

## In Hope with Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon

Adèle was born on June 10, 1789, a few weeks before the outbreak of the French Revolution. The Revolution forced the de Batz de Trenquelléon family into exile in Spain, then in Portugal and finally in San Sebastian. In San Sebastian Adèle made her first communion before returning to Feugarolles in November 1801. This whole troubled period of her childhood was marked by hope and trust in God ; in relation to her father, who fought for the King of France and was forced into distant exile in England; in abandonment to the Lord in wanting to become a Carmelite; in hoping for peace and a return to the family home.

When "La Petite Société" was formed, the objective was clear: "the goal of this Society is to obtain a good death" and to inspire others to serve God, under the protection of the Virgin Mary, and to save themselves. This desire for eternity was constant and obvious to everyone around Adèle, and fed the hope of reaching the homeland of heaven.

To do this, we must advance on the path of perfection through a "holy life" by cooperating with God's will for us. To Agathe Diché she wrote: "... let us despise a world which passes so rapidly, and not set our hearts nor our hopes on it. Let us love our divine Master... (March 8, 1813). And to Lolotte de Lachapelle: "My dear friend, let us ascend to heaven in heart and in mind. Abandoning this earth, let us pin our hopes and all our desires on the blessed eternity, where our divine Redeemer has prepared a place for us" (May 22, 1816).



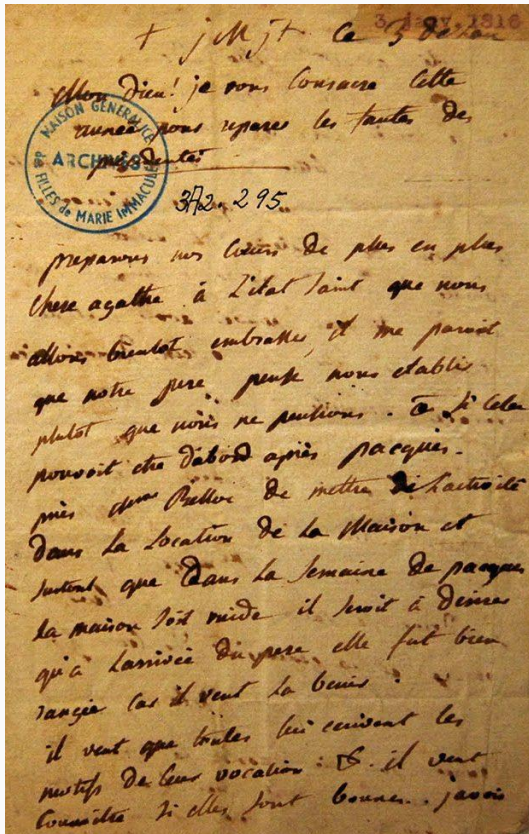
Adèle was aware of her personal lack of strength in trying to break her weaknesses but she counts on the gr<sup>â</sup>ce of God to advance : "Let's not be discouraged if success does not come immediately ; sometimes a long time is needed to get rid of a single defect. The Lord allows this, so that we might be more aware of our weakness and of the depth of our distress. Then we shall place all our confidence in God's infinite mercy and in the support of God's grace. " (To Agathe Diché, July 24, 1811). " ... our inadequacy is very great. We place all our hope in God. " (To Emilie de Rodat, September 29, 1819). "The devil is prowling about us, dear Agathe; let us remain firm in the assurance God gives us of His divine help " (To Agathe Diché, February 5,1807).

Her hope in divine mercy was immense: "The Lord's mercy will shine upon our misery and his omnipotence upon our weakness and powerlessness!" "If I Yielded to my feelings, dear friend, I would allow myself to sink into despair. But

no! I expect everything from the goodness of God, who is ever ready to pardon a truly repentant soul." (To Agathe Diché, November 14, 1810).

This hoped-for salvation is not withdrawal into oneself but becomes a missionary resolve: Fr. Chaminade "points out the purpose of our order : We are to be little missionaries, each one in her own state. I confess that the word thrills me. So now, my dear friend, let us consider ourselves destined to procure, by all possible means, the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbor. With that thought in mind, let us make our novitiate for the blessed state we wish to embrace. (To Agathe Diché, October 13, 1814). "Each associate will, as much as possible, seek out another young woman, trying to win her over to God and inspiring her with the desire to serve him and to save herself." (Rule of the "Little Society", point 11).

The life of Mother Marie of the Conception was not a long quiet river: the illness of her father, the death of several sisters on whom she counted for the development of the Institute, her own health, all this is offered in union with Christ suffering in trust. When the illness that would take Thérèse de Jésus Yannasch was announced, she wrote: "let my tears mingle with yours... My heart is in anguish. However, let us not be like those who have no hope. Let us raise our eyes; heaven is our homeland, our saintly Mother will precede us there, and in a very short time we shall join her. Let us follow her and the good example she has left us of mildness, patience, charity, and humility. (To Sister Dosithée Gatty, October 2, 1823). " ... by the grace and help of God, I can hope for everything." (To Agathe Diché, September 25, 1806).



During the difficulties experienced by the Institute she wrote : " When I was obliged to send Sister Nativité to Tonneins I placed the sodality into the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Humanly speaking, it is a lost cause; but my trust is in God and in Mary" (To Mother Louis de Gonzague Poitevin, February 5. 1825). Faced with the weight of the needs which rested on her shoulders she wrote these words on Novembre 20, 1820, to Emilie de Rodat : " Yes, dear sister, let us thrust ourselves and our heavy responsibility into the arms of our very good Master. He put the burden on our shoulders, his goodness will give us the strength to carry it."

Only God alone can give us the fulness of life: " Let us place our hopes, our desires and our joys in the Well-Beloved, for he alone is able to fill a heart which has been created for God alone " (To Agathe Diché, June 10, 1810).

The martyrdom, for which she was preparing herself at a young age, she experienced it in her daily life, in particular through her illness. Everything was consummated in the cry of hope and faith that she pronounced at her death on January 10, 1828: "Hosanna to the Son of David".

We can make our own the watchwords which she wrote at the beginning of her letters, or which recur frequently in those letters: "O my God, be my refuge and my hope!"; "I hope in the holy name of Mary!"; "He who hopes in the Lord can never be confounded."; "Let us hope for everything from His goodness and grace."; "Let us hope for nothing from ourselves; but all of Him who strengthens us. "