

Saint Julia Billiard • Saint stories

Who made you? Why did God make you? These are just two of the catechism questions most children learn to answer before their first Communion. St. Julia Billiard knew ALL her catechism by the time she was 7 years old ...when most children are just beginning to learn it. She taught other children what she knew!

Julia and her family lived in France. Her parents were peasant farmers who raised their seven children to know, love and serve God.

One day while she sat next to her father by the window, someone tried to shoot him. How terrifying! Fortunately, he wasn't killed but the incident paralyzed Julia for the next 22 years.

During those years, the French Revolution occurred. (During the revolution, many were killed, and the Catholic faith was forbidden by law.) Secretly she tried to care for poor children, teach young girls, and train teachers. Above all, she taught these children the faith. Several times she was almost caught teaching the faith and taking care of poor children. Many times she had to flee to another home. But nothing stopped her from doing God's will. With the help of a priest, she began to form the religious order, The Sisters of Notre Dame.

In 1804 a priest asked Julia to join him in praying a novena for a special cause. (A novena is a special prayer said for nine days in a row.) This priest did not share with her the intention of the novena. On the fifth day of the prayer, the priest came to her and said, "Mother, if you have any faith, take one step in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." She

stood up and walked. God worked a miracle and cured her!

Now she was able to work even harder caring for poor children and teaching. She devoted the rest of her life to this work. By the time she died in 1816, she had started 15 convents.

Feast day: April 8

St. Julia Billiart, pray for us!

Activity: Teach the faith!

The first two catechism questions and answers are pretty easy to learn. Teach them to someone you know.

Who made you? God made me.

Why did God make you? God made me to know him, love him, serve him in this world, and to be happy with him in heaven.