



## St. Emily de Vialar

**Born:** 12 September 1797 at Gaillace, Albi, southern France as Anne Marguerite Adelaide Emily de Vialar

**Died:** 24 August 1856 at Marseilles, Bouches-du-Rhône, France of natural causes

**Canonized:** 24 June 1951 by Pope Pius XII.

Also known as Anne Marguerite Adelaide Emily de Vialar, Emilie de Vialar, Emilie de Vialard.

Born to an aristocratic family, the eldest of three children, and only daughter of Baron James Augustine and Antoinette de Vialar. Because of the anti-Church sentiment of the years following the French Revolution, Emily was baptized in secret, and was taught religion at home by her mother. Sent at age 7 to Paris, France for her education. Her mother died when Emily was 15, and the girl returned home. She managed her father's house until she was 35 years old, privately devoting herself to a life of celibacy and prayer, and occasionally arguing with her father over her desire to enter religious life. Upon receiving a large inheritance from her grandfather, Emily and three other women founded the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition on Christmas Day in 1832; the Apparition refers to the appearance of Gabriel to Joseph, telling him to flee to Egypt. In 1835, Emily and several of the Sisters arrived in Algeria to help the sick during a cholera epidemic, and begin her dream of missionary work. Beginning in 1840 she tried to obtain papal approval of the Sisters, but secular politics between France and Algeria, and Church politics involving Bishop Dupuch of Alger prevented the recognition until 31 March 1862, several years after Emilie's death. During the next few years Emily established 14 new houses, travelled extensively, and sent missionaries anywhere that would accept them. This put a heavy strain on her inheritance, which had been mismanaged by her financial advisor. By 1851 she was bankrupt. Because of the money trouble, the reputation of Emily and of the Sisters suffered, and they were so poor that they sometimes ate in soup kitchens run by other Congregations.

Emily finally moved them all, establishing the mother-house of the Sisters in Marseilles, France where, with the help of the bishop, Saint Eugene de Mazenod, she began to build up her congregation again. In the years until her death, she established 40 houses in Europe, Africa, and Asia, and the Sisters continue their good work all over the world today.