



# *History of the Institute*

*Marist mission in a  
violent and secularised world (1907-1985)*

Volume 2

Brother André LANFREY



MARIST BROTHERS

**HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE  
OF THE MARIST BROTHERS**

**VOLUME II**

**Marist mission  
in a violent  
and secularised world  
(1907-1985)**

**Br André LANFREY**

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1. Brother  
André Lanfrey

## PREFACE



In the conclusion to the preceding volume I defined the period 1907 to 1967 as being one of disconnect. On the ground there was great dynamism but the rationale for all this activity had become frozen in time. This period came to an end with the election of John XXIII as Pope on 28 October 1958 and his convocation of a Council on 25 January 1959. I could have used this date to mark the end of fifty years in the life of the Institute, also because the General Chapter of 1958 had in some way anticipated the Council in proposing significant reforms for the Institute. But, for the Institute, the highpoint of radical change, apart from the tumultuous years of the Council itself, was the first session of the 1967-68 Chapter.

For this reason I have envisaged a History of the Institute from 1907 to today in two more or less equal phases: firstly the period 1907 – 1967, a time of striking adaptation in practice to a rapidly changing world, a time, as well, of vigorous resistance by Christian culture; secondly, roughly fifty years of trying to integrate into a new culture without compromise, with all the difficult distinctions between culture and faith that this entailed. This second period has been, in short, a time for deconstructing and reconstructing Marist identity. The doctrine may have been more or less redefined around 1985 but it has taken much longer for the cultural, institutional and spiritual change involved to emerge. The Bicentenary of the Institute, then, is not issuing in a new phase in the history of the Institute but rather the conclusion, it is to be hoped, of a slow metamorphosis.

The first section of this volume treats the sixty years between the extraordinary spread of the congregation around the world and the Second Vatican Council. I hesitated at first but adding on the twenty years following the Council seemed to be of real interest in this volume. This period contrasted sharply with the first part of the 20th Century but was a time when the Institute still retained multiple links to its immediate past.

Using constructs described by Rev Br Basilio, I have approached the whole Volume as an extended debate between “spirituality – structures” and “psychologism – freedom” (“psychologism” refers to a heightened or exaggerated importance given to psychology. Translator’s note). These were the terms which he used to define the atmosphere of the first session of the 1967 Chapter where there was a good deal of conflict and which, in my opinion, are good descriptors of a problem that has been beneath the surface all throughout the history of the Institute, especially in the period 1907-1985. The Introduction provides some precision on the meaning of these somewhat technical terms.

In the first two Chapters I focus my work on two fundamental but largely contradictory aspects of the life of the Institute: mission and secularisation. It is only after setting a context in this way, in Chapters 3 – 8, that I take up the institutional aspect of the Institute. I first describe it as a centralised body, stress-

ing uniformity through structures such as General Chapters, Superiors General and their Councils, Second Novitiates, and Bulletins of the Institute.

In Chapters 9 and 10, I take up in broad strokes, and only sketchily I fear, the varying fortunes of a number of Provinces. In Chapters 11 and 12, I focus on two issues that are of importance for Marist identity today, relations with lay people and the spirituality lived by the Brothers.

Having thus progressively narrowed my focus from the general to the particular, in the Conclusion I define the Institute in the years 1907 – 1967 as “an army ranged for battle”. It was fighting on behalf of a mission that was closely tied to a western view of Christianity, and against secularising forces in politics and religion. Slowly it became aware of the need to rethink its identity in a world that had changed forever.

The second section (1967 – 1985) is viewed as a time of crisis, a spectacular and enduring crisis in terms of membership, and a time of personal confusion. It was also the occasion for rebuilding a strong identity through re-interpreting the Marist tradition.

This Preface gives me the chance to acknowledge the assistance of the Patrimony Commission in preparing this text. The members became familiar with my work at our annual meetings in Rome and provided their advice and counsel. There were also occasional exchanges over the internet about specific points and how they should be presented. Br Eugène Kabanguka followed the project closely on behalf of the General Council of which he is a member. My gratitude to the Brothers who have read and commented on draft texts. A big thank-you as well to the Brothers who provided technical assistance in the layout and choice of images. I will not name them all here for fear of leaving anyone out.

Br André Lanfrey

## A KEY FOR ANALYSING THE INSTITUTE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

### **“Spirituality – Structures” and “Psychologism – Freedom”**

Two crises in vocations bookend the history of the Institute from 1907 to 1967. Each resulted from a destabilising event of major proportions. The period 1903-1907 was discussed in Volume 1. The second vocations crisis in the Institute began in 1959 with a significant and ongoing increase in the number of temporary and perpetual professed Brothers leaving the order. This was compounded in 1966 by a decrease in the number joining. Indeed, in 1965 when the Institute reached its highest number ever, 9,752 professed members, the first indications of a crisis were evident behind this apparently outstanding figure. The 1967-68 Chapter did not give much weight to this problem, thinking it to be merely a consequence of what had happened at the Vatican Council. Gradually the Institute realised that it was not a passing problem at all but a real identity crisis, the sources of which were rooted in the past. In his Circular of 2 January 1968, Rev Br Basilio presented an analysis of what had recently transpired at the first session of the XVI General Chapter held between 29 August and 28 October 1967. He made it clear that there was to be no quick solution. He noted a strong tension between two currents of thought: “spirituality – structures” and “psychologism – freedom”. He explained the main features of these in his Circular, referring to a number of pairs of opposites.

The first of these posits a humanist tendency against one that is spiritual, supernatural, and ascetical. Humanists stressed “the dignity of and respect for the human person, the right to freedom ... and especially the need to recognise the maturity of our Brothers and to act in consequence of this”. Among the ‘spirituals’ on the other hand, some wanted to maintain and pass on tradition intact, while others were prepared to jettison practices so as to “safeguard the fundamental aspects of our spirituality”.

The second pair of opposites concerned those in favour of “a greater insertion in the world” and those who wanted “the status quo and even a strengthening of our traditional lifestyle”.

The third pair related to government. Most of the Brothers were in favour of decentralisation but were divided over how it should happen, as, for example, through the introduction of Provincial Chapters. Some saw structures such as Religious Study, Exercises of Piety, and Retreats, as constraining and ill-suited to adults leading an active life. Others held that they should be retained.

The fourth pair dealing with the apostolate can be presented in a table of opposing tendencies:

**SPIRITUALITY-STRUCTURES AND PSYCHOLOGISM-FREEDOM**

CONSERVATIVE TENDENCY	INNOVATIVE TENDENCY
Teaching in the strict sense	Youth ministry in its widest sense
Maintenance of free, denominational schools	Presence in other or government schools
Traditional form of education	Non-formal education, technical schools, literacy, children with special needs
Work with a minority	Evangelisation that is open to all
Keep on teaching students from well-to-do families in private schools	Teaching poor children
Concern for the economically poor	Concern for those who are challenged physically or psychologically

Br Basilio was at pains to stress that these opposing tendencies did not operate like political camps but as trains of thought that varied in content and strength of conviction depending on the subject under consideration.

**The clarity and directness of Br Basilio**

Given the experience of the Vatican Council with its notion of *aggiornamento* and even its challenging of the “old order”, the newly elected Superior General<sup>1</sup> gave his approval for the debate to happen. He certainly criticized any serious deviations but restrained himself from passing any categorical judgement of the “good-bad” type so often used in the past. Rather than gloss over conflicts, he was very frank and upfront in speaking of the Chapter session as having been one of confrontation from the outset. At the very start, the Rules of Procedure prepared by the outgoing General Council were set aside since “the assembly wanted to assume authority for itself and for the Institute and not be conditioned in any way by pre-established positions”. More of the same was to follow:

*There were those with fixed positions, cutting attitudes, and insisting on things to the point of exasperation ... Others, by contrast, were prudent and political ... but not always clear and occasionally giving the impression of using the parliamentary system to block. Humour and irony were used to lighten the moment but also sometimes to hurt. ... Divergent and polemical opinions were clear to all, forcefully put, and stubbornly defended on a range of topics and sometimes on concrete points. Certain Capitulants polarized opinions, while a good number of others sat on the fence but were sympathetic nevertheless to one side or other of the argument.*

<sup>1</sup> Rev Br Charles-Raphaël did not speak. Rev Br Leonidas did not attend the whole Chapter.

The Acts of Chapter in their records of the debates of not only the first session but also the second in 1968 completely confirm this comment of Br Basilio:

*“In the Plenary Assemblies, the logos did not hover high enough above the spirits to enlighten, warm and distil a nebulous idea into a balanced and wholesome truth. Often it crashed and burnt.”*

Finally, Br Basilio noted that by the time the first session ended they had barely reached the point of “antithesis”, a normal stage in group processes, leaving the second session to get to the point of “synthesis”. But once again this was to happen against a background of conflict. This was why, after 1968, the Institute was to find itself in a precarious position.

## **Reflections of Rev Br Basilio on the tendencies in evidence at the Chapter**

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He was not one for waiting in hope but for actively pursuing a synthesis. Indeed, for him the terms spirituality and psychology were “not to be opposed but were related and completed one another”. The first tendency insisted on “not only the qualitative but the vital priority of the Gospel over human values” while the second spoke of “the urgent necessity of taking account of the psychological dimension of the human person”. The synthesis of the two is to be found in paying attention to the psychic aspects of the human person as well as to that person’s “gift of his life” based on “openness to God and others”.

As regards the other pair of opposites, “structures – freedom”, Br Basilio wrote that “structures are worthless if they are not lived in freedom”. He went on to say, “Our response to our charism is not to abandon what we have received but to open it up to include today’s values in a way that achieves integration and not antithesis”.

## **Questions as old as the Institute**

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Essentially the analysis made by Br Basilio does not only refer to a particular moment in the history of the Institute but can serve as a framework for understanding many arguments, implicit or out in the open, that have been part of the life of the Institute since its beginning. The atmosphere of the Chapter of 1852-54 was particularly strained if one is to believe Br Avit. Other Chapters before 1903 also had moments of conflict, notably over the Constitutions, even if the Chapter Minutes written in summary fashion gave only a hint of the bitterness of the debates.

Until 1852-54 there was a reasonable balance between “spirituality – structures” and “psychologism – freedom” in the Institute as a result of its closeness to our origins and quite a range of institutional settings. The second General

Chapter pushed things decisively towards the “spirituality – structures” tendency through the approval of a “definitive” Rule and the creation of a vow of stability reserving authority to men with a very ascetic and centralised vision of the Institute. In 1903 the pendulum started to swing the other way through the creation of Provinces and secularisation. The Chapters from 1907 to 1946 pushed the pendulum further towards “psychologism – freedom” pole, although not without some holding back and hesitation. Further, the 1958 Chapter showed an openly innovative spirit.

The underlying reasons for this evolution are well known. The “spirituality – structures” tendency is based on an unchanging theology and a hierarchical view of the Church. This view was being more and more challenged within the Church. Its spirit was one of resisting the world. The “psychologism – freedom” tendency has more diverse roots. Even though in many ways it grew out of a particular reading of theology and ecclesiology, it was strongly influenced by the humanism of the Enlightenment, the high regard given to scientific thinking, and also popular culture as projected by the mass media. It was trying to live in a compatible way with a secular world.

In promoting the *aggiornamento* of the Church, John XXIII was doing nothing other than recognising the need for a profound cultural change in the Church. But the challenge was great and the attempt by the Council to bring faith and modernity together was not to find a ready acceptance. So, it was not surprising that, within the Institute, reaching a synthesis of the two tendencies of “spirituality – structures” and “psychologism – freedom” was such a struggle.

## **Affirmation of unchangeable principles and tolerance in practice**

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It is important, however, not to exaggerate the gap between before and after 1967. The traditional model of a Church with spiritual power vis-à-vis the State with temporal power had been defeated at the Council but, in practice, there had always been a subtle dialectic at work in the Church between unchangeable principles and accommodation with human realities. Thus, the role of Rome was to recall doctrine in all its rigour even as it tolerated sometimes surprising adjustments on the ground. The scale of what was at stake was much less but the Institute had behaved in the same way.

This asymmetric yoke, combining tough principles and being flexible in practice, gave the Church in general and the Institute in particular an astonishing capacity for survival, a great flexibility to act and even led to remarkable growth. But when the distinction between unchangeable principles and adaptation to circumstances turned into a continual contradiction between what one said and what one did, people became very uncomfortable. The Vatican II Council was not the cause of the crisis but showed it for all to see. The same could be said for the Chapter of 1967-68.

## **On what do we base our lives: two answers or one?**

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The temptation in the aftermath of the Chapter was to effect a simple reversal in what was seen as being important. After 1967, in fact, living in tension with the world was no longer seen as a matter of principle but rather an anomaly and the temptation to water everything down in an idealised world was very strong. It required a lengthy effort to re-define the Institute, ensuring the primacy of spirituality over structures without dismissing them completely, and placing due emphasis on psychology without this resulting in a caricature of freedom. Rev Br Basilio foresaw all this in 1967-68 but the main body of the Institute needed a long time to assimilate this new culture.

The history of Marists in the 20th Century, then, was played out in two acts. The first was dominated by a “spirituality-structures” tendency, tempered by multiple accommodations as to place, circumstance and the human person. The second was characterised by a search for a synthesis between the “psychologism-freedom” tendency, partly in the ascendant, and a “spirituality-structures” approach obliged to re-imagine and re-define itself. It was no longer a question of *aggiornamento* but of metamorphosis, leading to a new balance that could be called “spirituality-mission”.

# *History of the Institute*





## PART 1

### **“Like an army ranged for battle”**

*This title taken from the Song of Songs (6, 10) seems well-suited to describe the life and mission of the congregation in the years 1907 – 1967. In so many ways, it behaved like an army, conquering all before it in some countries or continents or battling it out in others. This feeling of conducting a planet-wide combat for God was a significant factor in its remarkable cohesion and even its paradoxical prosperity in the midst of numerous trials and even tragedies. At first glance, it really was “an army ranged for battle” that nothing could hold back. It will be appropriate, then, in the following pages, to validate the pertinence, the dimensions and the limits of this comparison to warfare.*

**2.** On the previous page:  
Institute of Mexico,  
1951

# 1.

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## MISSION AND CHRISTIANITY

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### From the Aim of the Institute to Marist mission

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The Chapter debate in 1967-68 could also be expressed by the question: what is the mission of the Institute in a secularised world? But the word “mission”, common as it is in our days, was then far from having the level of acceptance in the Institute that it has acquired today. For example, in his *History of the Institute* written in 1947, Br Jean-Emile devoted a special chapter to “Our Missions”, beginning in 1836 with the departure of the first Brothers to Oceania. Then he reminded readers that, in Marist texts, until 1902 the word “mission” referred to any country outside of France where Brothers went, including Canada and Spain, “both very Catholic countries”. Later, Circulars referred to departures “for distant lands”. Finally, the meaning was restricted to “pagan countries” such as China, Turkey, Ceylon, Madagascar, Congo “and some others”. But by 1947 the term “pagan country” was starting to be out-dated.

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### The aim of the Institute and mission

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For a long time, then, ‘Marist mission’ was not defined by where the Brothers went to but by the fact the Brothers left their own country. This was mission in its etymological sense (“missus” meaning “sent”) but also like Abraham: “Leave your country ...”. The concept of “pagan country” was hardly an improvement in the meaning of mission as it made a negative judgement on foreign cultures and implied that Christianity and European civilisation went hand in hand, which by 1947 was less than evident.

In line with the *Life of the Founder* by Br Jean-Baptiste, which only treats of the concept of “mission” when referring to Oceania<sup>2</sup> Br Jean Emile did not regard the teaching apostolate of the Brothers in France after 1817 as having anything to do with mission. This might seem strange in the Society of Mary in which the 1816

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<sup>2</sup> Br Jean-Baptiste Furet, *Life of the Founder* (Part 1, Ch. 19)

Promise had envisaged its mission as being universal, either in distant places such as Oceania or as re-igniting fervour in parishes in Christian countries.

In this period of history, no-one dreamt of speaking of the school as a place of “mission”. Moreover, the concept of ‘Christianity’ retained its cultural meaning for many. Even in post-Revolutionary France where there was widespread lack of piety and anti-clericalism, nearly everyone was baptised, received instruction and made their first communion. Within the culture at the time of Fr Champagnat, then, the Marist Brothers could not consider that they were on mission since in theory there were no pagans but only the non-practising, ignorant and sinners. Even after 1903 and the separation of Church and State in 1905, French Catholics would be hard put to consider their country as ‘mission territory’.<sup>3</sup>

The Marist Brothers before 1884, the year when the Institute decided to launch out internationally, would never have spoken of their “mission” but rather of “the aim of the Institute”. The Life of the Founder describes this “aim” in a “short text” given to the Brothers when the Hermitage was being constructed.<sup>4</sup> The aim was made up of personal sanctification, fraternal charity, respect for civil and religious authorities, and finally zeal towards children<sup>5</sup>. It condemned in severe terms any Brother who would aspire to be a teacher of secular subjects only. Without religious education, instruction had no meaning or could even have a corrupting influence.

The great originality of Fr Champagnat in such a context was to have thought of the school as a place of mission even if he did not use the word. In declaring that the Brothers had an apostolic ministry he was really giving them a missionary identity, opening the way for young ignorant Christians to come to know the divine



**3.** Marist school at Païta (New Caledonia).

<sup>3</sup> The publication of *France, Pays de Mission* by Frs Godin and Daniel in 1943 created a sensation.

<sup>4</sup> Br Jean-Baptiste Furet, *Life*, Part 1, Ch. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Several instructions conserved by Brs Jean-Baptiste and François relate to this topic. Cf. André Lanfrey, *Marist Notebooks* N° 13.

mystery. Another indication of his missionary concept of the school is that he did not want his Brothers to take on other roles common to school teachers of the day such as being Church cantors or sacristans. Rather, he asked that they incarnate a charismatic Church in the parishes by their specialised apostolate and a life lived apart, a Church that was simultaneously close and distant. This was to sometimes cause them problems with the Parish Priest, their neighbours and even the children.

## **The Brothers as Sowers of the Word**

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Many texts, especially the House Annals of Br Avit, showed that the Brothers generally lived out the parable of the Sower (Matt. 13, 3-23) which is probably the best image of mission. The Sower “went out to sow”, to proclaim the Good News to all but could succeed only where there was a minimum of acceptance to be found. In as much as he is both very near and very far, the missionary takes on the figure of a prophet, inviting those around to take sides for or against the revelation he brings. Matthew develops a typology of reactions to such mission: the wayside, symbol of those who neither hear nor understand; the rocky places, an image of the fickle; the thorns represent the seduction of riches; and finally the good ground, that is those who not only hear but also understand. Given this, the prophet faced three main situations: the loss of influence by outright refusal or devaluation of his message; most commonly, an ongoing state that balanced tension and acceptance; a wholehearted welcome and encounter between the people and the missionaries. The Brothers were to experience all such situations and at all levels: schools where many Brothers found the children quite unreceptive of their teaching; some States that created difficulties for them and others where they were sometimes rejected outright.

## **Marist mission with a universal and eschatological dimension**

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In acting in this way, Fr Champagnat was only putting into practice the spirit of the Society of Mary which included both theory and experience. Indeed, from 1789 to 1799 the childhood of the first Marist aspirants had been spent in an atmosphere of resistance to a revolution that wanted to eliminate Christianity. With greater realism and subtlety, Napoleon had tried to put the Church at the service of the State, with the Bishops and Parish Priests keeping the people under control. And especially there was to be no militant Catholicism, Jesuit-style! The revelation to Courveille at le Puy on 15th August in 1812 is a typical example of the struggle between a politicised religion and a milieu nourished by an apostolic and charismatic spirit. Officially it was the feastday of St Napoleon, a feast created with the purpose of supplanting the Assumption. A marial revelation on such a day was in itself an act of protest. Its content was a second protest since it concerned a plan for a religious order when such groups were also illegal. The consecration at Fourvière in 1816 was a truly missionary program reaching out to the whole world. The powers that be could neither stifle the influence of the Church nor silence it by force. At the

same time, hostility towards the Church, indifference, and religious ignorance were widespread. There was never more need for mission than at such a time. The dramatic words of the Fourvière consecration revealed both the tension and the mutual acceptance that would be the experience of Marists in the surrounding society.

## The school as an authentic place of mission

Marist eschatological thinking and the durability of the concept of Christianity did not prevent Fr Champagnat from being intransigent when it came to the aim of the Institute. The Brothers' school was to be a source of both community strength and critical reflection for civil society which was often more interested in secular instruction than in Christian education *per se*. He took on this challenge, considering that the desire for general learning could act as an enticement that the Brothers could use to pursue evangelisation. He sought recognition as a charitable association from a State that was more interested in controlling and making use of religion than in understanding its purposes. Locally, he sought to take over the largest possible number of public schools.

Within the Church, getting the balance right between challenging local society and living in harmony was more complex still. The policy of Fr Champagnat went against traditional Church thinking that saw the school as an appendage of the Parish complex and the teacher as a helper to the clergy. Fr Champagnat certainly saw himself as an obedient son of the Bishops and was respectful of the Parish Priests, but he instructed his Brothers to limit their apostolate to the school. They were to be militant laypeople without clerical ambitions, in some ways rivalling the clergy in their competence, their ascetical life and their influence. They were to be agents of change in the general population towards cultural and religious modernity.



4. Betafo (Madagascar). A walk around the crater at Tritriva (1925).

To reach this outcome, however, Fr Champagnat had to act with his Brothers in the same way, balancing tension and acceptance. He was not shy in saying that those who did not want a hidden and ascetic life or give priority to teaching catechism had nothing to do in his outfit. Many in fact left, preferring the traditional role of helper to the clergy or lay teacher to the warm but demanding, self-reflective style that Fr Champagnat was asking of them. His art of governing followed the same logic. Those who were to be

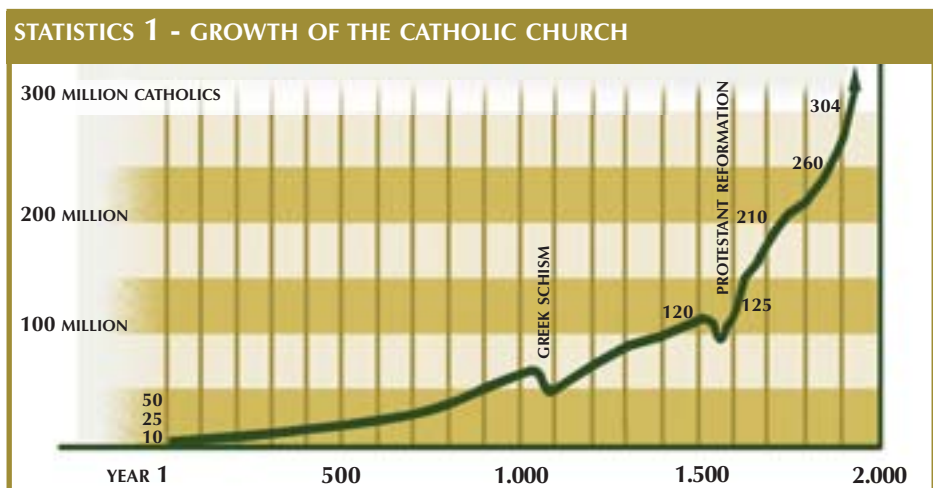
partners in his work would have to avoid the pitfalls of the surrounding culture but also any extreme clashes, both of which would lead to the failure of what can rightly be called the mission of the school or “the aim of the Institute”.

## From “the aim of the Institute” to missions

In the forty years following the death of Fr Champagnat, the pendulum of tension – acceptance with the partners of the school swung gradually towards greater tension. From 1884 onwards the Institute was to give priority “to the missions”, sending out large numbers of Brothers from their homeland. This decision was a sign of dynamism but also an admission of how difficult it had become to live the mission in France. It was not a rediscovery of mission but a variation in tactics. Until then priority had been given to mission at home with the aim of establishing a renewed Christianity. When the signs were clear that this was failing despite their efforts, the Institute re-mobilised its universal spirit to head out “to the missions”. This explains how the Superiors found it so easy to get young Brothers, and some not so young, ready to leave their homeland.

After 1903, the secularised Brothers who remained in France re-discovered their first ideals. They were to witness to personal commitment in schools that had become distinctly missionary as a result of the separation of Church and State. Their lives implicitly compared mission *hic et nunc* with distant missions. They were able to show that the new mission situation that members of religious congregations found themselves in remained viable as long as certain accommodations were made.

Moreover, the favour enjoyed by foreign missions has been largely overrated. While acceptance was the general rule in Anglo-Saxon countries with Protestant majorities, countries with a Catholic tradition were beset with strong anti-religious and anti-clerical undercurrents. Tensions and sometimes open conflicts alternated



Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 12, n° 81, 1934, p. 133.

with moments of harmony. In countries with other traditions such as in the Middle East and Asia, tension was more the rule ending sometimes in expulsion (Turkey, China), but for political reasons more than religious. In accepting numbers of non-Catholics, the schools were missionary centres. This was not because of the number of resulting conversions but because they fostered relationships that were almost ecumenical (as in South Africa, Turkey, Greece, and China), although they would never have expressed it this way.

Even if the Brothers managed to adapt themselves to new cultures, they often remained for a long time like foreign enclaves because of their language, their customs and mentality. This created difficulties in regard to real integration into the country and local recruiting. They had to live, as well, in a state of alternating tension and acceptance with the centre of the Institute which was not inclined to abandon customs that it judged to be appropriate for all cultures and climates. The gap between the tradition of the early days and the missions was to be seen most noticeably in the scope of education offered. Networks of primary schools were almost everywhere replaced by colleges and boarding schools offering secondary or higher education to meet the needs of the Church and local societies. Quite early in the piece, Brothers were to deplore the way the Institute was caring for the more well-to-do to the detriment of the poor and, after 1945, the Institute began to question itself about the reality of its missionary commitment and the apostolic effectiveness of its colleges.



## 2.

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### **A VERY BLURRED CONCEPT OF MISSION (1907-1946)**

The forced exile and secularisation of 1903 almost completely severed the umbilical cord that connected the Institute to France. The frenetically anti-Catholic republican government thought it had won a great victory over the Church but it soon realised that the destinies of the Church and the State were much more closely linked than it had thought.

#### **Mission and the war against religion that pitted French against French**

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It is true that in 1903-1905 the Church suffered a heavy defeat in the cold war against the French worldview that was the fruit of the Enlightenment, a sort of secular religion founded on Human Rights. The Catholic worldview regathered strength through resisting the French revolution and went on to regain ground in France during the 19th century and spread successfully around the world.

It is also true that during the 19th century these two worldviews managed to co-exist. But from 1881 onwards it was open warfare. The connection between Catholic mission and the promotion of French culture disappeared gradually. The spread of French culture to the wider world, in which French Catholic missions had played such an influential role, started to slow down owing to a lack of candidates for mission and out of defiance against a hostile government. The French Republic, therefore, through its marginalising of Catholicism, cut off the branch on which it had been sitting. The consequence of this break would be seen only over time.

#### **Finding new sources of vocations**

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Within the Institute after 1903 the major source of vocations was considerably reduced by the partial collapse of Marist works in France. The efforts of French Novices, however, forbidden from working in France and destined for the missions, should not be overlooked. Nevertheless, new sources were needed (like Spain, Germany, and



5. St Joseph's School in Roma Basutoland (Lesotho) in 1910 was the only Marist school in southern Africa for black Africans. A group of students in their "Sunday-best". The Brothers are Br Frederick on the right and Br Felix on the left.

Italy) to take up the baton and over time create a truly international Institute.

For many years interprovincial Juniorates in Spain (Carrión, Tuy) and Italy (Sangano...) were to provide manpower to Latin America. Under the new Constitutions of 1903, however, the General Council ceased to appoint most of the Brothers. The Provincials, now Major Superiors, had many urgent needs of their own and were reluctant to give up Brothers. So, the 1907 Chapter decided to establish the Work of St Francis Xavier under the direct control of the General Council and specifically intended to support overseas missions.

Secularisation and decentralisation of the Institute in this way led to a change in practice of mission. Still the word "mission" would continue to be used for many years to designate both Christian and non-Christian lands, the missionary being simply someone who had left his home country no matter where he was appointed. The Institute

thought of itself as more missionary than ever, but wasn't it confusing 'mission' with 'becoming more international'?

## Maintaining a heroic idea of mission

With the massive exile from France, mission in the sense of working outside one's home country became commonplace. Writing in the Bulletin<sup>6</sup> (N° 13, 1913) Br Diogène, Assistant General, recognised this fact. "Distances have shrunk considerably" to the point where people were less worried about travelling from Europe to China than they had previously been about going from the Hermitage to London. Hygiene had improved greatly and so there were fewer health risks. The diversity of languages was less frightening. One question remained, that of personal security and freedom. But isn't the history of the Church one of constant struggle interspersed with varying periods of calm?

For Br Diogène such progress was not to cause the slightest change in the depth of one's commitment. "From the moment of departure for faraway lands, the sacrifice is total. It is a complete and definitive separation" from family, from confrères, from the homeland and from any feeling of being on one's own in a foreign land. He had to fight against the desire of many Brothers, who had left France in 1903 without a strong missionary spirit, to return home. "There are some who entertain the thought of going home. Such a thought easily becomes a wish and soon a fixed idea". When others raised the fact of progress in means of transportation to request periodic home visits, Br Diogène remained firm. "The missionary worthy of the

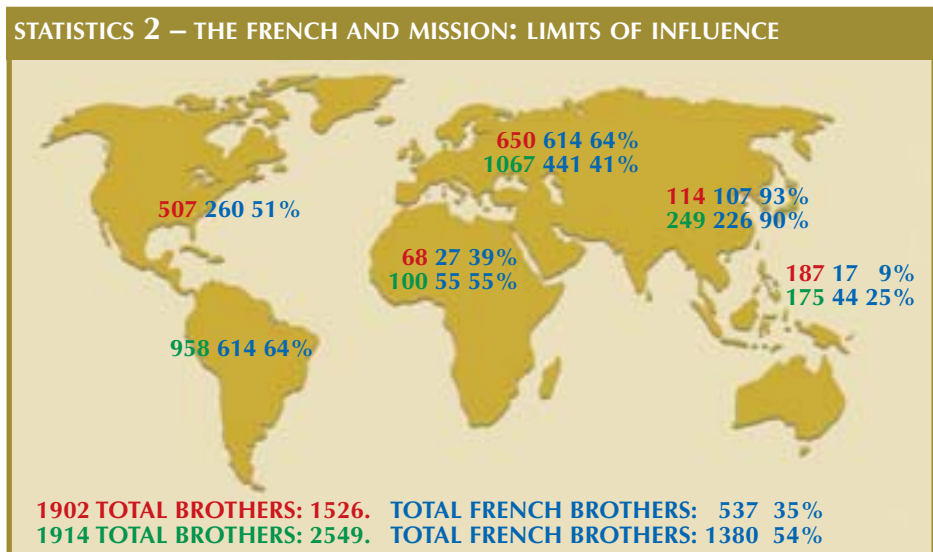
<sup>6</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, N° 25 (1913).

name,” he wrote, “leaves without any wish to return. He will not return, then, to visit his family, nor even for health reasons. He will only return when called by his superiors.” ... “The day when our Brothers return periodically from distant countries will be the day when we no longer have real missionaries”.

Rather than reinforcing a heroic concept of mission, this doctrine highlights its purpose, no longer ‘mission’ as such but ‘becoming more international’. The war of 1914-18 was to cause the return of many Brothers, some of whom were not at all disappointed to have the opportunity of being home. Later, especially after 1920, the Second Novitiate would give many missionaries the chance to go home for a while, duly authorised by obedience.

## The French and mission: limits of influence

The myth surrounding the exile of 1903 hides an important fact. A massive number of French Brothers left France after 1903 but their contribution was much less decisive than we had thought. In total, out of 1,239 Brothers sent from Europe over eleven years, there were 721 French or 58% and the bulk of their support was in the years 1903-1904. Even in those years the proportion of non-French was significant: 9.8% in 1903 and 12.5% in 1904. Between 1907 and 1912 there were almost no French Brothers sent outside the country. A table entitled “Comparative overview of the missions of the Little Brothers of Mary between 1902 and 1914”<sup>7</sup> gives us a view of the deployment of the French Brothers by continent and their proportion in the various countries, excluding France itself.



Source: André Lanfrey. Comparative figures for FMS missions in 1902 and 1914

<sup>7</sup> A.F.M. France 600, dossier 1918.

Thus, in 1914, more than half of the Brothers outside of France were French but their proportion varied by continent:

<b>IN EUROPE</b>	The French were welcomed but were not in the majority, and the houses of formation that were set up tended to artificially boost the numbers.
<b>IN AMERICA</b>	Two-thirds of the Brothers were French (except in Colombia) making up entities that had an expatriate feel about them. A sharper distinction between North America and Latin America needs to be made.
<b>IN ASIA</b>	(Middle East, Ceylon, China) almost all the Brothers were French as in general their presence was closely related to where France had influence.
<b>IN OCEANIA</b>	Not very receptive mainly because of the language challenge.
<b>IN AFRICA</b>	not seriously taken up as an option apart from South Africa. The schools in Algeria shared the same fate as those in France.

The 1914-18 War with its forced return of French Brothers in large numbers allowed other missionary nations, especially Spain, to take up the challenge.

### **Confusion of purpose: mission – colonisation - Christianity**

In his encyclical *Maximum illud* of 1919, Pope Benedict XV expressed his disquiet at the nationalism of missionaries who were confusing the interests of their homeland with those of God and were being slow to establish truly local Churches by training local clergy. It does not seem that the Marist Brothers, taken up as they were with re-organising themselves, felt themselves touched by this encyclical to which the Circulars of the time made scant reference.

By contrast, the efforts of Pius XI to boost missionary effort did find an echo. The encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* of 1926 more or less followed on from the teaching of Benedict XV and ordered Vicars Apostolic and Prefects in very strong terms to set up the local clergy. "Why should the local clergy be impeded from cultivating the field that is theirs and is natural to them, of leading their own people?" The Pope noted, moreover, that Europe was providing fewer missionary vocations than before. He went on to warn that peoples who "have attained a degree of political maturity, want to expel foreign functionaries, troops and missionaries in order to obtain their full independence." The encyclical proposed indigenous religious congregations as better suited to the local milieu but did not prohibit candidates from joining international congregations.<sup>8</sup>

Rev Br Diogène, in his Circular of 25 December 1929, made lengthy reference to the missions by way of introducing the publication of the full encyclical. But this thinking of the Pope was not seriously followed if one is to believe a particularly

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<sup>8</sup> This position was to cause certain problems in the Belgian Congo.

detailed, anonymous article in the Bulletin<sup>9</sup> (No 81, 1930). This was certainly from the pen of Br Jean-Emile, the new Secretary General. The distance from the Pope's thinking was very clear. In this article, mission was defined as "the preoccupation to evangelise peoples who are not yet Christian". It went on to enumerate the successes gained over the previous century. Africa which had been so isolated until 1840 now had ready means of communication. Under the control of "Christian powers that have installed themselves", Africa counts thousands of priests, Brothers and Sisters "and a cloud of catechists and local helpers". As a result, in numerous countries, Catholics could be counted in hundreds of thousands.

The author insisted on "local helpers", understanding the phrase in its broadest sense. Thus, North America which had been a missionary territory in the time of Fr Champagnat was now itself providing missionaries and "Oceania has almost reached the same point". Africa, it would seem, would follow the same trajectory over the coming fifty years. Only Asia stood out "as such a pagan stronghold that it will surely take longer to evangelise". In short, "the conquests of the Church were accelerating", the only problem being the Protestants with their "intrusive proselytising" and powerful financial backing.



6. Map of the works of the Marist Province of China.

The author conceded that "contemporary civilisation has many faults, slowly corrupting the faith of many weak souls", but overall, "false religions" were collapsing in ruins "in the face of European civilisation". The time was probably not far when these religions would be swallowed up by the indifference of the masses and the disdain of the cultivated classes while the Church would assure its triumph "either through the birth-rate in Christian countries or gains in pagan countries". The task was not over by any means but the powerful missionary drive would not weaken!

Readers at the beginning of the 21st century could well be astonished at such optimism which so readily mixed European civilisation and Christian civilisation, undervalued the rise of secularism, asked no questions about colonisation and showed not an ounce of ecumenism. But the author was only giving expression, in a rather crude

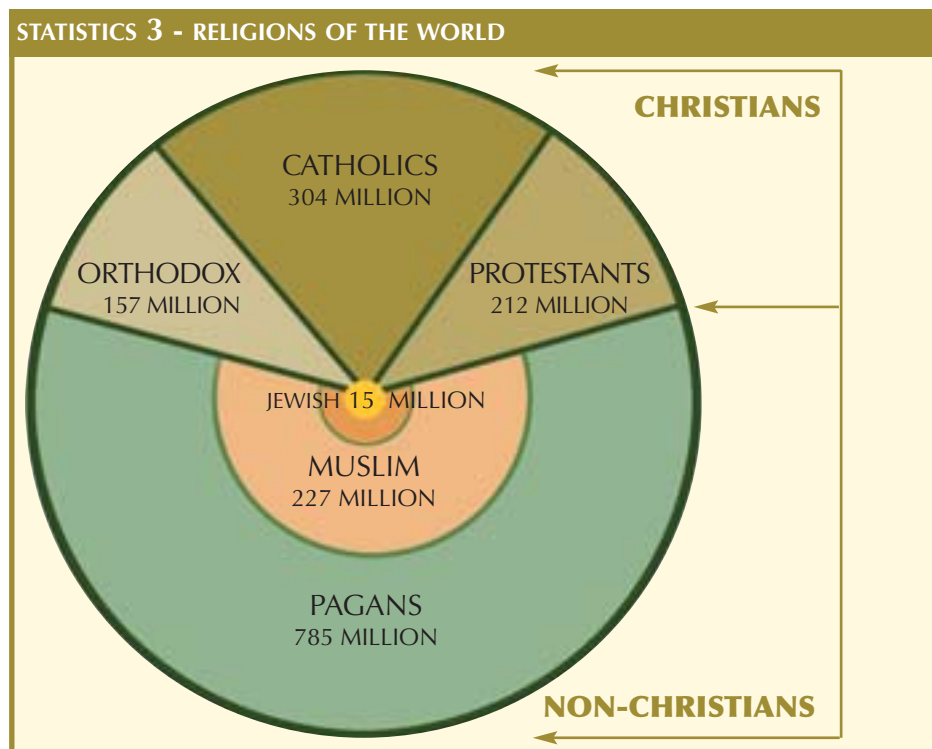
<sup>9</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, N° 81, (1930).

way, to a mindset that was common at the time<sup>10</sup>. In predicting that “local helpers” presaged a Church largely independent of its European roots, his fundamental model was that of a world-wide Western Christianity already taking shape.

### Mission, colonisation and cultural influence

This text provides no definitive evidence of any supposed collusion between mission in general and colonisation. Rather, a naive sentiment of superiority seems to have been in play. The thinking was that what was good for Europe was good for the world. Such thinking among the Marist Brothers led to an obsession with uniformity. Similarly there was ambiguity around mission being an unwitting vehicle for transmitting a dominant culture. Another consequence was a more or less permanent state of culture shock that slowed the development of some Provinces.

Several factors limited the scope of work of the Marist Brothers in areas colonised by France. In the first place, colonisers and missionaries, acutely aware of their different and even opposing objectives, were allies and rivals at the same



Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 12, N° 81, p. 131

<sup>10</sup> Administrative letters show that in this matter Rev Br Diogène adopted a more modest and prudent attitude.



7. Shanghai. Brothers at Lao Dong (1910).

time. The norm was for the government to request the foundation of schools by the French Marist Brothers. An exception was New Caledonia<sup>11</sup> where decisions were made by Religious Orders or Vicars Apostolic, who were more often than not French, it must be said. There was then relatively little direct collusion between Catholic missionaries and the French state, all the more so since republicans were the most active agents

in French colonisation. This was especially true of Jules Ferry, the promoter of lay schools in France aimed at “civilising” French children who were too Catholic for his taste. He had a similar desire to ‘civilise people’ in French colonies as well.

The real meeting point between the Marist Brothers and the French state in these colonies was culture. The Brothers were not slow to promote French influence, notably in teaching their language, for they saw this as the natural vehicle for forming Christians and for introducing modernity. Of course avoiding military service and not having to learn a foreign language were also a boon to them. They were “Catholic and French” as described in a popular song.

Marist foundations in the Turkish Empire and in China before 1914 were linked to the strong French influence in these States. French Marist Brothers also went voluntarily to countries that were not dependent on France but where there were French-speaking minorities. There were a number of such places at that time, e.g. the Seychelles, Canada. Neither did the French Brothers hesitate from early on to cross language barriers to go into countries that were culturally quite different (England,



8. China: Marist Brothers publicly honoured by the Chinese government (1931).

<sup>11</sup> The foundations in Algeria by the Province of Aubenas were not seen as colonial since Algeria was regarded as French territory.

South Africa, Spain, Ceylon ...), without paying much attention to contentious historical relations with other nations such as England and Germany.

Mention could be made of some notable exceptions such as Madagascar, a French Protectorate, where Brothers landed in 1911 but where there was only a modest deployment from the Institute, and especially the Belgian Congo where the government invited the Brothers to make a foundation in 1911. There must have been difficulties in Latin America, as well, where Spanish Brothers could have been seen as aligned with the colonisers. Certain passing comments show that in the British Empire as well the situation was not always idyllic in regard to missions and colonising influence.

It is not our intention to paint a rosy picture of Marist mission at this time, but neither is it fair to paint a dark picture. Overall the Marist Brothers knew how to maintain a missionary attitude even when their inculturation was quite often problematic as was mentioned above.

### The weight of the missions on the Institute around 1930

In his Circular of 1929, Br Diogène estimated that in mission countries (that he failed to define clearly) there were some 8,200 priests from Europe and America and 4,500 others “recruited from new Christian areas”. As regards Brothers from all Institutes, he spoke of 4,200 from Europe and America and 831 local Brothers. Speaking specifically of our Institute, he mentioned 80 schools, 18,000 students and 580 Brothers, i.e. not such a high proportion.

The anonymous author of the Bulletin wanted to be more precise basing himself as he said on the list of territories under the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith “or else those who had not recently been de-listed” and where the Catholic population was still a weak minority:

THE WEIGHT OF THE MISSIONS ON THE INSTITUTE AROUND 1930		
CONTINENT	COUNTRIES AND NUMBER OF MARIST SCHOOLS	TOTAL
Africa	Morocco 2; Egypt 1; Madagascar 2; Congo (Belgian) 3; South Africa 10	18
Asia	Syria 8; Turkey 2; Arabia (Aden) 1; Ceylon 2; China 16.	29
Oceania	New Zealand 8; New Caledonia 4; Australia 5; Polynesia 7.	24
America	Colombia 2	2
Europe	Denmark 2; Serbia 1; Greece 3.	6
	<b>18 countries</b>	<b>79</b>

*Source: Bulletin of the Institute, T. 12, N° 81, 1930.*

In fact this list shows countries which did not have sufficient local recruits and had received a permanent contingent of Brothers born elsewhere, without taking



serious account of important differences between them. Mission was thus understood in its traditional sense of the ‘sending out of missionaries’. This stopped when the local Church became self-sufficient.

The author also gives an overview of donations from the Provinces to the missions which he calculates as more than 160,000 Francs. In the partial statistics provided it is surprising to see a sizeable amount from China (5,500 Francs). Six Provinces provided the lion’s share: in order of importance, the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Spain, Great Britain and Ireland, Beaucamps. But the author estimates that the Institute itself spent more than seven or nine times more than this on the formation of missionary Brothers, in particular for the 150 Juniors, Novices and young Brothers of St Francis Xavier.

Around 1930, then, missionary thinking remained quite all over the place and the Institute was not a particularly shining example of being present in missions in the strict sense.

## Successful inculturation: the example of Brazil

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An excellent history of the Marist Brothers in Brazil<sup>12</sup> from 1917 to 1922 reminds us that, in the beginning, the foundations were the result of a direct or indirect appeal of Bishops imbued with the Tridentine tradition. Their concern was the salvation of souls in a Church understood as a perfect society, somewhat removed from the Brazilian State and society at large.

Initially, the Brothers paid little attention to political, economic or social problems. Still, their institutions soon followed whatever the State required (e.g. school cadets, participation in civic celebrations) and responded to the desire of Brazilians for intellectual and social advancement as much as religious formation, thereby disarming attacks from the free press. The Institute’s French origins were a positive, especially in the south and centre of the country where there were numbers of German and Italian immigrants and a middle class appreciative of French culture, while in the north the Brothers assimilated more quickly into Brazilian culture. Moreover, with an eye to their long-term autonomy, they left their first works once these were going well enough and established colleges which they owned and which they could run in a style that was more appropriate to their tradition.

Many of the congregation’s foundations followed the same pattern. The Brothers’ relative indifference to political, economic and social questions and their essentially religious and educational focus allowed them to find common ground with States and local societies. But such indifference also meant that they were somewhat insensitive to other factors such as colonisation and cultural imperialism.

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<sup>12</sup> Riolando Azzi, *História da Educação católica no Brasil. Contribuição dos Irmãos Maristas*, São Paulo, volume 1, p. 420-421.

For many years there was a steady growth in the number of English-speaking Brothers. This fact combined with the rapid rise of Spanish-speakers meant that French culture was becoming less dominant in the Institute. Moreover, as shall be seen in relation to the 1914-18 War, the patriotism of the French missionaries had cooled off. Their strong cultural links with France were combined with a real attachment to their new homeland. They learnt the local languages such as Turkish, Arabic, and Chinese so as to ensure the quality of their educational and religious mission, and to be better able to seek local vocations. In the thinking of most Brothers, mission and the growth of the Institute went hand in hand.

### 3.

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## A NEW MISSIONARY STRATEGY (1946-1967)

Under Br Théophane in the 19th century there had been a quite co-ordinated strategy for the expansion of missions. An anonymous paper in the archives of the Institute, entitled, “Some considerations on developments within the Institute”<sup>13</sup> offers a comparative critique of the expansion to that date and a detailed vision of a possible future strategy for the development of the Institute. It was undoubtedly composed in preparation for the 1946 Chapter.

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### A strategic plan for making foundations

The article studied what the history of the Institute, understood as an educational body, revealed about how foundations were made. There had been two types – passive and active. The first were responses to requests from Bishops or Parish Priests. This had been most frequently the case in France in the 19th century and even outside of France, e.g. South Africa in 1867 or Peking and Constantinople in 1891 and 1892 respectively. An ‘active’ foundation was when the Superiors themselves chose where to place an apostolate and then either rented or built an establishment, at their own risk. Rome is one example where the College was to become the basis for a new Province; or Belgrade where the Brothers after working for twenty five years in a place owned by the Lazarists without financial gain, established a prosperous college and “the beginnings of a Juniorate”.

The author, probably Br Jean-Emile, newly-appointed Assistant General, recognised that often active foundations started from a passive foundation. He commented, “It is evident that when we took matters into our own hands, works began to grow”. The Brothers were no longer constrained by outside governing groups with limited objectives. For him, it was clear that “when we choose the places and the means, we develop best”. And for him, France<sup>14</sup> was the counter-example:

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<sup>13</sup> AFM, dossier 203/1

<sup>14</sup> More than 80 establishments in four departments and 54 other departments without a single establishment.

*It seems clear that in France, where we have been forever, we have the most ridiculous situations in the Institute as a result of having so strongly followed the passive method of making foundations.*

This judgement seems over-stated and makes no mention of the government-imposed secularisation. In any case, he proposed “a new line of conduct for the future”. In the first place, unproductive lands like Aden should be avoided, “where there are not even a hundred resident Catholics”; or even New Caledonia, where the Brothers had worked for seventy years without any great hope of growth since the island had only 28,000 Catholics. In contrast, Indochina (now Vietnam) with its 1,500,000 Catholics or even India (3.5 million Catholics) or Australia offered real possibilities. In short, “it is not a matter of dedication but whether the terrain holds promise or not”.

A trickle of vocations could be predicted for Fiji (16,000 Catholics) and Samoa (15,000) but also a good number for Ceylon (400,000 Catholics) and Madagascar (500,000). Other promising countries should be considered: Cameroon, Tanganyika, Uganda, “without forgetting the Philippines and Portugal”.

## **Towards the centralisation of our missionary effort**

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The paper went on to say that Provinces are not the best-suited instruments for such an enterprise since they have “a defined field of action”. Rather it was the responsibility of “the centre of the Institute” to appeal to the Provinces for manpower and resources. “Brazilian Brothers could readily go to establish us in Portugal, Spanish Brothers in the Philippines, and Australian Brothers in India”. Such action would have to be sustained in manpower and resources for around ten years. Under-resourced situations were to be avoided such as had happened in Madagascar or in the early days in China which had limited their growth. So, “it is much more important to found the Institute in the countries of the future than to set up a new community in one of the old Provinces”<sup>15</sup>. His final reflection showed great realism: in many countries “the question of nationality determines who can stay and who must go. (...) If we delay, we will see the doors closed on our faces”.

Much could be said about this paper. There are so many simplistic and offensive statements; but also a global and realistic vision. Mission was to be once more coordinated from the centre as it was prior to 1903 and to target lands that were capable of assuring its prosperity. It remains the case, however, that such reasoning was founded on the idea of large Christian groupings – i.e. non-European groups from which the Institute could draw to assure its own growth. Such thinking was somehow contrary to mission. It proposed founding the Institute in areas that were already largely Christianised and without any prior request from the Church.

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<sup>15</sup> But the example he gives is a bit paradoxical. The Province of Constantinople, lacking recruits from its own territory, set up a Juniorate and a school in Langon in Bretagne. After eight years they had a dozen young Brothers “working in the classrooms” and this gave rise to the idea of a new Province.

## The new beginning in 1946

One of the commissions at the 1946 Chapter had the curious title “Recruitment and Mission”. Its thinking was influenced by the paper treated above. The report<sup>16</sup> (C. XIX, 8/12/1946 p. 473) defined the meaning of the word “missionary”, no doubt for the first time. There were many Brothers who had left their own country to work far away but “if one takes this word in its strict sense as a religious worker in a country where the majority of people are pagan, the number of our missionaries is considerably reduced”. Further, the commission drew up a list of ten mission countries - China, Madagascar, Ceylon, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Congo, Nyassa (Malawi), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) - where 357 Brothers were working. Again, it was necessary to take out the 97 Chinese Brothers, 10 from Madagascar, and 7 from Ceylon working in their own countries. There were therefore only 243 Brothers who were “true missionaries”, or 3% of the Institute.

In changing its definition of mission, then, the Institute discovered that it was not very missionary at all. For this reason the commission formulated proposals for a new beginning:

- *The reestablishment of the Work of St Francis Xavier that had been almost wiped out by the war;*
- *that well-off Provinces undertake a mission in countries where the Institute is interested in starting up: India, Philippines, Mozambique ...*
- *That the young Brothers interested in going to the missions, should be encouraged to write to the Superior General who will decide prudently how to deploy these willing souls in such a way as to not overly upset the works of their Provinces.*

The Commission further signalled that there would be a number of missions set up in pagan lands, for example in India, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and Mozambique, and suggested that the question of periodic return home of missionary Brothers be studied.

The inclusion of the Philippines, however, as a mission land showed that the notion of pagan country was still very blurred and that there remained a preoccupation with recruitment. Nevertheless, a step forward had been taken in the understanding of mission. The Chapter commission in 1958<sup>17</sup> would note:

BROTHERS ON MISSION		
YEAR	BROTHERS ON MISSION	STUDENTS
1946	357 (including 114 local Brothers)	19.380
1958	936 (including 353 local Brothers)	43.377

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 27, N°206, April 1967 p. 506-507

<sup>16</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 473. Circular of 8 December 1946.

<sup>17</sup> *Circulars*, T. XXII, p. 246. Circular of 8 December 1958.

The biggest effort came from 12 Provinces who made 18 new foundations. This would usher in a new phase of mission, taken up frequently by 'new' Provinces such as Canada, USA, Brazil, with the encouragement of a central co-ordinator. The creation in 1950 of the Missionary Union of Marcellin Champagnat provided spiritual and financial assistance. Two Circulars came back to the question of new foundations in 1959 and 1961. In these, the phenomenon of decolonisation was making itself felt. The Institute was aware that time was running out for foundations in many countries and, indeed, that mission had to assume different forms.

A little earlier, in Bulletin<sup>18</sup> N° 159 (1955), Br Thomas Austin A.G. had given an overview of the missions of the Institute showing the progress made since 1946 but presenting numbers significantly less those of 1958. True or not, the table below illustrates very clearly two types of mission. The older variety, founded before 1916, had not moved beyond the status of mission territory, or not then at least, for various reasons but most commonly for lack of local recruits. China under the yoke of the communists was obviously a separate case. In masterly fashion, the article showed that between 1916 and 1946 there was a near dearth of foundations and that there was a revival thereafter, a second variety of mission. It should be noted, however, that the number of foundations was artificially inflated by the establishment of the Province of China outside mainland China.

OVERVIEW OF ALL THE MISSIONS OF THE INSTITUTE					
PROVINCES	MISSION COUNTRIES	DATE OF FOUNDATION	HOUSES	BROTHERS	STUDENTS
South Africa	Lesotho	?	1	2	350
N.-D.H	New Caledonia	1873	4	27	820
New Zealand	Samoa	1888	3	14	1,440
New Zealand	Fiji	1888	3	14	1,250
South-East	Algeria	1890	2	5	680
China	China	1891		85	
Colombia	Colombia	1908	2 <sup>19</sup>	7	490
Belgium	Congo	1911	8	103	11,300
Varenes-East	Madagascar	1911	6	42	2,000
China	Ceylon	1911	4	27	2,750
Bética	Morocco	1915	1	10	250
Sydney	Solomon Islands	1938	3	7	200
Iberville	Southern Rhodesia	1939	3	22	2,450
Levis	Nyassa	1946	4	16	680
Central Brazil	Mozambique	1948	3	22	530

<sup>18</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXI, N° 159 July 1955, p. 150-168.

<sup>19</sup> Schools catering for Indians

PROVINCES	MISSION COUNTRIES	DATE OF FOUNDATION	HOUSES	BROTHERS	STUDENTS
USA	Philippines	1948	4	18	1,500
G. B and Ireland.	Nigeria	1949	2	6	300
China	Hong-Kong	1949	4	26	850
China	Malaysia	1949	7	38	4,130
China	Sumatra	1950	2	6	1,590
Sydney	New Britain	1950	1	4	100
China	Japan	1951	1	7	120
Central Brazil.	Angola	1954	1	3	50
Levis	Northern Rhodesia	1955	1	2	120
<b>Total</b>			<b>69</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>33,950</b>

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 22, N°159, (1955) Br Thomas Austin A.G.

Even though the table was divided into two very different periods the understanding of Marist mission remained the same. The missionary was one who left his country to spread the faith, expand the Institute or gain a foothold in countries where Brothers would be secure. Having said that, many foundations in Africa and elsewhere were made by Brothers from Oceania and the Americas, acting with a renewed sense of purpose in the post-war period. Further, in general, the Brothers from these countries did not find themselves compromised as had the Europeans in the bind of coloniser – missionary.



9. St Francis Xavier Juniorate 1950.

## Recruiting areas and mission lands (1950)

In 1950, a few years after the Second World War, the Institute was overall in a healthy state. There were 7,556 professed Brothers, 5881 of whom were working in their home countries and 1,675 (22%) were 'on mission', that is resident outside their country of origin. The Institute seemed to be giving more attention to new lands of conquest than to Provinces in difficulty. The restructuring of older, tired Provinces was thus slow to happen or ended in combinations that had little hope of succeeding.

What was perhaps most of interest at the time was the pronounced and long-standing disconnect between recruiting areas and mission lands giving rise to two more or less distinct geographic zones: one with apostolic works and one with vocations, with the interprovincial Juniorates and the Work of St Francis Xavier playing the role of middlemen. This is why certain Provinces in Latin America (e.g. Chile, Peru) were veritable appendices of Spain, just as before 1903 certain Provinces had the appearance of being French enclaves on Brazilian or Mexican soil. The Work of St Francis Xavier, under the control of the General Administration but with less manpower than in a previous era, was still deploying personnel to Provinces in need of assistance, such as China, Constantinople, Varennes-East, Ceylon.

In the end the recruiting areas could be grouped into three categories:

- Countries producing many vocations and apostolic works such as France before 1903 replaced later by Spain.
- Countries producing vocations but lacking in works of any corresponding importance: Germany and Italy.
- Countries with virtually no works: Switzerland, Portugal, central Europe (Hungary, Czechoslovakia).

MAIN MISSIONARY COUNTRIES (1950)			
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	WORKING IN THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	ON MISSION OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	TOTAL
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.881</b>	<b>1.675</b>	
Spain	334+276+286+30+9= 1205	8 (South Africa); 139 (Arg.); 39 (Br central); 15 (Br south); 25 (Br north); 5 (Adm. Gen.); 108 (Chile); 7 (China); 5 (Ceylon); 26 (Colombia); 191 (Cuba-AC); 1 (USA); 36 (Mex); 1 (NZ); 64 (Peru)	670
France	280+175+93+177+210 = 935	16 (South Africa); 2 (Ger.); 19 (Arg.); 10 (Belg.); 52 (Br central); 21 (Br south); 57 (Br north); 7 (Adm. Gen.); 1 Chile; 39 (China); 4 (Ceylon); 13 (Colombia); 11 (Cuba-AC); 12 (USA); 2 (GB-Irl); 14 (Iberv.); 2 (Italy ); 4 (Leon ); 1 (Levante); 6 (Levis); 26 (Mexico); 4 (Norte); 1 (NZ);	324



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	WORKING IN THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	ON MISSION OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	TOTAL
Italy	160	72 (Arg.); 26 (Br central); 2 (Br south); 2 Br north); 12 (Adm. Gen.); 8 (Chile); 1 (Ceylon); 1 (USA); 2 (Mexico); 2 (NDH); 1 (NZ); 23 (Peru).	152
Germany	123	15 (South Africa); 2 (Arg.); 1 (Bcps); 4 (Belg.); 5 (Br Central); 41 (Br South); 6 (Br North); 1 (Chile); 16 (China); 6 (NZ); 30 (Urug.)...	151
Portugal		3 (Br central); 3 (Br south); 96 (Br north)	102
Switzerland		6 (Ger.); 1 (Cuba-AC); 4 (USA); 4 (Iberville); 1 (Levante); 2 (Levis); 1 (Mexico); 18 (NDH); 2 (NZ); 20 (SGL).	59
England Scotland Ireland	32+84+75 = 191	4 (South Africa); 1 (Br Central); 5 (NSW); 3 (NZ) 7 (South Africa); 1 (Belg.); 2 (USA); 6 (NSW); 1 (NZ); 1 (SGL); 1 (S.E) 8 (South Africa); 1 (Belg.); 5 (China); 2 (Ceylon); 1 (USA);	49
Yugoslavia Czechoslovakia Hungary	0	1 (Adm. Gen.); 1 (Cuba-AC); 1 (NDH); 2 (Var.E) 1 (Ger.); 1 Br South); 1 (Br north); 2 (Adm. Gen.); 1 (USA); 8 (SGL); 2 (Var. E.) 2 (Adm. Gen.); 3 (China); 3 (SGL); 1 (S-E); 7 (Var.E)	37
Belgium	332	1 (South Africa); 1 (Ger.); 6 (Bcps); 1 (Adm. Gen.); 10 (Belg. Congo)	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.946</b>		<b>1.563</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the *Bulletins of the Institute* in 1950.

The list of the main missionary countries of the congregation between 1883 and 1950, then, as noted above, presents a very different geographical spread to that of apostolic works. Some countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, and Central Europe had more Brothers outside the country than inside. In contrast, the strength of a number of Provinces in South America was in part artificial since at that stage they relied on missionaries from outside and the question could therefore be posed as to the Provinces' degree of maturity.

## Where things stood in 1967

The Cold War was the ever-present backdrop in the period 1950 – 1967 but there were no more “world” wars. It was an era of global prosperity. Three huge waves of social change, however, came together in a short period with destabilising consequences. Between 1950 and 1960 there was rapid and massive decolonisation; the Second Vatican Council, which took place from 1962 to 1965, radically

changed the relationship of Catholicism to the world; and there was political and social upheaval at the end of the 1960s. In a way, this period was the end of a shortened 20th century (1914 – 1967), a century of global wars and of freeing the world from European dominance and Judaeo-Christian culture.

In preparation for the General Chapter, Bulletin<sup>20</sup> N° 26 took stock of where things were in the Institute. This was just after the Council but before its profound effects had been felt, and also before the social and cultural turmoil of 1968. It was like a snapshot of the distribution of Brothers by continent distinguishing between Brothers born in the country and those who were resident.

In Marist Africa, founded generally later in the century, it is no surprise to see that in nearly all countries foreign-born Brothers make up between 80 and 100%. Nevertheless, smaller proportions are evident in countries where the Brothers had been present for a longer period. Madagascar (1911) had only 23% expatriate Brothers and Nigeria 16% owing to the fusion with the Brothers of St Peter Claver. In contrast, South Africa, although by then an older Province, still had 53% foreign-born Brothers; and Congo Kinshasa, founded in 1911, 77%, its recruitment having been blocked by order from Rome and where the experience of decolonisation had been particularly violent. Almost all these countries were “mission territories” because they had not attained their maturity even if some of them were nearing this. The countries of origin of these foreign Brothers included Belgium, Canada, Portugal – Brazil, France, the Work of St Francis Xavier (Italians, Spaniards), the British Isles, Ireland.

<b>FOREIGN AND LOCAL BROTHERS IN AFRICA (1967)</b>			
<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>% OF EXPATRIATE BROTHERS</b>	<b>LOCAL BROTHERS WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY</b>
Nigeria	15	16	
Madagascar	59	23	
Rwanda	14	42	
South Africa	93	53	
Mozambique	27	59	
Congo (Kinshasa)	77	77	
Cameroon	10	80	
Zambia	15	80	
Morocco	6	83	
Malawi	39	84	
Rhodesia	41	90	
Angola	13	92	
Central Africa	18	94	
Algeria	8	100	
Congo Brazza	2	100	
<b>Total</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>71.5%</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 27, N°206, April 1967 p. 506-507.

<sup>20</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXVII, N° 206 April 1967, p. 506-507.

The situation in Latin America was not all that different for some countries where foundations had been made recently like Bolivia (1956) and Ecuador (1957) or between the two world wars. Among countries founded before 1914, it is surprising to note that in Argentina 65% were still foreign-born. The strength of numbers, however, and the small proportion of foreign-born Brothers showed that the Provinces of Colombia, Mexico and Brazil had reached maturity. They were even capable of spreading out around them in Central America and even to the other side of the Atlantic where Brazil and Portugal made a foundation in Angola. Latin America, then, presented a mixed picture owing to the varied lengths of time that the Brothers had been established and to difficulties in recruiting that varied from country to country, as well as weak perseverance. For some Provinces outside support remained indispensable.

In North America the profile was clearer. Not only were there almost zero foreign-born Brothers but there were a number of Canadian and American Brothers working overseas. These two countries, then, had become significant players in the spread of the Institute around the world.

<b>FOREIGN AND LOCAL BROTHERS IN THE AMERICAN PROVINCES (1967)</b>			
<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>% OF EXPATRIATE BROTHERS</b>	<b>LOCAL BROTHERS WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY</b>
Canada	696	0	84 (12 %)
United States	644	0	26 ( 4 %)
Mexico	563	0	47 ( 8 %)
Colombia	224	9	
Brazil	1220	12	
Costa Rica	4	50	
Argentina	349	65	
Chile	181	80	
El Salvador	80	81	
Puerto Rico	13	84	
Peru	149	86	
Guatemala	61	90	
Uruguay	64	90	
Bolivia	14	100	
Ecuador	41	100	
Venezuela	92	100	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.395</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>147 (3,3 %)</b>

*Source: Bulletin of the Institute, T. 27, N°206, April 1967 p. 506-507.*

The Provinces of Europe showed a report on Brothers resident and local Brothers that was still very positive. Obviously these figures did not signify dynamism but rather suggested a period of expansion coming to a close.

<b>FOREIGN AND LOCAL BROTHERS IN THE PROVINCES OF EUROPE (1967)</b>				
<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>WORKING IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY</b>	<b>FOREIGN-BORN</b>	<b>WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY</b>
Germany	274	152		122
Belgium	293	222		71
Spain	2614	1766		848
France	1078	946		132
Great Britain <sup>21</sup>	142	119		23
Greece	27	29	2	
Holland	13	23	10	
Ireland	112	74		38
Italy	278	184		94
Liechtenstein	0	16	16	
Portugal	109	71		37
Switzerland	47	34		13
Czechoslovakia	12	0		
Hungary	11	0		
Yugoslavia	7	0		
Poland	4	0		
Luxembourg	3	0		
Austria	2	0		
Denmark	2	0		
Albania	1	0		
Monaco	1	0		
Russia	1	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,031</b>	<b>3,636</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1,378 (37%)</b>

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 27, N°206, April 1967 p. 506-507.

Asia was the weakest continent. Ceylon had succeeded in terms of real but modest growth. China had been forced to re-imagine its future but had, it is true, a good number of Chinese Brothers. But it was to be a 'peripheral' China Province, based in the diaspora of Chinese communities, while dozens of their Brothers remained cut off in communist-controlled areas. Efforts to found the Brothers in Japan had proved difficult. There had been a single exception, the rapid growth in the

<sup>21</sup> England and Scotland.

Philippines founded relatively late (1948) by American Brothers. In the Middle East, the Province of Constantinople had disappeared and there was but a handful of local Brothers in Lebanon and Syria.

<b>FOREIGN AND LOCAL BROTHERS IN THE PROVINCES OF ASIA (1967)</b>			
COUNTRY	LOCAL BROTHERS	% FOREIGN-BORN	BROTHERS WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY
Ceylon	34	17	
China	42		52
Formosa	3	100	
Hong Kong	21	95	
Japan	20	95	
Lebanon	44	90	
Malaysia	20	55	
Pakistan	2	100	
Philippines	54	46	
Sarawak	7	100	
Singapore	15	100	
Syria	10	30	
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>52 (19%)</b>

*Source: Bulletin of the Institute, T. 27, N°206, April 1967 p. 506-507.*

In Oceania, Australia and New Zealand had for a long time been the bases for expansion into the surrounding islands. New Caledonia was sinking slowly, unable to survive without the constant support of French Brothers.

<b>FOREIGN AND LOCAL BROTHERS IN THE PROVINCES OF OCEANIA (1967)</b>			
COUNTRY	LOCAL BROTHERS	% FOREIGN-BORN	BROTHERS WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY
Australia	599	1.6	
New Zealand	200 <sup>22</sup>		
Fiji	19	42	
N. Caledonia	39	74	
N. Guinea	5	40	
Solomon Islands	16	50	
Samoa	20	80	
<b>Total</b>	<b>898 aprox</b>		

*Source: Bulletin of the Institute, T. 27, N°206, April 1967 p. 506-507.*

<sup>22</sup> Overlooked in the statistics.

The main contrast, then, with the 1950 summary was the emergence of sub-Saharan Africa. For the rest, the trends in evidence for a long time previously were confirmed. There were striking successes in North America and in Oceania; an uneven situation in Latin America and western Europe. Central Europe was closed. The Middle East had seen only a limited expansion and South-East Asia had been reduced to some scattered foundations on the edge of mainland China.

The 1968 statistics were eloquent on this matter:

STATISTICS 4 - PRESENCE OF THE BROTHERS BY CONTINENT		
Africa:	497	professed Brothers
Americas:	4.371	professed Brothers
Asia:	272	professed Brothers
Europe:	3.636	professed Brothers
Oceania:	928	professed Brothers
Source: <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> , T. 27, N°206, April 1967 p. 506-507.		

Is it possible to develop some sort of theory to explain these successes and failures? One could point to the ambiguity around mission and colonisation which prevented Marist works from getting fully established in many countries such as the Middle East or China. But more often political events and wars played a decisive role, notably in hindering the Brothers and their works from becoming integrating into the local culture. The case of China can be taken as typical in this regard.

In the end, wherever the Institute had succeeded in taking root it was because it had been among populations with a western and Christian culture. There the Brothers could quite easily build a working relationship with the people, taking the time needed, making a large enough commitment of personnel, and being flexible enough to assimilate into the local culture. In principle, the Institute was quite ill-prepared to work in with local populations since its official rule was one of international uniformity, based on European culture and more specifically French culture. What is astonishing is that the Institute succeeded so well, probably because the Brothers adopted a practical and intuitive manner in their approach to local cultures. They just went about living in new cultures, without theorising about what they were doing.

## **Conclusion: The changing face of Christianity and mission everywhere**

Three moments of the Institute's 'going out on mission' can be postulated, at least in how this was understood. Before 1914, there was a close connection between being promoters of one's home culture and mission; at the same time, mis-

sion was understood as leaving one's homeland independent of the destination. In a second moment, missionaries came from many places; also, the character of the country of destination was taken into account in the definition of mission. After 1946, the third moment, mission was clearly defined by identifying missionary territory as "pagan". Nevertheless the notion of a 'pagan country' became blurred as the notion of a 'Christian country' began to break down. From 1960 onwards, Christians and pagans were everywhere. Mission no longer referred to clearly defined geographical places since the history of the 20th century was characterised by two opposing trends: the deconstruction of traditional Christianity and the expansion of the Church throughout the whole world. This was the new reality that the Vatican Council attempted to address, and the Institute would do the same.





## 4.

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# THE TIME OF SECULARISATION. FROM A CANONICAL CONCEPT TO A GENERAL CULTURE

In Church tradition secularisation has a precise canonical meaning –“reducing what is in the realm of religion to the profane”. What was thought of as being outside the secular realm is now within it. When it suppressed congregations in 1903, the government of France, in the eyes of Catholics, was intruding into a domain that was not properly theirs.

Since then, the concept of secularisation has broadened considerably and now designates a socio-cultural trend that affects the whole world. The Institute has lived with such secularisation throughout the whole of its history, given that Fr Champagnat himself had founded his work to counter the de-christianising influence of the revolution. Moreover, people forget easily that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Brothers in France were reduced to working in non-government schools, under the control of committees who were Catholic but nonetheless composed of lay people and priests. Respecting the religious character of the Brothers was often not high on their agenda. What they wanted were teachers, nothing more. The radical secularisation of 1903 was then a follow-up to the rampant secularisation associated with the lay laws of 1881-86.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century state-enforced secularisation, whether based on the French model or not, was to be repeated in Mexico, Spain, Turkey, Germany and other countries. Whole societies were to disentangle themselves from their religious roots. Secularisation was, then, a many-sided phenomenon - sometimes internal to Catholicism, often driven by the state, and most commonly socio-cultural in character. It was to intensify as result of the two world wars in which the Brothers were to be involved whether they wanted to or not. Through the displacement and confusion of populations as well as the horrors they provoked, these wars contributed to calling the very notion of civilisation into question.

Although intellectually poorly armed to understand such terribly destabilising events, the Institute proved itself to be astonishingly capable of surviving in the long term. In the end, it was during a relatively peaceful period that its resistance would seem least strong. It was as if the secularisation resulting from external and violent events such as wars and persecutions had strengthened the Institute, while

socio-cultural secularisation had weakened it from the inside. It is not appropriate, then, to treat the secularisation that occurred in France as a special case but to include it as part of a much wider and more complex phenomenon.

## **The problem of secularisation in France from 1907 to 1940**

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The 1907 Chapter resulting from the death of Rev Br Théophile took up the question of secularisation that was dealt with at length in Volume 1. It condemned secularised Brothers to a long period of marginalisation. In practical terms it recognised three categories of secularised Brothers:

*Those who no longer have any connection with the congregation other than when they request dispensation from their vows.*

*Those who hold that they are still part of the congregation because they are in a job that obedience entrusted to them or when they hand over from time to time a generally small sum of money, but who do not attend annual retreats despite being invited and who themselves administer the money they earn without accounting for it as they should.*

*Those faithful secularised Brothers who follow what the Superiors tell them.*

The secularised Brothers in the first two categories were, then, to be invited to clarify their position and, in the case of refusal, Rome was to be approached to confirm their dismissal. The process proved lengthy since in 1911 the General Council<sup>23</sup> was still talking about “recalcitrant secularised Brothers”. The Brothers of the third category were praised for their courage as “poor victims of an iniquitous law, cast out, and transformed into lay people in the midst of a perverse world”.<sup>24</sup> Their Provincials were to visit them often, re-establish community life as soon as possible; organise recollections and retreats; control the length of holidays taken, family visits, and smoking; “absolutely forbid any commercial enterprise or being agents for businesses; ensure that cameras and bicycles disappeared; (...) hold out against the introduction of lay teachers in our schools”; refuse to authorise Brothers to join trade unions, co-operatives etc.; but foster gatherings with other Brothers living nearby.<sup>25</sup> Finally, they were to block teacher appointments made by local committees unless these committees were only carrying out what the Provincial had decided.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Délibérations du conseil general, 1909-1913*, p. 140, 3/11/1911

<sup>24</sup> Chapter of 1907

<sup>25</sup> Almost everywhere teachers’ unions were starting up to defend the profession of ‘non-government’ teachers against threats coming from the monopoly that the government was still planning. These teachers wanted to obtain a decent minimum salary from their employers (committees, regional or local education departments, benefactors, Parish Priests). They also had to pay into pension schemes and health insurance. In the Loire, many Marist Brothers belonged to the union of non-government teachers which had high hopes for reorganising the non-government education sector. The diocesan authorities were to give a structured response to the aspirations for independence around 1910.

<sup>26</sup> The dioceses created diocesan Catholic education offices, who wanted to treat all non-government teachers as lay teachers whom they could appoint and change without any consideration of their background or their religious Superiors.

Such a program could hardly be effected in the short term but showed the new style of life of the secularised Brothers and the fear of Superiors at seeing their Brothers become simply lay people, if not in their own eyes then at least in the eyes of Church authorities and the general Catholic population.

## The opinion of non-secularised Brothers

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The spirit of independence of some secularised Brothers was to be deplored. The annalist of the Province of Varennes wrote the following condemnation in 1907:

*The staff (of the school at Charolles), a number of them at least, instead of living as fervent religious, had difficulty even in living as good Christians, frequenting cafés, even theatres on occasion, coming home very late, riding around the streets on bikes, engaging in imprudent behaviour such as to scandalise upright people and to leave themselves open to criticism. .. What happened at Charolles happened alas in many other houses. The annalist owes it to the truth ... to acknowledge that they ended up taking hold of themselves and restarting some religious exercises, but it took a long time.*<sup>27</sup>

The opinions on secularisation moderated over time as shown in a kind of assessment made in 1944:<sup>28</sup>

*When 1903 came around the Brothers had to quickly take on the appearance of people of the world. Blazers and straw boaters quickly changed their looks. Then moustaches and beards appeared. They had to go out with friends at least from time to time to have something to eat and drink in a café. During the holidays it was dangerous to remain in the monastery, so they sometimes went to their families for an extended break.*

*If this behaviour scandalises our successors,<sup>29</sup> it should suffice by way of reply to hope that they never have to undergo the trial of secularisation and that, if it lasts 39 years, ask them to remain faithful to their vocation, save their apostolic works, maintain Juniorates and Novitiates during such a period.*

## Circulars

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Circulars never addressed secularisation openly but made plenty of allusions to it. As far back as 1904, the critiques of Br Théophane were concise:<sup>30</sup>

*Those who know the cost of their vocation are those who (...) consent to make the greatest sacrifices. They take care to be among the number of Brothers who*

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<sup>27</sup> Dossier 212/2, Charolles.

<sup>28</sup> File St Genis-Laval, dossier "maisons fermées"; François.

<sup>29</sup> He had just spoken about certain examples of the independence of the secularised Brothers.

<sup>30</sup> *Circulars*, T. 10 p. 413-414, Circular of 19/3/1904.

keep themselves within strict limits through renunciation and self-denial as Our Lord demands, (...) they are not looking for a placement of their own choice, nor one country rather than another.

Speaking about regularity the same Circular continues:

*Let everyone guard against the error that concessions must be made to modern times and modifications and allowances made in the practice of the Rule and the evangelical counsels. The Gospel has not changed and never will.*

Br Stratonique maintained the same tone:

*There is no other way (than the Rules and Constitutions) to arrive at perfection, to the holiness obliged by our vocation. (...) Perhaps some will be tempted to say, "Today's circumstances have changed many things; this should be taken into account". Undoubtedly difficulties have increased in some regions but they are only temporary situations, let us hope, that the Good Lord will cause to pass in his mercy. The underlying principle is and will always remain the same, because God's holy will does not vary.<sup>31</sup>*

Many similar texts could be found showing that the 1903 event posed a crucial question in practice, and not just for the secularised Brothers: what were the limits in adapting to the world? The same question was coming up also in foreign lands where customs originating in France were not appropriate.

At the same time the Superiors who travelled overseas a lot, were in amazement at the possibilities opening up:

*What an immense field of action on offer to our zeal! What good to be done and how easily achieved, I could say. This is what we have realised on our long trip around the world. It gave us great satisfaction to see everywhere (apart from a single island in the Pacific<sup>32</sup>) that works of evangelisation, teaching and charity enjoyed complete freedom of action. Even in countries under the control of Protestants, these works had the protection of the public authorities.<sup>33</sup>*

This choice had, moreover, a theological flavour: the struggle against Evil on a worldwide scale:

*If ... we take into consideration the increasingly determined and universal efforts of Satan and his minions to de-christianise peoples by de-christianising the schools, how could we not be roused to recruit plenty of fine soldiers to struggle against this diabolical campaign?<sup>34</sup>*

Some Brothers, then, the Superiors included, were embracing mission beyond the confined and dangerous milieu of France. But was not this choice also a stubborn refusal to recognise France as mission territory despite clear signs of aggressive secularisation?

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<sup>31</sup> *Circulars*, T. 11 p. 486, Circular of 2/2/1911.

<sup>32</sup> New Caledonia was subject to anti-clerical policies.

<sup>33</sup> *Circulars*, T. 11 p. 201, Circular of 30/12/1907.

<sup>34</sup> *Circulars*, T. 11 p. 427, Circular of 21/11/1909.

## The number of secularised Brothers:

Given the very fluid situation over a number of years, the statistics should be read with a degree of caution. One headcount of secularised Brothers in 1906 was 1.113.<sup>35</sup> The table below presents the main statistics related to secularisation between 1906 and 1920.

NUMERICAL EVOLUTION OF SECULARISED BROTHERS BETWEEN 1906 AND 1920								
	ST PAUL	ND HERMITAGE	VARENNES	LACABANE	BEAUCAMPS	ST GENIS-LAVAL	AUBENAS	TOTAL
1906. Secularised teaching	116	105	155	46	116	151	151	840
1906. Varios situations			9	6		20	4	39
1906, Without permission		40						40
1906. With permission		22						22
1906. Retired	49	48	32	15	?	80	53	279
1913. Secularised teaching	98	168	87 (1916)	42 (1910)		159 (1914)	134 (1914)	688
Secularised conscripted	17	46	32	17	18	35	32	197
Total of secularised	78	151	66	37	72	145	117	664
60-69	24	41	15	5	14	35	31	176
70-79	17	18	9	3	6	16	17	84
>80	2	2				1	5	10
% > 60	52.5	40.3	36.3	21.6	29.1	35.1	45.3	

Source: Summary made by Br André Lanfrey from various sources.

In 1906 there were more or less a thousand secularised Brothers. Their number went down by a third by 1920 while their average age increased, especially in the Provinces of Aubenas and Saint Paul which seemed to have committed themselves more than the other Provinces to the international scene.

<sup>35</sup> 'Statistics' file, dossier 1906, (ex 55189).

## Requests for assistance by secularised Brothers

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Before 1914 the General Council authorised practically no new secularisations despite calls from the Provincials of France. Br Bassianus (Provincial of Aubenas) communicated on 20 June 1913 the state of his District as a result of deaths, Brothers no longer able to teach and others overworked:<sup>36</sup>

*These are intolerable situations that discourage the Brothers as well as compromise their health. (...) I pray most sincerely that the General Administration take serious steps to come to the aid of this part of the family which still counts good and very faithful servants in its number, fully devoted to our works. This would be encouraging to our Brothers who feel abandoned, and would motivate the local clergy to be more welcoming and better disposed to our efforts to recruit.*

In 1914, he went further:

*I want to express the hope that our venerable major superiors organise an on-going turnover in personnel between the various districts of the same Province. (...) )<sup>37</sup>. If this hope comes true, a new courage will be born in our Brothers. We will retain the esteem and sympathy of the Bishops, clergy and local populations who are doing everything possible to keep their works going in France, and recruitment, which sadly we see dropping off from year to year, will rebound more abundantly because the clergy will take a greater interest.*

The other Provincials made similar proposals and the General Council was not deaf to these appeals in as much as they wanted to keep France as a reservoir of vocations. This led to the decision of 16 March 1914<sup>38</sup> that provided for the secularisation of some Brothers “in order to maintain or found some schools in certain regions of France that were fertile in good vocations”.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, on 29 June the Council refused the creation of a special Novitiate for those who would work in France because of the intransigent position of various Church Councillors.<sup>40</sup>

*1. A religious is someone vowed to God for life without hope of returning to the world (...) When, as is the case of your Brothers, he is vowed to the apostolate, his apostolate is subordinate to his religious vocation; the one follows the other and does not condition it (...) If, hypothetically, a conflict should arise between the two, the apostolate must give way.*

The position adopted in 1907, then, involved a strange contradiction. France was to furnish vocations for the apostolate across the world without benefiting from any help itself.

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<sup>36</sup> *Délibérations du conseil general*, (1909-1913) p. 194 and 1913-1919 p. 19. One authorisation in 1909 one refusal in 1912 and three in 1914.

<sup>37</sup> File Aubenas, dossier AUB 63162.

<sup>38</sup> *Délibérations du conseil general*, 1913-1919, p. 31.

<sup>39</sup> 15 May 1914 was the first application of this new attitude: the Provincial of Saint-Paul was authorised to place two Brothers in a school run by secularised Brothers, *ibid.* p. 47

<sup>40</sup> Dossier Sécularisation. Letter of R. Parayre, Professor of Law at the Catholic University of Lyons to the Br Procurator General.

## A delayed rebalancing at the 1920 Chapter

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The Commission on Secularisation, composed of secularised Brothers, put its finger on this contradiction.<sup>41</sup>

*If we abandon our homeland, vocations will become rare, either because parents will create difficulties for allowing their children to leave for distant places or especially because the pastors of souls will direct children to congregations serving in France.*

The Commission also produced a letter written by a non-secularised Brother, Br Joseph Firmin Lepetitgaland, who had visited the schools in France and was full of praise for the regularity and religious spirit that he found and who condemned any unfavourable attitude towards secularised Brothers:

*The number of Brothers lucky enough to wear the soutane and who I heard speak of the dedication of our persecuted Brothers is small. On the contrary, how many times did I not hear them speak ill of and slander these Brothers?*

France was thus to cease being a forbidden zone but it was well understood that “the means of maintaining our works in France can be reduced to one, the practice of the Rule”, with the exception of the soutane. It was under these conditions that the Chapter decided by a vote of 49 to 12, to maintain the works in France. This did not prevent the continuance of the ruling of 1907 that “Brothers in regular communities are not authorised to live as secularised Brothers without the permission of the General Council.”

Even if the 1920 Chapter had decided to lift the ban on secularisation, the Institute was torn between works at home and taking up works overseas. Such was the thinking behind what Br Diogène wrote in 1921:<sup>42</sup>

*Dear Canon,*

*Last April, on the occasion of our General Chapter, we informed you in all sincerity of the possibility of our reinforcing the staff of our schools in France<sup>43</sup> and consequently our willingness to accept at least one of the schools that you were intent on offering us. (...)*

*Our distant Provinces on whom we were counting for this reinforcement did a serious evaluation of their own needs (which are very real indeed). On the other hand, we had to deal with Bishops who had welcomed us generously in times of hardship and who are now not willing for us to abandon the schools established in their dioceses. The end result is that the situation of our schools in France cannot be much improved.*

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<sup>41</sup> Brs Elie-Marie, Marie-Charles, Marie-Victoric, Bassianus, Melchior, Stanislas, Joseph-Philippe.

<sup>42</sup> Administrative letter N° 15159 (volume 21) of 14/2/1921 to the Vicar General of Quimper (Bretagne) requesting Brothers.

<sup>43</sup> Administrative Letter 15112. – referenced by the editor

With no priority being given to the French Provinces, most of the French Brothers who were members of overseas Provinces (Constantinople, Syria, Mexico, Brazil, China ...) headed off again, recalled by their Superiors under pressure to resume works that had been abandoned during the Great War and to reinforce those that had remained open. Moreover, getting candidates to Novitiates set up in Italy posed the problem of crossing the border and families were reluctant for their children to leave their homeland. For this reason, Juniorates were re-established in France soon after the war.

## **Approaches made to the French government**

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Before 1914 the Superiors had hoped at one time to improve the situation of the secularised Brothers by negotiating with the French government. They had reason to hope since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was starting to get concerned at the lessening of French influence as a result of the forced exile of the congregations. Correspondence from 1913-1914 gives evidence of a campaign being mounted to gain the authorisation of Novitiates for missionary congregations.<sup>44</sup> Our Superiors were trying to capitalise on this.

A note from 22 June 1913 presented an overview of the situation between 1904-1912 that was instructive about the Brothers who had remained in the former Provincial houses.<sup>45</sup> But its main purpose was to show how the absence of recruiting in France had changed the relative strength in the congregation towards those from other countries. There were 1,312 French Brothers in 1905 and only 1,152 in 1913. Recruiting was dropping off. In the previous ten years only 58 French candidates had bolstered the numbers compared to 335 from elsewhere.

The note went on to request permission to open Novitiates in four or five regions of France "where the Brothers had previously been well known". Another note of 16 July 1914, just before the war, presented slightly different figures, with 1380 French Brothers working outside the country. Out of 671 religious sent outside of Europe since 1904, 209 had been French and 462 from elsewhere. This time the request was less ambitious, for a single Novitiate at St Genis-Laval.

Obviously the war of 1914-18 halted any further negotiations but a note made on 20 November 1920 took up the issue, up-dating the information and requests from before the war. The schools in the Middle East had collapsed and the number of French Brothers outside Europe was only 1044, i.e. 37% of the total. So the congregation asked to keep the house at St Genis-Laval, the only one that had not been liquidated or sold, as a Novitiate, a mission procure and a rest home for missionaries. At the same time a request was made for setting up three other Novitiates in

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<sup>44</sup> AFM Dossier France 600. There were 435 in 1904, going down to 250 in 1912. Their expenses against the charge of the congregation decreased slowly from 244,000 Francs in 1904 to 137,000.

<sup>45</sup> There was a draft law on the liquidation of congregations with the intention of finally indemnifying the older members of congregations.



the north, centre and the Midi without giving any exact locations. The thinking was to get the Provincial houses back.

The arrival in government of the highly anti-clerical Leftists Bloc in 1924-26 was to delay the sale of the house at St Genis-Laval but the Institute succeeded in buying it back on 20 August 1926. Negotiations with the French government recommenced and on 27 March 1929 the Chamber of Deputies voted to authorise the Society of the Marist Brothers of the Missions.<sup>46</sup> The Senate blocked the legislative process but the government thereafter tolerated the existence of formation houses on French soil. The General Council did not trust the government and kept the Novitiates in Italy and Spain but the Provinces welcomed the Juniors and Scholastics in France itself.

## Provinces without any help from outside

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Between 1920 and 1940, owing to the accumulation of all these problems, the situation of the French Provinces scarcely improved. By the 1932 Chapter, Aubenas and Varennes had lost half of their number through death since 1920; St Genis and the Hermitage one-third.<sup>47</sup> These provinces in difficulty, therefore, made approaches for the return of Brothers who had gone elsewhere. The response was not encouraging, however:

*Br Euphrosin presented the difficulties in recruiting Hispano-Americans and the resulting heavy demand on resources from Spain. Consequently it was up to Spain to help St Paul-Trois-Châteaux. Despite the apparent paradox, the Provincial of Spain complained of a shortage of personnel, and spoke of his trouble in filling leadership roles and the unhappiness of some Brothers at the thought of returning to France. At the end he added that an important support for maintaining our works seemed to be the protection of French ambassadors. He recalled the case of the Brothers in Mexico who were protected more effectively by personnel from the French embassy than by other diplomats.<sup>48</sup>*

Overall, then, it was a refusal. The Provinces of France would have to get by more or less on their own, all the more so since, in the eyes of many Capitulants, the difficulties in France were caused by a lack of regularity:

*It is urgent that, in the Provinces of France, unity be worked at so as to strengthen regular community life: financial administration, through putting all money into the common fund; no Brother is authorised to receive a monthly allowance; permissions for family visits, including their frequency and length; the recitation in community of all the prayers specified in the Rule; banning of bicycles wherever they are not indispensable; normal rising time of 4.30am; official visitations every three years by Brother Assistants.*

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<sup>46</sup> AFM, France 600, dossier 1929, note of Fr. Gonzalve Delsuc O.M.C.. Other congregations benefited from the same authorisation.

<sup>47</sup> Chapter register of 1932, p. 156.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*



**10.** Juniors at Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux. Easter 1936. The Brothers running the Juniorate are in secular dress.

## The official end of secularisation

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After the crushing of France in June 1940, the Vichy government abolished the anti-congregationist legislation (the law of 7 July 1904). The General Council, “blessing God for this happy event”, ordered the Brothers “to again wear our complete religious garb as soon as possible, at the very latest before the start of school in 1941”<sup>49</sup> and to resume all the practices laid down by the Rules. At the very moment the war was leading to an acceleration in secularisation, the way to resolve the problems of the French Provinces, it was thought, was by the Rule and the religious habit.

To sum up, France underwent the process of secularisation at several levels: through the action of an anti-religious State, but also that of a Church in which the Bishops had wanted at one time to employ older religious under their authority, without respecting the fact that they were religious. One of the most pernicious effects of this secularisation was the extreme difficulty of the Institute to adopt a realistic attitude towards the Provinces of France. It was as if their obsession with the Rule and the religious habit, as well as short-term recruiting objectives, had blocked out any other consideration.

Wearing the habit again in 1940 aroused more resignation than enthusiasm, the *moreso* since it came about as a result of a crushing national defeat. Moreover, by that time, the problem of secularisation had long moved from being a concern for one country to touching the whole world in the shape of a violence, and to a degree, never before experienced.

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<sup>49</sup> According to Br Edouard Heck, at the time director of the school at Cluses (Haute-Savoie), when the Brothers started to wear the *soutane* again they were subjected to mockery, even in the Church. In particular, the *rabat* seemed quite ridiculous. In a statement to Br André Lanfrey.

## 5.

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# THE INSTITUTE DURING THE GREAT WAR (August 1914 - November 1918)

The decision to treat the problem of French secularisation only once in this history has brought us to 1940. We will have to take a step backwards to treat war itself as another secularising phenomenon.

The war that broke out in Europe at the beginning of August 1914 had a marked effect on our multinational Institute. At that time there was a large number of French Brothers and several hundred German Brothers. Many Brothers had to return from China, the Americas, the Middle East and elsewhere to bear arms. The organisation of the Institute was seriously disturbed wherever the French Brothers had made up the majority of the Province, such as in France obviously, but also the Ottoman Empire, China, and the formation houses in Italy. It would seem that elsewhere, such as in Spain, Canada, and Mexico, the departure of the French Brothers caused fewer problems due to the strong group of local Brothers in these countries. In short, even though the war was to affect the whole world directly or indirectly, conscription was to concern the Brothers of four countries only, namely France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium.

### Lessening the effects of conscription

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Old Marist records provide little information on the Institute in Germany since the war had isolated them from the rest of the Institute. A recent history of the Province, however, indicates that between 1888 and 1914 there were 456 German Brothers listed on the Institute's register. When war broke out, 213 of them were working in the Province of Beaucamps and 140 on mission, including 100 in south Brazil.<sup>50</sup>

For French Brothers, the conscription decreed on 1 August 1914 meant that, in theory, all men under 40 had to enlist. French religious living outside the country

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<sup>50</sup> From Br Augustin Hendlemeier, 2014. p. 24

could have objected that, condemned to exile by the law of 1901 and the Combes decrees of 1903, they owed no duty to a homeland that had rejected them. Nevertheless, this stance of categorical refusal was undermined by a circular to the heads of the Ministry of the Interior from Louis Malvy on 2 August 1914, suspending the application of the 1901 law against members of congregations.

What this meant in the short term was that a provisional stop was put to the pursuit of those who were falsely secularised and the sale of what remained of property belonging to congregations. But, since 1906, the State had been powerless to prove false secularisations and the circular was to change nothing in the long term. This could be seen in 1924-26 when the Leftist Bloc, led by Edouard Herriot, had the audacity to move once again against the congregations. In the short term, in 1914, the aim of the government was to constitute a "sacred union" of all the French and, as a side-benefit, to get back the exiled religious to serve as cannon fodder.

Administrative letters of the Institute witness to the problems faced and to the strategy adopted by the Superiors to minimise the effects of conscription. A letter of Rev Br Stratonique to the Minister of War, of 6 October 1914,<sup>51</sup> shows that half of the 250 Brothers engaged in the Middle East and China had already been conscripted. Deferred Brothers were threatened with conscription into the auxiliary services. This would have destroyed the thirty six schools still functioning in those countries. He asked therefore that the deferred Brothers be dispensed from military service, and added:

*Their contribution in France would be insignificant; since most of them are far away and communications rare and difficult, it can be presumed that the war would be almost over before they could be brought back.*<sup>52</sup>

Another letter of 10 November 1914 asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the formation houses in Italy not be deprived of their staff. This was granted.<sup>53</sup>

However, from the end of 1914 a large number of Brothers were expelled from the Ottoman Empire which had joined the Central Empires in November 1914. The Institute as a result was to live the opposite experience to 1903, with the personnel from the Provinces of Constantinople and Syria having to be re-integrated into communities in France. "The General Council allowed them to be engaged for the time being in our schools in France."<sup>54</sup> On their behalf, the Superior General wrote to Minister Delcassé asking "that he allow them to accept offers of employment in non-government schools across the country and this without the legal obligation of not using their title or habit as religious." Such a request may appear strange but it was one way of showing a government that was making cynical use of the "sacred union" without making any real concession in regard to anti-clericalism, that they were not being duped by such a stratagem.

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<sup>51</sup> Letter N° 14798. There is some doubt about the date: perhaps 2 September 1914.

<sup>52</sup> This idea of a short war was at the time widespread, including among the military.

<sup>53</sup> See the *Letters* 14880, 14882...

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

The Institute's policy was, then, to keep the greatest number of Brothers possible not caught up with army service so as to maintain the formation structures and works established outside of France. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs seems, by and large, to have agreed with this policy. For its part, the Institute would be able to get some recognition for the services it was rendering. In 1916 the Superiors would draw attention to the fact that 2,600 French Brothers were working outside the country, nearly 600 engaged in the fighting, and 55 already dead in the service of their country.<sup>55</sup>

## Creative action taken by the German Brothers

Some months before war broke out, a Juniorate had been started at Recklinghausen, the first house founded in Germany. It was to be transformed into a military hospital and the Brothers, after a period of training, would become nurses. The hospital, which began to function in 1915, received several thousand wounded, including 3262 between May 1916 and April 1919, especially French and Russian prisoners of war, but also more than 400 British and, in the end, more than 300 Germans.<sup>56</sup>

## Data on those conscripted or killed in the war of 1914-1918



**11.** A group of Brother nurses in Recklinghausen Juniorate during the war (1914-18).  
Bulletin of the Institute, n. 72, 1927, p. 395.

9,281 French religious were conscripted<sup>57</sup> (708 of them Marist Brothers) and 1,517 (16.3%) were killed, including 101 Marist Brothers. The Jesuits alone accounted for 841 conscripted and 163 killed. For the Marist Brothers the most reliable data regarding Brothers involved in the war is to be found in the Acts of the 1920 General Chapter:

*“During the war, we had 1,037 Brothers conscripted; 154 killed or*

<sup>55</sup> Letter 14.926.

<sup>56</sup> Br Augustin Hendlemeier, *The German Brothers in the 1st World War*, Marist Notebooks N° 33.

<sup>57</sup> Christian Sorrel, *La République contre les congrégations*, Cerf, 2003, p. 211.

missing in action; 193 citations for bravery; 140 military crosses; 5 military medals; one Cross of the Legion of Honour and 4 other decorations”<sup>58</sup>

From its stance the Commission on Secularisation noted that, of the 197 secularised Brothers who were conscripted, 180 rejoined the congregation and 12 were killed.

A table entitled, “Marist Brothers soldiers during the 1914-18 war”,<sup>59</sup> gives a detailed overview of the impact of the war on Institute. What is striking is the small number of Brothers who came back from Spain, Canada, the United States and Brazil.<sup>60</sup> The Work of St Francis Xavier was particularly affected because it had so many German and Italian candidates. This table is also a good index of the degree to which the Provinces had become international. This can clearly be seen in the large number of German Brothers in the Province of Beaucamps and of Italian Brothers in the Province of Saint Paul.

MARIST BROTHER SOLDIERS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR										
PROVINCES	CONSCRIPTED						KILLED			
	FRANCE	ITALY	GERMANY	BELGIUM	AUSTRIA	TOTAL	FRANCE	ITALY	GERMANY	TOTAL
St Genis Laval	85	2	5			92	17		2	19
N.D. Hermitage	95	17					112	18		18
St Paul-	49	53				102	10	5		15
Aubenas	45					45	5			5
Beaucamps	49		169	20		238	4		39	43
Varenes	56	10				66	6	1		7
Lacabane	27					27	1			1
The Islands	1					1				
Spain	17					17	1			1
Canada	20					20	2			2
United States	17					17	2			2
Mexico	58					58	15			15
China	32					32	1			1
Constantinople	59		8		16 <sup>61</sup>	83	9		3	2

<sup>58</sup> *La preuve du sang. Le livre d'or du clergé français*, T. II, 1925, a work pointing to the involvement of clergy in the war, talks of the Marist Brothers as having 708 conscripted, 100 killed, 91 wounded (120 minor wounds), 287 citations for bravery, 316 various decorations.

<sup>59</sup> AFM France 600. Undated dossier, folder “Lettres de l’année 1914”

<sup>60</sup> No mention is made of Colombia.

<sup>61</sup> Fourteen Hungarian, one Romanian, one Bulgarian, in the Province of Constantinople..

PROVINCES	CONSCRIPED						KILLED			
	FRANCE	ITALY	GERMANY	BELGIUM	AUSTRIA	TOTAL	FRANCE	ITALY	GERMANY	TOTAL
Syria	58					58	5			5
Brazil Central	11					11	3			3
Brazil South	1					1				
Brazil North	6	1				7				
South Africa	1	1				2				
New Zealand			1			1				
New Caledonia	2					2				
Seychelles	3					3				
St Fr. Xavier	16	5	21			42	2		4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1.037</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>8,4</b>	<b>19,7</b>	<b>1,9</b>	<b>1,5</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30,9</b>	

Source: A.F.M. France 600, undated report.

Indeed, more than 90% of those conscripted and most of the deaths came from eleven Provinces and the Work of St Francis Xavier.<sup>62</sup> The proportion of Brothers conscripted or killed was highest for the Germans. The recent history of the German Brothers indicates 118 out of 180 Brothers were conscripted. Of these, 50 were killed and 54 left the Institute.<sup>63</sup>

Overall the war had little impact on the number of those leaving the Institute. If anything, it slowed these down at first before there were a large number in the years 1920-21. There was not to be the tidal wave that had for a moment been



**12.** German Juniors in the St Francis Xavier Juniorate, recruited by Br Raymond Celestin. May 1911.

<sup>62</sup> The percentage of German Brothers killed is abnormally high. This anomaly is hard to explain but must be related to the fact that some of the German Brothers were from Alsace-Lorraine and may have been counted twice: once as German and once as French.

<sup>63</sup> F. Augustin Hendelmeier, p. 31.



**13.** Veteran Brothers of the former Province of Beaucamps. From left to right: Br Marie-Gervais (seated), Br Laurent (standing), Br Edmond-Paul (standing), Br Adolphe-Louis (seated) and Br Mathurus (standing).

feared.<sup>64</sup> A survey of personal files<sup>65</sup> indicates 93 departures of perpetually professed in 1919, 54 of whom had been soldiers.

## Growing awareness of a long and deadly war

Obviously the first months of the war were particularly confused and it was only slowly that the Institute understood the unexpected character of the event that was unfolding. Only after September 1916 did the Bulletin of the Institute include a special section on "Our Soldiers" that recorded the names of Brothers killed in action. Numbers 37 – 51 included biographies of these Brothers who had died in the war. Their letters were frequently quoted. Mention was rarely made of those who had been wounded or taken prisoner but was always made of those who had been cited for bravery or decorated since this was a good argument to use against the anti-clericals who made out that the Church was not participating as patriotically as it should have been.

INFORMATIN ON MOBILISED BROTHERS FROM THE <i>BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE</i>				
BULLETIN N°	CONSCRIPTED	KILLED	YEAR	COMMENT
36 (1915)	3 a 400	7		Only the names are mentioned
37 (1915)				No new deaths
38 (1915)				No death mentioned
39-40 (sep. 1915)		12 (1914)/10 (1915)	1914 1915	22 deaths since the beginning of the war. Wounded (30...) and half a dozen prisoners

<sup>64</sup>The number of departures of perpetually professed Brothers was 35 in 1914. The average from 1915 to 1918 was only 24. Over the years 1915-1920 the average number of departures per year was 38-39.

<sup>65</sup> Carried out by Br Henri Réocreux.



BULLETIN N°	CONSCRIPTED	KILLED	YEAR	COMMENT
41 (nov.1915)		8	1915	11 wounded
42 (1916)		10	1915	
43 (1916)		4		1 killed in 1914, 1 at an unknown date, 2 in 1916
44 (1916)		6	1916	
45 (sept. 1916)		8	1916	Mentioned a total of 62 Brothers killed. (58 listed)
46 (nov. 1916)		4	1916	
47 (marzo 1917)		9	1916 1917	One killed in 1916; the others in 1917. Mentioned a total of 85 killed. (84 listed)
49 (dic. 1917)	850	15	1917	
50 (1918)		6	1918	
51 (1918)		13	1918	
52 (1918)		10	1918	Mentioned a total of 145 Brothers killed.(128 listed)

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute.*

## Dissident Brothers

The efforts of Superiors to minimise the effects of conscription were often successful. Such was the case of Br Leonidas, born 25 February 1886 and who left for Mexico on 5 August 1902, i.e. before the call-up age.<sup>66</sup> He was to be dispensed from any military obligation by the Embassy of France in 1915.<sup>67</sup> In fact, there were two distinct phases in the policy of the French government. At the outset of the war, there was an order of general conscription, undoubtedly linked to the idea of a conflict in which all the forces were to be thrown into battle at once. Then, with the conflict going on and on, they became more discerning, with the development of “specialised roles” in industry or all sorts of positions judged useful for the production of goods or propaganda.

Through circumstances such as distance or difficulties in communication or more deliberately, a certain number of French Brothers called up by the authorities did not obey and thus were found to be dissident. This problem was to be especially embarrassing around 1920-25 when the Superiors were seeking authorisation from the government for the opening of Novitiates in France for their overseas works.

<sup>66</sup> Young people who had settled overseas were dispensed from military service if they had not been home for ten years.

<sup>67</sup> Br Gabriel Michel. *Nos supérieurs. F. Léonida*, General House, Rome, 1976, p. 36-37.

The archives of the Marist Brothers have kept a report prepared by Br Joseph Prosper<sup>68</sup> (January – February 1925) that gave an account of his meeting with military officers and politicians over the dissidence of some Brothers as had been particularly the case in Brazil.<sup>69</sup> In his handwritten history of the Institute, Br Marie-Nicet provided an insight into the dissidence of Brothers. This text is all the more precious since he had been a dissident himself.<sup>70</sup>

*In the new Provinces such as China, South Africa, Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico, which were made up almost exclusively of “young Brothers”, the departure en masse of the conscripted was going to have a fatal effect on our works. On this occasion, given the exceptional circumstances, the Consul in Rio was not able to simply say to the Brothers, “Stay”, but made this judicious observation, “The Germans are staying. If you leave, they will take your place.” It was intelligent and clear in its meaning: Intelligenti pauca!*

*Soon afterwards, Senator Baudin, on tour to the countries of Latin America, exclaimed, “What! You are now going to abandon these magnificent works which do honour to France? It would be a crime or else a great act of stupidity. Don’t give up what you already have for something far less certain!”*

*The Superiors, however, remained perplexed. It is sometimes more difficult to know what is to be done than to do it. It is undoubtedly true that “It is better to serve one’s country through making friends than through killing its enemies.” But the order to mobilise included everyone. The families of dissidents would be dishonoured, so to speak. And what if they were to be extradited?*

*We should also recall that the biggest number of expatriates caught up in the conscription had themselves been expatriated victims of the persecution under Combes, placed outside the law after repeated harassment, and struck off the list of citizens... It was clear that what had happened dispensed them from going to serve a bad mother that had repudiated them.*

*The Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil, when consulted by the Brother Provincials of Central Brazil, had much to say about this. If, at the very least, the sectarians who are persecuting you were honest pagans, they would abolish the laws directed at religious in this tragic hour so that you could return as directed to your homeland and there bravely fulfil your military duties. But it does not make any sense for you*

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<sup>68</sup> AFM, France 600, dossier 1918. A 1914 dossier listed fifty-six French ‘dissidents’ in central Brazil and twenty-three in south Brazil.

<sup>69</sup> In *“Vingt ans de Brésil (1897-1917)”*, which gave an account of the origins of the Province of Central Brazil, Br Adorator spoke in veiled terms (p. 327-328) of the polemic among the Brothers “in the generalised frenzy” at the start of the war, deploring the fact that some had abandoned “positions they should have held on to” but thanking God for having kept the Province on the right road.

<sup>70</sup> Br Marie-Nicet, *Histoire de l’Institut* (handwritten), Volume VI a, Ch. XI p. 354.

<sup>71</sup> *“Vingt ans de Brésil”*, (p. 329-336) has a lengthy description of the visit of the Senator in April-May 1915 who became aware of the importance of the French works in Brazil and visited the Marist College of St Joseph’s in Rio. Br Adorator did not quote these words, however.

*to return, clandestinely, so to speak, into a country that did not want your services and that treated you unlawfully.<sup>72</sup> All the more so since you are carrying out work here in America which is not only humanitarian but also wonderfully patriotic. You are making France loved and esteemed, the same France that others are trying to malign.*

Here we have all the arguments for and against returning to France that Brothers struggled with in various places but that seemed to have had an exceptional weight in Brazil where weak local recruitment threatened the schools more than elsewhere. Another factor was the presence of many German Brothers in the south. The final decision taken by the Superiors can be summed up in three points:

- 1° *Refrain from arguing in public (i.e. in community) about this burning question.*
- 2° *Let those go who insist on leaving.*
- 3° *Invite those who are seeking advice to stay.*

Br Marie-Nicet also detailed the risk of extradition which at that time was not purely theoretical since it was difficult to foresee the future policies of the host countries towards one or other camp. Moreover, in Mexico, the hostile attitude of the government had forced fifty nine Brothers to return to France.<sup>73</sup> In contrast, the countries of North America and the British Empire offered great security, hence the small number of Brothers who returned from there, apart from special arrangements.<sup>74</sup> The young Germans, who were quite numerous in Belgium (80 Novices and postulants, 140 Juniors<sup>75</sup>), were driven to the Dutch border at the start of the war to return to Germany. The German and Hungarian Novices in Italy were transferred to Fribourg in Switzerland.

So resistance to conscription was larger than indicated by the example of Brazil but this seems to have been the only case that caused a problem, undoubtedly less the result of the number of dissident Brothers than of a letter from a Provincial sent to the French authorities probably to justify the dissidence based on the above arguments.<sup>76</sup> Thanks to this letter, only nineteen Brothers were to return from Brazil, of whom three were killed. In 1929 the matter seems to have been regularised politically but the dissident Brothers, like Br Marie-Nicet, were not able to return to France.

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<sup>72</sup> This statement is helpful in understanding the demands of the Superiors in regard to the wearing of soutane spoken about above.

<sup>73</sup> Br Gabriel Michel, *Nos supérieurs. F. Léonida*, General House, Rome, 1976, p. 35.

<sup>74</sup> No French Brother was to return from Colombia.

<sup>75</sup> Br Augustin Hendlmeier, "The Beginning of the German Marist Province", in *Marist Notebooks* N° 27, p. 68.

<sup>76</sup> Br Joseph Prosper was to emphasise that it was not signed and therefore was of no legal value.

## France and international opinion

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“The Germans stayed where they were,” said Br Marie-Nicet speaking of Brazil. These few words merit some explanation. Indeed, the 1905 military law imposed two years of military service on all French men. The idea of sending priests and religious to military service was shocking enough for many countries; but to impose armed service on them and not to quarantine them in auxiliary services (e.g. chaplaincies or medical support) appeared to be anti-clerical provocation. So, the rest of the world saw France as a country that had not shown a minimum of decency towards the Church and particularly towards its missionaries.

In 1917 the director of the Propagation of the Faith in New York indicated that “the iniquity committed by the French government in forcing priests to bear arms” had alienated American Catholics. He criticised those priests who had apparently left their missions without seeking “to be exempted from a bad law, made out of hatred of religion”.<sup>77</sup> In the same way, a missionary Bishop in Korea<sup>78</sup> reported that in the eyes of the Protestants:

*France cannot speak of itself as a Catholic country since, contrary to the rules of the Church, it has imposed armed service on all clergy. We must, they said, hope for Germany to prevail as it is a much more Christian nation than France.*

So, the argument put forward by Br Marie-Nicet and many others could be held to be eminently Christian and patriotic.

## Patriotism and inculturation

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Such arguments took place in many congregations<sup>79</sup>. The strong feeling of patriotism among the Brothers was counter-balanced by a violent resentment and a desire to serve the homeland in a more peaceful way, as shown in the testimony of Br Marie-Nicet. Also, the Brothers had a new homeland that deserved their attention more than their old one. They had adapted to the local culture and this attachment to their adopted country and Province comes through frequently in the letters and biographies of the Brothers who became soldiers.

Their experience of the breadth of the world and the passage of time had led them to look at France with new eyes. It was a world that was closed in on itself, a dangerous place, and where they no longer felt at home. The acrimonious anti-clericalism of the French government, even if reduced during the war, was in total

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<sup>77</sup> Paul Christophe, *Des missionnaires plongés dans la Grande Guerre. Lettres des Missions étrangères de Paris*, Cerf, 2012, p. 326.

<sup>78</sup> Paul Christophe, *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>79</sup> Christian Sorrel, *La république contre les congrégations*, Cerf, 2003, p. 210-211.

contrast with the religious freedom they enjoyed in most of the countries where they had made foundations. Also, whether dissident or conscripted, French Brothers harboured a strongly ambivalent feeling, a mixture of resentment and devotion, towards their homeland.

## The letters of Brothers who became soldiers



- 14.** Br Adolphe-Louis (Héctor Ammel), of the former Province of Beaucamps. He was born on 20 January 1883, in Halluin (59 - France) and died in Pommeroel (Belgium) on 1 June 1940. He was wounded by shrapnel on 11 June 1915 in Hébuterne (62 - France). He is represented as a soldier and with a cassock, with his military medals.

Bulletin<sup>80</sup> N° 36 (January 1915, p. 53) began to publish a series of extracts of letters written by Brothers who became soldiers. These were to become an important feature of the Bulletins until July 1917<sup>81</sup>.

In these twenty-four letters, most often addressed to the Brother Assistant but sometimes to the Superior General or other Superiors such as their Provincial, the soldiers shared something of the life they were leading, most often in combat but also engaged in more peaceful jobs such as in hospitals or secretarial work and even in captivity. Nearly all these letters came from French Brothers, the German Brothers having no easy way of corresponding with an enemy country<sup>82</sup>. Many of these Brothers had returned from Mexico, Syria and the Province of Constantinople and mentioned memories of their previous life in these countries to which they had become emotionally attached. They related in great detail how the fighting was so demanding and life so very tough in the camps. From their side, the Assistants sent circulars, Bulletins, the Circulars of the Superior General and, sparingly, a little money.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. V, N° 36, p. 53, (January 1915).

<sup>81</sup> That the printing of this correspondence in the Bulletins stopped at the end of the war can be explained by economic difficulties which made paper scarce and forced the reduction in size of the Bulletins.

<sup>82</sup> Some letters came from Italian Brothers.

<sup>83</sup> At the end of the war there were some complaints about this.

As was to be expected, one of the recurrent themes of these letters was love of the congregation, of the *soutane*, of religious and community life, now seen to be almost indulgent compared to military life. Indeed, the Institute would suffer relatively few defections of former combatants. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that very few Brothers expressed a specific devotion to Fr Champagnat when speaking of their devotion to the Institute which grew stronger on the occasion of the centenary of its foundation in 1917. The Institute was a family, a brotherhood, and an army whose uniform and organisation contrasted sharply with life in the military.

An evolution in the tone of the letters is noticeable. In the beginning, still bearing the marks of the events of 1903-1905 which had led them to believe that France had turned anti-religious, the Brothers were quite astonished to see that a large number of officers were very religious and how the common soldiers respected their state as religious. Later they seemed more pessimistic, even if they made no complaints of hostility towards them personally. Rather it was the indifference, religious ignorance, and the blaspheming of most of the soldiers. Some felt somewhat isolated or got together in small groups made up of priests, religious and other soldiers, attempting and sometimes succeeding to do apostolic work. Basically they had a practical experience of living in a world that was already very secularised.

Of course the Brothers gave the Superiors an account of their spiritual lives in a context that had nothing to do with life in a monastery. For many, sacramental practice was rare and they had scarcely any books to provide spiritual nourishment. None of them indicated that they had a Bible but neither did a copy of the New Testament feature in their kit. Only rarely was there any clear allusion to this in their letters. Their religion was based on the sacraments, with Mass, Confession and Communion as often as possible. Some mentioned *The Imitation of Christ*. In regard to personal exercises, the Little Office was more or less easy to recite while marching, during exhausting work and when their movement was restricted. They made frequent use of the Rosary, spontaneous prayer and meditation, notably during long periods of guard duty.

One Brother, who returned from the Far East in August 1914 even presented his personal retreat programme of three days in August 1916<sup>84</sup>, based on meditations proposed in the magazine *The Priest in the Army*, the reading of *The Imitation of Christ* and the Rosary. He mentioned nostalgically his entry to the congregation and the retreats he had experienced away from France. A letter of 8 January 1916<sup>85</sup> from a Brother getting ready to go up to the Front for the first time seems to communicate a quite general state of mind:

*Happy New Year! The epithet "happy" seems quite laughable in the midst of the sad events of these days. (...) I just wish that this war with its bloody horrors was over! May there be a victorious peace, peace where law and civilisation reign! And may a glorified Christianity take up its good works again in a new society!*

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<sup>84</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VI, N° 46, November 1916, p. 464.

<sup>85</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VI, N° 43, March 1916, p. 176.

Another letter from a Brother “on campaign” who had returned from Lebanon (he invoked Our Lady of Lebanon), writing from inside his tent, communicated another general feeling that he had thought deeply about:<sup>86</sup>

*We need pure victims able to make reparation and move heaven. Where are such victims to be found? Isn't it especially among the religious? Which soldier apostle has not dreamt of being a holocaust acceptable to God, of offering himself, like Jesus Christ, in sacrifice for the deliverance of his beloved homeland? (...) As for me, I can say that, thanks be to God, I never lose sight of this double aim of making reparation and meriting, in the hope that Providence can turn the events happening around me into a source of my improvement. If only you could know how calm I am inside when I give myself over unreservedly into God's maternal embrace!*

Such sacrificial spirituality with its blend of patriotism and Christian spirit does not prevent hard questions arising from the sheer number of deaths, the extent of the destruction and especially the length of the war. In 1915 the war had been sometimes viewed as a cleansing trial but by 1917 the tone was less assured. In a letter of 10 July 1917<sup>87</sup> a Brother soldier stated that the only good he could do was to show good example.

He wrote,

*My regiment is unfortunately composed mainly of men who seem to be strangers to any notion of religion and have not the slightest concern to show self-respect in what they say.*

Around the same time<sup>88</sup> another Brother wrote,

*It is impossible, after having seen what we have, to remain indifferent or stationary (in religious life). You either get better or worse.*

In short, the Brother soldiers had left a relatively simple mental universe behind and entered a more personal, a deeper spirituality. They often clearly perceived that their life, if it was not taken away from them, would never be the same as before and that the world itself would change. This was what a Brother artillery officer<sup>89</sup> had to say on 18 February 1915:

*Progress, about which so much is said, is to be seen everywhere in this frightful war, only through its sad and unique destructive role.*

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<sup>86</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VI , N° 43, March 1916, p. 177.

<sup>87</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute* T. VII, N° 48, July 1917, p. 221.

<sup>88</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 48, July 1917, p. 223.

<sup>89</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. V, N° 37, May 1915, p. 151.

## Appendix to the Circular of 24 May 1917

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It goes without saying that not all the conscripted Brothers shared the sentiments expressed above. Moreover, the war meant something unheard of for the temporary professed and Novices, an interrupted Novitiate and the expiry of temporary vows. Thus, for many serving Brothers their canonical link with the Institute had been severed. The length of the war threatened to make this separation definitive, the opposite of what had originally been thought.

To respond to this danger the Circular of 24 May 1917 had an attached 40-page brochure, entitled "The gift of my congregation. Its internal and external beauty. Its great men", written in September-December 1916 by a Brother who had been a soldier for more than two years. The introduction of the Superior General dwelt on the family spirit and supernatural spirit "present in most of our Brother soldiers". At the same time, his words betrayed his anxiety for their fidelity in the face of an interminable separation.

Having recalled its physical, intellectual and religious gifts, the author set himself to show its beauty:<sup>90</sup>

*I can compare you as a society to other man-made organisations and I am convinced that I will find none with constitutions as perfect. Then I can see your rapid expansion in all the countries of the world. I can make a count of the schools founded, the children being taught, the religious being saved in your womb. Finally, I can take a brief look at the life and work of your holy founder and his first disciples, the virtues of your members, especially those whom this terrible war keeps far from you and of whom more than sixty have already given their lives for the homeland.*

It was, then, a hymn to the Institute as a mystical body, good and beautiful in all the stages of its development and more especially in the present terrible time. It was an invitation to Brother soldiers to remain worthy of being chosen.

This powerful reminder prepared the ground for the Circular to Brother soldiers of 25 December 1917. In this the Superior General informed the Brothers in temporary profession who had been unable to renew their vows until their active military service came to an end, that they would be able to do so thanks to an indult obtained from Rome on 3 December 1917<sup>91</sup>. The question could well be posed about the gap between this text and what the Brothers, confronted by the horrors of war and the prospect of their own death, were revealing in their letters.

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<sup>90</sup> He seems to have made his vow of obedience. He had made the second Novitiate and probably the vow of stability. His brochure seems to be in part of collection of notes made over a period of time.

<sup>91</sup> Circulares T. XIV, three pages un-numbered.



## War and secularisation

The problem of Brothers who had returned to France and were free of military obligations had come up first in 1915 with the expulsion of the Brothers from the Ottoman Empire. It is certain as well that Brothers waiting for their conscription, or wounded in the war and then freed from military obligations for the rest of the war, remained in Europe. Of the fifty-nine French Brothers from the Province of Mexico, fifteen were killed and only a dozen returned, the others taking up work in schools in France.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, during the war of 1914-18 and until 1922, authorisations for secularisation were becoming numerous. This can be seen in the

STATISTICS 5 - AUTHORISATIONS OF SECULARISATION TAKEN FROM THE MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL									
	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	TOTAL
Lacabane	■								<u>1</u>
St Paul	■■■			■		■■■■■ ■■		■	<u>12</u>
Aubenas									
Varenes	■■	■	■■■■■ ■	■■		■■■■■ ■■			<u>33</u>
Hermitage		■	■■	■■	■■■■■ ■■■■■	■■■■	■■■■■ ■■■■■	■■■■	<u>47</u>
St Genis	■■	■	■■	■■	■■■■			■■■	<u>14</u>
Beaucamps									
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>107</b>
<p>The figures underlined indicate Brothers who changed Provinces permanently back to France.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: Minutes of the General Council.</p>									

<sup>92</sup> Br Gabriel Michel, *Nos supérieurs. F. Léonida*, Rome, 1976 p. 35 and 39. In fact, Br Gabriel Michel speaks of around fifty Brothers who returned to France. In *Marist Notebooks*, N° 30, February 2012, p. 98 Br Aureliano Brambila gives the figure of 55.

table created from data retrieved from deliberations of the General Council:

After 1922 there is no trace of any more such permissions of the General Council. An estimate can be made of more or less one hundred and thirty Brothers who remained temporarily or permanently in France. Even with this support of a hundred plus Brothers, the secularisation situation remained very precarious but the feelings about secularisation had changed.

## **The main consequence of the war**

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Perhaps the main consequence of the war was the loss of opportunity for the Institute to penetrate on a broad front into central Europe and the Middle East. This had begun in 1914 along two routes: on one side, the expansion of the Province of Beaucamps into Germany from the west and the south; and, on the other side, that of the Province of Constantinople moving into the Balkans and into Hungary. At the same time, the Province of Syria had begun to establish itself on solid grounds in Lebanon-Syria, even going to Baghdad in Iraq, to Egypt and to Palestine.

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires was going to render any attempt at expansion in that region very difficult. Nothing remains of our presence there although the effect of the war on the whole Institute was, in the short term, relatively limited. This meant that the leaders of the Institute were tempted to regard the conflict as a parenthesis while in fact the war was accelerating the secularisation of States and societies on a global scale and limiting any future expansion.

## 6.

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# SECULARISATION AS A PERMANENT, GLOBAL PHENOMENON

The policy of the French government in 1903 would appear remarkably tame when compared to the nationalist and especially totalitarian governments that emerged in the period between the wars. These were truly secular religions capable of great mobilising power and extreme violence towards those who opposed their messianic pretensions. In several countries (e.g. Mexico, Spain, China, Turkey, Germany) the Institute had to suffer the devastating effects of these powerful movements that were essentially more about religion than politics. But in the long term the most challenging and destabilising factor was the socio-cultural secularisation affecting every country. This had the capacity to quietly undermine the foundations of religious institutions that had previously provided the framework for whole cultures. There is obviously no question of describing in detail all the cases of this multi-faceted secularisation but it is important to mention a few consequences that were particularly tragic for the Institute as a result of the rise of these messianic projects.

### Mexico, Spain and Germany

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While the war in Europe was raging, Mexico was undergoing a much more severe form of secularisation than that of France. Br Aureliano Brambila<sup>93</sup> tells of how, after the 1910 revolution and the troubles arising out of that, the 1917 Constitution reduced religious freedom significantly. Teaching was to be totally in lay hands and a ban was imposed on teaching religion, on making religious vows, on operating seminaries or convents. In 1925 the coming to power of Calles led to open persecution. It would take until 1929 for arrangements between the State and the Church to pass from head-on clashes to a more surreptitious struggle with the government which was trying to legally strangle Catholic education. When the new socialist government of Cardenas in 1934 tried to bring in socialist education, the Church reacted by setting up a clandestine system of "Academias comerciales" (private academies) in private dwellings. It was only in 1940 that the laws that in effect

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<sup>93</sup> "The Marist charism in the land of Mexico", Marist Notebooks N° 30, February 2012, p. 99



15. A picture evoking the Marist Brothers martyred in Spain.

were laws of persecution were toned down. They were not suppressed until 1994.

During this period the Brothers had to wear civilian dress and it was for them that the 1932 Chapter, very insistent on the religious soutane, would concede that the Mexican Brothers could wear a black suit with, if possible, a black tie and black socks.<sup>94</sup> There was to be no question, however, of their leaving their country and the Mexican Brothers who had to live under such a regime of secularisation would not suffer any disapproval from the Institute.

In Spain, where for a long period there had been confrontation between an anti-clerical republican leftist party and a conservative Catholic party, the Republic that was proclaimed in April 1931 quickly began a plan of systematic secularisation.<sup>95</sup> The Brothers had to wear civil dress and laicise the

names of their schools. But the republican authorities were outflanked by an extreme group of anarchist or communist Leftist workers. It was during the general strike of October 1934 that Br Bernardo was assassinated at Barruelo. In 1936, the victory of the Popular Front and the military coup d'état of Franco on 18 July 1936 set the scene for uncontrolled violence from July to December 1936.<sup>96</sup> The communist, anarchist and unionist militia took over the republican government. Properties were burnt down and there were imprisonments and shootings all over. A total of 172 Brothers were murdered in Barcelona, Toledo and Las Avellanas ... In 1939 at the end of the civil war, a further 57 Brothers, who had been soldiers on one side or the other, were to be added to this list. The Brothers who survived had been through many difficult situations. Br Jean-Emile cites the case of the Novitiate at Pont s<sup>97</sup> where for years they lived with the windows shut and not making any noise so as to pretend that the house was empty.

<sup>94</sup> Br Basilio mentioned somewhere this custom of black shoes.

<sup>95</sup> See *Seeds of Life. 47 Marist Brothers martyrs in Spain*, a pamphlet published on the occasion of the beatification of 47 Brothers 28 October 2007 which gives a nuanced introduction to the cause of these events.

<sup>96</sup> The fundamental work on this question is: Br Juan J. Moral Barrio, *Vidas entregadas. Martirologio Marista en España. 1909-1939*, Institute of the Marist Brothers, 1997. See also *Nos modèles de sainteté mariste*, Rome, January 2005.

<sup>97</sup> *Histoire de l'institut*, 1947, p. 138

In Germany the District was responsible for a dozen schools but in 1937 the colleges had to close their doors. The German Brothers proceeded to establish schools in neighbouring countries, one in Poland at Poznan, another in Holland, three in Austria, and one in Vaduz in Liechtenstein. An important colony was to be set up in Uruguay.<sup>98</sup>

## The Second World War and its consequences

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The Circular of 25 December 1944 from which the figures above were taken, described how the war had touched the Brothers' lives.<sup>99</sup> The schools in neutral and Anglo-Saxon countries had not been disrupted much. Nevertheless three Australian Brothers disappeared in Bougainville. (Not in the Solomon Islands as stated in various Marist texts. In 1940 Bougainville was part of New Guinea. Today it is an autonomous region within Papua New Guinea.) 540 Brothers had been conscripted in France, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Syria, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Fifteen Italian Brothers in Egypt and Syria had been placed in concentration camps at the beginning of the war.

In the defeat of 1940 at least 80 French Brothers were taken prisoner as well as a number of Belgian Brothers. The Belgian Brothers had been working in medical support and were allowed to go home but most of the French Brothers were to remain prisoners.<sup>100</sup> In addition 75 young French Brothers were called up to Youth Production Camps<sup>101</sup> for periods of eight months at a time. In Italy the Brothers "even if they were not obliged to bear arms, had to face dangers from the fighting." From 1942 on, nearly 120 Brothers were forced to join the Service of Forced Labour in factories, forty of them ending up in Germany. Some must have hidden to escape this summons while others went over to join the resistance fighters. Also, after the liberation of France in 1944-45, Brothers aged between 20 and 25 were conscripted to take part in the final campaigns of the war and to join the occupation army in Germany. In China there was intense bombing and some Brothers were imprisoned and maltreated by the Japanese. There was no news from the French Brothers in China throughout the war.

This brief article shows how different the war of 1939-1945 was to the preceding one, due to the fact that there was no fixed frontline and that in the war zones, troops, civilian populations, and resistance gangs advanced and retreated requisitioning buildings, taking hostages, pillaging and mistreating people shamelessly. In addition, aerial bombing created a permanent danger and many schools suffered heavy damage or were destroyed. The schools lacked staff. It was difficult to get supplies; travel

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<sup>98</sup> Br Augustin Hendlemeier, p. 43, mentions 114 Brothers as leaving Germany in 1937: 52 to the missions in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, South Africa and the others spread around various countries in Europe.

<sup>99</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 330-340. Circular of 25 December 1944.

<sup>100</sup> A dozen of them were freed or escaped.

<sup>101</sup> A substitute for military service organised by the Vichy regime.

was very difficult because the rail lines were sabotaged. Mail delivery was very poor and Saint Genis-Laval had no news from certain parts of the Institute.

The Circular of 25 December 1945<sup>102</sup> made much of the dramatic situation in the District of Germany. Of the 250 Brothers in 1939 there were only 26 left on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1945, most of them old or ill. The others were soldiers (130) or dispersed across various countries (Uruguay, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein). Thirty had been killed in the war and one had died at Dachau. Others were listed as missing or had been taken prisoner.<sup>103</sup> While the First World War had been dramatic in the large number of men conscripted and of deaths, it had not had the widespread impact of forcing millions of civilians into total insecurity. Moreover, in Mexico, Spain and more specifically in Germany, the Institute had experienced what it meant to live in a totalitarian state. The Brothers in Greece had also known war, invasion, famine and civil war. Quite early in the piece, China had lived through a combination of revolution, anarchy, foreign occupation, and total war and was to live through more in the lead-up to the totalitarian government of 1949. In Europe the Iron Curtain was to ruin the schools established in Eastern Europe (e.g. Budapest) and to force western Europe to live under the communist threat for more than forty years.

## Some particularly eloquent biographies from this tragic period

The recent beatifications of the Brother martyrs of Spain have attracted attention to the victims of those troubled times. But less is known of the tragic situations encountered by many Brothers who did not lose their lives.

The life of Br Albert Pflieger (1900-1999) who went through many exiles and dangers gives a good idea of the situations lived by many Brothers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His life also sheds light on the fate of the Province of Constantinople which never reached the stage of having a fixed centre, whether in Turkey, Yugoslavia or Hungary.

This Brother was born into a modest family in Alsace, which was under Germany at the time. At the age of 13 he was recruited by Br Pulchronius who made a number of visits to Alsace for vocations even though he did not speak German. Albert began his Juniorate in Switzerland at Fribourg and stayed on there when blocked by the war from returning home. He was taught by French Brothers who had returned from Lebanon-



**16.** Br. Albert Pflieger. His life gives an idea of the vicissitudes experienced by Marist Brothers throughout the 20th century.

<sup>102</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 410-412. Circular of 25 December 1945.

<sup>103</sup> The *Chronologie mariste* (General House, Rome, 2010 p. 350) indicates fifty killed. Br Augustin Hendlemeier speaks of 130 Brothers conscripted of whom 52 were killed, and a large number of others not returning to religious life.

Syria but who had not accepted to serve in the army. When he went to St Genis-Laval in 1919 he made his first vows and became a French citizen. He was sent to Scutari in Turkey. Freed from his military obligations, in 1929 he was sent to Monastir in Macedonia in the new Yugoslavia where he learnt Serbo-Croat. This school, under the protection of the French Embassy, was made up of five to seven classes of Jewish, Muslim and Christian students who considered the Serbs to be an occupying force. During the holidays he went around recruiting. He even took steps to gain Yugoslav nationality. In 1929 the school was shifted to Belgrade. But in 1928 Br Albert was moved to Hungary where the Institute ran an orphanage at Kispet and a Juniorate with young Hungarians and Slovaks learning French before heading to Grugliasco, St Genis Laval, Langon (Bretagne), or Heraclea (Greece). Br Albert himself was appointed to a bilingual (French-Hungarian) school in Budapest. Setting this school up had been hard work but life was becoming easier with the arrival of Hungarian-born Brothers. Champagnat College would continue to function until 1944, with Hungary allied to Germany but relatively unscathed by the war. Some French Brothers who had escaped from Germany even arrived to boost the number of staff.<sup>104</sup>

The situation deteriorated with the occupation of Hungary by Germany in March 1944. With the help of the French embassy and the Swedish Red Cross, the whole community<sup>105</sup> put itself out to save around a hundred Jews threatened with



<sup>104</sup> Bernard Clerc and J.B. Bonetbeltz.

<sup>105</sup> Br Louis Prucser, director, Ferdinand Fischer, Alexandre Hegedüs...

deportation or to hide men from Alsace who had deserted from the German army. In the end they were denounced and the entire community of 8 Brothers and those they were protecting were imprisoned on 19 December 1944 in the dungeons of the Parliament in Budapest where they were very poorly treated until the Russians arrived on 11 February 1945. Thereafter, they had to protect themselves from the aggressions of the Russians, and participate in the repatriation of prisoners from various countries, particularly Hungarians.

The lowering of the Iron Curtain in 1947 spelt the end of the Marist work in Budapest. Br Albert left there in 1948 as did the last Hungarian Brothers in 1950. They were attached to the Province of Varennes-East. This sealed the fate of the Province of Constantinople that the Brothers had tried to reconstitute after the Second World War around three centres – Budapest, Athens and Bretagne (Langon) where the Brothers had not been present before. Br Albert Pflieger and his Hungarian confrères would continue their lives in France where they had hardly ever been before. In 1982 the eight members of the Budapest community<sup>106</sup> received Medals of the Just in recognition of their work for persecuted Jews.

### **Br Adjuteur (1885-1977)**

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This Brother has left a detailed narrative of a life<sup>107</sup> where wars alternated with an intense activity in schools. Emile Aragou was born on 30 November 1885 in Quirbajou, a small village in the district of Quillan, in the Aude. At the age of 11, in January 1897, he entered the minor Juniorate at Castelnaudry and was in 1<sup>st</sup> class there in the company of François Garrigue, who was to become Superior General by the name of Br Leonidas. On 12 September 1900, just before his fifteenth birthday, he entered the Novitiate. On 25 March 1901 he received the habit and the name of Br Adjuteur. On 15 August 1902 at the end of his Novitiate, he made the vow of obedience, the only one that was made up until 1903. His use of time in the Novitiate had been far from being solely on spiritual matters!

*During the Novitiate (from 25 March 1901 to 15 August 1902) I studied by myself for the Elementary Brevet which was indispensable for becoming a registered teacher. I went to Marseille and succeeded in the exam on 2 October 1902 to the great astonishment of my teachers who had predicted that I would fail completely.*

His first job in September 1902 was to be the cook.

*Then I spent two months at a small school in Vaucluse, at Piolenc, next to the town of Orange and three months at St-Saturnin-les-Apt in charge of an elementary class. Since I was not yet 18, my students were a section of the Director's class.*

In these few words we get a glimpse of the way things were during the last years of the old system of recruiting and training as lived by Br Adjuteur: rural upbringing;

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<sup>106</sup> Three others had died earlier.

<sup>107</sup> Published as a pamphlet by Br Alain Delorme in 1985.



Juniorate from around 11 to 15 years of age; Novitiate of around two years, including six months postulancy. Secular studies continued throughout. It was only after 1903 that directives from Rome would insist on a Novitiate devoted almost exclusively to ascetical studies. Finally the Scholasticate was not yet part of our structures and the first step in community life was as the cook.

From August 1903, Br Adjuteur moved to San Andrés de Palomar in Spain, a victim like so many others of the anti-congregation laws. He made his final profession on 28 August 1907, aged 22. He was to spend the better part of his active life in that country, considering it his second homeland and learning the language. He taught at Cullera, Valdemía, Manresa, and again at Valdemía until January 1915. He was witness to the Week of Blood in Barcelona in 1909,

*where a number of Churches and convents were burnt down and private property attacked. In the town of Mataró, there was unrest; thousands of workers revolted. There were only 25 police to deal with the protestors. We knew no calm for some days. Some gangs were stirred up and wanted to burn down our building. We had some boarders from South America. Prudently, we sent them to a hotel in the nearby small village of Argentona.*

In 1906 he was released from military service. But in 1915,

*despite the unjust law of expulsion of 1902 and the strong advice of the Consul to get me to continue my mission as a volunteer French teacher, I left of my own will to defend my homeland.*

He was first sent to a school for under-Officers and then went up to the Front during the years 1916-18.

*I applied myself with tenacity and courage to all my duties as a good soldier, he said.*

He retained a degree of nostalgia very common among former soldiers:

*Personally I have no regrets concerning the four years spent at the Front during the war. It was a very enriching experience of daily contact with men from all parts of France, their personal reactions in times of sorrow and dramatic moments, the fraternal atmosphere, the support and selflessness when in danger, the sympathetic relationships between officers and regular soldiers, and perseverance in hard work, often in truly dire circumstances.*

He was demobilised in January 1919. His parents had died during the war and the only family left was a younger sister 14 years old. He found the family home in an abandoned state and set about planting crops for a few months while waiting for the return of his two brothers who were demobilised later than him. He then went back to Valdemia in May 1919. He was to become the director there from 1924 after he had made his vow of stability on 10 August 1924 at the age of 39. He does not seem to have made the Second Novitiate before or after that time.

Then he narrates the general causes of the civil war: discontent, communist and anarchic ideas, the abdication of the king and the proclamation of the republic with what this meant regarding the secularisation of teaching.

*We were forced to wear civilian clothes.*

The military coup d'état of Franco on 18 July unleashed the civil war, *a conflict marked by passions, hatred, and jealousy, which was to be the cause of death of hundreds of thousands of victims.*

It was especially in the first months of the fighting that a large number of Brothers were killed and many others forced to live a precarious existence. The Provincial and his Council contacted the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist militia on 20 September 1936 in the hope of arranging the evacuation of Brothers from Catalunya in exchange for a sum of money.<sup>108</sup> On 30 September Br Adjuteur left to ask the Superiors for money. Three days later he returned by plane with the amount demanded. Thanks to this deal, 117 young Brothers who had been living in a dangerous situation in Las Avellanes, were able to get to France after many delays and moments of anguish. On a second trip, Br Adjuteur had to arrange for their welcome and repatriation into the area of Spain under nationalist control.

The second element of the plan was to assemble around a hundred Brothers from those parts of Spain under republican control in Barcelona and to transport them by ship on 8<sup>th</sup> October to Marseilles for around 100,000 Francs. Around the 6<sup>th</sup> October Br Adjuteur headed off again in search of funds. Before he could leave the country he was held up for several hours by an anarchist gang at the railway station in Barcelona. Then he was stopped by the French police at the border who found his comings and goings suspicious. While he was away, on the night between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October, the Brothers now gathered on the boat were imprisoned and 46 of them were killed. When Br Adjuteur returned from Marseilles by plane on 9<sup>th</sup> October he was stopped, robbed, threatened with death and sent for a week to a cell in a former convent that had been turned into a prison and a centre for executions. Then he was paraded before a judge who sent him for a week to a freezing jail. Finally he was sent to a government prison where he met up with the 62 survivors from the boat who told him all that had happened and how they had been liberated from the clutches of the anarchists by government troops. They remained very much in danger.

Since Br Adjuteur was French, the Consulate tried to have him freed but the Anarchist Committee was systematically opposed to his release. Three times he was imprisoned until finally he sneaked onto a French warship which transported him to France in mid-February 1937. Once again Br Adjuteur, with an offer of 60,000 Francs, opened negotiations with the judge responsible for the prosecution against the Brothers in Barcelona to get their trial delayed indefinitely.

After some time he went back to the nationalist part of Spain and took charge of the college at Pamplona. But at Christmas 1938 he was arrested by nationalist police for money-trafficking when the house at Espira had secretly sent money to the Broth-

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<sup>108</sup> See *Vidas entregadas*, op. cit. p. 69.

ers in Carrion de los Condes with him as the carrier but without telling him. When the civil war ended, he went back to Mataró to fix up the residence and then became the director of the college in Barcelona. Since the buildings being used were being rented, he bought the former convent of the Visitandine sisters that had been burnt down. This provided for a spacious and modern school. He did not have the chance to complete this construction for, at the end of 1939, he was named Provincial of St Paul-Trois-Châteaux, a decision which he thought of as a second exile:

*I was entering a totally different environment. I knew almost no-one. I knew absolutely nothing about the role I had to fulfil. For sure, my new companions were very good people. But wouldn't they be surprised to be under and to obey an unknown person who had been out of France for such a long time and who now had a Spanish mentality? Moreover, the situation was very strange; war had been declared but there was no fighting yet in France; yet the effects of the conflict elsewhere were already being felt intensely.*

From 1940 to 1949 he was to govern a Province with around twenty primary schools and two larger institutions - a boarding school at Bourg-de-Péage with 150 boarders, and a secondary school with a primary section in Marseilles with a body of 800 students. Conditions at the Provincial house at St Paul-Trois-Châteaux were not brilliant.

*There were at the time some student Brothers and older retired teachers, but the house had not been renovated. There was no central heating and only a stove in the community room. Often in winter, when the mistral was blowing, you could not escape the draughts in the corridors.*

But this was nothing compared to the events that caused food shortages and made travel hazardous and even dangerous. From December 1942, the south-east of France was occupied by the Germans:

*More than half of the house at St Paul was requisitioned and a company of SS troops were installed in the best of the bedrooms. Our front door was under guard day and night as well as a barbed wire fence and landmines. (...) Several of our older Brothers could not put up with the restrictions imposed. Sadly we transferred them to a nursing home.*

As there was a lack of teaching staff he spent a lot of his time replacing Brothers or Directors.

*During those years, I tried to be of service as a teacher of Maths and Science to the Elementary Brevet class. I was also the official director of the school at Salon replacing someone who had to stop working. I used the holidays at Easter and Christmas to visit various schools. Often it was very arduous, especially in the High Alps region with no connections for train arrivals and hills and flats covered in snow. You had to walk for miles through a thick layer of snow. In the same vein, to get from Perpignan to Narbonne, the trip was frightening. The wagons had no lighting or heating, the windows were broken, and the wind off the sea was humid and icy, freezing for the few travellers.*

In preparation for the landing in Provence the Allied planes systematically bombed the communication hubs. Fresh from visiting the Villeneuve school in Mar-

seilles on the eve of Pentecost 1944 (27 May), Br Adjuteur was getting ready to leave and was at the station when it was bombed. Windows were smashed, a locomotive over-turned, and panic broke out amongst the travellers. The Brothers' school, situated near the station, was completely destroyed but the students were safe and sound. Br Adjuteur was to have many problems getting back to St Paul some days later since communications had been completely wrecked by the bombing.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1944 he was at Bourg de Péage north of Valence and had to go back to St Paul-Trois-Châteaux. It was the day of the landing in Provence. The trains had stopped working. The bridges had been destroyed by the Allied bombing or the Resistance. Going part way on foot and part way by bus, Br Adjuteur got back to the house at St Paul only to find it threatened by bombs since a German communications centre was set up there. Fortunately the bombs fell some kilometres away. The liberation of St Paul on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1944 would not bring an immediate end to their communication problems or the many restrictions. It was only right at the end of the mandate of Br Adjuteur as Provincial that things would return to normal.

He was to be the last Provincial of St Paul. In 1949, when the Province of St Paul was fused with that of Aubenas, he took up active service again in various communities: Marseilles, Bourg-de-Péage, Ferrières (Aubenas), Notre Dame de Lacabane, as sub-Master of Novices, St-Paul-Trois-Châteaux (three years as Director), Le Cheylard, Algiers, Largentière, St-Martin-de-Valamas, back to Largentière. In 1970, aged 85, he finally came back to rest at his beloved home at St-Paul.

It is worthwhile spending some time on his stay in Algeria after the war of liberation had begun in 1954. He arrived in Algiers in 1958 to a city that had calmed down but which was to live through many moments of violence until 1962. He admitted,

*We have not suffered as much as was the case in the events prior to independence.*

In fact, the school that had nearly 420 students, almost all of whom were French, began to take in Arabic-speakers.

*Before and especially after the proclamation of independence, the number of French students decreased while the number of Arabs increased.*<sup>109</sup>

He even gave his account of the moment of independence with its excitement and its problems.

*I was able to attend the celebration that the city put on at independence (in 1962). Over several days and nights, uncontrolled crowds of people were on the streets, shouting out, banging and drumming, marches, masses let off the leash, cries of "Algeria is free!", "Algeria is independent!". I walked through the streets and passed through the crowded spots. (...) In the days that followed, normal life resumed. The departure of the French authorities, however, and the heads of com-*

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<sup>109</sup> After independence in Algeria the Brothers continued to run the school until it was nationalised in 1976.

*mercial and industrial enterprises, caused a downturn in the general economy. (...) Education was in a deplorable state. The university had been partially demolished. Many public buildings had been looted. The files of the National Education Department had been burnt. We ourselves, however, continued on with our mission of religious instruction and education.*

This is the way he participated in the fourth war of his life. It was not the hardest one for him physically but the atmosphere of insecurity must have weighed on him. His final words seem to me to summarise well the state of the spirit of many Brothers who also live through great dangers and painful situations:

*We ourselves, however, continued on with our mission of religious instruction and education.*

## An era of martyrs

In the 1960s decolonisation was particularly deadly in the former Belgian Congo and the victory of Castro in Cuba led in 1961 to the confiscation of schools, the imprisonment of some Brothers and in every case their expulsion. Then there was the Biafran war that concluded at the beginning of 1970. The years 1991-96 would see the assassination of Brothers in Guatemala, Algeria, Rwanda and the Congo.

Rev Br Diogène had commented earlier between the two world wars that there was always one part of the Institute in trouble at any one time. On 8<sup>th</sup> May 1998 in his Circular, *“Fidelity to our mission in situations of social crisis”*, Br Benito developed a type of spirituality for times of trouble, even persecution, and he presented a martyrology of the congregation starting with Br Hyacinthe killed along with two Marist Fathers in 1847. In total, 240 Brothers have been killed violently and can be considered martyrs. This number would easily be doubled if it took into account the Brothers who died in the civil war in Spain, the two world wars and in other similar events mentioned earlier.

VIOLENT DEATHS AND MARTYRS IN THE CONGREGATION			
CONTINENT	NUMBER	DATES	
Africa	13	1964-1996	Algeria: 1 / Congo-Zaire: 6 / Rwanda: 6
America	1	1991	Guatemala
Asia	10 <sup>110</sup>	1900 -1906 / 1951	China
Europe	175	1909 / 1834 -1939	Spain
Oceania	5	1847 - 1942	3 Australian Brothers disappeared on Bougainville

Source: Br Benito Arbués, *Circulars*, T. 30, 2.  
Circular on *Fidelity to the mission in situations of social crisis*, 8 May 1998.

<sup>110</sup> A postulant died alongside the Brothers. The chronology of the Institute (2010, p. 518-519) adds a further seven Chinese Brothers who died from being maltreated in prison or in work-camps between 1960 and 1975.

Only two Brothers were martyred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both in Oceania. There were 10 between 1900 and 1909, 9 of them in China. All the others came to a tragic end between 1934 and 1996.

So it is not exaggerating to speak of a “new era of martyrs”, as Br Benito did. The Superior General was careful to add, “but there are so many Brothers who, even if they have not shed their blood, have been heroes in their daily lives (...) Some of them have risked their lives through love and through their solidarity with others in situations of social crisis, in wars or in moments of political instability in some countries.” In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the experience of the precarious nature of apostolic life was not confined to a small minority but was the experience of many.

## 7.

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# GENERAL CHAPTERS. HOW ARE UNITY AND DIVERSITY TO BE RECONCILED? CHANGE AND TRADITION

The Institute resisted rather well against the violent forms of secularisation of the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but was to find itself less at ease when faced with the rise of what had long been called ‘progress’. Progress held out the promise in the here-below of a world that was more humane without any recourse to religion – and it delivered on this up to a point. It would even be against religion when religion seemed to block the emergence of an earthly paradise. Faced with this challenge, the Christian world in general responded in various and even contradictory ways. Protestantism on the whole accepted the trend commonly known as Modernity. Catholicism, on the other hand, adopted an adversarial position towards Modernity at the level of principles, with the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX in 1864 constituting an anti-modernist manifesto. This formed the basis of the unchallengeable teaching of the Church until Vatican II.

But doctrine is not everything and the Catholic world was a long way from turning its back totally on modernity. In theory a Promethean world was condemned, but in practice people were very happy to be part of it. The expansion of the Institute across the world, for example, was possible because of developments in communications and transport and the Institute had no qualms of conscience with this. Schools and colleges were intent on assisting in the social advancement of the lower and middle classes who were often more keen on becoming active players in the modern world than on religious education.

It is no surprise that this contradiction between accepting a world in a state of change and a doctrinal position grounded in anti-modern thought was to be an ongoing source of problems. All new advances in technology were met by reservations or prohibitions that were impossible to respect in as much as these advances were not being forced on people but rather were tools for making life easier without creating any obvious problems with faith and morals.

Not being a monastic order but an active congregation, the Institute was taken up in the whirlwind of change, much to the disquiet of the Superiors and the body of Brothers with the vow of stability. In the years between 1903 and 1967, the Institute had no choice but to engage with Modernity, but in small steps. Modernity

was often interpreted as secularisation whereas it was rather a re-alignment of the traditional boundaries between the sacred and the profane. The Acts of the General Chapters provide privileged vantage points to observe this slow slide, in particular in the reports of their specialised commissions which summarise the debates of the Brothers on the main topics. A sequential examination of these Acts of Chapters, in principle held every twelve years, gives the impression of a group imbued with an ideal of stability agreeing on reforms after the fact.

## A senate more than a house of representatives

Apart from standard topics like Finances, the Chapters took up five key themes – Education, the Formation of Brothers, the Rule, Vocations, Brothers’ Submissions. The various names given to the Commissions from one Chapter to the next indicate a real evolution of thinking. Thus, Vocations or recruiting was linked with Formation from 1907 to 1932 but in 1946 it was associated with Missions, and in 1958 with Perseverance. The Rule was always on the agenda but under discussion from quite varied points of view. In the Chapters of 1920 and 1932 the Institute faced up to the huge change in its educational services which were diversifying and working with adolescents and young adults rather than children. Over the years some topics such as secularisation dropped off the agenda and others came to the fore, such as the media, mission and the priesthood. There was, then, a real flexibility in the way Chapters worked as can be seen from the number and titles of the various commissions and their concern to address the questions of the day.

THE NAMES OF CHAPTER COMMISSIONS					
	1907	1920	1932	1946	1958
<b>SUNDRY</b>					
F/ Finances (and administration)	●	●	●	●	●
CB/ Causes of Beatification			●	●	●
S/ Secularisation	●	●			
Publications - annual, occasional		●	●	●	
Missions					●
Priesthood					●
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
EC/ Teacher’s Guide			●		
EC/ Pious Associations and the Practice of the Faith			●		
EC/ Teaching Methods			●		
EC/ Religious and Intellectual Formation of students			●		
EC/ Intellectual Formation of students and non-formal education				●	
EC/ Religious Formation of students and sodalities				●	



	1907	1920	1932	1946	1958
EC/ Christian Formation of students; sodalities; Catholic Action; ex-students					●
Teaching					●
<b>FORMATION</b>					
FF/ Programmes and studies		●			
FF/ Intellectual and Religious Formation of candidates				●	
FF/ Catechetical Formation, Religious Studies, Teacher Training, Secular Studies				●	
FF/ Formation of Brothers					●
<b>RULE</b>					
R/ <i>Constitutions</i> and General Discipline		●			
R/ General Directory (Part 1)		●			
R/ General Directory (Part 2)		●			
R/ General Directory and Acts of preceding Chapters (1907)	●				
R/ Regular Observance. The Vows. Cinemas, radio, television, books, magazines, periodicals					●
R/ Prayers					●
R/ Common Rule					●
R/ Regularity				●	●
<b>RECRUITMENT</b>					
RC/ Recruitment and Missions				●	
RC/ Recruitment and the Perseverance of Young Brothers					●
RC/ Recruitment and the Formation of Candidates	●	●	●		
St/ Statistics			●	●	●
<b>BROTHERS' SUBMISSIONS</b>					
VD/ Health of Brothers; care of the Aged; Brothers' Submissions					●
VD/ Brothers' Submissions	●		●	●	
VD/ Brothers' Submissions; military service		●			
<b>Total</b>	5	10	10	10	13

Source: Synthesis of Br André Lanfrey from Acts of General Chapters.

## Members by Right and Delegates to the 1932 Chapter

A comprehensive study of the Chapter Capitulants from 1903 to 1967 would shed some interesting light on the evolution in the representation of Provinces at the Chapters, e.g. in regard to the age of Capitulants and their turn-over. I will content myself with an overview of the 1932 Chapter Capitulants, giving their ages and their status. There were 36 members by right and 38 elected. The 12 members

of the General Council were aged from 65 (Br Clement) to 44 (Br Francis de Borgia) with an average age of 58. The ages of the 24 Provincials ranged from 71 (Br Constan cien, Provincial of Lacabane) to 40 (Br Henry Charles), with an average age of around 54. The age of delegates ranged from Br Marie-Joannice (77, but absent) to Brs Cipriano and Arcadius-Joseph (40). Their average age was 53, more or less the same as the Provincials'. All Capitulants had made the vow of stability when aged between 31 and 50, the average being 36. It was then a quite homogeneous group in terms of age but structurally conservative as a result of there being almost as many members by right as elected delegates.

The Commissions were drawn up by the General Council on the basis of the aptitudes of the Capitulants. The importance given to the various Commissions can be judged from the distribution of members by right and delegates. Thus, the Commission of Regularity had members by right only and they were a majority also on the Commission for Brothers' Submissions. By contrast, there were Commissions left totally to delegates, such as the one on Non-formal Education. In sum, the General Administration and Provincials controlled the key topics while the delegates played a supportive role only.

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSIONS				
NAMES OF COMMISSIONS	MEMBERS OF GENERAL COUNCIL	PROVINCIALS	DELEGATES	TOTAL
Regularity	1	7		8
Administration	2	2	5	9
Religious Formation	1	3	4	8
Recruitment	1	3	5	9
Various Associations	1	2	5	8
Regularity	1	2	4	7
Non-formal education	1	4	4	9
Brothers' Submissions	1	4	4	9

Source: Synthesis of Br André Lanfrey from Acts of General Chapters.

Delegates and members by right were able to express themselves freely, even if audacious decisions could hardly be expected from this type of assembly. There was no party discipline and neither the vow of stability nor the status of being a member by right should necessarily be taken an indicator of conservatism.

## 8.

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# THE “BROTHERS’ SUBMISSIONS” A REFLECTION OF THE ASPIRATIONS AND TENSIONS AT WORK IN THE INSTITUTE

The Chapters between 1903 and 1958 had a Commission responsible for receiving and presenting observations, notes and hopes to the assembly. In 1903 these proposals came from the Provincials, Brother Visitors and “a certain number of finally professed Brothers”. In 1907 the Chapter was held at short notice following the death of Br Théophane and the submissions came from the Capitulants only. In contrast, the 1920 Chapter was preceded by a *referendum*<sup>111</sup> in which all the finally professed Brothers participated. For the first time it was not only the voices of the Brothers with the vow of Stability and the Superiors being heard, even if the Commission set aside “a few letters that were of little importance, or of minor interest, because they were too focussed on local situations or particular individuals.”

At the 1932 Chapter the Commission on Brothers’ Submissions dealt with some 200 requests or suggestions but retained only a certain number since “many were straying too far from our Constitutions or family traditions”. The 1946 Commission gave no figures but rejected some proposals as “superfluous and not likely to lead to any practical outcomes”. The 1958 Commission received “around 500 proposals or reports” and proceeded like the 1920 and 1932 Chapters in setting aside interventions of local import or related to problems that were already “covered by our Rules and Constitutions”.

So, the number of expressed wishes of the Brothers grew steadily over the years. Sadly for the historian, the Chapter Commissions destroyed most of these. Even with such censoring, these reports showed an increasingly broad public opinion within the Institute.

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<sup>111</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, 2 February 1921, p. 421.

## 1903 and abuses

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The submissions taken up by the 1903 Chapter reflect a situation that was fast disappearing. The Commission was almost totally fixated on denouncing abuses. It criticised the practice of having personal funds which was rife particularly among the “non-professed Brothers”, i.e. those who had taken the vow of obedience only. Not having taken the vow of poverty, they had money from gifts from their families, income from the sale of text books, as well as running side-lines in photography. Thus they kept a sort of “escape route” for themselves. In regards to chastity, the Commission targeted in a particular way the language of some Brother soldiers<sup>112</sup> who “should keep their mouths shut forever about what they had seen or heard regarding this aspect of life”. Referring to obedience, they denounced “certain habits picked up in army barracks”, especially smoking and the independence of spirit which would lead some to say, “Obey ... but that’s old school!”. As for exercises of piety and the Rule, the report deplored the fact that spiritual reading and weekly confessions were being neglected; that meditation was poorly prepared; that silence was “perhaps the least observed chapter of the Rule”. The parish had become a formidable opponent in regard to community practices since these were being sacrificed for the sake of going to church in Lent and during the month of May. The Saturday interview with the Superior was not happening, neither was the Chapter of Faults, nor the recitation of the catechism by non-professed Brothers to the Superior. Brothers were smoking, reading newspapers, playing cards<sup>113</sup>, obtaining personal watches, drinking wine neat, drinking coffee. As for religious instruction, there was scarce preparation for catechism classes, nor study of the Gospels or Salvation history.

Such a long list of recriminations was already to be found in plenty of documents from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Typical of the language used by Superiors and Brothers with the vow of stability, it also conveyed a generational conflict. Besides, the monastic ideal of the houses of formation was ill-suited to school settings which were much closer to ordinary lay life. So such a diatribe should not be taken too seriously when one considers that the majority of the directors and teachers had shown themselves capable of saving the schools in France as secularised Brothers or leaving for overseas to found schools that had often had such great success.

The same reservation applies when the report touches on problems that appear to be more structural in nature. For example, “According to the testimony of the Provincials and Visitors, too many Brothers lack teacher training and are neither educated enough nor, especially, sufficiently concerned about what it is involved in providing students with a good education.” It is important to remember, however, that the Institute had just lived through twenty years of a steady increase in its intellectual level. The report went on to deplore a lack of discernment in recruitment for Juniorates and Novitiates while at the same time pushing for as many new recruits as possible. Finally, the report spoke of the sense of belonging as being too weak among the Brothers. They were reproached for being too attached to the

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<sup>112</sup> Having done their military service.

<sup>113</sup> “They even sometimes spent part of the night playing” was a phrase added and then edited out.

Province of District to the detriment of the Institute itself. This criticism, however, was linked to the climate of imminent secularisation and the Superiors were not happy that many Brothers refused to go into exile.

There we have an excellent snapshot of the life of the congregation just before the experience of secularisation or exile was to force it to move into new contexts. As I have already outlined, secularisation was to mean a return to a more lay lifestyle that the congregation, in the small parish schools, had never really left behind. Exile, on the other hand, would lead to a strengthening of community living, even monastic to a degree, owing to the fact that the Brothers would find themselves again cut off from the surrounding culture and in communities that were, in general, larger in number.



**18.** First cover of the Bulletin of the Institute.

In the meantime, one Capitulant proposed a measure to remedy the faults they had criticised. Over time, more Second Novitiates should be set up to form good directors. The Commission itself proposed that candidates and Brothers who lacked good judgement be sent away “without pity” before final profession. This idea was to be taken up by a number of Chapters, a sign that it was having little effect. Finally, what was needed was “a bi-monthly or monthly magazine for all members of the Institute that would get people to confront one another”, an idea that was to lead to the introduction of the Bulletin of the Institute in 1909.

Essentially, the 1903 Chapter was the moment when tensions arose sharply as a result of two changes that had had a profound impact: the rapid rise in the intellectual level of the Brothers; military service that afforded a knowledge of the secular world that was quite different from that of the older Brothers. It was no longer a matter of having good directors to make the young Brothers obey but of convincing adults of the

good sense of a tradition. Most often implicitly, and occasionally explicitly, the Institute was faced with an underlying problem: up to what point is the Rule the guarantee of the authentic spirit of the Institute? Should it not be re-worked in the light of the signs of the times and local needs?

## The congregation as an institution

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At the 1907 Chapter the Brothers' Submissions gave evidence of a double movement of decentralisation on the one hand and the search for unity on the other. For example, Provinces wanted gifts and bequests received for Juniorates to be administered by Provincial Councils. In 1920, the preoccupation was elsewhere. "Several distant Provinces where recruitment is weak and even almost nil" expressed the hope that these administrative units be re-attached to their mother-Provinces. This was true of New Caledonia, Constantinople and Syria. There was, then, an awareness that part of the Marist world was shutting down, either because of disturbances and national politics or because of difficulties in making solid foundations without outside help. On the contrary, some Brothers thought that Provinces that were over-extended should be divided. So it was that in 1932 a dozen Submissions called for the division of the Province of Spain while Germany (Beaucamps) and Italy (St Paul) would ask to be erected as separate Provinces. Also, "Some mother-Provinces in France, such as Aubenas, St Paul, Varennes" wanted to be helped by the return of French Brothers "when things can be arranged". These hopes were to meet with limited support.

In this same Chapter in 1932 there were some surprising articles about lists of privileges. Submissions 47 and 55 wanted privileges for the director of the Second Novitiate, former Assistant Generals, Provincial Economes, and former Provincials. It was a sign of a major structural change. Responsibilities were no longer held for life and new roles had appeared. So, some Brothers, of a strongly hierarchical bent, wanted an official recognition of new levels of ranking and took it badly that former Superiors were dropped to the bottom of the 'honours' ladder.

The 1946 Commission moved to make community settings more pleasant by insisting on there being good libraries where Brothers could find a choice of meditation books "when what was read out did not appeal to them". Also, having a recreation room would encourage a greater family spirit, at least in larger communities, and even provide "a special place" for newspapers, magazines and in-door games. But the Commission reminded everyone that "the Brothers' bedrooms were not to be used for work". Another new subject raised by many Brothers was to stop the practice of giving Religious names. The Commission did not agree to this request but wrote, "No name should be given that sounds ridiculous. We insist on this (underlined in the original)". The Chapter was, then, moving away from an ascetic model of community life and responding prudently to the more personal aspirations of Brothers who were often living in larger communities than in previous times.

In 1958 the Commission proposed a change that was of some significance. The Provincials would gather every three years at the General House "to study (...) the best ways of facing the challenges of the moment". The proposal was agreed on and in October 1961 the first general meeting of Provincials was held in Rome. Such meetings were to later become General Conferences.

## The Institute as a professional body of educators

In order to safeguard the common spirit of the Institute, the 1907 Commission proposed revising the *Teacher's Guide*, besides launching the *Bulletin of the Institute*. The *Guide* had been re-edited in 1891 but had been made obsolete by the diversity of teaching systems. In 1932 there was a proposal to name a committee of three Brothers responsible for keeping the collection of traditional Marist textbooks up to date. This wish went nowhere, however, as the educational settings were so diverse and the old French collection FTD (the acronym FTD comes from the Superior General, Frère Théophile Durand) was destined to collapse.



19. Textbooks produced by FTD.

There were more important questions. The significance of being an international body can be seen by the proposal in 1920 to establish official offices of the Institute in Paris and Madrid. Moreover, the Provinces of Asia, Oceania, Ceylon, the Seychelles and Madagascar wanted to see a procure established in Marseilles. Finally, the “missionary Brothers” sought permission to make a visit of a few weeks to their families “from time to time”. The world had become smaller and the experience of war had also had a profound effect on the spirits of missionary Brothers. No longer would they leave home with no intention of returning.

The practice throughout the Institute of setting up large secondary schools created new problems. There was a degree of openness, for example, from 1920 on for the Brothers to study Latin, necessary as this was in some countries such as South Africa. Brothers were allowed to gain an elementary understanding of the language but a more in-depth study required the authorisation of the Superior General. Among abuses considered by the Commission, mention was made for the first time of the increase in the number of lay people employed in our schools and houses, particularly domestics, a quite large number of whom were women. In 1946, the problem was to be “assistant teachers” who had to be kept separate from the community as far as possible. In 1946 as well a quite new matter surfaced. “There is a real danger in some parts of the Institute for the interior life of the Brothers (Exercises of Piety, Religious Study etc.) owing to their being overworked.”

Finally, in 1958, “Several Brothers requested that the role of canonical director be separated from that of school director in large Colleges”. Behind this request lay a desire for a distinction between community life and the school community. This idea would have to be seriously addressed in the 1970s. Brothers also wanted the practice of having enlarged House Councils made the norm in larger communities and permission to study in their own rooms except for religious study.

## The religious habit and cultural issues

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Already in 1907 a Province (probably Spain) requested that the rabat be substituted by the Roman collar. In 1920 the issue of dress was raised by “Brothers of different Provinces”.<sup>114</sup> They proposed the discontinuance of the rabat and the cloak which was judged to be too short. In hot countries a more appropriate hat was asked for. The Commission, however, decided to keep the dress code intact “as left to us by our Venerable Founder and as worn so religiously and with such dignity by our venerated Superiors and older Brothers”. It was true that three-cornered hats were rarely worn anymore but “we must insist on its constitutional form being kept”. The Commission went on to suggest, however, that “in certain countries” the Provincial and his Council should make a request direct to the General Council with reasons given. In hot countries, a black straw hat or a pith helmet could be tolerated. There was a slight evolution in the dress code at the 1932 Chapter. Submission No. 16 accepted civilian dress “where its use was required”, as in Mexico and Spain. Further, the question of the rabat came up again and the Commission recommended that a decision for its discontinuance be made by Provincial Councils. The 1958 Chapter would abolish the obligatory wearing of the rabat. Beards, which had become widespread with increased secularisation and the war, were thereafter forbidden (No. 54). A more colourful but also more telling submission was No. 37 “dealing definitively with the question of linen socks” since around fifteen Provinces were not conforming to the Constitutions on this matter. Hygiene problems were more or less the same as those over the habit. In 1907 one Province requested that underwear be personal from then on. Also at the 1920 Chapter, the Commission spoke against the “effeminate tendencies” of Brothers who had taken to using toiletries “that were high-class and that showed a very worldly taste”.

In 1932 a language problem started to surface. The study of French as the international language of the Institute was insisted on (No. 40), a clear sign that its use was decreasing. Moreover, the Flemish Brothers in No. 64 asked for a Novitiate in the Flemish language “following on from the Flemish Juniorate (at Pithem) which was already functioning”. Submission No. 10 recommended that Provinces with the same language combine to translate the Circulars, the Bulletins, “and other books of ours that have not yet been translated”. In 1958 the Commission would request as well that the Circulars of the Superior General be translated into the major languages of the Institute.

## Smoking

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Chapters were quite obsessive about this. It was not only the case for the Marist Brothers either since Rome had made a ruling that applied to all Religious. The 1920 Commission spoke strongly against smoking which had become widespread during

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<sup>114</sup> The photos contained in the excellent history of the Province of Germany by Br Augustin Hendlemer (2014) show that the German Brothers did not usually wear the rabat.



the war years. It explained at length why it was imposing a ban and proposed that inveterate smokers had to seek permission of the Superior General, accompanied by a doctor's certificate and a letter of support from their directors, confirmed by the Brother Visitor. The Commissions of 1932 and 1946 would remain in the same rigid position while that of 1958 would pass the question back to the Provinces.

## The Spiritual and Intellectual life

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Mention should be made of the consecration in 1907 of the Institute to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, taking its authority from the Founder who "benefited from recourse to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary", as well as the 1853 and 1883 Chapters. Provincials and Vice-Provincials were invited to affiliate their Provinces to the Apostolate of Prayer as a "reliable way of leading souls to the Heart of Jesus through the Heart of Mary".

In 1920 the Commission focussed its attention on having the uniformity in Exercises of Piety needed in an Institute spread to the four corners of the world. In 1932 there was less preoccupation with details but rather an insistence on a more personal spiritual life. Submission No. 13 recalled the need for Brothers to have spiritual direction so as to avoid any "trial by error" approach to religious perfection. Some importance was also given to the liturgical movement of the time which was encouraging people to read the liturgical prayers and to receive communion at Mass (Submissions 11, 23). There was some criticism as well that not all Professed Brothers could benefit from the Second Novitiate (Submissions 7, 9).

In 1932, the Commission was keen to renew the stock of foundational texts, e.g. a history of the Institute "to be a source of a stronger sense of belonging to and love for our religious family" (No. 14). There was also a proposal for a book of meditations for each day of the year to complement that of Br Jean Baptiste which was already quite old. A manual on religious decorum was likewise needed (No. 21). A new set of "suitable Marist hymns" should be prepared. Biographies of Brs Jean Baptiste, Théophile and Stratonique should be written. The *Bulletin of the Institute* should provide a bibliography, a page or two of instructive or edifying letters, some pages on the causes of Beatification of the Founder and Br François, and another on "news and updates". In other words, there was a growing awareness that the Institute was living on dated spiritual models. A number of these requests were taken up after 1945, for instance the publication of a *History of the Institute* in 1947 and the book *Our Superiors* in 1953.

The 1958 Commission was quite conservative at first glance on spirituality. It proposed a new edition of the *Directory of Solid Piety* and the *Domestic Manual*, and also the writing of the biographies of M. Mazelier and M. Vernet, the founders respectively of the Brothers of St. Paul-Trois-Châteaux and Viviers. These recommendations could, however, also be interpreted as springing from the desire for a better understanding of our origins and identity. For this reason the Commission recommended that a meditation booklet be written for Juniors as well as a "more complete History of the Institute".

## **The priesthood**

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This was a recurrent issue that took on a real intensity at the 1932 Chapter. "Several requests showed a desire for the category of "Brother-Priests" among us, owing to the lack of priests in certain countries. The idea was studied seriously. The 1946 Commission returned to the question of "Brother-Priests" and felt the need to explain why the idea was rejected. "Our mission is to be admired for what it is. It is a sort of priesthood, serving youth. In itself it suffices for achieving the highest ideals of personal holiness and of the apostolate." We know that the question would continue to grow and would only be resolved in the negative at the 1985 Chapter. We will come back to this.

## **The media**

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In 1920 the Commission presented a completely new article concerning magazines and various publications. It wanted the Chapter to prepare a detailed inventory of those publications which it suspected were leading the Institute to stray into commercial activities that had nothing to do with our purposes and were being used by the Brothers as a pretext for spending hours in frivolous reading. Nevertheless, the Commission noted that such printed matter could be very helpful in recruiting and proposed the establishing of a permanent editorial committee at Grugliasco for the Bulletin of the Institute, a Bulletin for Juniors and a Bulletin of Studies. Thus, the Institute was caught in a dilemma: print media was dangerous but it was not possible to do without it. The idea of centralising publications was not to be the solution and the Provinces would continue to publish their own magazines.

In 1932 a question arose that was to be taken up by several Chapters, that of "the use of radio equipment". There could be no simple banning but radios were to be kept under lock and key. It is curious that there were no submissions on movies even though they were easily accessible by that time. In 1946, the Commission was to complain that the war had provided reasons and pretexts for the introduction of radios. It demanded that Brothers conform to the Statutes agreed at previous Chapters and insisted at length on the dangers of this media for faith and morals. So, the use of radios was to remain restricted. In a special way, "personal radios of whatever kind were absolutely forbidden."

Movies were mentioned for the first time in the context of Boarding schools. They were to be strictly censored before any showing and such showings should be rare.

## **Limited responses to multiple signs of crisis**

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This rapid overview of all these submissions reveals certain lines of evolution. The first concerned the challenge of unity and diversity. This had been present in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but had become much more pronounced as a result of the Institute's growing international character. Initially, and until 1932, the Institute

favoured uniformity in, for example dress, prayers, customs, language. Principles were cited to oppose attempts to change although exceptions were made.

1932 saw a new attitude that was less preoccupied with uniformity than with the spirit of the Institute and a growing attention to individual aspirations. Going into details and categorical refusals became less over time and the principle of subsidiarity was adopted, with Provincial authorities empowered to decide more and more questions for themselves. On many points, then, the reports from successive Commissions on Brothers' Submissions give the impression of an evolution in three phases: 1. Practices were banned; 2. Practices were banned but exceptions made; 3. Tacit approval granted.

The issue of the priesthood which affected the Institute from 1932 grew out of an ideal concept a European and Tridentine form of Christianity centred on plentiful, competent and spiritual clergy. Believing that such an ecclesiology was the desired end-result of missionary endeavour, some Brothers could be tempted to seek to be ordained, especially in some countries where this model was not the reality.

In sum, the Institute seems to have been operating at least three levels: 1. The General Council and the Chapter, guardians of unity and of the Constitutions; 2. Provinces carrying increasing authority, concerned for their own growth and to fit in locally and nationally; 3. Schools and houses where people were making decisions for themselves, knowing that things would change eventually. A fourth level could be added, that of individual Brothers who were expressing their hopes and wishes more often and were discreetly freeing themselves from the constraints of tradition. The image of the Institute that comes through, then, is not that of a pyramid but rather of a combination of three or four more or less parallel and overlapping sectors, each faithful to its own timeframe and yet motivated to seek common ground, difficult as this could be.

<b>A SINGLE BODY – MULTIPLE ASPECTS – DELICATELY BALANCED</b>			
<b>THE INSTITUTE AS A BODY OF EDUCATORS</b>	<b>THE INSTITUTE AS A FEDERATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS</b>	<b>THE INSTITUTE AS A CENTRALISED RELIGIOUS ORDER</b>	<b>THE BROTHERS AS INDIVIDUALS</b>
Directors (boarding schools, ...)	Provincials and their Councils	General Council	Expressing their views and what they wanted
School middle-managers	Visitors	Formators	
Teachers	Bursars	Second Novitiate	
	Provincial Councillors	St François Xavier	
	Masters of Novices		
	Directors of Juniorates		
	Manual workers		

Source: Schema prepared by Br André Lanfrey.



## 9.

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# CHAPTERS AND FORMATION

As is logical, recruitment and formation were normally grouped together in the same Commission. A solid formation had to be assured when the period of candidacy was judged to be insufficiently effective. The 1907 Chapter insisted on the inadequacy of the Novitiate itself to assure formation and proposed Scholasticates to continue formation not only in secular subjects but also in religious and ascetical matters. It was no longer good enough to have a special school attended by some Brothers but where more attention was given to preparing for exams than to ascetical studies. Obviously, not every Province put this directive into practice in full. The Second Novitiate, which was reserved for a small elite, was not mentioned. Then there was a proposal for “an international house of formation” to support foundations that were lacking in local vocations. This would become the Work of St Francis Xavier. The hour of religious study was described as “one of the surest means of formation and perseverance”.

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## The 1920 Chapter – a call to strengthen formation

This Chapter had a lot to say about formation. Regarding Juniorates, it proposed an entry age of 12 and a programme “equivalent to the French brevet”, i.e. finishing primary school around 15. The report suggested a more stable formation team and uniform guidelines. Its authors, however, were conscious of “modifications necessary in some places and circumstances” and were divided over whether to grant Juniors “some days” of holidays in their families each year or before entry to the Postulancy. This was a more important debate than it may seem because it raised the question of the status of the Juniorate in the body of the congregation. Was it a pre-Novitiate or simply a preparatory school?

Regarding the Novitiate, the Commission proposed a Postulancy of one year rather than six months since it was often the case that the formators were not very competent. Also there was a need for “a common program of ascetical studies”. The Commission opposed the idea of placing the young Brothers in manual employment after profession. Rather, following the submissions of many Brothers, it wanted the Scholasticate to follow immediately. Finally, noting that the Constitutions and the Directory “left too much to the personal initiative of each Master of Novices”, it proposed that guidelines be drawn up, including a program of studies.

In this way, the Scholasticate “would receive all the newly professed” for two years with no exception made for Brothers destined for manual employment. It would not be a time of greater freedom than the Novitiate but it would encourage the strengthening of religious virtues, particularly regularity. There was frequent mention of the great truths of our religion. In discussing perseverance, the Commission insisted on recruitment being well done, as well as on Brother Directors and Provincials knowing how to accompany young Brothers.

The report finished with a proposal for a higher ‘Scholasticate’ aimed at forming “quality personnel for our various houses, Juniorates, Novitiates, and Scholasticates”. This would result in a greater consistency and stability in our young men<sup>115</sup>. The Jesus Magister international programme in Rome would much later fulfil this wish although the Second Novitiate was already going some way to addressing the need.

Was there a big change in 1920 compared to 1907? The Scholasticate as a major feature of formation was confirmed but the formation on offer there was in the hands of staff with varying degrees of competence and was not really systematic. The practice of manual employment after the Novitiate was on the way out. An awareness of the need for a more planned ongoing formation came through clearly but had to contend with the multiplicity of local conditions.

## **The intellectual climate of the Institute**

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The 1920 Commission dealing with studies and programs produced a report which was quite exceptional in the history of Chapters in regard to its perspective and frankness. It went well beyond the topic and proposed a new vision for the Institute, not only as a religious body of educators but its intellectual character.

The last part of the report contains a proposal for the establishment of the Office of a Director General of Studies. This follows a comment that, in the Constitutions and normative texts of the Institute, “we cannot see mention of the concept of a structure for our intellectual work as a body of teachers”. The *Teacher’s Guide* itself, under revision at the time, “was not aimed at training teachers nor at their initiation into the world of knowledge”. Moreover,

*Methods age over time, systems become obsolete (...) A single book invents nothing. It cannot cover all teaching methods and can only be adapted superficially to meet the needs of an infinite variety of people in a state of constant progress... If we listen carefully we can hear a general complaint from all sections of the congregation that the religious and intellectual formation of our Brothers is not up to what is required in our days.*

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<sup>115</sup> See p. 305-307 in *Nos supérieurs*, a description of the attempt to set up this Scholasticate which did not eventuate because of the 1914-18 war.

It was, then, a strong criticism of the intellectual poverty of the Institute. What was needed was an Office of the Director General of Studies, among other things to promote formation, update our traditional textbooks, publish a bulletin, and organise the writing of the history of the Institute. The Director General would have a rank equivalent to that of the Economic or Secretary General. His mission would be “to manage our intellectual patrimony and increase it, support the Provincials in the organisation of Scholastics and improve teaching methods ... for a teaching Institute with more than a hundred thousand students”.

Obviously, this project of appointing a Director General of Studies would not see the light of day. It would have created, at the heart of the Institute, an intellectual authority normally in the hands of the General Council and the Provincials. It raised, however, a basic question about the very nature of the congregation: what was the place of knowledge and intellectual culture in a body that aspired to educate others, especially when they were no longer children but youth and young adults? And an even more central question: how could a serious formation be assured for the Brothers if they were not exposed to an intellectual culture, be it secular or profane, from the time they became conscious of being in an open world where Christianity no longer held sway?

The Commission declined to provide detailed guidelines on formation but rather the following principle:

*As a teaching body, we cannot remain aloof from the present day needs of the societies in which we are living. Therefore, we need to use programs that correspond with the needs of our children, while at the same time keeping the spirit of our Rule.*

So, the Commission based the legitimacy of a secular intellectual formation on the Institute’s mission to respond to the needs of the world and even its own interest for that matter. The better a postulant could understand the training given to him, the more he was in a position to assimilate it. Intellectual formation at the Scholasticate “would protect religious formation from the perils of this time and emotional crises”.

Next, the question of religious study was addressed. It was considered as “the providential structure inspired by God and the Venerable Founder to uphold the Institute”.<sup>116</sup> The report proposed a program of studies inspired by that being used in the Provinces of Constantinople, Central Brazil, and “some others as well” for over ten years. To ensure that young Brothers become “religious, catechists and educators”, the report proposed a program of “asceticism, religion, and pedagogy” in two five-year cycles. The first was for Brothers from after the Novitiate up to final profession, the second for finally professed Brothers. The program detail left much to be desired, however. For Marist formation, there was no text later than that of Br Louis-Marie, as if the Marist spirit was set for all time in an unalterable canon of texts. The pedagogy program was more open and the knowledge more up to date.

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<sup>116</sup> The report was inspired by the ideas of Fr. Desurmont, Redemptorist.

## **The 1932 Chapter in continuity with that of 1920**

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Many of the measures adopted by the following Chapters would take up aspects of this desire for an official formation guide. The 1932 Commission proposed a set of manuals for use in the Novitiate, the details of which are very interesting since they went beyond the monoculture of Marist sources and included Lives of Religious Saints and “extracts from Masters of the spiritual life”, as well as “really important extracts drawn from our own texts, meaning that their study is taken seriously”. The Commission also seemed to have envisaged the appointment of “a competent person” to have the role, among other tasks, of Visitor of the houses of formation in Italy.

Concerning studies in the Scholasticate, “it is not enough to simply obtain a qualification. The young Brother has to know how to teach”. The example of Anglophone, German, Belgian and Canadian Provinces should be followed since they have based their programme on that of Teachers’ Colleges in their countries. “When they succeed in their career, they (the young Brothers) will become attached to it.” Their profession as teachers would then support their vocation. This represented no small change in perspective.

Another matter to be thought through was the requirement for secondary teachers to have a university degree, apart from France and Latin American countries. Provision needed to be made for residences near Catholic universities. Lyons, for example, could serve as a trial. The Commission also returned to the proposal of a higher Scholasticate to stop the amateurism of formators in regard to the spiritual life. In conclusion, they made an overall judgement of great significance:

*The congregation looks like a worn-out army. It is time for it to take a break from any new conquests. It has spread itself too quickly.*

This was a way of saying that formation could not be improved without moving away from a policy of continuous growth to working on a qualitative improvement. Serious formation takes time. This recommendation clearly contested the priority being given to apostolic works at the expense of building up a strong identity and capacity in the young Brothers. Even if there was no real follow-up, it showed a real awareness in some Capitulants that there was a deep-seated problem.

## **The 1946 Chapter: Studies and Perseverance**

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The 1946 Chapter gave the Commission a name that recalled the spirit and the letter of the 1920 Studies Commission: “Religious and Intellectual Formation of Candidates and Young Brothers”. The Commission spoke of “the importance of the human element” and personal factors through which “perseverance is attained”. This personalising trend was expressed particularly well in Proposal 19:

*Because of the way people generally live today, of the frequent contact Brothers have with the world around, and of the diversity of works conducted by the Institute, Masters of Novices should be less focussed on forming the whole group than on forming each person in solid convictions.*



One of the consequences of this focus on the individual would be “his education in purity”. A lack of such education would be “the source of torment and anguish” or “impure habits”. The Commission was, then, breaking new ground criticising an approach to initial formation that was “too focussed on firstly getting the young Brothers to conform” and then later leaving them to themselves. Exhausted by work, they would lose their taste for study. Then, “the world will find them inside our houses” through newspapers, the radio, visits from lay people, lay teachers and so on”. The diagnosis was clear: “the real causes of loss of vocation are internal”. What was required was “a serious internal formation of candidates and young Brothers.”

## Unity and diversity

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The Commission reviewed the existing formation centres without adding much to what had already been said. They noted that it was impossible for intellectual formation to be uniform around the world, but that there should be a solid Marist formation based on “serious religious instruction and the practice of a spirit of sacrifice”. Learning French was foundational. This desire for uniformity, however, was challenged by the cultural sensitivity of some Brothers who wanted Juniors “to use the traditional prayers of their countries ... rather than Marist prayers”. The proposal was refused but, in Scholasticates, that lasted at least two years, the programme “must take into account the requirements of the country or countries of the Province” and lead “to registration”, while being “a period of formation, not just a pathway to qualifications”. Thought should also be given to “formation for Catholic Action and social action”.

Attendance at universities, previously mentioned at the 1932 Chapter, was to be the subject of a number of restrictions: not before final profession; in Catholic universities; for those Brothers with shown capacity. Conversely, the Commission broadened the range of houses of study to include Louvain, Paris, Saragossa, Washington, Notre Dame (USA), even noting that “courses taken in an outside university will allow the Brothers to broaden their cultural and scientific horizons”.

Regarding ongoing formation, the Commission stated that religious studies were the unique way of enriching religious and ascetic knowledge but it also insisted on the importance of the Second Novitiate, “a bastion against abuses and laxity as well as a special school of holiness within the Institute”. It took exception, however, to its elitist aspect and wanted it to be open to more Brothers.

They ended with fourteen proposals. Three concerned the Second Novitiate which was now to receive the largest number possible of professed Brothers, including those in manual work. Its length was to be extended from five to nine months, in part for practical reasons such as the length of the academic year. Finally, the Commission addressed the working conditions and competence of principals, teachers and manual workers.

## A profound change in Formation?

The Chapters from 1920 to 1946, then, represented a profound change even in how formation was conceived but with many points of hesitation as well. The impression is given of a gap appearing between what was happening in the Provinces, some taking initiatives and others being more conservative, and the General Chapters reflecting this diversity without reaching, for the most part, any decisions that were binding on the whole Institute. What comes through is a clear awareness of living in a world where old formulas were no longer adequate. What was needed, going forward, was to form people spiritually, intellectually and professionally.

In sum, quite fundamental changes had taken place over the previous fifty years in this body where the administrative units had had such difficulty in remaining in step. The Juniorate and Novitiate were no longer more than just the first stages in the formation process, in which the main structures were the Scholasticate, university, ongoing formation and the Second Novitiate. The following table, comparing the period before 1907 and that up to 1946 may prove helpful:

FROM ONE SYSTEM OF FORMATION TO ANOTHER	
BEFORE 1907	BETWEEN 1907 AND 1946
Juniorate(+or - 12-15)	Juniorate (+ or - 12-15)
Novitiate (16-17)	Novitiate (16-17)
Professional Initiation in a school setting	Scholasticate for all (17-19) in theory
Special schools for a limited number	Professional Life
	University (for a limited number)
Second Novitiate for a small elite	Second Novitiate for many, around 30-35 years of age
Source: Synthesis prepared by Br André Lanfrey	

A change in the spirit of this formation must also be noted. Psychology and pedagogy now mattered. The adjective “intellectual” was now of capital importance. The concept of asceticism began to be replaced by that of spirituality. In short, it was no longer a question of being a devoted and regular Brother but of being a spiritual and competent Religious.

## The 1958 Chapter: continuity and minor changes

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The name given to the Commission gave a clear indication of a number of complementary themes – “Catechetical formation, religious studies, teacher training, secular studies”. The report was succinct but the bundles of submissions had plenty to say.

In regard to catechetical and theological formation, there was a suggestion for “the greatest number possible of Brothers to be sent to the Jesus Magister program in Rome.” In Religious studies, what was needed was a programme centred on theology and mariology. In its special request “for a revision and further writing of the history of the Institute to help the Brothers know it better and be more imbued with its spirit” the Commission was making history the means by which Marist spirituality might find its direction today.

The proposals regarding teaching, such as a “substantial reform of the *Teacher’s Guide*”, would be difficult to carry out. There was an idea for “an international educational magazine”, which implied that the Bulletin of the Institute that had filled such a function until then was no longer really meeting needs.<sup>117</sup> Regarding secular studies, the ideas floated included university hostels, libraries, cultural exchanges, and congresses.

So, overall, the professional and intellectual identity of the Institute was reinforced and responded to the evolution of thinking and methods. Marist spirituality, on the other hand, was not paid much attention, based as it was on very old texts. People had ideas about renewing these but there was no agreement on a structured effort to make this happen. Certainly, some valuable works on spirituality and history began to be published but, being the result of the initiative of individual Brothers, their influence on formation, if any, remained marginal.

There was, then, an imbalance between the two aspects of the identity of Marist Brothers. As a society of educators, it was dynamic and more or less up to date. As a religious society, its life was based on a heritage that was only just starting to be renewed. This distortion led to a hidden crisis, the visible consequence of which was weak perseverance. This weakness was all the more preoccupying, given that formation was being better attended to and longer.

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<sup>117</sup> However, especially from 1938 to 1954, the Bulletins had included numerous important articles on this question.



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# THE MARIST APPROACH TO EDUCATION(1903-1958)

After 1854 the thinking of the Institute on pedagogy was contained in the *Teacher's Guide*. The Circular of 6 June 1891<sup>118</sup> invited the Brothers to refer to a new edition in which only minor changes had been made despite the fact that school system of the congregation had changed dramatically by then, especially through the setting up of big boarding schools and of schools outside of France.

On 6 June 1908 Rev Br Stratonique<sup>119</sup> remarked that “sections of the *Guide* have become difficult to apply today”. Programs had been extended and the diversity of education laws in different countries meant that it could not be applied everywhere conveniently. “People everywhere have been asking for a revision for a long time” and the previous Chapter had expressed the same hope. So, the General Council was asking the Brothers for their ideas on how to approach the revision.

### The new Teacher's Guide

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The report of the Commission on the *Guide* to the 1920 Chapter explained how this project was followed through. The work was given first of all to a Brother to prepare a draft for discussion by the General Council. Then it passed through the hands of various commissions, with probably Br Marie-Odulphe being the key person responsible, before being finally presented to the Capitulants.

There was a clear explanation of the main principles underpinning the revision. This time it was to be a complete make-over through the deletion of sections of the text that were out of date or “unable to be applied by all the schools throughout the world”, while safeguarding the spirit of the Institute. “New sections” had been composed: on the psychology of children; schools and post-school institutions, recruiting; social education; teacher training for the young Brothers. Everything concerning timetables, school calendars, school registers and catalogues had been

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<sup>118</sup> *Circulars*, T. VIII, p. 109. Circular of 6 June 1908.

<sup>119</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 322. Circular of 25 December 1922.

deleted and from then on were left to the authority of the Provincials. One of the commissions had even hesitated about retaining the 3<sup>rd</sup> section on the teaching of subjects in primary schools such as reading, writing, spelling and singing. The report recommended that this section be re-written.

With the final editing done, the new Guide was printed in 1922. The Circular of 25/12/1922 mentions it in a few lines only while devoting many pages to the new Constitutions<sup>120</sup>. The text was re-edited in 1932 without change. Apparently, there was to be no further text for the Marist world on education before "*In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat: A vision for Marist education today*". This was the work of the International Commission for Marist Education (1995-98) and made scant reference to *The Teacher's Guide*.

The Institute, then, seems to have lived under four educational codes until today: the first, from its origins to 1853, based on the *Conduct of Christian Schools*; then, from 1853 – 1922 under a *Teacher's Guide*, quite original initially but becoming less and less relevant; the makeover was much delayed, in part because of historical events between 1903 and 1918. It is difficult to know whether the new *Guide* of 1922 played an important role in formation. The question of a further revision came up at the 1958 Chapter but nothing eventuated.

## Intellectual and religious formation of students

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The 1932 Chapter set up two Commissions, one on pious associations for students and one on religious and intellectual formation.

Already the 1920 Chapter had implicitly recognised that the centre of gravity of Marist works had largely shifted from elementary education to secondary education, or higher. The 1932 Chapter took this shift fully on board and tried to draw some practical consequences. It was, moreover, the moment when the traditional practices of Catholic colleges came under pressure from the introduction of new forces such as the Scouts and Catholic Action.

Associations of ex-students had existed for a long time and the report merely recommended long-standing practices. It saw three degrees of organisation: 1. The least demanding and the one generally adopted, involving an annual reunion with Mass and general gathering; 2. An association with more frequent meetings and clearly defined religious and social goals; 3. A more sophisticated association made up of several sections, based more or less on the model of the C.A.F.Y.<sup>121</sup> (study circles, good reading etc.). The report underlined a degree of possible competition with Parish, Diocesan and national groups within Catholic Action, e.g. Young Christian Workers.

The report listed precise goals for each of these associations, which were to be constituted as federations where possible: the defence of religion and Catholic

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<sup>120</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 620-630. Circular of 25 December 1922.

<sup>121</sup> Catholic Action for French Youth



**20.** A group of students attending Catholic schools in Makri-keuy (Turkey).

schools; a culture of priestly and religious vocations; integration into Catholic Action as spelt out by the Pope. The report seemed to hesitate, however, between traditional structures and Catholic Action. It remained preoccupied with maintaining and developing within each school pious associations such as the Apostolate of Prayer, Eucharistic Crusades, Sodality of Our Lady, and even silent retreats. Even though Catholic Action was affirmed as a part of the vision, it was not easy to integrate since it was linked to the world beyond the school, imbued with a different spirit and certainly suspected of not being much in favour of a culture of vocations.

The report on the religious and intellectual formation of students was quite conservative and rejected many suggestions to make the system more flexible. There were to be no Brothers specialising in religious education for senior students; every Brother had to be a teacher of religion. In the same way, there was to be no leaving aside of the half-hour of daily religious education in upper classes or boarding schools. "We would be betraying the trust of Christian families and societies." The practice of the sacraments, the spirit of sacrifice and silent retreats were to be encouraged. The report was definitely well aware of the general rise in secularisation which it defined in traditional terms. One had "to do battle with the trend towards sensuality, superficiality and religious indifference, characteristic of the current generation of students across all countries". For sure, health education, gymnastics and sport were good, provided that they did not cause problems for discipline or piety. The reply to one Brother who had proposed sexual education was that "no such initiation is to be given in any subject".

The Commission on "Non-formal education" was the most interesting even though it received only a thin file with three communications. Only one of these appeared to the Commission to merit discussion. It proposed a return "to the instruction and education of country children, and as a logical consequence, to the working class in towns through courses for adults". For its author, free education should be more linked to paid education by having evening classes. He even held that the Institute was unfaithful to article 2 of the Constitutions which obliged Broth-

ers to serve the poor. “We have neglected to provide education for workers and they have turned away from us.”

This provided the authors of the report with the occasion to paint a portrait of the works of the Institute, giving special mention to “the development of our large secondary establishments, mainly outside of Europe”. In response to the communication mentioned above, they recalled that the policy of support for the poor was being kept when students were admitted under special provisions or freely, as was the case at the Léonin High School in Athens where five hundred and fifty students were accepted free of charge out of six hundred. Regarding courses for adults, the Commission noted that they had been closed down after the younger ones dropped out and that such courses upset the daily timetable in overworking some Brothers.

Much improvisation was noted regarding the teaching of modern languages. There were proposals for inter-Province exchanges and even for an international English-speaking Juniorate.

## Teacher training around the Marist world

With just a few submissions to consider, the Commission decided to conduct a survey of Provincials present at the Chapter on two matters, the levels and types of institutions in each Province and teacher training.

On the first, the report noted that “the large majority of our schools provide primary education either in France or in mission countries where French is used”. Secondary and business schools were mainly found in Provinces where English, Spanish and Portuguese were spoken. Spain had a mixture of primary schools and large colleges. Technical and agricultural schools were conducted in the Province of Beaucamps, Canada, Argentina and Brazil. The report expressed the regret that there was so little agricultural education.

Despite the variety of regulations regarding required qualifications, “it is easy to conclude that the tendency of all governments is to centralise everything, and bring everything under the one authority. Hence we are obliged to get qualified and registered with even greater determination than in the past”.

Further, the survey provided an overview of the various systems of teacher training for Brothers in order to establish some basis of comparison between countries.

PROFESSIONAL FORMATION IN THE INSTITUTE IN 1932			
	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	HIGHER
China	Teachers’ College at Chala and St Joseph, officially recognised	Teachers’ College at Chala and St Joseph, officially recognised	Some Brothers at a Chinese university
Mexico	Public Teachers’ Colleges (anti-Catholic) (5 years)	Baccalaureat prepared by the Brothers	



	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	HIGHER
Brazil	No official training. Training for Primary done in the Scholasticates.	No official training. Personal studies of the Brothers	
Colombia	Scholasticate recognised as a Teachers' College	Baccalaureat granted by the Colleges	Qualifications easy to obtain
New Zealand	Bac at the end of the Juniorate	Registration obtained while working	University
Australia	Bac at the end of the Juniorate		2 years of Scholasticate.
England, Scotland	Testing prior to entry to the Juniorate	University after the Novitiate	
Ireland	Teachers' College		
Spain	Scholasticate	Scholasticate + personal study for the Bac	
France	Scholasticate for the Teachers' certificate (brevet)	Personal Study and holiday courses for the Bac	
Belgium	Teachers' College (Arlon) 4 years	Teachers' College (middle-school) Brussels	University of Louvain
Greece	Scholasticate (brevet)	Personal study for the Bac	University of Athens
Syria	Scholasticate (brevet)	Personal study for the Bac	Cath. Faculty of Lyons
Hungary	French brevet	Personal study for the Hungarian Teaching diploma	
Germany	Teachers Training from 14 to 20; 4 years as apprentice teachers	Scholasticate preparing for the Bac	University (4 years) for secondary teachers
USA	Bac in Arts or Science	Teachers College-Scholastic. at Poughkeepsie for Teaching diplomas	Catholic University at Fordham (S.J.)
Canada		Teachers College - Scolasticate (3 years)	University for Teaching diplomas (while working)

Source: Acts of Chapter 1932. *Commission on General Education.*

This table shows the wide variety of training across the different countries. The detail of local legislation differed as did their liberal philosophy. Some granted private education a high degree of freedom but in many others all primary teachers had to have graduated from a Teachers' College. The solution was, then, to have Scholasticates recognised as Teachers' Colleges.

Secondary teaching was universally easier to get into since it was less controlled by governments. This was especially true for private schools. Moreover, new countries frequently had no structure for secondary education and the Brothers were able to offer the middle class the services they wanted for social advancement. Such a situation gives at least a partial explanation of the strong contrast between the French-speaking countries where primary schools were predominant and the other countries where the Institute conducted middle-schools and higher secondary since elementary education was already well catered for. Its good fortune was its capacity to respond successfully to this demand since, already in France, the Institute had shifted from elementary primary education to upper primary and Junior secondary schools, close to College-level.

The academic levels of Brothers varied considerably from country to country. For example, in Anglo-Saxon countries and Europe, secondary studies were completed at the Juniorate and university entrance appears to have been a normal step in the formation process. In countries of the Latin tradition, university training was much less encouraged. There the Brothers received a minimal training in the Scholasticate and then acquired their basic or additional qualifications by their own means and while working.

Finally, the Commission would retain a few submissions approved by the Chapter: having non-paying schools close to well-off establishments; making better provision for teaching modern languages; paying particular attention to the teaching of agriculture. There were to be no evening courses.

One major fact stands out, then, from a study of the education questions treated at the 1932 Chapter. There had been a shift from a system of primary schools for the working class to a system that prioritised the middle class. Some Brothers spoke out against this as a deviation but the majority accepted it as an evolution. They tried to continue traditional religious formation in secondary schools and to encourage the professional development of the Brothers. Catholic Action with its militant spirit did not seem to fit into the formation of students except as extra work. The Brothers were being invited to pursue their education to serve works that were more or less inspired by the tradition of Jesuit colleges. This model had been well-suited in a period where Christianity held sway but had started to become dated. Both Commissions held rather conservative views but one seemed much more open to contemporary challenges, social questions in particular.

## **The 1946 Chapter and that of 1932 – the similarity**

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The commission on "Training the minds of our students and non-formal education" did not receive many more submissions than at the previous Chapter. Nevertheless, the 1932 report and its proposal to once more prioritise the poor had left its mark.

The Commission noted that technical education was weakly developed in the Institute apart from in Australia and New Zealand. Agricultural schools had been abandoned except in Australia (Campbelltown and Mt Gambier). The report returned to the question of free schools, recalling the “strong words of encouragement” from the Superior General to return to our origins. It considered two different situations. Where “there is a sharp divide between various social classes”, free schools should be supported by large academic institutions. “Wherever egalitarian ideas predominate”, scholarships should be awarded. Moreover, in England, Canada, Scotland, and America (USA) “our Brothers conduct only free schools” and in France almost all the schools were of this type. “Without too much trouble ... it should be easy for us to re-climb the slope that has not yet become too slippery and to return ... to the original intention of our Founder of going to the poorer classes”. The idea of evening classes came up again, with the proposal of “making special arrangements” for the teachers who would look after these classes.



**21.** Beginnings of technical education (carpentry) in Marist schools.



**22.** Beginnings of technical education (shoe-making) in Marist schools.

Academic libraries, which were still quite rare, were to be encouraged, especially in primary schools. School museums which were once popular and intended to introduce students to science, had been abandoned. Often the work of a single Brother, they disappeared with him “and soon the school museum and collections headed for the storeroom when not to the street”. A reaction was called for, involving the construction of cabinets for Physics and Natural History, and laboratories. It was also necessary to prepare teachers adequately in apologetics and philosophy so as “to clarify any religious doubts that may arise ... from the study of the physical and natural sciences”.

Radios had penetrated everywhere and the cinema had conquered the countryside. As they were to play an increasing role in education, it was appropriate to welcome them. But there were to be no wireless sets in the communities and certainly not in the Brothers’ bedrooms! Students were also to be trained in the arts, introducing them to music and drawing, and setting up art collections. Quality hand-writing was in decline



**23.** Physics preparation area in the Institute of Mexico (Mexico) in 1951.

“and there seemed little chance of changing this. Dactylos<sup>122</sup> were the culprit”. Regarding language teaching, student exchanges “would give us the chance to show our strength as an international body and our oneness of heart”. There was a vague idea of renewing the collection of Marist texts (edited by Vitte). The most novel idea was the recruitment of lay teachers from among ex-students who were open to dedicating themselves to Christian education. Their personal vocation was to be cultivated without in any way wanting to make them into Brothers.

The Commission on Religious Education and Pious Associations did not produce much compared to 1932. Nevertheless a member of the Commission pointed out that Catholic Action could not be treated as simply one association among others. On the contrary, its purpose was to form “the champions of Catholic action in Parishes and specialised social movements. It was the way for laypeople to participate in the hierarchic apostolate of the Church. Its manner of operation was quite intricate and demanded serious preparation and exceptional dedication”. There were yet again ambitious plans for ex-students associations but, in reality, their main function was to keep friendships alive.

In producing the new *Teacher’s Guide* the 1920 Chapter had given the impression that the Institute was resolutely committed to the path of pedagogical renewal. The 1932 and 1946 Chapters had been more ambiguous. There was a strong desire to go to the poor but without threatening the works serving the middle or upper



**24.** A significant change in the shift from teaching hand-writing to the use of type-writers. This became the norm in commercial education and secretarial training.

<sup>122</sup> Typewriter

classes. There was a strong desire to engage with Catholic Action but also to keep the traditional pious associations. Further, the curious distinction between countries with a sharp class divide and countries that were more egalitarian shows that the Institute was not serious about making any choice between the socio-political systems in which it was growing. Pragmatism and a degree of conservatism dominated the thinking.

## **A change of spirit in 1958**

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This Chapter did not represent an open break with preceding ones but approached questions with a clearly more open spirit. This can be readily seen in the report of the Commission on Education that declared that the notes sent in scarcely mentioned the main questions from 1946 either because they had been attended to (e.g. school libraries), or had proved impossible (e.g. evening courses, student exchanges) or simply that practices had changed (e.g. school museums).

On other topics, the report offered opinions that were both prudent and open. There was no point in making general directives concerning free schools. Rather, in each Province “there is to be no fear of doing too much when it comes to providing educational opportunities for the poor”. Provinces were also to consider providing social assistance such as meals for very poor and under-nourished children.

The Commission seemed resigned when it came to technical education. It noted a slight progress but it did not come up with any new concrete measures apart from the option of providing technical training to a certain number of young Brothers in the Scholasticate. Nothing much was said about audio-visual training – one is left feeling that the question was unlikely to ever be raised again.

The suggestion of returning to primary education was met by a condemnation “of the anachronistic character of such an idea”. At the same time the Commission acknowledged the implicit criticism of “the unchecked desire to develop and grow”.

The Commission noted that women Religious were already teaching in the lower grades in Marist schools in Chile, Peru and Mexico and that the idea was interesting if handled prudently. The Commission approved for Colleges to officially introduce the role of “Dean of Studies”, as an intermediary between the Director and homeroom teachers so as to allow the director to better fulfil his task as superior of the community and his representative role. Similarly, the different sections of the school should be separated, if possible in different buildings, and the number of students per class limited.

Regarding higher education, the Commission noted that some Provinces had opened such institutions and judged this initiative positively, while imposing a number of conditions such as the need for trained staff and avoiding any empty intellectual pursuits. Hostels for university students, such as the one in Chile, were supported. Finally, the Commission encouraged activities like the Scouts, holiday camps, sport, and community service. The main recommendation of the Commission was for the creation of a permanent Committee responsible for advances in pedagogy to be based at the General House and to publish a magazine.



**25.** One of the first groups of students accessing higher education under the Brothers. A group of students at Port Alegre participating in a preparatory course in the Faculty of Medicine.

The tone of the Commission responsible for Christian formation, pious associations, Catholic Action and ex-students also showed some new thinking. Its report began with a pessimistic observation that many ex-students were no longer practising the faith. This common observation, however, was accompanied by a quite novel diagnosis that “religious education was being conceived too theoretically, disconnected from the needs of children and young people.” It proposed, therefore, that religious education “be combined with the love of God in the spirit of the liturgy”, a person’s moral discipline being the result of having deeply internalised his or her religion. For this to happen, the young needed spiritual direction, in principle to be given by competent priests. Religious education in secondary classes, given by Brothers who had been trained if possible in “Institutes of Religious Education”, should replace the traditional daily half-hour of catechism. In order to better respect the freedom of students, daily Mass would cease to be obligatory for boarders. On the other hand, the Rosary would be kept as “the centre of our daily prayers”.

The spirit of Catholic Action was finally grasped. It was to be “the main extracurricular organisation to be established in schools” and Brothers should even get involved in the organisation of the movement after getting the needed permission. Nevertheless, there remained a degree of reluctance to lose Marist distinctiveness in a truly global apostolate by abandoning traditional marial associations and other pious associations. Someone even proposed “a marial group particular to Marist Brothers”. Another suggested setting up a third order for students, ex-students and

the parents of Brothers. But the creation of the World Union of Ex-students became the major point of reference and all Brothers were to make an effort to participate in its local bodies. There was a further proposal that a category of “Marist collaborators” be created within local associations for a select group of ex-students.

## **Awareness of a malaise in Marist educational strategy**

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Having shifted from primary education to secondary and sometimes higher, the Institute had become more complex in regard to its leadership structure and more specialised in roles, particularly in catechetics. The idea, as well, of having the same person as director of the community and principal of the school had also started to be problematic. Lastly, the schools could no longer run without the support of lay people and other religious.

These developments gave rise to severe criticism for leaving the poor behind and serving the middle classes, all the more for not having developed technical and agricultural education. The solutions arrived at to respond to these criticisms seemed to satisfy most people. Besides, the traditional College structure, based on the Jesuit model, was being totally transformed. The Scouts, Catholic Action, and sport were a threat to the previous system which was much more closed in on itself and elitist but also more openly religious. The young people and their families, meanwhile, were pressing for changes, especially in regard to religious practices. In short, the Institute found itself at the centre of a network of relationships that included the Government, the Church, parents, students and ex-students, and lay teachers. It tried to reconcile their demands and aspirations with its own purposes.

This state of affairs led some Brothers to long to return to the old ways of primary schools and catechism classes or to show their displeasure at any new openings. Growth, however, was at the very heart of the congregation’s mission which could not do other than be part of the culture with its trend towards increasing secularisation. This led to the desire to constitute a body of lay people around the Institute attached to its spirit but not belonging to it in an institutional sense. Sometime later, this idea would give birth to the Marist Family.





## 11.

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### MAINTAINING UNITY. THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND PROVINCES

One of the main functions of a General Chapter is to elect the Superior General. In addition to the personal qualities of the person chosen, this choice is also political to a degree. Thus, until 1920 Brs Louis-Marie, Théophile and Stratonique illustrate the dominance of the original Hermitage-St Genis group. There was but one brief exception to this with Br Nestor (1880 – 1883) from the Province of St Paul.

#### Traditions persist

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The election in 1920 of Br Diogène, originally from Beaucamps, represented a symbolic shift away from the centre of the Institute without causing any rupture. The same could be said of the election of Br Leonidas in 1946. He was French, but his personal ties were more with Latin America than with France. The election of Br Charles Raphaël, a Belgian, reflected the weakening of the French group without in any way giving the impression that it was an historical break.

In contrast, the election of Br Basilio from Mexico in 1967 and 1976 would indicate the dominance of the Spanish-speaking group and that of Br Charles Howard from Australia illustrated the importance of the group from Oceania and Anglo-Saxons more generally. More recent elections of Superior Generals seem to me to be more the result of compromises between the two major groups in the Institute, the Spanish-speakers and the English-speakers.

The role of the Superior General was also subtly balanced by the election of his Assistants. But it would take some fifty years after 1903 for there to be a significant number of non-French Brothers on the General Council.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> In his history of the Province of Germany, *100 years (1914-2014) . Marist Brothers. Germany*, published in 2014, Br Augustin Hendlemeier comments (p. 16) that no German Brother ever became an Assistant.



**26.** Br Désiré Alphonse arrives at the city of Natal (Brazil) in 1950 to visit the Marist works of Brazil.



**27.** Br Diogène on horseback to conduct canonical visitations during a trip as delegate to Brazil.



**28.** Br Euphrosin, Assistant General, visiting communities in Colombia.

## Punctilious guardians of unity and the Rule

The Superior General and his Assistants formed a General Council for regular meetings where people were appointed to many leadership positions such as Provincials, Provincial Councillors, Masters of Novices. The Council also oversaw the management of Provinces down to the smallest details, as can be seen in the Council minutes.<sup>124</sup>

The Provinces have been autonomous since 1903. Despite their ambiguous status, the Assistants kept to the previous tradition and acted like super-Provincials controlling clusters of Provinces. Their quite frequent canonical visits and their correspondence with Provincials kept them abreast of happenings in the various Provinces, at least when wars and other troubles prevented them from

travelling. In summary, they were the normal intermediaries between the Provinces and the Superior General. Their concern for unity and fidelity to the Rule counterbalanced any tendency of Provinces to be truly autonomous which would be understandable given their distance from the centre and the variety of cultures. These encounters between a now distant centre and administrative units increasingly at home in places with their own culture had to have been often quite challenging. The distinction between unity and uniformity was not always evident.

## The slow growth in the internationality of Members of the Council (1903-1967)<sup>125</sup>






From 1903 to 1967 there were some fifty members of the General Administration<sup>126</sup>, twenty nine of them French. Based on the date of their starting their role, there were only four non-French Brothers in the administration until 1946. Three of them were English-speakers who succeeded one another as the head of what was initially the Province of the Islands: Br John, Irish (1900-14), Br Colombanus,

<sup>124</sup> These Minutes are a mine of information on the life of the Institute but would require a lengthy study on their own.

<sup>125</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXVII, N° 205.

<sup>126</sup> Counting Br Césaire, Econome General, who left the order, there would, in fact, have been 51.

Scottish (1914-28), Br Clement, Australian (1928-51). (The Province of the Isles was divided in 1915 with the appointment of Br Clement as the Provincial of Australia-New Zealand). It was not until 1940 that there was a Spanish Brother, Br Sixto, and a Canadian, Br Paul Stratonique. From 1946 onwards, the proportion was to reverse. The following took up the role of Assistant at various dates:

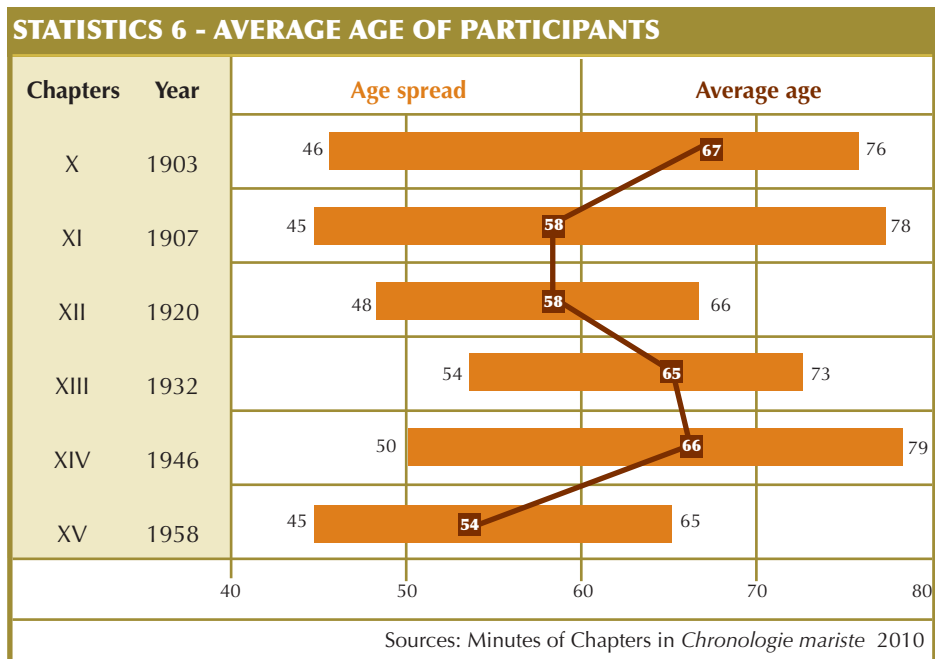
<b>INTERNATIONALITY OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL</b>			
<b>ITALY</b>		Brother Sebastiani	 Brother Alessandro  Brother Gildo
<b>SPAIN</b>		Brother Sixto	 Brother Leoncio-Martín  Brother Luis-Gonzaga
<b>SCOTLAND</b>		Brother Mary-Justinian	
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>		Brother Marie-Basilide	
<b>USA</b>		Brother Thomas-Austin	 Brother Paul-Ambrose
<b>BRAZIL</b>		Brother Roque-María	
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>		Brother Hilary-Mary	
<b>BELGIUM</b>		Brother Charles-Raphaël	 Brother Simon-Henri
<b>CANADA</b>		Brother Régis-Aimé	 Brother Lorenzo
<b>FRANCE</b>		Brother Louis-Martin	 Brother Joannès-Eugène.

1946-58 were, then, years of a real growth in the internationality of the leadership of the Institute even if this fact has to be nuanced since in former times many French Brothers had been more or less separated from their country, the case of Br Leonidas being highly significant in this regard. There was no denying that the new regions of the Institute had reached maturity. Should this fact be linked with the new tenor shown in the 1958 Chapter of being disinclined to perpetuate a certain resistance to change and respect for tradition that was more cultural than religious. It was as if the Institute was in the process of freeing itself from a certain conservative French tradition?

### Holding responsibilities for life (1903-1958)

Despite the 1903 Constitutions that foresaw that major superiors would be elected by Chapters for a fixed time, the tradition of holding positions for life was maintained and it was not unusual for Assistants to remain in place for two mandates of twelve years and sometimes longer. Additionally, there was an order of precedence determined by their election at the Chapter, with the first elected being the first Assistant and so on. It was a sign of the times, then, that 'precedence' disappeared at the 1958 Chapter.

In general, the Assistants were not very old at the time of their election but it was their longevity that made the General Council something of a gerontocracy, very experienced but not very inclined to audacious decisions. They were very often hampered by illness, when it was not death that struck them down during their mandate.



Thus the 1903 Chapter saw an ageing group continue on the Council since circumstances dictated that it was not the right moment for any change. With seven Assistants dying during their mandate before the 1920 Chapter, the Council proceeded to name replacements whom the Chapter docilely endorsed. Rev Br Stratonique at the age of 78 was not re-elected in 1920 and was the first Superior General since Br François to not die in office. Of the group elected in 1920, four (five including the Procurator General) died before the 1932 Chapter. The leadership group was then re-elected for twelve years but, as could have been foreseen, six members of the 1932 General Council (including the Superior General and the Vicar) were to die or resign before 1946, war having prevented the holding of a Chapter in 1944. Continuity was again preferred and so some quite old Assistants were re-elected, six of them being between 68 and 79 years of age. Between 1946 and 1958, nine General Councillors resigned or died. Finally the 1958 Chapter made the break and elected a young group, fit to assume their mandate.<sup>127</sup>

Until 1958, then, there was an institutional problem. The members of the General Council were more co-opted than elected and the Institute continued to function on the unwritten tradition of positions for life and a duly established order of precedence. This meant that gaining a position became a right and a responsibility that only illness or death could take away.

This mode of governing favoured strong unity but the very slow turnover of membership of the Councils held back the growth in internationality of the peak group of the Institute. The 1958 Chapter brought an end to an institutional phase in the Institute symbolised by positions for life, an order of precedence and the election of French Superiors General.

## **The figure of an Assistant General**

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The obituaries of 1931- 67 contain extended biographies of seven Assistants – four French, one Australian, one Italian and one Spaniard. These writings witness to a start to the congregation becoming more international at the highest level and also make use of these particular cases to highlight the growth of the congregation. Lastly, they showed the process by which the Institute chose its leaders.

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<sup>127</sup> Except for the case of Br Marie-Basilide (Frélechoz) that seems to be related to a deep-seated disagreement with the General Council.

## Early Life and formation

Br Flamien (1859-1941) grew up in La Villedieu en Ardèche and attended the Brothers' school from 1871 to 1873. When he arrived at the Novitiate at La Bégude on 26 October 1873 he still had to go through an important formality for entry to the Novitiate, to be measured to ensure that he had the minimum required height. From September 1874, after seven months of postulancy and Novitiate, he worked as a cook before beginning to teach. He attended the special school at St Genis-Laval, a forerunner of the Scholasticate, where he gained his higher teaching certificate. Before and after this break he taught for ten years at Salindres (Gard) where, as teacher of the top primary class, he contributed to the prestige of the school and was much appreciated by the working class families.



Flamien



Michaëlis



Ephrosin



Clément



Marie-Odulphe



Sixto



Sebastiani

30. Assistants general.

Br Michaëlis (1862-1950) was born in Franche-Comté but his family moved later near to Valence, south of Lyons. Auguste-Théophile Ménégaud lost his father early in life but managed to get educated thanks to an arrangement between his mother and the director of the boarding school at Bourg-de-Péage where he did odd jobs while still a student. He entered the Novitiate at St Paul in 1875, and was then made the cook at two schools before becoming, in 1880, a teacher at the boarding school at Luc-en-Provence. In 1884 he obtained his higher teaching certificate after a period at the special school at St Genis-Laval. Then he was able to take part, along with 94 other Brothers, in the first Thirty Day Retreat, held in the boarding school at Côte Saint André.

Br Euphrosin (1869-1954), from the Ardèche mountains, entered the Juniorate at St Paul in 1882. On leaving the Novitiate he worked for a year as a cook, followed by a Scholasticate of two years and then two more years as a teacher at the day school of Banyuls in the Eastern Pyrénées before being sent to the higher Scholasticate at St Genis-Laval to get his higher teaching certificate.

With Br Clement (1867-1957) we enter a quite different cultural setting. John Murray was born in Australia to a family that had recently emigrated from Ireland. He

was a pious youth, hard-working and keen on sport. He entered the Novitiate on 15 August 1887 but we do not know for sure how he came into contact with the Institute. He was among the six at the Novitiate at Hunters Hill who received the habit on 27 June 1888. It seems that in Australia the Brothers did not work for a time as cook because three months later he was in charge of a small class. On 2 July 1890 he made the vow of obedience. From 1891-95 he was the sub-Master of Novices.

Jean-Baptiste Villez (Br Marie-Odulphe 1872-1963) was born into a very modest family in Linselles, close to Lille. It was a semi-urban milieu. He went to the Brothers' school and then made his Novitiate and Scholasticate at Beaucamps in 1886-88. Since he had his certificate, he began teaching without having worked as a cook.

Miguel Lacunza (Br Sixto 1886-1954) hailed from a valley near Pamplona. He was recruited by Br Congal and entered the Juniorate at San Andres de Palomar in December 1898. After an abbreviated postulancy and a Novitiate where the team of formators appears to have been quite unstable, Br Sixto headed to the Scholasticate in June 1903. He was in the first group that did not make the vow of obedience but rather the three temporary vows. As a member of the founding group in Argentina, he found himself at the end of September 1903 in Buenos Aires in a residence of the Lazarist Fathers, looking after a small class and supervision.

Joseph Alexandre Diale (Br Sebastiani, 1896-1963) was born in Italy in the Aoste valley, a French-speaking area visited by our recruiters. In 1909 he was in the Juniorate at Mondovi which prepared candidates for the Province of St Paul and the districts of Argentina and Italy. In 1910 he volunteered to go to the Juniorate at Luján in Argentina to continue his formation. His biography does not give the details of his formation after that, but mentions that he had hardly finished school himself when he was made director of the Juniorate at Luján and recruiter at the same time until 1927.

These Brothers came from modest, even poor, homes. Br Clement, the son of an Irish immigrant who was a butcher, seems to have been from a family that was a bit better-off. All except Br Marie-Odulphe had known a type of emigration, either because they came from a rural enclave in the mountains (Brs Flamien and Sebastiani) or as children of immigrants (Brs Michaëlis and Clement). Their contact with the Institute was through attendance at a Brothers' school in only three cases. This took place as they were leaving childhood behind, when choices were made regarding what they would do in life. Br Clement, in contrast, entered the Novitiate at 20 years of age and seems to have had deeper personal motives for joining. All came from very Catholic families. While the villages in the countryside, often in the mountains, were still traditional Christian settings, Brs Michaëlis, Marie-Odulphe and Clement were familiar with more mixed settings as found close to towns.

Some noticeable changes can be seen in the lives of these men born between 1859 and 1896. The Juniorate had become a normal step for entry into religion and the age of entry to the Novitiate moved from 13-14 years of age to 15-16. The length of the Novitiate, at first very short, was increased. After 1880 the practice of newly professed being community cooks became rarer, giving way in general to the Scholasticate followed by beginning in the classroom. So, Brs Flamien, Michaëlis and Clement up to a point followed what could be described as the old process of formation, composed of a short Novitiate, two years as cook, their first years of teaching and gaining an elementary teaching certificate, while the more

promising of them were sent to the special school to obtain the higher teaching certificate. The case of Br Sixto who left for the missions with no baggage other than his Novitiate, shows, however, that there were exceptions made in the process. Br Marie-Odulphe was the only one to do military service.

## **A period of being Provincial**

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Br Flamien was 30 in 1890 when the Superiors made him Superior of the Scholasticate at Aubenas where there were around 70 young Brothers. Each year between 23 and 30 obtained their teaching certificate. In 1898 he attended the second session of the Second Novitiate at St Genis-Laval and he was made director of the program there from 1899 to 1903. As the sessions lasted only six months he assisted Br Richard, the Visitor of Aubenas, and ran the Thirty Day Retreats at Bourg de Péage for Brothers preparing for final profession. After 1903, as Visitor and then Provincial, he supported the secularised Brothers through “clandestine letters, furtive visits, and secret meetings”.

From 1888 to 1893 Br Michaëlis was the director of St Joseph school in Marseilles, with 9 Brothers and 250 students. In 1893 he made the vow of stability and became the director of the Juniorate of St Paul, with 110 Juniors. When named Visitor, he took up this role in January 1895, looking after 115 communities. When asked to take charge of the first session of the Second Novitiate, he led the program in 1897 and 1898, taking inspiration from the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Jesuit program. Then he began his visits again, especially in Spain and Rome, that were dependent on the Province of St Paul and were prospering at the time. This meant 120 communities in France, 57 in the Districts, 29 of them in Spain. As Visitor to Mexico in 1901 with three communities, he quickly found himself faced with an influx of Brothers coming from France. The biography made no secret of “the frightening question for the Brother Visitor as to how to find work and financial support for them”.

Br Euphrosin was a lecturer at the Scholasticate at St Paul when he was just 24 years old. From 1895 to 1900 he was director of a school in Marseilles and then of the Juniorate at Serres in the High Alps. From July 1903 to 1905 he led the founding of the Brothers in Jacona in Mexico and from 1906 to 1909 he was director of schools in Tlalpan and Merida. He succeeded Br Michaëlis as Provincial of Mexico from 1909 to 1920. His time as Provincial had two quite distinct phases. The first, until 1914, he developed the Province, expanding the works towards secondary education and organising the houses of formation. The second was a struggle against persecution which led to closing most of the communities and shifting the houses of formation to Texas.

Br Clement became a school director in 1895 and was to be in a position of authority at various levels until 1950. The Superiors had their eye on him early on since he was called to the first session of the Second Novitiate in 1897. He was subsequently made Master of Novices until 1902 when he became the director of St Joseph’s College Hunters Hill where he developed the sporting activities considerably. His biography mentions that copying the style of the English Public Schools was not easy to get accepted by the Superiors in Europe. In 1907 he was sent to New Zealand as director of Sacred Heart College.



From 1915 to 1917, Br Clement became Provincial of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa, an immense geographical area and difficult to manage during the Great War. He showed himself to be a tough Superior, demanding fidelity to the Rule or withdrawal from the Institute. After New Zealand became a Province in 1917 and until 1925, he only had to care for Australia. Since most of the foundations were primary schools, the Province was poor. In an effort to find vocations he named Brothers as recruiters and encouraged Brothers to attend university but he did not set up a Scholasticate. He did not really succeed as director of the Juniorate at Mittagong, seeming particularly prone to sending Juniors away.

It was at the boarding school at Paris-Plaisance where he spent ten years broken by his military service that Br Marie-Odulphe showed his qualities as teacher and animator. In 1903 he went into exile with the boarders to Grove Ferry in England and afterwards became the director at Péruwelz in Belgium. In 1908 he was sent to the Second Novitiate, becoming the director there from 1909 to 1920.

From 1910 to 1914, Br Sixto was in charge of vocations promotion. After his Second Novitiate in 1914-1915 he was the director of Belgrano and Champagnat Colleges in Buenos Aires before serving as Provincial in Argentina from 1923 to 1932. He became director of Champagnat College in Buenos Aires again from 1933 to 1940.

Br Sebastiani was made director of Belgrano College in Buenos Aires at the age of 27. After his Second Novitiate at Grugliasco where he was much appreciated by Br Avit, he led an agricultural institute for orphans. In 1936 he was the director of the Scholasticate at Luján and then director at Mendoza before becoming Provincial. There are no details provided on how he went in these roles.

When they were around 30 and sometimes well before that, these Brothers gave proof of their capacity as teachers and of their religious motivation. So they were considered suitable for positions of responsibility. Some special qualities could be seen in them. Some were gifted in forming other Brothers. This was the case with Brs Flamien, Michaëlis and Marie-Odulphe who played a major role in getting the Second Novitiate off the ground. Br Euphrosin was partly involved in this as well. On the other hand, Brs Clement, Sixto and Sebastiani led careers as administrators of large school institutions. Formation and college administration, then, were the two paths leading to the role of Visitor or Provincial before the General Council or the General Chapter chose these Brothers as Assistants. It should be noted, however, that Br Marie-Odulphe went directly from his role as Master of the Second Novitiate to that of Assistant.

## **The role of Assistants**

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All of them came into this role aged between 46 (Br Flamien) and 61 (Br Clement). Apart from Br Sebastiani (1896-1960) and Br Sixto (1886-1954), who died relatively young, they remained in charge until they were over 80. With the exception of Br Flamien, they had had a lengthy experience of the internationality of the congregation. Also, Brs Flamien, Michaëlis and Euphrosin had lived through periods of extreme difficulty when they were Provincials.

Br Flamien was named Assistant on 31 October 1908 to replace Br Liboire. At the time he was Provincial of Aubenas and its two districts, Pont s (Spain) and Brazil which would later become the Provinces of Léon and Brazil North. His biography gives little detail of his work, mentioning only the enormous difficulties arising from the lack of vocations, his great preoccupation. In 1940 he was relieved of his responsibilities as Assistant and retired to Aubenas. In 1941 he had the joy of seeing the Brothers resume wearing the soutane but the Province was without fresh blood. In the biography he is described as the worthy successor of Br Philogone, the previous Assistant of the Province, but one could be forgiven for thinking that the extreme discretion of the text concerning his time as Assistant covered over his quasi-failure as a leader in France. The causes of this were undoubtedly in part related to the priority he gave to Spain and Brazil where he sent most of the newly professed at the expense of Aubenas.

Br Michaëlis was not Provincial for long since the death of Br Bérillus meant his being made Assistant in April 1908. He was responsible for the Provinces of St Paul and Spain, and the districts of Argentina, Chile (1911) and Peru. The situation deteriorated rapidly in Barcelona on 25 July 1909. The Provincial house was burnt to the ground. The Novices and Scholastics had to make their own way for several days before finding refuge at Vich. Br Lycarion was killed and some Brothers imprisoned. It was like a preview of the tragedy that was to occur in the years 1936-39 and Br Michaëlis was unable to do much to help. His biography, as was the case for Br Flamien, said a lot about his earlier life but little about his work as Assistant. The inclusion of some statistics on the Province of Spain showed that this was the centre of the region Br Michaëlis covered as Assistant.

When he became Vicar General of the Institute in 1942, Br Michaëlis reorganised the Provinces of Spain that he knew so well, and also those of Canada. The author of the biography reproached him for his “apparent coldness, his seriousness and austerity”. When he died in 1950, the Province of St Paul had no new blood as had happened in the Province of Aubenas. These two Provinces who had been so fruitful in making new foundations had to be merged.

In 1920 Br Euphrosin became Assistant for St Paul-Italy and its former dependent Districts of Mexico and Colombia. His biography spoke of “a certain liveliness of character” in carrying out his duties which created some difficulties during his visits. He organised vocations work in Mexico with Juniorates at Carri n and Espira de L’Agly and a Novitiate at Pontôs.

When he was appointed Assistant in 1928, Br Clement was little loved by the Brothers of South Africa, Great Britain and Ireland whose particular circumstances he failed to recognise. Rather, he considered Australia and New Zealand as “the chosen land of the congregation”. He resigned in 1950 at the age of 83 and died in Australia in 1957. As a Provincial and Assistant with a strong temperament, building consensus was not his strong suit. It is a fact, however, that at the time of his death Australia was really prospering. His biography rightly refers to cultural difficulties provoked by the Institute’s growing international character, difficulties related to pedagogical style, and also, real tensions between countries.

Br Marie-Odulphe was elected Assistant in 1920 and was made responsible for Beaucamps, Belgium, Congo, Brazil South and Germany. The author of his biography describes in considerable detail his visits to Brazil and Congo but had nothing to say about the other sectors under his responsibility. He wrote that some Brothers “had found him somewhat pretentious in the ease with which he accepted tributes, receptions and words of praise”.

Br Sixto left Argentina at the beginning of 1941 when named Assistant for Aubeñas, León and Brazil North. In 1942 he became the Assistant for the Provinces of Spain. The re-organisation of these Provinces must not have been at all easy since his slogan was “All for keeping us united; nothing must separate us”. His biography added, “He came back to this time and time again, battling against the slightest seed of rivalry and constantly promoting the unity of the four Provinces. No word against any one of them ever passed his lips nor any comparison that might be taken the wrong way by others.

The same author<sup>128</sup> also wrote of his tenacity in creating a national federation of ex-students. His spiritual side was quite original. “He had a real devotion to Fr. Champagnat”, a characteristic that was not found in many Brothers at the time. One Brother was particularly full of praise, saying, “He was above all human. The mystic in him was twinned with the gentleman and the teaching apostle”.

Indeed, in him we see an Assistant who followed a quite original path in life. He had had no real initial formation, had never been involved in houses of formation but had made his mark as an institutional leader. His nomination as Assistant seems to have been largely related to the need to gain acceptance for the restructuring of the Spanish Provinces at the end of the war. As a Spanish Brother not belonging to any of the old Provinces, he was well-placed to do this.

Br Sebastiani (1896 – 1963) was elected Assistant in 1946 and made responsible for the Provinces of Italy, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay. His biography described him as a man who was rather impenetrable, an intellectual and an administrator, a man of books and files with little practical sense. Not much is known of where he acquired his great culture. Still, he was the one who got the Jesus Magister program off the ground. He resigned for health reasons in 1960 at the age of 64.

The biographies, then, say little about the long careers of these Assistants with whom the Brothers had only occasional contact, and then more at an institutional level than casually as Brothers. In saying this, I am touching on one of the limits of my work. Only an in-depth study of the archives in Rome would allow more accuracy or revision of these summary profiles. For the moment we have to be content with some appraisals of their qualities, defects and character traits: Br Clement, very rigid and very Australian to the end; Br Marie-Odulphe who liked being fêted; Br Michaëlis, very cold; Br Euphrosin, a lively character. Only the descriptions of Brs Sebastiani and Sixto reveal personalities that are not weighed down by their role as guardians of tradition. They were also the youngest, as well as not being in the role for very long.

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<sup>128</sup> He drew on the biographies which appeared in *Stella Maris* (magazine of Bética Province) and *Orientaciones* (León Province).

## **A system of promotion**

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These biographies, limited as they are, show an Institute functioning as a type of filter for discerning the capacities of people. The apprenticeship as cooks disappeared over time. Young Brothers who were judged to be talented were sometimes given special treatment in their formation, such as having the chance to get their higher teaching certificate. Yet the overall impression is that most of the Assistants were by and large self-taught. In weighing up the timing and appointments to positions of increasing importance, the Institute was making assessments based on four criteria: religious motivation, teaching ability, administrative talent, aptitude for formation and the management of Brothers. It was a meritocracy. The vow of stability was a sign of approval of a person's maturity as a Brother that was increasingly linked to the time of the Brother's Second Novitiate. A step upward often followed as Visitor or Provincial.

Becoming an Assistant was moving into a totally different status. It was practically a position for life and more administrative than on the ground. The Brothers' like or dislike of the Assistant depended on the style of his canonical visits and his relational qualities. Not much is known of their relationships with Provincials but they must not have been always simple.

## 12.

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# THE COMMON FUND AND FINANCIAL DECENTRALISATION

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the establishment of large boarding schools and commercial production, the Institute held finances that enabled it to face attacks from the government and exile without too many worries on the material front. This fact was a significant element in the success of the growing internationality of the Institute that is normally not considered. On the other hand, the new Constitutions of 1903 led to basic changes in this area, with the Provinces acquiring broad financial autonomy. The two fundamental questions of centre-periphery relationships and sharing resources were thereafter intertwined.

At the 1903 Chapter the Finance Commission registered nett assets of more than 10 million gold francs, with buildings and properties making up close to 80% off this sum. The other sources were varied, including a drop in community contributions to the common fund but a substantial increase in commercial operations – the sale of text books, Arquebuse, and chalk biphosphate. The reports also signalled the allocations made to Provincial houses, after 1896, probably for the support of Juniorates. Two large outlays show that finances were integral to world expansion. A foundation in New York had cost 1,300,000 F and more than 700,000 F. had been allocated to the Province of St Paul, mainly for its growth in Spain.

Obviously the Institute stood to lose its holdings in France valued at some 4 million and a half francs but the value of assets held outside of France was equal to this and measures had been taken to keep control of the commercial operations. The Superior General, then, was in a position to reassure the Brothers, particularly the older ones.

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### Losses that were well covered

The finance report presented to the 1907 Chapter commented that “despite the loss of our holdings in France”, the Congregation had holdings outside of France valued at nearly 7 million F. while its returns on commercial operations and disposable assets had improved. Responding to a fear that was present in 1903, the report wanted to reassure “those who feared that the congregation would not be

able to provide for their daily bread or basic needs". To respond to the criticisms of those who thought "that the centrally-held funds were unproductive", the report clarified that two banks in Turin managed the cash funds while long term deposits were held in banks in New York and London. The international growth of the congregation also had a financial dimension.

The shock of 1903 did cause, however, some uncertainty and serious conflicts. For example, it was announced to the Chapter that the Arquebuse brand had been sold to an Englishman living in London and was from then on under the jurisdiction of the English courts. The liqueur was produced at Carmagnola, Italy, and would remain the responsibility of the Institute. This issue, and others no doubt, were to provoke Br Martial, the Procurator General, to leave the Institute.

Regarding losses suffered by the Institute, a quite large number of buildings were bought by groups of friends or by dioceses to house their seminarians on the understanding that the Institute might be able to recoup them one day. In terms of realisable assets the 1907 Chapter recorded that the nett figure of the Provinces of 1,136,000 F. in 1903 had fallen to 644,000 F. as a result of "all kinds of adjustments made, with artwork, furniture, hides, farm animals etc. now gone after liquidation".

## The Procure of the General Administration and the Provinces

In 1903, the Provinces still did not have an established canonical personality and the Provincial procures were tightly controlled by the Procure of the General Administration which owned all the immovable assets, financed the Juniorates, and acted as a depository for the personal patrimony of Brothers and schools.

FINANCIAL BALANCE OF THE PROVINCES IN 1903				
PROVINCE	ASSETS 1903	LIABILITIES 1903	ASSETS 1907	LIABILITIES 1907
St Genis-Laval	123.000 <sup>129</sup>	1.800	83.000	16.000
Hermitage	79.000	87.000	36.000	5.000
Varenes	93.000	14.000	26.000	2.000
St Paul	139.000	3.000	8.000	2.000
Aubenas	253.000	15.000	76.000	11.000
Beaucamps	112.000	0	90.000	4.000
Lacabane (West)	108.000	13.000	37.000	7.000
Dumfries (Brit. Is.)	45.000	0	8.500	0
Sidney (Australia)	276	102.000	16.000	41.000
Iberville (Canada/Usa)	120.000	37.000	124.000	82.000
San Andrés (Spain)	93.000	34.000	164.000	58.000

<sup>129</sup> Rounded numbers.

PROVINCE	ASSETS 1903	LIABILITIES 1903	ASSETS 1907	LIABILITIES 1907
China			96.000	30.000
Syria			42.000	5.000
Constantinople			38.000	4.000
Colombia			89.000	50.000
Mexico			32.000	21.000
Brasil South			12.000	58.000
Brasil Central			105.000	57.000
Brasil North			?	?
South Africa			33.000	25.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.400.000</b>	<b>310.000</b>	<b>1.128.000</b>	<b>484.000</b>

Source: Acts of 1903 Chapter, *Finance Commission*.

By 1907 the older Provinces had seen their assets drop under the double pressure of the liquidation of the works in France and the creation of new Provinces. This drop, however, was not uniform and the huge change in the figures for St Paul seems to have resulted from a firm decision to accept the reality of exile. The newer Provinces, still in the phase of making investments, were living through tough financial times but, overall, the bottom line was clearly in the black.

## Payments to the Common Fund

The 1903 Chapter did not give any details of payments made to the Common Fund while that of 1907 prepared the following table for the period 1903-07, linking Mother Provinces and their overseas dependencies:

TRANSFERS FROM PROVINCES TO THE COMMON FUND (IN FRANCS) 1903-1907			
MOTHER PROVINCE	PAYMENTS MOTHER PROVINCE	PROVINCE DEPENDENCIES	PAYMENTS PROVINCE DEPENDENCIES
St Genis	39.910		
		Turkey	0
		China	0
Hermitage	65.547		
		Canada	31.102
St Paul	62.048		
		San Andrès	0
		Mexico	11.187
		Colombia	0

MOTHER PROVINCE	PAYMENTS MOTHER PROVINCE	PROVINCE DEPENDENCIES	PAYMENTS PROVINCE DEPENDENCIES
Aubenas	21.589		
		Brazil North	0
Varenes	62.020		
		Syria	0
Lacabane	50.400		
		Brazil Central	0
Dumfries			0
		Sydney	50.150
		South Africa	24.721
<b>Total</b>	<b>301.514</b>		<b>117.160</b>

Source: Acts of 1907 Chapter.



31. Balance (France). Plant for production of biphosphate.



32. Distillery at Carmagnola (Italy). Production of Arquebuse by the Brothers.

It is understandable that the newer Provinces were not in a position to contribute to the Common Fund but even so there are noticeable differences linked no doubt to the economic activity of the countries concerned but also to varying Province policies. The fact remains that it was the older Provinces, weakened as they were, that financed most of the expansion. The report even speaks of the significant contributions made by the secularised Brothers from the seven French Provinces in 1906-07 to a total of 178,690 F. which was "large enough for the upkeep of our senior and infirm Brothers".<sup>130</sup>

In 1907 the liqueur Arquebuse produced only "a relatively modest profit" of 377,000 F. owing to the shift to Carmagnola and court cases for fraud and against the liquidator who had tried to assume control of the brand name. The production of chalk biphosphate

<sup>130</sup> It seems that this sum should not be added to the more than 300,000 F. coming from the Mother Provinces. It was simply provided to show that "a good number of secularised Brothers retained a family spirit and remained faithfully attached to their vocation".



was still in the hands of the Province of St Paul and produced a profit of 259,000 F. after taking out the amount needed for the upkeep of the older Brothers of the Province. Finally, the sale of traditional textbooks, “the logo of which had had to be secularised” in France, recently translated into Spanish and Portuguese, was generating funds for the Provinces of Spain and Brazil and had added the sum of 194,000 F. to the Common Fund. The report, then, was able to bring closure to an argument, some aspects of which have been mentioned earlier.

*In 1903 some Chapter members had expressed certain fears regarding the material future of our aged, infirm or ill Brothers. The assurance given at the time by our dearly departed Brother Théophane is today vindicated and substantiated on the whole. The congregation, thanks be to God, remains in a position to provide everyone with suitable accommodation, food, and clothing, and whatever is needed for our sick.*

## The financial personality of the Provinces

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Finances were decentralised between 1903 and 1920 and the 1922 Constitutions simply endorsed the practice. From that time on, the Provinces appointed Province Bursars and were responsible for Novitiates, Juniorates, sick Brothers and schools. Any eventual surplus was to be placed in safe investments under the control of the General Council. The General Council (article 169) would receive one third of the surplus from communities and the Provinces two thirds. A ceiling would be set for the reserve funds held by each Province, with any excess amount passing to the Common Fund. This Fund no longer had any commitments other than the expenses of the General Administration and “providing assistance when possible and needed to Provinces, communities and works that had insufficient income”. Thus, the role of the Finance office of the General Administration was to manage a solidarity fund and to have general oversight of all finances.

## Finances at the 1920 Chapter

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For the first time the accounts of the Provinces and the General Administration were clearly separated. In spite of the war the General Finance Office produced a nett profit of 7,573,000 F. compared to 1907. The main sources of income were:

Biphosphate, liqueur, textbooks:	23.6 %
Interest and returns on shares:	50.9 %
Province contributions:	25.2 %

Expenses were made up of:

Assistance to Provinces:	21.9 %
Capital expenses (purchases, constructions, repairs):	6.0 %
Purchases of shares:	68.4 %
Returns to Provinces on the 1/3 of their incomes:	3.6 %.

The General Administration, then, had a highly profitable commercial operation and a portfolio of shares that was increasing in value. Province contributions, by comparison, were quite feeble, not to say almost zero, as the assistance and returns paid out were equal to contributions received.

## The wealth and poverty of the Provinces

The report listed the amounts contributed by the various Provinces between October 1907 and April 1920, or a period of twelve and half years.

<b>SUMS TRANSFERRED BY PROVINCES TO THE COMMON FUND (IN FRANCS) BETWEEN OCTOBER 1907 AND APRIL 1920</b>	
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS BY %</b>	
38-30 %	8 Provinces (New Zealand, China...)
27-20 %	9 Provinces
18-15 %	3 Provinces
5.3-0 %	4 Provinces
Fuente: Acts of 1920 Chapter.	

Few Provinces, then, managed to pay the third of their income to the General Administration but it is, nevertheless, quite hard to explain the differences in contributions. It is surprising, for example, to note that Provinces that had suffered greatly in the war, such as Beaucamps, made substantial payments while others, like Argentina, that were apparently not so affected, made minimal contributions. It is true that some countries had embarked on a policy of growth and the investment that this demanded while others, such as Syria and Constantinople, had suffered heavy losses as a result of the war. Another way of looking at the figures is that most of the older Provinces continued the highly centralised practices that were in place before 1903 while others found it difficult to bow to a rule that they found too restrictive. In any case, the General Administration seems to have found it hard to get the Provinces to comply.

At the 1932 Chapter the situation remained very positive despite the post-war inflation and the beginnings of the Depression. The General Administration put its annual expenses from 1920 to 1932 as 614,710 gold Francs or 3,073,650 F. in bank notes.<sup>131</sup> In terms of income, contributions to the Common Fund increased annually up to 551,865 gold Francs, “an amount less than the average of the expenses indicated above”. In total, the income to the Common Fund from interest, commercial returns, and Province contributions rose annually to 1 million gold Francs or roughly 5,000,000 Francs in notes but there were grounds to fear that the Depression would lead to “less interest and lower returns on commercial products”.

<sup>131</sup> The French Franc, called the “Franc Poincaré” was set at 1/5 of the gold Franc in 1926.

The income across the Provinces was very unequal. The highest earners were Spain, the United States, Mexico, Brazil Central and Argentina. On average Provinces contributed 14% of their income instead of the 33% theoretically required to the Common Fund. Moreover, the General Administration made remissions, loans and advances to a number of Provinces as if its task was to support Provinces rather than get income from them.

## **Weak contributions to the Common Fund**

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The financial report to the 1946 Chapter recorded that the amounts sent in by Provinces did not go above 9.5% of their incomes. Six Provinces sent nothing; 9 less than 5% of income; 10 less than 10%; 4 less than 15% and only 3 made a full contribution. So, “the Administration Commission gave itself the task of reminding Brothers responsible for temporal affairs of article 169 of the Constitutions. This article, the same as all the others, must not be ignored” and Provincial Councils had to regularise their situation regarding this matter. As a matter of fact, by 31 December 1945 the assets managed by the General Administration was 8,126,986 gold Francs as against 11,096,273 as of 31 December 1932. This was the first time that the General Finance Office noted a drop in its assets due mainly to foreign exchange issues. In contrast to the reports of 1920 and 1932 which ended full of optimism, that of 1946 felt the need to issue a recall to order.

In 1958 the situation of contributions from the 32 Provinces was again less than brilliant. During the twelve previous years they had sent in on average 6.4% of their income and only three of them sent in more than 10%. From then on, the French Franc was replaced by the Swiss Franc, the Dollar and other national currencies which complicated the production of a global set of accounts.

While the nett assets of 14 million Swiss Francs under the General Administration remained significant, there was less income from textbooks because they had not been re-edited in France. Also, Arquebuse produced at the Hermitage and chalk biphosphate were being targeted by a desire of the Chapter to move away from commercial activities.<sup>132</sup> The report insisted on the role of the Econome General in the purchase of many buildings and the support of works of common interest such as Second Novitiates. But the prevailing impression was that in the eyes of the majority of Capitulants the days of the Econome General having a regulating function were over.

## **Finances as a sign of progressive decentralisation**

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To summarise, the financial history from 1903 to 1958 was highly successful especially in the light of the troubled times that had been traversed. During that period, the system put in place at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Brs Louis-Marie

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<sup>132</sup> Demanded by Rome.

and Théophane was in operation. This was based on income from commercial operations, shares, and Province contributions.

The fragility of each one of these sources of income was to show itself, happily at different moments. Firstly, there were the Provinces that defaulted. The principle of contributing one third of incomes, probably set too high, was not respected in fact. From 1920 to 1945 the stock market was caught up in the financial disorder that followed the 14-18 war, then the Depression and the Second World War. The *Econome General* tried to alleviate the situation by investing in a number of stocks in reliable places such as Switzerland, New York and London, by buying land such as St Quentin-Fallavier or goods for re-sale. But in 1946 capital losses were in evidence even if the balance sheet was positive. By 1958 the commercial operations which had constituted a very important source of income had come to the end of their lives.

Financial power had thus shifted little by little from the General Council to the Provinces, as shown by the 1946 and 1958 Chapters. Thereafter the income of the General Administration came essentially from a portfolio of shares and buildings, the rental returns of which were uncertain and which people often dreamt of selling when they were not being needed by the Institute.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, the post-war prosperity allowed the General Administration to make more heavy investments such as the construction of the General House in Rome after 1958.

#### **APPENDIX 1: General Administration 1907-1958, p. 440**

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<sup>133</sup> It is perhaps significant that the Province of China, placed in difficulty by the arrival of the communists, was not assisted directly by the General Administration but by Provinces.

## 13.

# TRANSMITTING THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE. THE CIRCULARS

The Circulars are a powerful means of preserving the unity of the Institute and recalling that the Institute, before being a society of teachers and administrators of educational works, is a group that is essentially spiritually-based. Between 1860 and 1879 Br Louis-Marie had built up a solid synthesis of Marist spirituality that, along with the works of Br Jean-Baptiste, would serve as a point of reference until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This synthesis, however, concealed much of the tradition of our origins which would only begin to be studied after 1950. The Letters of Fr. Champagnat would be published only in 1985 and the notebooks of Br François are still waiting to be edited.

Since Br Théophile entered the Hermitage in 1845 he did not have any spiritual authority based on direct contact with the Founder. Moreover, he gave his energies to the rapid international growth taking place and to the educational role of the congregation. His most important Circulars, in which he drew heavily on Salesian pedagogy, dealt with piety in schools and with post-school works. Pontifical texts were systemically published. The cause of Beatification of Fr. Champagnat and his accounts of his travels around the world filled numerous pages. The period of Rev Br Théophile was, then, very poor on doctrine.<sup>134</sup> With him we passed from the time of the great interpreters, those who were there at the beginning, who saw and heard, and entered that of those who heard about, who read about the beginnings.



**33.** Br Théophile,  
Superior General.

The Circular of 12 December 1903<sup>135</sup> confirmed the start of a new era in the Institute since after that date it was under the Constitutions that had been definitively approved by Rome on 27 May 1903. They were printed so quickly that by

<sup>134</sup> There was, however, an important exception to this judgement. It was the brief instruction on the spirit of prayer (10 May 1902, T. X, p. 143-152) which presents a remarkably profound vision of prayer, a long way from the heavy and demanding instructions of Br Louis-Marie.

<sup>135</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 366. Circular of 12 December 1903.

December almost all Brothers had a copy. Because such a change might have troubled some spirits, Br Théophane reminded everyone that they should be regarded “not as a purely human work but as a divine work, the authentic expression of the will of God for everything concerning our religious life and the works to which we must dedicate ourselves”. Moreover, “in comparison with the troubled times in which we live” they guarantee stability. He concluded by reminding everyone that the old common Rules and Rules of Government remained in force for whatever was not contrary to the new Constitutions.

On 18 March 1905<sup>136</sup>, he outlined the procedure for temporary profession which brought to an end the tradition of making a vow of obedience at the end of the Novitiate. Thereafter, two months before the annual retreat, Brothers had to make an application in writing to the Provincial Council to make or renew their vows. Finally professed Brothers were to write informative notes on the temporary professed to the Council.

### **The important contribution of Rev Br Stratonique (1907-20)**

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He had to deal with problems that started under his predecessor, secularisation and the assimilation of the new 1903 Constitutions which created a decentralised system of government. These challenges were joined by two others: the centenary of the Institute and the war. For these reasons, during his time as Superior General, Rev Br Stratonique wrote a lot about the Constitutions and on the need to return to the spirit of the origins. It is therefore appropriate to stop and consider these two themes through which he expressed a quite personal line of thought.

On the 31 December 1907<sup>137</sup> and following the Chapter, Rev Br Stratonique gave details about the *General Directory*, published in 1905, a new edition of the old Common Rules and the Rules of Government, “updated to comply with our new Constitutions definitively approved by the Holy See in 1903”, and duly authorised by Rome after verification. In an attempt to make a connection between this Directory and our origins, he stated that, “The content of this book is little different to the Rules and Constitutions that the second General Chapter had to spend its time on in 1852”.

Thus, the Institute had two legislative documents: the Constitutions, modifications of which were reserved to the Holy See; and the Directory, containing more details, “which has not received the approval of the Holy See, nor does it have to”. It can be changed by General Chapters which can add Chapter statutes to it. Further, the Circular presented (p. 260) a number of articles that had been modified, approved or new, that were the work of the previous Chapter. In article 616 a timid effort can be seen to adapt to the reality of the diversity of countries and Provinces:

*In countries where it is recognised as necessary to wear in public clothing that differs from what is prescribed in the Constitutions, its form should everywhere be according to the model approved by the General Council.*

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<sup>136</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 515. Circular of 18 March 1905.

<sup>137</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 257. Circular of 31 December 1907.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1909<sup>138</sup>, Rev Br Stratonique began a series of Circulars (in 1912-14, 1916) on the theme of the Constitutions, always dated on the feast of the Presentation.<sup>139</sup> Addressing himself to the Brothers, Novices and postulants, he laid out the history of the Constitutions since 1817, the daily routine of the two first Brothers being “like the first step towards a constitution” and the new set of rules for the six first Brothers around 1819 being “like a more developed, more complete constitution”. “It was the common life in all things and all places”.

The introduction of a religious habit and vows in 1826 was a third step for him, which provided him with the platform to criticise those Brothers who did not respect our custom regarding linen socks, a custom established by the Founder and confirmed by Chapters over eighty years. Then he reviewed the Rule of 1837 and the Chapter of 1852-54. In referring to the provisional approval of the Constitutions by the Holy See, he recognised that there had been “several problems in the application” which were to cause a long period of waiting of forty years before the definitive approval in 1903.

Much could be said on this historical narrative but, in the end, it succeeded quite well in presenting the Constitutions as having been developed progressively and linking them strongly to the Founder and the first Brothers.

## Unalterable Constitutions

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On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1911<sup>140</sup> his Circular gave a response to a highly important objection that “present-day circumstances have changed many things; they should be taken into account”. For Br Stratonique, “passing situations that the Good Lord will shorten in his mercy” should be ignored ... “the principle is and always will be the same because God does not vary in His holy Will”. Changing the rules, then, is to build on sand.

Then he employed a series of comparisons of which the most striking was the planetary system in which the stars move, he believed, “according to well-known laws without ever deviating the path traced for them by the Creator and without ever crashing into one another”. In the same way, the Constitutions of religious orders are “the key mechanism of their whole organisation” which is their protection against decadence in as much as they are faithful “in all the climates of the world”.

For him, then, the perseverance of religious, which was the central theme of his Circular, is linked to the strict observance of the Rules and Constitutions. “What has caused such regrettable defections? Almost always the cause can be found in numerous and persistent infractions against the Constitutions and Rules.” He mo-

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<sup>138</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 335. Circular of 5 February 1909.

<sup>139</sup> The spiritual purpose was clear but Br Stratonique does not seem to have explained it. We could, for example, see in the date the example of the Holy Family submitting itself to the divine law.

<sup>140</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 485. Circular of 2 February 1911.

bilises biblical arguments, teachings of his predecessors and examples from the history of the Institute to support his assertion.

This doctrine can be partly explained by his worry over the weak perseverance of the Brothers. But fundamentally it is based on a theology and a philosophy that allows for no change. It is formulated with clarity. Any change or adaptation to the times and context is corruption. Making the Constitutions sacred as if they were a new Gospel is in essence nothing other than adapting the Institute to Roman theology and ecclesiology in which the Church is portrayed as a perfect society transcending human waywardness and established, by right if not in fact, as master of truth and stability, in the image of God. It was also a theory in contradiction with the historical narrative of the construction of the Rule, but Br Stratonique does not seem to have paid attention to this.



34. Brother Stratonique,  
Superior General.

Even if Br Stratonique knew not to push people to the edge with his principles, he considered it his duty as Superior to combat a manner of thinking and practice of Brothers who were little inclined to embrace such a radical vision, something that he considered to be an infidelity preventing the Institute from reaching the degree of fruitfulness that God expected of it. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1912<sup>141</sup>, commenting on article 144 of the Constitutions,<sup>142</sup> he again exhorted the Brothers to be regular to a fault, thereby generating vocations in abundance. Indeed, for him, not only was there no contradiction between doctrinal rigidity and apostolic mission but, rather, the first conditioned the second.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1914<sup>143</sup> Br Stratonique again insisted on the unalterable nature of the Constitutions which bore “some resemblance to the Ten Commandments” in a world where everything passes away. Since he feared that “the diversity of climates, of language, of customs, of forms of government” within the Institute risked corrupting its spirit, he took it upon himself to condemn “negligence in and disdain for the small things and the ease with which the Constitutions were broken”.

The war seems to have prevented him from continuing his yearly instruction on the Constitutions. He came back to it, however, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1916<sup>144</sup> with a lengthy discussion of obedience. In this he condemned outright “the trend to equality, to putting everyone on the same level, to pretensions to uncontrolled freedom,

<sup>141</sup> *Circulars*, T. XII, p. 7. Circular of 2 February 1912.

<sup>142</sup> This article imposes on the Superior General the duty of demanding that all observe the Constitutions, of ensuring the spiritual well-being of the Brothers, and of seeing that the Institute reach “the highest degree of prosperity possible for the greater glory of God”.

<sup>143</sup> *Circulars*, T. XII, p. 323. Circular of 2 February 1914.

<sup>144</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIII, p. 165-188. Circular of 22 April 1912.



to repeated and outrageous attacks on whoever happens to be in a position of social authority". Against this libertarian and egalitarian unruliness, besides *The Imitation of Christ* and the history of the Institute, he cited Mgr. Gay (1815-1892) whose thinking he certainly learnt from and who was one of the well-known spiritual writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but a committed traditionalist to boot.

In the Circular of 19 March 1919<sup>145</sup> he comes across as anxious in his description of the state of the Institute, even to the point of admitting failure after a war "the repercussions of which we are experiencing in all parts of the world". Was this a kind of spiritual testament dedicated to his successor at the end of a particularly testing mandate? In any case, he drew explicitly from the first Circular of Br Louis-Marie of 17 December 1860 who had charted a renewal programme around the three points of piety, fraternal charity, and perfect regularity. It would seem that Br Diogène and the General Council elected soon afterwards tried in their own way and in quite different circumstances to put this programme into practice.

## Champagnat and the first Brothers

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In preparing for the centenary Br Stratonique comes across as a different person to the punctilious guardian of the Constitutions and in some senses contradicted what he had said about these being inalterable. In the Circular of 19 March 1908<sup>146</sup> (T. VIII p. 295) he invited the Brothers to prepare for this event with a novena of years with the purpose of increasing the spirit of piety, regularity and fervour "that reigned among our first Brothers". Nevertheless, he would develop an original vision of Marist spirituality that was somewhat independent of Brs Jean-Baptiste and Louis-Marie. In the set of preparatory Circulars he used three approaches:

1. The essential Marist virtues
2. Brothers who were models of these virtues, with a focus on one central virtue, that of devotion
3. The importance of the ascetical writings of the Institute which should be studied and lived out to the full.

A table of the first two approaches:

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<sup>145</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 223-256. Circular of 19 March 1919.

<sup>146</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 295. Circular of 19 March 1908.

TOPICS TREATED IN THE CIRCULARS AND MODELS		
DATES	TOPICS TEATED	MODELS
6 June 1908 (T. X1 p. 314)	“to think, speak and act as Venerable Br Champagnat thought, spoke and acted”	Br Jérôme <sup>147</sup>
25 April 1909 (T. 11 p. 395)	Imitation of Champagnat: man of prayer, of the Rule, of zeal, of mortification, of devotion	
24 May 1910	Spirit of faith of the Founder (2nd Part of his Life)	
18 May 1911 (T. 11 p. 558)	Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Christian strength” and “the holy fear of God”	Brs François, Louis, Laurent, Jean-Baptiste, Stanislas, Louis-Marie, Jérôme, Bonaventure
22 April 1912 (T. 12 p. 118)	Practice of the Presence of God and zeal	
24 May 1913 (T. 12 p. 259)	Mortification	Brs Louis, Stanislas, Damien, Chrysostome, Bonaventure, Léon, Cassien, Ribier, Pascal, Timothée, Jean-Claude, Philogone.
24 May 1914 (T. 12 p. 505)	Fear of God in general; fear of God in education; “moral centre of gravity in education (Don Bosco)	Brs François, Louis, Jérôme, Jean-Pierre, Louis-Marie
1° June 1915 (T. 13 p. 98)	Spirit of piety	
2 February 1916 (T. 13 p. 130)	Faith, fervour and strength	

Source: Circulars of Br Stratonique.

<sup>147</sup> See the biographical note in *Letters* T. 2, p.304-305.

In this list of nine Circulars there are two recurring themes, the fear of God and mortification, the neglect of which he deplores. In writing of fear, he says, “Alas! How feeble this sentiment has become in the environment we often have to live in today. Are not there even some places where this holy fear is an unknown?”<sup>148</sup> On 24 May 1914<sup>149</sup> he even recounted a memory of his trip between Beirut and Smyrna, quoting the words of a Muslim colonel whom he met on the boat and who spoke of people being ungovernable when they had not been educated in the fear of God. From this, he concluded that the reason that so many of our students fall away from the practice of their religion is that they have not received this “moral centre of gravity” that the hundred or so Brothers, formed in the time of Fr Cham-pagnat and whom he had known personally, possessed to the highest degree. In the same Circular, he recalled that the last Circular of Br Louis-Marie, on hell, was like his spiritual testament (p. 508).

Speaking of mortification, on 24 May 1913<sup>150</sup> he launched an attack on Brothers who criticised artificially perfect examples from the past and happily quoted the proverb, “New times, new ways!”. He even made mention of corporal penitential devices such as the cilice and the discipline, regretting that their usage had disappeared.

These two strikingly austere themes were compensated by one virtue that seemed to him to be key, devotion to the Institute. This he found to an outstanding degree in the Brothers he used as exemplars.

## Revisiting Marist spiritual patrimony

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In the Circular of 6 June 1908<sup>151</sup> which launched the nine years of preparation, Br Stratonique recommended that Brothers study our ascetical books and spoke about his intention of writing a book on “The practice of devotion in the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary during the first century of its existence”. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1913<sup>152</sup>, in his treatment of two articles of the Constitutions on the hour of religious or ascetical study and on silence, two points much neglected in communities, Br Stratonique gave an idea of what he considered to be a good ascetical culture.

Firstly, there were classical works such as *The religious man* and *Knowledge and Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ* by Fr. Saint Jure, *Christian Perfection* by Rodriguez, and lastly, a more recent text *The Christian Virtues* by Fr. Valuy, a Jesuit like the two first authors, but from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1808-1869)<sup>153</sup>. He called the

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<sup>148</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 558. Circular of 18 May 1911.

<sup>149</sup> *Circulars*, T. XII, p. 521. Circular of 24 May 1914.

<sup>150</sup> *Circulars*, T. XII, p. 259. Circular of 24 May 1913.

<sup>151</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 314. Circular of 6 June 1908.

<sup>152</sup> *Circulars*, T. XII, p. 175-204. Circular of 2 February 1913.

<sup>153</sup> See the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* T. 16, col. 221-222. Benoît Valuy was born at Rive-de-Gier, quite near the Hermitage. He was a great preacher of retreats for priests and the Exercises of St Ignatius. He was well known through his numerous books, three of which were addressed particularly to religious communities. The work mentioned above was published in 1863 and went through many editions.

ascetical books of the Institute a “priceless treasure”, listing thirteen texts (p. 183). He took the opportunity to announce his plan to publish the collection of Circulars to be ready for the centenary of the Institute. He even proposed the publication “of extracts from the letters and personal notes of our venerated Br François”, who had been rather overlooked until then and whose life should be one of the first to be re-examined. “People will see the degree to which he lived on a supernatural plane.”

<b>RENEWED ATTENTION TO MARIST SPIRITUAL PATRIMONY</b>	
<b>MARIST TEXTS 1908<sup>154</sup></b>	<b>MARIST TEXTS 1913<sup>155</sup></b>
1. Life of Venerable Marcellin Champagnat	1. Principles of Perfection (1st edition 1855)
2. Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions (Avis, leçons, sentences)	2. Life of Venerable Marcellin Champagnat (various editions) (1st ed. 1856)
3. Panegyrics of the Founder	3. Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions (Avis, leçons, sentences) (1st ed. 1868 ; 2nd ed in preparation)
4. Biographies of certain Brothers	4. The Good Superior (1st ed. 1869)
5. Biographical Notices	5. Biographies of certain Brothers (1st ed. 1868)
6. Principles of Perfection	6. Biographical Notices
7. Circulars, (mainly of Br François and BrLouis-Marie)	7. Panegyrics of the Founder(1897)
8. General Directory (part of the Common Rule) (1905)	8. Directory of Solid Piety (1st ed. 1863)
	9. Meditations on the Incarnation (BrJean-Baptiste, 1875)
	10. Meditations on the Passion (BrJean-Baptiste, 1870)
	11. Mary as taught to young people
	12. Meditations on Our Lady
	13. Collection of Circulars

Source: Circulars of Br Stratonique.

<sup>154</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 315. Circular of 6 June 1908.

<sup>155</sup> *Circulars*, T. XII, p. 183. Circular of 2 February 1913.

The two lists above from 1908 and 1913 indicate an evolution in the 'canon' of Marist writings used by Br Stratonique. In 1913 communities were encouraged to place a suitable number of these texts on a special shelf in their libraries. It is quite difficult, however, to know if this direction had much effect since these works were in general very old and rather elementary in their content. Still it is possible to count Br Stratonique among those who had an in-depth knowledge of our basic documents. He tried to give fresh life to them, especially through connecting them systematically to the first Brothers and Champagnat.

In the Circular of 2 January 1917 his "Historical overview of the Institute in its first hundred years"<sup>156</sup>, elaborates a theology of the Institute founded on Divine Providence. "God the Creator and keeper of all things presides over all events... He organises all things towards the greatest good of His children."

His account of the foundation and growth of the Institute, then, aimed at highlighting the work of Providence on behalf of the Marist Brothers, with special emphasis on certain moments that were the most important in his eyes. He saw God acting to provide a cure for evil in the coincidence between the birth of Fr. Champagnat and the assembly of the Etats-Généraux that inaugurated the French Revolution. He gave great importance to the religious aunt of the Founder, Sister Thérèse, painting her as the instrument of his Christian initiation. He mentioned the account of the call of Champagnat to the priesthood and then passed almost without a break to his encounter with the dying boy in the foothills of Mt Pilat. From all such events he drew a lesson on the presence of God at all moments which was really important to remember in a time of war:

*When the flow of human events seems to want to drag everything with it, when our souls are full of anguish at the sight of present ills or the fear of ills to come, enough to make you tremble, let us remember that it is God who uses the sand on the seashore to stop and break the waves.*

Then Br Stratonique moved on to the providential action of God in the foundation and growth of the Institute. He recalled the vocation of Br Louis and the worry of Brs François, Louis-Marie and Stanislas at the death of Fr. Champagnat. The most original event mentioned was the year 1883, a date he considered providential since it was then that the Chapter decided to consecrate the Institute to the Sacred Heart.<sup>157</sup> It was to the Sacred Heart that Br Stratonique attributed the inspiration of the Superiors to break with the policy of Rev Br Louis-Marie to keep the Brothers in France by accepting to send Brothers to the Seychelles, Canada and Spain. Thus, in 1903, "everything was ready to receive those who wanted to keep their vocations safe".

His Circular of 24 May 1917<sup>158</sup> (p. 58-80), proposed as intended fruit of the annual retreats, "An increase in the supernatural spirit in the Institute as a whole and

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<sup>156</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 4-29. Circular of 2 January 1917.

<sup>157</sup> Under the inspiration of Br Amphiloque Deydier, Master of Novices at Varennes, but certainly supported by Br Stratonique.

<sup>158</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 58-80. Circular of 24 May 1917.

within each of its members". He completed his brief historical narrative with detailed references to some great models of Brothers from the past.<sup>159</sup>

## Consistency in his teaching?

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Br Stratonique's writings exemplify quite clearly the basic problem in the thinking of the Superiors. It was based on a theology that was more Plato-inspired than Christian, where stability was understood as divine and time understood as corruption. In such a scheme of things, the Church, as the image of the society in heaven, had to stand firm against any change, understood as simply a passing nuisance that Divine Providence would correct sooner or later for the benefit of those who had remained strong.

Fortunately, this metaphysical stance which was essentially a denial of history and even the Incarnation to a point, was strongly nuanced by the fraternal spirit and the love of the Institute seen as a spiritual family that he wanted to be better known and appreciated. For this reason, right at the end of his mandate, in the Circular of 24 May 1919,<sup>160</sup> Br Stratonique spoke again of his intention to write a golden book on devotion.<sup>161</sup> His attempt at unifying Marist spirituality is not convincing. His providential reading of history in the style of Bossuet is not really consistent with his ideal of unchangeable stability. His concept of the Institute, however, as a fraternity sounds right.

## Between clarity, conservatism and openness

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The contradictory characteristics in the teaching of Br Stratonique would be found in Circulars up till 1958, often expressed in a more nuanced way depending on the personality of each of the Superiors, and also because it was becoming more and more incongruous in a world where events were accelerating to state that there was nothing new under the sun.

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<sup>159</sup> Brs Louis, François, Laurent, Dorothée, Stanislas, Damien, Bonaventure, Léon, Elisée, Nicéas, Attale, Octavius, Pascal.

<sup>160</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 293-300. Circular of 24 May 1919.

<sup>161</sup> In *Nos supérieurs* (1953) p. 310, Br Jean-Emile said that the project was abandoned because "it was soon seen that the testimonies received resembled one another too much, and, with more of the same to come, were going to lead to a text with too little variation to be worth publishing." But this argument sounds strange since a synthesis could easily have been prepared from these notes which have disappeared according to Br Jean-Emile.

## Br Diogène, a prudent man (1920-1942)

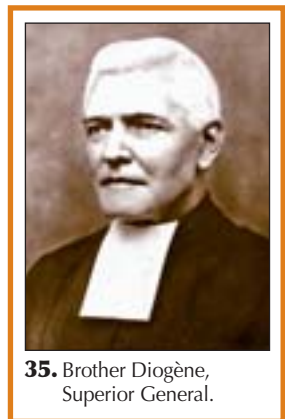
In Br Diogène one has the impression of being close to Br Théophane. He wrote few real Circulars but published many pontifical documents. There was little personal thinking in evidence, Br Diogène admitting that he was using material from such and such a book or conference that he liked. It was not because he lacked ideas, as shall be seen, but the problem was certainly more complex, as it had been in the case of Br Théophane. Indeed, both men took over the leadership after verbose Superior Generals and had to allow for a certain fatigue in their readers. On the other hand, they appeared somewhat troubled by a reading of Marist Spirituality that was set in concrete: since our origins have been definitively established by the official texts of the Institute and by the Rule, what was the point of repeating them ad infinitum? They gave their time, then, to what appeared to them to hold out something new, such as the pontifical documents and works on spirituality of their times. The biography of Rev Br Diogène would judge his Circulars to have been “less solemn than those of Br Louis-Marie but not less solid nor less practical”.<sup>162</sup> In short, they were “written for the conference room”.

When he was writing more personally, Br Diogène seemed to contradict himself in his approach. Thus, he affirmed a religious vocation as a veritable predestination in his Circular of 25 December 1921.<sup>163</sup> The one so called could not escape this even if he did not make vows. This idea can be partly explained by the post-war environment when Brothers who had been conscripted were hesitant about returning and when the Institute was facing arguments over old principles, as was common in post-war societies.

The Circular of 25 December 1923 on what constitutes the essential of religious life showed greater openness. This was probably the most subtle test of Br Diogène in which he tried to formulate a new teaching on secularisation, mentioned directly (p. 84) for the first time.<sup>164</sup>

The 1920 Chapter had recognised the fact of secularisation in France and the Brothers in Mexico found themselves faced with an even more violent form of secularisation. The question hanging over these experiences was, “What constitutes the essence of religious life?” Br Diogène answered in very traditional terms that, for religious, time did not count and that “in this second century of our existence we have to be just the same as those who went before us”. But he added a little further on:

*Our interior being<sup>165</sup> is what is essential, make no mistake, our holiness, at least our personal virtue. The rest is not without its importance, but it is merely acciden-*



<sup>162</sup> *Nos supérieurs*, Lyons, 1953, p. 396

<sup>163</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 515-536. Circular of 25 December 1921.

<sup>164</sup> The 1920 Chapter had a commission on secularisation but its Acts (T. 14 p. 411-453) make no mention of it, probably to avoid any eventual claims.

<sup>165</sup> The original French is « *c'est de l'être intérieur* » The “de” is unnecessary (A. Lanfrey)

tal... What is essential for religious<sup>166</sup> is an infallible safeguard for us if we possess enough of it... The proof of this has been demonstrated experimentally especially in countries where our Brothers have come through persecution or even revolutions. For a congregation spread across the five continents of the world, it is quite rare that persecution or revolutions do not clamp down on one thing or another...It is therefore wise to be ready for a struggle and to ask God to grant us in all the circumstances we may find ourselves in, the graces necessary to remain faithful to Him.

In short, ideally religious life is outside of time but, when in difficult times and places, it has to distinguish between the unalterable and the accidental, such as the religious habit, which may be sacrificed. So, although he was speaking in veiled and somewhat embarrassed terms, Br Diogène gave a certain legitimacy to secularisation and the changes this meant. Still, he drew only timid consequences for “the spirit of religious life” was always grounded in the exact observance of the Rule. He ended with a blast against failures in regard to poverty and the abuse of visits, not to mention a heavily traditional tirade against the spirit of the world.

Did this relative openness have any practical outcomes? At least it can be noted that the Brothers in Mexico and Spain, when confronted by secularising governments did not dream of leaving their country *en masse* but tried to keep their apostolate going, while sacrificing the external signs of belonging to a religious congregation.

The second Circular of Rev Br Diogène which seems to merit special comment is that of 24 May 1926 on the spirit of Venerable Fr. Champagnat<sup>167</sup>. In this he compared the Hermitage to the abbey at Clairvaux still steeped in the memory of St Bernard. It was to this place, revered by Brothers from all parts of the world, where one could breathe in “the atmosphere of holiness”, that Br Diogène went to intercede for the Brothers threatened by persecution in various places. In order to prepare themselves for any eventuality, he invited them to reproduce the virtues of the Founder, following the order of the Chapter headings of the second part of his *Life*, beginning with his spirit of faith.

This reference to the founding virtues seems to be of secondary interest. On the other hand, he made a strong link, at a distance of a century, between the sentiment of the Founder who saw the Hermitage as the mystical city of Mary destined to spread across the earth and the idea of his disciple who saw this promise being fulfilled but also threatened.

## **A conservative transition (1942-46)**

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The interregnum of four years (1942-46) between Br Diogène and Br Leonidas was led by Brs Michaëlis and then Marie-Odulphe. The five Circulars that they produced are far from being without interest. Once more, the first reaction to troubles

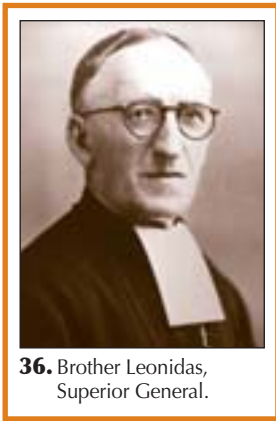
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<sup>166</sup> In italics in the original.

<sup>167</sup> *Circulars*, T. XV, p. 432-465. Circular of 24 May 1926.



and war was a desire for restoration. So Br Marie-Odulphe announced on 24 May 1945<sup>168</sup> his intention of “restoring everything in the spirit of the Founder by devotion to the Rule”. He saw in secularisation, the 14-18 war, the persecutions in various countries and the Second World War, a weakening of religious spirit to be cured by reinforcing its spiritual energies. This seems a rather limited response to the challenges of modern times. Indeed, the doctrine of leaders in the years 1942-46 seems to have broken away from the moderation of Br Diogène.



**36.** Brother Leonidas,  
Superior General.

### Clarity and tradition: Rev Br Leonidas

From 1946 to 1958 Br Leonidas produced many instructive texts. The idea of restoration remained fundamental to his way of thinking but he was open to the idea of change, particularly in formation. His disquiet at the weak perseverance of Brothers led him to want to reinforce their Marist identity through love and esteem for their vocation. The key Circular on this topic was that of 8 December 1952, entitled “We are religious, the Little Brothers of Mary” in which he discussed religious spirit and Marist spirit. His analysis of the causes of slackening of religious spirit showed originality. He spoke of persecution, military service and forced labour<sup>169</sup> but also of the high degree of protec-

tion shown by the authorities in some countries to the Institute leading to its over-extending itself and running short of personnel. It was a recognition that the problems facing the Institute were partly the result of its poorly managed growth, as had already been deplored by some members of the 1932 Chapter.

In the second part of the “Sources of Religious and Marist Spirit”<sup>170</sup> Br Leonidas listed the texts that in his opinion contained the Marist spirit as “The Life of the Founder”, the Rules, “Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions”, Biographical Notices, the Circulars of the first Superiors, and the Bulletin of the Institute. To these he added a little further on, “The Teacher’s Guide”, “The Good Superior”, “Christian Perfection”, the Meditations of Br Jean-Baptiste, and the Catechism of the Virgin Mary, although these were clearly of secondary importance. His purpose, then, was to distinguish what remained fundamental from what was secondary or out-of-date in Marist tradition.

<sup>168</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 351. Circular of 24 May 1945.

<sup>169</sup> The Service of Forced Labour which obliged young people in countries under German occupation to go to Germany to work for the war economy.

<sup>170</sup> *Circulars*, T. XXI, p. 113. Circular of 8 December 1952.

In the Circular of 8 December 1948<sup>171</sup> on spiritual direction he referred to an old problem. In 1890 the decree *Quaemadmodum* of the Holy See forbade Superiors of lay congregations from demanding that religious reveal matters of conscience that touched on the internal forum and the practice of spiritual direction conducted by Assistants was thereafter abandoned. Br Leonidas (p. 96) nuanced the consequences of this ban and encouraged a return to such spiritual direction.

He developed an interesting historical synthesis of the problem of perseverance<sup>172</sup> after having underlined that a religious vocation was fundamentally a mystery and a question of freedom and faith. This undermined the doctrine of predestination previously formulated by Br Diogène, according a central place to the human person. Still, his examination of the causes of defections and remedies that could be put in place did not really add anything new, even though they were expressed intelligently. For the first time, a summary of the reasoning of those who had left was presented in the 4<sup>th</sup> section (p. 25). The reflections of Br Leonidas, then, in the key matter of vocations come across as both open and traditional. There was no questioning of the responsibility of the institution as an important or determining factor in the choice made. The withdrawal of a Brother was problem for him and not for the institution.

So Br Leonidas gives the impression of having been a Superior who perceived that the apparent prosperity of the Institute was covering over some deep internal cracks that he described with some precision. In a way that is difficult to determine, he prepared the way for the significant reforms of the 1958 Chapter.

## The openness of Rev Br Charles-Raphaël

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The 1958 Chapter<sup>173</sup> adopted a programme of bringing new life to the spirit of our Blessed Founder through greater religious fervour, more effective zeal and a more homely community life. This did not represent a break from the time of Br Leonidas.

The first two Circulars of Br Charles-Raphaël on zeal and community life were in the traditional mould but a change in tone came with his Circular of 8 December 1960 on the Common Rules which had just been re-written. In the section dealing with “Our traditions to be maintained” (p. 501-504), Br Charles-Raphaël reformulated the spirit of the congregation, recalling that “apostolic concerns occupied first place in his (Champagnat’s) thinking and action and “even if the idea of founding a religious institute followed almost immediately” it was not his first thought. Therefore, “we must look in both these directions for what is essential in the work of our Blessed Founder”. Such ideas were frankly new for, since the time of Br Jean-Baptiste it had been taken for granted that religious life was first and zeal second.

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<sup>171</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX, p. 91-118. Circular of 8 December 1948.

<sup>172</sup> *Circulars*, T. XXII, p. 5-76. Circular of 24 May 1957.

<sup>173</sup> *Circulars*, T. XXII, p. 322-358. Circular of 24 May 1959.

Moreover, we have seen how the apostolate was generally understood to be subordinate to regularity between 1903 and 1946.

This same section of the Circular contained another new idea of note, entitled “The Spirituality he proposed for Brothers”. This was, to my knowledge, the first time that the word “spirituality” was officially used in Marist documents. The definition he gave was far from being commonplace since Br Charles-Raphaël recalled that “the life of Brothers must be imbued with a marial spirit”, i.e. the virtues of Nazareth of humility, simplicity and modesty that suit our way of life and our apostolate, an insight more present in the thinking of Fr Colin than of Fr Champagnat. This definition of Marist spirituality, when combined with family spirit, brings unity to our Marist spirit by placing the spirit of Nazareth at its heart, a Marist spirit that had all too often separated the apostolate and religious life. In this brief text, Br Charles-Raphaël showed himself to be an expert in Marist spirituality and was probably the first to formulate it in new terms after a long period of repetition of old formulas that were not always helpful.

The opening of the 1962 Vatican Council split the mandate of Br Charles-Raphaël in half and in 1963-64 he wrote a lengthy Circular in four sections with the surprising title of “Preservation and growth of the Institute”. It seemed singularly out of place, not to say conservative, at a time when events at the Council were turning the religious landscape upside down. But it must be seen as a desire on the part of a responsible Superior to face up to a level of excitement that threatened to sweep all before it. In any case, the Circular of 1<sup>st</sup> May 1965 on “Fidelity to the spirit of our vocation and the law of change” was preoccupied with this threat since even its title referred to the need to reconcile fidelity and change. Its third section (p. 278 ... ) tried to offer some norms regarding what should stay and what should be changed to the General Chapter that was taking shape.

Until 1946, with many nuances and differences in sensitivity, Circulars had remained within the line of thought traced by Brs Louis-Marie and Jean-Baptiste. Br Leonidas showed, sometimes hesitantly, the need to confront in-depth problems with a new spirit. Br Charles-Raphaël was convinced of the idea of reform but there was not the time to really work on it. It is, however, worthwhile noting that the Institute had begun to change before the Vatican Council and that the attempt to visualise such change came from a former Master of the Second Novitiate.



## 14.

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# THE SECOND NOVITIATE

The Rules of Government<sup>174</sup> on the Novitiate and the qualities needed in Masters of Novices<sup>175</sup> already in 1854 foresaw the creation of a Second Novitiate of six months “to be better instructed in the requirements of religious life, to be immersed in piety and especially to be formed in solid virtues”. There had been several unsuccessful attempts at setting up a Second Novitiate in the time of Br Jean-Baptiste but the first such structure would not come into being until the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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## A school for leaders in the Institute

The inauguration<sup>176</sup> on 24 October 1897 in the Sainte Marie (Clos Chaurand) retreat house at St Genis-Laval gave Br Théophile the occasion to speak about the program. He drew on the 1854 Constitutions and the apostle Paul, inviting the Second Novices to make progress “in the wisdom of the saints” through a deeper knowledge of the spirit of Jesus Christ, Mary and the Founder. He concluded:

*Then, filled with and enlivened by the spirit of Jesus and Mary, reproducing their virtues in your behaviour, and showing yourselves to be true disciples and worthy sons of Venerable Father Champagnat, you will be able to present yourselves to your Brothers as living copies of him and tell them ‘Imitate us’.*

To carry out this highly spiritual program the Brothers had at their disposal a library “in which you will find all the books that our Institute has produced”. Conference would complete their formation.

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<sup>174</sup> *Rules of Government* (Chapter XIV, 1<sup>st</sup> Part, article 4)

<sup>175</sup> 1854 *Constitutions*, Part 1, Chapter XIV, 2<sup>nd</sup> section on the means to take to conserve the Institute, article 4.

<sup>176</sup> *Circulars* T. IX, p. 222. Circular of 25 December 1897.

The Circular of 2 June 1899<sup>177</sup> gave an account of the closing ceremony of the exercises of the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the Second Novitiate, attended by thirty three Brothers from 15 October 1898 to 26 March 1899 under the direction of Fr. Petit SJ and Br Augustalis, director of the boarding school at Chagny and recently made an Assistant. The same volume spoke about the following session<sup>178</sup> from 15 October 1899 to April 1900 attended by thirty five Brothers under the direction of Fr. Petit and Br Flamien “from the community at Aubenas”. The warlike tone of the speech by a second Novice, as reported in the Circular, gave a certain idea of the program followed. “We have searched through the books and Circulars that are like masterpieces for our Institute and have found priceless treasures”. The Second Novices also worked at personal and group study of topics that demanded sustained effort.

The closing ceremony of the exercises from 15 October to 13 March 1901<sup>179</sup>, attended by twenty nine Brothers and the same two directors, gave details of the Marist formation followed: The Life of Fr. Champagnat, the books of Br Jean-Baptiste, “the immortal Circulars of Br Louis-Marie”, which had inspired writings edited by groups of Brothers. The 23 March 1902 was the closing ceremony of the next session<sup>180</sup>, attended by twenty three Brothers. Fortunately at this ceremony there was a detailed description given of the content of printed set of notes, 214 pages long, on “thirty seven ascetical and pedagogical topics treated *in extenso*”.

The closing ceremony on 15 April 1903<sup>181</sup>, with twenty seven Second Novices, held very special importance as this coincided with the fatal dissolution of the Institute in France. The report stressed the importance of spiritual direction to know oneself better and to improve. It referred particularly to the work of Fr. Petit, “For nearly three months he taught us about Jesus Christ and his adorable Heart”. Then he gave conferences on grace, the virtues, perfection, daily religious exercises, and the purification of our natural faculties. Br Flamien conducted sessions on the Institute.

The Second Novitiate shifted to Grugliasco from 17 September 1905 to 11 March 1906<sup>182</sup>. Fr. Hanrion SM and Br Augustalis replaced Fr. Petit and Br Flamien. Gathering the Brothers from various points on the planet was not easy and they had to wait until 1<sup>st</sup> October for the group to be nearly all present. The report summarised the Christological teaching of Fr. Hanrion. Br Augustalis handled Mariology and the history of the Institute, with special mention of Br François and putting particular stress on Br Louis-Marie “who has left us Circulars that could have been written by a Father of the Church”.

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<sup>177</sup> *Circulars*, T. IX, p. 415. Circular of 2 June 1899.

<sup>178</sup> *Circulars*, T. IX, p. 554. Circular of 10 May 1902.

<sup>179</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 31. Circular of 18 May 1901.

<sup>180</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 159. Circular of 10 May 1902.

<sup>181</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 329. Circular of 21 June 1903.

<sup>182</sup> *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 14. Circular of 30 May 1906.

From then on, the Circulars make scant reference to the Second Novitiate which was thereafter covered in the Bulletin of the Institute (1909 ...). Yet we have a reasonably precise idea of the theory and practice of this institution which had become, in a short period, a veritable leadership school in the congregation at a time when the vow of stability no longer seemed sufficient. Devotion to the Institute to the point of heroism had to be joined by a solid formation to resist the assaults of an aggressive world.

In Volume VI of his History of the Institute, Br Marie-Nicet confirmed what has been said above and added some further details:

*“Started in 1897, the Second Novitiate, lasting six months, received first of all the most capable members of the Institute – directors and head teachers. They came from all the Provinces to absorb the atmosphere of a spirit of faith, prayer, recollection and humility. These helpful exercises were interrupted in 1903 by the persecution and debacle of our works in France. They started again at Grugliasco in a somewhat shortened version in 1906 but did not take place in 1907 because of the demands of the General Chapter and the lack of space and support arrangements in the new mother-house”.*

A session for forty Second Novices ran from 23 August to 2 February 1909 under the direction of Br Paul-Marie, a former Provincial of Spain. Br Marie-Nicet listed their Provinces of origin but not necessarily their nationality as eight from Canada and USA, five from Constantinople, four from each of Belgium and the north of France, three from Brazil Central, two from Spain, two from China and Mexico, one Colombian and one Syrian, and finally, “nine or ten secularised Brothers from France”. For Br Marie-Nicet who took part in this session, around twenty of them were “very deserving religious” whom the Superiors wanted to promote to important positions. He mentioned:

Br Marie-Odulphe:	future Assistant
Br Antonin:	future Provincial of China
Br Louis-Marie:	future Econome General
Br Gaëtan:	future Provincial of Aubenas
Brs Joseph Philomène and Joseph Félix	future Provincials of St Genis-Laval
Br Louis-Patrice:	future founder in Rhodesia
Brs Henri Emile and Marie-Anicetus:	future Masters of Novices ...

An historical schema that is less than complete but interesting nonetheless, prepared by Second Novices in 1964, recalled the ups and downs and the spirit of this institution<sup>183</sup>:

<sup>183</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXVI, N° 194, p. 180, April 1964.

**37. OPERATION OF THE SECOND NOVITIATES FROM 1897 TO 1942**



Saint-Genis-Laval

? → 1897-1898  
 33 → 1898-1899  
 33,39,23,27 → 1899-1903



Grugliasco

40 → 1905-1906  
 1907  
 2 sessions per year? → 1908-1909  
 1909-1910  
 1910-1912  
 1912-1913  
 1913-1916  
 1 session: 6Brs/3 mths → 1917

no session → 1918  
 3 sessions → 1919  
 very brief session → 1920

37 sessions → 1920-1939  
 1940



Saint-Quentin-Fallavier

11 sessions → 1942

Source: Synthesis of Br André Lanfrey from the *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 26, n°194, p. 180, april 1964.





**Br Michaëlis**



**Br Agustalis**



**Br Flamien**



**Br Paul-Marie**



**Br Marie-Odulphe**



**Br Avit**



**Br Charles-Raphäel**

Although the intentions of Br Théophile were quite clear on the purpose and role of this work of ongoing formation, circumstances dictated a number of modifications. The role of the director of the Second Novitiate did not really begin until the arrival of Br Marie-Odulphe in 1910. In 1920 he recalled that “during and after the war the Second Novitiate was shortened to three or four months so as to give a greater number of Brothers who had been conscripted the chance to strengthen their interior lives before taking up apostolic work again”. Finally, a change in the meaning of the vow of stability was also going to have a big impact.

### **The Vow of Stability and the Second Novitiate**

At the 1907 Chapter Br Stratonique started a debate “about the calling of Brothers to the vow of stability”.

*“It seems that Rome would like all the Brothers to be admitted to this vow after 10 years of perpetual profession provided that they have been called by decision of the General Council after being proposed by their Provincial Council in conformity with article 61 of the Constitutions. The Holy See does not approve of what it considers to be a privileged category (of Brothers).”*

The use of the conditional shows the reluctance of the editor and, certainly the majority, vis-à-vis what Rome wanted.

Also, “a simple exchange of views ended without any clear proposal” but the General Council would discreetly accept to enlarge the ‘élite’, with the Second Novitiate becoming the waiting room of the vow of stability.

### **At the 1920 Chapter: a charter for the Second Novitiate**

Br Marie-Odulphe proposed an additional chapter for the Directory which was an idealistic statement on Marist spirituality, placing itself in line with the 1854 Constitutions and the program addressed by Br Théophile in 1897. It is worthwhile quoting it at length:

Art. 1 The aim of the Second Novitiate is to provide perpetually professed Brothers with a means of immersing themselves in piety, of being instructed more fully in the requirements of religious life, and especially of being formed better in solid virtues.

[...]

Art. 7 The theory and practice of the spiritual program of the Second Novitiate outlined in Art. 1 can be summarised in three points. Firstly, immersing themselves in piety. In practice, what has to be uppermost is for the second Novice to have an insatiable desire to converse with God, even without interruption.

Art. 8 Secondly, he will be instructed more fully in the requirements of religious life, especially its nature, its obligations and the benefits of the vows and the Rule (...), thus preparing himself to return to his Province as a model and defender of regularity.

Art. 12 On leaving the Second Novitiate, which has thus become a "School of the Heart", he will be burning for the salvation of souls. Since numerous stains may have soiled the purity of his zeal up till then, he will have to discover them through self-examination and sincerity of heart so that the precious gold of his future apostolate is no longer tainted and the pure fire of divine love alone enflames his heart.

Art. 14. In short, making an effort to become a man of prayer, of the Rule, of solid virtue is the prime purpose, the immediate goal of the Second Novitiate. (...) At the Second Novitiate one's future, one's eternity is being determined.

Art. 15. The length of the Second Novitiate is five months. There will generally be two sessions per year: the first, from 20 February till the nearest Sunday to 20 July, and the second from 20 August till the nearest Sunday to 20 January. An eight-day retreat will take place a week or two after the opening of each session and a three-day recollection towards the end.

Art. 16. The Brother Director of the Second Novitiate will have the qualities required in a Master of Novices to a very high degree. Besides this, it is necessary for him to possess a general culture and a fund of pedagogical and religious knowledge. He will be full of the spirit of the Institute, very experienced in spiritual matters and in the government of religious.

The Chapter approved this chapter unanimously, adding a few suggestions:

Mystical: school of holiness, religion of the heart, soul burning with divine love, the presence of God, spiritual combat.

Ascetical: solid virtues, renunciation, prayer.

Institutional: the Rule, obedience, indifference in regard to appointments.

Apostolic: towards young Brothers and young people.

It was nothing less than a vision of a school of Marist spirituality. But was such an idealistic program what suited a large number of Brothers, given that the length of time of this renewal was so short? In any case, this was the system in force during the inter-war years but with a spirit of elitism that had been toned down.

## Br Avit: the living Rule

It is possible perhaps to speak of a golden age of the Second Novitiate between 1920 and 1939. These were years characterised by the extraordinary stability of its director, Br Avit. His obituary went beyond the edifying tone of much of such literature and provided some valuable information on him.<sup>184</sup> Born in 1871 in the Maritime Alps, he joined the College at Digoin in 1884.<sup>185</sup> In 1896, at 19 years of age, he left for Beirut, certainly in order to escape military service. He was to stay there until 1911, at first as a teacher then an esteemed director of the College. His biography underlined his great qualities of work and determination but also his obvious defects. His Second Novitiate in 1911-12 was a time of real conversion for him.

*Undoubtedly he reproached himself for his excesses in external mortification but especially for his arrogant and hurtful ways, a certain air of superiority, sometimes inclined to disdain, in his interactions with people who had fewer natural*



**38.** Group at the Second Novitiate, "Our Lady of Good Counsel", in 1930.

<sup>184</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VII, (1954-1958), N° 176, p. 124.

<sup>185</sup> The chronology of his receiving the habit and his first jobs in the Province of Varennes do not seem to be reliable.

gifts. His extreme stubbornness in his ideas, rarely listening to the opinions of others; his intolerance; his lack of emotion which was more likely to put people off than to win them for God (...) This in-depth review of his character faults and distortions that had bedevilled his apostolic work until then was to be the platform for a moral restoration, for a transformation that he wanted to be total, and for a robust spurt of vitality to triumph, through absolute confidence in God and an unflagging hope, over what he called his 'old dependencies'.

He replaced Br Marie-Odulphe at the first session of the Second Novitiate in 1912 but then went for philosophy studies at the university of Fribourg before becoming director of the Scholasticate for the Province of St Genis-Laval at St Gingolph in Switzerland. Then, cancer, for which he received radium therapy, affected his health and probably saved him from being called up for military service. Finally, from 1920 to 1938, from forty nine to sixty-seven years of age, he was to direct thirty seven sessions of the Second Novitiate attended by 1,100 Brothers.

His conversion in 1911 no doubt reformed his character but his biography described his spirituality as based on a spirit of sacrifice, an exaggerated love of the Rule, practising it down to the smallest details, a spirit of piety based on the Eucharist, devotion to the Passion, Mary and especially St Joseph. The biography also praised his affability and spirit of service. Yet, his former Novices who venerated him like a saint, held him in esteem rather than loved him. He represented in his own person the ideal of a Marist Brother for the Brothers of his generation with the vow of stability. It should be noted as well that he came into the role of Master of Second Novices at the time a different spirit forged by the war and the changes it led to was starting to appear among the Brothers.

With Br Marie-Odulphe firstly and then the long period of Br Avit as director, the role of director of the Second Novitiate, although not imagined in the Constitutions, made its title-holder a kind of Assistant by office, and the Second Novitiate a central feature of ongoing formation in the Institute. In any case, the Second Novices of 1964 drew up an interesting statistical summary of these sessions:

St Genis-Laval:	1897-1903/ 6 sessions and 174 Brothers
Grugliasco:	1905-1920/ 514 Brothers
Grugliasco:	1920-1939/ 37 sessions each with around thirty Brothers , i.e. more or less 1,100 Brothers.

The biography of Br Charles-Raphaël<sup>186</sup> gives us some details on how the Second Novitiate ran in the inter-war period. From 20 August 1920 till 1927 Br Avit had led a dozen sessions with the help of Br Amphiloque, a former Master of Novices and former Provincial of Syria, then on his own until the arrival of Br Charles-Raphaël as sub-Master in February 1935. At that date two Marist Fathers,

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<sup>186</sup> Br Paul Sester, *Frère Charles-Raphaël* (Jean Ergen 1900-1984), 8<sup>e</sup> supérieur général de l'institut des Frères Maristes, Rome, 1988, 102 p.

Roguin and Lembezat, were attached to the work. Br Charles-Raphaël, then perpetually professed since 1926, had made the Second Novitiate himself very young, at the age of thirty three, from 20 February to 20 July 1933. The group was made up of thirty nine Second Novices coming from seventeen Provinces spread across the five continents.

## **Br Charles-Raphaël, a discreet reformer**

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Having made his vow of stability on 20 August 1936, just ten years after his final vows, Br Charles Raphaël was named Master of Second Novices on 15 July 1938. Because of the war, however, he would lead only two sessions and be named director of Grugliasco in August 1939. Then, in December 1941 he became Visitor of the houses of formation in Italy, grouped into a District.

According to Br Paul Sester<sup>187</sup> in his “Life of Br Charles Raphaël”, he possessed “flexibility in the face of a certain rigidity, understanding and reason in a ‘by the book’ form of regularity, pedagogical expertise in traditional catechetics, and finally, the apostolate considered as a means of sanctification just as much as harsh ascetics”.

As the Superiors were very keen on this work of the Second Novitiate, they tried to start it again at St Quentin Fallavier with Br Avit leading the first session from 14 September 1942 to 2 February 1943. As soon as the war was over, Br Charles-Raphaël was summoned to St Genis-Laval in June 1945 and found himself at St Quentin Fallavier on 20 August 1945 to open the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the Second Novitiate.

## **Multiplication of Second Novitiates**

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From 1945 on we can speak of a new age of the Second Novitiate experience characterised by the number of places and languages in use. The existence of a single Second Novitiate using French as means of communication, and, moreover, the fact that it was housed in the same house as the General Council, had become unsuitable. St Quentin Fallavier which had begun to function again under the direction of Br Charles-Raphaël and then Br Régis-Aimé was handed for a time to the Spanish-speaking Provinces. In 1953 a Second Novitiate of nine months was held there under the direction of Br Henri Noé (Marcel Colin) while the traditional Second Novitiate was held at St Paul-Trois-Châteaux under the direction of Brs Fernando-Luis and Joseph Gaudence.

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

From 1947 to 1958 the Second Novitiate at Grugliasco was re-established under the direction of first Br Charles-Raphaël, then Brs Fernando-Luis, Juan Maria, Fabiàn Gregorio, especially for Spanish-speaking Brothers. This meant that for the first time the congregation had two Second Novitiates. Afterwards the Spanish-speaking Second Novitiate would function in Spain, at Siguënza. In 1956 a Second Novitiate ran for a short time at Campinas in Brazil under the direction of Br, Roque Maria, a future Assistant, and Br André Cerise. Lastly, another, using English, was set up in Fribourg in 1962.

At that date, then, there were four traditional Second Novitiates corresponding to the four major language zones of the congregation, serving all the professed Brothers. A Second Novitiate that was specifically more elitist and very international in character continued the tradition from before 1914 at St Quentin Fallavier.

The Institute had, then, succeeded in reconciling elitism and a broadening of the group with the vow of stability, while accepting at long last a multicultural vision of the congregation. The Second Novices of 1964 calculated the number of Brothers who had passed through the Second Novitiate since the beginning as 4,358. By the same date, Saint Quentin had seen 993 Brothers pass through and Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, 637.

## 15.

# MOVES TOWARDS A MORE DEMANDING FORMATION

In the late 1950s the ongoing formation provided by the Second Novitiates was insufficient and a higher level needed to be added. This sentiment was shared by other similar congregations as the institute of the Jesus Magister was established at the Lateran university for lay congregations. In its first year, starting on 21 October 1957, there were nine De la Salle, eleven Marist and 1 Marianist participants. The courses offered in this first year were only preparatory for full university formation due to begin in October 1958 and last for three years. The courses were to include theology, Sacred Scripture, canon law, pedagogy and catechetics.<sup>188</sup>

By 1961-62 the Pontifical Institute of Jesus Magister would number one hundred and twenty four students belonging to ten congregations and twenty six countries. The Marist international college of Jesus Magister had thirty six Brothers at the time. There were sixteen in first year, five in second, six in third, and four in fourth or about a quarter of all the students at the Pontifical Institute, with another five Brothers attending other pontifical universities in Rome. These Brothers came from twenty one Provinces and their ages ranged from eighteen to forty two.<sup>189</sup>

## The Year of Spirituality

A Year of Spirituality<sup>190</sup> was begun in Rome on 15 October 1961. This was a continuation of the Second Novitiate of nine months at St Quentin, with the same director, Br Henri-Noé. The group was made up of sixteen Brothers from twenty five to forty and coming from ten countries, particularly Latin America. In his opening address, like Brs Théophane and Marie-Odulphe before him, Br Henri- Noé laid out an ambitious program:







<sup>188</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIII, N° 170 (April 1958) p. 126 ; N° 175, July 1959.3-

<sup>189</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXV, N° 185, January 1962 p. 36.

<sup>190</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXV, N° 185, January 1962 p. 33

*It is good to establish a Marist think-tank since our precious apostolate and our world-wide growth demands a life guided by the Spirit and not taken up with meeting immediate needs." This work was not a Second Novitiate properly speaking, nor a shortened version of the Jesus Magister but a study centre of our spiritual life, providing "ideas that are correct and expansive, dynamic and reliable, easy to follow and grounded, an honest attempt at a way of thinking that is sincerely Marist.*

The teaching staff was of high quality:

39. TEACHING STAFF OF THE "SPIRITUALITY YEAR"			
	Br Alessandro	FMS	Canon Law.
	Fr. Evode Beaucamp,	Lecturer at the Jesus Magister Franciscan..	Sacred Scripture
	Fr. Vladimir Boublic	Lecturer at the Lateran and the Jesus Magister.	Dogmatic Theology.
	Br Marcel Colin	FMS.	Marist ascetical practice and the Vows.
	Fr. Patrick Corcoran	S. M. Lecturer in Sociology at the Lateran.	Mariology.
	Fr. Bernard Häring	C. Ss. R.	Moral Theology.
	Br Sebastiani	FMS. Former Assistant General.	Theology of Religious Life.
	Fr. Louis-Marie Simon	O.M.I.	Ascetical Theology.
Source: <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> , T. 25, n. 185.			

The Bulletin<sup>191</sup> noted that at the end of the year, after an in-depth study of the literature of the Institute "where sometimes unsuspected riches were discovered", each Brother wrote a thesis "one of the many aspects of the holiness of our Blessed Founder".<sup>192</sup> Br Marcel Colin would lead the Year of Spirituality until 1964 when he was elected Provincial of St Genis-Laval.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>191</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXV N° 186, April 1962 p. 110

<sup>192</sup> An abbreviated version of each thesis was printed in the Bulletin.

<sup>193</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, XXVI N° 195, July 1964, p. 226-27.





**40.** Spirituality course at El Escorial (Madrid), 1964.

## Sigüenza and L'Escorial

There is extensive documentation on the Spanish-speaking Second Novitiate thanks to the biography of Br Basilio Rueda.<sup>194</sup> It was opened temporarily at Sigüenza on 10 January 1965 under the direction of Br Nicolàs Ramirez. Br Basilio arrived as sub-Master in April and made his vow of stability there in May. From the second session which began in July, he became the Master of Second Novices. The Superiors chose him because “he fulfilled the conditions needed in this Council period: openness to new times, renewal and adaptation of religious life, in one word *aggiornamento*”.

The Second Novitiate was transferred to L'Escorial on 6 January 1966 and it was there that Br Basilio flourished, using a more dynamic methodology involving study circles, panels, surveys, and audio-visuals”. New topics appeared such as sexuality, affectivity and the consecrated life, human maturity, social problems. But he would have the time to lead only five sessions for a hundred or so Brothers in total. As delegate to the 1967 General Chapter, he was elected Superior General on 24 September. This was the second time a Master of Second Novices had become Superior General, but the first moved directly from the first role to the second. This was the result of the exceptional personality of Br Basilio but also of the changes brought about by the Vatican Council.

<sup>194</sup> Br José Flores Chepo, *Lumière et flammes d'une vie. Frère Basilio Rueda*, translated from Spanish by Br Gabriel Michel, no date or editor, ch. XVII, p. 121-133.

## From Second Novitiates to Centres of Spirituality

And so, another epoch of ongoing formation was taking shape. The Bulletin of the Institute<sup>195</sup> noted that because of the Chapter in 1968 only the Second Novitiate in Fribourg was functioning. An announcement was made about a resumption of Second Novitiates but the traditional approach was doomed.

Volume XXIX of the Bulletin paid hardly any attention to the Second Novitiates but the expression "Centre of Spirituality" replaced that of "Second Novitiate". N° 21 of July 1970<sup>196</sup> presented photos of members of the "Centres of higher formation" for the year 1969-70 that were clear indicators of an evolution in progress. The Brothers at the Champagnat Centre, the new name for the Year of Spirituality, as well as those of Fribourg and St. Paul were nearly all in civil dress. In the photo of the Jesus Magister group, only a third were in civil dress and of the two groups at L'Escorial nearly all Brothers were in soutane. In practice, there was a high degree of continuity with the Second Novitiates of the past but the change of name signi-



41. Daily life at the Second Novitiate had its lighter moments.

<sup>195</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXVIII N° 208, May 1968, p. 79

<sup>196</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIX N° 211, July 1970, p. 77

fied more than a new set of externals. There was a new spirit in a context that had been turned upside down. It could be said, by way of conclusion, that around 1970 the history of Second Novitiates, resulting from decisions taken in 1920, came to an end.

## Life in the Second Novitiates

The systematically qualitative, rather than chronological, approach that follows is based on the biography of Br Charles-Raphaël<sup>197</sup> that provides information on how the Second Novitiate functioned in the time of Br Avit. On arrival, the Brothers handed in their watches and wallets to the Master of Novices and housework was distributed. Playing boules was obligatory. At some point in the session, each Second Novice was subjected to the practice of “mirrors”. He received a written list of his faults prepared by his confreres. There were some days for a break granted by the Superior General. It would seem that the Second Novices were not still expected, as they were at the beginning, to do personal research on the Institute.

In any case, well before the end of the time Br Avit was director, this system seemed dated and his replacement by Br Charles Raphaël on the eve of the war seemed due to the need to put new life into a dated way of doing things. Br Avit had been born in 1871 and was spiritually a man of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One witness quoted by Br Paul Sester<sup>198</sup> gave a withering assessment, “It became urgent to remediate a vision based on compliance, old-fashioned asceticism, a spirituality characterised by fear, and depression.”

So Br Charles Raphaël set about changing the spirit of the Second Novitiate but did so prudently, since some Superiors were somewhat fearful. His biography remarks politely that he “went out of his way to satisfy their concern even when it was not always explicitly stated”.<sup>199</sup> He did away with short haircuts, going for walks in groups of three that were “more burdensome than restful”, and “this nit-picking supervision that led to hypocrisy”. At the request of the Second Novices, the game of boules was replaced by volley-ball. Generally speaking, the warmth of the new master of Novices was appreciated.

The notes of a Second Novice from 1947<sup>200</sup> give a good idea of his teaching. Out of eighty conferences, fourteen were devoted to Christology, especially the doctrine of the mystical body; nine to Mariology; nine on prayer and contemplation; eight on the theological virtues; and, at the end of the session, seven on the

<sup>197</sup> *Frère Charles-Raphaël*, p. 49.

<sup>198</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 50

<sup>199</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 50

<sup>200</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 53

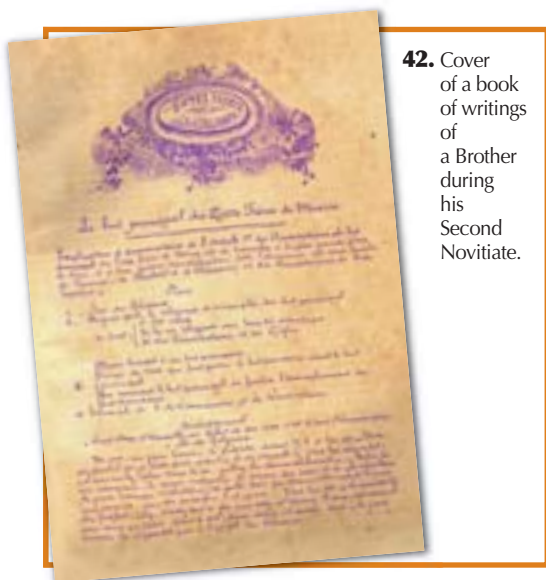
apostolate. In addition, three conferences on human nature and two on joy appeared for the first time. Even if Br Charles Raphaël led only a few sessions,<sup>201</sup> he brought in a new style and, without intending to, a new spirit.

## Second novitiates and spiritual growth

Above it was stated that, at the time of his Second Novitiate in 1911, Br Avit was deeply troubled by his former opinions and was moved to reform his spirituality. A similar impression comes through with Br Charles Raphaël when he was asked to give a speech at the end of the session he attended on 20 July 1934. He spoke with humour about a return to monastic life and the weekly rituals: Mondays, the study of the life of Fr. Champagnat; Saturday, conferences by missionary priests;

Sundays, commentary on the Rule; and so on. But he also underlined the spiritual shake-up that the Novices had experienced, no doubt including himself.

*Here he found little cracks in the edifice of his faith. As regards Marist perfection, he had never placed a high value on it, precisely because it was his and he thought he knew it already. He was to discover its splendour. The ideal became clearer to his eyes, and grew beyond measure as he studied it more closely... Little by little he came to understand that all his misfortunes could be used as a ladder to reach a higher degree of sanctity.*



42. Cover of a book of writings of a Brother during his Second Novitiate.

How many Brothers experienced their Second Novitiate as a deepening as described here? In any case, the Superiors considered that the Second Novitiate was a valuable institution necessary for the unity of the body of professed Brothers and as a source of conversion.

The session overviews were not all of this quality and frequently mention the desire to better keep the Rule and make it kept as the main outcome. One such from the 100<sup>th</sup> session at St Quentin from 20 August 1963 to 20 February 1964<sup>202</sup> pointed to the practice of devout holidays and pious tourism:

<sup>201</sup> Two in 1938-39, three in 1945-47 at St Quentin Fallavier, three at Grugliasco until 20 July 1948, when he was elected as an Assistant General.

<sup>202</sup> The description is of a Spanish-speaking second Novitiate with Brothers from eleven Provinces.

*intense participation in the liturgical life, fervent celebration of the month of the Rosary, sustained interest in the second Session of the Ecumenical Council Vatican II, sentire cum Ecclesia, pilgrimages to the Marist holy places of the Hermitage, Marlies, Le Rosey, living relics which made our hearts tremble reminding us of the heroic times of our origins. Let us recall our days of relaxation, the visit to Geneva, to the Savoy and its beautiful countryside, to Hautecombe<sup>203</sup> where we enjoyed the piety of the Benedictine Offices. At Ars we prayed in front of the holy Curé. We also went to prostrate ourselves before the image of Fourvière that our Blessed Father Founder had seen so often. The session concluded with a visit to the General House and the chance to contemplate the beauties of the Eternal City. The blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff was a worthy crowning moment.*

Held at much the same time, the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Second Novitiate at St Paul, which brought together the French-speaking Brothers from France, Canada, Italy, Brazil and Madagascar, had an altogether different tone. Fr. Bonaventure, a Trappist, gave conferences and spiritual direction. Fr. Rondet SJ, a professor at the Faculty of Theology in Lyons, gave an outline in four conferences of contemporary Mariology, from the work of the French Society of Marial Studies. Fr. Brunon, Superior of the Seminary at Toulouse, a Scripture scholar, gave an exegesis of twenty or so psalms. Assistants General Gildo and Roque Maria presented on education and the Reverend Brother gave a conference on the future of the Institute. The session overview made no mention of any personal research by the Second Novices nor any study of Marist spiritual sources.

In fact these two overviews are complementary and the Second Novitiates of the 1960s combined a time of relative rest, various pilgrimages, an intense liturgical life and a focus on spiritual growth. A certain cult of ascetics and the Rule seems to have been much reduced if these overviews are to be believed.

## Mixed results

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Making the Second Novitiate more available had involved a certain lessening of its quality. This explains the concern of the Superiors to set up a higher level of formation closer to the spirit of what had led to the first Second Novitiate a little before 1900. It was true that many Brothers, as adults, had been able to undertake an extended spiritual and Marist formation and to make time available for personal study. In addition, the proliferation of Second Novitiates had contributed to the emergence of an intellectual and spiritual élite in the congregation. These included the formation personnel, a number of whom later became Major Superiors, but also Brothers who were less prominent but who were able around forty years of age to profit from a time of renewal that would continue to bear fruit over time and to prepare themselves for responsibilities in formation and school leadership.

A paradox should, nevertheless, be noted. In 1903, when the Institute had no time to modify the old ways to any depth, the body of finally professed and Brothers

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<sup>203</sup> A Benedictine Abbey.

with stability had coped and persevered quite well, whereas in the 1960s and 70s the equivalent body was on the surface much better trained but would reveal itself to be more fragile.

Spiritual and cultural factors partly explain this paradox. In 1903 the spiritual life was still very ascetic and communitarian but by 1960 Brothers had reframed the spiritual life to be more Gospel-inspired, more liturgical, and more personal. Also, was the Second Novitiate compensating for an initial formation that had too elementary to begin with and poorly followed up, thus not helping many Brothers to reach the spiritual maturity needed to benefit from a second run at formation? How many Brothers began their period of Second Novitiate as spiritual 'children' in the worst sense of the word?

Must we then entertain the hypothesis that the congregation functioned for too long on two schemas of formation that were sequential but poorly co-ordinated? There was a large group of candidates, too young, quickly trained and sent to work, leaving it to time to sort out the more solid or compliant types, before finally proceeding to a more authentic formation that was still too short and able to benefit only those men who were mature enough to engage with the experience. Hence the pertinence of the comment of the Formation Commission at the 1932 Chapter, "The congregation seems like a tired army. It is time to take a break and refrain from more conquests. It has over-extended itself too quickly".

This was the crux of the problem. The Institute had not slowed down the increase in the number or size of its works to allow for a stronger and more consistent, personal preparation of the Brothers that would result from a higher quality of initial formation that was better articulated with ongoing formation. From 1932 on, each General Chapter was to deplore the weak perseverance but the internal cause of the problem was never really confronted.

There was also the problem of formation personnel. It seems clear to me that from 1920 to 1938 the Superiors appointed and kept Br Avit in place, knowing that he was resisting any proposed change to his style of leading the Second Novitiate that was increasingly out of touch with the culture of the Brothers. This led to his losing part of his spiritual credibility. He may have been a saint but was not to be imitated. It took a lot of tact for Br Charles-Raphaël to give the Second Novitiate a less compelling style. In fact it was only after the 1958 Chapter and the Vatican Council that there would be a 'freeing up' of practices.

## **The Rule as a substitute for spirituality**

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The formators at the Novitiates or Second Novitiates were all profoundly spiritual men. But the type of cult of the Rule which comes through in the vision written in 1920 and many other documents would indicate a spirituality that made them think that salvation was to be found in an institution which had been founded once and for all and which was a reflection of the unchanging and unalterable heavenly world. Therefore in the most extreme cases – and the most consistent – there was an exaggerated cult of the Rule and a horror of change. It is true that formators like

Br Charles-Raphaël managed to avoid any complete break with the prevailing system by compensating its rigid aspect with reforms to minor details, his personal qualities and easy-going charity. But essentially this was only a difference in style. The Second Novitiate between the two wars was a peak of the spirit of 'spirituality-structures' with all its riches but also its real paralysis.

## A school of spirituality all the same?

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Reading the Circular on Fidelity by Br Basilio, however, leads me to nuance the preceding picture of the Second Novitiate since many testimonies of Brothers point to the Second Novitiate as among "the most powerful moments of prayer and grace that they had been offered or sought in their lives" (p. 415), alongside retreats, experiences in the Focolare movement or charismatic renewal. Ten testimonies out of twenty seven that mention the Second Novitiate speak of it as a time of conversion, a fresh start or overcoming serious personal problems. "The Second Novitiate opened my eyes," said one of them.

Nevertheless, it can be said that the fundamental research on the Institute hardly came from the spiritual formators but rather from individual initiatives, people like P. Zind, G. Michel and S. Farrell, and this was in the field of history. Hence, Br Quentin Duffy, Vicar General, in his 1980 article "Marist Spirituality According To Our Constitutions"<sup>204</sup>, could thank historians for their work but added, « until now no-one has devoted himself to any in-depth study of our spirituality".

Such a statement merits at least being nuanced since, besides seeing Marist spirituality as being beyond time, Marist historians had renewed our understanding of the spiritual context of our origins. Besides, works of formators like Br Henri Noé<sup>205</sup> and student Brothers had had real value but were without an audience to show their appreciation. In the language of economics, it could be said that there was an insufficient demand rather than a shortfall in regard to Marist spirituality. But that is simply another way to say that the Second Novitiates were not really factors in the flourishing of a school of spirituality.

The Second Novitiates did transmit Marist spirit and charism, without a doubt. As schools of spirituality their role was more limited since it was confined to recalling a spirit and a set of practices that had already been laid down. One could say much the same for the teaching contained in the Circulars. This would occasion a big cultural shock after 1967 when it would be a question of relativising the Rule to give a central place to spirituality. Each Brother would be invited, not only to memorise things that others had discovered, but to reinterpret a tradition that was seen to be more complex but also more alive than previously thought.

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<sup>204</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXXI, N° 220, June 1980, p. 101.

<sup>205</sup> For example, *Sur les pas de Marcellin Champagnat. Méditations maristes*, Centre Champagnat, N.D. de L'Hermitage, 1958, 240 p.





## 16.

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# A SLOW CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

The first issue of the Bulletin of the Institute was published in January 1909. Its purpose was to safeguard the unity of the Brothers “spread across almost all parts of the world and separated by sometimes enormous distances”.<sup>206</sup> The magazine was to appear every two months and would have four sections: “a religious article suitable for the times and circumstances”; “some points of pedagogy”; “the works of the Institute”; deaths. But the Circular that launched the magazine made it clear that this plan was to be flexible and asked for the collaboration of all. It was, then, a magazine with serious articles, information and at the same time the official organ of the General Council. It would not be easy to meet all three intentions.

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## An overview of a half-century in the life of the institute

An examination of the issues from 1909 to 1930 gives a first look at the overall contents of the Bulletin. The section titled “Religious direction” became “Religion and the Spiritual Life” after issue No 7 of January 1910. Soon a section on “Updates and news” was added to that on works.

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## The time of Br Dalmace (1862-1929)

The editor-in-chief and the soul of the Bulletin until 1929 would be Br Dalmace, the Secretary General. Two obituaries describe his life.<sup>207</sup> He came from the Ardèche but belonged to the Province of St Paul-Trois-Châteaux and was for a long time a professor in the senior teachers’ college at St Genis-Laval, preparing Brothers for their senior teaching certificate. There he taught literature but also geography

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<sup>206</sup> Circular of 11 November 1908 and Introduction to N° 1.

<sup>207</sup> *Circulars*, T. XVI p. 327, Circular of 24/5/1929; *Bulletin of the Institute*, N° 76 (1930).



43. Br Dalmace,  
Secretary General.

and languages, having taught himself Spanish, Italian, English and Latin. In addition, he composed a complete set of school texts for the FTD collection, and played a role in editing books for the Middle East and Spain. He was, then, an intellectual, a man at home in an office, very discreet and a stay-at-home. Although not a Capitulant but present at Grugliasco, he was elected at the 1907 Chapter as Secretary General.

His unexpected election to this position was a direct consequence of the plan of producing a Bulletin of the Institute. Br Dalmace had all the desired qualities for such work as well as a network of potential informants from his former role as a formator. His biography gave a few details of his many activities:

*He undertook almost on his own the direction and often the editing of the Bulletin of the Institute. Undoubtedly communications came to him from all points of the world but his sensitivity and his desire to never publish anything that was not really worthy of the Institute made him read everything that came to him carefully, often rewriting and reframing the text. The issues until now amount to more than six thousand pages and are a real treasure for our religious family.*

The high frequency of publication could not be maintained. By 1912 it had gone from six editions annually to five. During the war years Br Dalmace managed to produce at least three editions per year. The shortage of paper and administrative assistance, the increase in price, communication problems and also the lack of time, no doubt due to preparations for the General Chapter, meant that only two editions appeared (53-54) in 1919. This reduced number would be maintained in the following years for the context in 1920 was far different from that of 1907-09 when the Institute was under pressure from being forced to internationalise in 1903 and as a consequence feared for its unity. By 1920 it was rather the case of the Brothers knowing that they had succeeded against severe trials. Also, in an Institute that had become multicultural a general magazine written in French was becoming less useful.

## A qualitative overview

A study of the articles in the section "Religion and the Spiritual Life" shows several phases in its history. Until 1913 the regular writers were the Major Superiors or the Directors of Second Novitiates. Some signatures can be recognised, those of Br Gérald (n° 2), Br Diogène (n° 8, 14, 25), Br Augustalis (n° 3, 13), Br Michaëlis (n° 9), Br Flamien (n° 11), Br Marie Odulphe (n° 19, signed M.O.). Other authors left their initials only. The signature F.S. (n° 21-22, 43, 49) probably indicated Br Stratonique himself. Nevertheless a great many articles that were signed F.D., Br Dalmace, or, left anonymous, were still his work, at least in part. After 1913 contributions from the Major Superiors were the exception and the Bulletin took on the form of the official communication of the Institute, with official teaching being left to the Circulars.

Starting in N° 9 (May 1910), the leading articles of the Bulletin were taken from popular religious magazines such as *The Marial Review* or *The Messenger of the Heart of Jesus* or adapted from old or recent works on ascetics or spirituality. Occasionally the theme was more Marist, e.g. the instruction notebooks of Br François whose cause had been introduced. Generally speaking a strongly ascetical spirit pervaded the texts. They were still operating out of a 19<sup>th</sup> century spiritual mindset, with little effort being made to link the spiritual life with what was happening around them. The spirituality of the Institute did not receive much attention.

There were, however, plenty of more personal and current stories as well. In N° 3 (May 1909) Br Augustalis wrote about the persecution of the Church throughout the world, making reference to the events of 1903 and encouraging people to trust. Br Marie-Odulphe, in his article “Lessons from the Epiphany” (n° 19, January 1912), used the image of the three wise men to describe the Institute which gathers Brothers from every nation. In N° 25 (January 1913), Br Diogène spoke of the risk of a certain waning of the missionary spirit in the Institute. During the moral crisis at the end of the war, N° 49 (December 1917) and N° 50 (April 18) spoke in a timely way of trust in God and of holy hope. This was a small step towards linking spirituality and history, but only a minor one.

In short, the Bulletin did not attempt to renew the spiritual thinking of the congregation. After the 14-18 War there were no more articles based on a ‘timeless’ theology but there was no real replacement theology either. When Br Dalmace died on 1 April 1929 the Bulletin needed a serious overhaul.

## The Bulletin from 1930 to 1939

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He was replaced on 8 April by Br Jean-Emile, the former Provincial of Constantinople and Master of Novices at Héraclée in Greece.<sup>208</sup> In temperament and life experience he was very different from Br Dalmace. He was also a man of a new generation. As it would take him some time to settle into his new role, the last two editions of 1929 had a transitional quality. N° 77, certainly prepared before he arrived, bore the stamp of Br Dalmace and N° 78 was made up of a long set of death notices.

Br Jean Emile put his own stamp on the Bulletin with N° 79, of February 1930 in which the two first sections on the spiritual life and education were replaced by an article of general interest about religious life, education or the Institute, often quite anecdotal in style. So, the magazine became more obviously than before focussed on information and serious articles would appear much less frequently. An excellent analysis from 1938<sup>209</sup> described the contrast between the two editors in chief:

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<sup>208</sup> *Circulars*, T. XVI p. 335.

<sup>209</sup> *Circulars*, T. XVI p. 197, N° 114 of October 1938.

*The serious, traditional feel of the first eleven volumes was succeeded by a fresh breath of life, an almost idealist form; whereas previous texts had been lengthy and serious, maybe not completely exhausting many topics but examining questions arising at some depth, the new author preferred simple slices of life, so to say.*

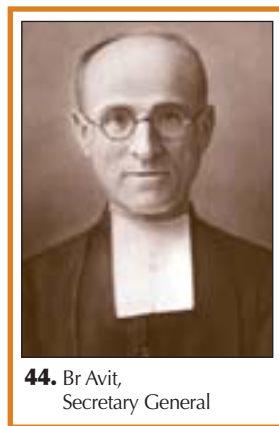
This was a more nuanced and charitable way of saying the should be 'that' Br Dalmace was past his prime and this analysis was in fact a homage to Br Jean-Emile from his successor, Br Avit. It will be seen that he himself did not follow the same path.

A study of Volumes XII to XVI of the Bulletin shows more than a change in tone. There was now an historical dimension to perspectives on the Institute. Some examples: in N° 92<sup>210</sup> "a former student" wrote with talent about Br François and described his notebooks. In N° 111 p. 11 (January 1938) a well-documented article "Our glorious rabat" presented an historical study of this article of clothing that was much disputed in the Spanish Provinces.

## The time of Br Avit

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Br Jean-Emile finished as editor on 29 June 1938 when he was named an Assistant General. His replacement was Br Avit, until then the Master of Second Novices. From N° 116 (April 1939) the sections on "Religion and the Spiritual Life" and "Education and Teaching" re-appeared. In turning back to the tradition of Br Dalmace, the austere Br Avit was thus showing his discreet but determined disapproval of the editorial line followed by Br Jean-Emile. With the war disrupting publications, only N° 119-124 would appear between 1940 and 46. N° 125 in January 1947 announced a fresh start under the banner of tradition:



44. Br Avit,  
Secretary General

*The Bulletin will once more try to use the traditional headings at the top of each page: Religion and the Spiritual Life, Education and Teaching, Our Works, Updates and News. These describe its broad purpose.*

*He was to repeat unceasingly that the first duty of a Little Brother of Mary was to be a saint; that the value of his life could be calculated by his degree of interiority under the gaze of God; that he should have but one ideal in his sights, the reproduction of Jesus in his own person, with the help of Our Lady, St. Joseph and Venerable Father Champagnat.*

*He was to never stop speaking about how sublime the social role was of the Christian educator and how urgent it was to seek to make maximum use of natural and supernatural resources to awaken souls, to make them flourish and to rise to God, to the great sun of grace.*

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<sup>210</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIII, N° 92, April 1933.

Br Avit even seems to have wanted for a time to use the Bulletin of the Institute as a way of updating and deepening spirituality. Hence, in Volume 16,<sup>211</sup> accompanying a long article entitled, “To Better Know Our Lord Jesus Christ”, he listed a bibliography of 114 titles, with seventeen on Scripture and the others on “theology, spirituality and liturgy”. This list gives a good idea of the contents of the library of the Second Novitiate that he had obviously drawn on. Its quality was undeniable. It contained the great spiritual writers of the past like Bérulle, Lallemant, Thomas de Jésus, Grou, but the greater number were more recent writers of note. He later published a marial bibliography of 52 doctrinal works and 86 others grouped somewhat haphazardly as prayers and devotions.<sup>212</sup> Br Avit was not to continue along this path<sup>213</sup> which was clearly not what the Institute wanted at that time. It represented, however, an effort to give the magazine some fresh theological and spiritual depth.

Until N° 159 (July 1955) there were quite a few articles on spirituality that were well-written and covered three angles: spiritual and scriptural matters; devotional, in general discussed in historical terms; re-thinking Marist identity. The impression given was that the magazine was giving voice to the best of the teaching of the formators at the Second Novitiate and of a new generation. New Marist authors began to sign or initial the articles, such as Br Henri-Noé (Marcel Colin), Br M.S. This attempt to be more serious would be followed by an editorial effort that merits to be acknowledged in passing. In 1958 the Champagnat Centre at the Hermitage published a set of meditations by Br Henri-Noé (Marcel Colin) entitled, “In the Footsteps of Champagnat”; “Contemporary marial pages”, taken from the best authors in 1958; and “Joseph the Just”.<sup>214</sup> The Mary Mediatrix company in Genvat, Belgium, published other texts by the same author<sup>215</sup> on “Meditations on the Sacred Heart” and “Marial Meditations” and a Life of Br Alfano about whom more will be said later.

## Attempts at renewal and signs of crisis

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Br Avit died in December 1954 and was replaced on 28 June 1955 as Secretary General by Br Régis-Aimé. In N° 159 of July 1955 the latter launched a survey of readers of which he gave the results in January 1956 (N° 161). There were few replies and the two main comments were that there could be “greater variety in articles on spirituality” and greater depth in articles on education. In 1955, Br Louis-Laurent (Pierre Zind) had begun a section on “history”, producing his important “Contribution to the History of Marist Origins”. The Beatification of the Founder provided material for a number of issues. From N° 163 (July 1956) there was no section on “The Spiritual Life” and articles dealing with spirituality became

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<sup>211</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XVI, N° 115-117, January to July 1939.

<sup>212</sup> In the two lists works in German, English, Spanish, Italian or Dutch were rare.

<sup>213</sup> He would also produce an extensive bibliography on St. Joseph.

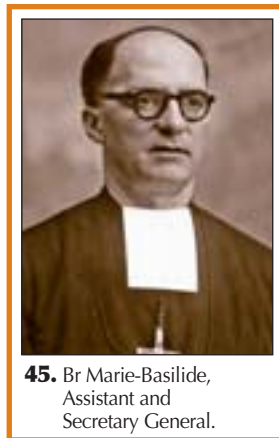
<sup>214</sup> Also *Frère François* by Guy Chastel and *L’Eglise et l’éducation* by L. Riboulet.

<sup>215</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIII, N° 176, October 1959, p. 675.

rare. History replaced spirituality undoubtedly because it was more likely to produce something new for Marist readers. Moreover, the beatification of Marcellin Champagnat had re-centred attention on our origins.

### The Fifty Year mark: a magazine in search of new life

Br Régis-Aimé died suddenly on 16 March 1957 and was replaced by Br Marie-Basilide (Joseph Freléchoz), former Provincial of St. Genis-Laval. He was to resign in 1960. For sure he was the one responsible for the Bulletin of January 1960<sup>216</sup> that celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the magazine and offered a brief comment in retrospect. He pointed out that its 13,000 pages contained close to three hundred spiritual articles, which gave rise to a somewhat reserved judgement: “Even if they do not all have the same value, at least they show the desire of Brothers to do something good for their Brothers”. Then he reviewed the richness of the pedagogical content and information on the Institute sufficient for “when a Brother would like to write the history of the Institute the Bulletin will provide him with abundant material, even if not complete.”



He then set about painting portraits of the various directors of the magazine: Br Dalmace, discreet and hard-working; Br Jean-Emile who “breathed youthful and expansive life into the Bulletin”; Br, Avit, “the expert, the philosopher, the ascetic”, prepared for the role by his long experience as Master of Second Novices; finally, Br Régis-Aimé who died in 1957 and who had narrated the celebration of the beatification of Champagnat. While expressing his regret at so few contributors, the author named some of them: Br Elie-Victor on pedagogical matters; Br Louis-Laurent (Pierre Zind) on research work; Br Louis-Antoine and Jules Victorin who was the archivist. He also pointed out that the previous General Chapter had proposed to reprint the articles on spirituality and pedagogy that had appeared in the Bulletin and an index of these had been prepared and was printed as a supplement to the Bulletin. But the author concluded prudently, “It is left to others who may eventually want to use the material to determine what should happen and if it is timely and helpful to reprint the articles themselves”.

The question of a reprint ended there. Moreover, the general tone of the article suggested that the magazine depended on a few contributors and did not have a wide audience in the Institute. The 1958 Chapter, in its request “that the editorial policy of our magazines focus on the growth of the Institute”<sup>217</sup> would echo this feeling.

<sup>216</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIV, N° 177, January 1960, p. 9-15.

<sup>217</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIV, N° 177, January 1960, p. 15.

## Spirituality and Educational Thinking

The teaching contained in the Bulletins did not deserve such indifference on the part of the Brothers. The index drawn up in 1960 has allowed me to make an inventory of the topics treated in the serious articles in the Bulletins to be able to see where they agree or differ and to note any development in the thinking, where possible.

<b>A MINI-PICTURE OF 50 YEARS IN THE LIFE OF THE INSTITUTE</b>				
<b>SECTIONS</b>	<b>I-XI (1909-1929)</b>	<b>XII-XVII (1930-1947)</b>	<b>XVIII-XXIII (1948-1959)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Editors	Brother Dalmace	Brother Jean-Émile Brother Avit (39-47)	Brother Avit 1954 Brother Régis-Aimé	
<b>RELIGION AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE</b>				
God	2		2	4
Our Lord	9	2	3	14
Scripture			3	3
Our Lady	5	8	12	25
Saint Joseph	2	3	5	10
God, Our Lord, Our Lady, Saint Joseph <sup>218</sup>	18	18	22	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>VOCATION</b>				
Zeal and holiness, Religious Life and Vocation, Prayer and contemplation, Penitence, Constancy, Vocation, Recruitment	39	8	7	54
<b>EDUCATION, CATECHESIS, MISSION</b>				
Education in general, Education: aspects; The child, General Pedagogy	42	4	21	67
Religion in education, Religious educators, Our Lady in education, Catechism and apostolate, missions	14	18	41	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION OF M. CHAMPAGNAT</b>				
Champagnat	1		39	47
<b>HISTORY, BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>				
Bibliography	1	5	20	26
History of the Institute		3	7	10
Source: Schema of Br André Lanfrey from the 1960 Index of the <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> .				
Note: The figures given in the boxes below indicate the frequency of the titles. The columns are rough divisions into significant periods without giving too much importance to the editors.				

<sup>218</sup> Summary Articles.

There were no big quantitative differences on the topic of the Spiritual Life even if the number went down a little in the time of Br Jean-Emile. It is somewhat surprising that Scripture was given only marginal treatment and then late in the piece. The contrast between the period of Br Dalmace and the others on the topic of Vocations is striking. This can be explained by the need of the Institute to get recruitment going again after 1903. There was a turnaround in the focus of attention when it came to education. At first the focus was education in general but then priority was given to religious education, indicating that there was an early awareness of a crisis in passing on the faith.

Few articles on Fr. Champagnat appeared before 1947. The Institute in those days was living more on the interpretation of spirituality given by Br Louis-Marie than on any knowledge of our origins. The attention finally given to Fr Champagnat resulted from his beatification but also from the rediscovery of our Marist origins. This rediscovery coincides with the sudden appearance of history in the Bulletin, while the section, "Bibliography", tried to respond to the desire of Brothers for information that went further than the books of the Institute and traditional literature.

### **The 1960 summary: a mixed result**

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The summary prepared for the fiftieth year was informative but had a half-hearted feel to it. True, the magazine had had to face up to formidable challenges. Besides being the output of a distant central authority and really only available in French, it had to reconcile the two sensitive tasks of providing serious reflections and passing on information. For all this, the Bulletin played the role in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the Annals of Br Avit had in the 19<sup>th</sup>.

The magazine said a lot about the successive editors and their comparative sensitivities regarding spirituality and culture. They were nearly all experts in what Br Basilio would define as 'spirituality-structures', but in differing ways. Indeed, as described above, Br Dalmace lived like a Benedictine, and Br Avit, Master of Novices and "a living Rule", trying at all costs to safeguard the spirit of the Institute that he felt was being threatened. Brs Jean-Emile and Régis-Aimé were more concerned with adapting the Bulletin to the times and tastes of the Brothers.

### **Crisis and change: Volumes XXIV (1960)-XXIX (1970-71)**

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From 1960 to 1967 the Bulletin was under the responsibility of Br Gildo, former Provincial of Italy. He presented the debates and new thinking of that time but remained traditional overall. A break with the past occurred in Volume XXVIII (1968-69) where the section "Second Novitiates" was replaced by "Centres of Marist Spirituality. Jesus Magister", and two new sections appeared, "The Marist Family" and "Post-Chapter Issues". Volume XXIX (1970-71) went much further. What was previously "Around the Marist World" was divided into three sections, "News from the General House", "Going to the Poor and the Missions", "News from the Marist



world". "Education and Teaching" became "Pedagogical Issues". Two new sections were created, "The Church Today" and "The World Today". Spirituality was mentioned in passing in the "marial pages".

The sudden disappearance of the sections on the Provinces which had been the main topic from the beginning was spectacular. This was the result of the crisis that they were experiencing. For this reason from 1968 onwards the number of editions of the Bulletin each year was cut back and the main focus shifted to reflective articles since there was little news coming in and Post-Conciliar and Post-Chapter issues were posing many questions. The quality of these editions was, moreover, often quite outstanding, such as N° 205 of January 1967 celebrating the One Hundred and Fifty Years of the Institute or N° 206 of April 1967 which gave a statistical and geographical overview of the Institute around the world.

<b>TABLE OF SECTIONS OF THE BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE</b>							
	<b>XXIV 1960-1961 N° 177-184 (8 N°)</b>	<b>XXV 1962-1963 N° 185-192 (8 N°)</b>	<b>XXVI 1964-1965 N° 193-200 (8 N°)</b>	<b>XXVII 1966-1967 N° 201-207 (7 N°)</b>	<b>XXVIII 1968-1969 N° 208-210 (3 N°)</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Spirituality	7	5	5	3	3	1	27
General Chapter					4		4
Post-Chapter issues					2	3	5
Provinces	135	144	189	113	26	28	635
Causes of Beatification and Canonisation		11	17	12	2		42
Former students	10	11				3	24
Recruitment	11	2	10	3	1		27
Marist Family					3		3
The Church today					3	3	6
The world today						4	4

Source: Schema prepared by Br André Lanfrey.

**Nota:** The numbers in the boxes indicate the number of articles about this or that section in each Volume.

## **The final stage of the Bulletin: outstanding but in decline (1971-1984)**

After 1971 numbers 215-222 (volumes XXX-XXXI) abandoned the practice of the Bulletin as a 'chronicle of the Institute' in order to give priority to specific events and serious issues. The time of 'special editions' had arrived.

SURVIVAL AND FRAGILITY OF THE <i>BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE</i> (1971-1984)			
VOLUME	N°	DATE	TOPIC
XXIX	212	December 1970	La educación. Artículos en cuatro lenguas
XXIX	213	May 1971	"Prayer to Mary. The prayer of Mary" in four languages
XXXI	219	December 1978	Catechesis
XXXI	220	June 1980	The <i>Constitutions</i>
XXXI	221	June 1982	State of the Institute

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 29-31.

The quality of the articles on spirituality, statistics, history is undeniable. Just at the time that it seemed to be publishing solid and original pieces of work, the Bulletin stopped in December 1984 with N° 222, the noticeable thinness (50 pages) of which indicated that contributions had been lacking. Its title, "From Spirit to Life" was astonishingly paradoxical. The Bulletin was not shut down, rather it died out. But in February 1987 N° 1 of *FMS Message* was to appear, with more modest ambitions, and with the sub-title "Bulletin of the Institute".

By way of conclusion, it can be said that, even if the 'new' approach tried from 1962 to 1982 had shown undeniable signs of a time of crisis, the Institute had also shown a capacity for reflection that did it honour, a capacity that was far from absent in the Bulletin taken as a whole.

## 17.

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# PEDAGOGICAL THINKING IN THE *BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE.* OUR TRADITION AS EDUCATORS AND CATECHETICAL RENEWAL

A great number of Marist documents from the 20<sup>th</sup> century were on Christian education but the Bulletin of the Institute constitutes an exceptional source since, between 1909 and 1927, a section on “Education and Teaching” figured in each of the first 73 issues of the Bulletin. The author was most often Br Dalmace. This section disappeared from 1928 to 1939 when the Bulletin was under the responsibility of Br Jean-Emile but it was re-established by Br Avit from 1938-1954. Thus, over forty years of quite systematic documentation on the educational thinking of the Institute is available for study. Br Dalmace and Br Avit and occasionally Br Jean-Emile write not only in their own name but on behalf of the General Council.

### The program of Br Dalmace

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In Bulletin N° 1, under the title, “What Our Mission As Religious Teachers Demands Of Us”, he presented the essential elements of his educational thinking that was both traditional and forthright.

*By vocation and by chosen state, we are Religious Teachers, Christian educators,*

*I - In a word, we must live a life conditioned not only by human nature and the senses, nor even by our intellect or spirit, but a supernatural life in union with God ...*

*II - But, how to speak of the love of God without the desire to extend His kingdom for His greater glory (...) All the powers of hell, in their impious rage, seem to have formed legions, to use the expression in the Holy Scriptures, against God, against Christ whose reign over souls they have sworn to destroy. (...) We know that as soon as they leave our schools, these children whose souls were entrusted to us are going to be subject to all sorts of seductions (...) Whenever it is possible, let us try to get them together again*

*sometimes at the school (...) In so doing we will be giving them the chance to strengthen one another (...) and maybe even to form some pious association which will be a powerful help in their keeping the faith.*

The spirit of resistance must not neglect competence.

*III -To be a good Teacher and especially a good educator, (...) one has to become familiar as well with the means that are recognised as most likely to get the message across quickly. (...) This, however, is the focus of a whole branch of Pedagogy, Teaching Methods, the essential principles of which should be familiar to anyone involved in education.*

*Let us study with pious diligence that important aspect of pedagogy that is no longer mentioned in official documents (...). I mean the pedagogy of catechetics or the art which is so eminently proper to our vocation of making religious education easier, more attractive, more solid and more fruitful.*

Br Dalmace drew largely on very old pedagogues, his most recent and frequent reference being Mgr. Dupanloup, a pedagogical thinker from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who had a strong influence on the *Teacher's Guide* and even more on Br Jean-Baptiste's *Treatise on Education*. Br Dalmace even drew directly on this work which had remained in manuscript form.<sup>219</sup> He referred to it in N° 64 of the *Bulletin* (August 1923) when speaking of "The aim and excellence of our Vocation."

*In the final years of his sadly too short a life, Brother Jean-Baptiste, of happy and saintly memory, undertook the writing of a book entitled, "The means of doing good among Children". This would have been the second volume of "Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions". In it he tried to highlight the spirit and teaching of the Venerable Founder on Christian Education and the means of ensuring its fruit.<sup>220</sup>*

In praising pedagogy and good teaching methods, Br Dalmace was being quite modern in his thinking. In *Bulletin* N° 10 he returned to professional skills. He recognised that "in nearly all our houses" the Brothers were overloaded but wanted Provinces to imitate what was happening in Canada and the United States.

*In August 1904 the Provincial Council in one of its meetings decided to set up a Commission of Studies. Its purpose would be: 1. To give direction to the personal studies of the Brothers; 2. To send them each month some written homework, some questions to solve; 3. To correct, comment on and show appreciation for these monthly assignments; 4. To increase and complete our collection of traditional books by composing textbooks which are urgently needed; 5. Lastly, to publish a Bulletin of Studies which would be, so to say, the soul of the initiative.*

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<sup>219</sup> It was typed by Br Paul Sester and published in an A4 notebook in February 1998. The bulk of its first part came from the teaching of Fr. Champagnat; the second part was largely drawn from Mgr. Dupanloup and various other authors.

<sup>220</sup> Br Dalmace wanted the work to be published and summarised the first two chapters, one on the aim of the Brothers and the other on the excellence of this aim.

In Bulletin N° 12 of November 1910 he treated religious studies that were especially necessary given “the particular circumstances of the time in which we are living”.

*There have probably been times when catechists could limit their efforts to a simple exposition of Christian truths. Within the family and even society, especially in the countryside, children generally were surrounded by an atmosphere of faith and piety. (...) Unfortunately, as we know only too well, such happy times have disappeared at least in many countries.*

*Children come to school full of prejudices. In workshops, factories, almost everywhere, religious education is the butt of contradiction and derision. So, religious education can no longer content itself with making the children learn about Christian doctrine, (...) Such teaching, in a word, must not just be doctrinal, especially when teaching youngsters of a certain age and learning. It has to become apologetic, at least to some degree.*

The Brothers themselves were not exempt from this environment for “living, as we do, within the world, we are surrounded by an atmosphere of naturalism and sensuality the pernicious influence of which seeks to assault us from all sides.” Faith therefore had to be strengthened by systematic religious study. He gave the example of the Province of Constantinople where religious studies were organised in an eight-year program, quite basic it has to be said, that comprised doctrine, the works of the Institute and pedagogy.

The leadership of the Institute was, then, aware of a quite generalised de-christianised context which was even threatening religious and which needed to be fought off with a renewal in catechesis and a deeper religious culture.

## **Unrestrained Conservatism in the Thinking of Br Dalmace**

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The Bulletins in the years 1921-28 (N° 59-74) were predominantly traditional in talking about Christian instruction. A typical example is to be found in N 74 (August 1928), the second last of Br Dalmace, entitled, “The merit and dignity of the Christian Teacher”. The introduction of this article is significant:

*More than once before, in the pages of the Bulletin, we have had the occasion to return to this topic which holds such interest for our readers. We have drawn on the writings of particularly competent authors on this topic such as Rollin, Mgr. Dupanloup, and Overberg. We would like to think all the same that Brothers would read with equal pleasure, and possibly profit as well, from the thoughts of Father Jouveny SJ, author of “How to Learn and Teach”. (...) After two centuries it retains its relevance. The extract we reproduce below is its conclusion.<sup>221</sup>*

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<sup>221</sup> Born in Paris in 1613, Father Joseph Jouveny died in Rome in 1719. For many years he taught Rhetoric with distinction in the Colleges at Caen, La Flèche and Louis-le-Grand, in Paris.

The great masters to learn from for Br Dalmace, and undoubtedly a good part of the General Council, remained therefore authors from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such rooted conservatism was obviously not to be found in the new *Teacher's Guide*, a work of the General Administration, even if Br Dalmace began with words of praise borrowed from the *Guide* of 1853.

*It is true that some have criticised this system of teaching as somewhat mechanical, monotonous, fostering routine, 'parrotting',<sup>222</sup> and going against one of the essential characteristics of true pedagogical spirit, which aims at surmising, so to say, how the students are feeling and adapting teaching processes to suit. We would not want to claim that our system has never deserved such a reproach. But the fault is much less with the system than with those who use it unintelligently.*

Further, even Br Dalmace who made more of the great pedagogues of the past than contemporary authors, recognised the need for changes:

*Since that time, the education offered by the congregation has changed under pressure of events. From being exclusively primary almost everywhere, it has been extended in many places to secondary. Besides this, the need to comply with official regulations in the various countries where we are present has made it very difficult, if not impossible, to give the new edition just published the precision and imperative style, including on matters of detail, that distinguished the preceding text. To make it open to use everywhere, it has been necessary to remain in generalities on many points and to give these directives the character of guidelines rather than formal requirements.*

The *Guide* thus lost "its character as a *Code*" and became a "benevolent Counsellor", a guarantor of the thinking of the Founder. It placed Marist pedagogy within the history of education in a very well documented manner.

*In terms of pedagogy the Venerable Father Champagnat was neither a theoretician nor an innovator, properly speaking. Over a century before, Saint J. B. de la Salle, of whom he was a great admirer, had developed a highly successful system and it was Fr. Champagnat's ambition to spread the system to rural parishes where it had not yet reached, at least as widely as was needed.*

If it is no longer possible to respect the letter of the 1853 *Teacher's Guide*, "let us at least do what is needed to be faithful to its spirit. This is always possible and even easy."

In discussing "Salvation History and the Catechism"<sup>223</sup> the author expressed regret that at least from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the catechism, in the form of a set of short theological statements that were very abstract for children, had supplanted "the concrete form of salvation history". In conformity with the ideas proposed by re-

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<sup>222</sup> This word designates the fault of those whose learning consists of storing up words and phrases in their memory without bothering to test their correctness nor even to understand their meaning.

<sup>223</sup> *Bulletin* N° 52 (December 1918) on Salvation History. *Bulletin* N° 66 (1924) dealt with the same topic but in a more structured way. Neither article was signed but both were probably written by Br Dalmace.

formers in catechetics, Br Dalmace opted for a return to the historical method which made religious education more concrete.

He also wrote about another new topic, youth. In December 1922 N° 2, a lengthy article appeared that was very sympathetic to the story and organisation of the Scouts. It was in 1927 (N° 72), however, that the focus shifted from children to youth under a very traditional title, “The Spirit Of St Aloysius Gonzaga In The Work Of Christian Education”. The first sentences were not lacking in realism about a notion that had rarely been spoken about before then in an Institute which had, however, largely redirected its forces to secondary education in recent years.

*In the light of the general spirit of contemporary youth, it could appear fanciful at first to want to interest them in the ideals of thinking, sense of vocation and personal habits as shown so well in the life of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga. Surely the incredible optimist who conceived such a plan would only have to appear in any gathering of youth to hit his head against a brick wall of disinterest. “You are wasting your time in coming here to preach to us about St. Aloysius. This may have worked for our forebears three or four centuries ago, but the intelligent young people of today are attracted irresistibly to other dreams by their instincts, convictions and hopes.*

Obviously the rest of the article would try to show that the example of St Aloysius was not outdated but did not really counteract the tough observations in the introduction. This reflection and others already mentioned lead me to define Br Dalmace, and behind him the General Council, as an enlightened conservative, very much aware of a world, particularly the world of youth, that was leaving Christianity behind. While firm in his principles, he was open to new ideas particularly in the field of catechetics. But did his educational thinking mirror that of the majority of his readers?

## Two pedagogues of the Institute

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In 1910 Br Dalmace had endorsed the establishment in the Province of Canada – United States of a structured ongoing formation of Brothers, including a *Bulletin of Studies*.<sup>224</sup> How this initiative developed over time can be known from an excellent biography<sup>225</sup> of one of its prime movers, Br Pierre Gonzalès (1871-1944), better known as Louis Riboulet.

Born in France at St Alban-de-Lay, he did his formation at St Genis-Laval in 1886-89 before leaving left for Canada on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1890 where he taught in several places. On his return to Canada after his Second Novitiate in 1902-1903, he spent a lot of time in formation. In 1904 he wrote some articles in the brand new *Bulletin of Studies* of the Province. Inspired by a chapter in *Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions*, he began a series of articles on “What makes a good Cat-

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<sup>224</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. I, N° 10, July 1910, p. 509.

<sup>225</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. V, N° 114. Life written by Br Louis-Antoine Vallet.



- 46. *Histoire de la Pédagogie* (1925) by Br Louis Riboulet, winning praise from the Academy of Paris, translated into Spanish by Edelvives and re-edited in 1935.
- 47. Br Pierre Gonzales (1871 – 1944), better known as Louis Riboulet.

echism lesson?”. The series which ended in 1914 would be 271 pages long. These articles would even be reproduced in France in 1911 in the *Catechetical Review*. From 1906 he was a lecturer at the Scholasticate and responsible for the *Bulletin of Studies*. As a member of the Studies Commission of the Province he encouraged Brothers to gain their official qualifications. He followed courses at the *Institute of Scientific Studies* affiliated to the University of the State of New York and gained a number of degrees. His biography made no secret of the fact that his work attracted quite a bit of opposition:

*The two topics of literary and philosophical studies and teacher training were the basis of a general culture that he worked at throughout his life and that guided his own work. Maybe we should rather say ‘his struggles’, for Brother Pierre- Gonzalès had to really struggle to win others over to his principles. He had to struggle against well-entrenched habits, against prejudices, and against misunderstandings. He had to struggle, if truth be told, against people.*

The biography also highlighted the encouragement he received from various figures of note and also the fact that “in other Provinces of the Institute, people are following with interest the progress of Canada in organising studies”.

Br Pierre- Gonzalès travelled to Europe in 1914<sup>226</sup> and found himself blocked there by the war. Conscripted into the reserves at short notice, he became a lecturer in literature and philosophy at the institution of Valbenoîte at St Etienne. During the holidays he used to give courses on pedagogy to the young Brothers of the Province of the Hermitage and contributed for a time to a *Bulletin of Studies* similar to that of Canada. “The difficulties, however, were many, sometimes made worse by arguments and painful misunderstandings.”

<sup>226</sup> Nothing was said about the purpose of this trip nor its intended duration.



In fact, he was more an intellectual than a teacher and devoted his time mostly to writing. In 1925 he published a *History of Pedagogy* (662 p.) with a preface by his friend, Cardinal Baudrillart, Rector of the Catholic Faculties of Paris. This book was even recognised by the Académie Française, translated into Spanish for the Edelvivès publishing company and re-printed in 1935. From 1926 to 1928 he produced, “*Advice on intellectual work*” for the *Belgian Pedagogical Review* and used these articles for a book with a preface by Mgr. Lavallée, Rector of the Catholic Faculties of Lyons. This was followed by a *Manual of General Pedagogy* and a *Manual of Psychology applied to Education*, both of which were translated into Spanish. His biography also mentions *Preventative Discipline* and *The Church and Education from the beginning of the Christian era to the XIV century*, this latter text appearing after his death.

Br Léon-Stanislas (1890-1947)<sup>227</sup> worked at Arlon in Belgium and was another who, a little later, had an enduring influence as a pedagogue. Between 1924 and 1929, in addition to his teaching load, he attended the Institute of Teaching run by the De la Salle Brothers in Brussels. He became a lecturer in pedagogy at Arlon before being made director from 1935 to 1942. He found the time to complete his doctoral thesis in Flemish at the University at Gand on “The ideas of Dewey on the education of children and their application in schools” and wrote many articles. As director of St Gilles in Brussels from 1942, he wielded a strong influence amongst teachers in Brussels. He died accidentally in 1947.

This “pioneer of new ways of teaching” produced eleven books. Four volumes on methodology appeared under the general title “*Off the beaten track*”, then, in chronological order, “*Personal work and the syllabus*”, “*Activities in Religious formation*”, “*Teaching better*”, “*Lessons in Psychology applied to education*”, “*A general course in Teaching*”, “*Learning in the Family*”, “*How to form characters*”.

## Controversial figures but not without a following

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Brothers Pierre Gonzalès and Léon-Stanislas were intellectuals who were not really inclined to accommodate others’ opinions. The biography of Br Léon-Stanislas recognised a degree of obstinacy in him and “to play the devil’s advocate, let us add that he took criticism of his books or ideas badly.”

Nevertheless they were not men without a following. Br Riboulet represented the dynamism of the Provinces of North America and the Hermitage, while Br Léon-Stanislas stood for the impact that the training centre at Arlon had on teaching. Moreover, their writings had a real influence within the Institute and beyond. Obviously it is difficult to speak of a school of Marist pedagogy in the period between the wars but in many Provinces there must have been disciples who imitated these two Brothers who wrote so much and so well.

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<sup>227</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VI, N° 131. Biography by Br J.I.

## The pedagogical thinking of Br Léon-Stanislas

I will not comment on the thinking of Br Riboulet for two reasons. Firstly, his text on *Advice on Intellectual Work* seems quite conventional to me, and secondly he seems to have been more an historian of education than a pedagogue. Br Léon-Stanislas, on the other hand, had a robust approach to pedagogy. In *Off the beaten track*, his first book dedicated to general methodology, his preface could not have been clearer:

*Ideas on pedagogy have undergone a profound change in the last thirty or forty years. This has given rise to theories that are commonly called 'new'. Scientists have relentlessly sought to apply their experimental methods to the study of children which have proven so effective in other fields. They have scrutinised the possibilities and interests of children's minds with the same passion and the same concern for objectivity as other researchers. The result has been fresh insights into children, their physical functions and how to foster their development.*

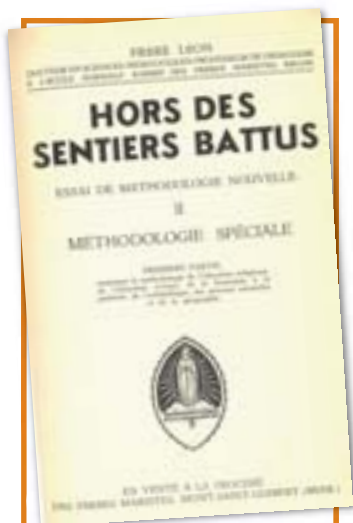
*These insights have practical consequences that sometimes go against traditional concepts. Those who want to raise their educational practice to the heights of modern pedagogy have to revise their teaching methods substantially.*

In contrast to Br Dalmace who believed that pedagogical principles never changed, Br Léon held that when 'new' teachers used scientific methods they had attained tangible results. In Volume 1 of *Off the beaten track*, however, he chose the diplomatic path of adding to the seven Chapters on the 'new' education, "Chapters eight and nine that demonstrated how these principles were present in seed form in the thinking of two pedagogues of the past, Montaigne and Venerable Champagnat". The last Chapter even presented Jesus as the model teacher. In Volume 2 which dealt with Special Education, Br Léon devoted the first Chapter to religious education.

In Volume 3 he seems to have grown in confidence:

*Practising teachers, trained in traditional principles and used to methodologies of the past are somewhat disoriented at the moment. They hear talk of new methods, active learning, centres of interest, globalism, student-centred approaches, self-government and many things besides. (...) 'Bah! They are just the obsessions of the minister or school inspector. They will pass just like other ideas that I have seen bud and flower briefly and then die the good death.*

*People have to understand that this time the 'old' teacher is making a mistake. We are in a time of considerable crisis and of reorganisation which*



**48.** Br Léon-Stanislas (1890 -1947) was lecturer in pedagogy at Arlon and "a pioneer of the new pedagogy".

*will take time but will endure. Active methods are here to stay. (...) This time, methods and means that are dictated by routine or good old experience will no longer work. Rather what is needed is an approach that is based on scientific research. Biologists, psychologists, methodologists are offering teachers the results of their painstaking labours and inviting teachers to get in touch with them.*

## **Br Léon and the renewal of religious education**

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In *Off the beaten track* Volume 2,<sup>228</sup> Br Léon set about demolishing old methods of catechetics. There was “too much instruction but little education; an excess of words; students parroting responses, a lack of suitability to the world of children. “Our catechisms date back to the Council of Trent.” It is time to follow “Modern Reformers” of the catechism.<sup>229</sup>

*They went back to the Gospels and made a close study of the way Our Lord behaved and taught, which they discovered to conform with the most scientific principles of valid modern methodology. They recalled Saint Augustine and his historical method, so suitable for the spontaneous interests and deeper emotions of children. They revisited the thoroughly Christian customs of the Middle Ages that brought things to life in painted images and action-plays before faith was made abstract, something to be memorised. There has been a return to the humble process of induction, starting from concrete situations in Salvation History and real life, abandoning the stupid pretension of jumping from there to general definitions and never-ending commentaries. (...) In short and essentially, what is really valid and psychologically grounded in the principles of active learning is being applied to religious education. All the great catechists we have referred to have made use of these principles while differing in respect of focus and methods.*

## **The reticence of Br Jean-Emile**

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It would seem that Brs Léon-Stanislas and Pierre Gonzalès did not write in the Bulletin of the Institute in the times of Br Dalmace and Br Jean-Emile. Neither were the published writings of other Brothers mentioned. However, in the Bulletin<sup>230</sup> Br Jean-Emile spoke of them in an article with the quite neutral title, “Some Writings On Pedagogy”, followed by a sort of profession of faith that was solidly old-school and undoubtedly in line with the thinking of many Brothers.

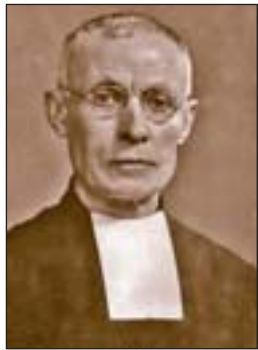
*Interesting writings on pedagogy abound in the literature. Since what is essential in education has been known for a long time, it is normal that when significant*

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<sup>228</sup> Br Léon, *Hors des sentiers battus (Off the beaten track)* Volume 2

<sup>229</sup> “People like Yorke, Shields and Cooper, Fargues, Quinet and Charles, Dupont, Flamion, de Hemptinne, Poppe, Vandevelde, Vandermeuren, Bavo and many others”.

<sup>230</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XV, N° 104, April 1936, p. 72.



49. Brother Jean-Emile

writings appear on less explored aspects of the vast field of education—quite rare as such writings are – they will generate some interest. More than one author sincerely or rather naively thinks that nothing serious or logical was ever produced before he came along. (...) Nothing, however, could be further from the truth (...) From ancient times to our days, the art of teaching has remained more or less the same. A class will always be a small world on the go and with challenging behaviour for its teacher, no matter how exciting new theories may appear to be. If the teacher does not possess the art of controlling children, such theories remain a dead letter, just as the most attractive political projects are during times of turmoil.

So, there was no need to get worked up about theories that were nothing more than “bright ideas that education has seen bud and blossom briefly over the past two or three generations”. All the same, “In pedagogy, as in most other disciplines, noticeable if not sensational progress is constantly being made” and the Bulletin had decided to list some books “published by Religious”. He proceeded to talk about *The History of Pedagogy* by Br L. Riboulet, published by Vitte of Lyons. Yet he found it too tolerant of a number of questionable pedagogues such as Rousseau and Pestalozzi. He took the opportunity to write a lengthy paragraph that was highly critical of Pestalozzi before finishing with some ambiguous words of praise:

*Let us, then, admire The History of L. Riboulet which showed great respect towards our adversaries. They will not do the same for him, that is for sure. Yet in the end, the Divine Master himself said that in matters of the spirit, “It is better to give than to receive.*

He spoke next in praise of a work published by Br Etienne, Superior General of Brothers of Ploërmel in which “common sense and experience were so evident” and in which “you do not get lost in theory”. Then, after favourable remarks on a book by the De la Salle Brothers, he commented on *Off the beaten track* by Br Léon. He gave an honest report on the main idea of the book about the relevance of new pedagogies and expressed appreciation that Br Léon had proposed Jesus Christ and Fr. Champagnat as models for teachers. Even so, Br Jean Emile did not really believe in any advances in the field of pedagogy and did not understand the intellectual stance of Brs Riboulet and Léon. Still, as limited as his article was, it did recognise the fact of some new pedagogical thinking in the Institute.

## **The openness of the *Bulletin* regarding pedagogy in the time of Br Avit**

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This former Master of the Second Novitiate who was considered such a traditionalist, was to display an astonishing openness in the *Bulletin* in 1938<sup>231</sup> in a long article entitled, “What Is Happening In Religious Education?”, a veritable manifesto for a renewal in catechetics.

At the start he stated that “the Second Novices have studied the Manual for Catechists of the De la Salle Brothers, still much appreciated today, and the other more recent manuals on religious education were in the library.” Over the course of the six months, these Second Novices had to give a catechism lesson to their fellow Novices “along with a group of Juniors from St Francis Xavier when this was possible”. In addition, the Brothers from different Provinces swapped ideas and methods and had access to writings “intended to open their horizons in regard to general and special education”.

The Second Novitiate was, then, to function as an important centre of pedagogical and especially catechetical renewal in the Institute. The author recommended in a special way the work, *What Is Happening In Religious Education?*, from the *Centre of Catechetical Literature* of Louvain which produced a synthesis of methods and writings published in French, German, English, Spanish, Italian and Dutch. Its catch-cry was “Start from real life” by choosing methods that were historical, active, and concentric ... and giving priority to teaching about liturgy, the historical Christ, the mystical Christ, Catholic Action and so on. Teaching was to be more inductive and more concrete, prioritising historical methods “which involved making the connection between doctrinal and moral teaching and stories from Salvation History and the life of Our Lord”.

This article that shows a quite unexpected side of the Second Novitiate also illustrates how catechetical renewal validated a more general pedagogical renewal in the Institute.

## **A series of innovative articles from 1939 to 1951**

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This article was but the first in a long series on pedagogy and Christian education that continued until N° 144 of October 1951. Thereafter, the articles became more diverse and anecdotal. The year 1939, even though it was the year that the Superiors returned to St Genis-Laval and war broke out, seems particularly rich in texts of note. N° 115 of January 1939 was very timely, highlighting the struggle between Christianity and paganism in its discussion of the Church and Christian education. N° 116 of April 1939, on teaching and Christian formation in our schools, treated a topic that had been largely ignored by the *Bulletin* till that time, namely

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<sup>231</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XVI, N° 114, October 1938, p. 223.

adolescence and the challenges it posed in youth ministry. N° 118 of October 1939 spoke strongly against routine in teaching, citing the works of Brs Léon-Stanislas and Riboulet among others.

Few editions appeared between April 1940 and January 1947. N° 120-123 from April 1940 to April 1942, however, presented Champagnat as “an educator ahead of his time” through demonstrating quite correctly that his teaching methods were even then close to the principles of the ‘new’ education. In 1947-48 (N° 126-127, 129) three articles appeared, signed by Br Léon-Stanislas. Starting in 1948, several articles by Br Elie-Victor (N° 132, 135) proposed a closer study of what it is to be a child. The word “psychology” gained credibility. The Bulletin N° 133 of January 1949 an article “A religious education teacher” praised Fr. Joseph Colomb and his progressive but very controversial catechism. Br Jules-Victorin returned to the challenge of adolescence in two articles in N° 136, 138.

### **A shift in the *Bulletin* towards global questions in education**

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After this stimulating period, the year 1951 appears to be rather one of questioning. A series of three articles (N° 141-143) spoke of problems faced by Brother catechists at that time. The year closed with an article (N° 144) by Br Charles-Raphaël, then Assistant General, “Are We Still Truly Christian Educators?” As suggested in the title, he expressed his doubts about the quality of our education system and the teaching competence of the Brothers. Other articles would take up the same line of questioning, in particular that of Br Sebastiani, Assistant General, in 1954 (N° 153) on the Christian formation of senior students. After that, articles on education were few and far between. Besides, the focus on the Beatification of the Founder in 1955 and the creation of the World Union of Ex-Students would displace attention to the questions posed in the years 1951-54, but their relevance would be shown in the future.

Thus the change in regard to education evident in the Bulletin illustrates a basic problem in the Church in general and the Institute in particular. From the turn of the century one fact stood out, that paganism with the support of science had erected a structure that was opposed to Christianity and threatened its survival. What strategy could be used to counter this multi-faceted phenomenon? The response of Brs Dalmace and Jean-Emile was to hold out regarding principles while allowing for technical advances. But as shown above some in the wider group of Brothers went much further. Br Léon-Stanislas in particular was loud and clear that the scientific path taken by pedagogues using new methods had created a radically new situation and that it was no longer tenable to speak of holding out or some middle way. What was needed was a total conversion in how teachers teach.

Two arguments were made in favour of adopting the ‘new’ pedagogy, its connection to Christian tradition: taking Jesus Christ and Champagnat as precursors of new methods, and catechetical renewal. Yet going down this path could lead to confusion since some believed that it was enough to change their methods while

hanging on to a traditional anthropology. The warnings of the two Assistants in 1951 and 1953 pointed to the fact that there was a much deeper problem. Implicitly they were posing the question whether traditional culture was useful any longer in evangelisation but rather was a block between young people and the Institute. Vatican II, some ten years later, would tackle the question but some recognition should be made of the fact that the Institute was somewhat prepared for the radical solutions that the Council would put forward.





## 18.

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# THE PROVINCES. DIFFERING FORTUNES

It is impossible to provide a detailed history of each Province in a book with limited goals. Such a project would require a team of writers. Br Juan Moral in *Marist Notebooks* N° 37 of February 2012<sup>232</sup> compiled a bibliography of Province histories that readers could refer to if they wish. In this Chapter I will try nevertheless to give an overview and some reflections on a topic that is extremely complex.

While not suggesting that the history of Provinces began in the first years of the Institute, it can be said that from the year 1817 Marist mission was organised around the two poles of community residence and apostolic work in hamlets. The first mission of the congregation began with the foundation at Marlhès in 1818. Two Brothers lived at a distance from the central house but were connected spiritually and in matters of administration to it. That was what the parish priest Alliot noted at Marlhès and also Inspector Guillard at St Sauveur and Bourg-Argental. The foundation of new schools from the Hermitage would follow the same model. Communities of Brothers were sent to an often distant place after an agreement had been reached with Church and civil authorities. Near the end of Father Champagnat's life, with the foundation of Novitiates at Vauban (1839) and St Pol-sur-Ternoise (1838), the seeds of two Provinces were planted which would grow into the Provinces of Varennes and Beaucamps. Soon afterwards, the merger with the Brothers of St Paul (1842) and Viviers (1844) created two other Provinces in effect, with centres at St Paul-Trois-Châteaux and La Bégude.

The central house of a Province was governed by a director responsible for the spirit of the congregation and having direct authority over the activities of the house such as the Novitiate, the infirmary, and the farm but whose responsibility was limited to the network of establishments dependent on this centre. Real authority was exercised from a single centre, the Superior General and his Assistants based at the Mother House.

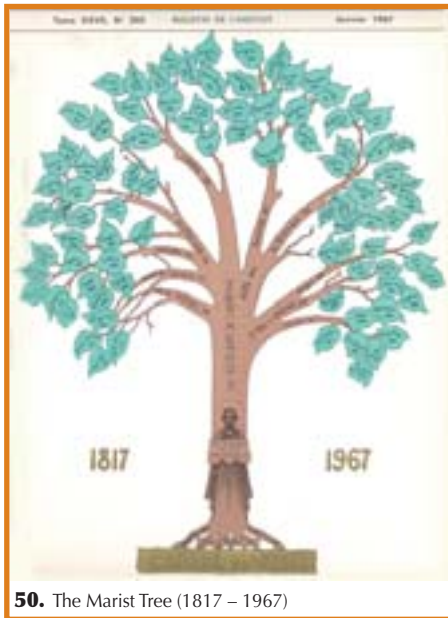
The growth of the Hermitage and the shift of the Mother House would lead to a division into two Provinces after 1860, St Genis and L'Hermitage. By 1903 there

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<sup>232</sup> The excellent history of the German Province, published in 2014 by Br Augustin Hendlemeier: *Marist Brothers. Germany, 100 years (1914-2014)*, should be added to this list.

were seven French Provinces, the circumstances of which differed substantially. The Province of Varennes, in the centre of France, founded in 1876 in an area of lukewarm Christianity, had known limited growth. The Province of Beaucamps, established in 1854, founded the first schools in England but grew in size only because of significant support in personnel from Provinces in the south and their expansion into the bordering countries of Belgium and Germany. The Province of Lacabane in the south-west, founded in 1856, was not really a separate entity until 1885, thanks to an influx of Brothers from L'Hermitage, Saint Paul and Beaucamps. So, Marist France was far from presenting a uniform picture either qualitatively or quantitatively in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After 1903 this pattern of administrative units with strengths that varied greatly would be repeated on an international scale.

### The Marist tree: Myth and reality



50. The Marist Tree (1817 – 1967)

The Marist tree<sup>233</sup> featured on the cover of the *Bulletin on the Institute* in 1967 to celebrate the 150 years of the Institute gives an interesting picture of its growth, from its origin and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, just before the identity crisis of the Institute. In terms of what it tried to portray, one could discuss the consistency of its representation that gives priority to Provinces of origin as the trunk and branches but then proceeds to represent countries rather than Provinces, giving the impression of a tree covered in luxuriant foliage.<sup>234</sup> The Provinces of Brazil, Oceania (Australia, New Zealand), the United States with 2 Provinces, Spain with 7 Provinces, Canada with 3 Provinces, were not represented relative to their real importance.

The chronology of the creation of the Provinces of origin is quite well represented but one fundamental factor in their history is missing. By 1967 the names of several of them had disappeared after they were forced to merge when they had become too weak. This was the case with St Paul-Trois-Châteaux and Aubenas which were merged in 1949 into the Province of South-East and with the Province of Varennes which had become Varennes-Orient through taking in the former Provinces of Syria-Lebanon and Constantinople. The Province of Lacabane, which had passed through many variants, had become the Province of South-West.

<sup>233</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXVII, N° 205, January 1967.

<sup>234</sup> Even if some dotted leaves indicated that the Brothers were no longer in those countries.

As interesting as it may have been, then, the image used to mark the 150 years of the Institute did not acknowledge a phenomenon that had a long history: Provinces, founded by other Provinces, that had enjoyed wonderful growth and were capable of spreading out in their turn; others, often ‘mother’ Provinces were in a more or less advanced state of decline; Provinces which had seen only modest growth for various reasons. The case of Districts, like New Caledonia, that had never reached the status of a Province, could also be added.

## Assistants and Provincials

In 1903 the Assistants-General ceased to have a direct governance role over Provinces. At the end of the Chapter,<sup>235</sup> the Circular of 20 June 1903 defined their responsibilities and for the first time named Provincials as Major Superiors. The Assistants thereafter became the somewhat distant leaders of clusters of Provinces and Districts that had had previous connections (see the table below). From then on it became difficult for a Brother to move from one Province to another. Thus began a new age in the organisation of the Provinces. As was true in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a considerable disparity in the readiness of the Provinces for such a change.

THE DECENTRALISATION OF 1903: ASSISTANTS AND PROVINCIALS			
ASSISTANT	PROVINCES	PROVINCIALS	DISTRICTS <sup>236</sup>
Br ADON	St Genis-Laval (1860)	Br Paulin	China, Constantinople
Br BÉRILLUS	St Paul (1842), Spain (1903)	Br Christophe, Br Paul-Marie	Mexico, Colombia
Br STRATONIQUE	L’Hermitage (1817), Canada-USA (1903)	Br Priscilien, Br Félix-Eugène	
Br CLIMAQUE	North + District of Belgium (1842)	Br Diogène	Brazil South
Br LIBOIRE	Aubenas (+ Algeria) (1842)	Br Richard	Pontós (Spain), Brazil North
Br AUGUSTALIS	Centre (Varennes) (1876), West (Lacabane) (1903)	Br Louis-Philemon, Br Anaclétus	Syria, Brazil Central
Br JOHN	British Isles (1873), Australia (1903)	Br Benedict, Br Mary-Stanislaus	South Africa <sup>237</sup>

Source: Acts of 1903 Chapter.

<sup>235</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 326. Circular du 21 June 1903.

<sup>236</sup> The Superiors used the words, “District” and “Vice-Province” interchangeably (C. 10 p. 368).

<sup>237</sup> Probably The Seychelles and Aden as well.

## The new provinces created in 1909

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The first issue of the Bulletin of the Institute gave a brief description of the twelve new Provinces created between 1903 and 1908.

The process for making foundations had always been more or less the same. A Vicar Apostolic, a Bishop, a missionary religious order, such as the Lazarists or the Jesuits, or less frequently a lay group or even a government, as was the case in Colombia, made a request for one or more schools. The Brothers were engaged in various tasks such as parish schools, orphanages, and assistant teachers in colleges. No matter what work they took up, the Brothers were initially working directly for the Church, be it missionary or well-established. They were asked to participate in ministry programs that had been designed before they came on the scene. In short, the Marist Brothers were involved in only a support role to reinforce new or well-established local Churches.

It was only in a second phase, after having tested things for themselves and gained some confidence, that they established works of their own, sometimes working closely with their mentors, and sometimes seriously at odds with them. In this way Districts came into being, under a Brother Visitor, responsible for a network of schools and a group of twenty or more Brothers, all strangers to the country, mostly expatriates, and generally with no stable or functioning central house. If local circumstances proved difficult for recruitment and there was insufficient new blood from elsewhere, such a situation could go on forever, as happened in South Africa, Madagascar and New Caledonia. When the Institute ensured a continuous supply of Brothers to the District and established a central house with a well-provided Novitiate, the move from being a District to being a Province could be relatively short.

The large-scale exile Brothers in 1903 accelerated the creation of new Provinces as the recently created Districts suddenly found themselves with plenty of personnel and sometimes even overwhelmed by the influx. The challenge was then to find work for the Brothers and financial resources for their upkeep. Often enough the large-scale exile of 1903 created as many problems as it created new possibilities. In any case, it forced the creation of Provinces with considerable improvisation involved.

Several really solid Provinces were to emerge from these quite immature entities created in 1903 and 1908 in thirty years or even less. By 1932, however, the extraordinary prosperity of many Provinces would hide the weakness of others and the real end of some. Also, by 1909 it could be seen that not all new Provinces had the same chance of reaching full maturity, i.e. being self-sufficient in personnel, material and financial resources, and especially in having a strong sense of belonging to a Province community, an idea that is difficult to express in words but nonetheless fundamental.

Besides, the author of the article on new Provinces in 1909<sup>238</sup>, in describing Australia, Canada, USA and Spain which were already showing signs of success,

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<sup>238</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. I, N° 1, January 1909, p. 15-36

was clearly aware that not all situations were the same at the start. He then spoke of South Africa which had been founded well beforehand but had not reached maturity. He emphasised that the Institute since 1903 had only suffered moderate losses in number but omitted one glaring fact: the older Provinces had aged overnight and many of the new ones had been for the most part stitched together or destabilised by the arrival of more Brothers than were needed in the immediate future.

## **Provinces on the road to success**

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Reconnecting with the wider mission to Oceania but completely autonomous in relation to the Marist Fathers, the Brothers arrived in Sydney, Australia, in 1872 to take charge of a parish school at St Patrick's. They quickly added a Novitiate and a boarding school. By 1877-78 the District counted around forty Brothers. It established a central house, firstly as a Novitiate and then a boarding school, at Hunters Hill, near the centre of Sydney. In 1909 the Province of Australia, erected in 1903, had 18 schools in Australia, 9 in New Zealand, 3 in Fiji, and 3 in Samoa, with 280 Brothers and 4,315 students.

Only thirty one years had passed between the first foundation and the creation of the Province. Furthermore, the growth was regional as well as local. Establishing new schools, local recruiting and building an administrative centre were worked on concurrently. The figures given for 1909 are impressive but they do not mention the proportion of the Brothers coming from other countries. Local records show 37 French Brothers in the Pacific at this time, based mostly in New Caledonia. There were also 18 who had come from Ireland, 11 from the United Kingdom and 5 from Germany. The remainder were only in ones and twos as far as national origin is concerned. That is, there were around 40 Brothers born outside Australia and New Zealand. (Translator's note) Among them, the number of French Brothers exiled in 1903 seems to have been quite few. With a Juniorate of around thirty candidates, the Province was set on a path to maturity despite its brief existence.

The scenario in Canada and USA was similar. In response to a request from Bishop Moreau, six Brothers from the Hermitage arrived in Iberville in 1885 to take charge of a parish school with a boarding annex. The arrival of a large number of Brothers from the Province of the Hermitage paved the way for the foundation of many parish schools in Canada and the United States. But this phase in the Province's history was quite brief. After the foundation of schools in New York, e.g. St Ann's Academy in 1894, and at Montreal, the Institute started to work independently of the local Church. By 1909 it had three Juniorates with more than 100 Juniors and two Novitiates, at Poughkeepsie and St Hyacinthe. The Province had 8,000 students across 39 schools, with 389 Brothers, 126 of whom were in temporary profession. Such an abundant number of vocations led to the Province being divided in 1911. From first foundation to the creation of the Province took 18 years, and only another 8 before its division. The French reinforcement in 1903 simply added to a dynamism that was essentially home-grown. It was only in the years between 1940 and 1950, however, that these Provinces would once more be divided and decide to develop missionary sectors themselves. Despite their extraor-

dinarily rapid success, the Provinces of Canada and the United States, were still immature in 1909-1911. Maybe this was the consequence of an imbalance of generations and the fact that a large-scale arrival of French Brothers in 1903 had created problems as well as possibilities.

It was a quite different context that saw the creation of the Province of Spain, starting from the community in Girona, the members of which had originally been appointed to Argentina. The foundation in 1887 was not the result of any direct agreement with a Bishop or religious order but with the committee of the Apostleship of Prayer which had obtained a royal decree authorising the Brothers to work in Spain. In 1888 the Brothers built a centre for themselves along with the Valdemia college in Mataró. There they set the Novitiate up for a time before it was moved to San Andrés de Palomar. Thanks to personnel from the Province of St Paul and local recruitment, the Province of Spain, which was erected in 1903, counted 418 professed Brothers by 1908 of whom 142 were in temporary vows. It was, then, a very young Province with 8,000 students across 60 schools, or 133 per school on average. In contrast with the United States and Canada, and in a similar way to Australia, it moved quickly to provide large numbers of missionaries to Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America.

In each of these three areas the Brothers had many things in their favour: e.g. a supportive or liberal government and a population with a strong Catholic culture and desire for education; a Church keen to have competent teachers at both primary and secondary levels. Above all, since the foundations happened well before 1903, they were, to different degrees, in a position to gain from the exile of the Brothers from France.

### **Provinces whose dynamism was hampered by external events**

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In South Africa, the Vicar Apostolic of the Cape, Bishop Grimley, with the backing of Cardinal Barnabo, had obtained Brothers to take charge of his schools in 1867. There were few Catholics, however, and, with no local recruits, the schools made slow progress. The war in the Transvaal in 1899 led to a crisis. This struggling District would have to wait until 1907 to be made a Province, after the arrival of forty or so young Brothers from Aubenais who took time to adjust to the country. By 1909 it was a small Province of 75 Brothers and a single Novice. Its works were really well adapted to the country. They offered a “mixed” education, i.e. accepting Protestants and Jews, and opening a school for Africans at Roma. It was, however, a Province that lacked full autonomy.

The scenario was very different in Colombia where the Concordat between Rome and the Colombian government of 1887 encouraged the establishment of public schools conducted by religious. Seven Brothers were sent to Popayán and, with the help of reinforcements, by 1889 there were 10 schools, 103 Brothers, mostly expatriates, but already 27 Novices and 16 postulants. The civil war, known as “1,000 days” destroyed the schools in 1900-1902 and the Brothers were left with

nothing or sent into exile. The Province had to rebuild itself anew, this time setting up private institutions. By 1909 there were 103 Brothers, 10 Novices and 40 Juniors. In short, it was a Province which had lived through two foundations in quick succession. Even if the numerical growth was modest, the trial they had suffered made it a strong Province with deep roots in a country that was struggling politically.

The Province of China was the fruit of several quite different agreements. In 1891 Bishop Sarthou, the Vicar Apostolic, appealed to the Brothers to take charge of the French-Chinese school in Nantang, Beijing, but also insisted that they take over the English-medium St Louis College for Europeans in Tientsin. In 1893 the 'mission' in Beijing also asked the Brothers to run the orphanage at Chala-Eul. So, in the north of China, the Brothers were assistants to the 'mission'. The Boxer rebellion in 1900 was to destroy these works and a number of Brothers were killed. In 1906 another five Brothers were massacred in Nan Tchang. Further south the situation was quite different. In 1893 the Jesuits sought the help of the Brothers in St Francis Xavier College in Shanghai and the College was entrusted to them in 1895.

Despite these tragedies, with the arrival of new missionaries, the schools rebounded. The Province was erected in 1908 and in 1909 had 124 Brothers looking after 17 schools with 2,120 students. The difficulties of which the Brothers had been victims showed that their work was not seen as being clearly pro-Chinese. Still, the presence of fourteen postulants and twenty-six Juniors gave room for hope. The story of the Marist Brothers in China was to be an uninterrupted series of trials. Yet, the large number of Chinese Brothers and the continued existence of the Province of China outside the mainland shows that the encounter between European Brothers and the Chinese Christian population had been successful.

In these three countries, even if their political and cultural contexts differed greatly – a Catholic country, a Protestant country, and a "pagan" country – the dialectic of "tension and acceptance" was at play, with tension being more dominant. Even relations with the Church in China were not exempt from this as can be seen in the article of Br Robert Teoh<sup>239</sup> on the aborted fusion of the Brothers of the Mother of God (the Maternists) with the Marist Brothers from 1909 to 1912. This experience points to the cultural and ecclesiological problems that came up in China but also more generally in the Institute. This small congregation, which was dependent on the Vicar Apostolic of the region of Shanghai, had not been integrated into the Marist Brothers in the end for two main reasons: the Marist formators had failed to understand certain aspects of culture; the Church authorities had refused to treat the Chinese Brothers as more than their helpers. The Marist Brothers had welcomed them as equals and encouraged them to follow them in refusing to prostrate themselves before the missionaries as had been the custom. This was an interesting example of a conflict between two interpretations of what would later be called inculturation.

The Province of Constantinople began in 1892 with the arrival of four Brothers as teachers and boarding supervisors at St Benedict College run by the Lazarist Fathers. The next year the Lazarists entrusted them with the direction of a primary school at Scutari, in Asia, where the Brothers were able to obtain exemption from

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<sup>239</sup> Marist Notebooks N° 27, October 2009, p. 89-113.

military service. The Turkish authorities were to subject the Brothers to all kinds of hassles. As happened in China, several other authorities approached the Institute for assistance. In 1895, Mgr. Marengo, parish priest of Makri Keui, near Constantinople but inside Asia, gained a Catholic school; and through the intermediary of the Jesuits and the French Consul, the Institute founded a school at Samsoun on the Black Sea. The Lazarists, Jesuits, and other congregations invited the Brothers to take over schools or to assist them in various places. Even the French ambassador got them to open a school on the island of Metelin.

In contrast to most new Provinces, the Brothers of Constantinople were true missionaries in the sense that they lived outside Latin Christianity and had to adjust their way of doing things to this context. Most of the students “were outside the true Church” but, even if the Brothers were not thinking in terms of ecumenism as such, they put it into practice. “Religious education was taught to all Christians without distinction”; “ethics classes taught the others their general responsibilities towards God, their neighbour and themselves”. In this way they practised a form of ‘accommodation but not in all things’ that was quite uncommon at the time but was to become the pattern elsewhere. Yet obviously vocations were extremely rare. While the Province had 14 communities with 103 Brothers in 1909, they were all foreigners. Meanwhile the Province sought to make inroads into central Europe. It set up a Juniorate at Roustchouk in Bulgaria but with only 8 Juniors, and another was foreshadowed at Orsova in Hungary.

In essence the context was similar to that of China, with a culture that was not only different but even antagonistic, seeing Catholicism as a foreign body. The attitude of the government was more hostile than that of the general population that was either orthodox or muslim, and so the chances of sinking deep roots were virtually nil. The 1914-18 war was to destroy all the schools and in 1935 the last Brothers left the country, refusing to accept the policy of nationalisation of schools in Turkey introduced by Kemal. Only the schools in Greece and central Europe in Budapest remained, while there had been a small number of schools founded in Bretagne, France, as a source of possible vocations.

The scenario was a little less difficult in Lebanon-Syria where there was a sizeable Christian population with political autonomy. Religious congregations were able to work there, under the protection of France that had chosen not to ‘export’ its anti-clerical and anti-congregation policies. By 1909 the Brothers numbered around a hundred, working in 19 schools with 22,000 students. There was, however, but a trickle of local vocations reaching the Novitiate. Everything had to be rebuilt after the 1914-18 war. Still there were never nearly enough local Brothers for the schools in hand. Despite the fact that the Brothers related quite well to people around them at the religious level, they remained isolated culturally. In some ways their overall situation resembled that of New Caledonia and South Africa.

## **Provinces of slow growth**

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The Provinces of Varennes and Lacabane made their first foundation in central Brazil at the request of the Bishop of Mariana in the State of Minas Gerais. Six Brothers arrived at Congonhas in 1897 to teach and supervise students in a dioc-



san college. Soon after, however, Br Norbert, Assistant General, directed the Brothers to start a fee-paying school in Sao Paolo. A large number of colleges were to begin as a result. By 1909 the situation remained unimpressive, however, with 75 Brothers teaching 1,800 students. The provincial house was at Mendès where the Novitiate and Juniorate were still at the stage of being a “little flock”.

Considerable improvisation characterised the foundation of the Province of Brazil north. In March 1903 five Brothers from Aubenas arrived in Belem in the north of Brazil following an invitation from the local Bishop, Mgr. Maïa. They took charge of the diocesan college of Carmo, initially in difficult circumstances. Belem quickly became a place of refuge for many Brothers from Aubenas chased out of France. The years that followed saw a lot of unplanned growth. It is quite astounding that a Province was created in 1908 since there were only 52 Brothers teaching 1,100 students. There was no provincial house, nor Novitiate.

In the south of Brazil the Brothers responded to a request of the Bishop responsible for German-speakers in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. They started a German-medium parish school at Bom Principio in 1900, then a Portuguese-medium public school in 1901, and finally a teachers’ college in 1903. The Bishop of Porto Alegre, Mgr. Ponce de Leon, managed to get the Brothers to start three schools in Porto Alegre in 1902. By 1909 the Province had, thanks to a large influx of Brothers, 18 schools, 2000 students and a hundred Brothers mainly from Beaucamps.<sup>240</sup> There was no Provincial house but a Novitiate had just been begun.

As happened in south Brazil, a variety of authorities were involved in the Brothers’ foundation in Mexico. The Brothers arrived in Guadalajara in 1899 at the invitation of a committee of parents. In the same year schools were started in Yucatan. At the request of Bishops, schools were begun in Zamora in 1900, Mexico city in 1901, and Cuernavaca in 1902. As a result, when many French Brothers arrived from St Paul they found a set-up that was able to use their services effectively. By 1909 the Province had 26 schools, 180 Brothers and 4,600 students. The Provincial house, which had formation sections attached, was at Zamora. Their works were more successful than in Brazil but the sinking of deep roots had barely begun. This must have happened quickly, however, since the Brothers were able to survive despite the expulsion of European Brothers during the revolution that wracked the country from 1914 to 1920. Further, the essentially totalitarian regime of Calles from 1926 to 1930 was no more successful in getting the Brothers to give up.

This rapid overview of the new Provinces brings out the quite artificial and even paradoxical character of the Provinces since a good number of them were canonically autonomous but without the practical resources needed for this autonomy. Three criteria were behind the decision to create the Provinces: 1. That of distance, not only physical but in terms of culture and administration, making a broad local autonomy necessary; 2. The Constitutional requirement of having decentralised government; 3. The number of Brothers, in the hope that each of the Provinces would be able to get organised and provide new blood for itself in the long term.

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<sup>240</sup> In his history of the German Province (2014), Br Augustin Hendlemeier speaks (p. 24) of the departure of 100 German Brothers for south Brazil prior to 1914.

This explains, then, why, even when Provinces had pronounced weaknesses, the General Council maintained its traditional role and continued to direct vocations from France overseas, while seeking recruits from elsewhere as well. It was to find these through the creation of the Work of St Francis Xavier in Spain, Germany, Italy, and even in central Europe. By 1909 there was the outline of a policy of giving priority to the international growth of the congregation, using Europe as a reservoir of missionary vocations.

The two world wars as well as revolutions, civil disturbances and national uprisings were obviously going to cause serious upsets to the well-being of the Institute. Nevertheless, in 1909 the future shape of the Institute was being drawn, with its forces divided into large blocs:

EUROPE	in difficulty, but still providing missionaries for the rest of the world, particularly thanks to Spain, Italy, Germany and St Francis Xavier.
LATIN AMERICA	growing only slowly in maturity thanks to the support of Spain and European missionaries.
NORTH AMERICA AND OCEANIA	capable of getting organised and providing for their own vocational needs.
MIDDLE EAST	The Middle East blocked in its growth before it could start.
CHINA	showing signs of greater openness.

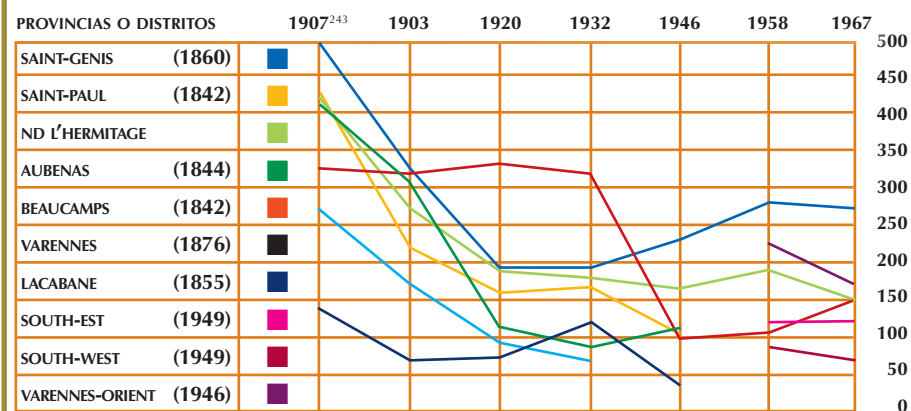
## The decline of the Mother Provinces

The policy of missionary expansion differed according to the Assistants who governed them at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. St Paul and Beaucamps were resolutely committed to nearby and distant countries. St Genis and l’Hermitage seem to have been slightly less so,<sup>241</sup> and Varennes – Lacabane even less because of weakness at home. In addition, the suppression of the congregation in 1903 showed quite varying capacities for survival. The Province of St Paul, with its external commitments already in place, had no problems identifying places to send its Brothers while in the Provinces of Aubenas and Varennes there were no clear plans. Moreover, in the period 1903-1967,<sup>242</sup> St Genis, l’Hermitage and Beaucamps would regain some strength while the other Provinces had to be restructured by fusion or being added to Provinces outside France. The table in the Annex below of electors to the General Chapters in this period, i.e. Brothers in perpetual profession and those with the vow of stability, clearly shows the quite divergent fates of these Provinces.

<sup>241</sup> In his *Histoire de l’institut* in 1947, Br Jean-Emile remarks (p. 219) that before 1908 200 Brothers had been sent to China and Turkey.

<sup>242</sup> An increase in personnel after 1946 was partly artificial since some non-French units had been added to Varennes.

## STATISTICS 7 - EVOLUTION OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROVINCES OF FRANCE (1903- 1967)



Source: Schema of Br André Lanfrey from the Acts of elections for General Chapters

## The history of the Institute written in 1947

Almost forty years after the 1909 overview, a History of the Institute edited by Br Jean-Emile, Assistant General from 1939,<sup>244</sup> gave a sort of report on the one hundred and thirty years of its existence. Conceived as a textbook, it had all the qualities of such a text as well as the limits:<sup>245</sup> a clarity of description at the price of some debatable simplifications. In its Preface, the author said that he was “responding to a wish expressed at the 1946 General Chapter”.<sup>246</sup>

## An overview of the Provinces

In his final chapter Br Jean-Emile painted a global picture of the Institute at the end of the war. In order to avoid “a monotonous” description of the then 30 Provinces, he took a regional approach.

1. For France he stated that the Provinces had “faced diminishment since 1903”. It had been necessary to combine Aubenas and Lacabane into the Province of South-West, and Varennes, Constantinople with its schools in

<sup>243</sup> Acts of Chapter. Statistics.

<sup>244</sup> He died in 1971. No biography seems to have been written.

<sup>245</sup> Edited by the Office of the Econome General of the Marist Brothers at St Genis-Laval.

<sup>246</sup> In fact, he was responding to a hope of the 1932 Chapter. It must be supposed that the bulk of the work was completed while Br Jean-Emile was Secretary General. The 1946 General Chapter encouraged him to complete the text and publish it.

Bretagne, and the Middle East. So there were then six Provinces with 1,355 subjects including only 197 Juniors. The number of Juniors had gone down considerably because of the war.

2. North America, with 3 Provinces, had 1,340 subjects including 380 Juniors, 60 schools and 21,640 students. "Every reason to hope for continued growth (...) In the United States we have total freedom of action and in Canada the schools of the Brothers are subsidised".
3. Mexico is "an admirable Province that nothing can discourage", counting 576 subjects including 145 Juniors and 13, 244 students.
4. Brazil "today hosts three of the most thriving Provinces of the Institute". Vocations are now plentiful there. The 54 establishments serve 25,000 students. There are some 2,000 subjects, including 750 Juniors. Future growth is to be expected".
5. In Spanish-speaking America the 4 Provinces "are continuing" to grow despite some political upheavals. There were 1,165 subjects including 367 Juniors. 53 schools were serving 22,000 students.
6. For Spain with its 4 Provinces the damage done by the civil war had been repaired. 72 schools (compared to 100 before 1936) were serving 27,000 students. There were three Juniorates providing candidates for South America.
7. Regarding the 3 Provinces of Australia and New Zealand: "Although these Provinces are established in countries with a protestant majority, they enjoy freedoms that are not always available in Catholic countries". They had missions in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Bougainville. Together they numbered 661, including 128 Juniors. 16,700 students attended their 63 schools.
8. The Province of Belgium was a source of great hope from its connection with "the enormous Congo which is taking great strides towards being a thoroughly Christian country".

For Br Jean-Emile these were the 24 Provinces that constituted the real strength of the Institute through their prosperity or at least their personnel. He went on to speak of the "other Provinces" that were smaller or beset with structural problems. He did not make any particular assessment of Great Britain / Ireland or Italy, probably because he did not know much about them. For South Africa and New Caledonia he highlighted the challenges in recruiting. For Germany and China he discussed at some length the tough trials they had been through as well as their courage in starting afresh. It was, then, an optimistic panorama of the Institute but not without its nuances or somewhat doubtful value judgements.

## **A Hymn to an Institute unscathed by time**

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This report fitted into the overall purpose of the book which was to show how the Institute had remained faithful to its origins and had fought the good fight. France at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was described as a battlefield between the

Freemasons and the Church, with the population remaining predominantly Christian and extremely favourable towards religious congregations<sup>247</sup>. He made no mention of changes in the Institute from 1840 to 1880, thinking that our schools had virtually remained as they had been at the time of Fr Champagnat. He exaggerated the effect of the nationalisation of schools between 1881 and 1903 which, according to him, had led to the abandonment of small schools “for the sake of big colleges that needed large staffs and were able to support them”. This was a tendentious interpretation with a precise purpose: to justify the shift of focus in the Institute from primary to secondary schools.

(p. 81) *So, it was only under the unavoidable pressure of events that the Institute had to resign itself to this change in its ideal as received from our Venerable Founder. Founded principally for schools in the countryside, it found itself forced to move to the towns, especially in France.*

Finally, the Institute was “a little like the empire of Charles Quint on which the sun never set”. Brothers everywhere of all races and languages shared the same spirit and practices. The sole difference was in how they dressed: suits and ties, Roman Collar, white soutanes... It was a holy body of men, beloved of Mary, highly esteemed by people, unassailable to the wiles of the wicked. It was a fervent body, where peace reigned. For him, there was no decadence calling for reform.

*So, all our troubles come from outside. We have been subjected to persecutions, expulsions, confiscations and sometimes massacres because Providence wants us to share in the tribulations of the Church, the mystical body of the Divine Master, suffering until the end of the world. Thanks be to God, none of these trials has come about for the Institute as a result of the action of its children.*

There was, then, nothing to change in a society that had remained faithful to its original spirit. The persecutions that had been surmounted were but the sign of such fidelity across time. The 1947 ‘history’ of the Institute was then quite paradoxical since it said that the Institute was always the same, time having no hold on it. But, on the whole, the attempt comes across as a glowing report but not all that convincing.

## **The Unity of the Institute and yet quite different fates of the individual Provinces**

At the end of his book, Br Jean-Emile suggested that each Province write its own history following the lead of the Province of St Genis-Laval (p. 217-233). It was a way of recognising the particular character of each administrative unit. Having recorded the trials experienced by the Province of St Genis, he noted that in 1947 there were 318 Brothers, the same as in 1860. Yet “this was quite miraculous and in any case a proof of its devotion, solid religious spirit and zeal, of having held out (...) and of never having lost hope even in the midst of the worst of circumstances”. This was, altogether, a good description of the spirit of this Province, short as it was.

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<sup>247</sup> This conspiracy theory was common ground between conservative and Catholic propaganda.

Quite recently, Br Augustin Hendlemeier<sup>248</sup> set about defining the major characteristics of the Province of Germany. Although there had been many German Brothers, they had always been on the geographical and cultural edge of the Institute, resulting in a weak sense of belonging to an international body, an over-attachment to tradition and authority, and a certain religious conservatism. On the other hand, its energy and corporate spirit helped the Province to come through tough times. Br Hendlemeier also underlined the importance of the quite monastic life and spirit of the Provincial house at Furth. There a large number of Brothers were engaged in all kinds of specialist tasks that gave the Province its quite unique character. Yet isn't the history of each Province unique?

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<sup>248</sup> *Marist Brothers, Germany, 1914-2014*, p. 13-15.

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# THE REPORTS OF VISITS MADE IN 1947-52

Some slightly later sources can be used to add to this generalised history of the Institute. Fortunately, because of the difficulties in communication between Provinces during the Second World War, the Circulars<sup>249</sup> contained the records of canonical visits made between 1947 and 1952. These offered snapshots of the Provinces and their strengths and weaknesses. In spite of their somewhat formal tone, the prevailing trends can be discerned and the above comments of Br Jean-Emile can be validated, nuanced or contradicted.

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### Tragic situations

This was a relatively peaceful time after a period of great hardship in many places. Mexico had come through a long period of alternating persecution and calm between 1914 and 1940<sup>250</sup>. Germany, in a state of ruin, was under military occupation; Br Marie-Odulphe had trouble getting in<sup>251</sup>. Several houses of the Institute were in the hands of refugees or occupation forces. The war had killed many Brothers and “sadly caused others to leave the Institute”. In addition, the Province was scattered, with Brothers in Uruguay, Liechtenstein and Switzerland besides Germany.

Spain, which was still rebuilding and reorganising after the 1936-39 civil war and had been divided into four Provinces in 1944, had finished its convalescence. 1,200 Brothers were at work with 650 in formation, although this had been quite reduced in length it would seem. Greece, where there were 33 Brothers, faced a terrible famine and then civil war in the post-war period. The schools that had been requisitioned for a long time had just been returned<sup>252</sup>.

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<sup>249</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX-XX.

<sup>250</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX p. 51-55. Circular of 24 May 1948. See also in *Marist Notebooks* N° 30 (February 2012 p. 93-131, “Marist charism in the land of Mexico” of Br Brambila.

<sup>251</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 614 ; T. XX, p. 125-135. Circular of 8 December 1948.

<sup>252</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX, p. 140. Circular of 8 December 1948.

China alone was to experience worse<sup>253</sup>. The report published in December 1949 spoke of a Province being cut in two. Half of the 233 Brothers were in the north, the area under communist control, trying to save what they could. The Novices and postulants had taken refuge in Macau. An attempt was being made to start schools in South-East Asia.

## **Isolation and the beginnings of decolonisation**

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Many mission countries, such as Congo, Madagascar, Middle East, Ceylon and New Caledonia, had been through a long period of isolation. Also, the effects of decolonisation were starting to be felt. Br Jean-Emile deplored the long isolation of the District of Madagascar, with 23 Malagache Brothers out of 32, and its lack of resources.<sup>254</sup> Ceylon, with around twenty Brothers, had likewise been isolated for a long period but its works were flourishing with the assistance of lay teachers. The country had become independent in 1949 but the government, although quite liberal in its policies, would pay salaries to Singhalese only. For New Caledonia the isolation had been fatal.<sup>255</sup> There were only three schools left and no new local vocations. Br Désiré-Alphonse, the Visitor, was quoted as saying, "The mission is dying".

Developments in Africa were quite the opposite, with new foundations in Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Mozambique under the patronage of Canadian and Brazilian Brothers. The older foundations of South Africa, Madagascar and Belgian Congo presented very contrasting pictures. There were large schools and negligible local recruitment in South Africa and Belgian Congo, while there was a much healthier balance between local Brothers and works in Madagascar.

## **The insufficiency of Brothers for schools and the rise of lay people**

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The war had meant that there were even fewer Brothers for the schools under their responsibility and so lay staff were being employed nearly everywhere. Certain Visitors insisted on the need to replace lay staff with Brothers and, at the very least, to restrict the contact between Brothers and lay people as much as possible. This was the case in Beaucamps where the Visitor recommended that "laystaff be sent away". In Mexico, schools had between 5 and 40 lay teachers depending on their size. Belgium had many lay teachers. Varennes had 102 Brothers and 16 lay staff in its schools.

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<sup>253</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 618. Circular of 24 May 1947; T. XX, p. 297, Circular of 8 December 1949.

<sup>254</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 607. Circular of 24 May 1947.

<sup>255</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 60. Circular of 25 December 1940.



## Recruitment and formation

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In many Provinces senior Juniorates were established so that by the time a candidate entered the Novitiate he would have completed secondary studies and be about 17 years old. Also the length of the Scholasticate was extended to allow Brothers to obtain professional qualifications and Scholasticates where Brothers attended university were on the increase. Furthermore, differences in regard to recruitment were appearing: in Anglo-Saxon countries new vocations were mostly coming from our schools whereas in Brazil they were coming from elsewhere.

## A traditional mindset confronted by new contexts

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Many Visitors were still caught up with a mentality of restoration. The ideal remained that of a wholly Christian society that the Visitor for Canada<sup>256</sup> believed to have found there in 1948:

*There is no country in the world where religious enjoy a more favourable context than yours. The families are deeply Christian ... You conduct recognised schools where the organisation conforms entirely with directives of the Catholic hierarchy. Religious education is included in the government syllabus. The textbooks are beyond reproach in matters of doctrine. The civil authorities offer you total protection. The parish clergy provide for the religious practices of your students. The education department pays you for your work.*

It was reported that in Mexico<sup>257</sup> the end of the persecution had led to “a real avalanche of children” attending the fee-paying colleges operated by religious. This had meant the employment of a good number of lay teachers. The Visitor wanted to know that the Provincials were intending to replace lay teachers with Brothers “although this will take time since they are so many”. Certainly such a policy did not become practice after the visit. He may have been anxious for a return to tradition regarding the employment of lay people but he was less so regarding the clientele of the schools. For him, it was certainly important to educate the poor, this being the spirit of the Institute,

*but, given the special needs in countries like yours where the clergy conduct so few colleges, the formation and Christian education that you offer is even more needed for the children of well-to-do families than others since they are the ones who will one day govern the country.*

There could be no better illustration of the shift in Marist education, from the poor and working classes to the elite. The Visitor went on to say that the same had happened in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Cuba, where, thanks to this choice, “religious initiatives were being consolidated and supported”.

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<sup>256</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 158. Circular of 15 March 1942.

<sup>257</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX, p. 53-54. Circular of 24 May 1948.

In Asia, the Institute seemed to have had second thoughts about its policy of expansion. At least that is the impression given in a short article giving “news from Ceylon” in 1948.<sup>258</sup> The article touched on a topic that does not seem to have had direct relevance to Ceylon which was mainly Buddhist, but rather to the nearby country of India. The article stated that, because of the caste system, candidates from the low castes could not be admitted into the clergy or religious orders. The author held that such thinking was opposed to the Gospel and that “the only choice is to accept high caste candidates or perish”. He then formulated a principle that the Institute was to apply more or less everywhere at various times: “Those on the ground know that they have to adjust to the local culture”, all the while working for a change in spirit. In the end, the Institute did not have to contend with the Indian challenge at that time but there was a wider debate going on that was behind this article.

In 1949 the Visitor for South Africa<sup>259</sup> found himself confronted with apartheid on which he made no explicit judgement, being content to note that among the ten schools of the Province there was one for the blacks. In contrast, he was astonished that 47% of the students in schools for the whites were either Protestants or Jews. As ex-students were to be found in the *Marist Old Boys* irrespective of their religion, he needed to be reassured by a local Bishop that such a situation was acceptable, one of the outcomes of this ‘mixing’ being a reduction in sectarian prejudices.

### **Similarities and dissimilarities of regions that were doing well**

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The Visit reports confirmed the comments of Br Jean-Emile on regions that were doing well but hinted at significant differences between them as shown by a closer study of their statistics. The three blocs of Brazil, USA-Canada and Oceania had almost the same number of establishments but those of Brazil were clearly much bigger. Also, looking at recruitment, the comparative figures of Juniors / Brothers were quite different.

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<sup>258</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIX, p. 621. Circular of 24 May 1947.

<sup>259</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX, p. 233. Circular of 24 May 1949.

<b>PROVINCES OF BRAZIL</b>					
PROVINCES	N° SCHOOLS	N° OF BROTHERS/SCHOOLS	N° OF STUDENTS/SCHOOL	N° OF STUDENTS/BROTHER	JUNIORS/BROTHERS
Brazil Central	15	26	504	19	54%
Brazil South	34	13	348	26	102 %
Brazil North	14	18	359	19.5	65 %
<b>Total/average</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>73.6 %</b>
<b>PROVINCES OF NORTH AMERICA</b>					
PROVINCES (1950)	N° SCHOOLS	N° OF BROTHERS/SCHOOLS	N° OF STUDENTS/SCHOOL	N° OF STUDENTS/BROTHER	JUNIORS/BROTHERS
United States	14	23.5	550	23.3	36 %
Iberville	21	15 <sup>260</sup>	272 <sup>261</sup>	18.1	56 %
Lévis	26	12	276 <sup>262</sup>	22.8	66 %
<b>Total/average</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>52 %</b>
<b>PROVINCES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND</b>					
PROVINCES (1950)	N° SCHOOLS	N° OF BROTHERS/SCHOOLS	N° OF STUDENTS/SCHOOL	N° OF STUDENTS/BROTHER	JUNIORS/BROTHERS
Sydney	33	7.4	256 (42 boarders)	34.4	34 %
Melbourne	19	6	166 (42 boarders)	27.4	26 %
New Zealand	19	6	166 (42 boarders)	27.4	26 %
<b>Total/average</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31.3 %</b>
Source: Table prepared by Br André Lanfrey from visit reports published in the <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> .					

It was probably the case that in Brazil there were more private secondary colleges serving the middle-class, undoubtedly with an eclectic religious identity and therefore not really promising for recruitment. In the Anglo-Saxon worlds of USA, Canada and Australia, the context was more democratic and the Catholic identity stronger, which allowed for recruitment from schools and thus less dependence on Juniorates and a higher age of entry into the Novitiate. This was the pattern that was to become more generalised over time. At that time, the Colleges in Brazil who had to cover the payment of their teachers seemed to have few lay staff<sup>263</sup> while, in the Anglo-Saxon world, day schools with a mixture of Brothers and laystaff were common.

<sup>260</sup> Schools with between 3 and 36 Brothers (Collège Laval).

<sup>261</sup> Schools with between 60 and 700 students.

<sup>262</sup> Schools with between 60 and 900 students.

<sup>263</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX, p. 77. Circular of 24 May 1948.

## The Province of Italy, a long time coming

Italy had had its share of difficulties but more importantly, like Germany, it had provided many Juniors for St Francis Xavier and a number of Provinces, particularly Argentina. This is the reason that it did not become a Province of its own until 1946.<sup>264</sup> The quite modest number of Brothers, then, was not due to a weak potential for growth but to a ‘skimming off’ over many years of Juniors and Brothers to the advantage of regions considered missionary lands. Its strong proportion of Juniors suggests that recruitment was focussed on rural areas. The high number of Brothers per school, however, shows that they were working mainly in urban schools with boarding sections.

THE PROVINCE OF ITALY, A LONG TIME COMING					
PROVINCES (1950)	N° SCHOOLS	N° OF BROTHERS/SCHOOLS	N° OF STUDENTS/SCHOOL	N° OF STUDENTS/BROTHER	JUNIORS/BROTHERS
Italy (1950)	8	20	298	14.9	91 %
Source: Table prepared by Br André Lanfrey from visit reports published in the <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> .					

## The uncertain future of the Middle East: Lebanon / Syria

The District of Lebanon-Syria was established in a region where life was extremely unpredictable. Marist works had been destroyed between 1914 and 1918, relationships were difficult between religious communities, and a new challenge had appeared with the independence of Syria and Lebanon in 1945 that paved the way for a trend towards decolonisation that was to become widespread in the coming years. Too weak to subsist on its own, Lebanon-Syria was no longer a Province but part of the Province of Varennes-East.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE-EAST: LEBANON/SYRIA					
DISTRICT (1950)	N° SCHOOLS	N° OF BROTHERS/SCHOOLS	N° OF STUDENTS/SCHOOL	N° OF STUDENTS/BROTHER	JUNIORS/BROTHERS
Lebano-Syria	8	8	310	38'8	18.75
Source: Table prepared by Br André Lanfrey from visit reports published in the <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> ..					

<sup>264</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX, p. 380-386. Circular of 24 May 1950.

This sector comprised large urban boarding institutions,<sup>265</sup> offering primary and secondary education in French and Arabic. The schools in Syria at Aleppo and Damascus, which had been closed down by the government, were re-opened under pressure from the Christian population and with the help of the French government. The report highlighted the more or less long-standing difficulties: the need to be familiar with Arabic, which was becoming ever more urgent; quarrels between religious communities; people leaving rural areas such as Amchit.

For all these reasons, the statistics make distinctions that were uncommon elsewhere: there were 2,287 Catholic and 199 orthodox or muslim students; 1,881 were fee-paying and 605 (Catholic) attended for free. Although they enjoyed an excellent reputation, the schools were limited by their financial resources, the lack of land to expand, and number of Brothers. “We can only meet the demand (of parents) by employing more lay teachers, something that is impossible for schools that depend heavily on external sources to cover their costs”. Recruitment prospects gave little hope for change. There was a tiny Juniorate with a dozen Juniors who would later proceed to Varennes to complete their formation. Despite their long contact and services rendered, the Marist Brothers had only weak relations with the surrounding society, the various religious communities and the government.

China was experiencing the same problem but in a context of violence. The trend towards decolonisation had begun, oftentimes strongly influenced by ideologies, leading to many cases of the Brothers being marginalised or expelled, as happened for example in Cuba and Congo-Brazzaville. These were prime examples of long-standing missions that had the twin goals of introducing a European-style Christian society and extending European cultural influence, a pattern that had seen its day by the eve of the Second World War.

## Long-term effects of becoming more international

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By the 1950s most Provinces had a long history and corporate identity. Delegates of the General Council could be surprised or delighted by certain aspects of their culture or educational practice. The ideal of traditional Christianity remained the key point of reference but the complexity of the world was accepted, at least as the lesser of two evils. The Institute had to resign itself to the collapse of some regions while the overall feeling was one of optimism. The challenge of decolonisation was still not widely appreciated. On the other hand, some Visitors were getting upset about the employment of lay teachers. Their comments, however, counted for little since this had become irreversible in many places.

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<sup>265</sup> The nature of ‘boarding’ in three of these schools was special: the residence provided only lodging and bedding. The students brought their own food, as “weekday boarders”. These students do not seem to have been counted as boarders.

## **From instances of secularisation to secularisation as such**

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The state of the Provinces of the Institute around 1950 was the result of becoming more international, a process that had been successful overall. But the identity of Provinces forged over fifty years also depended on broad cultural movements with deep roots in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the time of the Protestant and Catholic reformations and the Enlightenment.

Thus the Marist regions in North America and Oceania followed the Anglo-Saxon model, with its liberal tradition of granting considerable autonomy to religious and Church communities. Superiors and Visitors frequently remarked on this liberalism which was in stark contrast with the political situation in many countries that had a Catholic majority. Within a society with a religious and democratic spirit there lived a minority Catholic 'tribe' that was well organised and had a well-defined identity, largely the product of Catholic schooling. The Church still had recognised authority. At the same time, it was a world preoccupied with getting ahead socially, with economic progress and with advances in technology, a world where many aspects of religious traditions were being eroded, discreetly paving the way for an intensification of secularisation.

The Latin world was characterised by a strong rivalry between revolutionaries of the Enlightenment and Catholicism that remained powerful and disinclined to acknowledge that its time was over. These ideological positions had multiple social and economic implications. Very clear class divisions remained and land-holdings were still quite structured. Robust political debates led to moments of extreme tension or short-term measures for keeping the peace that pleased no-one. It was enough for one of the two camps to impose an extremist form of secular religion for tension to turn into tragedy. This occurred in a controlled way in France through ostracism, in a more violent way in Mexico through periods of persecution interspersed with calm, in Spain through violent persecution and civil war, and even in Germany. So, the majority of countries with a 'Latin' tradition – France, Spain, Belgium, Italy ... and Latin America as well – were to live through such experiences. For the first century of its existence, the Institute itself was to take an active role in defence of an acknowledged place for the Church in society, a place it continued to hold onto strongly.

As a group the Marist Brothers were certainly in the conservative camp but they were far from adopting defined ideological positions. They were solidly pragmatic with little interest in intellectual debate. Also, through educating students from working class families and Catholic middle class families, they had contributed to preparing the way for Modernity while being members of a Church that was anti-modern in its public stances. Further, they saw no problem in building bridges with other cultures and religions. This was the basis of the overall success of their international growth.

Nevertheless, relations were more problematic in non-Christian countries or where the Latin Church was in a minority. This was the case in almost the whole of Asia and most of the Middle East. In these lands, the Institute was able to gain a foothold only along the shorelines. This was because, essentially, Marist mission

was experienced as an agency of support and change on behalf of Western Catholicism rather than a way of making successful and lasting contact with other cultures. It could be said, then, that, in their own way, the Marist Brothers prepared the ground for Vatican II, but as a missionary body in the strict sense of the word, it would seem that a degree of caution needs to be exercised in assessing their record.

## **The hegemony of socio-cultural secularisation**

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By 1950 it was clear that differences between the Anglo-Saxon and Latin experiences were beginning to disappear as a consequence of the Second World War. This event had lessened the importance of the ideological model that came out of the French Revolution. At that time Enlightenment philosophy had been interpreted aggressively and, more or less, as a substitute religion. Post-war developments were the reason that the Church, and the Institute in particular, felt that they were well-placed. They believed that, apart from communism, they had by and large won their bet about social change happening without the need to give in to revolutionary forces. This led to genuine optimism but also a degree of blindness concerning the effects of Anglo-Saxon Modernity, thereafter hegemonic, that was generating secularisation but with a socio-cultural rather than ideological-political character.

In the short term, the Institute retrieved a strong missionary spirit that was mainly directed towards Africa and invested in modernising its administration, symbolised by the completion of the new General House in Rome in 1961. When John XXIII revealed his project of an “aggiornamento” of the Church in 1959, a majority of Catholics, including the Marist Brothers, were to join without hesitation into what they understood as the end of a process of internal modernisation that had begun years before. Feeling both profoundly modern and Catholic, they were decidedly unhappy about the large gap between socio-cultural Modernity and a Church that was still caught up with its anti-modern defensive stance.

The crisis that was to break out consequent to the Council was not provoked by any external aggression as had been the case in politico-religious contexts in the past. Rather it took the form of a real challenge for individuals and institutions to clarify how they viewed the relationship between faith and culture, which they had previously seen essentially as one, without paying much attention to consistency. The 1950s were, then, for many Provinces years of accomplishment but also years of illusion. From the time the Council was announced they would be confronted by a completely new context, resulting in a trying ‘moment of truth’.

### **APPENDIX 2: The numerical evolution of the Provinces, p. 448**





## 20.

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# TO FOUND AND MAKE PROVINCES PROSPER. PROVINCIALS, RECRUITERS AND JUNIORATES

Geopolitical factors have often been decisive for the long-term fortunes of Provinces, but the dynamism and charism of their immediate leaders, including leadership groups in the widest sense such as Provincial Council and Masters of Novices, have also carried a lot of weight. This study will focus on the two highly strategic roles of Provincials and Recruiters.

It should be remembered that until 1903 the Provincials were in fact the Directors of Provincial houses dealing with the current affairs of their territory while the Provinces were actually governed by the Assistants General. From 1903 the Provincials became Major Superiors, with a mandate of only six years, or nine years at the most. Yet, since it was the practice in many Provinces for two Provincials to alternate, the tradition of holding such a role for life had not been totally set aside. Besides, former Provincials would remain in key positions such as Provincial Councillors, directors of large schools, Masters of Novices. So as to avoid any difficulties for their successors, they were often delegated to visit other Provinces or inspect distant Juniorates.

How did someone become Provincial? The scenario was similar to that of Assistants General. After a few years teaching where the young Brother gave proof of his intelligence and vocational stability, and after his final profession, the Assistant would assign him to the senior Scholasticate to get his senior teaching diploma. Then he would appoint him to positions of trust such as a teacher in one of the large boarding schools of the Province or to a formation house – Juniorate, Novitiate, Scholasticate. He would then become its director. A sign of his being esteemed by the Superiors between 1896 and 1914 was to be called to the six-month Second Novitiate, followed by taking the vow of Stability. If the Brother remained in France or in his home country, a career as director, Master of Novices or even Visitor might have followed. The faith of the Superiors was validated when the esteem of the Brothers was shown in his election to General Chapters, or at least his receiving a good number of votes.

In the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was necessary to identify leaders for distant missions and so the Superiors drew on such capable and dedicated Brothers, aided by much younger Brothers who had requested or agreed to make the big jump.

Once in place, the community would get organised and seek new arrivals until they were in a position to be a District governed by a Visitor who was, in principle, the leader of the new foundation.

The missionary pathway, however, held many risks. Leaders died unexpectedly of sickness as in Colombia or in a political upheaval as in China or had to return to Europe. Sometimes it was then that true leaders emerged, men on whom the Superiors had not initially counted and who were to become the real founders of Provinces, whether they had the title or not, since it sometimes happened that the choice of the Superiors did not correspond with the wishes of the Brothers.

Events in 1903 partly upset this scheme of things since it was necessary to manage the exile of such a large number of Brothers as best they could and to appoint Provincials capable of making new foundations as a matter of urgency. In the same way, secularisation meant the appointment of secularised Brothers as clandestine Provincials in France. Thus Brothers were chosen who had never considered themselves as potential Provincials but who had given proof, generally as school Principals, of their vocational stability and good relations with their confrères. In short, the Provincials of the troubled years from 1903 to 1920 and even beyond fitted into two quite different categories: personalities who had attracted attention to themselves and who had been prepared for high office; Brothers who had been promoted on merit and with the acquiescence of the Brothers, ratified by the Superiors. Also, the prosperity of many Provinces depended in part on the ability of the Provincials to combine administrative competence and personal charisma. It would seem that many managed this if one is to credit their biographies which had as much to say about the history of their Provinces as them.

## Portrait of a model provincial

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Br Acyndinus (1846 – 1918), Louis Rioux, born at Vion, Ardèche, on 22 March 1846, was the founder of the Province of Constantinople. He entered the Novitiate at St Genis-Laval in April 1860. After various assignments he became director of the boarding school at La Côte-Saint André in Isère:

*Extremely intelligent, he had studied a lot while he was young. He obtained the senior teaching diploma at a time when this was still rare. Through his bravely facing up to all kinds of situations in various houses, especially at the boarding school at Péage, he had capitalised on the many talents God had given him. Adding to his wide knowledge of all teaching subjects, he became accomplished in drawing and music.*

In 1891 he was chosen to succeed Br Marie-Candide, who had left for China, as director of 140 Juniors at St Genis-Laval. In 1892 he went to Constantinople where he was to found this Province and work for its growth. His biography provides a record of the undertaking he accomplished just before the war was to destroy it almost completely:

*When Br Acyndinus came to the East in 1892 he arrived with three companions who were, like him, simply assistant teachers at St Benedict College run by the Lazarist Fathers. When he left in 1914, he left behind 115 Brothers in 15 houses a third of*



**51.** Br Acyndinus (1846-1918) founder of the Province of Constantinople.

which had become the property of the Institute. There were large numbers of students everywhere. Several schools had more than 250 students or were close to that number and offered the higher grades. Moreover, in spite of quite unfavourable conditions for recruiting, a Juniorate of around twenty youth had ended up being built, the dream of having a Provincial house was coming true, the financial situation had returned to normal after being in debt for a long time caused by heavy expenses related to growing too fast, and there was a lively religious spirit in all communities. (BI 1915)

Difficulties had not been lacking:

*Picket lines of soldiers in front of the gates to stop the children coming to school, interminable hassling by the police, gangs of schismatic students supported by their religious authorities, and thousands of other minor events of every kind.*

It is never easy to take the place of a founder. Since Constantinople had become a Province in 1908, a new Provincial had to be appointed in 1914. It was to be Br Jean-Emile, future

Assistant General. "It was a huge event in this Province of Constantinople who had seen him (Br Acyndinus) as its head with various titles for 22 years." Similar difficulties in succession would be encountered in many places until the spirit of 'heroic times' gave way to a more prosaic conception of the role in the inter-war period.

To administer a new-born Province well was hard enough but it was not the most important. A Provincial had to have charisma, leading with tact, strength and understanding. Br Acyndinus seems to have not lacked these:

*His primary concern was for everyone to be in the right place and for due respect and obedience to be paid to leaders. ... Knowing that he was under those on whom he depended, he made a claim, in his turn, on the obedience due to himself or the Brother Directors. Thus, on occasions that were happily rare, more than one Brother was invited to obey or go home.*

*Except for insubordination which was for him an unforgiveable sin, everything else was a matter for mercy. If someone brought to his attention that a young Brother could not control his class, he would reply that he would learn over time. Another was wearing torn clothes ... he gave him some extra money to get new*

ones. This Brother was a bit fiery ... he was growing up, not to worry. That one had had some particular problem ... a transfer would fix everything. This other one had a quite eccentric character ... many saints have been eccentrics. All such moments would end with a paternal reproach and he relied on time and good will to fix whatever needed to be put up with.

He liked to inspire young people to love work. He organised holiday classes, often giving them himself to those who might benefit from them. He gave a healthy push towards studies by setting up a house dedicated for this purpose for as long as he had the staff needed. He set in train a program of religious studies that he carefully kept track of, organising it and presiding over the exams. For distant houses he ran off copies of his frequent letters and summaries of the religious instruction he gave to the Brothers. In short, the means had to be completely absent for one of his bright ideas not to be put into action.

It is rare to find a biography that so clearly describes the mindset of a Provincial, a mindset that would appear to have been common. Yet, some biographies hint at more rigid Provincials. Such was the case of Br Marie-Charles (1863 – 1931),<sup>266</sup> Provincial of St Paul from 1912-1920:

*A declared enemy of this cursed spirit of independence that seeks to infiltrate the chosen troops of the Holy Church, he was as rigid as a sword in defence of the principles which underpin religious life.*

Br Marie-Alypius (1867-1932),<sup>267</sup> several times Provincial of Brazil North, seems to have had a similar attitude:

*The Superior, he used to say, is the watchman on the highway of the world, the road that leads to hell. He cries out, "Halt there!" He must do everything he can to prevent souls continuing on the path to perdition, to fight against anything that would detract from good order, a good spirit, or Marist customs and traditions. He must oppose the introduction of subversive ideas with all his strength.*

When he left for the 1920 Chapter, he wrote:

*May the Lord bless this Chapter and inspire the Capitulants. May He preserve them from innovations, disastrous trends and comfort! No breaches, no mutilations of the work of Venerable Fr Champagnat!*



**52.** Henri Jérôme Jouve  
(Br Marie Alypius  
1867-1932).  
Provincial  
North Brazil.

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<sup>266</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 13, September 1932, p. 97.

<sup>267</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 32, August 1933, p. 230.

## The difficulty of being Provincial

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Becoming Provincial, then, meant being recognised by the Superiors as a man of tradition and authority. Yet, the role also demanded an ability to manage any difficulties that arose and to gain acceptance from the Brothers, something that was needed since appointments by the Provincial involved sensitive compromises. In the Circular on Fidelity (1984) a former Provincial described his apostolic growth in a way that gives some insight into the challenges of being Provincial:

*I started out full of idealism but a class full of young people forces you to have two feet on the ground... People would tell me how important it was to have control of my class and to demand a high level of good conduct. I was a man of my generation, so at first I did everything possible to maintain high standards. It was only late that I was able to be myself and to see things in quite a different light.*

He went on to say,

*How many times did I refuse to withhold judgment, to be understanding, to simply listen (...) The ability to understand those I was responsible for came much later when I was in charge of Scholastics, after I had been Provincial.*

And he concluded,

*With time I have become more understanding and, I hope, more open to helping and loving.*

It would seem that this Provincial had discovered, as so many of his predecessors, the two principal qualities of being a good Provincial: solid realism and broad understanding. But, like him, probably many Provincials discovered the starkness of realism before they discovered understanding.

## Founders of provinces

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Br Candidien (Pierre-Auguste Pagès)<sup>268</sup> born in 1859 in Ardèche, entered the novitiate at St Paul-Trois-Châteaux in 1875. He was a member of the group of six Brothers, under the leadership of Br Angelo, until then the director of the Juniorate at St Paul, who were asked to start a school at Popayán in Colombia. He had not received any higher training, had never been a director nor held any lasting role in a house of formation. His departure for Colombia was due mainly to his good relations with Br Angelo, his former community superior at St Bauzille. Yet in Colombia he was going to reveal unexpected capacities.

Br Angelo died soon after arriving in Popayán in December 1889. As Br Joseph-Célestin was unable to come to replace him until 1890, Br Candidien filled in as leader for a difficult few months. In 1894 he was placed in charge of the formation

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<sup>268</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. X, N° 69, December 1925, p. 181.



**53.** The seven founders of Marist Colombia accompanied by Br Bérillus, Assistant General of Saint-Paul.

house at Popayán. Two years later, Br Joseph-Célestin could no longer cope with the overall governance of the District which had more than 12 houses that were quite a distance from one another and appointed Br Candidien to replace him at the Provincial house. He was even made responsible for the current affairs of the District in the absence of the Brother Visitor who had been called to St Genis in 1898 for his Second Novitiate. "The Brothers were thus accustomed to seeing him each day take on an increasingly active role in administrative matters." They were not surprised to learn, in December 1900, that Br Candidien would replace Br Joseph-Célestin as Visitor when he was obliged to return to Europe for health reasons.

Conditions were difficult. The war of a "1,000 days" had broken out on 18 October 1899. Inflation was such that the Brothers could no longer survive on their stipend alone and had to make use of measures such as selling exercise books, the paper of which would be used for printing bank notes. Because the Novitiate lacked the resources to provide for its needs, the Novices and a number of young Brothers were sent back to their families. Some European Brothers left for Mexico or returned to France. Despite everything, after three years of war the schools were still functioning. Br Candidien was sent as Delegate of the District to the 1903 Chapter and would return as Vice-Provincial.

The political environment had changed. The government "of national unity" was causing more and more hassles. So, Br Candidien began to start private schools. On 14 July 1906 he gave his place to Br Théodore-Joseph who had been sent to succeed him. For the rest of his life, over 19 years, he would be the Province bursar and the 'socius' of the Provincial on all his travels. In 1922 he was the one asked to go to El Salvador to commence a new school. Although he was never named Provincial (Colombia became a Province in 1908), Br Candidien could be regarded as the founder of Marist Colombia even if the Superiors had not considered that he had the qualities needed to be Provincial.

His successor, Br Théodore-Joseph<sup>269</sup> (1864-1942) entered the Novitiate as St Paul in September 1877 and took the habit on 15 August 1879. After a few years teaching in big schools (Bourg-de-Péage, Ganges, La Seyne, Le Luc-en-Provence), he was called to the Teachers' College at St Genis-Laval where "he obtained his diplomas with very high grades".

He was then sent to Valdemía College in Mataró. In 1902 he attended the Second Novitiate at St Genis-Laval before making his vow of stability. On his return to Mataró, he was soon named Visitor to the schools that the Province of St Paul-Trois-Châteaux conducted in Spain. On 14 April 1906 he embarked at Barcelona with four other Brothers to head to Colombia with the roles of Visitor Provincial and then Provincial from 1908 to 1914. After being replaced by Br Acadius he was appointed director of the Notre-Dame des Andes boarding school, one of the most important positions in the Province (1914-1920), before being re-appointed Provincial from 1920 to 1929. An indication of the esteem in which he was held by the Brothers was his election as delegate to the 1903, 1908, 1920 and 1932 General Chapters.

His successor, Br Adalbony, placed him in charge of the Juniorate and then, the following year, appointed him as director of the Provincial house. In 1934 he was delegated as Visitor to the District of Central America which he found to be making good progress. He set about building several schools but died suddenly on 13 February 1942. The moral figure presented in his biography portrayed him "as a man of action, struggling against any form of idleness which he called "tropicalisation". "As Superior, Br Théodore-Joseph was prudent, meticulous, full of energy and enthusiasm, and exercised a powerful influence. He was liked and respected."

Br Adalbony (1872-1948),<sup>270</sup> entered the Novitiate at St- Paul-Trois-Châteaux on 4 August 1887. He started teaching at Girona where he mastered the language quite quickly to the point that he was able to produce a booklet on Spanish grammar. Up till then he does not seem to have come to the attention of an Assistant but he had the advantage of a longer training than his predecessors. When he was sent to Colombia he distinguished himself as a top-class teacher in various schools before being made director of the Scholasticate at Popayán until January 1908. He was then put in charge of the school at Ibagué. After his Second Novitiate at Grugliasco in 1913, he was appointed director of the College in Manizales, then the Teachers College at Ibagué where he remained in charge for ten years.



**54.** Jean François Xavier Chabal (Br Adalbony, 1872-1948)

<sup>269</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VI, N° 125, August 1949, p. 24.

<sup>270</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VI, N° 153, August - September 1952, p. 335.

As Provincial of Colombia from 1929 to 1939, he seems to have completed a change that had begun well before him. He used all his authority to promote the studies of the Brothers with a view to establishing new private primary and secondary schools, since there was a real danger of having to leave the public schools, given the laicising tendencies of the new government. Shortly afterwards (1931-1932), he had to close the public schools conducted by the Brothers. This allowed him to open new private schools and to bolster the ones already existing. Also, the Province was able to make new foundations in Central America: the “Colegio de Infantes” in Guatemala and “Liceo San Luis” in Santa Ana (El Salvador).

Nevertheless, it would seem that Colombia went through something of a succession crisis since in May 1936 Br Adalbon was re-elected for a third term. He was to be replaced by Br Leonidas who had come from Mexico. In 1939, at the end of his mandate, he retired to the Provincial House where he did odd jobs such as editing the *Ecos de familia*, House Annals and Biographical Notices.

So, it could be said that Colombia, first as a District and then as a Province, had two founders: Brs Candidien and Théodore-Joseph. Br Candidien because of his unexpected ability to handle difficult situations; Br Théodore-Joseph, in contrast, who had the full trust of the General Administration and who had been well prepared for his task. A quite different moment seems to have begun in 1914. We know nothing of Br Acatius, Provincial between 1914 and 1920, who had no biographical notice written about him. It would seem that the potential of Br Adalbon had been developed through the tasks Br Candidien assigned to him rather than his having been picked out by the Major Superiors. Yet he does not seem to have enjoyed the same prestige as his predecessors and left the Province in a crisis.

## In Brazil, Br Adorator

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Many examples similar to Colombia could be given. Br Adorator (Jean Benoit Gautheron)<sup>271</sup>, the future Provincial of Central Brazil, was born in 1855 at Beaubery, entered the Novitiate at St Genis-Laval on 22 June 1870, and made his vow of Obedience in 1871 and perpetual profession in 1878. In 1886-87 he was called to the Mother House to study for his Higher Teaching Diploma and then made sub-director at Saint-Pourçain in Allier. This was an institution with some sixty boarders in addition to the 220 or 230 day students from the local area. The level of studies there was very high as the school prepared students for a basic teaching certificate, admission to Teachers College, Arts and Crafts institutes, Highways Department, Posts and Telegraph services, and even the Baccalaureate. In 1895 at the age of 40 Br Adorator became the director of this institution.



**55.** Jean Benoit Gautheron  
(Br Adorator,  
1855-1919)

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<sup>271</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VIII, N° 54,



A new mission changed the career path of a man destined to be a school leader. In 1901, Br Augustalis chose him as Visitor of a small group of Brothers from Varennes and Lacabane who had settled in central Brazil. By the month of March 1903 when the Chamber of Deputies in France voted to suppress all our schools in France, the District of Brazil Central already had six schools. From the Province centre he set up at Mendes, Br Adorator saw to the growth of the Province, first as Visitor and then after 1908 as Provincial. He was provided with plenty of Brothers although many were still young. He was the leader for fifteen years, apart from a brief period of three years when he passed responsibility to Br Isidore Régis as required by the Constitutions. He was re-appointed Provincial but was to die in an accident while riding a horse.<sup>272</sup>

His replacement, Br Isidore-Régis (1874-1941),<sup>273</sup> was born in 1874 in Beaubery like Br Adorator. He attended the Brothers' school there and entered the Juniorate at Digoin before going to the Novitiate at St Genis-Laval. After a time as a cook, he was called to the Scholasticate at St Genis-Laval where he gained his teaching certificate. While working in various schools, he obtained his Senior Teaching Diploma and modern baccalaureate. In 1893 he was teaching the first year group at the Novitiate at Varennes. He was 19 years old and dreamt of pursuing higher studies. He was particularly passionate about mathematics. When forced to do his military service he managed to get it reduced by a year through enrolling at the Catholic Faculty at Lyons where he gained his Masters in mathematics with distinction. When he was released from military service, he made his final vows. This decision led to a radical change in his thinking.

From 1897 to 1902 he taught in various boarding schools but, encouraged by Br Adorator, he arrived in Brazil in May 1902 where he was appointed to "Colegio do Carmo" in São Paulo. From 1903 he took charge of the College where he was to stay for twenty years. In 1907 he replaced the Provincial for a time when the latter went to the General Chapter. In 1911 he was made Provincial of Central Brazil to the great satisfaction of the Brothers. He was only 38 years old but was valued as a person of prodigious talent and as an exemplary religious. In order to communicate as often as possible with all the Brothers, he quickly initiated *O Boletim dos Estudos* and *O Boletim dos Juvenatos* with the aim of fostering family spirit and supplementing the formation of the Brothers. After only three years as Provincial,<sup>274</sup> Br Isidore-Régis returned as head of the schools in São Paulo, guaranteeing their standing. From 1920 to 1941 he was director of the Provincial house at Mendes apart from a brief return to São Paulo from 1929 to 1931. He played a pre-eminent role in publishing the F.T.D. collection of school texts which has since taken on gigantic proportions in Brazil.

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<sup>272</sup> He was the main author of "*Vingt ans de Brésil (1897-1917)*", a detailed chronicle of the origins of the Province of Central Brazil.

<sup>273</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. V, N° 109, (1874-1941), p. 337.

<sup>274</sup> In *Vingt ans de Brésil (1897-1917)* Br Adorator told of his displeasure at the way this provincialship was cut short. He seems to have been against his re-appointment for personal reasons.

It would seem that in the persons of Br Adorator and Isidore-Régis we have Brothers who were first of all set on careers in education but who became founders of a Province without having been especially singled out by the Superiors. Their mission commitment showed their potential to themselves and those around them.

## In Syria

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Here the situation was a little more complicated. The real founder of the Province was Br Avit, the future Master of Second Novices. His successor was Br Amphiloque (1851-1929),<sup>275</sup> Jules Deydier, born at Nyons on 15 August 1847. He had been Master of Novices for the Province of Varennes, at Arfeuilles from 1881, at Varennes in 1903 and finally at Amchit in Syria until 1908. His appointment as Provincial was a surprise to the young Province. His biography sensitively communicated the reservation of the Brothers: "He was 67 years old and the young Brothers were wondering if he could manage the responsibility and whether there was to be a return to the 'heroic' age of the Institute". In 1914 the Brothers were repatriated to Grugliasco. Because of his age, Br Amphiloque would not return to Syria after the war.



**56.** Joseph Marie Jolivet  
(Br Benoît,  
1872-1931).

The re-founder of the Province was to be Br Benoît, Joseph-Marie Jolivet, (1872-1931)<sup>276</sup> whom the Brothers of Syria would probably have preferred before the war. He had been a boarder at La Clayette, a College of the Brothers, and received the habit at St Genis-Laval in 1888. He was highly educated and did only one year of military service. In 1902 he was appointed to Varennes-sur-Allier as lecturer and supervisor at the Novitiate. He it was who undertook the preparations for the Brothers embarking for Lebanon. He was at Amchit before being transferred in 1908 to Gebail. In 1914, just when the College at Gebail was at its peak, war broke out and destroyed all our schools in Lebanon and Syria. As a soldier he served in a divisional headquarters before returning to Syria. There, now as Visitor, he tried to rebuild from the ruins. In October 1919 all the schools re-opened their doors but with a quite reduced staff, worn out by the war and exhausted by the reconstruction work. In 1920, he received a vote of confidence from his confrères in being elected as delegate to the General Chapter. He returned from this as Provincial and would hold this position for nine years.

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<sup>275</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XI, N° 78, December 1929, p. 338-354.

<sup>276</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, 37, April 1933, p. 287.

## District leaders in exile

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Br Front (1852-1935),<sup>277</sup> received the habit on 28 September 1869 at Hautefort. As director of the school at Bordeaux he showed himself to be a good administrator. In 1896 he was appointed director of the Provincial house at Lacabane after his time at the Second Novitiate, which had recently started at St Genis-Laval. He combined the roles of director and Province Bursar. In 1903 he delayed being expelled for as long as he could and was the prime mover in the purchase and fitting out of Anzuola in Spain. His biography gives little detail of his time as Provincial. It would seem that his capacity as an administrator and the confidence of the Brothers had been determining factors in his appointment.

The case of Br Richard<sup>278</sup> was quite different. Born in 1846 in Labégude (Ardèche), he received the habit on 2 February 1861. Scarcely 37 years of age, and the youngest Brother with the vow of Stability in the Province, he was elected delegate to the Chapter of 1883. In 1886, he was made Master of Novices for the Province. In 1895, he succeeded Br Liboire as Provincial of Aubenas. In 1903 the central house of the District was transferred to Pontós in Spain and Br Richard arrived there in the first days of May 1903. Everything had to start from scratch. Obligated to remain in Spain thereafter, since the Novitiate was there, he was made responsible for the District from 1906 to 1913 as Visitor, with someone else being appointed to care for the works in France. During this period he founded houses in Galicia and Asturias where most Spanish candidates were coming from. While he was not Provincial as such, he is regarded as one of the founders of the Province of León.

## Provincials who were secularised Brothers

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Br Stanislas (1861-1941), M. Subrin, as he was commonly known over long years of secularisation, entered the Novitiate at St Genis-Laval in 1878. As director of a big school, he was called to the Second Novitiate in 1902 or 1903. When secularisation was imposed, he distinguished himself by his spirit of resistance and advocated waiting to be expelled rather than giving in. He took up residence in Villeurbanne, a suburb of Lyons, “along with two other Brothers of average calibre whom he had brought from Thizy”.<sup>279</sup> There he became a rallying point for Brothers disoriented by what had happened. When a society of friends of the Brothers bought back the boarding school at St Didier-sur-Chalaronne from the authorities, he became its director until 1920. As Provincial he succeeded Br Elie-Marie who “with boundless energy and an optimism that nothing could discourage, had saved

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<sup>277</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, 49, September 1935, p. 382.

<sup>278</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. X, N° 70, June 1826, p. 259-269.

<sup>279</sup>Where he had been director.

whatever could be saved of the Province of St-Genis in such dreadful times". He was to be Provincial firstly from 1920 to 1929 and then a second period from 1938 to 1941, a total of twelve years, alternating with Br Joseph Philomène (Beaupertuis), another secularised Brother held in high esteem by the Brothers.

In the Province of the Hermitage, Br Joseph Philippe (1870 – 1938), appointed Provincial in 1915, found himself in a difficult situation because of the war:

*He had to fill in teaching for three weeks at Terrenoire, coming to sleep at the Hermitage every two or three days to catch up on his correspondence. How many letters written, what steps taken to keep the schools going!*

It was not at all easy-going:

*Sometimes the strength of his voice gave witness to his attachment to the important cause of Christian education. Any exaggeration in what he said was easily overlooked because he told the truth in an impartial way. Despite a certain overbearing manner caused by the fatigue and crushing concerns of the war, Br Joseph-Philippe was appreciated and liked.*

A fundamentally new group in the Institute, then, was to make its appearance after 1903: men in charge for a short time who therefore remained close to the Brothers in a defined area. Given responsibility to ensure that a common spirit prevailed, they were men who were constantly balancing demands from the centre and those from the peripheries, unchangeable principles and adaptations to time and place. Their re-appointment as leaders indicates that they had the confidence of both the Superiors and Brothers of the Province. But it is true that their role became less demanding as the Provinces aged.

## 21.

### RECRUIT WHERE YOU ARE: PRINCIPLE AND REALITY

After 1876 Juniorates became an indispensable component in the process of recruitment and formation in the Institute. At least at the beginning, the directors of Juniorates had a double role: finding adolescents through contacts with parish priests and families in the area covered by the Province, and then forming them. This is precisely what Br Sisoès did as director of the Juniorate at Lavalla. He would pay regular visits to the parish priests of Haute-Loire, the Loire and part of the Ardèche. In 1900-1902 more than 70% of the Juniors at Lavalla did not come from our schools,<sup>280</sup> and the percentage seems to have been similar elsewhere. The author of the life of Br Aldegrin,<sup>281</sup> writing around 1940, spoke of this time as a sort of golden age:

*In those days, that is around 1892, it was still a fortunate time for filling up Juniorates and those in charge of recruiting had less trouble. For example, Br Cléomène, director of the Juniorate at Digoin, used to write beautiful circulars to the clergy in regions where we were known. By return mail there were replies telling of such and such a child willing to come to his holy house. A Brother would head off to seek out the candidates and, then the little lambs of our good God, as Br Cléomène liked to call them, were led into our fold.*

The Juniorate was, thus, the first contact with the congregation for many aspirants. Regarded as a pre-Novitiate, Juniorates were so integral to the Institute that our statistics would for a long time count Juniors as members. After 1903 most Brothers would have done two or three years at the Juniorate (12-15 years of age), a Postulancy of some months and a Novitiate that was strictly of one year's duration (15-16 years of age). First vows were pronounced when they were around 16 or 17. The practice of spending a period of time in the Scholasticate was just starting. A large number of Brothers would have been able to make their final vows when around 21 or 22 or a little later if they had to do their military service. The Superiors held strongly to such commitments at a young age, influenced as they were by their

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<sup>280</sup> Br Louis Vibert, *Lavalla and the Marist Brothers from 1825 to today* in *Marist Notebooks* N° 31, March 2013, p. 151.

<sup>281</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. V, N° 103, p. 275.

traditional anthropology that people in urban centres were starting to leave behind. When the French government, before 1914, was thinking of authorising missionary Novitiates but with entry restricted to those over twenty-one, they protested:

*Young people who wait till they have reached their majority to make their choice of career are very much in the minority. Moreover, such a delay is an indicator of instability or apathy. These are defects opposed to the nature of religious life.*<sup>282</sup>

Even though this system of recruiting youth hid the fact that almost automatically there was a low level of perseverance, the Institute had no intention of delaying the age of commitment but rather tried to be more selective by insisting on higher educational standards. Moreover, as long as this vocational volatility did not compromise overall growth in numbers, very few saw the need to change a system that seemed to be paying off so well.

## **1907 Confirmation of a broader approach to recruiting**

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The suppression of the Juniorates in France after 1903 created problems for providing the new Provinces with young Brothers. The prospect of sending adolescents outside the country aroused misgivings in families. Also, there were complications in passing through border controls. Lastly, the French clergy were not at all happy with any Institute that did not send its subjects home after formation.

So, the Commission on Vocations at the 1907 Chapter, falling back on our earlier experience, produced a comprehensive charter for recruiting. In the first place, priority was to be given to seeking vocations in our schools, “since experience proved that the best and most solid vocations came from those we have taught”. For this purpose, devotion to Our Lady would be fostered, especially through setting up pious associations, and the frequent reception of Communion recommended. There would be efforts made to make the Founder and the works of the congregation better known.

Since “especially in France” it was not possible to rely on this method of recruiting, it would be necessary to identify priests who would take our recruiting to heart. Above all, every formation house had to release a Brother recruiter to contact the parish priests. He was to avoid selecting children from impoverished circumstances or from orphanages since “these rarely turn out to be serious vocations”; “better to seek out the middle class”. The families had to be respectable and the piety of the mother taken into account. Lastly, as a sign of vocation, “a contribution to the cost of the Novitiate should be requested as far as possible”. Even if all settings were capable of producing vocations, “experience shows, nevertheless, that they are more serious when coming from certain regions. These are the areas where efforts should be concentrated”. Public talks by Brothers and Juniors were not to be neglected and “an illustrated periodical”<sup>283</sup> would be produced to give an

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<sup>282</sup> AFM, France 600, the memoir of M. Riou, Senator, 22 June 1913.

<sup>283</sup> The *Bulletin of the Institute* would fill this function as would many other Province magazines.

overview of our works and be a recruiting strategy. The Juniorate and Novitiate at Arlon were already gaining vocations by means of special magazines published in German.

It was true that “religious persecution in France had had the happy unintended consequence of the growth of our distant missions” but houses of formation had to be set up there wherever possible. Since “in some areas recruiting was nearly impossible”, the Commission proposed the establishment of “an international house of formation” in either England or Belgium “which would become our house for overseas missions”. The Work of St Francis Xavier was to grow out of this idea.

This, then, was the taking up on an international scale of an idea from religious sociology that the congregation had discovered in France after the 1860s: there is no 1:1 correspondence between places where new works are begun and fruitful areas for recruiting. Recruiting outside our own schools is indispensable.

### Scattered resistance to international recruiting

In spite of the proposals of the Commission on Vocations, the idea of recruiting Brothers in countries where the Brothers had recently arrived did not have unanimous support. This is evident in the speech of Br John at the 1907 Chapter (session of 18 October). There he gave the example of Australia where, despite the scepticism of Bishops and priests, there had been an abundance of vocations. He commented, nevertheless, that “we did not know how to avoid the pitfall of placing quantity first” and they were forced to call a halt for a time.

In the Bulletin of the Institute of January 1912<sup>284</sup> Br Marie-Odulphe, Master of Second Novices, refers to the same argument. Writing a long article on “Lessons from the Epiphany”, he used the classical image of the three magi kings as representing the three sections of the world who came to adore Jesus. Then he added:

*Weren't these words written for our dear congregation? Over recent years have we not seen many nations turning to us, sending plenty of their children to join us?*



57. Br Eugène Minot (known as Br Pulchronius), the recruiter of Br Albert Pflieger.

<sup>284</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, Tome II, N° 19 p. 396-407

Thus he was imagining the day when Brothers of the three races – white, yellow and black – would continue the adoration of the magi. He illustrated his thinking with an extremely instructive footnote:

*One day at St Genis-Laval two Brother Assistants were talking about the possible expansion of the congregation.<sup>285</sup> “Who knows,” one of them said (it was Br Stratonique), “if one day we won’t have Marist Brothers with yellow skin and wearing a long plait on their back, and so on, finally real representatives of the Chinese race?” “Bah! Bah! Bah!” said the other, “Those are crazy thoughts. Neither you nor I will ever see that.” Facts have proved the former right. What was a possibility has become a reality.*

The option of the Institute to recruit “where we are”, that is in all the countries where it had established schools, did not get unanimous support. Behind this divergence of opinion, undoubtedly, were two different conceptions of mission. One envisaged the new territories as permanent missions, counting on regular support from the centre and/or regarding the local populations as unsuitable for providing capable new Brothers. The other was more optimistic, considering that all groups of people were called to provide disciples of Fr Champagnat. This latter attitude was very evident in Rev Br Stratonique:

*When he went to Turkey in 1910 where not a single candidate had ever been received as a result of the overwhelming muslim majority in the population, he accepted no reasoning that tried to show that nothing could be done. “There must be vocations,” he would say, “since God wants religious everywhere. Look harder and you will find some”.*

The author only reluctantly agreed with him, “they looked harder and found some, a very small number it must be said.”<sup>286</sup>

The choice made by the Institute to establish Juniorates in all Provinces is related, then, to an exceptionally open and even utopic conception of mission at a time when such an idea was not commonly accepted. Nevertheless, in practice, Europe was to remain the great purveyor of missionaries and many Provinces, in Latin America particularly, for a long time regarded it as normal to have a supply of vocations from Europe. It is also true that without really thinking about it, the Institute had exported a cultural model of formation that was more or less adapted to suit the various countries where the Brothers had settled. Behind the principle of recruiting “where we are”, there were all kinds of adjustments and reservations.

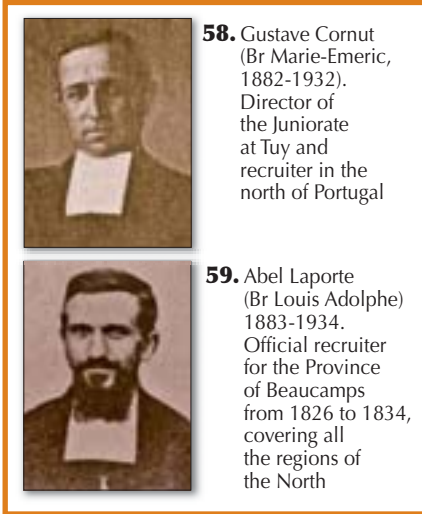
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<sup>285</sup> This seems to have been in the last years of the 19th century.

<sup>286</sup> *Nos Supérieurs*, op. cit. p. 314



## The recruiter: a highly strategic assignment



**58.** Gustave Cornut  
(Br Marie-Emeric,  
1882-1932).  
Director of  
the Juniorate  
at Tuy and  
recruiter in the  
north of Portugal

**59.** Abel Laporte  
(Br Louis Adolphe)  
1883-1934.  
Official recruiter  
for the Province  
of Beaucamps  
from 1826 to 1834,  
covering all  
the regions of  
the North

After the 1907 Chapter each Provinces was encouraged to appoint an official recruiter.<sup>287</sup> But the habits of the 19<sup>th</sup> century persisted. The combination, director of the Juniorate / recruiter, was seen in Br Marie-Emeric (1882-1932) who was in charge of the Juniorate at Tuy in 1918 and recruiter in the north of Portugal.<sup>288</sup> Similarly, Br Laurent<sup>289</sup> (1849-1910), while director of Anzuola, was the recruiter in the Basque country and in Navarre. Br Joseph-Dominin (1883-1958), director of the Juniorate at Beaucamps from 1928 to 1933, scouted around the Lorraine which was his home territory.<sup>290</sup> The official recruiter of the Province in the period 1926-34 was Br Louis-Adolphe (1883-1934) who went in search of candidates in the North.<sup>291</sup> Recruitment for the Juniorate at Bairo, for candidates destined to

go to Lebanon-Syria, Central Brazil, Italy and France,<sup>292</sup> was done by its director Br Elie-Gilbert (1882-1955) in Italy itself and by Br Aldegrin (1887-1940) who scoured Franche-Comté, the Jura around Berne, and even the Lozère in the centre of France.

Few assignments of Brothers were as important for the survival and growth of the Provinces. So, before 1914, the Province of St Genis-Laval released Br Marie-Albano (1872-1923)<sup>293</sup> to visit the two slopes of the Alps, Savoy and Piedmont, for recruits for the Novitiate at San Maurizio. Br Pulchronius (1847 – 1917?) recruited for the same Juniorate more to the north in the Jura, the Haute-Saône, the Vosges, and even in Haute-Alsace, which was German-speaking.<sup>294</sup> He is said to have led nearly 140 young men to the Juniorate who were destined for the Provinces of St Genis-Laval, China and Constantinople. In order to recruit in the French part of the Province of Aubenas, Br Véron(1861-1943) was recalled from Spain in 1914. He was to travel by foot across the Vivrais, the Basse-Ardèche and the Gard, bringing around a hundred recruits to the Province.

<sup>287</sup> An article in the *Bulletin of the Institute* of October 1921 (N° 59) developed the idea of a “culture of vocations” under the primary responsibility of those who have the title of “recruiter”. But the author insisted on the role of “volunteer recruiters”.

<sup>288</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 17, p. 124.

<sup>289</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. II, N° 13, January 1911, p. 1.

<sup>290</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VII, N° 173, p. 69.

<sup>291</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 44, p. 341.

<sup>292</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. V, N° 103, p. 275 y T. VIII, N° 7, p. 51.

<sup>293</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IX, N° 63, April 1923, p. 330-334.

<sup>294</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 52, December 1918, p. 618-623.



**60.** Jean Marie Ginet (Br Marie Albano 1872-1923). Given the responsibility by the Province of Saint-Genis-Laval to visit the two slopes of the Alps, Savoy and Piedmont to recruit candidates for the Novitiate at San Maurizio.



**61.** Jules Adrien Monteil (Br Bonius Joseph, 1840-1917)

Some recruiters exercised the role without their status being clear. This seems to have been the case with Br Basilisse (1858-1916) in the Province of St Paul.<sup>295</sup> Appointed to Spain, he used to travel around Castille and Navarre during the holidays recruiting for the recently started Juniorate at Matar . In order to have fertile fields of vocations near to the Juniorate, he worked at founding a College-Juniorate at Burgos in the far north-east of Spain. The Juniorate at Arcienaga was the result. Br Bonius-Joseph (1840-1917), appointed as caretaker of the former Novitiate at Castelnaudary from 1903 to 1913 would make good use of his position to recruit in the area to the benefit of his Province.

## Eccentrics

A quite common feature of these recruiters was a good dose of eccentricity even marginality, either because that is how they were before or how they became in the role. Moreover, a degree of confusion remained about the former role of 'fund-raiser' or 'collector' and that of 'recruiter'. For example, Br Barlaam (1831-1914) was named as the fund-raiser for the construction of the new chapel at the Hermitage and did some recruiting on the side. Br Marie-Régis,<sup>296</sup> became the fund-raiser for the Juniorate at Lavalla after 1879. Several recruiters took on other additional tasks, men like Br Basilisse in Spain who was the self-appointed representative for chalk biphosphate and FTD textbooks. Such initiatives, especially what he had attempted at Burgos, may well have been the reason for his recall to France from 1900 to 1905. Br Marie-Régis (BI N° 34, 1914), fund-raiser, a good bee-keeper and photographer, had also overstepped the mark somewhat.

Sometimes it was the experience of being pushed aside that made recruiters. For example, Br Bonius-Joseph had been Master of Novices at Aubenas from 1883 to 1896 before being removed from the role and isolated in Castelnaudary. Br Marie-Amateur (1859-1930) had not been well liked as Superior in Turkey before becoming recruiter / fund-raiser in St Genis-Laval around 1925. Br Louis-Adolphe, the recruiter for Beaucamps,<sup>297</sup> was considered an eccentric. Br Aldegrin was re-

<sup>295</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 48, July 1917, p. 232-237.

<sup>296</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IV, N° 34, July 1914, p. 346-347.

<sup>297</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 44, p. 341.

garded as more enterprising than prudent. Br Joseph-Dominin was a rough character, extremely stubborn and little liked by the Juniors.

The author of the life of Br Louis-Adolphe (1883-1934), recruiter for Beaucamps (Notices IV/44) summarised the situation of most of them in few words:

*When he got a cold reception or a rebuff, he accepted it all with the same smile (...) Always on the move, he abandoned himself with child-like trust to Divine Providence for food and lodging. Out of fear of imposing himself in asking for a place at the family table he preferred to go without. There also, he accepted all the unforeseen events that happened on his journey with the same spirit of sacrifice, humility and kindness.*

*It happened that some people did not fully approve of his method of recruiting. Some would have preferred him to be more judicious, more discerning in his choice of recruits. Obviously. People said the same about all recruiters. "All the same", added his Brother Assistant, "there were many good Brothers recruited by him and they brought honour to the Congregation".*

*Such demanding work as a recruiter quickly took toll of his health. Living for the most part, as he did, like a bird in the open, led to his having stomach problems. While he still had a breath in his body, he thought about recruiting. Eight days before his death, he was still sending letters and circulars from his bed in the infirmary with this in mind.*

The biography of Br Enrico-Maria (1886-1958) merits special mention. Born in Val d'Aoste, Italy, he was sent very young to Argentina where he became the recruiter. From 1925 he exercised the same role in Italy for the Juniorate at Gassino which had been ceded by the Hermitage to the Provinces of Argentina and Peru-Chile. Being very enterprising, he criss-crossed Italy even during the Second World War, enjoying the contacts he was making in all sorts of contexts, saving threatened people, even putting himself in danger and carrying out a quite diverse apostolate. Finally, after the war, the American Provinces stopped their support for Gassino and Br Enrico-Maria retired to Mondovi from where he continued to visit his benefactors until his death.

## A new concept of recruiting

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At the time Br Enrico-Maria finished his career as recruiter the style of recruiting was changing substantially. The biography of Br Jacques François (1913-1965) of the Belgian Province shows how he had a different approach: he chose to recruit not young adolescents but young men who were at least fifteen years old. In particular, he saw himself as a "guide".<sup>298</sup> As recorded in the Circular on Fidelity (1984, p. 520), a Provincial who had become the recruiter found himself face to face with

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<sup>298</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IX, N° 7, p. 526.



**62.** Jean Cortier (Br Marie-Wenceslas 1881-1960). Recruiter for the Province of Iberville (Canada). Innovative in his approach to recruitment distributing a prospectus on a wide scale.

young people who needed someone they could trust without necessarily wanting to become Brothers. He confessed, "This made me realise that seeking vocations was much bigger than simply soliciting on behalf of the order (...) I had to come up with a less narrow way of going about my work".

In the Province of Iberville, as well, Br Marie-Wenceslas (1881-1960), appointed recruiter in 1943, understood his task differently. Already getting on in years, he did not see his role as wandering around like a pilgrim. Like Br Jacques-François he primarily contacted older youth through a leaflet that was widely distributed and he seemed to give more importance to schools than recruiting elsewhere. He made his visits by car, four days around the Ascension and ten days in July. He recruited, as well, for other congregations, especially women's orders. For the Marist Brothers, his tally was 66 Juniors, 2 Postulants and 52 finally professed Brothers. Methods had changed as well in Europe. Br Elie-Gilbert (1882-1958), director at Bairo, made his visits at Easter-time by car.<sup>299</sup>

So, in the 1940s and 50s the 'heroic' period of recruiting came to a close. The erstwhile model of recruiter as a pilgrim, balancing multiple roles and each one doing things his own way, had been displaced by Brothers with a different spirit in Provinces seeking aspirants of a better quality. Moreover, less reliance could be placed on rural contexts that were being totally transformed; big changes were happening in regard to means of communication as well. Behind the external changes in recruiting strategies was a new anthropology within the congregation: the aspirant was called to play an active role in his choice of state of life. As Br Jacques-François said, the recruiter had become a "guide".

## The broad phases in recruitment policy

In the light of the biographies cited above, several phases can be proposed to describe the work of recruiters:

- Before 1876, recruiting was spontaneous, each Brother attracting nephews, cousins, pupils ... and Brother fund-raisers bringing in donations and postulants through their contact with parish priests and families.
- After 1876, the directors of Juniorates sought to establish networks based on regular contacts with the parish priests in the territory of their Province.

<sup>299</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VIII, N° 07, p. 51 y 09, p. 77; T. X, N° 8, p. 76.

- After 1907, the role of recruiter became officially recognised in most Provinces. Recruiting areas were delineated so as to avoid territorial conflicts between the recruiters of the various Provinces. Quite frequently, recruiters acted on behalf of international Juniorates.
- After 1945, new forms of recruiting emerged with a new spirit.

It is true that this record, based as it is on biographies of varying value, provides only the barest of outlines of the story of these recruiters. What is clear, at least, is that these Brothers played a key role in the dynamism of the congregation, living out their lives as religious, with all its adventures and yet staying firmly grounded, while at some distance from the life led by most Brothers. A certain founding spirit was to be found in them, concerned to make close contact with the surrounding society while, at the same time, being members of a body that did its best to limit its contacts with society. Further, at a time when we believe we are discovering the importance of Marist laity, it is useful to recall that throughout the whole of its existence, the Institute was perpetuating itself through sustained contact with the secular world and outside the school context.



## 22.

# THE WORK OF SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER AND INTERNATIONAL JUNIORATES

With the new Constitutions of 1903 and the creation of numerous Provinces, the Superior General and his Council had lost direct control of the Brothers in favour of the Provincials. An international formation house dependent on the General Administration appeared to be necessary to assist Provinces in difficulty. The model was, moreover, not completely new: the formation centre at Arlon, for example, was taking in Belgians, Germans, young people from Alsace-Lorraine and France.

The Saint Francis Xavier Juniorate was opened on 1 October 1909 in temporary premises at the Mother House at Grugliasco. Its director was Br Augustin-Joseph, former Provincial of Varennes, with a team of formators from America, Belgium, and Switzerland. The Juniors were not recruited directly but sent from the Juniorates in Arlon (Belgium), Vich, Pontós, Mondovi, Ventimiglia, Santa Maria, Bairo, San Maurizio, and Dumfries. In short, they were skimmed off the Novitiates of Europe to make up a group of around sixty Juniors, aged from 12 to 16: 17 Germans, 14 French, 13 Spanish, 8 Italians and 2 English. Teaching was in French and at



**63.** Br Dieudonné Montay (Br Joseph Dieudonné, 1859-1931)



**64.** Staff at the Juniorate of St Francis Xavier (Grugliasco). From left to right: Standing. Brs: Benedetto (Martini), Basile (Szalay), Carlo-Andrea (Brédy), Heliodore (Balko A.). Seated. Brs: Domenico (Contardo), Luis-Agustín (Lluís Colomé), Pedro-Félix (Rey), Otto Xaver (Knauer).

a level that corresponded to that of French upper primary classes. Proper premises were constructed in 1910-1911. After their novitiate at Santa Maria and Scholasticate at Grugliasco, the young men were ready for missioning.

In May 1914 the Bulletin of the Institute<sup>300</sup> presented a first report that was very optimistic. Twelve young Brothers, after making their Novitiate at Santa Maria, had completed their formation in 1913. Four of them had been sent as formators to Juniorates in Europe; the other eight had been shared out between Samoa, Ceylon, and New Caledonia. A second group of 22 was in the Scholasticate while 38 were making their Novitiate. There were around 80 Juniors at the Juniorate. In total, over the four years it had been running, the Juniorate had welcomed 142 Juniors. 77 had received the habit, 71 had finished their novitiate, and around thirty had been sent on mission.

The war disrupted this dynamic. The Formators were conscripted and later the scholastics. The Juniors had to return to their countries. The only ones remaining were the Spanish, French and Swiss. Rev Br Stratonique, however, encouraged the Spanish Novitiates to send new recruits and at the end of 1915, 23 Spaniards, 3 Italians and two Frenchmen arrived. Combined with the existing Juniors who had not proceeded by then to the Novitiate, there were 35 or 36 Juniors in May 1916, while twenty others were making their Novitiate. But after that no others came and in February 1917 the last group entered the Novitiate. The few remaining Juniors were spread out to other houses, with Grugliasco becoming the novitiate and then Scholasticate for the final groups.

In January 1920 Br Joseph-Dieudonné, the new director, brought together the few Juniors who had survived<sup>301</sup> at Mondovi and received substantial reinforcements of some thirty Juniors coming from Carrión, Spain, and five from Scotland. By October 1920 there would be around forty Juniors and six months later, 72. The thirty scholastics at Grugliasco were shared out among the Provinces at the conclusion of the General Chapter. A report in 1922 on the first years of the Work of St Francis Xavier spoke of 178 receiving the habit, 104 Brothers who had persevered, and 12 deceased. There had been, then, 62 who left after receiving the habit.

On its return to Grugliasco the Juniorate maintained an enrolment of around 70 youth. In 1924, there were 13 scholastics and 75 Juniors at Grugliasco and around twenty Novices at Santa Maria. The distribution of the 9 scholastics from the preceding group gives a good idea of the regions of the Institute that were having difficulty in getting vocations as well as of the tiny nature of the assistance provided: China: 2; Seychelles: 2; Aden: 1; New Caledonia 1; Chile: 1.

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<sup>300</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IV, N° 32, March 1914, p. 129-135.

<sup>301</sup> Grugliasco was fully occupied by the Scholasticate and would be by Capitulants.



## The 1934 Report

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The Bulletin of the Institute presented a report on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Work in 1934.<sup>302</sup> From October 1909 to March 1934, 720 Juniors had been received. The Work was going extremely well since there were still 147 'Xaverians' in formation. More than 300 ex-Xaverians were working across nearly all the Provinces although some had received more than others, particularly South Africa which had received 32 Brothers or more or less one-third of the Province. Mexico, Colombia, the three Provinces of Brazil and Argentina had benefitted from being sent around twenty Brothers each.

The article allowed itself a few discreet criticisms about the low intellectual level and teaching capacity of graduates. He also mentioned "failures in screening" with some Juniors being too old or others who "had tried the patience of another Juniorate". In conclusion, he found the results to be too modest: "If all our Provinces, at least those of Europe, were really behind the Work, the Juniorate of St Francis Xavier would take off". But at that moment the Provinces in Europe had scarce resources to continue their help to Provinces elsewhere, made worse by the fact that Spain was entering a serious political crisis. Besides, there were many bilateral agreements between Provinces that let the American Provinces get help directly. For example, Mexico recruited at Carrión de los Condes.

## An interprovincial Juniorate: Carrión de los Condes

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The most complete history of this Juniorate is to be found in the BI of April 1955, written by Br Leoncio Martín A.G.

*This Juniorate was established in 1912 by our much admired and deeply regretted Br Filogonio,<sup>303</sup> who had returned from the torrid region of Yucatán in Mexico. (...) The Province of Mexico, founded in 1899, offered our Brothers a magnificent field of apostolate but at that time sufficient local vocations were not forthcoming. (...) On 18 April of that same year, this valiant pioneer started his first recruiting tour and twelve days later he returned full of joy, portantes manípulos suos. 32 Juniors were indeed the happy fruit of this productive and encouraging expedition. On 1 May, the Juniorate of Our Lady of Guadalupe was officially begun. Scarcely eleven months later, the first caravan of his 'brave little missionaries' as they were jokingly called, left for Mexico.*

*[...] The Provinces of Colombia, Argentina, Chile and Peru banded together with Mexico to also have Juniors at Carrión de los Condes. [...] Besides, Carrión was also providing a large number of recruits for mission countries through the large contingent it sent each year to the St Francis Xavier international Juniorate.*

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<sup>302</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIV, N° 96, April 1934. The author seems to have consulted the archives.

<sup>303</sup> Under the authority of Br Euphrosin, A.G.

To complete the formation of a section of the aspirants, a Novitiate and Scholasticate were set up at Pontós in Catalunya in 1920, in buildings ceded by the Province of León. Statistics collected by Br Leoncio Martín reveal the figure of 1,034 Juniors who passed through Carrión, with 128 still there. 169 Juniors had been sent from this Juniorate to St Francis Xavier and 342 had made their Novitiate at Pontós, while 58 had left for Chile, 17 for Colombia 126 for Argentina to do their Novitiate there.

The Statistics below show the fruitfulness of this formation house:

FRUITFULNESS OF THE FORMATION HOUSES	
JUNIORS WHO WENT ON TO THE ST FRANCIS XAVIER INTERNATIONAL JUNIORATE	
Carrión de los Condes	169
Las Avellanas (Spain)	44
Anzuola (Spain)	4
León (ESpain)	3
Brazil	15
Juniorado de Valladolid (Spain)	15
Espira de l'Agly (France)	230
Colombia (directly)	17
Chile (id.)	58
Argentina (id.)	126
Mexico (id.)	8
Novitiate at Pontós (Spain)	342
Source: <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> , T.21, N°158, April 1955	

In 1949, the District of Cuba separated from the Province of Mexico and united with the District of Central America, then dependent on Colombia, to make a new Province. Since Mexico no longer needed recruits from outside the Province, the Juniorate at Carrión was transferred to the Province of Cuba-Central America. The Province of Colombia was also able to provide enough local vocations and so stopped calling for European recruits. Only Juniors destined for Argentina, Chile, Peru and Cuba-Central America remained at Carrión. In fact, the three Provinces of Argentina, Chile, Peru were to set up a senior Juniorate at Valladolid, with Carrión remaining the minor Juniorate.<sup>304</sup>

In 1955 Valladolid had 150 senior Juniors preparing for the Spanish baccalaureate.<sup>305</sup>

The biography of Br Théodore-Joseph<sup>306</sup> (1884-1942) who left for Colombia in 1906 gives additional information on the Juniorate at Espira de L'Agly, 70 km from Pontós, but in French Catalunya. It was a former Trappistine convent bought back by the Barrer family and donated to the Marist Brothers on the sole condition that they maintain a non-fee paying school in that commune. The Provinces of Colombia and Mexico opened a Juniorate there which, along with that of Carrión, was to feed into the Novitiate at Pontós and the St Francis Xavier Juniorate. Espira would be used as a refuge for the Novitiate of Pontós in 1936-39.

<sup>304</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXI, N° 157, January 1955, p, 412.

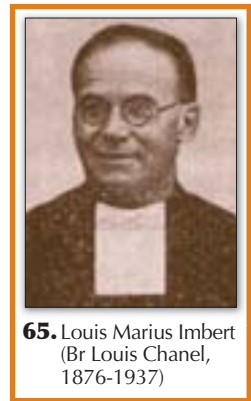
<sup>305</sup> Clarifications provided by Br Agustín Carazo. The *Bulletin of the Institute* of January 1955 contains additional information that is somewhat different.

<sup>306</sup> See also the *Biographical Notices* of Br Euphrosin and the *Bulletins* of June 1924 and April 1955.

According to the biography of Br Euphrosin, between 1920 and 1953 Pontós had received 675 postulants, 275 of whom had come from Carrión and 400 having spent two or three years at Espira. About 500 were sent to America (Mexico, Cuba or Colombia), 350 of whom had had two years of Scholasticate also in Pontós. The Spanish-speaking Provinces of Latin America had succeeded in creating a recruiting structure in Europe that yielded them more recruits than the work of St Francis Xavier.

## The Province of Aubenas and the Districts it produced

The biography of Br Louis-Chanel<sup>307</sup> from the Province of Aubenas and sent to north Brazil in 1904, provides quite good information on the recruiting system of his Province. Just before 1914 he was sent to Italy to set up a Juniorate at Sangano near Grugliasco for the Provinces of north and central Brazil. A group of 24 Juniors from Pontós and Bairo made up the first group. But Br Louis Chanel was conscripted and the Juniorate had to be suspended during the war. After returning to Brazil from 1919-26, he went back to France to establish a Juniorate in Ardèche: firstly at Ferrières, near Aubenas, then at Ruoms (1926-1930). After a period as director of the non-government school at St Martin-de-Valamas, he was entrusted in 1933 with the task of setting up a Juniorate for north Brazil at Mazères, in Béarn, in the area surrounding Pau. In 1936, shortly before his death, he accompanied the first group of 11 Juniors to Brazil.



65. Louis Marius Imbert  
(Br Louis Chanel,  
1876-1937)

Br Marie Amadeus (1875-1939)<sup>308</sup> also from the Province of Aubenas, left for Brazil in 1903 and was sent back to France in 1918 to found a Juniorate. An attempt at Saint Saturnin, in the Massif Central, did not succeed. He proceeded to set it up at Tuy, in Spain, on the border with Portugal, and he directed the work with the help of Br Marie-Emeric. Soon, a group of Portuguese Juniors were to emigrate to Brazil each year. Later he participated in setting up the Juniorate at Mazères.

## A continuing disconnect between the number of works and local vocations

An article in the Bulletin of the Institute<sup>309</sup> from 1931 gave an abridged history of Juniorates and their locations:

<sup>307</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. V, N° 82, p. 103.

<sup>308</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. V, N° 100, p. 253.

<sup>309</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XII, N° 83, July 1931, p. 401.

DISTRIBUTION OF JUNIORS BY CONTINENTS IN 1931		
CONTINENT	N° OF JUNIORATES	N° OF JUNIORS
Europe	28 <sup>310</sup>	1400
The Americas	13	700
Asia	2	
Oceania	2	
Africa and Madagascar	1 Madagascar 1 being built	
Grugliasco (San Francis Javier)	1	From all countries of Europe
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>2798</b>

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 12, N°83, July 1931, p. 401.

In contrast to the spread of Brothers, the Juniorates were still essentially concentrated in Europe. Formation houses had only incompletely followed the international spread of Marist works. Difficulties in local recruiting were only part of the explanation. Clearly, the Institute had only partially co-ordinated works and recruiting. The impression is given that most Latin American Provinces had retained the tradition from the start of the century of making a sharp distinction between mission lands and the recruiting areas in Europe. In this quite unbalanced system the Work of St Francis Xavier played, all in all, only a secondary role since its recruitment depended on the good will of a few Provinces.

In any case, a difficult time began after 1934 with the troubles in Spain which had been the big provider of vocations until then, and with Germany in difficulty as well. Italy was on the verge of becoming a Province. In addition, the 1946 Chapter Commission on "Recruiting and Mission" advocated the re-organisation of the *Work of St Francis Xavier*, "which had been sorely tried by the war" and expressed the hope that "its Scholasticate would facilitate young Brothers getting a teaching diploma, either French for missions with a Latin-based language or English for English-speaking missions". At that date the work had 146 subjects in formation.<sup>311</sup> The Commission also wanted Provinces that were rich in personnel "to shoulder the burden that other Provinces, particularly those of France, could no longer carry and even found new ones as Canada had just done in Africa".

This was, then, an invitation to achieve a greater correspondence locally between works and vocations and not to rely any longer on Europe which was already exhausted. Yet, as seen above, in 1955 several Latin American Provinces were still

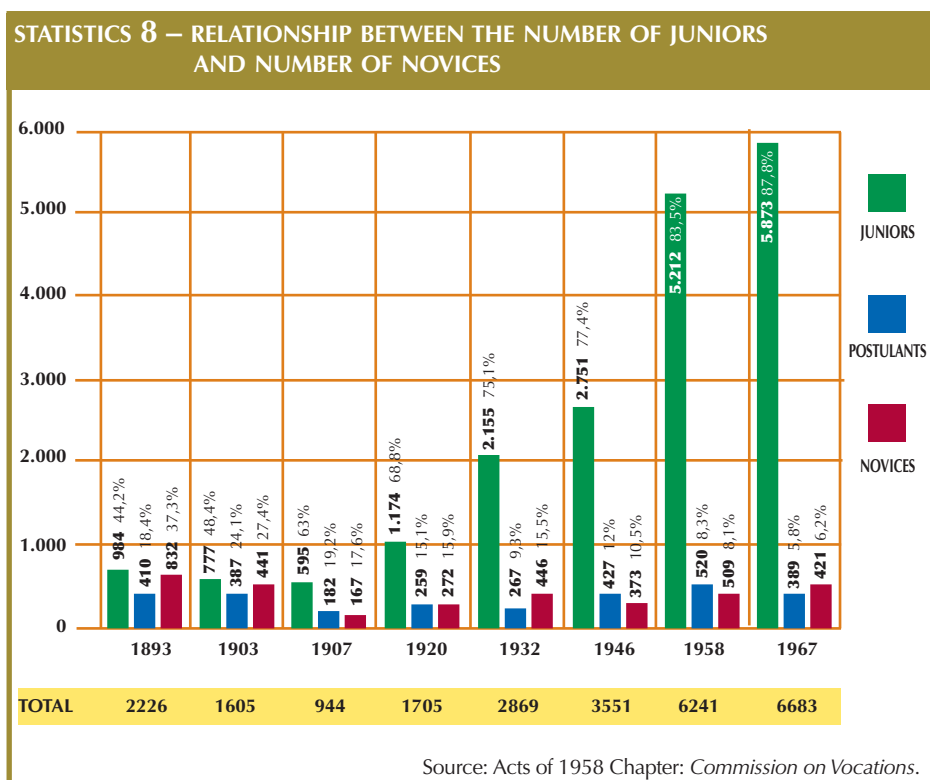
<sup>310</sup> Several of them providing for Juniors with an 'international' vocation.

<sup>311</sup> Acts, The Commission on Recruiting and Missions spoke of 146 subjects.

reinforcing their system of Juniorates in Spain. The ‘prosperity’ of Latin America, then, was partly artificial, not to mention the cultural challenges faced in Latin American Provinces due to a large proportion of their members being foreigners.

## The increase in size of juniorates

Until 1920 Juniorates were relatively small pre-novitiates. But after 1934 the close connection between the Novitiates and Juniorates weakened, the latter becoming equivalent to minor seminaries where most students had only a vague notion of a religious vocation. By increasing the size of Juniorates that were providing fewer and fewer postulants, the Institute forged ahead regardless.<sup>312</sup> While the number of Juniors was to double between 1946 and 1958, the change in the number of temporary professed Brothers could hardly be noticed.



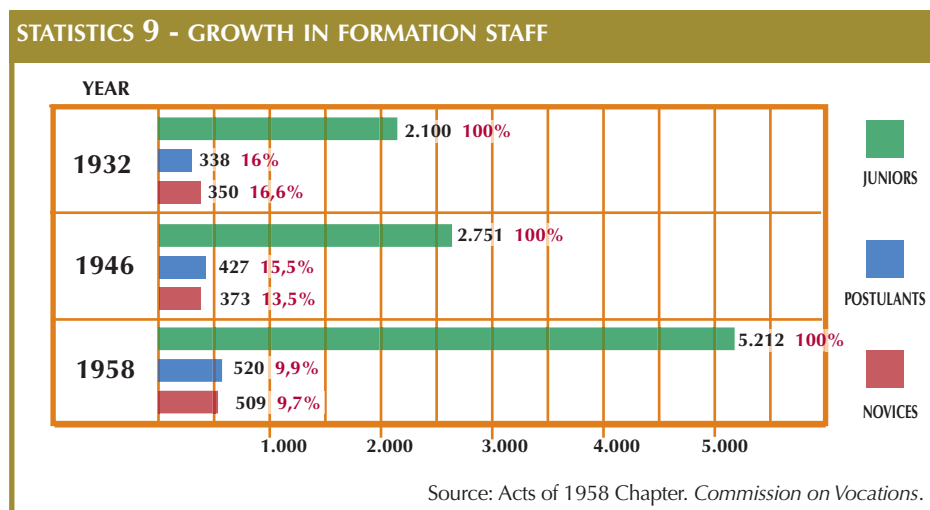
<sup>312</sup> The figures also suggest that, before 1920, the Juniorates were not the only recruiting strategy and that a significant number of postulants entered the Novitiate directly.

To summarise, the years 1907-1932 witnessed a remarkable response to the challenge of secularisation and exile. But, after that, recruiting was in a slow decline that accelerated from 1958 to 1967. Finally, the impression is given of two quite distinct periods. Until 1903 recruiting rested on the combination of Juniorate and Novitiate, these two steps being almost indistinguishable and often conducted in the same house. This led to the number of Juniors being more or less the same as that of Novices and postulants.

The banning of the congregation in France and the new Constitutions led to a noticeable evolution: Juniorates were seen as entities that should be separated from Novitiates; temporary vows would replace the single vow of Obedience. By 1920 the formation process was clear: Juniorates aimed at welcoming large numbers of adolescents in each Province; Novitiates forming candidates for temporary profession in a year and a half to two years; temporary professed Brothers generally passing through a Scholasticate and able to make final vows five years later. This system seems to have peaked in 1932.

## Questioning of Juniorates at the 1958 Chapter

The report dealing with Vocations approached the problem in a different spirit to other Chapters and set about first of all highlighting the lack of results from Juniorates.



Quoting a quite recent article of Br Louis-Laurent (Pierre Zind) in the Bulletin of the Institute<sup>313</sup> the report noted that “the increase in the number of Juniors is re-

<sup>313</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIII, N° 169, January 1958 p. 29.

flected in the number of postulants but in a very limited way, like a fading echo". He produced figures on those leaving the Institute "without comment".

Temporary Professed left between 1946-1958	1,364
Finally Professed	795
Total	2,159
Average number leaving per year	180

For the first time a Chapter Commission preferred an analysis based on age-groups rather than canonical status:

<b>ANALYSIS BASED ON CANONICAL STATUS BY AGE</b>	
From 16 to 20 years of age:	334
Withdrawing before final profession (20 or younger)	742
Withdrawing between 20 years of age and final profession	288
Many withdrawals following closely on final profession :	328 between 21 and 30 years of age
Withdrawal between 30 and 40	378 (crisis around 35)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.070</b>
Source: Summary prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the report given by the <i>Commission on Vocations</i> to the 1958 Chapter.	

In its conclusion the report was more prudent than in other Chapters. "We can never prevent personal dramas nor the free choice of human wills, but if there are measures that can be taken to remedy this situation at the level of Province or General administration and government, we have an obligation to undertake them seriously".

In linking the ineffectiveness of Juniorates with weak perseverance, the Chapter Commission was questioning the adequacy of formation being offered. The increase in departures and the collapse of recruiting between 1965 and 1970 were not, then, events that could not have been foreseen. So it was that in the 1970s a step in Marist formation that was almost a hundred years old died out quickly. From then on there was a strong reluctance to engage adolescents in religious life. Besides, the type of Christian setting that was the pond in which recruiters fished was in a state of rapid change.





## 23.

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# THE INSTITUTE AS A SOCIETY OF EDUCATORS

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## LAY STAFF AND EX-STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

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The 1947 history of the Institute (p.194) provides a survey of the overall relationship between students and Brothers in 1902: 842 schools, 5,975 Brothers (those with Obedience and finally professed) and 87,068 students, giving a students to Brothers ratio of 14.5. The statistics on “school staffs” prepared for the 1907 Chapter enable a more precise figure to be put on this ratio. Thus, “Brothers with teaching positions” numbered 3,164 for 5,630 boarders and 79,758 day students, i.e. a little less than 27 students per teaching Brother. The average figures vary across the Provinces, most being between 20 and 30 students per Brother but only 17 in the Province of Constantinople and 58 in the British Isles.

At the 1920 Chapter, the “Brothers in school” were recorded as 3,384 for 10,996 boarders and 92,960 day students, i.e. an average of 30.7 students per Brother working in a school. The contrast between Provinces was even more striking than in 1907: 99.5 students per Brother in the British Isles compared to 12 in New Caledonia. School statistics from 1932 show 610 schools with 4,439 “teaching Brothers” for 134,124 students, i.e. 30.2 students per Brother, the same as in 1920. At the 1946 Chapter there were 183,726 students for a number of 5,518 Brothers, i.e. 33.2 students per Brother in 604 schools. In short, between 1907 and 1946 the average had slowly risen from 27 to 33 students per teaching Brother.

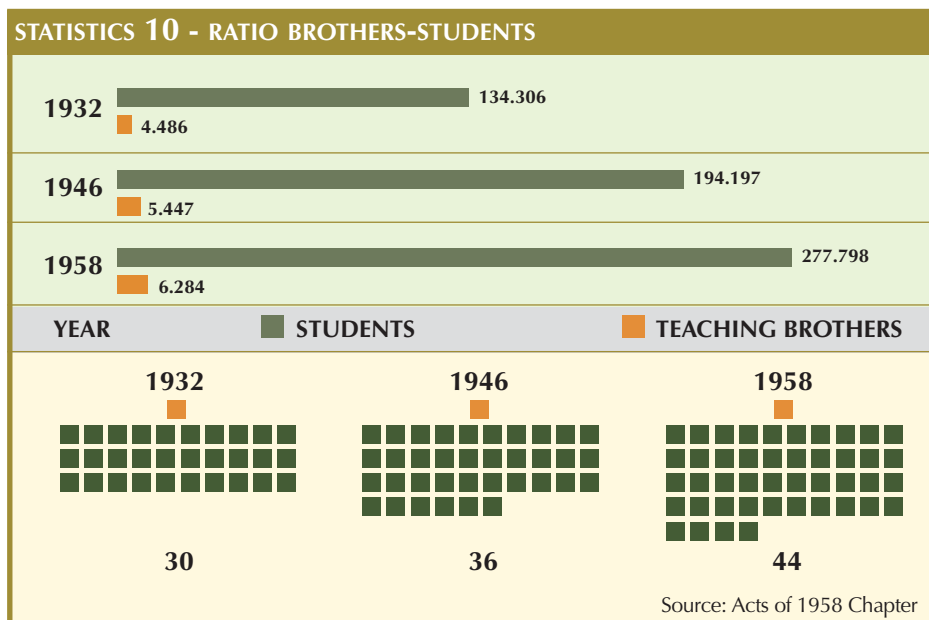
A set of statistics prepared in 1947 (History of the Institute p. 205) gave an average of 27.7 students per professed Brother that can be expanded into four groups:

- Great Britain-Ireland (92.7 students per professed Brother); China (64.8); Peru (43.8)
- South Africa, Australia, Belgium, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand had between 36 and 39 students per professed Brother
- Colombia, U.S.A., Spain, Brazil and Canada had between 22.7 and 29.6
- Fewer than 20 students per professed Brother: Argentina (19.8), France (18.4), Italy (16.5)

It could be supposed that the Provinces with a ratio equal to or above 36 students per professed Brother had a large number of lay people working as either teachers or teacher assistants.

## From lay helpers to lay partners

At the 1958 Chapter the Statistics Commission tried less to line up the figures as in previous Chapters than to attempt an approach that was more qualitative and comparative:



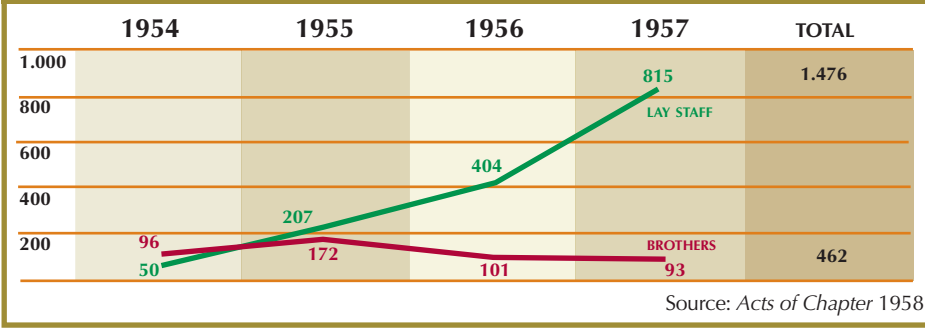
The levels were clearly identified:

THE ISSUE OF LAYTEACHERS		
Primary:	147.339	(53 %)
Secondary:	116.114	(41 %)
Higher:	8.802	(3 %)
Technical:	5.543	(2%)
Source: Acts of 1958 Chapter		

## The issue of layteachers

It was also in 1958 that close attention was paid to exact statistics regarding lay staff whose employment in large numbers alongside the Brothers goes some way to explaining the explosion in the number of students.

**STATISTICS 11 - NUMBERS OF TEACHING BROTHERS AND LAY TEACHERS STARTING/YEAR**



On the basis of the evident trend, the report judged that “it could well be asked if we are not headed towards a dangerous imbalance”. More precisely, “At present we have 4,490 lay staff for 6,284 Brothers”. This was undoubtedly the first time that a General Chapter had become so clearly aware of a revolution in the conduct of the works of the Institute.

The question was how to remedy the situation at a time of massive increase in demand for education. By 1967 there would be 375,602 students, nearly a hundred thousand more than in 1958, with the number of Brothers going up only from 8,974 to 9,704. In the schools, the number of ‘lay people’ had now overtaken that of the Brothers, by far. But the Institute always had some trouble in admitting this reality. The Bulletin of the Institute N° 206 (April 1967), that celebrated the 150 years of the Institute with detailed statistics, did not offer any overall figures on “lay people”. They came in through the back door as it were, included in the numbers associated with each school in the various Provinces. I used the statistics of each Province to prepare the table below of teaching personnel.

<b>BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE ON SCHOOL STAFFS AS AT 1 JANUARY 1967</b>		
<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>TEACHING PERSONNEL: BROTHERS</b>	<b>TEACHING PERSONNEL: “LAY”</b>
South Africa	77	91
Germany	70	42
Beaucamps (New Caledonia)	122/25	75/35
Belgium-Holland	113	518
Betica (Peru)	204	141
Brazil North	116	272
Castilla	152	70
Catalogne	171	129
Caxias Do Sul	52	105
Chile	102	109
China	59	356
Colombia	168	233
Congo-Rwanda	87	177

PROVINCE	TEACHING PERSONNEL: BROTHERS	TEACHING PERSONNEL: "LAY"
Cordoba (Arg.)	123	139
Cuba-Cent. America	198	169
Desbiens	77	320
Esopus	257	152
G.B./Irl./Nigeria	211	151
Iberville	231	301
Italy	92	98
Leon	141	83
Levante	121	126
Levis	116	372
Lujan (Arg.)	110	126
Madrid	117	72
Melbourne	133	103
Mexico Central	160	176
Mexico Occ..	217	145
Norte (Spain)	227	102
Hermitage	121	144
New Zealand	201	81
Peru	64	168
Porto Alegre	242	613
Poughkeepsie	239	259
Rio (Brazil)	107	196
St Genis-Laval	231	144
Santa Catarina	83	99
Santa Maria	136	244
Sao Paulo	134	252
Sud-Est (France)	83	134
Sud-Ouest (France)	46	64
Sydney	343	94
Varennes (Greece)	51/27	41/98
Sri Lanka (+Pakistan)	25	87
Lebanon-Syria	52	269
Madagascar	38	73
Philippines	49	166
Portugal	82	65
Swiss-missions	18	2
Uruguay	51	37
Venezuela	64	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,536</b>	<b>8,392</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from data in the *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 27, N°206, p. 509-611, April 1967.

In less than 10 years the number of “lay teachers” had almost doubled and that of the Brothers had only increased slightly. This is what Rev Br Charles-Raphaël noted in his report at the end of his mandate in 1967. In 1958 the number of teaching staff was 10,774 (58% of them Brothers) for 277,798 students at all levels, i.e. 25.7 students per teacher. By 1967, the ratio had hardly changed: 25.1 students per teacher. But the Brothers made up only 43% of the teaching personnel.

This represented a revolution in the Institute which was not given serious attention at the time, even though it played a decisive role in the crisis of identity of the congregation, independently of the Vatican Council. By 1967 the percentage of lay people in Marist schools across the Provinces ranged from 85 (China) to 21 (Sydney)<sup>314</sup>. Two-thirds of the Provinces, then, had more lay teachers than Brothers by 1967 and in only two Provinces were lay teachers less than 30% of the total.

## Lay Teachers and regional contexts

An examination of these figures by geographical regions shows significant similarities and differences:

LAY TEACHERS BY REGIONS			
CONTINENTS ET REGIONS	PROVINCES	% RANGE OF LAY PEOPLE	AVERAGE
Asia	3	77 (Sri Lanka, Philippines)- 85 (China)	79 %
Africa + Madagascar	3	54 (South Africa)- 67 (Congo-Rwanda)	62 %
Canada	3	56 (Iberville)- 80 (Desbiens)	70 %
United States	2	37 (Esopus)- 52 (Poughkeepsie)	44 %
Spanish Latin America	10	40 (Mexico Occidental)- 72 (Perú)	52 %
Brazil	7	54 (Santa Catarina)- 71 (Porto Alegre)	65 %
Spain	7	31 (Castilla)- 51 (Levante)	38 %
Australia, New Zealand	3	21 (Sydney)- 43 (Melbourne)	30 %

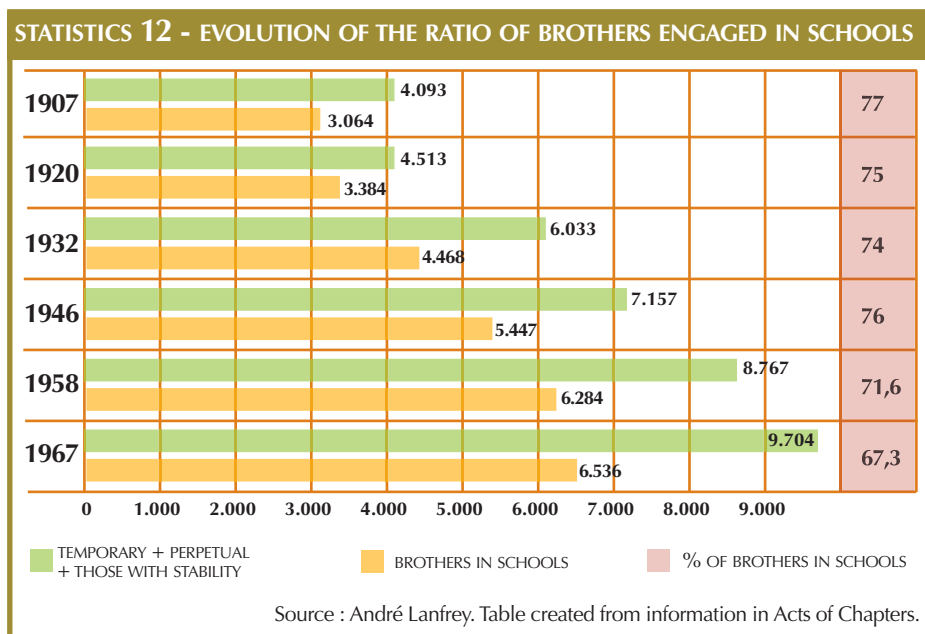
Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from Acts of Chapters.

This table does not include the region of Europe (other than Spain) because differences between Provinces were so great and the picture was unclear with some Provinces being linked to overseas territories: e.g. Beaucamps with New Caledonia, Varennes with Greece, the British Isles with Nigeria, Portugal with Angola and Mozambique. Elsewhere there appeared to be quite homogeneous zones: those with very large numbers of lay people as in Latin America and Canada; those who were much slower to recruit them such as the United States, Spain and Oceania.

<sup>314</sup> Because the Swiss-missions had a special status, their figures were not counted.

## A decrease in the proportion of Brothers working in schools

The increase in the number of lay people was accompanied by a certain decrease in the engagement of Brothers in traditional educational roles. Until 1946 the proportion of Brothers engaged in formal education was stable at 76-77%, the remainder being in formation roles, administration, manual work ... As time went on, a significant ‘falling off’ could be noted, as shown in the table below:



The development of Scholasticates and opportunities for university studies had gradually swung the Institute towards a type of training that resembled that of the upper classes: a lengthy training aimed at gaining a middle range or higher qualification. Further, the increase in size of Juniorates had required an ever increasing staff.

After 1958, then, the Institute was caught short by the presence of such a massive number of lay people at the heart of its educational project. Further, since the phenomenon of “lay presence” was quickly becoming more pronounced, it had become impossible to take a backward step. A completely new situation had to be thought through where questions were being raised about the place of the Brother in educational ministry and that of laypeople as participating in the Marist apostolate.

### APPENDIX 3: Table of Teaching Staff by regions, p. 458

## Ex-student associations

As just described, the Marist Brothers had a lot of trouble in seeing lay teachers as other than rivals or helpers. On the other hand, the relationship of lay teachers with parents and students was infinitely more natural.

## Local Associations

Collaboration between Brothers and lay people was structured, in the first place, around ex-students and the so-called 'faith-based groups'. This topic has already been traced out by Br Alexandre Lefebvre in his booklet on *The Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family: Its Origins*.<sup>315</sup> This placed the first Old Boys' Association at the boarding school at Beaucamps in 1865. It was founded by the Brother director and its purpose was to keep "the family spirit" between former students and their teachers. It was both "a faith-based group" and "a support group for the Brothers' school" and for Catholic education in general.

Especially after 1880, ex-student associations were to multiply in France, mainly connected with the larger boarding schools of the Institute, in the North (Lille, Pont-Sainte-Maxence, Paris-Pernety) and around Lyons (Valbenoîte...). The defence of non-government education which was under threat from the government was a major factor in their foundation. Similarly, the suppression of the congregations in



**66.** Retreat for ex-students of the Boarding School of Ecole, from 26 to 29 October 1934.

<sup>315</sup> This is in the form of an electronic booklet of 111 pages, published in 1997. The main ideas of its content can be found in summary form in an article in *Marist Notebooks* N° 15 which was the source for these lines.

1903 would contribute to more of them being set up, the associations taking on the role of defending non-government education in general and federating at a national level. It was often thanks to former students that many schools in France were retained or restored, schools like Neuville sur-Saône which was bought back by ex-students. Many ex-students also participated in Parents' Associations or Committees running non-government schools.

There were many ex-student associations founded in a number of other countries as well, where they were considered as faith-based groups as in France. The Bulletin of the Institute counted 193 of them in 1932<sup>316</sup> out of a total of around 600 schools, the larger schools for the most part, especially the boarding schools. The activities were limited in general to an annual meeting and Mass, a celebratory meal and speech. A sizeable number of groups, however, went further in adopting the practices of the A.C.J.F.<sup>317</sup> in France, organising study groups, conferences and debates, affiliating with the local St Vincent de Paul conference, running youth clubs, and, especially after 1920, getting involved in Catholic Action.

For a long time the Major Superiors considered that these associations were not their direct responsibility but rather the initiative of school directors or some zealous Brothers. The Superiors' major concern was that the associations did not interfere with the Brothers' religious exercises. Around 1920, however, the governing authority of the Institute could no longer completely ignore them. Thus, *The Teacher's Guide* of 1923<sup>318</sup> (Ch. VII, Section 6, p. 83-86) took up the topic of "School and post-school Associations" in essentially devotional terms. It made the point that their purpose was "the intellectual, professional and most especially physical growth, through study circles, sports clubs, and especially ex-student associations". Chapter VIII, entitled "Social Education", which could have been named equally well as "Civic Education", made only brief mention of ex-student associations. The 1932 edition of the *Guide* added nothing to that of 1923.

Article 212 of the 1923 Rule asked that "with an eye to keeping former students in good habits", the Brothers promote the setting up of parish youth groups and get involved in them zealously. Article 377, however, reminded the Brothers "not to take on any responsibility (other than the school) and not to take part in any devotional or charitable work that was counter to what was expected of their status as religious".

In fact it was only at the 1932 General Chapter that the Brothers showed a degree of openness to new possibilities. Even so, the local ex-student groups were to retain their status as 'faith-based' groups although many were struggling to make this a reality. Indeed, this issue of local ex-student groups is a good illustration of the ability to operate on two distinct and even contradictory levels: one based on the model of Christianity unifying faith and culture; the other, accepting a certain disconnect between faith and culture in the context of a secularised society and

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<sup>316</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIII, N° 90, October 1932, p. 193.

<sup>317</sup> In French, "Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française".

<sup>318</sup> *The Teacher's Guide* of 1923, Ch. VII, Section 6, p. 83-86.



being content with a minimal overlap. This is why the Institute was reluctant to include the local groups in its official texts.

A good example of this quite ambiguous style of operating was the Old Boys Association of St Joseph College in Lowell (United States), founded in 1892 and teaching more than 800 students mostly from Canadian and Irish Catholic families.<sup>319</sup> This association had been the fruit of the collaboration of Br Louis-Bernadin and an ex-student:

*Next the Statutes of the Association were discussed. (...) At its second meeting and a third which took place sometime later, a recruitment committee was set up, Br Chryseuil, the first director of the school, was elected Honorary President, drama and baseball clubs were organised, and we studied ways of ensuring the success of a gathering and banquet set for the 15<sup>th</sup> August for which we immediately began to prepare.*

There was a Mass arranged for the ex-students on that day. “There were people from all classes and works of life: members of State Congress, lawyers, priests, business men, industrialists, humble workers”, as well as former teachers, “particularly Brothers Chryseuil, Priscillianus and Léon Marcel, former directors of the College”. In the afternoon there was a picnic with a baseball match and various games. The day finished with a banquet set for nearly 300, with toasts from lay and Church dignitaries and the election of officers for the year ahead.

It was, therefore, a kind of celebration that was both civil and religious in nature as expressed in article III of the Statutes: “The aim of this association is the progress and social improvement of St Joseph College, of its students and the members of this association”. Certainly, the association had a chaplain, the College director was its president and one had to be Catholic to join, but it was not about forming Christian leaders nor did it pretend to be particularly Marist.

The BI N° 27 (May 1913) used quite similar terms for the association founded in 1898 by Br Edwin, the oldest Brother in Australia. It was called the St Joseph's College Old Boys Union. Also in Sydney there were 300 ex-students of St Mary's High School which had become The High School, Darlinghurst; there was the association at North Sydney as well with an equally large number; and that of St Patrick's school, the cradle of the Institute in Australia. In Auckland, New Zealand, there was a flourishing Old Boys' Association of Sacred Heart College. Then there was the recently-founded but already strong Old Boys' Association of Assumption College, Kilmore, in the state of Victoria; and further off, some 1600 km from Sydney, the Old Boys Association of the three schools in Adelaide, very attached to the memory of Br Jules-Etienne (Stephen). The author of the article on Australia thought that very few countries had such a great richness of associations that were contributing actively to getting enrolments for the Brothers' schools.

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<sup>319</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. II, N° 24, 1912, p. 774-782.

In 1916, the Bulletin (N° 42) published the impressions and memories of an ex-student of Hunters Hill which gave a good idea of how most former students understood their connection to their *Alma Mater*. In his eyes the College was a point of stability in a young and immense country. It had formed characters, allowing them to live their young lives to the full, especially through sport, and to develop “a clear vision of the real meaning of life” through religion. His words, however, were vague and could have been applied to any Catholic College.

## The thinking of the 1932 General Chapter

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Bulletin N° 90 of October 1932 published documentation assembled for the General Chapter that set out a charter for youth ministries. It even gave an extended bibliography on the topic. It took up at length what the *The Teacher's Guide* had written in 1923 about forming leaders and marial groups. At the end of the article it gave a place of honour to the Eucharistic Crusade, appreciating its hierarchic and somewhat military aspect:

*It consists of a leader or president who is a kind of group captain, assisted by a small staff making up the Office Bearers. To this is added a whole set of lesser leaders known as “Little Apostles”, each one proudly leading a group of four or five Crusaders, ten at the most, with the distinctive logo of the Crusaders.*

The Crusade promoted hard work, piety and a good disposition. Since “it was also an excellent way of cultivating vocations”, it deserved to be taken up by all centres of education.

The Bulletin then went on to list the school associations of the Institute:

- 280 Eucharistic Crusade groups
- 110 Sodalties of Our Lady
- 290 Sodalties of the Sacred Heart and the Apostleship of Prayer
- 80 other sodalties

These added up to a total of 769 school associations, not counting the groups connected to collections and prayers for the Holy Childhood or the Propagation of the Faith (190,000 French francs, a little bit down because of the Depression).

The real novelty was the recommendation concerning post-school associations or mixed ones, school and post-school. Such local groups or associations were



**67.** A group of students belonging to the Association for the Apostleship of Prayer.

easy to set up through an agreement between the Brother Director “or any other Brother with a long association with the school” and some former students. Former friends were invited to join, a leadership group was set up to establish its rules and procedures, involving at least an annual reunion where the ex-students would be happy to get together and their activities would grow according to circumstances, the number of members and the know-how of the leaders. The main aim was friendship: “The primary aim in founding a local association was to gather with old friends and to share stories about the good old days of one’s childhood”.

Then the scope of the association might broaden: Masses for the dead; mechanisms for mutual help; a library, study circle, conferences, retreats for one or more days. Finally, their focus would turn to supporting the school: “They will do fundraising, organise celebrations, arrange for enrolments, constitute a sympathetic network of people who are reliable and smart and who are keen to serve, without in any way usurping the authority of the school leaders.” Local associations would even group together regionally and nationally to defend and promote the cause of ‘freedom of choice’ in regard to education:

*This is how, step by step and over time, people rediscover with pleasure an old friend from childhood in the broad project of defending religion.<sup>320</sup>*

The number of such post-school associations or ‘mixed’ ones, i.e. including both current and former students, across the Institute were approximately:

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<sup>320</sup> A text inspired by an article in the *Haut-Parleur* (Loud-Speaker), the organ of the Federation of ex-student associations of France.

- 193 ex-students Associations, often with a periodic newsletter,
- 49 Conferences of St Vincent de Paul or charitable associations,
- 18 Study circles,
- 83 Associations hard to categorise due to their quite varied aims: instructive talks, sports, careers for students, savings societies, etc.

Finally, the documentation offered some model Statutes. The first was extremely detailed and was from the Association of the *Institute of Saint Gilles* in Belgium, founded in 1917. It was led by the Brother director and did not have a chaplain. Ex-students of other Marist schools could belong, as well as young men who were at least sixteen and who had declared themselves to be aspirants. This association was looking for more than a general re-union and divided itself into nine groups based on cultural, social or religious objectives:

1. The *Drama* group
2. The *Music (symphony)* group
3. The *Study* circle under the leadership of a priest
4. The *Travel* group
5. The *Careers* group that tried to find jobs for its members
6. The *Pension fund* group
7. The *Sodality* group under the leadership of the Brother director who organised monthly recollections
8. The *Newsletter* group, confided to an editorial committee which included a Brother.
9. The *Games* group, whose purpose was to make the monthly meetings more interesting. This was led by a delegate chosen by the committee.

With such a comprehensive project, the school became the centre of a local Christian Democrat community under the leadership of the Brothers, with the role of the parish not being clear. It was a sort of compromise between Catholic Action and Catholic youth club. An association of a college in Spain had a similar structure, made up of a general organisation with an annual reunion but also a "Study circle" whose aim was "Catholic social action in all its aspects. Its members were therefore divided into different groups: the Sunday group (devotions and the practice of religion; the Communications group; the Sports group; the Careers group; Social Action".

The article also presented a model of the Statutes of a federation on the scale of Belgium the main aim of which was "to unite the Associations of former students of the Brothers in Belgium into a federation and to keep them in the same spirit of

faith, patriotism and friendly solidarity". The article also advocated another type of federation that was more political and assertive, taking the Federation of Ex-students of Catholic Education in France as its model. This Federation had 400,000 members, "a sizeable Catholic force in the struggles of our days for the support of non-government schools and the recruitment of vocations"<sup>321</sup>. Using a structure of regional unions, one of its main aims was: "to take appropriate and timely action in the public domain and towards the legislative and executive authorities in order to achieve the legitimate demands of Free Catholic Education".

The Statutes of the College in Spain appeared particularly interesting to the author since "One Brother only was involved", the director, or "preferably another Brother of the community". The meetings of study circles took place on Sundays around 10 or 11 in the morning and "so, community life did not suffer in any way from these meetings". Finally, "Gathering all the members of the Association for a particular purpose needed to happen only rarely. On the other hand, the energies of younger members were being channelled as it was they who made up the core of members of the Circle, having an influence on the whole Association".

Basically, the Institute accepted post-school activities but tended to keep them on the margins, only interested in their leadership and religious aspects and fearful that their operation might disturb community life. There was no real understanding of what Catholic Action was and people had problems seeing how complex cultural and social initiatives could be developed from a school-base without having Brothers who were specialised in this ministry. There was, then, only a reluctant and superficial encounter with militant lay movements.

Regardless, individual Provinces and schools had great autonomy and the general policy of the Institute did not in all likelihood coincide with national and provincial initiatives. Br Lefebvre<sup>322</sup> mentioned that Assistants to countries like Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal found many associations and federations of ex-students during their canonical visits after 1945. In his Circular on zeal of 24 May 1949,<sup>323</sup> Br Leonidas gave a special place to school and post-school initiatives, recommending Catholic Action and the creation of ex-students associations, among others. He took note of the desire of some local groups to create a world federation but judged the project to be premature and reminded the Brothers that zeal was subordinate to obedience.

## Change on a large scale in the 1950s

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In the Bulletin of the Institute (N° 138, April 1950), Br Jules Victorin, General Archivist, prepared a quite detailed report on the associations, following on from a survey on their operation and vitality "in the various regions of the Institute".

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<sup>321</sup> The article in the Bulletin was strongly influenced by the quarterly Bulletin of this federation, *Haut-Parleur*.

<sup>322</sup> Br Alexandre Lefebvre in his article, *The Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family. Its Origins*. In *Marist Notebooks* N° 15, p. 127.

<sup>323</sup> *Circulars*, T. XX, p. 193-199. Circular on zeal of 24 May 1949.

He noted that ex-student Associations had been organised or were in the process of being organised in almost all Provinces apart from some countries such as Switzerland, Germany and Greece, where there were legal restrictions. On the other hand, in some Provinces like South Africa, Australia and Italy, all the schools had active Old Boys groups. Number-wise he counted 17 schools with more than 500 members, 4 of them having more than 1,000. The reunion day normally included a Mass for the intentions of teachers and members, living or dead, with a homily or speech by a former student of the Brothers; then a plenary meeting with discussion, election or re-election of office bearers, reports from the Secretary and Treasurer, various instructions, etc.; a family-style meal. In the evening some places held fêtes, literary events, games including their families, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Some local associations organised “periodic gatherings for recollections or silent retreats, or preparing people to meet their Easter obligations”. One of them, Denia in the Province of Levante, organised May devotions in the college chapel. “Some local associations in Australia invited well-known speakers to address the ex-students on religious topics and social action”. In Italy, all the associations had three groups: one for charitable works, one for literature and drama; one for sport. In most cases there was a periodical that kept contacts alive between members of the local association (*L’Ancien, Amitié, S’unir, Le Trait-d’ Union, L’Escalade, Excelsior*, etc. ...).

Many associations provided moral support and resources for the schools: bursaries for poor or deserving students; prizes for successful students; financial help for maintenance. Some took up more social concerns, providing clothing and food for those in need or organising evenings or sporting events to raise funds for new clothes for first communicants in the local area...



**68.** Congress of Brothers leading apostolic associations in the Marist Province of Central Brazil, in São Pãolo in 1952.

Some had more Marist or international ideas in mind: the Ex-Students in Argentina contributed to the erection of a monument to Venerable Father Champagnat at the Provincial house at Luján and the purchase of a stained-glass window of the Founder for the infirmary in the same house. The Ex-Students in Santa Maria (Central Brazil) created “the Chair of Brother Weibert”<sup>324</sup> at the Catholic University in Porto Alegre in honour of their former director, and paid the lecturers. In several countries such as Brazil, France and Mexico, ex-students took up the cause of religious freedom and choice in schools. The local Marist associations in South Africa, Chile, Italy and the Province of Levante in Spain formed federations. Elsewhere what was happening was less clear. In France, the Marist ex-students associations were part of a vast national federation recognised by the government. In Madagascar, Marist ex-students from Antsirabe living in Tananarivo, the capital where there was at the time no Marist school, joined the association of the De la Salle Brothers but formed a special group in this that was very attached to the Marist Brothers.

These examples illustrate a kind of archipelago of diverse groupings but there was also a willingness to consider a more structured organisation being pushed for by some Marist Provinces and some more dynamic association leaders. Some local associations had even expressed the hope of founding a world federation.

Br Jules-Victorin also underlined the importance of the influence that these ex-students could have through the positions they held in the Church: two Cardinals, a good number of Archbishops and Bishops, Vicars General, Rectors of seminaries and other Church dignitaries, and hundreds of priests and religious. “We also have to be careful not to forget the impressive number of Marist vocations from our schools”, he added, without saying more. In the secular world, several Ministers or former Ministers, politicians, Senators, ambassadors, magistrates, military officers... had been formed in our schools.

In fact, Br Jules-Victorin was describing a change that had begun in the 19th century and was now a reality without any discussion in the 1950s: the associations were no longer simple faith-based groups. Many former students, well-placed in civil or Church society, were partners as much as disciples.

## The 1953 Survey

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Br Jules-Victorin was careful not to sound too triumphal and underlined the unfinished and diverse character of these associations. Basically, his exposé agreed with the conclusions of another survey conducted a little later on, “The religious formation of our senior students”, as reported in the BI N° 153 (1954) by Br Sebastiani, Assistant General. The survey began with a preliminary question with a caustic tone:

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<sup>324</sup> Founder of the Province of Central Brazil.

*Are we, in general, sufficiently informed on the perseverance of most of our students as Christians, or are we peacefully basking in the impression given by the small number of those who continue to visit the school as members of ex-student associations?*

The survey had been conducted in 1953 in several countries across two continents. It was directed at ex-students “who, through their Christian life, religious culture, social standing (...) and their involvement with various youth ministries, brought together the best qualities to provide us with an opinion that was based on their observations and experience of real life in the world today”. Leaving aside any words of praise, Br Sebastiani stressed:

*With striking unanimity, they were wanting a more practical formation, one that was more open to the real world that Christians face in society today (...) They wanted the Brothers to be more in touch with the reality of the contemporary world and their teaching to be more directly aimed at, on the one hand, the Christian response to daily problems and, on the other, providing current apologetic arguments.*

In addition, *They wanted to be more personally involved in their own formation” and “asked to be introduced to more open religious practices that would lead to their being formed in a more personal spiritual life.*

*Unfortunately, one of them said, at the college that I attended, we were told that convictions grew out of repeatedly doing things. (...) But it is not by being forced to repeat things that leads to being convinced of their goodness or usefulness. We develop religious habits through religious convictions and not vice-versa.*

In conclusion, Br Sebastiani recalled:

*the feeling of discovering precise and sincere hopes in the testimonies of leading a thoroughly Christian life, of getting involved in Catholic social action and ministry. Is this one of the fruits of the Movement of Catholic Action? (...) a courageous stance of being a Christian in society, with the consequent deeply felt need for clear and certain teaching about life, for unshakeable personal convictions and a fervent interior life.*

He advocated, then, “adopting a method similar to that employed by Catholic Action in senior classes”: religious education as a “real program for Christian living in today’s world”, and study circles, “beginning with problems from real life”, meetings with “the local Catholic community”, and talks from experts...

The survey showed that at the highest level of the Institute people were preoccupied with the apostolic effectiveness of Marist schools. Moreover, the influence of this survey was to be felt at the 1958 Chapter where the relevant Commission advocated religious education that was more flexible, giving people more freedom and adopting the methodology of Catholic Action.



## 24.

# MOVES TOWARDS THE WORLD UNION OF EX-STUDENTS

The flourishing of certain federations (France, Italy, Spain and Belgium) and a less reserved attitude on the part of the Superiors were sufficient for the Beatification of Marcellin Champagnat in Rome in 1955 to provide the opportunity to set the foundations of the project of a World Union. The meeting was held at San Leone Magno College. The BI 160 (1955) gave a report on the inaugural meeting presided over by the Reverend Brother Superior General and Doctor Bombelli, President of the Italian Federation, attended by representatives from more than 25 Federations or Provinces.

*It became apparent that in the different countries associations had different functions and roles. It would therefore be necessary to create an organism that was sufficiently flexible to fit diverse situations. The role of the Union would be, above all, to create a broad stream of sympathy and mutual help around Christian schools and the Marist Brothers, and, as the need arose, to mount effective interventions.*

The World Union of Ex-students Associations of the Marist Brothers was launched to the acclaim of those in attendance. As proposed by Br Leonidas the officers of the Italian Marist Federation were to assume the task of getting all the information needed about the federations and to come up with concrete structures for the Union so that, in two years time, representatives of the various federations could reassemble to elect the governing council and finalise the Statutes.



### 69.

Foundation of the World Union of Marist Ex-students at San Leone Magno College in Rome on the occasion of the Beatification of Marcellin Champagnat..

## The Madrid Congress<sup>325</sup>

This congress showed that we were not just dealing with vague hopes linked to the enthusiasm surrounding the beatification of Marcellin Champagnat. Thirty four countries were represented. Br Charles-Raphaël was the special delegate of the Reverend Brother. The main item was the vote on the Statutes. The aim of the Union was: “to affirm by all means possible and especially through the growing strength of its organisation, the rights of God, the Church and families in the field of education”; the promotion of “the Marist spirit”; the support of Christian education; especially the works of the Marist Brothers. These Statutes, then, went well beyond those of most of the local associations which did not insist on their Marist identity but spoke in general terms of Christian living. The World Union, therefore, took on a character that was strongly spiritual and tied to the Institute. Since it was structured around national federations, its creation would lead to a strong push to federate across the various parts of the Institute.

The 1958 General Chapter<sup>326</sup> would reinforce this trend by advocating the designation of a Brother ‘adviser in each federation to ensure its fidelity to the Marist spirit. It even recommended the writing of a statute on “Marist co-workers”, a sort of Third-Order, an issue that would be taken up again at the Montréal congress in 1961. No such statute was produced and there was no further discussion on the idea. It could well be that this suggestion was aimed more at lay teachers in Marist schools than at ex-students. One thing is clear in any case: in 1955-58 the Institute which, up till then, had seen the Ex-Students as merely on the edge of its mission and therefore had been only loosely linked with them, now regarded them as being under its responsibility and obliged to share its spirit.



70. Congress of the World Union of Ex-student Associations in Madrid where the Statutes of the Union were approved..

<sup>325</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIII, N° 169, January 1958, p. 35-40.

<sup>326</sup> Br Alexandre Lefebvre, op.cit. p. 128

## A glimpse into the life of federations

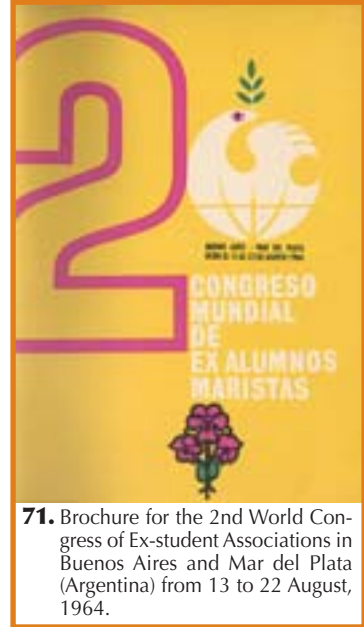
It could be imagined that this change would have provoked some debate but Br Lefebvre did not really go into any detail concerning the life of the federations. The Bulletin of the Institute gave only a very superficial coverage of the Congresses, recording speeches and congratulatory remarks but making it hard to follow any serious discussions that occurred at these assemblies. Some indications can nevertheless be found here and there. For example, in Argentina, the first national congress of Marist ex-students of Luján, Argentina,<sup>327</sup> produced some significant resolutions:

- I. *Defend Christian schools and religious education at all teaching levels. A clause was added that this resolution would be presented to government authorities at an appropriate time in the name of 20,000 Marist ex-students.*
- II. *Provide effective support for Marist vocations through spiritual, social and financial collaboration to gain new candidates.*
- III. *Invite ex-students to participate in some faith-based group to nourish their spiritual lives. To join a marial confraternity, the Legion of Mary, a Conference of St Vincent de Paul, the Federation of Catholic Action, a parish youth club.*

These show the characteristics of groups that were “faith-based and ready to defend Catholic schools” typical of traditional associations but still a really quite limited link to the Marist Brothers.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of Marist associations of Spain in Madrid in November 1963<sup>328</sup> was presided by Br Luis Gonzaga, Assistant General, along with all the Provincials of the peninsula and Brother Advisers of associations. It produced resolutions that gave the Federation a spiritual character closely tied to the Institute.

1. *We believe that the Brother Advisers must be very attentive to what the 15<sup>th</sup> General Chapter said about them. (...) The local associations should have a spiritual, collaborative orientation and be preferred to any other association.*<sup>329</sup>



71. Brochure for the 2nd World Congress of Ex-student Associations in Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata (Argentina) from 13 to 22 August, 1964.

<sup>327</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIV, N° 182, April 1961, p. 279-280.

<sup>328</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXVI, N° 195, July 1964, p. 215-218.

<sup>329</sup> *Circulars*, T. XXII, p. 290. Circular of 8 December 1958.

2. *Local associations, as groups with a spiritual character, will pay special attention to encouraging and strengthening the Christian life of its members with an eye to apostolic engagement. (...) In each association there must be a Committee member, preferably an ex-student priest, responsible for religious activities.*
3. *The Assembly recognises the need for collaboration between the Ex-students group, the Parents group and the school leaders to foster the formation of the students ...*
4. *Each local association should organise a social ministry to be organised, encouraged and implemented by all members. The Assembly is of the view that the best would be to start a school or classes for older youth and workers looking for further intellectual, professional and religious formation.*
5. *The Assembly invites the local associations to take charge of Movie Clubs as one of the most effective ways of fostering the formation of their members, parents of students, and the students themselves.*
6. *The Council of each local association will consider the possible creation of an Insurance Fund or something similar.*

The Federation even envisaged setting up a university College in Madrid in collaboration with the Brothers to ensure its spirit for young people doing their university studies. The prevailing conservatism did not prevent them having interesting ideas such as the fusion between the associations of ex-students and the parents' associations as well as following up on young people proceeding to higher studies. The idea of a family was starting to take shape.

The third Congress of the Marist Ex-students of Brazil<sup>330</sup> was held from 20 to 26 July in Porto Alegre in the grounds of "Pontificia Universidade Católica" of the Rio Grande do Sul Province. At the conclusion of their meeting, those attending made promises that betrayed a lack of concrete results, organisation problems and the desire for some widening of perspective. Ideas on social outreach included literacy projects, crèches, and ways of assisting poor families. Regarding the relationship between Brothers and associations, they wanted the role of the assessor to be effective at the national level as well as at the Provincial and local levels. As to Christian identity, the proposal was that ex-students live their Christian lives to the full and accept the responsibilities that this involved.

Alongside these quite traditional objectives, a hope was expressed to move beyond a vision that was too narrow by a women's group in each association and working systematically "towards the realisation of the ideals of peace and harmony between all people". This congress was strongly inspired, then, by "Pacem in Terris" that had deplored the existence of a world divided between rich and poor countries and in the grip of:

*materialistic, ideological trends that wanted to eliminate the last light of belief in our supernatural destiny, thus reducing the individual to being a plaything of the*

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<sup>330</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXVIII, N° 196, October, p. 315.

forces of nature and the base instrument of greed and exploitation of those who hold some scrap of authority or power.

The same sensitivity to the Vatican Council was in evidence at the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (1967-68). There was no longer any question of retreating from the world, just the contrary. However, consumed as they were in serious debates about reforming the Institute, the Capitulants did not go beyond traditional ideas regarding associations such as friendship, helping the schools, apostolate ...<sup>331</sup>

## Br Virgilio León (1927-1986) and the concept of the Marist Family

After the Second Vatican Council which broke with a hierarchic model of the Church and recognised the importance of the laity, it became difficult to see the World Union as simply a 'help' to the Marist Brothers. Some expression had to be found that was well-enough grounded to encompass both Brothers and lay people. In this way, the concept of "The Marist Family", already quite frequently in use but given various meanings, came to the fore.<sup>332</sup>

It was Br Virgilio, Provincial of Catalunya in 1966, Capitulant in 1967-68, assessor of the Spanish Federation from 1972, who was able to give this expression a theological and charismatic underpinning. It all began from his deep conviction as a Marist aspirant back in 1940 that he was entering a spiritual family. From 1967, in the magazine *Familia Marista*, intended for candidates and their families, he developed the meaning of this expression: the family of Champagnat, the family of Mary, a cell of the Church understood as the People of God in which there was a place for everyone: "older brothers and Benjamins, our parents, our students and ex-students and all their families".<sup>333</sup> He promoted this idea enthusiastically in the Provinces of Spain, especially in youth ministry circles. As national co-ordinator for Marist youth ministry he supported the creation of the musical group "Kairoi", the Easter celebrations for young people at Las Avelanas and many meetings of "Marist Animators" whose action would influence the founding of the Movement of the Marist Family.



**72.** Br Virgilio León Herrero, adviser to the Spanish Federation of Ex-student Associations.

<sup>331</sup> Br Alexandre Lefebvre, op.cit. p. 130.

<sup>332</sup> On the evolution of the concept, see Antonio Martínez Estaún, "The Marist Family according to Br Virgilio León", in *Marist Notebooks*, N° 30, February 2012, p. 123-175.

<sup>333</sup> Br Alexandre Lefebvre, op.cit. p. 132.

## The influence of Br Virgilio on the Spanish Federation and the World Union

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When he became adviser to the Spanish Federation in 1972, it was in a deep crisis. Certainly the members had developed statutes and structures but without any real ability to promote the level of lay involvement pushed for by the Council. Br Virgilio León was going to breathe spirit into it. In congresses organised by Federations and the World Union he proposed the idea of “The Marist Family”.<sup>334</sup>

His proposal arrived at a moment when many Federations, like the Institute itself, were in crisis after the Council, and were looking for “new inspiration” (Congress of Badalona 1973). Influenced by Br Virgilio, the Spanish Federation in 1973 adopted the aim of setting up a “Marist Family”, bringing together Brothers, ex-students, parents, teachers and students.<sup>335</sup> The project captured the heart of council members of the World Union at their meeting at Toulouse in that same year. So, “The Marist Family and its continuing legacy in the education of youth” was to be the theme of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the World Union in July 1974 at St Genis-Laval<sup>336</sup> where 200 participants assembled from 25 federations. The idea of ‘local associations’ was being replaced by that of the “Marist family”, composed of “all those who feel concerned by these increasingly urgent problems: Brothers, Ex-students, Parents of students, Friends of the school ...” A real “Marist educational community” had to be built up where each one felt at ease in his or her specific role.

Curiously the text makes no specific mention of lay teachers, even if they were included in the idea of a “Marist educational community”. In addition, the congress discussed the wider developments that were happening around that time: the diminishment in the number of religious meant that “lay people had to take their responsibility to keep the work of their teachers going, to promote the moral and spiritual values to which they remained profoundly attached and to assist with new needs that were making themselves felt everywhere”. Mgr. Honoré, Bishop of Evreux and quite an expert on educational matters, left no place any longer for the old concept of a pre-Conciliar Church:

*“In a secularised and pluralist context, the Church has to understand itself less in terms of power than in terms of service (...) That is to say that any Christian institutions today, and schools in particular, must be seen less as instruments of control or religious proselytism than as an expression of service, of co-operation ...”*

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<sup>334</sup> The beginning of this paragraph and the end of the preceding one are strongly inspired by an exchange of views with Br Antonio Martínez Estaún.

<sup>335</sup> Br Alexandre Lefebvre, op.cit. p. 134.

<sup>336</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, N° 217, May 1975, p. 367-373.

## The Marist Family without the World Union

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The 17th General Chapter in 1976 was not very interested in the project of creating the 'Broad Marist Family' as proposed by the World Union and was content to encourage the local associations and federations to take the idea further. But the federations were divided. At the Melbourne Congress in 1978<sup>337</sup> the World Union was called into question as being too heavy a structure. Further on the eve of the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in 1985 it seemed very divided. The concept of the 'Marist Family', however, was confirmed since the new Constitutions established officially that:

*The Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family is an extension of our Institute; it is a movement for people who wish to share more fully the spirituality and sense of mission inherited from Marcellin Champagnat. In this movement, affiliated members, young people, parents, helpers, former students, and friends deepen within themselves the spirit of our Founder so that they can live it and let it shine forth. The Institute animates and co-ordinates the activities of this movement by setting up suitable structures. (C. 164.4)*

After closed discussions, then, the Institute had decided to no longer hold any responsibility for the World Union, a decision that would lead to its demise in the near future. In announcing the suspension of the Union *sine die* on 31 December 1986, M. Schmitz of the Belgian Federation spoke not only about the decision of the General Chapter but blamed "a huge change of mentality", "the 'tourist' character of congresses and their simply being stages for national prestige" as preventing reflection at any depth, the difficulties in producing the magazine *Unitas* and, finally, the inability of the Australian Federation to take on the leadership of the Union.

## A rather disappointing report of the post-school initiatives of the World Union

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By the time the World Union of Ex-students came to a close, local associations of ex-students of boarding schools and Marist Colleges had been in existence for over a hundred years. These had been regarded as faith-based groups but they most often involved little more than an annual reunion, paying a small contribution and having a newsletter. Early on these associations in France, Belgium, Spain, and other countries had often played a political-religious role in the struggle between the Church and the lay State. The Major Superiors had certainly encouraged post-school activities early in the piece but they regarded them as prolonging the mission of the schools, trying to ensure the practice of the faith by really young people after leaving school and considering that apostolic work with adults did not pertain to the vocation of the Brothers.

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<sup>337</sup> Br Alexandre Lefebvre, op.cit. p. 150.

School directors were undoubtedly of a different point of view, seeking out ex-students capable of supporting the schools through their contacts, their financial help and even as parents of current students. Spiritual considerations, then, did not figure highly in the operation of the local associations, many of which blended into the 'Catholic' landscape without this meaning anything really. It remains true, however, that how a group showed its Catholic identity could vary from one country to the next.

With the rise of Catholic Action in some countries, there was a tendency to transform the ex-students associations into associations with a variety of cultural, social and religious activities based on democratic principles. The Superiors had tolerated these kinds of associations on condition that they maintained Christian principles based on respect for the hierarchy and belief in God. This attitude does not seem to have changed before the 1950s. So, there were three quite different types of associations:

- Simple associations linked to particular schools, without any commitment other than a vague adherence to its educational principles;
- Associations that were more political-religious, that took up the defence of not only their school but Catholic education in general.
- Associations with a Christian Democrat spirit offering a suite of activities while being clear about their Marist identity.

The Major Superiors, then, became aware of the potential of this movement towards creating associations at the very time that they were questioning themselves about the relevance of a faith education in schools which appeared to be a long way from meeting the needs of young adults. The creation of the World Union in 1955 was not due solely to the beatification of Marcellin Champagnat but to a coming together of two partners keen to be of mutual support. Obviously, the Institute did have second-thoughts about this creation. There had to be some control over a relatively spontaneous trend originating in Marist schools that was saying, in its own way, that the Brothers had rights and responsibilities towards adults for whose education they had been partly responsible. Also, the idea of seeking vocations from among the ranks of ex-students was certainly present. As well, a desire to simply spend time together, political – religious preoccupations, looking for honorary positions were certainly features of the associations themselves.

From 1955-58 the Institute quickly imposed its traditional doctrine on the Union: spirituality and Marist identity first, with Catholic Action and Christian Democracy secondary. Questions could also well be asked about the Marist convictions of the ordinary members belonging to these federations that had been put together quite artificially. On the other hand, the World Union had left to one side a group that had become very important in Marist mission: the lay teachers.

In the Post-Council context the time was right for the promotion of the laity but the traditional points of reference were no longer clear. All of a sudden it was the end of the old idea of Christianity based on respect for the hierarchy and intense devotional practices, but also of the type of Christianity that was more democratic in the style of Catholic Action, or even, quite simply, of Catholicism that was more



cultural than based on any deep conviction. For an Institute in crisis the World Union looked like a huge apparatus with little capacity to provide significant help. However, in trying to re-think its *raison d'être* using the concepts of “The Broad Marist Family” and “Educational community”, the World Union had caught the Institute off-guard when it was having trouble redefining its identity and therefore not yet prepared to commit itself to a real partnership with lay people.

The World Union therefore had died in part for reasons related to timing: the idea of the Marist Family came too early vis-à-vis the Institute that still saw itself as strong enough to find within itself the means of its re-birth and that still could not conceive of lay partners acting as partners. But above all, what was the real strength of the World Union without the Brothers advisers? Moreover, the great promoter of the idea of the “Marist Family” had been Br Virgilio León,<sup>338</sup> Provincial of Catalunya, not the World Union.

When all is said and done, the World Union, despite all its limitations, contributed to freeing the Institute from any narrow conception of its religious and apostolic identity. Moreover, it could be that we missed out on a fruitful partnership between lay people and Brothers in the years 1974-86. Nevertheless, the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family was to grow out of this early attempt at relating and working together. But that is another story.

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<sup>338</sup> Biography in A. Lefebvre, op. cit. p. 132-136 ; 173-1, drawing heavily on Antonio Martínez Estaún



## 25.

# SANCTITY AND WORK AS PER THE OBITUARIES (1909-1967)

After such lengthy discussion on the Institute as a corporate institution, it is time to shift the focus to how individual Brothers lived their lives. Fortunately there are substantial sources for doing this, as detailed in the 1931 introduction to Tome IV of the biographical notices of Brothers who had died. There the intention to publish these systematically over the coming years was announced. In the end, there was to be a series of seven volumes, the last in 1967. The author of this Introduction, most probably the Secretary General of the time, Br Jean-Emile, described the purpose of the project as being to edify the living by shining a light on the beautiful examples of life and holy death given to us by our departed Brothers.<sup>339</sup>

“It is a venerable tradition, going back to our Founder, to remember our dearly Departed and to be edified by the retelling of their virtues. Nothing speaks better than example, for no-one can deny the possibility of perseverance, fidelity to the Rule, mortification and zeal in reading what our confrères, now called to their heavenly reward, achieved while still among us.”

A summary of how the Institute had kept up this tradition followed. In 1837 the story of the death of Br Dorotheé was recounted in one of the short Circulars of those days. This was followed by many biographies being written up in the Circulars.<sup>340</sup> The 1868 *Biographies of Certain Brothers* by Br Jean Baptiste had three sections: sixteen biographies of Brothers who were models of virtue; the holy deaths of twenty Brothers in the infirmary; finally, short notes on six other Brothers. From 1890 on, a decision was taken to publish separate notebooks of biographies which were to be bound into two volumes. The collection was stopped in 1903 and so, once again, the Circulars devoted some pages to our departed from time to time.

The *Bulletin of the Institute* which started in 1909 would take up the baton. In its second edition, it gave eight or ten lines and sometimes a page to the memory of Brothers who had died recently. There was no space to write more. Longer bi-

<sup>339</sup> The abbot of Rancé (1626-1700), reformer of La Trappe, contributed in a big way to re-establish this tradition in his well-known *Relation de la mort de quelques religieux de La Trappe*.

<sup>340</sup> Around sixty, according to the Index of Circulars XIII p. 511-512.

ographies were published as time went on, particularly after 1922. This approach did not really appeal to people, however, since it meant leaving out “as many obituaries as possible”. Some 526 biographies were published. A summary overview follows.

SUMMARY TABLE OF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND OBITUARIES			
DATES	TOMES	APPEARED IN	NUMBER OF NOTICES
1837...		<i>Circulars</i> (until 1909)	75 approx.
1868	I	<i>Biographies of Certain Brothers</i>	42
1890-1900	II	Series of Biographies in leaflets later bound into volumes	64
1899-1901	III		23
<b>Total</b>			<b>204</b>
1909-1931	<i>Bulletin of the Institute</i>	Notices of varying length	526

Source: Br André Lanfrey.

## Biographical Notices in the Bulletin

The notices from before 1914 come across as official records with a coating of conventional rhetoric but later they had a more literary style and provided enough information for the reader to get an understanding of the human and spiritual richness of many departed Brothers. There was no systematic attempt to fit them into a pre-established category of virtues and neither was there any holding back on recalling their personal limitations. They were, however, biographies intended to edify, with many features in common: a patriarchal family, a fervent novitiate, life as a zealous teacher, and so on. Because of this repetition, the reader could be tempted to take an interest in the historical details only. These were quite well documented: date of birth, entry to the novitiate, positions held, countries where the Brother served and so on. Many treasures, however, are there to be found if one can get past this first impression.

## Lengthier lives

These obituaries reveal an important fact: the increase in lifespan of the Brothers. This was clear in a preliminary comment to the biography of Br Cyriaque,<sup>341</sup> a Brother who had been engaged in manual work and who died at 91 in 1914:

<sup>341</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IV, N° 35, November 1914, p. 415-417.

*Not so long ago, it was almost considered an axiom that Brothers did not grow old in the Institute. To those who thought the contrary, citing notable examples, the triumphal response was to point to at the average age of the departed to see that such examples were really only fortunate exceptions. But this argument, which may have been correct in its time, does not hold up today. At the last retreat, the Reverend Brother, armed with exact figures, was able to state that, in the space of the half-century from 1860 to 1910, the average age of our departed had gradually risen from 24 to 54. Thanks be to God, then, people grow older in the Institute and the proof of this is that in the past year, from June 1913 to June 1914, among the 56 deaths that we have had, there were 28 or half the number who were more than 60 years old and 35 more than 50.*

The war that was to break out soon after was not to call this important fact into question in any serious way and the Bulletin went on to describe generations who were more productive than preceding ones because of the length of the careers of Brothers. Thus, the numerical growth of the Institute did not come about solely through large numbers entering but also through an improvement in living conditions. Having said that, tuberculosis continued its ravages; as did yellow fever, typhus and smallpox in tropical countries; world wars, government hassles in places like France and Turkey, revolutionary outbreaks and civil wars in China and Spain, were the new causes of death, either directly or indirectly. In many places the Brothers had lived longer but more dangerously, as already noted.

## Saintly Brothers

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The biographies did set out to edify but that did not stretch to describing the Brothers as saints. Still, there were some who had this reputation. For example, Br Amphien,<sup>342</sup> director for a long period at the boarding school-turned-day school at Beaujeu, then director of the Provincial house at l'Hermitage, was called "the good saint".<sup>343</sup> Br Gaubert<sup>344</sup> on his retirement at Beaucamps was known as "the praying Father". Sometimes it was the surrounding population who 'canonised' Brothers. This was the case with Br Frédéric<sup>345</sup> who had been at Gueugnon, an industrial town in Saône-et-Loire from 1862 to 1914 and was considered by the local people as "the saint of Gueugnon". The municipality awarded him a medal of honour (the Monthion medal) in 1912 and his death occasioned an outpouring of public grief. In Cailloux-sous-Fontaine, to the north of Lyons, Br Carolus was never known other than as "the saint of Cailloux"<sup>346</sup> and, when he died at St Genis-Laval, the local population wanted to take his body for themselves. Appointed to Villeneuve-de-

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<sup>342</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. I, N° 12, November 1910, p. 671-674.

<sup>343</sup> But Br Alain Delorme has informed me that the Hermitage Annals described this Brother as someone who made life a pain for those around him.

<sup>344</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IV, N° 34, July 1914, p. 338-340.

<sup>345</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IV, N° 35, November 1914, p. 410-415.

<sup>346</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XII, N° 82, October 1930, p. 245-250.

Berg for more than 20 years, Br Marie-Robert was called “the saintly Brother Marie-Robert”.<sup>347</sup> Similarly, old Br Euchariste<sup>348</sup> quickly acquired the reputation of being a saint in the school where he worked for a time at the end of his life.

## Spiritual reading

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The biographies provided little information on the sources that inspired the holiness of departed Brothers. In this regard, the note on Br Onias,<sup>349</sup> a devoted reader of *The Good Superior*, is a treasure-trove:

*So what did the good Brother do to nourish his piety? He read several well-chosen books, few in number, but always the same ones over and over: The Gospels, The Imitation of Jesus Christ, The Religious Man,<sup>350</sup> Reflections on the Mysteries of the Rosary. He used to read the Roman Parishioner from cover to cover, with the liturgical prayers and accompanying reflections which he took delight in reading many times over and meditating on each Sunday before joining the community for Office.*

Br Mary-Stanislaus,<sup>351</sup> an Australian, provided an example of a slightly more contemporary spirituality.

*Following the recommendation of Brother Jean Baptiste, for whom he had a sort of cultish attraction, he taught the Brothers first and foremost to aim at living a virtuous life even as he, no less than anyone else, had a taste for the enjoyable and appealing side of things.*

*[...] He took special delight in the works of Father Faber, undoubtedly because of a more or less unconscious affinity between his own mindset and that of the celebrated English Oratorian. It does not seem rash to think that his long tête-à-têtes with this great mystic, who doubled as a great poet, had a marked influence on the character of his religious temperament that was both serious and affective, and similarly on the great objects of his devotion: the greatness and lovability of God, the mysteries of the Holy Childhood, the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion of our Saviour, the sorrows of Mary, the holy Church and its noble Leader, etc.*

## Spiritual men

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Other Brothers were recognised as really spiritual men. For example, Br Ludvin,<sup>352</sup> who had struggled as a teacher:

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<sup>347</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VI, N° 44, May - July 1916, p. 305-308.

<sup>348</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XII, N° 83, January 1931, p. 306-315.

<sup>349</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VI, N° 42, January 1916, p. 73.

<sup>350</sup> From Saint Jure, a Jesuit of the 17th century.

<sup>351</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 48, July 1917, p. 228-232.

<sup>352</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IX, N° 63, April 1923, p. 336.

*A friend had bought him some pictures of the Stations of the Cross. He had carefully framed them and placed them above his desk. While he went about his work, they helped him meditate on the sufferings of Our Lord. (...) Every day he made the Stations in spite of his many tasks, as well as brief but fervent visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Well before the decree on daily Communion, the Chaplain had admitted him to frequent Communion and had spoken to the Superiors on a number of occasions about the high esteem in which he held this humble Brother.*

This spirituality based on the Passion appeared quite frequently in the notices. In the case of Br Joseph Bonose<sup>353</sup> it was linked to a Eucharistic spirituality:

*His favoured weapons in spiritual combat were prayer, vigilance and trust in God. (...) His great devotion was for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Every morning he would get up an hour ahead of the community, with permission. When he had washed and dressed he would spend half an hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament, doing his 'call to arms', and getting his 'instructions for the day', as he used to say. He often said that we non-ordained religious should put up a statue to Pius X for having re-established daily Communion.*

[...]

*Based on his own experience, the teaching he pressed on his Novices was aimed at forming them on the model of disciples of the Cross. Constantly 'on the cross' himself as a result of the illness and suffering that were gradually taking their devastating toll, he was reluctant to submit to any cure to restore his health. (...) A hardship for him but a ray of light for others, he remained for the whole of his life, undoubtedly through the will of God, in a state of doubt and confusion about his own behaviour. Only those who were closest to him and who knew him intimately would be able to say how much he had to suffer as a result of this state of mind and how he continued to show filial resignation to the will of God to the end.*

Br Paul-Marie<sup>354</sup> one of the founders of the Province of Spain, presented a somewhat similar profile of devotion to the Eucharist and the Passion, but not without its doubts:

*Very devoted as he was to the Sacrament of the Altar he never stopped exhorting others to frequently approach the Eucharistic Banquet to which he himself was so attached. (...) Like St Paul, his glorious patron, he could have said, "My greatest boast is to know Christ crucified". (...) He had a profound devotion to the five Wounds of the Saviour and to the Way of the Cross, the Stations of which he liked to make in the morning before*



**73.** Jules Charles Gravil  
(Br Paul-Marie  
1853-1929)

<sup>353</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. X, N° 72, July 1927, p. 441-447.

<sup>354</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XII, N° 79, February 1930, p. 50-64.

the *Salve Regina* and during the day. (...) Frequently I have met people on my travels who speak with conviction of Br Paul-Marie as "a saint".

In retirement at Las Avellanas, he lived through a tough interior trial:

*"It seemed to him that God to whom he was addressing all his prayers was unmoved and deaf to his voice, that He was withdrawing Himself from him, abandoning him to his own devices, to the full weight of his weaknesses and nothingness. Worrying obsessively, plunged into an abyss of sadness, surrounded by total darkness, the sensitive soul of Br Paul-Marie experienced in some way the same consequences of that cruel abandon that the Saviour complained about on the Cross: "Father, why have you abandoned me?"*

Br Mares, a simple shoe-maker and infirmary assistant in 1893,<sup>355</sup> was recognised as a deeply spiritual man:

*He used to spend his recreation periods as well as his Sundays and Feastdays when the workshops were closed with the sick to whom he gave himself entirely (...) and he did this until his death." "I kneel before him," said one Superior, "if only for the attentive way he cared for the sick." (...) Br Mares had a very intense interior life. His meditations took him to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. A book was retrieved from his small library that was faded and well-thumbed that he loved to use each morning before and after Communion and often during the day. He had a perfect understanding of the charitable purpose that Jesus Christ had had in instituting the Divine Eucharist. One could say that the end of his life was a continuous meditation of this adorable mystery. It was from this well that he drew out an intense love of mortification and the supernatural affection he had for his suffering confrères.*



74. Br Amphiloque

Br Amphiloque,<sup>356</sup> for a long time Master of Novices and then Provincial of Syria, showed great zeal and a spiritual life that summarised in a way the spirituality of many Brothers.

*In 1914 he put the finishing touches to his book, Teaching Mary to Youth the fruit of his fervent devotion to the Blessed Virgin and twenty years of work. (...) But you should have heard Brother Amphiloque in person on the subject. What devotion, what fire, what heart he brought when speaking of the Blessed Virgin! (...) Not only did he speak of the Blessed Virgin throughout his life but it was the usual topic of his correspondence. (...) Work every day for Mary! Be zealous, industrious, indefatigable apostles of devotion to her! All of you go and go always to Jesus through Mary! She will be your*

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<sup>355</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IX, N° 64, August 1923, p. 406-410.

<sup>356</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XI, N° 78, December 1929, p. 338-354.



*consolation in all your troubles, the measure of your salvation and of your eternal happiness.*

He became devoted to the Stations of the Cross in quite colourful circumstances:

*During the construction of Jounieh, when the required permissions had not been completely in order, Rev Br Théophane had thought it appropriate to sanction Br Amphiloque, then Provincial, by ordering him to make the Stations of the Cross each day for six months. The penance was carried out faithfully and humbly each day in the full view of all. Br Amphiloque found the practice so appealing to his heart that he continued it until his death twenty five years later.*

Finally, “he it was, at the 1883 Chapter, who put the motion to consecrate the Institute to the Sacred Heart of Jesus” and who even edited a catechism of the Sacred Heart, based on the structure he had used in *Teaching Mary to youth*. He would not be able to get it published.”

Br Salathiel<sup>357</sup> had a quite similar approach to that of Br Amphiloque. At St Gilles in Brussels, he established a Eucharistic Sodality and led the Confraternity of Our Lady that he regarded as “a nursery of religious and priestly vocations, of Christians who were devout, upright and men of conviction who would grow up to be agents for good in the world.”

## Heroic Brothers

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Around thirty notices referred to Brother soldiers, most of whom had died in the war, either through their wounds or sickness or killed at the Front. The first accounts go back to 1914. Br Dioscore,<sup>358</sup> for example, had returned from Turkey where he had played the role of hero at Adana several years beforehand in saving a number of Armenians who had taken refuge in a church. He died of an illness in December 1914. Brs Marie-Augustalis and Honeste,<sup>359</sup> conscripted into the auxiliary brigades, offered to take the place of family-men on the Front and lost their lives there.

## Secularised Brothers

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The Bulletin held no grudge against secularised Brothers since 55 death notices were about them. Moreover, these notices offered a good summary of the wide variety of situations in which they had lived. Some had not worked in Marist schools: Br Rogatien<sup>360</sup> (1830-1911) worked in a seminary; Br Andronicus (1838-1911) was

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<sup>357</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IX, N° 62, December 1922, p. 249-251.

<sup>358</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IV, N° 35, November 1914, p. 420.

<sup>359</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. V, N° 39-40, July - September 1915, p. 327.

<sup>360</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. II, N° 13, January 1911, p. 59.

a tutor.<sup>361</sup> Some, who had been secularised at first, later took themselves into exile: e.g. Br Amandus<sup>362</sup> to Brazil in 1907 or Br Marie-Othman to Pontós around 1906.<sup>363</sup> Mention was made of court cases in which some of them had been victims, men like Br Marie-Xaverius<sup>364</sup> and Br Christianus.<sup>365</sup> The way some of them had adapted their apostolic work to the circumstances was extraordinary. For example, Br Frédéric,<sup>366</sup> the “saint of Gueugnon”:

*The non-government school at Gueugnon was not exempt from the general banning. In the month of July 1903 its intrepid director had to finish the schoolwork he had been engaged in for forty years (...) but he was held in such esteem and attracted such strong sympathy that people did all that they could to keep him in the country, the country he himself would have had such difficulty leaving. He stayed on there, then, to continue his mission of charity among the sick, the poor, and the least favoured, sharing his faith and caring for them over eight years with a maternal love, as was reported in a local magazine. In the evenings, when his small family had gone, he could be found visiting the sick or going to the church. (...) People venerated him as a saint.*

For others, life was to be tougher as it was for Br Anthidius,<sup>367</sup> for example. He had been the director of the non-government school at Clignancourt in the suburbs of Paris that he had to close in 1903 to take over the boarding school at Charolles in Saône-et-Loire. A case was opened against him and his co-workers on the charge that their secularisation was a pretence. Convicted by the court in Charolles, he was acquitted by the Court of Appeal in Dijon. The government still claimed the building at Charolles as its property, applying the law of Separation between the Church and the State.

*During the night of the end of September 1908, all the police brigades of the area received the order to set out for Charolles. At daybreak, the boarding school was surrounded. A special government officer who had come from Mâcon to preside over this sad task, broke into the house, followed by the armed forces, and expelled the people living there peacefully manu militari.*

After a temporary position at Paray-le-Monial, he took charge of the boarding school at Decize in 1909 and restored its reputation. When the college was requisitioned as a hospital from 1914-1918, he continued in whatever spaces he could find. After the war he was made director of the Marist boarding school at Chagny. In the end he died from a bout of asthma on 22 May 1925.

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<sup>361</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. II, N° 20, March 1912, p. 526-527.

<sup>362</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, n. 47, March 1917, p. 121.

<sup>363</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. III, n. 29, September 1913, p. 384-386.

<sup>364</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VI, N° 44, May - July 1916, p. 292-296.

<sup>365</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 48, July 1917, p. 242-243.

<sup>366</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IV, N° 35, November 1914, p. 410-415.

<sup>367</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XI, N° 75, December 1928, p. 179-182.

The life and death of Br Anthidius give an idea of the battle that secularisation involved: a constant struggle against the desire to do away with Catholic schools by whatever means were available. This Brother was to die just when the lay State was to fail in its attempt.

## Intellectuals, artists, and pedagogues

Initial formation in the congregation, even after 1882 when Scholasticates started to function, remained at an elementary level, leaving it to each one to continue his own formation. From such an unlikely start, many Brothers, especially those in boarding schools, managed to attain remarkable levels of culture but without necessarily gaining high degrees. Certainly for many of them such culture remained rather unsophisticated, based on accumulating knowledge rather than any capacity for synthesis. Some, however, could be described as real intellectuals, artists and pedagogues. Br Anthelme<sup>368</sup> (1840 – 1909) fitted into this category. He was a teacher and director for the whole of his life. Indeed, his very brief biography stated:

*He had a sort of passion for botany and the other branches of natural history. This put him in touch with many well-known personalities of the academic world who held him in high esteem.*

Br Basilien<sup>369</sup> (1835-1910), a teacher at the boarding school at Paris-Plaisance, specialised in teaching the physical sciences “in which he obtained remarkable results”, all the while holding the post of master of discipline. Br Jean- Félix<sup>370</sup> (1846-1914) was an accomplished musician, in charge of singing at the Juniorate at St Genis-Laval, with between 160 and 170 Juniors, from 1883-91:

*He had a magnificent voice and a quite refined and sensitive ear for music. (...) He was an enthusiastic admirer of Dom Pothier, who had brought Gregorian chant back into vogue, and introduced its practice to the chapel of the Mother House twenty years before the publication of the motu proprio of Pius X and 30 years before the Vatican edition was published. He even composed a practical guide for the correct performance of Gregorian Chant which contributed greatly to popularising its use in our houses and even beyond.*

His cutting character, however, and his ideas meant that “his remaining at the Mother House became untenable and, around the Spring of 1891, he had to be moved on. He was to remain quite bitter about this and had difficulty settling down elsewhere”. In retirement at St Genis from 1907, “he spent his hours of free time preparing a new edition of his *Practical Guide For The Performance Of Gregorian Chant* was published by the Vitte book company in 1910.”

<sup>368</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. I, N° 6, November 1909, p. 328. (BI/6)

<sup>369</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. II, N° 19, January 1912, p. 462-463.

<sup>370</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 49, December 1917, p. 337-339.

For nearly 30 years, in Paris, Br Prudence<sup>371</sup> was in charge of teaching mathematics to older students preparing for the Ecole Centrale<sup>372</sup>. “Many students owed their becoming engineers to him and some even went on to make a name for themselves in France through their work.” He was never director nor even sub-director. He moved to Arlon when exiled in 1903 and continued to teach mathematics over almost 25 years to either students preparing for all kinds of careers or young Brothers.”

Br Candidus (1856-1924) entered the novitiate at Saint Paul-Trois-Châteaux in 1870. He was appointed to the Special School at St Genis-Laval from 1881-1887, teaching physical and natural sciences, literature, history and geography. He had obtained the Elementary Teaching certificate, the Senior Teaching diploma, and the Certificate of Pedagogical Aptitude, and had done courses in Physics, Chemistry, Natural History, Mineralogy and Literature at the Catholic Faculties in Lyons. During the holidays in 1887 he was sent to Rome, where preparations were being made for founding San Leone Magno college, to be accredited in Italy and finally to replace Brother Marie-Urbain, the director, who had died prematurely. He was made responsible for Institute business with Roman congregations and in 1901 was made Procurator General accredited to the Holy See. He would remain in this position for twenty five years, highly esteemed by Vatican officials, including Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI.

Br Vigilus<sup>373</sup> (1858-1917) carried out his teaching career in boarding schools in the North: His biography painted him as “an educator of the highest order”, while describing the pedagogical environment of the beginning of the century:

*Around 1899, when Br Vigilus was master of discipline at our boarding school at Plaisance in Paris, people were looking hard for an approach that gave students more freedom. Mr Marion, on behalf of lecturers at the University, and Mr Fonsegrive, on behalf of teachers in non-government schools, had made themselves standard-bearers of the new idea. A practical trial attempted at the School des Roches<sup>374</sup> had caused quite a bit of noise. Mr Demolins had introduced the English teaching approach which gave more space to freedom; and people in France had shown both curiosity and sympathy for the initiative.*

*Br Vigilus followed the development of such new theories attentively. He had always been opposed to any mechanical sort of discipline that allowed teachers to ‘play the tsar’ and enforce a purely external order without teaching children the important skill of taking responsibility for their own lives. (...) Out of respect for the freedom of children, he even took some steps towards a qualified trial of the ideas just mentioned.*

Even though these attempts were not conclusive, he continued to exhort his senior students “to not be afraid to stand out, to emerge above the anonymous

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<sup>371</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. X, N° 72, July 1927, p. 453-457.

<sup>372</sup> One of the most renowned schools of France.

<sup>373</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 47, March 1917, p. 113-121.

<sup>374</sup> One of the most up-to-date schools in regard to its pedagogy.

crowd". To encourage them in this regard he put on a conference for senior students at Paris-Plaisance. On hearing of his death, many former students, including several priests, came to pay their respects. One of them asked to be sent his Profession Cross, saying, "In my turn I will carry the Cross of this good Brother."

There were many other initiatives but of a more modest nature. Br Gentien (1833-1917?),<sup>375</sup> a simple director of a primary school, made a deep impression at Izieux. In his retirement, he used to collect and organise the lessons and short stories that he had used in preparing students for their First Communion. He used them to draw up a *Practical Guide For Preparing For First Communion*, listed among the religious books of the Congregation.<sup>376</sup> Br Marie-Salvatoris, a Canadian,<sup>377</sup> spent his last holidays inventing a device intended to assist in the use of his "animated alphabet". Letters were moved under the control of an ingenious system of articulated levers to form the various phonetic syllables of reading in front of the students. The author of his biography was a little sceptical that this method would last long but recognised that "his beginners had learnt to read in a matter of weeks".

## Manual workers

The tradition of getting Brothers in formation to do manual work and then sending them out as cooks, contributed to a real appreciation of Brothers engaged in manual work. Moreover, there was a wide range of such employment: from infirmarians and gardeners, to office assistants, book-binders, supervisors, sacristans, porters, tailors, shoe-makers, cooks etc.. For this reason the Bulletin included dozens of biographies of Brothers who had been manual workers, but in a changing context: the destruction of the Provinces of France and their Provincial houses, as well as the shift towards secondary education, were the beginning of the end for this way of being a Brother that had been so typical during the first century of its growth. In paying tribute to Br Libère (1834-1910), who had been in charge of the cellar at St Paul for his whole life, the biographical notice eulogised a whole category of Brothers that was changing rapidly:

*He was a member of that tribe of venerable manual workers whose ancestors had been Brother Stanislas, Brother Jerome, Brother Hippolyte and others. These real sons of the Institute found ways of doing tasks on their own that seemed to require two or three men. They did this with neither noise nor show, unnoticed so to speak. They were real treasures for the houses they were appointed to. (...) What an admirable fund of piety, spirit of faith, simplicity, uprightness, gen-*



**75.** Isidore Esprit Pons  
(Br Libère 1834-1911)

<sup>375</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 49, December 1917, p. 339-341.

<sup>376</sup> *Circulars*, T. 13 p. 425.

<sup>377</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. IX, N° 65 December 1923, p. 484-489.

erosity and spirit of sacrifice were to be found in him if you had the chance to observe him close-up! He died the death of a saint, after a short illness of three days, on last 23 June, at the age of 77, the 54<sup>th</sup> of his religious life.

Br Adelphus (1834-1913), shoe-maker at St Paul for fifty years,<sup>378</sup> received a similar eulogy. Br Frémin who died in 1918<sup>379</sup> had been a late vocation, almost illiterate before becoming a colourful factotum at St Genis-Laval. The author of his biography gave him a beautiful eulogy:

*We would like to believe that a beautiful place has been reserved on that great day when justice will reign for our good Brother Frémin whom many of our readers knew in former times at the Mother House at St Genis-Laval, and whom the good Lord called from this world on 29 December 1918 when he was 77 years of age.*

In Br Marie-Constant<sup>380</sup> we find another type of Brother who started off as a manual worker but moved on from this, as happened for a quite large number of such Brothers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a baker in Le Luc en Province before becoming a postulant at St Paul when more than 25 years old. He was almost immediately made baker at St Genis-Laval where he received the habit in 1870. He had had limited schooling but had a taste for study and, from 1873, was sent to Beaujeu as a teacher in the lower grades. "Going up from class to class, he became a much valued teacher over the course of the 13 years he was in this position, and an excellent help for the Director."

He succeeded so well as teacher and as sub-director that the Superiors appointed him in 1886 as director of the boarding school at Péage-de-Roussillon. But it was a failure and in 1892 he became a lecturer at the Scholasticate at St Genis-Laval. Almost blind, he remained at St Genis after 1903, rendering whatever service he could and serving as spiritual father to Br Frémin. He taught him "to rise through the practice of the presence of God, purity of intention, conformity of one's will to the will of God, love for and imitation of the Blessed Virgin, etc. to a height of the spiritual life that will undoubtedly make more intellectually-gifted religious blush on the last day."

## **The Institute becoming more international**

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Most of the biographical notices were about French Brothers but there were plenty about Brothers from other countries or continents as well, especially Brothers from the old Province of the Isles or its extensions. Some examples will suffice. Br Clare,<sup>381</sup> a Scotsman (1839-1909), a manual worker at Dumfries, was the first mentioned. Br Finan (1845-1913) was an Irishman who emigrated to New Zealand

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<sup>378</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. III, N° 30, November 1913, p. 461-462.

<sup>379</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VIII, N° 54, December 1919, p. 170-175.

<sup>380</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. X, N° 72, July 1927, p. 462-468.

<sup>381</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. I, N° 4, July 1909, p. 215.

before joining the Institute when 43 years old. He was also a manual worker. Br George (1878 – 1926?), an Australian<sup>382</sup> was someone of a quite different calibre: he had been a teacher and then director of schools in New Zealand and then Australia.

Br Charles-Bernard (1887-1910) was the first German Brother mentioned.<sup>383</sup> In 1909 he had left for north Brazil. While a teacher of German at Gymnasio do Carmo, in Bélem du Pará, he died of yellow fever in 1910. Br Léon-Corsini (1897-1912), also German, died prematurely in south Brazil.<sup>384</sup> Br Higinio (1886-1910) was a Spaniard. His first work was as a lecturer at the novitiate:

*During the anarchist uprising in Barcelona that forced the novitiate and the community at S. Andrés to disperse, Br Higinio surpassed himself and, despite his young age, gave proof of a courage, devotion, prudence and spirit of initiative that could only be expected in someone of mature age whom long experience had prepared for all the eventualities of life. He it was who looked after getting provisions for the older Brothers and got them into a safe place in the hospital town of La Garriga.*

He died of pneumonia at Las Avellanas.

Br Luiz Juvéal (1899-1915 ?)<sup>385</sup> had hardly begun his apostolic life when he died of tuberculosis. “He was the first Brazilian Brother whom the Province of North Brazil had sent to Paradise.” Br Diodoro was Mexican<sup>386</sup> (1890-1929). His brothers had taken part in the uprising of the Christeros. “Miguel was just nineteen years old when Br Pierre Damien had a big recruiting drive in the region of Tapalpa which was peaceful at the time”. With little formal schooling and already ‘old’, he had trouble with studies. “One of the great torments of his life until he made final profession was the fear of being sent home to his family. Of course this fear led him to make every effort to improve his knowledge so as to make himself useful.” Not much gifted at doing supervision, he learnt carpentry.

In 1914 he went into exile in Texas with the Novitiate where he was to be a precious help in the work of repairs and construction. Since the war in Europe had reduced the number of Brothers, he was given a small class to teach in 1917. He succeeded at this reasonably well and was appointed an assistant for small children at Tlalpan in 1920 where he was much appreciated by the children “despite his somewhat rough manners and his eccentric way of doing things”. In the last years of his life he edified his confrères by the long hours he spent in religious study “which he invariably finished with the attentive reading of a chapter from

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<sup>382</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. X, N° 71, December 1926, p. 368-370.

<sup>383</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. II, N° 13, January 1911, p. 59.

<sup>384</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. II, N° 22, July 1912, p. 679.

<sup>385</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. VII, N° 51, September 1918, p. 536-540.

<sup>386</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XI, N° 78, December 1929, p. 372-376.

the Imitation of Christ." "Besides his devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Virgin, he had a very special devotion to the souls in Purgatory."

## Missionaries

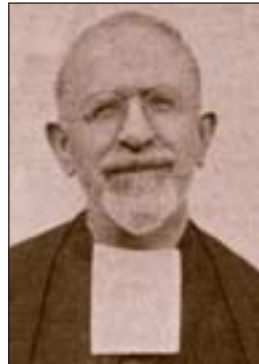
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The events surrounding 1903 meant that a very large number of Brothers mentioned in the Bulletin passed part of their lives outside their home country and sometimes in several countries. For example, Br Marie-Charles<sup>387</sup> from the Province of St Paul, who went to *Ventimiglia* in Italy in 1903, then Spain, before going to found a school in Peru (1908-1912) before returning to St Paul.

Then there was Br Félix Eugène<sup>388</sup> (1860-1935) whose biography, written in English, is divided into three periods: France (1875-1886); New Caledonia (1886-1899); America (1889-1935), where was to be Visitor and then Provincial before being director of a number of schools. Br Hervé (1835-1916) whose biography also appeared in English in Bulletin N° 45, was born at Mondragon. Until 1880 he was a teacher and then principal. Sent to Australia, he took part in the construction of the college at Hunters Hill while studying English. After some years in Australia, he was sent to Fiji. When he became blind, he returned to Australia.



76. Charles François Constantin  
(Br Marie-Charles  
1863-1931)



77. Claude Laffon (Br Félix-  
Eugène 1860-1935)

## The volumes of biographical notes (1931-1967)

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The publication of biographical leaflets began in 1931. Br Jean-Emile warned, however, "Other leaflets will appear once or twice a year, God willing, although we cannot say exactly when they will be published. It depends on when material arrives at the Mother House." In the end, a set of seven consistent volumes would appear, that brought together Brothers who died between 1930 and 1967.

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<sup>387</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 13, September 1932, p. 97.

<sup>388</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 63, September 1935, p. 486.



<b>COLLECTION OF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES FROM 1931 TO 1967</b>			
Aug. 1931	IV	Deceased between 1930-1936	1-67
Sept. 1937	V	Deceased between 1937-1947	68-123 (55)
Aug. 1949	VI	Deceased between 1949-1952	124-167 (43)
Aug. 1954	VII	Deceased between 1952-1958	168-204 (36)
Oct. 1959	VIII	Deceased between 1957-1962	51
Oct. 1963	IX	Deceased between 1963-1966	62
Oct. 1967	X	Deceased between 1964-1967	19
<b>Total</b>			<b>333</b>

Source: Synthesis prepared by Br André Lanfrey.

In total, adding together Circulars, Bulletins and Volumes of notices, there are more than 1,000 notices. They have quite varied value but constitute a considerable reference corpus. It is one of the rare sources that give insight into a large number of Brothers, the illustrious and the less so. A mass of information on the lives of the Provinces is also contained in these pages.

## Authors of the biographical notes

For a long time the biographical notes were anonymous. It was only from the sixth series of Tome V, which dealt with the dead from 1937 to 1947, that the authors began to be identified by name or at least by initials.

<b>AUTHORS AND NEWSLETTERS THAT PROVIDED MATERIAL FOR BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES</b>						
TOMES	DIFUNTOS/ ANOS	ANONYMOUS	NAMES GIVEN	INITIALS	MARIST NEWSLETTERS	TOTAL
Tome VI	deceased from 1941-48	16	6	19	3	44
Tome VII		9	17	4	4	34
Tome VIII	deceased from 1957-62	8	13	11	18	50
Tome IX		9	7	38	7	61
Tome X		2	3	9	4	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>207</b>
%		<b>21 %</b>	<b>22 %</b>	<b>39 %</b>	<b>17 %</b>	

Source: Synthesis prepared by Br André Lanfrey.

Around 1941, then, the anonymity favoured by monastic tradition gave way to a degree of individualism. The existence of a signature also added credibility to the notice written. Moreover, it became customary to make use of notices that had appeared in Provincial newsletters, thus giving an international flavour to some biographies that were thought more interesting than others.

It is sometimes possible to guess the people behind sets of initials. For example, Br Jules Victorin (J.V.), the long-time archivist of the Institute, Br Norbert, Provincial of Beaucamps, and Br Gabriel Augustin, who were the authors of many notices. Br Louis Ignace must have been behind the dozen notices signed "F.L.I." as author of 49 obituaries from the Province of Iberville. He was to have the honour of such a notice himself after his death. Overall, it would seem that the notices were the work of a wide range of Brothers, often those involved in formation. The Secretary General seems to have played the role of chief organiser, sometimes making use of the materials provided without change, but also having to edit and re-write texts.

## **Two predominant virtues: love of work and regularity**

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The series that began in 1931 was more consistent than the corpus of biographical notices in the Bulletin. These notices were quite detailed, often with supportive testimonies, extracts from letters or personal notes. The model remained that of biographies written to edify: firstly the Brother's *curriculum vitae*, then his human virtues, his qualities as a teacher, his spirituality, and his devout death. The standard story-line was of a child born into a family that accepted for one of their sons to enter the Juniorate with either joy or Christian resignation. Then followed the time of formation and the biographies often gave precious details on how the Juniorates, Novitiates, and Scholasticates operated and on their staff who had not always been well-chosen. Then there was a description of the 'career' of the Brother across various schools and roles. For many, this progression was interrupted for a time by military service, the war, or the Second Novitiate. The events of 1903 modified the shape of the Institute considerably and many accounts described lives that were much more adventurous than could have been imagined. What strikes the reader is the extraordinary mobility of these Brothers and the adventures of their lives in mission lands, persecutions, wars, changing assignments, studies undertaken, languages learnt and so on.

Obviously these biographies recall the Marist virtues that the Brothers demonstrated: their faith, mortification, humility, obedience, poverty, marital devotion, family spirit and so on. Chastity was rarely mentioned as it touched on their private lives. Their zeal as such was not spoken of explicitly but treated from the perspective of their lives as teachers. The repetition from one person to the next can be a little tiresome but there are nevertheless three fundamental dimensions that come through the stories. One of them is quite surprising, for the number-one Marist virtue – if it really can be called a virtue – was 'love of work'. One could even

speak of a ‘mystique’ of work. Certainly the biography of Fr. Champagnat<sup>389</sup> had stressed his love of work but only in the context of many other virtues. In the notices this virtue surfaced in almost first place, if ‘zeal’ is counted as one of its expressions.

A ‘mystique’ of regularity is also very evident in the notices. It was related to uprightness and Br Alfano is the classic example of it. Finally, there was the dimension of faith or piety, including all Christian practices, like attending Mass, and religious practices, such as the Office and meditation, but also more personal devotions to which we will return. One other fundamental trait of every biography should be mentioned: a happy death, emphasised in many notices as putting the stamp of approval on a successful life. In sum, granted that the stories have to be read with a grain of salt, quite different personalities emerge, men who were frequently imbued with a deep personal spirituality.

## Sociology of the Institute

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The Bulletin of the Institute had presented the lives of a considerable number of perpetually and temporary professed Brothers but the great majority of notices between 1931 and 1967 were about Brothers with the vow of stability. Thus there were many notices on the Major Superiors (Assistants, Provincials) but also on second-rank people like Masters of Novices, Directors of Scholasticates, Juniorates, Provincial houses and Boarding Schools, Provincial Bursars, Recruiters and so on. This category was often combined with that of missionaries who had straddled continents or had built up schools in faraway countries. Pedagogues were mentioned in banal terms alongside the two preceding groups as if the Institute was better known for its builders and missionaries than its teachers. Still some biographies commented on the high reputation of such and such a teacher who had left an enduring memory and whose funeral had had a triumphal quality. The biographies of manual workers were less frequent than they had been in the *Bulletin*, a sign that this category of Brothers was in decline. The situation of secularised Brothers was not dwelt on at any length but rather their Marist spirit, stressing, in passing, the valuable influence they had had.

Obviously, the intention was to keep the memory of departed Brothers alive and to show that the spirit of the Institute continued into the present. Even so, a comparison to *Our Models in Religion* (1866) and the series from 1931-1967 points to a marked cultural shift: the Brothers were no longer models of this or that virtue or models of a happy death but rather individuals with complex personalities, whose life journeys were many and varied. Their life stories were no longer being written up to simply edify.

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<sup>389</sup> *Life*, Part 2, Ch. XIV

## The question of spirituality

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As suggested earlier, the biographical notices were not intended to go deeply into the spirituality of the Brothers being described, even when the author included extracts from their spiritual musings or when he implied that they had the reputation of being saints. There was a technical reason for this: to not increase the length of the notes in an inordinate way. But the hesitancy arose also out of sensitivity for the privacy and mystery of the person's relationship with God.

Furthermore, there was a Marist spiritual anthropology that framed the notices and that was interested in showing the Brother's lineage as a Christian. So, he was placed in three successive families: his family of origin, his spiritual family on earth, his heavenly family. Essentially, writing a biography was meant to exemplify family spirit in its purest form and so embellish the spiritual genealogy of the congregation. The collection was not as much a set of independent lives of the congregation's illustrious men as a sort of catalogue of a communion of saints, as complete as possible.

### "Being a saint" as understood in the notices

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As was true for the Bulletin of the Institute, nearly all the notices made much of the faith and piety of the Brother concerned, although there were many that were not content with stressing his fidelity to religious exercises as per the Rule. Many Brothers said the Rosary regularly (all fifteen mysteries), made the Stations of the Cross daily, or spent hours in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (e.g. Br Alfano, Br Clement, Br Marie-Agillbert). Through such practices or less observable attitudes, a certain number of Brothers came to be called "a saint" by those around them, even while still living. This was the case of Br Joseph Clérus<sup>390</sup> (1883-1930) whom his confrères called "the holy Brother Clérus". "What a saintly man!" people said about Br Kentigern<sup>391</sup> and likewise, "the saintly Brother Léonard"<sup>392</sup> or Br Anselmo.<sup>393</sup> In speaking of Br Joseph Romain who had returned from China and lived out his life in small villages, the parish priests would say, "What a holy Brother!". In the conclusion of the biography of Br Pedro Mariano, a missionary in Peru, there was mention of introducing his cause of beatification.

Some biographies described real mystics. For example, Br Elie-Gilbert (1882-1958), born at La Perche, near Saint-Amand-Montrond in Cher, and sent to Lebanon. "It was at Beirut – where he worked at Saint Joseph university - that he developed his passion for studies in spirituality that were to characterise his whole life and make him fill up stacks of thick notebooks with religious notes." When he was expelled during the 1914-18 war he was sent to Bairo to become recruiter and then a school director in the Province of Varennes.

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<sup>390</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 1, August 1931, p. 7.

<sup>391</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IV, N° 42, August 1933, p. 330.

<sup>392</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. V, N° 95, September 1940-1941, p. 213.

<sup>393</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VIII, N° 8, October 1960, p. 207.

Drawing on his notebooks and his own words, his biographer, Br Gabriel Augustin, left us an anthology of his doctrine. "His 1917 retreat resolution was expressed as: 'Recollection. To aim at doing all things perfectly well so as to come quickly into the embrace of Jesus'. His 1919 resolutions proposed: "Personal prayer: in the morning, after Rosary, in the evening. That is where God will tell me the daily resolution to make." "May Jesus be loved!" he was in the habit of saying, something he whispered even as he was falling asleep or was semi-conscious.

*Let us live close to Christ without fail," he said one day. "Grounded in the love of his heart, we can enjoy the incomparable experience of the absolute trust he inspires. He alone is the Saviour. In Him, in our turn, we become saviours of a world in disarray, desperately sad for having forgotten Christ. To be Christ for all people, to ensure his presence in the world, that is our mission.*

He had three great devotions: to the Sacred Heart, to the Passion and to the Eucharist. The first two started "with the contact he had had in the Novitiate with Br Amphiloque, his formator in the Novitiate". And "so it was only natural that the daily practice of the Way of the Cross became his custom". He remained quite Christ-centred as he approached death:

*Why should I fear death when it will bring me to the Heart of Our Lord? Ah! Coming face to face with Him, the Supreme Good, Friend and all-loving Saviour! Oh! How my lips get drunk with happiness as I kiss the breast of my crucifix, my one treasure! May I kiss you for all eternity! What a heaven that would be! None of the beauties of heaven could equal feeling the Heart of my Jesus beating under my lips, breathing in his divinity!*

It was his habit to spend periods at night in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He explained why in 1957 when a serious depression forced him into hospital and to stop this practice:

*One of my friends had suggested that my illness was due to the fact that I used to get up during the night to adore Our Lord in the silence and half-light of the small red lamps. We were just there like two old friends and that suited me just fine! (...) I had started this practice when I was 18 in Beirut at the Jesuits where the workers used to stay awake on the first Friday of the month. I did this for eight years. And later at Jounieh, Bairo.... (...) You pray better in the recollection of the night," he confessed. "It is as if a piece of heaven comes down on you; you are dazzled by it; it has an astonishing healing power of energy and love.*



**78.** Antoine Bègue  
(Br Kentigern  
1841-1933)



**79.** Elie Pierre Ant Junchat  
(Br Elie-Gilbert  
1882-1958)

Maybe his troubles were not just psychological. Maybe, behind his depression, there was a type of 'dark night' of the mystics, since in 1956:

*He, who had been for his whole life so trusting in Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, was going to be prey to such discouragement that he cried out:*

*Until now I have had trust but now I am in despair... I can no longer pray ... pray for me. He believed himself cursed, damned, unworthy of staying in this house from which he tried to flee.*

He confessed that he had discovered only quite late in life a relationship with Mary:

*I had felt inclined towards the Sacred Heart but I did not pray enough to the Blessed Virgin to be strengthened in this love. That was my mistake in the beginning.*

He associated Mary with his Christology as this somewhat sentimental prayer illustrates:

*O blessed Virgin, my dear little Mother, I love you with such respect that I find it difficult to kiss your dear hand, so sweet and so fresh, the most delicate flower on this earth. All the while, the ardour of my faith urges me to hold Jesus tight against my heart and to kiss this Divine Heart tenderly, twenty, fifty times in a row, saying to him: "Oh! I love you, poor, misjudged Jesus!"*

## Marial mystique

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Obviously the biographies contain many words about the marial devotion of the Brothers but only some of them make us feel in the presence of something more, a marial 'mystique'.

This was the case of Br Gerardo Maria (Ceferino Herrero López) born on 8 January 1905 in Villanueva la Nia in the province of Santander in Spain. He was sent to Venezuela in 1932 and then to the mission at Riocacha in Colombia where the Capuchin Fathers had requested Brothers to run orphanages for the young Indians. His failing health forced the Superiors to recall him to Spain. "He always remained attached through prayer and sacrifice to his dear mission in Colombia - just like Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus to whom he had a great devotion – just as he was to the missionary work of the whole Church".

In his contact with the Capuchins, he was deeply influenced by their special marial mystique. A Capuchin Father wrote, "After he read the *Mariale* of St Lawrence of Brindisi (1559-1619), (...) he would speak about it to everyone he came across, saying, "We can never give enough thanks to God for having given us such a Mother". Now this work<sup>394</sup> is regarded as an excellent treatise on Mariology in which Lawrence clearly affirms the universal mediation of Mary. This is very similar to speaking of Mary as "our ordinary resource", so dear to Champagnat. Br Gerardo

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<sup>394</sup> *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, T. IV, col 389-390

Maria also “lived and propagated the devotion to the Holy Slavery, following the teaching of St Louis Grignon de Montfort, and he normally added the initials E.M. (Esclave Marial) to his signature. This devotion of Franciscan origin was widespread in the Spanish-speaking world in modern times even before Montfort started to promote it. The Curé of Ars had taken it up for a time and it seems to have influenced Fr Champagnat as well. It would seem, then, that the case of Br Gerardo Maria is a good example of the close relationship between Marist spirituality and other more ancient spiritual traditions.

Br Louis Prosper (1897-1963) exemplified a less emotional mystique, something he undoubtedly developed during his Second Novitiate in 1931-32:

*My first obligation is an attentive respect for God, the Eternal Present. Everything is as nothing when it is not Him. If you are in touch with yourself, stop; if you are in touch with God, give yourself over completely. I am strong when I want what God wants; I am free when I want only what God wants; when I am free and strong I am capable of anything. What matters is to remember that only an intense interior life can make my ministry fruitful. (...) With Jesus, in Jesus and through Jesus, I want to make reparation for my past. This is the guiding principle of my life, the fixed principle for the remainder of my days. Never forget it!*

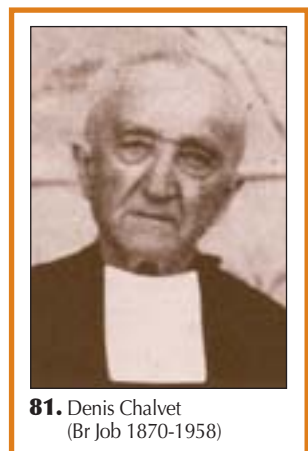
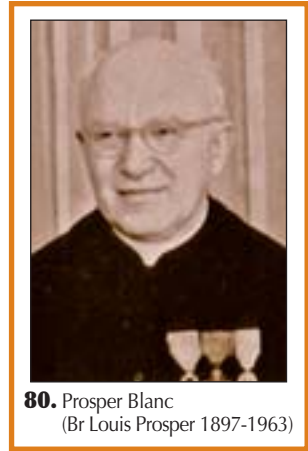
He showed as equally strong attachment towards Mary as Br Gerardo Maria did, but one that was typically Marist:

*To be a Marist without Mary, he wrote, is an anomaly. I belong to her in a very special way because I have made the gift of all that I am to her. (...) She can have everything, everything, everything... I will, then, live out my total consecration to Mary and I will live up to my motto, “All to Jesus through Mary, all to Mary for Jesus.*

In order to perfect this attitude he chose, with permission, to sleep on boards and to give himself the discipline each Saturday.

Lastly, let us consider Br Job (1870-1958), born near St Paul-Trois-Châteaux, sent to Spain in 1887, and then made Master of Novices in 1900. In a letter written to one of his former Novices, he articulated a real mystical life that was both Christological and marial:

*Try to act through love and not through fear. Love Our Lord with the heart of a child. Put plenty of good will into the service of such a Master. (...) One way of quickly and easily becoming holy is true devotion to the Blessed Virgin. For this, remember: 1) Mary is*



my mother; I am her child. What a blessing! 2) How would Mary go about doing what I am doing right now? 3) The Blessed Virgin sees the world through my eyes. Try this modest program of personal sanctification for yourself and you will see that soon you will be a better person and you will be walking on the sure path that leads to perfection.

In his private notes he was even more precise:

*True devotion to the Blessed Virgin has to grow in me each day until I reach that happy state where I am not only a living, faithful copy of Mary, but I am transformed into Mary. May She live in me; may She think and act through me; may I be a docile instrument in her maternal hands, so that She can do with me what She wills. I take the firm resolution to make a constant effort to acquire a true and solid devotion to our good Mother in heaven.*

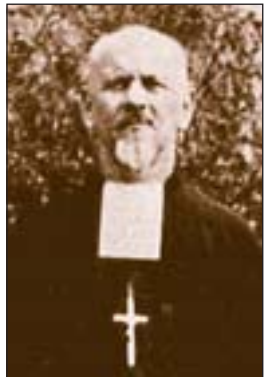
This is not just the imitation of Mary (as in devotion) but real identification. No doubt other notices would show the truly Christological and marial mystique of other Brothers as well.

## The Sacred Heart and Our Lady

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Many of the biographies stress devotion to the Sacred Heart, often combined with that of the Eucharist and the Passion of Christ. Sometimes this also included devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.

Br Salutaris (Louis Goutardier, 1880-1966) seems to have been both quite typical of this approach and at the same time profoundly original. At first he entered the Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception, founded by Dom Gréa (1828-1917) with the aim of restoring the order of canons.<sup>395</sup> But, when Dom Gréa was attacked by a rival, the young scholastic was sent away and then entered the Marist Brothers in 1900. Nevertheless, he had assimilated the doctrine of Dom Gréa, one of the great spiritual thinkers of his time. He looked at the Church through the lens of the mystery of the Trinity as “a permanent epiphany of Christ, in its leader and its members.” The mission of *l’ordo canonicus* was to give life to this mystery through the liturgy, linked to a harsh, ascetical way of life.



**82.** Salutaris Louis Goutardier  
(Br Salutaris 1880-1966)

After some time in the Near-East, Br Salutaris returned to France at the start of the 14-18 war. He showed himself to be a remarkable trainer of men, unashamedly combining patriotism and devotion to the Sacred Heart. “The whole Regiment knew him and

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<sup>395</sup> *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, T. VI, col. 802-808.



an artillery lieutenant, seeing him head out to heavy fighting, used to say, “He will return because he has the sign of the Sacred Heart on his left arm.” The fact is that, despite an extremely risky life, he came through unscathed and became an officer. At the end of the war he was made responsible by the French army for resupplying Lebanon where food was in short supply. When he returned to France he held the positions of recruiter/fund-raiser and bursar.

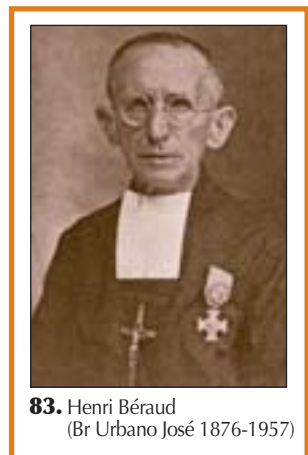
He was a good Marist Brother but in his heart he remained a disciple of Dom Gréa whose photos, pictures, letters and many extracts of his spiritual teaching he held onto as relics. He was to make three pilgrimages to the tomb of his spiritual master. He also corresponded with the successors of the Founder and the Fathers he had known. His biographer, Br Gabriel Augustin, saw three special devotions in him: the Eucharist, the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. The Rosary, his favourite prayer, was his “fighting weapon”. He used to recite it in the trenches, when under fire, and he made his soldiers recite it. This practice had a special meaning for him because of a specific devotion: “It is Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows who is protecting my soldiers”. But a testamentary note seems to best sum up his spirituality:

*I ask that my New Testament be placed over me on my coffin, on the left side in place of decorations. With it, I will not be alone in the tomb. Jesus will be with me, Jesus-Word-Gospel, Jesus-Flesh-Eucharist.*

In short, this Brother combined Marist spirituality with another. Many biographies, moreover, spoke of the importance of quite original spiritualities or more recent ones like that of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux<sup>396</sup>. The most striking example of someone going down this path was Br Urbano-José,<sup>397</sup> born at Aspres-sur-Buech in the Hautes- Alpes, France, who laboured for most of his life in Colombia. His reputation as a saint was well established there. He was devoted to the Immaculate Conception, but his biographer had this to say:

*We cannot remain silent before the great devotion that Brother Urbano had for Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. A priest wrote, “He was a faithful imitator of her since he was as simple as she was and her spirit of abandonment and of angelic innocence captivated him so much that he made him himself the apostle and propagator of devotion to Thérèse, the saint of the shower of roses, the most well-known saint of modern times”. He had contact by letter with the Carmel at Lisieux and they gave him the mission of collecting the funds needed for Colombia to erect an altar in the new Basilica dedicated to the saint.*

These few examples give the impression that many Brothers combined a real but not clearly defined Marist spirituality with devotions from their place and



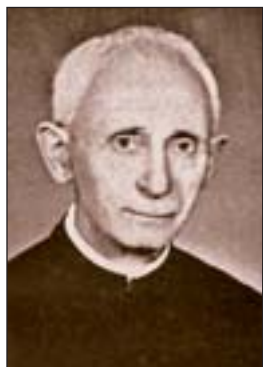
**83.** Henri Béraud  
(Br Urbano José 1876-1957)

<sup>396</sup> See Br Marte-Emeric (IV) ; Gerardo-Maria (VIII) and others.

<sup>397</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VIII, N° 3, October 1960, p. 141.

time, without any concern for how they all fitted together. This was why Br Alfano deplored the fact that Brothers were setting aside “our family’s staple food”, i.e. our body of spiritual and ascetical writings. Even if the biographies quite frequently indicated that the Brothers had read and studied Marist literature, the words of Br Alfano showed that Brothers were distancing themselves somewhat from old-fashioned writings that were strongly ascetical in tone.

## The mystique of the Rule and Marist spirituality



**84.** Noël Bertrand  
(Br Félice 1887-1961)

Most frequently it was the Major Superiors and formators who had an intimate knowledge of the Marist spiritual writings that were closely tied to a real mystique of the Rule. This was particularly the case with Br Alfano but he will be considered later.

Among the many examples of Brothers who were thoroughly imbued with the Rule, Br Felice (Noël Bertrand 1886-1961) stands out. He was born in the village of Chabotte in the Hautes Alpes and made his Novitiate at St Paul. He went to Mexico but came home to take part in the war. During his Second Novitiate before returning to Mexico, he wrote one of the most profound reflections we can find of the spiritual torment caused by the war: “Thank you, my God! Still, how can I rid myself of this muck all over me? Blessed Virgin! I am counting on you, for I need your help.” On the closing day, he wrote: “I feel, my God, that if I cannot persevere in making whole-hearted reparation for what five years of war has destroyed in me, I am lost...”.

On the closing day, he wrote: “I feel, my God, that if I cannot persevere in making whole-hearted reparation for what five years of war has destroyed in me, I am lost...”.

This exceptional spiritual lucidity sat very well with a quite inflexible attitude to the Rule:

*The truths of our faith, the Constitutions and the Rules of our Institute were the lighthouse of his life. (...) His behaviour never bent to any majority opinion, to what frivolous spirits had to say, to those pushing novelties, or to those who were careless regarding minor observances. (...) The helpful reforms of the last General Chapter (1958) made him a little restive. He had an instinctive dislike for what seemed to him to be a watering down, an easier or more comfortable life.*

Br Clement (John Murray), Master of Novices before being Provincial of Australia and then Assistant General (1867-1957), seems to present a quite similar profile. His biography described his time as Provincial:

*It is difficult to imagine anyone more regular than Br Clement. As Superior, he was convinced that regularity was essential for every authentic religious life and for any Institute to flourish. In his different roles, he was tireless in his demands. Sometimes, his demands and decisions might have appeared hard and even unacceptable but everyone knew very well that Br Clement would not demand anything more than he would do himself. He was meticulous regarding the Rule and appar-*

ently thought that this was the best way of acquiring its spirit. (...) This way of acting annoyed many, especially when the letter of the Rule seemed to be insisted on to the detriment of its spirit. (...)

This portrait of Br Clement is a typical example of the mystique of the Rule that was very common among formators and Superiors. This mystique goes some way to explaining both the Institute's resistance to change in its thinking and the stability it enjoyed.

## Spiritual reading

As already suggested, an overly rigid conception of the Rule had led to Marist writings being viewed as little more than a code, a body of writing that had become increasingly outdated. Hence Brothers often went in search of more consoling, devotional material. Even so, their love of the congregation and devotion to Fr. Champagnat were far from absent. Some biographies even gave an insight into what the Brothers had read:

SPIRITUAL READING READ BY BROTHERS		
BROTHER	DATES	BEDSIDE READING
Marte Emeric	1888-1932	Life of Sr Marie of the Divine Heart <sup>398</sup> Life of M. Mary Alacoque Life of Thérèse of the Child Jesus Life of St Sophie Barat (foundress of the Dames of the Sacred Heart)
Léonard	1854-1939	The works of Fr. Chaignon <sup>399</sup> The works of Fr. Desurmont <sup>400</sup> Meditations of Br Jean-Baptiste St Alphonsus Ligouri, Preparation for death
Méandre	1869-1957	A Reader of Francis de Sales and Teresa of Avila
Norbert	1881-1958	The soul of the Apostolate by Dom Chautard, Cistercian, (1858-1935) <sup>401</sup> , Teresa of Avila, Peter of Alcantara, John of the Cross
Gerardo Maria	1905-1958	The Mariale of St Lawrence of Brindisi

<sup>398</sup> A Good Shepherd Sister (1863-1899), Superior at Porto, who made her convent a centre of charity and the spiritual life. She grew in a mystical attachment to the heart of Jesus.

<sup>399</sup> A Jesuit (1791-1883). A renowned retreat preacher. Well-known particularly for his *Meditation or Growing in Christian holiness through mental prayer* and *Meditations for Religious or The Perfection of the religious state, the fruit of perfect prayer*.

<sup>400</sup> A Redemptorist (1828-1898). Preacher and religious formator. His Complete Works, published in 1906-1913.

<sup>401</sup> A great literary success between 1930 and 1950.

BROTHER	DATES	BEDSIDE READING
Urbano-José	1876-1957	Writings of Br Jean-Baptiste ; Circulars
Grimoald		Lives of the Saints. Books of the Institute (Meditations of Br Jean-Baptiste)/Alphonsus Ligouri The Crucifix, by a Redemptorist
Felice	1886-1961	New Testament, Imitation of Jesus Christ, Rules, Constitutions, Circulars
Joseph Adolphe	1874-1962	Lives of the Saints, The practice of acts of perfect love, Towards a more beautiful heaven, by a Montfort priest To know how to suffer, God is enough for me, by a Redemptorist/Dom Marmion, Benedictine, (1858-1923)/Father Marc on the Gospel, Canon Henry, Our sweetest Lady, Extracts from Dom Marmion on suffering, Come to me <sup>402</sup>
Source: Synthesis prepared by Br André Lanfrey.		

Clearly it is not possible to draw any conclusions from such a limited list of books. What can be said, at least, is that the Brothers read a wide range of books, from the most profound spiritual authors to works of popular devotion, including current, well-known authors and Marist texts. The Bible hardly gets a mention.

## The spirituality of educators

Obviously the biographies made frequent reference to the Brothers' role as educators but in general terms only, stressing an ethic of vigilance, strictness, competence and reason. The biography of Br Héliodorus (Emile Davin 1876-1935) probably provides the best summary of the spirituality of teachers. He was born at Saint Pierre d'Argençon in the Hautes-Alpes, received the habit in 1893 and left for Colombia in 1894. There, at the beginning of his teaching career, he drew up his personal code. This was both brief and demanding and undoubtedly owed a lot to his formators:

*I am an educator, we read in his notes, therefore I have received the greatest and most noble mission possible from God through the intermediary of my Su-*



**85.** Émile Sylvain Davin  
(Br Héliodorus 1876-1935)

<sup>402</sup> Since Br Joseph Adolphe was the infirmarian, these books may have been for the Brothers in his care.

*periors. I have committed myself to guiding a whole class of children on the road to wisdom.*

*I am an educator, therefore: I am taking the place of all the Parents of the children under my control. I have to give them my full support to raise them well.*

*I am an educator, therefore: I have the responsibility and care of a nursery of adults. In some distant future, these tender shoots will have to be transplanted into the wide world of society and I have to be careful to ensure that they develop the strength that they will need to grow and be fruitful.*

*I am an educator, therefore: God has raised me, so to speak, to the dignity of a visible guardian angel. He has commanded me as he does his angels to watch over the salvation of the children he has entrusted to me.*

*I am an educator, therefore: I am in charge of safeguarding a treasure that is a thousand times more precious than all the goods of this world, a treasure that Our Lord has gained by shedding his divine blood and for which he did not hesitate to sacrifice his life.*

*I am an educator, therefore: my vocation, my job, my commitments oblige me to be the guardian, the guide and the companion of young pilgrims on their journey to the heavenly homeland, pilgrims who lack knowledge and experience. Oh! What a responsibility! Cursed be me if I am a blind guide! Cursed be me, a thousand times cursed, if, instead of being their guide, I should happen to abuse them.*

This was a code that rested on two pillars: the social role of the teacher and that of a spiritual guide. Nearly all the biographies in the collection matched this approach to education. It was, moreover, very faithful to the instructions of Fr Champagnat.

We know that the Rule insisted on religious study but what about other study more linked to their profession as teachers? Indeed, the biographies show Brothers who had a great capacity to train themselves in many fields. Yet, it seems that study simply sat within the mystique of work already discussed: Brothers followed the Rule that invited them to be ready to take on any role asked of them. Also, even though the Institute had many very knowledgeable Brothers, this knowledge was not valued for its own sake. Rather, it was a way of fulfilling the demands of their vocation: such knowledge only had value when it related to their role. Essentially, the congregation did not want an intellectual body of men, even if it was in fact more intellectual than it thought it was.

## **Extraordinary experiences**

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The term “mystique” has been used several times to designate a key principle in the spiritual lives of the Brothers. ‘Mystique’ it might have been, but we are still in the real world of what is called ‘the common life’: no apparitions or visions or revelations; in short, no mystical experiences. The biography of Br Grimoald seems to be an exception to this, if only moderately so. He was recruited in Switzerland

in 1889<sup>403</sup> and taught some time later at Gerona in Catalunya. He told the story of what happened there as he came out of class after a ceremony in honour of Mary:

*The children went down into the yard to line up in three rows and to head home, accompanied all the way by their teachers. But just when the last of them had gone through the gate, a very small child turned up, completely alone, bare-footed, dressed in a shabby white dress. I did not know what to make of his presence. Perhaps, I thought to myself, he wants a sweet. "Come here, little one," I said, and I led him into the classroom. I gave him one of those sweets that Catalans call 'Nissu', as big as a beautiful hazelnut. The child took it with pleasure and smiled at me, but, to my great surprise, did not put it into his mouth. He said nothing. I thought he wanted to give it to his mother and I left with the child, intending to meet her. How surprised I was, then, when reaching the doorway to find that the child had suddenly disappeared and there was no-one in the street. It was only then that I understood that the Child Jesus had wanted to show me how pleasing the devotion of children for his Holy Mother was for him.*



**86.** François Lafay  
(Br Marie-Eparque  
1878-1962)

Br Marie Eparque<sup>404</sup> related the story as well of how his devotion to Mary was due to the fact that when he was in danger of drowning he had had the feeling of being saved by her.

To sum up, there were few spiritual experiences that were really extraordinary although quotes from personal notes and spiritual testimonies seemed less reserved than those in the *Bulletin of the Institute*. Ascetical language predominated but many of the authors of the notices made it clear that this language was a quite inadequate translation of what the Brothers had experienced. Through the accounts of the illnesses and deaths of confrères, the congregation tried to place a value on "the art of a happy death" which the surrounding lay society had largely given up on.

## Wars, persecutions and martyrs

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The biographies abounded in stories of the multiple difficulties faced by Brothers around the world: the secularisation in France, being expelled from the Middle East in 1914, the persecution in Mexico, the civil war in Spain, the troubles in China followed by communist persecution, and finally the violent decolonisation of Belgian Congo. The biography of Br Luigi<sup>405</sup> gives a good idea of the climate of uncertainty that many Brothers must have lived through in those times, sometimes with tragic endings.

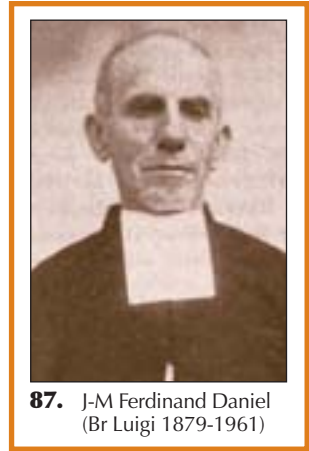
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<sup>403</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VIII, N° 8, October 1961, p. 324.

<sup>404</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VIII, n.10 de 1962, October p. 469.

<sup>405</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. IX, October 1963, p. 53.

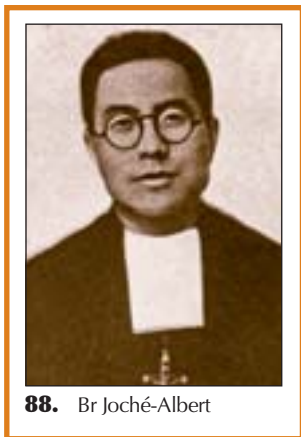
Ferdinand Daniel, born at Jonquièrre d'Orange in Vaucluse, formerly a Papal territory, was admitted to the Novitiate at Tricastin on 26 July 1893. In 1903 he was among the 110 Brothers sent by Br Bérillus, Assistant General, to Mexico. On 8 May 1909 he became the Master of Novices. Two years later, he was called to Grugliasco to follow the exercises of the Second Novitiate from 20 August 1911 to 2 February 1912, under Br Marie-Odulphe. On his return to Mexico, he again took up his role as head of the Novitiate but "Alas! The revolutionary hurricane was soon to be unleashed". On 24 September 1914 of the same year the future general Joaquin Amaro ordered them to leave the house with immediate effect, giving them less than an hour to grab their clothing and other essential items.



The Novitiate and Scholasticate were re-established as best they could in the south east of Texas, on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico at Port Lavaca, and later, in February 1915, transferred to San Antonio. But the house was expensive and a long way from recruiting areas and, in October 1920, was severely damaged by a violent tornado. The Provincial Council recalled Br Luigi and his Novices to Mexico where they initially found refuge at the Patricio Sanz centre at Tlalpan before settling at la Quinta Soledad on 24 September 1922. Two years later, the persecution under Calles broke out against the Church: priests who were foreign nationals and religious communities were hunted down. A program eliminating any reference to religion was imposed on all Catholic schools. The Novitiate and Scholasticate had to be given a completely lay appearance to ward off house visits which were becoming increasingly threatening.

Religious formation was becoming almost impossible in such an atmosphere of constant alerts, so the Novitiate, which had only twelve Novices, was to go to join the one that the Province had been running for six years in Pontós in Spain. So, Br Luigi found himself in this old house that had been founded by the Brothers of Aubenas. He was to pass the rest of his life there, in a constant state of anguish under the red terror, apart from a stay of 27 months at Espira de l'Agly in France at the end of the civil war. Having been in the role of Master of Novices for 42 years, Br Luigi was relieved of the responsibility in 1951 and died in Pontós on 22 January 1961. So, here was a Brother who, from 1903 to 1940, spent his life under persecution and exile. He was, however, spared the world wars: the first probably due to his weak health and the second because of his advanced age.

Br Christian (Edouard Ettinger, 1814-1964) had arrived in the Belgian Congo in 1946 and was one of the victims of the unrest there in the period of decolonisation. He became Provincial in 1962 and was killed in June 1964. It took until February 1967 to know the exact circumstances of the tragedy that took his life.



Br Joche Albert<sup>406</sup> was martyred in quite a different context. He was born in the Province of Ho-pei in the north of China, into a Christian farming family. He was sent to Chefoo in the north of China where he remained for fourteen years until 1946. The Japanese were replaced by the communists who had already established themselves in some provinces in the north of China. The Brothers were arrested, classes suspended, and they were sent to a concentration camp to be re-educated by endless speeches, reading brochures, and hours of discussion on the 'new' ideas. All the same, in the beginning things were not as rigid as they were to be in the following years. Moreover, freedom of religion, solemnly proclaimed by the new masters, was still respected up to a point. Life became rapidly untenable in the College where they had returned,

armed with false documentation. So the Brothers escaped and went to Tsing-tao, a large town in the south, "where we had a community".

Br Joche-Albert was subsequently sent to Sichuan, some thousands of kilometres away in the west of China, to the town of Sichang to found a school with his community. "And at that point, the communist wave swept over the town of Sichang as it had swamped so many others." Re-education began again. "There was nothing new for Br Joche Albert apart from some improvement in the methods. Freed for a time, he was arrested on 6 January 1951 and mistreated in prison. "Once he was tied up for four days and nights." They did not dare force him to appear before a tribunal but, after a campaign of calumny, on 21 April 1951 he was publicly executed.

## Our spiritual tradition: stable or rigid?

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These overviews of a sizeable volume of documents show that many Brothers had a profound spirituality but only more or less in harmony with the official spirituality of the Institute. From this, should it be deduced that Marist spirituality as it was taught had lacked completeness and was seen as somewhat outmoded and exaggeratedly ascetical? The question deserves to be put.

The hypothesis could also be made that the mystique of a Rule that was unchangeable down to its minutiae, as practised by many Brothers, was a spirituality in which the ascetical demands prevented them from understanding its deep meaning and richness. The other dominant mystique of the Institute – love of work – did not seem to have the capacity either to encourage many to deepen their spirituality. In short, the congregation asked its disciples to be obedient, pious and hard-working. In the end, it was often outside of this framework that the Brothers developed their personal spirituality.

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<sup>406</sup> *Biographical Notices*, T. VI, N° 161, October 1963, p. 422.



Even so, regularity, piety and hard work showed themselves to be extraordinarily effective. In a context where exile, wars, and persecutions were constant threats to the communities and individuals, the maintenance of a regular lifestyle, come hell or high water, allowed for an astonishing personal and corporate strength, despite its being 'timeless' and 'the same for all'. Maybe the mystique of the Rule, as evident as it was in the Superiors and formators, was not such a bad response to the challenges of the day, even if it could become a weakness if it was conceived of as a wall and not a flexible restraining rope. Besides, in practice, the biographies show how the Institute was able to constantly adapt itself to changing situations.



## 26.

# THE CIRCULAR ON FIDELITY: A “COLLECTIVE MARIST BIOGRAPHY”

The tradition of biographical notices that had been in abeyance for over twenty years was to be reactivated, although in a completely different style, by Rev Br Basilio in his Circular of 8 December 1984 on “Fidelity”. Its main purpose (Ch 1) was to critique a contemporary counter-culture that considered fidelity as being opposed to freedom. This was at a time of large-scale withdrawals from the Institute - 3,000 in 16 years - which had created a degree of disarray. Without denying this “sad and troubled page in the history of the post-Conciliar Church” Br Basilio set out “to write a short paragraph that would shed a hopeful light on this same history” (p. 15).<sup>407</sup>

89. Br Basilio Rueda



90. Cover of the Circular on Fidelity. A collective biography of the Marist Institute, a unique work in the post-conciliar Church.

Its originality was not in its subject but in its methodology. He developed a sort of phenomenology of fidelity based on 500 autobiographies that he had asked for in a Circular in October 1978,<sup>408</sup> addressed to senior Brothers. A second invitation in 1983 (p. 608) “to all categories of Brothers” resulted in 400 other autobiographies that he divided into three categories (p. 13): quite a few middle-aged Brothers; a smaller number of young Brothers; and then many senior Brothers.

<sup>407</sup> In his introduction to his *Biographies de quelques Frères*, in 1868, (*Our Models in Religion*), Br Jean-Baptiste had had the same objective.

<sup>408</sup> *Circulars*, T. 28, p 597. Circular on Fidelity, 8 September 1984. T. 28, p 597.

Br Basilio was not trying to write a history; he had a spiritual purpose. Nevertheless, the 900 or so testimonies that he collected represent an extraordinary source for the inside story of the Institute in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also, this survey was openly international, much more so than the biographical notices which were still very French. A mere compilation was no longer the intention as it had been with the biographical notices, but rather a framework for reflection built up from the testimonies, considered in six stages:

- The birth of the vocation (home life and Juniorate)
- First steps (Novitiate and Scholasticate)
- Being tested in real life: “first steps in apostolic and community life”
- On the open road: “from young adulthood to mid-life”
- Mid-life turned in on itself: (crisis of maturity)
- An old, fragrant wine: “from maturity to wholeness”

A quick look at these Chapters follows. First of all, Br Basilio (p. 51) spoke of three motivations for vocations: evangelical, subjective and congregational. He noted that, according to the testimonies, “the congregational aspect largely dominated the evangelical” and that “there were not many testimonies that were purely Christo-centric, in a clearly Gospel sense”. From this he developed the hypothesis that “certainly the congregation gives witness to God but in some way as secondary to itself”. (...) This is a failing that needs to be acknowledged.”

I myself thought I had detected in the biographical notices a rather surprising cult of the congregation. The literary styles of the biographical notices, however, tend to exalt the social body for whom the text is intended, as do autobiographies. Also, I believe that there is more at work here: an ascetic spiritual culture that is reluctant to speak of its deepest self and, besides, did not have the words to describe



**91.** Provincial House at Apipucos, Recife (Brazil). Br Basilio Rueda with a group of Brothers from the Province of North Brazil at the end of the retreat (1970-1973?)

it. This has resulted in our difficulty to speak in evangelical terms. Rev Br Basilio was therefore right to speak of a failure of the Institute in explaining the Gospel and personal motivations for our vocation, but its causes seem to have more to do with an aspect of our personal and collective culture than any spiritual shortfall.

## Mediators of vocation

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The testimonies do not seem much different from what the biographical notices present: ‘patriarchal families’ in which the mother, much more than the father, ensured the environment and Christian practices. This characteristic, then, deserves more consideration as being true and not simply as some edifying banality. Thus, many Brothers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century grew up in Christian households where the families, parishes, aunts, grandmothers, and men or women teachers encouraged entry to religious life. It was a world that was to be totally unravelled after the Second World War and its rapid decline goes some way to accounting for the crisis of vocations around 1960. It was not, however, an ideal world: many parents exercised an overbearing authority and were more feared than loved, not to mention the conduct of some others that was not above reproach. But, there again, the information at hand was only confirming what was known from other sources.

Contact with the Brothers was generally the same as in the biographical notices: recruiters with a colourful style, men of solid virtue, who kept in touch with school teachers and parish priests; the striking witness of the Brothers at school or through family contacts. In contrast, the appearance of “self-chosen vocations” (p. 107), in which the family setting was not an important factor or even seemed to be discouraging (e.g. no faith or protestant), seemed to be something quite new. The motivations of aspirants were often confused, mixing up the vocations of Brothers, priests and teachers. Apostolic motivations as such were rare but some evidenced a certain missionary romanticism.

In all of this, there was nothing very new when compared to the biographical notices. Br Basilio was quite aware, moreover, that “our Marist vocations of the first half of the century were often a reflection of the style, values and sensibilities inherited from the preceding century and a rather traditional setting” (p. 141). In those days people knew their catechism well and their Salvation History but hardly ever opened the Bible. It is easy to understand how momentous the irruption of the Council would be for Brothers who had grown up in such Christian settings, which seemed to turn its back on a model of Church that had certainly been damaged, even challenged from within, but had remained a major point of reference in their early cultural universe.

## Time of formation

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The period at the Juniorate was described as a time of great activity in a prayerful climate under the direction of influential formators. In the Novitiate, the Master generally came across as “more a man of God than a man of science, much more

a witness than an expert, much more a saint than a scholar". It was a time of fervour, of crystallising convictions leading up to first profession, understood as being for life. In contrast, "the Scholasticate stage (...) was more difficult to evaluate" since it varied so much over time and place. This ranged from comfortable places that encouraged serious work to houses of studies that had few structures and where the Brothers received only some vague help from a few lecturers. A certain number of Brothers did not even have a Scholasticate. Also, these testimonies added something new to our knowledge of the Institute in the 20<sup>th</sup> century for they showed that a number of Provinces had retained the practice of spending time as a cook and that Scholasticates, where they existed, were not run properly. Difficult situations such as wars and staffing shortages certainly were factors but "in all truth, it must be said that more than one Superior gave in to indefensible short term needs". (p. 198)

On this topic, the biographical notices had given a slightly more optimistic impression. But this institutional weakness of Scholasticates was understandable since canon law did not impose any minimum period as it did for Novitiates. Besides, the Superiors who had not made a Scholasticate themselves but had been self-taught, were not likely to see the need for such an institution. And then, troubled times created urgent situations.

A quite constant cultural trait persisted in the congregation: a weak conceptual connection between burning zeal and the prerequisite formation, as if people were afraid that studies would undermine apostolic commitment and fidelity to one's vocation. Also, for many Brothers who were forced to work hard under pressure, the time of intellectual formation had been a trial. This fact, that Br Basilio brought to light, provided an insightful explanation for a point missing in the biographical notices that spoke complacently about the wide culture of many Brothers without saying where they had acquired this. The answer is clear: in most cases, it was the fruit of their own efforts and not of any serious formation policy. This explains the critique of Br Basilio who wondered whether the congregation had been faithful to the spirit of the Founder in this matter "in prolonging situations indefinitely that depended on sheer luck". (p. 200)

There were also more fundamental examples of incompetence: over-rigid Masters of Novices; formators appointed there because they had failed elsewhere, men who were lacking in authority or even unbalanced psychologically. Contrary to the biographical notices that almost never mentioned affectivity or sexuality, the autobiographies revealed difficulties faced by Juniors and young Brothers who sometimes found an answer to their problems from chaplains or more rarely from one or other formator, but who in general were ill-prepared to make a vow of chastity.

Finally, Rev Br Basilio ended by speaking about a style of formation that was preoccupied with strengthening character and the will, a sense of piety, and family spirit. He acknowledged in a good number of cases, "a poor understanding of Marist spirit", and a belief that humiliation leads to humility and, because of this, to "a complex of fear and introversion" (p. 239), evidence of which he had found in his sociological surveys. Nevertheless allowance must be made for a continuity of culture between the unsophisticated settings the young people were coming from and an ascetical formation where it was thought that characters would be formed through obedience and piety.

For Br Basilio, the period of temporary profession was that of “being tested in real life”, real life “that can form or deform” according to the quality of each Brother and the community he finds himself in. In a less structured setting than a house of formation and engaged in a corporate work, the young Brothers could develop “manly friendships, sometimes at a decent spiritual depth” with confrères who were fewer in number and a cross-section of ages. But they could also suffer disappointment and be led astray. It was also a time of “incredible work demands” to sustain under-staffed schools and to pursue their own studies. There was another real-life situation that was particularly confronting and soul-destroying: not only military service, a trial that was not really all that challenging, but war, as lived by the young Brothers and older ones as well. Many testimonies spoke of the battles and captivity during the civil war in Spain and the Second World War. In this, many Brothers, of all ages, lived a “real-life test”, that stripped them of everything.

## The trials of mid-life

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Then came the passage from young adulthood to middle age when, said Br Basilio, “it was not simply a question of perseverance but also of the quality of this perseverance” (p. 307). This was the time of increasing apostolic commitment and never-ending activity but also of occasional setbacks; often a time of cooling off of religious sentiment and of feeling alone, with its temptation of seeking the companionship of women; a time of changing jobs made possible by new skills and qualifications gained through hard work; a time for re-visiting old personal issues.<sup>409</sup> Br Basilio mentioned examples of “lives lived out in straight lines” (p. 364), many more “lives lived faithfully in and through trials and contradictions” (p. 375), and even “vocations that had been well and truly shaken” (p. 379).

The biographical notices on Brothers had made frequent mention of the trials endured by specific Brothers, either explicitly as in sicknesses, appointments and misunderstandings, or more often implicitly when listing his virtues and occasionally mentioning his personal limitations. Nevertheless, the notices privileged the “life in straight lines” aspect and blocked out any interior problems the men may have had as religious, problems that people around them were largely ignorant of anyway. These autobiographies, on the contrary, brought religious lives into relief that were more chaotic overall but essentially all the more real for that.

In the notices perseverance was regarded almost as a good in itself, crowned by an edifying death, the reward for an ascetical life. Yet, the Circular did not see any direct connection between these stories and salvation. It even suggested that perseverance could be more cynical than positive (p. 390). It rather insisted on religious life being a constant spiritual struggle, with its victories and defeats, deep down in the heart of the religious. In the first instance, the religious lived against the background of an anthropology that was mechanistic and voluntarist in which

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<sup>409</sup> See the Circular p. 451 on the phenomenology of the mid-life crisis.

salvation came through piety and the observance of the Rule; in the second instance, the religious was aware of the infinite complexity of the human person and his relation to God, requiring him to search for the truth without ever becoming complacent in matters of faith and morals. There was no question of simply opposing the two pairs of 'spirituality-structure' and 'psychologism-freedom' but of seeking a new synthesis between them, starting from real life and Christian principles.

Finally, Rev Br Basilio looked at the senior years of religious as a transition from maturity to wholeness, while granting that, "there are some older men who do not make the transition well. (...) They become bitter, critical and hard to please". He did not give any examples of these because presumably there were few testimonies received from this type of Brother. For the rest, he was full of praise with expressions like, "They were men of conviction and hope that continued to grow without their realising it" (p. 551. It was a time of serenity and awareness of having "fought the good fight" (p. 572.)

The conclusion of the Circular was composed of twenty or so quite commonplace, numbered points that are disappointing, to say the least. It was as if the author had not had the time to pull together the main arguments of his work into a compelling conclusion.

## **Heavy workloads and spiritual struggles**

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For sure the Marist vocation for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century still bore the traces of that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: a Christian setting, formation in three stages understood in quite diverse ways – a pleasant Juniorate, an austere novitiate, a weakly-organised Scholasticate. Overall religious and intellectual formation was minimal. Apostolic life was first and foremost a life of heavy workloads in which the Brothers managed to learn on the job. Their professional and apostolic lives were characterised by external crises, such as failures or wars, or internal ones that they managed to overcome as best they could. In sum, the study of all these testimonies added only one new consideration of any significance: that middle age for religious is less about serene maturity than criss-crossed by various crises. I am less convinced by the picture of a peaceful old age even if Br Basilio did suggest that, as is true for mid-life, old age can bring with it many challenges of its own.

The study of the biographical notices has shown that the Institute certainly had a large number of Brothers who lived deeply spiritual lives. Yet their being constrained somewhat by the cult of the Rule had limited their number. Basically, the unspoken agreement between individuals and the institution had been: the spirit of the Institute and the Rule for all; each one to his own spirituality. This was not such a bad thing for a period of time when Christianity was under such extreme pressure. Still, this agreement risked being insufficient in a secularised world with its tendency to challenge institutional authority and exalt the freedom of the individual.



## 27.

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# MODEL MARIST SAINTS. CAUSES OF CANONISATION AND RELATIONS WITH ROME

Even when members of a religious body might have quite diverse interpretations of their fundamental spirituality, they recognise themselves in a spiritual father whom they would like to see recognised by the Church. This is particularly the case when they are a large group that has given proof of its solid qualities. In this way, their legitimacy and unity would be considerably strengthened. This is the reason that the Superiors engaged the Institute of the Marist Brothers in the process of canonisation of their founder at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

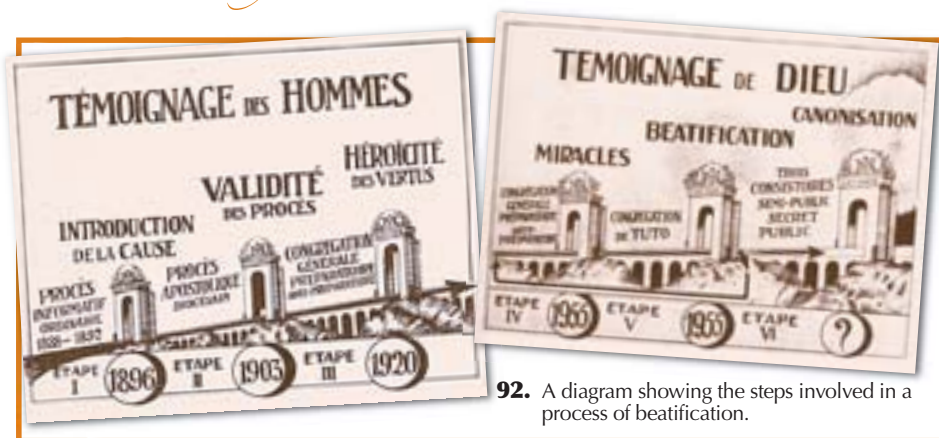
They knew that such an objective would demand conviction, patience, juridical competence, and material means but they wanted to have Champagnat proclaimed a saint by the time of the centenary of the Institute in 1917. We know that this was not to be, that it would be a very draining and drawn-out process, and that the acclamation of Marist sanctity would be played out in a historical context that was full of twists and turns, even tragedies. While, at first, it was considered to be the final seal on a successful foundation, the process of canonisation was to run parallel to a turbulent history and to produce more diverse models of sanctity than had been foreseen.

### The cause of Fr Champagnat

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On 29 January 1886,

*Rev Br (Théophile) shared his idea of introducing the Cause of Beatification of the Venerable Founder with his Council. He gave us the letters of Fr Nicolet to read, inviting us and even urging us to take up this important matter that had been suggested to him by His Eminence Cardinal Bartolini, the Prefect of the Congregation of Rites. Mgr Lajoint, the Vicar General of Lyons, had sent us the full approval of His Eminence Cardinal Caverot. Archbishop of Lyons, along with his own words of encouragement and promise of support.*



92. A diagram showing the steps involved in a process of beatification.

*The Council welcomed this proposal of the Superior General whole-heartedly. Following this, it was agreed that a circular letter would be sent without delay to the whole Congregation telling them of this news, asking for special prayers for this intention and informing them of what the preparation of a petition to introduce the cause would entail.*

### A timely idea

Thanks to the efforts of Fr Nicolet, Procurator General of the Marist Fathers, the beatification of Fr Chanel had been decided and would be proclaimed on 17 November 1889. As both a Marist Father and Founder of the Brothers, Fr Champagnat would then be a good candidate for beatification for both Marist branches. Moreover, at that time, it was not possible to envisage the introduction of the cause of Fr. J. C. Colin who had died in 1875.<sup>410</sup> It was also seen as one way among others of protesting against the anti-congregationist policies of the French government that had started in 1880.<sup>411</sup>

Br Théophile had other reasons for getting on the right side of Rome. He had been elected in 1883 after the unexpected death of Br Nestor and felt obliged to demonstrate the loyalty of the congregation that had been somewhat under a cloud because of a conflict with the Congregation for Bishops and Religious over the Constitutions. Finally, given its large membership and its rapid international expansion, the congregation could not remain indefinitely dependent on the Marist Fathers and needed to have its own permanent representation at the centre of Christianity. So, in an audience on 8 April 1886, Br Théophile informed the Holy Father of our intention to work towards the introduction of the cause of Marcellin Champagnat and also to start a school in Rome, the future San Leone Magno, the first

<sup>410</sup> Fr Jeantin would not complete his biography until 1895. The diocesan process would take place between 1899-1901 and his cause introduced in Rome in 1908 (OMI p. 16).

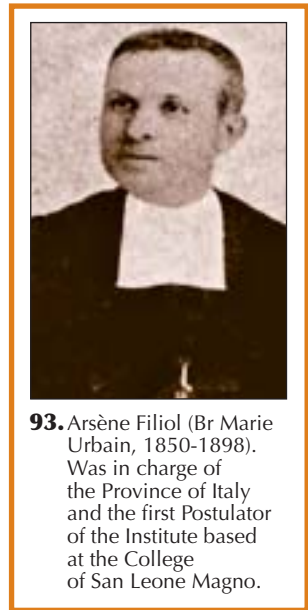
<sup>411</sup> 1880 Decrees banning unauthorised congregations such as the Marist Fathers.

stone of which would be laid on 8 September 1887.<sup>412</sup> Its director, Br Marie-Urbain, would hold the office of Procurator and Vice-Postulator of the cause of Fr Champagnat under the direction of Fr Nicolet. After his death at the age of 48 on 20 June 1898, Br Candidus was to inherit his roles.<sup>413</sup>

## A long and complex process

When, in his Circular<sup>414</sup> of 2 February 1886, he outlined the first steps in the diocesan process, Br Théophile certainly had no idea that he was committing the Institute to more than a century of procedures and that one of the tasks of Superiors and Procurators would be to maintain enthusiasm that threatened to wane over time.

It is not by chance that the word “process’ is used in relation to causes of beatification since it describes a complex juridical procedure that aims to prove, not the innocence of an accused, but the sanctity of a servant of God. It begins with a diocesan enquiry, said to be ‘ordinary’, into local belief in the sanctity of the servant of God, his virtues and miracles<sup>415</sup>. As a preliminary, the Postulator of the cause sets out the articles of a biography that the tribunal will use to frame questions for witnesses. For Fr Champagnat, this canonical biography<sup>416</sup> would consist of 21 chapters and 376 articles, drawn for the most part from the *Life* of Fr Champagnat written by Br Jean-Baptiste. When these articles had been presented by Fr Nicolet to the Archbishop of Lyons, an ordinary tribunal of instruction was set up. Its hearings occurred over 78 sittings between 21 January 1888 and 22 December 1891. Sixty-six witnesses were heard;<sup>417</sup> the grave of Fr Champagnat was opened and his remains confirmed and moved; fifty letters and written testimonies were examined.



**93.** Arsène Filiol (Br Marie Urbain, 1850-1898). Was in charge of the Province of Italy and the first Postulator of the Institute based at the College of San Leone Magno.

<sup>412</sup> *Chronologie mariste*, General House, 2010, Rome, p. 260.

<sup>413</sup> See: *Circulars*, T.V, Circulars of 16 May 1886 and 25 December 1887, as well as the *Biographical Notices* of Br Marie-Urbain, (1880-1890) starting from 10 January 1899, p. 536 and Br Candidus in the *Bulletin of the Institute*, 1926, T. X, N° 70, p. 251-259; and especially, Br Emery, *Biographical Notices*, T. VII, N° 196, October 1858, p. 381.

<sup>414</sup> *Circulars*, T. VII, p. 254. Circular of 2 February 1886.

<sup>415</sup> Annex III of his book that covered the diocesan enquiry in the process of Fr Champagnat (Rome 1991), which presents the schema for how a cause proceeds. The 2010 chronology, in its Annex V p. 516-517, sets out a table of the various causes in 2009 along with their main steps.

<sup>416</sup> Br A. Carazo, appendix II.

<sup>417</sup> 21 Marist Brothers, 3 Marist Fathers, 1 religious sister, 12 parish priests, 29 lay people, 17 of whom were women.

Since this biography contained the testimonies of around twenty witnesses who had known the Founder, it was a major historical source although it was not considered valuable at the time, partly for technical reasons. Indeed, the copy intended for the Marist Brothers and entrusted to Fr Nicolet, was lost. It was only in 1991 that Br A. Carazo published a copy using the copy in the Vatican archives. In any case, in the Institute of the 1890s, there was little inclination to study our origins from any perspective other than the official 1856 biography.



**94.** Joseph Siméon Gros  
(Brother Bérillus,  
1841-1909)

On 12 January 1892, Brs Théophane and Bérillus deposed “the initial canonical information on the life, virtues and miracles of the pious Founder” at the Congregation of Rites.<sup>418</sup> On 29 January 1892 a decree was published that opened the (Roman) apostolic process with responsibility given to the authorities of the diocese of Lyons. Then a copy of the “transumptum” was begun in Rome to prepare the “copia publica” that would be passed on in 1893 to the Postulator and the lawyer acting for the cause so that they could prepare the “positio”. This was distributed to the consultors of the Congregation of Rites which would deliver, at one of its sittings, a favourable or unfavourable “votum” for the introduction of the cause.

This happened on 9 August 1896 and Fr Champagnat acquired the title of Venerable. The anticlerical and anti-congregationist policies of the French government had undoubtedly indirectly sped up the process. Indeed, it was a moment of success for the Institute and teaching congregations, celebrated by numerous triduums and panegyrics. Moreover, the decree of beatification of J. B. de la Salle had been published on 19 February 1888<sup>419</sup> and his canonisation was set for 24 May 1900.

Encouraged by this example, the Marist Brothers for a long time were hoping for a quick beatification of Fr Champagnat. But “the wise slowness of Rome” was to prevail.

Indeed, the Marist Brothers had to exercise patience since canon law required a second process, called “apostolic”, this time under the responsibility of the Holy See, to confirm the diocesan process. This process took place in Lyons over the years from 1897 to 1901. Taken to Rome in 1902, it was validated in 1903. Then began the slow progress of the cause with its various “positio” papers for the study of the heroicity of virtues and the validation of “miracles”. The wait would be long – 53 years!

<sup>418</sup> Published by Br Agustín Carazo, Postulator, under the title *Témoignages sur Marcellin Champagnat. Enquête diocésaine*, Rome 1991.

<sup>419</sup> *Chronologie mariste*, General House, Rome, 2010.

Besides, the political-religious situation in France had become less favourable: the congregations had been destroyed in 1903-4; legislation had separated Church and State in 1905; and, a short time later, diplomatic relations between France and the Holy See had been severed. The glorification of educators had become less pressing and the beatification of Joan of Arc in 1909 was a better way of encouraging Catholic resistance to the lay State.

On 22 October 1907, Br Candidus, Procurator and vice-Postulator, reported on the status of the cause to the General Chapter:

*After the introduction of the Cause of our Venerable Founder in 1896, Rome ordered the setting up of the apostolic Process to be conducted in Lyons. The report was presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in July 1899 by Br Climaque, Assistant General. It would take a full year to make a detailed study of this Process so as to establish its validity. Then the same Process would be passed to the lawyer for the cause to compose a Summary. Five years were to pass at the end of which the printed Summary could be placed in the hands of the Promoter of the Faith.*

In 1907, then, the Institute was waiting on the opinions of the 'Devil's Advocate' on the heroicity of the virtues which the lawyer had to refute in the course of three sittings of the Congregation: the pre-preparatory, the preparatory and finally the general. The two miracles that had to be presented had to follow the same procedure before the Holy Father could decide on any solemn beatification.

## **A major hurdle: no "clear miracle"**

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Favours attributed to Fr Champagnat were to become a frequent theme of Circulars, but none could survive a Process.<sup>420</sup> In his Circular of 2 February 1909 that recounted his trip to Rome in December 1908, Br Stratonique noted that the prelates in charge of the cause had told him unanimously, "that everything looked fine". But they added, "Do you have any clear miracles to present?"

It was clear that the process on the heroicity of virtues was making progress: the pre-preparatory sitting of the Congregation had gone well on 3 May 1910. Prior to this delicate step, Br Stratonique had asked for "a kind of prayer crusade", including students and parents of students "to beseech the heavens through the intercession of our Venerable Founder so as to obtain two clear miracles as demanded by the Sacred Congregation of Rites".

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<sup>420</sup> The Circular of 27 December 1899, *Circulars*, T. IX, p. 488, speaks of an ecclesiastical commission meeting at the Hermitage on 9 November to question witnesses on the cure of Madame Malaure, the sister of the parish priest of Vallbenoîte, cured at the tomb of Fr Champagnat. But any hopes of having the miracle recognised were dashed.

This effort was to be accompanied “by the distribution of a book of panegyrics, various editions of his Life, and particularly the abridged version of 54 pages that has just been published”<sup>421</sup>. New holy cards were to be distributed, “especially showing the Venerable Founder teaching catechism”<sup>422</sup>. By these means Br Stratonique was still hoping for the beatification of Fr Champagnat before the centenary of the Institute in 1917.

## **Favours attributed to Fr Champagnat: Novenas and picture - relics**

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From 1892 on, Circulars<sup>423</sup> published some accounts of cures. Then, from December 1897 to the Circular of 15 August, 1920,<sup>424</sup> twenty-two Circulars were to have a section on “Favours attributed to the intercession of Fr Champagnat”<sup>425</sup>. Almost a hundred incidents were recounted there, most often in the form of letters. The pattern for the numerous accounts of cures was: a Brother, a child at a Brothers’ school or a family connected to them, had experienced a serious illness that the doctors were unable to cure and that had brought the sick person to the point of death. After requesting a Brother, or at the initiative of someone, or very rarely at their own initiative, a picture-relic<sup>426</sup> was placed against the sick part of the body or under the pillow of the patient, while a novena took place, with a whole school or Brothers’ community joining in. During the novena, the situation improved and sometimes even a really rapid cure. Mention should also be made of ten or so expressions of thanks for some particular protection, or the resolution of temporal problems (four or five), conversions, particularly as death drew close.

Some were colourful, such as success in an exam attributed to Champagnat thanks to his picture placed on a blotter, accompanied by a spoken prayer.<sup>427</sup>

## **Where the testimonies came from**

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Mention can also be made of where the testimonies came from. A quick overview would indicate:

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<sup>421</sup> This was the *Petite Vie illustrée du Vénérable Champagnat* announced in November 1908 (C. XI p. 333 and 374).

<sup>422</sup> Circular of 2 February 1909, *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 356.

<sup>423</sup> Particularly 27 December 1892 and 1 January 1895.

<sup>424</sup> This speaks of the celebration of the decree of the heroicity of virtues of Fr Champagnat.

<sup>425</sup> The times when this section did not appear were highly significant: between 29 December 1902 and 19 March 1908, the institute was condemned to go into exile and secularisation; then, from 2 February 1914 to 2 January 1917 war was raging.

<sup>426</sup> Several witnesses said that the relic was a piece of the (flannel) belt of Fr Champagnat.

<sup>427</sup> *Circulars*, T. IX, p. 372. Circular of 10 October 1898.

France: 32 (including 1 from Algeria)  
 Canada: 12  
 Spain: 10  
 Middle-East (Syria-Lebanon, Egypt, Constantinople): 10  
 New Caledonia: 3  
 Mexico: 3  
 Arlon (Belgium): 2  
 In the English-speaking world the favours appeared to be more dispersed:  
 Dundee (Scotland) 1;  
 Australia 1;  
 Suva (Fiji) 1;  
 Roma (Lesotho) 1;  
 Aden 1;  
 Poughkeepsie (USA) 1.  
 Nevertheless, this amounts to six accounts.  
 There were no testimonies from Argentina or Brazil and only one from Colombia.

For France, where secularisation hindered any publicity being given to the cause, the great majority came from the old Province of L'Hermitage. Should much significance be given to these numbers? It could be said, at least, that devotion to the Founder was clearly present internationally but that it was not uniform.

## **A saint for peace and the protection of educators**

Another fact is more troubling: apparently, the 1914-18 war was not really the occasion for the more than a thousand conscripted Brothers to invoke the protection of Fr Champagnat.<sup>428</sup> An examination of the letters of Brothers during this war shows a greater devotion to the Institute than to the Founder himself. Perhaps, however, they looked on Fr Champagnat as a saint especially for teachers and children and not really having anything to do with military life. It was, moreover, a lay person, the father of two children, Jean Resséjac, who in 1917 asked for a picture-relic to stay alive in the fighting<sup>429</sup>. Likewise, it was a mother of a family from around Beaucamps who had been forced into exile as a result of war-related problems and who invoked Fr Champagnat to be cured of an abscess on her arm so that she could look after her children.<sup>430</sup>

<sup>428</sup> I can only find a single mention of a Brother on this topic in the Circular of 2 February 1919, *Circulars*, T. XIV, starting p. 90.

<sup>429</sup> He was not seeking this favour for himself but for the sake of his family (Circular of 2 February 1917).

<sup>430</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 263. Circular of 19 March 1919.

## How to co-ordinate three notions of miracles?

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The Brother Procurator and the Superiors had recommended that medical certificates be obtained in cases of cures. This is what Br Adriano-José of Alicante<sup>431</sup> (Spain) recalled when asking for a picture-relic of Fr Champagnat since “Rome requires first-class miracles”. Most frequently, however, the accounts were content to give public witness to graces received, whatever they were. Some medical certificates accompanying the accounts were rare and most often quite cryptic. Little by little, nevertheless, there was a coming together of religious and scientific cultures; and, during the period from 1917 to 1919 there were five medical certificates produced but for cures that did not, in general, satisfy the Roman criteria.<sup>432</sup>

In short, there was a real difficulty in co-ordinating three quite different cultures: that of doctors; that of a quite ‘popular’ form of Christianity given to interpreting cures as signs from heaven; and that of the jurists of the Sacred Congregation of Rites who did not want to endorse anything without minute examination. In the end, it was the juridical hurdle that was the hardest to cross. In the Circular of 2 February 1912, a report of Br Candidus reminded readers that “the Sacred Congregation of Rites is rather tough on this point and often rejects miracles that a reputable body of doctors would not hesitate to approve”. So, despite many accounts of favours received, some of which were quite impressive, the Institute was unable to present any “clear miracles” as required by the Roman consultors.

## Difficulties in the process of heroicity of virtues

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Meanwhile, the recognition of the heroicity of virtues was a tough trial in itself and a more immediate one. Br Candidus informed the Institute that on 12 March 1912 the preparatory sitting of the Congregation on the heroicity of virtues was to be held. It would be a decisive moment “since in the later general sitting, in front of the Pope, the question was simply summarised”. And he warned, “The judges will only give an affirmative vote if the lawyer for the cause can overcome any doubts and show the sanctity of the Venerable Founder for all to see”.

To pray for the success of this sitting of the congregation that was of such capital importance, each community was to make a novena of prayers, consisting of the *Veni Creator* and the *Ave Marist Stella* at the beginning of their Evening Prayer. In houses with a chapel, there was to be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament with the singing of these two hymns. In addition, until the centenary of the Institute, the Morning Offering to the Sacred Heart would conclude with “*the intentions of the Apostleship of Prayer, and of the Institute in preparation for its Centenary and for our causes of Beatification*”.

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<sup>431</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 41. Circular of 2 January 1917.

<sup>432</sup> Only one was really described in detail: the cure of a Junior at Carrión de los Condes (C. of 19/03/1919).



Still, the preparatory sitting did not go well: “two or three consultors (...) had problems”<sup>433</sup>. It was necessary “to clarify some historical points in the life of our Venerable Father Champagnat”. The speech of Pope Benedict XV explained the reason for the problem on the occasion of the solemn ceremony for the decree on heroicity of virtues in 1920:

*It was said that Venerable Champagnat was too severe, too rigorous and the memory of his behaviour was sufficient reason for some to cast a doubt on his heroicity of virtues. Yet the Divine Master armed himself with a whip against those who would profane the temple. Shouldn't Marcellin Champagnat have armed himself with holy intransigence against those who dared to profane the living temple of God?*

So, the Postulator and Mgr Salotti, the lawyer, had had to respond to an objection concerning the summary dismissals of two postulants for immoral conduct.<sup>434</sup> In stressing the rigour of Roman processes before the sitting in 1912, Br Candidus seems to have been preparing the Institute for disappointment.

The death of Cardinal Ferrata, proponent of the cause, was also to delay the process. In his Circular of 24 May 1916, Br Stratonique was still expressing the hope that a sitting would “soon” make a favourable pronouncement on the heroicity of the virtues of the founder; at the same time he acknowledged that “worries caused by the terrible events that have taken place over nearly two years have undoubtedly distracted us somewhat from this dear cause of beatification”. Yet he announced a wide-ranging publicity effort through pictures and books.

## **Rome remained unbending regarding the heroicity of virtues**

The promulgation in 1917 of the new text of Canon Law also contributed to delay proceedings. Also, the very notion of heroicity of virtues had evolved. The Dictionary of Spirituality<sup>435</sup> (t. 7/1, columns 337-343) indicates that heroicity of virtues started to be mentioned with the cause of St Teresa of Avila at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>436</sup> and the relevant criteria were codified by Benedict XIV in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But this notion of “heroic virtue”, that had been over-influenced by the cult of ancient heroes, created problems when it was not balanced by taking into account the fidelity to one’s duties of state to which Benedict XIV had referred not long before.

<sup>433</sup> Circular of 2 February 1915. It mentioned the causes of the Marist Fathers: Chanel, Colin, Fr. Ducharme, Blaise Marmoiton.

<sup>434</sup> *Life*, Part 2, Ch. XIII, 1989 edition, p. 409-410.

<sup>435</sup> *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, T. 7/1, columns 337-343.

<sup>436</sup> She herself affirmed in chapter XXXI of her autobiography, “It takes more courage for a soul that is not faultless to follow the way of perfection than to endure a quick martyrdom”

In 1916 Benedict XV declared in the case of a Friar Minor that “the constant and exact accomplishment of the duties of his state” had been heroic. On 11 April 1920 the Congregation of Rites adopted this doctrine for itself. This is what the Pope said in his speech of recognition of the heroicity of Fr Champagnat on 11 July 1920: <sup>437</sup> “... the life of Venerable Champagnat must be studied in the light of the mission that was proper to him”. Champagnat’s severity was therefore justified by his duty as founder and as educator.<sup>438</sup>

## **Proclamation of heroicity of virtues: a decisive moment**

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The Circular of 15 August 1920 gave a detailed account of the proclamation of the decree of the heroicity of virtues, made on 11 July. The General Council had travelled to Rome for the occasion. Since the Postulator of the cause was still Fr Copéré S.M., he it was who addressed the Pope during the ceremony in the name of the Marist Fathers and Brothers. He presented Fr Champagnat as a member of the Marist Fathers and deputy to Fr Colin more than as founder of the Brothers.

The reply of the Pope was based on the biblical sentence, “Attendite a falsis prophetis” (beware of false prophets). In contrast, he exalted the mission of teachers as a form of prophecy of truth in the face of perverse doctrines. And in a particular way, he spoke of him as the founder of the Marist Brothers without saying much about his belonging to the Marist Fathers. So, a major barrier had been lifted; Rome had clearly seen the servant of God as an educator and founder. But the question of miracles remained unchanged.

## **Patience, patience!**

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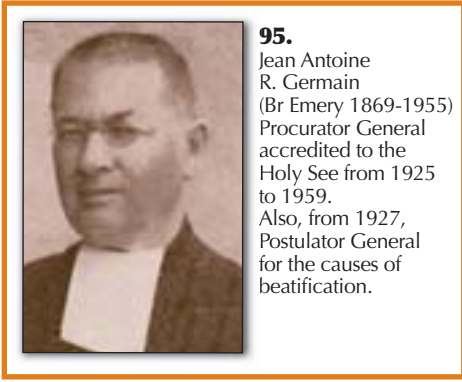
In 1932, Br Emery informed the Chapter that several favours attributed to the intercession of Fr Champagnat had not been upheld. A single important change had taken place: on 14 January 1926, he had replaced Br Candidus, who had died in 1924. More importantly, on 17 October 1928 Fr Copéré, Postulator, had had to leave Rome<sup>439</sup> and the cause of Fr Champagnat had been entrusted entirely to the Marist Brothers.

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<sup>437</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIV, p. 370. Circular of 15 August 1920.

<sup>438</sup> In a report of 15 March 1919 (C. of 19 March T. 14 p. 256), Br Candidus announced that the dossier for the general sitting on the heroicity of the virtues was ready to be distributed to the consultors for a final decision in the presence of the Pope.

<sup>439</sup> Volume 12 of *Délibérations du conseil général*. On 22 June 1928 the Council noted that Fr Grimal who was to replace Fr Copéré, had proposed Br Emery as Postulator of the cause of Fr Champagnat.



This decision, which was in line with the interpretation of the Pope in 1920, gave free rein to Br Emery. At the end of his report he expressed his concern about the dearth of miracles: "I am persuaded to think that we do not place enough store on his glorification". Indeed it might have been true that the patience of the Institute had been sorely tested. At his encouragement, the Chapter would advocate the creation of a "day for our Venerable Founder" in all schools, on Saturdays or one Saturday each month. A day that was "truly holy"

would be kept on the anniversary of his death, 6 June, complete with communion and a talk or catechism class on the V. Founder along with voluntary offerings for his beatification.

It is time to recall that the Marist Brothers had also been working for a long time on the cause of Br François, with Br Candidus as the first Postulator.

### The cause of Br François makes slow progress

The introduction of the cause of Fr Champagnat in 1896 was a spur for the Superiors to work on that of his successor. In 1897-99, at the request of Br Théophile, Fr Ponty, chaplain at the Provincial house in Lacabane, wrote a *Life of Br François* based on his writings<sup>440</sup> The events of 1901-1903 were to delay the project but in 1909 Br Stratonique<sup>441</sup> in his Circular of 25 April, decided to press ahead. Besides, Mgr Salotti, the lawyer for the cause, was already at work editing the basic articles of a canonical biography. Br Stratonique asked the Brothers to collect any writings of the servant of God and to give their testimonies: "No need to fear giving a lot of details; things that may appear small can sometimes have a greater influence in the sense that they can complement what others are saying". On 24 February 1910, Br Marie-Junien<sup>442</sup> became the very active vice-Postulator of the cause of Br François<sup>443</sup>. On 20 June 1910 the diocesan tribunal was set up. From then on, in the Circulars the section on "Our causes of beatification" replaced that of "The cause of Ven. Fr Champagnat".

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<sup>440</sup> Published by Vitte in Lyons in 1899, 338 p. .See the letter-Preface of Fr Ponty.  
<sup>441</sup> Br Stratonique, Circular of 25 April 1909.  
<sup>442</sup> The report of Br Candidus in the Circular of 2 February 1916 announced the death of Br Marie-Junien and sang his praises.  
<sup>443</sup> Nevertheless, the articles of the canonical biography were prepared with the collaboration of Fr Copéré.



96. "Positio" of Br François Rivat.

It is not very easy to follow the vagaries of the cause between Rome and Lyons and what follows lacks detail. On 18 May 1912 the diocesan Process was taken to Rome. Then the procedure got lost in the meanders of Roman procedures and also, certainly, in delays caused by the war. There was, as well, the reform of Canon Law in 1917. On 24 May 1922, Very Rev Br Stratonique was named vice-Postulator. In August the apostolic process began in Lyons and was finally completed and taken to Rome on 24 April 1924 for the cause to be formally introduced.

The Circular of 25 December 1934<sup>444</sup> informed Brothers that on 13 March 1931 the completed dossier had been sent to the Promoter of the Faith for his negative opinions and the replies of the lawyer, and that the introduction of the cause had been published on 14 November 1934. Even so, the title of Venerable was not thereby granted to Br François. In conformity with the new Code of Canon Law he still had to pass the test of the heroicity of his virtues which would not be opened until 4 July 1968 and would hardly be noticed in the post-Conciliar atmosphere.

The cause of Br François was also partly delayed by that of Fr Champagnat, as Br Emery said in all simplicity in 1932: "... The Venerable Brother would not mind if we concentrate for now on Fr Champagnat whom he loved and venerated all his life".

## **The importance of the role of Procurator-Postulator**

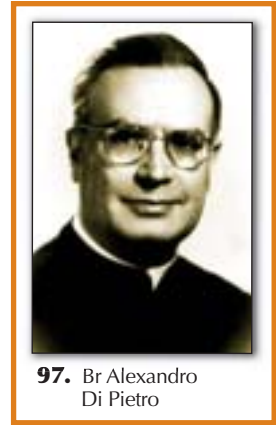
The processes of canonisation should not hide a fundamental reality in the life of the Institute: with the start of San Leone Magno college and the creation of the office of the Procurator accredited to the Holy See, the Marist Brothers had established a permanent connection with the Pope and the Curia. Thereafter they were a recognised congregation at the very heart of Christianity. They had brought their emancipation from the Marist Fathers to a conclusion, particularly through the appointment of Br Emery as Postulator for the cause of Fr Champagnat.

Appointed by the General Council, the Procurator was up for reappointment every three years but in fact he remained in place for as long as the Assistants since it was a role that demanded stability. He was more a super-Assistant than a quasi-Assistant. Br Marie-Urbain, who died unexpectedly in 1898, undoubtedly only had

<sup>444</sup> *Circulars*, T. XVII, p. 315-326. Circular of 25 December 1934.

the time to get started in this new role. It was really Br Candidus, Procurator until 1924, who set up the role that Br Emery was to assume from 1924 to 1948. After Br Alessandro (1949-1979), the Procurators would spend less time in the role.<sup>445</sup>

At the 1946 Chapter Br Emery spoke with humour about his “job” as Procurator General which did not mean, as some thought, that he was “on clover”.<sup>446</sup> For certain, the Institute was going well: relationships with other Institutes of Brothers and other congregations were cordial. Except for “the appeal of the Spanish Brothers against the rabat” there were few internal matters that had to be referred to Rome. The Institute was known and appreciated because of the College of San Leone Magno: 900 students, in 27 classes, 6 in primary and 21 in secondary. It was “renowned for being one of the most serious colleges when it comes to teaching”. Its chapel was “a small cathedral, “erected to celebrate the Beatification of our Venerable Founder”. The Office of the Procurator General which took up part of the first storey was recognised juridically by the Italian government. For this reason, it was the proprietor of the College itself. As it had had to give up some of its rooms, it had become very cramped. In any case:



*The current Procurator General is doing everything he can not to break with the wonderful traditions established by his venerable predecessor, Br Candidus, who always had doors opened for him be it at the Vatican or the various Roman Congregations.*

Finally, “One of the greatest worries of the Procurator General are the errands of all kinds that come to him and which assuredly make him the top commissioner of the Institute!”

## The state of the causes in 1946

While his report on the causes of beatification at the 1932 Chapter had been quite muddled, in 1946 Br Emery gave a clear and sometimes colourful description of the manifold procedures stressing the need for patience: there were more than 800 causes pending. And he stated, “It is a race in which those who slave away the most are not always the first to arrive”.

<sup>445</sup> Br Leonard Voegtle had the role for the years 1979-1981 only. Br Agustín Carazo (1981-1991); Br Gabriele Andreucci (1991-2001), Br Giovanni Bigotto (2001-2010).

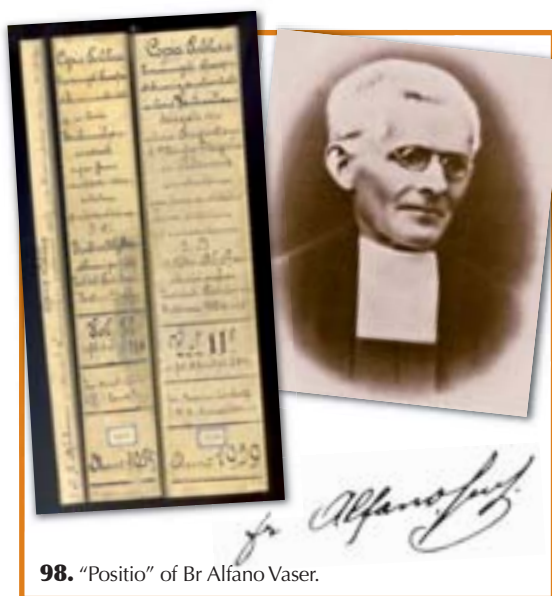
<sup>446</sup> A man leading a restful life.

Since the cause of Fr Champagnat had barely moved, he described the progress of that of Br François after its introduction in Rome. Cardinal Maurin, on 17 October 1935, had constituted the apostolic Tribunal on 25 September 1936. Its closing act had been signed and then brought to Rome by the prelate himself who commented to Br Emery, "In Rome things do not go very fast". In 1946 the Summary of the "positio" was to be handed over to the Lawyer and then the Promoter General for the Faith. The decree on the heroicity of virtues was a long way off. As for miracles ...

As regards the cause of Fr Champagnat, there was, all the same, something new since two miracles were being examined: that of Mrs Grondin of the United States, cured of a cancer in 1939 and a young man from Madagascar, Jean Ranaivo, in remission from cerebro-spinal meningitis from 1941. We know that these two miracles would pave the way for the beatification of Marcellin Champagnat on 29 May 1955. But in 1946 the procedures were in an early stage and Br Emery was being prudent<sup>447</sup>. Still, he was no longer expressing the same concern as in 1932, as if he had good reason to hope that a cause that he had dedicated himself to for more than twenty years was going to succeed.

### Br Alfano: a rather surprising cause

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98. "Positio" of Br Alfano Vaser.

A little later a new cause was to come along, that of the Master of Novices of the former Province of St Paul and then the new Province of Italy. Br Alfano was born in 1873 and died at Ventimiglia on 1 March 1943. The quick opening of a process of beatification so soon after the death of a servant of God, could seem all the more surprising in that he had never been a Major Superior and was relatively unknown in the congregation. In any case, in 1949 the Bishop of Ventimiglia published a decree asking for the writings of the servant of God to be collected and the diocesan process began on 3 July 1951.

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<sup>447</sup> The process for studying the cure of Mrs Grondin took place in the diocese of Portland in 1948; that of Jean Ranaivo in the diocese of Antsirabe in 1947.

## An initiative of the General Council

The General Council (Register 16) in its session of 18 September 1948 opted for “the eventual process of the life and virtues of Br Alfano of the Province of Italy, about which the Br Secretary General will write to the Provincial”. On 20 September 1948,<sup>448</sup> Br Avit, Secretary General, wrote to Br Sebastiano, Provincial of Italy, to invite him to contact the ecclesiastical authorities and to identify a person to act as Postulator. And he added:

*Personally, having had quite close relations with dear Brother Alfano, I am convinced that his was the life of a holy religious that we must not leave buried and forgotten as has happened to so many other virtuous disciples of Venerable Fr Champagnat. We will know their supernatural splendour only in another world.*

In the Provincial newsletter “In famiglia” in November 1948, Br Sebastiano praised Br Alfano as a model of “a life of faith” and of fidelity to the Rule. But the cause was not unanimously supported by the Brothers. “Those who knew Br Alfano only superficially accused him of being rigid, but those who had lived close to him had been able to realise that he was not rigid so much as terribly logical”.

So, the introduction of the cause of Br Alfano began with the desire of the General Council, particularly Br Avit, to sanctify a type of Brother who had been capable of great fidelity in the midst of the upheavals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Circulars of 8 December 1954 and 24 May 1956 provided details on steps being taken by Br Martino Giuseppe, Vice-Postulator. The diocesan enquiry at Ventimiglia had begun on 7 April 1949<sup>449</sup> and finished at the end of 1954. One item of interest is worth mentioning: thinking that his numerous writings did not belong to him, Br Alfano destroyed nothing. A selection of his papers gathered in 1950, filled a large suitcase. Br Luis Di Giusto<sup>450</sup> spoke of 263 letters and 96 notebooks adding up to some 7,000 pages. Finally, on 22 October 1956 all these documents were taken to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

BI N° 190 reported on the state of the question in 1963 but in a rather confused way. Cardinal Alois Masella had been named proponent of the cause on 13 January 1959. Some theologians had examined the writings of the servant of God and the decree of approval of them was expected. The publication of the Life of Br Alfano by Br Henri-Noé (Marcel Colin) with the title *The Straight Path* (Genval, 1963), a work mentioned in another Chapter, was thought to have been written to help the introduction of the cause which was opposed by some Brothers.

<sup>448</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, N° 190 of April 1963 celebrating the 20th anniversary of the death of Br Alfano.

<sup>449</sup> But in *Bulletin of the Institute*, N° 16 it says that the diocesan process began on 3 July 1951.

<sup>450</sup> Br Luis Di Giusto, *Historia del Instituto de los Hermanos Maristas*, Marist Province of Cruz del Sur, Argentina, 2004, p. 227.

Thereafter the cause was to disappear from the issues of concern of the Institute and followed its own path. The Chapters of 1958, 1976, and 1985 said nothing about it, neither was there much in Institute publications. Nevertheless, on 22 January 1991, the heroicity of his virtues was recognised and Br Alfano was declared Venerable.

## **Martyrs on a large-scale irrupt into our causes of beatification**

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Before 1934 the Institute had been through many trying circumstances and numerous Brothers had risked their lives but martyrs had been rare. In July-August 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion, Brs Jules-André, Joseph-Félicité, Marie-Adon and the postulant Paul Chen were killed. There was little mention made in Circulars of their cause which was entrusted to the Lazarists.<sup>451</sup> On 25 February 1906, five Brothers were massacred by the local population at Nan-Tang, China after a mandarin had committed suicide at their place and they were accused of having killed him. These deaths were the harbingers of what was to be a particularly violent 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1909, Br Lycarion, a Swiss, was killed during the “Tragic Week” in Barcelona. Even though he was the proto-martyr of Spain, his diocesan process for beatification was completed and his cause introduced in Rome only in 1967.<sup>452</sup> The second martyr was Br Bernardo killed in Barruelo on 6 October 1934 in the troubled times of the Republic, during the Asturias Revolution. His diocesan process was conducted at Burgos between 1945 and 1948. But the cause dragged on (as it did for Br Lycarion) and the Roman process only terminated in 1990. The decree of his martyrdom was pronounced in 2004.<sup>453</sup>

In his report to the 1946 Chapter, Br Emery had finished with some words on “our Martyrs in China” and “our martyr in Barruelo” for whom the Ordinary Process for their recognition as martyrs had concluded. It is significant that at that time he made no reference to the other 175 martyrs in Spain from the years 1936-39. The events were still recent, Marist Spain was in recovery mode, and the political-religious circumstances were less than auspicious.

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<sup>451</sup> On the other hand, their memory was kept alive in Institute magazines. In 2011 Br Giovanni Bigotto published a booklet entitled, *The China martyrs of 1900. The Boxer Persecution* which explained the progress of the cause.

<sup>452</sup> Br Juan J. Moral Barrio, *Vidas entregadas. Martirologio Marista en España. 1909-1939*, Institute of the Marist Brothers, 1997. p. 29.

<sup>453</sup> According to the schema of the *FMS Message* N° 36, September 2007, p. 121.



## The martyrs of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39)

Anarchy and the worst of excesses characterised this conflict that started on 18 July 1936. In Barcelona around a hundred Brothers had gathered in order to be evacuated to Marseilles, as they were told. During the night of 7-8 October 1936, however, they were victims of a betrayal by the anarchist Federation and Br Laurentino, Br Virgilio and 44 other Brothers were massacred in the cemetery at Montcada in Barcelona. Their diocesan process took place from 1963-69. The Roman process concluded in 1990 and the decree of their martyrdom was made on 18 December 2006. The beatification of Br Bernardo, Br Laurentino and his companions was celebrated in Rome on 28 October 2007.

These were in some way relatively simple processes, concerning precise individuals or groups. Also, Roman procedure did not require miracles but simply proof of their martyrdom. Small groups of Brothers, however, had been killed in twenty different places and it was necessary, at first, to include them with other causes in a small number of dioceses:

- Lleida (1946): process of Br Crisanto, killed at Tartareu near Las Avellanas.
- Urgell (1946): Br Aquilino and his three companions killed at Las Avellanas.
- Saragossa (1957): Br Cipriano and 29 Brothers from communities in Toledo, Valentia, Vic, Rabadesella, Badajoz.
- Madrid (1969): Br Guzman, his 39 companions and 2 Laymen coming from around fifteen different places.



99. "Positio" of Br Crisanto and companions.

In the end, on 31 July 1989, when Br Agustin Carazo was Postulator, all these causes were combined together into one. The decree of beatification was signed on 3 June 2013 and the celebration took place on 13 October of the same year.

Br Mariano Santamaria, vice-Postulator for the Spanish causes, does not gloss over the obstacles encountered to bring the causes of the Spanish martyrs to a conclusion.<sup>454</sup> Amongst others, he pointed to "the slowing down that happened under Pope Paul VI" (1963-78) but also division among the Brothers in Spain as to the suitability of introducing the causes, to the point that Rev Br Basilio had had to push the Provincials to continue with the work.

<sup>454</sup> *FMS Message*, N° 43, December 2013, p. 129.

## **Explanations given by Br A. Carazo<sup>455</sup>**

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Br Mariano made a veiled reference to a moratorium imposed by Pope Paul VI who was anxious to avoid any political interpretations being made after the Franco era, and also to not run counter to Council documents that were based on a model of the Church as communion. This led to the processes of six causes of Spanish Brothers being blocked and unattended in the archives of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (the new name of the Congregation of Rites).

In Spain the memory of the martyrs went through several phases. Starting in 1940 the Provinces had undertaken a lot of work to collect sources. Yet, as contemporaries of the assassinated Brothers died out and the political context changed, a kind of self-censure occurred and memories faded.

It was not until 1983 that Br A. Carazo was able to reactivate the files and encourage the Provincials of Spain to take up work on the causes. The arrival of John Paul II as Pope also considerably changed things.

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<sup>455</sup> The contents of this paragraph come from Br A. Carazo.

## 28.

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# THE PRODUCTION OF IMAGES AND A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

In the preceding pages little mention had been made of a fundamental reason to pursue causes of beatification: to communicate the life and virtues of servants of God to the whole Christian community. This is, however, a basic element of the process since no cause can succeed without a sizeable and determined group carrying forward the memory of saintly persons and continuing to invoke them despite the passage of time. So, the Superiors, and more particularly the Postulators, have the task of organising and encouraging propaganda through all kinds of media: books, pictures, statues and so on. In this way, Postulators often become highly skilled in the production of these and in their knowledge of the iconography of the Institute. A particularly fine example of this is the book of Br A. Carazo, “*Tras las huellas de Marcelino Champagnat*”, edited by the Province of Chile in 1999, which contains the most extensive Marist iconographic collection that I know.<sup>456</sup> Taking my inspiration to a degree from this natural alliance between causes of beatification and media, and without pretending to be exhaustive, I am going to present the causes of beatification from a perspective that seems to me to be just as revealing, but less austere, as following the development of processes themselves.

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## Re-edit, translate and seek a wider public<sup>457</sup>

The Institute did not wait for the process of beatification of Fr Champagnat to make its Founder and his work known publicly. The publication of his *Life* in 1856 was the first act of such a policy. Following this, holy cards bearing his portrait were distributed, especially as promotional material related to Juniorates.<sup>458</sup> As time

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<sup>456</sup> This is a summary of Marist research on our origins, particularly that of Br P. Zind. The author also included a collection of Marist iconography that was extensive and well-documented, particularly regarding the portraits of Fr Champagnat and ‘Our Good Mother’.

<sup>457</sup> I do not know of any systematic bibliography of Marist publications. Volume XIII of the Circulars certainly gives a list but does not give the exact name, dates or names of editors.

<sup>458</sup> Regarding these images, see A. Lanfrey, *The portraits of Fr Champagnat in the 19th century in Marist Notebooks* N° 29, May 2011, p. 5-34.

passed and the Institute expanded, the old editions of Marist works from the 1850-1870s started to run out and thought had to be given to re-editing and adapting them for a wider public.

In 1884 the General Council decided on an English edition of the *Life*;<sup>459</sup> and on 6 March 1885 it discussed an abridged version of the *Life*, to which his portrait and photos of Marist places were to be added.<sup>460</sup> The English translation was to appear in 1887 in a single volume with the portrait of the Founder and photos of Lavalla, L'Hermitage and St Genis-Laval.<sup>461</sup> The abridged version, intended particularly for students, would not be published until 1896 in a volume of 352 pages, including some twenty etched illustrations.<sup>462</sup> In 1902 translations appeared in Italian, German and Portuguese.<sup>463</sup>

For the Brothers and a more limited public, the complete *Life* of the Founder was re-edited in 1897, just after he was proclaimed Venerable. The English edition seems to have somehow instigated this publication, now in a single volume of 647 pages, embellished with a portrait of Fr Champagnat at the front and etched images interspersed throughout the text. The version in Spanish was approved in 1911.<sup>464</sup>

The decision to introduce the cause of Fr Champagnat had meant imagining publications that were more appealing to a more general public. So, in June 1887, Br Eubert, Secretary General, requested Mr. Léon Aubineau, editor of *L'Univers*, a newspaper with a large readership and that was very Catholic and conservative, to produce a short biography of the Founder that was to appear in the newspaper at the end of 1890.<sup>465</sup> But this biography that was more literary than historical, did not please the Council who, on 24 February 1891, proposed the writing of an abbreviated *Life* of the Founder in 32 pages, intended for schoolchildren. Translations into Spanish and English were foreshadowed in the Circular of 27 December 1895.<sup>466</sup>

Marist publicity used the biography in three forms: a very short *Life*, an abridged edition (1896) and the complete *Life* of 1897 that the Superiors were somewhat reluctant to have translated.<sup>467</sup> After 1921, however, the biography of Fr Champagnat

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<sup>459</sup> *Délibérations du conseil général*, T. III of 30/10/1884,); T. IV, of 21/11/1890.

<sup>460</sup> Its publication intended for students was announced in the Circular of 19 January 1885 (C. VII, p. 229)

<sup>461</sup> *Life and spirit of J.B.M. Champagnat*, Burns & Oates, 1887. The end of the book contains an appendix on the growth of the Institute since 1840 and two statistical lists of membership and schools.

<sup>462</sup> *Circulars*, T. IX p. 41, 12 June 1896. Letter of Br Théophile to M. Aubineau, on 10/02/1889 (*Circulars*, VII p. 580).

<sup>463</sup> *Délibérations du conseil général*, T. VI, (1897-1906), the 11/02 and 20/02/1902.

<sup>464</sup> *Délibérations du conseil général*, T. VIII, (1909-1913), 15/12/1911.

<sup>465</sup> *Délibérations du conseil general*, (enlarged) V. IV (1890-1902 of 21/11/1890).

<sup>466</sup> *Circulars*, T. VIII, p. 728. Circular of 27 December 1895.

<sup>467</sup> The Council (V. 9, 12/03/1914) accepted for a translation to be done by the Provinces of Spain but on the condition that it hold the right to give its imprimatur.

nat by Mgr. Laveille, Vicar General of Meaux and a well-known hagiographer, was quickly translated into several languages and would, for a time, tend to replace the *Life* written by Br Jean-Baptiste.<sup>468</sup>

Once the cause had been introduced, and on the advice of Fr Nicolet, the Institute published a publicity booklet on “Favours attributed to Venerable Fr Champagnat”, the first edition of which came out in 1906, another in 1912 and a third<sup>469</sup> in 1924 with 10,000 copies. The objective was clear:<sup>470</sup>

*To distribute it as widely as possible through our students, their parents, the relatives of Brothers, our Brother Collectors, Brothers in vocations work, and other means that each of us might be inspired to come up with. The main thing is that a large number of people know about it and are inspired to ask confidently for cures or other favours through the intercession of our Venerable Founder. I also recommend the distribution of pictures of Fr Champagnat with a relic attached.*



**100.** Painting of Champagnat in which the image of Mary, the book of Rules and the Rosary appear for the first time along with the Founder. An oil-painting, probably by Silverio Capparoni. Seems to have been commissioned on the occasion of the official introduction of the cause of beatification in Rome in 1896..

## Statues and portraits

Regarding statuary, Br Nestor had already ordered a bust of Fr Champagnat from a sculptor, Mr. Montagny<sup>471</sup> but the Council seems to have decided to not have it reproduced. On the other hand, on 29 May 1890 it accepted the bust of M. Zan from St Etienne and decided to have copies cast. On 20 October 1891 it gave its approval for a life-size statue to be produced by M. Vermare from Lyons, but on condition that the facial features remain as close as possible to those shown in the portrait of Ravery. This ended with the Vermare statue being widely distributed.

Being extremely careful to control the image of Fr Champagnat, on 20 January 1897 the Council rejected<sup>472</sup> a medallion of Fr Champagnat by M. Picot that was

<sup>468</sup> The Institute tried for a long time to collect any panegyrics published to mark the declaration of Fr Champagnat as Venerable in 1896. The stock seems to have been difficult to sell.

<sup>469</sup> *Délibérations du conseil général*, T. XI, (1922-1926), 04/11/1924.

<sup>470</sup> *Circulars*, T. XII, p. 166. Circular of 22 April 1912.

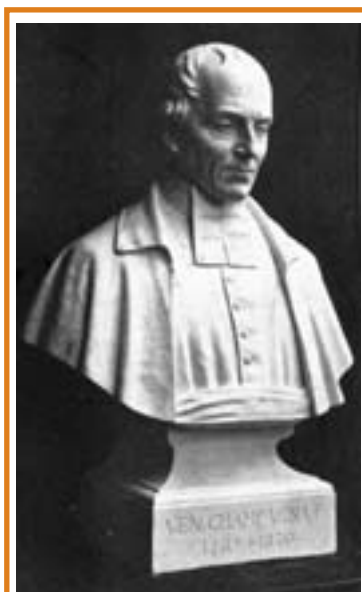
<sup>471</sup> *Délibérations du conseil general*, T. III, (1880-1889), 12/12/1884)

<sup>472</sup> *Délibérations du conseil général*, T. V, (1889-1897). Circular of 25 January 1887, T. VII, p. 327.

thought to bear little resemblance to him. Finally, on 25 May 1916<sup>473</sup> the Council would recognise only a single model of bust, that of the House of Borgagno in Turin. The Circular of 24 May 1916<sup>474</sup> stated:

*On the occasion of the Centenary we had a bust of our Venerable Father Founder made by a top sculptor from Turin. It is well done. It is life-size. After mature thought we have decided at the General Council that it will be adopted throughout the Institute to the exclusion of all others. We have made this decision to ensure the real uniformity we want. We will have a number of copies made for sale via the Econome General. Also, we propose to have a smaller copy made. The weight and size will be regulated to enable them to be sent by regular post.*

As for portraits, Br Nestor had also been something of a precursor: during his brief time as General, in 1882, the painting by Br Wulmer<sup>475</sup> was done, the original of which seems to have been lost. The Circular of 18 March 1905<sup>476</sup> spoke of large printed images (60 x 45 cm), and medium-size (25 x 15 cm). That of 24 May 1917 announced a portrait in chromolithography (colour-print): "It has the exact appearance of a fine oil painting. Its dimensions are 65 centimetres by 50. (...) We would like a copy to be in every classroom in the Institute."



**101.** Official 'bust' of Fr Champagnat, created in Turin (Italy) in 1917 on the occasion of the first centenary of the foundation of the Institute.

## Publicity by brochures and pictures

Statues, busts and large size portraits were relatively few in number and costly. The main means of publicity were small size holy cards. In 1892 Br Philogone<sup>477</sup> contacted a publisher in Poitiers to have copies made on a large-scale, using old images. So, over time books took second place in Institute promotion material to brochures and images. The Circular of 2 February 1909 asked the Brothers to distribute the book of panegyrics in honour of Fr Champagnat, the various versions of his *Life*, "and particularly

<sup>473</sup> *Délibérations du conseil général* T. IX, (1913-1919), 25 April 1916.

<sup>474</sup> *Circulars*, T. XIII, p. 240. Circular of 24 May 1916.

<sup>475</sup> This portrayed Fr Champagnat at his desk editing the Common Rules. See *Tras las huellas...* p. 164 and 242.

<sup>476</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 524-525. Circular du 18 March 1905.

<sup>477</sup> *Administrative letters* 11405 and 11404.

the abridged version in 54 pages that we have just published”.<sup>478</sup>Also, “the new holy cards, especially the one where the Venerable Founder is shown teaching catechism,” should be widely distributed. The Superior General kept picture-relics to himself that could be obtained on request.

On 2 February 1911, the Reverend Brother referred to a new picture-relic to be used on a wide scale, “among parents and acquaintances of our Brothers, among relatives of students at our schools, devout people (...) in a word, anywhere there may be some hope of obtaining a miracle”. The *Short Illustrated Life of the Venerable Founder*, recently published, was also to be distributed as widely as possible. Finally, “the small holy cards (coloured or not) with the Venerable Founder shown teaching catechism were still available in large numbers from the Econome General”. In his Circular of 2 February 1914, Br Stratonique spoke of one hundred and thirty thousand copies having been made. There were 12,000 copies of the *Short Illustrated Life of the Venerable Founder* still available from the Econome General at Grugliasco and 9,000 of the small brochure entitled, “*Biographical Notes on Venerable Fr M. Champagnat and stories of favours obtained through his intercession*”. Editions of the shorter ‘Life of the Founder’ in Spanish, Portuguese, German and Italian were to be distributed “as widely as possible”.

The Circular of 24 May 1916<sup>479</sup> announced that the General Council had decided to produce a large number of copies of a holy card of the Venerable Founder with a prayer on the back for his beatification, approved by the Promoter of the Faith. It also gave a sort of report on recent efforts to publicise the cause and mentioned the items that were available from the Econome General.

- 1° Short Illustrated Life of the Venerable Founder, in French: 10.000 copies
- 2° Biographical Notes and favours attributed to Ven. Fr Champagnat: 6.500 copies
- 3° New picture of Ven. Fr Champagnat, with young people: French text, 24,000; Spanish text, 2,500<sup>480</sup>
- 4° Old picture of Ven. Fr Champagnat, with young people: Italian text, 7,000; English text, 7,500; Portuguese text, 8,000.

Br Stratonique hammered away again, “We must obtain miracles! The greater our faith and trust, the easier it is to obtain the favours requested”.

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<sup>478</sup> This was the *Vie abrégée du Vénérable Marcellin Champagnat* combined with stories of extraordinary favours obtained through his intercession ( *Circulars*, T. XI, p. 333, 11 November 1908 )

<sup>479</sup> *Circulars*, T. X, p. 524-525. Circular of 18 March 1905.

<sup>480</sup> Council deliberations spoke of this as a picture “like the painting in Rome”, probably the one that was a colour print.

Did the results match the efforts of the General Council? A comparison of the 1914 and 1916 figures allows an assessment to be made of the relatively slow circulation of brochures in a context of war where communications were disturbed.

PROMOTION MATERIAL OF BROCHURES AND HOLY CARDS			
BROCHURES	STOCK 1914	STOCK 1916	DIFFERENCE
Short Illustrated Life of Fr Champagnat	12.000	10.000	2.000
Biographical Notice and favours.	9.000	6.500	2.500

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 16, N°115, January 1939.

Nevertheless, around the time of the centenary the Institute had fixed the broad lines of its publicity strategy: statues, busts, portraits, brochures and books in various languages,<sup>481</sup> and large-scale printing of holy cards. In his 1947 history of the Institute, Br Jean-Emile also mentioned the production of the *Revue Champagnat* composed at the Hermitage from 1935, with a distribution of 5,000 copies and 35,000 copies of the *Champagnat Calendar*. Similar calendars were distributed in large numbers in Belgium and Canada. In any case, around 1930 the cause of Fr Champagnat had largely become the responsibility of the Provinces who distributed their own magazines, gave his name<sup>482</sup> to numerous schools, erected monuments in his honour and printed many holy cards and brochures ... not always with the backing of the General Council it would seem.

Having said that, soon after the Second World War, the General Council adopted an active policy of publicity through holy cards. On 8 February 1946 it ordered 200,000 holy cards in colour from Mignard of Paris and the same number from Lescuyer of Lyons. On 12 February 1952 it decided to print a further 200,000 holy cards using a portrait by an artist from Rome.<sup>483</sup> In 1952 a comic book on Fr Champagnat was produced by Fleurus publications of Paris.<sup>484</sup> In the same year, Br Leonidas commissioned a portrait of Fr Champagnat from M. Paul Delormez of Paris but in the end this was not used at the beatification.

<sup>481</sup> The Volumes of minutes of the General Council contain numerous authorisations of translations and publications.

<sup>482</sup> To my knowledge the first college to bear the name of Champagnat was in Buenos Aires in 1914. *Délibérations du conseil général*, T. IX (1913-1919), 12/12/1914.

<sup>483</sup> Br A. Carazo believes that the influence of the General Council and French taste predominated until around 1930 but from then on, especially at the time of the Beatification, the influence of the Provinces and Roman taste predominated.

<sup>484</sup> It was rather an "Illustrated Life", with the text by Abbé Vignon and illustration by Robert Rigot.



## The *Bulletin* of the Institute and the causes of beatification

The *Bulletin* which was started in 1909 was not intended to cover the causes of beatification. For this reason it had few specific articles on the Founder apart from T. 7 (1917-1918) that recounted the numerous celebrations organised around the world for the centenary of the congregation. Nonetheless the *Bulletin* had the advantage of having more space for pictures and photos and became more preferred as a means of communication to the Circulars. From 1930<sup>485</sup> on Br Jean-Emile published a few articles: on favours attributed to Fr Champagnat;<sup>486</sup> on Marist sacred places like his bedroom at the Hermitage;<sup>487</sup> or significant events such as the new edition of his *Life* in 1931<sup>488</sup> and the placing of a plaque at Fourvière.<sup>489</sup> He sometimes wrote articles of real interest such as “Students as they were”<sup>490</sup> that referred to the studies and doctrinal notes of Br François. He was the first to take an interest in the original portrait of Fr Champagnat that had long been forgotten<sup>491</sup>.



**102.** A pencil portrait in which Champagnat is shown with the Rosary and the book of Rules but without the statue of Mary.

**103.** A large-scale painting in colour, conserved in the General Archives, in which Marcellin Champagnat is making “an offering of his work” to Mary.



**104.** Drawing – composition. “Marcellin the catechist”, teaching children. In his left hand he is holding a catechism of Mary.

<sup>485</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XII-XV, (1930-1937).

<sup>486</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XII, N° 80, April 1930, p. 109; T. XII, N° 85, April 1930, p. 430. T. XIII, N° 94, October 1963, p. 469; T. XIV, N° 96, April 1934, p. 104; T. XIV, N° 98, October de 1934, p. 241 and T. XIV, N° 99, January 1935, p. 295.

<sup>487</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIII, N° 87, January 1932, p. 28.

<sup>488</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XII, N° 83, January 1931, p. 320.

<sup>489</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIV, N° 102, p. 472. This did not commemorate the promise made by the group of Marists but only that of Champagnat.

<sup>490</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIII, N° 94, October 1933, p. 469.

<sup>491</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIV, N° 112, April 1938, p. 5.

What can be said is that, overall, Fr Champagnat and Br François were mentioned quite frequently in the Bulletin but in a fleeting and anecdotal way, and not as full, independent subjects.

After T. XVI (1938-39) the feel of the Bulletin changed. Br Jean-Emile was replaced by Br Avit. The centenary of the death of Fr Champagnat was drawing close. So, the Bulletin of April 1938<sup>492</sup> appealed for a renewed effort in regularity and prayer but also in publicity so as to advance the cause of Fr Champagnat. From then on, many Bulletins would return to the causes of beatification, in particular N° 115 of January 1939 which exhorted a renewal of efforts to get the message out.

*Perhaps a lack of know-how has meant that one or other telling fact has been forgotten or not made use of at the right time that others could have better brought to light so as to radiate the sanctity of our V. Founder.*

He also reminded readers of some of the collection of holy cards to be distributed:

*Based on one of the more artistic representations of V. Champagnat, formerly produced by the Benziger company of Einsiedeln in Switzerland, there are now two classical types (...) resulting from the piety and the paintbrush of Brother Mary-Stanislaus of Australia. In one of these images, Fr Champagnat is offering a bouquet that symbolises the virtues and works of her spiritual sons. The other represents him in his preferred role as a catechist.*

## The summary made in 1947

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The BI of April 1947<sup>493</sup> gave the most complete overview of the many ways that Fr Champagnat was being made known around the world. Firstly at the Hermitage with his tomb and “the so-called room of relics”; the Hermitage was also the place of dispatch for the *Revue Champagnat* that publicised the favours obtained through the intercession of Fr Champagnat and reminded Brothers of the dates for the novena to be made to obtain his beatification.<sup>494</sup> The Champagnat Calendar and numerous Provincial magazines brought the name of the Founder and knowledge of his work into homes. There was as well the birthplace of Venerable Champagnat at Le Rosey, which the Institute partly owned. Curiously, no mention was made of Lavalla.

In terms of paintings and sculptures, portraits of Champagnat figured in the sanctuary of La Louvesc and on the façade of the church at St Sauveur-en-Rue. It was soon to be sculpted onto that of the basilica at Fourvière. At the San Fernando College at Sevilla there was an image in Seville ceramic (1.5m x 1m) portraying Fr

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<sup>492</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XVI, N° 112, April 1938, p. 65.

<sup>493</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 17, N° 126 April 1947.

<sup>494</sup> Recitation of three *Hail Mary's*, the prayer approved for the beatification and the invocations of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



**105.** Reliquary presented to Pope Pius XII on 29 May 1955 on the occasion of the beatification. It contained a tooth of Marcellin Champagnat. It is a smaller scale version of one inaugurated in Havana in 1954. The reliquary is currently displayed in the chapel of General House community.



**106.** Statute erected in honor of Marcellin Champagnat at the Novitiate house at Santa María de Bellpuig at Les Avellanes. The work of ex-student José Flotats de Canet de Mar (Barcelona). Inaugurated on 15th August 1949. It has been used as a prototype for numerous other statues.



**107.** Postage stamp released on the occasion of the 9th World Congress of Marist Ex-students in Chile in November 1982. The stamp depicts the stained glass dedicated to Champagnat in the chapel at Tibidabo in Barcelona.

Champagnat surrounded by children of various races.<sup>495</sup>

There were many busts of Fr Champagnat: “there were various models to be found almost across the Marist world”. A few particularly striking examples were indicated: a marble bust at the entrance to the college at Manizales, Colombia; that of Valdemia college at Mataró (Spain) in Carrara marble, placed in the grounds in 1915; that of the formation house at Tuy in the Province of León, in bronze, the work of a famous artist, José Zorrilla. In Argentina, in each of the communities, a place of honour was reserved for a bust of the Founder.

*There was also a great variety of statues. The oldest was that of the House of Vermare in Lyons. (...) This statue in cast-iron was blessed at Aubenas in 1894 on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Br Philogone, Assistant General for the Province.*

Copies of this were in Lebanon, Sydney, Iberville and St Hyacinthe (Canada). Plaster reproductions were to be found in St Genis-Laval, Charlieu, Mittagong, Randwick, Kilmore, Glenelg, and many other places. A second type, in bronzed cement, portraying the Venerable Founder with a group of children, was erected in the town square at Santa Maria (Rio Grande del Sul) and numerous copies of this existed in Brazil. The third model presented the Venerable Fr Champagnat leading a child: the statue, in bronze, had been blessed on October 1942 at the Provincial house at Luján, Argentina.

Stained glass windows commemorating Champagnat were to be found at Marlies, his birthplace; in a chapel at Izieux near the Hermitage; in Canada in

<sup>495</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XVI, N° 116, April 1939, p. 397.

the parish church of Sainte Philomène-de-Rosemont in Montreal; in the church of the Lazarists at Bélem de Para on the Amazon in North Brazil. In our chapels there were one or two stained glass windows of Fr Champagnat, either surrounded by children or presenting Our Lady with a symbolic bouquet: at Arlon and at Mont-Saint-Guibert in Belgium; at Cassel in the Province of Beaucamps; at Port Victoria in the Seychelles; at Popayán in Colombia; at Luján in Argentina; in most of the chapels in our houses in central Brazil. At Tyngsborough in the United States there were four windows and a fifth would be put in place after the beatification. The Istituto Champagnat, the Provincial house of South Brazil in Porto Alegre, had sixteen windows recalling the life of Fr Champagnat. In the college of Cisne Street in Madrid, a window portrayed Marcellin welcoming our Brother martyrs. At Saint-Pourçain, (France), a beautiful window showed him sitting between the first two directors of the school surrounded by a group of children whose faces were still recognisable. The establishment of a 'Champagnat day' by the 1932 Chapter had contributed to the production of multiple dramas and small plays, poems and songs but without any really outstanding pieces among them. The list was long of houses, colleges and schools bearing the name "Champagnat".

Obviously, concluded the author, all such zeal counted for nothing without filial fervour. "If Venerable Marcellin Champagnat does not intervene, as we would wish, by some striking cures, won't this be because the general state of holiness in the Congregation needs to improve and counterbalance the defects of half-heartedness and laxity?"

It was only after giving this warning that the author dreamt of offering a bibliography. Firstly, *The Life of V. Marcellin-Joseph-Benedict Champagnat, by one of his first disciples*, translated also into Spanish. A new English translation was at the press. The book, *Marcellin Champagnat* by Guy Chastel, a short work of 170p published in 1939<sup>496</sup> was for an uninitiated readership. It seems that the book *Marcellin Champagnat* of Mgr Laveille was a bit out-dated.<sup>497</sup> In terms of publications for a general audience, there was *Venerable Marcellin Champagnat*, in French and English, a brochure of 64 pages with 32 illustrations, intended for schools, vocations days and for the use of recruiters. There were two pictures: *A colour painting of V. Fr Champagnat* (65 X 55 cm) and "an artistic holy card" recently run off in seven colours, with a format of 121 x 78 mm without a text on the reverse side so that it could be used in all countries. And, of course, there was a stock of small cards with texts in English and Spanish.

The cause of Champagnat, then, like Marist identity, appeared to be increasingly based on prestigious expressions and Marist historical places, combined with simple displays in which images and celebrations played a major role. In some way, the scene was being set for the celebrations of the beatification to come, with their roll-out of triduum and other events. Moreover, it would be the Bulletin that would be the preferred means of communicating these events in words and pictures in Tomes XXI (1954-55) and XXII (1956-58), too long to detail here.

<sup>496</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XVI, N° 117, July 1939, p. 347 and 560. . Guy Chastel, éditions Al-sacia, Paris. (BI N° 117)

<sup>497</sup> The 1921 edition, with its 431 pages, was not really suitable for the general public.

The beatification of Fr Champagnat in 1955 obviously provoked an explosion of art and writings on Champagnat.<sup>498</sup> But mention could also be made of an attempt at keeping things uniform: the official portrait of Tito Ridolfi (1954) and the images of the painter J.B. Conti inundated the Marist world.<sup>499</sup> In an article in *Marist Notebooks* (N 6, December 1994, p. 1-7) Br Fernando Hinojal outlined the main phases of Champagnat iconography.<sup>500</sup> For the period 1955-89, he stressed the great diversity in styles and techniques, and also in thematic content (educational, marital, a person for all etc.). Br A. Carazo<sup>501</sup> pointed out the predominance of a Roman style around the beatification, followed by a 1980-99 phase of renewal in Marist iconography, particularly through the work of two artists from the Spanish world: Gregorio Dominguez (Goyo) in paintings, and Br José Santamaria in sculpture.

## Problems in the strategy for reaching canonisation

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From 1887 to 1999 the Institute gave absolute priority to the cause of Fr Champagnat. Even if that of Br François emerged very early on, there was much less effort put into promoting his cause. The causes of the Spanish martyrs, that remained for a long time untouched owing to political-religious factors, were not concluded until after the canonisation of the Founder which had been a drawn-out process after his beatification.<sup>502</sup>

However, this event had spurred on the pursuit of his cause in the hope of a speedy canonisation.<sup>503</sup> The 1958 Chapter had put in place a truckload of measures to promote devotion to the new 'Blessed' Marcellin. In particular, it proposed: a definitive and critical biography of the Life of Fr Champagnat; a History of the Institute of the same quality; and even a film on the Founder made by specialists. The construction of Chapels in honour of Marcellin Champagnat at the Hermitage and Marlies, and the refurbishment of Lavalla in the years following the beatification were, in any case, to provide greater consistency between the Marist 'sacred' places.

So, should some relationship be seen between the beatification of Fr Champagnat and the taking up (or rather taking off) of historical studies on the origins of the Institute? Not a direct one, it would seem. In the introduction to his "Contribution to research into the origins of the Little Brothers of Mary", a significant title, pub-

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<sup>498</sup> See: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXI, N° 160, 1955, on the Beatification.

<sup>499</sup> Br A. Carazo, *Tras las huellas de Marcelino Champagnat* p. 108-109, 239.

<sup>500</sup> Using the albums of pictures in the General Archives.

<sup>501</sup> From an exchange of correspondence with the author.

<sup>502</sup> The *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XVII, N° 120 (1940) suggests that these Brother martyrs would one day be canonised.

<sup>503</sup> The cure of Br Heriberto Weber in 1976 in Montevideo would lead to a lengthy enquiry which, thanks to the efforts of Brs Carazo and Andreucci, was recognised as a miracle in 1998.

lished in the Bulletin in January 1955, Br Louis-Laurent (Pierre Zind) makes no reference to the coming beatification of Marcellin Champagnat.<sup>504</sup> His unique reference was to the approaching centenary (1856) of the publication of the *Life* of Champagnat by Br Jean-Baptiste.

A feeling of liberation resulted from the Institute being freed by the beatification from a conventional, even backward-looking, view of its origins.<sup>505</sup> While it is not possible to speak of a Marist school of history as such, quite a number of researchers (P. Zind, G. Michel, A. Balko, S. Farrell, A. Brambila ...) through articles and sometimes books of high academic quality, renewed our knowledge of Champagnat and Marist origins. Nevertheless, it was only in 1985-87 that the two volumes of 'Letters of Marcellin Champagnat' would appear; and in 1989 a new edition of his *Life* based on the original of 1856.<sup>506</sup>

As history became introduced into a field that until then had been treated from a religious, even edifying, perspective, the traditional supports of our causes were pushed into the background. From 1958, Circulars were exclusively on doctrinal matters. The Bulletin of the Institute<sup>507</sup> gave more space to Br François, the Spanish martyrs, and Br Alfano; but the post-Conciliar atmosphere and the crisis of identity of the Institute rapidly shifted the focus towards subjects that were judged to be more fundamental and urgent. Consequently, the canonisation of Marcellin Champagnat on 18 April 1999 was an event that had been waited for with greater patience than his venerability (1896) or his beatification (1955). Coming as it did in a quite different historical context, it would be framed in quite a different light.

It is not my task, however, to give any more detail on the history of our causes, especially after 1985. I simply want to mention that the FMS Message N 43 outlined the following state of the causes in 2013: the cause of M. Champagnat completed by his canonisation; two confessors whose causes had not been completed: Venerable Brothers François and Alfano; the cause of Br Basilio Rueda whose diocesan process had begun in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Concerning the Spanish martyrs, the outstanding causes are those of Br Lycarion and particularly that of Br Eusebio and his 58 companions from various dioceses in Catalunya whose diocesan process was taken up in Barcelona in 1993.<sup>508</sup> The cause of Br Henri Vergès (1930-1994), assassinated in Algiers, is combined with that of 18 other martyrs of Algeria.

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<sup>504</sup> On 16 November 1954 the preparatory sitting of the Roman congregation accepted the two miracles attributed to the Founder (Chronology 2010 p. 362). The article had certainly been written well beforehand but the perspective of the beatification favoured its early publication in the Bulletin.

<sup>505</sup> The huge quantity of Marist promotional literature after the beatification would require a study on its own.

<sup>506</sup> The re-editions of 1897 and 1931 had made some changes. There was still little use of historical critical methods.

<sup>507</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XIV-XXVII, N° 183-210 (1961-1969).

<sup>508</sup> Br Juan J. Moral Barrio, *Vidas entregadas. Martirologio Marista en España. 1909-1939*, Institute of the Marist Brothers, 1997. p. 809.

## From a former way of being Church to a “new era of martyrs”?

The Institute certainly succeeded on the ‘remembering’ side of things at the canonisation of its Founder, but at the cost of maintaining a static interpretation of our origins up until his beatification. Brs François and Alfano remain largely “hidden and unknown”, their causes progressing juridically without any strong support from the bulk of the Institute. Yet, these two Brothers, especially the first, left significant spiritual writings that the Institute has barely thought of using until today as if their process of beatification had put a deeper knowledge of these candidates for official sainthood on ice.



**108.** Br Henri Vergés.  
Killed, Algeria, 1994.

I readily acknowledge a link between a really quite superficial knowledge of the candidates for beatification and the difficulty in obtaining “clear miracles” which are the concern of Superiors and Postulators. This difficulty can make them wonder about a lack of fervour in the Institute. Still, isn’t one part of the problem a tendency to promote quite superficial and repetitive devotions to the detriment of a deeper study that might introduce something new<sup>509</sup> ?

In the persons of the 175 Spanish martyrs from 1934-1936, the Institute had abruptly come face to face with a different sort of sanctity, one that was more current. The Circular of 8 May 1998,<sup>510</sup> entitled “Fidelity to our mission in situations of social unrest”, added fundamental elements to our reflection on what constitutes Marist sanctity. Beginning with recent events – 11 Brothers killed in Rwanda, Congo and Algeria – and recalling that the number of Brother martyrs had reached more than 200, Br Benito Arbuès spoke of “a new era of martyrs” being lived through by the Church and the Institute in a world where Christian influence is waning and where violent situations have rapidly increased in frequency and contexts.

Such a reflection went a long way towards reminding us about where we came from: the Society of Mary, born in the French Revolution and founded on a universal mission and the risk of martyrdom. The lives of Marist Brothers, from the time of Fr Champagnat and Br François, have been shaken in every generation by revolutions, wars and persecutions. Today as well, the prospect of martyrdom remains very real in many places. For this reason, it is not appropriate to make any negative

<sup>509</sup> Br A. Carazo pointed to this lack of serious study but also to the few people devoted to these causes; the fact of being a lay congregation; etc.

<sup>510</sup> *Circulars*, T. XXX, N° 2. Circular of 8 May 1998 “Fidelity to our mission in situations of social unrest”

comparison between those who are honoured for their heroicity in having accomplished their duties of state and others who have shed their blood: all of them have lived in a “new era of martyrs”, in their own way and according to their own destiny. Really, this is the only era the Institute has ever known.



## CONCLUSION:

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### A SUMMARY REFLECTION ON AN EPOCH AND THE START OF A NEW ERA

After the sixty years described above, a period began that was more peaceful in general but where our “army ranged for battle” was now obliged to question itself on the best strategies to adopt in its fight on unforeseen fronts for God and the Church. Before diving into any reflection on this new historical context, it seems necessary to recapitulate the main preceding stages.

The period from 1907 to 1920 was one of total restructuring due to the large-scale exile of 1903 and the implementation of the new Constitutions. As a result, the Institute that had been an overly-centralised body until that time, became a federation of autonomous Provinces. The First World War made things worse in the destruction of a swathe of schools in the Ottoman Empire, making communication difficult or even impossible, compromising the growth of certain Provinces such as Germany, and, finally, obliging a really large number of Brothers to fight for causes that were at odds with their ideals.

The response to all such trials was to achieve an effective balance between decentralisation with its flexibility (for the Provinces) and the maintenance of strong, unifying ties. More than ever before, the Rule was the pillar of the Institute. The General Council, with the Assistants General becoming ‘super-Provincials’, would demand its meticulous observance across all countries. So as to maintain or reinforce this unity the Chapter created some new instruments such as the Bulletin of the Institute (1909) and the Work of St Francis Xavier. The Second Novitiate which had recently started up became a structure for international, on-going formation. Finally, the Circulars of Br Stratonique reinforced the ‘*esprit de corps*’ through presenting the history of the Institute as a spiritual lineage, a source of honour and responsibility, and his reminder that “God does not change” – and neither does the Rule!

By 1920 the Institute could note that it had recuperated very well from the shock of 1903, had come through the trials of the war, had implemented its constitutional change (the Common Rule and the Constitutions) and had adapted its teaching methods to an international context. Yet this overall success hid many questions: the cultural unity of the congregation was fracturing; the old style of Church which the Institute had served so devotedly had been extremely affected by the war; the missionary dynamism of the congregation was at a standstill; many Provinces were

in a state of decline or were having difficulty in re-establishing themselves; attitudes were becoming more secularised ... As a report to the 1932 General Chapter said, "The congregation looks like a worn-out army. It is time for it to take a break from any new conquests ..." But what could they do when the Depression, wars, revolutions and persecutions were to start up after a brief period of calm? It was not until after 1945 that the strategy of being 'an army ranged for battle', to make new conquests or stand their ground, would slowly lose its relevance.

This strategy had both its flexible and questioning side. The General Council and Chapters were into reform in ways they did not always admit. This avoided things coming to a head but at some cost to their authority: what was forbidden today would be allowed tomorrow. Further, the proposals for change were not just about minor details such as the habit, language and the rabat. They touched on the priesthood, colleges, Catholic Action, formation and the means of communication, amongst others. The impression given was of a slow shift in authority from the General Council to the Provinces and even to individual schools that anticipated decisions from central authorities when confronted with national and local emergencies. A good example of this was the suppression of the rule concerning linen socks by Provinces without any decision being made on this at the level of the Institute. There were times when the General Council took a stand on certain questions such as the rabat, which caused a real revolt in Spain.<sup>511</sup> But, most often, the General Council and Chapters adopted the principle of subsidiarity by leaving it to Provincial Councils to resolve issues locally.

Therefore, to use the language of Br Basilio, I willingly subscribe to the idea that from 1907 to 1958 the Institute was dominated by the 'spirituality-structures' tendency, conscious that among its members there were those who held the line against any concessions – a minority in my opinion – and those ready to make adjustments. Moreover, I would happily modify the concept developed by Rev Br Basilio<sup>512</sup> by splitting it as follows: on the one hand, 'spirituality-structures' understood in rigid and ideological terms; on the other, 'spirituality-structures' understood in a way that was flexible and profound. I believe that this latter tendency was the source of a lot of re-thinking and critiques before 1967.

For example, virulent critiques were made at the 1932 Chapter against an educational structure that was geared too heavily towards the middle or upper classes. Concern began to be expressed about weak perseverance, including that of finally professed Brothers. The petition of a significant number of Brothers in favour of the priesthood was a surprise. Clearly, there was a malaise that was making itself felt, without any obvious, serious remedy. The many external difficulties from the end of the 1930s to the 1958 Chapter hardly allowed for any policy other than making timely adjustments in a body whose unity had been severely weakened. It was only at the 1958 Chapter that a reformist majority would make its appearance, prudently but firmly, but would not have the time to really put its stamp on decisions taken.

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<sup>511</sup> The minutes of the General Council have an extended account of this issue.

<sup>512</sup> In his Circular Br Basilio hesitated between "spirituality" and "spiritualism". The latter seems more appropriate to me since he was referring to a spirituality that was tightly bound to the institution.

I found it easy to find evidence of an enduring tendency that could be named ‘spirituality-structures’ but I have had difficulty in finding the supposed one of ‘psychologism-freedom’. Still, on reflection, I came to think that this tendency has been integral to the life of the Institute all throughout its history on the condition that a clear distinction is made between ‘psychologism-freedom’, unbending and mixed up with ideology, and simply ‘psychology-freedom’.



**109.** Vatican Council II, a watershed moment between two epochs.

In my opinion, the story of the concept of ‘psychology-freedom’ began with the two first Brothers at Lavalla in 1817 who placed their trust in a curate. It continued around 1820 when the Brothers declared themselves ready to follow their Founder when he was under threat of being replaced. We could multiply the examples of Brothers who were capable of making personal choices in circumstances that were not envisaged in the Rule and where the institution had suffered setbacks. The secularised Brothers from 1903 to 1906 were an example on a large scale of ‘psychology-freedom’ as were so many Brothers in times of persecution in Mexico, Germany, China, Spain and elsewhere, or else those conscripted during world wars. Our study of the obituaries has shown that many Brothers, while living ap-

parently humdrum lives, gave evidence of a personal spirituality that seems to me to be a wonderful example of their 'psychology-freedom'. It is even possible to make the generalisation that the secret of the stability of the Institute had less to do with the Rule than the free conscience of subjects who followed when people spoke sense and when there was a clear apostolic mission. Essentially, the success of the Institute was to inspire a large number of its members to closely integrate 'spirituality-structure' and 'psychology-freedom', which amounts to nothing less than a definition of 'vocation' when all is said and done.

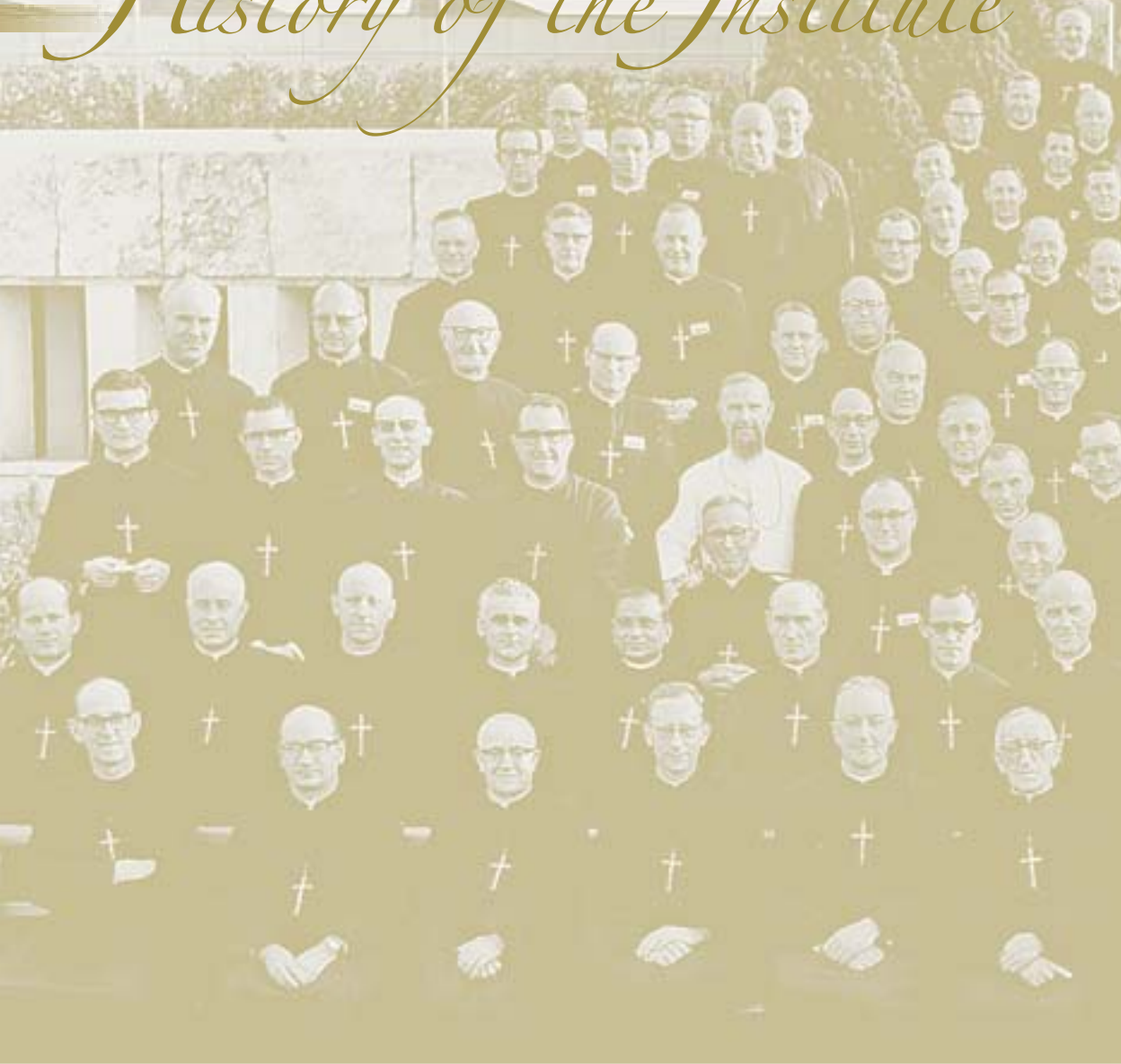
There is, however, another side to the coin. The large number of Brothers leaving the congregation shows that there has been a very high proportion who did not succeed in the integration just mentioned. Furthermore, the perseverance of others raises questions, those whom Br Avit years ago called "the good-for-nothings" or whom numerous Institute texts referred to as "people with a bad attitude". Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century General Chapters were increasingly worried about the high number of withdrawals, not only of temporary professed but finally professed as well. To remedy the situation, people sought to improve formation ... people were reminded that vocation was a divine choice that they could not walk away from ... Nothing changed as a result and people came to the conclusion that they were face to face with the mystery of human freedom. Yet the Institute failed to ask the right question: wasn't it part of the problem? Wasn't it because it was a body in which structure dominated spirituality and freedom that many Brothers had left or stayed on creating problems?

The institutional conversion that the Institute neither understood nor was capable of seeing through before 1967 had to be taken up in great haste and confusion. The image of an army ranged for battle lost all its relevance as a result. The consequences of this shock were ambivalent: on the one hand, the institutional unity of the Institute was weakened; on the other, some fundamental characteristics of our origins came to light: being an association of free men, united around an apostolic mission that was both grounded in real life and all-embracing.

Before concluding, I think it would be helpful to mention another structural cause for the stability and structural tension: being an Institute that was both a society of educators and a religious order. The circulars come down on the side of our being a monastic order but the Bulletins of the Institute highlight our being primarily a teaching and apostolic body. When formation style is considered, there was a strongly monastic character to initial formation but this was only for a few years. Thereafter, the Brothers were engaged in years of hard work as teachers, accompanied by religious exercises that risked becoming simply formalised devotional practices. This was the main challenge of 'active' congregations who were struggling to develop an apostolic spirituality. The Second Novitiate and other places of higher formation managed only a partial response and too late to the need to integrate apostolic life and spirituality. The very rapid foundation of new schools from 1946 on, without a parallel growth in the number of Brothers, was to contribute to widening the gap between religious order and society of educators. Furthermore, the rapid rise in the presence of lay people, resulting from a poorly-managed growth in the number of schools, was to become an important element of the post-Conciliar crisis.

Vatican II, then, triggered the explosion of an identity crisis, the roots of which went back partly to the 1852-54 Chapter. That of 1967-68, amidst much noise and confusion, put an end to a definition of Marist identity that was more than a hundred years old. It had never been seriously re-thought over those years, despite many adaptations. Deconstructing a stable model can turn into a catastrophe and even if the group that undertakes this is strong and flexible enough not to collapse completely, the reconstructing process can only be laborious.

# *History of the Institute*



**Crisis and refounding of  
the marist identity**



## PART II

*In the Introduction to this Volume I referred to the depth of the crisis evident during the first session of the 1967-68 Chapter, held soon*

*after the Council. Time was needed, nevertheless, to appreciate that they were not just facing a crisis related to events that could be*

# History of the Institute

*addressed by a simple aggiornamento, but a structural crisis. To take a classical biblical image, the Institute thought it was crossing the Red Sea and would soon find itself in the Promised Land. Instead it was faced with a long march through the desert: a time of deconstructing and reconstructing that led to confusion and numerical collapse on the one hand and an extraordinary effort at redefining Marist identity on the other. I intend to focus on this first post-Conciliar phase, leaving it to someone more knowledgeable than me to deal with the period from 1985 until today.*

*Nonetheless, it seems to me that there is a close connection between these two post-conciliar phases since, after 1985, despite*

*the fact that it has seriously re-imagined its identity, the Institute appears to me to lack dynamism. To understand this phenomenon, another biblical image may help: that of the Tower of Babel. Indeed, the Institute is living with a considerable confusion of language: certainly a crisis of faith and spirituality but particularly, in my opinion, of the language being used. As beautiful and profound as the texts may be that redefine Marist identity, they are life-giving only for those who have wholeheartedly embraced the culture that underpins them. Br Basilio early on spoke of the necessity of institutional conversion and he asked Brothers to take their spiritual lives seriously. But the most difficult and longest conversion is*



*undoubtedly that of culture. This cultural 'lag' is very evident when a comparison is made between the texts in Circulars and Chapter documents and the mentalities and thinking of 'ordinary' Brothers. This is why I would readily*

*categorise this period 1967-1985 as a profound cultural revolution that all the Brothers in Institute have struggled to assimilate, all the more so since the ranks of a new generation of Brothers are so singularly thin.*



## 29.

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# THE CRISIS BETWEEN 1959 AND 1985. A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

The Institute has always kept an eye on its statistics for administrative purposes but also because the ascending graphs of the number of Brothers, schools, Provinces and students were signs of its fidelity to its original inspiration. Before 1967 the only significant downturn was in 1903. This had only reinforced the conviction of the Institute that it was on the right track, however, since this event had been caused by enemies of the faith and had been followed by a rapid recovery. When growth slowed down or Provinces stagnated, this was put down to failings in regard to the Rule more than any work of wrong-doers. Besides, this mystification of 'number' did not prevent the Institute from acting very pragmatically to ensure a plentiful flow of vocations. Again, the continuing downward trend of statistics after 1967, despite considerable efforts at renewal and recruiting, troubled many Brothers. Little by little they had to face facts: the Institute was experiencing an unprecedented structural crisis of which the descending statistics were the most obvious indication.

### The end of an era<sup>513</sup>

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No more than comparable Institutes, the Marist Brothers had not seen the crisis coming. The perseverance of Brothers was weak but the Institute seemed settled into a sort of ebb and flow process which led to a nett positive result in most administrative units. Thus, in the years between 1958 and 1964 many Provinces were divided, mostly because of a strong growth in membership:

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<sup>513</sup> Sources: *Bulletin of the Institute*, XXXI N° 221 p. 159, general statistics by Province; Appendix to the Bulletin of the Institute of April, 1967.

LARGE-SCALE RE-ORGANISATION OF PROVINCES	
1958	Uruguay separated from the Province of Germany
1959	Central Brazil divided into the Provinces of Rio and San Paulo
1959	China-Ceylon divided. Creation of the District of Sri Lanka
1959	Spain passed from 4 provinces (Betica, Levante, Leon, Norte) to 6
1959	Division of the Province of the United States: Esopus and Poughkeepsie
1959	Beaucamps made responsible for New Caledonia, ceded by the Hermitage
1959	Varenes-Orient became Varenes. Lebanon-Syria and Madagascar became Districts
1959	Portugal separated from south Brazil
1959	Venezuela separated from Norte.
1960	The Province of Lévis (Canada) divided : creation of Débiens
1960	Mexico divided into two Provinces
1960	The Philippines separated from the Province of Esopus
1962	Belgium- Congo divided into Belgium–Holland and Congo-Rwanda
1962	Swiss-missions separated from St Genis-Laval and Germany
1963	South Brazil divided into the Provinces of Caxias do sul and Porto Alegre
1964	Santa Catarina (Brazil) divided into Santa Catarina and Santa Maria
1964	Division of Argentina into the Provinces of Cordoba and Lujan
Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey using data in the <i>Bulletin of the Institute</i> , T. 27, N°206, April 1967.	

This massive increase in administrative units, intended to better manage growth,<sup>514</sup> almost immediately met with – and in part provoked – a sudden drop in the number of Brothers. Because people clung to the hope of things changing for a long time, the policy of fusing Provinces would not be enacted until 1996-2001.

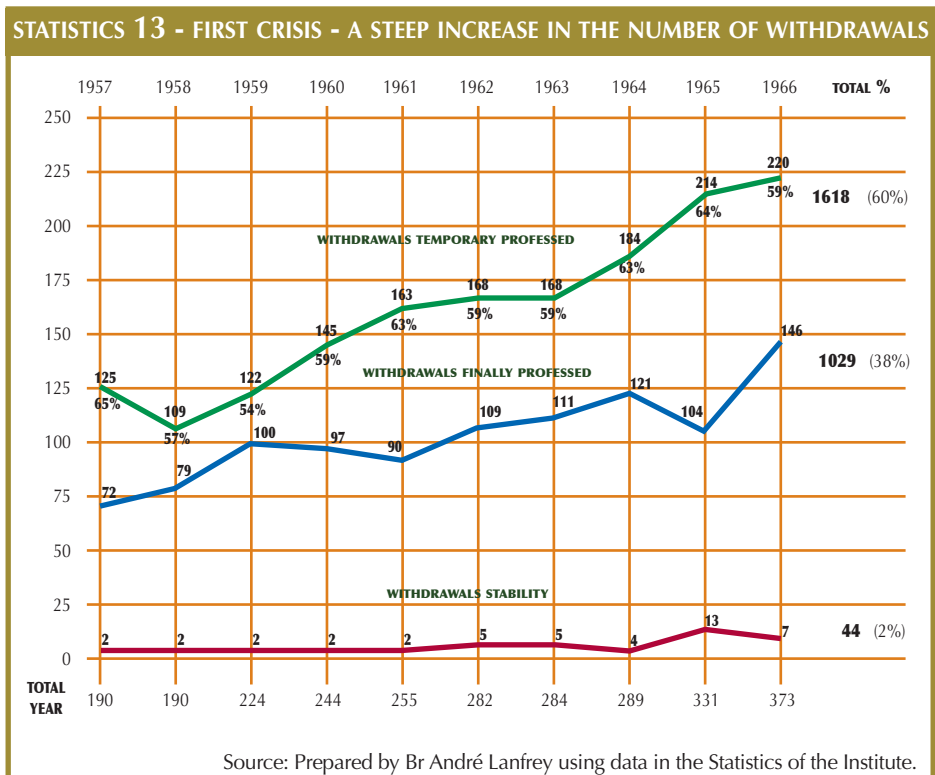
### The first crisis: 1959-66

The large number of withdrawals was not in itself a new phenomenon since the Institute had lived with a more or less constant demographic of only 30% of Brothers who received the habit dying in the Institute. Its numerical prosperity until 1966 rested on a balance between three complementary factors: large numbers of first professions; withdrawals, in big numbers for sure, but spaced out over time;

<sup>514</sup> Thereafter only limited adjustments were made. In 1975, the Province of Ecuador was created. In the same period, Nigeria and Ireland were separated from Great Britain. The French Province of Sud-Ouest was absorbed by l’Hermitage.

and a substantial extension in expected life span, something that is often overlooked. The crisis began with an acceleration in withdrawals and then there was a drop in new entries. The extension of life span only softened the effects of the double crisis connected with entries and withdrawals.

Between 1957 and 1961 there was a steep increase in the number of withdrawals, especially among finally professed Brothers. It can be explained, in part, as resulting from the 1958 Chapter and the breaking up of the Provinces. In short, it was a crisis of timing, such as the Institute had known in the past. But this time it did not calm down and it can be presumed that the announcement of the Council in 1959 and how it evolved came to give this trend the character of an enduring crisis. The Council years, 1962-65, saw the rise in withdrawals continue, particularly among the temporary professed and even Brothers with stability. The years 1965 and 1966 showed a worsening in withdrawals just when entries began to trend downwards.



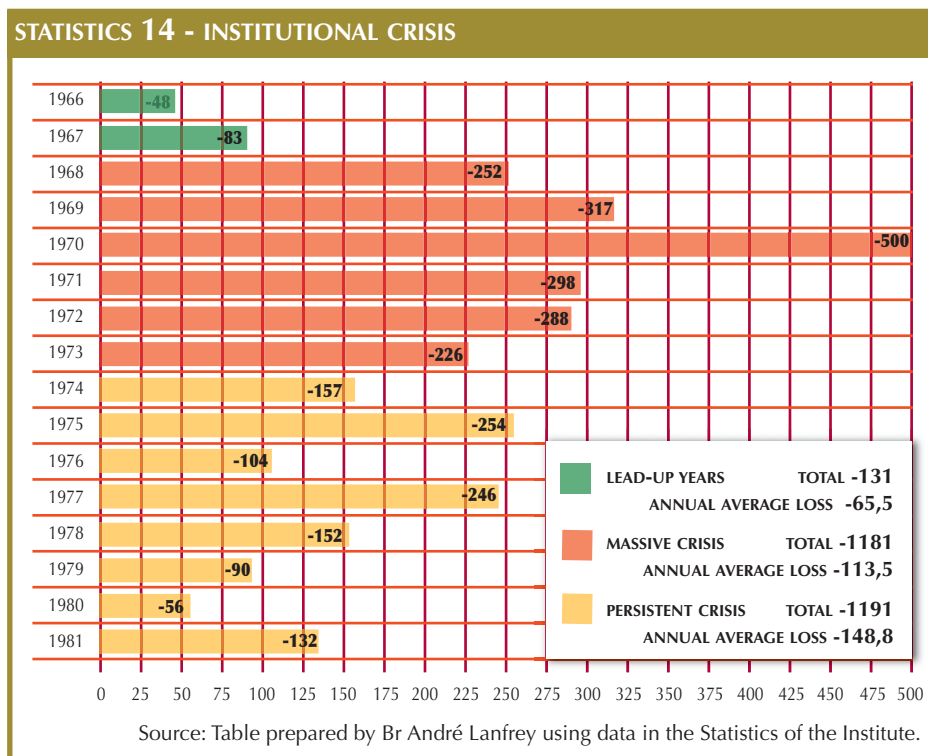
60% of temporary professed left, as did 40% of finally professed and Brothers with stability. Although the proportions remained almost unchanged between 1957 and 1966, the totals doubled. The growth of the Institute was still not seriously affected since the flow of entries remained strong: from 1957 to 1966 the number of Juniors oscillated

between 5,212 (1957) and 6,368 (1963); that of postulants between 501 (1958) and 623 (1962)<sup>515</sup>. Over the period we have the following equation: 4,453 first professions – 2662 withdrawals – 832 deaths = + 959 professed between 1957 and 1966.

The year 1966 marked a significant decrease in the number of Postulants, to 389. The number of Novices oscillated between 453 (1959) and 556 (1962). But in 1966 the figure dropped to 421. The admissions to first vows did not show any obvious falling off: they were 401 (1957) up to 508 (1961) and still 407 in 1966. So it was only in 1966 that a crisis in entries started to show itself.

### Drop in the number of professed Brothers from 1965 to 1981

We know that the number of professed Brothers went up to 9,721 at the end of 1964.<sup>516</sup> At the end of 1965 it would peak at 9,752. After that, it was a real melting away that should, nevertheless, be seen as a complex phenomenon and not simply linear. The table below attempts to present the facts:



<sup>515</sup> A xeroxed copy of Statistics distributed to Capitulants in 1967 showed the acceleration in the number of withdrawals while there was no noticeable drop in entries

<sup>516</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXXI, N° 221, June 1982, p. 161.

So, the decrease in the overall number began in 1966 and snowballed between 1968 and 1973, peaking in 1968-70. At the end of a sixteen year long collapse (1965-1981), the Institute went from 9,753 Brothers to 6,549, i.e. a loss of 32% of its membership. And we know that as the years went on the crisis did not stop. The Institute has seen an ongoing overall decrease of around a hundred Brothers every year since, a figure that started in the years 1978-81 and produced a figure close to 3,500 Brothers in 2012, that is a loss of a third of the membership, this time over a thirty year period (1982-2012).

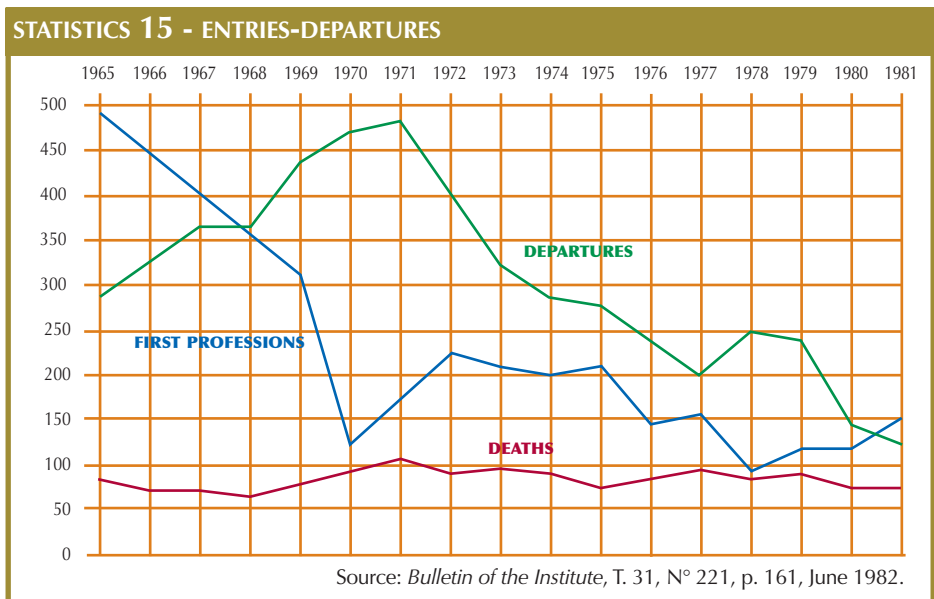
## Two successive crises (1965-81)

The graph of entries-withdrawals for the years 1965-82<sup>517</sup> provides an overall view of the phenomenon in three time periods:

In the years 1968-70 a staggering rise in withdrawals and a symmetric dropping off in entries. Curiously, the number of deaths also increased noticeably.

The years 1971-75 indicated the beginning of an end to the crisis: entries went up again noticeably and withdrawals went down sharply.

The years 1977-78 showed a replica of the crisis of 68-70 and it was only in 1980 that the number of entries equalled the number of withdrawals. The entries did not, however, make up for the cumulative losses of those withdrawing and dying. For the first time in its history, the Institute found itself in a crisis of numbers through the insufficiency of entries due to the combined effects of Vatican II and socio-cultural secularisation.



<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*

## Different impact across the Provinces

This crisis of numbers was world-wide but its impact was very uneven across continents and countries. Some Provinces<sup>518</sup> even maintained their numbers more or less.

DIFFERING IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON PROVINCES	
Africa (% 1981 compared to the figure for 1964)	99%
Australia-New Zealand	95%
Asia (China, Sri Lanka, Philippines)	83
Spain	78
Argentina	78
Mexico	77
Latin America (other countries)	63
USA	60
Europe (less France and Spain)	59
Canada	57
Lebanon-Syria	54
France	53
Brazil	51%
<i>Source: Bulletin of the Institute, T. 31, N°221, p. 161, June 1982.</i>	

Thus, the withdrawals by continent or region can be grouped:

1. Almost unchanged: Africa, Australia-New Zealand, Asia
2. Withdrawals + or – 25%: Asia, Spain, Argentina, Mexico
3. Withdrawals of around 40% : Latin America, USA, Europe, Canada
4. Withdrawals greater than 45% : France, Lebanon-Syria, Brazil

It would be rather imprudent to formulate hypotheses concerning these differences.

All the same, thought could be given to factors like the history of the Province, the unity of the local Catholic Church, and the degree of secularisation. But there are many other possible parameters...

## After the main crisis: a slow numerical decline

The FMS Message magazine published more or less annual statistics that tracked the evolution, not so much of the crisis as such, but of the slow decline of membership. An important detail to note is that the statistics no longer included Juniors since Juniorates were fast disappearing.

<sup>518</sup> Two Provinces of Africa, two in Asia, one in Australia and Catalunya in Spain.



<b>A SLOW DECLINE IN NUMBERS SETS IN</b>						
<b>DATE</b>	<b>PROFESSED + NOVICES</b>	<b>DECEASED</b>	<b>WITH-DRAWALS</b>	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> VOWS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>PROFESSED RESULT</b>
31.12.1980 <sup>519</sup>	483	73	122		6681	
31.12.1981	511	112	156		6549	-132
31.12.1985	453	82	145		6110	-439
31.12.1986	482	95	101		6043	-67
31.12.1987	457	107	131	119	5928	-115
31.12.1988	480	112	101	93	5823	-105
31.12.1989	449	95	104	105	5718	-105
31.12.1990	255 <sup>520</sup>	113	93	124	5643	-75
31.12.1991	213	102	77	112	5567	-76
31.12.1992	191	87	102	95	5493	-74
31.12.1994	132	102	75	83	5298	-195
31.12.1995	141	110	89	64	5163	-135
31.12.1996	147	95	92	75	5051	-112
31.12.1997	145	102	70	60	4942	-109
31.12.1999	139	107	82	71	4756	-186
31.12.2002	148	104	91	60	4430	-326
31.12.2003	125	105	59	79	4345	-85
31.12.2006	148	132	73	62	4005	-340
31.12.2007	160	98	29	61	3940	-65
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>-2741</b>	
<b>AVERAGE</b>					<b>-41 %</b>	<b>-101/year</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from Statistics in *FMS Message*.

As far as one can tell, the period of 27 years between 1980 and 2007 can be divided into two stages with the year 1993 (not documented) as the dividing line. Until that date there had been a balance between withdrawals and first professions of around 110-120 per year, with the number of deceased leading to an annual loss of around 75 Brothers. Thereafter, there was a shift to an average of 60-70 first professions compared to a slightly higher number of withdrawals. When combined with the number of deceased, the Institute was losing around a hundred Brothers per year.

<sup>519</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, N° 221 p. 191

<sup>520</sup> From this year there was no further distinction made between postulants and Novices but between Novices in 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

## The number of new vocations by Province

By 31 December 1989, eleven out of fifty Administrative units had neither postulants nor Novices and fifteen others had fewer than five. Eighteen Provinces or Districts had not had a first profession in that year.<sup>521</sup> By 31 December 1999,<sup>522</sup> of the forty seven administrative units, thirteen had no-one in the Novitiate and twenty one had had no first professions. By 31 December 2000, of the twenty six administrative units, only six had 10 or more Novices and none had more than twenty. It is worthwhile having a good look at these statistics, listing the Provinces in order of the number of their Novices. It outlines a completely new map of the Institute in which Africa above all and Latin America less clearly are ensuring the numbers needed for any renewal.

PROVINCES RANKED BY NUMBER OF NOVICES					
PROVINCE	BROTHERS	NOVICES	1 <sup>ST</sup> VOWS	DECEASED	WITHDRAWALS
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.940</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>29</b>
Southern Africa	127	25	11	2	0
Central-East Africa	92	23	6	3	1
Mexico Central	135	14	3	1	1
Nigeria	92	10	7	1	0
Norandina	150	10	5	4	1
Brazil Centro Norte	129	9	2	3	3
Canada	166	9	3	7	0
Philippines	53	9	3	0	0
Brasil Centro Sul	132	8	3	2	1
Mediterranea	309	7	7	3	1
Sri Lanka / Pakistan	65	6	3	0	0
Madagascar	55	5	0	3	0
Rio Grande do sul	218	5	1	2	1
S. M. de Los Andes	121	5	1	5	2
Cruz del Sur	170	4	1	1	2
Mexico occidental	133	4	2	3	4
Sydney	243	3	3	5	3
Central America	119	2	0	2	2
L'Hermitage	393	2	0	21	3
China	28	0	0	2	0
Compostela	247	0	0	7	1
Europe Central-West	165	0	0	7	0
Ibérica	202	0	0	6	1
Melbourne	89	0	0	1	1
New Zealand	113	0	0	0	1
USA	194	0	0	7	0

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from Statistics in *FMS Message*.

<sup>521</sup> *FMS Message*, N° 8 p. 58.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid*, N° 29 p. 45.

## What was the impact of the Council?

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The Council played a primordial role in this crisis of membership, particularly in giving it a world-wide character. Until the Council, and despite robust, internal debates, the Catholic Church had not gone through a grieving process over its loss of status in society and, for better or worse, the Papacy had kept to its principles of authority and hierarchy. Yet, in just a few years, the Church gave the impression of turning its back on previous positions. Freedom of conscience, the Church as the People of God, the theology of the laity ... seemed to make religious congregations obsolete. These were invited, besides, to renew themselves from top to bottom. Still, as shown above, the crisis of withdrawals from the Institute had begun before the Council and therefore it does not explain everything.

## One way of relating to lay people was now obsolete

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The main novelty for the Institute was less the large number of Brothers leaving than its inability to attract new aspirants to itself. I readily propose a reason why this new phenomenon happened: two crises came together, the one provoked by the Council in the 'old' Christian countries and settings, and that of the Institute. The traditional 'fishing pond' of the Institute had dried up.

To dwell on this quite paradoxical point, just when the Institute was reaffirming its lay identity, Christian lay people were not interested in joining. To explain this paradox, I want to recall the notion of an 'unspoken agreement' between Christian families and the Institute: the families, generally of modest circumstances and in traditional Christian settings, wanted their sons to benefit from a good formation, while the Institute was hoping to make Brothers of them. With the setting up of Juniorates from 1876 to around 1945, this system worked quite well, even if the majority of the young men who were formed would leave the Institute after a time, some lasting longer than others. In short, they were making a second choice in life, outside the congregational body that had provided them access to a more open world. Meanwhile, many of these Brothers were to give service, compensating the congregation for its effort in forming them. It should not, then, be overlooked that the Institute was like a holding chamber between two types of Christian laity: the first, traditional and generally rural; the second, more modern and urban. Because of this, through their formation structures, such as Juniorates, the Marist Brothers contributed, in their own way and somewhat in spite of themselves, to fostering lay people who were better prepared for that moment in history. Weak perseverance is not to be understood, therefore, only as a loss but also as a way laypeople were formed for the Church, however hard this may be to measure.

Yet, soon enough the system was to encounter problems. After 1945, the effectiveness of Juniorates fell away noticeably. In the context of the 1960s and 1970s, the 'old Church' shed its skin and the agreement between families and the Institute stopped working in a satisfying way. In short, religious vocations lost their sociological and demographic supports. What had been both a vocation and a career,

often quite unambiguously sustained by clearly defined institutions (family, parish, Institute), became an individual choice demanding a degree of spiritual motivation and a taste for risk-taking that an adolescent, or even a young man, rarely possesses. From then on, recruiting was directed increasingly at young adults, the number of whom was to fall off in proportion to the way in which society was becoming thoroughly secularised.

Parallel to these developments, strong reservations were being expressed in the Institute regarding the recruiting of adolescents, linked to a more personalised understanding of vocation. Besides, the Marist Brothers had changed from being a congregation devoted to working class students, as it had been for a long time, towards a certain elitism. Further, although it was running many works dedicated to youth, they managed to attract vocations in only a limited number of places capable of replacing the vast populations that made up the Christian settings of old. Neither was the body of lay teachers in our schools a significant resource in this regard. In fact, the presence of lay people may well have been a factor in the weakening of perseverance. The World Union of former students had not proved itself to be a serious source of vocations at all.

The crisis of entries was, therefore, the consequence of a relationship crisis between laity and the Institute which was unable to find in its works, nonetheless flourishing, a new source of vocations needed for its reproduction. To a degree, however, people had been aware of this problem for a while: around 1950 the Major Superiors were worried by the weak impact our education was having on older youth. Further the 1958 Chapter noted the wide gap between the number of Juniors and those entering religion. So, the Vatican Council was more responsible for bringing a latent crisis to light than being its cause.

## **An irreversible change**

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In the period from 1967 to 1985 the Institute was preoccupied with redefining its identity and seemed resigned to accepting its numerical loss in favour of taking its time to renew and even re-found itself. So, it was only logical that, around 1985, the desire to establish a new way of relating to laypeople would emerge in a pronounced way. But this was to be a long-term process. It could well be asked whether, while being less impressive number-wise, the Institute had become more consistent in its quality. In any case, the time of having a plethora of Brothers had little chance of ever being repeated and the new relationship with laypeople had changed things, even if it is hard to put a numerical figure on this reality.

## 30.

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# A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CRISIS IN THE YEARS 1967-1985 ACCORDING TO THE CIRCULAR ON FIDELITY OF 8 SEPTEMBER 1984

This Circular dealt not only with the lives of individual Brothers but also revealed a lot about the crisis of the Institute and its consequences from 1967 to 1984, in the valuable interpretations of this troubled period made by Brothers, generally middle-aged. This was essentially the content of Chapter IV of this lengthy Circular. In describing the mid-life crisis of Brothers, it was indirectly speaking about that of the Institute, giving the impression that Br Basilio was describing a crisis that was both collective and individual in the 1967-1984 period. This can be inferred from the words of Rev Br Basilio that can be equally applied to the Institute as to individuals:

*Disorientation is normal in any crisis, a loss of control over one's life and what constitutes it, with all the risks that this implies. (...) For (Romano Guardini) each of these crises is the rise of the building-blocks of a life becoming more rounded, richer and more dynamic. Schemas that were put together in the preceding stage of life start to fall apart. There is a slight loss of ability to understand and give direction to a whole range of things that are still unfamiliar. Former schemas can no longer channel a rising life that is bursting upwards. Yet, this state of being 'over-full' is not a bad thing; it is a good thing with a risk attached. The outcome could be disastrous or wonderful according to the wisdom with which this rising life was welcomed.*

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## Individual crises and those resulting from the Council

Br Basilio went on to talk about the “phenomenology of this crisis”: firstly, a “demystifying of what is real (...), of what had earlier been idealised and pictured in glowing terms”, and now found itself “reduced to its actual and prosaic dimensions”. (...) “One is led to say, “That’s all there is!”. “I have already seen it all, experienced it all. Whatever is to come will be more or less a repetition of what I

have already lived." Aware that there is still time to change the course of his life, the mid-life Brother could think about lay life or the priesthood:

*One day I had to think things through when, while I was working as a youth minister, a priest offered to prepare me for priesthood. I hesitated but then began preparations for joining the X Fathers. (...) During this period I was quite torn. I found my congregation comfortable, ageing, frozen in its ways, unable to engage in Church work. The whole decade of the 1970s was a period of revolt and dissatisfaction for me.*

Br Basilio drew the connection between some of these personal crises and the post-Conciliar period:

*There are moments of crisis that happen like those lived by the Church in recent years. Then, for a time, night descends and "all cats are grey", positives and negatives all lay claim to the same mantle of "the Council", of "renewal", of "aggiornamento" etc. (...) Fidelity had provoked action in the past; the same fidelity might now provoke a toughening of character to not follow a lie, to not make a mistake in 'grey' situations which seductively appear to be a step forward but are really a step backwards. (...) Each one of us, following the calls of his heart, can be attracted to a commitment to the poor, the struggle for human rights, living community life with more passion, strict observance etc. etc.*

There was, then, in the years between 1967 and 1980, a meeting of two crises: the one, individual, but highly significant owing to the large number of mid-life Brothers; and a collective crisis in which the institution had its own experience of encountering the real, suddenly discovering itself reduced in standing and authority because it no longer had the wherewithal it once had. There were three types of responses from the Brothers:

- *Adjusting to what is real" going as far as "resignation" with a hint of despair*
- *Choosing another direction in life, as a lay person or priest, which could be a refusal to embrace the real and to find oneself again, some time later, in yet another moment of being tired of the real.*
- *Two-fold fidelity in one: "fidelity to the ideal within the real; fidelity to the real so as to reach the ideal" a passing "from dreaming to utopia".*

## **A feeling of collapse**

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Br Basilio did not hide the fact that the testimonies came mainly from Brothers in the third group and of a fairly advanced age. Nonetheless, he reminded his readers of the importance of those who "were embittered by the renewal process" or found it hard to find a positive side to change.

*We really are the "remnant of Israel". We are walking through the desert but where to? Our socio-cultural revolution will not be over for a long time. (...) I am discovering more and more that I want to be faithful to someone rather than to*



**111.** 1967-68 Session. Marist community at the International College in Rome, made up of Brothers from various cultures, languages and countries, studying at the Jesus Magister Institute

*structures or an organisation. To do this I need the help and support of companions walking alongside me. I often feel alone on the journey.*

Their severe judgements were many:

- 1. Then came the time of disaster. Brothers could be found in cafés, something that had never happened before in our country. Even lay people began to be scandalised by the bad example given in the town. Some Brothers stayed up watching television until midnight. They no longer felt any obligation to be pres-*



**112.** A comparison of the outfits of those joining the community of the International College in 1970 with those from three years earlier (see the previous photo) gives an idea of the changes that had occurred in less than three years.

ent for morning prayers. Is this what the program of Renewal is all about? (...) The old loner that I am thinks anyway that what is essential for any community is that each one does his best to be present for the whole life of this community: We do not want to live in a hotel but a home full of life and human warmth.

2. We of the old generation endured a real persecution. It is not that the young have mistreated us but we have had to watch just about everything we held dear be swept away. It seems that we were too structured. Meanwhile, the destruction of religious orders had often been caused by the weakening of their structures. No more bells, no more morning call to get up. Where is this leading us to?
3. When some Brothers started to wear civil dress and this prior to any proper authorisation, I was really shocked. Being placed in front of a fait accompli threw a cloud over my concept of religious obedience but it did not have any serious impact on my fidelity.
4. I had the good fortune to live most of my life before the 1970s at a time when nothing was challenged. At that time, yes we prayed well and did extraordinary work.
5. Finally, (...) the trial of recent years when everything dear to us was thrown overboard. Mary is "gone" from our houses, her statues 'gone' from our classrooms, and her pictures 'gone' from our walls. (...) I don't get enraged, I keep quiet and suffer in silence. Now the proposed renewal seems to promise a religious life that is realistic and adapted to our modern times ... provided that there are enough religious left to live it!

In fact many of the witnesses focussed their attention on cultural details and structures (the religious habit, religious insignia, timetables ...) with a certain tendency to idealise the 'old days'. They were also deeply affected by the reducing



**113.**  
Rome 1974.  
Centre  
Champagnat.  
Group from  
English-speaking  
Provinces.





**114.**  
Rome 1974.  
Centre  
Champagnat.  
Group from  
French-speaking  
Provinces.

size of the Institute due to the many withdrawals, and were anxious about the future. They felt alone in a body of men that they no longer recognised, their isolation being as much cultural as spiritual.

### The loss of standing of formators

The ‘effervescent’ period seems to have been particularly hard for formators, placed as they were in the front line. “Regarding the changes wrought by Vatican II to religious life, I have readily taken steps to adopt them myself,” said a Brother



**115.**  
Rome 1974.  
Centre  
Champagnat.  
Group from  
Spanish-speaking  
Provinces.

in charge of a university residence, when confronted after 1968 by some students who were anti- any establishment:

*In a matter of a few days, all community exercises were abandoned: rising, Mass, Office, Rosary, etc. even meals! People came to table as they do in hotels, with guests: friends of both genders, without forewarning; the mealtime was extended ... Occasionally, a young priest student who liked to think he was being avant-garde would say a Mass using a common loaf of bread, red wine and a made-up canon. (...) I was allowed entry as a free auditor to their first autonomous meeting. (...) Before all this happened I tried to channel the movement, to give some guidelines towards a truer religious life. Alas! "I was holding things back!" "I was just too much!" "The only thing I could do was to resign!"*

Another formator was less clear but did not hide a sense of disarray felt by many others:

*With the wrong interpretations and abuses that followed from an "exaggerated openness", I suffered a terrible shock, painful in the extreme. I presented my resignation as formator because I could not see how to explain the Rules when no-one was observing a good number of them anymore.*

*Maybe the Provincial had his reasons for accepting this state of affairs, but I, in all conscience, could not agree. I even heard Brothers say to me, "We know what congregation we made our vows in but we no longer know if it's the same one today".*

## **A question of different generations?**

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The confusion sometimes resembled old inter-generational problems as this testimony recalls:

*What made me suffer the most was to see how many understood the Council. Young Brothers still in nappies wanted to give lessons to the old Brothers, explaining to them what religious life had to mean from now on.*

But another, much younger Brother, gives a more nuanced statement:

*After 10 years teaching, the congregation offered me the chance to complete my studies. I opted for theology and they were three years of grace at the heart of the renewal following Vatican II and just after the 1967 Chapter. It was a very sad period because of the large number leaving. Our Province saw itself suddenly minus strong characters who would surely have helped us move ahead.*

*It was at the end of these studies in 1970 that I decided to renew my first commitment in making the vow of stability. I wanted to express by this my intention of following my journey as a religious at the very time when others were raising questions.*

A Brother, undoubtedly a little older, also manifested this desire to be faithful despite everything he saw around him:

*I have seen the cedars of Lebanon fall: friends, Brothers of my age who were highly valued, directors, Provincial Councillors, etc. (...) Of seven youngsters from my village, I am the only one left. Of the twelve who received the habit with me, two of us are left; of those who did the 30 day Retreat, half are left; of those who attended the Second Novitiate and other formation programs, there again their ranks are thinning out. And yet, I have never felt myself better than them. (...) Whenever I have seen someone leaving, instead of crushing my ideals, it reinforces my commitment.*

## Nuanced results

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Other testimonies give rise to a more nuanced assessment, even positive, dividing the period into two or three stages such as in this testimony which is far from glorifying the 'old days' and which acknowledges the happy consequences of renewal:

*Totally cut off from the world from the age of 12-13, I was raised in a closed vase. The big challenges of life and its difficulties were treated in only a superficial way. We were formed in a piety that consisted in fidelity to the prayers set down in the Rule. My conscience was sometimes tormented over silly things and I could not blossom as a free person for fear of being in a state of mortal-sin. Fortunately, the manly direction of Brother X was grafted onto that state of mind. He formed me to have a sensitive conscience without being scrupulous; to the love of Jesus and Mary, based on sacrifice!*

*I welcomed the renewal demanded by Vatican II with little enthusiasm. (...) Over time I came to see its positive side: prayers in the vernacular, psalms sung or meditated on. Among modern hymns, some are very beautiful. Texts from Sacred Scripture really nourish the soul... I try to adapt myself to the new mentality without abandoning what has been salutary to my soul up till now.*

The following testimony puts less stress on the 'explosive' stage of the crisis as on its enduring outcomes and gives a close analysis of the complexity of the situation, suggesting a method of discernment:

*The rapid changes that came from the moment the Council began have been profound and wide-ranging. They have affected all religious and their way of life. Not only religious discipline, but the values, style and aims of this religious life.*

*One thing is certain. There is no agreement on these changes. (...) At present, as I see things, it seems that we have reached some quite banal accommodations that consist of agreeing that we are not agreed. (...) Having said this, let it be very clear that I do not see this "division" among us as calling our good will into question in general. (...) One would also obviously have to agree that sometimes opposition has an underground character and may be based on more mediocre values.*

*In this period in question, what I see is that more than 100 Brothers of my Province have, as they say, voted with their feet, that is they have left us. But I think it is important to attribute these 'losses' not to the change happening but to our refusal as a Province to face up to this change. It seems that this demanded a maturity and a freedom that we lacked as a whole group. (...)*

*And now, my personal testimony: I believe that the Holy Spirit knows exactly what is happening to us and this interests him, and I am convinced that he can and will resolve our problem in his own way and time. We have to be patient and pray. I try to remain open to what the Spirit is asking of me; I do not close my mind to movements that I do not always understand.*

A French Brother proposed a schema, in two stages:

*The current renewal was at first a total catastrophe for many Brothers of my generation: the closing of Juniorates, wearing civil clothes in an undignified way, the frightening number of Brothers leaving. It all spelt ruin, didn't it? Then things started to improve. We were allowed to do things that it was impossible to imagine previously and they were very good. Each person felt responsible for his apostolic ministry. Community life well-lived allows you to be yourself in leading a life of charity. What remains to be seen is if there will be any new vocations.*

## **Resignation more than a deep sense of belonging**

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That said, many judgements showed a mere acceptance of change more than any enthusiastic sense of belonging:

*There are now many fewer community exercises. I am delighted about that. That does not stop me praying more these days than before. But am I making a serious, rash judgement in wondering if all the Brothers take pains to pray personally?*

*A new era opened up, full of promises in the deepest part of me. I was not opposed to this movement which was to create "new" saints ... but always on condition that the legitimate authority was respected and obeyed. The push from the young Brothers was strong and deep. I could not remain indifferent to this effort at renewal from the base up.*

*In fact, it is the Spirit that leads to pure faith, under new forms. Precisely, for us the hardest has been to accept these new forms to express the same thing that we have known under older forms. (...) I keep the old system when it is not contrary to the new and I integrate the new into my daily program, in common with my Brothers in the Lord.*

## **Openly positive comments**

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For more than one person the events were the occasion of personal conversion, both spiritual and cultural:

*Even though I am already getting on, I have the feeling of living a more responsible life, more open to the demands of the times, more respectful of the human person, more creative, more spiritually of value. The Council and the General Chapters with their motivated and pressing invitations towards a courageousaggiorna-*



**116.** Fribourg, 1983. The search for institutional identity and a better knowledge of the origins of the Institute gave rise to the need for combined courses involving the four branches of the Society of Mary.

*mento, have made a breach into my way of seeing things. I am neither a fanatic for novelties, nor idolatrous for a past that some people would like to limit to what they choose to remember.*

**After the storm**

Around 1960 the Institute as a corporate body could be compared to a middle-aged man, settled in a situation that was stable but lacking in satisfaction. This was why 1958 saw the appearance at the same time of a trend toward prudent reform and a rise in withdrawals. The Council event transformed what could have been a double crisis into a structural one. The testimonies of the Brothers, mostly senior men, showed a quite negative perception of the confusing days of the 1970s and also a quite ambivalent attitude towards the following period. In any case, through their testimonies we can see how they were situated in respect of the pair, 'spirituality-structure'. Many set up, thereafter, a sort of compromise between a tradition, that they were sorry to lose for the most part, and the new times that most simply accepted while others entered into it with a more open spirit.

Because the huge number of withdrawals and the weakness of recruitment had thinned out the ranks of the new generations, the Institute found itself in a real contradiction between a leadership group, fired up with an open desire for reform, and an old guard torn between tradition and the spirit of the Council.

**APPENDIX 4: The crisis of membership by Province, p. 460**



## 31.

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# A PROFOUND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

## Two emblematic visions of the institute between 1967 and 1985

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The eighteen years that separated the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter from the 18<sup>th</sup> (1968-1985) were not the first serious identity crisis for the congregation. There was the one before in the years 1852-60 that led to the resignation of Br François<sup>523</sup>, the memory of which was covered over by the energetic takeover of Rev Br Louis-Marie. The possibility of following the vagaries of the 1967-85 crisis in a much more detailed manner is available to us in the abundance of sources and the recent nature of the events. In themselves, these documents show the change “in real time” since anyone reading the various acts and documents today can easily see that they were using a very different language to preceding Chapters. One only has to compare the reports made by Br Charles-Raphaël in 1967 and Br Basilio in 1985 at the end of their mandates to see this in sharp relief.

### The report of Br Charles-Raphaël in 1967: still optimistic

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At the opening of the Chapter on 4 September 1967, Rev Br Charles-Raphaël referred to the “Current geography of the Institute”, with 9,704 Brothers, that is 937 more than in 1958, although it had just suffered the loss of 48 Brothers. The average age in the Institute was 39.7 while it had been 37.8 nine years before, owing to the reduction in the number of Brothers under twenty, resulting from the decision taken to delay admission to the Postulancy. 700 Brothers had died during those nine years. This figure had remained more or less the same for many years.

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<sup>523</sup> His resignation was not mainly because of ill-health, but at the insistence of Church authorities, Rome in the first place.

*On the other hand we note a noticeable increase in the number of Brothers leaving, particularly over recent years and especially in some countries. This is making itself felt, not only in regard to the overall number, but also in its proportion, moving from 2.12% to 3.29% per annum. It remains to be seen if this trend is simply passing or if there are serious reasons behind it.*

In nine years the Institute had changed a lot. From 32 Provinces and Districts in 1958, it had moved to 43 Provinces and 8 autonomous Districts, their numbers varying from four hundred Brothers to less than a hundred. Despite a spectacular fall-off in number, this arrangement would hardly change until the restructuring of the 2000s.

The Institute had made new openings: in Formosa and Sarawak, in Pakistan, dependent on the Province of Ceylon; in Cameroon, in New Guinea; in Costa Rica and Puerto Rico. On the other hand, it had withdrawn from Cuba, New Britain, Indonesia, and quite recently, from Congo-Brazza. In addition, some Provinces or Districts had opened 'mission' schools in their own territory: the two Provinces of Mexico, Venezuela, some Provinces of Brazil ... In total thirty-two new schools had been opened in the new missions and the old ones. The Missionary Union of Blessed Marcellin Champagnat had raised significant sums to support this activity, as had the General Fund and some Provinces.

The number of houses went up from 758 to 832, schools from 693 to 743, students from around 278,000 to more than 375,000. Also the number of lay teachers had practically doubled in the nine years while the number of Brothers teaching had gone up only by around 5%. In addition, the established trend away from primary schools to secondary continued and the challenge of co-education had surfaced.

The number of new vocations was dropping off in several Provinces even though there was an increase in the number of Juniors (5,873 as against 5,212) and Juniorates (99 as against 79). Their purpose and organisation had undergone significant change, particularly in some countries, and yet:

*We know, on the other hand, that Juniorates, as institutions, are under discussion in some quarters. In spite of the various opinions being expressed, we are obliged to state that nearly everywhere the majority of postulants still come from our Juniorates.*

The graph of the number of Novices was clearly trending down but this was in part due to a temporary adjustment. Some Provinces had recently delayed admission to the Postulancy in a quite radical way, to around 17-18 years of age. Also, because a large number of Postulants were not getting as far as receiving the habit, selection was becoming tighter. There was a trend to combine novitiates with small numbers so as to ensure the young candidates a better human and religious formation.

There were thirty six Scholasticates. Several Provinces combined their forces to ensure a better arrangement. Sometimes this coming together even involved other congregations. Increasingly the young Brothers were sent for full university studies in thirteen university residences, but there were still many who had to juggle university studies and apostolic tasks. In Rome itself, the 'Jesus Magister' Institute, or-



ganised specifically for Teaching Brothers, had produced good results, and in many Provinces an increasing number of Brothers were attending courses in Theological faculties and Catechetical Institutes.

There were three centres for the Second Novitiate, in French, Spanish and English, operating respectively in St-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, L'Escorial and Fribourg. The Portuguese language group, after operating for a few years at Campinas in Brazil, had joined, on a provisional basis, with the French-speaking group. On the other hand, a new structure, the Year of Spirituality, had operated regularly at the General House since 1961, bringing together on average thirty Brothers of all languages each year.

In the first section of his report Br Charles-Raphaël referred to decisions of the last Chapter and efforts made by his administration to carry them out. But he stressed one major fact:

*Vatican II has progressively focussed the attention of all religious families on the “renewal process” that was being asked of them and that two follow-up documents were to set out in detail: Perfectae Caritatis and Ecclesiae Sanctae. While not ignoring the legacy of the last Chapter, members of the Institute have been especially preoccupied with giving a whole-hearted response to the call of the Church.*

His conclusion was reasonably optimistic :

*Overall, our situation is still healthy. (...) There are some “shadows” on the picture. We have to acknowledge them honestly and regret their presence but it would be unjust and dangerous to exaggerate their importance.*

The presumption was, then, that this was to be a quite normal Chapter but we know that it turned out to be quite exceptional in its length (two sessions) and in its complete make-over of the Constitutions which would only find its definitive form after 1985. The Institute came out of this numerically quite weakened and yet renewed in its self-understanding as shown in the report of Br Basilio in 1985.<sup>524</sup>

## **A report on a period of structural crisis in 1985 by Br Basilio**

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This report in fact dealt with the two mandates of Rev Br Basilio and could be regarded as a type of both spiritual and institutional testament. In the first section he presented a critical review of the “type and plan” of his government which he described as collegial, one that listened, but only indirectly personal.<sup>525</sup> One of the main objectives of the collegial group that he led had been “to gain acceptance for the renewal requested by the Council within the Institute, according to the doc-

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<sup>524</sup> Marist Brothers of the Schools, *Listening to the 18th General Chapter*, Casa Generalizia, Rome, undated, p. 65-92.

<sup>525</sup> Because of the influence of his own personality.



**117.** Brothers from various congregations, starting off at the Jesus Magister Institute, with their lecturers at the entrance to the Pontifical University at the Lateran where they attended classes. Photo taken at the start of the 1959-60 course.

uments of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapters”, using assemblies, retreats and even a special edition of the *Bulletin of the Institute*,<sup>526</sup> as well as inviting the Provinces to set up programs for the Brothers to take the new Constitutions on board.

The second major concern had been “to re-direct the Institute towards the poor and the missions”. Personal prayer had been the third objective, “pursued by an effort to raise awareness of it during our visits, through retreats on prayer given in more than twenty Provinces”; through two Circulars and encouraging Brothers to take part in schools of prayer outside the Institute. Vocations promotion had not been ignored nor had “attention to strengthening the unity of the Institute” through the creation of research centres at the Hermitage and Rome. In a particular way, “we have safeguarded our unity on the level of ideas, keeping to the middle path, and avoiding straying too far either towards novelties or traditionalist positions”.

As regards ongoing formation, the Second Novitiates had been maintained, the Jesus Magister had become the International College and, at the Centre Champagnat, two renewal courses of two months duration had been held. The Project of Community Life had been encouraged everywhere. Finally, ongoing relations had been established with the other branches of the Marist family. So, the Institute had been governed and even, “our government has not been sparing in its contacts with ‘ordinary’ Brothers”. However, Br Basilio acknowledged that “in one or other sector of the Institute my own efforts or those of my Councillors had only quite limited results.”

He went on to make some recommendations: to choose the Vicar General carefully and maintain the role “such as has been exercised by the present Br Vicar General”,

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<sup>526</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXXI, N° 220, June 1980.

that is “concerned with government” (p. 78). A sufficiently large team of Councillors was needed but not to be in charge of regions, rather to keep in direct contact with Brothers and Provinces from time to time over the course of their nine-year mandate. Also, he expressed the wish that an article be written that invited Brothers who felt a missionary calling to offer themselves as volunteers to the Superior General.

In short, he summarised the work of his period as General around three key ideas: collegial government; renewal of our mission, particularly towards the poor; the deepening of the spiritual life of the Brothers. More clearly than ever before, the Institute was described as a body of spiritual men whom the Major Superiors had to animate as their primary task. In large measure, the Brothers were given priority over Marist works, which may seem paradoxical at a time when the apostolic side of the congregation was being re-discovered and distancing from a monastic tradition was being advocated. But it made good sense to move in this direction: the apostolate did not make sense if its ministers were not highly motivated themselves.

This characteristic would appear possibly even more clearly in the second section of what Br Basilio had to say on the state of the Institute (p. 79). He thought that the downward trend of the Institute “gave the impression of bottoming out and of tending to change direction”, at least in some Provinces. He was fully aware that the more or less secularised contexts constituted a tough obstacle to surmount. In particular, he made a reflection (p. 80) that was very much at odds with the tradition of the Institute:

*On the other hand, our objective is not numbers, but the work of the Lord which requires workers to accomplish it. From this perspective, then, quality is more important than quantity.*

**118.** Research into the origins of the Institute and its founder began to produce significant results. A portrait of Patouillard senior, father of Jeanne, wife of Philip Arnaud, nephew of Marcellin Champagnat.

**119.** One of the reports on research into the origins of the Institute and the founder published in the *Bulletin of the Institute*.



**120.** Brs Alexandro Balko, Gabriel Michel and Juan María Merino, guides for visits to Marist sites.

Having said that, he gave special attention to the qualitative side of things, reviewing the “strengths” of the Institute: attachment to the spirit of the Founder; good relations at the level of government; rich community relationships “in spite of all our human weaknesses, the negative side of the formation we received, and the influences of the modern world”; apostolic openness, keen to respond to the calls of the Church and of youth; fidelity in prayer and trust, particularly strong in senior Brothers.

He then listed five weak points. On the first three (community prayer being often weak; “the weakness of personal prayer in a good number of our Brothers”; “a low esteem for religious consecration”), his observations were traditional even if, in general, they went further than others had before, notably in regard to personal prayer which he strongly differentiated from piety.

With his fourth weakness, he confronted an issue that had been covered over for a long time and had now become a burning question: “the lack of criteria to guide our apostolic identity”. Indeed, after being mainly engaged in small country schools, “the Brothers were spread out around the world, adapting themselves to the contexts of different countries, so much so that our aim, our apostolic options and our identity have been diversified”. Even if “maintaining a narrow and completely fixed idea of the mission of the Marist Brothers (...) is no longer possible,” the Institute cannot just take on any sort of apostolic tasks. What has to happen, then, is to remain faithful to the Founder and to the calls of our time. “This is no easy matter (...) especially in some Provinces where tradition, history and personal interests are a great source of inertia”. There are symmetric risks, then, of excess and stifling when it comes to the apostolate: “quality gets swallowed up in quantity. (...) Besides, the increasing complexity of the world of education and the wide variety of contexts of Catholic schools around the world ... require the setting of criteria that determine what our apostolate as Marist Brothers should be.”<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> See in *Listening to the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*, p. 87 note 1, for the criteria that were defined as a result of this intervention.

In conclusion, the Rev Brother noted “the weakness in the formation of Brothers”, a traditional topic of General Chapters, but without commenting unfavourably on any intellectual weakness: the problem was rather religious and social formation. The first was too superficial and poorly accompanied; the second was being taken to political extremes.

By way of summary, two major dimensions of renewal seemed to hold priority for him: the Constitutions and formation. His diagnosis was clear: the work begun by Fr Champagnat “is no longer capable of responding to the needs of our times without substantial adaptation” (p. 92). “When it comes to formation, we have not given it the necessary priority apart from some exceptions.” Priority has to be given, therefore, to investing in people and bringing the restructuring of formation to a conclusion with the help of guidelines established by the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

Eighteen years after the optimistic report of Rev Br Charles-Raphaël, then, it was no longer a question of self-satisfaction based largely on statistics, but, on the contrary, of a diagnosis that was much more qualitative and reasonably harsh. There was a program of renewal to pursue, as well, as if this period, long as it had been, had served primarily to show up the size of the flaws of the Institute. It was, then, suggesting that the former prosperity of the Institute had been in part artificial.



**121.** 121. Br Berne and his school at St Julien Molhesabate (1892). **122.** Main Chapel at the General House, Rome. **123.** High School at Kumamoto (Japan)

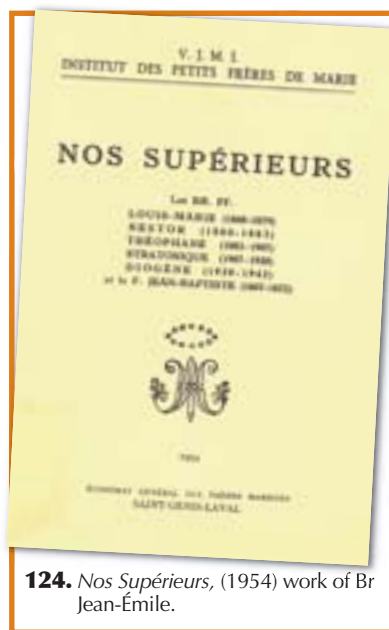
## A sign of a profound cultural change. From hagiography to biography

References in earlier Chapters to the lives of Brothers in the period 1907-1967 largely came from their obituaries. The Founder himself as well as some Brothers, generally Superiors, had made use quite early in our history of real biographies that could be classified as being hagiographic without any hesitation. Even when the people concerned were not, properly speaking, saints, the literature followed the rules of hagiography “which does not refer to events in the past as history does, but rather to what is exemplary”.<sup>528</sup> Its aim, therefore, was to edify, that is to feed the imagination and sentimental side of religious readers so as to strengthen their feeling of belonging to a long line of saints.

Even so, such edification had no chance of working unless it fitted into the culture that characterised the whole group that was being addressed. So, any change in form and content of the biographies would seem to indicate an evolution in the culture of those writing and those being addressed. In what follows, an attempt will be made to show just such a change by reference to some significant examples.

### “Our Superiors” (1953)

Following up on the request of General Chapters for the publication of new biographies, Br Jean-Émile in 1953 produced a book at St Genis-Laval of 408 pages, entitled *Our Superiors*. This took up the tradition begun in 1856 with the biography of Fr Champagnat, but it was particularly in continuity with the biography of Br François by Fr Ponty in 1899,<sup>529</sup> and that of Br Louis-Marie in 1907.<sup>530</sup> Nevertheless, Br Jean-Émile did not include Br François in his list of Superiors. He may have just been being prudent since his cause of beatification had begun, but more probably, he was following a well-established tradition of not referring to Br François’ time as Superior. He included a shortened version of the biography of Br Louis-Marie. And, even though Br Jean Baptiste had never been Superior General,



124. *Nos Supérieurs*, (1954) work of Br Jean-Émile.

<sup>528</sup> Michel de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, folio/history, 2002, Ch. VII p. 316-335.

<sup>529</sup> Abbé L. Ponty, chaplain at the N.D. of Lacabane, *Vie du F. François*, Lyon, Vitte, 1899, 338p.

<sup>530</sup> *Vie du Fr Louis-Marie*, by a Brother of this Institute, Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1907, 299 p.

he started the book with him. Excluding the first successor of Fr Champagnat in a book about the Superiors of the Institute begs the question.

The book holds a real historical interest since Br Jean-Emile consulted the archives and he placed the Superiors against the background of the general history of the Institute. However, he only partly detached himself from the old hagiographic tradition that consisted in an account of the life of a saint, followed by a catalogue of his or her virtues. In short, it was an example of traditional, edifying literature designed to reinforce and illustrate what Br Basilio would soon call the “spirituality-structure” pair.

This was a pair in which the second term is somewhat weak as in the description of the spirituality<sup>531</sup> of Br Jean Baptiste where that of Br Jean-Emile himself comes through, at least in part.

*It was simple and strong. He was not given to any excess, he had no personal likes or dislikes, he preferred the common life to anything else. He sampled many spiritualities but was on the lookout for the simplest. (...) He based everything on this one fundamental idea of Our Lord: what is the use of gaining the whole world only to lose one's soul? Eternal salvation was his unique concern. (...) There is no mention of any contemporary event in his book, not even the joys and trials of the Church that stirred the heart of Br Louis-Marie. Nothing that happened seemed to merit even a casual mention.*

Br Jean-Emile concluded that these writings that were imbued with solid virtue and solid piety were of interest to serious religious while the frivolous would put them aside. However, it could well be asked whether this was spirituality at all and whether the people who put them aside were really so frivolous when the vision of the spiritual life was presented in such a cursory manner.

The Conclusion of the book presented a complementary aspect to the spiritual tone of all the lives described. Recalling the project of Br Stratonique of writing a golden book on dedication, he spoke of “the century from the death of Ven. Fr Champagnat to that of Rev Br Diogène as illustrative of real heroes of dedication. From morning to evening, and often well before others had got up until after they had all retired, the Superiors (...) used all their time and all their energy to ensure the good of their religious family”. Given such ceaseless dedication, “no-one should be surprised that our good God came to the aid of his good workers”. Finally, “they were all fathers to their families more than imperious or demanding Superiors”.

In setting up an opposition between serious religious and the frivolous, Br Jean-Emile had made the case himself that the Institute was not held in the esteem that it deserved. The same could be said for his collection of lives which seem to be the last examples of traditional Marist hagiography. Indeed, they might have still been able to satisfy the peers of Br Jean-Emile (1878-1971), but it is unlikely that such a manner of conceiving the spirit of the Institute corresponded with the aspirations of a younger generation. Five years later, the Chapter would advocate a spiritual life that was altogether deeper and more personal than was merely hinted at in this book.

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<sup>531</sup> This was one of the first times this word was used in Marist writings.

## The life of Br Alfano (1873-1943): from hagiography to spiritual biography



125. *La ligne droite*, (1963) work of Br Marcel Colin.

In 1963, the Marie Médiatrice company at Genval in Belgium published a biography of Br Alfano who died in 1943 and whose cause of beatification had begun in 1953 and been introduced in Rome in 1955. In this book, entitled “The straight road”, Br Henri-Noé (Marcel Colin), the prestigious formator at the Second Novitiate and then at the Centre Champagnat, painted a portrait of this Brother, born in Val d’Aoste in Italy in 1873. Br Alfano spent his formation years at St Paul-Trois-Châteaux before becoming a teacher in Rome and Genova, Master of Novices for an extended time (1907-1922), and then a formator at the Scholasticate (1923-1939).

Even though the book was addressed to a wide public, it was directed at revealing in a quite orderly manner the main traits of a spirituality that, in many ways, resembled that of Br Jean-Emile. It presented Br Alfano as a dutiful person, one who never wasted a minute and

who was most certainly a “living Rule” to the point that he had the reputation of being a severe man (p. 92). “The words that most frequently passed his lips were: Duty, Serious, Reflection, Constancy.” Br Alfano was, moreover, an assiduous reader of the spiritual writings of the Institute which he called, “our family’s staple food” (p. 71). A concise outline of the teaching he gave to the Novices is contained in a manuscript of 140 pages. In eight chapters he explained the true meaning of the Marist spirit (p. 72): a spirit of faith; a spirit of childlike trust in God; a spirit of uprightness; a spirit of regularity; a spirit of fraternal charity; a spirit of spiritual joy; a spirit of sacrifice; a spirit of humility, simplicity and modesty.

In the 6th section of the biography, the author spoke of the five major characteristics of Br Alfano’s life. Firstly he focussed on his “art of living”, made up of self-control and attention to duty, in particular getting people to respect the Rule. Then there was: “non-stop prayer”, less a matter of devotion than abandoning himself to God (p. 125); love of the congregation; “his generous sharing in the Cross of Christ” by a constant spirit of sacrifice. Finally, Br Alfano was a “marial soul”, an apostle of the Rosary. In his concluding chapter entitled, “Magnificat”, the author took care to remind readers that:

*This man who came across as being severe, this lover of the Cross, this man of the Rule and fidelity (...) had an open, hungry, sensitive, and passionate side to him. To see him only as an ascetic is to distort and mutilate him. For he was principally an ardent, loving soul, full of desire, the high point of love.*



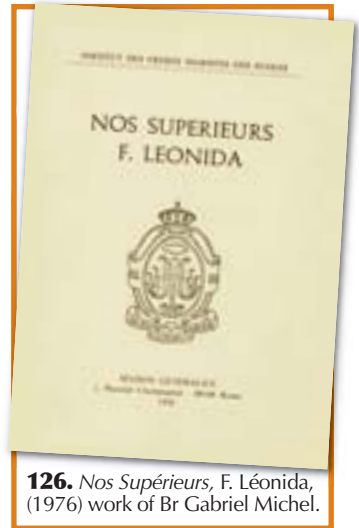
This book was hinting at the mystical flame behind an ascetic facade. While Br Jean-Emile was still locked in an ascetical and hagiographic mode, Br Marcel Colin was expressing himself in a tone of spirituality, more interested in the deeper meaning of a life than any list of its virtues. This was, moreover what he had set out to do: to gain an understanding of a spiritual journey that might have appeared rigid but was really a straight road.

This biography was also pointing to a certain sociology of the Institute: that of its second rank officers such as its formators, who would never rise to being Provincial or Assistants but who were what held the congregation together over the years from 1900 to 1960. Br Alfano was a near-perfect example of this group since he had filled nearly all the intermediary roles. After his final profession in 1894, he became the Master of Scholastics for Italy at Ventimiglia in 1903. And after his vow of stability in 1907, he became Master of Novices until 1922.<sup>532</sup> From 1909 he was a Provincial Councillor of St Paul-Trois-Châteaux. In 1916 he made his Second Novitiate. From 1923 to 1939 he was on the staff of the Scholasticate.<sup>533</sup> He was elected twice to General Chapters, in 1920 and 1932.

Br Marcel Colin, himself a formator, knew how to see the real greatness of these dutiful and Rule-abiding men, men who were also uncompromising witnesses to the spiritual identity of the congregation, itself struggling to follow their lead. Basically, in speaking in a sympathetic way of the personality of Br Alfano, uncompromising to a fault, Br Henri-Noé was implicitly stating that it was neither easy nor desirable for people to try to follow in his footsteps. In short, it was a case of “to be admired but not imitated”, likely to make people think about themselves but not feel inclined to imitate him. It was then a way of saying that the days of this type of sanctity were over.

## From hagiography to historical biography

This attempt to move beyond ascetical hagiography to purely spiritual biographies would have its imitators, with an intervening phase of purely historical biographies. Even if it is sensitive to speak about a Marist historical school, the early stages of this trend may be dated to 1956-58 with the articles of Br Pierre Zind (Louis-Laurent), “Contributions to a fresh start regarding the origins of the Institute”.<sup>534</sup>



**126.** *Nos Supérieurs, F. Léonida*, (1976) work of Br Gabriel Michel.

<sup>532</sup> His departure from the Novitiate was due to a disagreement with the Provincial over the admission of a Novice to vows. But there certainly must have been other reasons that the author does not mention.

<sup>533</sup> Br Marcel Colin does not mention his exact role. It seems to have been that of Superior.

<sup>534</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. XXIV, p. 83, 161, 215.

The title of the biography of Br Leonidas by Br Gabriel-Michel in 1976, "*Our Superiors, Br Leonidas*",<sup>535</sup> showed clearly that it was in continuity with the book of Br Jean-Emile. However, it had an altogether different feel to its predecessor: there was no longer any mixture of hagiography and history; it was an historical biography constructed from a collection of testimonies and not seriously interested in the person's beliefs. In his Introduction, Br Gabriel-Michel warned his readers:

*Some people will find this biography of a man they considered as the perfect Superior to be exaggeratedly critical. Others will say that this portrait, while being undoubtedly true, is describing the ideal of a world that has disappeared forever.*

Indeed, the account showed someone who was full of grandeur and even of sensitivity, but also made judgements like the following:

*He was the personification of the Rule (or rather regimentation). A metronome that never broke down, but without human warmth, without those small gestures or throw-away lines that are spontaneous and so touch one's heart and transform it. (p. 84)*

Br Leonidas himself acknowledged,

*It's not heart that I lack, but its expression (p. 89).*

Br Gabriel-Michel would conclude: (p. 146)

*The current generation is quick to judge this generation that seemed to be draped in principles and readily believes itself to be closer to the Gospel. It is too early to judge ...*

Just as Br Marcel Colin had made an effort to find a deeper meaning in the austere life of Br Alfano, Br Gabriel tried to get us to understand the depth of a man who held responsibility but whose personality was open to much discussion. And he succeeded largely because he looked at him with all his limitations as well as his personal complexity and depth. Yet, as noted above, his personal beliefs hardly appeared in this text whereas the biography of Br Alfano was more forthcoming on this point. The two biographies were in agreement on one fact: this type of sanctity had become difficult to understand. Br Gabriel went one step further: it was obsolete.

The cultural break lived through between 1963 and 1976 could not be better highlighted, all the more so in that this judgement came from a Brother who had lived many years in the preceding period and who was trying to understand it rather than condemn it. So, it was not so much a matter of deciding if one epoch was better than another but of stating clearly that times had changed. Hereafter, the only way of edifying is to search for the truth about a life journey that surely has a spiritual dimension but is also characterised by human limitations and the period in which the person lived. Without a doubt, history will be the judge, history which had been so ignored by our Institute that thought of itself as shielded from it because of its set ideas about its fate.

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<sup>535</sup> Br Gabriel Michel *Nos Supérieurs: Fr Léonida*, General House, Rome, 1976, 150 p.

The biography of Br Charles-Raphaël by Br Paul Sester<sup>536</sup> in 1988 would share the same spirit, but the author did not feel the need to prudently warn his readers, as if this biographical style spoke for itself<sup>537</sup>. This particular biography had been referred to several times in preceding Chapters. In the final chapter of his book, the author stressed the outstanding qualities of the man and then endeavoured to indicate how his personality differed quite markedly from that of his predecessor:

*Like everyone else, no matter how great, he had his limits. In his case, what was missing were the qualities of an executive (...) Even when he was acting in the name of the Council, he was always hesitant in taking decisions, he lacked firmness in giving orders since he did not like to impose himself, he did not want to lord it over anyone and found it disagreeable to put himself out in front.*



**127.** Frère Charles-Raphaël, 8<sup>ème</sup> Supérieur Général de l'Institut des Frères Maristes, (1988), work of Br Paul Sester.

Is there still a hint of hagiography and edification here? Yes to a certain extent, since, paradoxically, referring to the complexity of a person comes across as more edifying than any hagiographic text that lacks credibility because it is too good to be true. The intention of putting good examples forward remains the same, but with the explicit addition of the concepts of complexity and temporality. Hereafter, anyone who writes an edifying biography has to take steps to avoid presenting the person in question as free from the constraints of time and the human condition. Thus, a type of hagiography is being born that makes a clearer distinction than before between sanctity and perfection and that is more respectful of history and anthropology. Cultural change has come about through the integration of secular culture and Catholic tradition.

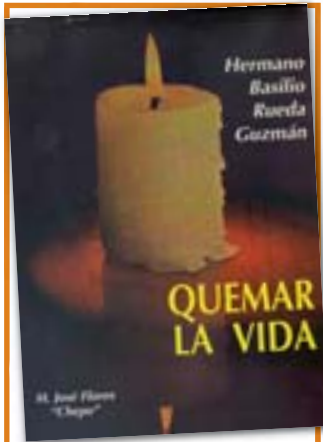
## From biographical history to spiritual biography?

The last two biographies certainly did not bracket out the spiritual side of the Superiors being described but, with the biography of Br Basilio Rueda by Br José Florès Chepo<sup>538</sup>, spirituality became the central theme of the biography. It also explained the motto of Br Basilio, "To burn one's life for Christ, the Brothers, and the Kingdom", something that all of his predecessors could obviously have related to. But in these pages Br Basilio comes across as an exemplar of a mystical and prophetic life, miles away from the ascetical line taken unashamedly by Br Jean-

<sup>536</sup> Br Paul Sester *Frère Charles Raphaël, 8<sup>o</sup> supérieur général de l'institut des Frères Maristes*, Rome, 1988, 103 p.

<sup>537</sup> Br Paul Sester was to receive a number of criticisms of his book.

<sup>538</sup> *Lumière et flammes d'une vie*, translated by Br Gabriel Michel, with no indication of place or date, 340 p.



**128.** *Quemar la vida.* (1998)  
Biography of  
Br Basilio Rueda Guzmán,  
Superior General

Emile in 1953 and well-understood by Br Marcel Colin in relation to Br Alfano.

So, I believe that there have been three phases in the writing of biographies: the hagiographic, the historical and the charismatic, which seem to illustrate the profound change that has taken place in the Institute. Certainly, just as there was a rhetorical aspect to the way in which Superiors General and formators were presented as distant 'living rules' and 'near perfect' individuals, there is rhetoric in historical and charismatic biographies. Nevertheless, this turnaround is highly significant.

### **Cultural change and spiritual growth**

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Through the above examples, I have tried to bring to the fore one basic fact: if there has been a break in the history of the Institute, it is not to be found primarily at the theological, spiritual or even institutional level, but rather in the expression of this theology and spirituality. The Institute has not thrown what it had previously adored onto the fire but, through becoming one with the surrounding culture, it has changed the way it looks at God, the Church, the world and itself. This is why, even on subjects as secondary as the biographies of Superiors, it is no longer possible to write as before. However, it is not easy to leave behind one culture and build another without wondering if one is not thereby in the process of losing one's soul..

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# GENERAL CHAPTERS AND CIRCULARS (1967-1985). REINTERPRETING TRADITION WHILE IT WAS STILL RECENT

The 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapters have a lot in common due to the fact that all three corresponded with the generalate of Br Basilio and the development of the new Constitutions. An atmosphere of tension had reigned at them, in particular over the question of the priesthood. There was earlier reference made to the first session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter in 1967 which, following the example of the Vatican Council, set aside the working documents to determine the way it wanted to function and its own program. This was a daring break with previous tradition. Such an event was all the more surprising in that it happened in a gathering of Brothers with the vow of stability, since the 1967 Chapter was still composed only of Brothers with the four vows.

### A weighty doctrinal work

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The main fruits of this work of reinterpretation are contained in the “Chapter documents” published in two volumes - red and green – on 21 November 1968. These had been used as the basis for the *ad experimentum* Constitutions, published the same day (a white book). A marial document published in 1969 and a Directory completed the body of their work. These documents were very rich in doctrine, founded on the Bible, the Council teachings and the tradition of the Institute.

### The first volume of the Chapter documents: Religious Life

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Starting with Document 1 on the Spirit of the Institute, the Chapter invited Brothers to reflect on “the quality of our fidelity” since “the spiritual climate and society have changed a lot since our origins. We have to question ourselves about where

we may have fallen behind over time”.<sup>539</sup> In conclusion, the document expressed the wish, among other hopes, “that in-depth, critical studies be constantly undertaken at the level of the Institute to reveal the rich and dynamic character of our Marist vocation”.

Document 2 on Religious Consecration expressed an acute awareness that from now on we were living in “a world that was profoundly secularised, where there was no mention of God nor apparently would there be in the future”.<sup>540</sup> Further, “the need for screening and formation has to be complemented by the need for restoring and strengthening faith, faith that has been shaken by the icy winds of uncertainty, anguish and scepticism in a rapidly changing world that seems to be distancing itself from religion and denying the existence of God in the name of scientific progress and human dignity”.<sup>541</sup>

There was a heated argument over the vow of stability if the lengthy record devoted to it is to be believed (p. 88-100). It was finally defined by its charismatic aspect, “as a personal means of responding more deeply to the grace of the Holy Spirit to foster greater fidelity in observing the Constitutions and the unceasing renewal of the vitality of the Institute.” Behind this apparently anodyne definition, an institutional revolution was at work. The vow of stability would no longer constitute a barrier to significant offices and General Chapters.

Document 3 on the Life of Prayer confirmed elements that had been evident and evolving in Chapters from 1932 to 1958: the importance of the word of God, attention to personal prayer, and liturgical prayer. The Rosary was replaced by “marial prayer”. Although the term “marial devotion” was retained, doctrinal advances referred more to a spirituality. There was no longer an obligation to spend an hour each day on religious study but attendance at conferences and courses was to lead to “a solid religious culture”. In short, the practices of the Institute were retained but reinterpreted and above all deepened.



**129.** Chapter Documents.  
Green Book.

## Revitalising community life

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In Document 3, the most voluminous, community life (p. 109-173) was envisaged as “a mystery” within that of the Church, “the mystical body of Christ and the People of God more than a juridically organised society”.<sup>542</sup> Moreover, “the ques-

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<sup>539</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter Documents, p. 2-3.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid* p. 25

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34..

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.* p. 121-122..

tioning of values that seemed unchangeable, the rapid change of the world”, the reforms of Vatican II, the complexity of new apostolic works, and the penury of vocations, demanded, more than ever, that Brothers be supported by their communities.

Surveys conducted in the Institute on the occasion of the Chapter had pointed to “the superficial character of a good number of our communities” (p. 113). So, what was needed was a profound reform founded on “a spirituality of openness” and “fidelity in a time of change” instead of “fidelity to fixed practices”. It was no longer enough to be a team attached to a common school ministry. Communities had to be about real sharing like the first Christian community, being brothers although with a leader, and being apostolic-minded. Precisely because there was this ‘apostolic’ dimension, there would be an “educational community” (p. 166) of students, “lay teachers”, Brothers’ parents, “office staff” and even former Brothers who “can constitute a significant sector of the Marist community on mission”. Parish and diocesan communities were also mentioned.

In some ways this document turned its back on ways of the past. Indeed, while it was true that in the early days at Lavalla the Brothers had been apostolic lay people more directed to serving the wider Church community than their own small community (cf. Br Laurent going to Bessat), Fr Champagnat had quickly established a monastery style of community living and limited our apostolate to teaching. It was significant, besides, that the document made no claim to authority from our origins or tradition.

So, the idea of an educational community was born. This would flow over into the introduction of the laity into the vision of the Institute. The Institute, then, would no longer define itself as a society of religious involved in education with well-defined boundaries but as a community made up of a core of Brothers living a particular spirituality together, associated with other ill-defined groups that shared its spiritual and apostolic life in various ways. It was no longer a congregation as such that was taking shape, but a new community. Having said that, the community of Brothers was to become both more demanding and flexible, because it was no longer defined by everyone working on the same project in the same place but by living and sharing a common spirituality.

This new way of conceiving the Brothers’ community was a return - apparently without being aware of it - to the first years of the congregation and would beg the same question as had come up then: if it is not the work that brings the Brothers together, would the community, now defined in other terms, be strong enough spiritually to hold itself together? These proposals, then, meant a potential crisis that the development of the ‘project of community life’ tried to address.



**130.** Chapter Documents.  
Red Book.

## **Apostolic mission: from the school to education?**

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In the second volume of the Chapter documents, the section on apostolic life presented a nuanced view of the world today: the importance of the human person and progress, the rise of secularism and the population explosion, hopes for unity and development” (p. 27). But also, “a world where life, liberty and human dignity are ever more threatened (...) A world where God is absent, in which humankind is threatened with suffocation as a result of being closed off to the transcendent”. Therefore, the mission of the Marist Brothers was primarily catechesis and faith education through “schools and particularly Catholic schools” but also “non-school activities”. There was no point in trying to list such activities but they should be “aimed at announcing the Gospel while respecting freedom of conscience”. Finally, the “poor” should be our main focus but the document does not state exactly what type of poverty.

At first glance this text did not really split with previous Institute practice since Brothers had always been involved in activities beyond the school (parish youth groups, extra-curricular and post-school activities). Nevertheless, these activities remained largely tied to the schools while what was envisaged from then on were projects that had no school connection. This was to produce conflicts in many Provinces between those in schools and practitioners of new apostolic approaches.

However, it was the second section of the document on apostolic life that would be problematic since it touched on the subject of “the Institute and priesthood”. Unable to reach a decision, the Chapter expressed a desire that contact be made with the Marist Fathers to look at some mutual collaboration in schools and gave the new General Administration the task of studying the question further to find a solution.

In the following chapters (p. 45-130), the document sketched the spirituality of a Marist educator that was somewhat tedious. It tried to adopt a perspective that was both open and well-grounded, but, in my opinion, it still reflected traditional thinking. Schools were to be “teams of educators”; a chapter was devoted to apostolic youth movements (p. 118); another (p. 124) to the World Union of Ex-Students.

Some passages indicated a real crisis in passing on the faith and culture. For example, there was the observation of: (p. 77-78)

*a sort of malaise, a certain reticence in regard to religious education. There are even Brothers who want to have nothing more to do with it, especially in senior classes. People say that they are not competent enough, or that they feel “out of their depth” with the new mentalities and methods. (...) Some are shaken up by baseless questioning that is dangerous for our faith.*

On the whole, this lengthy document (p. 9-130) lacks unity, as if an effort had been made to include all the various educational trends in the congregation. Those with a more traditional mindset could find a lot in continuity with previous thinking, and those who were more innovative could find what was needed to move forward.

The Commission members (p. 134) made no pretence, moreover, at having a definitive and complete vision of the question because of “the constant and rapid

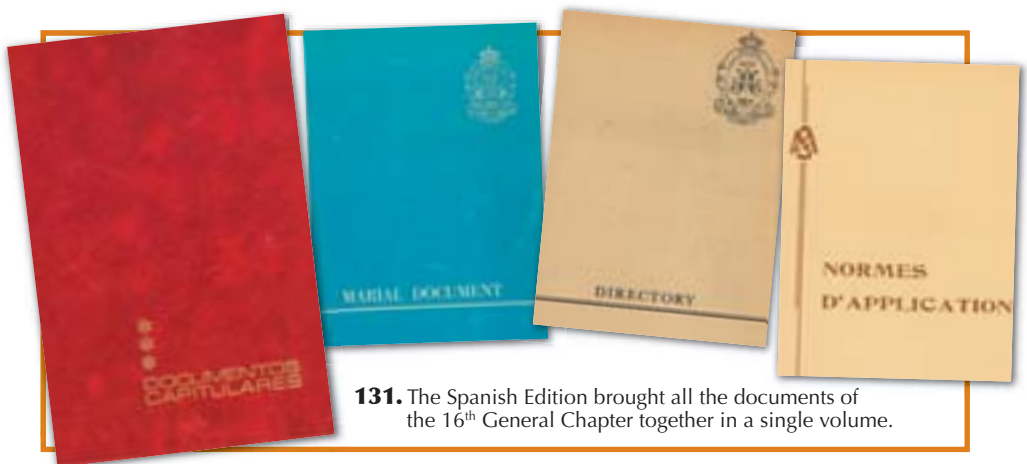


evolution of society". Noting the drying up of vocations and the increase in withdrawals, they gave their analysis of the reasons: "We are living in a time when faith is in a serious critical condition while material well-being is on the increase. The choice of a 'higher' vocation has lost its aspect of social promotion". But also, "our school network has grown and become more complicated in many countries", such that Juniorates are less attractive. Moreover, the competency and influence of our lay helpers raise questions about the usefulness of the Brothers' vocation. Clergy have little understanding of our role. But the biggest obstacles "are bitter, sad, blasé, irregular Brothers and communities without a sense of purpose". All in all, the crisis related to the identity of the apostolic vocation of the Brother was analysed with clarity.

## A formation crisis

The Commission did not set out to revolutionise formation but approved a development that was under way: small-scale Juniorates that were more homely or aspirants accompanied by specialised Brothers while staying at home. Holidays that had forever been frowned upon were now viewed favourably as a way of young people keeping in touch with their family and peers. In the novitiate the taking of the habit was to happen without any solemn ritual. Regarding Scholasticates, it was noted that, while professional training was good, "religious formation was a source of great concern". The problem seemed to be the same for Brothers attending university. The Jesus Magister and centres of spirituality (the term "Second Novitiate" had started to be dropped) needed renewing.

The chapter on perseverance (p. 194 ...) pointed to "an increase in the number of departures of finally professed and even Brothers with stability" while "the number of temporary professed was diminishing at a time when the percentage of overall departures was going up". As usual, it cast blame on inadequate discernment before admission and lack of depth in commitment. Mention was made of overwork "resulting from poor judgement in multiplying new foundations and stub-



**131.** The Spanish Edition brought all the documents of the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter together in a single volume.

bornness in retaining existing schools”.<sup>543</sup> There were, however, some new symptoms identified: a way of life that was too excluded from mainstream society and communities that were too closed in on themselves. Furthermore, “the world was passing through a period of uncertainty and calling everything into question to the point of doubting the soundness of the vocation of teaching Brothers”. Among the usual remedies for such a situation (such as prayer, family spirit, and spiritual direction), there was one that stood out as being quite novel: “a reappraisal of our state as religious is needed, particularly from the theological point of view”. This matter had to be worked on in the centres of spirituality.

The document on formation was largely based on tradition but acknowledged that there was an identity crisis for lay religious in the Church which regarded them simply as some sort of specialised laypeople, without much thought given to the theological or charismatic foundations of such a life choice. The small booklet, *Brothers in Lay Religious Institutes*,<sup>544</sup> produced by the Union of Superior Generals would much later provide a response to this difficulty. But it was at Vatican II that the problem was brought to light in several guises: the question of the priesthood and that of formation.

## **The Third World: decolonisation and mission**

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The foreword (p. 205) of the document on mission treated the Third World and mission countries as more or less identical. In its chapter 1, it took care to distinguish “mission” from “missions”. The latter referred to peoples where the Church had not yet taken root or had not yet reached maturity. But it also included “certain peoples or human groups where the preaching of the Gospel goes back a long time but has not succeeded”, which could include protestant countries or old Christian lands that were no longer so. Nevertheless, the idea of “Christian countries” (p. 218) was still there. The chapter, then, did not fully go beyond the old opposition of Christian country-mission country even when other documents spoke at length about ‘One World’ where secularisation predominated.

Be that as it may, the Commission put forward a global plan for missionary implantations (p. 259-266), even proposing that 10% of active Brothers could be engaged in this task, at the cost of a reorganisation of existing works. There was a need for a General Missions Office, with links to a Regional Missions Office and a Provincial Missions Office, responsible for co-ordinating the effort of the Institute. This initiative was all the more urgent in that the work of St Francis Xavier (p. 240) which had already been showing signs of running out of puff in 1958, had died out for lack of recruits. Many paragraphs were devoted to “local Brothers” who should be given a formation that was appropriate to their culture and entrusted with responsibilities sooner rather than later.

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<sup>543</sup> This argument had first appeared at the 1932 Chapter.

<sup>544</sup> Unión de Superiores Generales, *Hermano en los institutos religiosos laicos*, Rome, 1991, 69 p.

In chapter VIII some thought was given to “adapting religious life in mission countries” (p. 252), what is commonly known today as ‘inculturation’. This provided the right moment for a guarded warning about the relationship between the spread of Christianity and western civilisation through the “more or less close” co-operation with colonial civil servants. Despite such ambiguities, “if the Church today has sunk roots in certain countries and is governed by locals, it is thanks to these great missionaries” (p. 253). But things could no longer continue in this way: the spread of Christianity had to take account of mentalities and cultures.

This discourse on mission came at a time when decolonisation was still quite recent in many countries and had not yet happened in others. The text betrayed a sort of “third-world” bias which encouraged the chapter to envisage a fresh missionary effort. Although this project was still caught up in traditional ideas, it would find strong echoes in the coming years, with many Provinces starting missions, especially in Africa and Asia.

In hindsight, questions could be asked about the relevance of a strategy of foreign mission for Provinces that were thereby sacrificing in part their chances of local renewal in losing their most energetic members. This apparent contradiction seems to be related to several factors: the difficulty in conceiving the old Christian lands as mission countries; the Third World focus that was very strong at the time; the under-estimation of the size of the internal crisis; the conviction that foreign missions provided a solution to the identity crisis. Up to a point, it was the reappearance of the 1903 strategy that sought to save the congregation through missionary outreach.

## **Finances, poverty and justice**

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The last matter dealt with in the Chapter documents was finances. Its technical side is of no direct interest to us here. Still, certain remarks are quite significant: “We recommend the separation of community accounts and school accounts” (p. 273). Schools would pay a salary to the Brothers and “in this way, there would be no need to declare fictional benefits coming to the schools”. Moreover, “are there not schools that keep themselves going thanks to the fact that salaries are not paid to the Brothers working there? Does it make sense that the salaries of these Brothers are going to support well-off students to the detriment of the poor?”

Further on there was discussion of introducing lay people into the administration of temporal affairs so as to release some Brothers for apostolic tasks and “to decrease some of the prejudice surrounding our supposed exorbitant profits”. In regard to social justice (p. 293), lay teachers and domestic workers were to receive reasonable salaries and benefit from social security measures. In regard to the financial relationship between the Common Fund and Provincial holdings, the Commission expressed the wish that one-tenth of Province revenues go to the General Fund as the 1958 Chapter had decided (p. 299), and that one-tenth of this amount be passed on to the missions.

The text of the Constitutions published in Rome on 21 November 1968 was inspired in large measure by the Chapter Documents. It had been edited by an *ad hoc* commission between the first and second sessions of the 1967-68 Chapter, then discussed and approved at the 1968 session. They contain a large part of the plan and the ideas of these preparatory documents.

## **A new spirit concerning some old questions**

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While the 1958 Chapter had already shown a new spirit, the 1967-68 Chapter was one of a real break with the past, similar to Vatican II. Yet, like all cases of such 'breaks', it retained important elements of continuity. This could be because one section of the Chapter had put its weight behind stopping decisions from going too far or because the protagonists of change had not followed things through to their logical conclusion.

In fact, the matters under debate and recommendations had nearly all been under discussion at previous Chapters. Yet it was the underlying thinking that was different: until the 1946 Chapter this thinking had been considered unchangeable. By 1958 the scheme of things was more nuanced and by 1967 the only way forward was to adapt to the changing world and to work with its better aspirations while fighting against its secularism. From a good versus bad scenario, the Institute had moved on to a more complex way of looking at things that required a lot of discernment of itself and the world. In particular it had to be self-critical in the light of its tradition and the way the Church now saw things.

What had forever seemed a given, destined to last indefinitely, was now obsolete. What had been a patrimony to guard jealously had to start again from scratch. The 1967-68 Chapter was, then, largely utopic: both the end of one way of understanding reality and the beginning of another. Yet, how were they to get the message across to a body of almost 10,000 Brothers about a change that only one hundred and fifty had experienced? How best to make the admission that those who until then had always been seen as the brakes on any change had suddenly become the accelerators?

## **An inevitable crisis of confidence**

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This was referred to by Rev Br Basilio at the end of the 1976 Chapter<sup>545</sup> when he invited its members to not repeat the failure in communication that followed the 1967-68 Chapter:

*Some Brothers were so disappointed and frustrated, feeling that that they had not obtained what they had been hoping for, that they just could not accept the texts prepared by that Chapter. Some Provinces took two to three years, others six or seven years, to find out about the Chapter documents and to fall into step with the rest of the congregation.*

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<sup>545</sup> *Texts of the 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, Rome, p. 118.*

Still, this situation that the Institute was experiencing on a small scale was only a reflection of what the Catholic Church was going through on a much larger scale.

## The circulars of Rev Br Basilio Rueda

Br Leonidas had been the fully-fledged type of Superior following the model set by Br Louis-Marie and seen in many Assistants. Br Charles-Raphaël, although a man of this tradition, had shown much more openness. Although Rev Br Basilio had come from Mexico like Br Leonidas, there was more by way of contrast than continuity between them, even if they had enjoyed cordial personal relations.

## An atypical Superior General

In fact, the life journey of Br Basilio had been relatively standard until his work with the Better World movement (1961-65) which had been allowed by the openness of the Institute following on from the 1958 Chapter and the perspective coming through the Vatican Council. Over a number of years he carried out a ministry that had not been foreseen in our Constitutions nor in our tradition and he was to become Superior General without having followed the normal route for reaching this position. Before 1961 he had neither been Provincial Councillor nor made the vow of stability.



**132.** Br Basilio Ruedas, an atypical Superior General, and his successor, Br Charles Howard.

He had only been the director of the Juniorate since 1954. But his involvement with the *Cursillo* movement and his university training seem to have become deciding factors in his mission. Under the influence of his Professor and Marist tradition, he decided on one of the foundations of his spirituality: to burn one's life for Christ. Already, during his time as a teacher and student, he does not seem to have paid much attention to the Rule regarding work and rest.

His role as Master of the Second Novitiate over five sessions gave him the chance to connect with the Institute again and to prove his attachment to it by making the vow of stability. Elected delegate of his home Province in March 1967, he was the unofficial candidate of Spanish-speaking Capitulants for the highest office, even though he had never been Provincial or Assistant and was still exceptionally young (43 years of age: 1924-67).

In fact he was the right Superior General for a time of crisis and for new times. In some way, his weak connection with the preceding epoch was a plus, as was

his experience outside the congregation, making him a prototype of a new way of being a Marist Brother. His double period as General would confirm the intuition of those who elected him. Indeed, he knew how to bring about the needed breaks in self-understanding while not turning his back on tradition. As pastor, he would attempt to accompany, as best he could, Brothers from every part of the world. Having said that, this work of rebuilding and change also had a destructive side to it, something he could not control since its causes went back such a long way. Still, maintaining unity was no small feat.

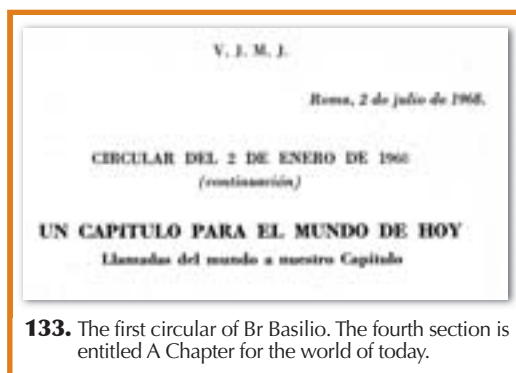
His coming also signified the end of a tradition that until then had always found its chief executive officer in Europe. From then on, the Anglo-Saxon group (Br Charles Howard and Br Seán Sammon) and the Spanish group (Br Benito Arbuès, Br Emili Turú<sup>546</sup>), have led the Institute, whose French-speaking group is fast fading away.

## Taking tradition on board and re-thinking it

The first Circular of Br Basilio Rueda dated 2 January 1968 was made up of five sections that were spread out, in fact, until November of the following year. It basically concerned the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, the first session of which had just taken place. This was why the first section (T. 24, 21/1/1968) was devoted to a critique of this event, noting that for the first time in many years, the Chapter had seen real confrontation. This was mentioned earlier in the introduction to the period 1907-1967.

A first conceptual revolution is contained in the 4<sup>th</sup> section of the Circular from 2 July 1968, entitled, “A Chapter for the world today”. This was intended to get the congregation to forget about the old way of seeing the world as corrupt, something to be wary of, to be replaced by a world that is calling out and in which we are to be “sacrament and leaven” (p. 399). In the fifth section of the Circular which would not appear until 1 November 1969, Br Basilio spoke of “The Calls of the Church and the Founder”. His Conclusion (p. 652) proclaimed a new way of being Marist:

*You can be sure that we are advancing towards a way of life that is less legalistic, apostolically more daring, more in touch with a growing, professional way of doing things, involving more independence and external freedom.*



**133.** The first circular of Br Basilio. The fourth section is entitled A Chapter for the world of today.

<sup>546</sup> These two Brothers come from a specific part of the Spanish world, Catalunya.

He went on to add that such change “will end up leading to vocational crises” for “it is not just a matter of degree, but of style and even of structure”. He was, then, adopting almost the exact opposite position to the whole tradition of Circulars, disconnecting spirituality from the institution. To change the structure was not intended to harm spirituality but, on the contrary, to reinterpret it so as to give it new life for the sake of a new world.

He was to explicitly come back to this thought in his Circular of 1 July 1971 that recapped the General Conference of Provincials, in particular his meditation given to the Provincials (p. 344-399). In it, he said very clearly that the Institute had to undertake “a change of mentality, a *metanoia* or institutional conversion” (p. 345). In any case, there was no choice: we are participants in “a transformation of religious life, not in its essence but in what is accidental, not in its evangelical dimension but its cultural dimension. We are participating in its shedding of its previous form and in its finding ‘new expression’” (p. 346).

The Circular of 25 December 1975 on “The Spirit of the Institute” was of capital importance since it focussed on the “spirit of the Institute” that others had laid claim to ever since the time of the Founder to define the heart of Marist spirituality.

*When we speak of the spirit of the Institute we think of humility, simplicity and modesty. We think of marial devotion and finally we think of fraternal charity lived in a quite unique way as the family spirit.*

Yet ‘spirit’ should not be confused with ‘charism’. The former “is more a way of being, the way a particular family relates, an atmosphere between people who share a common outlook on life”. Charism, on the other hand, talks about both being and acting”. Spirituality is the way we systematise our spirit. It can be “expressed in words”, defined and taught.

So, he made the helpful distinction between spirit, charism and spirituality: spirit, with its rather cultural nature; charism, of the order of grace; and spirituality, more rational and theological (p, 174-176). Then he stressed that the spirituality of Champagnat, as priest and Marist Father, was not exactly the same as ours. He also invited us to relativise our spirit in the light of the Gospel and history. He recognised that quite frequently, “slipping from the spiritual to the purely psychological level has not always had good outcomes” (p. 189). For example, humility has engendered inferiority complexes. He ended by outlining a schema for humility, simplicity and modesty as re-imagined in a new context.

In other Circulars Br Basilio would attempt to reinterpret basic aspects of our identity: for example, our relationship with Mary in “Making Space for Mary”<sup>547</sup> Then there was the extraordinary and lengthy Circular on Fidelity (8 September 1984) which, for the first time and in a systematic way, treated Marist life not as it was supposed to be lived but as it actually had been, with all the highpoints and lowpoints of individuals and the institutions.

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<sup>547</sup> *Circulars*, T. XXVI. Circular of 8 September 1976. Circulars Br Basilio “*Making Space for Mary*”.

Thus, with Br Basilio the idea that came through strongly was that the Institute was not to be understood as an institution with an identifying spirit but rather as a unique spirituality that was constantly evolving and adapting and which the institution and each Brother were meant to serve. Even so, Rev Br Basilio was loath to directly criticise previous generations. If I understand his thinking well, what he saw was:

- A relationship with the world that was too anchored in the monastic tradition,
- An understanding of religious life that was too clerical and hierarchic,
- Weak integration between religious life and apostolic life.



### 33.

## THE 1976 AND 1985 CHAPTERS. BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE

The document output from the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was so great that the 17<sup>th</sup> was determined to be more sparing in what it produced, being content to summarise its work in a relatively modest book of 247 pages.<sup>548</sup> Indeed, Br Basilio had explained in his foreword remarks (p. 9-10), “The Chapter became aware that we possess good documents but that they are poorly known, little meditated on, still less put into practice at any level: personal, community or general”. The Chapter was content, then, to complete the work of the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter, including deciding to extend the time of experimentation of the Constitutions and deferring the question of the priesthood to the following Chapter. One decision of importance was taken



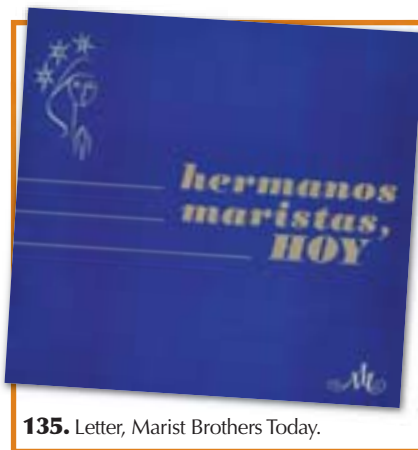
**134.** Members of the 17th General Chapter (1976).

<sup>548</sup> *Texts of 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*, Rome, undated.

but which could not finally be acted on: the sale of the General House.

### “Marist Brothers Today”<sup>549</sup>

Keen to avoid the Brothers having to read a lengthy and intellectual text, the Chapter chose to send them a succinct message that was both prophetic and fraternal in style. It recalled that after the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter, “we have questioned traditional values and looked for new ways to express them; sometimes we have wondered if it were really possible to harmonise all the different points of view, and whether the effort was really worth all the tension and apprehension it caused”. Yet, it also affirmed, “Already a younger, future-oriented generation is coming through”. The rest of the text gave a summary of the Constitutions in a charismatic style, “trying to pass on a message of theological hope, to speak of the happiness of the Institute to be what it is, to thank the Lord for this and to witness to it among the people of today”.<sup>550</sup>



135. Letter, Marist Brothers Today.

### Poverty and Justice

The heightened social awareness of the Chapter led it to a more serious consideration of poverty and justice, a theme that the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter had treated in its discussion of poverty and the apostolic life. It was the only text that was to acquire the status of being a Chapter document. It was clearly influenced by Pontifical teaching but also by the theology of liberation and that was why the Reverend Brother warned against “getting wrapped up in any purely social mystique” (p. 11). Still, such a document was pulling religious poverty away from a narrow understanding that was essentially canonical and ascetical to give it a socio-political dimension. From now on, the world was not to be fought against but made more just. Resistance had become an element of our mission.

### PAC (prayer, apostolate and community)

In making the distinction between the religious community and the educational community, the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter had made a helpful clarification but, in the process, had removed a large part of the *raison d'être* of the religious community. Also,

<sup>549</sup> The idea of preparing such a document had already come up at the preceding Chapter.

<sup>550</sup> *Texts of 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*, Rome, undated, p.4, Letter, Marist Brothers Today.

at the very moment the Institute was rediscovering its apostolic vocation, this separation implicitly meant that the communities would once again follow the monastic model.

In setting up the PAC Commission, the 17th Chapter was trying to develop an integrated approach to our spirituality around three elements. As the Commission said, it was a matter of defining the Marist Brothers “as a Marist apostolic Institute”. So, the Commission proposed four pathways towards such integration.

The first, “starting from consecrated life”, invited people to live “as Brothers for all” not simply within the confines of their local community but sharing Marist spirituality with students, teachers, former students ... “so as to build up the wider Marist family” (p. 96), a phrase that was to have a promising future. This was, then, one of the foundation stones of the opening of the Institute to the laity who were now considered as partners, at least in theory.

Then came the integration pathway starting from a community life that took up “the spirituality and charism of the Founder”. The practical instrument of this way was to be the Community Life Project, revised each year. The details of this were described at length in an appendix (p. 108-113).

Our life of prayer, nourished by the presence of God and of Mary, by the word of God, by daily events and by the signs of the times, would constitute the third approach to integration. In practice, this meant communities deciding on “a life project” related to prayer which could sometimes be open to others: young people, friends, relatives ... At the level of the General Administration, research on Fr Champagnat and “our Marist apostolic spirituality” had to be pursued.

Finally there came the pathway of apostolic life. This posed the formidable problem related to “the tension between personal and institutional charism” arising from when there was a distinction made between religious community and ministry community. The text tried to resolve the dilemma by proposing that Brothers see their individual ministries as the mission of the community and that communities receive these individual ministries “as part of its mission”. Moreover, Catholic schools, despite their many challenges, remained our primary ministry.

This document, then, provided confirmation of a number of openings: collaboration with the laity, respect for individual difference and the diversity of communities and ministries... It implied that the institution had ceased being the exclusive bearer of Marist charism and spirituality, while basing itself in the end on the fundamental concept of ‘Marist apostolic spirituality’, even though this remained ill-defined. In such a context, the community life project seems to have been more a timely than a necessary strategy. Overall, while their attempt to integrate Marist life is to be congratulated, there was much left to be done in this regard.

## **Little said regarding formation, mission and the Constitutions**

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Regarding formation, the lengthy text of the Commission (p. 63-87) does not seem to have added much to what the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter had said. In his opening words



**136.** Constitutions approved by the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (1985).

to the Chapter (p. 11-12), Br Basilio had already said what needed to be said: faced with heavy losses and the overall diminishment of entries, a fresh approach to vocations ministry and better formation were indispensable. In spite of his comment that, in some way, the haemorrhage was a purification of the Institute, there was no cure in sight.

Regarding missions, the Commission made some adjustments in expression since the words 'local' and 'indigenous' had acquired pejorative or ideological overtones. The word 'mission' was to be replaced by 'evangelisation'. Moreover, the Commission proposed a complete re-writing of the chapter in the Constitutions on missions, changing its title to 'Evangelisation' and proposing an extensive theoretical framework for the task.

The Constitutions, "the most successful document from the preceding Chapter" in the eyes of Br Basilio, were not touched, leaving it to a commission to review them prior to the next Chapter. The Directory, the document from the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter containing the juridic section of the Constitutions, was replaced by the "Norms of application". They ratified some basic changes: the vow of stability was no longer required for eligibility to the Chapter; General Conferences between Chapters would be assemblies of the General Council and Provincials; Provinces could group themselves into regions and General Councillors no longer had any regional responsibilities.

In his final speech on 30 October 1976, Br Basilio made much of the fraternal spirit and the spirit of prayer that had characterised the Chapter. The implied criticism of the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter was nuanced all the same by his comment that it had been "excellent in spite of the tensions". These two successive assemblies have to be seen as a whole, leading to "progress in mutual understanding and acceptance of pluralism, something we have hardly been used to." In addition, "we have understood that it is not enough to change structures and our basic texts. What is important is personal, community and even institutional conversion". It was a way of saying that unity was far from being achieved.

Then Br Basilio reviewed the topics that have been mentioned above and which were treated with greater clarity in his foreword to the Volume of the texts of the 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. In particular, when speaking of community,<sup>551</sup> he stated "that we are not monks but religious engaged in pastoral work and the apostolate". Even so, Brothers should not be "free-loaders" or "set themselves up as some sort of secular institute". Referring to the post-Chapter period, he invited one and all to 'let the Constitutions breathe' in everyday, real life, and, in regard to the message of the Chapter, "at all cost, we should not make the same mistake as the preceding Chapter" which had failed to communicate its thinking to the main body of the congregation.

<sup>551</sup> *Texts of the 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*, p. 115.

## **Decisive importance of the 18th General Chapter (1985)**

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The thin volume of the Acts of Chapter recorded its main outcomes as the definitive adoption of the Constitutions and the setting of the date they came into effect as 2 January 1986; the definitive rejection of the priesthood; the suppression of the World Union of Ex-Students for the sake of the “Marist Family” project. But it was the small book, “Listening to the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter”, produced by the General Administration, that offered a better perspective on this event.

The report of Br Basilio on the Institute has already been referred to. It made up a substantial part of this booklet. But the retreat conferences that he gave to the Capitulants also contained some remarkable ideas.<sup>552</sup> In the first, Br Basilio meditated on the current crisis of religious life: not as “a structural falling apart” as one sociologist described it but as a time of “mission and giving birth”. This mission received from the Vatican Council was one of “a change our mentality, a ‘metanoia’ or institutional conversion”. Refusing to take a position on whether the upheaval in religious life was a sign of sickness or a fatal condition, he noted a discarding of former expressions of religious life to give birth to new expressions or face death.

In his 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> conferences, Br Basilio focussed his attention on spirituality that had to be Christian (contemplative, in fact), apostolic and Marist. He singled out in a special way (p. 46-47), the difficulty in integrating contemplation and apostolate that pre-conciliar theology had justified by assigning two goals to congregations like ours: “a primary goal of personal sanctification and a second or secondary goal of apostolic works”. This way of seeing ourselves, reinforced by a certain style of formation, was the source of “a type of spiritual stress”, resulting in one or other goal being left aside. For this reason (p. 49), many Brothers, communities and even Provinces, have let personal prayer slide and reduced time given to prayer, without any corresponding increase in apostolic spirituality, either because work had not been inspired by contemplation or because there was a dichotomy between prayer and apostolate.

This represented one aspect of a deeper explanation of the problem of perseverance in an Institute like ours that had remained for a long time limited to exercises of piety and a mystique of work instead of an integrated life of both contemplation and action. The concept of Marist apostolic spirituality had become necessary and the 1985 Chapter was the right moment to take a definitive step towards its acceptance, thereby bringing about a profound change in the self-understanding of the Institute.

## **Finalising the Constitutions**

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As mentioned above, the Constitutions that had been prepared in 1967-68 had not been taken up by the Institute before the 1976 Chapter and it had decided to name a commission to have a final draft ready for the 1985 Chapter. In the meantime,

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<sup>552</sup> Which were also to be found in his Circulars.

the Superiors had done their best to get people to know the contents of these Constitutions, in particular through N° 220 of the Bulletin of the Institute of June 1980.

Of all the articles of high quality that it contained, I would single out that of Br Paul Sester on “The role and value of our Constitutions”. Regarding “The spirit of our Constitutions” (p. 13), he was responding to those who thought that they bore no resemblance to our traditional texts, conceding that, “We must agree that the new presentation differs greatly from that of the old Rules and Constitutions in regard to its purpose”. He set out the contrasts in form and content between the two texts:

<b>TWO DIFFERENT NOTIONS OF THE CONSTITUTIONS</b>	
<b>OLD RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>1968 CONSTITUTIONS</b>
Emphasis on what was to be done	Suggested a frame of mind
An imperative tone	A descriptive style
Warn about faults and dangers	Aim at a goal
	Attention paid to doctrinal underpinnings
Virtues to be practised	Intended to assist in making sense of our way of life
Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the article by Br Paul Sester.	

The deliberate intention, then, of the authors of the new Constitutions had been to refuse to use a normative approach and to privilege a process:

*So our Constitutions no longer say: to live up to the ideal of an authentic Marist Brother, you must do this (...) They present you with the image of a true disciple of Father Champagnat, in which you can recognise some outlines of your own possible development as a person.*

The consequences were considerable: uniformity was thereafter impossible, even if a certain diversity had never been a necessary indicator of dissipation or laxity. In addition, interpreting the Constitutions meant risk-taking and an element of doubt. Also, all in all, “the Constitutions had to be approached like the Gospels”: not as some collection of norms but a source of life to be referred to over and over.

In the interpretation given by Br Paul Sester, the traits of a personalist philosophy can be seen, founded on the idea that “what God fundamentally wants from me (...) is for me to be myself, in the blossoming of my personality to the extremes of my possibilities” (p. 11). The Constitutions, then, are a means, a framework, that allow each Brother to reach his fulfilment.

So it was understandable that these Constitutions had been the source of reservations, based as they were on a totally different anthropology from the one that had guided the writing of legislative texts after 1852-54. In contrast, they reconnected with the period from 1817 to 1851 over which time the Rule had continued to evolve, sticking as much as possible to the real life of the Brothers and their apostolic objectives.

In large measure, from 1852 to 1967, the institutional aspect of the Rule and Constitutions had held sway. This situation had created a solid framework that structured the lives of many Brothers and allowed for tremendous dynamism. Yet it would seem that from 1922 on, and in a more and more obvious manner, this ascendancy of the institution over inspiration had become counter-productive. The Vatican Council had only brought this latent crisis to light. The resonance of the Council was profound since it was a response to a hope that the 1968 Constitutions finally fulfilled in giving priority to the theological and charismatic dimensions of our lives. It was a little late and it came in a relatively confused way but inspiration had its revenge on the institution.

## A huge culture shock

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The question remains nevertheless: how many Marist Brothers were up to moving from a normative understanding of Marist identity to a dynamic and personalist vision? There we have a possible partial explanation of the weak perseverance and the limited number of new vocations in the years from 1967 to 1985. Before 1967, the many withdrawals could be explained by the fact that many Brothers did not find in the congregation any means of being who they wanted to be. However, because after 1968 the pattern of withdrawals showed no signs of lessening and entries were few and far between, despite an unprecedented openness, the reason may have been just the opposite: a life project that did not offer a sufficiently structured framework.

Was the profound change in the Constitutions too late or too abrupt, even if it was rolled out over more than twenty years? In spite of all the care taken to not devalue the past of the Institute, the change could have come across as an implicit condemnation. In addition, the fall-off in numbers was taken as confirming the suspicions of those who saw in the change nothing other than destabilisation and destruction.

To conclude, the Institute was not much given, on the whole, to intellectual and spiritual speculation. It was significant that Br Quentin Duffy had been able to say as recently as 1980<sup>553</sup> that “no-one has taken up the study of spirituality at any depth”. The new Constitutions could therefore have seemed strange to our spirit and especially to our culture. A better knowledge of the history of our spirituality would have been able to show that until 1851 the Institute had lived through different phases in its identity and that the change of 1967-85 was only reactivating many of our primitive traits that were more authentic than the tradition established in the years 1852-70, especially by Br Jean-Baptiste and Br Louis Marie. After 1967, in their form and spirit, the Constitutions were a “re-founding” even if the word would not be accepted as appropriate until much later. It is readily understandable that this text took a long time to be accepted in a body of men who had trouble recognising their identity and culture in it since their memories did not go back as far as the origins but only to an interpretation of those times that had appeared much later.

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<sup>553</sup> *Bulletin of the Institute* N° 220, 1980, p. 107.





## 34.

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# THE QUESTION OF PRIESTHOOD IN THE INSTITUTE (1932-1985)

As described in Volume 1, the relationship between the Institute and the priesthood has often been quite sensitive, and, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, many Brothers have been tempted to become priests. Even so, those who wanted to become priests were not claiming the right to remain Brothers. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from 1932 to 1985, this question of Brother-Priests was to lead to such passionate debates that I feel obliged to give it a chapter of its own, all the more so since the question was to defer another question of capital importance until later: the link between the Institute and laity.

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### Emergence of the question at the 1932 and 1946 Chapters

In these two Chapters the issue of the priesthood was reported on by the Commission on Submissions from the Brothers and would not be the focus of discussion in a plenary session, in virtue of its contradiction with article II of the Constitutions: "Members of the Institute are not allowed to join a Third Order or to aim for the Priesthood". The 1932 Commission, however, which retained only 63 of the proposals out of the 200 it had received, noted in its report: "60/ Several requests that were seriously studied manifested the desire to see what could be designated as "Brother-Priests" organised in the Institute. The penury of priests in some countries where our Brothers and their students sometimes suffer a lot is what has led the authors of this request to look for a solution to this lack."

This desire was all the more respectable in its being linked to mission situations. But it was also revelatory of a relatively new fact: the narrowing of the cultural and even ministerial distance between priests and Brothers.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in 1946, "several requests" went in the same direction and with the same reasoning. The Commission, however, was not content with dismissing the idea of "Brother-Priests" by falling back on the Constitutions; it went further. Firstly, "This would require a fundamental transformation of the very Constitution of the congregation"; also, our union of hearts is favoured by the fact that among us there is but a single status; finally, Rome wanted us to be sepa-

rated from the Marist Fathers; and above all, "Our mission is to be admired for what it is. It is a sort of priesthood, serving youth. In itself it suffices for achieving the highest ideals of personal holiness and of the apostolate."

## A major issue in 1958

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At the 15th General Chapter in 1958, the acuteness of the issue was clear. In its 27<sup>th</sup> sitting on 10 October, the first Commission acknowledged that it had received "an impressive number of communications on the question of the priesthood for members of the Institute". Indeed, there were 70 communications "from Brothers across the majority of Provinces of the Institute", with 68 of them clearly in favour of the priesthood.

So, it was not just some localised trend nor the consequence of a pressure group but a matter that concerned a wide range of people. One of the communications was opposed to the idea; another weighing up the pro's and con's; and two proposing "the foundation of a new Institute aimed at providing the priests needed in our houses of formation and Colleges". Five requested only "agreements with the Marist Fathers" or other religious Institutes and even with Bishops. Another proposed the creation of a Third-Order and "two spoke of the 'diaconate' which would provide a partial solution to the problem".

In the arguments advanced some gave as their basic reason, "our apostolate is incomplete without the priesthood". But most of the reports to the Chapter were pastoral in nature: the lack of priests in many countries was depriving the Brothers and students of access to the Sacraments and the formation of youth was incomplete. Also, "often the chaplains assigned to us do not fit in, with no understanding



**137.** Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

of either religious life or the mentality of our young people". There was, then, "a lack of spiritual directors for the Brothers and the students", either through the absence of priests or their incompetence.

In these arguments we can detect the old problem of strained relations between clergy and the Brothers of which the house Annals of Br Avit, for example, gave innumerable examples throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Still, the fact remained that there were many more colleges today and the Brothers, not authorised to hear the confessions of the young, felt at a loss as to how provide them with spiritual guidance. Then again, without systematic theological training, they felt less capable of transmitting church teaching that was correct and adapted to the times. Finally, in some places, the absence of clergy posed problems for men whose religious and pastoral lives revolved around frequent access to the Sacraments rather than on a personal religious life founded on Scripture.

The idea of having Brother-Priests, then, flowed from the change in the Institute towards secondary and higher education and the idea that the Institute had to respond to this change by a more systematic integration of priests into its pastoral system. Such an attitude may seem paradoxical at the very moment when Catholic Action was exalting the laity. Yet, in the Institute some saw themselves more as an incomplete clergy than as a militant laity. So, the argument raged in some countries: "Many vocations are slipping through our fingers because there are no possibilities of aspiring to the priesthood in the Institute". It was not frankly a new problem, but moving into secondary education as well a more middle-class clientele gave it more of an edge. To avoid jealousies and divisions that such an innovation could lead to, these reports suggested: that only up to a maximum of 10% of Brothers be accepted for the priesthood and only from those between 35 and 50 years of age; that they be 'reserved' for the houses of formation and colleges and called by the General Council.



In accepting to present in detail the content of this dossier to the Chapter, the Commission was acknowledging the good intentions of the various authors, even those opposed to the project. It asked the General Council to study the matter and to ask the Marist Fathers as a matter of priority to provide priests for houses of formation and colleges. We have a good idea of the opinion of the Chapter on this question since, when a Brother asked for a plenary session on the question of the priesthood, it was rejected by 75 votes to 28.

The General Council had itself taken the question very seriously because a letter from Fr Larraona from the Congregation for Religious, dated 29 September 1958 and included in the Acts of Chapter, told us that he had been invited to intervene on this question with the Capitulants “before and outside of the Chapter”. He declined the offer out of sensitivity but still presented a written reflection that was certainly handed out. He was quite guarded in his response but overall opposed to this innovation. In particular he did not see any benefits arising from a closer association with the Marist Fathers. No doubt this letter strongly influenced the rejection by the Capitulants of any discussion of the matter. Still, a quite strong minority demurred.

## Confrontation at the 1968 session

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In the introduction, reference was made to the tense atmosphere of the first session of the 16th Chapter. The second session was no different from the first in this regard, particularly on the topic of “The Institute and the Priesthood”, since those in favour of the priesthood now had a fundamental Council text to support them: line 10b of *Perfectae Caritatis*:

*The sacred synod declares that there is nothing to prevent some members of religious communities of brothers being admitted to holy orders by provision of their general chapter in order to meet the need for priestly ministrations in their own houses, provided that the lay character of the community remains unchanged.*

What was more, Cardinal Antoniutti was to intervene in the course of the Chapter in favour of accepting the priesthood. Also, an organised pressure group would try to highlight the dramatic situation of some works of the Institute arising from the lack of priests.

So, a report on the Institute and priesthood question was prepared by a sub-commission of the Apostolate Commission. On 7 November 1968, during the 50<sup>th</sup> plenary assembly, it presented a report that reflected strongly opposing views and put forward three proposals and one wish. In his introductory remarks, Rev Br Basilio had warned that any decision for or against the priesthood had to gain two-thirds of the votes. After a lot of confusion and attempts to block the vote, the first proposal was put. This proposal was “to pursue the study of the question of priesthood in the Institute”, and, during this time, to not allow any Brothers to be ordained. The votes received 129 in favour, 13 against, and 5 abstentions. The other two proposals, which were only supplementary to the first, received similar votes. What remained was the wish that the Superior General contact the next General

Chapter of the Marist Fathers “in order to strengthen closer contacts between the Fathers and the Brothers”, particularly in educational matters. In the end, this wish received 120 votes in favour, 19 against, and 8 abstentions.

But the parliamentary guerilla warfare continued and the sub-commission was asked to prepare a more succinct report. Three days later, on 18 November, the question was brought back to the 67<sup>th</sup> plenary assembly. This was the occasion for some Brothers to expound on the dramatic situations affecting 50% of the Institute, particularly in Latin America and the missions. There were heated reflections and grave accusations made against a supposed duplicity and the refusal of opponents of the priesthood to obey the Holy See. “This Chapter is about to roll the stone that will close off the tomb of the priesthood in the Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools.” The Superior General, however, intervened to say that in his eyes the question was not ready for any decision. Indeed, the new report, which was substantially the same as the previous one, received 108 votes in favour, 17 against and 9 abstentions.

On 20 November, in the 71<sup>st</sup> session, the question came up again in reference to the draft of article 3 of the Constitutions that affirmed that Brothers were lay religious. After recriminations and obstructions from those in favour of the priesthood, the Chapter agreed (121 yes, 7 no, 8 abstentions) on an article affirming the Brothers as “lay religious”. However, there was a “*mens*” attached – i.e. an explanatory note - proposed by Rev Br Basilio and placed at the bottom of the text of the Constitutions, that reminded everyone that the question remained open but that no Brother was to be ordained before the Chapter had ruled on the question.

Any reader of the Acts of the Chapter today would be flabbergasted by the passion that this question aroused. The impression given is that, on this as on other questions discussed at this Chapter, there was a small minority who were very determined to try to drag the Chapter towards approving the priesthood while there was an equally determined minority totally opposed to this. Rev Br Basilio played the role of referee skilfully in supporting a decision to wait. This was, in the end, what the great majority of the Chapter wanted, as shown by the voting. When it came to decisions, the voting had produced majorities of between 120 and 130 votes in favour and between 10 and 20 implacable opponents. In the end, the decisions taken did not really mean it had been a tied match: the question would return but, in the meantime, there was to be no question of any *fait accompli* since it was well understood that no Brother was to be ordained. On this point, Rev Br Basilio did not hold back:

*No member, as a Marist Brother, can be ordained a priest as long as this has not been changed by a General Chapter. (...) If there is any Provincial or provincial delegate who gives a false interpretation on this matter on his return to his Province, when I visit I will undertake to say that he has either lied or been mistaken, although it would be difficult to make such a huge mistake. Let everyone be very clear on this.*

The issue of “the Institute and the Priesthood” was very well summarised in the *Chapter Documents* which recalled the two main lines of the debate.<sup>554</sup> Firstly, the

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<sup>554</sup> *Texts of the 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, Rome, 1968. Apostolic Life N° 34.*

text acknowledged “a deficiency in religious services” in certain regions, “even serious and urgent ones in some sectors”. Yet, “not all Provinces experience these difficulties to the same extent”. This led to the second line of reflection: the consequences of ordaining some Brothers on the nature and apostolate of the Institute.

Thus, a question of principle was grafted onto an old pastoral question referred to in Chapters since 1932: wouldn’t the admission of Brothers to ordination harm the nature of the Institute? The document even quoted an extract from *Perfectae Caritatis* 10, which stated that, “Lay Religious life is a state for the profession of the evangelical counsels which is complete in itself.” Because it was too serious an issue to be resolved quickly and there was insufficient information, the question was passed on to the next Chapter, with the General Council made responsible for in-depth study. In the Acts, the heated polemics were glossed over by these words, “The Capitulants, on both sides of the argument, put aside their cherished ideas for the sake of unity”.

Some recommendations followed that were aimed at working on the two lines of reflection of the Chapter. These included forming the Brothers for “their apostolic task in all its fullness”. This meant a greater openness to adjusting “to the rhythm of Christian life in the local Church, finding ways of getting the best from the pastoral services available”. It also meant, “understanding our chaplains well, drawing them out of the isolation they sometimes experience in our places, integrating them into our educational communities, paying them an appropriate stipend”, intensifying our efforts to seek priestly vocations, and collaborating with congregations of priests, in particular the Marist Fathers. The question of the priesthood, then, opened up other questions about the pastoral practices of the Brothers who were more than a little inclined to instrumentalise the priesthood and to keep separate from the local Church. The practical results of a closer connection with the Marist Fathers, that had been the subject of a wish at the Chapter, were to be limited but there was to be an enduring re-connection with them and the other branches of the Marist Society.

## **The Perplexity of the 17<sup>th</sup> Chapter (1976)**

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According to the minutes, there was much less tension and discussion was less monopolised by a few protagonists. However, allusion was made to “post-capitular *mens*” which Rev Br Basilio described as “originating from a ‘mad’ group who wanted to consult the Sacred Congregation again”. There was no question of it being made known, “so as to avoid upsetting people”.

The question of ordination had changed: there was less of a fight over ordination to the priesthood in the whole Institute than its introduction in some Provinces where it was a felt need. A sizeable number of Brothers were open to a period of experimentation. The effects of the Council and post-conciliar events can be felt in the arguments presented. Opponents made much of the crisis of the priesthood: “The theology of the priesthood is not at all clear” (...) “clericalism is dying”. In several mission countries (Madagascar, Nigeria, Philippines ...) the introduction of the priesthood “would lessen the message that the Brothers are giving by their vocation”. And then, shouldn’t the Brothers share the same lot as all other Christians?

Finally, there was a vote on three proposals. On the first which asked if approval was given to introduce the priesthood in the whole Institute and following the conditions laid down in *Perfectae Caritatis*, there were 40 in favour, 100 against and 4 abstentions. The second proposed that the congregation remain lay “without any clerical member”. This resulted in 91 votes in favour, 49 against and 5 blank slips. The third proposal envisaged the Chapter agreeing to “the introduction of the priesthood in those Provinces where there is a special need”. The vote was 93 in favour, 47 against, 3 white slips and 1 informal. There was one vote less than that required for a two-thirds majority. Finally, on 18 October 1976 the Chapter voted by 109 in favour, 30 against and 2 abstentions to pass the question of the priesthood to the next Chapter, “with no member to be ordained in the meantime”.

All these votes are clear evidence of a division at the Chapter into two unequal tendencies: about 90 Brothers opposed to the priesthood, but divided into two groups of more or less the same size, some absolutely opposed to the idea, and the others in favour of its introduction in some places only. There were around thirty in favour of the priesthood and twenty or so undecided. On 15 October two antithetical solutions were almost passed, with only the undecided preventing an outcome. The vote on October 18 to hold the question over grouped those opposed to the priesthood and those undecided against the core group in favour of the priesthood in the Institute. However, the vote to wait benefited the opponents of the priesthood more than its partisans. Moreover, the opening left by *Perfectae Caritatis* for priests limited to the works of lay congregations seemed quite restrictive in the new context of a Church of the People of God. In the *Texts of the 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter* (p. 224) the decision of the Chapter is recorded without commentary.

## The decisive Chapter (1985)

Already in 1976 many interventions by Capitulants had demonstrated a change in how people were feeling about the Church. There was a trend to relativising worship and drawing closer to the laity. At the 1985 Chapter this feeling was very much in evidence. For example, Br D. C., “Evangelisation is of primary importance, even compared to the sacramental practice of priests”. Br J. M. K., “To ordain Brothers for our own needs would be selfish and discriminatory since religious women have the same needs as we do. (...) The Word of God is as much a source of grace as the Sacraments; we need to make use of this resource; to ordain Brothers would be only a passing solution”. Br A. B., “How could we keep a Brother-Priest uniquely for our communities and colleges when the local parish needs him? We have to live among the people and share their lot”.

On 25 October 1985, after deciding that a two-thirds majority was needed, the proposal to introduce the priesthood at the level of the whole Institute was rejected: there were 19 votes in favour, 102 against, three blanks, and one informal. A question that had been raised in 1932 was closed, after fifty years. Still it could be said that, while the question may have had its roots in one theological and ecclesiological context, it would end up in another, with the Vatican Council at first giving air

to the possibility of the priesthood but also creating the framework ( for the rise of the laity) in the long term for its refusal.

Having said that, most of the Brothers asking for the introduction of the priesthood before 1967 showed real insight, since running colleges and secondary or higher schools was putting them on the same footing as religious orders of priests and people had to draw the pastoral consequences from this: guiding the consciences of young people, initiating them in theology and apologetics, and above all ensuring their frequent and regular access to the Sacraments, all done in the Marist spirit. In the context of the hierarchical Church coming from the Council of Trent, the proposal had great relevance even if it went against the tradition of the Institute. The opponents of such a change could be classed as conservatives unable to respond to crying pastoral needs.



**138.** Lay people present at the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (1993).

In theory, the decisions of Vatican II in favour of the Church as the People of God should have calmed down this desire to introduce the priesthood into the Institute. However, this did not happen since the Council texts and the general questioning around what they meant opened up the possibility of perpetuating an image of priesthood that was more in line with the ecclesiology of the Council of Trent. Yet, over time, it became more apparent that allowing priesthood in the Institute would lead to an ecclesiological and identity impasse without providing any credible pastoral solution.

In conclusion, the study of these three special moments of debate has shown how the Institute dealt with the ecclesiological ambiguities it had been living with before then, clearly setting itself up as a lay entity which, intuitively, had anticipated the definition of the Church as the People of God. The only issue remaining was that this choice implicitly created problems for its pastoral work: our large schools were thereby losing some of their legitimacy in the eyes of some for the sake of our mission in general; and the growth of the Institute became of secondary concern. It should be added that on this topic more than any other, the Institute risked being divided forever.



## **The choice of the laity and the marginalisation of the priesthood**

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Until around 1950, the distrust of involving laypeople in our works came from the ecclesiology of the Council of Trent which was both challenged and endorsed by the Institute. It was challenged in the sense that the Institute's self-affirmation as a lay entity meant that it was claiming real autonomy from the clergy. It was endorsed in the sense that the Brothers saw themselves – and were seen – as the intermediaries between the Church teaching (Bishops) and the Church being taught (the laity).

The bitterness of the quarrel over priesthood highlights the fact that the Institute had more clearly distanced itself from its lay status than it thought it had since it had preferred giving serious thought to the priesthood over caring for the lay people whose presence in its pastoral mission was growing. Also, it is significant to note that the same 1985 Chapter that ruled in the negative on the question of the priesthood, suppressed the World Union of Ex-Students but endorsed the establishment of a Marist Family as "an extension of our Institute" (Constitutions). Through this decision, the Institute freed itself from the problematic thinking of the Council of Trent, aligned itself with the spirit of Vatican II, and thereby went back to its earliest tradition. Even so, the polemic over the priesthood had forced the Institute to reconsider its relations with ordained ministers. It also undoubtedly set the scene for a renewed relation with the Marist Fathers. Moreover, there were grounds for hoping that in the future the relationship between the Institute and ordained ministers would be on new terms that were less polemical.



## **CONCLUSION:**

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### **REFLECTION ON THE CHANGE UNDERWAY**

#### **Culture, institution, spirituality**

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Having already given a conclusion to the period 1907-1967, I will concentrate my attention on the following period, 1967-1985, during which the Institute grew in self-understanding and brought its thinking up to date but was also at first threatened with implosion and then inexorably dragged into a spiral of slow decline in numbers. And, even if statistics are only one indicator among others, they pointed to a profound and enduring crisis.

#### **Putting the crisis into perspective**

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Even so, this was not the first structural crisis that the congregation had faced. In my opinion, the first was in 1826-29 at the Hermitage when M. Courveille and M. Terraillon wanted to remodel the branch of the Brothers according to norms that they had drawn up, and when Fr Champagnat proposed the taking of vows and finally imposed the sewn soutane, linen socks and a particular method for teaching reading. The simple association of laymen that the branch of the Brothers had been up to that point was changing sharply into a congregation.

The second crisis occurred between 1851 and 1860. Once legal authorisation had been obtained in 1852-54, the Chapter built up the legislation of the congregation so as to obtain recognition from Rome that would definitively establish the Marist Brothers as religious. The Annals of Br Avit have provided partial reports on the conflicts that resulted from this huge institutional change. Further, Br François had to cede his role as Superior General in 1860, not so much for reasons of ill-health as because of opposition to his government from the older Brothers, from Rome, the Archdiocese and even the Marist Fathers. This is an issue mentioned in Volume 1, Chapter 10. Recent research, not yet published, shows that Br François' leadership was questioned by a number of different parties and his standing down was a prerequisite for the canonical recognition of the Marist Brothers. The third crisis was obviously that of 1903, essentially because the government dissolved

the congregation in France. Again, the Institute had to accept the Constitutions coming from Rome that imposed decentralisation, three vows for all and so on.

Each of these crises had occasioned quite a number of withdrawals and had given rise to ongoing internal opposition since the Institute had two complementary pathways open to it, both based on the phrase, "We need Brothers ...". The first was that of a lay association symbolised by the first years at Lavalla but continued in a multitude of schools in villages and towns where the Brothers lived in close contact with the local population. The establishment of the vow of obedience by Fr Colin in 1840, moreover, contributed to perpetuating a tradition that saw the Brothers as a sort of teaching Third Order. The secularisation of 1903 would come into this category. The other potential pathway was to move towards a monastic model since, in the hierarchical ecclesiology of the day, this was the only way to give a solid structure to a body of laymen. It was symbolised by the Hermitage but also by all the Provincial houses in which the Brothers led a strict conventual life.

Obviously, these two traditions were more complementary than opposites, but it should be acknowledged that the monastic tendency dominated the life of the institution more and more. Yet, after just a brief period of formation, most Brothers found themselves in a lay environment even if the Rule theoretically demanded that they act like monks in their schools. In short, it was an open question: Is the Marist Brother a teaching religious or a religious teacher?

## **The ecclesiological revolution of the Council**

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In defining the Church as the People of God and no longer as a hierarchy, the Council gave back an unexpected legitimacy to the definition of the Marist Brother as an apostolic layman. Essentially, it provided a response to the aspirations of Champagnat and the first Brothers for an apostolic collaboration between priests and lay people. But this arrived out of the blue after the Institute had spent a hundred years trying to define itself and be accepted as a religious order on its own. Even if it kept very close contacts with the world of laypeople, it still thought of itself as not really belonging to the lay state. It was, then, only natural that the first reaction to the Council was one of confusion.

But the two earlier traditions were quickly in play again and the opposition between the pairs 'spirituality-structures' and 'psychologism-freedom' at the 1967 session could just as easily have been formulated as a debate between 'monasticism-rule' and 'lay state-spirituality'. A synthesis of these would take a long time, involving a sensitive task of deconstructing and reconstructing that would be taken up by three successive Chapters.

Deconstructing dominated the 1967-68 Chapter. The second was more one of a fragile balance, and finally the last, one of decisions, with its refusal of the priesthood and the completion of the Constitutions. Throughout, Rev Br Basilio, through his doctrinal Circulars, had largely renewed the foundations of Marist spirituality that until then had been more dependent on a tradition that went back more to the years 1850-70 than to the preceding period.

## Lay state - spirituality

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It seems to me that at the end of the period 1967-85 the identity of the Institute was mainly defined by the pair 'lay state – spirituality' that the Circulars in the following years on spirituality and the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family would elaborate on. But then, another challenging question arose: if the identity of the Marist Brothers was not fully defined by the term 'congregation', what would the definition be for a new entity with two distinct groups (Brothers and Laypeople) sharing the same spirituality?

As this was a problem for the next epoch, I will not address it here. On the other hand, this effort at reconstructing has been a top-down process, in an atmosphere of confusion, not really favourable for communicating with 'ordinary Brothers', inclined to be distrustful, to wait-and-see, and to be absorbed in their own lives. How, then, ensure that the new synthesis gains the assent of the majority of Brothers? This challenge is more cultural than doctrinal but it can still slow down the return of the congregation to a strong identity.

Moreover, this attitude of reserve towards change has not only had negative results. If this change, that is as much cultural as it is spiritual and institutional, has not obliterated the Institute nor created real schisms among the Brothers as happened in other congregations, this outcome, which is more outstanding than it seems, is largely due to a culture made up of an *esprit de corps* and a capacity for resisting adversity: a "spirit of the Institute" that is very much alive. On the other hand, the personal spirituality of many Brothers has played a role, examples of which are contained in the Circular of Br Basilio on Fidelity. This is a deeper spirituality than certain official statements would credit.

Besides, I wonder if, around 1985, the Institute was not living through an inversion of what it had lived through in previous years: Superiors, for a long time the brakes, who became the accelerators; and the bulk of the congregation who had been longing for changes for such a long time, had difficulty following a change that was more disturbing than they had ever imagined.

## The community as a place for faith sharing?

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This phenomenon of a marked 'disconnect' between the head and the base seems to me to be particularly the case when it comes to community. In the 1976 Acts of Chapter (p. 91-113) there was the program, Prayer, Apostolate and Community (P.A.C.), that aimed at integrating the life of the Brothers and foresaw the introduction of the Project of Community Life (p. 108-113). Yet, in working on the period post-1985, I have noted with some surprise a sort of *leit-motiv*. The report of the General Council to the 1993 Chapter stated: "the communities do not seem able to express with sufficient clarity the evangelical values that make religious life prophetic". The 2001 report says much the same thing but in another way: "For a good number of Brothers, spirituality continues to be something private. There are still difficulties in sharing spirituality either within the community or with lay peo-

ple". The 2009 report adds, "It does not seem to us that the majority of our communities could be recognised as schools of spirituality".

It is not up to me to challenge such statements especially when Rev Br Basilio had often underlined the weak spiritual depth of many Brothers. But there is no reason to think that when the Institute was at its peak number-wise the spirituality of the Brothers was superior. A new factor has come into play that I would call 'cultural' and which seems to me quite well described in the reports just quoted: e.g. "For a number of Brothers spirituality continues to be something private".

So, the Brothers were deemed, then, to not only lack spirituality but also to have difficulty expressing it. This is a quite understandable difficulty, moreover, since, the congregation had not encouraged faith sharing in previous times, anchored as it was in the practice of the Rule and solid virtues, especially work. The bearers of a spirituality that is mainly explicit and to be shared, then, are up against a well-established culture.

Besides, in dissociating communities from the schools where the Brothers were attached, one of the two pillars on which the balance of the Institute rested has been weakened. This has the associated risk of having communities that do not have much life, since faith sharing has played no part in their previous tradition, and chatting about how the schools are going has become limited since the activities and networks are not what they used to be.

This is what the General Councils stated in their reports to the 1993, 2001, and 2009 Chapters. For example, the 1993 report stated, "It seems that the Brothers have not succeeded in integrating their inner lives, leading to growth in faith, hope and charity in all the other dimensions of our lives: consecration, apostolate and community". "In some communities there is a lack of a common vision of the meaning and purpose of our Marist vocation", said the report of 2001 (p. 28). And it added, "Some put more stress on the apostolic dimension and some limit this to the ministry of being a teacher or educator of young people; others stress the lay dimension above all; others the community and the witness given by our fraternity; others the fact of being consecrated men ... to the detriment of other dimensions". It could not be said more clearly that the attempt at renewal has been slow to yield fruit in the body of the Institute for reasons that are perhaps as much cultural as spiritual. If 1985 was an important step in reconstructing our identity, it must be that the bulk of Brothers have not found it easy to follow the leaders. In the post-Council years, there was much talk about institutional and spiritual conversion but without a doubt not enough about cultural conversion.

## **From congregation to a society with various branches?**

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One thing is certain: the time is over for congregations made up of lots of lay people, who were quickly trained as an intermediary workforce in an old way of being Church. Without much thinking about it, the Marist Brothers have returned to the problem present at its origins: How to live a lay apostolate in the Church? So, this justifies the use of the word 'refounding', as sometimes used in our documents.

The primitive project of the Society of Mary that envisaged a tree with several branches could be used as an example for new times. On this matter, it should be recalled that La Valla and especially the Hermitage were places where the Society of Mary was trying to get started after the consecration of Fourvière in 1816 but before that of Cerdon-Belley. The branch of the Fathers at the Hermitage was not able to get established permanently but the Brothers were the enduring fruit, with their own way of conceiving the Society of Mary, so much so that it was impossible for them to fuse with the Society of Mary at Belley.

Since the Marist Brothers were not only a branch of the Society of Mary but the remaining section of a project that started at the Hermitage, the idea of a lay branch associated with that of the Brothers is perfectly in line with the spirit of our origins, even though the theological, ecclesiological and cultural contexts are so different. For this reason, it seems legitimate to speak of the period 1967-1985 as the beginning of a metamorphosis.

**APPENDIX 5: The General Administration from 1907 to 1958, p. 462**

# *History of the Institute*


















# APPENDICES

















**General Administration 1907-1958**

NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Théophane (L.A. Durand)	 St Priest Ardèche	FR	1824 1907	1860	1860 AG for the North 1876 AG Hermitage 1883 Superior General
Gérald (Charles Flahaut)	 Trois Vaux (Pas de Calais)	FR	1829 1909	1880	1880 AG Bourbonnais 1893 AG Trouble-shooting 1905 Secr. General
Bérillus (Joseph Gros)	 Mormoiron (Vaucluse)	FR	1841 1909	1880	1880 AG St Paul 1903 AG Spain 1907 AG Colombia-Mexico
Stratonique (Antoine Usclard)	 Vion (Ardèche)	FR	1843 1926	1883	1883 AG Hermitage 1907 Superior General
Adon (Louis Sirven)	 St Ambroix (Gard)	FR	1837 1906	1883	1883 AG St Genis
Climaque (Jules Souillart)	 Ficheux (Pas de Calais)	FR	1848 1908	1893	1893 AG Beaucamps + 1907 Brazil South








NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Liboire (Joseph Darbousset) 	St Étienne de L. Ardèche	FR	1844 1908	1895	1895 AG Aubenas 1907 Brazil North
Augustalis (Antoine Corompt) 	Chavanay (Loire)	FR	1857 1919	1899	1899 AG Bourbonnais, Varennes, Lacabanne, Brazil Central
John (Denis Dulles) 	Cork (Ireland)	IRISH	1841 1914	1900	1900 AG British Isles 1907 AG Australia, South Africa
Pierre Joseph (Ph. Fayolle) 	Écouly (Rhône)	FR	1854 1922	1903	1903 Secr. General 1905 Econome General
Paulin (Louis Guyon) 	Serrières (Ardèche)	FR	1848 1918	1906	1906 AG St Genis- Constantinople- China
Angelicus (Cl. Berne) 	Chazelles (Loire)	FR	1859 1928	1907	1907 AG Hermitage, USA, Canada
Dalmace (Louis Laurence) 	Sagnes (Ardèche)	FR	1862 1929	1907	1907 Secr. General








APPENDIX C CHAPTER 12

NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Diogène (Henri Bécuwe) 	Herzele (Nord)	FR	1860 1942	1908	1908 AG Beaucamps, Belgium, Germany, Brazil South; 1920 Superior General
Flamien (Louis Raoux) 	Villedieu (Ardèche)	FR	1859 1941	1908	1908 AG Aubenas, Brazil North, León
Michaëlis (Aug. Ménégaud) 	Isle-sur-le Doubs (Doubs)	FR	1862 1950	1909	1909-1946 AG St Paul, Spain, Argentina (1942 - 1945) Vicar General
Damien (Marius Bonnet) 	Gravières (Ardèche)	FR	1843 1918	1909	1909 AG Trouble-shooting and St François Xavier
Columbanus (Peter Brady) 	Glasgow (Scotland)	SCOT	1863 1928	1914	1914 AG G.B., Ireland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand
Élie-Marie (J.B. Rajón) 	Commelle (Isère)	FR	1860 1938	1920	1920 AG St Genis, China, Constantinople
Augustin-Joseph (Antoine Desplaces) 	Toulon-sur- Arroux (Seine et Loire)	FR	1863 1945	1920	1920-1941 AG Varennes. Lacabane, Brazil Central








NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Marie-Odulphe (J.B. Villez)	 Linselles (Nord)	FR	1872 1863	1920	1920-1949 AG Beaucamps, Belgium, Congo, Brazil South
Euphrosin (Augus. Amblard)	 Darbres (Aude)	FR	1869 1954	1920	1920-1951 AG St Paul, Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, Central America
Louis-Marie (Louis Boffy)	 Faucagnes (Haute Saône)	FR	1887 1963	1822	1922-1957 Econ. General
Émery (Jean Cermain)	 Montmirail (Drôme)	FR	1869 1955	1825	1925-1959 Proc. General
Clement (John Murray)	 West Maitland (Australia)	AUS	1867 1957	1928	1928-1951 AG British Isles, Australia, New Zealand, Sout Africa
François de Borgia (Et. Arthaud)	 Montbrison (Loire)	FR	1888 1942	1929	1929 AG Hermitage, USA, Canada
Jean Émile (Émile Barraud)	 Lyon	FR	1878 1971	1929	1929 Secr. General 1939-1958 AG St Genis, China, Syria-Lebanon, Constantinople, Varennes-East

APPENDIX C CHAPTER 12


NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Avit (J.B. Belmon) 	Moukinet (Alpes Maritimes)	FR	1877 1954	1839	1939 Secr. General
Sixto (Miguel Lacunza) 	Ciriza (Spain)	SP	1886 1954	1940	1940 AG Spain
Leonidas (François Garrigue) 	Vinça (Pyrénées Orient.)	FR	1886 1975	1941	1941 AG Hermitage, Aubenas Anzuola-Lacabane 1946 Superior General
Désiré Alphonse (D. Herbaux) 	Quesnoy (Nord)	FR	1887 1970	1941	1941-1953 AG Hermitage, South-East, South-West
Paul Stratonique (P. Lelièvre) 	Quebec (Canada)	CAN	1892 1970	1942	1942-1946 AG Canada, USA
Sébastien (Alessandre Diale) 	Challand (Italy)	IT	1896 1963	1946	1946-1958 AG Argentina, Italy, Peru, Chile, Uruguay
Charles-Raphaël (Jean Ergen) 	Udange (Lux. Belge)	BEL	1900 1984	1947	1947 AG Beaucamps, Belgium, Congo, Germany 1958 Superior General

NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Régis-Aimé (A. Perrault) 	St Jude (Canada)	CAN	1903 1957	1948	1948 AG Canada, USA 1954 Secr. General
Alessandro (G. di Pietro) 	Vivaro Romano (Italy)	IT	1908 2004	1949	1949 Procurator General
Leoncio Martín (Valeriano Lorenzo) 	Fordehumos (Spain)	SP	1899 1980	1951	1951 AG Colombia, Cuba, Central America , Mexico, 1958 Vicar General
Mary Justinian (James Woods) 	Bothwell (Scotland)	SCOT	1910 1984	1951	1951 AG G.B. - Ireland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand
Thomas Austin (A. O'Donnell) 	New-York	USA	1897 1974	1953	1953 AG Canada USA
Joannès Eugène (Joannès Minot) 	Arcinges (Loire)	FR	1902 1970	1953	1953 AG Beaucamps, Hermitage, South-East, Sud-West Varennes-East
Luis Gonzaga (Julio Marín) 	Arlanza (Spain)	SP	1896 1977	1954	1954 AG Spain + Venezuela

APPENDIX C CHAPTER 12

NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Marie Basilide (J. Frelechoz)	 Courtetelle (Switzerland)	SWISS	1909 2005	1957	1957 Sec. General 1958 AG Belgium, Italy, Germany
Simon Henri (Pierre Valenne)	 Arlon (Belgium)	BEL	1898 1978	1957	1957 Econome General
Lucinio María (Juan Recarte)	 Lete (Spain)	SP	1893 1982	1958	1958 AG Argentina, Chile, Peru, Uruguay
Lorenzo (Lorenzo Tanguay)	 Ste Justine (Canada)	CAN	1904 1994	1958	1958 AG Canada
Roque Maria (Ernesto Stefani)	 Villa Garibaldi (Brazil)	BRAZIL	1908 1992	1958	1958 AG Brazil-Portugal
Hilary Mary (Austin Conroy)	 Bathurst (Australia)	AUS	1906 1997	1958	1958 AG Australia, New Zealand
Louis Martin (Martin Eslinguer)	 Petit Landau (Ht Rhin)	FR	1913 2006	1958	1958 AG France, Lebanon-Syria, Madagascar



NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	BIRTH/DEATH	STARTED	ROLES
Paul Ambrose (Leonard Fontaine) 	Southbridge (USA)	USA	1903 2003	1958	1958 AG USA, China, Ceylon, Philippines
Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from various sources: <i>Chapters, Chronology, Bulletin of the Institute, etc.</i>					

## Quantitative growth of the Provinces

Statistics are one of the great passions of the Institute and it is true that numerical tables often speak louder than words. It seems pertinent, then, to use this method to round out the preceding Chapter.

In preparing the statistical tables below I have used the number of electors, by administrative units, for the 1903-67 General Chapters. They have the advantage of counting only the perpetually professed and Brothers with stability, and so provide a more focussed overview of each Province. I am conscious, however, that between 1903 and 1967 many Provinces had territories cut off or were involved in fusions and that therefore different geographical realities are hidden behind the same name. For example, Beaucamps which originally included Belgium and Germany; or St Paul, for a long time including Italy.

EVOLUTION							
PROVINCES O DISTRICTS	1903	1907	1920	1932	1946	1958	1967-1968
Number of administrative units	12	20	25	26	32	33	50
Number of electors	3.001	3.100	3.197	4.013	5.087	6.745	7.578
Number of electors by A.U.	250	155	127	154	158	204	151

These figures indicate three phases in the life of the Institute. Between 1903 and 1920, the number of administrative units doubled and the average number of their members was halved. This was the great moment of decentralisation occasioned by the massive international expansion of the Institute and the 1903 Constitutions. Between 1920 and 1958, the number of administrative units and members increased significantly. Finally, the phase from 1958 to 1967 showed a similar pattern to that of 1903-1907, with a considerable increase in the number of administrative units but a brutal drop in the average number of members. Obviously many of these new entities came from the healthy prosperity of certain Provinces but there was also a concern to establish units that corresponded to the way the world was developing, particularly in relation to decolonisation.

A surprising symmetry can be noted between the 1903-20 period and that of 1958-67. In the first case institutional change happened in a post-crisis environment. In the second, it was a pre-crisis environment. Such a massive restructuring of Provinces, intended to lead to further growth, was undoubtedly a factor in the crisis that cannot be ignored because the strong identity of the former Provinces had been disturbed.

At some risk I have prepared the tables below for the broad regions of the Institute. I have added titles. I am aware that the figures given cover over a number of complexities. Still they seem to me capable of arousing interest and reflection.

## The decline of Mother Provinces

TABLE OF ELECTORS (FINALLY PROFESSED AND BROTHERS WITH STABILITY) TO THE GENERAL CHAPTERS BETWEEN 1903 AND 1967							
PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>555</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
St Genis (1860)	513	325	191	192	229	276	268
L'Hermitage	423	273	194	181	161	189	152
Beaucamps (1842)	260+76 (Belgium)	326	363	319	97	107	149
St Paul (1842)	436	227	156	162	103		
Aubenas (1844)	411	305	117	93	115		
<b>F R A N C E</b> South-East (1949)						132	116
Lacabane (1885)	145	63	70	126	39		
South-West (1946)						84	69
Varennes (1876-1946)	270	171	91	66	50		
Varennes East (1946...)						229	12+47 (Syria)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.534</b>	<b>1.690</b>	<b>1.182</b>	<b>1.139</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>1.017</b>	<b>875+47</b>

<sup>555</sup> Acts of Chapter 1907. Statistics

**EUROPEAN PROVINCES SHOWING WEAK GROWTH**

PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>556</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
Germany				95	109	160	124
Belgium (1934)					275	318	216
British Isles (1873)	112	91	111	124	128	147	200
Italy					101	140	134
Portugal (District)							84
Swiss-Missions (District)							38
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>796</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

**THE SUCCESS OF SPAIN**

PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>557</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
Spain (1903)	126	296	373	505			
León (1925)			94	180	135	250	193
Bética (1942)					184	322	238
Castilla							176
Cataluña							202
Levante (1942)					161	272	131
Madrid							125
Norte (1942)					175	292	224
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>1.136</b>	<b>1.289</b>

Source: FMS Message n°1.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>557</sup> FMS Message, N° 1.

THE RATHER SLOW GROWTH OF SPANISH-SPEAKING LATIN AMERICA								
PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>558</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967	
LATIN AMERICA	Colombia (1908)	75	114	155	208	189	196	
	Mexico (1908)	105	153	192	213	277		
	Mexico Central						171	
	Mexico Occidental						209	
	Argentina (1920)		73	116	229	265		
	Córdoba						139	
	Luján						141	
	Chile / Perú				73	165	122	
	Chile							135
	Perú						91	106
	Cuba/C. Amer. (1949)						227	230
	Uruguay (District)							55
	Venezuela (District)							59
<b>Total</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>1.171</b>	<b>1.441</b>	

Source: Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

<sup>558</sup> Acts of Chapter 1907. Statistics

**THE PRECOCIOUS GROWTH OF NORTH AMERICA**

PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>559</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
Canada /USA (1903-1911)	153	233	186	312			
Desbiens						116	
Iberville (1943)					248	288	431
Lévis (1943)					213	282	187
USA		113	141	199	339		
Esopus							226
Poughkeepsie						229	
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>1.186</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

**THE DIVERSITY AND FRAGILITY OF MARIST BRAZIL**

PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>560</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
Brazil North (1908)		46	64	101	174	220	127
Brazil Central (1908)		75	103	136	272	336	
Rio de Janeiro							141
Sao Paulo							158
Brazil South (1908)		44	126	150	303	287	
Caxias do Sul							80
Porto Alegre							210
Santa Catarina (1951)						205	82
Santa Maria							137
<b>Total</b>		<b>165</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>1.048</b>	<b>935</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

<b>SUCCESS IN OCEANIA</b>							
PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>561</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
Oceania (Section)	76						
Australia (1903)		141	97	131	237		
Melbourne (1947)						119	146
New Zealand (1916)			50	75	105	152	197
Sydney (1947)						224	327
New-Caledonia (District) (1913)			23		31	18	
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>670</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

<b>THE SEMI-FAILURE OF THE MARIST MIDDLE EAST</b>							
PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>562</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
Constantinople (1908-1946)		76	72	69	69		
M.East Syria (1908-1946)		86	87	91	92		
<b>Total</b>		<b>162</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>161</b>		

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

<b>BRUSHING AGAINST ASIA</b>							
PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
Ceylon (District)							27
China (1908)		82	105	153	179	115	70
Philippines (District)							40
<b>Total</b>		<b>82</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>137</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid.*

AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR: AN AREA OF MODEST GROWTH							
PROVINCE OR DISTRICT	ELECTORS 1903	ELECTORS 1907 <sup>563</sup>	ELECTORS 1920	ELECTORS 1932	ELECTORS 1946	ELECTORS 1958	ELECTORS 1967
AFRICA	South Africa (1908)	60	71	75	88	71	77
	Congo-Rwanda						80
	Madagascar (District)						42
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>199</b>

Source: Prepared by Br André Lanfrey from the number of electors to General Chapters according to the Acts of Chapter.

Certainly these tables show rapid and lasting successes from 1903 on. Spain was really exceptional, balancing its growth in schools and new vocations, all the while providing Latin America with the personnel it needed for its growth. Generally speaking, Latin America had many more works than Brothers alone could manage. Their maturity was late in coming for internal reasons such as the unplanned growth around 1903 and external reasons such as their difficulty in recruiting and political troubles. The United States-Canada and English-speaking Oceania represented a quite different sort of success and were belatedly engaged in overseas mission themselves. In 1967 Africa still remained a quite modest sector.

Survival is a better word than dynamism to describe Provinces or countries that were sorely tested by political events or the difficulty they had in getting local vocations to sustain their schools: Germany, South Africa, New Caledonia, the Middle East, Sri Lanka. Mention can also be made of some Provinces that were created too late or whose dynamism was reduced because they were in territories designated for recruiting or had received only limited outside help: Italy, Germany. Switzerland, Madagascar, France. On occasions Marist presence had been almost wiped out as in China (1949), Cuba (1960), Constantinople (1924)...

<sup>563</sup> Acts of Chapter. Statistics.



COMBINED TABLE								
	PROVINCES/DISTRICTS	1903	1907	1920	1932	1946	1958	1967
ASIA	Ceylon (District)							27
	China (1908)		82	105	153	179	115	70
	Philippines (District)							40
AFRICA	South Africa (1908)		60	71	75	88	71	77
	Congo-Rwanda							80
	Madagascar (District)							42
LATIN AMERICA	Córdoba							139
	Luján							141
	Argentina (1920)			73	116	229	265	
	Chile							135
	Chile/Peru				73	165	122	
	Colombia (1908)		75	114	155	208	189	196
	Cuba/Central America (1949)						227	230
	Mexico (1908)		105	153	192	213	277	
	Mexico Central							171
	Mexico Occidental							209
	Peru						91	106
	Uruguay (District)							55
	Venezuela (District)							59
NORTH AMERICA	Desbiens							116
	Esopus							226
	Iberville (1943)					248	288	431
	Lévis (1943)					213	282	187
	Poughkeepsie							229
	USA			113	141	199	339	
Canada/USA (1903-1911)	153	233	186	312				
BRAZIL	Brazil Central (1908)		75	103	136	272	336	
	Brazil South (1908)		44	126	150	303	287	
	Caxias do Sul							80
	Porto Alegre							210
	Río de Janeiro							141
	Santa Catarina (1951)						205	82

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PROVINCES/DISTRICTS	1903	1907	1920	1932	1946	1958	1967	
<b>B R A Z I L</b>	Santa Maria						137	
	São Paulo						158	
	Brazil North (1908)		46	64	101	174	220	127
<b>E U R O P E</b>	Germany			95	109	160	124	
	Belgium (1934)				275	318	216	
	British Isles (1873)	112	91	111	124	128	147	200
	Italy					101	140	134
	Portugal (District)							84
	Swiss Missions (District)							38
<b>S P A I N</b>	Bética (1942)				184	322	238	
	Castilla						176	
	Cataluña						202	
	Spain (1903)	126	296	373	505			
	Leon (1925)			94	180	135	250	193
	Levante (1942)					161	272	131
	Madrid							125
	Norte (1942)					175	292	224
<b>F R A N C E</b>	Aubenas (1844)	411	305	117	93	115		
	Beaucamps (1842)	260 + 76 (Belg)	326	363	319	97	107	149
	Lacabane (1903?)	145	63	70	126	39		
	NDH	423	273	194	181	161	189	152
	SGL (1860)	513	325	191	192	229	276	268
	St Paul (1842)	436	227	156	162	103		
	South-East (1949)						132	116
	South-West (1946)						84	69
	Varennes (1876-1946)	270	171	91	66	50		
Varennes-East (1946...)						229	121+47 (Syria)	

PROVINCES/DISTRICTS	1903	1907	1920	1932	1946	1958	1967	
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>	Constantinople (1908-1946)		76	72	69	69		
	Syria (1908-1946)		86	87	91	92		
<b>OCEANIA</b>	Australia (1903)		141	97	131	237		
	Melbourne (1947)					119	146	
	New Caledonia (District) (1916)			23		31	18	
	New Zealand (1916)			50	75	105	152	197
	Oceania (section)	76						
	Sydney (1947)						224	327
Number of administrative units	12	20	25	26	32	33	50	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.001</b>	<b>3.100</b>	<b>3.197</b>	<b>4.013</b>	<b>5.087</b>	<b>6.745</b>	<b>7.578</b>	

Source: Electors to the Chapters from 1903 to 1967 (Acts of Chapter)

TABLE OF TEACHING STAFF BY REGION 1967					
	PROVINCE	BROTHERS	LAY	TOTAL	% OF LAY STAFF
ASIA	Sri Lanka (+ Pakistan)	25	87	112	77
	China	59	356	415	85
	Philippines	49	166	215	77
AFRICA	South Africa	77	91	168	54
	Congo-Rwanda	87	177	264	67
	Madagascar	38	73	111	65
NORTH AMERICA	Desbiens	77	320	397	80
	Iberville	231	301	532	56
	Levis	116	372	488	76
	Esopus	257	152	409	37
	Poughkeepsie	239	259	495	52
LATIN AMERICA	Chile	102	109	211	51
	Colombia	168	233	401	58
	Cordoba	123	139	262	53
	Cuba-Central America	198	169	367	46
	Lujan (Argentina)	110	126	236	53
	Mexico Central	160	176	336	52
	Peru	64	168	232	72
	Uruguay	51	37	88	42
	Venezuela	64	74	138	53
	Mexico Occidental	217	145	362	40
BRAZIL	Brazil North	116	272	388	70
	Caxias do Sul	52	105	157	66
	Porto Alegre	242	613	855	71
	Rio (Brazil)	107	196	303	64
	Santa Catarina	83	99	182	54
	Santa Maria	136	244	380	64
Sao Paulo	134	252	386	65	

	PROVINCE	BROTHERS	LAY	TOTAL	% OF LAY STAFF
EUROPE	Germany	70	42	112	37'5
	Belgium-Holland	113	518	631	82
	G.B.-Ireland-Nigeria	211	151	362	41
	Italy	92	98	190	51
	Portugal	82	65	147	44
	Swiss-Missions	18	2	20	10
SPAIN	Betica-Peru	204	141	345	40
	Castilla	152	70	222	31
	Catalogne	171	129	300	43
	Leon	141	83	224	37
	Levante	121	126	247	51
	Madrid	117	72	189	38
	North (Spain)	227	102	329	31
FRANCE	Varennes + Greece	78	139	217	64
	Beaucamps + N. Caledonia	147	110	257	42
	Hermitage	121	144	265	54
	St Genis-Laval	231	144	375	38
	South-East	83	134	217	61
	South-West	46	64	110	58
M. EAST	Lebanon-Syria	52	269	321	83
OCEANIA	Sydney	343	94	437	21
	Melbourne	133	103	236	43
	New Zealand	201	81	282	28
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.536</b>	<b>8.392</b>	<b>24.628</b>	<b>57</b>

Source: *Bulletin of the Institute*, T. 27, N°206, April 1967.

THE CRISIS OF MEMBERSHIP BY PROVINCE							
	PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS <sup>564</sup>	1964	1970	1976	1981	% PROV. <sup>565</sup>	% REGION
AFRICA-MADAGASCAR	South Africa	113	78	56	42	37	
	Congo-Rwanda	98	127	122	100	102	
	Nigeria		67	69	75	111	
	Madagascar	58	50	46	51	88	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>			<b>268</b>		<b>99</b>
LATIN AMERICA	Chile	189	165	137	120	63	
	Colombia	247	173	118	98	39	
	Cuba, Central America	302	291	190	175	58	
	Peru	148	147	100	77	52	
	Ecuador			64	57		
	Uruguay	68	72	57	49	72	
	Venezuela	84	80	51	55	65	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.043</b>			<b>664</b>		<b>63</b>	
LATIN AMERICA	Cordoba (Argentina)	169	154	134	117	69	
	Luján (Argentina)	168	158	152	146	86	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>			<b>263</b>		<b>78</b>
LATIN AMERICA	Mexico Central	238	225	175	184	77	
	Mexico Occidental	278	283	215	216	77	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>516</b>			<b>400</b>		<b>77</b>
BRAZIL	Caxías do Sul	111	80	56		50	
	Brasil North	197	131	118	102	51	
	Porto Alegre	267	183	139	171	64	
	Rio de Janeiro	220	130	113	103	47	
	Santa Catarina	120	91	81	86	71	
	Santa Maria	200	143	123	108	54	
	São Paulo	195	135	107	106	54	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1310</b>			<b>676</b>		<b>51</b>	
OCEANIA	Melbourne	194	209	198	179	92	
	Sydney	380	422	414	393	103	
	New Zealand	254	287	243	216	85	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>828</b>			<b>788</b>		<b>95</b>

<sup>564</sup> I am aware that a certain number of Provinces changed their names during this period. Generally I have kept the names given in 1964. I have not distinguished between Provinces and Districts.

<sup>565</sup> Percentage compared to the figure for 1964

PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS		1964	1970	1976	1981	% PROV. <sup>565</sup>	% REGION
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>	Canada, Desbiens	140	111	92	76	54	
	Canada Iberville	413	377	296	252	61	
	Canada Lévis	225	169	133	118	52	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>778</b>			<b>446</b>		<b>57</b>
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>	USA Esopus	314	255	214	198	63	
	USA Poughkeepsie	303	253	198	173	57	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>617</b>			<b>371</b>		<b>60</b>
<b>ASIA</b>	China	126	120	63	56	44	
	Sri Lanka	33	47	57	55	166	
	Philippines	54	67	87	66	122	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>			<b>177</b>		<b>83</b>
	Lebanon-Syria	53	43	36	29	54	
<b>SPAIN</b>	Bética	292	162	231	208	71	
	Castilla	245	214	195	179	73	
	Catalogne	238	288	265	258	102	
	León	238	205	214	191	80	
	Levante	179	178	126	129	72	
	Madrid	165	168	146	146	88	
	North	279	235	198	178	63	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.650</b>			<b>1.289</b>		<b>68</b>	
<b>EUROPE</b>	Germany	188	132	109	91	48	
	Belgium, Holland	262	222	196	171	65	
	Great Britain, Ireland, Nigeria	268					
	Great Britain		98	83	83	84	
	Ireland		65	62	50	76	
	Italy	160	145	134	134	83	
	Portugal	107	91	81	64	60	
	Swiss-Missions	56	40	32	28	50	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.041</b>	<b>793</b>		<b>621</b>		<b>59</b>	
<b>FRANCE</b>	Beaucamps	174	151	101	81	47	
	Hermitage	189	234	181	152	80	
	St Genis-Laval	357	285	232	202	56	
	South-East	141	101	76	66	47	
	South-West	78					
	Varenes	138	120	93	77	55	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.077</b>			<b>578</b>		<b>53</b>

Sources: B.I. XXXI, N° 221 p. 159 "General Statistics by Province" (1970-1981) and "Appendices to the B.I. of April 1967 (reserved for Capitulants)" Number of professed between 1957 and 1966.

**From “the spirit of the Institute”  
to “Marist apostolic spirituality” 1907-1985**





### CONSTITUTIONS

- Doctrine
- Discernment

### MARIST APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY

- Unification of life
- Less institutional
- Strong brotherhood
- Personal and community spirituality

### THE INSTITUTION

Leadership:

- animate
- govern

### COMMUNITY

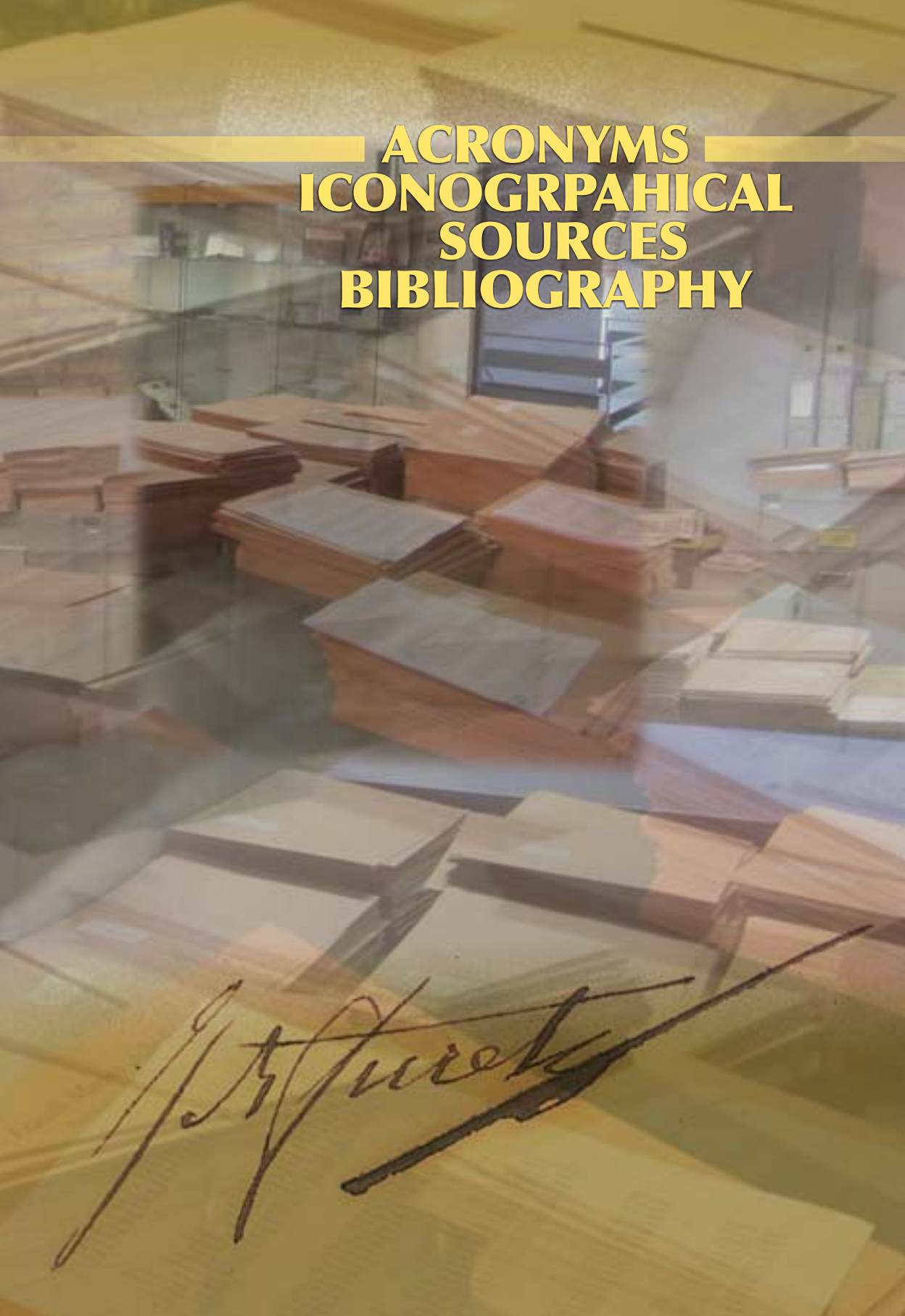
- Faith sharing
- Discernment
- Openness

### MISSION OF EDUCATION

- Solidarity
- Diversity
- Discernment
- Shared Mission

# *History of the Institute*

A photograph of a large archive room filled with stacks of papers and folders. A prominent red folder stands upright in the foreground. In the background, a framed portrait of a man is visible on the wall.



**ACRONYMS  
ICONOGRAPHICAL  
SOURCES  
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*P. B. Smith*

## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AA</b>	<i>Abrégé des Annales</i> . This acronym refers to the text of these Annals published in Rome in 1972.
<b>A.D.F.M.</b>	<i>Apostolat d'un Frère Mariste</i> .
<b>AFM</b>	Archives of the Marist Brothers
<b>ALS</b>	<i>Avis, Leçons, Sentences</i> . In English, <i>Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions</i>
<b>AN</b>	National Archives (France)
<b>Letters</b>	The <i>Letters of Fr Champagnat</i> (1985-87)
<b>Life</b>	<i>Life of Fr Champagnat</i> , 1989 edition. The chapters in the 1 <sup>st</sup> part are numbered in arabic form and those in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> part in Roman numerals.
<b>OFM</b>	<i>Origines des Frères Maristes</i> . This refers to the three volumes published in 2011 that contain documents from the time of Fr Champagnat.
<b>OM</b>	<i>Origines Maristes</i> . The number added to these initials indicates the volume (1 to 4).

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# FUNDAMENTAL SOURCES ABOUT THE MARIST BROTHERS

## A. HANDWRITTEN AND PRINTED SOURCES

In Volume 1 I provided quite an extensive overview of sources and bibliography (Cf. Foreword and General Introduction p. 11-16, and also the Annex p. 369-378). As already mentioned, in writing Volume 2, I did not study all handwritten and printed sources on the Institute in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but gave preference to some of them that seemed of greater significance, or were more accessible being in printed or electronic form, and most often in French. However, I made use of some dossiers from earlier times on a range of topics such as secularisation or the First World War.

### 1. Main sources covering the whole period under study

- *Circulars of the Superiors*: from Volume X (1901-1905) to Volume XXVIII (up to 8 September 1984). An electronic version in French of the complete Collection (up till 2006) was prepared by Br Louis Richard in 2006.
- *Collection of Circulars* (English ed.), Grugliasco 1932.
- *Acts of General Chapters*: From the 10<sup>th</sup> (1903) to the 18<sup>th</sup> (1985), in electronic version.
- *Bulletin of the Institute*: From Volume 1 (N° 1 undated; N° 2 March 1909) to Volume XXXI (N° 222, December 1984). Collection computerised in French by Br Louis Richard in 2009.
- *Supplement to the Bulletin of the Institute* (1967), Table of Contents of Bulletins (1909-1967), Rome, 78 p.
- *Biographical Notices*: (Computerised in French by Br Louis Richard in 2007-2008). The volumes from the first series (I-III) were used especially in the writing of Volume 1 of this History.
  - Volume I – *Biographies de quelques Frères*, [Br Jean-Baptiste] Lyon 1868.
  - Volume II - *Biographies de quelques Frères de 1890 à 1900*, Lyon 1900, 671 pages.
  - Volume III – *Notices nécrologiques* from 10 January 1899, (429 p.).
  - Volume IV - N° 1 of a new series, August 1931. *Notices biographiques de l'Institut des P. F.M.*, Grugliasco, 1931, (527 p.).

- Volume V - September 1937 (bound booklets N.1, N.2, ...), *Notices biographiques* ... Grugliasco 1937, (526 p.)
- Volume VI - August 1949, *Notices biographiques* ... E. Vitte, Lyon, (520 p.)
- Volume VII - August 1954, *Notices biographiques* ...E. Vitte, Lyon, (515 p.).
- Volume VIII - October 1959, *Notices biographiques* ... (514 p.).
- Volume IX - October 1963, *Notices biographiques* ...Roma EUR, (596 p.)
- In the *Bulletin of the Institute* there were numerous biographical notices between 1909 (N° 2) and 1931 (N° 83).

## 2. Rules and Constitutions (list incomplete)

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- *Guide des écoles à l'usage des P.F.M.*, Lyon, Vitte, 1891, 280 p.
- *Guide des écoles à l'usage des P.F.M.*, 3rd consolidated edition, Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1923, 252 p. *The Teacher's Guide*, Grugliasco, 1931, 287p.
- *Guide des écoles à l'usage des PFM*, 4th edition, Desclée et Cie, Paris, Tournai, Rome, 1932, 302 p.
- *Constitutions de l'institut des Frères maristes des Ecoles ou Petits Frères de Marie*, Turin, Vincenzo Bona, 1922, 93 p. *Constitutions of the Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools or the Little Brothers of Mary, Mother House, St Genis-Laval*, 1953.
- *Règles du gouvernement...* Vitte, Lyon, 1927, 242 p. *Rules of Government*, Desclée et Cie, Tournai, 1930.
- *Règles communes de l'institut des P.F.M.*, Printery of the College of the artigianelli Craftworkers, Turin, 1923, 141 p. *Common Rules of the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary, Mount St Michael, Dumfries*, 1924, 144p.
- *Règles communes de l'institut des P.F.M.* St Genis-Laval,, 1947, 139 p.
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## 3. Sources related to particular time periods

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- *Registres de Délibérations du Conseil Général*: From Volume 6 (1897-1906) to Volume 18 (1955-1957). Collection computerised by Br Louis Richard 2006-2007.
- *Lettres administratives*: from 1901 (Letter N° 13.698) to 1953 (letter 18.063). Collection computerised by Br Louis Richard starting in 1996.

#### **4. Chapter Documents and Constitutions from 1968 to 1986**

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- *Constitutions*, Rome, 1968, 138 p. + Note on the question of priesthood
- *Texts of the 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*, Rome, 247 p., undated.
- *Norms of application*, 131 p., undated
- *Marist Brothers Today*, 1976, 21 p.
- *Listening to the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*, Rome, 144 p., undated.
- *Constitutions and Statutes*, Rome, 8 December 1986, 254 p.

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- AFM Dossier 212/2, *Annales de la province de Varennes : Charolles*
- AFM F. Marie-Nicet, *Histoire de l'institut* (handwritten), 6 volumes
- AFM "Statistiques", dossier 1906,
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- AFM, dossier "sécularisation", Letter of R. Parayre, professor of Law at the Catholic Faculties of Lyon, to the Procurator General.

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- Anonymous author (in fact, Br, Jean-Emile, Assistant), *Nos supérieurs*, St Genis-Laval, 1953, 408 p.
- Anonymous author (Br Jean-Emile), *Histoire de l'institut des Petits Frères de Marie*, St Genis-Laval, 1947, 223 p.

## B. MARIST BIBLIOGRAPHY

The number of Marist works produced in the period 1907 – 1985 was enormous. More or less every Province had its own review or reviews. But, outside of the periodicals and the piles of school texts, where are the deeper texts about spirituality, pedagogy, history, scholarship ...? The years 1955-1985 saw the appearance of many remarkable works of Marist research, particularly concerning our origins; the period 1907-1955 by contrast seems quite uncreative. For sure, it was a time when the basic Institute texts were translated into various languages. Also, during that historical moment, the multiple disturbances affecting the Institute were hardly conducive to in-depth writing.

It may well be the case that this comment is a mistake coming from the limited access of the author. The bibliographical overview below is, then, a reflection of my reading of the Bulletin of the Institute and the Circulars as well as the inventory of my personal library rather than the fruit of a systematic investigation. Whatever, it would be good if this modest confession would inspire work on a better understanding of Marist intellectual and spiritual output in the years between 1900 and the Council.

### 1. Some re-editions of works of piety and formation, in chronological order

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When these re-editions were published, there were often changes made to the text and the addition of an Index.

- *Avis, leçons, sentences*, edition 1914, (hard to find, not consulted)
- *Biographies de quelques Frères*, Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1924, 402 p. ; *Our Models in Religion*, Mother House of the Marist Brothers, Grugliasco, 1936.
- *Avis, leçons, sentences*, New edition, Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1927, 470 p.; *Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions* (tr. Br Leonard Voetgle, General Administration, 1997?)
- *Le Directoire de la solide piété*, Desclée et Cie, Paris, Tournai, Rome, 1928, 762 p.
- *Principles of Christian and Religious Perfection for the use of the Little Brothers of Mary*, 6th edition, Grugliasco, 1932, 559 p.
- *La Vierge Marie enseignée à la jeunesse*, 3rd edition, Vitte, Lyon, 1937, 407 p.
- *Principles of Christian and Religious Perfection for the use of the Little Brothers of Mary*, 7th edition, Grugliasco, 1939, 598 p.
- *Méditations sur l'Incarnation, la Passion et L'Eucharistie* (drawn from the works of Br Jean-Baptiste), St Genis-Laval, 1950, 448 p.
- *Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Desclée et Cie, Paris, Tournai, Rome, New York, 1956, 238 p.

## 2. Some new works of Spirituality

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The importance of the Editions Marie Médiatrice of Genval (Belgium) needs to be acknowledged here.

- Anonymous (Br Henri-Noé), *Sur les pas de Marcellin Champagnat.*, Centre Champagnat, N.D. de L'Hermitage , 1958, 240 p.
- Anonymous (Br Henri-Noé), *Pages mariales contemporaines*, 1958, Centre Champagnat, N.D. de L'Hermitage , 1958, 240 p.
- *Méditations sur le Sacré-Coeur* (Br Henri Noé), Editions Marie Médiatrice, Genval, (Belgium)
- *Méditations mariales*, (Br Henri Noé), Editions Marie Médiatrice, Genval, (Belgium)

## 3. Scholarly works or related to the history of the period 1907-1985

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- *Chronologie mariste (1789-1917)*, Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1917, 71 p.
- Br Ignace Thiry, *L'institut des Frères Maristes face à la persécution*, Editions Marie Médiatrice, Genval, (Belgium). 1960, 140 p.
- *Abrégé des Annales. F. Avit (période 1789-1840)*, (by Br Gabriel Michel), Rome, 1972, 355
- *Chronologie de l'institut* (by Br Charles-Raphaël), Rome, 1976, 271 p.
- Br Agustín Carazo, (published by), *Témoignages sur Marcellin Champagnat. Enquête diocésaine*, Rome 1991. 281 p. + Appendix of 126 p.
- Riolando Azzi, *História da Educação católica no Brasil. Contribuição dos Irmãos Maristas, 1897-1997*, Simar, São Paulo, 1997, 2 volumes.
- Br Alexandre Lefebvre, *Le mouvement Champagnat de la Famille Mariste. Ses origines*,, electronic version of 111 p., summarised by the same author in Marist Notebooks N° 15, May 1999, p. 119-170 under the title: "From Ex-students to the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family".
- Br Jean-Baptiste Furet, *Traité sur l'éducation*, a manuscript computerised and published in A4 format in February 1998 by Br Paul Sester.
- Br Pierre Zind and Agustín Carazo, *Tras las huellas de Marcelino Champagnat. El contexto histórico, religioso y educativo del Fundador*, Provincia Marista de Chile, 1999, 248 p.
- F. Luis Di Giusto, *Historia del Instituto de los Hermanos Maristas*, Marist Province of Cruz del Sur, Argentina, 2004, 264 p.
- *Chronologie mariste*, (Br Jean Ronzon), General House, Rome, 2010

- Br Augustin Hendlmeier, *100 years (1914-2014)*. Marist Brothers. Germany, 2014, 128 p..

#### 4. Various Biographies

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- Abbé L. Ponty, chaplain of N.D. de Lacabane, *Vie du F. François*, Lyon, Vitte, 1899, 338 p.
- *Vie du F. Louis-Marie*, by a Brother of this Institute, Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1907, 299 p.
- Guy Chastel, *Le Frère François*, Editions Alsacia, Paris, 1948, 158 p.
- *Autobiographie du F. Adjueteur*, published in booklet form by Br Alain Delorme, 1985
- Br Henri-Noé, *La voie droite* (Vie du F. Alfano), Editions Marie Médiatrice, Genval, (Belgium), 1963.
- Br Gabriel Michel . *Nos Supérieurs. F. Léonida*, General House, Rome, 1976
- Br José, Flores, "Chepo", *Lumière et flammes d'une vie. Frère Basilio Rueda*, translated into French from Spanish by Br Gabriel Michel, with no mention of the date or publisher.
- Br Paul Sester, *Frère Charles Raphaël, 8° supérieur général de l'institut des Frères Maristes*, Rome, 1988, 103 p.
- Juan Jesús Moral Barrio, *Vidas entregadas. Martirologio Marista en España. 1909-1939*, Institute of the Marist Brothers, 1997.
- Br Louis Hochet, *Un enfant du siècle. Albert Pfleger (1900-1999) Frère Mariste*, N.D. de L'Hermitage, 2001, 96 p.
- *Seeds of life. 47 Marist Brother martyrs in Spain*, booklet of 120 p. published on the occasion of their beatification on 28 October 2007.
- Br Giovanni Bigotto, *The China Martyrs of 1900. The Boxer Persecution*, Rome 2011.

#### 5. Some biographies of Fr Champagnat

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Circulars refer to numerous lives of the Founder, often intended for a public audience and going through multiple editions and translations. It is not always easy to track down this type of literature.

- *Vie (abrégée) de J.B.M. Champagnat*, Lyon, X. Jevain, 1885, 232 p. a portrait and three engravings.
- *Life and spirit of J.B.M. Champagnat...* Burns & Oates, London-New York,

- 1887, 491 p., portrait of Champagnat, engravings of La Valla and L'Hermitage, appendix on the growth of the Institute (p. 484-491).
- *Vie du Fondateur, (Life of the Founder)*, 32 p., 1891. Translations in Spanish and English. A publication mentioned in Circulars but one that I did not consult.
  - *Vie abrégée du P. Champagnat destinée aux élèves*, 1896, 352 p. 20 engravings.
  - *Vie du Vénérable M.J.B. Champagnat...* Nouvelle édition, Lyon, Vitte, 1897, 647 p., 19 engravings.
  - *Panegyriques, allocutions et discours prononcés à l'occasion de l'introduction de la cause du Vénérable M.J.B. Champagnat*, Lyon, X. Jevain, 1897, 433 p.
  - *Faveurs attribuées au V.P. Champagnat*, editions in 1906, 1912, 1924. (Circulars)
  - *Petite vie illustrée du Vénérable Champagnat*, 1908. (not consulted)
  - *Vie abrégée du Vénérable Marcellin Champagnat*, (new edition), Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1923, 59 p.
  - Mgr. Laveille, *Marcellin Champagnat*, Paris, Téqui, 1921, 435 p.
  - *Vie du Vénérable M.J.B. Champagnat...* 3th edition, Desclée et Cie, Paris, Tournai, Rome, 1931, 650 p., 34 engravings, index ; *Life of Venerable M.J.B. Champagnat*, 1931.
  - Abbé Jean Vignon, *Le P. Champagnat 1789-1840*, Editions Fleurus, 1952. An illustrated history with 164 stories.
  - *Vie de Joseph Benoît Marcellin Champagnat (Life of Joseph Benedict Marcellin Champagnat)*, Br Jean-Baptiste Furet, General House, Rome, 1989.

## 6. Pedagogy, Education

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- Louis Riboulet (Br Pierre Gonzalès). I was only able to consult some of the works mentioned.
  - *Histoire de la pédagogie*, Vitte, Lyon-Paris, 1925, 662 p., Re-edited in 1935. Translated into Spanish by Edelvivès.
  - *Conseils sur le travail intellectuel*, Vitte, 1928, 288 p.
  - *Manuel de pédagogie générale*, Vitte, 264 p.
  - *Manuel de psychologie adaptée à l'éducation.*, Vitte, 312 p. Spanish translation.
  - *L'Eglise et l'éducation*
  - *La discipline préventive*

- *L'éducation de l'ère chrétienne au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*

Br Léon-Stanislas (he always signed his works "Br Léon"): Only the first text was studied at depth, using an electronic version prepared in 2014 by Br Louis Richard.

- *Hors des sentiers battus*,
- Volume I, *Essai de méthodologie nouvelle*, Procure des Frères Maristes, Mont Saint Guibert, Brabant, 1935, 133 p.
- Volume II *Méthodologie spéciale*, Mont Saint Guibert, 1935, 172 p.
- Volume III, *Méthodologie spéciale* (2<sup>e</sup> partie), Mont Saint Guibert, 1936, 147 p.
- Volume IV *Méthodologie spéciale* (3<sup>e</sup> partie) Procure des Frères Maristes, Brussels, 1937, 108 p.
- *Le travail personnel par le syllabus*;
- *Formation religieuse et méthodes actives*;
- *Pour mieux enseigner*,
- *Leçons de psychologie appliquée à l'éducation*;
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- Br Aureliano Brambila, *The Marist charism in the land of Mexico*, in *Marist Notebooks* N° 30, February 2012 p. 93-130.
- Brs M. Green, A. Brambila, A. Lanfrey, Juan Jesús Moral Barrio, articles on the History Project for the Bicentenary, in *Marist Notebooks* N° 30 (February 2012).
- Br Robert Theo, *An Attempted Fusion between the Congregation of the Mother of God with the Marist Brothers in China, between 1909 and 1912*, in *Marist Notebooks* N° 27, October 2009, p. 89-113
- Br Louis Vibert, *Lavalla and the Marist Brothers from 1825 to today*, in *Marist Notebooks* N° 31, March 2013, p. 135-168.
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- Br André Lanfrey, *The Portraits of Fr. Champagnat in the XIX century*, in *Marist Notebooks* N° 29, May 2011, p. 5-34.

## 8. Articles de FMS-Message

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- *FMS Message*, N° 29, p. 45...Statistics 1999.
- *FMS Message*, N° 36, September 2007, on the Causes of Beatification
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- Paul Christophe, *Des missionnaires plongés dans la Grande Guerre. Lettres des Missions étrangères de Paris*, Cerf, 2012, 367 p.
- Abbé de Rancé (1626-1700), reformer of la Trappe, *Relation de la mort de quelques religieux de La Trappe*, 1st edition in 1678. Last edition, Mercure de France Paris, 2012, 296 p.
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