



SEVEN DAYS

with

**St. MARIE EUGENIE
Milleret de Brou**



**Religious of the Assumption
2006**

CONTENTS

A new Saint	page 3
Marie Eugénie: a Saint Prayed	page 10
Marie Eugénie: A Saint Loved	page 13
Marie Eugénie : A Saint Danced.....	page 16
Marie Eugénie: A Saint Cried	page 19
Marie Eugénie: A Saint Worked.....	page 23
Marie Eugénie: A Saint Dreamed	page 25

About this booklet

This is the story of one person's path to holiness, of how Marie Eugénie listened to God leading her in all the happenings of her life. It was like most people's lives, it had its up and downs, its happy times and sad times. Marie Eugénie knew that God was with her guiding and helping her to live her life with love and meaning. She can be a model of encouragement for our lives.

This booklet is for young people to read on their own or in a group. It is best read in sections and giving time to think about the questions and ideas at the end of each section.

A New Saint!



What is a saint?

Can you think of someone you know who is a good and kind person? It might be one of your family or a friend. That person might be young or old, a parent, grandparent, teenager, child, teacher, football player, farmer or fashion model. What makes a person good and holy is that they try their best to be a friend of Jesus and a friend to everyone.

Some people, who have led very good lives and have loved Jesus and others, are called *Saint*. That is a word that means *holy*. There is a special ceremony at which the Pope announces that we can all use the title *Saint* for a particular person. That ceremony is called canonization. It is helpful to have saints because we can learn from them.

Mother Marie Eugénie of Jesus is to be canonized and so the Church is giving us another Saint. Holiness is for everybody, so the Pope is telling us that by learning about the life of Marie Eugénie, it will help us to become saints too.

Who was Marie Eugénie and what made her a saint?

Eugénie Milleret, who was to become Mother Marie Eugénie, was born in the northeast of France in 1817. Her family were baptized Catholics, but they were not religious. Her father was a rich banker and politician who was often away from home. The family lived in the country near the border of Germany and Luxembourg. Eugenie could see those countries from her bed-room window.

Here life was easy and carefree; she played with her elder brother in the garden and went with her mother to visit the poor families and the sick who lived nearby. When she was 13, her father lost all his money, their beautiful house was sold and the family split up. Eugénie left her father and her brother and went to live with her mother in Paris. It was a sad and difficult time for Eugénie; it is never easy when you have to be separated from those you love. Two years later, when she was just 15, her

mother caught cholera and died in a few hours. Eugénie was left alone in the world. Can you imagine how she felt?

After several years, staying with different families and pretending she were having a good time, whilst really feeling lonely and uncertain, Eugénie found herself one day in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. There she heard a young and popular preacher called Father Lacordaire. What he said made a great impression on her. She knew she wanted to be closer to Jesus. She found that the Gospel made sense of her life and she decided to give her whole life to Jesus Christ.

Years later she would say: *It is silly not to be what you are as completely as possible.* It is important for all of us really to be our best selves and to develop and use the gifts that God gives us. For Eugénie, knowing God loved her gave her life purpose and meaning. But the big question was how should she follow Jesus and show her love for him.

The world in which Eugénie lived was an exciting one; it was a time of many new inventions and lots of factories. People who had always been poor farmers now moved from the country-side into the towns in hope of finding better living conditions. Most were disappointed: they were still poor and were now living in dirty overcrowded slums whilst the rich people were getting richer and most were not bothered about the poor. They had forgotten about God. Eugénie was concerned about this.

She met a priest called Father Combalot, who persuaded her that the best way to follow Jesus and help make the world what God wanted it to be was to start a new religious family committed to education: the Religious of the Assumption, usually called The Sisters of the Assumption.





NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL in PARIS

Eugénie thought and prayed about the idea. It was her chance to say Yes to God just like Mary had when she was asked to be the Mother of Jesus. Eugénie knew she had to follow Jesus because she loved him.

In 1839 Eugénie and some young women came together and gave their lives to God and prepared themselves to bring change to the world by empowering young people to take responsibility for it. Eugénie added Marie to her name to remind her of Mary's love of God. These young women were called Sisters.

The Sisters needed courage: they were young and inexperienced. Father Combalot left Marie Eugénie on her own. She had to train the new sisters, find a house and start a school. Gradually more sisters joined her. They were very poor and their life was hard. They spent their time praying, teaching and being together as a community. It was so difficult that the Archbishop was worried that this life of poverty, prayer and education was too much for the sisters and they should not continue. However they assured him they were OK. At the same time the Sisters were becoming known in Paris. The parents wanted to send their children to the school because the sisters were happy and sincere, as well as giving the pupils a broad, modern education.

What made Marie Eugénie a saint? It was because in everything she did she was very close to Jesus Christ whom she loved so much. She said it like this. *I am always thinking of Jesus Christ and how to spread his kingdom of love.*

Marie Eugénie's life was completely centred on Jesus Christ. Whenever she thought about Jesus' life, death and Resurrection her heart was full of love. She tried hard to be like Him and to live as He had lived. She prayed to be very close to Jesus. When she received Him in Holy Communion, she felt very close to Him.

Marie Eugénie had a long life which covered nearly all the 19th century. Her mission in the Church was to found a community of Sisters. All her life was spent starting communities and opening schools, sharing her dream with the sisters who joined her. She had to buy land, set up schools and train the sisters.

We all need guidelines or rules in our life, whether we are at home or school or even just crossing the road. Those rules help us to be happy, safe and make other peoples' lives happy. The Sisters needed a Rule to guide them in their life together. Marie

Eugénie thought and prayed about it, asked advice and wrote a Rule. The authorities in the Church in Rome thought it was a good Rule. What do you think is an important rule in life?

Marie Eugénie really cared about people and they loved her. When she met people they knew she cared for them. Her love of Jesus helped her to love others.

By the time Marie Eugénie died in 1898 more than a thousand sisters had joined her and there were Assumption communities all over France, in England and Spain and Italy. There were communities in the Philippines and in Nicaragua. The communities Marie Eugénie started were happy, friendly and enthusiastic. Wherever there were Assumption communities there was the same loving spirit, which everyone recognised as the Assumption family spirit. The sisters loved to be with Marie Eugénie and she loved to be with them.

They knew that the best way to spread God's Kingdom of love was by educating girls. At this time girls did not get a very good education. Marie Eugénie knew how important women were. In her day women did not go out to work but stayed at home looking after their families. Marie Eugénie realized that women were important for the love and care they gave to their families. A mother has a good opportunity to influence their children and help them to love God and live by the Gospel.

Marie Eugénie believed that everyone is loved by God and is good and that when we love other people we touch the good that is in them and help them to grow into the person God wants them to be. Her way of spreading the Kingdom of God was always through love.

Everyone needs the help of friends; Marie Eugénie had a good friend, a priest called Father d'Alzon. They helped each other to become holy. She encouraged him to start a Religious Order for men, which was called the Augustinians of the Assumption. Another special friend who was one of the first young women to join Marie Eugénie was an Irish sister called Mother Thérèse Emmanuel. She supported Marie Eugénie all her life, especially when there were difficulties. Both Father d'Alzon and died before Marie Eugénie. She missed them both, but she knew she always had Jesus as her friend, to whom she could talk about her happy

moments and her difficulties, so when she became old and felt lonely she turned more and more to Jesus.

Sister Thérèse Emmanuel



When she grew old, Marie Eugénie's life changed. She could no longer manage to be in charge of all the communities, so the Church arranged for her to have a sister to help her. Gradually she had to give up the long journeys she had made by train and boat. Then her legs became weaker and to help her get around in the garden she had a little carriage pulled by a donkey. It must have been even harder for her when she found it difficult to speak. But everyone noticed how peaceful she was and how she would hold her crucifix in her hands, thinking about Jesus on the Cross. One day she said: *I am looking at my Lord, by looking at Him we learn how to love.* On the 10th March 1898 Marie Eugénie died and joined the One she loved with all her heart.



What do you think?



1. Do you know someone you think is holy?
2. What do you think makes them holy?
3. Why do think it is important that girls get a good education?



Link with the Bible



We love God because God loved us first. 1 John 4:19

How did Marie Eugenie follow these words of St John?

Marie Eugénie: A Saint Prayed



Everyone needs a time to be peaceful and quiet, a time when you can think over your happy times and perhaps the sad times too. During that time we can speak to Jesus about our thoughts because we know how much He loves us and we can tell Him how much we love Him. When we do this, it is called prayer.

Even though her parents did not teach her much about God, as a child Marie Eugénie went to Church sometimes, read a lot, and had discovered something about God. Her First Holy Communion was a very special time when she felt drawn very close to God who spoke to her heart; but at the time she didn't realize how extraordinary it was and soon forgot about it. She would say a prayer from time to time. In her diary, when she was a teenager, she sometimes spoke to God, usually when she was upset or worried about her life. Otherwise, she did not think much at all about God. But God did not forget Marie Eugénie.



When at the age of 19, Marie Eugénie came to know and love Jesus and His Church through the preaching of Father Lacordaire, she started to develop a deeply personal relationship with God. She loved to think about God – how loving, how wonderful, how powerful – about God being always there throughout her life. She wanted to be with God always, to love and thank God and return love for love.

God speaks to us in many ways: through the Word of God in the Bible, through the teachings of the Church, through beauty, through other people's words and actions, through the things that happen to us, through everything. Marie Eugénie realized that she could find God by going into the quiet space within herself, by thinking about God being very close to her and by listening to what God wanted to say to her in her heart.

It was reading the Gospels and getting to know Jesus better that brought Marie Eugénie closer to God and changed her life. She understood that God's loving plan for the world was that Jesus should bring everyone into the happiness of the Kingdom of God, and that He invites us to help him do this.

The more she prayed, the more Marie Eugénie realized how much Jesus loved her and she wanted to make her love as great as his – which is impossible, but she wanted to love as much as she could. She knew that she met Jesus in the closest possible way in the Eucharist, when she received Holy Communion at Mass and these moments became the most important of her life. It was a special time to be quiet, to adore God, to express her love, to ask for what she and everyone else needed.

Another important prayer for Marie Eugénie was the Divine Office, the special prayer of the Church. This prayer uses the Book of Psalms from the Bible, one of the oldest prayer books in the world! Jesus prayed the psalms every day; they are very beautiful and can help us pray like Jesus. Marie Eugénie and the Sisters used this prayer everyday and the Sisters of the Assumption all over the world still do today. It helps when people pray together. Marie Eugénie thought of all the people all over the world who were praying the psalms and who had done so from the beginning of the Church. She knew that this prayer brought together in love all those friends of Jesus who had ever lived; this is called the Communion of Saints.



Marie Eugénie went to God for all her needs. She was an anxious person, prayer helped her to be peaceful, it made her want to do good. As her life went on, she depended more and more on prayer. People found her a prayerful person and it helped them feel close to God. Her great concern was for all the young people, who like herself when young, did not know God, or find meaning in their life. She wanted them to know how much they were loved, how wonderful it is to love God in return and how God has a great plan for each person.



What do you think?



1. The Sisters pray with the psalms everyday in the prayer they call the Office. Do you know any psalms?
2. Sometimes life is very noisy. What is your special place where you can listen to God?
3. Find that quiet place and take a moment to think about Jesus, let him speak to you in your heart.
4. Often say to yourself *Jesus loves me very much*, it will help you to love Him and other people too.



Link with the Bible



Jesus said 'when you pray, this is what to say...' Luke 11: 1-4

Look this up in your Bible and read it through slowly

Marie Eugénie: A Saint Loved



Love more than anything else, makes us happy. We all feel strong, courageous and generous when we feel loved. Some people learn this when they are young. We need to love others to be happy. And, when we practice loving others, we become more lovable ourselves.

All human beings are born with the ability to love. We know this because we are all made in the image and likeness of God and God is love. Each one of us has to learn how to love. Usually we learn it first of all in our families. Marie Eugénie was one of those fortunate people who learned to love young. Her mother was quite strict but loving. Marie Eugénie tried hard to please her mother by being obedient and helpful. Her mother's care for the villagers and neighbors taught her to care for others especially those in need. She learned to notice the pain and difficulties of others and to try to do something about it. When her parents lost their money there was only a little jam and bread in the house, Eugénie did not complain so her parents would not feel bad.

She loved her older brother, Louis, because he was the nearest to her in age, and they were good to each other all their lives. As time passed and her brothers and cousins married and had children, Marie Eugénie loved them all. To the very end of her life she was concerned for the welfare of her family, praying for them constantly and helping them in whatever ways she could. She helped many people too, sharing what she had with them. She had a kind word for everyone.

All through her life Marie Eugénie had lots of friends. What made her a good friend was her thoughtfulness: she saw what would make others happy. When she was young her cousin, Ernestine, had a bad leg and couldn't walk properly, Eugénie didn't leave her out but thought up games her cousin could join in with. Another way in which she showed her thoughtfulness was when her uncle offered to buy her an expensive present, but she insisted that what she really wanted was a skipping rope, because she did not want him to spend too much money on her.

We can think of God's love as an enormous circle which includes the whole world. Our love starts with a small circle of family and friends, but it does not stop here. Marie Eugénie loved the sisters who came to join her religious family. She enjoyed their company and they enjoyed hers. She loved the children who came to the Assumption schools. Because she was intelligent and her mind was quick, she could sometimes be very critical and impatient. She worked hard to try to be more patient and less critical.

All her adult life Marie Eugénie was a very busy person, but she did not make that an excuse for not loving. She was always ready to make time to see people, to write letters and to remember special occasions. She showed people what they meant to her. She understood when they were overburdened or worried and tried to help them. On the other hand she was not soft: when she felt that someone was not living up to their commitments, she was honest in telling them so. She knew that love sometimes meant pointing out that someone was wrong.

One of the ways Marie Eugénie expressed her love was in concern and care for those who were poor or suffering. She was particularly considerate of the needs of those who were sick. She looked for good medical care, but also for little things which would please them and above all she saw that they had all the help they needed to love God. When they were dying she was particularly careful to see that there was a priest to give them the Sacrament of the Sick because she knew this would bring them peace.



Marie Eugénie learned how to love by looking at Jesus and seeing how He loved. She spent a lot of time with Him; she tried to try to be like Him and because she loved Him very much, she wanted to share his way of life and to give her life as Jesus had given his life on the Cross. She always remembered the words of Jesus: *No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.* And this is what she did.



What do you think?



1. Think of someone you know who is very loving. How do they show their love?
2. Think of three things you could do which would make your family or school a more loving place.
3. What do you think sick people need most (not counting medicine)?
4. Do you know of anyone who is lonely or left out? What could you do to show them love?



Link with the Bible



Jesus said 'You must love God with all you heart and your neighbor as yourself...' Luke 10:27

Look this up in your Bible and read the story that comes after that of the Good Samaritan, who showed great love.

Marie Eugénie : A Saint Danced



Can you tell how someone is feeling by looking at them, maybe the way they walk? What makes you want to dance? Sometimes you can feel yourselves dancing in your heart because you are happy, you are full of wonder and joy, you are light hearted and carefree, you want to share that joy with others and make them happy too. Marie Eugénie was just like that.

Marie Eugénie knew all about dancing. Her cousin Ernestine tells a story of a grand ball or dance given by Eugénie's parents at their country house. All the most important people of the region came to the ball and most of them stayed the night. Ernestine remembered:

Eugénie wore a white dress and amused herself wholeheartedly, playing and dancing, to the rhythm of the orchestra. I danced as much as my bad leg allowed and then I was tired. But the rest of the night was terrible, because there were so many people in the house and we had to share a tiny bed. It was so small neither of us could sleep. Eugénie did not complain but laughed and joked loudly to silence my unending complaints. Instead of trying to sleep which was impossible, she reminded me of the fun we had just enjoyed: the trip, the concert, the dance, the guests who had talked to little girls like us and so on.



People become saints in different ways. For Marie Eugénie one important way was to choose to see the good side of every situation. It was a way that helped her to be happy. She knew how to enjoy herself and she would not let complaints about an uncomfortable bed

spoil a wonderful occasion. It is a great gift to always to find the good side of everything; Marie Eugénie tried to do this all her life. It made her think of Our Lady ascending to heaven in her

Assumption. Like Mary we should try to be close to Jesus and think about the things that really matter. Marie Eugénie explained it to the sisters like this:

Our spirit is one of closeness to Jesus whose love and joy helps us to overcome problems and difficulties without getting too upset or complaining or wasting time over them...I think that the spirit of joyfulness of the Assumption Sisters helps us to stop whining and to follow what God wants us to do so as to make the best of things for his service and glory.

How did Marie Eugénie learn to live like this? We find the clue in the story she gives us of her first Holy Communion, which she did not make until she was twelve years old, just a few months before the ball. There were two particularly important parts to this experience. Firstly she had an experience of God being very close to her :

*The moment when I received Jesus Christ it was as if all that I had ever known was lost in my God, I no longer saw nor heard anything, I no longer felt the presence of anything except God. She belonged to God and nothing else mattered. And then after she received her First Holy Communion she explains how: *Coming back to my place from the front of the Church, I was very frightened, I asked myself how was I going to find my mother again, when I heard inside me a voice which said: 'You will lose your mother, but I shall be for you more than a mother'.**

Of course, she found her way back all right.

God is always telling us: Do not be afraid. I am with you. I will help you. When God sent Moses to Pharaoh to tell him to free the Israelites, God said to him: 'Do not be afraid, I will be with you'. At the Annunciation it was the Angel Gabriel who told Mary not to be afraid and that the Holy Spirit would come upon her. Jesus promised his apostles: 'I will be with you always until the end of the world'. The saints listen to God's promise and as a result they have the confidence to do great things for God. Like everyone else they may have times when feel that they are small and insignificant, but they are not paralyzed by their fears. When Marie Eugénie heard that Father Combalot wanted her as

the foundress of a new religious family she said to him, "*But I am not capable of founding a religious order*" His answer was: "*It is Jesus Christ who will be founder of our Assumption*".



What do you think?

1. Do you ever grumble and moan? How do you feel when other people grumble and whine? Could you make up a prayer asking Jesus to help you be more cheerful and positive?
2. With a friend make a list of the happiest words you can think of, put them into a song or poem; e.g. *I am happy when I... I make others happy when I*
3. Do you ever feel afraid? What usually helps you to have courage?
4. Look up the words of the song by Lee Ann Womack called *I hope you dance*, what do you like about that song?



Link with the Bible

Jesus said 'happy are the peacemakers they shall be recognised as the children of God' Matthew 5: 9

What do you think this means? How can you be a peacemaker?

Marie Eugénie: A Saint Cried



Sometimes we feel sad and feel lonely. Perhaps things are wrong in our families: there are separations or anger or sadness. There are times when there are misunderstandings in friendships. We or those close to us may be ill and in pain. These are the kinds of things which make us cry.

Do saints really cry? Of course they do, all human beings cry. Crying shows that we are suffering or in pain and there is suffering in every human life. Some people suffer serious illnesses; some are injured in accidents or wars. Many people are always suffering from hunger and have the worry of finding food for their families. Some are persecuted, imprisoned and tortured. These are situations that can make us cry.

Life is extremely hard for some people and less hard for others. All this is very mysterious for us. Why suffering and pain exist is of the great questions of life. People ask: why do good people suffer? How can a good God allow such suffering? They ask: why me? It



is easy to trust God and have confidence when everything goes well; it is much harder when things go wrong and we suffer. Jesus who suffered for us is there with us loving us in our suffering.

There were times when Marie Eugénie cried. Even as a child she had difficult things to bear. When she was five, she saw both her nine year-old brother and baby sister, who was only one year-old, die. She was only in school for only a few months because she caught a very serious illness, typhoid fever. Then she fell and injured her hip. This never healed properly and for the rest of her life every now and again it gave her a lot of pain. Once she had to stay on her back in bed for nine months because of it. She knew the horrible experience of her father losing all his

money and going bankrupt and of people coming into the house to take away their furniture to pay the debts. Shortly afterwards her parents split up and she and her mother left their beautiful house in the country, which had to be sold. When she was only 15, her beloved mother died.

When she was grown up there were other sufferings. She wept over sisters who left the community. She suffered from the people who were supposed to be helping her saying nasty things about her which were not true. She was sad and suffered when sisters became ill: in those days a great many of them died young. Each death was a loss which broke her heart. When one of the first sisters who was a faithful friend and very helpful to her was very ill, she wrote to the priest she used to talk to: *I am broken-hearted, I would feel as if a part of me had died if I were to lose M. Therese Emmanuel... but in my feelings and my sorrow, I have always been ready to accept whatever God wants.*



All these trials did not make Marie Eugénie a gloomy saint or make her doubt the goodness of God. God's love is so powerful that everything can be turned to our good. God always wants what is good for his creation and especially for us human beings whom he made in love.

We can be sure that God will use any suffering there is in the world for a good purpose, even if we do not know what that purpose is. There is a story that helps us to understand this: A kind man was watching a butterfly struggle out of a chrysalis. Feeling sorry for the insect's struggles, the man split open the chrysalis and set it free. Then he watched as the butterfly tried to stretch out its wings, but the wings would not open, because they needed the hours of struggle to free themselves from the chrysalis in order to have the strength to fly. Suffering enables us to develop strengths we would never have otherwise.

How we deal with suffering shows what kind of people we are. It also makes us into the kind of people we become. We can refuse it but then we become bitter and unhappy. The sufferings Marie Eugénie had as a child led her to wonder about the meaning of life. She learned self-control and a sense of duty regardless of her feelings. Because she had suffered herself, she knew what it

felt like so she could understand other people's pains and anxieties. She became a deeply caring person to whom young and old confided their worries and pains. The secret of her strength and happiness was that she was very close to Jesus who loved us so much that he gave his life for our happiness. In his Passion and Resurrection, Jesus showed us that He is with us in all our pains and sorrows; that, if we have confidence in God and entrust ourselves to God's Love, we shall see that love overcomes suffering and even death. Jesus teaches us by his words and his way: *Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must take up their cross and follow me.*





What do you think?



1. Find out about the life of Pope John Paul II. (there is a lot of information on the internet, as well as in books) What do you think were his sufferings and what kind of person did they help him to become? In what ways were his sufferings like Marie Eugénie's?
2. Make up a prayer for someone you know who is suffering. What is the kindest thing you can do for someone who is suffering?
3. Check out the websites of aid agencies like CAFOD, CARITAS CRS and see what people are doing to help the hunger and suffering of many poor people.



Link with the Bible



Jesus said 'blessed are those who grieve for they shall be comforted' Matthew 5: 5

How does Jesus comfort us?

Marie Eugénie: A Saint Worked



God created the world and gave life to everything in it: this was His work. The second great work of God is Redemption; that is the bringing back to life that which has been lost. Jesus came on earth as a human person, died and rose again to save us all; this 'work' is at the heart of God's work of Redemption. God continues to work in the world: Jesus said: *My Father is still working, and I also am working.* (John 5:17).

Jesus' life was about doing the work of His heavenly Father. He told us: *I must carry out the work of the one who sent me.* (John 9:4) Jesus invites his friends to join him in his work and Marie Eugénie was keenly aware of this. She explained that the reason for founding a new religious family was that there was plenty for everyone to do to spread the Good News of Jesus.

Marie Eugénie wanted to make a difference to the lives of people through Assumption education. She wanted people to care for something more important than just their own concerns. She had an idea of building together a good human community. Many people thought this was just a daydream, but for her it was very real and very urgent. When you have great ideas, you need the courage to believe in them and to trust in God. But also you have to do your part. You have to work hard. Marie Eugénie liked the saying of St Ignatius who says *'that we have to pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on us.'*

When you work hard for God it often involves giving up some of your own ideas or things you might want to do: it means being unselfish, sharing and making a sacrifice. We have to make sacrifices if we want to achieve something.

Sometimes it is easy to give up trying to start something new. Wise people, and the saints are very wise people, know that to achieve anything worthwhile you have to keep trying and not give up easily, not everything in life is instant. Things that are worthwhile take time. Marie Eugénie would have agreed with Pope Benedict XVI who tells us: *'It is not power, but love that saves us! The world is saved by the patience of God'*. Power is impatient and violent. She was convinced that we must follow the faith

and love of Jesus, then each one of us can make a change in our own community.

What gave Marie Eugénie great encouragement was her conviction that the work of the Assumption sisters was the “will of God”, that God wanted it.



What do you think?

1. What are your ideas for an ideal human community living together?
2. Can you think of the times you have had to make a sacrifice for something you knew to be right? It might have been something like sharing, or giving up your favourite T.V. programme because someone wanted a different one. How did you feel when that happened?
3. Have you ever tried some work which took a while to achieve, perhaps it was something you made or a skill you had to learn. E.g. it takes a while to learn to ride a bike or learn to share; but in the end it brings happiness and love.



Link with the Bible

St Paul said 'You are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus for the good which God had planned to make up our way of life. Ephesians 1:10

How do you think these words are suitable for Marie Eugénie and yourself?

Marie Eugénie: A Saint Dreamed



When Marie Eugénie was young she became a friend of Jesus and decided to give the whole of her life to him. But she found that some Christians had a very strange idea of the world – for them it was a sinful place, where a scary God wanted to test them and punish them. They did not see God as a God of love and forgiveness. Marie Eugénie saw things quite differently. She said: *I believe that this world is a place of glory for God.*

What did she mean? God is given glory when we enjoy the beautiful and exciting world which He created in love and which gives us hope and joy - makes us happy. The Bible tells us that when God created the world He looked at it and saw that it was very good. The world is full of amazing things that God has created – the air and the water; rocks

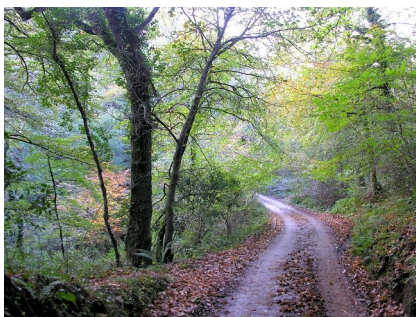


and plants and animals; and most importantly human beings. This wonderful world is part of God's own dream for the Universe. And the exciting thing about Marie Eugénie is that her dream was seeing the world the way God created it in the beginning and the way He wants it to become. She realized that what God wants more than anything is for people to be happy. God wants people to see that the world is a mirror which shows us how beautiful and good God is and how much He loves us. Of course she realized that the actual world we live in does not always act as a very good mirror for the goodness of God, but that is because some human beings have been selfish and not shared.



What gives God glory? One important answer is young people with dreams... God has put dreams into our hearts: the Prophet Isaiah had a dream of lions and lambs living at peace with one another. In modern times, Gandhi in India and Martin Luther King in the United States had dreams of independence and equality for their peoples. Mother Teresa of Calcutta had a dream of poor people being able to die with dignity. The greatest dream was the one God gave to Jesus his Son. Jesus dreamed of a world where the blind would see, the lame walk, prisoners be freed and the poor have the Good News of the Gospel preached to them. Jesus called this dream the Kingdom of God.

Marie Eugénie was an ordinary girl who became a saint, an ordinary girl who dared to believe and hope beyond what we she saw. Her dream was to help make Jesus dream come true in her time. She had a job to do, a part to play. She said:



I believe that we are placed on this earth to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God in ourselves and in others

I believe that each one of us has a mission on earth. It is simply a question of finding how God can use us to make His Gospel known and lived.

She felt that she was like a builder on a construction site. God was putting up a wonderful building and she wanted to bring her stone to be part of that building.



What do you think?

1. Research one of the people mentioned above, Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King or someone else who has made a difference to others. What was their dream?
2. God has given us the responsibility for caring for the earth, what ideas do you have for ways in which you could care for creation in your area?
3. Spend some quiet time asking God to show you what your mission is just now.



Link with the Bible

St Paul said 'We must always thank God for you, because God chose you from the beginning... may God encourage you and strengthen you in every good word and deed.' 2 Thessalonians 1:12, 17.

These words match the life of Marie Eugénie and every follower of Jesus. Say them quietly and slowly to yourself.