

August 12, 2021

Good Morning All,

1. Today's Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/081221.cfm>

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: St. Jane Frances de Chantal was happily married. Despite the early financial worries, she and her husband shared "one heart and one soul." They were devoted to each other and to their four children.

One way Jane shared her blessings was by giving bread and soup personally to the poor who came to her door. Often people who had just received food from her would pretend to leave, go around the house and get back in line for more. When asked why she let these people get away with this, Jane said, "What if God turned me away when I came back to him again and again with the same request?" (Catholic.org)

Her husband was tragically killed but God had further plans for her life. Along with today's biography, we have included a memoir of a talk given by St. Jane to her sisters.

3. Quotes of the Day:

~ "When all else has forsaken us, it is then that we are least forsaken by God."

~ "We should go to prayer with deep humility and an awareness of our nothingness. We must invoke the help of the Holy Spirit and that of our good angel, and then remain still in God's presence, full of faith that He is more in us than we are than we are in ourselves."

~ "There is no danger if our prayer is without words or reflection because the good success of prayer depends neither on words nor on study. It depends upon the simple raising of our minds to God, and the more simple and stripped of feeling it is, the surer it is."

St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Pray for Us!

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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"In Madame de Chantal I have found the perfect woman, whom Solomon had difficulty finding in Jerusalem". - St. Francis de Sales, her spiritual director.

St. Jane Frances de Chantal was born in Dijon, France, **on January 28**, 1572, and died at the Visitation Convent Moulins **on December 13**, 1641.

Jane (Jeanne) was born into nobility, her father being the president of the parliament of Burgundy. At age 20 she was married to the Baron de Chantal. Jane had four children, and loved and served her young family deeply until the death of her husband in a hunting accident at age 28.

For seven years she was forced to live in the house of her father in law, a trial which she was forced to bare patiently due to his ill-disposition towards her, and it was during this time that she took a vow of perpetual chastity.

In all of her prayers, Jane asked God to send her a guide. In a vision, He showed her the spiritual director that He held in reserve for her. During Lent, in 1604, she visited her father at Dijon, where St. Francis de Sales was preaching at the Sainte Chapelle. She recognized in him the mysterious director who had been shown to her, and she placed herself under his guidance. Then began the famous correspondence between the two saints which produced volumes of letters of

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spiritual direction, some of which are available today, but most of which were destroyed by her upon the death of St. Francis.

She went to Annecy in 1610, where she believed God was calling her to found an order for women and girls who felt called to live the life of Christian perfection, but not practice the severe asceticism of the religious orders of the time.

Thus the Congregation of the Visitation was canonically established at Annecy on June 6th, 1610, Trinity Sunday. The method of spiritual perfection of the Visitation nuns was that of St. Francis, which consisted in always keeping one's will united to the Divine will, in taking -so to speak- one's soul, heart, and longings into one's hands and giving them into God's keeping, and in seeking always to do what is pleasing to Him. There were 86 convents of the Visitation nuns at the time of her death 31 years later.

St. Jane Frances de Chantal's spirituality was a strong and resilient one; she did not like to see her daughters giving way to human weaknesses, and encouraged constant battle against the passions and habits which keep one from following God's will.

Her trials were continuous and borne bravely, and yet she was exceedingly sensitive. She endured interior crosses which, particularly during the last nine years of her life, kept her in an agony of soul, from which she was not freed until three months before her death.

Her reputation for sanctity was widespread. Queens, princes, and princesses flocked to the reception-room of the Visitation. Wherever she went to establish foundations, the people gave her ovations. "These people", she would say confused, "do not know me-they are mistaken".

Her body is venerated with that of St. Francis de Sales in the church of the Visitation at Annecy. She was canonized in 1767.

Source: Catholicnewsagency.com

From The Memoirs by the secretary of St. Jane Frances de Chantal

Love is as strong as death

One day Saint Jane spoke the following eloquent words, which listeners took down exactly as spoken:

"My dear daughters, many of our holy fathers in the faith, men who were pillars of the Church, did not die martyrs. Why do you think this was?" Each one present offered an answer; then their mother continued. "Well, I myself think it was because there is another martyrdom: the martyrdom of love. Here God keeps his servants and handmaids in this present life so that they may labor for him, and he makes of them both martyrs and confessors. I know," she added, "that the Daughters of the Visitation are meant to be martyrs of this kind, and that, by the favor of God, some of them, more fortunate than others in that their desire has been granted, will actually suffer such a martyrdom."

One sister asked what form this martyrdom took. The saint answered: "Yield yourself fully to God, and you will find out! Divine love takes its sword to the hidden recesses of our inmost soul and divides us from ourselves. I know one person whom love cut off from all that was dearest to her, just as completely and effectively as if a tyrant's blade had severed spirit from body."

We realized that she was speaking of herself. When another sister asked how long the martyrdom would continue, the Saint replied: "From the moment when we commit ourselves unreservedly to God, until our last breath. I am speaking, of course, of great-souled individuals who keep nothing back for themselves, but instead are faithful in love. Our Lord does not intend this martyrdom for those who are weak in love and perseverance. Such people he lets continue on their mediocre way, so that they will not be lost to him; he never does violence to our free will."

Finally, the saint was asked whether this martyrdom of love could be put on the same level as martyrdom of the body. She answered: "We should not worry about equality. I do think, however, that the martyrdom of love cannot be relegated to a second place, for love is as strong as death. For the martyrs of love suffer infinitely more in remaining in this life so as to serve God, than if they died a thousand times over in testimony to their faith and love and fidelity."

Source: liturgies.net, Office of Readings for St. Jane Frances de Chantal

