



# The Abbey of 'Dames Nobles' in Montigny-Lès-Vesoul (70)



*Altarpiece made by the MARCA brothers in 1737*

Document produced by Annie LUCARZ

## **Héloïse de Joinville :**

- Heiress to the aforesaid piece of land : « Au Blacon » owned by the Counts of Burgundy.
- Bereft of Jean de Faucogney, a noble family of Burgundy who founded the Marteroy Priory (The Marteroy)
- Sister of Jean de Joinville : he was the historian and biographer of Louis IX (Saint Louis), the brother of Isabelle of France who founded the Abbey of the Urban Poor Clare Nuns in Longchamp in 1253.

**Founded** this Abbey of the Urban Poor Clare Nuns, the first one in Franche-Comté in 1286, after 20 years of serious consideration and after the fashion of Isabelle of France.

**Saint Clare**, born to a noble family, renounced wealth for pledge of humility and gained papal privilege of poverty at the age of 23. She befriended Saint Francis of Assisi as her spiritual friend (see statuette on altarpiece).

Life in the Abbey was dedicated to praying and self-denial, although young maids had to confirm some degrees of nobility (4 on mother's side and 4 on father's side) to get access to it. The Rule of that religious Order was more flexible than that of Saint Clare's Nuns. Each nun would have her own house built by her family, and it would then be passed on to a new nun called 'a niece' by adoption.

## **A few landmarks :**

In the Middle Ages, between 1356 and 1453, a lot of devastations took place after successive wars and fires. The last fires in 1595 were perpetrated by the Lord of Tremblecourt and then later in 1686.

The Abbey and the whole village had to be rebuilt in the XVIIIth century.

At the time of the French Revolution in 1789, the Nuns' Houses officially became 'national property and estates' and were sold to private owners.

In **1906**, after the law of separation between Church and State, the Chapel was sold to a secondhand goods dealer, who also sold away its furniture. The steeple was taken down.

**1971** The 'Département' (Haute-Saône) bought the Chapel back.

**1997** The Abbey became a listed building (registered as « Monument Historique »)

**2015** The Association « Patrimoine et Mémoire (Heritage and Memory)» was created

**2018-2019** The roof of the Chapel was rebuilt and the pinnacle installed on 1 October 2019. A crypt became visible inside the Chapel, and the Christ crucifix was put back in the Chapel (ceremony on 30 September 2019).

**2019** In Spring : the Magic Garden was designed.

*Do not throw away this leaflet – printed by the village of Montigny-les-Vesoul.*