

**Blessed Marie Poussepin**  
born 14 October, 1653 Dourdan, France  
died 24 January 1744, Sainville, France

Marie's family's fortune was built on producing hand-knit silk stockings, but tastes changed and her father was unable to move with the times. When he died, thirty-year-old Marie inherited a pile of debts and a business on the verge of bankruptcy.

Marie was not discouraged, however. She had heard about a new English invention, the mechanical loom, and bought four on credit. She learned to use them herself, then trained her employees. Well ahead of her time, Marie established an apprentice program and generous performance bonuses. In four years she had paid off her father's debts and stabilized the business. She then handed over control to her younger brother and began teaching children in her home. Marie soon attracted like-minded women who called themselves the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. She believed that they would be most effective by remaining in the world, supporting themselves, and sharing the lives of ordinary people, but in the post-Reformation climate, the bishop of Chartres was unwilling to recognize a women's community without enclosure. Dominican historians make it clear that the bishop also disliked the Dominican Order and did not want it in his diocese. Forbidden to have any public connection with Dominicans, Marie focused her attention on the work of her institute, establishing twenty houses in France before her death. It took two hundred years for her community to be allowed to use its formal title, "Dominican Sisters of Charity of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary". Today there are more than four thousand Sisters of the Presentation in thirty-seven countries, including the United States and Iraq. They celebrate Marie's feast day on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October.

**The Genius of Marie Poussepin:**

Struggling to keep her congregation free from enclosure, Marie insisted:

*"The community will not confine itself to closing in upon itself the abundance it has received from heaven. It will take the means to spread it abroad generously and abundantly".*

**Reflection:**

*"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same LORD; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone".*

1 Corinthians 12.4-6

Gallick, Sarah: [The Big Book of Women Saints](#), p. 327