

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

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1647–1690 • France

Ever since she was little, Margaret preferred praying to Jesus in front of the Blessed Sacrament to playing childhood games. At the age of nine, she became ill and bedridden for four years. She made a promise to Mary that, if healed, she would become a nun. After Our Lady miraculously healed her, Margaret took Mary as her Confirmation name in memory of her promise.

Her father died when she was still young, and the family property fell into the hands of her relatives. They treated Margaret Mary and her mother like servants in their own home. Margaret Mary would cry in the corner of the garden because they would not let her go to Mass when she wanted. Her heart was also sorrowful for her mother, who suffered much under this treatment. When Margaret Mary prayed in front of the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus would appear to her and console her. Margaret Mary thought that Jesus appeared to everyone. She did not know she was special!

When she turned seventeen, the family property was restored to her brother. Her brother wanted her to marry. Margaret Mary did not know if she should keep her promise to become a nun since she was so young when she had made it. One evening, she went to a masked ball. As she was leaving, Jesus appeared to her. He was suffering, His back scourged as in His Passion. He reproached her for not keeping her promise to Him.

Margaret Mary knew then that she really was meant to be a nun. She joined the Order of the Visitation, and soon, Jesus appeared to her and showed her His Sacred Heart. It burned with love for the world. But then, Jesus told her that most people ignored Him. He had given His heart to humanity, and yet most rejected Him! So He asked Margaret Mary to spread devotion to His Sacred Heart through the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the reception of Holy Communion on the first Friday of every month, and adoration for an hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursday. The holy hour would console His Sacred Heart, which had been abandoned at the Garden of Gethsemane.

At first, the other nuns in the convent did not believe that Jesus had appeared to Margaret Mary. But then a newly elected mother superior believed in Margaret Mary's visions, and the convent celebrated the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Margaret Mary Alacoque died a holy death, and almost 150 years later, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was established for the whole Church. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, help me to console Jesus' Sacred Heart with my prayers!