

## **Blessed Anne-Marie Javouhey**

(Nanette de Chamblanc)

born 10 November 1779, Jallanges, France

died 15 JULY 1851, Paris, France

Napoleon Bonaparte once said, *"I know of only two good heads in France -- my own and Mother Javouhey's. If she were a man, I would make her a general."* One of the first women to establish missions in Africa, Anne-Marie pioneered in the struggle for human rights for all races.

Shortly before she was to take the veil with the Sisters of Charity, Anne-Marie dreamed that Teresa of Avila appeared to her, surrounded by children of many races, and urged her to found a new congregation to care for them. She confided this to her confessor, who immediately cancelled the ceremony and sent Anne-Marie home. After several more false starts, she founded the Sisters of St. Joseph, and acquired a former monastery at Cluny that became their home. The French government asked her to organize schools and hospitals in France's African and Caribbean colonies, and Anne-Marie began this work with an arduous voyage to Madagascar. *The perils of the sea do not frighten us,"* she wrote, *"our aim is the hope of doing good, of winning a few souls for religion, of alleviating the poor sick and sustaining their courage in the midst of the greatest danger."* Anne-Marie later took missionaries to Guadeloupe and Martinique, Senegal and Sierra Leone, but she fought with the bishop of Cayenne, who banned her from the sacraments for almost two years. Returning to France in 1830, she entered a long power struggle with the bishop of Autun. She won every battle, but by 1851, she was mortally ill and bedridden. Informed of the sudden death of her nemesis, Anne-Marie said only, *"So he's gone, that good bishop. God rest his soul"* and asked that all papers concerning their dispute be destroyed. Today, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny count more than three thousand members from Tanzania to Poland. They venerate Anne-Marie on 14 July.

### **The Genius of Anne-Marie Javouhey**

Anne-Marie advised: *"God will give you the grace according to your needs: never doubt your strength when you count on him."*

### **Reflection:**

*"Your word is a lamp for my feet  
a light for my path."*

*Psalms 119:105*

Source:

Gallick, Sarah [The Big Book of Women Saints](#) p. 211