

Blessed Marie-Catherine de Saint-Augustin, AMJ (1632–1668)

Catherine of Saint-Augustin was born on May 3, 1632, in Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, Normandy (France). She is raised by her maternal grandparents who are used to offer hospitality to the poor and sick and teach Catherine the virtue of charity. As early as age three, she expresses a strong desire to do God's will and at age five she has strong mystical prayer experiences. When she is only eight, she understands that the Holy Spirit is calling her to be a saint and at age ten she writes a note giving herself to "Lady Mary".



Catherine is a witty and attractive girl and has a cheerful character. Despite her enjoyment of worldly life, when she is twelve, she decides to enter the community of Hotel-Dieu of Bayeux, which is directed by the Augustinian nuns, Hospital Sisters of the Mercy of Jesus. She enters their novitiate on October 24, 1646, taking the name in religion of Catherine of St. Augustin. When she is fifteen, she offers herself for the Canada mission and promises "to live and die in Canada if God will open its door" for her. She makes solemn profession as a nun on May 4, 1648, in Nantes, and sets sail for Canada on May 27.

The ship arrives in Quebec on August 19. Catherine learns the languages of the First Nations people and looks after the sick. In the spring of 1649, she adopts as her model Saint Jean de Brebeuf, who has just been martyred. Between 1654 and 1668 she fills, one after the other, the offices of treasurer, director of the hospital and novice director for her community. Catherine continues to experience deep prayer and, at the same time, inner temptations cause her great turmoil. She often has health problems. In 1654 she promises to remain in Canada and, in 1658, she offers herself in a spirit of reparation for the salvation of New France. In 1665 she promises to work for "everything that I know to be most perfect and for the greater glory of God". She gets sick and dies on May 8, 1668. She was beatified on April 23, 1989.

QUOTATION:

« I offered myself to the Divine Majesty to serve him as a victim whenever it pleased him; I took no care for my life or my possessions. I only want God to dispose of them according to his holy will »