

Lives of Saints

St Madeleine Sophie Barat

1779 - 1865

Feastday: 25th May



“God does not
ask of us the
perfection of
tomorrow, nor
even of tonight,
but only of the
present
moment.”

**St Madeleine Sophie
Barat**

S. D. C.
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I was born at Joigny, Burgundy, in 1779. My brother Louis, then aged eleven, acted as my godfather. Louis later taught me Latin, Greek, history, natural science, Spanish, and Italian. I took delight in reading the classics in the original, and surpassed my brother's pupils at the seminary.

My brother joined the Fathers of the Faith, a group of fervent priests, united in the hope of becoming members of the Society of Jesus on its restoration. A friend of his, Father Varin, wanted to found a society of women, similar to the Society of Jesus, which would be devoted to the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to prayer and sacrifice. With three companions I made my first consecration in 1800. The first convent was opened at Amiens the following year.

I was elected superior-general in January, 1806. As superior, I prayed a lot, suffered silently, and practised tact, respect and charity. With Father Varin, now a Jesuit, I elaborated constitutions and rules grafted on the Institute of St. Ignatius. Foundations multiplied, and soon solemn approval was received from Rome.

I journeyed from convent to convent, wrote thousands of letters, and assembled general congregations, so as to preserve the original spirit. I also prayed continuously. The real secret of my influence lay in my habitual seclusion from the outside world. My supernatural views on education, which I communicated to the religious engaged in my schools, were the effect of prayer. I was greatly loved both by my daughters, as well as by princes and pontiffs. Yet I sought to remain humble of heart.

I died in Paris, in 1865. My body was found intact in 1893. I was canonized in 1925 by Pope Pius XI.