



The Message



of



Maria Anna Blandine

The Message of Marie Anne Blondin

A Word from the Editor

This issue of *The Message of Marie Anne Blondin* is coming to you a little late, but our sincere wish is still to help you get to know more about our Foundress as well as her outreach around the world. This issue of the *Message*, which began publication in 1958, not long after the opening of the canonization process for our beloved Mother, has always sought to explore the many facets of this great, Quebec-born figure of saintliness. Over the years, a succession of Sisters of Saint Anne have written about their Mother, focusing on the evangelical values she put forward in her life.

We are at the beginning of a new phase. The Marie Anne Blondin Centre has been dismantled to develop a new way of organizing things more in keeping with present requirements in terms of available personnel and premises. From now on, a number of people in the General Secretariat and the Finance Office will be assigned to various tasks to help achieve our objective, which is to remain a place and a link for communicating information about our dear Foundress.

Our *Message* truly will be that of Mother Marie Anne. It will still contain the same features: an article that stirs our affection and admiration for our mother, a compilation of favours received and grateful testimonies, and finally, information on the status of the Cause of Mother Marie Anne. Declared Venerable on May 14, 1991, and then Blessed on April 29, 2001, our Mother seems to be moving closer to the Church's supreme recognition. In the hope that this will indeed happen one day, we do not hesitate to pray to our Blessed Marie Anne Blondin for all the intentions that are close to our hearts. May our confidence be rewarded.

I would like to take advantage of the New Year to wish you every grace and blessing. May Blessed Marie Anne Blondin always hear you, and may she obtain for you the Lord's mercy, joy, peace and serenity.

Madeleine Lanoue, SSA
General Secretary

IT'S SNOWING MERCY!

It's snowing mercy, coming down in great, thick snowflakes! I'm using this expression to emphasize the quiet nature of mercy, as well as the sense of wonder it stirs in us. It's snowing mercy here in January 2016, as we are engulfed in the winter season's snowstorms. Do you not see mercy popping up here and there all over the world? Wherever a mass killing has taken place, flowers, plush toys and candles suddenly begin to appear in a ritual of loving remembrance, a flame of compassion. Men and women touch, put their arms around each other and hug each other, as if to ward off evil. They protest, they carry signs saying "Love is better than hate!" People even pray together, whatever their religion, to the God who "crowns us with steadfast love and mercy" (Ps 103:4b), the God who "is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Ps 103:8). What does God do? Like the father of the prodigal son, He does not speak. If He does speak, He does it quietly. He is silent, like the snow... Anyone who sins will find in Him the hidden strength of



THE PRODIGAL SON, BY REMBRANDT

being defenceless, like the prodigal son who does not have enough time to finish his little prepared speech. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Lk 15:18-19). Filled with compassion, the father runs and puts his arms around him and kisses him (Lk 15:20). The father takes the son in his arms to show that he is forgiven. And then he throws a party: "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one..."

(Lk 15:22). A storm of love for a son who repents! The father holds him close with both hands, as in the painting by Rembrandt. The father is completely stunned at the return of his son. “What could be more feeble and more helpless than God, since He can do nothing without us?” (C Claudel) When we take one step toward Him, the Father runs to us! That’s mercy! The Hebrew word “rahamim” means “insides, depths”. Deeply moved within, the father brings forth his son to new life.

Yes, it’s snowing mercy

Pope Francis has made it the guiding light of his pontificate, in the wake of the Council, of John Paul II who established Divine Mercy Sunday and wrote the encyclical *Dives in misericordia* (God, Rich in Mercy), and of Benedict XVI and his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (Love in Truth). But Pope Francis goes further: in several editions of his most recent book, *The Name of God is Mercy*, the Pope has written the title in his own hand. It is as if the Pope wanted to write in our hearts, engrave on them, the name of Mercy. Oh, shine in our hearts, Star of Mercy. “The Clement, the Merciful”, says the Quran about God, “Who is like you, Father of Mercy?”, asks the Jewish prayer. “Merciful like the Father”, says the logo for the Jubilee of Mercy. *Misericordes sicut Pater* is the hymn for the Jubilee, echoing from cathedrals, humble churches and chapels.

It’s snowing mercy in the logo for the Jubilee Year

Christ, the Good Shepherd, dressed in the white garment of the Resurrection, carries an injured man on his shoulders. With his wounded hands, the Good Shepherd bears the man; in His mercy, holding him as if to breathe new strength into him from the very Heart of our God. This Good Shepherd wears the halo of the

Conqueror; He has conquered Death and Evil. The man is wearing a gold-coloured garment, a robe of celebration, for daring to admit that he is a sinner. “Bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him,” orders the father of the prodigal son (Lk 15:22). The hands and feet of the man are hanging loose; he is being carried by the Good Samaritan par excellence: Jesus. The man’s left eye and Christ’s right eye overlap each other. From now on, the man sees with Christ and in Christ “all things new” (Rv 21:5). He sees things differently. He sees God with a purified eye, purified enough to say: “Abba! Father! I know that you love me!” And he looks at his neighbour, whoever that may be, with the eyes of Jesus.



It snowed mercy in the life of Mother Marie Anne

As a child, Esther Blondin discovered mercy in her parents, who were so good, so tender. She also discovered it in her own heart that went out to the poor, the sick and the suffering. Later, she showed mercy to the young women of her parish who were part of a Marian group. What joy she felt as she walked with them along their spiritual path! At age 22, Esther decided to go back to school so that she could show mercy to children who did not know how to read or write and so could not go to catechism class. Her heart was so pained by their suffering that she was willing to sit in the classroom and learn, in exchange for doing small tasks for the Sisters of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame. These sisters had such an influence on her that she entered their novitiate to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. Illness soon forced her to return to her family home. But Providence did allow her to become a teacher, to help out a friend at the village school. She soon rose to become the prin-

cial of the Academy that bears her name. With God, all things are possible! Soon she found herself approaching the Bishop of Montreal for permission to found a religious order to teach poor children in the countryside.

The beginnings of her religious order were humble, but God provided. Four years after founding her Institute, Mother Marie Anne met with unheard-of difficulties. Her stumbling block: a bold young chaplain who overstepped himself and caused her terrible suffering.

At the start of this “war”, Mother Marie Anne demanded her rights and reported everything to the Community’s spiritual father, good Bishop Bourget, who encouraged and supported her. But the wind suddenly changed, and the Bishop required Mother Marie Anne to give up the title of Superior even if the Community wanted to give it to her again. A strange decision! Mother Marie Anne accepted it humbly, however, in words that clearly show her inner attitude: “I bless Divine Providence a thousand times for being a mother to me as it led me through tribulations and crosses... For myself, my Lord Bishop, what causes me pain is that I have not done all the good I wanted to do for the glory of God and the good of the Community, and for doing the evil that I certainly did not want to do; but I pray you, my Lord, to forgive me all the faults I may have committed during my time as Superior.” No words could have been more heartfelt. Mother Marie Anne was 45 years old. In a short period of time, she had made giant steps in learning forgiveness. God’s grace in her was not in vain. She could sign her letter in all truth as: “Your humble and obedient daughter in Jesus Christ”. She was removed from the Motherhouse so that she “could not cause harm” and sent to Sainte-Genève where the open persecution would continue.



PHOTO : J. LOUPRET

Mother Marie Anne not only forgave, she performed acts of mercy. She invited the same priest who caused her so much suffering to come and preach a retreat for her pupils in Sainte-Geneviève. She fasted in reparation for the faults committed in the Community. Over time, she did not even complain of the poor treatment she received, simply stating the facts when the truth required it. She became merciful, a woman of forgiveness, a heart of compassion for any suffering, whether physical, moral or spiritual. She really did apply in her life the corporal and spiritual works of mercy recommended by our Pope Francis, especially those involving care, comfort and encouragement.

Prayer:

O Mother Marie Anne, prophet of mercy throughout your life,

Help us enter this Jubilee Year of Mercy with excitement and real devotion.

Teach us forgiveness that saves and heals,

teach us the gentle and merciful gaze that does not look down on an adversary,

true humility that accepts every hurt as an opportunity for spiritual growth.

From the glory of heaven where you live, obtain for us from the Father of Mercies,

the grace to forgive 77 times 7 times (Mt 18:22), that is, without ceasing,

and ever more deeply.

Amen.

Pierrette Petit, S.S.A.

GRATEFUL TESTIMONIES FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for her protection during a successful lung operation.

G. L., St-Lambert, QC

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for answering my prayer during an operation.

J. D., age 98, Laval, QC

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for my successful cataract surgery and also for helping my granddaughter with MS to get the job she wanted. I have great confidence in Mother Marie Anne and pray to her every day.

M. L., Victoria, British Columbia

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for protection on the road. I travel a lot on business and I feel her presence beside me. Twice I was able to avoid an accident.

G.L., Laval, QC

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for all favours received.

M. A., Rockville, MD, U.S.A.

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for protecting my son during a car accident.

B. D., Bourget, Ontario

I asked Mother Marie Anne to keep my daughter's eyes from getting worse and she did.

J. A., Cap-Aux-Meules, Iles-de-la-Madeleine, QC

I am sending you a small donation for favours received through Mother Marie Anne. I pray to her every day. I have great confidence in her.

M.A., Balmoral, New Brunswick

I had breast cancer and within six months I had all the examinations, an operation and 29 radiation treatments. Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for her help.

J. G., St-Jérôme, QC

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for all her goodness. She has been good to me and my family. I have great confidence in her.

R. M., Hawkesbury, Ontario

We have confidence in Mother Marie Anne. Here is a donation to her Cause.

D. and S., Coppell, TX, U.S.A.

Thanks to the intercession of Mother Marie Anne, I saw my son again after a nine-year absence. Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for hearing my prayers.

P. G., Sainte-Marie-Salomé, QC

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for answering my prayers for my husband, who had two operations in three days and almost died.

D. R., Repentigny, QC

I recently wrote to ask for your help in selling my mother's house. Even before I sent the letter, the house was sold at the asking price. Thank you for the favour received.

Joanne, Joliette, QC

Between November and May, my family and I suffered four bouts of gastroenteritis. I asked Mother Marie Anne to send the germs far away from my house and my family, and she answered my prayers.

M. J. A., Fatima, Iles-de-la-Madeleine, QC

Thank you to Mother Marie Anne for protecting my children on a trip to Indonesia and for my daughter's lovely wedding, in spite of the rain. I am thankful for the way she looks after us. She never lets us down.

L. P., Mascouche, QC

Cause of Marie Anne Blondin

What's new?

On April 29, 2014, the community named Fr. Thomas Klosterkamp, OMI, as postulator for the Cause in Rome. In one of his recent messages to us, Father Klosterkamp stressed the need for us to find ways to make known the charism of Blessed Marie Anne Blondin and to show how she is a woman “for the world”. If you have anything to send us in regard to this, please note that all evidence needs to be written up and documented, in order to expand the file for her Cause, which we hold so dear. Please see below for specific information.

During the coming year, the 15th anniversary of the beatification of Blessed Marie Anne Blondin, let us all make a concerted effort to help advance the Cause.

Favours received:

- Thank you for telling us how your prayers have been answered.
- If you wish to make a donation, please make your cheque to the order of:

Œuvres de charité — Sœurs de Sainte-Anne
1950 Provost Street
Lachine, QC H8S 1P7

THE MESSAGE OF MARIE ANNE BLONDIN

The Eucharist is celebrated quarterly for the intentions
of all benefactors and friends

This publication is not intended to anticipate in any way
the decisions of our Holy Mother Church,
but wishes to conform entirely to her rules and spirit.

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