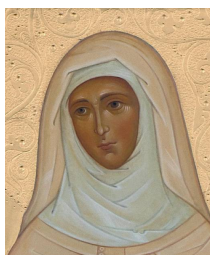


**RELIGIEUSES DE L'ASSOMPTION**  
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**17, rue de l'Assomption**  
**75016 PARIS – France**



**10 March 2013**  
Feast of Saint Marie Eugenie

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Family of the Assumption,

Once more it is the time for remembering, reiterating our thanks for the life of Saint Marie Eugenie and celebrating our faith. Thanks to **Saint Marie Eugenie** we have the happiness of participating in the extension of the Reign of Jesus Christ in a specific way, by taking part in the mission of the Church. In our religious communities and in the enlarged family of Assumption Together, we taste the joy of serving the Lord through so many brothers and sisters of all languages, races, cultures, in the faith of Him who has called us in the diversity of our vocations.

## **1. To remember**

There are important dates in the life of a family and 10<sup>th</sup> March is one of these for us. This date gives us the opportunity of remembering the woman of faith whom we all love, Saint Marie of Eugenie of Jesus. The 10<sup>th</sup> March, the last day in her long life, has become the first and the most important in the order of faith, because it marks the successful conclusion of her earthly journey. This is why I should like us to contemplate the faith of Mother Marie Eugenie, on this her feast day in this year of faith.

Marie Eugenie, our **“ancestor”**, is placed at the beginning of our common history. She is the bond of our unity and our communion as members of the Assumption. Her life, which was completely given, was marked from her infancy by the seal of faith, from the family motto – “Nothing without faith” – by way of her first communion, then her conversion in Notre Dame, up to her “yes” to God to be the **first stone** of the Assumption, put in place by the hand of God.

Marie Eugenie lived a loving faith, a faith which enabled her to welcome the will of God with absolute confidence, a sign of her response in love: *“It is God who guides all and no wiser or more loving hand could guide our destinies”*. Her confidence in others and in the human in general is born of this faith. It is from this starting point that she was able to develop an anthropological vision full of hope and establish the foundations of our educational charism: *At the bottom of the worst natures, there is always something good, believe in it, search perseveringly for it”*<sup>1</sup>. Marie Eugenie was convinced that faith and trust make things happen, and that they can transform persons. We owe her a great debt of gratitude for the impact of her faith on the spirit of our religious family. For her, faith, *“the foremost characteristic of the spirit of the Assumption”*<sup>2</sup> should be the expression of our gratitude towards God for all his benefits, and especially for the Christ, the full and entire Truth come down from heaven among us.

## **2. To give thanks**

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<sup>1</sup> Marie Eugenie of Jesus: *Counsels on Education, 1842*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Marie Eugenie of Jesus, Chapter of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1878: *“Faith, Love of the Truth”*

If we hold to our faith as Marie Eugenie held to hers, we will never cease from giving thanks to God. Speaking of the spirit of the Assumption, did she not say: *“The first right of God, is to be believed when He speaks, and the first duty of the human person is to receive the word of God with profound respect and great faith... Consequently we ought to respond with adoration and love to the word through which God makes himself known.”* Since God speaks to us, it is normal for us to receive his Word with faith.<sup>3</sup> Marie Eugenie was the object of the goodness and kindness of God, the God she had long sought, the God who came to seek for her to lead her by his ways to Himself. She marvelled at this divine largesse, but also at her own response to the infinite love of the Lord and that of her first community. We are her heirs and responsible for this response of faith: *“Such is our vocation also, and what has always seemed to us to distinguish it from any other was the strong will to go forward under its guidance and the support of its certainty”.*<sup>4</sup>

On this feast day, let us allow our joy and gratitude to well out for Mother Marie Eugenie and the Assumption. If the Assumption was born and still exists, it is thanks to the great faith of Marie Eugenie and our first mothers. From the beginning they believed in the future of the Congregation, letting themselves be animated and led on by the confidence of the Abbé Combalot which communicated itself to them.<sup>5</sup>

Let us give thanks for the Assumption yesterday and today, let us give thanks for all which we receive from her. Let us love her and work to make her strong by the quality of our personal lives and the ardour of our faith to live to live what has been entrusted to us, our “mission”, our “personal vocation”, our “particular spirit”!

Let us also be grateful for the Church, for Pope Benedict XVI who canonised Saint Marie Eugenie and who is retiring with great faith in God, sole Master of his work!

### **3. As we also walk in faith...**

Thanks to her re-found faith, Marie Eugenie gave a meaning to her life. Following her, we also have the experience that faith starts us on the road, opens a path for us of a life of communion, of wisdom and of prophecy, thanks to which we put our steps into the footsteps of our forebears in the faith, all the saints and all seekers for meaning. They found their own path by setting themselves to listen to God, to their own hearts and to their times. Faith in salvation in Christ commits us to journey with others, to allow the Risen One to join us, so that He can explain the Scriptures to us and break the bread for us.

Obedience is the concrete response of our faith, as it was for Saint Marie Eugenie. If the Assumption exists, she used to say, “it is because we believed”. This requires a certain divesting from self to receive the life of Another, through others. So, by faith we are led on paths of solidarity and of the transmission of life, paths of evangelisation by the witness of the joy which the faith brings. Moving towards Easter, it is good to listen again to the words of the hymn which we sing at First Vespers of the Sunday of the second week of Lent: “May we discover the face of Christ, the joy of the saved; He has come, He will come again, God always keeps his promises...”<sup>6</sup>

Our faith makes of us women and men of convictions, convictions founded on trust in the love of God which makes us capable of loving in our turn. However, we need to nourish our faith and to renew ourselves in its spirit, by the means given us for our baptismal and religious life: love of the

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Heb.4:1-11

<sup>4</sup> Marie Eugenie of Jesus, note n<sup>o</sup>.1513, quoted in *Education at the Assumption –Reference Text* p. 24

<sup>5</sup> Marie Eugenie of Jesus, Chapter of 28th April 1889 : *Build our work and our teaching on the foundation of faith*

<sup>6</sup> Prière du Temps Présent, en français, p.728

Office which “is one of the sources of our life and one from which we can draw the spirit of the Church”<sup>7</sup>, love of the Eucharist and Eucharistic adoration, the spirit of adoration, meditation on the Word, love of the Church...

In this time of great expectation for the whole Church about its future, the invitation of Saint Marie Eugenie can sustain our faith and inspire our prayer: *“To be truly of the Assumption, our faith must be firm and ardent. May it inspire all our thoughts, all our works, all our relationships both within and without; may it become the atmosphere of our souls”*<sup>8</sup>. We need to let this word resonate in our hearts, and to work on it ceaselessly, so that it may shape our daily lives.

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Faith remains a great challenge for our times, and Marie Eugenie a great witness before our eyes. To celebrate the sanctity of Marie Eugenie is also to think of the long line of all those women and men who have opened the way of faith for us. It is to marvel at our own faith journey, to give thanks for this gift and to commit ourselves to take care of it. For us, the Year of Faith is an invitation to renew our fervour in this life of faith. Like Marie Eugenie, we can make the search for the Kingdom of God our unique preoccupation, by agreeing to enter into its dynamic where we learn to hand over our lives day by day, until that day when we will be completely in Him. Like her, let us dare to put our trust in God who does not do things by halves. By faith and trust, we will obtain everything, but each thing in its time. That is why we must believe that He who awaits us at the end of the journey is also walking with us. May his Word which is our food be also the light on our way.

With my affection and prayers in the joy of St. Marie Eugenie’s feast,

Sr. Martine Tapsoba  
General Superior

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<sup>7</sup> Marie Eugenie of Jesus, Chapter of 28<sup>th</sup> April 1889: *Build our work and our teaching on the foundation of faith*

<sup>8</sup> Marie Eugenie of Jesus, Chapter of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1878 : *“ Faith, love of the Truth”*