

Blessed Maria of the Incarnation

1566-1618

Barbara Avrillot was born in Paris in 1566 to a noble family. She brought the Carmelite reformation of Saint Teresa of Avila to France.

She studied under the Minor Sisters of the Humility of Our Lady at Longchamp and shortly thereafter she was married to the Viscount of Villemor, from whom she bore six children. St. Francis de Sales was one of her spiritual directors. In 1601 she was introduced to the writings of Saint Teresa and was so deeply impressed that she decided to bring the disalced Carmelites to France. The first Carmel arose in Paris in 1604, followed by Pointoise, Dijon and Amiens. All three of her daughters took the habit and became nuns. Likewise she did the same in 1614, after the death of her husband, and took the name of Maria of the Incarnation. She died in 1618. The night before her departure for the Carmel of Amiens, she made a pilgrimage to the monastery of Feullants, in Paris, to entrust herself to Saint Bernard, to whom she was very devoted: as she stepped foot onto the first step of the stairs to the door of the Church, she heard a music so sweet that she was almost enraptured... it was the singing of

the Angels. She had never heard anything more harmonious. The celestial concert continued the whole time she remained in the Church. Four years later, in the Carmel of Pointoise, during her long and painful sickness, she was comforted by the Angels twice in the same manner.

