



Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Montmartre OSB

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CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER, 2025



“O wonder! Our human nature is united with God. Today is the beginning of the One who has no beginning. Alleluia!”

(Friday Vespers Antiphon for Christmastide)

Dear Friends,

Christmas is not only the remembrance of Christ's birth but the celebration of God's union with humanity.

It is a mystery that finds its fullness in the Holy Eucharist. The same Christ who took flesh from the Virgin Mary now gives us that glorified flesh as our food and our life. The manger already points to the altar, and the gift of the Incarnation leads us towards the gift of His Body and Blood.

On this holy day, the Eternal One, who is not bound by time and transcends it, enters our time, and the invisible God becomes visible. The Creator comes to us as a Child so that we may approach Him without fear. This wondrous exchange lies at the heart of both Christmas and the Eucharist: God comes down to us so that we may be raised to Him.

While we adore the Infant Jesus in the crib, we are also called to adore Him where He remains with us in the Blessed Sacrament. Our Mother Foundress: Servant of God Marie Adèle Garnier lived this mystery deeply. Drawn by faith, she discovered the Child of Bethlehem hidden in the Host and from this love was born the charism of perpetual Eucharistic adoration, which her daughters continue today.

At Christmas we adore the Infant Jesus in the crib, yet we are called to adore Him even more deeply where He remains with us now in the Blessed Sacrament. The same Lord who lay in the manger still waits for us in the tabernacle, hidden in the form of Bread, longing for our love. Mother Marie Adèle Garnier understood this mystery in a simple and pure way. She allowed the truth of Christmas to shape her whole life. Like the Magi, she was drawn to Jesus with a heart full of wonder. Her star was faith. It led her onward until she reached the One who hides Himself in the Host.

There she found the Child of Bethlehem, silent and humble, giving Himself without limit. From this deep faith came the charism of perpetual Eucharistic adoration. Her daughters continue this journey today, keeping watch with Jesus and offering Him the love He desires.

As we celebrate this holy season, we are warmly invited to come and encounter Jesus at Mass and to spend time with Him in Eucharistic adoration. Let Him draw us close. Let Him speak to our heart. In His quiet presence He continues the same wondrous exchange, giving Himself to us so that we may become more like Him.

This Christmas season we are pleased to introduce a new series in our newsletter dedicated to the life and spirituality of our Mother Foundress: Servant of God Mother Marie Adèle Garnier. Her journey is a remarkable witness to the grace of the Eucharist at work in an ordinary soul who became extraordinary through her love for Christ.

Each reflection will explore a new stage of her life, showing how the Lord guided her, purified her and prepared her for the founding of our congregation. We hope these reflections will deepen our appreciation for her legacy and strengthen our own Eucharistic devotion. Her story reminds us that we also journey through life as pilgrims of the Eucharist, seeking to grow in love for Christ present in our midst.



The Early Eucharistic Journey of Servant of God Mother Marie Adèle Garnier

When reflecting upon the life of Mother Marie Adèle Garnier, one cannot help recognising that the Eucharist was not simply an element of her spirituality. It was the very axis around which her entire existence revolved. To remove the Eucharist from her life would be to remove the heart of her vocation, her mission and her sanctity. Her journey towards this profound Eucharistic union was gradual. It began with seeds sown in childhood, watered by suffering, nourished through daily fidelity and ultimately blossomed into a life of extraordinary intimacy with Christ.

Seeds of Grace in a Difficult Religious Climate

Marie Adèle was born on the feast of the Assumption, 15 August 1838, in Burgundy, France. She entered a France that still bore the marks of Jansenism, a rigorist spirit that had discouraged frequent Communion for generations. Many Catholics received the Eucharist only a few times a year and many had abandoned the sacraments altogether. It was into this atmosphere that she was born.

She was deeply loved by her devout mother and grandmother. She was also much loved by her father, Nicolas, although he no longer practised his faith. Her mother died when Adèle was only six, so she never received long maternal guidance in the ways of the Church. Before her death, her mother pleaded that her four daughters be sent to a convent school run by the Celestine Sisters in Villeneuve.

It was there that the first seeds of Eucharistic grace were planted in her heart. As she prepared for her First Holy Communion at the age of eleven and a half, she listened with great seriousness to a story told by one of the nuns. It concerned a child whose First Communion had brought about her father's conversion. This possibility touched Adèle deeply and remained with her.

A Child's Bold Prayer

During her retreat young Marie Adèle begged Our Lady to win for her father the grace of conversion. She even offered her own life immediately after receiving Communion if God would grant this request. Her tears throughout the day of her First Communion drew attention from her classmates and when her intention was discovered a stern nun told her sharply that she was not good enough to make such a request. Yet God accepted the sincerity of her sacrifice. It would take thirty one years before the prayer was fulfilled. On the anniversary of her First Communion, 19 May 1881, her father suddenly returned to the sacraments after decades away. He received Confession and Communion before dying shortly afterwards. Her childhood offering had not been rejected. It had simply been answered in God's time.

The Awakening of Her Eucharistic Vocation

Little more is recorded about her sacramental life in childhood. In Lent of 1857, when she was about eighteen or nineteen, a Jesuit missionary named Father Delfour preached in her parish. His sermon deeply touched her conscience. Feeling worldly, vain and proud, she sought him out for confession. After listening attentively he asked her to return a few days later. At their second meeting he gave her a spiritual directive that startled her. He told her to receive Holy Communion every day.

Daily Communion was almost unheard of at that time. She protested that she was unworthy. He remained calm and said, "No, my child. You are to receive Communion every day." She obeyed. Each morning she walked across a square in Dijon to attend Mass, often as the only daily communicant apart from the priest. Slowly the sacrament transformed her. God became the centre of her thoughts, virtue became easier, joy became deeper and her Eucharistic devotion grew from a small seed into a flourishing interior life.

The Stirring of a Religious Vocation

As Adèle grew in Eucharistic intimacy she began to feel drawn to a life completely dedicated to God. Her spiritual director at the time was another Jesuit, Rev. Fr. Donniou S.J.. He was concerned about her fragile health and hesitated. Eventually he allowed her to try religious life. She entered the Society of the Sacred Heart at Conflans as a postulant. Her time there was brief. Her health collapsed under the demands of community life and she had to leave. This was a sorrow for her and for the community, yet it formed part of her spiritual preparation.

After a short period back in Dijon and an unsuccessful attempt at another governess position, she was recommended to the household of Madame de Crozé. The situation seemed ideal except for one difficulty. The parish church was several kilometres away and daily Communion was impossible.

A Home Chapel and Deeper Eucharistic Intimacy

The young couple, who were fervent in their faith and deeply fond of Adèle, decided to ask permission for a private chapel. The bishop approved their request. Monsieur de Crozé built a small but beautiful chapel in a wood near the house. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved there and although Mass was celebrated only a few times a week Adèle could once again live close to the Eucharistic Lord. She cared for the chapel linens and vestments and began making a daily holy hour. She prayed for France, for the Church, for the Holy Father, for priests and in reparation for sin. During this time her Eucharistic spirituality grew so much that she began writing prayers which show a deepening love for the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.

The Trial of Spiritual Darkness

God then permitted a period of spiritual dryness. Her prayer became difficult and full of distractions. She confided in Abbé Studer, a Jesuit priest and family friend who often celebrated Mass for them. Seeing her distress he gave her an instruction. He told her to ask Jesus during her next holy hour for a sensible feeling of His love. She felt unworthy to ask for such consolation but eventually obeyed.

What followed became the decisive mystical grace of her early life. As she approached the tabernacle and prepared to genuflect she suddenly perceived a burst of intense light, almost like flames of love, coming from the tabernacle. Her heart felt pierced and enveloped by the presence of Christ. She fell to the ground in awe. She knew that Jesus Himself had touched her and changed her.

For more than a week she felt His nearness in a vivid and unmistakable way. Even when the immediate experience faded her interior union with Him remained.

She later wrote that from that moment onwards her soul lived in continual companionship with Jesus. Outwardly she continued her duties as before. Inwardly her life had been changed forever. Christ had become the central reality of her existence. In Adèle's own words:

“On the afternoon of the next day, when I was leaving the chapel, I remembered my promise to good Father Studer. Then I went back, knelt on a prie-dieu, and said: ‘My Jesus, out of obedience I ask you to have pity on me and give me a little consolation; but I prefer your holy will to everything else.’ Then I made the sign of the cross, rose, and as I was making the genuflection, a dart of love like a burning brand, left the tabernacle and like a lightning flash, struck me through the heart. Beside myself with joy, I fell down as though I had been thunderstruck, and remained there the prey of an indescribable transport. I do not know whether Jesus was in me or I in Him, but I no longer lived. I was in heaven, plunged into the delights of a love that took away all awareness of myself. (Led by a Star II P. 98-99)

COMMUNITY NEWS

27 June 2025, which was the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, marked the end of the celebration of the 350th Centenary of the Apparitions of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. As Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we celebrated this centenary in a special way by having a nine day Retreat Novena from the sixteenth to the twenty sixth, the eve of the feast. There was prayer, reflection and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on each day of the Novena, given by our Chaplain, Rev. Fr. Ferdinand.



Our Very Reverend Mother General, Mother Marilla Aw, was visiting our community at the time, and it was a special grace to prepare for the great feast of our Congregation with her. She left us on the eve of the Sacred Heart to return to our Mother House at Tyburn, where they had the privilege of hosting the relics of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque and Saint Claude de la Colombière from 2 July to 6 July.

On 19 July the monastery hosted a seminar by the pro-life organisation Family Life International and the Kolbe Centre, titled *Catholic Doctrine of Creation in the Age of AI*. The seminar explored the Church's teaching on creation, drawing on Sacred Scripture, the Church Fathers, Doctors and Councils, with particular reference to the theory of evolution. It affirmed God as the sole Creator and addressed errors that exclude divine causation, especially concerning the special creation of Adam and Eve. The talks also considered how the loss of this teaching has contributed to a weakening of faith, marriage, family and respect for human life. More information on their pro-life activities can be found at: familyandlife.co.uk.

Last month, during the Month of the Holy Souls, some of the Sisters visited the graves of our deceased Sisters at Haylie Brae Cemetery in Largs. As has become our practice over time, Vespers for the Dead was sung, prayers were recited, and the *Suscipe* was sung. Visiting the cemetery to pray for the faithful departed is a deeply nourishing spiritual practice and a salutary reminder that our life on earth is a pilgrimage towards heaven. As Saint Benedict exhorts, we are to keep death daily before our eyes.



On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the titular feast of the monastery, Holy Mass was celebrated at 12 noon. At 4.30 pm, a Holy Hour of Vespers, prayer, devotion to Our Lady Rosa Mystica, and Benediction was held with members of the laity. Our Congregation has a special devotion to Our Lady Rosa Mystica, whose statue is present in all our monasteries throughout the world. This devotion emphasises prayer, penance, and reparation, particularly for the sanctification of priests and consecrated souls, and for the renewal of the Church.

OBLATES DAY OF REFLECTION

In our last newsletter, we announced the start of a monthly Oblates Day of Reflection led by the Reverend Mother Prioress, held on the first Saturday of each month. These meetings help the Oblates to study the Rule of Saint Benedict, deepen their Benedictine spirituality, and grow in understanding of the Eucharistic charism of the Congregation, inspired by the teachings of our Foundress, Mother Marie Adèle Garnier. They are encouraged to live a truly Eucharistic life in harmony with the teaching of the Church. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, “The mystery we receive must become the life we live” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 83).

The response has been very encouraging, with strong attendance and growing interest from others. For this reason, we are pleased to open the Days of Reflection to the wider public. All who wish to reflect on the Rule of Saint Benedict and the Eucharistic charism of the Congregation are warmly welcome. The next meeting will take place on 3 January 2026. For further details, please contact Reverend Mother Prioress.

FIRST FRIDAY ALL-NIGHT EUCHARISTIC VIGIL

An all-night Eucharistic vigil is held on the first Friday of each month, beginning with Holy Mass at 7.30 pm, followed by Compline, Confessions, prayer, and Eucharistic adoration throughout the night, and concluding with Holy Mass at 6.00 am; both men and women are welcome. Offered in reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the vigil responds to the calls of Our Lord to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque and of Our Lady at Fatima.

TEAROOM/HOSPITALITY



We are saddened to announce the death of a very dear friend and devoted helper of the monastery, Doreen Strachan. Doreen was among the first volunteers to assist the monastery when the Community moved from Dumfries to Largs. She was a woman of deep faith, great generosity, and a cheerful and good-humoured spirit. Doreen died on 30 July of this year, and her funeral took place at the parish church, St Mary's Star of the Sea on 19 August. May her soul rest in peace. Amen.

On 26 July, the annual Strawberry Tea Fayre was held in the tearoom. It was well attended, and the helpers worked very hard to organise the event. On 29 November, the annual Christmas Fayre also took place. A wide selection of Christmas cakes, puddings, marmalade, jams, and gift items was available for sale. There was much laughter and friendly conversation as people socialised and enjoyed the occasion. The fayre concluded with a raffle draw.

This year, many of the gift items were generously donated by local shops and businesses in Largs. We are most grateful to all who contributed so generously. Our thanks go in particular to: Mr James McAllister of First Roofing and Services Limited (FRBS); The Edinburgh Wooden Mill Largs, Christine, Gypsy Cream; Stephen, Room; Aldo and Claudio, Nardini's at The Moorings; Becky, Neilly's; Lyndsay, Wilkies; the Manager of Moorings Knitwear and Countrywear; Anne Marie, Elements; Grace, Hair Boutique; Siobhan, Copper Nut; Elaine, Ivory Mac; Lorraine, Morrisons; David, Halliday's; Costa Coffee; and Richard and Gloria, Continental.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to all the helpers of the monastery, who give so generously of their time and effort in support of our apostolate. As a small token of our gratitude, the Christmas dinner for the helpers will be held in the tearoom on 7 January 2026.





CONGREGATION NEWS

In July, there was great joy at our monastery in France with the Temporary Profession of Sister Marguerite-Marie. She is the first vocation of this foundation and the first French vocation for many years, which is especially significant as our Order was founded in France. Although there is little religious practice in the village, the local people showed real interest and support on this occasion. The ceremony was prayerful and uplifting, and Sister Marguerite-Marie took her vows with calmness and dignity.

Sisters from the novitiate at our Mother House in London were able to be present. During their visit, they also made a formation pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial, nearby, to mark the 350th anniversary of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, the patron saint of our newly professed Sister.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE UPDATE

In our last Sacred Heart Newsletter, we reported the installation of new slate roofs on the North Wing of the guesthouse and the Main South roof. Although we did not initially have sufficient funds, Mr James McAllister of First Roofing and Building Services (FRBS) kindly allowed payment by instalments. We are pleased to report that the work is now complete and, thanks to the providence of God and the generosity of our benefactors, the outstanding balance has been paid in full.

In recent months, we also faced flooding in the ladies' facilities and a continuing leak in the tearoom. After investigation, a cracked water pipe in the ceiling of the priest's sacristy was found to be the cause. James McAllister disconnected the pipe, carried out the necessary repairs and decorated the room, generously offering this work as a gift to the monastery. We are most grateful to Mr McAllister for his continued generosity. Our next major project will be the renewal of the flat roof of the Sisters' Enclosure, estimated to cost approximately £50,000.

We thank our benefactors, friends, and helpers for your continued support in enabling the enthronement and adoration of the Sacred Heart to continue here. Holy Mass will be offered for you on Christmas Day. Those who wish to contribute towards our roofing and restoration project may do so via our website:

<https://www.tyburnconvent.org.uk/largsmonasterydonations>. If you would like to donate by cheque, please make it payable to Benedictine Monastery.

With loving prayers for a blessed and peaceful Christmas in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Mother Prioress and Community