

Sharing Our Marianist Stories, Ep. 6 Transcript

Story of a Friendship - Mother Adèle and Jeanne Diché (with Sr. Gabby Bibeau, FMI, Danielle Weidner, and narration by Patti Gehred)

0:11 - Patti Gehred

Welcome to *Sharing Our Marianist Stories*. I'm Patti Gehred. We have a special episode today honoring the upcoming beatification of Mother Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, the Foundress of the Marianists Sisters. This episode is a recorded version of a short skit we did in Dayton, OH, in January of 2017. This skit reenacts the relationship between Mother Adèle and her best friend, Jeanne Diché. Adèle and Jeanne became friends as teenagers. They maintained their friendship until Adèle's death in 1828. They bonded over their love of God and commitment to God's people. A remarkable aspect of their friendship is that their lives took very different paths. Adèle started her own religious order and Jeanne got married and had children. Even so, [they] remained close friends. Jeanne became a major supporter of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, also known as the Marianist Sisters. The following is a short recreation of their friendship through letters. Although these are not actual letters of Adèle and Jeanne, it captures the spirit of their special relationship. Adèle is played by Danielle Weidner, a NACMS staff member, and Jeanne is played by Sr. Gabby Bibeau, our NACMS graduate assistant. I will narrate between letters to offer some background into what's taking place in their lives. Let's begin.

01:53 - Patti Gehred

February 1803 - the beginning: Jeanne and Adèle are teenagers.

02:03 - Adèle (Danielle Weidner)

Dear Jeanne - how much more proof of a loving God do we need than the fact that we have met at our long-awaited confirmations? It seems fitting that I will only ever know you as your confirmation name, Jeanne, and not as your birth name, Marie-Thérèse. Papa told me that he and your father have agreed that you should come visit me, so we will have time to talk and pray. May I share with you what I have written to your dear sister, Agathe? God is the only principle of Christian friendship and the only lasting bond. If we love one another in God, for God, and in view of God, we will certainly love one another forever. I trust this will be the beginning of a wonderful friendship. - Adèle

02:59 - Patti Gehred

Shortly after their promised visit.

03:05 - Jeanne Diché (Sr. Gabby Bibeau, FMI).

Dear Adèle - I hope this visit will be the first of many. Please come and visit me at my house, too. It seems we each have two homes and you have two sisters. It was so lovely to meet your family and everyone else who lives with you at the Château. I especially enjoyed meeting your tutor and spiritual director, Monsieur [Father Jean-Baptiste] Ducourneau. Let's support each other, in being faithful to living the rule of life that he has written for us. I believe we can help each other become closer to Jesus and live lives of faith and hope. - Your friend, Jeanne.

03:51 - Patti Gehred

It's now 1804, around the time when Adèle and Jeanne begin their Association. This Association consists of young women who pray for each other and encourage each other's growth in faith. The political situation in France is still turbulent and the church continues to face persecution under Napoleon's regime.

04:14 - Adèle (Danielle Weidner)

Dear Jeanne - can you believe that our friendship is blossoming to include so many other faithful friends? With the addition of your beautiful sisters, and our continued recruitment, we now have a little Association that can support, love, and pray for each other. It is so important, my dear friend, for us to pray for each other that we may have peaceful deaths despite these dangerous and dreadful times. We all know that one day our lives will be over, and together we can prepare ourselves to enter heaven. - Your sister, Adèle.

04:59 - Patti Gehred

One year later, a major shift occurs in their friendship.

05:04 - Jeanne Diché (Sr. Gabby Bibeau, FMI)

Dear Adèle - Thank you so much for your loving support of my marriage. I know you are worried that now that I'm married, you may be losing a friend and a collaborator. Although I cannot be as involved in our Association as I was as a single woman, please know that I will always be your friend and I will always support you in doing God's work. Agathe has assured me that she will become more involved in our Association to fill in any gaps I may be leaving. - Sincerely, Jeanne.

05:43 - Patti Gehred

Nine months later.

05:45 - Adèle (Danielle Weidner)

Dear Jeanne - My prayers have been answered. You and the baby are well. Please accept my hugs to you and little Eugene. Agathe and I continue to give thanks to God and promise to do all he asks of us. I have told our new director, Father [Jean] Larribeau, of the good news, and he adds his prayers. I will come see you soon as I cannot wait to hug your little family in person. - Your friend, Adèle.

06:22 - Patti Gehred

Now it is November 14th, 1812. Jeanne has four children, the oldest is 7 and the youngest is not quite two. Jeanne writes in her journal.

06:34 - Jeanne Diché (Sr. Gabby Bibeau, SM)

I have lost the worthy spouse the Lord had given me. This sacrifice has been more painful than I could ever have imagined. He was 35 and I am 28.

06:51 - Patti Gehred

Out of concern for her friend, Adèle writes Jeanne's sister, Agathe.

06:56 - Adèle (Danielle Weidner)

Dear Agathe - How is our dear Jeanne? I am praying for her every minute. Let us prepare ourselves, for we shall take the same route sooner or later, at a moment when we least anticipate it. Jeanne's poor husband never dreamed that his hour of death would come so soon. The same thing could happen to us. Let us therefore be ready for we know neither the day nor the hour. I will visit Jeanne as soon as possible to comfort her as she grieves. - Sincerely, Adèle.

07:33 - Patti Gehred

We now fast forward three years to 1815. Father Chaminade relies on Jeanne for the foundation of the Sodality in Agen. Jeanne writes to Adèle as now Adèle's father [Baron Charles de Batz de Trenquelléon] is near death.

07:52 - Jeanne Diché (Sr. Gabby Bibeau, FMI)

Dear Adèle - Please know your father is constantly in my prayers. Of course, you are by his side to help him recover. As you requested, I met with dear Father Chaminade to learn more of his plans to begin a sodality here in Agen. He assured me, as I know he has assured you that he has not forgotten your dream of beginning a religious order. Do not discourage, my dear Adèle. The process is slow and I know that your wonderful, vibrant vivacity can make being patient difficult. But take it from me to whom God has given patience in abundance in the form of children: if God wills it, it will happen, all in God's time. Know of my prayers for you. - Jeanne.

08:48 - Patti Gehred

1816 - things are lining up for the foundation of the Marianist Sisters.

08:55 - Adèle (Danielle Weidner)

Dear Jeanne - I am so happy to report that Father Chaminade is in agreement with you that we should rent the property you found in Agen to start our new religious congregation. I cannot thank you enough for your help in finding and securing the lease of this property. I cried tears of joy when I read Father Chaminade's recent letter in which he wrote, "You will be Daughters of Mary and will appear so to the public." Our work continues, dear friend. Who would have thought so many years ago on the occasion of our confirmations that God would lead us to where we are now? I am always encouraged by your sisterly guidance and by your prayers. May God bless you. - Adèle.

09:47 - Patti Gehred

As the Daughters of Mary grow, Jeanne is the only lay person allowed in the convent. In 1822, Father Chaminade seeks counsel from Jeanne about purchasing another property for the Sisters.

10:01 - Jeanne Diché (Sr. Gabby Bibeau, FMI)

Dear Adèle - I continue to pray for your improved health. It saddens me to hear you are not feeling well and that so many of your dear Sisters are perishing. Do not discourage. The Lord knows what these times of trials will do for you and your Daughters. What strength and faith each of you will gain! Perhaps this will lift your spirits. At Father Chaminade's request, I have gone to Condom to see about purchasing the lovely Pietà shrine that Napoleon had burned down,

and it looks like we can begin acquiring this property. God is so good. He carefully watches over your little foundation. - Talk to you soon, Jeanne

10:50 - Patti Gehred

Two years later, despite death and disease, they begin to expand outside of Agen. However, nothing could have prepared the Sisters for the death of their Foundress. On January 10th, 1828, Adèle was united with Jesus and Mary, whom she loved so dearly. Jeanne was at her bedside during her final hours. Jeanne writes to Adèle's mother [Baroness Marie Ursule de Peyronnencq de Saint Chamarand de Trenquelléon].

11:16 - Jeanne Diché (Sr. Gabby Bibeau, FMI)

Dear Maman de Batz - I was blessed to be with our dear Adèle at the moment she died. Please know her small fears of death were eased through faith and prayer. She received all the prayers for the dying from Father [Joseph-Antoine] Mouran and Father [Jean-Felician] Serres. She took so much comfort from their presence. All of her Sisters tried to be with her as they were able. She assured Mother Saint-Vincent [Marie-Madeleine-Cornier de Labastide] of her readiness to meet God by saying, "God has given me so many graces. Help me to thank him." Her final words were, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Oh, how we will miss her!

12:08 - Patti Gehred

Even after Adèle died, Jeanne continued to play a pivotal role in supporting the Daughters of Mary as they expanded. Jeanne died in 1865. We can only assume that on that day she was reunited with her dear friend in heaven.

12:27 - Patti Gehred

The narrative of today's podcast was written by myself, Sr. Gabby, and Danielle Weidner. To read more about Adèle and Jeanne's friendship, go to the podcast page on our website, nacms.org. You will find an article written by Danielle that explores this friendship even more. Adèle will be beatified on June 10th of [2018]. Check out [the] website - "beatadele.com" to keep updated on any beatification news. Thank you for listening.