

What Love Can Do

Things have a strange way of changing, like popcorn—given certain loving heat.

Strange things happened to Mother Marie Anne during 1809-1890, her lifetime on this earth. For from about 1854 to 1890, she might say: “The heat is on!” It was an effort of Mother Marie Anne to deal with the antagonism shown her during those years. As the congregation commemorates the 125th anniversary of her death this year, it is good to look back to **her** difficult **35 years**. May it be an effort to show more love and, consequently, “the popper” full of the fluffy, nutritious popcorn that God had meant it to be.

Deprived of being the General Superior or of having anything to do with the running of the congregation that she had founded, Mother Marie Anne was even threatened by some of being expelled from the congregation. Tears began in Mother Marie’s eyes as she thought of a way to serve God’s purposes and still conform to her religious obedience. She thought of the kindness she could spread in the congregation she so loved. By just being SISTER Mary Anne, she would mix more among the Sisters and she could let her heart direct her.

It was a good resolution and so she began to wear more smiles. She reached out to the lonely, or sewed for those who were not able, or took time for visiting the sick. Not only did she do what **she** proposed, she was also ordered to do the ironing, which demanded a fire to heat the old-style irons on the stove top. When novices were assigned to help with the ironing, Mother Marie Anne began to realize that God was calling her to be closer to the novices and to the whole community, rather than being almost always enclosed in the privacy of an office space.

It always hurts to know you are not wanted! She recognized it when she was more or less isolated in the beginning years by being banished out of the main convent. But a difficult “obedience” such as that, ended when she was once again with her novices, or her young Sisters, or her old and the weak. She was even able to greet, or reply, to the current various leaders of the congregation. Sometimes her reply would receive a stinging admonition intensifying the feeling that, indeed, she was unfit.

What about you??? Perhaps, you are someone like Mother Marie Anne. There are many people in the world today receiving valuable help from people whose names are often enough not even known. Mother Marie Anne kept something in her big pockets so as to give “ a surprise” to little boarders crying because they missed their mothers. Perhaps Mother Marie Anne thought that, if she were in an office and a person of authority, she would not have noticed and helped those little girls.

In her lifetime, Mother Marie Anne made for herself a “pattern” of good works that many people remembered. If she had made a greater fuss about her demotion from being known as the Foundress and General Superior, she might have grown bitter or she might even have left the congregation, or, perhaps, ended her passionate love for God while bemoaning the fact that she had been ousted from the convent.

However, she did not do that. She humbled herself as Christ had humbled Himself. She confided in God, in Our Lady, in Good Saint Anne. She respected the bishop in Montreal. She began to love the good things that were happening to her in the congregation. As she aged, the pain and barbs that had stung and had continued for so many years, by the grace of God, changed into 35 years of **love**. As one can read in a book* a chapter entitled, “Vengeance” of Love”, one can see that because of her loving effort of faith, hope, and love she brought many blessings to uncounted people and to the congregation itself. So much so is her heroic faith now recognized, that she is known as Blessed Marie Anne Blondin and her cause is in Rome for canonization. It is Mother Marie Anne’s “vengeance”, a flowing stream of love.

You, too, can be close to God and loved by many people in various needs. Just a “Thank you!” to someone who gives you your change, can help him (or her) to realize that his (or her) job is a good one, that he (or she) is worth something! God puts into your life many opportunities to listen, to donate, to pray, to teach, to love, to remedy, even to sing! Sometimes people hurt you, perhaps it is like a jab with a resulting pain. Instead of making a rough, ugly “vengeance” reply, try to smile and make it a “vengeance of love”, as did Mother Marie Anne.

We hear of many places where people need consoling. Perhaps it is right next to your house, or even to someone living in your house. Children could be sad or unable to express their feelings. Realizing this, you could spend more time with them, sing with them, play games with them. Kindly interest shown makes it easier for people to feel that there really is love in this big world for them! Like Mother Marie Anne, when angry or hurt, you can resort to a “Vengeance” of Love!

Yes, like popcorn, with given certain heat it has a strange way of changing!

Sr. Margaret Cantwell, S.S.A. January 14, 2015

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