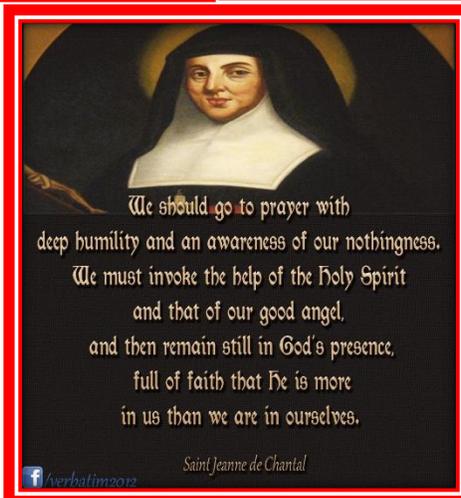


Daily Saints - 12 August



Born on 28 January 1572 at Dijon, Burgundy, France, Died on 13 December 1641, Beatified in 1751, and Canonized as a saint in 1767.

Feast of Saint Jeanne de Chantal

She is the patron saint against in-law problems, against the death of parents, forgotten people, parents separated from children, widows.

Jane (Jeanne) was born on 28 January 1572 at Dijon, Burgundy, France to a noble family. Her mother died when she was 18 months old, and her father, head of parliament at Dijon, France, became the main influence on her education. Jane developed into a woman of beauty and refinement, lively and cheerful in temperament. At age 20 she was married to the Baron de Chantal. She had six children, three of whom died in infancy. As a mother, she most zealously instructed the children in the ways of virtue and piety and the observance of every divine precept. At her castle, she restored the custom of daily Mass and was seriously engaged in various charitable works. With great generosity, she supported the poor and took special joy in seeing how divine Providence often blesses and increases the smallest larder. Therefore, she made a vow never to refuse anyone who asked for alms in the Name of Christ.

Jane's husband Baron was killed after seven years of marriage and she was widowed at 28. Baron was killed in a hunting accident and died in her arms. The sudden death of the husband sank her into deep dejection for four months at her family home. Her father-in-law threatened to disinherit her children if she did not return to his home. He was then 75, vain, fierce, and extravagant. Jane Frances managed to remain cheerful despite him and his insolent housekeeper.

For seven years she was forced to live in the house of her father in law, a trial which she was forced to bear patiently due to his ill-disposition towards her, and it was during this time that she took a vow of perpetual chastity. With all her heart she forgave the person who had killed her husband; then she acted as sponsor for one of his children in order to show her forgiveness openly.

In all of her prayers, Jane asked God to send her a guide. In a vision, He showed her the spiritual director that He held in reserve for her. During Lent, in 1604, she visited her father at Dijon, where St. Francis de Sales was preaching at the Sainte Chapelle. She recognized in him the mysterious director who had been shown to her, and she placed herself under his guidance. Then began the famous correspondence between the two saints which produced volumes of letters of spiritual direction, some of which are available today, but most of which were destroyed by her upon the death of St. Francis.

She went to Annecy in 1610, where she believed God was calling her to found an order for women and girls who felt called to live the life of Christian perfection, but not practice the severe asceticism of the religious orders of the time. Thus, the Congregation of the Visitation was canonically established at Annecy on June 6th, 1610, Trinity Sunday. They were primarily intended to exemplify the virtues of Mary at the Visitation—hence their name the Visitation nuns—humility and meekness. She underwent great sufferings: Francis de Sales died; her son was killed; a plague-ravaged France; her daughter-in-law and son-in-law died. She encouraged the local authorities to make great efforts for the victims of the plague, and she put all her convent's resources at the disposal of the sick.

Her trials were continuous and borne bravely, and yet she was exceedingly sensitive. She endured interior crosses which, particularly during the last nine years of her life, kept her in an agony of soul, from which she was not freed until three months before her death.

Her reputation for sanctity was widespread. Queens, princes, and princesses flocked to the reception-room of the Visitation. Wherever she went to establish foundations, the people gave her ovations. "These people", she would say confused, "do not know me—they are mistaken".

During a part of her religious life, Jane Frances had to undergo great trials of the spirit—interior anguish, darkness, and spiritual dryness. She died while on a visitation of convents of the community on 13 December 1641. The Catholic Church beatified her in 1751 and canonized her a saint in 1767.

Quotes of Saint Jeanne de Chantal

- "Hold your eyes on God and leave the doing to him. That is all the doing you have to worry about."
- "We should go to prayer with deep humility and an awareness of our nothingness. We must invoke the help of the Holy Spirit and that of our good angel, and then remain still in God's presence, full of faith that he is more in us than we are in ourselves."
- "In prayer we must converse very familiarly with our Lord, concerning our little needs, telling him what they are, and remaining submissive to anything he may wish to do with us."
- "Fidelity toward God consists in being perfectly resigned to his holy will, in enduring everything that his goodness allows in our lives, and in carrying out all our duties, especially that of prayer, with love and for love."
- "There is no danger if our prayer is without words or reflection because the good success of prayer depends neither on words nor on the study. It depends upon the simple raising of our minds to God, and the simpler and more stripped of feeling it is, the surer it is. We must never dwell on our sins during prayer. Regarding our offenses, a simple humbling of our soul before God, without a thought of this offense or that, is enough such thoughts act as distractions."