Why Sister Marie? Why Now?
~Personal Reflections on the life of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey,
And her mission in these times.
My deepest gratitude to
Reverend Carl G. Schulte, C.M.
author of A Guiding Star, the biography of Sister Marie,
for his wisdom, kind generosity, abundant support,
true example of carrying one’s Cross in charity, humility, perseverance,
..and all the while with a very cheerful good humor!

To Erin, my sister-in-The-Spirit,
thank you for introducing me to Sister Marie.
May God bless you always.
When all else fails, we laugh!

Many thanks to the de Mandat-Grancey family
for their gracious hospitality
and especially for sharing their stories of
Sister Marie.

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PREFACE

You are about to meet Adele Louise Marie Grancey, a noble French lass, who is on the brink of breaking into Church history. She died only five years before my own birth. The author of this booklet, Lorraine Fusaro, wife and mother of six children, fell in love with her and has a web log dedicated to publicizing Mary’s House and the role of Sister Marie. Lorraine dearly wants you to meet her. You will understand why when you read this short biography Why Sister Marie? Why Now? which also includes her personal reflections on the life of Sister Marie. You, too, will want to share her story with others.

Adele Marie became known as Sister Marie, a Daughter of Charity, with a seemingly rather inconspicuous life but one of the most meaningful in history. She had the ability to be self-effacing, never using her status as a noble woman or, that by her vocation, she became a member of the Family of St. Vincent de Paul. The focus of her attention was on the person being helped or the Blessed Virgin Mary, never on herself. It is evident that Lorraine Fusaro has captured that quality in Sister Marie.

As you follow the development of the life of Sister Marie you will see how easy it is to find you are wrapped in attention with the Virgin Mary with whom Sister Marie is involved. And after a bit, the Virgin Mary, too, moves you; moves you back to Sister Marie. Each of them dearly cares for the other.

It is that caring quality of Sister Marie that brought her the most privileged grace of uncovering, after fifteen hundred years, the remains of Mary’s House. The exuberance and appreciation felt by so many in being able to visit the replica of the Doorway to the Virgin is manifested in this literary work of Lorraine. It is a wonderful introduction to A Guiding Star which, with God’s grace, will soon be published.

Easter 2009

Reverend Carl G. Schulte, C.M.
Why Sister Marie? Why Now?

~Personal Reflections on the life of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey,
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Forever changed.

While recovering from the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and subsequently learning of the life and works of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey, I became convinced that Sister Marie is a woman for our time. I remain convinced.

My husband Anthony and I have lived all of our lives in the New York City area on Long Island where we met, married in 1981, and have raised six children. Anthony has commuted by train into New York City for twenty-five years to work in the financial district. Providentially, he terminated his employment at Cantor Fitzgerald Securities on the 105th floor of Tower I of the World Trade Center five months prior to September 11, 2001. He had moved to his new company and was employed in the building right next to 7 World Trade Center. On that dreadful day, when the age old hatred between God’s children of different faiths reared its ugly head, Anthony stood on the street outside 7 World Trade Center and then ran for cover pausing occasionally to view the unspeakable horror of two planes attacking our city; our nation. Tragically, in a matter of minutes, among the thousands who perished, many of his previous co-workers and friends were brutally taken from this world, leaving behind families and loved ones. In those moments our lives, and the lives of every person in this country, and indeed the whole world, was forever changed. Anthony returned to work a few months later to be haunted daily by the view from the window of his new office; a dark and desolate smoldering hole.

“Let me introduce you to…”

Just a few months after this, my long time friend Erin von Uffel made a visit home to Long Island from Europe. She, her husband, and their five
sons were enjoying a two year work related transfer to London. During our visit she talked to me about a nun from the 1800’s who had captured her interest. While spending her years in London doing some traveling to the Holy Sites of Europe and the surrounding countries, she was truly taken by Mary’s House in Ephesus, Turkey. There she learned of Sister Marie, the hidden nun who is recognized by the Catholic Church as Foundress of Mary’s House. This little stone house is the once hidden holy place where Mary, Mother of Jesus, spent her final years on this earth; the House is located in the very same holy place of Mary’s Dormition and Assumption into Heaven. My friend briefly explained to me that Mary’s House at Ephesus is no longer hidden because of the zeal of Sister Marie. Erin has ever since been Sister Marie’s tireless champion sharing her zeal for this little nun with everyone who will listen.¹

Erin left to go back to London leaving me with the very long name of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey to try to remember, as well as learn to pronounce. Much of the information she shared with me that day I am ashamed to say I forgot. However, as we parted she pressed Sister Marie’s prayer card into my hand.

We kept in touch by phone while she finished her stay in London and upon her permanent return in 2004 we decided to have lunch one day to share our family news and updates of the past two years. At my request, she patiently and lovingly retold Sister Marie’s story. It was plain to see that her heart was obviously devoted to this nun of so long ago. Erin’s zeal for all things of faith had always been contagious. I was beginning to become interested too. Over the next year or so when I would find a bit of time, I would read about Sister Marie’s life myself and little by little I began to pray to her. That’s when God took over and my heart became involved.

“Why Now”…and a little epiphany

A year later, on January 19, 2005, Erin and I met for lunch to discuss

¹ Inspired by the Holy Spirit and after much prayer Father Ignatius, a Carmelite priest from Ireland, with Erin von Uffel, composed the prayer you will now find on Sister Marie’s prayer card. They then petitioned the Archbishop of Izmir, Turkey, w Giuseppe G. Bernardini, and obtained the Imprimatur for this prayer on October 6, 2004.
Sister Marie again. It was at that lunch table in a restaurant in our hometown of Huntington that a connection was crystallized in my mind between the recent tragedy of September 11, 2001 in New York City and Sister Marie. The pieces of Sister Marie’s story that I had already learned and the role of Mary’s House as a gathering place for different faiths added up in my mind to a beautiful possibility. I recall saying to Erin at that lunch table, “This isn’t only about recognizing a woman’s holiness; this is about the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and world peace!” It was later that evening while thinking about this meeting that it occurred to me that 1/19 (the day’s date) is the exact reverse number of 9/11, the day of tragedy. My soul was seized with the Holy Spirit and a small hope was enkindled in my heart that the hatred of 9/11 could also be reversed just like those numbers; undone by forgiveness and prayers for peace through the intercession of Sister Marie. I was beginning to understand the answer to the “Why Now?” question. The world was certainly ripe for healing now, in these times. It was clear that after 9/11 we were in dire need of unity and peace between Muslims and Judeo-Christian America. Sister Marie seemed to be the impetus for this endeavor, but to fully reveal the answer to the “Why Sister Marie?” question would require some more study, serious prayer, and devotion on my part. Who exactly was Sister Marie? Where did Sister Marie come from? Who was her family? What were the circumstances and events that shaped her life? Why is her life important today?

A Bit of History

The French Revolution 1789-1799 (including the Reign of Terror), and the reign of Napoleon or the Napoleonic Era 1800-1815 were the historical traumas that preceded Sister Marie’s entry into the world. Adele Louise, as she was named and baptized, began life in this very unsettled historical time. The ruling powers in France were fluctuating between Kings and Republics not without excruciating struggle and strife for the French people who had yet to make any strides towards recovery after the horrors of the previous forty years. The country was in very sad repair politically and Paris was a truly desperate and poverty stricken city.
Even as French nobility, the Granceys were greatly affected by the desperation of these times but they did manage to keep their faith and their family unity. They lost almost all of their homes which were burned or confiscated. The only noble home remaining is the Grancey Castle where Sister Marie was born in 1837. She was one of six children born to the Count and Countess of Grancey; a family of nobility who also has been noted in both French and Ecclesiastical history for its holiness.

Her grandparents and other older relatives and family friends were certainly first hand witnesses of the horrors of the recent past. The murmured bits and pieces of stories that Sister Marie may have gleaned as a child from memories recounted in overheard adult conversations were undoubtedly vivid and sorrow filled. Although born in the grand castle in Dijon, France in an atmosphere of privilege and comfort, she spent half of each year in Paris as she grew. There is where she saw a very different world; one of poverty and deprivation.

**A Vocation is Born**

Just forty years before Adele Louise’s birth, Paris was completely unaccustomed to the sight of any religious in the city due to the Reign of Terror in 1793. However, in 1800, for the purpose of caring for his troops, Napoleon reorganized the Sisters of Charity in Paris. In 1815, they finally settled in the rue de Bac where they still live today. For the longest while, throughout this bitter and tumultuous nineteenth century in France, the Sisters of Charity were certainly in as dire straights and probably looked as poor as, or poorer than, the poor they were helping.

As noted before, the Grancey’s spent from January to June each year in a Parisian house. It is fair to assume that during these first two decades of her life, Marie was witness to these Sisters in their tattered blue habits with their white cornettes as they helped the poor Parisians struggle to their feet after enduring a very cruel century.

Sister Marie’s vocation was born in these moments. Even though her childhood was very sweet and comfortable, she wanted to be like those Sisters of Paris. What is so amazing, and indeed edifying, is that she understood the dichotomy of her situation so clearly at such a tender
age. Even as a little girl, she would often compose prayers and write them down in her Catechism notebook. One day she wrote, “I pray God that He gives me a religious vocation because, otherwise, I’m not sure to be able to resist all the temptations of the world around me.”

From Castle to Convent

It was my sincere pleasure to visit the Grancey family in France in May of 2008. There I stood in awe of the Chateau Grancey. I have nothing to compare it to from my own experience in America. It is a castle complete with drawbridge, family crest flags flying, surrounded with high fortress walls, and blessed with its own “Chapel,” or collegiate church, dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist, just inside the massive gates. This “Chapel” I might add, is as large as any Church one might find in a big town in America. The memories of the fairy tales of my youth found their origins and I understood them all in a beautiful new way. Never before had I seen such an enormous and majestic building set atop a hill in the French countryside where wild boar still inhabit the woods.

The interior was spectacular with high ceilings, old oil paintings, sculptures, fountains, yards and yards of drapery and cording, fine antique silk rugs, and marble and stone everywhere. There were at least eight floors as I recall. The family now resides in only a portion of it that has been updated to include an upstairs kitchen for the formal dining room, office, sleeping quarters and living area. But the remainder of the castle remains untouched, like a museum. The lower two floors contain the large old kitchen with its huge wood burning oven that takes up a entire wall. There is an enormous terrace that wraps the rear of the castle from which one can take in the most spectacular views. The main floor welcomes visitors with three sets of enormous doors that open to a spectacular foyer that opens to the main ballroom with a fireplace twice as tall as an adult. Off the ballroom is the lovely, quaint family chapel. The upper floors contain bedroom after bedroom and a large library atop the castle filled with hundreds of shelves of books and documents all on the history of the de Mandat-Grancey family. The family tree can be traced back for many centuries and even includes saints; the great Cistercian St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and St. Hugh the Grand Abbot of
Cluny. Another of the family’s very notable and saintly abbots was Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny 1122. Prophetically, among other of his holy writings, he is the first academic to translate the Koran into both Latin and French.

“Despite his active life and important role in European history, Peter’s greatest achievement stands his contribution to the reappraisal of the Church’s relations with the religion of Islam. A proponent of studying Islam based upon its own sources, he commissioned a comprehensive translation of Islamic source material, and in 1142 he travelled to Spain where he met his translators. One scholar described this as a ‘momentous event in the intellectual history of Europe.’”

This torch of inter-religious dialogue between the Christians and Muslims so early in the history of the de Mandat-Grancey family is passed many centuries later to Sister Marie with her mission to find, resurrect, and share Mary’s House where Muslims and Christians pray side by side and honor Mary, Mother of Jesus.

I paint this picture of the opulent Chateau Grancey in your imagination to help you better understand what it was that the charitable heart of Sister Marie lovingly, and joyfully gave up to join the simple and sparse convent that becomes her home as a Daughter of Charity.

One can also say that Sister Marie left one house, the majestic Chateau Grancey, and was chosen by God to complete the task of finding and giving to the world another house, the little humble House of Mary. She left an earthly treasure and embraced a heavenly one…and all peoples of the world, all God’s children, are the beneficiaries.

**Religious Life**

Sister Marie entered the community of the Daughters of Charity and became a postulant in Paris at Saint Sulpice Parish in May of 1857. She took the veil in May of 1858. No longer a daughter of nobility, she became a servant of the poor.

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Her first assignment was at a French orphanage called The House of Mercy in the town of Aire-Sur-La-Lys. Here she, along with six other sisters, cared for 55 orphans and maintained a sewing workshop for 60 girls, some of whom came from the local town to join the resident girls. She was especially good at ridding the young orphans of lice and scurvy. It was at this time that Sister Marie’s deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary began to shine for others to see and she found great joy as head of the Association of the Children of Mary. With true passion and love she would continue teaching children and all people of Mary for the rest of her life. She taught with great joy of the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She would always be known as a devotee of Mary. She is quoted as teaching the Children of Mary: “Be closely united with one another, loyal and devoted to the Association! Be courageous Christians devoted within the family, exemplary outside the family. Diligently avoid all that can adversely affect your faith and dignity. Be like Mary.”

Ten years later in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War, she became Superior at an Orphanage in Pecq near Paris. It was an extremely dangerous time but Sister Marie never failed to do the most wonderful job caring for, teaching, and protecting the children and her sisters. For 16 years she remained at this orphanage and each year as bills exceeded funds, she used her own resources to pay for the necessities of the children and the other nuns.

Her next assignment came after she volunteered and responded to Pope Leo XIII’s call for French missionaries to help in the Middle East. In 1886 she was assigned to the French Hospital in Smyrna (now Izmir), Turkey. After finding the hospital in very poor condition, she again used her own funds to improve things for the patients and staff while she lived in poverty. Happily, Sister Marie also found that a few classrooms and two sewing workshops were in a building attached to the hospital. She filled them with young girls and so was renewed with the enthusiasm of teaching her beloved Children of Mary. Sister Marie would remain at this place, caring for Muslims and Christians young and old, until her death in 1915.

It was while at Smyrna that Sister Marie began her mission to find Mary’s House.
Pioneer Priests and Girls’ Dreams

Sister Marie is officially recognized by the Church to be the Foundress of Mary’s House. Her essential contribution to assist Our Lady by the acquisition and preservation of this House has been a crucial link in this story heretofore appreciated by very few. One such person to hold up Sister Marie for the world to know is a priest, a contemporary of Sister Marie. He completed a book in 1905 based entirely on his journal about the true story of the discovery of the Holy Virgin’s House.

*The Holy Virgin’s House: The True Story of Its Discovery*[^3] is the journal of Father Eugene Poulin[^4], a Lazarist priest who spent the last forty years of his priesthood in Smyrna, Turkey as the Superior in his order and Director of the Catholic College. Father Poulin spent all of his leisure time there studying the *Panaghia Capouli* or “The Door of the Holiest,” a term that has come to refer not only to the Holy Virgin’s House, *Meryem Ana Evi*, but also many surrounding areas of Ephesus including the grave of the Blessed Virgin, the Chapel built and rebuilt in this place by devotees over the years, and the Way of the Cross carved into the hill where Our Lady once walked and prayed. In his obituary listed by the Mission of the Fraternity of Lazarists, it is written of his studies:

> It is well known that his studies of Panaghia Capouli (for there are more than two thick books unpublished) have been printed. They comprise five small books or volumes, signed Gabrielovich, a nickname derived from Gabriel, his father’s Christian name. They are studies of real value, although their impact may be lessened because of the writer’s trenchant means of expression, his combative stance, which disturb the reader. But once the first impression had been overcome and upon carefully reading the proofs, it was decided that the thesis concerning Ephesus was not an invention of C. Emmerich.

Father Poulin was never favorably inclined to believe in any mystic and admits he had no esteem for these “women visionaries” and their “girls’ dreams.” In fact, talk of these mystics was fodder for much joking.

[^4]: 1843-1928
among his colleagues. He explains in his journal that he never believed a single one of the writings or words of any visionaries throughout his whole thirty-three years as a priest⁵; that is until mid-November 1890. The fact that after this *metanoia* he finds himself spending the rest of his adult life proving the writings of a German mystic, Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich regarding the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John at Ephesus, once considered by him to be mere girl’s folly, is a divine comedy that did not escape him. In relating the story of his conversion of heart regarding Anne Catherine Emmerich’s mystical writings he is brutally honest about himself all for the purpose of showing the mighty power of God in directing what seemed an impossible task with an impossible soul; himself. He tells a charming story of how A.C.Emmerich’s book “pursues” him mercilessly until he relents and finally reads. He is forever changed and then so is history.

Father Jung, a friend of Father Poulin, no less adverse to visionaries and mystics, is a teacher at the college of Sacre Coeur where Father Poulin is Director. In his journal Father Poulin describes Father Jung:

> M. Jung an old non-commissioned officer, a professor of Holy Scriptures, of Hebrew, of natural sciences, of mathematics, and therefore a teacher of science at the College of Sacre Coeur, was as much for his personality, studies and education, also well known as being the most opposed to everything concerning mysticism, dreams and visions.

Thus, he was one of the adversaries of C. Emmerich, and one of the most implacable. He used to say: “Girls’ dreams”. For him the matter was finished.

Father Jung was in charge of celebrating the Mass every morning at the French Hospital⁶ in Smyrna where Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey was assigned. Sister Marie had been a “passionate adherent” of Anne CatherineEmmerich for a long time and had often told Father Jung and anyone else who would listen, that she was looking for someone who would excavate the vicinities around Ephesus to try to find the House as well as the grave of the Blessed Virgin Mary mentioned by Anne Catherine Emmerich. She spends years pleading and discussing, and

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⁵ Ordained 1857.
⁶ Hospital Francais
certainly praying, for Father Jung to read Anne Catherine Emmerich’s books. In fact, Sister Marie believes with all her heart that Mary’s House does in fact exist, and right in Turkey a mere 75 km from where she and Father Jung and Father Poulin are all providentially assigned. Finally Father Jung relents and agrees to read Anne Catherine Emmerich’s book if only to quiet Sister Marie and disprove what he considered nonsense. He began reading the book at nine o’clock in the evening the same day he receives it in the mail from Sister Marie. He never puts it down until 4 o’clock the next morning. He too, like Father Poulin, is overwhelmed with the charm of Anne Catherine Emmerich’s story. Due to Sister Marie’s tenacious persistence and prayers this priest, with a heretofore extreme aversion to all mystics and their writings, is also converted. The discussions between Father Poulin and Father Jung at the college are now completely different. The joking has ceased.

Come in my children, it’s been almost two thousand years…

Later in July of 1891 the first expedition leaves in search of Mary’s House. Their “map” is the book containing the private revelation of Anne Catherine Emmerich. Traveling in search of Mary’s House and grave are both Father Poulin and Father Jung along with two other interested men: one a Lazarist priest, Father Vervault, and the other a friend of Father Jung, a Greek named M. Pelecas. Also present for daily assistance on this trip is a Persian servant Thomaso and a Moslem Turk named Mustapha, a hunter who knew the mountain well enough to be a guide and protector. On July 29 those three Catholics, one Greek Orthodox, and one Muslim finally find the House! The unity begins. There are two other expeditions to follow. Finally, Sister Marie arrives at the House by donkey later that year in December of 1891.

The Original Testimony for the Cause of Sister Marie

All the prayers and sacrifices of Sister Marie are occasionally alluded to in Father Poulin’s journal until in one section he writes a most profound and heart felt testimony to tell the whole world of Sister Marie’s selfless generosity, her valiant persistence and dedication, and his debt of gratitude to her that he entreats us to share with him and all of Christendom.
Father Poulin offers us a compelling reason for our zeal for the cause of Sister Marie and her mission in these times in this excerpt (below) from his journal:

It was on 29th July, 1891 that Panaghia was discovered; the following 15th August a first review was decided on, to be continued from 19th to 25th of the same month. A third, long inquiry was held and it was established without doubt that “they had found what they were looking for; there was no need to look elsewhere.”

Soon people started saying, “How good it would be if we had this!” Later they said: “We must have that!” Then they said: “We must have this!” The idea made its way little by little into their spirits. So far so good; the decision had been taken to acquire, but what about the possibility!..

Could we buy it? We couldn’t think about it with this enormous debt of 300-400 thousand francs…with a return of zero! Otherwise, Paris would never permit a similar acquisition; to whom could we turn? We didn’t wait for long…

The Lord, who sees and organizes things, had taken care to put before us a soul in love with beauty and goodness, who was ready to give herself to everything good. A great soul, devoted, ardent, pious, and generous; the noble Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey. She was, God had chosen her to be, the terrestrial Providence, like Panaghia’s Mother! For twelve years she has been charged of this valiant religious enterprise; she has never failed.

Oh! How happy I am to give her all the respect she merits! Also, could these writings make known to posterity, long after us, to whom France, the Catholic church are in debt for Panaghia! The Lord gave me this opportunity to say loudly what I had in my heart for a long time, to acquit what I deemed to be a serious debt. It is done. Praise be to God!

For years Sister Grancey had been thinking about the Virgin’s
Grave, looking forward to its discovery. As soon as she had been told about the opportunity of buying Panaghia, her heart was full of joy…”Just the time to find the necessary fund,” she answered: “Do let’s buy it.”

Now what?...and a bit about Vows

To understand why Sister Marie could enter activity that nuns could not, it is necessary to understand the vows a Daughter of Charity takes. A Daughter of Charity makes four vows: Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Service to the Poor. Unlike other religious, her Vow of Poverty allows her to retain personal funds and inheritances held by her at the time of her entrance into the Community. She exercises her Vow of Poverty by seeking permission to use funds for the Poor and works of faith.7 Sister Marie as a Daughter of Charity coming from a well-to-do family is therefore able to use God’s abundant gifts to her to, in turn, give abundantly to others. Now we have insight to understand what happens next.

Sister Marie provides the revenues to purchase the House. After travelling home to France to request of her father the necessary funds, “Sister Marie, through her dowry, [she] would buy the whole mountain on which the House of Mary stands”8 on November 15, 1892.

In time, when thanks to the efforts and finances of Sister Marie, the area was renewed and there was a fairly consistent peaceful co-existence of all parties involved, Sister Marie hands over ownership and legal title to her trusted long time friend Father Eugene Poulin, Vincentian, on May 11, 1910. In some way then, she is able to fulfill her dream of leaving Mary’s House to a Child of Saint Vincent, if not the entire Order.

Four years later in 1896, Pope Leo XIII discontinues indulgences formerly attached to the tomb of Mary in Jerusalem. Then 1914 Pope Pius X grants plenary indulgences for the remission of sins to pilgrims who visit Mary’s House at Ephesus.

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7 Reverend Carl G. Schulte, C.M.
8 As told by Father Joseph Buttigieg, OFM CAP, Former Superior at Mary’s House in the film Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey; A True Daughter of Charity, DVD, Mary’s Media Foundation, 2006.
For Love of Mary

Sister Marie had spent twelve years vigilantly praying and entreating all who would listen to begin the expedition to find Mary’s House. Then once Mary’s House was found, she spent the rest of her life funding and working to restore it. She did it for us, for the Church, and for all of God’s children out of love for Our Lady and the truth of Her last years spent here on earth before Her Dormition and Assumption into heaven. Sister Marie deeply desired to find the Blessed Virgin’s tomb and House and preserve for posterity this treasure of Mary’s gift of peace to the world. In so doing, Sister Marie opened the door of Mary’s House so that all God’s children might enter. Every time we pray with Sister Marie our hearts and souls are united and placed inside the Home of Mary by the Foundress of Mary’s House. Muslims, Orthodox, and Christians all join together in the home of a Jewish Mother.

What’s In a Name? … Panaghia Capouli? Panaya Kapulu?

By God’s plan, Sister Marie has been chosen not only to find Mary’s House, but to hold open wide the DOOR…and her prayers keep the door open. Like Mary’s House, Sister Marie too has been hidden…until now.

Sister Marie is a true sign for our times. A sign points the way. Sr. Marie points the way to Mary...which always leads to Jesus.

Sister Marie is also a true sentinel…and a hostess of sorts! Not only does she guard and protect Mary’s House, she calls to us with her prayers saying “Come in!” and she welcomes us into the presence of Mary, Our Mother.

To give tribute to Sister Marie’s life and to the honor her memory the de Mandat-Grancey family was presented original first century stones from Mary’s House. This gift now rests at the Chateau Grancey in Burgundy in the Archdiocese of Dijon, France.
Another honor given to her life work and devotion to Mary is the title the Church has given Sister Marie; Foundress of Mary’s House. Permanently mounted just inside the door to Mary’s House are two large white marble plaques telling all pilgrims of its Foundress and her faithful friends Father Poulin and Father Jung. In a manner of speaking, it is Sister Marie’s memory that guards the door. Sister Marie’s memory is honored just inside the DOOR to Mary’s House…We know that the door is the means of entry.

This link between Sister Marie and the Door to Mary’s House, or to the way to enter, became increasingly apparent to me after some reading about Ephesus and its history. I did already know that the entire area of Mary’s House is called Panaghia Capouli. Translated from Greek this means Door of the Holiest. Then I read that there is also another name, in Turkish, called Panaya Kapula which translates to: “Doorway to the Virgin.” How prophetic it is that Sister Marie is the one chosen by God to give the Children of Mary, all God’s children, and indeed the whole world, the Doorway to the Virgin! The Blessed Virgin will always show the way to Her Son Jesus…and He saves.

A Common Ground

Sister Marie’s love for Our Lady and Her House at Ephesus is one shared with the Muslims. I was edified and intrigued to learn that Mary’s House is a common pilgrimage destination for both faiths where they offer their own respective peaceful and reverent prayer; a singular place in the world where Christians and Muslims pray together in their own way to God the Father while honoring Jesus’ Mother, Mary.

Muslims honor Mary as God’s only creature, along with Jesus Christ, to be conceived without the stain of sin. As Catholics we implore the Mother of God under the title The Immaculate Conception. Catholics pray in a favorite devotion to Mary, “O Mary conceived without sin, pray of us who have recourse to Thee.” I was also astonished to learn that Muslims visit this House to honor Mary, Mother of Jesus each August 15; coincidentally August 15 is the Catholic Feast of the Assumption of Mary. The Assumption of Mary took place in this very House. In these tension filled times, could prayers for peace to Our Lady from
Christians and Muslims united in devotion to Jesus’ Mother in Mary’s House be any more crucial?

Another beautiful dimension to this story is that our Greek and Armenian Orthodox brothers and sisters also visit this holy House to pray and honor whom they call Theotokos, Mother of God. The division between the Eastern left hand of Christian Orthodoxy and the Western right hand of Christian Catholicism is an unnatural continuous rent in the Body of Christ; but in Mary’s House Orthodox and Catholic kneel side by side.

Of course it is not possible that Mary could ever forget the faith of her Fathers; Judaism. Before she was the Mother of Our Savior she was a devout Jewish maiden who was raised by her mother and father, St. Anne and St. Joachim, to be a devout Jewish wife and mother. It is this Mary who gathers Orthodox, Christian, and Muslim alike into her home of Jewish heritage.

I was blessed to pilgrimage to Ephesus in October of 2008. There I saw with my own eyes the melting pot of humanity speaking many tongues and peacefully gathered at Mary’s knee in prayer. I held my rosary beads as some brought prayer mats; others wore head coverings, still others blessed themselves from right to left; some knelt, some bowed three times, some sat down to rest in the peace of this place; some wore habits and clerics, and some wore blue jeans and tattoos. All loved and honored Mary.

On October 13, 2006 one hundred and thirty-eight Muslim clerics signed and sent an open letter to our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, called A Common Word.9 This “common word” is described in the letter as a shared belief in one God. The Vatican responded with charity and generosity citing the Holy Father’s recent Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est (“God is Love”) and noting that without ignoring or downplaying our differences that we can and should look to our shared belief in the two fold commandment to Love God and one’s neighbor as well as our call for a common commitment to promote peace in the world. The letter goes on to encourage a focus on what unites us, namely, belief in the one God, provident Creator and universal Judge, and respect for the dignity of every human person. It also recalls Our Holy Father’s

9 For more information visit: www.acommonword.com
words from the beginning of his Pontificate when he stated: “I am profoundly convinced that we must not yield to the negative pressures in our midst, but must affirm that values of mutual respect, solidarity and peace. The life of every human being is sacred, both for Christians and Muslims. There is plenty of scope for us to act together in the service of fundamental moral values.” *(Address to Representatives of Some Muslim Communities, Cologne, 20 August 2005).*

This effort at dialogue focusing on the commonalities of the faiths continues between Christian and Muslim clerics. In March of 2007 the Holy Father invited Muslim clerics to an historic Catholic-Muslim Forum that convened in November 2008. It is always good for clerics of different faiths to dialogue especially when the intention is love of God and peace in His world. As the clerics dialogue regarding *a common word*, let us spiritually unite in prayerful support of their efforts as Muslim and Christian children of God. We can do this in the little place where Our Lady has already established for us *a common ground*… namely, Meryem Ana Evi, Mary’s House, in Ephesus.

**Fulton Sheen**

Before learning of Sister Marie and Mary’s House, I never could have dreamed that Muslims love Mary. She is written of no less than 34 times in the Koran. She is held up as an example for all women and, like previously explained, is honored for her Immaculate Conception and her Virgin Birth. Bishop Fulton Sheen wrote of these monumental shared beliefs in his beautiful piece entitled Mary and the Moslems in which he also adds:

“The Koran has also verses on the Annunciation, Visitation, and Nativity. Angels are pictured as accompanying the Blessed Mother and saying: “Oh, Mary, God has chosen you and purified you, and elected you above all the women of the earth. In the nineteenth chapter of the Koran there are 41 verses on Jesus and Mary.”

Bishop Fulton Sheen’s prophetic thoughts demonstrate his understanding of the possibilities for dialogue that blossom with a shared love for Mary.
Mother of All Humanity

Mary’s desire for souls extends to God’s children of all faiths because all of God’s children are her children; Children of Mary. It is especially those children who have yet to know Her or Her Divine Son for whom She yearns most. This is our Mother’s perfect plan for peace for all of Her children. This is why Sister Marie spent twelve years of her life driven in passionate pursuit of her objective to procure and preserve Mary’s House. In this House all God’s children will find their Mother. In this House Sister Marie continues her dedication to the Children of Mary.

Prayer has helped me to become completely convinced of this connection between September 11, 2001, the call to pray for peace among the world’s Christians, Muslims, Orthodox, Jews, all God’s children and dear Sister Marie.10 This will be the Triumph of Mary’s heart; when She brings all God’s children to Her Son Jesus. For many Sister Marie has become the patroness for this peace; our intercessor with those of other faiths. Our little nun has a big mission.

In 2005 a petition was sent to the Holy Father by five Cardinals asking that Mary be declared Mother of All Humanity; with Jesus Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix. Cardinal Luis Aponte Martinez, the retired Archbishop of San Juan is one of five cardinal co-sponsors of the 2005 International Symposium on Marian Co-redemption who are asking by petition that the Holy Father proclaim Mary “the Spiritual Mother of All Humanity, the co-redemptrix with Jesus the Redeemer, mediatrix of all graces with Jesus the one mediator, and advocate with Jesus Christ on behalf of the human race.” Isn’t this what Mary does in Mary’s House? This is a great confirmation for us of the intensely important contribution of Sister Marie in the story of Mary’s House.

Mary’s House – Mary’s Heart

Is there anything else that could possibly contribute more to unity and the cause of world peace in these times than to recognize what Our Lady has already established as a common ground between different faiths

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10 I have since established www.sistermarie.com for the sole purpose of increasing private devotion for the cause of the beatification of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey.
of this world? Even though the world may strive to define different religions as enemies, God Our Father calls us all His Children. It is my belief that great grace has and will continue to flow from Our Lady who unites Her estranged children in this little place of peace. I believe the House at Ephesus is an earthly symbol of Mary’s Heart. It is where She has begun this unity; it is where She accomplishes this fraternity; it is where She fulfills Her title of Mother of All Humanity; it is where we must spiritually unite in prayer until it is completely accomplished in Her Triumph. What would the world be without Mary’s House; Mary’s Heart? God chose Sister Marie to be the one to give us this gift. She did not fail Him.

Our Lady’s Tears; Holy Ground

Mary, Our Sorrowful Mother, was the first to pray the Stations of the Cross and this was in Ephesus in the hills behind her little House. There is historical evidence for this and sadly what we would consider relics are held in a public museum in Turkey. The tears of our Mother saturate this holy Ground.

Sister Marie cherished Mary’s House in some large part because of the Holy Tears of Our Lady that fell there. Imagine how precious to Jesus are the tears of His Mother. She accepted us as her children at her Son’s request as He hung on the Cross to pay for our sins. It was then that she began to love us as a Mother. These tears of our Mother then fell for love of Him and for love of us as she recalled and relived His Passion while she prayed behind her house in Ephesus. She is our Mother; she loves us even though we knew not what we did, nor what we continue to do.

I recall sitting in Mary’s House praying the Sorrowful Mysteries as I looked through a small high window that opened to show a view of the very hill and holy ground upon which Our Lady walked, prayed, and wept. The wrought iron grating covering the opening was a pattern of crosses. My heart could almost see her struggling as she wept, walked, climbed and knelt remembering her precious Son, and I wept too.
Our Times

Like her beloved Mary’s House which is no longer hidden, now in this new millennium neither is Sister Marie. Has she come out of hiding to help us in these troubled times? It seems no coincidence that a desire for the cause of the beatification of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey should spring from the heart of New York; this city which sacrificed so many of God’s children to murderous aggression cloaked in the guise of a “religious” mission. Healing and peace begin with forgiveness and are sustained by prayer. In Mary’s House can be found the religious fraternity, prayer and peace which brings hope.

Let us join Sister Marie in her mission of gathering all God’s children into the House of Mary, Her Heart, and undo today with forgiveness, prayer and love the ungodly hatred of September 11, 2001. The Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the future of our children and grandchildren depend upon these prayers. Let us thank God for Sister Marie without whom this precious hope for unity and peace, Mary’s House, might have been forever lost.

The Popes Honor Mary’s House

An indication of the Church’s heart as regards Mary’s House and Sister Marie can be understood in how our Popes have honored them.

In 1895 Pope Leo XIII removed the plenary indulgence for Mary’s tomb in Jerusalem for all time. Pope Pius X granted a one time plenary indulgence to a 1914 pilgrimage to Mary’s House. In 1951, Pope Pius XII declared Mary’s House an official sanctuary for pilgrims. That same year he also granted permission for the celebration of the Votive Mass of the Assumption at Mary’s House. Finally, Pope John XXIII granted a plenary indulgence for Catholic pilgrims to Mary’s House for all time on August 18, 1961.

Three Vicars of Christ have also blessed Mary’s House with their presence. Pope Paul VI came to pay his respects to the Virgin Mary at Ephesus on July 26th 1967. He entered the shrine, prayed for a long time in front of the altar, and he himself lit the sculpted lamp he had brought.
In memory of Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey, he gave the Superior of the Sisters of Charity a gold chalice for their oratory inscribed with her name.

Pope John Paul II also came to Meryem Ana Evi on November 30, 1979 after an official visit to Ankara. He celebrated Holy Mass there before a crowd of pilgrims. The open air altar was erected on this occasion. He offered to the Capuchin Friars, who celebrate the Holy Eucharist every day at the shrine, precious liturgical clothes and vessels.

On November 29, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI became the most recent Pope to pilgrimage to Mary’s House. As a gift he left his Rosary that is encased in what was once Mary’s bedroom.

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on the open air altar to a large crowd of pilgrims. Just five years after the tragedy of 9/11, in his Papal Homily he offered a timely request:

“From here in Ephesus,
a city blessed by the presence of Mary Most Holy
~ who we know is loved and venerated also by Muslims ~
let us lift up to the Lord
a special prayer for peace between peoples.”

To answer the request of our Holy Father, may I most humbly suggest that we make this prayer through the most powerful intercession of Sister Marie De Mandat-Grancey.

Please find the prayer card on the back cover. This is the prayer card used by those asking Sister Marie’s intercessory prayer help for healing in mind, body, or spirit. We continue to receive numerous notarized letters and medical records of healings of people from all over the world. If God gives Sister Marie permission to help you, she will answer your prayers too. No matter how big or small be the prayer request, you can trust Sister Marie to intercede for you.

Sister Marie, pray for us. Amen.
In the Heart of Sister Marie

It is here.
So close...
I feel it in my soul.
This precious treasure;
This haven;
This beacon of hope.

Hidden stones still witnessing,
eternally echoing,
the whispers,
and prayers,
and quiet tears of
the Woman
who at once
undoes the fatal
No
with her eternal
hope filled
Yes.

Behold the Handmaid of the Lord.
Fiat Father.

“Woman behold your son.”
Fiat Son.

Be it done unto me according to Your
will...
Fiat Holy Spirit.

I see your hands tremble
as they carve out
each station of the Cross
in the hill behind your house.
I see your tear drops fall
coredeeming...
just as His Blood drops fell
Redeeming...

Never a love so pure
and tested
and proven;
His
and yours.

Mother of all humanity
I hear your heartbeat calling me.
Guide me.
Help me find your
little hidden house.
Help me
to help you
bring your children home.

Comfort,
Unity,
Peace,
Shelter...
in your Heart,
in your Home.

Sweet angels
Do you hear it too?
Holy messengers
I am listening.
Lead me.
Show me this place,
Mary’s House,
that I may open wide the door
for all God’s children,
the Children of Mary.

Mother of Hope
Help me
To help you
fulfill the desire of your Son
“That they may be one.”

by L. Fusaro
For more information:

Read *Mary’s House and Sister Marie* by L. Fusaro available through the Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey Foundation.

Also the biography of Sister Marie *coming soon*…

**A Guiding Star** by Reverend Carl G. Schulte, C.M.

Visit:  www.sistermarie.com

Write to:

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To order the *Why Sister Marie? Why Now?* booklet in sets of 50 or more, please contact printer directly at: Minuteman Press of Huntington
Tel: 631-427-1155 • Email: jatprint@optonline.net
WE THANK GOD
FOR GIVING US THE PRIVILEGE OF
SISTER MARIE DE MANDAT-GRANCEY.

THROUGH HER GREAT GENEROSITY
SHE ACQUIRED THE PROPERTY AT EPHESUS,
THE HOME OF MARY AND
SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

WE ASK GOD AND SISTER MARIE
TO CONTINUE TO BLESS THE CORNERSTONE
GIVEN TO HER, “AROUND THIS CORNERSTONE
WE BUILD OUR FAITH AND THE POWERS OF
DARKNESS WILL NOT PREVAIL.”

WE PRAY FOR GOD’S WILL TO BE
COMPLETELY FILLED THROUGH THE
INTERCESSION OF SISTER MARIE.
AMEN

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