

Lives
of
Saints

St Jane Frances de Chantal

1572-1641

Feastday: 12th December



We should
“throw ourselves
into God as a
little drop of
water into the
sea, and lose
ourselves indeed
in the Ocean of
the divine
goodness.”

**St Jane Frances
de Chantal**

I was born to the nobility, the daughter of the president of the Parliament of Burgundy. My mother died when I was 18 months old, and my father raised me up alone. I got married in 1592, when I was twenty years old. My husband was Baron Christophe de Chantal. I loved him sincerely, and we were both devoted to our four children. When I was just 28, I was widowed. The Baron was killed in a hunting accident. He died in my arms. For a while I struggled to forgive the man who had killed my husband, but I did forgive him, and even became godmother to his child.

Taking a personal vow of chastity, I was forced to live with my father-in-law. This was a period of great misery for me. I spent my free time in prayer, and received a vision of the man who would become my spiritual director.

In Lent, 1604, I met Saint Francis de Sales, and recognized him as the man in my vision. I became a spiritual student and close friend of Saint Francis, and we carried on a lengthy correspondence for years.

In 1610, I founded the Order of the Visitation of Our Lady at Annecy, in France. The Order was designed for widows and laywomen who did not wish to join the full life of the orders, and I oversaw the founding of 69 convents. In fact, I spent the rest of my days overseeing the Order, and acting as spiritual advisor to any who desired my wisdom. I directed an ambassador, an archbishop, as well as my own brother and one of my daughters.

I died to the world in 1641, at sixty-nine years of age.

S. J. D. C.
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