

## Prayer Service in Honour of Jean-Pierre Medaille, S.J. (1610-1669)

December 30, 2023

**Opening Hymn:** ‘Lord of Creation, to You Be All Praise’, CBW III #498, or hymn of your choice

**Reading:** Today we remember and honour Jean-Pierre Medaille SJ, who was instrumental in founding the Sisters of St. Joseph in the mid seventeenth century. He was born in Carcassonne, a medieval walled city in southwestern France, to devout parents, and he entered the Toulouse Province of the Jesuits at age fifteen. According to existing records, he was an outstanding student, intelligent and well-disciplined, although of fragile health. The Bubonic Plague began in 1628, just after Medaille had made his first vows. He and other novices had wanted to go out and serve the sick and suffering, but instead their novice master brought them to a safe place in Lardenne. In just three years, ninety-seven Jesuits died in the Toulouse Province, about one third of the total number.

Fr. Medaille was probably ordained in 1637, and made his solemn profession of vows in 1643 as well as the fourth vow, obedience to the pope for mission work. In his priestly life, he worked at a variety of ministries, teacher, counselor, administrator, itinerant preacher and spiritual guide, travelling up and down the rugged countryside on foot or on horse or donkey.

From 1646 to 1650, he worked as a missionary in the Auvergne region of France. In these years he met some women who were helping the poor in Le Puy-en-Velay. These women wanted to consecrate their lives to God and the needy, but outside of the cloister. Fr. Medaille actually lived in Le Puy from September 1650 to August 1651, and during that time, with his help, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph was born.

In his remaining years, Fr. Medaille continued working as a missionary. In 1669 he moved to Billom to a house for sick and elderly priests. Here he continued to hear confessions of people in the area. He died on December 30, 1669, at age 59. He was remembered as a man of great holiness, and was called “the saint” and “the apostle.” (information drawn largely from Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery – slide/tape presentation)

“What I find miraculous in this new project is that it has no visible

father

mother

founder

or foundress...

The ‘Little Design’ is a work of God.”

(from ‘The Eucharistic Letter’ – Jean-Pierre Medaille)

**Reading:** From the Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Daughters of Saint Joseph - Jean-Pierre Medaille

The End of our little Congregation of Saint Joseph, briefly stated, requires that the sisters who compose it remember that their little Congregation is consecrated to the most holy and uncreated Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to the holy and created trinity of Jesus, Mary and Joseph:

To the honour of God the FATHER  
who is the model of all perfection  
they should profess to seek in all things  
whatever is most perfect.

To the honour of God the SON  
who emptied himself for us  
they should strive by a very deep humility  
to become empty of self,  
of self-interest and self-will.

To the honour of God the HOLY SPIRIT  
who is all love, they should so live  
that their little body may bear the name  
of "Congregation of great love of God"  
and in everything and everywhere  
their lives may proclaim  
the love they profess.

To the honour of JESUS  
wholly devoted to the glory of his Father  
and the salvation of souls,  
they should be filled with zeal  
to promote, as far as they are able,  
the glory of God and the salvation  
and sanctification of the neighbor.

To the honour of the glorious Virgin Mary  
who was filled to overflowing  
with every kind of grace,  
they should strive to be faithful  
to all the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

To the honour of their glorious patriarch  
Saint Joseph who was all love for Jesus and Mary,

they should practice  
perfect unity and charity among themselves  
as well as great charity and compassion  
toward every kind of neighbor  
in accord with God's will  
and the directives of their institute  
always with the sovereign assistance of grace  
without which we are nothing.

**Closing Prayer:**

We thank you, dear God, for Jean-Pierre Medaille, who has given us the inspiration and the ideals to which we are called as Sisters of St. Joseph. May we continue to be faithful witnesses to your love, and to spread that love to all whom we meet on our journey. And, if it is your desire, may others, willing to take risks and be open to your call, join us as Sisters of St. Joseph, or as fellow workers and associates in our richly blessed Family of Joseph. Amen.