



Religious Life Today as Lived in St. Julie Billiard's Vision
FOUNDER OF THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR AND SAINT FOR OUR TIMES

Religious Life Today

by Anne-Louise Nadeau, SNDdeN

1. Do you have the **courage to believe** that goodness is a much stronger power than evil?
2. Do you have the **courage to believe** that peace and non-violence can be a way of life?
3. Do you have the **courage to believe** that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is as relevant today as it was in the days of the early Christian community?

If you have answered **YES** to these above questions or if you are willing to give serious thought to these above possibilities, then the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur invite you to join them as a vowed religious.

We are women who **dare to be idealists** in the face of considerable odds. We are women who proclaim God's goodness because we dare to take seriously the Gospel of Jesus. We are women who live with and among God's people laying claim that all human beings have a right to be free.

We **are vowed women**: Through our *vow of poverty*, we attempt to walk through life with open hands, believing that simplicity and sharing are more important than grasping and possessing material things. Through our *vow of chastity*, we have a passion for loving freely and unconditionally, living with the aloneness of never being the chosen partner of another. Through our *vow of obedience* we risk believing that we hear the Word of God in one another, in the signs of the times, in our religious tradition and in ourselves. These vows are a

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gift to God who fires us with a passion for mission and who sustains us in difficult times.

We are **'sisters' to each other**. We support and challenge each other. We disagree and we are diverse. We celebrate and mourn together. But regardless of what any one of us is grappling with, one thing we know for sure: *We have each other*.

St. Julie Billiard, a French peasant woman and Françoise Blin de Bourdon, an aristocrat are the two women who began the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1804. They believed in God and in each other. Together they challenged hierarchical structures, shaped a new model of what vowed religious women were 'supposed' to be like, and fashioned for us a strong legacy of education as Notre Dame's way of changing the world.

If any of this is tugging at your heart, we invite you to join us in finding a love and a happiness that you never dreamed possible.

'COME AND SEE' for yourself.