

Martyrs of Compiègne



Number of martyrs: 16

Place of martyrdom: Place du Trône Renversé

Date of death: July 17, 1794

Canonization: equipollent canonization on Feb. 22, 2022 by Pope Francis

Feast Day: July 17

About the Martyrs of Compiègne:

On July 17, 1794, a trial was held to determine the fate of 16 people: 11 Carmelite nuns, 3 lay sisters, and 2 tertiaries. The 16 women were accused of being enemies of the state: charges of treason and fanaticism were brought against them by the revolutionary government who had outlawed religious life.

The women who resided at the Carmel convent in Compiègne received a visit from government officials on August 4, 1790 and were given an ultimatum: either abandon life as a member of the Carmelites, or face imprisonment and further punishment. Under the brave direction of Mother Teresa of St. Augustine, they refused and dedicated themselves to execution, offering themselves as a sacrifice for France and the French Church. In August 1792, all convents and monasteries were ordered to be closed and the members of the Carmel were forced to re-enter the world. They donned civilian clothes, as the wearing of habits or other religious apparel was outlawed. Hiding in the city in small groups, they continued the illegal practice of community prayer. They were all arrested after a raid of their apartments, which uncovered proof of their “crimes”: letters which supported the monarchy, criticized the revolution, and evidenced their lives of consecration.

The sisters were arrested on June 22, 1794 and imprisoned in a former convent. By divine providence, the sisters had been arrested in their religious habits as they washed their civilian clothing. On July 10, 1794, they were transferred to Paris to await their trial on July 17. They stood with no legal counsel and were sentenced to death by guillotine. The sisters were transported via cart for two hours through the streets of Paris, singing hymns of praise. The frenzied mob silenced as the sisters arrived at their execution site. The novice knelt before her prioress and received her vows, and the sisters sang *Veni Creator Spiritus* as the crowd kept silent. One by one, from youngest to oldest, the sisters knelt before the prioress asking, “Permission to die, Mother?” Receiving the reply, “Go, my daughter,” they ascended the steps to their death. The chant they were singing, *Laudate Dominum*, was cut off voice by voice by the sound of the guillotine blade. The revolutionary government fell 10 days later.

Quote from the martyrs:

“Permission to die, Mother?”

“Go, my daughter.”

Find out more:

Websites: Word on Fire (search Compiègne)

Opera: Dialogues des Carmélites (loosely based)



Martyrs of Compiègne

Madeleine-Claudine Ledoine (Mother Teresa of St. Augustine), prioress
Marie-Anne (or Antoinette) Brideau (Mother St. Louis), sub-prioress
Marie-Anne Piedcourt (Sister of Jesus Crucified), choir-nun
Anne-Marie-Madeleine Thouret (Sister Charlotte of the Resurrection), sacristan
Marie-Antoniette or Anne Hanisset (Sister Teresa of the Holy Heart of Mary)
Marie-Françoise Gabrielle de Croissy (Mother Henriette of Jesus)
Marie-Gabrielle Trézel (Sister Teresa of St. Ignatius), choir-nun
Rose-Chrétien de la Neuville, widow, (Sister Julia Louisa of Jesus), choir-nun
Anne Petras (Sister Mary Henrietta of Providence), choir-nun
Marie Claude Cyprienne Brard or Catherine Charlotte Brard (Sister Euphrasia of the
Immaculate Conception)
Marie-Geneviève Meunier (Sister Constance), novice
Angélique Roussel (Sister Mary of the Holy Ghost), lay sister
Marie Dufour (Sister St. Martha), lay sister
Julie or Juliette Vérolot (Sister St. Francis Xavier), lay sister
Catherine Soiron, tertiary
Teresa Soiron, tertiary

Prayer

Lord God, you called Blessed Teresa of St. Augustine and her Companions to go on in the strength of the Holy Spirit from the heights of Carmel to receive a martyr's crown. May our love too be so steadfast that it will bring us to the everlasting vision of your glory. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

