

Margherita Bays will be canonized in Autumn

The news reached us last January 15th and made us, the Swiss Church and, above all, the dioceses of Lausanne, Geneva and Friborg very happy.

Monsignor Martial Python, curator-moderator of the Blessed Margherita Bays pastoral unit, which includes Romont and its surroundings (around twenty parishes in all), has worked hard to make the Blessed known, by holding many conferences, many of them abroad. He also dedicated a book entitled: *The mystical life of Marguerita Bays*, to Margherita. It was published by the publishing house, Parole et Silence.

The influence of this lay person who lived in the small rural village of La Pierraz, now merged with Siviriez, goes beyond the Swiss borders. Margherita is known and venerated even in Canada and Latin America. It is surprising to see how this humble woman conveys a strong message of simplicity, seriousness and abandonment to Christ!

Very few were aware of the fact that "Gotron" (diminutive for Margherita) had the stigmata of the Crucified Jesus, stigmata that she had for a long period of time. Today she is compared to Marthe Robin, well known for the Foyer de Charité influence that she wanted (founded).

This humble lay person was a tertiary of St. Francis of Assisi and was part of the fraternity of the parish of Siviriez. Her attachment to Franciscan spirituality undoubtedly shaped her life of faith which was reflected in the special attention she gave to those who were the outcasts of her time: country maids, alcoholics, divorced people and the poor. Margherita did not judge anyone. On the contrary, she was the living reflection of God's mercy, embodied even in her stigmatized body.

The Swiss Capuchins contributed to the first phase of the journey that led to her canonization, which will take place this fall. Friar Samuel Horner, a Capuchin native of the parish of Ependes, was one of the postulators for the cause of her beatification. The person, who is picking up the the fruit of his work and of the many others who followed him, is Fr Claude Morel of the Fathers of St. Francis de Sales.

In due course we will return to the canonization of Blessed Margherita and we will present a reflection on this ecclesial event.

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