

1911 – 1922

Venerable Anne of Guigné

On July 29, 1915, Anne of Guigné learned the sad news that her father died in the war (World War I). Anne was only 4 years old at the time, and was the eldest child in her family. Everyone knew her to be a spoiled and capricious child who was jealous of her little brothers and deeply proud. From that day on, however Anne decided that she would become kind and obedient, in order to please her mother and console her for the loss of her daddy. The change was immediate: now she carried out her duties in the most perfect manner possible, and above all she strived not to be so proud and capricious. She often said to her mother: “Mother, just think, daddy can now see us; he loves us, and one day we will also be reunited with him. So don’t be sad.” Two weeks after the death of her father, a solemn Mass was celebrated in the church at Annecy-le-Vieux. Anne was with her grandmother and her aunt Jeanne. After the Mass, her aunt stopped to pray a little while longer and at a certain point she remembered about Anne and asked her: “Perhaps we have been here a little too long; do you want me to give you my Rosary?” Anne responded frankly: “Oh no, Aunt Jeanne, I am speaking with the little Jesus in the Tabernacle.” She was only four years and three months old at the time, but between her and Jesus arose, through an extraordinary gift of grace, an intense conversation of love. There was born inside her the desire to prove to Jesus how much love she had for Him, offering Him many sacrifices. Anne had a great desire to make her First Communion: at only 4 years old, she had already perfectly comprehended that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Holy Mass. One day, she was walking with her grandfather and explained all this to him. They passed by a store of wheat and Anne saw that there were many Grains scattered on the ground. The grandfather asked her: “Anne, do you know what is done with wheat?” Anne answered, “Tell me, grandpa.” Her grandfather began: “The farmer gathers the wheat and then grinds it and then makes flour for us. We use this flour to make bread and also to make the Hosts that the priest gives us at Mass. Do you know what the Hosts become?” Anne responded, “Little Jesus comes and hides Himself in the white Hosts, which become Jesus.” How happy Anne was when she discussed such things! In 1917, when she was only six years old, Anne received her First Communion. That day, Anne wrote: “My Jesus, I love You, and to please You, I resolve to obey You always.” This was a resolution to become a saint, or rather, to obey the Lord always in order to become a saint. To her mother she wrote: “I will try to be obedient always in order to please Jesus and our heavenly Mother. It seems to me that Jesus has placed this desire in my heart. I said to Him that I wanted to be very obedient and I seemed to hear Him say: “Well then, obey!”

Her catechist, Sister Germaine, one day asked her these questions: “What is your secret? And what is the greatest happiness on earth, according to you?” Anne responded: “Jesus loves me very much and I love Him very much; this is my secret and my greatest happiness is to suffer much for our gracious God.” This Love for the Lord impelled her to wish to see Jesus known and loved by all. Her eyes welled up with tears when she heard about men and women who offended the Lord with their sins. She would repeat at that point: “We ourselves have to love the Lord Jesus even more, for those who do not love Him.” Her practice of frequent Confession and her encounter with the Eucharistic Jesus in daily Communion enabled her to forget herself for the sake of others. “She arrived at the point,” says her catechist, “where she would forget her own self so completely, as if she herself no longer existed.” On December 19, 1921, Anne became gravely ill. Her face had become disfigured from the pain. She resolved: “I wish to offer my sufferings as Jesus did on the Cross.” With incredible strength, she never uttered any lament. “You are comforting Jesus and converting sinners,” her mother reminded her. She responded: “Well then, if this is so, I wish to suffer even more.” Hour after hour, she offered her sufferings for the Church and for those far from God. She did not want to pray for herself, but only for others. In those days between the years 1921 and 1922, Anne prepared herself to meet her greatest Love: the Lord Jesus... and He came for her at 5:25 on Saturday morning, January 14, 1922. On March 3, 1990, Pope John Paul II declared her “heroic in the practice of Christian virtue,” that is, “venerable.”