theirs, taking part in their conversation, condescending to their weakness in order to instruct them and enlighten the darkness of their minds.

"Here is the example you should follow, for you are destined to be so many Good Shepherds, and you must imitate the abnegation, the spirit of charity, the zeal of Jesus himself."<sup>1</sup>

### *Her Action*

Mother Mary Euphrasia was called the "mother of charity" by witnesses in the process of canonization. Once, while traveling, she met a young woman who was plunged in the deepest despair, preparing to commit suicide. Mother Euphrasia enveloped her with consoling proofs of her loving concern. Calling herself "the mother of all who are unhappy, of all who suffer," she said, "Come to Angers. We will receive you into the Good Shepherd and you will have to pay nothing." The young woman, consoled and strengthened by her encounter with Mother Euphrasia, gratefully accepted the generous offer.<sup>2</sup>

We find in Mary Euphrasia's letter to the young woman's former companion, a physician from a neighboring city, the same compassion: "This dear lady is brokenhearted, as I have no doubt you yourself are. She has told me everything. I understand how painful it is for both of you. . . . She has a further request, which we support wholeheartedly, that you come through Angers on your return to Paris. I beg you to give her this consolation. You may be sure of our discretion; you will not be known and we can discuss the things we are not able to put into writing. ... As for myself, Monsieur, have no uneasiness; troubles of this kind are not unknown to me. You will not be the first whose sorrows I have alleviated. You are good; you have a good heart. Mme X cannot say enough good about you; allay her unhappiness as much as possible."<sup>3</sup>

1. *Conferences*, ch. 6 (1907) 43-44, (1994) 57-58; Lk 19:10; Jn 8:7.

2. *Portals*, 2:174-75; Achilles Yves Key, *AP Witness 9, Canonization*, 690.

3. *Mary Euphrasia to Monsieur . . . Docteur en Medecine a Niort, February 22, 1851 (MS)*.

*Inspiration*

Early in the morning he [Jesus] came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him: "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."—Jn 8:2-11 NRSV

*Our Discipleship*

Reflect on the above scriptural passage. Using your journal, enter into a dialogue with the scribes and Pharisees who condemned the woman; speak with the woman after Jesus intervened. What lessons do you learn from this Gospel parable for your own life?

"An Irish girl in the Angers house who could not speak French was suffering from some great spiritual uneasiness. 'I have a great sin on my conscience' she said, weeping while she spoke, 'and I want to confess it.' There was at that time no priest in Angers who could hear English confessions. Mother Euphrasia heard that there was a priest in Saumur, about 45 miles from Angers, who could. She sent a carriage for him; he came, heard the confession, and went away leaving the girl restored to peace of mind."<sup>4</sup> In what ways have you owned your responsibility to share the mission of the Good Shepherd? How are you being called to exemplify the Good Shepherd? Is there a family member, a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker, an enemy who is alienated from God?

4. *Pasquier*, 2:435-36.

What action might you take to be a shepherd to that person?

On the feast of the Good Shepherd in 1840, Mary Euphrasia gave a characteristic commentary on the parable in John 10:11-16: "The Good Shepherd gives his life for his sheep. ... We must all be true shepherds. . . . What does a shepherd do? He does not give his sheep bad grass. He knows what is bad. He leads the little lambs away from the bitter plants. He never eats his bread without giving them a mouthful, and if he has milk he offers them his bowl."<sup>5</sup> Recall an incident in the past week in which you cared for someone unhappy or suffering. What did you learn about compassion in this situation? Ask Jesus to give you the grace to respond to others with his compassion.

Select a scriptural passage that will nourish your desire to imitate the Good Shepherd, who came "to seek out and save what was lost." Some suggestions: Ps 23; Isa 40:1-11; Ezek 34:1-31; Lk 5:27-32, 15:1-7, and 23:39-43; Jn 10:11-18; 2 Cor 11:29; Jas 5:19-20.

Read selections from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 904-5, 908-9, 913, 2447. Turn to the Spirit of Christ to inspire you "to let Christ incorporate you into his enterprise of mercy and liberation . . . spurring you to daring and noble deeds of mercy."<sup>6</sup>



Jesus, Compassionate Shepherd,  
 teach me to strengthen what is weak,  
 bind up what was driven away,  
 preserve what is well and strong,  
 that I may be a burning and shining light,  
 burning interiorly and shining exteriorly,  
 a light to draw others to your mercy and salvation.  
 Amen.<sup>7</sup>

5. Pelletier, *Letters and Miscellaneous Papers*; cf. *Conferences*, ch. 6 (1907) 46-47, (1994) 62.

6. George W. Constable, "On the Unique Goodness of the Holy Spirit," pt. 4, 21.

7. Adapted from St. John Eudes; Ezek 34:15-16.



## *The Will of God*

My food  
is to do the will of the one who sent me,  
and to complete his work.

Jn4:34NJB



### *St. Mary Euphrasia's Vision*

"The sacrifice of Abraham is the most perfect model of the life of faith. If Isaac had not allowed himself to be bound willingly, had he resisted, if Abraham had not been so generous, what occurred would never have happened, and neither Abraham nor Isaac would have merited as they did. Abraham asked no questions, he raised no difficulty to God's command, he did not propose for the accomplishment of his sacrifice any other than the place which the Lord had assigned for it. He simply obeyed. You should do as much; you ought to submit to God's will in all things, obeying generously; and treasures of happiness will redound to your souls."<sup>1</sup>

Mary Euphrasia discerned each initiative carefully, then she "pressed the will of God to her heart." Of herself she said, "If I yielded to human prudence, I would send ten letters this very evening to stop ten projects. But no, they will be done in spite of me." When Mother M. Augustine of Jesus Fernandez Concha, provincial of Chile, manifested difficulties she foresaw in bearing future responsibilities, Mary Euphrasia

1. *Conferences*, ch. 54 (1907) 331-32, (1994) 392.

replied, "It is so truly the will of God that I would traverse the whole world to accomplish it if it were necessary."<sup>2</sup>

In her correspondence she continually reflected her complete adherence to the will of God. "Let us seek only God, his adorable will, and the salvation of souls." "It is indeed for the work's sake that God does such marvels: we are only an echo repeating the sounds of his everlasting will." "Accept the will of God. God has his designs! I can assure you that I hold on to these works solely in the measure that God inspires. Be patient and await God's moment! Pray. With us, ask God to give us his Holy Spirit. Above all, peace, charity, holy union and the salvation of souls! These are our objectives. We must pray before making a decision." "I submit to the divine will."<sup>3</sup>

"I cannot repeat often enough that good works take their rise, gain strength, and are perfected only at the foot of the cross. Our Lord wills that we follow him to Calvary, in order to allow us to participate in the work of the redemption of souls which he effected by the shedding of his precious blood."<sup>4</sup>

"Be obedient to the inspirations of divine grace, and rest assured you will reach the port of a happy eternity. St. Francis de Sales says that we shall certainly die to self if we accomplish God's will in everything. Therefore, it is not necessary, as perhaps you imagine, to undertake great austerities."<sup>5</sup>

### *Her Action*

Once sure of her goal, "nothing could discourage Mary Euphrasia. She had the approval of her bishop; from Rome some church leaders wrote supporting her. The Pope had received the request for the establishment of the generalate. 'If our Holy Father allows us to continue this great work ... we must rise above all contradictions.'<sup>6</sup>

2. Fernandez Concha, *Mirror of Virtues*, 31.

3. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Louis Royne, September 6, 1834; to Sr. M. John of the Cross David, November 18, 1835, and April 28, 1836; and to Sr. M. Stanislaus Bedouet, January 21, 1837 (MS)*.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 56 (1907) 351-52, (1994) 413-14.

5. *Conferences*, ch. 25 (1907) 189, (1994) 227.

6. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Sophie Lavoye, October 23, 1834, in Pecard, 2:82, and Pasquier, 1:212.*

When speaking of Mary Euphrasia's deep union with God the sisters always cited the example of her absolute dependence on the will of God in the inspiration to found the generalate. She herself relates: "I felt strongly impelled to do all in my power to obtain permission for the election of a superior general in spite of myself. One day during vespers, at the Magnificat, something seemed to urge me more strongly than ever to do so. When I left the chapel, I took refuge in my room and there, with trembling hand, I began to write to the Cardinal Vicar at Rome, commencing with these words: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your word.' I was so frightened at the step I had taken, that, not knowing what terms to use to express my submission, I ended with these words: 'Your Eminence, I prostrate myself on the ground; I am at your feet, and I desire only the greater glory of God. If the Sovereign Pontiff and your Eminence see obstacles in the way of the establishment of the generalate, I submit most humbly to your decision.'

"Many contradictions followed this step, and some time later, after having written this letter, a very extraordinary thing happened to me. One night, hardly had I fallen asleep when I seemed to behold a prelate who was unknown to me; he was dressed as a cardinal; his countenance expressed gentleness and sanctity; his whole appearance inspired respect and veneration. He said to me, 'Fear nothing, my daughter, your work will be approved; I am chosen by God to be its protector.' After these words he disappeared, leaving me full of confidence and consolation. What was my surprise some years later, on my first journey to Rome, to recognize in Cardinal Odescalchi the venerated protector who had appeared to me!"<sup>7</sup>

This letter, setting out the facts simply, with no complaint against her adversaries, revealed Mother Euphrasia's great abandonment to the will of God and weighed favorably among the documents considered regarding the generalate. Despite thirteen opposing letters, the vote approving the generalate was unanimous. Father Kohlmann, Jesuit consultor to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, asked for a change, substituting "universe" for "France." Through this gesture the congregation became universal.<sup>8</sup>

7. *Fernandez Concha, Minor of Virtues, 79-81; Conferences, ch. 3 (1907) 19-20, (1994) 30.*

8. *Portals, 1:233-35; Conferences, ch. 3 (1907) 19-21, (1994) 29-31.*

While awaiting the answer from Rome, Mother Euphrasia wrote, "Ah, my dear daughter, if I had sought my own elevation in the holy cause of the generalate, I should have been disappointed; but, thanks be to God, my soul is in peace. The glory of God, the salvation of souls—these are my life and only work."<sup>9</sup>

### *Inspiration*

Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there to pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And he began to feel sadness and anguish.

Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and stay awake with me." And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. "My Father," he said, "if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it."—Mt 26:36-39 NJB

### *Our Discipleship*

St. Mary Euphrasia counseled, "In all things be led by the Spirit of God, that everything may conduce to his glory and that of the holy work."<sup>9</sup>

Trace the influence of God's Spirit upon your personal decision-making history. What does it reveal to you about the place of God's will in your life? Bring to prayer an important decision with which you are wrestling: seek to know God's will.

Throughout her life, Mary Euphrasia constantly repeated Mary's fiat: "Let it be done to me according to your word." Read the story of the Annunciation, Luke 1:26-38. Visualize the unfolding events. How does Mary's understanding of God's will differ from yours? Read the passage again slowly. Pause as a word or phrase impresses you, letting Mary's loving fiat call forth from you a similar response to God's will.

"There are graces prepared for our state, for the places and for the employments to which we are called. These graces will never be wanting to us if we do what God asks of us."<sup>11</sup> Recall your personal

9. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Sophie Lavoye, October 17, 1834 in Pasquier, 1:197.*

10. *Mary Euphrasia to Sisters in Rheims, July 2, 1837, in Pasquier, 1:353.*

11. *Conferences, ch. 49 (1907) 309.*

response to God's call to a place, a work, the sharing of your gifts with others. How do you respond to God's grace?

Select other passages of Scripture through which you might, by a generous heart and willing spirit,<sup>12</sup> press the will of God to your heart: Ps 40:7-9; Mt 7:21 and 26:39; Jn 4:34 and 6:38-40; Rom 12:2; Eph 1:3-12 and 5:15-20; Phil 2:12-13; IThess 4:3-8 and 5:16-22; Heb 13:20-21; Jas 4:15; 1 Pet 3:17; 1 Jn 5:14; Rev 4:11.

Continue to reflect and pray for understanding of the will of God, using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 148, 2617, 2822-27, and references cited in the texts.



Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

12. St. John Eudes, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, 109, "Corde magno et animo volenti"; 2 Mace 1:3.

## *The Church*

You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.

Mt 16:18NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia's Vision*

"The Church is a ship which preserves the treasure of our faith and hope. This vessel, which nothing can destroy, has been voyaging for more than eighteen centuries, carrying its riches to all the nations of the world. Jesus Christ himself is the pilot; he holds the rudder and steers her through every danger. It seems sometimes that our Lord is sleeping: the storm rages, hell rises up against the Church, persecutions threaten to annihilate her. But a cry of distress is heard, our loving Savior rises, with a word calms the storm, and God's holy ark goes on her assured way across the centuries.

"The Church is a spouse whose heart is rent by her own children; always persecuted yet she is always beautiful. Has there ever been a mother who has given more children to heaven than the Church? Opening her arms to us on the day of our baptism, she is extremely concerned for our holiness.

"I feel I could never say enough about our mother the Church, of the love we owe her, and of the obligation we all have to pray fervently for her. . . . Let us then remain always so closely united to her, that she may be able under all circumstances to recognize us as a mother recognizes her obedient and devoted children.

"Listen to the following quotation: 'Great works are never achieved without difficulties. God, who has confided to his Church the sublime mission of saving souls, has willed that her earthly existence should be marked by great struggles and formidable trials. We must not be unreasonably alarmed by the attacks which she experiences on all sides. She has passed through terrible crises, which she has overcome, and she will always be invincible.'"<sup>1</sup>

"I have," Mary Euphrasia said, "such entire confidence in the Church that when she speaks, I believe her as firmly as if our Lord Jesus Christ himself were speaking."<sup>2</sup>

### *Her Action*

Mother Euphrasia's childhood nurse visited her at the Good Shepherd in Angers in later years, and said to the sisters, "If you only knew how prayerful little Rose was! Evenings before going to bed, I could not get her to finish her prayers. 'Wait just a little, dear Moïse,' she would say, 'I haven't yet said my five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys for the Church.'" And Mother Euphrasia added, "My dear Moïse, I don't think that I have missed saying the five Our Fathers and Hail Marys since then; for all my life I have loved the Church very much."<sup>3</sup>

"Mary Euphrasia delighted in religious festivals and was not content with the more ordinary kind, for she believed that the majesty of the Church's liturgical ceremonies was a more efficacious method of reaching simple souls than learned sermons. She thought that the beauty of divine worship, which works upon the soul through the imagination, attracts it to God." "According to her director, 'She entered into every festival of the Church with intense faith and joy. She gladly accepted every new devotion which added lustre to our Blessed Lady's glory, and which was recommended by ecclesiastical authority to the piety of the faithful.'"<sup>4</sup>

"We must," she said, "accustom ourselves to enter into the spirit of the Church at all times, never neglecting to unite ourselves with her,

1. *Conferences*, ch. 1 (1907) 1-2, (1994) 8-9.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 2 (1907) 17, (1994) 27.

3. *Portais*, 1:44.

4. *Pasquier*, 2:270-71, 284.

above all on great feasts."<sup>5</sup> There are many examples of this focus in her conferences:

"With what wonder this feast of the Annunciation fills our hearts as we ponder the infinite self-abasement of the Lord who comes down from heaven to take flesh in his mother's womb!"<sup>6</sup>

"Advent is a time of recollection, of salvation; it is a season of grace of which we must profit. From December 17 the anthems of the Office begin with, 'O,' to express adoration and love. These were the sentiments in which our Blessed Lady passed the days preceding the birth of our Lord. She was in continual contemplation. Jesus is born again in our hearts; let us adore him as Mary did. I always look forward to this holy season and see it pass with regret." "These days have brought to mind the City of God: the progression of hymns and feasts, Midnight Mass, the crib, lights, New Year's Day, the Epiphany—we have been solaced by our dearest memories."<sup>7</sup>

"We have reached the first day of Lent. How are we going to spend this holy time? Certainly in union with the holy will of God. . . . Oh! how happy those who, preparing for Easter, make their prayers and each Communion well! Their souls will truly eat and drink; they will really rest in God. Full of fresh energy, they will then travel on courageously towards the place that will be shown them." "Before the feast of Pentecost we unite with the holy apostles and disciples in the Cenacle, praying and preparing ourselves like them to receive the Holy Spirit."<sup>8</sup>

This love for the Church was imprinted in the hearts of her sisters. One of the contemplative sisters who was a witness in St. Mary Euphrasia's canonization testified: "I myself and our sisters always found that our venerable Mother had all the virtues and practiced them perfectly. Her faith was evident in the enthusiasm and sort of ecstasy with which she spoke of the happiness of being born in the Catholic Church, of being born of very Christian parents, of the grace of her religious vocation and of her life consecrated to an apostolate for souls. Her attachment to the revealed truths of our faith was very evident.

5. *Conferences*, ch. 9 (1907) 76; (1994) 97.

6. *Conferences*, ch. 26 (1907) 191, (1994) 229.

7. *Conferences*, ch. 22 (1907) 167, (1994) 202; ch. 23 (1907) 170, (1994) 205.

8. *Conferences*, ch. 25 (1907) 182, 185, (1994) 218, 222; ch. 14 (1907) 114.



This was her whole life. Her love for the Church, for the Sovereign Pontiff, her submission to their teachings and decisions was extraordinary. I remember that in order to please her, in our feast day greetings, we always mentioned 'Rome,' her attachment to the Holy Father, and the great help she received from him."<sup>9</sup>

### *Inspiration*

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." . . . From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.— Mt 16:13-21 NRSV

### *Our Discipleship*

St. Mary Euphrasia said, "Let us always pray for the Church, holy and inviolable as she is, the Church you love so much! Let us sacrifice ourselves for her that her conquests may be multiplied, and that the splendor of her beauty may become more and more manifest."<sup>10</sup> St. Mary Euphrasia had the ability to see the Church "with the eyes of faith." In what ways do I imitate her love for the Church?

The saints are acutely aware of the unity between Christ and his Church. St. Joan of Arc told her judges: "About Jesus Christ and the Church, I simply know they're just one thing, and we shouldn't complicate

9. Sr. Magdalen St. Rose Pradhomme, *AP Witness 24*, 455-56, in Warnig and Dubois, *Our Testimonies*, 14-15.

10. *Conferences*, ch. 1 (1907) 4-5, (1994) 12-13.

the matter."<sup>11</sup> How deep is my understanding of the mystery of the unity of Christ and his Church? Am I urged to express my love for the Church by seeking to interest others in joining her?

"Mary Euphrasia meditated on the Church's ritual with a profound sense of its meaning, and with great devotion towards our mother the Church, who follows her children everywhere to do them service, to draw down upon them, and the least of their works, the grace of God."<sup>12</sup> With St. Mary Euphrasia reflect upon your favorite feasts and seasons of the Church year. Consider the spiritual nourishment they bring to you and to all that you do. Ask her to obtain for you the grace of a deeper faith in the action of the Lord through the celebration of his mysteries.

To deepen your love for the Church, from time to time pray with a text from Sacred Scripture, such as: Ezek 34:11-16; Mt 9:36-37, 18:1-35, and 28:16-20; Lk 24:44-49; Jn 10:1-18, 15:1-27, 19:34, and 21:15-17; Acts 2, 3, and 4; Eph 1; 2 Pet 1; Rev 21.

In a spirit of faith, reflect on 770-76 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.



This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father: In the abundance of his glory may he, through his Spirit, enable us to grow firm in power with regard to our inner selves, so that Christ may live in our hearts through faith, and, then, planted in love and built on love, with all God's holy people we will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; so that, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond knowledge, we may be filled with the utter fullness of God. Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen.

Eph 3:14-21 NJB (adapted)

11. *Acts of the Trial of Joan of Arc, cited in CCC, §795.*

12. *Pasquier, 2:477.*

## *The Eucharist*

Take, eat; this is my body. . . . Drink ... all of you,  
for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured  
out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mt 26:26-27 NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"The sacrifices of the Old Law were already a foreshadowing of the Eucharist. Since the revelation of the Law of Grace, its memorial is daily renewed in the divine sacrifice of the Mass, and it will be renewed until the end of time. St. John Chrysostom said: 'All that you find most worthy of veneration, most holy and most solemn in the celebration of any feast, is contained in the Holy Eucharist, the divine Sacrifice.'"<sup>1</sup>

"It is in this holy Sacrament that we truly find God and really enjoy his divine presence. St. John Chrysostom wrote: 'Some people say, "I would like to have had the grace of seeing our Lord in his body, like those who had the happiness of talking with him when he was on earth. How ravishing to see his face, his bearing, his garments, even the sandals on his feet. . . ." And I tell you it is this very same God who allows us not only to see him, but to touch him and to receive him within us.' God could do no more for us, and we could want nothing more.

1. *Conferences*, ch. 9 (1907) 75, (1994) 95-96.

"All the same, do we know how to profit by so many graces? Let us examine ourselves on this. When our Lord was on earth, it sufficed to touch his garments to be healed of any infirmity. And we, for many years, have had the most intimate relationship with him; we touch not only his garment but frequently press him to our hearts. He is united so closely to us that, according to his own testimony, we are one with him; and yet we are not cured of our spiritual ills. We receive within us Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the world, the God of strength and power, yet we often remain in spiritual darkness, and we are as weak as ever. We receive within us this God whose heart is a furnace of love and our hearts are still as cold as ice.

"What causes this strange state of affairs? I will tell you. It is caused by our hidden attachment to our faults, because we cherish, almost unconsciously, certain weaknesses, certain imperfections. That is why our prayers and Communions are not fervent and why we are so miserable and imperfect. Get rid of everything in your soul which could be displeasing to the eyes of your beloved and you will experience grace flowing abundantly upon you. You will see more clearly your inmost self; special strength will be granted you to resist your faults and overcome yourself; and little by little you will be completely transformed.

"Above all, if you want to draw a treasury of grace from your intimate relationship with our Lord, go to Holy Communion with great confidence, joined to a deep sense of your misery and needs, conscious that you lack everything. Draw near to our Lord thoroughly convinced of your nothingness, your weakness, your destitution, and you will have everything to hope for and to expect from his goodness and mercy. Never forget that Jesus Christ is not less powerful or less generous in the Blessed Sacrament than he was during his mortal life, when he lived on earth, conversing with people."<sup>2</sup>

### *Her Action*

St. Mary Euphrasia's lifelong devotion to the Eucharist was evident at the time of her first Communion. "She more than once told the sisters that the day she received her divine Lord for the first time, the presence of God

filled her with ecstatic joy, and from that time she knew she was called to religious life."<sup>3</sup>

"A priest, who was for a long time her director, testified: 'If she showed her lively faith in her manner of prayer and of hearing holy Mass, she seemed ravished with ecstasy when she went to Holy Communion. And still more when making her thanksgiving; she seemed then to be utterly lost in God. At such times, in her wondrous self-surrender to Jesus Christ she received the clearest lights as to how she was to act in affairs of importance; she found answers to her difficulties, explanations of everything that she had not understood. I have often heard her say with the greatest simplicity, "I will ask our Lord about it while I am making my thanksgiving." When she said this, I always knew that her doubts would vanish, and God would enlighten her.'

"The sisters testified that Mary Euphrasia very rarely, either through illness or fatigue, lost an opportunity of receiving Holy Communion. Sometimes, when hardly able to move, she might be seen almost dragging herself from her room to go to Holy Communion. Those were the moments she talked with God and fortified her soul, moments in which, while conversing with our Lord, she made many of her most important decisions with regard to foundations. Mother Euphrasia often said to the sisters: 'God inspired me to do so in Holy Communion.'"<sup>4</sup>

Mother Euphrasia gave evidence of the value she placed on the Eucharist in recalling years later the loss of a single Communion in the early days of the foundation of Angers: "Forgotten by everybody, we languished in extreme poverty, without furniture, without blankets, without clothing, sometimes without food, and what food we had was tasteless. We stayed in that condition about a year. No Mass except on Sundays and Thursdays and always so late that we could rarely go to Communion. All my life I shall remember that on the beautiful feast of Corpus Christi that year we were deprived of Holy Communion."<sup>5</sup>

When on her deathbed she received Holy Communion the sisters who remained near her heard her speak impassioned words of love for

3. *Pasquier*, 1:13.

4. *Pasquier*, 2:442-44.

5. *Conferences*, ch. 64 (1907) 399, (1994) 470-71.

her Eucharistic Lord: 'O Jesus, you are my life, my beloved, my all. I offer you my life. I give you my heart. I wish what you wish, nothing but your holy will. Forgive me my sins. I am deeply sorry for having offended you.'

„6

### *Inspiration*

I am the bread of life.  
No one who comes to me will ever hunger;  
no one who believes in me will ever thirst.  
But, as I have told you,  
you can see me and still you do not believe.  
Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me;  
I will certainly not reject  
anyone who comes to me,  
because I have come from heaven,  
not to do my own will,  
but to do the will of him who sent me.  
Now the will of him who sent me  
is that I should lose nothing  
of all that he has given to me,  
but that I should raise it up on the last day.  
It is my Father's will  
that whoever sees the Son and believes in him  
should have eternal life,  
and that I should raise that person up on the last day. . . .  
I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.  
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;  
and the bread that I shall give  
is my flesh, for the life of the world. . . .  
For my flesh is real food  
and my blood is real drink.  
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
lives in me  
and I live in that person.  
As the living Father sent me  
and I draw life from the Father,

6. *Portals, 2:405.*

so whoever eats me will also draw life from me.  
This is the bread which has come down from heaven;  
it is not like the bread our ancestors ate:  
they are dead,  
but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.  
-Jn 6:35-40, 51, 55-58 NJB

### *Our Discipleship*

Slowly read again the above passage of Scripture. Let the words touch you personally, responding as the Spirit enlightens you. Ask for a deep faith in the mystery of Jesus, the Living Bread.

St. Mary Euphrasia said, "This divine Sacrament is the joy, the glory, the support of every faithful soul. . . . What would become of us if we did not have the immense happiness of possessing this treasure of Holy Communion?"<sup>7</sup> Is the Eucharist the "treasure, support, and source of joy" in your life? How can you participate more fully in Mass and Holy Communion? Do you seek enlightenment and inspiration in the moments of intimacy with Jesus after Holy Communion? Do you visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament especially when you feel heavily burdened?

The Eucharist was the source of Mary Euphrasia's zeal for the salvation of souls. How does your faith in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist enliven your zeal? What steps must you take to nurture your zeal that it may "embrace the whole world?"

Reflect on scriptural passages to increase your faith in the presence and action of Jesus in the Eucharist. Some suggestions: Mt 26:26-28; Lk 22:14-20; Jn 6 and 15; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

Reflect on passages in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1324, 1330-32, 1341-44, 1378-82, 1391-1401.

7. *Conferences*, ch. 8 (1907) 67, (1994) 86.



*Anima Christi*

Soul of Christ, sanctify me;  
Body of Christ, save me;  
Blood of Christ inebriate me;  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me;  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me;  
O good Jesus, hear me;  
Within your wounds hide me;  
Let me never be separated from you;  
From the evil one protect me;  
At the hour of my death, call me;  
And bid me come to you: That with your Saints,  
I may praise you forever and ever.  
Amen.



## Mary

Jesus. . . said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

Jn 19:26-27 NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"There is no doubt that we cannot have too great a devotion to the Blessed Virgin, or love her too much. Her help will never fail us and our Lord is infinitely pleased to receive the humble prayers we present to him through the hands of this good Mother. St. Bernard assures us that a true servant of Mary can never perish. You who are so well instructed need not be told that the homage paid to Mary should not surpass, or even equal, that which is due to her divine Son, who is king of heaven and earth. But devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ and devotion to Mary are intimately united. The more we love Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the more we love the Blessed Virgin; and the more we love the Blessed Virgin, the more we love the Blessed Sacrament."<sup>1</sup>

"Wherever heresy has arisen it has first attacked the worship of the Blessed Sacrament and devotion to our Blessed Lady, wishing to begin its work of destruction by closing these two sources of divine grace. And what efforts have been made by the powers of darkness to prevent the private and public worship devout souls desire to render to the

1. *Conferences, ch. 12 (1907) 92, (1994) 116-17.*

Sacred Heart of Jesus! What obstacles, what difficulties! But all this could not prevent the devotion from spreading throughout the world. It is as if the completion, the perfection of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, or rather the two mysteries are so linked together that they cannot be separated; for whoever loves and honors Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of his love cannot fail also to love and honor his Heart, the seat of the great love shown us in the Blessed Sacrament.

"I will sum up as follows what I have been saying: devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, devotion to the Blessed Virgin—these are three inseparable devotions we should lovingly cultivate and which will ensure the perfection of the good works we have undertaken as well as our eternal happiness."<sup>2</sup>

### *Her Action*

"Mother Mary Euphrasia had an extraordinary devotion to Mary. She constantly meditated upon and often spoke of her virtues. She loved to expatiate upon the part assigned to her as cooperator in our redemption, as the Mother of Christians, the Comforter of the afflicted, the Refuge of sinners. In her instructions, she reflected on the great truth: the Body and Blood of our Lord in the Sacrament of the altar are the Body and Blood formed in the womb of Mary; we are indebted to her in this way for the Eucharist, for our redemption, for the human nature of our Lord."<sup>3</sup>

"When the trouble regarding the establishment of the generalate was pressing hardest, there was also a lack of food in the convent. Instead of appealing to human charity, Mary Euphrasia appealed to Mary: 'I am going to ask Our Lady what I ought to do,' she wrote to one of her daughters. 'No one else can understand and comfort me. I love her so that I would die for her! O my dearest Lord, what must I do? Silence, prayer, suffering, waiting—these are the lessons Our Lady is always teaching me. Oh, pray for me, my dearest children, that I may be faithful to them.'"<sup>4</sup>

Looking to Mary as the model of virtue and relying on her inter-

2. *Conferences*, ch. 12 (1907) 98-99, (1994) 124-25.

3. *Pasquier*, 2:277-78.

4. *Pasquier*, 2:282.

cession with God sustained St. Mary Euphrasia all through her life. She began the letter to Cardinal Odescalchi, in which she set out her considerations for the erection of the generalate, with the words of Mary, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." "The long series of Mary's sorrows was also the frequent subject of Mary Euphrasia's meditations, the source whence she drew strength to utter no complaint."<sup>5</sup>

"Like all of the natives of La Vendee, Mary Euphrasia was brought up in devotion to the great servant of Mary, Father Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, who had evangelized western France with apostolic zeal in the 17th century." On April 24, 1860, when visiting her new foundation in Cholet, Mary Euphrasia went on pilgrimage to the tomb of Louis de Montfort in St. Laurent-sur-Sevre.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly before her death, when taken in a wheelchair to the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception on her last feast day, March 13, 1868, she said as she arose, "I must pay my visit to Our Lady on foot." And on her deathbed she was heard talking to herself: "Oh, how lovely heaven is! I see our Lord in the midst of his elect! I feel Our Lady there, too, near me. If I can reach the place she has shown me, I shall find the Lord of Peace."<sup>7</sup>

### *Inspiration*

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the

5. *Pasquier*, 2:38.

6. *Pasquier*, 2:531-32.

7. *Pasquier*, 2:640.

servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have drunk freely. But you have kept the good wine until now."-Jn 2:1-10 NRSV/RSV

### *Our Discipleship*

Reflect upon the Gospel account of the wedding feast of Cana. Select a particularly meaningful line from this passage. Pray the line over and over, making it a mantra. Let its message touch your heart and mind. Then meditate on these questions: What lessons can you learn from this Gospel passage? How do you think this Gospel event might have encouraged St. Mary Euphrasia? Are there any situations in your life in which you might ask Mary to intervene?

Mary Euphrasia considered herself a servant of Mary.<sup>8</sup> As you reflect upon Mary Euphrasia's relationship with Mary, where do these reflections lead you? Reflect on the image of Mary as your mother. In what ways has she been your mother, friend, guide, and model? Have you considered making a consecration of your life to Jesus through Mary?

What do you think God desires to accomplish in you? Are you prepared to say your "fiat" daily to let God lead you? Review your life in light of the Gospel account of the Angel Gabriel asking Mary to become the Mother of God: Lk 1:26-38.

Make a study of Mary from the Sacred Scriptures. Use a commentary to nuance the scriptural texts. What characteristics of Mary most attract you? How would you like to grow in likeness to Mary? Wis 6:12-22, 7:22-30, and 8:1-8; Lk 1, 2, and 11:27-28; Mk 3:31-35; Jn 2:1-12 and 19:25-27; Rev 12:1-17.

Consider Mary's role on behalf of the members of Christ through study of texts in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 487, 494, 964, 971, 2673-79.

8. Pasquier, 2:620.



*Prayer to Jesus Living in Mary*

O Jesus, alive in Mary,  
Come dwell in us and reign,  
Pour out your life in us,  
No more to live but for you.

Shape there your noble virtues,  
Your Spirit and his holiness,  
Your maxims without flaw,  
The passion of your charity.

Make us sharers in your mysteries,  
That we might imitate you here below;  
Send us the keenness of your light,  
To guide our every step.

To the glory of your Father,  
In the power of your Name,  
Reign in us, through your Mother  
Over nature and demon!<sup>9</sup>  
Amen.

9. Hymn 111, composed by St. Louis Marie de Montfort, trans. Rev. Charles Underbill Quinn, cited in Gaffney, *Jesus Living in Mary* (Bayshore, N.Y.: Montfort Publications, 1995), ii.

## *The Saints*

Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Mt25:34NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"In every century there have been saints. Our first parents were saints. After their sin they spent long years on earth doing penance for the fault they had committed, laboring in the sweat of their brow, serving God in sorrow and tears, until they had satisfied divine justice. They were admitted into a place of rest to await the promised Savior, who would open heaven's gate to them. Yes, they were saints. , The early patriarchs were also saints keeping constantly faithful to God's law. The prophets were saints. In the early Church there were so many saints that their number cannot be counted. In our own time also there are saints, and every day the heavenly city counts new citizens. 'I saw' says St. John, 'a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.' There are saints in every walk of life, that is certain."<sup>1</sup>

"You know that the Church consists of three branches which together form one body—the Church in possession of perfect beatitude; the Church suffering purification while awaiting the blessed vision of the Lord; and the Church struggling" in pilgrimage on earth."<sup>2</sup>

1. *Conferences*, ch. 47 (1907) 288, (1994) 343; *Rev* 7:9.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 1 (1907) 3-4, (1994) 11-12; CCC §954.

"Be on your guard and watch continually over yourselves, remembering that, as the Apostle says, we bear always within us the inclination to evil, the unhappy fruit of original sin. And we must wage continual war against this evil inclination by turning to good account those impulses which would otherwise lead to our ruin. This is what the saints did, always striving to overcome their bad inclinations, resisting and conquering them, and diverting them from unworthy things to direct them to God.

"We know that St. Francis de Sales was born with a strong inclination to anger and he became a model of meekness and gentleness. We also know that St. Augustine was unhappily prone to idolize creatures; he conquered himself, turned all his capacity to love towards our Lord, and we have his beautiful exclamation: 'God is my love, my center. I wish to live only for Jesus Christ. This is my passion, this my sole desire!' Again, we know that St. Ignatius of Loyola was proud and vain, but once he understood the nothingness of worldly things, he set out to humble himself and to do all for God's glory, so that he took as his motto: All for the greater glory of God.'"<sup>3</sup>

"Like St. Teresa have we not been more than once moved to astonishment, gratitude, and love in considering the establishment of holy Church, the zeal of the apostles, the courage of the martyrs, and all the virtues of holy people who have succeeded one another from age to age until our own days? And have we not also admired the works and institutions which have been established at various times, according as they were required for God's glory and the salvation of souls, each one coming into existence according to the circumstances and needs of the age which saw them rise? For this reason we have rejoiced enthusiastically, singing with the Church, 'God is wonderful in his works and in his saints.'"<sup>4</sup>

### *Her Action*

In exhorting others to follow the example of the saints in their effort to acquire virtue, Mary Euphrasia was herself following the saint she so greatly admired and whom she so often quoted. "St. Teresa says in one

3. *Conferences*, ch. 38 (1907) 238-39, (1994) 287-88.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 47 (1907) 287-88, (1994) 342-43.

of her works: 'We animate the children of a noble race to become virtuous by speaking to them of the virtues of their ancestors; we relate their enterprises, deeds of valor, traits of goodness, and thus induce the children to become brave and generous like them.'"<sup>5</sup> Examples abound in Mary Euphrasia's conferences.

"Our Lord, being God, in his infinite wisdom chose St. Peter as head of the Church, in order that as Peter had himself sinned by denying his Master in so cowardly a manner, he could have more pity for sinners." "How truly the Apostle St. Paul said: 'I chastise my body and bring it under control, for fear that, having preached to others, I myself might be condemned.'"<sup>6</sup>

"Saints love souls because they cost our Lord's blood. They esteem the soul of a poor ragged child full of faults and the soul of a great sinner because these souls are loved by God and our Lord shed his blood to redeem them. Such were the thoughts which animated St. Francis Xavier when he hastened to the conquest of souls."<sup>7</sup>

"St. Jerome, finding that penances and austerities did not banish worldly thoughts from his mind, undertook the study of Hebrew, a very difficult language, and he thus succeeded in captivating his imagination, ridding it of the recollection of worldly vanities and of creatures."<sup>8</sup>

"Let us be humble as our father St. Augustine was. When, before his conversion, he went to confer with St. Ambrose he was sometimes kept waiting; but far from being offended, he considered himself unworthy to disturb the venerable bishop. It was this humility that caused St. Ambrose to predict that Augustine would become a great saint. These two lights of the Church now shine with a joint splendor. Later St. Augustine received letters from St. Jerome, who, in the heart of the desert, had allowed himself to be prejudiced against him and wrote: 'Because you are a priest, because you have talent, because you are a bishop, you think you are better than your elders; but know that old oxen walk all the stronger as they are older.' St. Augustine replied: 'Would that I had the wings of a dove and I would fly to you who are my Father in the

5. *Conferences*, ch. 65 (1907) 408, (1994) 482.

6. *Conferences*, ch. 43 (1907) 269, (1994) 322-23; ch. 59 (1907) 367, (1994) 431; 1 Cor 9:27.

7. *Conferences*, ch. 4 (1907) 32, (1994) 44.

8. *Conferences*, ch. 40 (1907) 254, (1994) 305.



faith!' Such is the humility of the saints; they vie with one another in humbling themselves.'<sup>9</sup>

"Mother Euphrasia had the habit of referring everything to God. If one of the foreign novices lamented that she could not profit from her instructions, which she saw were received with admiration and delight by her companions, Mary Euphrasia would say, with great simplicity: 'Console yourself, my child; make a novena to our father, St. Joseph; he will obtain understanding for you.' And indeed so it happened."<sup>10</sup>

### *Inspiration*

But God, rich in mercy, for the great love he bore us, brought us to life with Christ even when we were dead in our sins; it is by his grace you are saved. And in union with Christ Jesus he raised us up and enthroned us with him in the heavenly realms, so that he might display in the ages to come how immense are the resources of his grace, and how great his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by his grace you are saved, through trusting him; it is not your own doing. It is God's gift, not a reward for work done. There is nothing for anyone to boast of. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to devote ourselves to the good deeds for which God designed us.—Eph 2:4-10 NEB

### *Our Discipleship*

Ponder the examples of saints taken from St. Mary Euphrasia's instructions. What virtue was she illustrating in each example? How well is this virtue integrated into your life? How can you open yourself to cooperate with God's grace to increase in this virtue? If you were illustrating this virtue to someone else, what example would you use?

The faith of St. Mary Euphrasia inspired her to practice devotion to the saints. How aware are you of your membership in the communion of saints? Are the names that you received in baptism and confirmation significant to you? Read a biography of your patron saint.

Resolve to increase your devotion to the saints in order to seek

9. *Conferences*, ch. 27 (1907) 195-96, (1994) 235-36.

10. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues*, 79.

inspiration, guidance, and help from them on your pilgrimage to heaven.

Reflect on the meaning of holiness in the following verses of Scripture: Isa 6:1-8; Lev 19:2; Ex 19 and 20; Job 1:1-12; Prov 8:13,32-36; Mt 5:1-12 and 25:31-46; Lk 1:68-79; Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:18-19, 3:14-21, and 4:15-16; Heb 12:22-24; Rev 19:1-10.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, study the mystery of holiness in the Church, the Communion of Saints: 773, 823-26, 946-48, 954-59, 972, 2012-16, 2683-84.



God our Father,  
Source of all holiness,  
the work of your hands is manifest in your saints,  
the beauty of your truth is reflected in their faith.  
May we who aspire to have part in their joy  
be filled with the Spirit that blessed their lives,  
so that having shared their faith on earth  
we may also know their peace in your kingdom.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord.<sup>11</sup>  
Amen.

*11. Liturgy of the feast of All Saints.*

# Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray.

Lk11:1 NRSV



## *St. Mary Euphrasia's Vision*

"Prayer is a private audience granted to us by God in which he manifests himself to us to shower his graces upon us. But, believe me, no one can initiate you into this intimate communing of the soul with God, no one can teach you this secret relationship of creature and Creator. For your part, ask God with all earnestness to teach you how to converse with him, and strive to make yourselves worthy of this grace.

"Prepare yourself constantly for prayer by great fidelity to your duties, then in all simplicity present yourself before our divine Savior. Listen to his voice when he speaks to your heart and when he tells you to correct certain faults or suggests certain sacrifices. Ask pardon for your faults, thank him for his innumerable benefits, beg new graces for yourself, for your neighbor, for your sisters in our missions. Exercise your understanding, memory, and will as much as possible; and above all excite in your heart sentiments of love, gratitude, and generosity. In a word, your prayer should be a prayer of zeal, a prayer of abnegation and of sacrifice; a prayer as fervent and persevering when God leaves you in dryness as when he consoles you with his ineffable spiritual consolations.

"Finally, your prayer should be what may be called 'apostolic prayer/ animated not only with a great desire to please God and glorify him by your service, but also by an ardent desire to bring the whole world to love him and to serve him, even at the cost of your life.'" <sup>1</sup>

"You know that you ought to follow in the footsteps of Mary, our incomparable model. Now the heart of the holy Mother was a sanctuary of prayer, a perpetual altar of sacrifice on which the incense of prayer burnt unceasingly. She was continually adoring and thanking God. In like manner prayer should be your habitual occupation. Whatever work you may be doing outwardly, your soul should be always absorbed in adoring, thanking, blessing, and loving God. . . . The virtues which shone in Mary should be found reflected as perfectly as possible in your soul. Your life should be as hers was, one of prayer, a life hidden in God. She will watch over you with the incomparable tenderness of her maternal heart, and she will lead you by the hand beyond the tomb." <sup>2</sup>

### *Her Action*

"The habitual object of Mary Euphrasia's contemplation, adoration, and praise, was the Most Blessed Trinity; her soul was filled with God, and, as it were, buried in the infinite ocean of the divinity. God the Father blessed her memory, God the Son blessed her understanding, God the Holy Spirit blessed her will. She, in return, spread through the whole congregation the strength, light, and love with which she was filled. Nothing was able to withdraw her soul from that intimate union with God. No one could converse with her without feeling the gentle influence of the love of God which was always overflowing in her heart." <sup>3</sup>

Mary Euphrasia habitually confided the spiritual and material concerns and interests of the congregation to God. Her biographers and the witnesses in the canonization process give evidence that she found in prayer the divine inspirations so often the opposite of the viewpoints and calculations of human wisdom. "One of the sisters who spent many years

1. *Conferences*, ch. 13 (1907) 106-7, (1994) 134-35.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 13 (1907) 110, (1994) 139.

3. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues*, 70.

in the motherhouse related, 'Our Mother is always with God; she settles everything with him' adding playfully, 'even what she has to give us for dinner.'"<sup>4</sup>

"At times, somewhat at a loss with regard to certain points, uncertain, not knowing which course of action to take, she would say, 'How dark it is today.' But, after prayer and communion, she would cry out with joy, 'The light has come!' She saw with great clarity what means should be taken to solve the problem or difficulty. She discerned so clearly the will of God that it was impossible to doubt it; and fortified by this divine inspiration, she persevered courageously toward the goal, not allowing herself to be overcome by any obstacle, assured of success often in spite of the most unfavorable predictions." If asked advice on a serious question, "she would say, 'I am not able to give you a reply at this moment; let me consult God in prayer.' On the following day, she would give the clearest, most exact, and the most practical of solutions."<sup>5</sup>

"Do not forget this maxim of the saints which I have several times quoted to you, 'If you neglect prayer, if you do not practice it assiduously, you will not succeed in accomplishing in a whole day what you could have done in an hour, and moreover, the work you accomplish will remain imperfect.'"<sup>6</sup>

In her letters Mary Euphrasia constantly exemplified her reliance on prayer. Upon receiving a letter on Christmas eve, 1834, from the diocesan vicar general saying that the survival of the foundation in Grenoble was in question, she wrote immediately to the bishop, and during the midnight Mass poured out her trouble to the Infant Jesus. She learned afterwards that the same night the bishop had been inspired not to sign the papers that would have sent the sisters back to Angers. Concerning the foundation at Perpignan, Mother Euphrasia wrote from her sickbed, "Let us pray, suffer, and await better days. We are so beset with crosses, afflictions, and death that we can do nothing but submit and adore God's will."<sup>7</sup>

As her first decision on being named superior of the house of Tours in 1825, Mary Euphrasia concretized the value she placed in prayer in founding the Sisters Magdalens, a community of prayer and

4. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues, 79.*

5. *Portais, 2:358, 359.*

6. *Conferences, ch. 23 (1907) 171, (1994) 206-7.*

7. *Pasquier, 1:177, 448.*

penance for the salvation of souls. "You have named me superior; I am unworthy of it, uneasy, but since I am superior, we shall found the Magdalens."<sup>8</sup> In 1831, three months after her arrival as superior of the convent in Angers, she opened a community of Sisters Magdalens.

In the process of the canonization of St. Mary Euphrasia, these contemplative sisters testified, "She prayed, she prayed a lot, and would ask us to pray, then she knew how to suffer and wait. She also knew when to begin an enterprise and to act, or not act. Her confidence in God was her great secret all her life." "It was the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Holy Office, and contemplation that really aroused her zeal." "She had consecrated her whole person to God and she loved the beauty of divine worship. She would come and ask us to pray for a certain grace. She would return later asking us to thank God for the grace received and she would share with us the favors God granted her foundations."<sup>9</sup>

### *Inspiration*

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.-I Thess 5:16-21 NRSV

### *Our Discipleship*

Consider if, in your personal experience, you follow St. Mary Euphrasia's exhortation to pray well: Do you consider prayer an audience with God? Do you ask God for the grace necessary to pray well? Do you prepare for prayer by recalling God's presence frequently while going about your duties? by avoiding the imperfections and sins that distract you from God? by cultivating gratitude for all God's gifts?

St. Mary Euphrasia said: "Seek God earnestly, tell him your troubles with confidence, draw near to him who is burning with charity,

8. *Portals*, 1:117.

9. *Sr. Magdalen St. Rose Prudhomme and Sr. Magdalen St. Mary of Egypt Body, in Warnig and Dubois, Our Testimonies*, 18, 21, 28-29.

hide yourself in his Sacred Heart; there you will taste that ineffable peace reserved for the soul that prays and contemplates in silence the greatness of the hidden God."<sup>10</sup> Have you established a place and a time for prayer so that this spiritual enrichment is a part of your daily life? How well have you formed the habit of seeking God in all that you do? How can you increase your awareness that God is always with you and cares for you?

St. Mary Euphrasia began her conference on prayer: "Have great zeal, great ardor for the salvation of souls, and to obtain this be devoted to prayer and Holy Communion."<sup>11</sup> In this conference on prayer, she spoke five other times of zeal and laboring for the salvation of souls. In her conference on zeal she exhorts us continually to pray for the salvation of souls. How often do you pray for the salvation of souls? Is it for you, like it was for her, as natural as breathing? How often do you pray and make sacrifices for the conversion of a particular soul?

Select passages from Scripture which suggest God's invitation to you for a relationship with him. Some suggestions: Mt 6 and 7; Lk 11:1-13; Jn 14; Eph 1:3-14 and 3:14-21.

Select in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* a portion that you feel would be helpful to you and reflect on it as means of nourishing your life of prayer: 2558-2758, 2759-2865.

10. Fernandez Concha, *Mirror of Virtues*, 78-79.

11. *Conferences*, ch. 13 (1907) 100, (1994) 126.



As a deer longs for flowing streams,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.  
When shall I come and behold  
the face of God? . . .

Ps 42:1-2

O send out your light and your truth;  
let them lead me;  
let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your dwelling.

Ps 43:3 NRSV



## *Divine Providence*

If you then . . . know how to give your children what is good for them, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him!

Mt 7:11 NEB



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"We are daily overwhelmed with God's benefits, as was Jerusalem. He watches over and guards us as the apple of his eye. He covers us with his wings and lavishes on us his most tender caresses. He frequently sends us prophets to recall his holy will to us and make known what he desires we should do for his service. He protects us against our enemies and puts them to flight. He speaks to us unceasingly, in the depth of our souls to encourage us in our labors, to urge us, to entreat us to remain faithful to him. He invites us to his holy table to nourish us with his Flesh and give us his Blood to drink. He gives us manna in abundance as he did to the children of Israel in the desert."<sup>1</sup>

"If you have crosses and troubles, remember what our Lord said to his apostles when he was sending them out to convert the world: 'You will be persecuted, you will suffer much for my Name.' We must accept corrections from the hand of God as though they were caresses. It is his Heart which lovingly allows these things. Let us humble ourselves under his fatherly hand. Great graces will follow these sufferings. After all he has done for us, can we doubt anything he may do now? ...

1. *Conferences*, ch. 45 (1907) 279, (1994) 333-34.

All he asks is perfect fidelity as you make your way along the road traced out by his fatherly providence. Expect help from God alone, for one trusts in vain in human help."<sup>2</sup>

"Be very prudent . . . but do not worry. Jesus Christ says: 'Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns: and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.' 'Seek, therefore, first the kingdom of God and his justice; and all these things will be given you as well.' We must, therefore, place ourselves entirely in the hands of God." "Rest assured that God will not fail to provide for all our necessities."<sup>3</sup>

### *Her Action*

"It can be said in all truth that there is a special providence for Good Shepherd houses. Often they seem without resources, yet they have never lacked what is necessary; one way or another God has always come to their aid." "When sending her daughters to the foundations, she used to say to them: 'Gold and silver I have none, but that which I have, I give you: in the name of the Good Shepherd, arise and walk, confident that you will extend his kingdom.' One of her biographers adds: And her daughters arose, their souls filled with the faith of their mother, their hearts inflamed with her charity; they went forth, and extended the dominion of Jesus Christ over souls' "<sup>4</sup>

An instance of God's providential care was recounted by Mary Euphrasia in one of her conferences. "At Metz the great drought had made vegetables and every kind of food very expensive. The superior had bought provisions for a few days with the little money she had. The poverty of that house was so great that there was no money even to pay the postage on a letter arriving from Angers. In this extremity the superior flung herself at Our Lady's feet, and full of confidence in her power, made up her mind to try to borrow a thousand francs. A letter for this purpose was begun; before it was finished the superior was summoned by a

2. *Conferences*, ch. 20 (1907) 156, (1994) 189; Mt 5:11, 10:22; Ps 60:11.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 52 (1907) 324-25, (1994) 383; Mt 6:26-29, 33; *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues*, 8.

4. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues*, 1-2; see also Acts 3:6.

visitor who had come to give her five hundred francs. The evening of that same day another person brought five hundred more, and the next day M. Chalandon, their superior, visited the community giving them another five hundred, which had been entrusted to him for this purpose. Of course the letter asking for a loan was torn up. A thousand times our Lord has come to our help in our need in similar ways."<sup>5</sup>

St. Mary Euphrasia sent three sisters from Angers to Laurentana to establish the second foundation in Rome. "The sisters took no money with them but were full of zeal and trusted that divine providence which never failed the congregation. The first religious of Namur had begun their work with only forty-four francs in their common purse. The sisters of Laurentana began theirs with equal confidence in God's providence and, poor as they were, could never make up their minds to refuse any penitent who sought admission."<sup>6</sup>

### *Inspiration*

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."-Mt 6:25-34 NRSV

5. *Conferences*, ch. 7 (1907) 59-60, (1994) 76-77.

6. *Pasquier*, 1:497-98.

### *Our Discipleship*

Mary Euphrasia summed up her reflection on the above Gospel passage with the words: "We must therefore place ourselves entirely in the hands of God." Visit a place of natural beauty and reflect on God's provident care for the universe. Adore and thank God for his many gifts to you within your environment.

Mary Euphrasia said: "Let us adore the designs of providence without seeking to fathom them."<sup>7</sup> When you find yourself anxious or concerned, remind yourself of the presence of God. Make an act of abandonment to God. Repeat the name of Jesus; or say 'My Jesus, mercy!' each time you feel the source of anxiety returning.

Listen to Mary Euphrasia as she counsels: "Abandon yourselves completely to divine providence, but at the same time labor as if you did not have this same providence to rely on."<sup>8</sup> Do you take initiative in discerning God's design in your life and in acting upon it? Speak to God of your hopes and fears in responding with "a generous heart and willing spirit" to the divine will as it is revealed to you.

Select passages from Scripture to seek deeper understanding and trust in divine providence. Some suggestions for reflection and prayer: Gen 28:15; Ex 33:1-22; Deut 2:7; Pss 23, 31:19, 55:22, 104, 127, 131, 136, 145, and 147; Prov 2 and 19:21; Isa 51:16; Mt 10:29-31; Jn 14:2; Rom 8:28; Phil 2:13; Heb 4:12-13; 1 Pet 5:7.

Study 302-14 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

7. *Conferences*, ch. 48 (1907) 298, (1994) 355.

8. *Conferences*, ch. 34 (1907) 218.



The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff—  
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.

Ps 23 NRSV

## *The Cross*

If you want to be a follower of mine, renounce yourself  
and take up your cross every day and follow me.

Lk9:23NJB (adapted)



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"Embrace the crosses you will meet, don't fear them; great works take their rise in the midst of all sorts of trials and labors. We should pursue the path of suffering with constancy; we should never say, 'It is enough,' but continue to thank God in trial as in gladness. I cannot better compare it than to the angel mentioned in the Book of Revelation who set his right foot on the sea and his left upon the earth to show that he stood unshaken. Labor then to acquire this love of the cross and humiliations, which in the designs of God merit for us a crown of inestimable value.

"Adversity is the best of teachers, and we learn to lead an interior life far better in poverty than in prosperity. Suffering well borne imparts vigor to our souls, but we must accept trials and adversity as proofs of God's love and mercy. I think I may say with certainty that those who try to avoid a little cross will meet a heavier one. Souls who to begin with are weak and faltering grow strong in abandonment, poverty, and adversity; moreover, if they rise above these trials they will be fit instruments for God's work, and will the better understand the sorrows of others for having themselves endured them."<sup>1</sup>

1. *Conferences*, ch. 56 (1907) 349-50, (1994) 411-12.

"Do not think that crosses will disturb our souls or that they rob us of our peace of mind. Oh, no, far from it; when we offer them to God, we enjoy great inward peace and they become lighter." "We must learn to carry the cross, yes, but that does not prevent our feeling the suffering. Even St. Paul exclaimed, 'Life has become bitter to me on account of so many crosses.' Indeed, is there anyone without vexations and various troubles? How many people in the world are contradicted from morning to night and silently resign themselves to their lot, while some religious complain unceasingly."<sup>2</sup>

"You are established on Mount Calvary and upon its summit you must learn fortitude to endure injustices calmly. Oh, how hard injustices are to bear! Often, in fact, they cause good people to waver and vacillate. Don't be surprised if you are crucified; you snatch so many souls from hell that the devil is sure to raise enemies against you. And these are not always people of the world. Sometimes persons consecrated to God will injure you; harming you all the more in that they will misunderstand your intentions, and their opinion will carry more weight. . . . We must accustom ourselves to live only for God."<sup>3</sup>

### *Her Action*

From 1842 until the close of her life, Mary Euphrasia suffered the greatest cross of all, the trial of seeing her intentions misunderstood. This prolonged misunderstanding was the crucible in which her soul was to be purified.

"From her first meeting with the new bishop of Angers, Bishop Guillaume L. Angebault, Mary Euphrasia could foresee a troubled future relationship. Quite simply she mentioned writing to the Cardinal Protector to tell him how happy the new bishop's nomination had made her. Ah! answered Bishop Angebault with delicate sarcasm, 'then, it is you who will be my protector in Rome.' His manner deeply troubled Mary Euphrasia. . . . Years later Bishop Angebault admitted that he had heard unfavorable comments regarding Mary Euphrasia before coming to Angers. . . .

"In 1845 the spirit of the House at Angers was very fervent, just as it had been during the entire period of Mary Euphrasia's government.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 56 (1907) 347, 351, (1994) 408, 413.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 20 (1907) 154, (1994) 187.

Yet there was a small group of discontented and self-willed individuals. One of them, Sister Mary of the Passion Drach, Mother Euphrasia's secretary, made use of visits from her father to send complaints and false accusations against the Mother General to Bishop Angebault. She supplied false and garbled information as to how Mary Euphrasia had enlisted the aid of the Cardinal Protector to safeguard the Constitutions of the congregation. The bishop believed Sister Mary of the Passion without permitting the superior a hearing. Then, without notice to the Council of the motherhouse, he released Sister Mary of the Passion from her vows and proceeded to the convent to make a formal inquiry. . . .

"The Mother General's conduct was heroic. She would not permit the sisters even a word against Bishop Angebault. 'Remember that he is our bishop,' she reminded them. She herself opened her soul only to her intimate confidantes and advisors.

"Mary Euphrasia wrote to Sr. M. John of the Cross, Superior of Munich: 'It is to God, and to you alone, my most devoted and beloved daughter, that I can open my sorrowing soul. Except that I am not in prison, an avalanche of sorrows has borne down upon me, and I am without support, without help! The bishop has just banished our dear Mary Teresa of Jesus out of his diocese on account of Rome. He wanted to drive me out, too, but the tears of the Chapter suspended the sentence. On that day of dreadful memory, Mary of the Passion turned traitor to everything: Rome, our holy Protector, our letters, and above all ourselves; but, what is still worse, her God and her vows. My soul, withered up with grief, dares no longer express itself; but it is at peace! I still have permission to receive Communion. The bishop spends a part of the day here speaking ill of me in private to each of the professed; in fine I am for him an object of horror. God and Rome console me. There, you have one portion of our troubles. Up to the present our sisters here are very faithful, but they are ready to die with sorrow.'

"To Sr. M. Stanislaus Bedouet, she wrote: 'How grateful I am to you for the part you have taken in my trials. It is true, they have been heavy indeed. . . . Every day we are afflicted with new sorrows. I feel them so acutely that I cannot even speak of them. Ah! If God did not sustain me, my faith itself would be shaken.'

"The bishop was disappointed: he thought he would find confirmation of the accusations made by Sister Drach. A few did corroborate her complaints.



The greater number, however, vindicated their Mother General, and this, even though the bishop not only invited criticism but phrased his questions to provoke it. ... Bishop Angebault did not see that the accusations brought against Mary Euphrasia were calumnies; otherwise he would have had to give credence to the greater number of sisters who testified that she was not only loved but profoundly venerated by nearly all her daughters. He was blinded by his prejudices; and in sending a report to Rome against Mary Euphrasia, he thought he was accomplishing his duty.

"The displeasure of the bishop continued. In 1847 he came to the convent and assembled both the novices and the professed religious in chapel. Among other reproaches, he turned to the novices with these words: 'You are but novices and are not yet bound by vows. You would do better to return to your families rather than to remain here to be guided by hypocrisy and falsehoods.' All during this outburst, Mary Euphrasia remained calm and quiet, without making the slightest gesture in reply.

"The bishop repeated this scene eleven or twelve years later. Gathering the community in chapel, he spoke against Mary Euphrasia. She bore the humiliation in tranquility, afterwards calming the indignant sisters and assuring them that in spite of everything the Lord would continue to bless the congregation."<sup>4</sup>

### *Inspiration*

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter;  
no complaint from his lips against the evil done to him.  
He was given up to death, to give his people life.  
— Responsory, Office of Readings, Good Friday. See Isa 53:7, 12

### *Our Discipleship*

In the greatest cross of her life, Mary Euphrasia took refuge in the suffering Christ. If you have endured a misunderstanding of enormous proportions and have not examined it in the light of Jesus and his cross, what lessons do you learn by reflecting on Mary Euphrasia's experience,

4. Saudreau, *Graces et Fidelite*, 106-9, 112-13; Morrison, "Secret of Sanctity," 97-99, 103; *Letters*, April 8, 1845, May 17, 1845 (MS).

which encourages you to find peace at the foot of the cross of Christ?

St. Paul says, "The message of the cross is folly for those who are on the way to ruin, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God." Mary Euphrasia taught her sisters: "The way of faith is a way of the cross. One who lives by faith will always be content, whatever afflictions she suffers or whatever contradictions she experiences . . . because she considers herself happy to have something to offer to God, to whom she flies on the wings of faith."<sup>5</sup> Reflect on your daily life—its routines, inconveniences, challenges, joys, sorrows—in the light of the cross, seeking through the Spirit of Christ to understand how God's power to save is always at work in you.

Mary Euphrasia liked to honor Mary praying and weeping at the foot of the cross. Through Mme d'Andigne she had a Calvary erected in the convent garden with statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. John, surrounding it with cedars of Lebanon. Am I willing to stand with Mary and John at the foot of the cross? What opportunities do I choose to show this in my daily life?

Meditate from time to time on a text from Scripture relative to the cross, such as: Mt 5:3-12, 8:17,10:38, and 16:21-28; Mk 14:26-39; Lk 23:1-49; Jn 1:9-18, 8:25-36, 12:20-26, 15:18-27, and 19:1-37; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 12:9-10; Gal 6:14; Phil 2:1-18 and 3:17-21; Col 1:24-29.

Take a passage in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for study and reflection: 164-65, 460-61, 516-21, 544, 555, 556, 562, 572, 606-18, 908, 1500-1505, 1506-8, 1521, 1716 (Beatitudes).

5. *Conferences*, ch. 5 (1907) 38-39, (1994) 51-52; 1 Cor 1:18.



Jesus,  
give us the grace to be crucified after your example,  
to die with you  
so as to bury our poor human nature in the tomb,  
to rise gloriously from the sepulchre as you did,  
to be born again in a divine life  
which, begun here below in the mysterious obscurity  
of Faith,  
may have its completion in the splendors of eternal glory  
when we shall be able to say with truth:  
"I live now, not I, but you, Christ Jesus, live in me."<sup>6</sup>

6. *Adapted from Conferences, ch. 25 (1907) 190, (1994) 228; Gal 2:20.*

## *Fortitude*

In the world you face persecution. But take courage;  
I have conquered the world!

Jn 16:33 NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia's Vision*

"Whatever may be your trials, you must never be disheartened, but raise your thoughts and eyes to God, placing your confidence in him, recalling the words of St. Paul: 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'"<sup>1</sup>

"In the country the finest trees are those which the gardener has cut and pruned. Be strong in soul and generous, setting aside love of self, and if the opportunity occurs do not hesitate to perform even heroic acts of virtue. If we only use the tips of our fingers or hardly wet ourselves with a sponge when we wash, can we expect to be really clean? To learn to swim we must not enter the water little by little, but throw ourselves into it. ... It could be said that those who have never been tempted know nothing of the spiritual life. St. Gregory writes, 'There is a devil of the morning, a noonday devil and an evening devil' which means that the evil one tempts us at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of our lives and of our good works."<sup>2</sup>

1. *Conferences*, ch. 13 (1907) 102, (1994) 129; Phil 4:13.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 58 (1907) 362-63, (1994) 425-27.

"Don't be downcast by your weaknesses. If you fall, rise again with courage. Remember that before we reach the summit of Carmel and taste the spiritual delights granted to the faithful, we must first pass through a torrent of bitterness and drink of the waters of tribulation. Mount Carmel is the symbol of delights, rich in vineyards, olive trees, and beautified by all sorts of flowers and fruit. Great fatigue has to be gone through before reaching the summit of the mountain, and in climbing it one often loses heart."<sup>3</sup>

"The year that has just passed has indeed been for us one of suffering; but it has also been a salutary time. Like the cedars of Lebanon we have been pruned and tried, that we might put forth fresh growth and be renewed in strength. It is well that we be tried in this way from time to time, in order that we may be reanimated and maintained in our first fervor."<sup>4</sup>

"How foolish we would be if we acted for any other motive than that of pleasing God! Courage, then; go forward! Save souls! . . . Keep this hope in your hearts: it will console you in your difficulties and sustain your courage. Souls to whose salvation you have contributed will plead your cause at God's tribunal: 'Soul for soul, Lord! This good mother helped to save my soul, without her I should have perished; it is she who by your grace converted me; have mercy on her, as she had mercy on me.' Fly, then; hasten, full of courage to save souls."<sup>5</sup>

"The essential point is to have no fear ... of the obstacles you may encounter. Go straight on. Be like a fisherman who keeps casting his net, always hoping to catch fish. Then leave God to do the rest; he knows better than we do what is for our good. Besides, we are only feeble instruments in his hands, which he deigns to use for the accomplishment of his designs."<sup>6</sup>

### *Her Action*

St. Mary Euphrasia encouraged her sisters by word and example, sometimes citing failures or temptations she had herself overcome:

3. *Conferences*, ch. 58 (1907) 361, (1994) 424.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 20 (1907) 152, (1994) 184.

5. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues*, 40; *Conferences*, ch. 20 (1907) 154-55, (1994) 186, 188; ch. 62 (1907) 384, (1994) 452.

6. *Conferences*, ch. 20 (1907) 157-58, (1994) 191.

"Do not seek for consolations; do not depend upon your own strength. Never yield to discouragement or to repugnance. You ought not to say: 'I am not capable of doing that.' But with strong faith and the strength which comes from obedience [to God's will], take up the work, and whether you succeed according to your wishes or not, our Lord will know how to draw profit from it for your soul and for the glory of his holy name.

"While speaking on this subject I will relate to you what happened to me when leaving Tours for Angers. I had gone to the Ursuline Community, of which Mme de Lignac was the superior, where I was to take the stagecoach, when suddenly I felt overwhelmed with discouragement and doubt. It seemed to me that I should do no good, that I would even hinder something others could carry out. I was on the verge of turning back, when I was told that a priest [Jean-Baptiste Pasquier, d. June 21, 1842] wished to speak to me. As soon as I walked in, this saintly man said to me: 'Mother, you are under temptation; our Lord has just made this known to me in prayer. Woe to you, if you yield! It is not humility that causes your hesitation, but a weakness of nature. Have courage, go to Angers, and you will see that, by means of you, God will do great works for his glory.'"<sup>7</sup>

Mary Euphrasia's fortitude was evident to the sisters who lived with her. A contemplative sister gave witness in the Apostolic Process: "Mother Euphrasia had an extraordinary courage which never failed her and which proves it was a supernatural strength. When I entered the Good Shepherd, she was often sick and tormented by painful nausea. Her infirmities augmented with time; she had an internal illness. On the other hand, she had much to suffer in her government on account of her difficulties with the bishop. Several unfaithful sisters who abandoned their vocation . . . caused great suffering to her, some of them shamefully calumniating her. She met many obstacles in her numerous foundations. However, at all times and in all circumstances we saw her serene and confident, persevering in her works, charitable towards everyone, never speaking ill of anyone. On seeing her, one would never have guessed that she had so much pain and suffering. She persevered to death in this fortitude. She was solicitous for us in spite of her poor health. I have spoken of the contradictions, the accusations, and the difficulties that Mother Euphrasia encountered. I now attest to her inalterable patience, prudence, and charity in the midst of all these trials."<sup>8</sup>

7. *Conferences*, ch. 20 (1907) 158, (1994) 191-92.

8. *Sr. Magdalen St. Mary of Egypt Body, AP Witness 10, Canonization, 929-30; Warnig and Dubois, Our Testimonies, 30.*

*Inspiration*

If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long;

we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom 8:31-39 NRSV

*Our Discipleship*

How do you regard the trials you are undergoing at the present moment? Do you believe that, "like the cedars of Lebanon," you are being "pruned and tried" that you "might put forth fresh growth and be renewed in spirit?" What fruit does God want you to draw from the things you suffer? Reflect upon your efforts to live in accord with your faith in everyday life. Do you pray for the courage to remain faithful, especially when others are encouraging you to do something contrary to your faith? Do you call upon the Holy Spirit to strengthen you in times of temptation? What steps can you take to become more courageous in professing your faith in an unbelieving world?

Consider with St. Mary Euphrasia: "Isn't it true then when you are overwhelmed, when you feel alone, our Savior says: 'Come to me, and I will comfort you?' You go to him, and there your soul is calmed and at peace."<sup>9</sup> In the future, will you tap more fully this inexhaustible source of strength?

Reflect on the example of Jesus in John 19:8-11 and on other scriptural passages prescribing courage, and make application to your own situation: Deut 31:6-8; Pss 91, 112, and 118; Isa 12; Mt 8:21-27 and 25:1-13; Mk 10:28-31; Lk 12:4-12, 32-35; Jn 14; Acts 4:13; 1 Cor 16:13; Eph 6:10-20; Phil 1:27-30.

Strive to stir up the gift of fortitude that you have received and cultivate its growth by studying the teachings in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Read 1804, 1805, 1808, 1831, 2473, 2848, 2849.

9. *Conferences*, ch. 8 (1907) 61-62, (1994) 79; Mt 11:28.



The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh—  
my adversaries and foes—  
they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident. . .

Ps 27:1-3

Wait for the lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the lord!

Ps 27:14 NRSV



# Forgiveness

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Mt 6.-14 NRSV



## *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"The fulfillment of the Law consists of love.' The saints tell us that faith is love that believes. Hope is love that expects. Adoration is love that worships. Prayer is love that petitions. Mercy is love that pardons. Charity is love that sacrifices itself. Mortification, martyrdom, is love that immolates itself."

"We must never offend anyone or say anything likely to wound another. . . . Were this to happen, how could we receive Holy Communion in peace, since we are told in the holy Gospel: 'If therefore you offer your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has anything against you, leave there your offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to your brother or sister: and then coming you shall offer your gift.' "<sup>2</sup>

"I beg you, for the love of God, never to say anything to others that can hurt their feelings. Poor faltering souls would be discouraged, and you would cease to be followers of the Good Shepherd, who raises the fallen sheep, places it on his shoulders, and shows towards it nothing

1. *Conferences, ch. 5 (1907) 39, (1994) 52-53.*

2. *Conferences, ch. 8 (1907) 68-69, (1994) 88; Mt 5:23-24 (adapted).*

but tenderness. Be very just in your way of acting. When others ask pardon, do not make them feel it when you forgive them. Avoid hurting their feelings, a thing which it is very hard to forgive.<sup>3</sup>

### *Her Action*

Sr. M. of the Passion betrayed Mary Euphrasia by denouncing her to Bishop Angebault; she was dispensed from her vows by the bishop and left the Good Shepherd Congregation. "On the warm recommendation of Bishop Angebault she was able to enter the Sisters of Providence of Ribeauville. She was dismissed two years after her Profession 'because of insubordination and improper language, wherein even bishops were not respected; she had the tongue of a viper,' the superiors of that congregation wrote. Mary Euphrasia, in her habitual spirit of heroic forgiveness, had desired immediately after her departure from the Good Shepherd to have her re-enter upon the right path. She begged her in a letter of loving tenderness to return to the fold. But all to no avail. Later, in 1849, undoubtedly just after Sr. Mary of the Passion had been dismissed by the Sisters of Providence, she made another attempt. She wrote to Sr. M. Louis de Baligand: This is for you alone, my daughter. I forbid you to speak of it. Oh, if you could bring back to me that child of my sorrow and my tears, with what tenderness I should receive her."<sup>4</sup>

Another incident reflects Mother Euphrasia's continual compassion and spirit of forgiveness. "The Mother General . . . read a letter from Sr. M. Mechtilde Flosse, who had left the congregation in 1841 shortly after the destruction of the convent in Clermont of which she had been the superior. She expressed her sincere regret and repentance for her past conduct and with great earnestness begged to be readmitted to the congregation." Mary Euphrasia wrote to her: "Heaven has pardoned you and I welcome you with all my heart and, knowing your feelings, do not name any price at which you have to purchase the happiness of living again with us. Let grace dictate how best to make amends. . . . Here you will find God, peace, and happiness. No one will reproach you for your past." Sr. M. Mechtilde "returned to the motherhouse November 20, 1847

3. *Conferences*, ch. 61 (1907) 381, (1994) 448.

4. *Saudreau*, *Graces et Fidelite*, 109-10; *Morrison*, "Secret of Sanctity," 99-100; *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Louis de Baligand*, February 16, 1849 (MS).

where she was received with open arms by all."<sup>5</sup>

The sisters used to say that it was sufficient to offend Mary Euphrasia to draw forth her goodness. On receiving an abusive letter on one occasion, she smiled. A sister asked if she had received news of a foundation. Immediately after that she sent a sister to render a particularly thoughtful service to the writer. Filled with surprise, this man asked if his letter had arrived. "Yes," the sister replied, "that is why our Mother has sent me to you."<sup>6</sup>

Mary Euphrasia constantly referred to forgiveness in her letters, as illustrated in these few examples.

"Day of sorrow," Mother Mary Euphrasia wrote to Sr. M. Louis, superior of the new foundation in Grenoble, in response to the letter she had received that morning in which Sr. Louis related the "rude ingratitude" committed by her assistant towards Bishop de Bruillard. Mary Euphrasia continued: "As for Sr. M. Philip, I am leaving her to her own thoughts, leaving the responsibility on her own heart. What a judgment awaits her. She has brought about the failure of the entire work, insulted a prince of the Church, failed by being ungrateful, filled my heart with bitterness for my whole life. Finally, my child, may God forgive her, as I too pardon her."<sup>7</sup>

"The Lord has taken Israel his servant into his protection," Mary Euphrasia began in writing to Sr. M. Louis on another occasion. "Graces, union, and peace constantly pour down in profusion within the enclosure of this monastery, but outside the storm is more violent than ever. May God be praised; we are calm. . . . M. Dufetre had someone inform me yesterday that he no longer feared anything and that by his own efforts he would have Grenoble and Metz severed from me forever . . . and he continued, 'I have just written to Rome and their destruction is certain.' Then, raising his hand, he said: 'I pronounce upon the head of Mother Euphrasia curse upon curse.' As for me, my dear daughter, after I received the letter, I went to prepare myself for Holy Communion and I had the happiness of receiving it while begging our Lord to bless

5. Entry in *Book of Council Meetings*, cited in Laugier, "Saint Mary Euphrasia," 28-29; *Mary Euphrasia to Mile Flosse* (Sr. M. Mechtilde), November 4, 1847 (MS).

6. *Portais*, 2:172.

7. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Louis Royne*, December 28, 1833 (MS).

Fr. Dufetre and all those who are calling down curses on us."<sup>8</sup>

A few years later Mother Euphrasia wrote to Sr. M. John of the Cross: "Father Dufetre is in Angers. He is admirable in God and is all for the work. This priest has come back! He wrote to me, 'Everything is over. I venerate you as the beloved spouse of our Lord and I love you as my daughter. From now on your work will be mine.' You know me, my dear John of the Cross. That much wasn't necessary to soften my heart. We all received Communion and when he came to see me, I shed tears of compassion and so did he."<sup>9</sup>

On another occasion, Mary Euphrasia wrote to Sr. M. John of the Cross: "The house at Bordeaux is giving us extraordinary crosses. Alas! my daughter, it has almost failed, and our hearts are really torn. Prudence makes me silent. You would be much grieved, and so are we, and puzzled as well. For the last week we have been expecting the sisters to come back. . . . Oh! my daughter, indeed my heart is wounded. Fiat! I pardon them all. Unfortunately, too, there has been a want of courage in Mary of St. Joseph. She has not been able to bear the cross and insults offered to our holy congregation, and this has put the finishing touch to our troubles. People seem to have a great contempt for all of us. May the Lord pour his graces on our enemies. Yet the cross is precious nevertheless."<sup>10</sup>

So deep was Mary Euphrasia's understanding of mercy as "the greatest attribute of God" that her gratitude became mercy-in-action, as exemplified here: " 'I shall proclaim the mercies of the Lord.' Let your gratitude to God enable you to forgive the hurtful letter which has been sent to you. The sister concerned is overwhelmed by remorse. She has acknowledged her fault to me and you know what I would say in such a situation. What else could I do? After all, it was written in moment of human weakness."<sup>11</sup>

In her last illness, she asked for the Sacrament of the Sick.

8. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Louis Royne, October 28, 1834 (MS).*

9. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. John of the Cross David, January 23, 1837, in Morrison, Spirit and Charism, 48.*

10. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. John of the Cross David, August 31, 1837, in Pasquier, 1:360-61.*

11. *Dives in Misericordia, 13; Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Dosithea Joseph, January 30, 1837 (MS).*

Before receiving Communion, she made a sign that she wished to speak. She began by renewing her vows; and then she asked pardon of the whole congregation, saying that she also pardoned wholeheartedly anyone who might have offended her.<sup>12</sup>

### *Inspiration*

"But I say to you who listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." —Lk 6:27-36 NRSV

### *Our Discipleship*

Read the above Scripture passage again. Apply it to yourself at this moment. Do you hold on to an injury that you forgive but are reluctant to forget? Pray for the grace of forgiveness in the spirit of the Gospel and the example of St. Mary Euphrasia. Decide on some particular course of action you can take to forgive and be reconciled. You might imitate Mary Euphrasia by writing a letter expressing forgiveness, or you might visit the person or send flowers.

Recall two or three hurtful memories of people who have injured you in some significant manner. Ask Jesus to help you to let go of the feelings of hurt, disappointment, rejection, resentment, anger, or even

<sup>12</sup>. *Necrology*.

rage that you still harbor towards these individuals. Consider participating in a program for healing of memories.

Mary Euphrasia wrote to one of her sisters: "Although you have been amiss, you have my trust always."<sup>13</sup> Reflect on a time in your life when you needed forgiveness. How did others treat you? Imagine Jesus forgiving you and bask in his love for you. Ask him to free you of the things that block your ability to receive the forgiveness of others.

Select other passages of Scripture for reflection and prayer to open yourself more fully to the spirit of forgiveness. Gen 50:15-21; Ex 23:4-9; Lev 19:18; 1 Sam 24; Prv 24:17; Mic 7:18-20; Mt 5:23-24, 6:9-15, and 18:21-35; Mk 11:25; Lk 15:11-32, 17:3-4, and 23:34; Acts 7:51-60; Rom 12:14-21; Col 3:12-17; Eph 4:32.

Choose a passage from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1822-29, 2608, 2838-45 —especially 2840 and 2843.



O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

13. Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Louis Royne, March 11, 1834, in *Spirituality Commission, United for the Holy Work*, 55.

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## *Work/Teamwork*

Go and work in the vineyard today.

Mt 21:28 NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"Work is, as you know, divinely instituted. God said to Adam, 'You shall eat your bread in the sweat of your brow.' No one on earth is allowed to live in idleness and so avoid this severe but just sentence. We must always work in one way or another. The active life is perfectly compatible with the contemplative life. A soul may rise to the highest degree of contemplation even when busily occupied. . . .

"We must combine the activities of Martha and Mary. Like Martha, we should know how to apply ourselves to exterior work and, like Mary, never withdraw from our divine Master's presence. Work like Martha. Can you believe that she did not love the Savior? She is blamed for being too pressured, but if our Lord came here, wouldn't we have done as much as she? In spite of her busyness she scarcely left her beloved guest. She went, then came back to Jesus, went back to her work and again returned to her dear Master. Seeing that her sister never left him, she was almost jealous. Do the same! Lend yourself to your work, but always come back to God. . . .

"Great souls, souls of prayer accomplish much work without disquiet. St. Teresa was never anxious, never disturbed, however multiplied her occupations were; whatever the difficulties she encountered she remained tranquil, remembering that God acted in her. He will also act in you and he will communicate to you in abundance the

knowledge you need, provided that you also, after the example of these great saints, love prayer, are generous, charitable, affable, industrious; in a word, it suffices that you are careful to act for God alone. Never be indolent or slothful. Idleness and softness caused Solomon to neglect the right use of the gift of wisdom, which had been granted to him by the Lord. . . .

"Work, strictly speaking, is not prayer; but it can take the place of prayer when done solely with the intention of promoting the glory of God. ... St. Paul, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Vincent de Paul did not lead the same kind of life as the holy anchorites, St. Anthony, St. Hilarion, St. Arsenius, etc. They all, however, reached a high degree of sanctity by following the path to which they were called."<sup>1</sup>

In order to emphasize the need to work in harmony with others St. Mary Euphrasia used the example of a beehive. She said to her sisters, "Bees have the instinct to share the work among themselves, helping each other in a wonderful orderliness and without confusion. Bees seem unable to survive without working, without obeying [the will of God].... This seems to be the mysterious work that goes on in the hive, everyone engaged for the general good, keeping nothing for oneself."<sup>2</sup>

"When you carry out your duties with enthusiasm you are only accomplishing the law of God which is enjoined on you. When, however, you lend a hand to others, you not only fulfil the spirit of your obligations, but you, moreover, practice the Gospel counsels, for you practice perfect charity to your neighbor. . . .

"Work generously and unceasingly. Help one another reciprocally. This charity will draw down the blessings of heaven on your work. I assure you that you will experience the sweet consolation of seeing the work of God increase before your eyes, that work in which, by common consent, all cooperate." "I dare to say that if you . . . always love one another, if you always uphold one another, you will be capable of working wonders and you will go straight to heaven."<sup>3</sup>

1. *Conferences*, ch. 49 (1907) 302-303, 304, 309, (1994) 358-60, 361, 367; *Gen* 3:19.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 50 (1907) 311-12, (1994) 369-70.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 49 (1907) 308, 309, (1994) 365, 367; ch. 68 (1907) 421-22, (1994) 497.



*Her Action*

"Work wholeheartedly, then, at the work assigned to you and you will hear one day from God's own mouth: 'Come, faithful servant, come and receive the reward you have earned by your labors and by your virtues.'"<sup>4</sup>

Mary Euphrasia's letters show her concern for every detail of the "holy work." In 1834, for example, she wrote to Sr. M. Louis Royne: "Our good Marie Augustine has told me that you are a bit worried about the work. Why is that? It is really essential to accomplish it well. Every month we earn 800-900 francs; it is one of our greatest sources of income. But the details of running this house are enormous. Children are received each day, requiring mattresses, bed linens, etc. In Sr. M. Annunciation we have a real treasure; she undertakes everything. She has now succeeded in weaving cloth, having picked up this trade from a girl who knew it. The home-industries are doing well: in the afternoons they spin and make the cloth needed for the classes. Annunciation and six helpers have learned to make shoes. A shoemaker comes to teach them."<sup>5</sup>

Mary Euphrasia's collaboration with her sisters is evidenced in her correspondence. "Tell me what you think; ought we to go to Germany? Look at it in the sight of God. . . . What ought we to do?" "For goodness sake, don't dream of flying off to heaven and leaving us with all this work! And London? What do you think about it? I really believe it needs your drive, for it is a divine mission, an immense one. Millions of souls call out to us."<sup>6</sup>

Mary Euphrasia experienced the stress of overwork; she wrote to Sr. M. Stanislaus Bedouet: "I have more to do than I can do; I have not a moment to spare. It pains me that I cannot write more at length to you, but I have been suffering very much for the last three days. I am writing to you as I cannot apply myself steadily to anything. It is a feverish attack, the result of over-fatigue."<sup>7</sup>

"In 1848 a number of the monasteries in France became the prey

4. *Conferences*, ch. 21 (1907) 166, (1994) 201; Mt 25:34.

5. *Letter of October 28, 1834 (MS)*.

6. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. John of the Cross David, March 21, 1839, in Pasquier, 1:458; Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Clement Pattin, July 30, 1840, in Spirituality/Historical Commission, Our Heritage, 1:121.*

7. *Letter of November 11, 1833, in Pasquier, 1:159-60.*

of popular hatred. ... To minimize the ill effects of the revolution, Mother Euphrasia assembled her Council and, after seeking the light of the Holy Spirit, she drew up a circular letter containing practical advice. Her first recommendation was to preserve their houses; to put on lay dress if the habit caused irritation; to remain in the convent as seculars, earning their living by cultivating the ground, if they could not stay as religious educating young girls; to seek and carry out the advice of the ecclesiastical superiors. But if in spite of all precautions, they were nevertheless expelled, she reminded them that the house of Angers was their motherhouse and they would be ready to share everything with them." Mother Euphrasia received some five hundred refugees from houses that were destroyed.<sup>8</sup>

Sr. M. Stanislaus Bedouet wrote to Mary Euphrasia: " 'Lord, the zeal of your house consumes me.' These words of the holy prophet-king . . . can very well be applied to you. Oh, yes, the zeal for the glory of God devours and consumes you. Your beautiful soul aspires to nothing else! Thus, you are for us, dear Mother, an ever-renewed model and example. Yes, through you we see in our dear Institute the religious spirit in all the glow of its first fervor. You know how to imprint in the hearts of all your daughters and in the entire Order, a principle of spiritual strength, an energy and incomparable devotion. For isn't it admirable to see our young sisters crossing the seas without any fear of danger in order to run after the lost sheep?"<sup>9</sup>

### *Inspiration*

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose

8. *Pasquier*, 2:304, 307.

9. Sr. M. Stanislaus Bedouet to Mary Euphrasia, August 16, 1839, in *Spirituality Commission, United for the Holy Work*, 20; Ps 119:139.

with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.—1 Cor 3:5-15 NRSV

### *Our Discipleship*

Consider the importance of your work in the eyes of God. How do you accomplish the work he has given you to do in this world? Are you building in gold, silver, or straw? What do you have to do to build in gold? How could you become, like St. Paul, a master builder constructing the foundation of the kingdom of God?

How did St. Mary Euphrasia view work? What did the "holy work" mean to her? Compare your own view of work, your "holy work," with hers. Have a dialogue with St. Mary Euphrasia about the things you hope to accomplish with the help of God's grace.

In the *Mirror of the Virtues of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier*, a document examined by the Church during the process of canonization, we find outlined the charitable work in which she was engaged and to which she gave direction during her lifetime. Apply the spiritual and corporal works of mercy to yourself.

Could you compare your workplace to a beehive, where each person works for the common good without seeking to outshine others? What kind of a team player are you? What can you do to make your helpfulness, respect, and resourcefulness more available to the people with whom you work?

Select passages from Scripture for further reflection and prayer: Prv 31:10-31; Mt 11:28-30, 21:28-32, 25:1-13, 25:14-30, and 25:31-46; Mk 10:42-45; Jn 6:27-37; 1 Cor 3:5-9; Gal 6:2-5, 10; 2 Tim 4:7; 1 Pet 4:8-11; Rev 14:13.

Select passages in the Catechism of the Catholic Church for reflection on your understanding of the place of work in your life: 2427-28; 2447, 2460.



God our Father, creator and ruler of the universe, in every age you call us to develop and use our gifts for the good of others. With St. Joseph as our example and guide, help us to do the work you have asked and come to the rewards you have promised. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Roman Missal, feast of St. Joseph, the Worker*

## *Friendship*

You are my friends.

Jn 15:14NRSV



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

St. Mary Euphrasia counseled her sisters to extend friendship to persons in their care, to cultivate affection for one another, and to regard Jesus as their ultimate friend.

She said: "Have this spirit of charity towards those whom you serve; imitate the good superior who spoke to them as to her children and treated them as such. She entered into all their troubles and let them share her own. Yes, love them. We are naturally inclined to love those who love us, and we can thus do more good. Watch how a little child clings to those who take care of it and fondle it. We are all little children on this point; it is a tendency which is, so to say, born in us."<sup>1</sup>

"Our congregation is founded on charity, that beautiful virtue without which all the others have no luster; let us endeavor our utmost to perpetuate it among us. What is more lovely and even more desirable than this charity, this cordial love one for another! We should have but one heart among us. Just as when one tries to pour grains through a very small funnel, they escape on all sides, in the same way, if we are not

<sup>1</sup> *Conferences, ch. 42 (1907) 265-66, (1994) 318.*

united among ourselves, we shall not be so with God and we shall never do any good."<sup>2</sup>

" 'Be hospitable to one another.' These words may well be addressed to us, for charity is the essence of our vocation. We may say that the motherhouse is the home of an affectionate grandmother, where children and grandchildren, who come to visit it, are tenderly caressed. When our sisters arrive we ought to pay them every attention, ministering to their slightest wants, making them rest, comforting them, washing their linen, showing them the utmost cordiality accompanied with humility and charity."<sup>3</sup>

"When you write to our dear sisters, don't make it just a few words, a few insignificant lines which leave an empty feeling in the heart. Go into little details, showing that you are interested in everything. In writing to the houses that have much to suffer, express your sympathy and endeavor to encourage them."<sup>4</sup>

Mary Euphrasia presented Jesus to her sisters in the role of friend: "Jesus Christ is the only friend who never abandons anyone. He it is who in our last moments comes to visit us on our bed of pain. Let us, therefore, remain united with him by prayer and Holy Communion. Let us go before the tabernacle and weep, not only for our own sins, but for those of the sheep confided to our care." "To the interior soul, to the soul living hidden in God may be applied these words: 'She will be the friend of the Lord.'"<sup>5</sup>

### *Her Action*

Mary Euphrasia made it clear that her human friendships were rooted in her friendship with God. Through conferences, personal interaction, letters, she cultivated a family spirit within the congregation. She maintained intense friendships with many of the sisters, opening her heart to them especially through her letters, encouraging them and gently facilitating their growth in truth and charity.

To a friend whom she could fully affirm she wrote: " 'There will be only one flock and one shepherd.' Oh, how far away you are and I long so

2. *Conferences*, ch. 42 (1907) 263, (1994) 315.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 30 (1907) 207, (1994) 249.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 30 (1907) 205, (1994) 248.

5. *Conferences*, ch. 11 (1907) 89, (1994) 114; 14 (1907) 120.

much to talk to you; you whose letters, thoughts, interior trials go to my very heart. I understand you so thoroughly, and God alone knows how closely we are united. Truly my confidence in you is unbounded. Your progress, your successes at Turin do not in the least astonish me. ... Do not fail to come to the election: we shall understand each other thoroughly—what long talks we shall have!"<sup>6</sup>

With a superior whose correspondence to her former convent contained complaints about a troubled relationship with her assistant, Mother Euphrasia counted on the bonds of friendship to sustain her reproach. She wrote: "Your character is incompatible with that of Sr. M. Celestine, but to whom should you have mentioned this if not to me? It was not my intention to leave you at London together . . . but I am sorely grieved by a number of your letters which have come to my attention, though they were not addressed to me. Why torment yourself? It was not your heart which dictated those letters. Perhaps it was the excess of your suffering. How could your heart ever forget your motherhouse? Besides, have I not had correspondence from you during the past three years? Are these not the letters I should believe? Rest assured that your secret will be guarded, but why do you imagine that you have any better friend than your Mother? My child, can you understand her love?" Later she wrote, "Poor Sister M. Joseph, you have been so disconsolate. Do not think that you have grieved me, but often say to yourself: 'How many times I have consoled my Mother, and how many times I have dried her tears. Let my poor Mother remember that, and let her not scold me anymore.'"<sup>7</sup>

Mary Euphrasia continued friendships from childhood and her school days; in particular with her teacher, Marie-Pauline de Lignac, who was later the superior of the Ursuline Sisters in Tours,<sup>8</sup> and a girlhood friend, who became the superior of the Carmelite Sisters in Tours. Mary Euphrasia corresponded with them and visited them on her journeys.

Mary Euphrasia's closest friends beyond her community were Count de Neuville and Mme d'Andigne. Of Mme d'Andigne Mary

6. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Euphrasia of Jesus de Pechmann, March 14, 1845, in Pasquier, 2:196; Jn 10:16.*

7. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Joseph Regaudiat, January 9 and 10, 1841, in Saudreau, *Graces et Fidelite*, 167-68, and in Morrison, "Secret of Sanctity," 167-68.*

8. *Pasquier, 2:468.*

Euphrasia exclaimed, "What shall I say of our great benefactress, Madame d'Andigne, whose only thought was to do good"? "Mme d'Andigne de Villequier, through whom it had pleased God to make the Institute known at Angers, and who, together with M. de Neuville, had aided and encouraged the foundation, asked to be admitted to the community as a lay boarder, entering on November 21, 1833."<sup>9</sup>

St. Mary Euphrasia's biographer describes an instance of the cordial relationships and friendships that she established among religious of other congregations: "While in Paris, Mary Euphrasia visited Mme Barat, Superior of the Sacred Heart. Mme Perdreau, a religious of the Sacred Heart, afterwards when writing to Angers said: 'Ever since our holy foundresses met and gave one another that holy kiss which we think of as the kiss of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic, our two religious families are forever as united as the Franciscans and Dominicans.'"<sup>10</sup>

Bishop Jean Francois de Herce of Nantes, who was so helpful with the English novices, wrote to her in disappointment that his attempted intervention with a potential benefactor had been unsuccessful: "Dear Rev. Mother, Your kind letter gave me much pleasure. I imagined the Marchioness of Wellesley smiling graciously on the new community, and giving it the encouragement of her benevolent protection; but she has written me a long letter (which I enclose) telling me she will take no part in this good work. ... I shall leave her letter for a time unanswered, it being an answer to mine. Still, I should like to do whatever you think best. I shall always be glad to add my grain of sand to the scale, to weigh it down to the side you wish. You and your daughters are very dear to me; my heart prays for you unceasingly, and I constantly regret that you should be so far from me. Happily, love of our Lord does away with distance of place, and, in his precious Blood, all friends in every clime meet together and form one family. The family of which you are head is after my own heart, and I cherish it with tender affection."<sup>11</sup>

9. *Conferences*, ch. 63 (1907) 395, (1994) 465; *Pasquier*, 2:468.

10. *St. Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779-1865), foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart*; *Pasquier*, 2:285.

11. *Bishop de Herce to Mary Euphrasia, February 9, 1841, in Pasquier*, 2:31-32.



### *Inspiration*

A loyal friend is a powerful defense:  
    whoever finds one has indeed found a treasure.  
A loyal friend is something beyond price,  
    there is no measuring his worth.  
A loyal friend is the elixir of life,  
    and those who fear the Lord will find one.  
Whoever fears the Lord makes true friends,  
    for as a person is, so is his friend too.

—Ecclus (Sir) 6:14-17 NJB

### *Our Discipleship*

Who are your closest and most cherished friends? How have they been a treasure beyond price, the elixir of life, a powerful defense, a companion on the journey of life? What has each one added to your life? Thank God for each friend and for the different ways they have enriched you.

Reflect on a broken friendship. In the light of God's grace can you right it, restore it, and rejoice anew in it through truth in charity as Mary Euphrasia did?

Think of St. Mary Euphrasia as a friend. What bonds unite her to others? What bonds unite her to you? Dialogue with her as you examine the basis of your friendships.

Reflect on John 15:12-17. Bring your response to a specific resolution to further this divine friendship. Additional passages of Scripture: Prv 17:17, 18:24, and 27:6, 10; Eccl 4:9-12; Ruth 1:1-18; 1 Sam 18:1 and 20:17; Ps 133; Isa 41:8-10; Jn 11:5-36 and 13:23; Tit 3:4-8.

Study friendship in the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 374, 1468, 1939, 2010, 2346-47.



Father, bring to fulfillment in us this prayer of Jesus:

Holy Father,  
keep those you have given me true to your name,  
so that they may be one like us.

Jn 17:11

May they all be one  
just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you,  
so that they also may be one in us,  
so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.

Jn 17:21

With me in them and you in me,  
may they be so perfected in unity  
that the world will recognize that it was you who sent me  
and that you have loved them as you have loved me.

Jn 17:23 NJB

## *Gratitude*

Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.

Jn 11:41 NJB



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"You feel it keenly when you do not meet with gratitude in those from whom you have the right to expect it. Truly, ingratitude is one of the things that causes most pain to the human heart. What are not God's claims upon our gratitude? Consider, then, how deeply we grieve the heart of God when we are ungrateful for the blessings we have received from him."<sup>1</sup>

"Oh, who can enumerate all the favors God has bestowed upon us! His benefactions are continual and therefore it is our duty to thank him ceaselessly; our hearts ought to melt with gratitude and love towards him. As for me, for a long time, I have found it only possible to meditate upon the graces God wills to give our congregation. And could we fail to ponder the individual care his fatherly goodness lavishes on us? A hymn of gratitude must always re-echo among us. Never receive a kindness from our Lord without thanking him for it! That is the way to receive still more favors, because God loves and blesses grateful hearts."<sup>2</sup>

1. *Conferences*, ch. 64 (1907) 402, (1994) 474.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 31 (1907) 210-11, (1994) 255.

"You have a heart created to love and to be grateful! Therefore, raise your joyful thanks to your Benefactor. . . . Desire to have a thousand lives to offer to the Lord and strive to return love for love." "Pray frequently for all your benefactors, spiritual and temporal. . . . Beg our Lord to give them everything they need and desire."<sup>3</sup>

"The simplest definition which can be given of gratitude is expressed in these words: 'Gratitude is the memory of the heart.' That heart is but a poor one which has no memories, which retains no remembrances."<sup>4</sup>

"I wish that everything I have just said on gratitude were written in letters of gold! However, I give it to you; it is your portion, your inheritance; engrave it on your hearts, repeat it to future generations, take it with you to your missions, speak about it among yourselves in far-off lands. Let its remembrance be your consolation, your hope, and so you will always be filled with gratitude . . . exclaiming every day with joy and happiness: 'We are the children of miracles!'"<sup>5</sup>

### *Her Action*

"Mary Euphrasia, besides living in the habitual state of gratitude to God, had a natural impulse to show her sense of obligation to those who patronized her works and supported them."<sup>6</sup>

She said to her sisters: "After God, the Blessed Virgin, and the holy Church who has extended her protection over us, to whom do we owe gratitude? To our good father, de Neuville. To him you owe your happiness, your expectations. In a word, you are indebted to him for everything. This venerated name should be written on every door in this house. Who could ever tell the whole story of his generosity. . . . This man, who was generous to the point of heroism, always said he had done nothing!" "We will write in our annals the name of Count Augustin de la Potherie de Neuville, who sold his ancestral castle and impoverished himself to establish this House of Angers."<sup>7</sup>

"One way in which our Mother showed her gratitude to our great benefactor, M. de Neuville, was as follows: Louis, one of his servants,

3. *Conferences*, ch. 64 (1907) 401-2, 404, (1994) 474, 477.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 64 (1907) 405, (1994) 478; *Jean-Baptiste Massieu (1742-1818)*.

5. *Conferences*, ch. 64 (1907) 406, (1994) 479.

6. *Pasquier*, 2:121-22.

7. *Conferences*, ch. 64 (1907) 402-3, (1994) 474-75; ch. 65 (1907) 410, (1994) 485.

had become very infirm, and they were thinking of placing him in a hospital. When our Mother heard of it, she said to M. de Neuville: 'No! my good Father, he shall not go to the hospital; he has served you too faithfully, and he has been too devoted to the Good Shepherd for that. We have, outside our enclosure, a room all ready for him; he will only have a step to go to church, and he will also see his good employer more frequently.' Tears came to the eyes of M. de Neuville, as he expressed his pleasure at this arrangement. Louis lived for some time, surrounded by the attention and care our Mother caused to be shown to him, and he had the happiness of being frequently visited by his noble employer."<sup>8</sup>

Count de Neuville died peacefully on December 3, 1843. "In gratitude towards him Mary Euphrasia had a special solemn Requiem service celebrated for him in her chapel in the presence of Bishop Angebault. She also sent a circular letter to all her houses, requesting that Communion and prayers be offered for him for three months. She had the portrait of M. de Neuville painted by Pauline Perdreau, who later became a religious of the Sacred Heart. . . . Mary Euphrasia always kept Count de Neuville in most grateful remembrance, and looked upon every good person who afterwards helped her in her work as another M. de Neuville sent by God."<sup>9</sup>

Mary Euphrasia's gratitude during the time of her final illness was later described by the sisters: "We were touched by the humility with which she thanked us for all we did for her; for our prayers, our tears, the little attentions we showed her, and the letters which arrived from all parts of the world. When she was told that our children were praying for her, she replied: 'What a consolation it is to know that those dear children are praying for me; go and thank them.'<sup>10</sup>

Several weeks before her death, Bishop Angebault, who had been the cause of untold suffering, visited her with his vicar. As he entered he said, "My dear daughter, I have come to bring you my blessing. I have already remembered you in the Holy Sacrifice and in my visit to the Blessed Sacrament." "I am very grateful to you, your Excellency," she replied in an effusive and respectful tone.<sup>11</sup>

8. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues, 65.*

9. *Pasquier, 2:161-62.*

10. *Fernandez Concha, Minor of Virtues, 66; Conferences, (1888) 39; Necrology.*

11. *Portals, 2:409-10.*

"The virtue of gratitude was so predominant in our venerated Mother, that she declared: 'Gratitude is a cause of martyrdom to me.' We may say that this virtue did not end with her life, but that she carried it with her into eternity."<sup>12</sup>

### Inspiration

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."— Lk 17:11-19 NRSV

### Our Discipleship

Do you identify with one of the nine lepers who did not return to Jesus? In a dialogue with Jesus consider what you must do to become like the grateful leper.

Read Psalm 136. In a litany of thanksgiving, enumerate the countless blessings God has given you.

Focus on gratitude for a day, week, or month by noting in your journal each day the benefits you receive from God, from others, and from the events and circumstances of your life. Resolve to express your gratitude each time someone does something for you, no matter how slight. Ask God to extend his graces and blessing to those whom you have forgotten to thank. In a spirit of gratitude give to another person the kindness you have received.

12. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues, 66.*

Continue to seek inspiration from the Sacred Scriptures so that, with St. Mary Euphrasia, your "whole life will be one long act of gratitude."<sup>13</sup> 1 Chr 16:7-36; Ruth 2:10-13; 2 Sam 9:1-13, Pss 104, 107, and 145; Mk 14:22-25; Jn 6:11; 2 Cor 9:6-15; Eph 5:18-20; Col 2:6-7 and 3:12-17; 1 Thess 5:12-20.

Study some of the facets of gratitude in the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 224, 295, 1077-83, 1328, 1352, 1356-61, 2603-4, 2637-43, 2648, 2855.



Make a joyful noise to the lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.

Know that the lord is God.  
It is he that made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the lord is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Ps 100 NRSV

13. *Conferences*, ch. 64 (1907) 406, (1994) 479.

## *Humility*

Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.

Mt 11:29 NJB



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"The virtue of humility is supremely pleasing to our Lord, being the basis of all our spiritual perfection. Use every means in your power that this great virtue should take deep root in your hearts. Without it you will have no holiness, except in your imagination, and it would fade away before the smallest trial or temptation. To want to practice virtue and attain holiness without beginning with humility is like endeavoring to construct a building in the air with no foundation. This is the reason why we unfortunately see but little solid virtue and so seldom find true piety. Often say: 'My God, do not permit me to pass twenty-four hours without being humbled.' And when a day has gone by without a humiliation, say with St. Teresa: 'My God, I have done nothing for you today, and my day is lost for eternity.'"<sup>1</sup>

"Humility is the key to every treasure, nothing being more dear to the heart of God than someone truly humble, entirely stripped of self-love. Yet nothing is more rare than to find this virtue really existing in a soul, so opposite is it to our nature, in which pride is, so to say, ingrained from its origin. It is this that caused to be written in Holy Scripture, 'Pride is the beginning of all sin.'

1. *Conferences, ch. 18 (1907) 139-40, (1994) 169.*



"What have we offered to God, what do we offer to him that does not already belong to him? What do we possess that we do not hold from his royal munificence? What have we of our own but misery and sin, the wretched inheritance of our first parents? Is it not right for us to recognize that we are but 'dust and ashes?' "<sup>2</sup>

"Humility will be, as it were, an anchor which will keep you firm in the midst of the tempest. You will not be disheartened by contradictions, by weariness, nor even by the faults into which you may fall; for you will be strong in the very strength of God, and you will grow day by day in a closer union with him."<sup>3</sup>

"Had our Lord known a surer way to heaven than that of humility, without doubt he would have taught it to us. You will never have to go the lengths to which he chose to go. Which of you was cradled in a manger? Who has been calumniated as he was? Who has been tortured on a cross? 'The disciple is not greater than the Master.' "<sup>4</sup>

"In the tabernacle, Jesus continues his life of humiliation, teaching us all the sublimity of this virtue. When the soul is cast down by humiliation, it goes to him to seek the strength it needs. He gives this strength, making the soul taste the sweetness of the cross. And his Sacred Heart repeats to it the divine lesson: 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.' He will teach it also that 'humility enables us to do work for souls.' "<sup>5</sup>

### *Her Action*

In her letters Mary Euphrasia often spoke of humility. "I conjure you lovingly, and out of my own experience, not to set any value on the honor that may seem to be paid to you. All of it is emptiness. Seek God in your great work and be free of human respect. Use the excellent judgment God has given you to do things worthy of him. ... Be prudent with others, be humble, be exact. You are on the spot and you must do what you think best."<sup>6</sup>

2. *Conferences*, ch. 17 (1907) 137, (1994) 165.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 18 (1907) 148, (1994) 180.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 18 (1907) 146-47, (1994) 178-79.

5. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues*, 57.

6. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Louis Royne, December 25, 1833, in Pasquier*, 1:170-71.

"What beautiful examples of humility she gave to her sisters! 'It is very true/ she said to them in order to make them understand that everything in her works came from God, 'I was not possessed of riches, talents, or any exterior attractions, but I only always loved the children and I loved them with my whole soul.' One simply does not find in her anything of pretension, self-absorption, or self-satisfaction in success or in authority. When she wanted something done, she asked, rather than imposing her will. When she needed something, she requested it with a humility that touched the heart. She thought people made too much over her: she did not understand why they paid such deference to a 'poor creature.' And in the face of the most terrible calumnies, she did not feel the need to justify herself."<sup>7</sup>

A witness in the process of canonization testified: "Our Mother always appeared very humble and forgetful of self. She spoke only of God and of the works of God. She considered herself a little servant in his service. She often gave herself this title and referred all to God's glory. Her serenity in the midst of trials, her discretion, her charity, and the forgiveness of injuries which she practiced so delicately, are proof of her humility. In a word, I attest that our Mother practiced all the Christian virtues."<sup>8</sup>

### *Inspiration*

[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other, for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."— Lk18:9-14 NRSV

7. *Portais*, 2:307.

8. *Sr. Magdalen St. Mary of Egypt Body*, AP 10, *Canonization*, 1163, cited in *Warnig and Dubois*, *Our Testimonies*, 36.

### *Our Discipleship*

Our Lord's whole life was an act of humility. St. Mary Euphrasia emphasized the humility Jesus showed at Bethlehem, at Calvary, and in remaining with us in the Eucharist. What are other examples of humility in Jesus' life? Which ones attract you most? How can you imitate Jesus in this mystery?

Pray slowly and repeatedly Jesus' words, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart." When you experience humiliations, contradictions, failures, how do you strive to put on the mind of Christ and seek the strength you need?

"Do not fear to be too humble. Look at our Lord Jesus Christ at the feet of Judas! Who can say: 'My heart is clean, I am pure from sin?'" "Confession has been instituted to purify us from our stains; we have but to own our faults with humility and sorrow, and our good God pardons them. Provided he sees we have a good will, he himself extends his hand to raise us when we have fallen."<sup>9</sup> Pray Psalm 51 (Miserere).

Study the Scriptures: Deut 15:15; Pss 9:12, 69:32, and 131; Mic 6:8; Mt 5:5, 10-12, 18:4, and 20:25-28; Mk 9:33-37; Lk 14:7-11; Jn 13:5; Col 3:12; Jas 4:10; 1 Pet 5:1-11.

Reflect on aspects of the humility of Christ, Mary, and the Christian in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 459-63, 489, 520, 525, 526, 558, 559, 724, 2097, 2559, 2628, 2631, 2706, 2713, 2784-85.

9. *Conferences*, ch. 18 (1907) 145, (1994) 177; ch. 25 (1907) 186, (1994) 223; *Prov* 20:9.



Make my own the mind of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God,  
did not count equality with God  
something to be grasped.

But he emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
becoming as human beings are;  
and being in every way  
like a human being,  
he was humbler yet,  
even to accepting death,  
death on a cross.

And for this God raised him high,  
and gave him the name  
which is above all other names;

so that *all beings*  
in the heavens, on earth  
and in the underworld,  
*should bend the knee* at the name of Jesus  
and that *every tongue should acknowledge*  
Jesus Christ as Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

*Phil 2:5-11 NJB*

# Joy

My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Lk 1:47 NRSV



## *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"Live joyfully with your God, love him, think only of him, seek nothing but him, occupy yourself with him alone, live, breathe for him alone, let him be your soul's atmosphere; give yourself unreservedly to God, and one day you will fall asleep on his Heart to awaken in his glory." "Rejoice, rejoice every day, live joyfully, for the thought that the everlasting arms of God are around you is a source of the sweetest consolation."<sup>1</sup>

"I would like you to be always cheerful and affable. . . . 'Rejoice in the Lord always/ says St. Paul. Joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit which the wicked never taste. Let this holy joy of the children of God dwell in your heart. Melancholy, taciturn, sour or hard virtue, one only in name, is not inspired by the Spirit of God, nor is it suitable for a Christian."<sup>2</sup>

"Do not imagine that thoughtfulness and prudence will prevent you from being kindly and cheerful ... on the contrary, along with them comes a conscience at peace, and this peace fills the soul with purest

1. *Conferences*, ch. 17 (1907) 138, (1994) 166-67.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 15 (1907) 124, (1994) 150; *Phil* 4:4.

joy, making it attentive and docile to the voice of the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

"When we see the children sad, we should say a few words to them and use every means to restore their joy of heart." "From time to time have something good and pleasant to tell them to banish their sadness and cheer them. . . . We must divert them by harmless amusements. I would like you to have a fund of interesting anecdotes to entertain them with. Be convinced that it requires great tact to give the children opportune and agreeable amusement and distraction. You will need more skill to provide them with happy recreations than to give them fine instructions."<sup>4</sup>

"If you ever find certain days long and weary, seek refuge at once with him whose word or glance suffices to dissipate the clouds of sadness and restore joy to your heart; go with confidence and lay your burden at his feet, confide to him the bitterest trials of your heart, pour out your soul into his, all burning with love. Take up your dwelling in his divine Heart, bury yourself there; you will find ineffable peace and receive more than you expected to obtain."<sup>5</sup>

### *Her Action*

"In a heart so filled with God, how could any spirit other than that of joy predominate?"<sup>6</sup> Throughout Mary Euphrasia's conferences, letters, and the testimony given during the process of her canonization, numerous references are made to her joyous spirit founded in her faith in God and her zeal for the salvation of souls.

"My heart is full of joy when a sanctuary lamp is lighted in a new chapel of the congregation or in some ancient monastery buffeted by storms, having been put to profane use for so many years, and which we have been able to restore to its original use! One of my greatest consolations is to have re-lighted the lamp before our Lord in the Abbey of St. Florent. Each time I visit that dear house, my soul is inundated with the sweetest consolations when kneeling beneath that light. And how many other lamps have we not had the happiness of re-lighting ...

3. *Conferences*, ch. 39 (1907) 249, (1994) 299.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 61 (1907) 380, 382-83, (1994) 447, 450-51.

5. *Conferences*, ch. 12 (1907) 95, (1994) 120.

6. Morrison, "Secret of Sanctity," 243.

St. Savinien in Sens and the Abbey of St. Nicholas in Angers. Isn't it true that you too are delighted about it?"<sup>7</sup>

Writing to Sr. M. Stanislaus Bedouet, Mary Euphrasia expresses her joy in a new foundation: " 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.' He has founded Poitiers! Oh! what a beautiful flock!" And, to Sr. M. Sophie Lavoye, she reveals her happiness in the success of the "holy work": "I am filled with joy that the good God gives you as well as us so many souls to instruct."<sup>8</sup>

"I do not wonder at St. Ignatius' joy when he received St. Francis Xavier's first letter. My joy, too, is full, and beyond all words."<sup>9</sup>

"Our holy Mother carried to recreation a sweetness and joyousness that expanded all hearts, imparting to them an easy and spontaneous liberty. Like St. Teresa, our Mother never cramped anyone whether at recreation, at prayer, or in the practice of obedience."<sup>10</sup>

From the beginning of the Good Shepherd in Angers, Mary Euphrasia had wanted to build a chapel to accommodate the communities and classes that were developing at the motherhouse. In 1832, Count de Neuville offered the finances required and Mary Euphrasia joyfully accepted. Her biographer describes the scene: "She and the other religious and novices forthwith set to work to dig out stones to build with. Zeal for the house of God excited and sustained them. Anyone who saw them in their pious eagerness, joyfully working, spade and pick in hand, must have been struck with admiration. The thought of God's presence and the longing to build for him a house, gave them strength for the work."<sup>11</sup>

Mary Euphrasia found her greatest joy in cooperating with Christ in the divine work of redemption.

### *Inspiration*

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything,

7. *Conferences*, ch. 12 (1907) 95, (1994) 120.

8. *Letters of February 20, 1839, and October 4, 1835 (MS)*; Lk 1:46-47.

9. *Pasquier*, 2:475. *Mary Euphrasia's comment to the Angers community on the receipt of a letter from the mission in Bangalore, March 3, 1857.*

10. *Extract from the Process for Beatification, cited by Sr. M. Odile Laugier, "Saint Mary Euphrasia," 22.*

11. *Pasquier*, 1:124.

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.—Phil 4:4-7 NRSV

### *Our Discipleship*

Consider the joy you have experienced during the last few days. What part did God play in this experience? How can you increase your capacity to experience joy in God? Write your own psalm or Magnificat thanking God for the joyful events and special graces given you during your life.

Mary Euphrasia lived in joy while immersed in contradictions and trials. Dialogue with her to understand better how to deepen your own capacity to rejoice in God even in the midst of sadness or sorrow.

"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."<sup>12</sup> How can you apply this to yourself and to your desire to reach other souls? Do you pray for your own continual conversion and for the conversion of others?

Continue your study of the Scriptures to encourage you in the joy of the Lord: Pss 33, 100, and 126; Isa 12:1-6, and 61:10; Jer 15:16; Mt 5:1-12 and 13:44; Lk 15:32; Jn 15:7-11 and 16:20-24; Gal 5:22-26.

Seek the guidance of the Spirit through the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 301, 523, 736, 1720-28, 1832.





I thank you, Yahweh, with my whole heart,  
I recount all your wonders,

I rejoice and delight in you,  
I sing to your name, Most High.

Ps 9:1-2

I keep Yahweh before me always,  
for with him at my right hand, nothing can shake me.

So my heart rejoices, my soul delights,  
my body too will rest secure,  
for you will not abandon me to Sheol,  
you cannot allow your faithful servant to see the abyss.  
You will teach me the path of life,  
unbounded joy in your presence,  
at your right hand delight for ever.

Ps 16:8-11 NJB

## *Faith*

Everything is possible for one who has faith.

Mk 9:24 NJB



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"Faith is a gift of God, and is the root and foundation of the greatest virtues. Persons animated by faith see God everywhere and in everything. If all our actions were animated by a spirit of faith, they would become meritorious and would be ascribed to us for justice and sanctification, as was formerly the firm belief of Abraham. He hoped against hope, sustained by his faith in the immutability of God's word. I fully approve of those who, to obtain the gift of a lively faith, have recourse to the intercession of this holy patriarch.

"Spiritual life cannot exist without a spirit of faith. If you possess a spirit of faith, you will hear with joy this sentence which may be applied to you: The just live by faith.' As also that other, They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.' "<sup>1</sup>

"You must beware of ever letting your spirit of faith slacken. Instruct yourselves, instruct yourselves! Do not hesitate to go back upon the fundamental truths of religion. To read again and again the Epistles

1. *Conferences, ch. 5 (1907) 37-38, (1994) 49-51; Rom 4:1-25; Gal 3:6-9; Gen 17:1-8, 22:1-19.*

and Gospels. Cling to Catholic doctrine and do not deviate from it on the smallest point."<sup>2</sup>

"Apply yourselves diligently to the study of religion. I cannot recommend too highly the study of the catechism. You should always have it at hand. However long you live, you will always need its doctrine for yourself and to teach it to others. Often read sacred history, above all the history of the Church."<sup>3</sup>

"The way of faith is the way of the cross. Those who live by faith are always contented, whatever tribulation they suffer or whatever contradictions they experience, because they esteem themselves happy to have something to offer to God, to whom they fly on the wings of faith."<sup>4</sup>

"If you are generous enough to allow yourselves to be crucified after the example of our divine Savior, to die with him so as to bury your poor human nature in the tomb, you will rise gloriously from the sepulchre, as he did, to be born again in a divine life which, begun here below in the mysterious obscurity of faith, will have its completion in the splendors of eternal glory, when we shall be able to say with truth: 'I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me.'"<sup>5</sup>

### *Her Action*

"When Mary Euphrasia was superior at Angers, the sister who directed the girls asked her advice about a child who was giving much trouble. 'Have confidence, my dear daughter. The Lord will change the wolf into a lamb. I will go now and pray for that intention. Then I will come to the class for a few moments.' She found the penitent, however, even more determined than ever to leave the safe shelter of the Good Shepherd. She called the child to her, made the sign of the cross on the girl's forehead, and said: 'Now, dear child, go. Go, if you have the courage to do so, where the devil calls you.' Touched by her words, the girl asked pardon and begged to be allowed to remain. From that day she lived a life which gave much edification."<sup>6</sup>

2. *Conferences*, ch. 2 (1907) 14, (1994) 23.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 2 (1907) 11, (1994) 20.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 5 (1907) 38-39, (1994) 51-52.

5. *Conferences*, ch. 25 (1907) 190, (1994) 228; Gal 2:20.

6. Morrison, "Secret of Sanctity," 11-12.

In a letter to Sr. M. Louis she stated: "We have received a request for a foundation . . . what a miracle. I can only kneel in adoration. We are being offered a house equipped with furniture and linen. . . . But, between us, my child, I am short of sisters. Still, if God wants it, he will achieve his work, for, as you yourself see, the crosses have not been able to destroy the holy work. Oh, no, on the contrary, never have there been so many blessings. Thank the Lord with us, and let us try to gain more and more grace."<sup>7</sup>

She wrote in 1840 to Sr. M. Teresa de Couespel: "I pray and wait. Oh, life of God, life of the cross, life of faith! It is in you that the works are brought forth. How my soul suffers, but how I love God!"<sup>8</sup> And to the sisters who made the first foundation in America, "Here, my dear affectionate daughters, I will quote the words of the apostle St. Paul: 'Rejoice without ceasing in the Lord your God!' You are so fortunate to have been chosen for this beautiful mission! Your companions envy your lot, they all want to go to see you in America, they all want to go out and help you one day!"<sup>9</sup>

"In the exercise of her apostolic life, she converted the most hardened sinners, and strengthened in the faith souls newly converted to the Church. Her strong and ardent faith continued until death. Before receiving the holy Viaticum she exclaimed, in the presence of the whole community, 'I declare that I die a daughter of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church.' After her thanksgiving she added, 'My children, above all, cling to Holy Church.'"<sup>10</sup>

### *Inspiration*

Then what do we say about Abraham, the ancestor from whom we are descended physically? If Abraham had been justified because of what he had done, then he would have had something to boast about. But not before God: does not scripture say: Abraham put his faith in God and this was reckoned to him as uprightness? Now, when someone works, the wages for this are not considered as a favour but as due;

7. *Mary Euphrasia to Sr. M. Louis Royne, July 27, 1834 (MS).*

8. *Spirit and Charism, 23.*

9. *Mary Euphrasia to the Sisters in Louisville, Ky., November 11, 1842, in Letters, 179.*

10. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues, 6.*

however, when someone, without working, puts faith in the one who justifies the godless, it is this faith that is reckoned as uprightness. . . .

For the promise to Abraham and his descendants that he should inherit the world was not through the Law, but through the uprightness of faith. . . . Abraham is our father in the eyes of God, in whom he put his faith. . . .

Though there seemed no hope, he hoped and believed that he was to become *father of many nations in fulfillment of the promise: Just so will your descendants be*. Even the thought that his body was as good as dead—he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was dead too did not shake his faith. Counting on the promise of God, he did not doubt or disbelieve, but drew strength from faith and gave glory to God, fully convinced that whatever God promised he has the power to perform. This is the faith that was *reckoned to him as uprightness*. And the word "reckoned" in scripture applies not only to him; it is there for our sake too—our faith, too, will be "*reckoned*" because we believe in him who raised from the dead our Lord Jesus who was *handed over to death for our sins* and raised to life for our justification.—Rom 4:1-5, 13, 17, 18-25 NJB

### *Our Discipleship*

"Be animated with that faith which will. . . enable you to tread with ardor the ways of God."<sup>11</sup> Do you value faith? Do you believe that it is the pearl beyond all price? Do you consider that with the onslaught of the world's influence, you could lose its vigor, or lose it entirely? Do you pray frequently for an increase in the gift of faith, "Lord, I do believe, help my unbelief?"

"To obtain what we ask in prayer we must have faith."<sup>12</sup> Jesus said, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed . . ." (Mt 17:20). Recall the last request you made of God. Examine it in the light of your reflections on faith after the example of St. Mary Euphrasia. Renew your request of God or the intercession of Mary or of the saints.

"Work wholeheartedly at the tasks given you to do and you will hear one day from God's own lips: 'Come, faithful servant, come and receive the reward you have earned by your labors and your virtues.'<sup>13</sup>

11. *Conferences*, ch. 5 (1907) 38, (1994) 51; Mk9:24.

12. *Conferences*, ch. 12 (1907) 96, (1994) 122.

13. *Conferences*, ch. 21 (1907) 166, (1994) 201; Mt 35:24.

Do you apply to yourself the words of St. James, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (Jas 2:17). Consider in the light of the Gospel how your faith ought to underpin and guide everything that you do.

Reflect on faith in the Holy Scriptures, as for example: Gen 12:1-9, 21:1-7, and 22:1-19; Heb 11 and 12; Ps 146; Mt 6:25-34, 8:2-13, 9:2-8, 18-34, 14:35-36, and 16:8; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 7:36-50 and 17:5-19; Jn 4:46-54, 6:40, 9:7, and 14:1-31; Rom 10:17; Gal 5:6; Rev 14:12.

Study faith in the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 26, 142-65, 176-84, 205, 736, 1691-98, 1814-16.



O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

## Hope

Let us keep firm in the hope we profess, because the one who made the promise is trustworthy.

Heb 10:23 NJB



### *St. Mary Euphrasia 's Vision*

"We are told in Holy Scripture that 'He went about doing good.' The leper in the Gospel had only to say with faith and humility, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean,' and his leprosy was instantly cured.... How great should be our confidence, when the signal favor is granted to us of possessing within us this divine Physician of souls, this Master from whom every blessing proceeds. Oh! speak to him then of your poverty, speak to him of your infirmities. Beg him to cure you. ... Do not fear to approach him since he himself calls you. He is the God of all consolation and he loves to see that we confide entirely in his goodness."<sup>1</sup>

"Your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion goes about seeking whom he may devour.' He was artful enough to cause Adam and Eve to sin in the earthly paradise; he led Judas, our Lord's disciple, into the most horrible of crimes; he dared to approach Jesus himself to tempt him. What more can be said? Who is there that he will respect and not endeavor to disturb? Above all, can you think that he will leave you in peace while you wage war against him? Go forth then to the conflict with

1. *Conferences*, ch. 8 (1907) 63-64, (1994) 81-82; Mt 8:2.

courage, and do not let your adversary gain the victory. Fear greatly your own weakness but have unbounded confidence in God, and do not doubt that he will ever be with you. The prophet Isaiah says: Those who hope in the Lord shall regain their strength, they will sprout wings like eagles, though they run they will not grow weary, though they walk they will never tire.'"<sup>2</sup>

"Pray to him with confidence and with love; recollect that he who desires to do you good holds in his hands the power of God. ... He is ever inviting us to go to him, and we may converse with him as long as we wish. Let us then address ourselves to him on all occasions. Let us expose our needs to him with perfect confidence; let us ask his grace. He is an abyss of charity, and we shall always find in him the assistance we need, and also inexhaustible treasures of consolation. 'Let us hope in the Lord, and we shall never be confounded.'"<sup>3</sup>

### *Her Action*

"The countess Genevieve d'Andigne, the intimate friend of our venerated Mother and the witness of her apostolic labors, loved to call her 'the mother of hope.' In the moment of conflict, Mother Euphrasia used to say: 'We must always hope in God for the grace we need; and in order to win it from him, let us be fervent, not serving him with lukewarmness. . . . However great the difficulties you have to overcome, however hard and painful the sufferings you may be called upon to endure, never lose courage, lest your want of confidence render you unworthy of God's help.' Thus did she strengthen the hearts of her sisters by her sublime hope, and taught them to keep their eyes steadily lifted up to the 'mountain from whence comes help.'"<sup>4</sup>

In 1835, Mother Mary Euphrasia wrote to Sr. M. John of the Cross David: "Your hearts are in the winepress of privation. I see your troubles, and have known them too, and I pray our Lord to give you light and grace. You are deprived of all consolations. Oh! courage! I see in God that these crosses are the very roots of the work which shall flourish

2. *Conferences*, ch. 55 (1907) 342-43, (1994) 404; 1 Pet 5:8; Isa 40:31.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 9 (1907) 81, (1994) 103.

4. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues*, 8-9; *Conferences*, ch. 55 (1907) 342-43, (1994) 404; *Pasquier*, 1:281.



at Nancy. Yes, it will be a great work; yet a little while and you shall see great things. I have the sweet confidence that God will do everything, through Mary, our Mother."<sup>5</sup>

In 1843, she wrote to Sr. M. Louis Royne in Aries, where the difficulties were immense: "You live with God alone because all abandon you except us. ... Do you believe that you can succeed? Humanly speaking I feel it is impossible but God is there and you are so brave."<sup>6</sup>

Mary Euphrasia spoke often of her hope in God and trust in his mercy for ourselves and for everyone, especially for those served by the Good Shepherd. "You must win them," she said, "by means entirely opposite to those to which they are accustomed; treat the roughest with the greatest refinement, speaking to them in gentle terms, sparing them everything that would excite them to impatience or discouragement."<sup>7</sup>

During the last days of her own life, Mary Euphrasia frequently consoled her sorrowing sisters by saying: "Be at peace; as for me, I go to God, where I shall be better able to help you than I can here."<sup>8</sup>

One of the contemplative sisters gave an eye-witness account of Mary Euphrasia's virtue in the canonization process: "God alone was her end and her recompense. God, sought purely for himself, without any attachment to created things: this was our Mother's secret and the source of her holy hope. She had such great confidence in God that we never saw her discouraged or troubled by the difficulties and trials she met with in the government of her Institute."<sup>9</sup>

### *Inspiration*

In my estimation, all that we suffer in the present time is nothing in comparison with the glory which is destined to be disclosed for us, for the whole creation is waiting with eagerness for the children of God to be

5. *Letter of December 17, 1835, cited in Spirituality Commission, United for the Holy Work, 45; Pasquier, 1:274.*

6. *Letter of October 18, 1843, cited in Spirituality Commission, United for the Holy Work, 60.*

7. *Conferences, ch. 62 (1907) 388, (1994) 457.*

8. *Fernandez Concha, Mirror of Virtues, 9.*

9. *Sr. Magdalen St. Rose Prudhomme, AP 24, in Warnig and Dubois, Our Testimonies, 18.*

revealed. It was not for its own purposes that creation had frustration imposed on it, but for the purposes of him who imposed it— with the intention that the whole creation itself might be freed from its slavery to corruption and brought into the same glorious freedom as the children of God. We are well aware that the whole creation, until this time, has been groaning in labor pains. And not only that: we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free. In hope, we already have salvation; in hope, not visibly present, or we should not be hoping— nobody goes on hoping for something which is already visible. But having this hope for what we cannot yet see, we are able to wait for it with persevering confidence.—Rom 8:18-25NJB

### *Our Discipleship*

Ponder the words of St. Mary Euphrasia: "Do not depend upon your own strength. Never yield to discouragement. But with strong faith . . . take up the work, and whether you succeed according to your wishes or not, our Lord will know how to draw profit from it for your soul and the glory of his holy name."<sup>10</sup> How well do you put this admonition into practice? What can you do to increase your hope that God will assist you in all your undertakings?

St. Mary Euphrasia was alert to see the manifestations of God's grace at work in the persons around her. "Grace, it may be said, hovers continually around us, constantly seeking entrance into our souls."<sup>11</sup> How well have you developed the spiritual capacity of seeing God's merciful hand in the experiences of your own and others' lives?

Consult a concordance of Scripture and notice how frequently "Hope in the Lord" occurs in the psalms. Recount the reasons you have for trusting God's goodness to you. What obstacles prevent you from having complete trust in him?

Reflect on hope in the Holy Scriptures, as for example: Pss 25, 31, 33, 34, 42, 62, 119:74, 130, and 146; Isa 2:1-5 and 9:6-7; Mt 6:25-34 and 25:31-46; Lk 1:46-55, 1:67-79, 2:29-32, and 10:20; Jn 11:23-27

10. *Conferences, ch. 20 (1907) 158, (1994) 191.*

11. *Conferences, ch. 46 (1907) 282, (1994) 339.*

and 14:1-31; Rom 4:18, 5:1-5, and 15:4-13; 2 Cor 5:4-10; Eph 1:18-23; Phil 3:17-21; Col 3:1-11; Heb 6:13-20; 1 Pet 1:3-9; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Rev 7:9-17 and 21.

Study hope in the teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1817-21, 2090, 2657.



I lift up my eyes to the mountains;  
where is my help to come from?  
My help comes from Yahweh  
who made heaven and earth.

May he save your foot from stumbling;  
may he, your guardian, not fall asleep!  
You see—he neither sleeps nor slumbers,  
the guardian of Israel.

Yahweh is your guardian, your shade,  
Yahweh, at your right hand.  
By day the sun will not strike you,  
nor the moon by night.

Yahweh guards you from all harm  
Yahweh guards your life,  
Yahweh guards your comings and goings,  
henceforth and for ever.

Ps 121 NJB

# Charity

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you;  
abide in my love.

Jn 15:9 NRSV



## *St. Mary Euphrasia's Vision*

The love Mary Euphrasia had for God overflowed into love of her neighbor. She ceaselessly exhorted her sisters to love God, to endeavor to work for the salvation of souls, and to love one another, as the following quotations illustrate.

"'God is love.' May the spirit of charity always reign among us."

"How great should be our love for God, from whom we have received so many benefits, and who only asks as a proof of our love that we should keep his Law. We can every one of us love our good God, the light-hearted as well as those inclined to melancholy, the circumspect as well as those who are less so, the talented as well as those with fewer gifts. . .

"Do everything as far as possible through love, and you will see what great things you will be able to effect. We can make more progress in one year by love than we could in ten through fear. . . .

"I delight in that passage of the Gospel in which our Lord addresses these gentle words to the apostle St. Peter who had been unfaithful to him: 'Peter, do you love me?' Peter had offended him, yet he does not ask: 'Peter, do you fear me?' And when the disciple's last reply to the reiterated question showed that he was grieved by the doubt they

implied, the divine Master was not satisfied with saying as he had done the first and second time: 'Feed my lambs/ he added also: 'Feed my sheep/ thus constituting him the Pastor of pastors, the infallible head of the whole Church. And here let me remark in passing that Jesus Christ did not say to Peter: 'Govern, be the master' but he used the word: 'Feed' which means, 'prepare pasturage, give nourishment to your lambs and to your sheep.'"<sup>1</sup>

"Oh, how happy are the souls who live by love! It is true they do not live without sorrow, but love delights to suffer, and nothing is hard to one who loves. A soul that ardently loves God no longer runs, she flies along the path of perfection. St. Francis de Sales says, 'How mistaken they are who make sanctity consist in anything but the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Love is the fulfilling of the Law.'"<sup>2</sup>

"When I reflect upon the extent of our Lord's love for us, I must say that we are very ungrateful, giving so little in return for so much love. But what consoles me is to think that his mercy is also boundless. Let us love him then in gratitude for his goodness, taking to heart the promotion of his glory. In exchange he will ever overwhelm us with his blessings."<sup>3</sup>

"Charity should lead us to follow in the footsteps of the divine Shepherd and go in search of the poor sheep, who, having strayed from the fold of Jesus Christ are become the outcasts of the world. A preacher remarked to us lately: 'The world loves sin, but hates the sinner; it despises, abandons, and is merciless towards the poor souls of whose ruin it has been the cause. Only religion opens its arms to the sinners.'"<sup>4</sup>

"The Father gave what was dearest to him, his own Son; and that this mission of love for his creatures might be accomplished, he sent a messenger on earth, the archangel Gabriel, to the holy Virgin who, as the masterpiece of the Creator, was already filled with grace and the most precious gifts of heaven. The celestial ambassador descending to earth announces to this privileged creature the designs and decrees of the infinite mercy of God. The Holy Spirit waits but the consent of this pure

1. *Conferences*, ch. 42 (1907) 263, (1994) 315; ch. 6 (1907) 40-42, (1994) 54-56; *Un4:16*.

2. *Conferences*, ch. 5 (1907) 39; (1994) 52; *Rom 13:10*.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 11 (1907) 90-91, (1994) 115.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 16 (1907) 128; (1994) 155.

Virgin to overshadow her with the power of the Most High. Then are effected marvels which our weak intelligence can never comprehend.

"For whom has God worked these wonders? Perhaps for elect souls, his friends? No, all this was done solely for poor fallen creatures who have wandered from the right path. Behold the love of a God! He loves us passionately, and we, shall we make him no return? Oh yes! we will draw to him some of these souls so dear to his heart."<sup>5</sup>

Throughout her conferences Mary Euphrasia draws attention to the many ways in which it is possible to dampen this charity, which should unite Christians in their endeavor to help their neighbor grow in the love of God.

"Have great respect one for another. Do not be selfish; nothing is more opposed to a tender, cordial charity than cold selfishness. Let the very greatest cordiality reign among you. St. Teresa wrote to Mother Mary of St. Joseph: 'I cannot get accustomed to your cold manner; I enjoy the society of your daughters just as I dread yours!' Above all avoid abruptness. ... If you see someone committing a fault, quietly call her attention to it; never mention a fault you have seen committed. ... Be considerate of one another. . . . Never lessen what is said in favor of another. When someone is praised, add something else good that you know about her."<sup>6</sup>

"The desire to do good to others and to add to the glory of God raises the soul to heavenly thoughts. When a soul is filled with true charity, nothing appears difficult because this charity becomes the principle of all its operations, and it acts only under this influence. It is said in Holy Scripture: 'God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.'"<sup>7</sup>

### *Her Action*

"In a diocese where there was a convent of the Good Shepherd, a gentleman of good position, influenced by a person hostile to the sisters, sent Mary Euphrasia insulting letters. Three weeks after writing the last of these letters he died, and a lady, a relation of his, wrote to one of the

5. *Conferences, ch. 4 (1907) 33-34; (1994): 45-46.*

6. *Conferences, ch. 42 (1907) 263-64; (1994) 316-17.*

7. *Conferences, ch. 21 (1907) 162; (1994) 197; 1 Jn 4:16.*

sisters at Angers: 'After a short illness my cousin has been taken from us. There was, however, time to give him the last sacraments. My grief is very great. Will the Superior General remember him in prayer?' The religious went to Mother General to know what answer she should send. While the sister read the letter to her, tears fell from Mary Euphrasia's eyes. 'No, no!' she exclaimed, 'I do not remember. I always thought him an excellent man. He was deceived. Write to his family; tell them how I sympathize with them, and that tomorrow all the community will go to Communion for his soul.' Then correcting herself: 'But your letter will not arrive soon enough. The poor man's cousin will spend a miserable night. Let us send it by a messenger;' and it was sent accordingly that evening."<sup>8</sup>

"At St. Florent, before Mary Euphrasia had time to get out of the coach, she saw four of the five orphan sisters whom in former days she had received from their dying mother's arms and placed in the convent boarding school. They were waiting for her and ran to meet her with smiling faces. 'Do you remember,' said one, 'how good you always were to little Clementina? Whenever I had done anything naughty I used to fly to your arms for refuge.'"<sup>9</sup>

"The year 1850 was rendered memorable to the people of Angers by a terrible catastrophe. ... A whole battalion of the 11<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry was precipitated one stormy day into the river Maine. The suspension bridge they were crossing gave way suddenly, and the 500 men of which the battalion consisted were all thrown into the water. . . . Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia sent sisters with help of all kinds, and offered her house as a refuge for those victims of the accident who had no other place of shelter. She thought of the departed also, and had the Office for the Dead recited in the convent chapel, suggested a general Communion to the community, with a retreat of three days, and a half-hour extra of prayer. Four days later she despatched a circular letter to her different houses filled with deeply Christian sentiments. She wrote: 'The soldiers were rescued only by the greatest heroism.'"<sup>10</sup>

"One day, in 1848, when Angers was seething with revolution, a tumultuous mob assembled beneath the windows of the Good Shepherd,

8. *Pasquier*, 2:418.

9. *Pasquier*, 2:318-19.

10. *Pasquier*, 2:336-37.

shouting, 'Down with the nuns!' At the noise of the tumult an elderly gentleman, very distinguished looking but wearing traces of some deep grief, showed himself and addressed the mob: 'Friends,' he said, 'why have you come here to insult pious women whose lives are given wholly to the relief of the sufferings of others? Listen to me! I lost my son, and to relieve my sorrow, and especially that of my wife, to whom the outer world has become an insupportable sight, the kind Superior of the Good Shepherd has opened her doors to us, and allows us to live in the out-quarters of her monastery.' These words, spoken with feeling, found their way to the hearts of those to whom they were addressed, the uproar ceased, the crowd quietly dispersed."<sup>11</sup>

Mary Euphrasia encouraged special tenderness for those who were ill or dying. "Jesus Christ willed to experience sadness and anguish in his agony. Did he not say, 'My soul is sorrowful, even unto death?' Is not this encouraging for those who are induced, despite themselves almost, to complain of their extreme sufferings? When you visit someone like this, try to find out what subject of conversation will please her most. Some want others to share their sufferings; well, then, talk about their illness, sympathize with them, weep with them. . . . But if you perceive that your presence wearies, leave in order not to arouse impatience."<sup>12</sup>

In giving testimony at the canonization process, Sr. M. Augustine of Jesus, Provincial of Chili, reported that Mary Euphrasia spoke individually to sisters whom she was sending on mission just before her death. To Sr. M. Ignatius, whom she had appointed to Aden in Southern Arabia, she said: "Just love!" Sr. Ignatius later commented, "Our Mother was not able to continue speaking but I understood that by this word, 'Love,' she was saying to me, 'Love God! Love the Church! Love souls! Love the Institute.'"<sup>13</sup>

### *Inspiration*

And now a lawyer stood up and, to test him, asked, "Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law?"

11. *Pasquier*, 2:303.

12. *Conferences*, ch. 43 (1907) 267, (1994) 320-21.

13. *Mother M. Augustine Fernandez Concha, Witness AP 1, Canonization*, fol. 231.



What is your reading of it?" He replied, "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself*" Jesus said to him, "You have answered right, do this and life is yours."

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" In answer Jesus said, "A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, 'Look after him, and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have.' Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?" He replied, "The one who showed pity towards him." Jesus said to him, "Go, and do the same yourself."—Lk 10:25-37 NJB

### *Our Discipleship*

St. Mary Euphrasia said: "Do as I did, I did nothing great ... I only loved." How could you, as the Good Samaritan, be more generous with your time, your talents, your material goods, your spiritual treasures for the good of others? What riches of the heart have you given away today? Spend time with Jesus, asking him for the courage and strength to overcome your selfish tendencies.

Reflect on the Gospel passage that so deeply touched St. Mary Euphrasia: "Peter, do you love me?" Listen to Jesus asking you this same question.

Reflect on charity in the Scriptures, as for example: Mt 5:43-48, 7:12, 22:34-40, and 25:31-46; Mk 9:36-37; Lk 10:25-37; Jn 3:16, 13:34, and 15:12-17; Rom 5:8 and 13:8-10; 1 Cor 13:1-13; Eph 2:4-10; Col 3:14; 1 Jn 3:1-2 and 4:7-21.

Study charity in the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for example: 864, 1723-24, 1822-29, 1889, 2055.



Set my mind, O God, on the higher gifts. Show me the best way of all. So fill my being with your Spirit of Love that, in loving you above all, my love for everyone else will be patient and kind, never jealous, boastful, conceited, rude or self-seeking, easily taking offense or storing up grievances. Let me never rejoice in wrongdoing but find my joy in the truth; always ready to make allowances for others, trusting, hoping, and enduring whatever comes. Give me faith and hope in abundance that I may receive the greatest gift of all, love, which is you, for you are Love. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Cf. I Cor 12:31 and 13:4-7, 13*

## *Universal Zeal*

Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; . . . and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.

Mt 28:19-20 NJB



### *St. Mary Euphrasia's Vision*

"Charity and zeal should be universal, that is to say, they should extend to all and everything."<sup>1</sup>

"Now that we have received the grace of the generalate with all the blessings of the head of the Church, worthy successor of St. Peter, who wishes us to multiply our houses throughout the universe, you will go and pitch your tents from one end of the world to the other. One city, one foundation must not satisfy your zeal: it must embrace the whole world. St. Paul said: 'I am neither Greek nor Roman, I belong to all nations.' And St. Francis Xavier also said, 'I am not only a Spaniard, I am an Indian, a Chinese, a Japanese, I belong, in fine, to every country in which I have the happiness to preach the Gospel.'

"Such ought to be your sentiments. We must rouse ourselves, we must be ever ready to march. Since we are all pastors, or if you prefer it shepherdesses, we must not be attached to one little corner of the earth. As for myself, I do not wish it said any longer that I am French. I am Italian, English, German, Spanish, African, American, Indian, etc. I belong to every country where there are souls to save.

1. *Conferences*, ch. 42 (1907) 263, (1994) 315.

"When we see there are sheep to be gathered into the fold, we must not fear to go and pitch our tents on the most distant shores. In Italy, in Bavaria, in every part of Europe, in America, Africa, Asia, Oceania, everywhere must we go in search of our Lord's sheep. The conquests you achieve will be in proportion to the alacrity with which you answer the call."<sup>2</sup>

"Set to work; let your zeal be pure, prudent, universal, and persevering. Pure, because it should be inspired by the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all purity. Universal and persevering, not an inconstant zeal which exists for a week and then cools down, but a daily zeal; a universal zeal, which is not affected either by countries or individuals; an enlightened zeal, which saves us from committing acts of imprudence even under the appearance of good. Let us seek counsel when we doubt; by a want of prudence we are sometimes led into unpardonable follies.

"Zeal does not consist in continual preaching, in giving good advice, in constantly exhorting to virtue, but rather in giving good example. Example impresses much more than words, and through it we often obtain astonishing results."<sup>3</sup>

"Courage, go forth to save souls!"<sup>4</sup>

### *Her Action*

"One had but to listen to Mary Euphrasia to feel that she saw the whole world lying open to her zeal, and that she felt a divine inspiration to make her apostolate embrace the universe. She had the most perfect confidence in her mission."<sup>5</sup>

"While I was in prayer our Lord showed me numerous swarms leaving this motherhouse of Angers; even now colonies of new bees await the signal of departure. This emigration will be the beginning of their life of sacrifice. Meanwhile pray, lay up great provisions for the journey. Draw honey in plenty from meditation, be faithful to all the advice given you, to all the recommendations you receive."<sup>6</sup>

2. *Conferences*, ch. 6 (1907) 47-48, (1994) 63; *Portals*, 2:187-88.

3. *Conferences*, ch. 63 (1907) 396, (1994) 467.

4. *Conferences*, ch. 20 (1907) 155, (1994) 188.

5. *Pasquier*, 1:263.

6. *Conferences*, ch. 50 (1907) 313, (1994) 371-72.

"Yes, let us be faithful to the graces received. They are precious indeed, since by means of them we shall work with renewed zeal for the salvation of that multitude of souls which, without the generalate, would have been neglected. Requests for foundations will come from all sides." "Some of you are called to England, others to Africa and America, others to Germany, and certainly several will leave shortly for Lyon."<sup>7</sup>

"Oh, what charity and compassion we should have for these souls placed in our care. Love them, love them very much! Console and strengthen these suffering sheep; make them by God's grace happy, very happy; this is your duty. Do not forget that you will win hearts to our Lord only by love."<sup>8</sup>

"During her lifetime Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia sent her daughters to all parts of the world. From each distant foundation the dying words of one of the first penitents of Australia could be re-echoed: 'Ah, thank you, thank you. Write to your Mother General and tell her all the gratitude of my heart. She has sent her dear daughters to this distant country to help to save my soul and many, many other souls. I will ask God. . . .' The sentence was finished in heaven!"<sup>9</sup>

### *Inspiration*

For the love of Christ overwhelms us when we consider that if one man died for all, then all have died; his purpose in dying for all humanity was that those who live should live not any more for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life. . . .

So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone and a new being is there to see. It is all God's work; he reconciled us to himself through Christ and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation. I mean, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not holding anyone's faults against them, but entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were urging you through us, and in the name of Christ we appeal to you to be

7. *Mary Euphrasia to the Sisters in Metz, February 28, 1835, in Pasquier, 1:229; Conferences, ch. 25 (1907) 185, (1994) 222.*

8. *Conferences, ch. 63 (1907) 395, (1994) 466.*

9. *Pasquier, 2:570-71.*

reconciled to God. For our sake he made the sinless one a victim for sin, so that in him we might become the uprightness of God.

As his fellow-workers, we urge you not to let your acceptance of his grace come to nothing. As he said, "*At the time of my favour I have answered you; on the day of salvation I have helped you*"; well, now is the real time of favour, now the day of salvation is here.—2 Cor 5:14-15, 17-21, 6:1-2 NJB

### *Our Discipleship*

"Charity and zeal should be universal, that is to say, they should extend to all and everything."<sup>10</sup> By a steadfast attentiveness to grace, Mary Euphrasia learned God's will for her and followed it. Every Christian is called to participate in the mission of Jesus. What are you doing to follow in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd? What is your objective? How can you best fulfil it?

"Ask God to give you his love, love for souls, and you will see the marvels this holy love will work in you."<sup>11</sup> Are you penetrated with Jesus' zeal? Do you share the universal zeal of an eighty-year-old widow who, after a simple word of thanks, spoke spontaneously to the assembled mourners at the close of her husband's funeral Mass: "Today, I have prayed for you and everyone in the whole world. May God grant salvation to you and to everyone, everyone in the whole world."<sup>12</sup>

Pope John Paul II, in *Mission of the Redeemer*, speaks of the characteristics of missionary spirituality. "The universal call to holiness is closely linked to the universal call to mission. Every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission."<sup>13</sup> Reflect on these texts. To what extent do you live missionary spirituality? Ask Jesus, Good Shepherd, for the grace of universal zeal.

Suggestions for scriptural reflections: Ezek 34:11-16; Mt 16:21, 18: 12-14, and 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Lk2:49, 4:16-19, 43, 9:24,12:50, and 19:10; Jn 3:16, 10:11-18, and 17:1-26; Rom 10:1, 11-13; 1 Cor 9:22; 2 Cor 5:14-21; 2 Thess 3:1-5; 1 Tim 2:1-4.

10. *Conferences*, ch. 42 (1907) 263, (1994) 315.

11. *Conferences*, ch. 3 (1907) 23, (1994) 34.

12. *Regina Knowles Button*, July 31, 1995.

13. *Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio*, ch. 8, §87-90.

Seek a deeper understanding of your role in the mission of Jesus through study of the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Some suggestions: 2, 3, 543-45, 730, 767, 831, 849-59, 1268-70, 2632.



O Sacred Heart of Jesus, humbly prostrate before you, I beseech you most earnestly to accept the offering I make to you of my whole self. May every beat of my heart be a prayer to obtain mercy and pardon for sinners; may every breath I draw be an act of contrition equal to the penance of the fervent Magdalen; may the food of my life be to work unceasingly for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; may my blood cease to flow in my veins rather than that the precious Blood shed by your Sacred Heart should remain without fruit for sinners. When I turn my eyes towards your divine Majesty in heaven or in the tabernacle, or look on you crucified, or behold your Sacred Heart represented, may strength, courage, and generosity increase in my soul. May the natural movements of my eyes be so many supplications to your divine and merciful Heart to look with a favorable eye on sinful souls and obtain for them the happiness of beholding you eternally. May my every glance have the power to draw the just to a still greater love of their Creator. When I take repose, I beg of you to accept it as watchfulness, to prevent Satan from robbing you of souls, and in exchange for any little privation I may suffer, grant me the grace to be consumed with the same thirst which you suffered on the cross for the salvation of souls, and by an ardent, burning love for your Sacred Heart. Amen.

Prayer of Mother Mary Euphrasia Pelletier. <sup>14</sup>

14. Fernandez Concha, *Mirror of Virtues*, 33; *Our Venerable Mother's Own Words*, 149-50 (adapted).

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