

MARY OF JESUS CRUCIFIED (Mary Baouardy, 1846-1877) Servant of God (D)

Born at Abellyn (Cheffa-Amar, Galilee), between Nazareth and Haifa, on Jan. 5, 1846, Mary was orphaned at three years of age and was brought by her uncle to Alexandria in Egypt, where she made her First Communion. Since she had set her heart on virginity, she separated, despite persecutions and maltreatment, from the young man to whom she had been engaged at the age of twelve.

In a moment of religious furor, a Muslim wounded her seriously in the neck with a scimitar, because she had refused to become a Mohammedan; and since he believed her dead, he wrapped her in a large veil and carried her outside the city. Healed miraculously by Our Lady, who appeared to her in a dream, Mary went into domestic service, first at Alexandria, and then at Jerusalem, Beirut and Marseilles. And here, in May of 1865, she joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. But in 1867, while still a postulant, she was dismissed because of the extraordinary experiences of her spiritual life. Because of them she was judged better suited to the contemplative than to the active life. The extraordinary events of which her life was to be full had already begun: on March 29, 1867, she had had the stigmata for the first time.

Mary entered the Carmel of Pau in 1867 with Veronica of the Passion, who had been her mistress at the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. She took the habit as a lay sister on July 27, 1867; and on Aug. 21, 1870, she left for Mangalore, where the vicar apostolic, Ephrem M. Garrelon, wanted to have the first cloistered monastery in India. She made her profession there on Nov. 21, 1871, and the vicar apostolic himself became her spiritual director.

Because of several extraordinary mystical manifestations that defied any explanation, the vicar Garrelon believed Mary was being led by the spirit of darkness. Mary, therefore, was obliged to return to Pau, in Sept. of 1872. Supernaturally spurred on to found a Carmel at Bethlehem, she worked to realize her dream until in Aug., 1875, she was really able to leave for Palestine. The monastery was inaugurated on Sept. 24 in temporary quarters; and on Nov. 21, 1876, the community moved into the definitive monastery. It was built according to the indications and under the direction of the servant of God, who was already thinking of the foundation of a new Carmel at Nazareth. But this idea was realized only in 1910, a number of years after her death, which overtook her on Aug. 26, 1878.

The spiritual life of Mary of Jesus Crucified, though replete with extraordinary facts, still shines with particular simplicity. Humble and unlettered, she yet knew how to give counsels and theological explanations of crystalline clarity. This was obviously the fruit of her uninterrupted prayerful communion with the Lord, of her faith and, above all, of the love that consumed her. Her ecstasies, her prophecies, her raptures were very frequent; her practice of the most solid and substantiating virtues like humility and obedience was sustained, despite an obsessive power that at times the devil seemed to have over her.

For a long time she shared in the sufferings of the passion. From the year 1867, especially during Lent, the stigmata appeared on her body. Only in 1876, after she had implored Our Lord, did she obtain the grace to have the exterior signs disappear, and only the painful participation in the sufferings of the Lord remained.

Her cause of beatification was begun in 1919, and the informative process was sent to the Holy See in 1922. The introduction of the cause was approved on May 18, 1927 (AAS, XIX /1927/, pp. 254-8). The procedure then followed the regular course. Particularly important is another new *Positio /Deposition/* on the virtues of the servant of God (Rome, 1944), in which two opinions, one theological by R. Garrigou-Lagrange, and the other psychological by A. Mager regarding the phenomena of her life, were published. Both are positive.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: P. Estrade, *Vie de Sr. Marie de Jésus Crucifié* Paris 1913; 19162 (the author was a director of the servant of God); D Buzy, *Vie de Sr. Marie de Jésus Crucifié*, ibid. 1922; 19272; vers it Turin 1924; id., *Pensées de Sr. Marie de Jésus Crucifié*, ibid 1927; B Stolz, *Miriam von Abellyn, Bigge-Ruhr* 1929; *Positio super introductione; causae*, Rome 1924; [Gebhard di S. Lorenzo], *Miriam von Abellyn Regensburg* 1931; id., *Vie de Soeur Marie de Jésus Crucifié*, Paris 1939; *Nova positio super virtutibus*, Rome 1941; *Alia nova positio super virtutibus*, ibid. 1944. Works of D. Buzy also in English

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