

## **ASASV September 2020 Salem Chapter Reflection by Eileen Luddy**

### **Matilde Le Duc**

#### **Home Life:**

The Le Duc family were well off and very religious. Mathilde's father was very industrious. Her mother, descended from Acadians, was a strong-willed woman. As a child, Mathilde was deeply devoted to Our Lady. She had many brothers and sisters, all of whom were well respected and religious. The people in the parish found Mathilde to be a lovely, tall, slim, regal looking young woman with sparkling eyes and a round face with flawless skin; a young woman who was cultured in her speech and actions.

#### **Education and Father Harper's Call:**

From age of 9 through 16 Mathilde was a boarding student with the Ursuline Sisters. She did so well that, at 16, she was asked to teach in her village school in St. Gregoire. After 4 years of that, she was contemplating becoming an Ursuline sister, but Fr. Harper, her confessor, asked her to help him start a new congregation. She felt it was a sign that God was calling her to this, so she said yes right away. She was 20.

#### **Matilde's personality:**

Matilde was intelligent, well-educated and meticulous about what she did. She was a good organizer. One sister said of her that she never hesitated to point out when something was amiss. In later life she sometimes incurred the disfavor of whoever was the superior because of her outspokenness. Yet, as Directress of Postulants, she often led by example, not words. When she would make a visit to the postulant's quarters, if she saw things left on the floor, she would silently pick them up and put them in their proper places, and then go on to talk about something totally different. Usually, the next time she came, the postulants made sure things were ship-shape.

#### **Her Principal Functions**

After Leocadie Bourgeois, the first Mother, died, the remaining sisters decided that Mathilde /Soeur Ste. Marie should become their Superior General.

#### **Mathilde's spiritual life:**

More than anything, Mathilde wanted to be a good bride of Christ. She knew she needed Jesus's help to control her "know-it-all" nature. She more than the others was thirsting for a "rule to live by". She wanted to live more closely with the Lord. She knew she needed his help. She was objective enough to know her imperfections. As she aged, she truly did learn humility and religious obedience. She was known for her saintliness, her humility and her generosity. The Lord truly did help her to master her impulses.

#### **Summary:**

I hope this talk will help you feel closer to Mathilde Le Duc/ Mere Ste. Marie and to her spirit in heaven. I imagine she looks down on us all in love, praying that we will shape up, get personally and religiously organized, love and support one another, and rise to the challenges before us – teaching others to trust

that our loving God is with them and will always help them. We in Salem are very blessed to have had three wonderful examples in the lives of our beloved sisters, one in heaven interceding for us and two in our everyday lives.

As laywomen and laymen trying to bring our lives more in tune with these deeply committed servants of God, we each must find our own way. I personally feel she calls me to a deeper prayer life, to be better organized, to waste less of my earthly time on trivialities like television and news, to pray and read scripture more, and to spend more quality time with those close to me, and to reach out more often to others - loving them, interceding for them, accompanying them, and with God's help, serving their needs.