

ST. MARGUERITE'S

SPIRITUALITY: Marguerite lived her great faith. "God will provide," she told the cook when the bread and wine for meals were nearly gone. Yet, there was enough for each day's needs until the supplies from France arrived. This multiplication miracle was a gift from God.

VENERATION AND DEVOTION:

The day following her death, a priest wrote, "If saints were canonized as in the past by the voice of the people and of the clergy, tomorrow we would be saying the Mass of Saint Marguerite of Canada."

Since 1910, Marguerite Bourgeoys' tomb has been venerated at the Mother House of the Congregation de Notre Dame. Her heart is also enshrined in a reliquary. Several testimonials reveal the power of her intercession with God. Two miracles were recognized by the Church before her beatification in 1950 by Pope Pius XII.

THE TWO MIRACLES: Through St. Marguerite's intercession, two men were saved from incurable ailments. Fifty-year-old Joseph Descoteaux,

suffering from worsening gangrene, was facing amputation of his left foot. Some clay from St. Marguerite's tomb was applied to the area. The next morning, new flesh had replaced the black rotting flesh.

Jean Lacroix, a 77-year-old male, sustained an injury that also led to gangrene. His right lower leg had to be amputated. Then to his dismay, the gangrene spread to his left foot. He refused another amputation, relying instead on St. Marguerite's intercession. His cure was also given overnight, resulting in the disappearance of the black flesh and appearance of healthy new skin.



QUOTES

- ◆ When the heart is open to the sun of grace, we see flowers blossom in their fragrance.
- ◆ Seek to please God alone.
- ◆ The goodness of God makes me hope in His mercy.

PRAYER TO ST. MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS

O Mother Bourgeoys, you, whose compassionate power is ever increasing, show us your way of Truth, Faith, and Holiness.

Make us humble enough to abandon ourselves to the will of God and generous enough to find in the Cross the joy of the Loving Giver.

May your fidelity to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament lead us ever nearer to this source of light and peace. May your spirit of openness help us to be concerned for our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Finally, may Our Lady of the Trinity bring us to this unity of eternal grace which God has called you for all eternity. Amen.



Needlepoint project displayed in the narthex of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish in Brookfield, CT. Artist: Donald P. Ventrudo.

ST. MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS



April 17, 1620 - January 12, 1700

“Go, I will never abandon you”

(Words from the Blessed Virgin Mary in a private revelation to Marguerite Bourgeoys before her departure to Canada).

On January 12th, the Church celebrates our patronal feast dedicated to St. Marguerite Bourgeoys. She was born in France on 17 April 1620 and passed into eternal life on 12 January 1700 in New France (Canada) after a robust life dedicated to serving God in

her neighbor and establishing the Congregation of Notre Dame religious sisters. In fact, St. Marguerite passed away after praying to the Lord that He would heal one of her fellow sisters in the Congregation by having Marguerite’s own soul offered to God in exchange for her ill religious sister. To the very end, St. Marguerite put others before herself. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II on 31 October 1982, the same year that our church was established (on 29-30 May, the feast of Pentecost that year), and we continue to hold the distinction of still being the only parish dedicated to St. Marguerite Bourgeoys in the United States!

Mother Marguerite’s accomplishments were quite extraordinary for a woman in the seventeenth century. She made three trips from France to Canada during her life, and especially in those days, transatlantic trips were considered often perilous. Not only did one have to contend with the possibility of bad weather and raging seas, but diseases rapidly spreading within a ship’s close quarters afflicted many voyages generally.

Marguerite believed strongly in the virtue of education. The Congregation she founded would become one of the strongest teaching orders in the Church. She educated the Canadian American Indians as well as the French colonists, and eventually, she established a boarding school where bourgeois families sent their daughters. Nevertheless, Mother Marguerite’s preference clearly gravitated toward educating the less fortunate, poor girls of the towns.

St. Marguerite’s vision for the Congregation was considered unique for her time. She did not want her order to be cloistered. She wanted her religious sisters to be out in the world. She took the Blessed Virgin Mary as her patron and example. As St. Marguerite would say, since the Our Lady was not cloistered, so the religious sisters should not be cloistered behind convent walls. She wanted the people to see the charity of the Congregation sisters in action living among their fellow townsmen. She did not want her religious sisters to be a burden to anyone, and consequently, they worked for their living in

imitation of St. Paul himself who remained a tentmaker as he traveled to many missionary outposts within Christianity’s first century.

The Congregation sisters took an active interest beyond the classroom in the girls they were forming into good Christian models of holiness in imitation of Jesus. The sisters even acted

similarly to Jewish *shadchans*—marriage matchmakers! Men who wanted to date and marry the girls connected with the Congregation’s educational system established by Mother Marguerite had to undergo an intense “interview,” as it were, by the religious sisters before the women would be matched with a young man on a date!

What accounts for the incredible success overall of the Congregation of Notre Dame, which is the enduring legacy of St. Marguerite’s life? After all, by her own account, Marguerite could only guarantee the women who joined her order “bread and soup.” From its small beginnings, the Congregation grew over the centuries to thousands of religious sisters who even today are dedicated to the mission of St. Marguerite and the education of all, especially among the poorest who would have no future if it were not for others taking the time to give them skills not only in secular learning, but also in formation of the life of Christ. We see the answer in especially the last two years of St. Marguerite’s life: she dedicated herself to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament nearly perpetually. She had already lived her life united to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in fact, Marguerite credited her vocation to come to New France (Canada) from a private revelation connected with the Blessed Mother.

St. Marguerite’s example is alive and well in her namesake parish today. Many Christians from surrounding towns continue to visit our chapel for adoration of Blessed Sacrament, and pious devotion to Our Lady in our parish remains strong as well. None of this would be possible if it were not for God’s grace still working

through our patroness today. May we all cooperate with God’s grace through the sacramental life of our parish, in its devotional life, and in the concern we show in serving our neighbors as if they were Christ Himself. In these ways, we demonstrate daily that we are all spiritual sons and daughters of Mother Marguerite Bourgeoys today!

- Fr. Shawn William Cutler, “The Pastor’s Page”, 6 January 2019

