



# THE SONG AT THE SCAFFOLD

## BY GERTRUD VON LE FORT

### A 10-WEEK BOOK STUDY



SESSION THREE: CHAPTER 3, PAGES 15-21

#### People to know:

Louis XVI – King of France at the dawn of the Revolution [1789], executed in 1793, the year the Reign of Terror began. His queen: Marie Antoinette.

Robespierre – the leader of the Reign of Terror and its victim in 1794

Jean-Jacques Rousseau – “noble savage” – his political theory was to throw off all law, Church and State, and revert to the natural state.

Voltaire – Frenchman living in and writing essays on England – made Reason his god, Enlightenment thinking – freedom from Church dogma and the tyranny of the King.

Pope Pius VI – decried the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, an attempt to subordinate the Roman Catholic Church to the secular French government. Many Catholics turned against the Revolution when this decree came out in 1790.

Madame Acarie – see the note at the bottom of page 16

Madame Louise of France – see the note at the bottom of page 17

#### CHAPTER THREE: \_\_\_\_\_

(HOW WOULD YOU TITLE THIS CHAPTER?)

The images of the Infant King of Glory and the large, bright candle paired with the slim, tremulous candle greet us as we begin this chapter. How is this image emblematic of what will unfold in this chapter?



Blanche's spiritual progress develops:

- ❁ Her admission into the convent was in doubt. Sister Marie of the Incarnation likened her to a “little bird” and a “tiny flame.” Only the edict from the bishop ensured her entrance into Carmel.
  - ✚ She blossomed in her devotion to His Majesty, our Lord. Is her spiritual progress deeply rooted?
  - ✚ Or will her faith be that of the seed sown on the roadside, which is quickly eaten by the birds?
  - ✚ Would you have admitted Blanche into Carmel if the Bishop hadn't ordered it?
- ❁ Descriptions of Blanche:
  - ✚ “Appealing if somewhat fragile.”
  - ✚ “Her hands trembling with happiness...”
  - ✚ “The poor child knew very well that her strength was failing and that she had not been prepared to receive the habit.”
  - ✚ “She shuddered a little.”
  - ✚ “Heartfelt fervor.”
  - ✚ “Humble gratitude of this timid child.”
- ❁ Consider Blanche's name as a professed sister in Carmel: “Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.” (*Jesus in the Garden of Agony.*)
  - ✚ Praying for His own strength
  - ✚ Praying for His Apostles
  - ✚ Prayer so deep, his sweat was as drops of blood
  - ✚ Praying for the Father's Will to be done
  - ✚ Praying with full knowledge of His Passion to come
  - ✚ What do you think of these characterizations? Which of these prayers resounded in Blanche's heart?
  - ✚ Does this name foreshadow her ultimate fate?
- ❁ The last sentence is foreboding: “Therefore Blanche's second relapse was all the more confounding.”

