



SR. MARIE de MANDAT-GRANCEY FOUNDATION

SEPTEMBER 13, 1837 - MAY 31, 1915

EPHESUS, TURKEY



Sr. Marie in front of Mary's House



Stones from Meryem Ana Evi (Mary's House) Ephesus, Turkey

*Cum Permissu superiorum
A Pilgrim House Production
The House of Mary at Ephesus*

Cornerstone The Story of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey, D.C.

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Introduction

The craving for sympathy and love is a human trait common to us all. Despite all protestations to the contrary, it is indeed dangerous to try to suffer utterly alone. Everyone, particularly in moments of great suffering, wants someone to whom one can open one's heart, with the assurance that the partner will not be disgusted with thoughts of pettiness or childishness. Nor does one want to have one's weakness ridiculed or laughed at.

Chapter I No Saint was more aware of the priority of charity in every dimension than the great St. Vincent de Paul, who, in November 1633, established the religious family of the Daughters of Charity. He did this in company with St. Louise de Marillac, the widow of Antoine LeGras, Secretary to the Queen Regent of France, Marie deMedici. The symbol for heroic and profound charity for centuries was the cornette worn by the members of this religious community.

It was both to this true ideal of sacrifice for love that the young Adele-Louise-Marie Grancey was attracted in 1858. In that year, she entered the Daughters of Charity in the parish community of St. Sulpice, Paris. On September 27, 1862, she made her profession of vows and became a permanent member of that religious institute which to this day symbolizes the appeal of total generosity out of sheer love for God and his children.

Chapter II Sister M. de Mandat-Grancey's Family

Adele Louise Marie de Mandat-Grancey was born in 1837 in the Chateau Grancey in Burgundy. She was the fifth child of Galliot-Marie-Francois-Ernest de Mandat and Jeanne-Louise-Laure-Eugene-Rachel de Cordove, the Count and Countess of Grancey. The family has been noted in French and Ecclesiastical history as both noble and holy. It is distinguished by the motto, *Enmese et Verbo* - "By the sword and the word."

Through ancient connections the de Mandat-Grancey family was associated in history with another family of saints, the outstanding relations of the Cistercian hero, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, that great devotee of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. A Grand Abbott of Cluny, St. Hughes, was another prominent relative; but even more prominent was the

scholarly and saintly abbot, Pierre-Maurice the Venerable. He was elected Abbott of Cluny under the title of Peter the Venerable in 1122. The author of a precious scholastic treatise from the treasury of the Middle Ages, *De Miraculis* - i.e., "The Miracles of God" - he is best known for being the first academic to undertake the project of translating the Koran into both Latin and the vernacular French, thus inaugurating the dialogue between Latin Christianity and Islam. In light of future events in the life of Sister Marie deMandat-Grancey, Peter the Venerable appears as a figure of a prophet in the family history, and indeed in the modern discipline of inter-religious dialogue.

In the eighteenth century, the French Revolution brought havoc to all members of the aristocracy, and the de Mandat-Grancey family was no less affected. However, through careful planning, most of the family escaped with their lives and their faith intact. Eventually, following the exile of Napoleon, the family was able to regroup, especially at the Parisian house. Upon their return, they found that the Archbishop of Paris had moved the central headquarters of the Daughters of Charity to the former townhouse of the Comtes de Lavalliere, on the rue de Bac.

In short, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and the aristocratic family of the de Mandat-Grancey both resided in Paris. How strange the sight of the religious must have been for all Parisians. From the reign of terror of 1793, which dispersed the children of St. Vincent de Paul, they were compelled to do works of charity as ordinary citizens – and, indeed, citizens in the most tattered form of secular garb. Their only dignity came from within their souls.

In 1800, Napoleon reorganized the Sisters of Charity as a nursing corps for his armies, and gave them a type of motherhouse in the rue de Vuix-Colombier. In 1815, they finally settled in the rue de Bac. The most apparent element in their resettlement was their wretched clothing. They simply did not have enough fabric, and they could not match the standard navy blue cloth that was prescribed by custom for their habits. The cornette, a large spreading white cap, was restored, but some sisters wore black, others wore blue, while the rest wore an ordinary house dress. As Parisians looked out their windows, the Grancey household members included, they more than likely could not distinguish the sisters from their patients or clients. That situation continued until almost 1840. In the meantime, the postulants to the re-established Institute were mostly peasant girls, who would have been quite a contrast to the noble families living near their hostels and convents. Still, it was to this group that the young Adele Grancey was attracted. They were the prominent Religious Order of the time.

It has been said that a vocation consists of the ability to undertake certain tasks, accompanied by the desire to fulfill them. Still it is God that provides the vocation.

The education of the young Adele Grancey was balanced between her homelife in Burgundy and the townhouse in Paris. Her talents were enhanced by a private governess, and she learned the usual skills of a noble woman, including needlework, cook-

ing, literature, music and dance, but most of all the catechism. Notes written in her preliminary catechetical materials, including a diary, indicated an early desire to be with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to experience the presence of God mystically. The evidence of her personal spiritual life as a young girl is that of charity, love of God, and love of neighbor. Other members of her family later found themselves in places of responsibility and high dignity. She herself seems always to have been drawn by the images of those odd-looking women, who went in and out of the Motherhouse of their Institute, exuding the sanctifying power of charity. She often reflected upon this, and took to herself the beatitude, “Blessed are the merciful (Mt. 5:7).” As one commentator on her life said of her, “This is because charity, outside of official canonization of the Church, through Divine prerogative beatifies and canonizes secretly the souls: “*Beate Misericordia* – Beatified by Mercy.” At the time of her entrance, no sister of Charity had yet been canonized. Still, the overwhelming witness of charity engendered amazing growth for the remnant daughters of St. Vincent de Paul who had survived the French Revolution. In 1831, there were only approximately 150 sisters at the rue de Bac, not counting the novices, the postulants, the servants and the patients. By the time of her death (1915), there were more than 30,000 Daughters of Charity across the entire globe. Charity itself became a magnet of vocations. Hers was the heroic one.

From her earliest youth, especially at the time of her First Communion, “pure love” seemed to be her core grace, a love through empathy, compassion, and a pronounced idealism. This was fed by her need to go into solitude and prayer to be with the Lord. The care of the poor, the sick, and the children was her dream. The evidence of this life-long personal pattern is found in her funeral liturgy at Smyrna in Turkey, when the Archbishop of Smyrna pronounced these words in his eulogy:

“Such a life of detachment, of dedication, of virile virtues of a kindness that was always ready to give generously and untiringly by what kind of death was she to be crowned? St. Vincent de Paul had promised to his daughters that the love of the poor would cause them to smile upon their deaths, to smile at that which is most frightening to human nature. Is such a thing possible? To smile at death, to salute it, as the angel of deliverance, to see in it only God, who comes, invites, extends his arms, isn't it a gift without a price?”

Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey, the young Adele, actually died with such a smile. She quietly lived with such a smile even from the earliest days of her primary education, when she came to know Jesus and his Mother Mary, and when she came to know the Gospel message of the Beatitudes, the compassion of Jesus in the miracle narrative, and the story of the Rich Young Man.

Like all Parisians she saw those odd-looking women wearing the cornette sym-

bol of charity, she likewise possessed that courageous and idealistic smile. She found the heroines of her life in that family of Charity. In truth, for each person, there is only one source of happiness: it consists of those insightful moments of self-respect, of being happy with one's self. From her earliest years until her 20th birthday, Adele de Grancey quietly and prayerfully knew who she was and who she was destined to be - a noble, yet hidden, lady of Charity, according to the style of the great St. Vincent de Paul.

The Religious Life of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey

In 1857, Adele left her brothers Antonin, Charles and Edmond - all Barons of the de Mandat-Grancey family - as well as her sisters Christine and Leontine, and she assumed the name of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey. On July 26th of that same year, she penned a telling letter to her grandfather, the Marquis Courdue. In thanking the older gentleman for a package of red currants, she revealed that there had been some dissent in the family over her vocation. In particular, she cited Antonin, who was both hurt and angry at her departure. She also indicated that she did not easily arrive at her decision. Here is a brief passage which provides history with the evidence of her heart.

“It is two months to this day and hour that I wrote to you with a broken heart and eyes filled with tears. Today, it is not the same. I cannot tell you how much I congratulate myself on what I did. Everything makes me think that while I'm here I'm where God wants me. I fear nothing for the future. It is true that my not so generous nature wanted to refuse the sacrifices that I was called to do, and I can assure you that as a result one has to suffer cruelly, but God does not refuse His grace to those who, at the bottom of their heart, wish only what He wishes, and I myself experience how well He knows how to alleviate the burdens that seem to be the most crushing.”

Sister Marie's first assignment was at a House of Mercy maintained by her Order. The town was Aire-Sur-La-Lys. There were only six sisters in the residence, and, while trained as a nurse, she was employed in the pharmacy, as well as the dispensary. At the same time, she visited two small towns to care for the sick. To add to her monumental duties, she also was a teacher in an orphanage of 55 abandoned children and an instructor in a sewing workshop for 60 young girls destined to make their own living. In all of this work, she was sustained by the responsibility of directing the Children of Mary. It will be remembered that in 1858 the Children of Mary became prominent throughout France because of their association with St. Bernadette at Lourdes. It is at this time that her devotion to the Blessed Mother became evident within her community, and she was identified as a devotee of Mary for the rest of her life, always finding an outlet with a Sodality of Mary, even in far away Turkey where she would end her days.

Possessed with a natural charm, she searched out the unhappy, the depressed,



*St. Vincent de Paul
Established the
Daughters of Charity
in 1633*



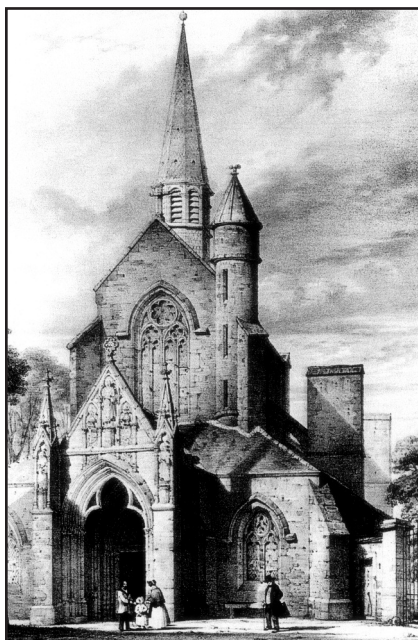
*St. Louise de Marillac
Mother Foundress of
Daughters of Charity*



*Sr. Marie de Mandat-Grancey
September 13, 1837 - May 31, 1915
Ephesus, Turkey*



*Home where Sr. Marie was born.
Grancey, Burgundy, France*



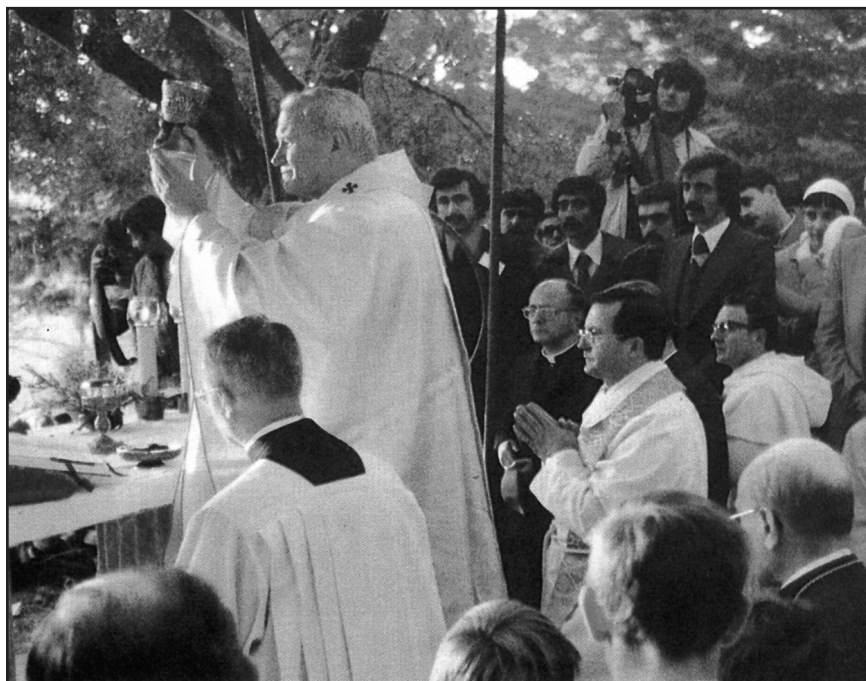
*Sr. Marie's family Chapel of St. John,
Grancey, France*



*Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass
at the house on November 29, 2006*



Pope Paul VI visited the House on the 26th of July, 1967



Pope John Paul II celebrated mass at the House on November 30, 1979



The first visit of Sr. Marie to Mary's House before restoration.



Sr. Marie kneeling in prayer at one of the Stations of the Cross behind the House of Mary.

the indigent, the poor and the diseased. No longer would she be identified as a daughter of the aristocracy. Indeed, she became the servant of all and found joy in that title. Her special skill was ridding orphan children of lice and scurvy.

A decade later she assumed the title of Sister Servant in the Charity orphanage at Pecq, a suburb of Paris. The title, "Sister Servant," is that given to the Superior within the Daughters of Charity. She arrived exactly in time for the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). At that time, the orphanage doubled and tripled in size. Supplies were limited and willing hands were few. However, through careful planning and courage to openly beg for food, clothing, and beds, she brought the community and the institute through the crisis. She maintained her position until 1886, when she volunteered to serve in the French Naval station at Smyrna in Turkey.

Smyrna

Since the age of King Francis I in the sixteenth century, France enjoyed a privileged diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire. At first the world was shocked by the treaty made by the French sovereign with the Turkish Sultan. However, it also provided a privileged place for French nationals in what could truly be called an ambivalent territory, partly Asian and partly European, as well as partly Muslim and partly Christian. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was clearly in decline. Many French entrepreneurs took advantage and opened businesses there and even engaged in assisting the Ottoman government with public works and infrastructure. Hence, French Religious, including the Jesuits, the Assumptionists, and the Daughters of Charity, were welcomed additions to the intellectual and cultural life of the empire. By the time Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey arrived the Naval Hospital, once so active during the Crimean War (1854-1856), was now dilapidated and underequipped. It was said that no other religious establishment in Smyrna could have equalled or surpassed this in poverty. With multiple contacts and a generous spirit, the middle-aged nun who came from the aristocracy set about making matters more comfortable for the patients from the navy and for those doctors and sisters who had to care for them.

In the process of restoration, the sisters established a small classroom for sick children which soon burgeoned into workshops and a full-fledged school. By the time Sister Marie became the superior, in all her efforts, she manifested a missionary spirit even establishing again the Children of Mary in order to catechize them. The city of Smyrna was riddled with scandal and that loose living that accompanies a seaport town. She chided the children that were in her charge: "Do not neglect the lessons of the catechism! Do not neglect the sacraments! Keep the Sunday observance! ...Because all these things are more necessary to you than ever and the service of God must not be interrupted." Then she spoke of hospitality: "The chapel will remain open always. Take advantage of it. In addition, the hearts of the Sisters are always open to you...come and see

them.”

Throughout the remainder of her life, which was to be spent at Smyrna, either through direct instruction or by example, she proclaimed the message of the protection of the Immaculate Mother of God. Both younger and older girls alike gave witness to the fact that when she spoke of Mary’s Immaculate Heart or her Immaculate Conception, her face radiated a beautiful smile, perhaps the same smile she exuded when she looked through the window of her Paris home and observed those rag-tag Sisters of Charity years before. Mary drew her closer to her motherly heart. She left these words to the Children of Mary: “Be closely united with one another, loyal and devoted to the Association! Be courageous Christians devoted within the family, exemplary outside the family. Diligently avoid all that can adversely affect your faith and dignity. Be like Mary.”

Meryem Ana Evi (Domus Mariae)

Ephesus, Turkey

In 1890, Sister Marie DeMandat-Grancey became the Superior of the Community at Smyrna. Little did she know when she assumed that office that she would be among those who would spend many years rescuing Mary’s actual home from oblivion. The Story of the House of Mary is quite rich yet complicated, and deserves to be told in greater detail in another place. Suffice it to sketch a few comments here.

From the earliest days of the second century, A.D., tradition has it that Mary and St. John fled Jerusalem in the company of Mary Magdalene and other Christian faithful. Persecution of the first Jewish Christians began in 37 A.D. This kind of holocaust was conducted under the Temple authorities. In the year 42 A.D., Herod Agrippa I ascended the throne and executed St. James, the brother of St. John. According to legend, this small band of Christian refugees fled to Ephesus, which was then the greatest city of the Roman Empire, as well as its financial center. Not to mention slaves, servants and foreigners, 250,000 Roman citizens lived there. Among them was a community of both Jews and Jewish Christians who enjoyed freedom of religion. Of course, from today’s perspective biblical scholars recognize the possibility of two simultaneous Apostolic Churches existing compatibly at the same time - the Johannine Church, from 42 A.D., and later, from 53 A.D. onward, the more evangelical Pauline Church. It is debated as to whether the dormition of Mary was in Ephesus or Jerusalem. However, contemporary popes have honored the Shrine at Ephesus as a genuine dwelling of Mary and St. John. Among them were Pope Benedict XIV, Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius X, Pope Benedict XV, Pope Pius XII, Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI visited the shrine on November 29, 2006 during his visit with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

One evening shortly after becoming Superior, Sister Marie asked a visiting Vin-

centian Father to choose something for the Spiritual reading for the community during dinner. Unwittingly, the priest took down a volume containing the visions of the Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, a 38-year-old Augustinian nun who was confined to her bed, during the time of the Napoleonic wars and who was granted the gift of visions of the life and death of Jesus. One of the guests, Father Eugene Poulin, C.M., was the director of the French Sacred Heart College at Smyrna. As a rigorous classical scholar and scientist, he was disgusted with the choice since he was opposed to all forms of mysticism. However, the passage that *was* read was taken from Sister Anne Catherine's *Life of the Holy Virgin*. It described the Holy House of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Ephesus, now known as Izmir. All who heard were already familiar with local rumors regarding that site. The text of Sister Emmerich whetted their appetites to know more.

Both Sister Marie and Father Poulin were inspired by what was read. Father Poulin was so moved that he inspired other members of his community to undertake a long, arduous expedition to locate a site that might approximate the visions of the late Anne Catherine. After many attempts and mistakes on the same journey, the archaeologists finally stopped for water and rest. This seemingly was an accident. The location was marked by a castle. This was clearly identified within the vision of Anne Catherine Emmerich. The local Orthodox Christian villagers approached them and confirmed the ruins of a monastery as the gate of the "All Holy." They also indicated that for centuries they have venerated it as the Holy House of Mary! Within two years, archaeologists were to identify the foundations as being rooted in a Jewish community of the first century, A.D.

On August 23, 1891, the first Mass was celebrated on that spot in Latin. Having every reason to believe in their findings, they returned to inform Sister Marie, who, inspired by her deep faith in the presence of Mary in her life believed in the site of the Holy House from the beginning. The following year Father Poulin and his companion, Father M.H. Jung, C.M., overheard the actual owners of the property discussing the desperate need for its sale. They at once informed Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey. Overwhelmed by the news and the Spirit of Mary, Sister Marie delivered her own private fortune to purchase the property. On February 27, 1892, she deposited 45,000 Francs in the Smyrna Branch of Credit of the Lyonnais Bank. On November 16, after a deposit of 31,000 Francs, the property, the ruins of the Shrine, and the original first century house were registered to Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey. On December 1, the Archbishop declared in a formal document that the above ruins of Panaghia-Capoli are truly the remains of the House inhabited by the Blessed Virgin Mary. From that moment on, the little nun that had been a daughter of a prominent count and countess took charge of promoting, protecting and developing the Shrine now known as the *Meryem Anna Evi*. For that reason, her family was rewarded with original first century stones from Mary's House, which now rest in the Chapel of St. John at the Chateau

Grancey in Burgundy in the Archdiocese of Dijon in France.

The symbol of the cornerstone is particularly noteworthy in the treasury of the Church's Spirituality. It is applied to Jesus, to St. Peter, and, indeed, to all the Apostles. When the authorities at Izmir sent the stones from Mary's House back to the family of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey at Burgundy, they wished to confirm that by her life, work, and especially her promotion and protection of the Holy House, Sister Marie was uniquely identified with the primitive Apostolic community, established by Jesus in the first days of his public ministry. The imagery cannot be denied; "stone" and "cornerstone." Not only that, these stones came from the hearth of Mary's House; the heart of Her home. These stones, in particular, clearly identify Sister Marie with Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Conclusion

Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey promoted devotion to Mary at the site of the chapel, from 1892 until her death on May 31, 1915. She was buried with the other Daughters of Charity in the Christian Cemetery at Smyrna. Her devotion was so great that she touched the hearts of Catholic and Orthodox Christians alike, drawing them together to the Shrine. Most miraculous of all, she drew Muslim worshippers as well, for Islam honors Mary under the title of Immaculate Conception.

To this day, Muslims and Christians honor Mary in prayer together at the Marian Shrine at Ephesus, certainly a sign of hope in these uncertain times of inter-religious conflict. Here, thanks to the foresight and virtue of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey, Mary is again honored, under a particularly precious title, as Mother of Holy Hope.

Jerome M. Vereb, C.P. S.T.D.

Erin von Uffel, D.M.

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SR. MARIE de MANDAT-GRANCEY

1837-1915

WE THANK GOD
FOR GIVING US THE PRIVILEGE OF
SR. MARIE de MANDAT-GRANCEY.

THROUGH HER GREAT GENEROSITY
SHE ACQUIRED THE PROPERTY AT EPHEBUS,
THE HOME OF MARY AND
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

WE ASK GOD AND SR. MARIE
TO CONTINUE TO BLESS THE CORNERSTONE
GIVEN TO HER, "AROUND THIS CORNERSTONE
WE BUILD OUR FAITH AND THE POWERS OF
DARKNESS WILL NOT PREVAIL."

WE PRAY FOR GOD'S WILL TO BE
COMPLETELY FULFILLED THROUGH THE
INTERCESSION OF SR. MARIE.
AMEN

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