

6 - Forever Friends

Introduction

Close your eyes

Breath in your nose and out through your mouth.

Breath in your nose and out through your mouth.

Repeat 7 times...

Sign of the Cross

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Story

In early 1800s France, Families wealthier than the Chavoins often sent their children away to boarding school. Among them was Marie Jotillon, a clever, attractive girl, faithful to her prayers and lessons about God. One time, when Marie was home on holiday, Jeanne-Marie was shocked to see how she was dressed. Marie, then about 14 or 15 years old, had returned wearing a new fashion—colorful ribbons braided through her hair. Today, such a style might seem insignificant, but in Coutouvre at that time, it was seen as improper. Jeanne-Marie rightly discerned that the young teenager was becoming more interested in her appearance than in her faith and care for others. She wondered what she should do.



Not long before this, a young man studying to be a priest had visited Coutouvre. He was staying with the parish priest, Father Guillermet. Before long, he recognized that Jeanne-Marie was a person of strong faith and a deep desire to know God fully. They had several conversations, and he began teaching her how to pray more deeply, helping her grow in her relationship with God and understand how to become the best version of herself. This young man, Jean-Philibert Lefranc, became someone Jeanne-Marie could trust, and she confided in him about her concerns for Marie Jotillon. Jean-Philibert offered to help Marie in the same way he was helping Jeanne-Marie and suggested that Jeanne-Marie encourage her friend to meet with him.

Jeanne-Marie waited for the right moment, but she had to be patient as Marie, suspecting her friend's intentions, tried to avoid her. Finally, one day, they met at the back gate of the Chavoin house.

Jeanne-Marie invited Marie to sit with her in the backyard under the beautiful pear tree. There, she shared her concerns and spoke about the spiritual growth she had experienced through her sessions with Jean-Philibert. Eventually, Marie agreed to meet him.

From that point on, Jeanne-Marie and Marie became very close friends, bonded by their shared faith in God. They met weekly to discuss how they were growing in their love for God, how they were striving to become the people they believed God wanted them to be, where they were struggling, and how they were working to overcome their weaknesses. Such deep conversations were rare, which made their friendship uniquely special.

Silence

Sit still for 1 minute. What parts of this story stays with you?

Discuss

Any thoughts? *2-3 minutes*

Common Prayer

What do you want to thank God for?

What do you wish to place in God's hands?

How would you like God's guidance or support in your life?

Hail Mary

We pray with Mary at this time:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Closing Prayer

Loving Father, we thank You for the gift of spiritual mentors who guide us closer to You, as Jean-Philibert Lefranc did for Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn in the early 1800s. Help us to seek and offer wisdom with humility and love, encouraging one another to grow in faith and virtue. Encourage us to seek out people in our lives to be our spiritual mentors. May we, like Jeanne-Marie, trust in Your guidance as we support those around us in their spiritual journeys. Strengthen our resolve to be patient and compassionate, riding the ups and the downs with gentleness, but sharing Your deeper truth in ways that inspire transformation, change and deeper communion with You God. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

Amen.

Sign of the Cross

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.