

Émilie de Villeneuve

BY PATRICIA MATHSON

FEAST DAY: OCTOBER 2

As a young woman Émilie lived with her family in France. She had two older sisters and a younger brother. When Émilie's mother died, they went to live with their grandmother. After the death of an older sister, Émilie felt called to serve God by serving others. She started a home for children who had nowhere to live.

Helped people in need

Émilie went on to work with the poor, the sick, those in prison, and other people who were hurting. She went where she was needed, and the way was sometimes difficult. She was a person of prayer and shared the good news of God's love. Other women joined her and Émilie formed the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Castres.



Émilie de Villeneuve

Her work continues

Émilie died of cholera in 1854 after a lifetime of service. Her work continues through the order she founded. The sisters work in schools, hospitals, and communities to benefit people in need. They join with others to make a difference in the lives of the people they serve. The order has spread to 15 countries.

Sign of God's love

At her canonization Mass in 2015, Pope Francis said, She "consecrated her life to God and to the poor, the sick, the imprisoned and the exploited, becoming for them and for all a concrete sign of the Lord's merciful love." Her life reminds us that each of us is called to be a sign of God's love for others by our words and our actions.

What can we do?

- * Let's talk about Émilie's life. Who did she help? How did she show God's love to other people? Who continues her work? What did Pope Francis say about St. Émilie? How can we be a sign of God's love for others?
- * Let's make a list of ways we can help others. We can be friendly to a new child in school, make a card for someone who is sick, get help when a child is bullied, listen when someone needs to talk, help others with chores, and bring in items for the food pantry.
- * Let's each draw a picture of how we will help someone. Make

OCTOBER SAINTS

- 1 St. Thérèse
- 6 St. Bruno
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary
- 16 St. Hedwig
- 17 St. Ignatius of Antioch
- 20 St. Paul of the Cross
- 22 St. John Paul II
- 23 St. John of Capistrano
- 24 St. Anthony Claret
- 28 Sts. Simon and Jude

the picture with markers and put a title for it at the bottom of the paper. Then you can share your picture with others if you choose and tell them what the picture shows you doing. Share your picture at home too.

Prayer

Holy Spirit of love, we ask you to work in our hearts and our lives. Help us to grow in faith, hope, and love. Guide us to show God's love to other people by our words and actions as St. Émilie did. May we see the face of Jesus in each person we meet. Amen.

Patricia Mathson has many years of experience in faith formation as a DRE and holds a MRE degree from the University of Dallas. She is the children's ministry coordinator at Hope Family Center in Des Moines, IA. She is the author of many books including *Prayers and Activities on Service* (Twenty-Third Publications).

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