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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 **EDITORIAL**
André Lanfrey, fms and Antonio Ramalho, fms

■ **MARIST SPIRITUALITY**

- 5 God's Presence and Love.
The first characteristic of Marist spirituality
Michael Green, fms

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- 27 Before Marist Spirituality:
The Spirit of the Institute
André Lanfrey, fms

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- 41 Modesty as a virtue,
according to Br François
Antonio Martínez Estaún, fms

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- 51 Marian Devotion. Theological foundations
for the Marists of Marcellin Champagnat
Afonso Murad, fms

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■ **STUDIES**

- 65 The Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony
in Chile(2011-2021). Genesis of a project
to organise, conserve and nurture our charism
Francisco J. Flores Sánchez

fflores@maristas.cl



- 79 Outline of an Administrative History of the Institute. The General Secretariat of the Institute and the ACCESS database
André Lanfrey, fms, and Adrien Mercier, fms

alanfrey@maristes.net • amercier@maristes.net



■ DOCUMENTS

- 95 The General Chapter of 1852-54 and Brother François in Rome in 1858. A letter from Brother Marie-Jubin protesting the way that the new Rule and Constitutions were developed
André Lanfrey, fms
- 109 Brother François' journal from his visit to Rome in 1858
The tribulations of a Superior General seeking canonical recognition
André Lanfrey, fms, and Antonio Martínez Estaún, fms
- 123 Brief information on some publications

Cover photo

Chapel of the Council, General House - Rome. The altar is the same where Marcellin Champagnat celebrated the Eucharist on several occasions. In baroque style, on the front it bears the letters AM, also in baroque style. On the right there is the statue of the Good



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EDITORIAL

The Patrimony Commission decided that Marist Notebooks 40 would feature the topic of Marist spirituality. Four articles in this issue address that subject from different perspectives. The most fundamental, on the presence and love of God (Brother Michael Green), situates this aspect of our spirituality within a long spiritual tradition. It is taken from a more extensive study by Brother Michael, which is available in full on the champagnat.org site. The study on “The Spirit of the Institute” (Brother André Lanfrey) proposes this expression to be largely equivalent to the more recent concept of “Marist spirituality”. Brother Antonio Martínez Estaún devotes his article to a Marist virtue that can be difficult to define: modesty. Finally, Brother Afonso Murad invites us to a theological discernment on Marian devotion, which is very useful today, for all Marists.

The next two articles sit well together since they both deal with the Institute as an institution concerned with preserving its memory and history.

The article by Flores Sánchez deals with this question at the level of the Chilean Province. The second (Brother André Lanfrey and Adrien Mercier) outlines an administrative history of the Institute by discussing the large Access data management system developed at the turn of the 21st century. These two articles therefore invite us to become more aware of the revolution for accessing our history that is taking place before our eyes, allowing many investigations but also generating new problems.

The two document studies that are included in this issue are also very similar in subject and date since they deal with Brother François’ stay in Rome in 1858. They reveal to us many things about the state of mind of the Institute after the General Chapter of 1852-54; about the personality of Brother François, which remains largely unknown; about the Roman environment of the time and about the delicate relations between the Marist Fathers and the Marist Brothers. More globally, these documents reveal

how problematic it was for the Institute to move from its founding experience to its structuring as a body governed by a Rule, Constitutions, and the oversight of Rome.

Finally, we thought it would be useful to provide some brief information on publications and events of patrimonial interest.



GOD'S PRESENCE AND LOVE. THE FIRST CHARACTERISTIC OF MARIST SPIRITUALITY



Michael Green, fms

Br Michael Green has written an extended essay entitled – Marist Spirituality, what its historical sources reveal of its essence – where he offers a critical exploration of the six characteristics of Marist spirituality that are described in Water from the Rock. The full essay can be accessed in English on the champagnat.org website (<https://bit.ly/3xBQwJL>), and it has also been published in Portuguese under the title: “Experiência de Travessia, marcos da espiritualidade de Marcelino Champagnat e dos primeiros Irmãos Maristas”. The article below is a redacted version of his treatment of the first characteristic – ‘God’s presence and love’

Water from the Rock introduces the first characteristic of Marist spirituality – ‘God’s presence and love’ – in a single, short paragraph. It is the briefest of the text’s introductions to the six lenses onto our spirituality that it proposes:

Today, those of us who follow in the footsteps of Marcellin and his first disciples are seized by their same inner dynamism. We develop a way of being, loving and doing, in the spirit of our origins. Gradually, day by day, we deepen our experience of the loving presence of God within ourselves and in others. This presence of God is a profound experience of being personally loved by God, and the conviction that he is close to us in our daily human experiences.¹

That description, as rich as it unquestionably is, presents the spiritual life as rather gentle and benign, with phrases such as ‘gradually’, ‘day by day’, ‘experience of loving presence’, ‘he is close to us’. Marcellin, in fact, had a much tougher time of it. So many – if not all – of the masters of the spiritual life seem to have had followed similarly testing paths as they have sought to progress more deeply in their spiritual lives.

It is well for us to recognise that Marcellin’s personal spirituality was something that did indeed grow and mature: the eight-year-old boy impressed by the heroism of fugitive

¹ *Water from the Rock*, #16

priests, the idealistic sixteen-year-old minor seminarian, the inspired twenty-seven-year-old ordinand, the indefatigable thirty-two-year-old curate, the cancer-ridden fifty year-old founder – we need to view differentially. Far from the fanciful image of baby Marcellin with a flame flickering above his cot as one predestined for special holiness – as the strained hagiography of Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet would have us believe – Marcellin was like each of us in his need to discover, to reflect, to discern, to err and to change. Ultimately, the change to which we are all called is a fundamental one, a life-defining orientation of heart and mind, a metanoia (cf. Mark 1:15). For Marcellin, this journey was at times torturous, even quite gutting. In the terminology of classical spiritual writers we can describe it as his ‘purging’.

But more of the ups and downs of Marcellin’s personal journey later. Let us first consider the phrase ‘the presence of God’, an expression that has enjoyed a prominent place in our Marist spiritual rhetoric since the founding time.

SOURCES OF THE ‘PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD’

Brother Sylvestre, writing almost forty years after Marcellin’s death, recalled the man he had known when he was still a teenager:

The frequent remembrance of the presence of God was always Fr Champagnat’s favourite practice. We could say that it was the soul of his soul.²

Perhaps we see it most strikingly from Marcellin’s own pen in his ‘Spiritual Testament’. He began this important document with his customary phrase: Here, in the presence of God ... Then, further on, as he turns to talk specifically about Marists’ spiritual lives, we read these words:

I beg of God and desire with all my heart that you persevere faithfully in the holy exercise of the presence of God. It is the soul of prayer, of meditation, and of all virtues.³

They are strong words.

² *Memoir of Brother Sylvestre*, Appendix, Ch.2

³ Spiritual Testament of Marcellin Champagnat, in J-B Furet, *Life of Marcellin Champagnat*

The ‘exercise’ or the ‘practice’ of the ‘presence of God’ was a common expression at the time, regarded almost as a synonym for whole of one’s spiritual life. A popular book with that very title – *The Practice of the Presence of God* – was a work that would have been attractive to Marcellin because it offered such an accessible, affective and immanent spirituality. Written by a Discalced Carmelite, Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection (1614-1691), the book was compiled after the friar’s death by one of the many people to whom he offered spiritual direction.

Lawrence, a former soldier, joined the Carmelites after considerable life experience and did not seek ordination: he contented himself for forty years as cook, pot-washer and sandal-maker in a new 100-member priory in Paris. Not that he was uneducated; rather, the contrary. He was quite well read, especially in his own Carmelite mystics such as Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. Yet he developed a compelling simplicity for explaining what living in the presence of God meant, the fruit of decades of his own experience. For him, it came down to an intimate affair of the heart, and a continual conversation between him and God. His life was his prayer, and vice-versa.

The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are calling for different things at the same time, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees before the Blessed Sacrament⁴

We are reminded of Marcellin’s words found in a letter he wrote from Paris in March 1838 as he was occupied with running all over town pursuing his application for legal authorisation for the Brothers:

I am still in Paris, seeing this one and that one, with all my errands seeming to do little to speed up our major business ... Yet I find greater solitude in the middle of Paris than at the Hermitage ... I carry you all in my heart.⁵

The Practice of the Presence of God, published less than a century before Marcellin’s birth, comprises a series sixteen letters Brother Lawrence wrote to people to offer them spiritual advice, along with a record of four conversations he had with Joseph de Beaufort, and some of his maxims. It is a modest little work, and still available.⁶ Lawrence urges people to be intentionally, affectively and continually attentive to God’s close presence. There was joy in that, for him: sustaining joy, quiet joy.

⁴ Practice of the Presence of God, Fourth Conversation.

⁵ Letter 181, *Letters of Marcellin Champagnat*

⁶ A good edition of the book is that translated by John L. Delaney (published by Doubleday, and available in paperback and Kindle from Amazon). This edition has a helpful Foreword from Henri Nouwen and an Introduction from Delaney.

In his spiritual maturity, Lawrence became dismissive of the value of personal disciplines, penances, and even set prayers if they did not serve to nurture in a person a sense of the loving presence of God.

His intuition was that spirituality is essentially relational. A loving relationship. God is companion, friend and confidante – always there, in our innermost self. We are absorbed in God, and God in us. How to ‘live in the presence of God’ was the same for him as how to build, sustain and develop any close interpersonal relationship. It was all absorbing for him, but also outwardly impelling – love radiated, love shared. To go anywhere, however, it needed to be intentionally and consciously pursued. That is the same for any relationship, of course. When we speak of the ‘Theocentricism’ in Marist spirituality, it is important to understand it not as something primarily cerebral or philosophical but essentially relational.

A writer who certainly did have a direct and defining impact on Marcellin, François de Sales (1567-1622), was also deeply influenced by the Carmelite mystics. He was also keen, like Brother Lawrence, to promote the notion that an intense spiritual life was not something to be confined to abbeys and convents, to religious and clergy. This emphasis on a personal and affective spirituality, and every person’s capacity to nurture it, was an important feature of the century of the ‘Catholic Reformation’ following the

Council of Trent. Later, we labelled that which developed as the ‘French school of spirituality’, a somewhat misleading term but one that does recognise that many of the movers and shakers of this spiritual revival were indeed French. Among them are familiar names such as Vincent de Paul and Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, and perhaps others who may be less familiar to some, such as Pierre de Bérulle, Madame Acarie, Jean-Jacques Olier, Jean Eudes, and Jane-Frances de Chantal. Our Marist spirituality grew directly out of this milieu; all of these spiritual masters and others were known to Marcellin. They helped him to frame and to ponder the experience of the presence of God in his life, and how he taught others about it. A giant among them, and the one who possibly had most impact on our strand of Marist spirituality, was François de Sales.

De Sales’ first major book, *The Devout Life*, was aimed at a general readership; it treated the fostering of a sense of God’s presence in daily living. His second, *Treatise on the Love of God*, took his readers more deeply into their personal experience of God. His essential thesis was that he understood the love of God as something inscribed into the human heart as its fundamental desire. The itinerary of a person’s spiritual life is a journey of discovery for how to fulfil this desire, and to become ecstatically consumed by the liberating and irresistible love of God. Indeed, the book was conceived as a commentary on the *Song of Songs*, an

epic love poem. The only response to such love is to love in return, to become a loving person.

Marcellin's seminary studies led him to be much influenced also by the writings of the Spaniard Alfonso Rodriguez SJ (1526-1616) whose one book *The Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection* was widely read and studied in the seventeenth century, and the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Saint Jure SJ (1588-1657), a more prolific author and renowned spiritual director. Both men explored the 'practice of the presence of God', albeit not quite in the same way. From Rodriguez, Marcellin was taken by the concept of

the whole world filled with God, as it is,
so people can imagine themselves in the midst
of this infinite ocean of God, surrounded by him,
like a sponge in the midst of the sea.⁷

Although, Marcellin drew much from Rodriguez, it was the more mystically oriented Saint Jure to whom he seemed more drawn. Marcellin was a contemplative, by natural disposition and by conscious choice. Ironically enough, this most pragmatic of men did not have an especially pragmatic or tick-the-box approach to his spiritual life. For Marcellin, it was not a matter of climbing any ladder of holiness or being dutiful, not about what he did but rather with whom he was in re-

lationship. From the writings of each of Brothers François, Jean-Baptiste and Sylvestre, we learn that one of Marcellin's most repeated pieces of Scripture was Acts 17:18

For it is in God that we live and move
and have our being.

Sylvestre tells us that Marcellin sat often with Psalm 139:

Seeing his serenity, his centredness
and his sense recollection one could well believe
that he was always conscious of the presence
of God. I remember that when he was leading the
meditation he always began with
the words of Psalm 139: 'Quo ibo a spiritu tuo?'
He prayed it aloud in such a tone of voice,
emphatic and solemn, that it produced
an inexpressible impression and such
a sense of recollection that you were afraid
to breathe.⁸

In the language of the time, his approach was more mystical than ascetical. In this, he differed by some good measure from his biographer, Brother Jean Baptiste.

Unfortunately, Jean-Baptiste, despite all that we owe him as a chronicler and biographer, can be criticised for the way he re-interpreted the spirituality that Marcellin fostered in the first generation of Marists. In the second part of *The Life of Father Champagnat*, he devoted twenty-four chapters to describe the Found-

⁷ Rodriguez, *The Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection*. Sixth Treatise, Ch. 2

⁸ Memoir of Brother Sylvestre, Appendix, Ch.2

er's character and personal traits. His purpose in doing this was to depict the ideal Marist, to present Marcellin as an exemplar of how to live as a Marist. One of these chapters addressed itself to 'how Fr Champagnat kept himself in the presence of God'. A close textual analysis of it reveals that Jean-Baptiste has almost certainly based the whole chapter on a section of one of the notebooks of Brother François, who in turn seems to have composed his notes from a talk or talks given by Marcellin on the subject of the presence of God, parts of which Marcellin has obviously drawn directly from Rodriguez and Saint-Jure. No doubt, this was deliberate and well intentioned on Jean-Baptiste's part. However, while he improves the elegance and composition of François' notes, he changes its emphases. He presents the 'practice of the presence of God' as just that: a set of practices, things to do. Further, as he writes of Marcellin's idea of God's being 'everywhere', he employs the phrase 'God sees me' (which is nowhere evident in Marcellin's own extant writings); he offers it as something of a deterrent. That is to say, the practice of the presence of God is useful to keep us fearfully off the pernicious road to sin. This was not Marcellin's primary emphasis.

A vignette in the biography of Brother Jean-Pierre Martinol (the first Brother to die) is more instruc-

tive for pointing us to Marcellin's intuitions and the kind of spirituality he fostered in the first Brothers. It comes from the earliest years at La Valla. Young Martinol, twenty years of age and in the workforce for some years by that time, comes to join the small community in 1819 or 1820. He is struck by the way the Brothers are a long-time silent each morning, and he is troubled that he doesn't know how to 'do' that. Let us pick up the story:

One day [Jean-Pierre] asked, 'Father, can we pray to God without speaking?'
 'Yes, but why do you ask me this question?'
 'Because, every morning, I see you and the Brothers remain still for a long time, deep in contemplation, without saying a word. I understand that you are praying, but I don't know how to do this, which grieves me.'
 'And what do you do during this time?'
 'I recite my rosary and tell God, "I give you my heart and I love you."'
 'You can very well continue with this prayer, but I will also teach you how to pray like the Brothers.'
 ... To the young man's question, 'How can one take actions without speaking?'
 Marcellin responded by giving the example of the mother who looks at or who thinks of her child with love, without telling the child. 'Yourself,' said Father Champagnat, 'do you not love the good Lord when you see a crucifix?' When the postulant answered affirmatively, Marcellin explained that in this way he could pray to God without speaking, every morning, as did the Brothers.⁹

⁹ *Biographies de quelques Frères*, p.34

The image of prayer as an intimate loving relationship, a loving gaze: this is the disposition of a mystic, a contemplative. It is revealing that Marcellin is still relatively young at this point, not yet thirty. His spirituality will deepen considerably, as we shall see, but already we sense that living in the presence of God is an affair of the heart for him.

Another insight comes from Brother François's notes – taken from Marcellin's talk(s) on the subject of the 'practice of the presence of God'. In his exercise book, François has written down the five means or pre-conditions that he has learnt from Marcellin for deepening a sense of God's presence: purity of heart; prayer; silence and retreat; order your actions to the will of God and search for God in everything; contemplate God in all his creatures. They are really not surprising. Textbook stuff. More intriguing are the little phrases that François has added next to each one – no doubt noting down comments of Marcellin himself. Particularly teasing is what he jotted next to 'purity of heart': two Scripture references – Matthew 5, and the *Song of Songs*. The reference to the Beatitudes is predictable – *blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God*. But the *Song of Songs*? A celebration of heartfelt yearning and of young love. How might that shape or change

our image of Marcellin? After the word 'prayer', François has written 'humility' and the French word 'douceur', which means gentleness, sweetness, softness.

Using the imagery of an intimate and loving personal relationship for appreciating how Marcellin would have you and me come to sense God in our lives is perhaps the most helpful way for appreciating the spiritual legacy he has left us. We have all been in relationships, fallen in love. We know about initial attraction, first flush, young love. But we know there is much more, needs to be much more. We know that a relationship is not essentially about doing things or proving oneself; that's not its basis. If we are in love, nonetheless, there is much we will want to do, time we will want to give, priorities we will want to make, disciplines we will willingly impose on ourselves. Equally, we know a relationship that is to endure cannot be built on anything less than complete honesty and gift of self – what the Scriptures might call purity of heart. We know also about the ups and downs we will experience, the heartaches, the trials, the moments of doubt perhaps, and the times of forgiveness and recommitment. The intensity. All of that played out in Marcellin's spiritual journey, the fruits of which have helped to shape the distinctive spirituality that today we call Marist.

THE INFLUENCE OF FRANÇOIS DE SALES

To understand St Marcellin Champagnat's spirituality, and the spiritual tradition which is his legacy, we need to appreciate the spiritual fundamentals proposed by St François de Sales. If you don't understand François de Sales, you won't understand Marcellin Champagnat.

That is not to suggest that de Sales was the only shaping influence on Marcellin, and how Marcellin understood 'God's presence and love' in his life. Some have already been mentioned. There were others in addition to these, notably the formative influence of his family in his first fifteen years, and other leading figures of post-Reformation Europe whom he read, such as St Alphonsus Ligouri. The spirituality that emanated from Le Puy was also defining for Marcellin, recognising that his home region was in that diocese and the orbit of its spiritual currents up until the time of Napoleon – influences such as St John Francis Regis and the spirituality of the Sisters of St Joseph (who had a house in Marhles, and to whom both Marcellin's aunt and great aunt belonged) being worthy of mention. The writings of the Spanish nun and mystic María of Ágreda were significant for him later on.

Indeed, the spiritual milieu of the time – as all times – was complex and heterogenous. It is misleadingly simplistic to talk of 'French spirituality'

or the 'French school of spirituality'. There were, for example, Jansenist or at least strongly rigorist and ascetical emphases being pushed from some quarters. There was a current of more pessimistic Augustinian thought that emphasised nothingness before God, and that sometimes skewed towards an unhealthy self-abnegation. There were also some loud revisionist voices: let's go back to the way it was (or imagined to be) before the King lost his head. These rigorist and restorationist currents certainly washed through the seminary in Lyon when Marcellin was a student there. But he mostly eschewed them.

One reason he did so was his attraction to what de Sales had to say. What in particular was it about de Sales that grabbed Marcellin?

Let's start in a perhaps unexpected place. Modesty. The third of our 'three violets'. The more obvious spiritual attitude with which we could begin might be humility. Just about every master of the spiritual life, from the desert fathers and mothers onwards, has emphasised humility as the basis of the spiritual life. Before them, and indeed before Jesus, the Hebrew Scriptures emphasised this fundamental attitude of heart. Alternatively, we could take simplicity, which in fact was something of a novel concept that Francis de Sales promoted for nurturing one's spiritual life, and which has become key in our own Marist tradition. Indeed, it is one of the six char-

acteristics of our spirituality named in *Water from the Rock*. But let us turn our attention to arguably the most neglected, or perhaps misunderstood, of the ‘three violets’ – modesty.

It is clear that, while Marcellin might have coined the metaphor of ‘violets’ to describe them, given as he was to the use of colourful imagery drawn from farming and nature, the spiritual dispositions themselves come straight from de Sales. For the third one, though, de Sales had another word: *douceur* in French. It has the sense of gentleness, sweetness, lightness of touch, pleasantness.

Tough taskmaster that he admittedly was, it is interesting that Marcellin was drawn to a spiritual attitude that was so essentially meek. It reveals much of his sense of God in his life, and his own relationship with God, a gentle and loving God. A life-giving God rather than a life-sapping one. An early Brother – Dacien who was young when he knew Marcellin – gives us a window into this in a testimony taken almost fifty years after the Founder’s death:

His tone of voice, his sharp and sometimes severe glance, often intimidated me; but in the confessional I no longer heard the voice of the master, but only the loving tone of the gentlest of fathers.¹⁰

In conventional spiritual wisdom, the early steps of a person’s spiritual journey are known as the ‘purgative stage’. This is what Marcellin would have been taught. It’s what he would have read in Rodriguez, Saint Jure and others. This stage is the time for stripping away all that encumbers further progression. ‘Mortification of the senses’ was an expression that was commonly used at the time and, indeed, for much longer. Literally, a killing of feelings. How many people have had their psycho-emotional wellbeing stunted or maimed by spiritual directors who have misunderstood this concept, or who have imposed it bluntly? This was not Marcellin’s approach; there are myriad examples, rather, of his kindness, his patience, his understanding and his encouragement, especially of the younger Brothers. Baby-steps were fine, and lots of them made for a decent journey. For this reason, he was attracted to de Sales’ idea of the ‘little virtues’, which he adopted.

This is not to imply that François de Sales shrank from the need for discipline and decision in the interior life. He drew on both his personal experience and on the wisdom of the ages – from giants such as Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, and Catherine of Siena – to affirm the need for radical and demanding personal change if progress in the spiritual

¹⁰ *Témoignages sur Marcellin Champagnat, Enquête Diocésaine*, Vol.1, #12, 1889.

life was to take place. It could be a rough and black ride at times. But this is not where he began. This was not his starting point. That is key.

For de Sales, it was, rather, all about the heart. And the heart was all about desire. Desire was not something about which to be fearful or in denial. It was to be befriended, not squashed. Indeed, desire was the key to understanding the human condition, made essentially in the image of God. Later Thérèse of Lisieux – another Carmelite – would write in the same vein. All desire was ultimately a desire for love, and love was God. This is what seized Marcellin. He was intuitively attracted to the notion that growth in holiness was not, in the first place, about striving for perfection through disciplined acts of mortification, fasting, hours of praying, or proving oneself in one way or another. It was about the heart. This was the underlying premise.

De Sales taught that a desire to love God was inscribed on the human heart as its primordial desire. It was a desire that he described in almost erotic terms – something that was seductive, irresistible, passionate. The journey of a person's spiritual life was to become entirely captured by this love that was God, and to be consumed by it. In *The Treatise on the Love of God*, he drew especially on the *Song of Songs* for imagery to describe this. Growing in holiness was about falling more deeply in love, and then

responding in love. God, he wrote in *An Introduction to the Devout Life*, does not see perfection consisting 'in the multiplicity of acts that we do to please him, but why and how we do them ... doing them in love, through love and for love.' The ultimate response was to become a loving person, because a genuine experience of love in God can elicit no other response.

Here we tread into the subtle but profound difference between someone who is driven, obsessed or fanatical, and someone who is a lover. The intensity of the fanatic is tied up in self and self-righteousness; that of the lover is bound up in the other and other-centredness. It is in the latter that we find 'modesty' at its most essential – a disposition not to impose oneself on the other, not to be a shouter and attention-seeker, not to control or possess, but to seek to give life to the other. Both the fanatic and the lover will go to extraordinary lengths, take risks, be moved to exercise discipline and restraint, but for very different purposes and to very different ends.

'PRESENCE' AND 'LOVE' OF GOD: TWIN JOHANNINE DIMENSIONS OF MARIST SPIRITUALITY

It is no surprise that Marcellin, so attracted by the intuitions of François de Sales, would find him-

self most at home in the Johannine Scriptures, and especially the First Letter of John. Here we find Marcellin's go-to place in the Bible. In two Circulars he wrote at the beginning of 1836 and 1837 – by then as a quite spiritually advanced person in the last years of his life – the words of John and his own words mingle indistinguishably. 'Carissimi', he calls his Brothers, 'my beloved, my very dear brothers, let us love one another'. He goes on in both letters to write of his tender concern for them, the way his heart is moved by them, his deep desire for their spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing. 'Cherished and well-beloved, you are constantly the special object of my love. All my desires and wishes are for your happiness.' These are the words of someone who, in Salesian terms, has been consumed by love and can do nothing else but only want to share it. Four years later, in his Spiritual Testament, we find almost the same words.

We can imagine Marcellin sitting frequently with the First Letter of John, letting these words of Scripture become his own words, his very self. 'Whoever has not loved, has not known God.' (4:7) 'We shall become like him when we see him as he really is.' (3:2) 'This is the message we have heard from the beginning: love one another' (3:11). 'God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God' (4:16) 'There is no fear in love' (4:18)

Thus, in Marist spirituality, 'presence of God' and 'love of God' must go together. Marcellin's urging us to the 'practice of the presence of God' could be misleading if it implies some action or activity or discipline that is not integrally bound up with a loving relationship. It is also important that 'God's presence and love' is named as the first of the six characteristics of Marist spirituality, because everything else comes from this dual experience. It is our relationship with God, and God with us, that is at the source of what we want to do or be.

Marcellin was also attracted by the grounded approach of François de Sales. In this, they seemed to be of similar cut: intuitively drawn to the interior life, but always looking for how this is lived in practical everyday life. They were both incarnational in their emphases.

So, like Brother Lawrence, we find Francis de Sales, advocating a continual mindfulness of God and, indeed, an ongoing conversation with God, in the activity of the day. Francis called this making little 'spiritual retreats' during each day:

Throughout the day, as often as you can, place yourself in the presence of God ...
'Where are we, my soul? Our real place to be is with our God' ... Remember then to retreat often into the solitude of your heart, even while physically in the midst of your business ... Our Lord inspired Catherine of Siena to make, as it were, a little interior oratory in her soul

where, in the midst of all her exterior work, she could withdraw mentally and enjoy the fruits of this holy solitude ... So withdraw often into this retreat of your heart so ... you can enjoy heart to ¹¹

But it is not something to do dutifully, as much as something to want heartfully:

We withdraw into God because we aspire to God; we aspire to God because we want to withdraw into God ... So, raise your mind often to God ... A thousand times a day give your heart, fix your interior eyes on his goodness, hold out your hand to him as a child does to its mother.¹²

Here, he echoes Saint-Jure

We have to withdraw into ourselves ... and there to experience the divine essence that pervades our soul and body and fills us entirely ... We need to let ourselves be taken up with profound respect, deep humility ... We are in awe. We adore, bless, praise and glorify this God of all goodness.¹³

It is, he wrote, to 'taste God in ourselves'.

Such mindfulness and immanence are not difficult concepts to grasp for someone who is in love. It is only natural to think often and to yearn to be with one's beloved. In the first official Rule of the Marist

Brothers, published in 1837, for the 'method of prayer' Marcellin drew directly on de Sales' method for continually turning to God, being always conscious of God.

To be well disposed to make one's meditation, it is necessary to remain continually in the presence of God ... so that the soul is always ready to unite itself to God, to stay close to him; otherwise there will be nothing but difficulty, and a lot of time lost when one tries to recollect oneself for the time of meditation. The spiritual masters call this continual presence of God the remote preparation for meditation.¹⁴

Indeed, in this section on the Brothers' method of prayer, this is the first thing mentioned, using de Sales' exact phrase 'the continual presence of God'. No doubt, Marcellin knew well what de Sales had written about developing such abiding consciousness of God: 'Without it, there can be no contemplative life, and even the active life will be badly lived.'¹⁵ So the Marists' 1837 Rule went on to make this expectation of the Brothers:

They will not be content with this half hour of meditation, but will try to continue it through the activity of the day, mindful of the presence of God and by making many small spontaneous prayers.

¹¹ *Introduction to the Devout Life, Part 2, Ch.12*

¹² *Ibid. Ch.13*

¹³ *De la connaissance et de l'amour de Notre Sauveur Jésus Christ, Bk.3, Ch7 #4*

¹⁴ *Regle des Petits Frères de Marie, 1837, pp.67-68*

¹⁵ *Introduction to the Devout Life, Ch.12*

In a letter to Jean Cholleton, Marcellin wrote in more grounded terms about what would happen to someone who neglected to nurture a sense of recollection and retreat in their life: 'A fish cannot live long out of water.'¹⁶

Some of the best insights into what 'God's presence and love' meant for Marcellin come to us from the pen of his first successor, Brother François. Very different from Marcellin in character, temperament, interests and skills, François was still able to see himself as a 'living copy' of the Founder, and he urged his confreres to allow Fr Champagnat to 'shine through' them. What he sought to develop among this second Marist generation – most of whom as soon as ten years after Marcellin's death had never known the Founder personally – was an integrity and consistency in their shared spirituality. This would be rich in the affective, mystical, spirituality of the heart that is so characteristic of de Sales.

Brother François, unlike Marcellin, was a writer. We have hundreds of his personal letters, many of his notebooks and journals and his official communications as Superior General. It is in one of his Circulars to all the Brothers – what has come to be known as the 'Circular on the

Spirit of Faith' – that we find a structured and deliberate attempt to outline what today we would call a 'Marist spirituality'. It was François' conscious intention to describe what should be distinctive about those who would follow Marcellin's way the God.

François himself was man with a profound interior life, something that had obviously been nurtured in him by Marcellin. What leaps from his writings is a spirituality that is markedly affective, relational, mystical, Scriptural, mission-oriented and Christocentric. There is much that can be said about the depth and richness of this signature Circular of François, but let us sit with just several small extracts from it and what it had to say about 'God's presence and love'.

The Christian is ... surrounded and penetrated with the holiness and the majesty of God: his providence ... his power ... his goodness and his mercy ... his justice ... his will ... for in him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 27:28)

We are always in the gaze of the living God ... who fills heaven and earth with his immensity (Jer 23:24), and that we are penetrated and surrounded on all sides by his divine essence.

The four means ... for nurturing [a spirit of faith] are: assiduous reading and meditating on the Word of God; a spirit of prayer; frequent communion; and the holy exercise of the presence of God.¹⁷

¹⁶ Letters of Marcellin Champagnat, #45, 8 September 1834

¹⁷ This Circular was published in four instalments spread over Circulars that Brother François wrote between 1848 and 1853. The extracts cited here are taken from Parts 1, 3 and 4. *Circulaires des Supérieurs Généraux*, Vol.2, Nos.1, 5 and 11.

Let us be attentive to see God in all his creatures, since they are the outcome of his goodness ... But, above all, let us seek him within ourselves, in the depths of our hearts; for it is here that he dwells as in his sanctuary ... Let us often retreat, therefore, to this inner cell, this temple of our soul, there to find God.

His notebooks and personal journals are replete with gems of spiritual wisdom, no doubt the fruit of his own prayer. Here are just a few excerpts:

'Where can I run Lord from your spirit?
David cried, 'and where can I flee to hide
from the light of your face?

If I climb to heaven you are there
and if I descend into hell you are present.
If I go to the ends of the sea,
your hand guides me and y
our right hand upholds me.

The darkness would not be dark for you,
night would be as light as day.'

(Ps 139)

But alas, how blind we are!

We spend almost all our life unmindful
of a God who is present and from
whom alone we must await our happiness
and who alone must govern all our mind's
thoughts and all our heart's affection.

He is in our midst and we do not know
him! (Jn 1)

Nothing is impossible for God.

We have received the Spirit
of the children of God and
we cry "My Father!" (Rom.8:15).

The Holy Spirit prays in us.

Have confidence: 'It is I; fear not.'

It is to excite trust in us that God wants us
to call him Our Father. It is the tender name
which Jesus teaches us to give him.

This is how you will pray: Our Father
who is in heaven (Matt 6) When you pray say:
Father (Lk 11) And St Paul adds that
we have received the spirit of the children
of God through which we shout: my Father,
my Father (Rom 8). Because you are his children,
he says again, God has sent into your hearts
the spirit of his son which makes you cry out:
My father, my father (Gal 4).

We pray then the best of all prayers
which seeks only to spread his freedom in us,
his cherished children.

How could we lack confidence?

It is the Holy Spirit who prays in us.¹⁸

And, from one of the Sunday night conferences that he gave at the Hermitage in his latter years, after his retirement as Superior General:

It is not enough for us to pray once in a while, or
even often, during the day.

Prayer needs to become part of our
very being, become incorporated into us,
take root in us, become mingled so
to speak with our very flesh and blood,
so that like the psalmist, our heart
and our body may tremble
with love when we think of the living God.

(Ps.86)

To 'tremble with love' in 'heart and body'. A powerful image. A lover's image.

¹⁸ Brother François instructions and notes are contained in three notebooks in the General Archives of the Marist Brothers, catalogued as Numbers 307, 308 and 309.

THE SCRIPTURAL PORTRAYAL OF MARY AS AN ARCHETYPE OF DISCIPLESHIP

When Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection or St François de Sales wrote in the seventeenth century about maintaining continual ‘conversation’ with God as way of enhancing the presence of God in their consciousness, they did not mean chatting idly to while away the hours. At that time, the word had a sense that was closer to its Latin root, ‘*conversatio*’. It was used to refer to where one usually dwelt, and with what or with whom one lived. The word carried a sense of abode and of relationship, and importantly, also of movement: literally, ‘con-’ (with whom or what), ‘-versor’ (one turned, was busy, or journeyed).

One’s ‘conversation’ in this late medieval and early modern usage described one’s habitual way of being and doing, with what one was mostly occupied, and with whom one lived and connected.

When, as a seminarian, Marcellin sat down to study the writings of Pierre de Bérulle, this is the sense of ‘conversation’ that he would have had to bring to his reading. Bérulle – contemporary and friend of Vincent de Paul and Francis de Sales, founder of the Paris Oratory, the one who introduced the Carmelite reform to France – emphasised Christian ‘conversation’, as he described

it. Bérullian thinking helped to form the spiritual emphases of French Catholicism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, those that in turn helped to shape Marcellin and the Marist spirituality that is his legacy. Bérulle’s writings became one of the staples of seminary studies.

Pierre de Bérulle proposed that Jesus’s primary orientation was to be ‘in conversation’ with others and with his Father. By this, he didn’t mean that Jesus talked a lot. He meant, rather, that Jesus was one with them, drawn to others wherever he found them, intimately involved with them as his ordinary place to be and, critically, offering to go with them to somewhere new. Of course, verbal interaction was an important element of this – because it allowed for challenge and discernment to take place – but to be ‘in conversation’ was something bigger than just that. Bérulle explained that Jesus went beyond the externals, piercing into the core of people’s hearts in order to free their hearts from whatever it was that impeded their appreciation of God’s love for them. He also used the expression that Jesus had a ‘*vie voyageuse*’ which we may translate as a ‘journeying life’. That is to say, Jesus’s ‘conversation’ with people went somewhere. And where it went was deeper.

Like others who figured in the founding of the ‘French school’ of spirituality, Bérulle was especially drawn to the Johannine Scriptures.

As we know, John's Gospel is structured around Jesus's encounters with people – with Nicodemus, with the Samaritan woman, with the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda, with the adulterous woman, with the blind man, with Martha and Mary, and most especially with his closest disciples – who come finally to be his 'friends'. Ultimately, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus brings them to his own dwelling, his Father's house, his own family – into Jesus's own conversation with his Father, so richly presented in what we usually call the Last Supper discourse. The Beloved Disciple at the foot of the Cross, symbolic of each of us, is made Jesus's own sibling. The people in these encounters – each of them spiritually blind, thirsty, lame, confused or disbelieving – are the ones with whom Jesus 'converses' and 'journeys'. His 'conversation' with them is transformative.

From our Marist beginnings, we can see that Marcellin offered his followers a similar invitation to enter into a transforming and abiding intimacy with the Divine. The call was to come to dwell in God, and to develop a deep consciousness of the indwelling God. Let us dip again into Brother François' writings to find a window into the kind of spiritual intuitions that Marcellin fostered, not-

ing both the immanence and the affectivity of them. In his notebooks, François interweaves the fruits of his own ponderings with ideas and quotations from a number of spiritual masters:¹⁹

God in me: the centre and resting place of my soul ... This presence of God is a source of consolation for the just, and a support in the stress and strain that seeking perfection may cause.

We see God in the depths of our heart, as our centre and our resting place.

We in God: the natural element of our soul. Outside of God, we feel as out of place as a fish out of water or a dislocated limb. God is our natural element.

We abide in God. If you take a fish out of its natural element, water, it will suffer, even if you put it in a basin of gold and precious stones. In the same way, whatever a person does, he will find his true resting place in God alone.

God is present in me, in my very breath. When I pay attention, said St Augustine, that your eyes are always on me and that you watch over me day and night with such care, and when I imagine you gazing on all that I do, penetrating all my thoughts, and observing all my plans, I am filled with amazement. It is as if in heaven and earth you had no other creature but me to govern.²⁰...

St Ambrose and St Bernard said that just as there is no single instant when

¹⁹ These are from the Notebooks of Brother François #308, pp.916-22. Several of the passages from this part of his Notebooks are also found in Ch.5 of the Life of Marcellin Champagnat by Brother Jean-Baptiste

²⁰ Cf. Rodriguez, *Treatise on the Presence of God*, Ch.1.

we do not enjoy the fruits of the goodness and mercy of God, there should not be a single instant when we do not hold him present in spirit.

St Gregory adds that being mindful of God should become like our very breathing.

Let us try, little by little, to develop the habit of recollecting our spirit that gets dissipated, and our wayward heart that gets lost in its search for comfort.

Let us try to draw our spirit back from outside to within ourselves, as often and as faithfully as possible, there to see God, listen to him, and converse with him.²¹

Which brings us to Mary.

Bérulle proposed Mary as the exemplar for how people should take up this life of Christ and live ‘in conversation’. For him, the attentiveness and the responsiveness of Mary – to both God and neighbour, in the biblical imagery of the Annunciation and the Visitation respectively – captured the heart of it. Mary was the model of a disciple filled with the plenitude of a loving and merciful God, bursting forth with it in Magnificat song. In fact, the expression ‘Mary in conversation with her neighbour’ became one theme in seventeenth century spiritual discourse. Bérulle liked to present Mary as the one who ‘treasured and pondered’, the woman of prayerfulness and attentiveness, who could do nothing else but go out to con-

verse with others about what was in her heart.

These Marian images from the Lucan Scriptures – not only of Annunciation and Visitation, but also of Pentecost – became archetypal ones for Marcellin and the founding Marists. Steeped in emphases that they had gleaned from Bérullian thought and from other writers they encountered in the seminary, they took Mary as model. Her personification of what it meant to be a disciple of Christ was drawn most especially from Luke. The spiritual tradition that has developed from them beckons Marists to identify with Mary as she is presented in the Gospel of Luke and in Acts, in much the same way that the Beloved Disciple is presented in the Gospel of John as the model of discipleship. Marist spirituality proposes the Lucan Mary as emblematic of Marists’ discipleship of Christ: Mary in the first two chapters of Luke, and the first two chapters of Acts. Indeed, Mary and the Holy Spirit are the only two characters who appear in the opening chapters of both Books: a deliberate literary link. To be Mary, to embrace God’s presence and love in a Marian way, is really the essence of Marist spirituality.

The scenes in Chapters 1 and 2 Luke’s Gospel are bookended by

²¹ François then adds this citation: *Bourdaloue: Retreat 5th day: Consideration; Rodriguez, Christian Perfection, Part I, 6th Treatise.*

references to the Temple, which a late first century reader would have recognised as an allusion to the traditional dwelling place of God (by the time of the Gospel's writing, of course, destroyed). Zechariah's meeting with the angel occurs there in the Temple, as does the 'Nunc Dimittis' prayer of Simeon, the prophecy of Anna, and Jesus with the teachers of the Law (Lk 1:5-25; 2:67-79). (And the final verse of the final chapter of the Gospel ends there – Lk.24:53). Yet, Mary's most extraordinary encounters with the Divine, and the revelation the Divine, in these opening chapters take place not with the Chief Priest in the Holy of Holies but with lowly people and foreigners in ordinary places – in Nazareth, in the hill country of Judea, and in a cave in Bethlehem. In the sequel – the Acts of the Apostles – Mary waits with the Apostles in the Upper Room, the place of Eucharist (which by tradition is located above the Tomb of David on Mount Zion – again God's dwelling place). The significance of the allusion is clear: Mary herself is now the Ark of the New Covenant, the new place where the presence of God is met. In Mary, graced with God's favour. In Mary, whose whole being rejoices in God. In Mary, who waits in faith for the Spirit. The bottom-of-the-social-scale shepherds see the Divine from their fields; at the end of chapter 2, Jesus ends up again in Nazareth, in the Galilean back country. Extraordinary things happen in the ordinary: an angel visits, a virgin

conceives, a barren woman gives birth, a dumb man speaks.

Paragraphs 44 to 90 of *Water from the Rock* offer a powerful and insightful Marist exploration for how the Marian disposition portrayed in Luke 1:26-38 – the Annunciation passage – could play out in our lives. These rich paragraphs merit frequent re-visiting. They can lead us to foster in ourselves what it means to be treasurers and ponderers of life's events – discerners of the movement of the Spirit in our lives, contemplatives alert to the extraordinary presence and love of God in our everyday. In the hyper-sensory world in which we find ourselves today, they call us to be still and to listen, and suggest ways for us to be so.

The dynamic of 'visitation' – or in Bérullian terms, 'conversation' – also runs through these initial chapters of both of the Lucan books: an angel visits (twice), Mary visits Elizabeth, the neighbours visit Elizabeth after the birth of John, both Mary and Zechariah praise God for visiting his people. Annunciation and visitation go together, as Christ-life takes flesh.

Yet there is a stinger lurking in all this gushing of joy and epiphany, one that is central to appreciating Mary's place as a model of discipleship, and for how to deepen our sense of the presence and love of God. It comes in Simeon's proph-

ecy (Lk.2:25) in a clause that seems at first to be a little parenthetical to his main point: 'and a sword will pierce your own heart, too.'

At one level, this line presents itself simply as a compassionate acknowledgement of the anguish that is ahead of Mary who as a mother will see her son suffer betrayal and execution. But there is a deeper reading of this verse, one that is concerned with how Luke presents the ideal of Christian discipleship, and Mary as the paragon of this. Recurrently Luke comes back to the core of what it means to be a disciple: it is to be someone who is attentive to the word of God, obedient to it, and acts on it (cf. Lk. 6:47; 8:21; 11:28). The mother of Jesus is portrayed as being and doing just that, linked to each of these verses. Luke then tells us that such hearing and responding involves the daily 'taking up of the cross' (Lk. 9:23-25). It means a leaving behind of all that we 'own' or, inversely, all that owns us. The first four disciples to be called hear and respond by doing this – Simon, James and John, and Levi (Lk. 5:11; 28). Discipleship is not possible without being dispossessed (cf. Lk. 14:33; Acts 2:45). Some, like the rich nobleman, have difficulty with this (Lk. 18:23); others, like Zaccheus, can forsake all their self-righteousness and embrace it. So Jesus comes to stay in his home (Lk. 19:1-10).

This way of understanding discipleship was explicitly applied in the formative years of Marist spirituality. In his Circular on the Spirit of Faith, in which Brother François consciously sets out to describe what should be distinctive about the Marists, we find this:

It is ... to think, to speak and to act according to the Gospel ...
 To be a disciple of Jesus Christ does not simply mean some pious practice ... but to understand properly these words of our Saviour:
 Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luke 9:23).
 ... It is the conforming of our thoughts, our judgements, and our actions with the thoughts, judgements and actions of our Lord.
 ... Where among us are the truly poor in spirit, the truly humble of heart, the true lovers of the Cross of Jesus Christ?
 ... the very spirit and character of our small Congregation ... our distinctive characteristic, must be of humility and simplicity ... after the example of the Blessed Virgin, our Mother and our Model
 ... Nothing but a lively faith in the words and example of Jesus Christ ... can dissipate our illusions of vainglory, prevent false calculations of pride, and show us that true glory ... is found only in humility, simplicity and modesty.²²

²² Taken from the first instalment of the Circular. *Circulaires*, Vol.5, No.1

Water from the Rock uses the phrase 'journey in faith' as the title for the chapter in the text that unpacks the Annunciation passage. It is the same expression that Bérulle used, and it speaks to something important: our experience of the 'presence and love of God' is not to be a static or mountain-top one. It is, rather, a journey. It is a life journey that is disruptive, disarming and dispossessing. The conditions of the journey call us to leave aside all that we might have imagined for ourselves – scattering the proud with all their plans, sending the rich empty (Lk. 1:53;55) – and to discern another way forward. It is to be vulnerable, to expose one's heart to be pierced, for there is a Word that seeks to make its home in our heart.

It is a journey also that needs to be discerning. A disciple is not a doormat. Mary, in Luke's account of the Annunciation, wonders and questions. Her 'fiat' comes only after that. Nor is her assent born in any way from fear of the consequences of resisting. Again, Luke makes this clear: both Zechariah's and Mary's responses come from a heart-space where they are not afraid (Lk: 1:12; 30), for God's visitation of his people is about freeing them from fear (Lk. 1:74). Jesus leaves them with his peace, and with assurance of no reason to fear, as long as they have come to faith (cf. Lk.24:36-49). François, in the Circular cited above, names a 'spirit of faith' as the kernel of being a Marist.

A journey in faith implies growth in faith. The wisdom of the centuries has traditionally framed this as a three-step process or a tridimensional experience: the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. While people have differed in their naming and enumerating of these steps or spaces, and the degree to which spiritual growth might be a nuanced and centripetal journey inwards rather than a definitive and linear process up a ladder, the basic premise is the same: the spiritual life has movement and deepening, a journey towards an increasing singleness of heart. In our Marist language, we may prefer to call this 'simplicity of heart'. The journey certainly involves purging, discipline and decision, but not in any Pelagian sense. Mary did not conceive the Christ-life within her through her own agency. The overall direction is towards becoming more and more marked by the intimacy of total union with the Divine of which Mary sings in the Magnificat.

It is a journey for each of us that is neither even nor uninterrupted. The heart needs to be pierced again and again. It is to be hoped, through it all, that the 'patient endurance' of which Teresa of Ávila speaks will gradually and ever more surely obtain all that the heart desires. For the older heart, the heart that has endured, the gentler heart, will be more ready to be open to the peace the Lord. In the end, perhaps as it was for Mary, all our spiritual jour-

neying brings us to be, quite literally, at home with the words of Gabriel in Luke that announced the pres-

ence of God incarnate: 'Rejoice ... the Lord is with you'. Conversation ensues.



BEFORE MARIST SPIRITUALITY: THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE



André Lanfrey, fms

At the time of the Institute's birth, the word "spirituality" was scarcely in use; the Institute only adopted it in the second half of the twentieth century to redefine its identity. At the beginning, and for a very long time, the expression "spirit of the Institute" was used, which was more or less equivalent in meaning. Somewhat later, the Marist "AM", accompanied by the three violets symbolising humility, simplicity and modesty, became a visual expression of this spirit.¹



The most complete study on the spirit of the Institute was provided by Brother Basilio in his Circular of 25 December 1975. In his introduction he offered a definition:

"When we speak of the spirit of the Institute, we think of humility, simplicity and modesty. We think also of Marian devotion, and we think finally of fraternal charity lived in a rather distinctive way: family spirit." But he also included a caveat: "This Circular does not, however, claim to be a complete study of our spirit. For that, it would need to include an historical section which would be indispensable but which is not within my competence to provide."

In this article I propose to develop an outline of the historical study desired by Brother Basilio. This will not be very easy to develop since the official texts of the Institute rarely employ the expression "spirit of the Institute". For example, neither the *Life of Father Champagnat* (1856) nor the *Com-*

¹ The seal shown opposite is taken from the Bulletin on the work of the Juniorates of 1894. The presence of the three violets on this seal was no doubt recent.

mon Rules (1852) has a chapter on this subject² And the reason is simple, as was recognised by Brother Louis-Marie in his Circular of 16 July 1861 (C.III, p. 45): “This Marist spirit of Father Champagnat ... is to be found everywhere in our Rules, in our Constitutions ... It is the soul and the life of our establishments ... It is our element, the atmosphere in which we live.” But this reduction of the spirit of the Institute to an overall ambiance does not match fully with reality. The manuscripts of Brothers François and Jean-Baptiste refer to conferences of Father Champagnat which give a definition of a spirit of the Institute founded on humility after the example of Mary.

To begin with, I will attempt to clarify as far as I can the origins and content of the concept of spirit of the Institute, before the General Chapter of 1852 -1854 established a “definitive” official teaching in the *Common Rules*, enriched subsequently by the *Life of Father Champagnat* (1856) and the later works of Brother Jean-Baptiste. I believe I can show that very early on Father Champagnat outlined the broad traits of what we call today Marist spirituality. But those who compiled the *Rule* of 1852 gave the spirit of the Institute a physiognomy that was more ascetical and institutional than spiritual, to the point that from then on “being a Brother who kept

the rule”, and “having the spirit of the Institute”, would be one and the same thing.

I will then try in the second part, but briefly – a full treatment can be found on the website [Champagnat.org/Marist History](http://Champagnat.org/MaristHistory) – to show how, up to the revision of the Rule and the emergence of the concept of Marist spirituality in the 1970s, the original teaching of Champagnat had continued to be remembered and had been taught, notably by the Superiors General.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE (1824-1852)

It was under the name of Mary that Champagnat gathered his first Brothers and it goes without saying that at the time of Champagnat the theme of humility was important since this was an essential element in the formation of every candidate to the religious life. At La Valla, therefore, the *Contempt of Oneself* by Franchi was read. Yet the maxims written on the walls of the oratory referred to Mary’s Immaculate Conception, and not to her humility. And the fifteen principal maxims of Father Champagnat from before

² The thematic index of *Avis, Leçons, Sentences, of the Circulars before 1916*, and the *Letters of Champagnat* have not included this entry.

1822 remembered by the Brothers (Life Ch. 10, pp. 103-105, English ed.) revolved around the these poles: piety; withdrawal from the world; love for Jesus and Mary; and zeal for the teaching of catechism. Humility was cited only in passing.

Nevertheless, when Brother Avit³ drew up the list of the principal conferences given by the Founder up to 1832, the early Brothers cited eight, of which the sixth was: "On humility". He gives a succinct insight⁴ into it: "*It was so as to inspire love for this virtue in the hearts of all the Brothers that Father Champagnat gave them the name of Little Brothers of Mary.*"

It is very little, but the Brothers had all the same remembered that, according to Champagnat, there existed a strong link between humility and the name of the Institute.

We will find this trait again in several texts on the spirit of the Institute.

The contribution of the "Pensées - Retraites"⁵ of Brother François

The notebooks of Brother François constitute a resource that is more precise and older, in particular Notebook 302 in which, starting from 1819, he recorded "thoughts" that had come to him at the time of his retreats or in the course of his reading. For the year 1824 (p. 49) he has left us this sort of synthesis of the Marist spirit:

"Our vocation is holy, sublime: it is that of Jesus Christ himself and of his apostles. To live up to it, one must faithfully employ all the means to fulfil all of its requirements well:

1st Means: A great union and charity between one another: that is the strength;

2nd: A great humility, modesty and simplicity in all things: that is the distinguishing mark;⁶

3rd: A great reserve, circumspection and restraint in relations with one's neighbour;

4th: Frequenting the sacraments with the required dispositions;

5th: A great devotion to the Blessed Virgin. (Fr Gardette, Sup. Maj. Semin[ary].)⁷

³ (*Annales* Vol. 1, pp. 108-115, Nos 177-197)

⁴ But which no doubt corresponded with the memory that the early Brothers had of it.

⁵ At the time of the digitisation of this manuscript the title was mistakenly noted as "Pensées de retraite" or "Thoughts from Retreats."

⁶ The stamp. This word would be taken up again in Article 1 in the chapter on humility in the Common Rules.

⁷ This type of reference occurring very frequently with Brother François often indicates the source of the word or refers back to a similar source. It is quite unlikely that Fr Gardette would have himself given this conference.

⁸ In the *Annals of the Institute*, Brother Avit seems to make reference to this conference on zeal (1832, n. 93)

This is no doubt a summary of a series of conferences on the vocation of the Brother: first on the aim of the Institute founded on zeal to imitate Jesus and the apostles, who were the first catechists.⁸ Then on the qualities he must have to be fruitful, among which is humility already formulated under its triple aspect. But this latter seems more linked with zeal than with devotion to Mary.

In the *Life of Father Champagnat* (Part 1, Ch. 12, p. 128) Brother Jean-Baptiste confirms the existence of this series of conferences given during the construction of the Hermitage: “During that summer, he thoroughly instructed them on the religious vocation, on the purpose of the Institute and on zeal for the Christian education of children.” And he subsequently gave them⁹ “*un petit écrit*” (“a small document”) which summarised his teaching and of which the *Life* gives the “substance” (pp. 129-130): sacramental life and prayer; fraternal charity and then a dozen articles on the conduct to be observed when with the children.

The first part of the *Treatise on Education* written later by Brother Jean-Baptiste,¹⁰ entitled “Means for

doing good among children” is to be considered as a development¹¹ of this series of talks. For example, Chapter 2 treating of the excellence of the catechetical aim of the Brothers affirms “nothing is more sublime or more excellent ... Jesus Christ himself fulfilled it, it is the first thing he confided to his apostles ...” He then refines further the qualities of zeal which must be prudent, open, kindly, gentle, mortified. In Chapter XV he recalls that “zeal must be humble” to be agreeable to God, and to people, but also “Humility is necessary for us to merit the protection of Mary.” It is even indispensable for “religious of the Society of Mary.”¹²

From these diverse observations I take it that, according to Brothers François and Jean-Baptiste, it was in 1824 that Father Champagnat defined in a systematic way a spirit based on zeal, fraternal charity, and a humility perceived as a virtue at once both necessary for the apostolate and as the foundation of a Society dedicated to Mary.

In October 1826, after the great crisis of Champagnat’s illness and the conflict with Father Courveille, some Brothers, among them Brother François himself¹³, made vows

⁹ Or he had them copy it.

¹⁰ In preparation for the writing of the *Guide des Ecoles* (1853)

¹¹ Br Jean-Baptiste has clearly based himself on Champagnat’s talks but he has added numerous quotations which make it difficult to identify the original text.

¹² Many other sources linked to these texts could be added: for example, the *Annals of the Institute*, 1832, n. 193, *Life*, Part II, Ch. 12 “Humility of Father Champagnat”.

¹³ But not Brother Louis nor Brother Jean-Baptiste.

for the first time. In 1827, (Notebook 302, p. 146) calling to mind his commitment, he defined the character proper to the Institute as humble because it was Marian, referring to a conference (or a series of conferences) which this time defined the Little Brothers of Mary as a religious congregation. And it seems clear that the manuscripts of Brothers François and Jean-Baptiste have preserved a copy of this major teaching on the spirit of the Institute.

- [146] 1. Humility is the root, the foundation, the mother, the wet-nurse, the guardian of all the virtues. Separate the flowers from the root, they will wilt ... Take away the foundation of a building, it will not stand. (Rodriguez, 2nd part, 2nd treatise).
2. Humility engenders and preserves all the virtues.
If we were as humble as Mary, we would become as virtuous as she is.
3. Whatever the good the works we do, they count for nothing if they are not accompanied by humility.
4. Pride is the beginning of all sin. (Eccl. 10)
5. My God, I cannot be humble unless you give me humility. I ask it of you.
6. Learn from me to be gentle and humble of heart. Yes, Divine Jesus! It is to this that I want to apply myself for the rest of my life.
- You have called me to an Institute whose proper characteristic is humility and which bears the name of Mary your beloved Mother, so pure, so humble.**

O humility! Virtue of Jesus and Mary! Be always my delight! (St Bernard; S. Jure, Conn. De J.C. L.3, C. 22, P. II, T. 4, p. 362; Rodriguez, Christian Perfection. 2ep. 2nd treatise).

And this humility is linked with the purity of the Immaculate Conception:

[147] Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te. – You are all beautiful, O my beloved, and in you there is no stain. (Song of Songs).
 Mary never had any stain. She was always totally beautiful, from her holy and immaculate conception, to her holy and blessed death; always totally pure in her soul and her body, in her thoughts, in her words and in her actions. She never allowed herself to fall into the least imperfection.

Series of conferences preserved by Brothers François and Jean-Baptiste

In a previous work¹⁴ I showed that there existed, in the manuscripts of the first Superiors, numerous conferences going back to Champagnat evident in the notes taken at the time these talks were given, which were then recovered and used again after his death. Below is the extract from a synoptic table of a series in which the spirit of the Institute is the major component.¹⁵

¹⁴ "A missing link in Marist Spirituality." Rome 2000, Notebook A4. 158 p.)

¹⁵ A missing link ... Chapter XIII, p. 90. In fact, the series is much longer.

Br François, Notebook 307, pp. 131-180	Br Jean-Baptiste ¹⁶ , Writings 3, pp. 103-147	Br Jean-Baptiste, Writings 4, pp. 332-398
Vocation	Vocation	Title 3: Vocation
	Rules for knowing one's vocation	
Means for preserving one's vocation	Means for preserving one's vocation	
Religious spirit ¹⁷	Religious spirit	Title 4: Religious spirit
Character and Spirit of the Little Brothers of Mary	Spirit of the Institute	Title 5: Spirit of the Institute
Bad spirit ¹⁸	On bad spirit	Title 6: On bad spirit

In my view the text which is the most faithful to the original conference on the spirit of the Institute is the one preserved by Brother François in Manuscript 307 p. 147: "Character, Spirit of the Society of the Little Brothers of Mary".¹⁹ In any case, the different versions have texts that are very close and are constructed along the same plan:

1. Each religious order has a spirit that is proper to itself;
2. The name 'Little Brothers of Mary' signifies the spirit particular to our Institute;
3. Mary has given us the example of a hidden life;
4. The attitudes and practices of humility in the Little Brothers of Mary.

Here is the beginning of the text from Brother François:

1. We must distinguish the general spirit of the religious state and the spirit particular to each order, says St Francis de Sales ... Each religious order therefore has its own particular spirit, which is like the character proper to it and its distinctive mark. Not all religious arrive at perfection through the same practices ...

... The spirit of the Little Brothers of Mary, their particular and distinctive character, is a spirit of humility and simplicity. Our life must be thus a life that is humble, hidden, unknown to the world. Humility and simplicity must always be the principal, privileged and characteristic virtues of each one of us. It is only by these virtues that we will be able to acquire the perfection of our life and procure the glory of God. They are the mould²⁰ which must give us our shape, the mirror in which we see the spirit

¹⁶ Brother Jean-Baptiste offers two different versions of this series, no doubt coming from the notes of different Brothers. Perhaps from Brother Louis and from himself.

¹⁷ This is the religious spirit in general, made up of esteem for one's vocation and the concern to fulfil its obligations. One paragraph nevertheless refers to the bad religious.

¹⁸ It is the very black portrait of the bad religious "discontented with himself and with others."

¹⁹ The two versions of Br Jean-Baptiste are more complete but seem to me to have been further reworked. They perhaps combine several earlier conferences.

²⁰ Certain texts say 'the cachet'.

of our order and our line of conduct. Let us never forget our name of Little Brothers and Little Brothers of Mary.²¹ Mary is our Mother, our Superior, our model. We are therefore called to imitate the humble, simple and pure life of the Blessed Virgin, and to make her virtues live again in our conduct; the humility of Mary in her thoughts, her words and her actions, her occupations, her sorrows, her honours and her privileges.”

Brother François then refers to the conference “Mary Model of Humility (308 p. 544)”²² which is at once a succinct account of the life of the Virgin and a meditation on its significance, particularly in the following passages:

(2) Mary did not have high ideas about herself; she only ever looked at her nothingness and held herself before God in humility and in a profound sense of her own nothingness.

(10) Mary practised such a humility in her words, in her actions; she covered herself in such a way with the veil of humility that she was always unknown to the world, scorned by the world and regarded by all as an ignorant woman, as a person of little worth, useless to the world, concealing from all

her virtues, her holiness, her lights, her power, the greatness of her son and of all the favours that she had received from God. It was thus that Mary esteemed, loved, sought after and practiced humility. Her life must be the model of ours.

Mary, aware of her nothingness before God, and choosing a life that was hidden and unknown: these are the themes are central to the school of spirituality associated with Cardinal de Bérulle (1575-1629).²³ For Champagnat, Marist humility was thus not simply an ascetical virtue but an adherence to the divine mystery, hidden wisdom and participation in salvation. There comes then a long list of items concerning humility, simplicity and, consequently, modesty. It is certain that a part of them is a construction from a later date. In any case, we find this list in Brother Jean-Baptiste as in Brother François. In the table below we focus on the first ones, which seem to us to be the earliest and to summarise the characteristics of humility as conceived by Champagnat.

Character, Spirit (307 p. 147). Brother François Spirit of the Institute (E3 p.p. 123-130; E4 p. 349...) Brother Jean-Baptiste
1/ Humility and simplicity, virtues cherished by the Little Brothers of Mary. They must shine forth in their lives.
2/ To have a particular predilection for the hidden life ...
3/ To consider humility as the principal virtue. To work to acquire it.
4/ To do good quietly

²¹ The usual name was ‘Brothers of Mary’. The word ‘little’ was added in 1824 in the Prospectus.

²² Brother Jean-Baptist develops this exemplary life of Mary in the instruction itself.

²³ It is often incorrectly called “the French School”. In his circular of 1975 Br Basilio alludes to this spirituality.

5/ To apply oneself to the human sciences and secular instruction only in order to please God.
6/ To conduct oneself with humility and simplicity, both with the Brothers and with lay people
7/ To have a particular predilection for public penances, the public avowal of faults ...
8/ To become like little children (a Gospel quotation perhaps serving as a conclusion in the original version. This item is found only in Brother François.)

It is first an interior attitude (a cherished virtue); a style of life (hidden and unknown; doing good quietly). But this general vision of humility has to be incarnated in an apostolic context that is communitarian and defined: the school, relationships among Brothers and with society, without forgetting the traditional monastic practices.

Some later items, less consistent and different in tone

The following items rest on the theme of the struggle against the bad spirit founded on pride and condemned in the strongest terms. Modesty starts to be joined to humility and simplicity. Brothers François and Jean-Baptiste give texts that are almost identical, the overall idea of which we will now give. The numbering indicates the variations.

Brother François	Br Jean-Baptiste
8. 10. Brothers cannot save their souls without humility, simplicity and modesty.	9. ditto
9. Happiness and success depend on their humility	10. ditto
11. Humility and simplicity are indispensable virtues. Those who do not have them are dead members.	11. ditto
12. 13. 14. Proud spirits are not made for the Institute	12. ditto
15. Each one must be persuaded that he is the last	13. ditto
16. To regard pride as the great enemy	14. ditto

This conference functions therefore as a synthesis of the ideal given by the Founder and no doubt completed by his immediate successors. It was to serve in the drawing up of the official texts of the Institute, notably the Common Rules, which would nevertheless, as we will see, be far from consistently expressed.

The Rule of 1852: a fragmenting of the teaching on the spirit of the Institute

The Common Rules did not retain the concept of the spirit of the Institute but did use the original conference in the chapter: "Devotion to the Blessed Virgin" (Part 1, Ch. VI)

especially in Article 8, which, on this spirit of Mary, offers a definition that comes close to that of the origins but with a certain distortion: Mary’s humility is less that of the creature before her creator than one of love for the Incarnate Christ.

Those virtues of Mary, which they should strive more particularly to imitate, are her humility, her purity, and her tender love for Jesus Christ. After her example, they should have a special predilection for a humble and hidden life, and for the lowest and most ordinary employments. Like her, they must cherish the Angelic Virtue, and take

every means to preserve it. Like her, they should fly even the shadow of sin; and, disengaging their hearts from all affection for creatures, they should love Jesus Christ only, and employ their whole strength and all their life in making Him loved. (Common Rules, English ed., 1947, Art. 46)

As for humility, almost all the articles in Chapter V of the second part of the Common Rules (English ed. 1947 Ch.VI) on this subject take their inspiration from the conferences on the spirit of the Institute. Article 1 clearly indicates this direct connection:

Common Rules Ch. V “Humility”	Characteristics and spirit of the Little Brothers of Mary (Br François)	Spirit of the institute (Br Jean-Baptiste)
The spirit of Humility, Simplicity, and Modesty should be the distinctive character of this Institute. The Brothers ought to have a particular predilection for these virtues, and should so contrive that all their actions and everything they have bear the stamp thereof. (Eng. Ed. Art. 176)	1. That humility and simplicity must be the cherished virtues of the Little Brothers of Mary, and shine out in their persons, in their actions and in all that belongs to them; 2. That they must have a particular predilection for the hidden life ...	That humility and simplicity must be the cherished virtues of the Brothers of Mary, that they must shine out in their persons, their words, their actions and in all that belongs to them 2. That the Brothers must have a particular predilection for the hidden life ...

In this chapter humility has been disconnected from the example of Mary. And the expression “cherished virtue”, no doubt judged to be too familiar, has not been retained. Modesty is so little integrated with humility and simplicity that it benefited from a separate chapter (Part 2, Ch. IX [Eng. Ed. 1947 Ch. VIII]). And furthermore, it is only conceived as the art of “composing in a becoming way the exterior of the person” so as to edify their neighbour. In short, it is the practice

of good manners among religious and in relationships with outsiders. In the end it is more connected to zeal than to humility per se and to Mary.

The Life of Father Champagnat: a less-than-convincing synthesis of two traditions on humility

In the second part of the Life, Chapter VII treats the Marian devotion of the Founder and Chapter XI his humility. Brother Jean-Baptiste

has thus confirmed the separation between the two subjects, devotion to Mary figuring among the major axes of spirituality along with the spirit of faith (Ch. 2), confidence in God (Ch. 3), the spirit of prayer (Chs. 4-5), and love of Jesus Christ (Ch. 6). Humility is simply part of the virtues, after obedience, poverty, detachment from family and mortification. Thus, the very order of the chapters sidelines the concept of spirit of the Institute in favour of a conception of humility that is ascetical, and a conception of the relationship with Mary that is devotional rather than spiritual.

Nevertheless, the content of the chapters does in part correct this rupture. Thus, in the chapter on Marian devotion, Brother Jean-Baptiste recalls (p. 338) the necessity of imitating Mary: “her humility, her modesty, her purity and her love for Jesus Christ” to the point “that everything in one’s actions and in one’s person recalls the spirit and the virtues of Mary”. But the chapter is mainly taken up with zeal for making Mary loved, and with practices in her honour. It is no longer the spirit of the Institute but simply devotion: Mary assures the salvation of those who are devoted to her.

In the chapter on humility, Brother Jean-Baptiste takes up again the passage contained in the conference “Spirit of the Institute” on the significance of the expression “Little Brothers of Mary” which is the “distinguishing characteristic”, the “mould”, the “mirror” of the Marist spirit. But he

places heavy emphasis on the ascetical aspect: one must know oneself, meditate on the evils produced by pride, attach oneself to obedience and to charity, and preserve modesty always and everywhere (pp. 400-402). His synthesis between the ascetical tradition and the spirit of the Institute on humility is disappointing.

Such an evolution is not surprising: a Rule, and the biography of a Founder conceived as the archetype of that Rule, could scarcely do anything but attenuate the notion of spirit of the Institute. The Manual of Piety, however, did keep something of it.

The Manual of Piety (1855): a later testimony of the spirit of the Institute

This catechism for the use of the novices, printed in 1855, may seem to be rather banal, but frequently it reveals the original Marist spirit. This is the case in Chapter III in the second part which tells us that the devotion of the Brothers to Mary must be “more special and more perfect” and comprises “four principal practices” of which the second is “taking on the spirit of Mary”. “It is a spirit of humility, of simplicity and of modesty; it is a great love for the hidden life, a great distancing of oneself from the world and an extreme horror of its vanities and pleasures.” Humility is treated a little further on in Chapter IX, “Family Spirit”, of which the first section is inspired by the conferences on “Religious Spirit” (p. 143), and “Character and Spirit of the Society of the Little Brothers of Mary” found in

Notebook 307 of Brother François which we have already treated at length:

Q. What is the spirit of the Little Brothers of Mary?

A. It is a spirit of humility, simplicity and modesty.

Q. Where does this spirit come from?

A. From the Blessed Virgin; for we have chosen her especially for our Mother and [as] we bear her name, it is right that we take on her spirit, that we imitate her virtues and that, in order to go to God and to do good, we follow the way she followed.

A second section of the chapter then treats of “What the spirit of humility requires of the Brothers” detailed in six points of which the first are fundamental: to do good quietly; to live unknown and forgotten in the world; to teach with humility and modesty.

Conclusion

The birth of the concept of spirit of the Institute therefore occurs very early: probably from 1824. It is no doubt linked to three key events: the Prospectus, which used the name *Petits Frères de Marie* for the first time; the construction of the Hermitage; and the conferences given which resulted in the *petit écrit*. In 1826 the organisation into a religious congregation made it necessary to define its distinctive spirit as a religious order. But this spirit which tied together Mary, humility and zeal, was counterbalanced by the ascetical tradition which considered humility to be a virtue in itself, without any

explicit link to Mary. The two traditions were merged in an ambiguous fashion in the famous threefold formula: humility, simplicity, modesty. This formula could be read with a clearly spiritual, even mystical, lens; but also in quite unimaginatively ascetical or devotional ways.

The team of Superiors who prepared the texts of the Common Rules of the Institute opted for a rather ascetical emphasis, which the Life of Champagnat continued. Although not rejected, the concept of “spirit of the Institute” lost its explicitly distinctive sense and became more a background theme throughout the texts and in ways of thinking. From then on, it was on the periphery of a Marist identity that was defined by the Rule. In these conditions it became difficult to conceive the spirit of the Institute as equivalent to a concept of spirituality.

Nevertheless, in his conference on the spirit of the Institute, Champagnat had defined for the early Brothers the basis of a genuine spirituality: not just “a way of being, a family feeling, an atmosphere creating between men a kinship of soul,” as Brother Basilio said, but “the systematisation of our spirit”, constituted “in a certain body of doctrine”, which could be spelt out in explicit terms, indeed taught²⁴ But the assimilation of such a body of doctrine was problematic for several reasons:

²⁴ Extracts from the Circular of Br Basilio of 25/12/1975, on the Spirit of the Institute.

the difficulty for many of the Brothers to understand it in depth; then the premature death of a Founder who left almost nothing in terms of written teaching nor, even more tellingly, a Rule; and finally the long delay between that death and the writing of a Rule (1840-1852) in a group undergoing a demographic explosion from 300 to close to 2000 Brothers. However, the concept of a “spirit of the Institute” founded on the Mary-humility-zeal tripod had not been forgotten, as we shall see.

2. A LOOK AT A CENTURY OF SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE (Extracts from an article on Champagnat.org/Marist History)

From the years 1852-1856 onward, with the Rule supposed to contain the whole of the spirit of the Institute, it was by the scrupulous observance of the Rule that a Brother proved that he possessed the spirit of the Institute; and the Vow of Stability was the public recognition of that fidelity. This overriding emphasis on the Rule did not prevent reference being made back to an earlier conception of the spirit of the Institute, one dating from before the Rule, very close to what we would today call a spirituality. A search through the Circulars of the Superiors General gives quite numerous indications of this. Here are some examples that are the most characteristic.

In his Circular on Marian Devotion of 16 July 1861, Brother Louis-Marie takes up again the plan of the original conference on the spirit of the Institute:

The general purpose of all religious orders [is] union with God through charity and the practice of the Evangelical Counsels ... (Mt. 19:17, 21.) ... But, beyond this general end, which is the same for all Religious, each congregation has its own proper spirit, ... For us, Little Brothers of Mary, ... this is the spirit of Mary, the practice of humility, of modesty and of the virtues of Mary which is our special means of perfection and sanctity. Devotion to Mary, the spirit of Mary, must everywhere and always be the distinctive characteristic of our congregation and of each one of its members, the mark by which they will be recognised.

Likewise, the Circular of 16 July 1868 on the Spirit of Humility comments on the word “little”, taking its inspiration from the original conference on the spirit of the Institute. And it develops six applications of this littleness:

1. Little before God, after the example of Our Lord ... (Heb. 5:7) ...
5. Little, even before the children
6. Little before ourselves (Lk. 18: 14)

Finally,

Mary is the highest of all the pure creatures in Heaven only because she was the most humble, in her eyes the smallest of all on earth. In truth, I say to you, if you do not become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Unlike Brother Théophane who left us very few doctrinal Circulars,

Brother Stratonique left quite a considerable body of work. He viewed the spirit of the Institute in a rather personal way. In his Circular of 6 June 1908:

We must aim to leave our retreat totally renewed in the original spirit of our Institute, in the very spirit of our Venerable Founder, the Marist spirit which he inculcated in his first Brothers ... It is this spirit which must be opposed to that of the world where it is lost through its spirit of pride, ostentation and duplicity.

For him, it was not humility that is at the heart of the Marist spirit but devotion. He even envisaged a book which would have for its title: *The Practice of Devotion in the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary over the First Century of its Existence*.

Somewhat like Brother Théophane, Brother Diogène was not much given to the theme of the spirit of the Institute, but his Circular of 24 May 1926 did treat the theme of “The Spirit of Father Champagnat” and he considered the Hermitage as the place where his spirit breathes:

One breathes it there like an atmosphere of holiness ... Each time I have the opportunity to walk this blessed soil, ... my heart expands in an ardent prayer to obtain from God, through the intercession of Mary, Queen of the Hermitage, that the spirit of our Venerable Father may enter more and more deeply into all of our religious and that her protection may sustain us during this quite dangerous and difficult period through which we are passing.

The war was scarcely over when on 24 May 1945, Brother Marie-

Odulphe, Vicar General, published a Circular with the title “Restoring all Things through the Faithful Observance of the Rule”! In spite of this worrying title of a return to order, the spirit of the Institute is defined in a way that is both remarkable and original:

Father Colin and his friend Father Champagnat indisputably wanted to give to the Society of Mary the very spirit of Mary. But the Most Blessed Virgin lived in a marvellous way a life that a formulation of Saint Paul expresses with astonishing precision: “A life hidden in God with Christ Jesus.” (Col. 3:3) And the two Venerable Founders, understanding that the Marist spirit consists in the interior life hidden in God with Christ, set themselves to tracing out for their spiritual sons an ideal where humility, self-abnegation, union with God, love of Jesus Christ and zeal for souls are like the foundational virtues.

On 8 December 1952, Brother Léonida also emphasised the necessity of a return to the original spirit in a Circular with the title “We are Religious: Little Brothers of Mary”, clearly inspired by the original Circular on the spirit of the Institute:

It was thus that the Venerable Father Champagnat marked out for his children the way of humility, simplicity and modesty, proposing for our imitation the Most Blessed Virgin, the most perfect copy of Our Lord, and wishing that all our communities reproduce, to the best of their ability, the life of the Holy Family at Nazareth.

He came back to the name of Little Brothers of Mary, which “breathes this spirit”. Finally, he came back to Mary as model:

Our Heavenly Mother showed herself so humble in all things that we would not be able legitimately to call ourselves her children if we did not combat pride, presumption and vanity; if we did not know how to recognise our ignorance, our fragility and our faults in order to attribute solely to the infinite goodness of God whatever in us has some value.

Later, Brother Charles Raphaël brought in the concept of Marist spirituality, the sign of a new way of thinking about the Marist identity, notably through a return to the origins that marked the Chapter of 1967-1968. The theory of this would be presented in the Circular of 1 July 1971 in which Brother Basilio, at the time of the General Conference, gave an paper called “A Superior General meditates aloud”:

Today, shortly after the close of the Council, ... we are witnessing a transformation in religious life, not in its essentials, but in its accidentals; not as an evangelical change, but a cultural one. We are witnessing a stripping away of its old forms and at its new ‘formulation’ ... As Yves Congar has said: ‘We must help the dawn to be born’.

CONCLUSION

If it is clear that for more than a century (1852-1965) the Rule was the major reference point for Marist identity, risking a formalism rather than a spirit, the definitions given above show that, for many Brothers, the “spirit of the Institute” had a meaning equivalent to what we currently call “spirituality”.



MODESTY AS A VIRTUE, ACCORDING TO FR FRANÇOIS



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Among the writings of Brother François, we find *Notebook 313 1* which deals at some length with modesty which is one of the characteristics of the Institute. With this brief exploration of its contents, I wish to make known the contribution that Brother François has made to the spiritual patrimony of the Institute through the thought reflected in the pages of this notebook.

In his introduction to *Notebook 313 1*, Brother Paul Sester asserts that “this text can only be attributed to Brother François with reservations”. This is the subject of research already undertaken by Brother André Lanfrey in his work, *Un ‘chaînon manquant’ de la spiritualité mariste. Les manuscrits d’instruction des Frères François et Jean-Baptiste*. [A

missing link in Marist spirituality: the instructional manuscripts of Brothers François and Jean-Baptiste] Rome 2000. In this work, supplemented by others cited in the *avant-propos*, Lanfrey states that “there is an obscure period between the writings of Fr Champagnat which end in 1840, and the period 1852-1856 when the foundational texts of the Congregation were published”.¹ I will pass over the preliminary research, enunciated by Brother Paul Sester in his introduction to the notebook of Brother François, concerning the authorship of the various texts² included in these writings devoted to the *Regles de bienséance et de modestie [Rules of decorum and modesty]*, and pass directly to an analysis of the structure and content of the texts.

¹ *Un ‘chaînon manquant’ de la spiritualité mariste. Les manuscrits d’instruction des Frères François et Jean-Baptiste*. Roma 2000, 2.

² In *Notebook 313 1*, Brother François twice alludes to a source from which he takes his ideas when he writes, “Politeness, says the author of ‘Manual for Gentlemen’, is putting into practice external manners” ... and again when he writes, “Civilian life is a matter of mutual exchange, says the author of ‘Manual for Gentlemen’”. In fact, the *Notebook* is inspired by and copies abundantly from J.B de la Salle’s book, *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, changing the word ‘civility’ for ‘modesty’.

I believe this difficulty is overcome by the certitude that, based on what Brother Avit says in his *Annals of the Institute*, the theme of modesty was present among the Brothers as part of the instructions they received. In 1838 he writes:

Brother Louis was librarian and master of ceremonies. In addition, he gave lessons in good manners.³

And in 1840:

On Sundays, before High Mass, Brother Louis rehearsed with those who were to perform in the chapel ceremonies. There was also a lesson in civility, often given by Brother Jean-Baptiste during the day, and an instruction before supper.⁴

And in 1835, a date prior to the two mentioned previously, he puts these words in the Founder's mouth:

A Brother can be a good religious and still have a difficult character, with defects that make his confreres suffer and damage fraternal union. God leaves us these defects to exercise our patience and the charity of our confreres. To obtain perfect unity in a community, each of its members should strive to practise indulgence, charitable dissimulation, compassion, holy cheerfulness, quickness of spirit, solicitude for the brothers, affability, civility, honesty, condescension, self-denial for the common good, and patience.⁵

1. STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF NOTEBOOK 313 1

Notebook 313 1 consists of twelve chapters and the date of composition is indicated in the text itself: The Hermitage, 1838. The writing in this notebook takes place at an important time when the official thinking of the Institute began to take shape in the Rule of the Founder and the Rule of 1854 formulated by the 2nd General Chapter. The title of the notebook is a composite one since it includes two distinct terms: on the one hand, rules of behaviour in conformity with the customs and mores of society (politeness), and on the other, modesty. The first impression that strikes the reader is that in speaking of these two subjects, Brother François uses a very broad vocabulary both for virtuous or civic behaviour and for its opposite. The terms *politeness, civility, delicacy, deference, deference, sensitivity, sweetness, gentleness, refinement, affability, courtesy, favour, and civility* are reflected in expressions such as: *please, if you would allow me, with your permission, if you would be so kind, kindly*. And also the opposites: *vulgarity, arrogance, roughness, brutality, impropriety, indelicacy, overindulgence, rudeness, bestial-*

³ Avit, *Annals of the Institute* 1838 [387]

⁴ Avit, *Annals of the Institute* 1840 [698]

⁵ Avit, *Annals of the Institute* 1835 [79]

ity, inattention, thoughtlessness. The abundance of vocabulary suggests that he has some difficulty in determining what he means by modesty, reflected in the way he structures the chapters of his writing.

The sequence of the chapters into which he divides this small work begins with socio-anthropologically by first analysing politeness (first chapter) and then civility (third chapter), both of which are social conventions for living in harmony with others. In the first chapter Brother François writes that:

we live for one another in such a way that we are destined to have obligations towards one another [...]. The human race is so called only because it is destined to proclaim to those who compose it the obligation they have to be attentive, gentle and courteous [...]. To ignore this obligation is unforgivable.

The chapter aims to describe the merits of politeness and modesty which *have something striking and admirable about them.*

To which he adds:

most people bemoan disagreeable and unpleasant men as much if not more than wicked ones.

And he concludes: *nothing is so odious as an ill-mannered man.*

Both chapters contain a good number of examples taken mainly from the lives of illustrious and distinguished historical figures (Abbé Blanchard, Montaigne, Charles IX, Abbé Gauthier, Queen Marie Thérèse, Gen-

eral Lassy, Count of Aubigné, Henri IV, Philip II, Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma), leaving the impression that politeness was only a matter for courtiers among whom models of behaviour should be sought, as opposed to the commoners, the rude or the ignorant, to whom pejorative terms would be applied.

In the second chapter, which serves as a link between the concepts considered in the first and third chapters, he says that courtesy and modesty are recommended by the saints, affirming that most of the rules of good behaviour and modesty that should be observed have been given to us by the Holy Spirit. And he concludes, with St Bonaventure, that without them something is lacking in the perfection of virtue. The examples cited in this chapter are Jesus Christ, St Gregory of Nyssa, Jean-Baptiste Saint Jure, St Dorothea, the Society of Jesus, St Hilary, Bishop of Arles, St Francis of Assisi and St Bonaventure. Here, too, good behaviour in society is presented with models worthy of the highest praise and admiration.

In the third chapter he distinguishes two types of politeness: a virtuous one, born of religion and morality and which we can call politeness of the heart. And the other, sterile, superficial and born of self-love, vanity and self-interest, which we can call empty politeness or politeness which only maintains appearances. The rest of the chapters (5 to 12) are devoted to the practical exercise of modesty in everyday life and constitute a verita-

ble catalogue⁶ of recommendations and practical applications of courtesy, civility and good culture, a sort of manual of politeness and good manners.

Let us analyse in detail the first three chapters in which he tries to establish modesty as a virtue.

2. FROM WHERE DOES THE NEED FOR POLITENESS ARISE?

Brother François' reflection begins with *politeness*, which he says *has always been seen as a necessary quality for a well-educated man*. In the first chapter he argues that politeness, good manners and good education are necessary because they contribute to social peace. And then he immediately changes vocabulary and instead of politeness uses the term civility. We are obliged to be indulgent, gentle and polite. This is called civility.

Civility is a science that teaches us to give that which we have to do and to say its proper place ..., it is the art of reconciling with grace what we owe to others and what we owe to ourselves.

The opposite of civility is rudeness, impoliteness.

But it should be noted that politeness is just an endorsement of civility which tends to please the self-image of others. We form a good opinion of someone whose manners and language are polite; it is by these manners and language that we appreciate and judge whether the individual is well-educated, whether he or she deserves our confidence or, on the contrary, disregard.

True politeness consists above all in showing others consideration, affection and esteem, even concern, in sensitively satisfying the vanity of others [...]. It is the art of acting outwardly in a spontaneous and pleasant manner [...], of giving satisfaction to those with whom one is obliged to deal.

3. POLITENESS: AN AMBIGUOUS VALUE

But if politeness is a value, as it undoubtedly is, it is an ambiguous one because it can conceal both the best and the worst. It is thus suspect.

⁶ Chapter 5. Modesty and body posture
Chapter 6. Modesty of the eyes.
Chapter 7. Modesty of the face and head.
Chapter 8. Modesty of arms and legs
Chapter 9. Modesty when going to bed and getting up
Chapter 10. Conclusion on what has been said on external modesty.
Chapter 11. Toileting
Chapter 12. Meals

The first thing to do in the face of politeness is not to be fooled. Politeness is not a virtue and cannot take the place of any virtue. Why say that it is perhaps the origin of all virtues? Let us look at what happens in reality. The newborn and the child do not and cannot have morals. The first thing they discover, and very early on, are prohibitions. “Don’t do that: it’s dirty, it looks bad, it’s bad”. Or: “It’s dangerous”. The child has to distinguish what is wrong (error) and what does harm (danger). Error is an entirely human evil, the evil that does no harm (at least to the subject of the action). It is evil without immediate or intrinsic danger. So why prohibit it? Simply because of what it is: dirty, looks bad, is bad. For the child, the act precedes the norm. They are presented with what is allowed and what is forbidden, what is done and what is not done. Whether it is right or wrong is established by a rule that anticipates judgement and gives a basis to it. But the rule is devoid of any foundation other than convention. Justification comes from usage and respect for an established usage. This is where the rule of politeness comes from. For a child, all these prohibitions are presented in the same way without any distinction. The distinction between what is ethical and what is aesthetic will come later in a progressive way. Therefore, politeness comes before morality, or to say it another way, morality at the beginning is only politeness.

In the third chapter, Brother François reflects on the ambiguity of politeness and concludes that:

there are two kinds of politeness: one which is virtuous and stems from religion and morality – this we can say is the politeness of the heart. And another which is sterile and superficial and stems from self-love, vanity and self-interest – this we might call pure appearance. The latter, however slight its merit may be, does not fail to render a great service to men because it is a guarantee against the scourge of incivility, an odious quality which makes us harsh, gruff, rude, ill-mannered, flighty, crude, unbearable. On the other hand, if this politeness of pure appearance has a merit, an advantage that is widely recognised, by every other measure it is debased and corrupted by the artifices of flattery, whether out of self-love or vile self-interest. Indeed, it is often a purely outward manifestation of feelings that do not exist within. Perhaps we have never had such false ideas of politeness as we have today. The sweetness, the beautiful sincerity, the naïve language of the heart have been replaced by affectation of manners and frivolous protestations by which, it seems, men agree to deceive each other. Their politeness varies according to circumstances.

To remove this ambiguity, discernment must be exercised, and to do this we must possess as a matter of necessity certain principles which enable us to discern promptly what is appropriate to the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

4. EDUCATED POLITENESS

Politeness consists not merely in that exchange of civility and compliments which convention has established, expressed without feeling and received without thanks, but in gratifying those with whom we are obliged to deal. The educated person studies how to satisfy everybody and, to succeed, they do not prioritise their own interests but esteem above all the interests of others. The word *honesty*, which from its beginnings has expressed what is just, right, respectful, virtuous, is also used today to designate a person who is polite, civil, well-mannered.

Brother François gives a new perspective to his reasoning by going beyond the behaviour of the polite person and adopting that of the honest one. He concludes:

Let us therefore have that politeness which announces the honest and Christian man, since one can by the mere spirit of benevolence, of humanity, of an even surer charity, have that amenity, that affability full of attention, of deference and consideration, which makes the sweetness of society and which makes it a thousand times more amiable than the mob of people so affectionate, so mannered, so polite, and so deceitful, of whom the world is full ... True politeness consists above all in being obliging, kind, affable, and using good manners with everyone. It is therefore not enough to appear to honour the people with whom one is in contact; one must also oblige them and hasten to do them a favour whenever the opportunity arises ... The first duty of civil life is to think of others and to do them good; those who live

only for themselves fall into contempt; on the contrary, by thinking of the welfare of others, one secures one's own, attracts people, makes friends of them and sometimes even benefactors.

5. POLITENESS GROUNDED IN VIRTUE

With this as background, Brother François deepens and grounds his thinking by affirming that:

There is nothing to fear from politeness which is inspired and sustained by Christian and religious sentiments; since it always starts from a benevolent heart, friendly to men [sic], inclined to please them, it is a sure and solid foundation, a politeness which is sincere, eager, generous, willing, and, so to speak, as true, as unchanging as God himself, to whom the polite Christian, in obliging men, proposes mainly to please.

And he adheres to the politeness which announces the honest and Christian person. He then seeks, firstly, ascetic foundations:

Politeness, like virtue, often opposes our inclinations, stops our endeavours, makes us sacrifice our tastes, watches over our actions, moderates our speech; but if, through this, the polite man [sic] comes close to the virtuous man, he is much inferior to him in other respects. The virtuous man, guided by wisdom, keeps a watchful eye on himself, examines his conduct, condemns his errors, his faults, his shortcomings; he knows his shortcomings and remains ever modest.

He goes on then to base the modesty of the virtuous person on charity:

His benevolence, on the other hand, leads him to excuse others, and even to find something meritorious, to favour them, to serve them in whatever circumstances they find themselves, in public as well as in private, in preferment as well as in privation, in ease as well as in mediocrity; all the more reason why he should not do anything that might upset anyone. Such is the wise and polite man [sic]; he fails no one, but he is not surprised that others fail him; he senses rudeness, but he does not get angry about it, he never responds except with a great politeness that nobly avenges him.

Modesty also gains in value when it is accompanied by humility:

The civility of a Christian is that charitable and honest air which emanates from humility and is founded on charity ... Nothing is more repulsive than the pride and vanity that come from self-love; in contrast, nothing is more pleasing, more touching, more winning of the heart than affability and submission, those humble and charitable sentiments and demonstrations of goodwill.

But he warns that:

To be truly polite it is not enough to be virtuous, it is necessary to add the discernment of what is honest and what is dishonest, what is proper and what is improper; for if a man [sic] is virtuous but at the same time is stupid or thinks himself special, he will never be considered either modest or civil.

As a counterpoint to the virtuous attitude of modesty, he describes the anti-values embodied by the person who does not practise modesty as a virtue:

The same is not true of the man [sic] whose politeness is rooted more in vanity than in virtue; he is presumptuous, vain, self-interested,

and will act only out of calculation, will be obliging only out of selfishness, and will love nobody. In his most animated manifestations of friendship, in his most careful attentions, in his most delicate preferences, he will only offer a pretence of politeness like a vulgar actor playing the role of a hero. In the end, he will have nothing but deceptive appearances and what Jesus said to the scribes and the Pharisees can be applied to him: "you are whited sepulchres". This is not the politeness to be practised by the religious and not the politeness to be taught to their students. The religious and moral principles with which they are imbued and which they wish to teach their pupils will inspire them with a more perfect politeness, that is to say, one which derives naturally from both the Christian virtues such as humility and charity and from the moral virtues such as modesty and benevolence.

6. WHAT IS MODESTY FOR BROTHER FRANÇOIS?

In all of *Notebook 313 1* we do not find a specific section defining modesty but the concept is indirectly present throughout. By way of conclusion to what we have said above, we will try to draw together the ideas that come close to a definition to establish what Brother François understood by modesty.

We can see that Brother François' thought is fixed on an appreciation of modesty that allows for a graduated approach, although most of his considerations allude to modesty more for its effects than for its essence.

At the most basic level, he places the elements which facilitate an initial conclusion. Taking an analogy from St Francis de Sales, he reasons as follows:

Just as by the goodness of our countenance one judges the health and disposition of the interior of our body, so by the goodness of our bearing and the modesty of our exterior one judges the holiness of our interior, and those who see us are edified or scandalised according to whether our bearing is well or ill composed.

From these first external signs, which are indications of the spiritual health of a modest person, he moves to the forms or manifestations of this value on human conduct, based on an incursion into the etymology of the word modesty.

True politeness consists in a universal modesty which regulates and accompanies our words, our actions, our looks, our gestures, our posture, our steps and our entire exterior, so that there is nothing in all this that could hurt anyone. Modesty, together with elegance of bearing, composes all the movements of our body, arranges everything symmetrically and in the most beautiful order according to the dictates of reason [...]. This form which modesty produces consists in a certain correctness and elegance of bearing which is adopted both by the person who acts and by the person with whom they are dealing. That is why it is called modesty, that is to say, a mode of movement.

In search of the source of the virtuous conduct of those who practise modesty, he delves into the ascetic values through which one discovers one's own shortcomings and he sets God as the point of reference in

whose presence all our actions take place.

The virtuous man [sic], guided by wisdom, keeps a watchful eye on himself, examines his conduct, condemns his errors, his faults, his mistakes; he is aware of what he lacks and that is why he acts continually with modesty ... True modesty is that which is based on virtue and is born of interior modesty ... This modesty must not be denied, day or night, in any place or before anyone, whether before people who are more familiar or of lowly status, or before strangers or people of the highest rank: no more when one is alone than when one is in the company of others, because God is everywhere and deserves absolute respect ... never allowing oneself to do in particular what one would never allow oneself to do in front of others. In this way one acquires the habit of modesty.

At the top of the scale, valuing modesty as a virtuous behaviour, he places an attitude guided by charity.

To be humble, to be modest is to prefer in all things the satisfaction and comfort of others to one's own, even to the point of expressing horror at anything that might annoy or offend someone. But these feelings come from the charity that leads us to consider others as ourselves in all things. It follows that the civility of a Christian is that charitable and honest air which exhales humility and is founded on Christian charity.

And he points out some effects of this quality of modesty:

His benevolence leads him to excuse others, and even to find merit, to favour and serve them in all circumstances in which he meets them in public as well as in private, in success as well as in defeat, in preferment as well as in privation. Such is the wise and polite person; he fails no one, but is not surprised that others fail him; he senses rudeness,

but he is never offended.

With a little care and vigilance these rules will become familiar to us and their practice will place us in a position to appear in public with that air of honesty and modesty which comes from a man of education and an upright heart, such as should be that of religious.

CONCLUSION

These principles provide a foundation for the final seven chapters of *Notebook 313 1* which propose practical norms of good education. These norms will become part of the

Rule of 1852 in the form of guidelines for the life of the teaching Brothers, many of whom came from rural settings. At the same time, what was exemplary conduct in society took on the dimension of virtue for the Christian educator motivated by charity. These same contents are imparted to Brother educators as educational content to be transmitted in the schools attended by the children of peasants. In this way, the rules of good education drawn up by St Jean-Baptiste de la Salle for the pupils of city schools became educational and formative content in country schools.



MARIAN DEVOTION THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE MARISTS OF MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT*



Afonso Murad, fms

“I leave you in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They are such delightful places! I have the honour to be your affectionate father in Jesus and Mary”. This was the way Father Champagnat ended his letter to Brother Barthélemy, in January 1831. The whole life and mission of our founder are based on the centrality of Jesus Christ and on the love of Mary, to the point that these constitute an inseparable unity. Brothers and lay people, Marists of Marcellin Champagnat, have inherited from him devotion to Mary, as a Good Mother, or a kind mother. How can we express this devotion in our own day, respecting the centrality of Jesus and the Trinitarian dimension of Christian worship? What are the theological foundations for the devotion to Mary? Does Marian devotion need renewal? If the answer is in the affirmative, what will be the criteria to bring renewal about? How can we cultivate a balanced devotion to our Good Mother,

er, avoiding exaggerations? These questions will guide our reflection in this article.

1. WORSHIP OF GOD. LITURGY AND DEVOTION

Christian worship, in the full sense of the term, is comprised of three constitutive dimensions: ethical-existential, mystical and ritual. The first dimension means that true worship consists in service of God in daily life, through a love that expresses solidarity, practises good works, and struggles for justice. This ethical dimension constitutes one of the differences of Christianity, not only as a religion but rather as a way of life, a dynamic structure of values that have a positive impact on interpersonal and social relationships. The biblical prophets insisted that the worship of God requires

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honesty and solidarity. As an example, we can cite Chapter 1 of Isaiah. There it is said that Yahweh God rejects the cultic sacrifices, if people have their hands covered in blood from the injustice they practise and from their oppression of the poor. In Is 58:6-7, the prophet announces the kind of fast and penance that pleases God: sharing one's bread with those in need, setting the oppressed free from slavery, and other liberating gestures. Interior worship arises from the heart that is in harmony with God in daily life.

The second dimension, the mystical, refers to the fact that worship expresses spirituality, a particular experience of God, which articulates presence and language. It articulates presence because God is totally Other, but who offers his love and takes the initiative in a salvific dialogue. Gratuitously, God comes to encounter the Human Being. When the person accepts this divine proposal, it is expressed in loving and relational language. It makes understandable, without ever exhausting it, the unsearchable mystery of the Transcendent. People praise, give thanks, express reverence, profess their faith, announce, and bear witness to others.

Finally, worship is expressed in ritual – words and symbolic gestures – strongly marked by the culture from where these emerge and where they develop.

To worship God, in an integrated way, means to live these dimen-

sions simultaneously: to try to do the will of the Lord with attitudes, actions and values (ethics), cultivate intimacy with the Lord (spirituality) and express it in a personal and communitarian form (rite). The heart of Christian devotion resides in the self-gift to God, in love of and commitment to the cause of Jesus, that is accompanied by interior dispositions and external religious practices.

The perennial challenge for any individual, community or church that tries to worship God “in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23) is to maintain the fragile equilibrium between two dimensions. There is no ideal formula or defined proportion for each one. For this reason, we say that there are various possible ways of maintaining equilibrium. Different groups or different times emphasise one dimension more than the other. In this constant and productive tension various ways of worshiping God take shape.

In the Catholic world, worship, from the external and ritual perspective, has at least three forms: *individual practices*, *devotion*, and *liturgy*. In the first, every one of the faithful expresses his or her relationship with God in accord with where their heart leads them. One can pray in silence in one's own room, dance, with upraised hands, walking, reciting psalms and canticles, creating and reciting formulae. Devotions consist in expressions of worship offered freely to the faithful, and these are worked out and passed on by

lay people, movements, religious institutes, priests and dioceses. In principle, any Christian can create a devotional expression and share it with others for them to use it, assuming that this is in tune with the Gospel and the ecclesial Tradition. No devotional practice is obligatory, even if it be recommended by religious movements, or by Church authorities. If it were obligatory, it would not be a devotion.

Finally, the liturgy comprises the official worship of the Church, with norms and a certain standardisation. Classically, it is said that the liturgy constitutes the public worship that the Redeemer offers to the Father and that the Church through Christ offers to Him. The liturgy brings about the worship of God and the sanctification of the human being, operating by means of visible signs. It is simultaneously the way in which the action of the Church takes place and the source from where it takes all its strength (The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10). In this document of Vatican II, following a long tradition, the Catholic Church considers the liturgy, above all the celebration of the Eucharist, as more important than devotions. However, the spiritual life is not exhausted by the liturgy, but it also presumes personal prayer (SC 11). Various pious practices of the Christian people are strongly recommended, presuming that these are in agreement with the norms and procedures of the Church (SC 12). In the Catholic liturgy, reformed after the Second Vatican Council,

Mary was placed in an intimate relationship with the mystery of Christ and the Church. Throughout the liturgical year, there are three types of Marian celebrations. In order of importance we have solemnities, feasts and memorials. Our patronal feast is the Solemnity of the Assumption.

The term “devotion” has various senses (MORETTI, 1987). Etymologically, “to be devoted” means to serve with fidelity, with respect and dedication for someone. Sometimes it is said that a person is devoted to a particular cause. Also, in a wide sense, “devotion” refers to an attitude of life in a person who, with fervour, promptness and constancy, offers service to God, in a variety of ways (VALABEK, 2003). In this first meaning, every Christian is potentially devoted, inasmuch as the person is dedicated to following Jesus and conforming their life to the will of God.

The adjective “devoted” infers a posture of reverence towards the sacred. Normally such a quality is attributed to a pious person, who is respectful before the Divine. The word “devoted” is synonymous with someone who has a unique relationship with a particular saint or with one of the many “Our Ladies”. People say: “I am a devotee of Our Lady of Lourdes”, “I am a devotee of St Jude”, and so on. Some, as a sign of their devotion, go on pilgrimages to shrines.

In Catholicism, devotion in the

strict sense can also be a specific way of expressing Christian worship which is different from the *liturgy*. In this sense, the term refers to devotional practices. It does not refer so much to the interior attitude, but above all to external expressions. In the area of Marian devotion, there are innumerable devotional practices, such as the rosary, novenas, consecration to Mary, processions, and litanies. These are *devotions* (in the plural), which make clear the *attitude* of devotedness, of entrusting oneself to God through the hands of Mary.

2. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF MARIAN DEVOTION

Why do Catholics and Orthodox pray to Mary? Is prayer directed to Jesus, our master and Lord, not sufficient?

Vatican II, in Chapter 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, poses the question: *If Jesus is the one mediator between God and humanity, how can we understand the intercessory role of Mary?* Following the Biblical data, the conciliar documents confirm that Christ is the unique mediator (1 Tim 2:5). However, this unique mediatorial role of Christ is not exclusive or exclusionary, but rather the saints are co-operators with Jesus.

According to the Council fathers, no creature can be placed on the

same level as the Incarnate Word and Redeemer. *The maternal mission of Mary is not diminished by the unique mediation of Christ*, but instead shows its power. It does not originate from an internal necessity, but as a gift from God. It does not impede but encourages union of the faithful with Christ (LG 60).

The people of God *participate* in the priesthood of Christ in various ways, and the divine goodness is diffused among creatures. So, the unique mediation of the Redeemer brings forth in creatures a variety of ways of *cooperation*, which share in the same source (LG 62). The Council recognised the legitimacy of seeking the intercession of Mary, as *cooperating* in the unique mediation of Christ. It never uses the term “Mediatrice”, which from then on became a term used by those who adhered to a maximalist approach to Marian devotion.

According to the Council, the cooperation of Mary is not on the same level as the redemptive mission of Jesus. It is for this mission and totally depends upon it. The cult of Mary is unique, differing from and oriented towards worship of the Trinity (LG 66). The cult of Mary is very good when it is expressed in a lucid and balanced way. The Council recommends the devotion to Mary, avoiding both exaggerations as well as a petty narrow-mindedness. True devotion towards Mary “does not consist in a sterile and transitory feeling, or in vain credulity, but in acknowledging the figure of the Virgin Mary

and in following her virtues” (LG 67).

Therefore, devotion to Mary can be justified within the perspective of the following of Jesus and the *Communion of Saints*. Mary shares in a particular way in the unique mediation of Christ, which is inclusive. The Vatican Council affirmed that Mary is a member, symbol and mother of the Church, because of her unique relationship with Jesus. Because she is *mother, companion and servant of the Lord*, she becomes for us mother, in the order of grace (LG 61). Due to her maternity, the union of mission with Christ and her singular graces and functions, she is also intimately related to the Church (LG 63). With Mary, the Church is mother and virgin; she brings forth new children through Baptism, keeps the Word, lives in faith, hope and love (LG 64).

This key of relationship with Christ and the Church is fundamental for justifying devotion to Mary, through the liturgy and devotions. On the first level is Jesus, to the cause of the Kingdom of God and the community of his followers. According to the text of the Vatican Council, Mary is at the same time *mother, disciple and generous associate of Jesus* (LG 61). With him she lives, teaches and learns. The title of “associate” is original, and indicates that Mary remains always with Jesus and his followers, not above them or independent of them.

Therefore, Mary directs us and in her we find inspiration, not in com-

petition with Jesus, our master, Lord and Saviour. In this special place in the Communion of Saints, she is closest to Jesus and closest to us (LG 54), Mary accompanies us and intercedes for Christians.

3. DEVOTION, YES. DEVOTIONALISM, NO!

In their prayers, Catholics can pray directly to God, or to some saint, and especially to Mary with supplication, request for intercession or thanksgiving. In the liturgy, prayer is directed explicitly to the Trinity: to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. To the saints, we make reference to their virtues and ask for their intercession, within the same prayer to the Trinity. It is not considered correct to ask forgiveness from the saints. To offer any form of adoration to the saints is not at all acceptable, as this is due only to God. Within popular devotions, when things escape the control of the clergy and of theology, they can tend to become easily mixed up and confused. Let us look at one example.

In the song “Nossa Senhora” (Our Lady), from the Brazilian Roberto Carlos, we can see how devotional language breaks the limits of correct dogmatic statements. He attributes to Mary a salvific function, which in reality belongs only to Jesus, our Saviour:

Great is the procession to ask for
Mercy and pardon
Cure for the body and salvation for the soul.

Poor sinners, oh Mother, so much in need of you
Holy Mother of God, have mercy on us

How can we analyse this? One theological perspective is that devotional language, because it is situated within the affective and symbolic sphere, tends to exaggeration. This is understandable and acceptable, but within the limits of the sound doctrine of the Church. A similar thing occurs with us, when we express ourselves in inflated way about our biological mothers. Who does not exalt their mother whom they love with filial tenderness? The logic of love, with its corresponding displays, breaks the bonds of formal and rational language.

On the other hand, it may be argued that every form of love can degenerate. For example, a possessive love in the relationship between mother and child generates dependency and a dangerous idealisation of the female figure. There is a risk of encountering something similar in the devotional relationship with the “Heavenly Mother”. Feminist theology shows how an idealised figure of Mary is associated, in many cases, to patriarchal postures, and discrimination towards women. Mary would be the saint and the other women would be the “daughters of Eve”.

The Church considers devotion to the saints and to Mary as something healthy. Devotionalism, however, consists in a deficient form of practising piety. It is characterised giving extreme value to pious practices, often associated with

vocal prayers. Theologically, its limits lie in the lack of centrality given to the person of Jesus. Prayers to Mary and to the other saints are multiplied, attributing to them an efficacy equal or greater than those directed to Christ. From the pastoral point of view, its weakness lies in the distance from Sacred Scripture and in “therapeutic reduction”, which is to say, faith is above all used to resolve personal problems, and the Christian call to live in love and solidarity is underestimated. An individualistic spirituality is encouraged, and this ignores the communitarian component of the Christian faith. Even though the devotional events attract thousands of people in great crowds, the focus is still on the “I” and not the “we” (community). Therefore, there are three grave limitations: a loss of focus at the centre of our Faith (Jesus), distancing from the Bible and individualism.

4. THE EMANCIPATION OF “POPULAR PIETY”

The terms “popular devotion” and “popular piety” are correlative. Some use them synonymously. Others say that “piety” denotes a certain interiority, an intention of the heart, or even a spiritual posture. While “devotion” refers to the practices of piety, they can be presented in gestures and words made to look like rites. Nevertheless, we must use the expression “popular devotion” with some care. Actually, Catholic devotional practices increasingly do

not originate from the people, in a slow cultural process, as happened in the past. On the contrary, these are created and fostered rapidly by various Church organisations such as media priests, new communities, movements, religious institutes, priests and lay people from parishes and dioceses. Some of these devotions lack theological and historical roots. They have been “invented”, transplanted from other contexts in an acritical way, or implemented to bring kudos to their promoters.

Pope Francis, in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) defends the rescuing of popular piety as a precious path of evangelisation. He clarifies that it must be purified, and then it will be dynamic and will mix with its own context. It is essential to interpret popular piety with the loving gaze of the Good Shepherd, welcoming it with affection and effect. Only in this way can we appreciate the theological life present in it, especially in the poor (EG 125). Pope Francis bears witness to such a way of looking at things, starting from the memories of his own pastoral practice among the people.

I think of the steadfast faith of those mothers tending their sick children who, though perhaps barely familiar with the articles of the creed, cling to a rosary; or of all the hope poured into a candle lighted in a humble home with a prayer for help from Mary, or in the gaze of tender love directed to Christ crucified. No one who loves God's holy

people will view these actions as the expression of a purely human search for the divine. They are the manifestation of a theological life nourished by the working of the Holy Spirit who has been poured into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5). (EG 125)

It is necessary to evangelise cultures so that the Gospel may become profoundly incarnate in them. In traditionally Catholic countries, such as in Latin America, the richness of the faith that is already present must be encouraged, fostered and reinforced¹. This does not mean simply conserving ancient practices, in the name of tradition. According to Francis, *we are constantly being called to grow. Each culture and social group needs purification and growth. In the case of the popular cultures of Catholic peoples, we can see deficiencies which need to be healed by the Gospel: machismo, alcoholism, domestic violence, low Mass attendance, fatalistic or superstitious notions which lead to sorcery, and the like. Popular piety itself can be the starting point for healing and liberation from these deficiencies.* (EG 69).

Francis denounces a certain type of religion. *There is a kind of Christianity made up of devotions reflecting an individual and sentimental faith life which does not in fact correspond to authentic “popular piety”.* This happens in a variety of ways. *Some people promote these expressions while not being in the least concerned with the advance-*

¹ The words of Pope Francis are in italics.

ment of society or the formation of the laity, and in certain cases they do so in order to obtain economic benefits or some power over others. (EG 70).

We recognise, as Francis does, that popular piety, with marked Marian characteristics, has immense value. This is expressed in many devotional practices, which have an inexhaustible number of meanings. Such recognition cannot allow for major misunderstandings, which consider the devotions as something immutable. Even worse would be to treat them as the greatest of all resources, to be expanded without any ethical or theological limits, in view of an alleged “pastoral success”.

It would be a mistake to make devotional practices the basis for the evangelizing work of the Church. We live in a pluralistic and multi religious society, which changes rapidly. Certain Marian devotional practices have meaning for adults, above all the elderly, but little impact on a huge number of children, adolescents and young people. A “Church in mission”, which maintains a dialogue with a pluralistic society, must break out of the narrow circle of the devotional mindset. The Church has retrieved Marian piety, with its devotional practices, so that the faith can be inculturated. However, it does not by any means accept everything. The focus is on inculturation and not on the preservation of devotions, as if they were untouchable and sacred. The major

task lies in reinterpreting the discourse and the religious practices, so that they become Good News for men and women of today. Pope Francis clarifies this:

The ultimate aim should be that the Gospel, is preached in categories proper to each culture, will create a new synthesis with that particular culture ... But if we allow doubts and fears to dampen our courage, instead of being creative we will remain comfortable and make no progress whatsoever. In this case we will not take an active part in historical processes, but become mere onlookers as the Church gradually stagnates. (EG 129)

.So, an important pastoral criterion is outlined: the issue is not to maintain through inertia or to bring devotional practices from the past, but rather to implement an educational process of *encouraging, fostering and reinforcing* the positive elements. *In order to do this*, it is necessary to have a critical yet loving stance, which can recognise the beautiful things, as well as the weaknesses and the risks. In this way it will be possible to make advances in proclamation and intercultural dialogue in new spaces and times.

5. HOW TO RENEW MARIAN DEVOTION

In 1974, not long after the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI published the Apostolic Exhortation “*Marialis Cultus*” (On Devotion to Mary). In this important document, Paul VI shows that the reform of

the liturgy after the Council placed Mary “in a certain place”, situating her in reference to Christ and the Church, inserting the memorials, feasts and solemnities in the liturgical cycle. Then, Paul VI followed an unusual path. Instead of dealing with the “devotion to Mary”, he presented her as the model of the Christian and of the Church directed towards the worship of God. This “hermeneutic shift” is fundamental as it accentuates a dimension that had been forgotten over the course of the centuries: Mary as the prototype of the follower of Jesus.

Paul VI lists the following characteristics of Mary (MC 16-20), which inspire the Church, as the community of Christians to worship God:

- *Listens to the Word of God and keeps it in her heart.* This is not a passive activity, or a spirituality that is not incarnated. Rather, it concerns an active movement, in the light of the Bible, to discern the signs of the times and to enter into the events of history
- *Dedicates herself to prayer:* presenting human needs to God, praising God and interceding for the salvation of humanity.
- *Lives out the vocation of a mother.* Like Mary, the Church is a mother, who brings forth children to birth in baptism and cares for them, nourishing their faith.
- *Offers herself to God.* Here lies the heart and the fulcrum of the devotion.

For Paul VI, *Mary is the mistress of the spiritual life for every Christian.* We look to Mary so that, like her, we might make our own lives into a true worship of God, and from this worship will come a commitment of one’s life (MC 21). The root of the devotion to Mary lies in taking inspiration from her attitudes.

Reclaiming the tradition of the Church, Paul VI briefly outlines the multiple ways in which Mary relates to Catholics: finding inspiration in her attitudes, imitation that leads to action, profound veneration, ardent love, trusting invocation, loving service, admiration that moves the heart and attentive study (MC 21). So, Mary is not only viewed as a powerful intercessor, a saint, the “Heavenly Mother”. She is also seen as the example for one’s life, an inspiration for how to relate to the world, starting from her biblical profile. It is worth remembering this classic text of Paul VI.

First, the Virgin Mary has always been proposed to the faithful by the Church as an example to be imitated, not precisely in the type of life she led, and much less for the socio-cultural background in which she lived and which today scarcely exists anywhere. She is held up as an example to the faithful rather for the way in which, in her own particular life, she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God (cf. Lk. 1:38), because she heard the word of God and acted on it, and because charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions. She is worthy of imitation because she was the first and the most perfect of Christ’s disciples. All of this has a permanent and universal exemplary value”. (MC 35)

One of the limits of Marian devotionism lies in the fact that “Our Lady in Glory” relegates the figure of Mary of Nazareth to the forgotten shadows, but she is the fundamental basis for a mature and balanced devotion. Biblical Mariology shows forth this face which is so human and enchanting as the mother of Jesus. She is pictured in the Gospels as the first disciple of Jesus, a pilgrim in faith, anointed by the Spirit, persevering even to the foot of the Cross, member and mother of the Christian community.

Which criteria should we adopt in order to accept, evaluate, set limits and renew Marian devotional practices? We could start with the contribution of Pope Paul VI, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (MC), regarding devotion to Mary in the Church. According to the Pope, Marian devotions take many forms, linked to time and place, the inclinations of people and their cultural traditions. That is why they are affected by the passage of time and need to be renewed. Such a process is necessary in order to evaluate the perennial elements and substitute those that have become anachronistic. For this reason, the contribution of theology and the Magisterium are required. In this way a revision of the exercises of Marian devotion must take place, respecting the healthy elements of Tradition

and with an openness “to receive the legitimate requests of the people of our time” (MC 24).

With this basis in the words of Paul VI, we can see that three criteria stand out to create, revise or re-work the exercises of Marian devotion.

A) The Biblical imprint

An examination of some devotional texts, such as litanies and novenas, can reveal how distant their words, prayers and hymns are from the Bible. Often, these attribute to Mary characteristics that are proper to Jesus (the mediator) or to the Holy Spirit (consoler). Where inadequate symbols are projected onto her, which do not correspond to the spirituality of the Bible, sometimes resort is had to allegory². So, saying that Mary is the “Ark of the New Covenant” is closer to the Bible than proclaiming her to be “the tabernacle” or “the first to receive Communion”.

There can be theological imprecision, due to superficiality in the statements and based on deficiencies in understanding the Bible. Let us look at an example. It is possible that Mary and other women who followed Jesus took part in the Last Supper, during which the Eucharist was instituted. However, to say that she received Communion because she gave birth to the Son of God displays a doctrinal error, because it does

² In a theological sense, “allegory” is a resource which was used principally in the first Christian centuries, in the patristic period, as a way of interpreting the texts of Sacred Scripture in a symbolic form, extrapolating the original meaning from that given to it by the author.

not distinguish “historical presence” and “sacramental presence”. Such a hermeneutical transposition is mistaken because it seems to lack sufficient definition. Making a simplistic deduction which is biologically mistaken, some say: “Jesus is the son of Mary. His blood is the blood of his mother. Therefore, in the Eucharist, we receive the blood of Mary”. Unfortunately, delusions such as this are spread, where good sense and pastoral sharpness seem unable to limit them.

Paul VI proposed a diligent use of texts and symbols taken from the Scriptures. He also suggested that the formulae for the prayers and the texts to be sung take their words and inspiration from the Bible. More than that, devotion to Mary must be permeated by the great themes of the Christian message (MC 30).

B) In harmony with the liturgy

Paul VI suggested that devotional practices take the liturgical seasons into account and be oriented towards the liturgy as a great celebration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He asked those who despise devotional exercises to avoid extremes, thus creating a vacuum, and similarly for those who mix pious exercises with the liturgy in hybrid celebrations (MC 31). However, he recognises that this advice is difficult to establish in practice. This is due to the fact that devotions tend to occupy a great part of the mystical-ritual space of the faithful, which is detrimental to the liturgy.

Some devotional events attract more people than Sunday Mass. There are many factors at play. Also, we must consider that the liturgy of the Roman Rite, with its many words and few gestures to engage the people, is not very meaningful for a large part of the faithful, particularly in Africa and Latin America. There we can find a real conflict between liturgy and devotion. Once, in a parish community in the interior of Brazil, Pentecost Sunday, a most important solemnity in the liturgical season, fell on the last Sunday of May. By popular tradition in the region, that date was reserved for the solemn coronation of Our Lady for the month of May. Everything revolved around Mary, beginning with the hymns. The coordinator of the team charged with preparing the liturgy caused an uproar, when she said to the organisers of the coronation that the Holy Spirit was more important than Mary. After a long discussion, in which the parish priest entered in the middle, it was decided to celebrate Pentecost, mixing hymns which referred to the Holy Spirit with Marian hymns, and the celebration ended with the coronation of Our Lady, after the final blessing. It is not easy to reconcile devotions and the liturgy.

C) Ecumenical sensitivity

Paul VI said that, due to its ecclesial character, in devotion to Mary the preoccupations of the Church should be reflected. Among these, he stressed a longing for the unity of Christians. Thus, Marian devotion became sensitive to the calls of the

ecumenical movement, and it took on an ecumenical aspect. The Pope recognised that there are real differences among the Christian churches with respect to the place of Mary in the mystery of salvation and to the devotion which is offered to her. He then made a clear and strong request:

... every care should be taken to avoid any exaggeration which could mislead other Christian brethren about the true doctrine of the Catholic Church. Similarly, the Church desires that any manifestation of cult which is opposed to correct Catholic practice should be eliminated (MC 32).

If we consider the ecumenical dialogue with historical Protestantism whose principal protagonists are Methodists, Presbyterians, and evangelical Lutherans and Anglicans, we can see that a mutual respect has been fostered. We have many points in common: the Bible, which is the revealed Word; Jesus as our Saviour; One God, in three Persons; Baptism; the call to conversion; seeking to do the will of God; belonging to a Church, cultivation of faith, hoped and love. We all believe and we profess that for Christians, Jesus is the one and only mediator.

However, let us not ignore the differences which exist. In Protestant conceptualising, the unique mediation of Christ is exclusive. No-one else can enter into that role. The saints are only an ethical reference. In the view of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, the unique mediation of Christ is inclusive. The saints cooperate with Jesus Christ in the salvation of the world. We use the

example of their lives. We can have recourse to them for their intercession. Mary has a special place in the communion of Saints: she is the closest to Jesus, and the closest to us. Accepting these differences and going to the core of what makes us tick (following Jesus today) involves reciprocal compromises. For Protestants, this involves respecting our way of understanding faith in Jesus, which includes Mary and the other saints. For Catholics, it is important to live the faith centred on the Lord, and recognise the legitimacy of the Christianity of the Reformation.

It seems that a consensus of Catholics and Protestants can be reached, without a useless demand that they accept devotion to Mary, and woven through a common vision about the Communion of Saints, an ancient point of the Apostles' Creed. In this sense, it is useful to get to know and spread the document of the Ecumenical group of Dombes: *Mary in the plan of God and the communion of Saints* (2005).

An equally important contribution comes from the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission, in the agreed statement "Mary, Grace and Hope in Christ" (2005). We cite here the original reflection of the theologian Elizabeth Johnson, in her work "Truly Our Sister. A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints" (2003). According to this author,

(The communion of Saints) points to the great and varied multitude of people who continually are connected to God and to each other, in graced

relationships of friendship and prophecy. To understand Mary, with her unique history, within this magnificent company, situates her importance for the faith within the multiple relationships of mutuality formed by the Spirit (Johnson, 2003)

OPEN CONCLUSIONS FOR THE MARISTS OF MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

We invite Communities of Brothers, Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement, principals of Marist schools, and leaders of Marist social institutions and pastoral teams to use this article to live better our devotion to Mary. Let us offer some brief open conclusions for their consideration.

- We have inherited from Father Champagnat a love for Jesus and devotion to Mary. This is who we are. However, the level of devotion of each one of us to the Mother of Jesus depends on our personal history, our spiritual journey and the cultural context in which we find ourselves. There are people who respect and admire Mary, but they do not have recourse to her intercession. In some countries Marian devotion is a cultural trait that is rooted in popular culture. In other places, especially where the majority is Protestant or of non-Christian religions, the display of Marian devotion is limited to the Catholic sphere.
- Religious plurality is a growing characteristic of various regions or nations. This leads us to develop an attitude of respect for different beliefs, rejecting proselytism in Marist educational and pastoral establishments. At the same time, we reveal with simplicity and joy our love for Mary and our confidence in her maternal presence.
- All of us, as Marists and Christians, must develop a spirituality of following Jesus as the decisive element of our existence. A prayerful reading of the Bible, in particular, is gaining importance in our time. The legitimate devotion to Mary will find a balance and avoid the exaggerations of devotionalism.
- It is necessary to get to know the reflections of Paul VI in *Marialis Cultus*. Just as important as directing our prayers to Mary is to find inspiration in her attitudes. We can only identify them by going through the texts of the Gospels of Luke and John, which present the human and spiritual portrait of Mary of Nazareth.
- Devotion to Mary, centred on Christ, is good. For this reason, we need to renew, reinterpret, and update the content and the form of our devotional practices, which can become anachronistic, as Paul VI and Pope Francis stress. We already have the criteria: a Biblical basis; in harmony with the liturgy; and ecumenical sensitivity. Also, we need to take into account the growing leadership of women and gender issues.

Let us ask Jesus that he might give us a tender love, wisdom, discernment, and audacity so that we

can practise devotion to Mary ourselves and spread it to others.

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THE HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF MARIST PATRIMONY IN CHILE (2011-2021)

**Genesis of a project to
organise, conserve
and nurture our charism¹**



**Francisco J.
Flores Sánchez²**

We are talking about archives, information, evidence, memory, identity and of civil rights, that is to say, of the past, the present, but above all of the future³

This article is concerned with a subject that has been addressed, either implicitly or explicitly, in every issue of Marist Notebooks: archives. These are the material and digital ways by which we access information that reconnects us with our origins, allows us to research them and, in the process, to cement

our distinctive identity as Marists of Marcellin Champagnat. The path we have chosen for this article will take us through several periods, throwing light on how the care for the documentary patrimony⁴ of the Institute in Chile developed, culminating in the establishment of the “Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony”

¹ This article is based on the thesis entitled “Development of Ecclesiastical Archives: The Case of the Historical Archive of the Marist Patrimony of Chile”, presented in fulfilment of the degree of Master in Archival Science at the Carlos III University (Spain) in the year 2018.

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³ Alberch Fugueras, R. – Cruz Mundet, J. (2004). *La aventura de la información. De los manuscritos del Mar Muerto al imperio Gates*. Madrid, España: Alianza, p. 7.

⁴ Documents and collections of documents of an historical character and of permanent value, whether in the private or public sphere. [Cf. Cruz Mundet, J. (2011). *Diccionario de Archivística*. Madrid, España: Alianza, p. 277]

as a heritage centre, the mission of which is to gather, organise, conserve, and generate content, as well as sharing historical documentation for people inside and outside the Institute⁵.

1. THE JOURNEY PRIOR TO OUR SETTING FORTH

Throughout the history of the Catholic Church, we see a special care for the preservation of physical and virtual assets, not only as an administrative requirement but as a useful contribution to society. In this sense, we can affirm that the monuments and objects, of every kind and style, which have formed part of the historical events through which the Church has lived, and which witness to the Church's relationships, are effective instruments for promoting evangelisation of modern people⁶. These goods of the Church are

classified in the following way: precious objects; votive items; sacred objects; cultural and ecclesiastical archives⁷. These comprise all documentation held in Church archives, whether produced by the Church or not⁸. As such, the archives of the Institute of Marist Brothers also belong to this category, within the subcategory of "archives of religious congregations".

Developing the metaphor of journey, the *Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony in Chile* (abbreviated to AHPM-CL), has taken more than one hundred years to be imagined, considered, finely tuned, and finally realised⁹. That is to say, from the time of the arrival of the Marists in Chile through until the year 2011¹⁰, we can see that the Institute carefully collected, safeguarded, preserved and organised documents in their different sectors. This work was led by Brothers as well as laymen and women who have had a sensitivity for these physical and virtual artifacts, which represent the

⁵ Cf. Centro de Memória, Documentação e Referência Itaú Cultural (2013). *Centros de Memória. Manual básico para implantação*. São Paulo, Brasil: Itaú Cultural, p. 12.

⁶ Cf. Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church (July-December 2003). "Necesidad y Urgencia del Inventario y Catalogación de los Bienes Culturales de la Iglesia". (Necessity and Urgency for an Inventory and Catalogue of the Cultural Heritage of the Church) *Apuntes*, 24. Bogotá, Colombia: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, p. 62.

⁷ Pimstein Scroggie, M. E., "Protección jurídica del Patrimonio Cultural en Chile", en: *Derecho y Religión*, Vol. 5, Año 2010. España: Delta Publicaciones – Instituto Metodológico de Derecho Eclesiástico del Estado, pp. 140-141.

⁸ Cf. Rubio Merino, P. (1998). *Archivística Eclesiástica. Nociones Básicas*. Bogotá: Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM), p. 15.

⁹ The first four Brothers arrived in Chile, in the city of Santa Rosa de Los Andes, on February 27, 1911. [Cf. Guajardo, J. – Loyola, C. (2012). *Cien años de Presencia Marista en Chile*. Santiago, Chile: Hermanos Maristas de Chile, p. 51]

¹⁰ This was the beginning of the project of the Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony in Chile, on the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the arrival of the Marist Brothers in Chile.

range of social, charismatic and cultural expressions of the Marists of Champagnat¹¹.

With our team in place – with the documents that have recorded actions and decisions relating to the Marist mission in Chile and its educational and evangelising work¹² – we needed first to plan out the route. A good place to start was to consult those who have been on the journey ahead of us, as this simplified a little our own way ahead. We found help in the *Constitutions and Statutes*.¹³ As has been said earlier, it is the Marist Brothers themselves who had to intensify and develop Marist spiritual patrimony through a knowledge of their own institutional history.¹⁴ With this in mind, these religious have produced various studies and publications¹⁵, which allowed them to preserve the story of the Institute's presence in Chile. They

also bore witness to international events which unite our country to this “global charismatic family”¹⁶.

In this first stage, where we entered into dialogue with those who began the journey towards building the “Marist patrimony” before us, we can highlight four religious who made possible the reality of the AHPM-CL through their erudite work in compiling and organising documents. The first of these is Br Gregorio *Pastor Barbero* (1927-2002), who served as archivist in the Apostolic Nunciature from 1977 to 1988. Thanks to this experience, his archival expertise was transferred to the Institute, establishing in the 1980s the first “Organisation of the Archive of the Marist Province of Chile”¹⁸. He was succeeded in the post of archivist of the Nunciature, by Br *Ulisse Baima Bugnone* (1920-2010)¹⁹, as he himself relates:

¹¹ “Patrimonio carismático cultural marista”. En: https://www.maristas.cl/sector_chile/patrimonio_marista

¹² Cf. Cruz Mundet, J. (2011). *Diccionario...*, p. 146.

¹³ We are referring to the previous *Constitutions and Statutes*, the text of 1986 with the modifications made by the General Chapters of 1993, 2001 and 2009.

¹⁴ Cf. Marist Brothers of the Schools (2011). *Constitutions and Statutes*. Rome, Italy: General House of the Marist Brothers of the Schools (Statute 164.2).

¹⁵ Among all these publications, we could stress the official bulletins: *Boletín Informativo* (1975-1989), *Hermanos* (1990-2002) and *Presencia Marista Chile* (2000-2011).

¹⁶ Cf. Marist Brothers of the Schools (2020). *Constitutions and Statutes of the Marist Brothers*. Rome, Italy: General House of the Marist Brothers of the Schools (Constitution 6).

¹⁷ Apostolic Nuncio: “The representative of the Pope in the country. As a diplomat, he fulfils appropriate functions with the government of the nation., at the same time as he exercises his pastoral role [...]”. [De Pedro, A. FMS (1990). *Diccionario de términos religiosos y afines*. Madrid, España: Verbo Divino – Paulinas, p. 170]

¹⁸ This is the first classification which we possess, and so is the beginning of a ranked and logical structure that reflects the functions and activities of the Marist Province in Chile. It is also the first classification of the documents generated by the Province. [Cf. Cruz Mundet, J. (2011). *Diccionario...*, p. 130].

¹⁹ His religious name was Michele Felice but it was made more Spanish-sounding. So, in some documents he appears as Br Miguel or Miquele Baima.

Br Gregorio Pastor, who was in charge of the Archives of the Nunciature in the time of Mgr Sodano, was sent to the A. de Ercilla Institute and Br Pedro Marcos, the Provincial, put me forward to replace him at the Nunciature, which I accepted with pleasure. From 1988 I worked each morning in the Nunciature, keeping files up to date and in good order²⁰.

As far as we can work out, Br Ulisse remained in that role until

2002²¹. It is interesting to note that the role of archivist was developed by the Marists of Chile from the 1990s. It is sufficient to recall the appointment of Br Ulisse from 1992 as “Provincial Archivist and Translator”²². This role was continued in the list of appointments until the creation of the Province of Santa María de los Andes in 2002²³.

<u>ORDEN DEL ARCHIVO</u>	
de la	
<u>PROVINCIA MARISTA</u>	
de	
<u>CHILE</u>	
TITULO I*	SPERIOR GENERAL Y VICARIO GENERAL
TITULO II*	SECRETARIA GENERAL
TITULO III*	CONSEJERO REGIONAL
TITULO IV*	GOBIERNO GENERAL DE LA CONGREGACION
TITULO V*	PROVINCIA MARISTA DE CHILE
TITULO VI*	ORGANIZACIONES INTERNACIONALES
TITULO VII*	ORGANIZACIONES NACIONALES
TITULO VIII*	PROVINCIAS MARISTAS Y ORGANIZACIONES INTERPROVINCIALES

First classification of the archives of the Marist Province of Chile (Br Gregorio Pastor, in the 1980s)

²⁰ Autobiographical document from the year 2000, entitled “Michele Felice (Ulisse Baima Bugnone)”. [Archivo Histórico Patrimonial Marista, referred to as AHPM-CL, Fondo Provincia Chile 1946-2002, “Expedientes Hermanos Fallecidos”, código: H-BBU_037].

²¹ Letter of Cardinal Angelo Sodano (Vatican Secretary of State) to Br Miguel Baima Bugnone (Apostolic Nunciature in Chile) in which he expressed his condolences for the death of Br Gregorio Pastor. June 27, 2002. [AHPM-CL, Fondo Provincia Chile 1946-2002, “Expedientes Hermanos Fallecidos”, código: H-PGB_018]

²² “Misión de los Hermanos para 1992”. Hermanos N° 7, junio 1992. Santiago, Chile: Provincia Marista Chile, p. 80.

²³ Thanks to the information obtained from Br Patricio Pino, we believe that the service of “Province Archivist” disappeared because it was taken on in an informal way by the Province Secretary, who was assisted by a secretary who worked part time in the office of the Province Secretary, which was in the community of Barrio Lindo (Santa Cruz, Bolivia).

In regard to researching, compilation and organisation of documents, we had two “pillars” for the future of the AHPM-CL. I am speaking of Brs. *Agustín Carazo Alameda* and *Jesús Bayo Mayor*. The first of these is known at an international level for his work as Postulator General in the General House between 1981 and 1991, but also for being a great promotor of research into Marist patrimony. He has also compiled materials that could be placed in an historical archive, a patrimony library and/or a Marist museum. On this point we should highlight his great work to create the *Collection of documents concerning Brother Fernando de la Fuente*²⁴, one of the Marist Brothers who were assassinated on October 31, 1996, in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo)²⁵. However, not everything is rosy, as some repositories were broken into and vandalised²⁶ on several occasions and by persons unknown, because there was not

an adequate space that was centralised and secure for these historical records.

As we bring to a close this first stage of research and review of previous experiences on the road to the establishment of the AHPM-CL, we cannot forget Br Jesús Bayo, above all because between 1994 and 2002, along with Br Miguel Baima, he saved and brought together the historical records of the Institute and of the Province into the house of formation²⁷. These had previously been dispersed or lost. This became clear during his research in order to create the text “*Violetas Siempre Vivas*” (Violets that Live Forever), where he encountered serious “difficulties to find reliable archives and sources, because there were no files or catalogues, or because there was such disorder, with documents scattered all over the place as well as a lack of classification, all of which did not help the work of historical investigation”²⁸.

²⁴ This collection refers to the gathering of documents of all types and times, produced and received by a person, family or organisation, whether public or private, in the management of his affairs, business or roles, and conserved as evidence of these, for the information they contain and for their value for history and knowledge. [Cf. Cruz Mundet, J. (2011). *Diccionario...*, p. 176]

²⁵ One year after the tragedy of the martyrs of Bugobe, in 1997, the Superior General, Br Benito Arbués, asked Br Agustín to begin to compile all the remaining materials that gave an account of the life of Br Fernando de la Fuente. This request and the subsequent organisation resulted in the 28th monograph of the magazine *Hermanos* (October 1997) and the book, *Santo para los demás... Evocación del Hermano Fernando de la Fuente, el “chileno” martirizado en Zaire* (2006) (*Saint for Others... Memories of Brother Fernando de la Fuente, the “Chilean”, martyred in Zaire*). [Cf. Carazo, A. FMS (June, 10, 2021). Génesis del “Centro de Patrimonio Marista – Chile”. Santiago, Chile, p. 4. Unedited manuscript of the Recollections of Br Agustín Carazo A.]

²⁶ Cf. Carazo, A. FMS (June 10, 2021). *Génesis...*, p. 3.

²⁷ At present it is the Central House for Marist Animation, called “Br Gilberto Poza Arce”.

²⁸ Bayo, J. FMS (2011). “*Violetas Siempre Vivas*. Reseñas biográficas de Hermanos Maristas Chile 1915-1978. Tomo I”, en: Cepam Vínculo, in 784071, p. 138.

Since there did not exist any coherent order, or clear categories, we cannot strictly speaking refer to it as an archive. The work of Br Agustín and Br Jesús is relevant in two ways: first, they are compilers who used what they found in order to spread knowledge of the cultural and charismatic heritage of Marist Chile; second, they made us aware of a lack of a proper Marist archive in Chile and a necessity to create one. This archive would safeguard, organise and allow access to information by all those who wished to know the roots of the Institute in our country, as well as knowledge of the life of Marcellin Champagnat and the first Marist Brothers.

2. CEPAM SMA: IS MORE LOVED BECAUSE IT IS MORE KNOWN

Continuing with the journey metaphor, our cases were now packed and prepared for the journey. We were aware of the witness of those who have gone before us on this path of preserving Marist patrimony in Chile. So, were we ready to set out on our adventure? Did we have all that was necessary? Stop! We still had no

map and we had not chosen a specific route for getting to our destination. The reason for this was that at the beginning we did not know where we wanted to go. We only had a lot of enthusiasm to get out and seek this “something” that would permit us to bring about that “Marcellin Champagnat, his Work and his Charism be more loved because they were more known and experienced”²⁹.

For this reason, at the beginning of 2009, the Provincial Council of the Santa María de los Andes Province, requested Br Patricio Pino to produce a plan, by August of that year, to form brothers and lay people in Marist Patrimony³⁰. The request was made to this Brother because he had worked on a project that is detailed below, called CEPAM SMA, inspired by the formation plan that the Province of Western Mexico had at that time: *Centro de Estudios del Patrimonio Marista (Centre for the Study of Marist Patrimony)*. To the initials of the centre in Spanish (CEPAM) were added the initials representing our Province: SMA³¹. Finally, a year later, the go-ahead was given for the implementation of the program for the Diploma in Marist Patrimony in the Province, endorsed by the Marcelino Champagnat University of Lima (Peru). As such, this diploma program was

²⁹ “¿Qué es CEPAM?”. Recuperado desde: <http://cepam.maristas.cl/>

³⁰ *Acts of the 37th session of the Provincial Council of the Santa María de los Andes Province*, March 2009.

³¹ Pino, P. (F.M.S.) and Alonso, S. (F.M.S.) (2017). Proyecto CEPAM Santa María de los Andes – 2010-2017. *Informe para ser presentado en el tercer encuentro de la Red de Centros de Memoria, Porto Alegre, Brasil, noviembre 2017*. Provincia Santa María de los Andes, p. 1. (CEPAM project in the Santa Maria de los Andes Province, 2010-2017. Paper to be presented at the third meeting of the Network of Centers for Memory).

³² *Acts of the 42nd session of the Provincial Council of the Santa María de los Andes Province*, March 2010.

from the beginning a fundamental part of the CEPAM SMA project³².

A year before the celebration of the centenary of the Institute in Chile (2011), there were a lot of preparations taking place, among which was the preparation of a book *Cien años de Presencia Marista en Chile (One Hundred Years of Marist Presence in Chile)*, and the first version of the Diploma in Marist Patrimony. For both these projects a great quantity of documentation was required in a variety of forms. A specialised bibliography in Marist history, both national and international, especially focused on the origins of the Institute in France in the nineteenth century was needed. Was it viable at this time help both projects by creating a patrimonial library and a Marist archive?

The proposal to develop CEPAM SMA left an open door for the venture. It was proposed to have various pivotal points which were centred on the integration of a range of resources – human, physical, technological – and the provision of an infrastructure, all of which were oriented towards encouraging people to approach the Marist charism by accessing the documentation that we could provide, which is to say, transforming them into cultural and historical sources.

Action Points for the CEPAM SMA Project (Br. Patricio Pino, 2018)

- Study proposal in order to bring the Marist charismatic and cultural patrimony to people

- Requirements for Provinces for the rescue, conservation and spread of the charismatic and cultural Marist patrimony
- Physical and virtual space necessary to safeguard and manage the patrimony of the institution, whether bibliographical, documentary or 3-dimensional
- Connection with other similar bodies, at the provincial, congregational, ecclesiastical and socio-cultural levels, at different stages.
- Proposals for formation, publication and investigation in this area to the different kinds of people involved in Marist life and mission
- Census of human resources, capable of managing, investigating and/or spreading this knowledge of Marist life and mission

3. THE THREE STAGES OF THE HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF MARIST PATRIMONY OF CHILE (2011-2015)

The open door presented by CEPAM SMA and the goal of resolving the deficiencies that had become clear in the first section are what led us to create the *Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony in Chile*.

In September 2010 in an informal conversation, Carolina Loyola who was one of the historians in charge of research and editing for *Cien años de Presencia Marista en Chile*, told us that the state of conservation of the original documents and photo-

graphs was rather poor, with no apparent organisation, except for their origin, which is to say, from which school they came or the person involved. Additionally, the books and periodicals had little structure. Their thematic arrangement seemed to be shaped by the immediate needs of courses or other formation programs such as the Diploma in Marist Patrimony at Marcelino Champagnat University.

Finally, we headed out through this door towards our destination. We began the adventure of a lifetime, which later turned into our vocation. We learned about this great heritage in the Marist life. With our suitcase full of dreams, desires, ideas, resolution and uncertainty, we had a clear goal: to organise the information we had so that it might be accessible to all those people who were interested in our Marist patrimony.

The first steps on the journey towards the anticipated AHPM-CI were very encouraging. The first professional approach to the Institute was by means of a meeting which took place on March 11, 2011, with Br Patricio Pino. At that time, he was the reference point for the

researchers working on the history of the one hundred years of the Institute in Chile. After he explained to us the pedagogical plan and the approach to the sources of the Marist patrimony that formed the basis for CEPAM SMA, along with the urgent need of a “patrimonial library” that would be capable of sustaining the kind of research proposed by the method used in the Diploma in Marist Patrimony, our turn arrived to explain the project for the creation of a Marist Archive in Chile, particularly oriented towards the structure of an historical archive³³. We made the appeal that documentation associated with the historical, cultural and spiritual journey of an institution should not be neglected. All this accumulation of documents, which are often only kept as a unused “treasure”, needed to be revised, organised and managed with the goal that the information gained be an accessible source for spiritual, historical and especially Marist patrimony. The idea was that communities would get to know their history and that the schools, made up of religious and laymen and women, would appropriate the Marist charism, not only in words, but also by means of concrete actions³⁴.

³³ An historical archive is that in which documents are conserved that were selected for their permanent value, in conditions that guarantee their integrity and the possibility of being passed on to future generations. As such these constitute part of the historical patrimony of nations, and thus of humanity. [Cf. Cruz Mundet, J. (2011). *Diccionario...*, p. 82]

³⁴ Cf. Flores, F. (2011). *Proyecto Archivo Histórico de la Congregación de los Hermanos Maristas en Chile*. Santiago, Chile, pp. 5-6.

This is how we began our journey in 2011, the first part of which took five years and then continued. At the first meeting, we created what we called a “patrimonial path”, which was made up of three consecutive projects, and which allowed us to continue to connect with the progress of each previous stage. We made continual progress, but to do so we had to make great spiritual, intellectual and physical efforts³⁵:

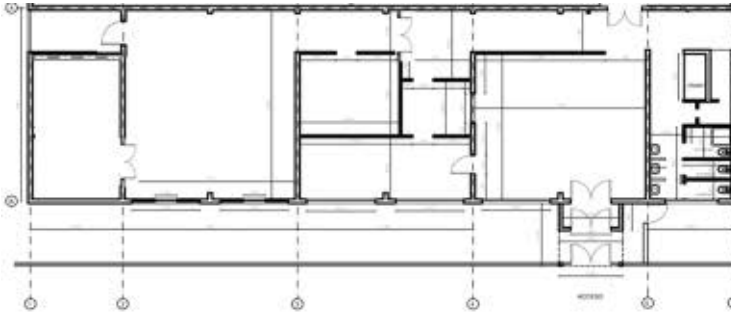
- The first of the projects was called “The Historical Archive of the Institute of Marist Brothers in Chile”, and was completed between August 2011 and October 2012. Our first objective was to obtain a general view of what we actually had. Then we wanted to know how all of this was conserved. What improvements could we make in the “Patrimony Room”³⁶? Our principal work was to carry out a survey of the contents of the room and begin to reorganise them, trying to connect the collections (both objects and books) and the groups of documents.
- The second stage was undertaken between March 2013 and August 2014. This was “Project II of the Historical-Patrimonial Archive for the Institute of the Marist Brothers”, which was focused on connecting the collections and sets of documents of the “Patrimony Room” with those found in the basement of the Retirement and Nursing Care Home *Monseñor Nuncio Sótero Sanz N° 189*. We changed the containers and cleaned things up. We also went through the book collection, removing copies that were not necessary and/or that were in a poor state.
- Finally, a third project unrolled between September 2014 and August 2015, which continued the previous two projects, revealing the necessity of a physical space adequate for the proper conservation of historical documents. Also, we wanted a space to hold the patrimonial library and some three dimensional objects. In this, also we were asked to plan the physi-

³⁵ On this point I would like to highlight the work of Patricio Valenzuela Arévalo and Camilo Alarcón Bustos who were part of various stages of this “dream-project” and as such, are guarantors that it will continue to develop.

³⁶ This is the meeting room on the third floor of the Central House for Marist Animation (Casa Central de Animación Marista “Hno. Gilberto Poza Arce”), where a varnished wooden cabinet built into the wall was installed, in the style of a library, that would contain three dimensional objects, book collections, and documents relating to Marist cultural patrimony in Chile.

cal installation of the Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony in Chile, with all the technical re-

quirements, for security and the environment which this new institution would require³⁷.



Plan of the structure of the Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony in Chile (scale 1: 50).

4. THE DREAM BECOMES REALITY: INSTALLATION OF AHPM-CL (2015-2017)

Approved in February 2015 by the Mission Council of the Chilean Sector, the plan for the installation of an Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony involved a rethink of the architecture of three adjoining classrooms in the library of the *Instituto Alonso de Ercilla* in Santiago. An internal remodelling of these areas was required along with the acqui-

sition of furniture, equipment and specialised resources for the maintenance of historical archives³⁸. For what was considered, an investment for the conservation of documents was required, which would be adequate for each space. In this sense, a specialised type of furnishing was considered, which would allow for access, safeguarding and security of the documents as well as the information they contain³⁹. To make all of this a reality we focused on these objectives:

- *Finding a space for storage: the Archive Room (for paper docu-*

³⁷ Cf. Pino, P. FMS (2014). Proyecto Archivo Histórico-Patrimonial de la Congregación de los Hermanos Maristas en Chile III. A) Para la instalación física del citado Archivo B) Para continuar ingresando material histórico a Archivum FMS. Presentación del proyecto para solicitud de autorización y recursos al Delegado de Misión y su Consejo, 30 de junio de 2014. Santiago, Chile: Provincia Santa María de los Andes - Sector Chile, p. 1. (Project for the Historical-Patrimonial Archive of the Congregation of Marist Brothers in Chile. a) For the physical installation of the Archive; b) To continue gathering together historical materials for the FMS Archive. Presentation of the Project in order to seek authorisation and funds from the Delegate for Missions and his Council, June 30, 2014.)

³⁸ Cf. Reyes, E. (2015). *Boletín 2. Consejo de Misión Sector Chile*. Pungal, 19-21 de febrero de 2015. Sector Chile, Provincia Santa María de los Andes, p. 6.

³⁹ Cf. Cruz Mundet, J. R. (2011). *Diccionario...*, pp. 212-213.

ments); the Photographs, Videos and Sound Archive; the Marist Patrimonial Library; the Library for Specialised Research; and the Room for Marist copies. This area counted for 60% of the AHPM-CL.

- *Establishing a physical space for work and management:* Office for the Director of AHPM-CL (Archivist); the Room for Conserving and Technical Processes (where evaluation of the state of conservation is carried out, preventative cleaning, along with the processes of description, cataloguing, inventory and digitalisation, which is to say, where the focus is on the treatment of the Marist patrimony.) This area corresponds to 20% of the AHPM-CL.
- *Temperature and adequate humidity,* which must be controlled for the different elements of the archives, dividing them in separate parts of the AHPM-CL for proper maintenance and stability (paper, photographs, glass plates, slides, negatives, videocassettes, cassettes and three dimensional objects, among other things).

After the installation and prior arrangement of the documentary patrimony of the Marists in Chile, on November 15, 2016, the longed-for inauguration of the Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony finally took place. To this event were invited the rectors of the twelve educational works of the Chilean Sector, along with all the Brothers who had served as Community Leaders, and Br Saturnino Alonso, Provincial of the Santa María de los Andes Province (2014-2021)⁴⁰.

As was said at the inauguration, it is also important to consider the conditions that are to be found both outside and inside the building of our archive, and for this reason, at the beginning of 2017, an evaluation was requested from the National Centre for Conservation and Restoration to certify the standard of its installations and the management of its collections. "The request allowed professionals to check that in the process of creating the collection and getting the space ready, preventative conservation was incorporated at an early stage, to ensure an ordered collection, stored in spaces under controlled conditions and with security systems incorporated"⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Cfr. Jara, F. (17 de noviembre de 2016). "Se inaugura Archivo-Histórico Patrimonial Marista". Recuperado desde: <https://www.maristas.cl/noticia/2016/11/bm90aWNpYTM=>

⁴¹ Arriagada, M. y Correa, M. (2017). *Informe de Visita al Archivo Histórico Patrimonial Marista*. 14 de junio de 2017. Santiago, Chile: Laboratorio de Papel y Libros, Centro Nacional de Conservación y Restauración, p. 3.



Frontispiece
of the Marist
Historical-Patrimonial
Archive of Chile
(2016)

5. AT THE SERVICE OF THE MISSION: THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND MARIST PATRIMONY (2018-2021)

The Archive and Marist Patrimony Department is now a set of services offering a range of assistance and formation to all areas of leadership, to the Delegate for Mission and his Council, and to all the apostolates of the Marist Chilean Sector. It promotes the organisation and management of information, research, and identity and institutional memory, shining a light on our Marist cultural patrimony⁴².

This was created in 2018, with the goal of managing in a connected way the Historical Marist Patri-

monial Archive, the Marist Museum, the Marist Patrimonial Library, and the Consultation Library. In charge is the Executive Secretary for Mission in the Chilean Sector, working with an interdisciplinary team of professionals in the areas of Patrimonial Education, Museum Studies, Archival Science, Library Science, Historiography, Spirituality and Cultural Patrimony, all of whom work together in the services of conservation, diffusion, animation and transmission of our charismatic Marist cultural patrimony⁴³.

Every day we seek to consolidate ourselves as a network of services, offering to the Chilean Sector sustainable methods to conserve, organise and make available the information, through a legal framework, a physical and technological

⁴² Cf. "Lineamiento Sectoriales", en: Secretariado de Misión y Coordinadores de Ámbitos (2019). Plan Estratégico 2019 - 2025, Sector Chile, Provincia Santa María de los Andes, p. 17.

⁴³ Los integrantes del Departamento de Archivo y Patrimonio Marista son Amelia Trejo, Hno. Patricio Pino y Francisco Flores.

infrastructure, with people who are highly qualified and members of the Santa María de los Andes Province and of the Network of Marist Memorial Centres in the South American Region⁴⁴. We seek to educate, animate, make available, and pass on our charism and identity as Marists of Marcellin Champagnat⁴⁵.

6. AN HISTORICAL ARCHIVE ADAPTED TO AND IN ACCORD WITH THE NEEDS

The *Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony in Chile* from August 2011 to November 2016, was a dream that became reality with the help of the Institute and the vision of several people who were sure that the documentary evidence that constituted our history could not nor should not be lost, eliminated, plundered or neglected. The achievements during 2017 and 2018 were the fruit of the vocation that was conceived around historical documents and formation in Marist patrimony.

A new challenge has been envisaged for in the period 2019 to 2025. As part of the strategic plan of the Chilean Sector, the Department of Archives and Marist Patrimony intends to realise the full management of documents⁴⁶. This is an enormous initiative, which at times seems unattainable, although, we have confidence that we can create and consolidate a plan of classification that would allow for a systematic and functional organisation of the documents of the Institute in Chile and in the Santa María de los Andes Province.

A priori, one of the objectives of this work, as our readers would know, is how to imagine an archive in the twenty-first century, discarding old and anachronistic images that we may have in our minds. An archive is not a dingy basement, dark and full of old and dusty papers, where an old person known as the “the archivist” hovers as the guardian of the space and of his treasury of documents. This person decides the how, when and to whom to give access to “his old papers”. There

⁴⁴ In November 2018, the Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony of Chile hosted the technical visit of the 4th Meeting of the Network of Marist Memorial Centres in the South American region [“4º Encontro da Rede de Centros de Memória Marista Região América Sul”. Recuperado desde: <http://memorias.umbrasil.org.br/2018/11/07/4o-encontro-da-rede-de-centros-de-memoria-marista-regiao-america-sul/>]

⁴⁵ “Ámbito de Archivo y Patrimonio Marista”. Recuperado desde: https://www.maristas.cl/sector_chile/patrimonio_marista

⁴⁶ This is the archival treatment to which documents are subjected in the first phases of their life-cycle, oriented towards a more effective, efficient and economical use and that decisions are taken and evidence is obtained from the various organisations involved in their administrative management. [Cf. Cruz Mundet, J. R. (2011). *Diccionario...*, p. 186].

is nothing further from the reality of a modern “archive”⁴⁷. The term refers to a whole system of management that effectively and efficiently provides administration, and that guarantees the proper creation of documents, their treatment, conservation, access and their communication⁴⁸. It is precisely through these processes that the dream of an Historical Archive of Marist Patrimony in Chile was realised between 2011 and 2016. And, from 2017, the Archive – both for the Sector and for the Santa María de los Andes Province – was developed increasingly as an entity that would guarantee the rights of children, adolescents and young people.

We have reached the end of this journey, one on which we have travelled for longer than was originally proposed, but that is precisely what happens with archives, documents and the information that they contain: we find them in the present but they take us back to the past which in turn provides basis for constructing our future where we define and live today the dream of Marcellin, We do so through an authentic re-

vitalisation which can be discovered in the physical and virtual inheritance that has been left to us, all of which comprises charismatic Marist cultural patrimony.



Hall of the archives

⁴⁷ Etimologically the word comes from the Latin *archivum*, which in turn comes from the Greek, *arkheion*, which was also known as the residence of the magistrates. [Cfr. Cruz Mundet, J. R. (2016). *Archivística. Gestión de documentos y administración de archivos*. Madrid, España: Alianza, p. 68]

⁴⁸ Cfr. Cruz Mundet, J. (2011). *Diccionario ...*, p. 78.



OUTLINE OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE

The General Secretariat of the Institute and the ACCESS database



André Lanfrey, fms



Adrien Mercier, fms

In the article, “Computerisation of our Archives” (*Marist Notebooks*, N.20, June 2004,) Br Paul Sester mentioned a decision which is important for present day researchers :

When the General Administration undertook to computerise the files of the Brothers, the Archives department began recording some 35,000 files of Brothers who were registered since 1817 up to the present day.

Br Paul speaks of a large file made up of index cards, measuring 21.8 x 9.2 cm¹. On the front is the personal data for each Brother and the stages of his religious life. On the back, there is a list of communities of which he was a member.

The digitilisation of the records has made possible the rapid use of the immense body of information

relating to most of those who have been part of the Institute. Several Brothers in the General Administration had dedicated themselves to this long-term task. Br Paul mentions their names : Br Fernand Ouellette (Canadian), Br Joseph Chang (Chinese), Br Santiago Rosa Urgquiza (former Provincial of Chile, who assisted the Secretary General 1998-99), and finally Br Ernest Censi (from France). When he wrote in 2004, Br Paul stated that the work was not finished “because the version of the files which contained the positions occupied by the Brothers was held back for a later time.” Despite this, the digitalised files, produced with ACCESS, were well advanced, as Br Jean Ronzon bears witness. He became Secretary General after the Chapter of 2001, and he gave the following information:

¹ The oldest are often the thickest : about 1 mm. Some files are in a smaller format.

I discovered the ACCESS database for the Brothers from the whole Institute when I arrived in Rome in September 2003. It came under my overall oversight, as the Secretary General, and more directly it was the responsibility of Br Henri Réocreux until July 2004.

It was a laywoman from Rome, Erika Gamberale, who ran the office of statistics until July 2006. Gabriela Scanavino took over after having worked in the Archives. A year later, Emanuela Lisciarelli followed in this position and continues in this role until the present day.

The ACCESS database comprises close to 38,000 records². Each date of entry into the computer having been recorded, we know that the first file was entered on November 11, 1988 and the last on August 3, 2010. However, as will be pointed out later by Emmanuela, the files have undergone some corrections. In order to write this article, I used the ACCESS database kept in the Secretariat of the Hermitage Province. Br Colin Chalmers, who checked this work, used a more recent version which has benefited from some corrections.

Having used this database, Br Jean Ronzon has evaluated the good points and the limits:

This database was excellent for finding the curriculum vitae of a living Brother as well as

anyone who had died. In addition, each Brother has been assigned a number which is very useful to avoid confusions. However, the database was becoming less useful for further research.

After attempting to update the database, in 2010, the General Administration asked Br Marcelo de Brito to improve it. However, he preferred to build a different database, called Kosmos, which has now become the standard. Emanuela Lisciarelli has spoken of her own experience :

I began to use the ACCESS database in 2009, when I started working in the statistics office. I updated the database with information from 2009 to December 31, 2015. Starting from the first of January 2016, the data was entered exclusively in Kosmos, the latest version of which will soon be available for the Provinces.

I did not participate in the creation of the ACCESS system but I worked solely on data entry. Therefore, I can only describe that ... The "main input section of ACCESS" (the grid of pre-established fields to be filled in) provided for the entry of personal details of the Brothers: name, surname, place and date of birth, as well as the names of parents, religious name, dates of postulancy, noviciate, scholasticate as well as the dates of profession and the province to which the brother belonged. There was a rough guide about how to insert the data, but over time, this was lost ...

There was a drop down menu in which one could identify the present community, while on the right, could be created a history of the places of

² Information provided by Br. Adrien Mercier, Secretary of L'Hermitage Province. Br Colin Chalmers has pointed out that the files from 2015 to 2018 only contain the name of the brother and the date of first profession.

residence and the roles filled over the years. The major problem with this type of system, such as what had been developed, was the overlay of data. Any change to the database left no trace of what preceded it ...

Finally, Emmanuela judged that “this system worked well for that time”, but that “the idea of creating a new kind of database (Kosmos) came out principally from the need to keep a history of the roles the Brothers filled and the communities where they lived over time.”

These files give us an overview of this digitalisation operation which is still in progress. As researchers, we know that, despite its limits, ACCESS still has its uses. However, as we do not have any clear information on the files that served as a basis for this software, I would like to situate this tool in the history of the administrative organisation of the Institute, which goes back to its first years and, if possible, date its starting point.

1. OUTLINE OF A HISTORY OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE INSTITUTE

The first years of the Institute, from 1817 to 1822, is a period with-

out real organisation. It was in 1822 that Champagnat began to keep a register of those who entered. Then in 1825, Fr Courveille opened a register of expenses and income. After this came the register of those who took the habit (OFM3/497-568) ; those who took temporary vows (OFM3/569-574) perpetual vows (575-598); and those who died (599-603). These are contained in Volume 3 of *Origine des Frères Maristes (Origin of the Marist Brothers)*, published in 2011 by Br Paul Sester. Also Br Avit provides some background on the beginning of this administrative work in the Institute (Annales, 1829, #97):

Until this year (1829) there was no register of those who were clothed in the habit or those who took vows. In order to cover this lacuna, the Father started three registers: one was for those who took the habit, another for temporary vows and the third for perpetual vows. Each Brother was invited, according to his abilities, to write down the details of his reception of the habit, his temporary vows and his [final] profession in one of the registers. Several of those who left the Institute were not recorded³. Others wrote the details of their reception of the habit and their temporary vows in the respective registers⁴ and so their names are not to be found in the register of those who were clothed in the habit. When our successors read these three registers, they will come across some confusion as no chronological order was followed.

³ Br. Avit estimates that about 20 left the Institute before 1829 (see p. 316). There are also the brothers who died young who are in the same situation.

⁴ This is a rather clumsy expression. It means that certain brothers mentioned the date of their clothing in the register of temporary or perpetual vows.

The year 1829 is a useful marker, although it is approximate, because the institution of the vows in 1826 made it important to keep records of those who went further than making simple promises⁵. The keeping of the registers was still less than rigorous because the clothing ceremonies and the professions were not recorded on the day of the event, but on various occasions and in one or other of the registers. For example, the taking of the habit of Br Stanislas Fayol, on October 25, 1822, is not mentioned except in the report of his perpetual profession, on October 11, 1826. Br Antoine Couturier (OFM3 p. 244), who made his perpetual vows on October 11, 1826, mentioned that he had been admitted to the novitiate on January 1, 1819, and that he took the habit on August 15 of the same year. It is not until 1833 that the reports of taking vows cease to mention the date of entry and the taking of the habit. From 1836, the number of Brothers increased, and the individual reports of profession were replaced by collective lists. It was the same for the taking of the habit from 1838. Therefore, the administration in regard to personnel was organised between 1826 and 1838.

Regarding relations with the world outside the Institute, Br Avit tells us, in the *Annales de l'institut* (1834 #1):

At the beginning, the Congregation did not have a secretariat. Most often the Reverend Father had verbal dealings with the communities or with the founders (of schools) who asked him for Brothers. The majority of these letters which he wrote were not kept ... The good Father ... organised a secretariat whose duty was to keep copies of letters sent, as well as taking care of current writing tasks ... The secretary first kept the register without following the chronological order. He recorded official entries, mixed together from 1829, 1830, 1831, and 1833 with those of 1834, etc. We also have good reasons to believe that he omitted quite a few entries.

Despite all these reservations and approximations, the year 1829 perhaps has best claim for the creation of a permanent secretariat at Notre-Dame de L'Hermitage. This secretariat had two functions: to compile the commitments of the Brothers and catalogue the administrative correspondence and other papers of the Congregation. Br Avit does not give us the name of the secretary, who, in his opinion, was not very competent. It was not Br François, of whom it is said (*Annales* 1820 #25): "He was the future secretary, the councillor of the Founder and his successor" who, became the right arm of the Founder, and was capable of administering the Institute in his absence⁶. His title of secretary prepared him to become "Director General" of the Institute in 1839. The less than competent

⁵ However, for Br. Avit, the secretariate was not well organised and so, prior to 1833, figures are approximate (*Annales* 1833 § 1) :« [1]

⁶ *Les Annales*, (1835 § 116) cite Champagnat's agenda for 1835 : « It is necessary that Br. François carry out the functions of the secretary until a new order can be established »,

Brother, as was suggested by Br Avit, was no more than a clerical assistant, a “keeper of the books” as was said in those times. Nonetheless, the word “secretary” covered two distinct functions.

We go back in the *Annales* to 1838 (#406) to find the nomination of Br Babylas (Pierre Geay) as “the first official secretary of the Institute”. He was born in 1821 at Saint Symphorien-le-Château (in modern times it is called Saint Symphorien-sur-Coise); he took the habit in 1838. As he suffered from epileptic seizures, this prevented him from teaching. He fulfilled this task for about fifteen years (1838-1853). It was actually an epileptic seizure which caused his death while in office. Over the years, he certainly acquired a high level of competence. He took on his role at a time of great change and dynamic developments in the Institute. He died after the first session of the Chapter of 1852-54 which must have imposed a heavy workload on him.

His successor was Br Marie-Ausone (Louis Barrot), born at Rivede-Gier in 1809, not far from Notre-Dame de L’Hermitage, and he too entered the Institute in 1838. He was a late vocation, probably not very suitable for teaching. According to the records, he was secretary on three occasions: in 1847-1851, as

assistant to Br Babylas, then as his successor in 1854-57. It is probable that the secretary in the years 1857-1860 was Br Marie-Jubin who, in a famous letter⁷, described himself, in March 1858, as the Secretary General, before being fired from this central position. After three years spent teaching in three different places, Br Marie-Ausone became secretary once again, at Saint Genis-Laval this time, when the secretariat, along with the Mother House, was moved in 1858. However, he only remained one year, as assistant to Br Euthyme (Claude Collard), the first holder of the title of Secretary General of the Institute. He filled the role until 1868.

The transition from Br Marie-Ausone to Br Euthyme indicates a complete change in status. From that time on, the secretary would be a prominent Brother, working in close contact with the Superior General, more or less as had happened with the Fr Champagnat-François pairing. Br Euthyme later became Assistant General. Without a doubt it was in his time and under his direction that the work to record the details of the Brothers was undertaken.⁸ It was this that served as the main basis for the computerised files for the ACCESS program. In Volume 1 of the deliberations of the General Council, for November 13, 1865, we find :

⁷ He denounced the attitude of the superiors at the Chapter of 1852-54 to the Roman Congregation of Propaganda Fidei. He accused the superiors of authoritarianism and the introduction of rules which were not according to the tradition.

⁸ Most of these are in the following format : 21.8 cm high and 9.2 cm wide. There also is a smaller format : 18.8 X 6.

Br Euthyme will enquire of the Brothers of Christian Schools regarding the methods they have for visiting their institutions and for establishing their Secretariat, etc. ...

Before 1860, the secretaries certainly had assistants on occasion, but the ACCESS files hardly give us any names. Under Br Euthyme, the under-secretary from 1865-66 was Br Marie-Raphaël (Claude Passot). When he became Assistant, Br Euthyme was replaced by Br Juste (Auguste Constant), who was Secretary General from 1868 to 1876. He had Br Jean-Félix (Antoine Faure) as an assistant from 1868-69, and from 1874, Br Tite (J.M. Debresse). Unlike Br Euthyme, Br Juste was not a big personality, but Br Avit tells us (1867 #42) that Br Félicité was nominated as assistant in 1867 to help and even replace Br Jean-Baptiste, who was very sick and was also an Assistant General at Saint Genis-Laval. As he did not want this assistance, Br Félicité had no job and he replaced Br Euthyme as Secretary General, perhaps without having the title. Br Juste, in fact, only became the first assistant to Br. Félicité. The Annales mention (1869 #21) that Brothers Pémen and Paulien were under-secretaries⁹.

Br Eubert (Pierre Meunier) who succeeded Br Juste (1873 #17),

followed a similar path to Br Euthyme: Assistant General from 1863 to 1876, then became Secretary General from 1876 to his death in 1893. He was assisted by Brothers Tite, André-Marie, Flavius, and Emilianus. It was with his nomination that the function of Secretary General passed from being an administrative role in the Congregation to that of a major superior. The decision was taken at the General Chapter, on August 18, 1876, after the approval by secret ballot, of the following motion: "*The Brother Procurator General and the Brother Secretary General will be part of the Chapter as full members*"¹¹, on the condition that they are nominated to their positions, by secret ballot and by the absolute majority of the votes of the Members of the Regime gathered together." Br Eubert was succeeded by Br Pierre-Joseph (Philibert Fayolle), who had previously visited and then continued the work at Grugliasco after 1903.

We have now sketched out the history of the administrative organization of the Institute, in a few broad strokes. It was between 1826 and 1829 that it appeared necessary to have an administrative back-up when the members started taking vows, as well as there being a

⁹ In the meeting of June 24, 1876, the General Council envisaged "for the Secretariat, Brs. Donat, as Secretary General, and Paulien and André-Marie, as adjunct secretaries."

¹⁰ His biography has him as Secretary General from 1874 to 1893.

¹¹ That is as members ex-officio.

more intense recruitment and more numerous apostolates. It was a little later, around 1835, that Br François became the first Secretary General of the Institute, without having the title. With him began the double role of “secretary” which referred to one who simply kept the records and registers as well as a Brother, vested with real power of

a superior. In 1876, what started as the task of a functionary of the Institute finally gave access to ex-officio membership of the Chapter. It was still not a position equivalent to that of Assistant General. The Secretary General was nominated by the “Regime” [i.e. Superior General and Assistants General] and not elected by the Chapter.

Annex : List of secretaries mentioned in the ACCESS file

Religious name	Civil name	Dates	Location of Secretariat	Dates of Service	Title
Babylas	Geay, Pierre	1821-1854	NDH	1838-1854	Secretary
Marie-Ausone	Barrot, Louis	1809-1886	NDH	1847-1851 1854-57 1860-61	Secretary
Marie-Jubin ?				1857-60 ?	Secr. General ?
Euthyme	Collard, Cl.	1821-1899	SGL	1860-1868	Secr. General
Marie-Raphaël	Passot, Claude-H.	1841-1911	SGL	1865-1866	Under Secretary.
Jean-Félix	Faure, Antoine	1846-1917	SGL	1868-1869	Secretary
Juste	Constant, Aug.	1818-1891	SGL	1868-1876	Secr. General.
Tite	Debresse, J-M	1829-1912	SGL	1874-1903	Secretary
André-Marie	Grizard, André	1856-1890	SGL	1876-1877	Secretary
Eubert	Meunier, Pierre	1826-1893	SGL	1876-1893	Secr. General.
Flavius	Françon, Gabr.	1822-1899	SGL	1877-1878	Secretary
Emilianus	Grouiller, Paul J.H.	1863-1903 (S)	SGL	1885-1894	Secretary
Pierre-Joseph	Fayolle, Phil.	1854-1922	SGL	1893-1905	Secr. General.

In the course of the 20th century, the post of Secretary General only became clear rather slowly, though the process began in 1860. In 1858

the office moved from L’Hermitage to St Genis-Laval. Throughout the 20th century, the office moved three times: in 1903, 1939 and 1961. One

of the important tasks of the Secretaries General, starting from 1909, was the preparation of the *Bulletin*

de l'Institut. I have attempted to reconstruct the list.

Religious name	Civil name	Dates	Location	Dates of service	Title
Gérald	Flahaut, Charles	1829-1909	Grugliasco	1905-1907	Secr. General ¹²
Dalmace	Laurans, J. L.	1862-1929	Grugliasco	1907-1929	Secr. General
Jean-Emile	Barraud, Emile	1878-1971	Grugliasco	1929-1938	Secr. General
Avit	Belmon, J.B.	1871-1954	SGL	1938-1954	Secr. General
Régis-Aimé	Perreault, Aimé	1903-1957	SGL	1955-1957	Assistant Secr. General ¹³
Marie-Basilide	Fréléchoz, J.	1909-2005	SGL	1957-1958	Assistant ¹⁴
Joannès -Eugène	Minot, Eugène	1902-1970	SGL/ Rome ¹⁵	1958-1967	Secr. General
Pierre-Raphaël	Michel, Gabriel	1920-2008	Rome	1967-1976	Secr. General
Paul-André	Sester, Paul	1926-2020	Rome	1976-1985	Secr. General
Yves-Marcellin	Yves, Thénosz	1931-1994	Rome	1985-1993	Secr. General
	Grande Galindo, José-Luis		Rome	1993-2000	Secr. General

¹² Circular, XIII, *Chronology*, p. 489-491. Annex IX of the Chronology of 2010 (p. 523-525) is more or less exact. Starting from 1893, Br Gérald was assistant, with a particular role in legal matters. This was an administrative position, which was very close to that of the Secretary General.

¹³ Br Régis-Aimé, assistant from 1948, became gravely ill with heart problems in 1951. That is the reason why he continued to hold the title of Assistant but in fact he replaced Br Avit as Secretary General from 1955. His tasks as Assistant were taken on by Br Thomas Austin in 1953. Br Régis-Aimé died suddenly in 1957.

¹⁴ Br Marie-Basilide took over the secretariat from Br Régis-Aimé until the Chapter of 1958. He was elected Assistant General, but resigned in 1960 and was replaced by Br Gildo Cotta (1960-67). Both worked on the Bulletin of the Institute for a while without having the title of Secretary General.

¹⁵ General House moved to Rome in 1961.

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE RECORDS WHICH SERVED AS A BASIS FOR THE ACCESS DATABASE

It was when Br Yves Thénoz was Secretary General that the project to digitalise our sources was born. These were mainly the 35,000 records concerning our Brothers to which Br Paul Sester alludes. However, other sources were also used, notably the registers which began in 1829, of which I have already written. In 1854, the *Rules of Government* (Ch. III, section 3, article 6) provided that the Superior General, in order to know the aptitudes of each Brother :

will keep a register that contains the names of all the Brothers, their age, the dates of their admission to the novitiate, their clothing, and when they made the vow of obedience, as well as their profession. The register will also contain notes about their bodily and spiritual qualities, their talents, their character, the kind of judgement they possess, the knowledge they have acquired and finally for what they are suited. All these things will be written down in chronological order.

Br François had certainly not waited till 1854 to have, in one form or another, such information which constituted a sort of essential file to manage a body of 1,500 brothers. The General Chapter did nothing more than make official a practice that was already in existence. Nevertheless, we speak of a “register” and not of a file.

Br Colin Chalmers speaks also of later files.

Until around 1950, data about a Brother were recorded in a file containing his personal details on one side, and the communities in which he had lived on the other side. They were classed in alphabetical order of religious name. These files are always kept in the office of the General Archives. After 1950, the format of the cards changed. The personal details were typed and the names of the communities were written manually each year. These files were very much bigger than the previous ones. At the present time, a large number of them contain a photo identifying the Brother, which was added on a date that I do not know.

Br Colin explains that this system of large index cards lasted until almost the year 2000, but that from the 1970s, the upkeep seems to have been very hit and miss. At an indeterminate date, it was decided to photocopy the cards which were made prior to 1950 on A4 sheets and to keep them in individual folders which could contain other documents, such as indulgences, acts of profession, etc., as well as large index cards. At the present time, numerous folders lack the personal details of such-and-such a Brother and some are completely empty.

We can follow approximately the outline of the successive ways that the Institute adopted to manage its personnel: first of all the registers, of which a large number are conserved; then two index systems, the one operative up to 1950, and the second one seems to cover more

or less to the end of the 20th century, before the ACCESS database, constituted in 1988-2010, becomes the basis for the Kosmos software which supplants it.

3. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE LARGE OLD FILE

There remain questions as to why, when and who compiled this enormous file of around 35,000 index cards with personal details of the Brothers. Br Avit, who wrote his *Annales* around 1890, does not mention it. The Circular of July 26, 1865 (Vol.3, 1860-69, p. 267) could be the beginning of the project, because it asks that all the Brothers, professed or not, even the Brother Directors, meet with the secretary of the Mother house at the next retreat in order to entrust him with their teaching certificate and their birth certificate so that the central administration might use these documents when dealing with the civil authorities. Above all, the Brothers who were born in 1845, should give the secretary the information he needs for their “ten year commitment” in Public Teaching which, in France, dispenses them from mili-

tary service¹⁶. This is why Br. Louis-Marie asked each Brother to advise the secretariat, if possible in writing: his religious name ; family name and Christian names; place and date of birth; date of entry into the novitiate; name, Christian name and profession of the father and mother (or guardian); “their place of birth, their present residence, and whether they know how to sign their names”. There is no evidence to support the hypothesis of the creation of the file at this time but I believe that this is very credible.

4. NUMBERS AND ORGANISATION OF THE FILE (1826-1903)

I thought that by working on the numbers of Brothers, I might work out the stages of the creation of this large file, just like stratigraphic layers reveal geological eras, especially since the ACCESS database seems to have respected the old numbering.

As the whole set of index cards constitute such an important volume of data, I have chosen to work on the large sample of Brothers who made their first profession before

¹⁶ After 1860, the imperial government, unhappy with Catholics who were too ultramontane, and suspicious of congregations, were reticent about giving the dispensation from military service to members of congregations who did not actually teach. The English and Scottish Brothers did not have to fear military service. They were considered as members of the clergy.

1904, which would give the quite respectable total of 10,000 records¹⁷. The table below shows that I have arrived at some results, but a more in-depth examination of the large file and the registers are necessary to understand better how this data was organised.

Registration numbers	Numbers on Access file	Number of Brothers ¹⁸	Commentary
429-6742	1-103	103 (80)	Alphabetical order by family name. Letter A
6765-15335	104-372	268 (176)	All are of deceased Brothers.
15731-17975	373-1479	1106 (1028)	Alphabetical order by religious name. Letter A
17980-18713	1483-1837	354 (374)	Letter B
18716-20061	1837-2439	602 (540)	Letter C
20062-20723	2440-2753	313 (286)	Letter D
20724-22079	2754-3338	584 (551)	Letter E
22088-22992	3341-3710	369 (355)	Letter F
22994-23880	3711-4077	366 (315)	Letter G
23881-24173	4078-4385	307 (144)	Letter H
24473-24651	4387-4442	45 (56)	Alphabetical order by family name. Letter A
24655-34490	4443-8923	4480 (4070)	Alphabetical order B-S inclusive
34492-34502	8924-8934	10 (10)	Old Brothers (professed in 1826-28)
34503-34560	8935-8962	27 (28)	Alphabetical order by family name. Letter S (and following).
34566-34976	8963-9148	185 (163)	Family names : Letters T and U
34977-34978	9149-9150	2 (2)	Two old Brothers (Professed in 1829-30)
34980-35452	9151-9369	218 (196)	Family names. Letter V
35457-35614	9370-9393	23 (22)	Family names. Letters W-Y-Z
35629-36087	9394-9628	234 (239)	Alphabetical order by the names of Brothers. Letters A-M
36087-36122	9629-9640	11 (8)	Brothers making profession before 1840

¹⁷ Working on those who took the habit before 1900, Br Colin Chalmers has achieved quite similar results, though a little lower, due to the fact that his base was a little narrower. I think that his counts are a bit more accurate than mine.

¹⁸ The figures are from Br Colin Chalmers.

36151-36164	9641-9646	5 (2 ?)	Professions in 1902-1905
36173-37293	9647-10406	749 (747)	Professed who left the Institute from 1828 to 1901.
	Total	10361 (9392)	

The part of the ACCESS database dedicated to Brothers of the 19th century, contains two major catalogues: one is incomplete with 4,000 religious name; the other is full, with more than 5,000 family names. There are also some catalogues which are smaller but quite logical, for example, in registration numbers 6765 to 15335 there is a list of 268 deceased Brothers. Also, in registration numbers 36173 to 37293 there are 749 Brothers who left the Institute. These two lists reveal perhaps the digitalisation of registers independent of the box files, created before or after the file itself and being able to function in parallel with it. In short, the old order of the index cards reflects a different logic and different times which are not easy to disentangle.

5. THE PROVINCE OF NOTRE-DAME DE L'HERMITAGE IN THE LARGE FILE

I have attempted to do a survey on the Province of Notre-Dame de L'Hermitage, which has given me results which are quite close to those in the table above. I found a complete catalogue of family names, which reveal a relative consistency of registration numbers from 24329 to 35574, and fragments of catalogues of religious names. Finally, a catalogue of Brothers who left the Institute may not come from the large file but from a specific register.

Registration numbers	Catalogue of Family names	Number of Brothers	Catalogue of Religious names	Registered in ACCESS in ...
1514-6299	Agier-Arrestat	20		1996, 2001,2009
14992-17939		82	Amasius-Aventin	1992-93
18012-23174		18	Barlaam-Front	1993,1998,
24329-24641	Arsac-Ayglon	16		1996...
24661-25803	Badel-Bunard	88		1996
25852-26417	Chelles-Cusin	35		1996
26448-26856	Dallemagne-Desrieux	17		1996
26889-27431	Caillat-Chazalle	27		1996

27443-27888	Deux-Duvergier	12		1996
27954-28530	Epalard-Furet (E-F)	14		1996
28558-29486	Gagnaire-Guyot	31		1996-1997
29537-30810	Hanotel-Luzy (H-J-L)	34		1997
30937-33080	Magnard-Pugnet (M-N-O-P)	61		1997
33126-34396	Rabeyrolle-Sibillon(R-S)	29		1997
34491-31502	Furet-Dumas		(12 of the first Brothers)	1997
34546-34745	Soulier-Thiollière (S-T)	05		1997
34882-34978	Beauvoir-Frécon		(4 of the first Brothers)	1997, 2001
35135-35574	Vaschalde-Yvroux (V-Y)	11		1997
35634-36125		55	Andoche-Viventiol (A-V)	1997-1998
36127-36985		592	Catalogue of Brothers who left (1828-1866)	1998

The ACCESS database has sufficiently respected the registration numbers of the Brothers so that traces of the old organisation appear. More detailed work could allow us to see things more clearly. However, would such work be worth the effort?

IN CONCLUSION

It remains for me to mention briefly the question of the reliability of the ACCESS database which I have referred to in an article [in French] which can be found at

champagnat.org/fr/bibliotheque/histoire-mariste/.

I would stress above all that those who conceived the ACCESS database, succeeded in constructing an excellent means of knowing the Institute as a worldwide organization. The *curriculum vitae* of tens of thousands of deceased Brothers or those who left the Institute are very accessible to us, and the entire database is generally reliable. I would like to point out some problems I encountered.

First of all, a great number of Brothers who took the habit and

received a religious name before the establishment of the large file, were not recorded in any file. In a survey that I did for 1840-60, ACCESS underestimated the number of perpetual professions as well as the number of those who took the habit, compared to other reliable sources, such as the *Annales de l'Institut*. The total number of members of the Institute should be at least 40,000. Like every statistical document, ACCESS contains a number of inevitable errors. For example, I found dates of profession prior to 1826, the year of the first vows, because there was an error in writing down the century, 1820 instead of 1920.

Sometimes these errors or approximations are due to an insufficient knowledge of the history of the Institute. So, from 1840 to 1903, the Brothers just out of the novitiate only took the vow of obedience and were not considered as truly pro-

fessed members, and so were not allowed a vote to elect to the Chapter¹⁹. However, the ACCESS file does not take account of this fact, which is historically important. On the other hand, ACCESS is very useful for determining the annual number of those who took the vow of obedience between 1840 and 1903, a piece of information which is difficult to find in the other sources.

Concerning the dates of the vows of all the first Brothers, the ACCESS file is often wrong as we did not see or know that in 1826-1828, a dozen Brothers had made perpetual vows without ever having made temporary vows. ACCESS, nevertheless, attributes temporary vows to them as if the secret vows before 1826 had all been temporary²⁰. We can find names of Brothers who appear to take temporary and perpetual vows on the same date. The table below compares the false data in ACCESS to those of the registers.

Reg'n number	Brother	Temp. vows Access	Perp. vows Access	Left/ Died	Temp. Vows Register	Perp. vows register
32960	Joseph (Poncet)	1826-10-08	1836-10-10	D		1826-10-08
24608	Laurent (Audras)	1826-10-11	1836-10-10	D		1826-10-11
28174	Stanislas (Fayolle)	1826-10-11	1836-10-10	D		1826-10-11
20144	Damien (Mercier)	1826-10-11		D		1826-10-11

¹⁹ See the Circular of April 10, 1852 (C. II p. 105) which shows around 337 professed electors.

²⁰ This is easy to check by consulting the register of temporary and perpetual professions (*Origines Maristes*, Vol. 3, docs. 569 and 575.)

34501	Ambroise (Pessonnel)	1826-10-11	1828-09-08	D		1826-10-11
22762	François (Rivat)	1826-10-11	1836-10-10	D		1826-10-11
34492	Gonzague (Sabatier)	1826-10-11	1828-10-05	L		1826-10-11
20677	Dorothee (Villemonge)	1826-10-12	1836-10-06	D	1826-10-12	1833-10-06
27460	Jean-Pierre (Deville)	1826-10-18	1827-09-30	D		1826-10-18
21684	Etienne (Pojnard)	1826-10-18	1826-10-18	D		1826-10-18
28168	Théodoret (Fayasson)	1827-09-25	1832-05-29	D	1826-09-25	1831-05-29
33022	Xavier (Prat)	1827-10-12	1829-10-25	D	1827-10-12	
24607	Louis (Audras)	1828-09-08	1836-10-10	D		1828-09-08
25535	JeanMarie (Bonnet)	1828-09-08	1836-10-00	D		1828-09-08
34502	Abel (Dumas)	1828-09-08	1828-09-08	L		1828-09-08
36178	Anselme (Poujard)	1828-09-08	1831-05-22	L	1830-09-08	1831-05-22
24323	Hippolyte	1828-09-08	1828-09-08	E		1828-09-08
18040	Barthélemy (Badard)	1828-10-05	1828-10-05	D		1828-10-05
36178	Anselme (Poujard)	1828-09-08	1831-05-22	L	1830-09-08	1831-05-22
24323	Hippolyte					
(Remil- lieux)	1828-09-08	1828-09-08	D		1828-09-08	
18040	Barthélemy					
(Badard)	1828-10-05	1828-10-05	D		1828-10-05	

It is above all when we look at the functions which the Brothers had that ACCESS is deceiving, in part because of abbreviations which are not at all clear. For example, “Admr”, which is very frequent, means “administrator” but

this corresponds to different jobs, of which Director is but one. The title “Ensg” means “enseignant” (teacher), but can also refer to Directors, and “EnsA” means “enseignant adjoint”, (assistant teacher). Sometimes the mention is rather

esoteric. I found “RecM” meaning “Recyclage mariste” (Marist recycling), which is without doubt a modernised version of “second novitiate”. Emmanuela, at the beginning of this article, mentioned

the difficulties of recording in ACCESS “the history of the places of residence and the roles filled over the years”. Perhaps the Kosmos software will provide solutions in these areas.



THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1852-54 AND BROTHER FRANÇOIS IN ROME IN 1858. A letter from Brother Marie-Jubin protesting the way that the new Rule and Constitutions were developed



André Lanfrey, fms

In the Marist Notebooks 38 (May 2020) Brother Antonio Martínez Estaún gave an historical overview of the work to prepare our Constitutions between 1852 and 1863. Among other things, he consulted the file in the Vatican archives on this subject, and he collected some written correspondence on which I will comment in this article.

In 1836, Rome recognised the Marist Fathers as the Society of Mary, but it did not extend this recognition to the other branches. In the Dioceses of Lyon and Belley, nevertheless, the ecclesiastical authorities considered that the Priests, Brothers and Sisters formed part of the same Society whose Superior was Fr Colin. However, faced with the continuing refusal of Rome to accept such a Society with several branches under the one Superior General, in 1845 the General Chapter of the Marist Fathers opted for separation between the Priests and the Brothers.

Without any civil or canonical recognition, the Brothers did not have

means to give legal effect to this separation before their civil recognition was acquired in 1851. A General Chapter in three sessions (1852-54) promulgated the *Common Rules*, the *Guide for Schools* and the *Constitutions*. At the beginning of the first session, Fr Colin officially declared the end of his role as Superior General of the Brothers, and he encouraged the Brothers to forge ahead into the future on their own.

This was easier said than done. Fr Champagnat had not left a written Rule¹, and Superiors and the older Brothers had some difficulty in agreeing on the spirit and the letter of the legislation of the Congregation. Little practised in how to debate

¹ The Rule of 1838 was only a book of custom and practice.

in a constituent assembly without any representation of ecclesiastical authorities², there were some tense moments between the Superiors and Capitulants at the Chapter, of which Br Avit has left us some substantial insights in the *Annals of the Institute*³. These contrast to the official but very much watered-down *Acts of the Chapter*. Br Avit says that this was the work of Br Louis-Marie.

Such tensions were not surprising. Raymond Hostie, in his *Vie et mort des ordres religieux* [Life and Death of Religious Orders], has shown that congregations can have difficulty in passing from the authority of the Founder to that of the Rule, notably when the Founder is still alive. The Marist Brothers had rather the reverse difficulty. The authority of Br François and his two Assistants was relatively weak in relation to the Capitulants, most of whom had known Fr Champagnat and who had some difficulty in accepting texts to which they had not contributed. It is true that at the end of the Chapter, they stated that the Rules “are the faithful expression of his [Fr Champagnat’s] will and contain his spirit”. However, the letter that we are about to examine shows that the agreement of a not insignificant number of them was more equivocal.

Despite this tension, the Superiors went ahead with the publication of a biography of the Founder, under the direction of Br Jean-Baptiste, as well as the construction of the new Mother House at St Genis-Laval, directed by Br Louis-Marie. Br François worked on the dossier to obtain from Rome a *decretum laudis* (a decree that gives pontifical right status to a religious institute). The first two projects would meet with success – the first in 1856, the second in 1858 – but the third was subject to serious delays. The letter that we are about to discuss was partially the cause of this.

1. BROTHERS FRANÇOIS AND LOUIS-MARIE IN ROME

The Superiors’ progress was delayed by Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyon, who was hesitant to endorse the Constitutions and Rules. He warned them, “In our days there is in Rome a current of ideas and tendencies which could cause you some embarrassment⁴”.

The full dossier of Br François included an account of the origins of the Institute, a summary of the Con-

² Cardinal de Bonald had counted on Fr Colin to lead the Chapter. The absence of a moderator with formal authority would have serious consequences.

³ Vol. 2, 1852, § 8-69, p. 257-274; 1853 p. 299; 1854 p. 315-324. (The page references refer to the original French edition).

⁴ *Annals of the Institute*, Vol. 2, 1858, § 22-24.

stitutions in twenty fundamental articles, letters of support from about thirty bishops,⁵ and the Rules written between 1852-54. The Superiors hoped to obtain a *decretum laudis* after two or three months of negotiations in Rome. Succeeding in this would have put an end to the persistent and widespread grumbling, coming principally from some senior Brothers. In fact, the decree was not granted until 1863 and the definitive Constitutions were approved only in 1903⁶.

The two Superiors left on February 6, 1858, after a visit to Cardinal de Bonald, who finally gave them his letter of support. They also went to the Mother House of the Marist Fathers where Fr Favre, the Superior General, gave them his own letter of recommendation⁷. They were welcomed to Rome by Fr Nicolet,

the Marist Fathers' Procurator. On March 1, they were received in audience by Pope Pius IX. Everything seemed to be going well until on March 15 when they discovered that the rather ultramontane journal, *L'Univers*, had revealed their business to the general public, describing them as replicating the Brothers of Christian Schools [De La Salles], without any mention of their connection to the Marist Fathers.

A letter of Br Marie-Jubin, the Secretary General at the Hermitage, addressed to Cardinal Barnabó, Prefect of Propaganda Fidei, dated March 26, 1858, would become a second obstacle as it denounced the dubious manner in which the legislation of the Institute, which was being presented in Rome, had been drafted at the General Chapter of 1852-54.

Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary
From our house of l'Hermitage at Saint-Chamond (Loire), March 26, 1858

Monseigneur,

On the occasion of the request for authorisation presented to His Holiness Pope Pius IX by the Superior of the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary, the undersigned presumes to submit confidentially to Your Eminence as follows:

1. The only General Chapter that has been held within the Institute finished its work in 1854. It reworked, expanded and supplemented the Rules in such a manner as to include several new or unrecognised elements, notably the vow of stability of which the Brothers were completely unaware

⁵ This large number of letters of support made a strong impression on the Roman authorities.

⁶ *La Vie du F. Louis-Marie* (The Life of Br. Louis-Marie), published in 1907 by Emmanuel Vitte, gives the superiors' interpretation of the affair in chapter X (p. 185-211).

⁷ These two people will later become the major obstacles to the authorization by Rome of the Marist Brothers.

before the year 1852. Given the short time that has elapsed since these new arrangements, it would perhaps be useful to have time to experience them before requesting final approval, especially since the convocation of the Chapter was rushed, the sessions were very brief for considering so many issues, and the members of the Chapter ill prepared for such an important matter.

2. It would seem appropriate that the fundamental articles should have been discussed in a General Chapter or at least at a Great Council ['Grand Conseil'] of the Institute⁸, which so far has not even once been convoked (See the Constitutions, Chap. XII, Art. 3, 4, 5, page 84).

3. We find that the daily recitation of the Office of Our Lady, aloud and in community, greatly tires the Brothers, who are obliged to spend seven to eight hours each day instructing about sixty children. From another perspective, one might doubt whether this recitation is really advantageous, given that the Brothers do not understand Latin, and so they do it usually without paying attention. They have very little time for their own training and to prepare their classes, so that, quite often they barely have sufficient instruction. Perhaps it would be sufficient to recite the Office only on Sundays and Thursdays.

4. The exercise of the culpa to purge fault is rarely done and I would say that it is done as little as possible. It seems that the weekly meeting which the Brothers must have with the Brother Director would suffice⁹.

5. In addition to the discomfort and injuries they often cause, cloth stockings are often the source of several kinds of indispositions because their tight fabric prevents the evaporation of perspiration which is then reabsorbed by the skin on the feet and the legs. They become a source of infection in the dormitories. These inconveniences are increased by the lack of care on the part of the Brothers to keep them clean, either through negligence or lack of time. Very many Brothers desire a mitigation of this article.

6. The soup-plate hat, called the Roman hat, is less expensive, more useful, simpler and easier to keep clean than the tricorne hat. It has been adopted by the Marist Fathers, and the Brothers desire to see it replace what they have now.

Monseigneur, these are the observations that I have heard being made quite often by several Brothers, even by the most senior, and which, I believe ought to be submitted to your attention, Your Eminence. Whatever importance you like to give them, the thought that they have been made known to the President of the Congregation which must examine our Rules, I think suffices to dissipate the unease which they might continue to feel and to bring back the spirits to perfect unity. That is all that I desire.

Please accept the most profound respect and the religious veneration with which I am, Monseigneur, the most humble and most obedient servant of Your Eminence.

Br. M. Jubin, Secretary General

⁸ Constitutions of 1854, 1st part, Ch. XII, art. 4-5. This takes in the "Regime" [i.e. Superior General and Assistants], the Procurator, the "Secretary of the Regime", and six Brothers, nominated by the Superior General.

⁹ According to the Common Rules of 1852, 1st part, Ch. IV, Article 8, the Brothers "will give an account of their exterior conduct" to the Director each week. This was not strictly speaking about spiritual direction.

Presumably the author sent his letter by way of the archdiocesan offices. Cardinal Barnabó must have received it in the first days of April. This protest was late but perhaps it was a result of the article in *L'Univers* for March 15, which showed that the affair was more delicate than had been foreseen. Evidently, Br Marie-Jubin was not aware of the importance which the Congregation of Propaganda Fidei gave to an isolated protest, even one coming from a Secretary General¹⁰. The letter was skillfully drafted. Although its tone was moderate, it cast suspicion on the Superiors and their account. It was taken seriously in Rome, and could hamper the efforts of the Superiors.

2. THE AUTHOR AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS LETTER ON THE BUSINESS CONDUCTED BY THE SUPERIORS

There is a long biographical note about Br Marie-Jubin in Volume II of the *Letters of Fr Champagnat* (p.360-364). Jean-Baptiste Méri-gay was born in Valbenoîte, near Saint-Etienne, in 1820. He entered the Hermitage in 1833, making his first vows in 1834 and his perpetual

vows in 1837. In 1838 he accompanied Fr Champagnat to Paris to learn lithography there and to have an internship at the school for deaf and dumb children. The rest of the biographical entry presents him as an educated individual, a good teacher, but a difficult character. He was dedicated to his studies, especially to mathematics and music. At the Chapter of 1852-54, he was one of 42 Brothers who were eligible to be elected from the Province of Notre Dame de l'Hermitage but, having obtained only 85 votes out of the 190 that had been cast, he was only the second substitute and was not a Capitulant¹¹. He was no doubt present among the administrative staff of the Hermitage and so he was in a good position to collect rumours and confidences from the proceedings of the Chapter. His stay in Paris in 1853-54, then at Breteuil (Oise) in 1854-56, are perhaps the consequences of an attitude that was judged to be too given to intrigue. When he returned to the Hermitage in 1856, he certainly participated, as a secretary, in compiling the dossier that was being prepared to seek authorisation from Rome.

The fate of his letter is revealed to us in the reply of the Nuncio in Paris, Mgr Mazio, to Cardinal Antonelli, the Secretary of State, on June 8 1858¹². This tells us that on April 30

¹⁰ The role of the "Secretary General", as understood at the time, no longer exists. Br Marie-Jubin was simply a coordinator of administration at the Hermitage, or just one of the secretaries.

¹¹ Circular, II, p. 107, 114. (The page numbers refer to the original French edition).

¹² File in the Vatican Archives, consulted by Br. A. M. Estaun.

(in Letter n.92091) he was asked to research the Little Brothers of Mary. He asked the Archbishop of Lyon to inform him very discreetly about the truth of the criticisms that were in the letter. Cardinal de Bonald simply passed this on to the Assistant General, Br Louis-Marie on his return from Rome.

Br Louis-Marie's written response, dated May 31, completely rejected the points made by Br Marie-Jubin, and Cardinal de Bonald, by sending it to the Nuncio without additional commentary of his own, implicitly approved. The letter of Br Marie-Jubin was therefore not retained by the Holy See. However, this delay was catastrophic for Br François.

As it happened, it was on April 9 that it was learned from Cardinal Barnabó that the dossier had been blocked and that "His Holiness add-

ed that if we were in a hurry to return it, we could do so"¹³. The Cardinal advised the Superiors to ask for an audience before their departure. This took place on April 15, and gave them some key information: "The Holy Father told us that he awaited a letter from Paris about our matter".

Br Louis-Marie set off back to France on April 24 while Br François awaited the critical response of the Nuncio without knowing what news it would bring and without realising that he would have to wait so long. He agreed that Fr Nicolet be the guide through the administrative labyrinth of Rome to attempt to discover some traces of this famous correspondence. Finally, Mgr Guidi, of the Secretariat of State, gave a response on May 27: "Abbiamo scritto; aspettiamo la risposta"¹⁴. On this date, the response from Br Louis-Marie, translated below, had not yet been sent.

Saint Genis Laval, May 31, 1858

To His Eminence Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyon

Monseigneur,

I beg your Eminence to allow me to give you in writing the explanation which you have had the kindness to ask of me regarding certain articles of our Rules and Constitutions.

1. The article which obliges us to wear cloth stockings, sewn and not knitted, goes back to 1845. They were adopted for reasons of uniformity, simplicity and economy. However, the principal reason is

¹³ It was the following day, April 10, that a letter from the Secretary of State asked the Nuncio in Paris to investigate the famous letter of Br. Marie-Jubin.

¹⁴ "We have written; we await the response".

that the use of knitted stockings multiplied the relationships of the Brothers with women, giving birth to grave abuses. Fr Champagnat did not find a better way to prevent this than to adopt cloth stockings. Another reason is that he took the idea from the Brothers of Christian Schools, who received them from the Venerable Father de la Salle, their Founder. They have never changed on this point. No-one until our days has ever complained that they were too uncomfortable or damaging to health.

2. There has never been a question within the Institute about the so-called Roman hat; and which probably exists nowhere but in Rome¹⁵. The General Chapter adopted the tricorne hat because it is the only one that has been in use among the Little Brothers of Mary.

3. The Articles which we have presented for the approval of the Holy See are faithful extracts of the Rules and Constitutions adopted by the General Chapter. It seems to us that it would not be right to submit them again and that it would suffice to appeal later in order to comment on any modifications which were deemed advisable.

4. The daily recitation of the Office of Our Lady in all the houses of the Institute is from the earliest foundation. Fr. Champagnat always regarded it not as an aggravation for his Brothers, but as a solace and a consolation. The Brothers themselves are happy to be united in this practice of piety with several other religious congregations which, even those dedicated to the work of teaching, are happy to fulfil.

5. Although the vow of stability was not made during the life of the Founder, it was always permitted by him in principle. We have, written in his own hand, this article of the Rule: The Brothers will make the four vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Stability.

The vow of stability which (sic) is not made until after 15 years in community and 10 years of profession, and is only permitted for the most capable and virtuous Brothers. As the vow is required for the Superior General, the Assistants, the Directors of novitiates, and all the members of the General Chapters, we wanted to ensure, as much as possible, the good government of the Institute, by giving the administration the best subjects in the Congregation. It is for this reason that the General Chapter, founding itself on such a powerful example as the Society of Jesus, did not hesitate to adopt this fourth vow and to make it the basis of the Constitutions.

6. On the Rules and Constitutions as a whole, the following should be observed:

- i. That in the essentials, they are all from our pious Founder, and the General Chapter did nothing more than put them in order and submit to writing, that which comes from custom and tradition.
- ii. That the said Chapter, with the approval of Your Eminence, was convoked, according to the Rules, by the Brother Superior General, who was canonically elected by the professed Brothers of the Institute.

¹⁵ This is an ambiguous expression which means : « which exists nowhere except in Rome » or more probably « which exists nowhere, and not even in Rome ».

iii. That it carefully considered and freely accepted to do no more than put in order and in writing the Rules and the Constitutions of the Institute, having taken three consecutive years to do this work as well as about one hundred general and particular sessions.

Here, Monsignor, I am obliged to confess to your Eminence that the secret opposition to our request for the Holy See's approval, is just a continuation and a remnant of the cabals which tried to hinder the General Chapter in 1852. Actually, it is a group of five or six ambitious and malcontent subjects, which has formed to defend, according to them, the rights of the Brothers. They are supported by two members of the Chapter who have become their leaders, and who have worked the whole time to weaken the bonds of religious discipline and push for relaxation and purely material wellbeing.

In regard to food, instead of two dishes, a dessert and wine, half of which is water which the Rule permits, they call for three dishes, three desserts and pure wine. In the same way, they proposed and supported any measure which tended to make the habit more comfortable and elegant, as in knitted stockings; the furnishing of the houses more elegant; with mirrors, curtains, and asking for permissions rarely; visits and making journeys easier, shorter religious exercises; in a word, everything which leaned towards freedom and independence, wellbeing and the comforts of life.

I give you these details, Monseigneur, to let your Eminence know where such subject would have led the Congregation, if the Regime had been weak before them for a single instant or if it had enjoyed less than the full confidence of the Brothers.

However, happily, Providence, which desires to have the work of the Little Brothers of Mary just as Fr Champagnat conceived of it and established it, has brought about a just outcome at the beginning of the issue: the two Brothers, who are members of the Chapter, who supported the changes have shamefully left the Congregation and, after 23 years of religious life have got married at Saint-Etienne, two leagues from the Mother House and right in the midst of our establishments. The main leader, who was denounced by the Chapter for his seditious intrigues, had to be, some months later, dispensed from his vows by your Eminence and reduced to the state of a simple novice as a punishment for the odious calumnies which he dared to write against one of the most worthy parish priests of the diocese.

The one who today is still trying to support the tendencies of this party is nothing else than a malcontent subject as he was not nominated a member of the General Chapter and he is even more discontented since he does not occupy the position in the Institute which he is ambitious for.

The universal disapproval of the Brothers had excised the views this evil party through the whole Institute, and it seemed to be completely forgotten so that the Regime did not even suspect that any trace of it was left.

However, as we have the sorrow to rediscover this again among our Brothers, we look at it as a blessing from God upon us that it dared to slither right to the feet of the very Vicar of Jesus Christ. We have firm confidence that the Holy Father will confound this latest effort of the evil spirit and will extirpate it so that it never again appears among us and at the same time confirms and approves the true spirit of the Little Brothers of Mary. If, in these solemn and decisive circumstances for the Institute, the spirit

of faction and of slackening should have the least triumph, this would be a certain source of division and ruin for the Congregation.

I dare to hope, Monseigneur, that your Eminence will save us from danger by enlightening His Holiness about the true spirit behind the letter in question.

Please accept the profound respect with which I am,

Monseigneur,

the most humble and obedient servant of

Your Eminence,

Brother Louis-Marie, Assistant

We might find it strange that the Secretary of State and the Apostolic Nuncio were given the task of clarifying such a minor affair. However, Pope Pius IX often passed issues to Nuncios to control national episcopates more tightly. Without a doubt this is why Cardinal de Bonald, unhappy at a procedure that made him subordinate to a Nuncio, did not himself investigate the issue or add a comment to the response given by Br Louis-Marie. This abstention temporarily saved the dossier of Br François. It was only on July 7 that Mgr Guidi visited once again, and declared “that the response of the Nuncio arrived quickly; that it was favourable; that there was still something to be unravelled; but that the affair would follow its course and that it would soon reach a conclusion”.

3. DELAYED SUCCESS OF BR FRANÇOIS AND FR NICOLET AT THE CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS AND REGULARS

On Friday July 16, the situation finally became clear. The Pope gave the order: “It must follow the normal course, and the file [until then at Propaganda Fidei] must be handed over immediately to the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars”. On July 21, Br François was able to meet with the Secretary of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, Mgr Bizzarri. Fr Nicolet, who accompanied Br François, had long emphasised the connection between the Marist Fathers and Brothers, while the Roman administration believed that they resembled the Brothers of Christian Schools. After much procrastination, it was only on July 31 that Br François himself dropped off the file at the

Congregation for Bishops and Regulars where Cardinal Bizzarri warned that it would be kept for a long time.

Br François had to return home and Fr Nicolet was left to continue with the matter. On August 9, he managed to get a farewell audience with the Pope. The conversation was banal: Pius IX justified the plodding pace of the Roman administration. Still believing that the Marist Brothers were a sort of clone of the Brothers of Christian Schools, the Pope asked Fr Nicolet: "Where are you staying in Rome? With the Brothers of Christian Schools?". Like Br François, Fr Nicolet spoke about the devotion of the Institute to the person of the Pope, who responded, "It is very important to be always attached to the Centre". These words of the Pope sum up very well the attitude which Br François had found in the whole of the Papal administration: slowness, centralising ultramontanism, and reference to the Brothers of Christian Schools who were well known in Rome. This is without doubt the reason that, before his departure, he made a visit to Br Floride, the Superior of the Brothers of Christian Schools in Italy. They had a "friendly conversation about the unity and understanding between the two Societies". "The Brothers of Christian Schools have always shown themselves to be very honest whenever I met them."

Br François was less pleased with Cardinal della Genga, the Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, who received him on August 16. The Cardinal exclaimed, "Yet

another new Institute!" After the explanation of Fr Nicolet, he said: "But it is very close to the Brothers of Christian Schools!" Also, Fr Nicolet took some lessons from the interview: "It is our number, the length of time we have been founded, all the letters of support from the bishops (and I have added – wrote Br François – our union with the Marist Fathers)" which obliged Rome to accept the dossier. However, he warned that the Rules and Constitutions would be examined very closely. He also wrote to Fr Favre that Rome would probably give some control of the Brothers to the Marist Fathers. Br François arrived back at St Genis-Laval on August 24.

He had left the Hermitage on February 6. As well as the delay which the letter of Br Marie-Jubin had caused, it also shook the confidence of Cardinal de Bonald towards Br François and it confirmed among the Marist Fathers – and particularly their Superior General, Fr Favre – the view that the return of a certain oversight of the Brothers by the Fathers was necessary. The fruit of the agreement between Cardinal de Bonald and Fr Favre came in the letter of the Cardinal on February 16 1859 in which the Archbishop of Lyon, demanded that as the Superiors of the Brothers lacked education and authority, the formation of the novices would be placed under the direction of the Marist Fathers "as before". This led to the resignation of Br François in 1860. The letter of Br Marie-Jubin was only a secondary cause but it was an important one in the context of the developments after the General Chapter of 1852-54.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS OF MARIE-JUBIN AND LOUIS-MARIE CONCERNING THE GENERAL CHAPTER

Br Marie-Jubin listed his objections in descending order of impor-

tance. In his response, Br Louis-Marie did the opposite, as indicated in the numbers of his text. Generally, he based his response on the authority of the Founder without rejecting other arguments. I will lay out the arguments as follows:

Br. Marie-Jubin , March 26 1858	Br. Louis-Marie, May 31 1858
1. The vow of stability “of which the Brothers are completely ignorant before the year 1852” is a novelty.	5. Although the vow of stability was not made during the life of the Founder, it was always permitted by him in principle. ¹⁶
‘The convocation of the Chapter was rushed, the sessions too brief and the members of the Chapter were ill prepared.	6. The General Chapter did nothing more than put in order and submit to writing, that which comes from custom and tradition.
2. The fundamental articles would have to have been discussed at the Chapter or at least in the Great Council.	3. The 20 articles presented to the Holy See are extracts from the Rules and Constitutions.
3. The daily recitation of the Office in community tires the Brothers too much.	4. The daily recitation of the Office of Our Lady in all the houses of the Institute is from the earliest foundation.
4. The culpa is done as little as possible. They are content with a “giving of an account!” ¹⁷ to the Director each week.	
5. The cloth stockings are not hygienic. This custom should be changed.	1. The article which obliges the Brothers to wear cloth stockings goes back to 1845. [...] No-one complains.
6. The tricorne hat should be replaced by the soup-plate hat, which is called the “Roman hat”.	2. There has never been a question in the Institute of the so-called “Roman hat”.

This comparison is interesting for the silence on certain subjects reported by Br Avit or present in the *Acts of the Chapter*. For example,

there is nothing about prayers for the dead, an issue which stirred up strong emotions at the Chapter. Br Marie-Jubin does not mention the

¹⁶ Br. Louis-Marie was certainly basing himself on a fragment which can be found in *Origine des Frères Maristes*, Vol.1, Doc.28, p.141 (Origin of the Marist Brothers): “The Brothers of Mary make simple vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and stability in the Society.” This is very little on which to base an original tradition.

¹⁷ According to the Common Rules of 1852, Part 1, Ch. IV, Article 8, the Brothers “will give an account of their exterior conduct” to the Director each week. This is not spiritual direction properly speaking.

problem of decentralisation through autonomous Provinces, raised as an issue by Fr Mazelier. The objections of Br Marie-Jubin focus on three points: the vow of stability is considered to be a novelty; the unduly rapid treatment of matters at the Chapter; certain practices to be adapted or reformed.

These criticisms align quite well with what was said by Br Avit about the vow of stability and the general atmosphere of the Chapter. Many of the Capitulants were concerned by some of the issues to be addressed, and troubled by certain propositions put forward by the Superiors, but they were united in a block against the minority of those who set themselves up in opposition. As Br. Marie-Jubin said: there was uneasiness rather than opposition among the senior Brothers. They were being asked to move from the oral tradition and customs to a written legislation. They found it difficult to see the original spirit in those texts, particularly regarding the vow of stability, which they thought would gradually replace their status as the senior brothers.

By 1858, however, some of the early customs of the Institute had fallen into disuse. This was the case with the culpa, which Br Louis-Marie did not even consider defending. Other customs were followed infrequently. Rather than confirming all these compromises, however, the Superiors wanted to return to the origins with its stricter practices in some cases. Br Avit made fun of the

proposed ban on watches that had become widely used (*Annals of the Institute*, Vol. 2, 1852 #49). In regard to the cloth stockings, Br Louis-Marie dates their obligatory use to 1845, implying that their imposition by Fr Champagnat around 1829 was not as absolute as Br Jean-Baptiste claims in his Life of the founder. It is probably the same for the Office of Our Lady where the daily recitation in community on school days should not have been normative. Regarding the use of the hat, Br Louis-Marie was correct: it was not particularly Roman, but the tricorne hat was falling into disuse.

5. RULES CONFORMING TO THE ORIGINS OR ADAPTED TO CIRCUMSTANCES?

Br François and his two Assistants were very much united in working out the Rules and Constitutions which, they believed, would take the Institute back to its early fervour. We can glimpse their inflexibility on this in the second part of Br Louis-Marie's response which suggests that the letter of Marie-Jubin emanates from "a group of five or six ambitious and malcontent subjects ... supported by two members of the Chapter who have become their leaders". Br Avit only partially confirms this point of view: in a long exposition about how opposition developed at the Chapter, he declared that "among the eight or ten members of the Chapter (includ-

ing himself) who were in opposition, only two seemed to be biased”.

Br Louis-Marie made these opponents out to be quite self-indulgent. However, Br Avit cites (Annals, Vol. 2, 1852, #51-52) a letter (of June 11, 1852) from Fr Colin who had received numerous complaints from Brothers, showing that the link between Marist priests and Brothers was far from broken and that the authority of the new Superiors was fragile. At any rate, Fr Colin grouped the complaints into two categories: in the first, there was a request for more Masses and prayers for the deceased Brothers; in the second, there was a concern about the health of the young Brothers who need more time for meals, more substantial food and physical exercise suitable for their age. This was not exactly the decadence that Br Louis-Marie describes.

He himself gave the reason for his intransigence: “Providence ... desires to have the work of the Little Brothers of Mary just as Fr Champagnat conceived of it and established it”. However, was that still possible? For him the sign of success of this return to the origins were “the two Brothers, who are Capitulants and who supported the changes (the cabal) have shamefully left the Congregation and, after 23 years of religious life have got married at Saint-Etienne”. Br Avit (Annals, Vol. 2, 1852, #54) confirms this fact and

states that one of the two was the Procurator General. He is referring to Br Antoine-Régis, the fifth and last to be elected from the Province of Viviers with 29 votes out of a possible 51. His name was Jean-Baptiste Raymond, born in Peaugres (Ardèche) in 1817. He was sent to the Hermitage by the Brothers in 1833, making his temporary profession in 1835 and perpetual profession in 1836¹⁸. From October 1845 to September 1852, he was Director of the school at Villeneuve de Berg (Ardèche) and by reason of this office he participated at the first session of the Chapter. At the two following sessions he participated as Procurator General. His file states that he left in 1856, for reasons which were certainly more complex than those given by Brothers Avit and Louis-Marie.

I do not know the name of the second Capitulant who left at the same time. Among the other Brothers who were considered to be part of the opposition party, without a doubt the second Brother was Br Marie-Lin (1813-1891), a native of Marlihes. Like Br Antoine Régis he professed his temporary vows in 1835 and his perpetual vows in 1836. He became Master of Novices at the Hermitage in September 1852 and was the tenth to be elected from the Province of l’Hermitage with 140 votes out of a possible 190. After the first session of the Chapter, we find him again briefly as the Director in a

¹⁸ His file says that he left in 1836 but this is an error as is shown by the Annals of Peaugres. This was verified by Br Adrien Mercier on October 7, 2020.

small school at Beaucroissant (Isère) where he remained for the rest of his life. His attitude at the Chapter likely resulted in his being sidelined¹⁹. Br Avit himself, who entered in 1838, was exiled as Director of a difficult posting in Digoin in 1855. As for Br Marie-Jubin, Br Louis-Marie knew or guessed that he was the author of the famous letter to Rome when he described him as “a subject who was discontented at not being nominated as a member of the General Chapter.”

We have covered a good part of the opposition group at the Chapter. Were they imbued with “the spirit of faction and slackening” as accused by Br Louis-Marie? Rather, they were Brothers who entered the Institute between 1833 and 1838, so they are from the second generation of senior Brothers, who did not experience the early customs of the Institute. They were better educated than the preceding generation, and more concerned with adapting to a rapidly changing world. They came up against Superiors who were anxious to establish a Rule in an Institute that had become very numerous and identity of which seemed

to them to be at risk, internally from decadence and externally from the revolutionary spirit²⁰. This is why the Superiors were eager to give legitimacy to their legislation by getting the approval of the highest spiritual and institutional authority – the Pope.

The two letters which we have discussed illustrate two conceptions of the Institute which people wanted to endure: on the one hand, a fidelity to the origins and which was marked by strictness and a centralised authority; on the other, adaptation to new times and a style of authority that was more distributed. At the same time these letters bear witness to the difficulty of moving from a time of customs and oral tradition to that of a Rule and a written culture. These tensions weakened the authority of the Superior General. The letter of Br Marie-Jubin is important not because of the weight of his arguments, but rather as a symptom of a crisis at the highest level at a delicate moment for Br François. It was Cardinal de Bonald, Fr Favre, and the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars who, for quite diverse but fundamental reasons, forced the resignation of Br François in 1860.

¹⁹ See the note in Letters of Fr Champagnat, Vol. 2, p. 365-369.



BROTHER FRANÇOIS' JOURNAL FROM HIS VISIT TO ROME IN 1858

The tribulations of a Superior General seeking canonical recognition



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Notebook 305 of Br François entitled “Religious Notes” begins with 178 pages called “Journey to Rome in 1858”. It is the day-by-day journal of his attempt to submit the dossier regarding the Little Brothers of Mary with Propaganda Fidei and then with the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, with a view to gaining canonical recognition. So, we can follow Br François on almost a daily basis at a particularly trying time in his life.

This journey is also of significant importance in the history of the Institute because we three ways of conceptualising the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary at this time: that of Br François, who envisaged a religious congregation independent of the Marist Fathers; that of the Roman authorities who thought of the Little Brothers of Mary as an offshoot of the Brothers of Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers); and that of the Marist Fathers who did not wish to relinquish a supervisory role over the Brothers.

We are two Marist researchers who have examined this complex matter. In 2018, Br Antonio Martínez Estaún, then in Rome as Postulator General, published a translation in Spanish of this important document with the title *Diario del Viaje a Roma del Hermano François en 1858*. (*Diary of the Journey to Rome of Br François in 1858*). It is almost a bilingual edition of the journal because each left-hand page bears a photograph of the original in French with the Spanish translation opposite. In 2019, once again under the auspices of the General Administration, Br Antonio published a second book of 200 pages, entitled *El hermano François Rivat peregrino en Roma (Br François Rivat, pilgrim to Rome)* in which he described the content of the *Diario del Viaje a Roma del Hermano François en 1858*, focusing on and synthesising some themes. He has also written an article in *Marist Notebooks* 37 (May 2019) on the Roman shrines visited by Br François.

I published a study in *Marist Notebooks* 39 (May 2021) on an article from the newspaper *L'Univers* from March 15, 1858. This article revealed the Roman misconception that the Little Brothers of Mary were affiliated with the Lasallians, something which embarrassed Br François and Br Louis-Marie. In the same edition, I discuss at length the letter which Br Marie-Jubin, secretary at The Hermitage, sent to Rome. He complained about the government of the Institute, provoking an inquiry in Rome which considerably delayed the business which Br François was pursuing. This letter also contributed to his being sidelined as the Marist Fathers, the Archbishop of Lyon, and the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars all judged him insufficiently capable of leading the Institute¹.

It is true that as a simple lay religious, confronted by the labyrinthine and slow-moving Roman bureaucracy, Br François would have been somewhat disconcerted and would have had to exercise infinite patience. At the same time, this journey to the heart of ultramontane Christianity would have allowed him to renew his Catholic and ultramontane fervour. He also had the opportunity to visit all the places of worship in Rome. These notes certainly informed his Circular of December 25, 1858, to the Brothers in Ocean-

ia, in which he recounts his stay in Rome without mentioning the great difficulties he encountered in relation to the Institute's preferred connection with the Marist Fathers. It is also helpful for to getting to know Br François' style, which is very sober, yet at the same time expressive of an untiring patience, and an incredible goodwill toward the Roman administration which seemed to play with him a little like a cat with a mouse. He nevertheless succeeded, thanks to his persistence and the support of Fr Nicolet, the Procurator of the Marist Fathers, to have his dossier accepted by the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars. However, he did not manage to convince those in Rome, who could be devious and subtle, of his capacity to lead a religious congregation of two thousand members, and which had received the support of almost thirty bishops.

In the article which follows, our intention is to offer to our readers and to future researchers a quick synthesis of the essential aspects of this long stay in Rome. This is the reason we have taken out all the religious aspects – visits to churches and monuments, edifying reflections – in order to focus on the content of the dealings with the Roman Curia, on which we will comment. Readers and researchers can refer to the works of B. Antonio Martínez Estaún to get a more complete picture.

¹ Readers can also read two articles at [champagnat.org/Library/Marist History](http://champagnat.org/Library/Marist_History). They are in French and bear the title, "La reconnaissance par Rome de l'institut des Frères Maristes en 1858-1863." (The Recognition by Rome of the Institute of Marist Brothers, 1858-1863).

1. A RATHER HURRIED DEPARTURE FOR ROME AND A SPEEDY JOURNEY

Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyon, finally consents² and approves of the trip. He gives a letter of recommendation.

6th February, Saturday. Departure from Notre Dame de l'Hermitage ... with Br. Louis-Marie, 1st Assistant.

7th. Sexagesima Sunday. Visit to His Eminence who signed the Memorandum for the authorisation of the Institute ...

8th. Monday. Arrived at Marseille. Visit to the episcopal offices ... Arrival of Fr Tempier, Vicar General, Oblate³. Letter of recommendation ... Boarding at 10.00 p.m.

9th. Tuesday. Crossing ... Good trip. 10. Wednesday. Arrival at Civitavecchia ...

11th. Thursday. Arrived in Rome at 2.00 a.m. Fr Nicolet⁴ and Fr Joseph to the Palazzo Valentini, Piazza degli Santi Apostoli.

On the days following, Br François and Br Louis-Marie visited some people who might support their plan.

12th Friday. To the Jesuits. Fr Villefort⁵ ...

13th Saturday. Visit to His Eminence Cardinal Barnabó, Prefect of Propaganda Fidei ... Reading of the Memorandum and the fundamental Statutes.

16th Tuesday ... Visit and memorandum to Fr Péroné⁶.

February 18, Thursday ... Visit to Mgr de Falloux, brother of the Minister⁷ ...

² There was some resistance from the Archbishop. This is confirmed by a letter of Fr Nicolet.

³ Oblate of Mary Immaculate.

⁴ This is the Marist priest who was Procurator in Rome. Fr Favre asked him to welcome the Brothers to Rome.

⁵ He was confessor to Br François during his stay in Rome. We can read about his meetings with this Jesuit in the journal.

⁶ Influential theologian in Rome.

⁷ This minister was the author of the Falloux law on teaching (1850) which broke the university monopoly and encouraged the teaching in private secondary schools..

From the 22nd to the 28th, they continued their visits: “to Cardinal Recanatti, Capuchin, ill, who was a consultor for the Brothers of Mans⁸... To Cardinal de Villecourt, formerly Bishop of la Rochelle,” who had begun his ministry at Saint-Chamond. Following the advice of Cardinal Barnabó, they requested and were granted an audience with the Holy Father. During this first phase of their business, the two Brothers were not accompanied by Fr Nicolet. It is

true that those they met were mainly French, but Br François and his Assistant also wanted to show their independence from the Marist Fathers. In his letters to Fr Favre, Superior General of the Marist Fathers, Fr Nicolet was critical of the Brothers wanting to reproduce in Rome the strategy they had followed in Paris in 1851. In fact, he did not take well to way the Marist Brothers were demonstrating their independence from the Marist Fathers.

2. PAPAL AUDIENCE FOLLOWED BY SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES

1st March. Monday. Papal audience . . . The Pope, sitting on a modest armchair in front of a little table on which was a writing desk and some quills. On our knees at his feet; kissing of the ring which he presented to us and kissing his feet; then, at his sign, we stood before him.

Br François offered to the Pope the homage of the Marist Brothers and presented him with a letter giving “a brief overview of our Society” and making him aware of “the venerable Prelates who have had the kindness to recommend us to him”.

And “Following the question of His Holiness, we gave him the book of the Constitutions and the Common Rules which he put in with the dossier⁹”. Then came a question which revealed the strategy of Br François and Br Louis-Marie:

Most Holy Father, our work has developed from a branch of the Marist Fathers, so, if it pleases Your Holiness to send our request to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fidei, where the Marist Fathers are particularly well known, we will be very grateful, but we absolutely submit ourselves to the pleasure of Your Holiness.

⁸ The Brothers of St Joseph of Mans were founded by Fr Dujarié. See Pierre Zind, *Les nouvelles congrégations de Frères enseignants*, p. 153-159. (*The New Congregations of Teaching Brothers*).

⁹ Crossed out.

Following the formalities at the end of the audience, Br François added: “Oh! How well His Holiness represents Our Lord!”. However, his request for approval by Propaganda Fidei was undoubtedly badly put and could have upset the Pope who was unwilling to be influenced. Above all, the request was a contra-

diction of the desire to establish a clear separation between Marist Fathers and Brothers and the request was only made for tactical reasons: to obtain provisional approval more quickly. Early in the proceedings, this contradiction did not seem to have any drawbacks and everything appeared to go well.

5th March. Friday. Visit to His Eminence Cardinal Barnabó who told us that the day before he had received from the Holy Father, along with our dossier, the order to write a report for him concerning our request. Received, as always, a very friendly welcome.

3. THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY AS A BRANCH OF THE BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND DOSSIER BLOCKED SO THAT AN INQUIRY COULD TAKE PLACE

The troubles began soon after. On March 15, an article appeared in the Catholic newspaper *L'Univers* which was very ultramontane in its leanings. The article used the dossier which had been deposited with Propaganda Fidei to present the Marist Brothers as a teaching congregation which was complementary to the Brothers of Chris-

tian Schools. This was manifestly a manoeuvre from the office of Cardinal Barnabó¹⁰ to position the papal administration in a certain way and which contradicted the plan to gain approval as a subsidiary of the Marist Fathers. Immediately Br. François and Br. Louis-Marie were forced to manifest their disagreement with this position:

15th. Monday. To Mgr. Talbot, personal secretary to His Holiness, the Vatican; article in *L'Univers* about the Society; we reject it completely; we are stunned by it.

¹⁰ There existed in Rome a very active group of ultramontane French priests who were very well in with the papal administration. Mgr. Chaillot was one of the most notorious of this group.

They renewed their request to this private secretary on March 17, 21 and 29: “He said to us that he had spoken with the Holy Father according to our instructions and that His Holiness ap-

peared to be satisfied”. However, the stance of the Roman bureaucrats, as well as that of Pius IX, was established. At the same time Cardinal Barnabó dragged things out.

16th March. Tuesday. (Visit) to His Eminence Cardinal Barnabó. He told us that his report was favourable. He has an audience with the Holy Father every Thursday, unless it falls on a major feast day, (which happened on three consecutive Thursdays,) or when there is a ceremony.

6th April. Tuesday. Visit to Cardinal Barnabó . . . This good Cardinal, Prefect of Propaganda Fidei, told us that he was ready to speak to the Holy Father about our request on Holy Thursday but that was not possible. He will see the Pope on the following Thursday.

In his journal Br François was full of praise for Cardinal Barnabó who maintained a very courteous attitude towards him. However, the Cardinal had received Br Marie-Jubin’s letter denouncing the governance of the

Superiors. The Pope then decided to hold an enquiry that would take a long time. He told them this in a tactful way, evidently without revealing anything of the reason for such a decision.

9th [April] Friday. To Cardinal Barnabó. His Eminence told us that he had seen the Pope who told him that there could not be a dispensation from the decision to examine a matter that had been recommended by 26 bishops, and that our Society must fill the void left by the Brothers of Christian Schools. The Pope left the dossier with him, telling him to keep hold of it. His Holiness added that if we were in a hurry it have it returned, that would be fine. Consequently, His Eminence advised us to ask the Pope for an audience prior to our departure.

So, the Superiors learned that their dossier was blocked for reasons they did not know. Moreover, they knew that in Rome there was a desire to have them affiliate with the Brothers of Christian Schools. They were politely invited to leave while they awaited the results of the enquiry. But the idea of returning to France under in such circumstances would have been catastrophic,

so the Superiors adopted a middle way. Br Louis-Marie left, as he had to monitor the completion of the new Mother House, and to wait for Br François to attempt to unblock the situation.

It was on Thursday, April 15 at the “private audience with His Holiness” on the occasion of the departure of BrLouis-Marie from Rome that the

situation was clarified a little. As Br François suspected that the request for Propaganda Fidei to examine the

dossier had caused offence, he declared on this occasion :

Absolute submission, to whichever Congregation it pleases the Holy Father to send the request for approval of our Institute for examination.

However, the reason for the blockage lay elsewhere:

The Holy Father told us that he was waiting for a letter from Paris about our request and he added: Buon viaggio al Fratello Assistente! (Have a good journey, to the Brother Assistant) when we told him that Brother Louis Marie was returning to France. How happy and content we are!

Br François was right to rejoice because the cause of the blockage did not appear to be beyond repair. He did not doubt, however, that waiting for the results of the inquiry would take a rather long time. The Superiors relayed to Cardinal Barna-

bó what happened at the audience. He responded by telling them a flattering story but at the same time he confirmed that in Rome the Pope himself saw the Little Brothers of Mary within the same grouping as the Brothers of Christian Schools.

The 12th, at St Agnes, during lunch with Cardinal Patrizzi [he asked] the Holy Father:

- Are these the Brothers of Christian Schools to whom Your Holiness gave communion?
- No, the Pope responded, they are two Little Brothers of Mary, for schools. I know them.
- There are already so many Institutes for that.
- These are Brothers to fill the gaps left by the Brothers of Christian Schools.

Cardinal Barnabó developed this thought and explained well our goal and that which distinguished us from the Brothers of Christian Schools. The Pope added that no Institute had ever been presented to him with such a great number of bishops supporting it.

These words and the departure of Br Louis-Marie forced Br François to change his approach. From then on, he would do his business with Fr Nicolet, the Procurator of the Marist Fa-

thers. He was a priest who spoke Italian and knew the papal administration better than he did. While they waited, the two Brothers recommenced their visits to some people who seemed to

be less close to the Curia. On Monday, April 19, they visited Cardinal de Villecourt; Mgr de la Tour d'Auvergne (Arras); Mgr Bastide, a\Almoner of the military hospital at the Quirinal; on April 23, they went to see Fr Jan-

del, the Master General of the Dominicans. On the 28th they received a "visit from Fr Villefort, a Jesuit, accompanied by another priest. Visit of Br Benoît, Jesuit, sacristan, accompanied by another Brother."

4. BR FRANÇOIS AND FR NICOLET: A LONG INVESTIGATION INTO THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF THE ROMAN ADMINISTRATION

On April 24, Br Louis-Marie left for France. Assisted by Fr Nicolet, Br François tried to find out where the famous letter awaited in Rome

was. While ignorant of its content, he presumed that it was addressed to the bishops who wrote testimonial letters.

Thursday, 6th May. Visit to Cardinal Barnabó along with Fr. Nicolet . . . The Cardinal advises us to see Mgr Fioramonti, Letters Secretary of His Holiness.

7th May. Friday. Visit to Mgr Fioramonti, with Fr Nicolet . . . He promised us that he would remind His Holiness about our request when there was an opportunity. I left him a memorandum.

Things hardly advanced:

ù26th. Wednesday of Ember Week. Visit to Cardinal Barnabó with Fr Nicolet. The Pope has still said nothing to him since his report. His Eminence . . . advised us to see Mgr Pacifici at the Quirinal Palace. It is he who took the names of the Cardinals and Bishops who gave us testimonial letters. He will probably know whether the response from Paris has been received.

May 27. Thursday. Visit to Mgr Pacifici, Briefs Secretary to the Princes, with Fr Nicolet who explained to him the purpose of our visit, as well as the role of His Eminence Cardinal Barnabó. Mgr said to us that he understood but that it was Mgr Guidi, who worked at the Secretariat of State, to whom the Pope had given the task of writing the letter. Follow me, he added; I will go to speak with him about it – he went off alone and when he returned he said to us: Mgr Guidi said to me: Abbiamo scritto; aspettiamo la risposta. [We have written; we are awaiting the response]. I am resigned.

It is one of those rare occasions where Br François let his weariness break through his words. And the

wait continued. To overcome his boredom, Br François made visits around Rome and copied long pas-

sages from the books of the Old Testament which matched his state of soul. And the visits continued.

18th June. Friday – Visit to His Eminence Cardinal de Villecourt, with Fr Nicolet. Waiting on the letter from France – A few words about the Institute.

5th July 5. Monday. Visit to Mgr Talbot to request him to ask His Holiness if he had received the response to the letter written concerning our situation. Mgr said that he would speak with His Holiness during their evening stroll, and to come back the next day.

6th. Tuesday. Visit to His Eminence Cardinal Barnabó along with Fr. Nicolet ... The good Cardinal thinks about writing to the Nuncio in Paris. He only wished to have the names of the bishops who supported us, without writing to them, as their letters are quite explicit ...

5. THE LETTER FINALLY ARRIVES. RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of State had written to the Nuncio in Paris to ask the Archbishop of Lyon to enquire discreetly about the charges levelled against the Superiors of the Little Brothers of Mary. The Archbishop then had written to Br Louis-Marie who had

recently returned from Rome. In his response Br Louis-Marie challenged the assertions of Br Marie-Jubin. As the Archbishop did not express any additional opinion, the Nuncio concluded that the complaints should not be taken seriously.

7th July . Wednesday. Visit to Mgr Guidi (with Fr Nicolet) – Letters Secretary to Princes for the Secretary of State. He had written to the Nuncio in Paris on the orders of His Holiness. – He told us that the response of the Nuncio had arrived recently; that it was favorable; that there are still some things to unravel but that the requests will follow the normal course and that it would soon be at an end. He encouraged us to see Mgr. Pacifici, to whom he had sent the file.

Mgr Pacifici said that, indeed, that he had the response; but that he could say no more to us, that he had to examine it and make his report to His Holiness; but that in 4 or 5 days, he would be able to tell us more. It is Cardinal Barnabó who still has all of your letters, he told us as he finished.

Fr Nicolet informed Fr Chaillot¹¹ that the long-awaited response of the Nuncio had arrived. He was very pleased because he had feared that our request would remain dormant ...

¹¹ This was a French prelate who was very active in the ultramontane network. He was perhaps the author of the article in *L'Univers*, in which the Little Brothers of Mary are considered to be imitators of the Brothers of Christian Schools. Later he would create major difficulties for Br Louis-Marie on the issue of the Constitutions.

Therefore, it was necessary to relaunch the case with the Congregation of Propaganda Fidei which still had dossier.

14th Wednesday. We had a meeting with Fr Nicolet who today will go alone to visit His Eminence Cardinal Barnabó , in order to remind him of our case, and to find out whether the answer had been given to him. If the answer were in the negative, he would go back to visit Mgr Pacifici tomorrow, as he himself had told us. After all that, I will also go to visit the Cardinal, to find out what His Holiness had to say on the subject.

The Cardinal told Fr. Nicolet that 5 days after our visit, Mgr Pacifici had brought him, from the Pope, the response of the Nuncio with the request to make a report to His Holiness the following day, Thursday, which was the day of the audience with His Holiness. The Cardinal added I could return on Friday to find out what had gone on, as long as the case was not suspended (returned) dilata¹³ [continuation] had been requested. He added that in his first report to the Pope, he had not asked for a dilata, but an examen, an approval without delay. »

16th. Friday. Cardinal Barnabó announces the pontifical decision to Br François:

This letter must follow the normal course; we cannot let a work which has been supported by so many recommendations simply lie there ... It is necessary to follow the regular course and the dossier must be sent immediately to the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars.

The Cardinal announced that he would send the dossier the following day to this Congregation and he invited his visitors to go to see the Cardinal Prefect and the Secretary on the following Tuesday.

They will tell you whether the case should soon be finalised or whether we still have a long way to go. If the first is the case, you can remain in Rome; if the second, you will return to France and Father Nicolet will look after your case.

¹² This is a curious turn of events, as if Fr Nicolet was henceforth considered as the one with responsibility for the dossier and Br François as his companion. The course of events that followed seems to confirm the fact that in Rome the Little Brothers of Mary were perceived as dependents of the Marist Fathers.

¹³ Underlined in the text.

21st. Wednesday. Visit to Mgr Bizzarri with Fr Nicolet ... [who] said to him ... The Brother Superior has been in Rome for 5 months – How is it that he did not come sooner ? Fr Nicolet briefly explained to him what had happened : 1. Our audience with His Holiness to whom the testimonial letters of the bishops were addressed; 2. Our dossier was handed over to Cardinal Barnabó and the reports of His Eminence before and after the letter of the Nuncio ; 3. That the Marist Fathers were very well known at Propaganda Fidei because of their Missions; that the two Societies have a very close relationship, to the point that they were presented jointly to the Holy See for approval by Fr. Colin in 1836, and that the Marist Fathers were alone authorised and so the Brothers are now presenting themselves.

6. DIFFICULTIES IN SENDING THE DOSSIER FROM PROPAGANDA FIDEI TO THE CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS AND REGULARS AND PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE

Despite the promises of Cardinal Barnabó, the dossier was not sent on. Br François that same day went to Propaganda Fidei where the Cardinal informed him that the Secretary was ill. Therefore, no dossier; perhaps tomorrow. However, by Tuesday 28, Cardinal Bizzarri had still received nothing. Cardinal Barnabó explained that “the Secretary of the Congregation has gone to take the waters at a spa. He took with him the key of his room where our dossier is”. He wrote to him and Barnabó asked him to return by Friday 30. However, on that day nothing happened. On Saturday 31st July Br François had to insist on seeing Cardinal Barnabó who finally gave him the file addressed to Cardinal Della Genga and which he himself would take to the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars. This is a good example of the ambiguous attitude of Barnabó, or at least of his administration, which seemed to want to keep the dossier under their control.

Mgr Bizzarri, who received Br François, warned him that the case

could take a long time and suggested that he return to France and leave Fr Nicolet to follow the case. The audience with the Pope requested for Thursday, August 5, would take place on Monday, August 9. The interview had little substance, but a few points emerged. For example, the Pope asked him:

“Where are you staying in Rome?
With the Brothers of Christian Schools?”

This gave the opportunity to Br François to say in response:

“Most Holy Father, I am with a Marist Father, and since my arrival in Rome, I have stayed with him”.

Br François renewed his declaration of attachment to the Holy See, and the Pope responded:

“It is really necessary to be always attached to the Centre”.

A good ultramontane despite his administrative problems, Br François concluded:

the figure of the Holy Father seemed to me to radiate with gentleness, goodness and majesty. ... The impression that he made on me will never fade from my memory, and my journey to Rome will be one of the most beautiful times of my life.

Then his final visits took place. The first was Wednesday, August 11 to Mgr Bizzarri who could not help repeating a refrain of the Roman bureaucracy:

There are so many Congregations ... that one could get lost, and confused. Marists of Marseille, Marists of Bordeaux, Marists of Lyon, Marists of Paris.

As for Cardinal Barnabó, he recalled:

If your case has been slow, it is because he had to wait so long for the response to his letter ... You should never be in too much of a hurry when dealing with a case, ... and above all in such an important case as the approval of a religious institute

He even outlined a theology of slowness: "... the Messiah was so necessary and yet God waited for 4000 years. He was born as a little baby and his Church was established little by little". He made an ultramontane profession of faith which certainly aligned with the convictions of Br. François:

Rome is the Centre of Catholicism, and her rays extend to the very ends of the earth, to which they give light and life ... the one who is truly Roman Catholic finds everywhere Brothers who form with him the great Family of the Church. He added that in order to conserve and strengthen this union and this attachment to the Centre, it is necessary that

Superiors have direct relations with the Holy See from time to time.

On Friday, August 13, undoubtedly to please his Roman advisers and interlocuters, Br François made a visit to Brother Floride, the Vicar General and Provincial of the Brothers of Christian Schools in Italy who "always were very honest when I met with them".

On Saturday, August 14, Fr Nicolet warned him:

He was right to believe that our petition was being given serious consideration in Rome; and that much is expected of the two Societies, Fathers and Brothers ... But, be aware, ... that your Rules and your Constitutions will be carefully examined because they [want] you to be established solidly, so that the Institute will endure and work well, that it will be strong and vigorous, well anchored and solid, so that it will not become corrupt nor go astray – That is why, we want to take all the time necessary in order that this important work be well established.

He reminded Br François that he might remain linked to the Marist Fathers more than he wished; and that the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars could place the Brothers under the oversight of the Fathers. That was the wish of Fr Favre, the Superior General, and of a significant portion of the Marist Fathers. It is unlikely that Br François, delighted to have had his dossier accepted, was immediately aware that this success might have serious consequences for him, of which the well-informed Fr Nicolet, who was well informed, let him have a glimpse of that.

7. FINAL INTERVIEW AND RETURN

Monday, August 16 saw the final visit, to Cardinal della Genga, Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

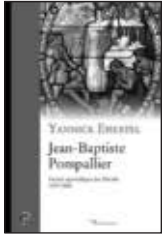
Fr Nicolet explained to him in Italian the purpose of our visit. ‘Another new Institute!’ His Excellency cried out. ‘But there are already so many that have the same objective, more or less. It will soon be very confusing.’ Then Fr. Nicolet explained to him in a few words how long we have been in existence, and our union with the Marist Fathers which goes back a long time. He also explained to the Cardinal what had originally been proposed for the approval of two Congregations as one, our number (which really struck him) and why there is a separate administration for each Congregation. His Excellency said again, ‘But it is so like the Brothers of Christian Schools!’

The reception was not very warm, even though the dossier was deposited in the Congregation and would follow the normal process. Br François left Rome on Saturday, August 21, arriving in Lyon on the 24th and at Saint-Genis-Laval on the 25th. He left after a short time for Lille and Beaucamps and did not get back to Saint-Genis finally till September 8, the day of the inauguration of the temporary chapel of the new Mother House. It was on this date that his journal ends. Despite the very detached tone in the journal, it does reveal how trying his trip was. Those he met were not convinced that Br François was a Superior General who capable of guiding a large, independent congregation. The trip was a heavy personal fail-

ure helped to cause his resignation in 1860.

From the perspective of the Institute, however, the trip was a success because it began the process that led to canonical recognition. But the traditional and official name of the Institute – “Little Brothers of Mary” – was not to be kept. The canonical name “Marist Brothers of the Schools” carries a trace of the debates of 1858 about the status of the Institute: “Brothers ... of schools” is what remains of the intention in Rome to affiliate the Institute to the Brothers of Christian Schools, while “Marist” recalls the origins, when Fathers and Brothers were part of the same Society.

BRIEF INFORMATION ON SOME PUBLICATIONS



**Yannick Essertel,
Jean-Baptiste Pompallier.
Vicaire apostolique des Maoris
*1838-1868***

Editions du Cerf, 2015. (463 pages)
The author is a French academic, undoubtedly known in New Zealand. His book treats Pompallier's disputes with the Marists but it also discusses more broadly his work as the first bishop of New Zealand.

**Ned Prendergast,
Before you we stand.
The story of the Marist
*Brothers in Ireland***

Published by the Marist Brothers in Ireland, 2021 (829 pages).

**Br. Jean Rousson,
Digitalised version of
documents (letters, statistics,
various lists) appended to
Volumes I-XIII of the collected
Circulars of the Superiors
General which were published
*between 1914 and 1916***

These documents, particularly those of Vol. XIII, are a mine of information for researchers

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