

# **The Wisdom of Madeleine Sophie Barat**

## **Introduction to the calendar**

**In 1800 Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779-1865) founded the Society of the Sacred Heart, a community of women who currently live and minister in forty-three countries on five continents and who, together with their associates, colleagues and friends, constitute the family of the Sacred Heart world-wide.**

**Sophie, as she was known by family and friends, was a remarkable administrator, an extraordinary educator and a visionary spiritual leader whose whole life was dedicated to the heart of Christ and to making God's love known. In these pages you will find an amazing range of her teachings on every topic from prayer and the interior life to grace, forgiveness, finances, fasting, teaching, self-forgetfulness, suffering, mindfulness, even letter writing.**

**These words of wisdom have been excerpted from translations of her letters and conferences. The editors have exercised a certain freedom to make Sophie's words accessible for today. Archaisms have been eliminated; dated piety has been rendered in more contemporary idiom. Sometimes her exhortations addressed to her sisters or to the Society of the Sacred Heart have been addressed rather to the family of God's Heart, that larger circle who have been touched by her vision and drawn into her orbit. We have retained Sophie's references to "vocation," convinced that each one of us has a vocation—a calling—to the holy life in virtue of our baptism. We have also included a fair number of references to one of Sophie's favorite virtues, humility, believing it is not only not passé, but a virtue deeply in tune with current cosmology (from *humus*, of the earth) and the reality of our place in the whole of God's created universe. Finally, we have tried to provide more gender-balanced language for God: while retaining some references to Father and Lord for the first and second persons of the Trinity we have used feminine pronouns for the Holy Spirit, the Ruah or "breath" of God, which is feminine in the Hebrew.**

**To give this calendar a longer life we have included only dates, not the days of the week. After the month of December you will find an appendix of some movable feasts (Thanksgiving, Ash Wednesday, the days of the triduum, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, The Body and Blood of Christ, the Sacred Heart, the Heart of Mary, and Christ the King). In addition, we have assigned some texts where they might prove most helpful: Lenten quotes in March; the Sacred Heart litany at the end of May; many quotes about the Holy Spirit in the month of June (Pentecost); and texts about teaching and mission in general at the beginning of the academic year in September.**

**We hope you will find in these pages inspiration, challenge, occasional humor, and some thought-provoking reflections. Above all we hope you will come to know and love Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat through the wisdom she offers you day by day.**

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