

## **A Marianist Moment - April 2022 Family Online**

### **The Witness of Women and the Resurrection**

Being a member of a male religious community dedicated to a woman, especially in today's secular society, can be seen as strange since a masculine stereotype sees dependence on a woman or looking upon a woman as a role model as supposedly not healthy. But this is furthest from the truth. I feel that the women in my life have been some of the most influential people. They support me, care for me, challenge me and love me. I say this because I grew up with five wonderful women in the Betz Family. Granted, we have not always seen eye to eye, but they continue to be very significant people in my life. And I gather the women in Jesus' life were very similar.

We look at the scriptures, and of course, Mary, Jesus' mother, was his primary teacher and witness of faith. She said, "Yes," and was with her son throughout his life and Paschal Mystery. Mary of Magdala, Mary and Martha, Lazarus' sisters, and the other women who were part of his circle remained faithful to him until the end. So it is not an accident that they were the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, as seen in all the Gospels. They all had a strength that enabled them to persevere in their belief that Jesus was the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is from this belief that they were honored to be the first witnesses of the resurrection and then commissioned to share the Good News of Jesus being alive. God gave them a significant place in salvation history.

Blessed Adèle and Venerable Marie Thérèse also have a significant place in salvation history. Both women lived through a cataclysmic time of the French Revolution and, because of their faith in the Providence of God, persevered and became witnesses to new life in the French Catholic Christian Community. They were movers and shakers in building up the Reign of God. Their engagement with people in need and with people seeking to deepen their faith lives created opportunities for Jesus' message of hope and new life to become a reality. The works of the Association, the Miséricorde, the Women Section of the Sodality and the Daughters of Mary can attest to this reality.

Another testament is Blessed Adèle's March 28, 1826 letter to Sister du Sacré Coeur Diché, Tonneins:

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to wish you and our sisters a happy Alleluia! May we all have truly risen, and may our spiritual resurrection have the same qualities as Christ's. His glorious body was gifted with subtlety; let us overcome all the obstacles to our salvation and every repugnance of nature. His glorious body was gifted with agility; let us run with eagerness to all our duties. His glorious body was gifted with impassibility; let us mortify all our senses. His glorious body was gifted with brightness; let us be the good odor of Jesus Christ and give a good example in all that we do. The glorious body of Jesus Christ was gifted with immortality; let perseverance and constancy stamp all our good resolution. These are my wishes for the dear group at Tonneins. (See Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, Vol. 2, edited by Joseph Stefanelli, SM, North American Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton OH, 1999, pp. 376-377)