

BLANDINE MERTEN



Blessed BLANDINE MERTEN was born in Düppenweiler on the Saar, in the diocese of Trier, West Germany, on 10 July 1883. She was the ninth child in a family of ten brothers and sisters. At her baptism she was given the name Mary Magdalene. By their way of life and example, her parents, simple farmers, prepared the young girl for a life firmly based on the Christian faith.

Whatever task was entrusted to Mary Magdalene, whether as a pupil, student or teacher in a primary school (1902-1908), she always endeavoured to accomplish it perfectly.

Already as a schoolgirl, she was called "angel", and this name has remained with her, for she was for her pupils and their parents an example of faithful observance of God's commandments, of gentleness, goodness, modesty and perfect service. Her confessor, Regens Dr. Bares, who later became bishop of Berlin, said after a visit to her: "I consider it a special grace whenever I am allowed to come into contact with this holy soul.

At the age of 25 she entered the Congregation of the Ursulines of Mount Calvary at the Motherhouse in Calvarienberg - Ahrweiler. and on November 4, 1913, she pronounced her final vows. One might be tempted to believe that the novitiate was easy for the young sister. But the opposite happened.

The trial period was harder for her than for any other. At school, she was carried by gratitude, everywhere she received proofs of esteem. But from the first day of her life in Calvary, she began the work she had entered the convent to accomplish: the sanctification of her soul by the most faithful fulfillment of her new duties.

Marie-Madeleine, today called Sister Blandine, was convinced that as a member of an active apostolic community, she could effectively help young people in their development and lead them towards a life guided by a Christian spirit.

Sister Blandine dedicated herself unreservedly to her profession, closely uniting her apostolic actions with a life of prayer. In her dealings with the students and the sisters, she showed prudence, zeal, patience, but also firmness and humility. She preferred to remain unknown and unnoticed, and she was an example to all. "Miss Merten seemed to me to be the greatest in that she did the little things of daily life, which often seem so exhausting, with the greatest punctuality and conscientiousness. I have never seen her violent or upset, even if there was sufficient reason," reports a colleague. Of her time as a teacher in what was then a very poor village in the Hunsrück, the schoolgirls tell of her time: "She was strict, but she also knew how to put up with jokes. On the other hand, she herself was always full of humor. She was a happy saint, not a sad one."

She has not had a long life to be actively involved as a teacher and educator. In the fall of 1916, she became seriously ill with pulmonary tuberculosis, at the time considered incurable. God accepted the promise she had made on the day of her perpetual profession: to become a sacrifice to His Divine Love. In total surrender to God's will, she endured the illness until her death in the convent of St. Bantus in Trier on May 18, 1918. She was not yet 35 years old and had not yet completed 11 years in the Order of the Ursulines. She was buried in the church cemetery next to St. Paul's Basilica in Trier. It is said that a more beautiful funeral procession has never been seen in Trier before. Shortly after her death, it became increasingly clear how much Sister Blandine was loved and venerated by all those who had known her. Her testimony is still alive. Her intercession is sought by an ever-increasing number of people.

This is what prompted the Bishop of Trier to initiate the process of her beatification. Sister Blandine walked the path of humility, loving God and her fellow men. That is why she always had an open heart and an outstretched hand for those who live in the shadows. She did not do extraordinary things, but she did ordinary things extraordinarily well. Her life inspires confidence. As a teacher and educator, as a nun, as a human being, as a person enduring illness and suffering, atoning and interceding, she has walked the path of hope and love from death to life and has thus become a kind and inspiring example.

It is in the secret of her life so faithfully lived that we find the missionary message to all of us: the Ursuline Order, the Church of Trier, in Germany throughout the world. After a major miracle, the healing of a malignant melanoma in a nun in Vienna, she was beatified on November 1, 1987. This makes Sister Blandine's light shine even brighter before all men so that they may give glory to the Father in heaven. (cf. Mt. 5:6).

We can hardly imitate his holy life. But his merciful love, his heart for the poor and his own poverty before God, "whose poverty in Christ enriches us (2 Cor 8:9)", can serve as an example - and a help to us.

PRAYER

Almighty and merciful God,

You have chosen Blessed Blandine to serve you and men with all your heart as your teacher and as an Ursuline sister.

Grant us, through her intercession, to eagerly follow her example of humility and love and thus always do Your will.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,

Our Lord and God, who in the unity of the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever. Amen.

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