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FMS

MARIST
NOTEBOOKS

information
studies
documents

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FRATELLI MARISTI

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(subdivision valid for each Conference)

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52.033 - Brother Louis-Marie, Boffy
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52.038 - Brother Avit, Belmon
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- 52.077 - Brother Leonard Voegtle
- 52.078 - Brother Renato Cruz
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(from 00.001 to 99.999 according to the order as recorded on the computer)

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602 Bourbonnais - Varennes

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604 Saint-Genis-Laval - Beaucamps-Saint-Genis-Laval

605 Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux

- 606 Nord - Beaucamps
- 607 Notre-Dame de la Cabane - South West

61 Europe (less France and Spain)

- 611 Great Britain
- 612 Germany
- 613 Belgium-Holland
- 614 Portugal
- 615 Ireland
- 616 Italy
- 617 Switzerland

62 - Spain

- 620 Generalities
- 621 Spain (Big Province)
- 622 Betica
- 623 Catalonia
- 624 Castille
- 625 Leon
- 626 Levante
- 627 Madrid
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- 632 Iberville
- 633 Levis
- 634 Desbiens
- 635 Quebec
- 636 United States
- 637 Esopus
- 638 Poughkeepsie

64 - Central America

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- 642 Mexico
- 643 Central Mexico
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- 645 Colombia
- 646 Ecuador
- 647 Venezuela

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- 653 Lujan
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- 655 Peru
- 656 Uruguay

66 - Brazil

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- 662 Brazil Meridional
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- 664 Santa Catarina
- 665 Sao Paulo
- 666 Porto Alegre
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- 668 Rio de Janeiro
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- 683 Philippines
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- 694 New Zealand

(subdivision valid for each Province)

A - Assemblies

B - Bulletins

C - Circulars of Brother Provincial

D - Deliberations

E - Admissions - Those taking the Habit

F - Finances

G - Photos: of Brothers; of Houses

H - Histories of the Province

L - Letters of Superiors

M - Missions of the Province

P - Appointments of personnel

R - Reports (other than those of the General Council)

S - Statistics

V - Vows: temporary; perpetual; stability

X - Official documents

(Then come the houses in alphabetical order just now; e.g.

601.001 - Anduze (plus two figures to indicate the

601.002 - Antraiques documents concerning the house)

601.003 - Aps

7 - FINANCES - MATERIAL GOODS

70 - Generalities: financial plans

71 - Correspondence files

72 - Financial statements of the Institute: Econome General

73 - Financial statements of Provinces

74 -

75 - Title-deeds of properties

76 - Building plans

MARY IN OUR CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES

- 2 *"...Marcellin was seized by the love that Jesus and Mary had for him and for others."
- 3 *"**TO FOLLOW CHRIST AS MARY DID**, in His life of love for the Father and for people."
- 4 *"**In giving us Mary's name**, Father Champagnat wished us to live her spirit."

*"**He was convinced that it was she who had done everything for us**, and he called her our Ordinary Resource and our First Superior."

*"**To make Mary's spirit our own**, we contemplate the life of our Mother and Model."

*"**Our ways of being and acting draw their inspiration and guidance from the attitudes that made her the perfect disciple of Christ.**"

*"**Since God gave His Son to the world through Mary**, we want to make her known and loved as one who will lead us to Jesus."

*"**All to Jesus through Mary, all to Mary for Jesus.**"
- 5 *"**The three Marial virtues of humility, simplicity, and modesty come to us from Marcellin Champagnat.**"

*"**We are aware of our limitations, yet, trusting in God and in Mary**, we can undertake difficult tasks and carry them through to a successful completion."

- 7 *”The spirituality bequeathed to us by Marcellin Champagnat is Marial and apostolic.”
- *”Jesus was the whole focus of Mary’s life; He is to be the focus of ours.”
- *”In whatever we do we act as she did, with her discretion, her sensitivity, and her respect for each person.”
- 9 *”We are drawn into unity around Mary, our Good Mother, as members of her family.”
- 10 *”There are special bonds uniting us to the various groups that emerged from the Society of Mary. With them, we want to see the Church illuminated by the spirit of Mary that is common to us.”
- 15.1 *”We renew our religious profession in community once a year. This renewal is made at the retreat, on the feast of the Assumption, or on some other Marial feast day.”
- 18 *”The model of our consecration is Mary, chosen by God to be completely His.”
- *”She welcomed in faith the Word of God at the Annunciation.”
- *”...she surrendered herself in love and joy to the workings of the Holy Spirit, giving herself totally to Him.”
- *”In Jesus’ company, she lived in utter trust in the Father, even to the foot of the Cross.”
- *”In the glory of the risen Christ, she becomes, in a special way, the mother of all those consecrated to God.”
- *”As men dedicated to her, we offer heartfelt thanks to her for the grace of our vocation, confident that her intercession will help us to persevere faithfully.”
- *”Our Founder, who learned so much from Mary ...”
- 19 *”Jesus willed to be born of the Virgin Mary ...”

21 *”We look to Mary, as Father Champagnat did, as guide and support in our learning to live the chaste life.”

*”She is the woman who was the first to live a life of virginity because of Christ.”

*”She became life-giving through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

*”In making a place for her in our home, we learn how people are to be loved, and we, in turn, become living signs of the Father’s tenderness.”

*”Mary inspires us to have constant concern for their welfare, and to respond with selfless love to their appeals for help.”

27.1 *”...so as to obtain, with Mary’s help, the gift of chastity.”

*”We keep alive among us the practices dear to our Founder, such as devotion to the Immaculate Conception and Consecration to Mary.”

30 *”The heart of Mary is revealed to us in her Magnificat, where, true to the tradition of the “poor of Israel”, she puts her trust in the Lord’s faithfulness.”

*”Together with Joseph the carpenter, she lives as one of the insignificant people of Nazareth.”

*”...she gives her active consent to every kind of detachment asked of her by God.”

*”In her company, we gradually break loose from our earthly attachments, in accordance with the purifying purpose of the Lord, who fashions within us a heart that is poor.”

38 *”Mary lived out her whole life in the spirit of her “Fiat” .”

*”By her obedience she became the Mother of God and co-operated in her Son’s redeeming mission.”

*”She is blessed because she listened to the word of God and carried it out.”

*”...we come to Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord, to be schooled by her, and we respond to her call: “Do whatever He tells you” .”

*"It is from Mary that we learn responsiveness to the Spirit and an obedience that is courageous and clear-sighted."

46 *"We shall fight our way through all this, especially by recourse to Mary, and with the help of our Brothers."

48 *"...we are conscious of the presence among us of Mary, Mother of the Church."

*"She helps us to live as brothers, bringing home to us the realisation that we make up one body in Christ."

*"Like Mary ... we remain attentive to the needs of the community and of the world."

*"Our life, like hers at Nazareth, is to be simple and hard-working."

49 *"... living close to our Good Mother, they grew steadily in the sense of brotherhood, of devotedness, and of self-renunciation in the service of one another."

53 *"... the community sees the young Brother as a gift from God and a sign of Mary's care for us."

54 *"For his part, the Brother looks to the Lord and to Mary for strength ..."

55 *"In this way, the Brother can experience the happiness of dying as a member of Mary's family."

67 *"Mary is a model of prayer for us."

*"Virgin of the Annunciation, she welcomes the Word of God."

*"Woman blessed among all women, she rejoices in God her Saviour."

*"Faithful handmaid, she lives out her YES even to the Cross."

*"Mother, she ponders in her heart what Jesus does, and relates His actions to the words of Scripture."

*"She intercedes at Cana and prays with the Church in the upper room."

*"... we pray with Mary, joining in her praise, her thanksgiving and her intercession."

68 *"Father Champagnat ... would turn to Mary with childlike confidence."

70.1 *"... we usually begin the day with the Salve Regina or another Marial hymn."

74 *"Our devotion to Mary ... is expressed in love, confidence and admiration and by trying to make our own Mary's attitude towards God and people."

*"... we go to Mary as a child to its mother."

*"By prayer and by studying what the Church is saying about Mary, we seek to deepen our relationship with her."

*"Her great feastdays ... are special times for intensifying our devotion to this Good Mother."

*"Every day we praise the Mother of God by reciting the Rosary, or by some other Marial prayer that reflects the mind of the Church."

74.1 *"We make every effort to celebrate fittingly the Marial feastdays in the spirit of the liturgy."

74.2 *"We celebrate the month of May in community. If possible we do so with the pupils or with other members of the faithful."

76 *"We ask St Joseph to help us share his love for Jesus and Mary."

84 *"Our attitudes towards young people find their inspiration in Mary, bringing up Jesus at Nazareth."

*"Our apostolic work is a sharing in her spiritual motherhood."

*"We contemplate her, hidden and unknown in the world, faithful to her mission of bringing God to us."

*"With simplicity, enthusiasm, and love, she carries Christ to the Precursor, and presents Him to the shepherds and the Wise Men."

*"Patiently she awaits God's hour, being prepared to take the initiative that results in the first "sign" which arouses faith in the disciples."

*"She steps aside so that attention may focus on Jesus."

*"But she is at His side in the suffering and humiliation of the Cross."

*"We attract young hearts to Mary, Christ's perfect disciple."

*"...making her known and loved as one who will lead us to Jesus."

*"We entrust those in our care to her."

*" ... and we invite them to pray often to this Good Mother."

84.1 *"... we see to it that young people are well instructed about Mary."

86 *"We devote ourselves wholeheartedly to catechesis ... and we trust in the Lord's help and in the care that Mary has for us."

91 *"Like Mary, (our missionary Brothers) withdraw as soon as their help is no longer needed."

93 *"We encourage young people to be aware of the needs of others, to open their hearts to the will of the Father, and to make more and more their own Mary's readiness to be of service."

94 *"Mary is our inspiration in the work of encouraging vocations, as she was for Marcellin Champagnat."

*"We ask her to sustain and develop what she has begun."

97 *"By living the evangelical counsels, he sets out to follow Christ in the manner of Mary."

107 *"...the Brothers engaged in formation ... choose Mary as the one who can inspire them in their mission. From her they learn how to accompany those confided to their care - with love, perseverance, and discretion."

120 *"In calling her our First Superior, we acknowledge that the Institute belongs to Mary, who has done everything for us."

*"We obey God in His representatives with a total readiness ..."

*"Those who govern us let themselves be guided by the spirit of the Handmaid of the Lord."

*"Like her, they listen, ponder, and act, having in mind the spiritual growth of the Brothers."

*"With confidence, they have recourse to her in every situation."

163 *"In our individual lives and in the life of the Institute, we experience the love and fidelity of God, as well as the motherly care of Mary."

170 *"This step (making the vow of stability) expresses our longing ... to express our gratitude to the Virgin Mary ..."

170.3*" ... I wish ... to make your Mother known and loved ..." (formula for the vow of stability)

171 *"Our life becomes ... an invitation to live the Gospel in the manner of Mary."

Br Aureliano Brambila, Rome, 1986.

AN ATTEMPT TO PUT THEM INTO GROUPS (*)

Mary, our model

docility to the Holy Spirit: 18b, 18c, 30c, 30d, 38c, 38e, 67a, 67b, 67c.

attitude towards the mystery of Christ: 3, 4d, 4f, 7b, 38d, 67e, 74a, 97.

apostle like Mary: 7a, 38b, 84c, 84d, 84e, 84f, 84g, 91.

fidelity to vocation: 18a, 18d, 18f, 38a, 67d.

(*) The letters refer to the order of quotations in articles which have been broken up, as listed in: MARY IN OUR CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES.

Mary, our Mother

praying to Mary (ordinary resource): 21a, 27.1a, 46, 54, 68, 74b, 84j, 86, 120e.
and the community: 4b, 9, 48, 49, 53.
and the apostolate: 21c, 21e, 84b (apostle with Mary).
and our personal integration: 55, 76, 163.
her prayer for us: 18e, 67f.
our prayer with her: 67g.

Mary, Mother of God

praising Mary: 27.1b, 70.1, 74c, 74d, 74e, 74.1, 74.2, 170.
apostle of Mary: 10, 84h, 84i, 84k, 84.1, 170.3.

Mary, our inspiration

spirituality: 4a, 4c, 5, 7a, 7c, 18g, 21b.
superiors: 120a, 120c, 120d.
vocations work: 93, 94.
educators: 84a.
formation staff: 107.

Mary, our companion

as a human being: 19, 30b, 120b.
in faith: 15.1, 30a.
in witness: 21d, 171.

STUDIES

FATHER CHAMPAGNAT AND THE FORMATION OF THE BROTHERS

Quotations from the “Life of Father Champagnat” by Brother Jean-Baptiste are taken from the English version of the 1989 edition by Brother Ludovic Bourke.

Quotations from the “Lettres de Marcellin J. B. Champagnat” (Textes présentés par Frère Paul Sester, Rome 1985)

are taken from the English translation by
Brother Leonard Voegtle. Rome 1992

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“The success of his Institute is a marvel to me especially when I recall the unrefined material he had to work with at the beginning, material that he managed to form into Brothers who, for the most part, were well-instructed and pious.”

It was the exceptional gifts of the “formator” which caused the admiration of this priest, himself a native of La Valla and disciple of Father Champagnat. Our Blessed Founder was a born educator who exercised a strong influence on his disciples, but who has not put into writing either his principles or his practice. To try to define his personal line in the formation of the first Brothers is a difficult task. We have to sift through and analyse the documents at our disposal in order to pick out the essential elements in his formation work.

It will be well to stress from the beginning that our appraisal must fit in with the general picture we have of the Founder and his charisma; one particular aspect of a coherent whole.

Besides, all congregations have their institutions for forming their subjects, and one is very like the other, since they are always ready to adopt practices which have been proved to be effective in other congregations. The important thing, therefore, is to sort out the particular spirit and personal attitudes of the Founder which have stamped their peculiar characteristics on Marist formation.

I - FUNDAMENTAL ATTITUDE

“The formative community is often one only in name ... formative relationships are artificial, the steps taken by the “formator” are either hopeful or resigned, never carried through to an effective conclusion ...

*There is something not right when you see more institution than community, when you notice more words than effective actions, more counsels than involvement in exemplary and inviting witness, more times and places of retreat than ways of mixing with people.” (Various authors, *Formazione alla vita religiosa*, ed. Rogate, Rome, 1983, p. 51. P. Gianola)*

In a conference, the Salesian Father Pietro Gianola mentioned the “bureaucrats of good”, these religious who form a social caste. He states forcefully the fundamental problem of institutions that are empty of life, artificial and unproductive systems. It is perhaps in this snare that we are most easily caught in these times when financial resources allow us to create, organise and equip institutions. But what result can you hope for when you put in a minimum of human and spiritual effort?

“Therefore there is a need of much flexibility in our methods, and at the same time clarity in our objectives, so as to bring into play all the resources, the energies and the enthusiasm of young people, suggesting what corresponds to their real aspirations.” (op.cit., p. 21, Elio Gambari)

It is in relation to this problem that the personal attitude of Father Champagnat in forming his Brothers stands out. This founder of a teaching order has nothing intellectual to offer which would project abstract theories on to real life. He was a man of heart and a man of action, always facing life as it is; a simple-hearted man who made spontaneously for the essential, the vital. When founding his Institute he saved himself the round-about way of previous intellectual theorising and began immediately. He had not been six months out of the seminary when his first subjects began their community life in the first house of the Institute.

The great idea of the foundation was thus reduced to a simple **step**: they lived together, worked, prayed, prepared themselves by study, while at the same time taking tentative steps towards Christian education by giving unpaid catechism lessons and looking after poor children. The Rule served simply to organise their life; it was to develop with the progress of the **Congregation** and the multiplication of its activities. There was no room for **unjustified** structures or intellectual madness. Unlike most founders of the **nineteenth** century who were preoccupied with organising structures of life as a first step, Marcellin starts from experience and finds an answer for real needs. **Renouncing** every ideological justification, he freely states that it was his own difficulties in learning to read that gave him the thought of helping young country children by providing Christian teachers and educators..

When confronted by inspector Guillard, who expressed his astonishment at the absence of official authorisation for the first schools, the young founder revealed his usual personal attitude:

"The curate ... explains that, in order to procure legal authorisation, he is waiting for the tree which he has just planted ... to take root." (Origines maristes 1, p. 275)

This precious attestation puts us before a man who is centred on reality, on life, on growth. Institutional organisation is not rejected, but it comes after life instead of preceding it.

Good will, the only condition

The answer he gave to the aspirant, Pierre-Alexis Labrosse, who was to become Brother Louis-Marie, when he asked about conditions required for joining the Institute, is a striking example of that simplicity of the Founder, who reduced to the essential the dispositions necessary for the religious life:

"The most important and, I might say, the only condition required for entering our house, along with health, is good will and a sincere desire to please God." (Letter no. 23, p. 63 Tr LV, 1992)

Good will and sincerity, these two qualities that together make up that biblical "simplicity of heart", are often referred to by Marcellin Champagnat. They express a demand for truth and genuineness which guarantee a fundamental disposition for the religious life. He is not afraid to make all the rest relative at the risk of exposing himself to the incomprehension of the "wise men of this world":

"It's hard to follow the way these Brothers operate; they do things in an opposite way to others: the most capable Brother takes the lowest class and the one who seems least educated, directs the whole community." (pp.453-454)

The choice of Brother Bonaventure is another illustration of this attitude of the Founder. This young man, who in secular life had been a servant, was called to perform the important function of Master of Novices in the early years of his religious life, because Father Champagnat was struck by his openness to grace and by his fidelity.

If Father Champagnat sets so much store by goodwill, sincerity and genuineness, it is because he knows that these dispositions are a key to that openness of heart which is indispensable if one is to cooperate with the grace of God. His formation work was instinctively based on goodwill and fervour.

He did not approve those who began a reprimand by upbraiding the culprit with the fault; his method was rather to try to get the culprit to understand the situation, to win his affection and confidence and to lead him to make his own admission of the fault; then he would proceed with kindness, to show him how he should deal with it.

His reproofs were almost always administered by way of advice and took the form of indicating with simplicity, frankness and kindness what should be done or what should be avoided.” (Life 1989, p. 438)

Brother François recalls an incident which brings out more strikingly the picture of the “good Father” talking to the heart of his children.

“His guidance interviews did not consist in talking a lot. It was often a fatherly embrace, a word, the same word repeated several times but, said by him, it went right down to the bottom of the heart, bringing repentance, love of God, the desire to improve. Many were those who found peace, confidence, happiness under his direction. (Ecrits, vol VIII, p. 114)

Personal commitment of the “formator”

Contemporary psychology freely asserts that to have influence over others one must first of all be oneself: authenticity is contagious. Father Champagnat based his insistence on good will and sincerity on a personal commitment that was heroic. Brother Laurent gives us a picture of him covered with sweat and dust, always doing the hardest jobs so as to spare his Brothers. Other eye-witness accounts stress the fact that the Founder was the first on all occasions, a living model who drew others in his wake:

“My father used to go frequently to the Hermitage to see my Brothers who were religious and lived there. Each time he worked with the labourers. When he came back home he used to say to us: “The Hermitage is a paradise: they pray, they work, they love each other, they keep the silence and Father Champagnat is always first at everything, the most edifying of all; he leads everyone on by the love and veneration they have for him.” (Informative process)

In his circular of the 6th January 1857, Brother François recalls a constant principle of Father Champagnat, that example must precede teaching:

"During his whole life he took to heart these words of Holy Scripture which he often repeated to us in his instructions: '... I wrote about the things that Jesus did and taught ...' (Acts 1,1), and he recommended that we too should do first and teach afterwards."

If that translation of the verse from Acts seems to us to be inexact today, the evangelical principle that is highlighted is still as true as ever. Moreover it is completely in line with another personal conviction of the Founder which he expressed in a letter to Brother Barthélemy (21.01.1830):

"I also know that you have many children in your school; you will have consequently many copies of your virtues, because the children will model themselves on you, and will certainly follow your example." (Letter no. 14, p. 48, Tr LV 1992)

Brother Jean-Baptiste seems to have assimilated this principle of Father Champagnat and repeats it freely:

"A Brother Director has as many copies of his actions and imitators of his behaviour as he has Brothers to direct ..." (Avis, Leçons, Sentences, Ch. 2)

In that passage it is obvious that he is speaking about the formation of young Brothers. It is the same in his biography of Brother Bonaventure where the Founder is supposed to be talking to the Master of Novices to complete his formation:

"All those under you have their eyes on you; you have as many copies of your actions as you have novices; it is on you that they will all model themselves." (Biographies, p. 111)

What gives this traditional element of example its value is that it guarantees the authenticity of the values being inculcated and of the whole formative process. It can be stated that, as a general rule, young people accept true values spontaneously, while they rebel against the bogus article. How many grown-ups there are, parents and educators, who give way before the demands of education and take refuge in theoretical discourses which engage no one in a direct commitment! The examples quoted show that Marcellin Champagnat reduced to a minimum the intellectual approach in order to exploit to the full the efficacy of the direct approach.

Family atmosphere: simplicity and kindness

However, the efficacy of example is not something mechanical. It demands an educational milieu where relations are natural, arising from personal attitudes that are marked by openness and mutual kindness. It is this family atmosphere, a matrix for all education, which characterises Father Champagnat's disciples from the start. In the letter of 01.12.1823, where the Founder is giving news about the establishments he has just visited, we find the following thought-provoking lines:

“Things are going very well in Tarentaise. The children say that Brother Laurent was a ‘nice guy’, but the new teacher is even more so.” (Letter no. 1, p. 27, Tr LV 1992)

As the expression “nice guy” evokes a picture of simplicity and goodness, it brings us to the definition of ‘family life’ as well as to paternal or fraternal relationships in educating children or in forming young religious. At this point we come across two important facts: a solid tradition of family life among the Marist Brothers and a contemporary pedagogical attitude of the highest importance.

The fatherly attitude of the Founder towards his disciples is clearly apparent in the example of Brother Laurent we have just mentioned. Let us quote here some words from the “tearful letter” which he wrote during the crisis in the summer of 1830, where the kind Father recalls the great trials which marked the stages of the development of his work:

“I reassured my children; I told them not to be afraid, that I would share all their misfortunes and share the last piece of bread with them. Under the circumstances, I could see that neither one nor the other had any fatherly feelings towards my young men.” (Letter 30, p. 76, Tr LV 1992)

It is not possible to develop here the topic of family spirit which is one of the aspects of the charisma of the Institute. Let us recall, however, these precious lines of Brother François which are taken from an instruction on Father Champagnat which he gave to the Brothers of the Hermitage:

“But above all he was kind; he was sympathetic; he was a father ... When he founded his congregation he wished to create a family where the head would be a father, and where all the older Brothers would look after and protect the youngest. Let us, then, be his family, his children ...”(Cabier 13, Instructions, p. 217)

In our congregation the family spirit is crystallised around two attitudes: the paternity of the Founder and a deeply felt and filial devotion to our “Good Mother”. A quotation from the Spiritual Testament will take the place of the lengthier treatment which the topic naturally deserves:

“I also ask of God ... that a tender and filial love for our Good Mother never fail you in all the changes of time and circumstance.” (Life, p. 237)

It is obvious that we are talking about an attachment of the heart and not of a simple mental conviction. In natural harmony with childlike simplicity, which is a fundamental characteristic of the Marist spirit, this “tender and filial love”, is a mark of the life and behaviour of the Marist Brother. It goes without saying that instruction on the knowledge and love of our Good Father and our “Good Mother” constitute essential elements in the formation of aspirants and young religious.

It is an interesting fact that the family style of our Marist life, which is based on an inheritance of simplicity, a tradition of the paternity of superiors and a filial love for our Good Mother, coincides with contemporary ideas on formation to the religious life:

“(The ‘formator’) will certainly not be a mysterious and presumptuous person... He will be neither a boss nor a tyrant ... It may seem strange, but the most mature approach is, in fact, that of spiritual paternity and maternity, loving, formative, vocational, as it was in the best religious traditions - of the desert Fathers, St Benedict, St Francis, St Ignatius, St John Bosco ...

In any case, real “formators” ... must use less words, few writings and documents ... Living together must take highest priority ... This kind of religious life calls for the testimony of an exemplary life and demands involvement and sharing, in following the examples of our basic models, Jesus and our founders ...

Personal and continuous contact, which forms by example, is of prime importance. This is what happened before the birth of these institutions (precious, but artificial and detached): seminaries, houses of formation. This is what happened, too, in the time of the great masters of art, before schools were established; what happened in the days of the masters of the spiritual life ... “ (op. cit., pp 158-159)

Maintain good will and fervour

Spiritual paternity, formation through the direct influence of a life lived and shared: these present day ideals bring us back to the practice of Father Champagnat, who was completely rooted in authenticity of life and was forever appealing to the good will of individuals. One of the chief tasks of “formators”, then, is to maintain this basic good will and keep on developing it. Apart from meditation and exercises of piety the religious life has other means at its disposal to maintain this spiritual disposition. Regularity has the merit of concentrating the good will of the individual on the fervent accomplishment of God’s will at the present moment. Devotedness, a traditional Marist virtue, incites us to give ourselves completely to the community and apostolic tasks of one’s religious family. For our Blessed Founder this virtue summed up the dispositions he expected of young religious in formation:

“Our Society is growing more and more; we are now 176 Brothers and a good number of novices, all of whom seem very devoted.” (Letter no. 109, p. 215, Tr LV 1992)

The art of correction

Fearless correction, made with tact, kindness and love, is one of the most efficacious means for maintaining souls in a state of basic rectitude and tirelessly putting right any twists and deviations. It therefore represents one of the high moments of formation on which the whole process often depends. The art of correction is similar in some ways to the art of education. Marcelin Champagnat, who was essentially an educator, seems to have mastered that delicate art. In his ‘Life’, Brother Jean-Baptiste gives a good illustration of this important aspect of the Founder in Chapter 16, p. 438. Father Champagnat never neglected correction, but he did it with remarkable tact, much love, often with humour and always with encouragement.

Jean-Félix Tamet, who took the habit at the age of twelve, taking the name of Brother Sylvester, gives us a touching illustration of the love the Founder had for young people, of his infinite patience when dealing with them, of the consummate art with which he was able to put things right and keep them in their vocation. This wild lad from St Etienne, because of his thoughtless acts, tried the patience of everyone at the Hermitage, except that of the kind Father, who was able to inspire in him an unflinching affection.

"I beg the reader, in the paragraphs that follow, to be good enough to take note of all that our esteemed Father did for me in order to correct my defects and keep me in my vocation. Here you will see traits of incomparable patience which, along with the most tender fatherly affection coupled with constant firmness, ended up by correcting my character which was flighty, scatterbrained and seemingly most unfit for the religious life ...

I was born with a naturally lively, light-headed and thoughtless temperament, and from the early days of my novitiate I indulged in childish pranks which were not slow in drawing down on me from our esteemed Father counsels, warnings, threats, corrections, and even penances which, mind you, I performed without demur, but which hardly corrected me so that, naturally, Father should have sent me home ...

The little rogue blocked Father Champagnat's way on the stairs thinking he was playing a trick on one of his confrères.

"Naturally I expected some exemplary penance. Well, there wasn't any. When I went to see him on Saturday evening to ask him for the customary permission, he spoke to me in words that were at the same time both pungent and pleasant, and advised me to become more serious. That was the end of this giddy behaviour."

After telling about some other thoughtless acts, Brother Sylvester asserts that the kindly Father always showed him clear signs of deep affection and that several old Brothers seemed unhappy with Father's great patience towards him. (Mémoires du Frère Sylvestre, pp. 265-273)

Brother Jean-Baptiste, who in general was rather strict, confirms this personal experience of young Brother Sylvestre:

"In general, he was extremely lenient towards young people provided they were well-disposed and showed evidence of good will." (Life, p. 440)

However, Brother Jean-Baptiste was personally too strict to appreciate the humour of Father Champagnat. When relating the incident on the stairway (p. 439), he changes his tone completely and uses stern language. That is where one can see the superiority of the master over the disciple in the matter of formation.

The letter of 23.11.1834 to Brother Dominique is a small masterpiece of practical psychology. The skilful superior sets about gradually deflating the

swollen head of this hot-headed character. He achieves a complete and neat correction, but like a good surgeon, he takes care to asepticise the wound with humour and by suggesting spiritual considerations.

"A little more humility and obedience would not hurt your situation any. If Brother Liguori had told you that all the Brothers had congratulated him for having you as his co-worker, would you have been so naïve as to believe him? Dear Dominique, it is impossible to please everyone, no matter how we act. ...

Shouldn't you have to pay back a little this year what you have made those who were with you suffer? You are too honest to think you haven't contracted any obligations towards them. Patience, dear friend, patience; I will see you in a few days, and I will arrange everything for the best, with the help of God ... While you are waiting, put yourself in Mary's arms; she will give you plenty of help to carry your cross." (Letter no. 49, p. 117, Tr LV 1992)

Trials

Correction can be considered as the touchstone of formation because it is one of its most difficult and important aspects. In Marcellin's case its application came from a strength of will, one might even say an instinct for education which were part of his nature, and went naturally hand in hand with a personal need for authenticity. Under this aspect, a corollary of correction is the trial, which is meant to verify if the basic good will is there. Brother Jean-Baptiste brings together these two aspects of formation in chapter 16 of the second part of his Life, expressing, as usual, his own tendency to strictness.

"If he noticed that a Brother was vain about his talents, he would humiliate him publicly, or perhaps assign him to the cooking, to an elementary class or to some manual employment...

He wanted theirs to be a solid virtue; for this reason, in his instructions he returned repeatedly and insistently to humility, poverty, mortification and the other virtues which strip man of self-love and of all the defects which take refuge in the hiding places of the soul; amongst these are attachment to one's will, vanity, obstinacy and love of ease and of all that panders to nature. He had a rare talent for detecting and unmasking defects of that kind and for instilling a detestation of them." (Life, pp. 443 and 445)

To back up these last assertions of his biographer here are some notes that Brother François has put together and which could be called “the sin of the perfect”. Our champion of simplicity of heart takes issue with self-complacency:

“Would a well-formed letter dare to take pride in the fact and forget or despise the hand which made it? ... The man who lives a most regular life should fear the poison of pride and self-esteem which could cause his death. The man who always acts in a precise, pious and faithful manner should be apprehensive when men praise him. ... The will of God is that golden measuring rod that St John speaks about (Rev. 11,1), with which we should measure all our actions.” (Cahier 0, p. 152)

The Founder knew how to translate these strong words into actions and create trial situations where the conceited aspirant was obliged to bring his real dispositions into the open. In his letter of 01.12.1823 we find some references to the case of Brother Jean-François (Etienne Roumeny), who took pride in his success at Saint-Sauveur, and whom the Founder changed to another house without previous warning.

“The school in St-Sauveur is still growing, although Brother Jean-François is no longer teaching there.” (Letter no. 1, p. 27, Tr LV 1992)

Alas, this early disciple (1819), was not able to put the will of God above his personal satisfactions and left the Institute in 1826 (cf Life p. 148). This example shows us how much store Father Champagnat set on sincerity; he wanted only authentic religious, real servants of God, in his congregation.

Training to meet future difficulties

However, formation is always oriented towards the future and aims at preparing young people for life and its trials. Therefore it necessarily comprises an aspect of training which makes the subjects battle-hardened for facing difficult situations on which their fidelity and perseverance often depend. Saint Ignatius, who was a soldier, has strongly stressed this realistic requirement. If the “formator” knows how to avoid the artificial and the excessive his disciples will later be grateful to him for his realism.

Here we do not need any demonstration. We know very well that, over and above its regularity and fervour, the Hermitage was a place marked by great poverty and continuous hard manual work. Here is one of the ques-

tions Father Champagnat asks Father Colin concerning a candidate who wants to join the Congregation:

“Does he perhaps think he will have to work less in religious life than in the world? That he will have an easier life? That he will have nothing else to do but pray, go to Mass, etc., etc.?” (Letter no. 55, p. 127, Tr LV 1992)

We understand that the young man in question who chipped away at the rocks in the Hermitage four or five hours a day during his novitiate, had ample time to give up any dreams he had of the easy life and was sufficiently hardened to face up to the most difficult situations that the apostolate might offer.

Responsibility of Brother Directors

Marcellin Champagnat, the man of experience and of the direct approach, knew quite well that a fervent novitiate is only the beginning of a good formation to the religious life. This was especially true at the beginning of the Institute when, because of the pressing needs for his apostolate, initiation into the religious life could be reduced to a period of a few months. Moreover, in spite of all efforts at adaptation, the novitiate still remains a more or less artificial milieu where the candidate accumulates a capital of good will and fervour to help him overcome obstacles in real life. The following stage, from the novitiate to the emission of perpetual vows, becomes the decisive period for religious formation. The young man has more contact with the realities of community and apostolic life and the decisions he takes in reacting to different situations are his own.

It is a decisive period in the life of a person and the one that determines the quality of one’s human and religious life, strengthening one’s apostolic service in faith and creativity.” (op. cit. pp. 209-210, S. Bisignano)

Since in the early days of the Institute there was no regular scholasticate, the greatest responsibility for the formation of young Brothers fell on Brother Directors. Moreover, when the scholasticate came into being, young Brothers were there for only a short time which was essentially directed towards preparation for official examinations. Hence the importance given to the role of Brother Directors as it comes out in the writings of Brother Jean-Baptiste, certain circulars and especially the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute.

“The Brother Director will make every effort to enhance the piety and knowledge of those in his charge.” (Règle de 1837, p. 28)

This condensed programme is spelt out in more detail in the Constitutions of 1854 (p. 199):

“The Brother Director must train in knowledge and virtue the Brothers who are under his charge; it is up to him to form them in their vocation, to give them the spirit of the Institute, to continue and round off the education they received in the novitiate, to form them to prayer and the practices of religious life, to guide them in their studies and in their work.”

In his circular of 09.02.1867, Brother Louis-Marie comments on this chapter 4 of the Constitutions entitled “Brother Directors”. Its declared aim is “The formation of Brothers and the religious spirit.” These essential tasks rest on the shoulders of Brother Directors who can easily recognise “the seriousness and breadth of their obligations” by following the numerous points the author makes. After drawing a parallel between the respective functions of Masters of Novices and Directors, the Superior General concludes with great clarity:

Let us not be afraid to say it: the job of Masters of Novices is religious education rather than education proper. The serious education of Brothers, their practical and sustained education can only be done in the houses under the guidance of Brother Directors, by their attentive, daily, persevering and ever paternal care.” (p. 350)

As Brother Jean-Baptiste is the chief inspiration and the overseer of the documents that followed the General Chapter of 1852-1854, it is from his pen that we find the most important formulation of the formative traditions that we are considering:

“A community ... is a moral body of which the Superior is the head and the inferiors are the members. ... The Superior forms his disciples to his own image and likeness. ... These sayings were often on Father Champagnat’s lips. He was so convinced of them that he declared the fortunes and future of the Institute to be entirely in the hands of the Brother Directors. We need not be surprised, then, that he exercised such caution, perhaps even severity, in the choice of Directors; ... he saw it as one of his principal duties to train them for the direction of schools and houses.” (Life pp.449-450)

Brother Jean-Baptiste then enumerates the qualities that the Founder looked for in Brother Directors. We can see here the attributes of a Marist “formator” in the spirit of Father Champagnat (and Brother Jean-Baptiste):

“A good spirit, great devotedness to the Institute, a lot of tact, a love of order and of thrift, fidelity to the Rule, genuine piety and, above all, charity, humility and prudence, these were the accomplishments and virtues he looked for in one who was to be responsible for the direction of others.” (Life, p. 453)

If we translate “good spirit” by “good will”, we are right in tune with Father Champagnat who gave high priority to qualities of the heart and their application in practical religious life. For Marist formation is directly grafted on to life with no trace of parasitic growth.

The Brother Director forms his Brothers by his example.

“... he is the first to respect the silence, to engage in study, to attend to order and cleanliness, to work in the garden and to supervise the children.” (Life p. 457)

He must give all his time *“to directing the Brothers; to forming them in virtue and in the knowledge that they need as teachers; to following their conduct closely ...” (Life p. 457)*

“One of his first duties is to form the Brothers to the different employments of the Society; if he is to do this he should know how to perform them all himself, so that he can put his hand to everything and can give the Brothers in all things practical lessons, doing in front of them what they are unable to do.” (Life p. 457)

The spirit which animates Marist formation

Finally, the authority invested in Brother Directors

“...should guide the Brothers along the path traced by the Rule ... and keep the Brothers faithful to their duty and to the spirit and goal of the Institute.” (Life p. 459)

Brother Louis-Marie most judiciously associates “the formation of the Brothers and religious spirit”, for the spirit, bound up with the educative milieu, is an essential element of formation. Going through the very numerous texts relating to those two “formators”, the Director and the Master of Novices, we find the major elements in the Marist spirit: humility, simplicity, good will, family spirit and cordiality, fatherly attitude of superiors, love of work and devotedness, filial devotion to our Good Mother.

The Master of Novices should have *“a tender and solid devotion to the Blessed Virgin, a limitless confidence in her protection, always acting in union with the Mother of God, expecting everything from her, having recourse to her goodness with the simplicity of a child ...”* (Constitutions de 1854, p. 145)

“a tender charity for all his disciples, which leads him to love and cherish them ... as his children, taking the part of a father and mother.” (ibid. p. 147)

In his turn, the Brother Director *“will show the Brothers on all occasion: all the tenderness of a father”*. (ibid. p. 190) *“He will strive to gain their confidence by great friendliness ... and will show himself on every occasion to be their father rather than their Superior”,* (p. 199)

“Before admitting postulants ... the Master of Novices will take special care to find out ... if they like work, if they have any aptitude for studies and a decided willingness to give themselves to God” (p. 150)

“... if they are not yet virtuous, they can become so, provided they have a real desire and a sincere will ...” (p. 151)

This last passage reminds one of the expressions that the Founder used in his letter to P.-A. Labrosse about the conditions required for entrance into the Institute (Letter no. 23). Again from the Constitutions:

“He should apply himself above all to give them the spirit of the Institute, that is to say to form them in the spirit of humility and simplicity, being careful ... to make them thoroughly understand that humility and simplicity must be the virtues cherished by the Little Brothers of Mary...” (pp. 169-170)

It is certain that humility and simplicity are inseparably united as the inside and outside of the same reality. However, it is useful to identify the essential quality of this spirit in one word; humility is the virtue of the man of good will. The Constitutions of 1854 found a good way of putting it and included it in their practical recommendations to Brother Directors:

“The Little Brothers of Mary must never give up simplicity which is the distinctive characteristic of the Institute” (p.196)

In the second part of his circular, Brother Louis-Marie describes a little experience which is the central point of his exhortations. He had witnessed

the filial enthusiasm caused by the arrival from the Hermitage of a case of books:

“And there they were, all three of them, radiant with joy, on their knees around that poor case, helping each other to take the nails out; then passing to each other, one after the other, the books, the papers, the clothes, all its contents; looking at them happily, turning them over every way ... But what struck me, what filled me with admiration, was the simplicity of those excellent Brothers, the candour of their souls, their wonderful innocence which made them find ... a gentle satisfaction in such a small thing ...

“It gives me great pleasure to recall here that lovable scene of family interest and filial piety they displayed...

“May Jesus and Mary, then, while keeping all childishness and puerility out of our mutual relations, preserve all that naïvety, simplicity and cordiality of the true family spirit. It is this good spirit which must be an essential part of the education of our young Brothers.” (Circular of 09.02.1987)

We must stress here this fundamental intuition of Brother Louis-Marie. New recruits to a religious congregation get to really know it through certain concrete features which are characteristic of its particular charisma. Now, one of the essential elements of its charisma is its spirit. In our Institute this is centred on evangelical simplicity.

In the first chapter of “Avis, Leçons, Sentences” Brother Jean-Baptiste compares the process of wood-carving to the formation of young religious:

“This is a true picture of a religious who is being formed according to the Rule he has embraced and the aim of his vocation, and who is shaped until the spirit of the Institute is personified in him (p. 19).

Here we are getting near to some of the expressions that the new Canon Law applies to novices: “... that they experience the Institute’s manner of living, that they be formed in mind and heart by its spirit.” (646)

And here we are back to the essential: formation to the spirit characteristic of the congregation. Today the Church expects us to give the example of simplicity of life which is the providential antidote to all the aberrations of modern society. The corresponding interior disposition is simplicity of heart, which is nourished by good will and sincerity and keeps pointing us always to the essential. It helps us to avoid a dichotomy between formation and life by

rejecting artificial structures and by keeping our lives authentic. A little bit of humour, after Father Champagnat's style, should help us not to take ourselves or our ways of doing things too seriously and to concentrate our attention on people by loving them as brothers. On the whole, we could perhaps apply to Marist formation Father Champagnat's advice for educating young people: be with them, love them, lead them to Jesus (with the maternal help of Mary).

II - FACTORS OF FORMATION

The person

Father Champagnat was a simple man whose vitality was unleashed in the form of direct action and love. His life and his activity were strongly polarised by people. Friendship and fatherly or brotherly relationships constitute a need for his ardent soul. If you read attentively the short circular of 12.08.1837, you are surprised to discover that it is not the administrative style which is a feature of the text but its simple, affectionate family tone.

“Our vacation this year will begin, like last year's, on 28th September. Be very careful to arrive exactly on 1st October, which we will try to celebrate as solemnly as possible in our lovely chapel. I enjoy informing you of this decision, knowing your submission and your docility.

How pleasant, how flattering it is for me, my dear children in Jesus and Mary, to think that in a few days I shall have the wonderful pleasure of saying to you, with the psalmist, while embracing you, “Quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum.” ... If possible, the retreat will begin at once.” (Letter no. 132, p. 248, Tr LV 1992)

This is a really cordial invitation, addressed to people, and with a strangely relativised time-table. The Superior leaves a margin for the Brothers' initiative and trusts their good will. The prospect of celebrating our Good Mother's feast of the Holy Rosary in the new chapel of the Mother House is another family event which seems to be an additional incentive. The centre of gravity of this short text seems to be the warmth of the meeting of the Father with each one of his children.

The Founder's correspondence holds traces of his affection for his children. At the end of certain letters he wrote from Paris in 1838, we find a

long list of names of persons to whom Brother François has been asked to pass on his greetings. Not having the affectionate nature of his Superior the latter neglects this commission and draws down on himself a slight remonstrance:

“I do not need to tell you how dear to me are all the Brothers I named in my last letter, even though you did not mention any of them” (Letter no. 174, p. 331, Tr LV 1992)

Father Champagnat is a man of specifics; his relationships are aimed directly at people. He has the art of being able to go right into the soul of his Brothers and share their most personal aspirations. When he was leaving for Paris he had promised Brother Stanislas that he would buy a beautiful cope for the chapel. Since he could not fulfil his promise, he worries about this and writes twice to Brother François asking him to explain the matter to Brother Stanislas, being afraid of disappointing that good Brother:

“I really don't want to buy the cope yet, if that doesn't upset Brother Stanislas too much. I will tell him the reason why when I see him.” (Letter no. 193, p. 366, Tr LV 1992)

The impulsive Brother Dominique, who had previously left the Hermitage to follow M. Courveille, was the object of Father Champagnat's special kindness in his many difficult moments.

“Dear Dominique, I really do feel for you in your difficulties. ... Meanwhile, tell Brother Liguori that I hold you all affectionately in my heart, and that I love you all; you, dear Dominique, because I know the difficulties you are facing in your position, the struggles you are going through, and the attachment you have shown me on so many occasions. (Letter no. 49, p. 118, Tr LV 1992)

Young Brother Sylvestre was the happy recipient of the special attention of the kindly Father for the young Brothers, and tells his experience with gratitude. After one and a half troubled years of novitiate, he finally received, at the age of fourteen, his first appointment.

“Dear friend, I am going to send you to Ampuis to cook and to help the Brother Director in his teaching work. It is one of the best establishments on all scores. When you have mastered your job I shall withdraw the Brother you are going to replace.”

"It did not take me long to get ready. In less than half an hour I was in Father's room with my things in my bag. With admirable solicitude he made me tell him all I was bringing to see if I needed anything" (Mémoires, pp. 278-279)

Then Father Champagnat made the young Brother get on to a horse and sent him on his way while he followed him on foot by round about paths.

"He got down from his horse, put me in his place, arranged the stirrups to suit me, gave me the bridle and showed me the way to use it, recommending me to stick to the road ... As he spoke to me and told me at what speed the horse should go, he led it by the bridle for a short time and then left. Would you not say when you read this little incident that the superior vanished and became a father towards his inferior?" (Ibid. p. 280)

Brother Sylvestre found the right word; the Founder was a father with a special solicitude for each one of his children who each feels himself the object of a special love. Thus we find here the educative conditions of a family situation where everyone can develop his own personality. That is why we are pleasantly surprised to discover that, at a time when people were afraid of freedom, the sons of Father Champagnat kept their own personality and often showed a healthy independence: they are "equal, free, grown-up" as the poet says. It was Brother Sylvestre again who provided an example of this, but a less fortunate one for him this time.

In 1848 he was in charge of the scholasticate which was at la Grange-Payre since the year before along with the juniorate. He had set about his job with gusto preparing young Brothers and not so young for the famous 'brevet' examination. In his rather naïve enthusiasm he put the compositions of his pupils on the notice-board in the Hermitage where they used to spend Sundays.

"The older ones, who were always last, were annoyed about that ... The board was smashed up and the pieces thrown into the cesspool during the night of Saturday/Sunday. There was a great commotion in the house. Brother Jean-Baptiste arrived three days later. He said that the older ones were the "strong heads" of the Institute ... They were sent back to the schools ...

When asked about this incident, Brother Dominique answered: 'That little pest was making fun of the older ones; they taught him a lesson; he deserved it'." (Abrégé des Annales, pp. 355-356)

The community

The family aspect is perhaps most characteristic of the form of religious life that Father Champagnat started. His active and affectionate character made it come naturally to him. We quoted above some examples of his fervent and devoted fatherliness towards his disciples. The combination of this love with the simplicity which characterises the Marist Brothers, creates conditions for family life: mutual openness and kindness. We must add to that the maternal role of the Blessed Virgin for whom the Brothers profess a deeply-felt filial devotion. She, more than Father Champagnat himself, is the centre of unity.

“You are all well aware, or at least you should be, that I love you all very dearly; I wish, I ardently desire, that we love one another as children of the same father, who is God, and of the same mother, who is Holy Church. And lastly, to say it all in one word, Mary is our common Mother; could she look on unconcernedly while we harbored something in our heart against one of those whom Mary loves, perhaps more than us?” (Letter no. 168, p. 311, Tr LV 1992)

The Founder expresses this thought more clearly still in an article of rule found in ‘cahier no. 5’:

“The Brothers of Mary will have a cordial affection for one another as befits children of Mary” (p. 20).

Devotedness, which is the community virtue par excellence, led the Brothers all day and every day to consecrate themselves body and soul to their religious family, especially through the manual work in which they engaged. To that must be added the liveliness, the youthful zest and good humour which were prevalent at the Hermitage. Father Champagnat’s spirituality, a combination of openness, good will and filial surrender to God and to our Good Mother, created a favourable milieu where souls could blossom unhindered. We can well believe young Brother Sylvestre when he says, on returning to the Hermitage after his first experience in a post:

“This fraudulent change - his Brother Director had got rid of him by a trick - was no cause of sorrow for me, for I loved the Mother House dearly, and moreover, my two months’ absence only made me love it more “ (p. 284)

When a candidate entered the Hermitage, he was taken in charge and, as it were, carried along by a fervent community, where everyone felt respon-

sible. Brother Sylvestre mentions that several old Brothers were unhappy about the long patience the Founder showed towards him (p. 273). In fact, outside of studies and religious exercises performed in common, the novices were confided to those Brothers who were responsible for different manual jobs for a good part of the day. A note of Father Champagnat gives us an idea of some of the difficulties which arise in this arrangement:

“Are the novices showing insubordination and disrespect to the older professed Brothers?” (Cahier no. 8, p. 50)

In addition to those who were directly responsible for formation, like Brothers Louis, François and Bonaventure, the community contained some real saints, like Brother Stanislas, the Founder's factotum, and Brother Jérôme, the cart-driver. When the latter was a postulant and was hesitating about his vocation, the Founder, in order to hold on to him, confided him at first to the care of a working Brother.

“Father Champagnat called the pious and intelligent Brother who was in charge of the kitchen, and informed him: ‘I am sending you a postulant for whom I have a high regard and who has all the qualities needed to make a good Brother ... I shall tell him to report to the kitchen, and I want you to keep him busy; do your best to win him over and to convince him to persevere in his vocation,’” (Life, p. 467)

Father Champagnat finally succeeded in convincing this postulant, whom he esteemed highly, to stay. He even went as far as putting off the clothing ceremony so as to give him time for a more complete preparation. The man of God had no doubt realised that this young man had the stuff of which saints are made. In later life he became a model of devotedness, uprightness, simplicity, purity of soul and continuous prayer. (cf Life pp. 479-481).

Under the influence of the holy Founder, the Hermitage was in every sense a house of formation.

Zeal

The community at the Hermitage was a family, but essentially an apostolic family. The short circular of 12.08.1837 already quoted makes this point forcefully:

“It is a delightful consolation to me to have you all together again, one in heart and mind, as a single family, seeking only the glory of God and the

good of his holy religion, all fighting under the same banner, that of the august Mary.” (Letter no. 132, p. 248, Tr LV 1992)

(Here we find in substance the motto of the Society of Mary which Father Champagnat is always ready to follow, but at the same time traces of the apostolic dynamism of St Ignatius.)

If the Hermitage was a real monastery, where the rule could be summed up in the Benedictine device, read the other way round, ‘Work and pray’, on the other hand life was oriented towards an apostolic goal: the education of the common people. Naturally this was the case for the novices who prepared actively for the apostolic life by formation in prayer, training for the religious life and acquiring the knowledge that would be directly useful for them to attain this end. But the community was essentially made up of simple manual workers whose life was equally animated by apostolic zeal. They were well aware that the fruit of their labour would reduce to a minimum the teaching stipend and so procure the benefits of Christian education to the common people. There was, therefore, no dichotomy between teaching Brothers and Brothers doing manual work: all of them did manual work and everyone took part in apostolic pursuits.

Compassion for the poor, orphans, abandoned children and the sick was a complementary aspect of Father Champagnat’s charisma. At La Valla he started by gathering together children who had been more or less abandoned:

“Brother Jean-Marie took in two poor little lads.” (Notes du P. Bourdin)

He failed in his project of adding to the Hermitage novitiate an orphanage with its training centre. However, care for the poor has always been a concern of the Institute as well as their education in Christian principles. Regular collections of used clothes were made for the needy. In 1833 a small hospice for old folk was built on the terrace of the infirmary.

The virtue of zeal for the Christian education of the poor is of highest importance for the Marist Brother. In fact it was compassion for poor children who had no means of receiving Christian education that prompted our Blessed Founder. “What a lot of good you can do”, he kept repeating to his disciples. Our ideal would be for our young Brothers in formation to live the experience of the Founder and his early disciples and hear the cry of the poor, the forsaken, the orphans ...

Jesus and Mary

But our Blessed Founder was a simple man who did not live by abstractions, even theological ones, but brought everything down to the level of actual life. Besides having a great sense of God, he had an essential need of the mediation of the Incarnation. That is why, when preaching on Trinity Sunday, he passed on quickly in his sermon to the feasts of Corpus Christi and the Sacred Heart. His notes are directed essentially to the Eucharist and Holy Communion.

One has the impression that the persons of Jesus and Mary who are the habitual object of his devotion, really come down to the level of their human existence, and form, as it were, a continuation of it. Besides, he normally names them together, making Jesus and Mary constitute, as it were, an incarnational unity. This is certainly the case at the end of his letters where the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary become the place for spiritual rendez-vous.

"I leave you all in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary; they are such wonderful places, and we are so well off there!" (Letter no. 49, p. 118, Tr LV 1992)

This filial surrender to Jesus and Mary is an important aspect of the Founder's spirituality. In 1827, writing to M. Cattet, vicar general, to ask him for a helper, he ends his request as follows:

"After I have updated you on the facts and on how things are going, I will rest in the Lord and in his most holy Mother, and I will bless their holy names." (Letter no. 4, p. 32, Tr LV 1992)

It is through the intermediary of Jesus and Mary that the Founder likes to express his fatherliness towards his disciples. Here is the beginning and end of the first letter of his correspondence that has been preserved for us:

*My dear children in Jesus and Mary ...
... assuring you that it will always give me pleasure and satisfaction to be your very devoted father in Jesus and Mary." (Letter no. 1, pp. 26 and 28, Tr LV 1992)*

Jesus and Mary were the direct 'relaying station' for the religious consecration of his Brothers. The 'dialogue' for the clothing ceremony, written in the hand of the Founder in 1834, contains this simple but trenchant exhortation:

"In order to be clothed with the habit, which you so earnestly solicit, you must die to the world ... and to yourselves in order to live only in Jesus and Mary."

"We fervently wish that Jesus and Mary be our all in all and that everything else be as nothing."

A little further on we read:

"You have every reason to be satisfied because, from now on, Mary has become, in a special manner, your Good Mother, and Jesus Christ the Spouse of your soul."

The Founder is fond of saying over and over again that the Institute is the work of Mary. In his letter to Brother Antoine (04.02.1831) he expresses this sentiment with a familiarity which has a touch of humour:

"Get her on your side; tell her that after you have done all you can, it's just too bad for her if her affairs don't go well." (Letter no. 20, p. 58, Tr LV 1992)

The circular of 21.08.1838 gives a precious account of this consecration to Mary; the Founder himself expresses his attachment to the Brothers only in the context of union with Jesus and Mary:

"Come, all of you, to be reunited and warmed in the sanctuary which witnessed your becoming children of the most loving of Mothers. It will fill us with the sweetest joy to see you renewing yourselves in one and the same spirit and telling Mary that you all want to live and die under her patronage, after having faithfully kept the promise you solemnly gave her. It is in union with Jesus and Mary that my heart, pouring itself out affectionately, tells you, my very dear Brothers, how much I love you." (Letter no. 210, p. 394, Tr LV 1992)

In his letter to a young Brother (20.07.1839), Father Champagnat expressly connects the practice of the vows with a personal devotion to Jesus and Mary (see further on).

The letter to the postulant P.-A. Labrosse (29.08.1831) places the whole of Marist life under the aegis of the Blessed Virgin.

"If you come with those dispositions, you will be received with open arms. Mary, our good Mother, will protect you, and after having had her for your

First Superior, you will have her as your Queen in heaven.” (Letter no. 23, p. 64, Tr LV 1992)

The apostolate of Christian education is also directly connected with a personal attachment to Jesus and Mary.

“What a wonderful and sublime occupation you have! You are constantly among the very people with whom Jesus Christ was so delighted to be, since he expressly forbade his disciples to prevent children from coming to him. And you, dear friend, far from preventing them, are making every effort to lead them to him. What a reception you will have in your turn, from this divine and generous master, who does not let even a glass of water go without its reward!

Tell your children that Jesus and Mary love them all very much: those who are good because they resemble Jesus Christ, who is infinitely good; those who are not yet good, because they will become so. Tell them that the Blessed Virgin also loves them, because she is the mother of all the children in our schools. (Letter no. 14, p. 48, Tr LV 1992)

The disciple of Father Champagnat knows that he is in the service of Jesus and Mary and that he is working alongside them for the sanctification of the children:

... (the children) have only to open their hearts and Jesus and Mary will fill them.” (Letter no. 20, p. 58, Tr LV 1992)

Finally, here is how our Blessed Founder encourages young Brother Euthyme, who is struggling with the difficulties of a beginner in the religious and apostolic life.

“Courage, dear Brother; Jesus and Mary will be your reward...” (Letter no. 102, p. 206, Tr LV 1992)

It is clear that we have here an important element in the spirituality of Father Champagnat and his disciples. And it is perfectly in line with Marist simplicity. Our religious life is nourished by a constant dialogue with Jesus and Mary, rather than by lofty theological reflections. It is not always easy not to forget this when we are dealing with the formation of young religious. And let no one quote the influence of the ‘French School’ or the Sulpicians. Jesus and Mary have always been linked together in the piety and the language of simple Christians. Once more, then, we are forced to conclude that popular piety is one of the most important sources of our spiritual life.

III - ASPECTS OF FORMATION

Formation to religious life

We can recognise three great stages in the history of the development of religious life. The first anchorites were essentially people looking for God; their ideal could be summed up in the motto: "God alone". In the following stage it is realised that in order to practice virtue and be really Christian you must live with others in community. Then we see countless monasteries rising up, whose rule is the great commandment of love of God and our neighbour. Crossing the boundaries of the monastery, charity takes the form of Christian compassion for the sick, the poor and for children, of apostolic zeal for the conversion of pagans. In modern times, new congregations are inspired by an ideal of apostolic service which combines the practice of love of God and of our neighbour.

The religious ideal that Marcellin Champagnat proposed to his disciples has something from each of the sources that nourish consecrated life, although he founded his work as a direct apostolate. He had a high sense of consecration to God and to his service through liturgical prayer. The name he gave to the Mother House - Our Lady of the Hermitage - represents a complete programme. We have already remarked that the Hermitage was a real monastery where life was ruled by the Benedictine device read the wrong way round: Work and Pray. Following the most authentic monastic traditions, the chapel was the centre and heart of the establishment. Prayer, study, manual work followed each other in the rhythm of a rule that was lovingly adhered to as the expression of fidelity to God and to one's vocation in the here and now.

We find the expression of this "monastic" conviction that the Founder had in his letter to Father Cholleton, the vicar general (08.09.1834):

"You know better than I that a fish cannot live long out of water. Only seclusion and meditation on the great truths can maintain the religious spirit." (Letter no. 45, p. 113, Tr LV 1992)

This reflection of the Founder reminds us that genuine religious life can never give up regular 'recharging' through recollection and prayer. However, the other side of the monastic life, community life, is perhaps the one which is still more evident in Father Champagnat's work. Being a man of heart, a real Father towards his Brothers, he had the gift of communicating that human

and supernatural warmth which transforms a community into a real family. The community of the Hermitage was one of those families that one was loath to leave and to which one returned with nostalgia. (see above)

The life of the novices was steeped in this “religious family” which was animated by a saint. Of course they played an active part in its life through prayer in common and long hours of manual work alongside Brothers of the community. Fervent devotedness towards the common good in preparation for their apostolic work among the poor was an excellent way to get them ready for joining their fellow workers in the field.. For, in spite of its monastic aspect, the Hermitage was an apostolic community where everything was ordered to the ideal of the Christian education of the poor.

Here again we can find signs of the religious tastes of the Founder. In his letter of 24.03.1838, he expresses his admiration for the Seminary of Foreign Missions where he is staying in Paris. He finds there a religious fervour, a life of fraternity and an apostolic zeal which fill him with enthusiasm:

“I am staying at the seminary of the Foreign Missions, where I am very satisfied. I assure you that if I did not know that I would be missed a little at the Hermitage, I would ask to end my days here. I follow the schedule of the house as much as my business allows. I get up at the bell, go to meditation and the other religious exercises, to meals and to recreation. I am extremely edified by the generous dedication of these men who are destined for the far-off missions. What thoughtful charity prevails among them; they are cheerful, but not frivolous or dissipated. Whatever delays their departure upsets them but does not discourage them. (Letter no. 183, p. 350, Tr LV 1992)

The admiration of the Founder for the Seminary of Foreign Missions no doubt shows the picture of the ideal house of formation that he had in mind and that he tried to create at the Hermitage. The chief formation of his novices consisted at that time in taking part in that fervent religious life in community and in that enthusiasm for the apostolate among the poor which were the soul of the whole house. As for practical formation in the observance of the vows, that was assured by the organised life of the house.

Poverty was part and parcel of their frugal and simple life-style, as was also manual work, at which the best part of the day was spent. Concern for the poor was always evident at the Hermitage in the help they offered them and the Christian education they were getting ready to bring them.

The demands of chastity were also included in their fervent consecration to God, their dedication to the Christian education of children and especially to a filial devotion to their Good Mother..

"The good fortune of being a child of Mary certainly demands some struggle and sacrifices. ... So tell Mary that the honor of her society requires her to keep you as chaste as an angel." (Letter no. 259, p. 461, Tr LV 1992)

The Founder was just as exacting for the virtue of obedience which, in his eyes, by its radical nature summed up the whole of religious life.

"Obedience makes a soul very holy and faultless and inseparable from its God. The only way I could withdraw from God would be by withdrawing from obedience. This virtue will prepare you wonderfully well to make your vows." (ibid.p.462)

It is obvious that the Founder is here looking on obedience as the perfect accomplishment of the will of God which makes Christians and saints. He goes on to express this forcefully:

"It is Jesus and Mary you are obeying. Otherwise you would be nothing more than a very bad religious all your life; or rather, you would not be a religious very long." (ibid. pp. 461 and 462)

The rigour of Marist obedience is assuaged by direct reference to Jesus and Mary, as well as by that important family quality which marks our community relationships:

"Obey wholeheartedly." (ibid. p. 461)

Being entirely taken for granted in the day to day life of the Brothers, obedience at the Hermitage was as strongly monastic as it was apostolic in that the Brothers' lives were regulated by it. Thus the novices shared completely in the life of a fervent community which was animated by the Founder in person. It was probably the best way to be imbued with the spirit of the Institute and to enter into that movement of zeal for the Christian education of the poor which sustained the Brothers.

Formation in prayer

The community aspect of the religious life is very much in evidence from the beginning of the Institute. Therefore it was fervent prayer in common which

was the main factor in forming the novices in their prayer life. Here again Father Champagnat trained the Brothers by the example of his own fervour. His contagious piety attracted even people from outside to the chapel in the Hermitage. Besides, the Founder had a pronounced taste for liturgical celebrations which were well-arranged, dignified and fervent. The chapel, which had been built by the community and was looked after with loving care was indeed the heart of the Hermitage. Apart from daily Mass and the regular visit to the Blessed Sacrament after dinner, the Brothers visited the chapel frequently during the day. It was, moreover, a chance to address a prayer to the Blessed Virgin.

We should point out here, perhaps, that the devotion of the Founder and his disciples had three main lines: 1. - a deep sense of God, which inspired the basic religious attitudes of faith, hope, love etc; 2. - devotion to the Eucharist, which had a special and constant appeal to them; 3. - a filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin. (The formula of the "first three places", which calls to mind the French School, has no confirmation in specific documents.)

Moreover, it is surprising how little our Blessed Founder was influenced by Sulpician teaching which essentially propagated this theology. You understand it better when you think that high intellectual speculation had hardly any attraction for the practical mind of Marcellin Champagnat. On the contrary, he showed great affinity to St Francis de Sales, a man of heart like himself. In his rough drafts of the Rules he borrows from the "Introduction to the Devout Life" his method for meditation, as well as the way to take an active part in Holy Mass. The latter consists in going over the life and death of Our Lord while following the different parts of the holy sacrifice.

The method for meditation was taken up again by the Rule which was printed in 1837 and, with some changes in the details, was officially followed in the Institute until the changes following Vatican II. After a preliminary act of putting oneself in the presence of God, the body of the meditation consisted in prayers and resolutions. Meditation ended with an act of thanksgiving and a "spiritual bouquet".

Every human activity involves an apprenticeship and beginners will always need a method. In reality this is never abandoned but assimilated by the individual as his personal and spiritual life mature.

We sometimes forget that Marist Brothers do not live in conditions which are conducive to the life of contemplatives. They often have to make a great effort to leave the sphere of earthly (temporal) preoccupations and set up psychological conditions that are favourable for prayer.

Meditation, as a systematic exercise, has been recommended by, among others, St Francis de Sales, who was talking to people living in the world, and by St Ignatius of Loyola, whose religious were destined to perform their apostolate in most difficult conditions.

In these conditions, the “exercise” of meditation implies an obligation of self-vigilance and recollection during the daily occupations. Saint Francis de Sales recommends the “spiritual retreat”. The written tradition in the Institute has kept up the exercise of the presence of God under the formula which was current in the nineteenth century: “God sees me”. Looking closely at this exercise you can see that it is just a formula to designate union with God and interior life. The title given by Brother Jean-Baptiste in chapter five of the second part of the life of the Founder expressly suggests this: “His spirit of recollection and the care he took to keep himself in the presence of God”.

The important thing then is to find the personal means of union with God practised by Marcellin Champagnat and his disciples. Now, we find traces of this intimate prayer in some manuscripts of the Founder in the form of scribbled notes in the margins. We find the expression “You know, God”, which, with its variations, sustains and nourishes dialogue between the soul and God. It is a surge towards God in simplicity of heart, which lets the heavenly Father see the difficulties of the moment. It really is a movement of filial surrender in that openness of heart, that confident love, that awareness of one’s own weakness that is characteristic of children.

We are looking now at a kind of spiritual childhood which has its roots in the Gospel discourse on Providence:

“So do not start worrying: ‘Where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes?’ ... Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things.” (Matth 6,31-33)

There is, then, a way of praying that one could call ‘Marist’, and which should be the mark of the way we perform our religious devotions. It is the simplicity of the child’s heart, which rushes spontaneously to his heavenly Father, even amid the occupations and cares of life. Openness of soul does away with the border between the temporal and the spiritual and allows us to live our earthly existence under the fatherly eye of God. “You know, my God, the situation I’m in; you know my good will and my poverty; I surrender myself to your wisdom and to your fatherly kindness”.

Filial devotion to the Good Mother is completely in line with this spiritual attitude. You can even say that devotion to Mary is the best expression of this spiritual childhood of which the Gospel speaks and in which, at a human level, Marist simplicity is rooted.

To complete the picture of formation in prayer in the Hermitage novitiate, we must mention the instructions that Father Champagnat gave to the community on the great feasts of the liturgical year and especially during the annual retreat. These talks were characterised by their simplicity, their fervour and their direct application to life.

For most of the Brothers Father Champagnat was their confessor as well as their spiritual director. His common sense and fatherly kindness were particularly appreciated by the younger Brothers. Brother Euthyme, who made his novitiate in the time of the Founder, gives us his memories:

"The zeal of the servant of God for the formation of the young people God confided to him knew no bounds; he formed us first of all in piety and in those virtues proper to the religious state, ... At that time I was only fourteen. I had left in the world a father whom I loved very much, and I had found another in the person of the servant of God.

...It was often in the confessional that I experienced his zeal; he would press me against his heart which was burning with love. I have not forgotten these words that he often repeated to me; 'God gave you a great grace when he called you to the religious life, it's up to you to accept it'."

In his 'Mémoires' Brother Sylvestre adds a further note to the above testimony:

"Every fortnight we went to Father Champagnat either for confession or outside the confessional," (p. 264)

Even if Father Champagnat got some other young Marist priests to help him in training the novices in the Hermitage, the basic stamp was that of the Founder and his immediate disciples: Brothers Louis, François and Bonaventure.

Catechetical and scholastic formation

In the Hermitage, the religious and spiritual formation of the novices was closely associated with their direct preparation for their apostolate. Marcellin

Champagnat was a man of God who was distinguished by his zeal; he had founded the Marist Brothers specifically for the apostolate of the Christian education of the poor. At this beginning of the modern era, Christian schools were responding to a historical need that was urgent. The formation period stretched from a few months to a year and its programme was rather tightly packed. The study of religion was therefore included in the general programme for the training of a religious educator.

For religious study Father Champagnat made a distinction between prayer and catechism, for the Brothers as well as for their students. This should suggest to us the importance that Father Champagnat attached to prayer in the framework of religious education. In the daily time-table there were two periods dedicated especially to learning by heart a big number of the usual prayers, in French and in Latin.

The daily catechism lesson was put at the end of the afternoon and lasted three quarters of an hour. From the traditions of the seminary they had adopted the "Sunday session" which consisted in a kind of competition where they recited the lessons they had learned during the week.

Besides, the time-table allowed for two periods for reading the Old and New Testaments, over and above the usual spiritual reading. In addition, they were constantly reading the lives of the saints and of the Fathers. Brother François' notes show us how useful these were in the religious formation of the student Brothers. The subjects chosen for meditation, and the conferences which accompanied liturgical celebrations also served to complete the religious formation of the young Brothers.

I do not know if the novices tried to give catechism lessons in front of their confrères. It is more probable that they were sent rather to the neighbouring villages where they could exercise their zeal in less artificial circumstances. Brother Jean-Baptiste tells us that the Brothers in the schools, apart from the catechism lessons they gave two or three times a day in their schools,

"...used to go, especially on Thursdays and Sundays to teach catechism in the hamlets of the parish." (Life, p. 503)

But the real training of young Brothers in teaching catechism and other school subjects took place during their first year in community where, along with doing the house work, they were gradually initiated into teaching. Afterwards they undertook the responsibility for a class under the watchful and fatherly guidance of the Brother Director.

Following an important element in the Marist tradition, the formation and training of the educator is directly related to the concrete apostolic need. In this there is a guarantee of authenticity which eliminates an artificial preparation. Moreover, the art of the catechist lies more in the way he gives his lesson than in any doctrinal or pedagogical preparation. The soul of catechesis is the transmission of a lively and ardent faith; in the absence of this zealous outburst, formulae lose all their meaning, and teaching catechism becomes a repetitive bore.

Here are some words that Pope John Paul II pronounced recently regarding the basic dispositions of the catechist:

"...an attitude of faith and love which is faithful to the whole of revelation and wishes to communicate it. The spirit of faith is essential to all Christian teaching... It is faith which is the soul of catechesis and is the inspiration of all our efforts in religious teaching." (Osservatore Romano, 17.01.1985)

Endowed as he was with natural dynamism, Marcellin was a born catechist, who had the secret of being able to impart Catholic doctrine with a lively faith. His simplicity and kindness easily found the way into hearts to communicate the burning convictions of his soul. He devoted himself to catechesis from his first years in the seminary and there are many witnesses to the fact that young and old were fond of listening to his simple and practical instructions.

"It was from Father Champagnat, who at that time was a curate in La Vallée, where I was born, that I received the first elements of secular and religious instruction. He it was who prepared me for my first communion, and I shall always have happy memories of the times when he used to bring us twice a day to a little lonely chapel, away from the village. There he would instruct us, make us sing, pray, keep silence and so on. All of this made a great impression on me." (Claude-Marie Tissot, Priest)

The young Brothers, therefore, must have picked up his method which was marked by genuineness, fervour and a way of engaging in dialogue with his audience. Of course they found the same characteristics in the catechism lesson he gave them and they could model themselves on them in the schools. According to Brother Jean-Baptistes, Father Champagnat's disciples were excellent catechists:

"Father Champagnat's guidance on teaching catechism, bore abundant fruit. the first Brothers were all distinguished by their zeal for the Christian

education of children and by a special skill in leading them along the path of virtue.

In one parish, a woman who had refused to send her children to the Brothers' school, alleging that the Brothers were too young, went one day to the parish priest and admitted: 'Although the Brothers are not much more than children, I must confess that they teach catechism very well. The neighbour's child, who attends there, is already better informed on his religion than any of us mothers; he repeats the lesson to all of us of an evening and has the most wonderful things to tell us. I have made up my mind, therefore, to send off my three boys to the Brothers tomorrow'." (Life, pp. 541 and 542)

The young Brothers picked up also that ardent zeal of the Founder for teaching catechism to children which he so successfully passed on to our first Brothers. Here are his words of encouragement to young Brother Euthyme who is about to start on his apostolate:

"Remember, too, how important your beginners' class is; it is up to you to train in religion all the children you teach; it is up to you to open or close heaven to them. So, dear friend, aim to edify them, imprint the love of God strongly in their young hearts. (Letter no. 102, p. 206, Tr LV 1992)

However, in view of the immediate need for preparation in the apostolate of Christian education, subjects essential for primary teaching took turn about in the novitiate with religious exercises, study of Christian doctrine and manual work.

When young lads came to the novitiate with 'suitable aptitudes', that meant that they could 'read and write passably', according to the way the Rule of 1837 puts it. It was necessary, therefore, to give them a solid grounding in the basic requirements for an elementary teacher by diligent training in reading, writing, grammar, spelling and counting. This initiation would be completed by personal study according to the requirements for public teaching which was being organised at that time.

There was also a place in the daily time-table for a singing lesson. It was intended primarily for animating prayers and catechism, and it brought a note of healthy joy to the otherwise severe world of primary teaching.

As to the general teaching method of Father Champagnat's disciples, it is characterised by an expression that we find in the letter of 01.12.1823, the first letter of the Founder that has been preserved:

"Things are also going well at Tarentaise. The children say that Brother Laurent was a 'nice guy', but the new teacher is even more so." (Letter no. 1, p. 27, Tr LV 1992)

The simplicity and kindness in that expression 'nice guy' create a family atmosphere where relationships are genuine, marked by fraternal openness and goodwill. That is where we have ideal conditions for the overall effectiveness of Marist Christian education, that we can sum up in a phrase taken from the letter of 21.01.1830 to Brother Barthélemy: to be among young people - to love them - to lead them to Jesus (with the maternal help of Mary).

Formation in manual work

In the Hermitage novitiate the daily programme contained as much manual work as study: 5 to 6 hours. This particular practice, which scandalised Father Champagnat's fellow-priests, is one of the most characteristic aspects of his method of formation. This founder of a teaching congregation trains his subjects, from the first day, in different manual trades. You come to understand this better if you realise that Father Champagnat intended his Brothers to work especially in poor townships where children attended school only in winter, working in different jobs during the fine season. It was quite in keeping, then, that their future teachers should prepare themselves for the same tenor of life. They were to be teacher/workers.

Among the conditions required for entrance into the Institute, the Founder stresses love of work. He also mentions to a postulant that he will not only have to pray, in the Marist Brothers congregation he will also have to work. That aspirant would be quickly convinced of this when he saw the daily programme.

In one of his drafts of the rules, round about 1830, we find an important chapter on manual work and the way to sanctify it. This is perhaps the most personal the Founder wrote in his sketches of the rules. Work is regulated like a liturgy and is presided over by two persons in charge. It is set in a frame of prompt obedience, the spirit of poverty and mortification. You must not sit on the ground during work (in the fields), but be content with taking a short rest standing up. For Brothers must work in an atmosphere of composure (with the reminder of the prayer of the hour), in silence, and in a spirit of penance.

The young man coming into this style of life was no doubt brought to realise that at the Hermitage they took things seriously. Those who were

looking for the easy life, as well as those who were dreaming of social advancement through education were quickly discouraged. Father Champagnat rightly judged candidates above all on their devotedness. In fact, besides requiring one to give up selfishness, manual work that was taxing and often painful required the total gift of oneself to the service of the community and the religious family. More especially, it caused one to acquire more specific practice in that spirit of humility and simplicity which are characteristic of the Marist vocation, while at the same time training one in that endurance which is indispensable for someone who is about to enter into the difficult career of teaching.

Founders today are coming back to the idea of manual work, because they have discovered the importance of physical commitment. Bodily involvement is a pledge of authenticity, a virtue directly linked to simplicity and the Marist spirit. Love of work imprints on the very being of a Marist Brother his character of a lay religious and keeps him close to the condition of ordinary Christians, who must reconcile worldly preoccupations with the demands of the spiritual life.

IV - STAGES OF FORMATION

Juniorate

In the beginning of the Institute, the Founder admitted candidates without paying too much attention to their age. The future Brother François came to La Valla when he was ten, Brother Sylvestre was twelve. However, most of the postulants accepted by Father Champagnat were about the age of twenty. The Rule of 1837 fixed the age for entry into the Congregation at between fifteen and thirty.

Brother Sylvestre recalls in his "Mémoires" how his thoughtless pranks tried the patience of the kindly Father and especially that of the older Brothers. As the property of la Grange-Payre was available they established a boarding-school/juniorate there in 1837 or 1838. A text, which is perhaps the first draft of the circular of 21.08.1838, gives us the following information:

"Since we have set up an establishment in la Grange-Payre for postulants who are not yet thirteen, you can bring there all those you consider to be good prospects. The boarding fee is one hundred écus per year."

Brother Cassien was in charge of the house, while his companion, Brother Arsène looked after the development of the property.

A nephew of Father Champagnat was at la Grange-Payre in 1838. He was the son of Jean-Barthélemy Champagnat and he took the habit in the Hermitage at the age of 12, becoming a holy religious with the name Brother Régis. Father Champagnat mentions him in his letter of 12.08.1838 to another of his nephews, Brother Théodoret:

"Your little brother is in La Grange-Payre, very happy ... (Letter no. 205, p. 386, Tr LV 1992)

The kindly Father, who was very fond of children, reserved one of his last visits for this juniorate near the Hermitage. He went there on Holy Thursday to say Mass and to give a talk to the juniors and boarders. (cf Life p. 225)

As to the guide-lines for the education given to the juniors, it was no doubt basically along the same lines as the Marist teaching methods mentioned above. Here is the advice that Brother Louis-Marie was to give at a later date to a recruiter:

"Give your juniors a strong sense of piety, frankness and love of work. Come back time and again to the great truths of religion" (Quoted by A. Lanfret, 'Une congrégation enseignante: les Frères Maristes de 1850 à 1904', 1979, p. 217)

Novitiate

Many aspects of formation already mentioned in this work refer more or less directly to the novitiate. In this section I would like to treat this subject in a more systematic way.

As a rule, Father Champagnat did not show himself difficult in admitting people to the novitiate, and Father Courveille blamed him for this. In his letter of 01.12.1823 to Brother Jean-Marie Granjon, the Founder illustrates this attitude with as much humour as supernatural spirit:

"Many novices are also coming, but nearly all of them are very poor and very young. Still, three of them have reached the age of reason, since they are over thirty. One is a business man, one is a shoemaker, and the third is a nobody. Still, God does great things with nothing." (Letter no. 1. p. 27. Tr LV 1992)

We know that the Founder admitted into the Institute one of the old men he received into the little hospice that was built in 1833. He was a shoemaker by trade and, under the name of Brother Spiridion, he contributed to the simplicity as well as the good humour of recreations in the Mother House (cf. *Abrégé des Annales*, pp. 202-203)

Father Champagnat had one principle which allowed him to reduce all the elements of the problem of selection to one common denominator. He expresses this in a reply, which we have quoted already, to the future Brother Louis-Marie, who was asking about conditions for entering the Institute:

“The most important, and I might say, the only condition required for entering our house, along with good health, is good will and a sincere desire to please God.” (Letter no. 23, p. 63, Tr LV 1992)

This demand for complete good will, although it looks harmless, really faces the aspirant with evangelical perfection and the radical nature of religious life. Father Champagnat expressed his way of thinking in more detail when introducing three postulants to the Superioress of the Marist Sisters:

“If they cannot bring you as much wealth as they would like, they at least have enough good will to do whatever you may demand of them. I told them that if they did not come to you with perfect self-renunciation, submission in the face of every trial, great openness of heart, a persevering spirit and a real desire to love God as Mary did, they should not go any further. They replied that these were exactly their own sentiments and their hearts’ desire. I told them that you would keep this letter, to remind them of their promises at the opportune moment; they told me that that is exactly what they want, and that they were ready to sign all of it with their own blood, if necessary.” (Letter no. 55, p. 68, Tr LV 1992)

Paradoxically, it was perhaps the candidates who were best prepared, humanly speaking, who were most liable not to satisfy the basic condition of the Founder. If P.-A. Labrosse was quick to come under the influence of Father Champagnat and embrace the spirit of simplicity of the Congregation, others, coming from the seminary were unable to overcome the tests of disinterestedness and complete obedience to which they were submitted by Father Champagnat. (cf. the case of Roumesy quoted above.)

Candidates presenting themselves with conditions less in their favour still did not avoid the “entrance examination”. In these cases Father Champagnat’s enquiries aimed above all at detecting a real lack of self-interest. He

particularly appreciated young people who were sacrificing the fruits of their work when entering the religious life.:

“One should have great consideration for someone who pays out of what he has put aside, or if, having nothing, he has taken care of a poor father or mother.” (Letter no. 55, p. 126 Tr LV 1992)

The Founder wants nothing to do with those who consider the religious life a refuge from the difficulties of life:

“Does he perhaps think he will have to work less in religious life than in the world? That he will have an easier life? That he will have nothing else to do but pray, go to Mass, etc., etc.?” (ibid. p. 127)

We note here that, in Father Champagnat’s way of looking at things, there was no room for canons!

However, there was a wide range of diversity among the postulants. Since most of the religious orders had been suppressed, a certain number of candidates presented themselves at the novitiate who, in other circumstances would have aimed at a contemplative order or the priesthood.

This fact is well illustrated by the very first recruits of the Founder. Jean-Marie Granjon could not rid himself of a vague inclination to join a contemplative order in spite of the unfortunate experience which made him return to Father Champagnat after his first attempt. Brother Louis, in his turn, just missed being carried away by the “temptation” of the priesthood. Father Courveille himself, not finding enough austerity and perfection at the Hermitage, was to end up with the Benedictines, after some unfortunate lapses, as we know.

In general, history has shown us that there was a great deal of richness and variety of characters among recruits. We have seen that the Founder himself had basic leanings towards the monastic life while at the same time associating them with a pronounced apostolic dynamism (cf. Letter of 24.03.1838, quoted above). The Hermitage was a real monastery, and the numerous manual workers who sanctified themselves in the Institute would not feel out of place in the way of life and spirituality of the Little Brothers of Jesus.

As regards pluralism and openness, we can only admire the lack of self-interest of the kindly Father:

"If the postulant asks for advice about which institute he should enter, he must be given the name of another which is more deserving of his confidence than our own." Letter no. 55, p. 127, Tr LV 1992)

He goes on in words which express both his deep humility and the identification of his Institute with the "work of Mary":

"However, if he still shows a preference for the Society of Mary, especially because of our patroness, he must be welcomed, and shown how well-placed his confidence is, since he places it in the Mother of God." (ibid. p. 127)

Chapter 7 of the second part of the Life shows by various examples that

"Devotion to Mary, the longing to honour her, to serve her and to live under her protection were seen by the Founder as evidence of a vocation." (Life, p. 342)

Brother Sylvestre remembers clearly the scene of his welcome by Father Champagnat:

"After having made us sit down, very politely but without affectation, he addressed several questions to myself and my companion, asking the reasons for our wishing to enter the religious life, if we had left our will at the convent gate, if we loved the Blessed Virgin ..." (Mémoires, p. 263)

We have already seen that love of work and devotedness were a fundamental condition for definite admission into the Institute. The Founder expressed this clearly in his drafts of the Rule and the General Chapter of 1852 made it the first article of chapter XI of the new Rules, with the heading "Of activity and the love of work".

Among the reasons for dismissal from the Institute, apart from cases which were obviously justified for reasons of morality, were exaggerated attachment to parents and worldly manners. Christ exhorts those who wish to follow him to leave everything, and the religious vocation is also a way of life. However, Father Champagnat was very humane. We know he brought to the Hermitage the parents of Brother Liguori who ended their days there. We know too that one of the Founder's brothers, who was stricken by bankruptcy and bad health, also found a refuge in the Hermitage. He was buried in the community cemetery as were three of his children.

There are some cases of excessive attachment to parents; however, Brother Jean-Baptiste himself fell into the opposite excess, letting himself be

ruled by his duties as superior. Here is an incident recalled by Brother Dacien, aged thirteen in 1839, and a novice at the Hermitage. When he was told of his mother's illness, Father Champagnat at first did not consider it opportune to let him go to see her.

"However, since I could not get over my grief, the Father was told by one of the novices. Next day he called me. 'I see,' he said, 'that you are very fond of your mother. Go and see her, and come back in three days'."
(Informative process)

On the other hand we can well understand the dismissal of a postulant who persisted in sticking to his worldly ways in a religious milieu where simplicity ruled. (cf. Life, p. 444)

The Founder obviously knew how to discern choice vocations, hold on to them and give special attention to their formation. He went to all possible lengths to hold on to a certain postulant who was discouraged by some tactless remarks of a novice. This young man was finally won over by the perseverance of the kindly Father, became a model of Marist virtues and died a saintly death. This was Brother Jerome, whose story, already quoted, is one of the examples narrated by Brother Jean-Baptiste in chapter 18 of the second part of Life, which is aptly titled "What Father Champagnat did to preserve the Brothers in their vocation".

Father Champagnat was equally discerning of the qualities of soul of young Brother Bonaventure whom, without more ado, he appointed Master of Novices, in spite of his lack of instruction.

In the biography of Brother Jean-Pierre we learn that Father Champagnat himself took charge of that young man. What was the result? A saint! This was probably the case too with the theological student P.-A. Labrosse, whom the Founder transformed into a good Marist Brother in less than three months.

But the greatest merit of the Founder was rather to transform into a good religious a young abandoned urchin like Jean-Baptiste Berne, or an impossible seminarist like Jean Cholleton, who also died "in the odour of sanctity". (Father Bourdin has written his biography)

The Hermitage novitiate was a centre of intense formation, and hence a taxing place. To have a better understanding of the demands of the programme we must put ourselves in the setting of the place and the time. Life was

very hard for the common people from whom the new recruits came. People lived in poverty and earned their living by exhausting work. It would have been neither wise nor prudent to give the impression that life in the novitiate was easy. Moreover, candidates had to be prepared for the harsh existence of teachers in those heroic days of the 'poor man's school'. When you read some of the testimonies, you may be surprised to see to what extent simple people admired the austerity and mortification in the person of a saint like Father Champagnat.

A table of the "exercises of the day" which was found in notebook no. 6 of Father Champagnat and which must go back to round about the year 1833, gives us an idea of the concentrated rhythm of life in the novitiate. Between rising at four o'clock and bed-time at half past eight there was very little time for relaxation (apart from manual work): quarter of an hour's recreation after dinner and half an hour after supper.

At the start of the day, prayers, reading, study succeeded each other up to nine o'clock, with quarter of an hour's interruption for breakfast. From nine till quarter to twelve: manual work, which is taken up again later, one hour after the break for dinner, till three o'clock (or half past three). Then the evening programme starts: reading, study, afternoon prayers right up to supper time at half past seven.

Outside the time for exercises of piety, the day was fairly equally divided between study and manual work, suggesting the well-known Benedictine motto: "Pray and work".

Attention could be drawn to the fact that the programme includes two times during the day, morning and evening, for revision and explanation of the method for meditation, showing the importance that the Founder attached to a systematic apprenticeship in meditation which he called "the two eyes of the religious life". (Notes of Brother François)

We must also note two substantial periods consecrated to the reading of Scripture. They read the Gospel in the morning and the Old Testament in the afternoon, apart from normal spiritual reading. If the examination of conscience in community, which preceded the mid-day meal, was something inherited from the seminary, the daily chapter of faults at the end of the day was a practice that was purely monastic. Performed with simplicity, these two exercises contributed effectively to maintaining fervour and making amends for any remissness or friction arising from life in community.

Obviously a rule is only of value by reason of the interior urge which enlivens it and makes of it an instrument of sanctification. In the Hermitage, the example of Father Champagnat, Brother François and our early Brothers made up a living reality which was able to both incarnate and relativise the daily programme.

Today we are living in another period of history and with another mentality. But the novitiate is still a time for trial as well as for formation. There is nothing like a challenging ideal for catalysing the good will of young people and facing them with a responsible choice. As for the programme of manual work, which drew such criticisms on Father Champagnat, it is adopted by certain founders today as an effective factor in personal, community and even apostolic formation.

If the Hermitage formation programme could be considered as somewhat monastic, it was completed by a second period of orientation which was distinctly apostolic. In fact, the second year of the novitiate was spent in the houses where the Brothers were to work, and so in conditions which were quite different. The Founder expresses this very clearly in his letter of 29.03.1835 which we have already quoted:

"The novitiate lasts two years, and part of it is spent in an establishment of the society, gaining practical experience of teaching or of cooking, and thus giving proof of a real vocation." (letter no. 55, p. 125 Tr LV 1992)

Father Champagnat, who was a master in the art of building, knows that "you judge the mason by the wall he builds".

Brother Louis-Marie says the same thing at more length:

"The result of this is that young Brothers come to their work ... prepared rather than formed for all that is going to be asked of them.

And let no one tell me that this is not how things should be, that they should have more knowledge, more practice, that they should be more solidly established ... It is not possible, especially when we have to try them out, from their second year of probation to see if this kind of thing suits them and for the Superiors to judge if they are suitable. This trial period, which is adopted in all constitutions and approved by the Holy See, is demanded in the interest of subjects as well as in that of Congregations." (Circulars, vol. III, pp.344-345)

Responsibility for household work and teaching apprenticeship are far from being mutually exclusive. Marist tradition associates the execution of different practical jobs with the demands of teaching. The hand-written rule of Saint-Sauveur, whose last edition goes back to 1834, makes it a duty for the young Brother in charge of the kitchen to be initiated in the work of teaching.

“The Brother Director will see to it that the Brother who is working in the kitchen helps in the class work.” (p. 9)

When you read the reflections of Brother Louis-Marie, you can understand the extra burden of responsibility laid on Brother Directors who already had to bear the weight of teaching, directing the school and directing the community:

“All the work of the novitiate will show no results if it is not supported and continued by Brother Directors.” (Circulars, vol. III, p. 340)
“What care and what attention Brother Directors must give (to formation), since it is almost completely their responsibility and can only be begun, rough-hewn, as it were, in the novitiate.”

However, no one can aspire to a never-ending life of heroism. The introduction of the Scholasticate was justified, not only because of the need to obtain the qualifications necessary for teaching, but especially because of the obvious fact that the formation received in the novitiate had to be completed in conditions which were nearer to real life.

Scholasticate

We have seen that at the beginning secular studies went on together with religious and catechetical formation in the novitiate. However, even in the Founder's time, we can find indications that there were student Brothers in the Hermitage. A daily time-table of around 1833 states:

“Those who have been chosen to do study go to class and start by studying grammar.”

The context does not make it clear if this refers to student Brothers or just a group of novices.

Young Brother Sylvester tells us that after an unfortunate attempt at teaching in Ampuis, he was glad to return to his workshop in the Hermitage.

But Father Champagnat wanted to encourage him and show his confidence in him by getting him at the same time to give some lessons to the student Brothers. (In 1833 the “young teacher” was only fourteen.)

Since 28.06.1833, when the Guizot law was proclaimed, the ‘brevet’ was obligatory for all teachers. Brother Dominique, who was at Charlieu, was alarmed at this and wanted to go to the Hermitage, no doubt to study for this exam which was the key to a teaching career. The Blessed Founder asked him to put the demands of the Congregation and God’s will before his desire to study:

“Keep your strong desire for a good formation, but without desiring anything except what God wants. In the face of everything that may annoy us, let us always say, ‘May God’s will be done’.” (Letter No. 36, p. 96, Tr LV 1992)

We can presume that there were at this time in the Hermitage regular groups of Brothers engaged in broadening their professional knowledge, especially with a view to obtaining all the required diplomas. Brother François, Father Champagnat’s secretary, a dedicated student himself, no doubt played an important part in the organisation of these refresher courses.

From 1848 on a regular scholasticate was functioning at la Grange-Payre, replacing the boarding-school. With its juniorate and scholasticate, this “house of formation” was to carry on as a complement to the Hermitage until its sale in 1853. This scholasticate, or “brevet class”, was formed by young Brothers and older Brothers doing a refresher course, the one whom Brother Jean-Baptiste called ‘the “strong heads” of the Institute’. After the tragicomic misadventures of Brother Sylvestre, who was in charge of this group, Brother François drew up some rules for the scholasticate. They are printed in the Bulletin de l’Institut (Tome XXIII, pp. 671-672).

The author reminds us that the aim of our study is the glory of God and the salvation of souls. To this end the Brothers will be diligent in study, especially of Christian doctrine, and will sanctify their work by ejaculatory prayers. He then recommends methodical study and great attention to handwriting and neat exercise-books. He does not fail to remind them of the respect due to their teachers as well as docility, discipline and silence. Finally he has a word of encouragement for the less gifted, insisting on the value of good will, while warning those who were succeeding best in their studies not to give way to vanity.

Later, in the time of Brothers Louis-Marie and Nestor, the scholasticate took on a more important role because of the higher standards required for teachers and the demands for official diplomas which became formidable weapons in the fight against teaching given by religious congregations.

Marist tradition has persistently preserved the pragmatic attitude of the Founder as regards intellectual and professional training: first live, then philosophise. In our religious family priority was always given to the demands of the religious life which was marked by simplicity and the requirements of apostolic action. The pursuit of official diplomas was regulated by the direct needs of Christian education in the school.

Ongoing education

So, ongoing education, which answers immediate needs and adapts itself to circumstances, is firmly rooted in Marist life. A situation of intellectual poverty in the beginnings has contributed to develop this love of work and this constant diligence which is adept at taking advantage of every available moment.

“It is essential that we not lose our time,” (Letter no. 176, p. 335, Tr LV 1992)

wrote Father Champagnat in his letter of 12.03.1838. And Brother Laurent declares that “he was the enemy of the slothful”. The need for ongoing formation makes us avoid idleness, which the Founder held in horror, and produces industrious teachers who will be models and trainers of their pupils. This system has, in fact, produced some remarkable self-made men from the very beginning, men like Brother François and Brother Jean-Baptiste.

In the time of the Founder, the main time for ongoing formation for the Brothers was the month’s vacation at the Hermitage. Father Champagnat insisted on having the Brothers around him in order to be able to continue their formation, linking it directly with the school year which had just ended. Here is what he wrote to a parish priest who wanted to keep the Brothers back in his parish:

“We need to have all our brothers with us during that month or so in order to talk about ... the success of each establishment. We have an overall examination to make, and an infinite number of things to settle, which we can do only in the presence of all our subjects.” (Letter no. 47, p. 114, Tr LV 1992)

So, all the Brothers take part in a detailed assessment of the situation of the Institute and the working out of a strategy for the new school year. There is no better formation than the one that keeps contact with reality.

Outside the time of retreat, where he gave at least one conference each day, the Founder used to give regular explanations of the rules of the Institute and continue the pedagogical training of his Brothers. Brother Jean-Baptiste asserts that you could compile a volume of all the practical lessons and discerning advice lavished by Father Champagnat.

“He gave them lessons himself in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and singing. Often he had to make inroads into recreation time to teach one or other of these. Having initiated them into these different subjects, he went further and showed how they should be communicated to the children, forming them in the method of teaching.” (Life, pp. 521-522)

But the application of the Brothers was sustained all the year through by the traditional means of emulation.

“Besides the religious formation and the lessons given during the vacation, he had arranged competitions among the Brothers and also among the pupils in the different establishments.” (Testimony of Brother Euthyme)

This testimony is confirmed by a note of the Founder which was probably one of his pieces of practical advice given during the vacation:

“The head Brother (“Grand Recteur”) in each canton will set a composition for the other schools under his charge.” (Cahier no. 8, p. 51)

Furthermore, when the Brothers came to the Hermitage they had to show proofs of their application and of their pupils’ progress.

“When they come to the house for the holidays, each Brother will bring six models (of writing). No one will be dispensed from this obligation without permission.

Every year, at the same time, each one shall bring a page on which every child will have written something, according to his ability, at the beginning and at the end of the year.” (Règle de 1837, p. 63). (cf. also, Life, p. 521)

But Marcellin knew very well that nothing can take the place of direct contacts and personal relationships in education. That is why he attached the greatest importance to visiting establishments, an undertaking he performed

with love, in spite of tiredness and a host of other occupations. Here is what he wrote to M. Barou, vicar general, in May 1827:

“Everyone agrees that it is of the utmost importance to train young people well. It is therefore very important that those who work at this excellent undertaking be themselves well trained and that they not be left to themselves once they are sent out.” (Letter no. 7, pp. 36-37, Tr LV 1992)

In a parallel letter to another vicar general, M. Cattet, the Founder clearly explained the principal objectives of his visits. Like the practical man he was, he was especially watchful in the matters of chastity and the regularity and zeal of the Brothers: indeed, it is faithfulness in these vital points that keeps the Brothers in “the spirit of their state”.

However, in spite of the great affection he had for his Brothers and the joy he felt whenever he met them personally, the Founder had to delegate some of these visits when the Congregation developed. He often made use of the intelligence and energy of Brother Jean-Baptiste by entrusting some special missions to him.

The Rule of 1937 contains a section on the Brother Visitor (p. 33). But the charge of checking on details was given to the “Head Director” who was responsible for all the schools in a district. He took the place of the “Grand Recteur” referred to above.

“In each district there is a First Director who is charged with supervising all the Brothers who work there.”

Apart from supervising the religious life of the Brothers, this First Director had to keep a check on their professional and apostolic life:

“18. Every month, and more often if necessary, the Brother First Director must fix a day for seeing the children of the establishments he visits.

19. He will see how the Brothers conduct their classes; if everything is in order; if catechism is well taught; if writing is neat and if the exercise books are well-kept.” (ibid. pp. 31-32)

Towards the end of the Founder’s life, the first team of Brother Superiors instituted periodical “conferences”. These consisted in cultural meetings centred on a programme which everyone had to prepare: reports, discussions, correction of work. While stressing religious studies, the circular of January

1840 gives a detailed programme of catechism, grammar, arithmetic; plus a subject for French composition and an arithmetical problem.

The exhortation which accompanied the programme encouraged study but not without showing a marked apprehension concerning any excesses it might entail:

"We therefore need first of all, this holy knowledge, which is sanctified by the charity which builds up and nourishes piety. Let us put far from us that purely worldly knowledge to which pride aspires and which puffs up the heart.

Above all, we will be good catechists, but we will also try to be competent teachers... With the sole intention of pleasing God, you will redouble your zeal for the sort of study which is suitable for a good Brother of Mary and you will make yourselves capable of giving suitable answers on the proposed topics." (Letter no. 313, pp. 533-534, Tr LV 1992)

CONCLUSION

The short text I had in mind when I started this work has been noticeably extended as the work developed. That proves that the commission on formation was right to undertake the study of this topic, which at first sight looks rather sterile. If this trial run is not a masterpiece, it at least opens up perspectives in such an important field.

Coming back to the starting point, let us recall the limitations that Marist tradition puts on our activities. In principle we are meant to give Christian education to the poor; consequently, the aim of formation is not to indulge in endless study in order to create an intellectual aristocracy. Since the time of our Founder, our preparation has always had in view direct apostolic usefulness. In these conditions it is easy to graft formation on to a fervent good will, an ideal ground for making the seed grow and bear fruit. Moreover, a good initiation allows one to adapt to the new needs of apostolic activity.

We must, at any price, keep to the simplicity of the Founder, and go straight to the essential, thus avoiding the routine of institutions which are condemned to sterility. Let us avoid that formation which is a kind of hibernation, where we spend the best days of our youth withdrawn from rea-

lity, without making contact with young people, the poor, and the problems of the apostolate. That obviously presumes that the placing of our houses of formation and the organisation of their programmes allow for a real initiation in the many apostolic activities of the Congregation. In any case, it is always possible to interrupt the cycle of studies to dedicate oneself for a time to a life of full-time apostolate.

To avoid sterility and ineffectiveness, the formation of young religious must be animated by an apostolic ideal which is always present. John Paul II expresses this forcefully in his allocution of 28.01.1985 to the priests and religious of Venezuela. Here are some of the words which the Holy Father addressed directly to novices and seminarists.:

“Do not be afraid, form yourselves well intellectually and pastorally, and take heart as you look around you, for the harvest is great and the workers are few.”

Brother Alexandre BALKO,

20.02.85

RECRUITING VOCATIONS under our first four Superiors General

The policy followed by our first four Superiors General in recruiting vocations was that followed by Father Champagnat - enlisting the help of heaven. "Prayer, faith, fidelity to duty" (A. Forissier) were the basic means they used. Several constants can be discerned. First, the action of God preparing the hearts ... , the solicitous intervention of our "Good Mother" who kept on choosing new postulants for herself from our schools (Circular 02.07.1855). "And our Good Mother has not been slow in choosing some new boys to take the place of those she is calling to our dear mission in Oceania" (Circular 15.01.1841). When the number of recruits drops in 1848, Rev. Brother François asks the Brothers to join him in asking God, through the intercession of Our Lady and St Joseph to send us some good postulants. In his circular of 02.02.1858 we find this tribute of the Reverend Brother: "It is the name of Mary which has given the Congregation its life ... Still today it is the blessed name of Mary which is the main support of our novitiates and which attracts numbers of postulants each year.

Rev. Brother Louis-Marie also acknowledges the part Mary plays in recruiting. "It is also through devotion to Mary, by devotional practices to her that he (M. Ch.) attracted the first Brothers and that they became attached to him."

But he considered St Joseph to be the one who was especially appointed by God to find subjects for novitiates. "In each Province we must do everything to help vocations ... 1. Ask God for them with constant prayers, especially through the intercession of St Joseph who seems to be specially appointed by God to provide for religious novitiates and find subjects for them."

In 1872 he attributes the rise in the number of recruits to the visible protection of Our Lady and St Joseph. The circular of 1874 sees as the sour-

ce of the increase in vocations the action of God and his blessings and exhorts everyone to keep up their united efforts and prayers.

Rev. Brother Nestor follows in the steps of his predecessors in his circular of 19.03.1881. To get the holy religious we need so badly we must first of all pray and ask God for good vocations every day through the intercession of Our Lady and St Joseph.

Rev. Brother Théophile, in his circular of 18.05.1901, tells us the opinions of the seven Superiors General who had met with him to discuss recruitment. At the top of the list were the supernatural means - prayer, penance and exemplary religious life. He also specifies novenas to Our Lady and to St Joseph, and devotion to Mary. He describes, too, the method used by Brother Pascal, already recommended by Rev. Brother Louis-Marie, whose advice is to pray and get others to pray a lot.

All four are at one in recognising the value for recruitment of an exemplary religious life. Recruiting is a supernatural work whose efficiency depends on God without whom the workers' efforts are in vain. That is why Rev. Brother François, in his circular of 15.01.1841, encourages the early Brothers in the Marist family to work "as hard as they can to leave to those who come after a rich inheritance of virtue and good example." On 29.01.1856 he once more exhorts the Brothers to foster vocations especially by the example of a pious, regular and edifying life. "It is by the holiness of your life that you will be, with regard to your pupils, according to the expression of St Paul, the good odour of Christ, to spread the knowledge of His name and to attract subjects to the Society of His Blessed Mother.

The circular of 08.12.1857 echoes the thought: "... but do not forget that the best way to foster and multiply vocations is to cultivate a love and appreciation of our state of life that is exemplary and truly religious."

And Rev. Brother Louis-Marie, in the same vein: "We must do all that we can in each Province to help vocations and, if need be, to promote them with the help of the parish clergy. The main thing is to see that piety and regularity reign in all our houses, for God, who desires above all the salvation of men, blesses in a very special way communities which are preparing saints for Him. That is how the heavenly propaganda of these good angels works and sooner or later it will bear fruit."

In 1881 Rev Brother Nestor, among the means he considers useful along with those already indicated, gives first place to exemplary conduct.

Rev. Brother Théophile mentions the following point taken from the conclusions of the meeting of Superiors General in 1901: "Recruiting children for the religious life is a supernatural work which calls for the use of supernatural means ... , the example of a pious, regular and edifying life."

Another constant is the harassment our first Superiors experienced following requests from parishes and even from townships for the Brothers to establish schools. This was in the years following the Restoration when truly Christian education and teaching were called for. The parish priests themselves became recruiters and sometimes wished to provide money for the foundations they were requesting. Time and again Rev. Brother François exhorts the Brothers to interest the parish clergy in vocations for this work. Rev. Brother Louis-Marie did the same for the Juniorate in 1868 and the Novitiate at Dumfries in 1874.

A favourite field for recruitment was that of young men between 15 and 21 years of age who could pass directly into the novitiates. It obviously had to be done outside of schools. It was particularly so during the generalship of Rev. Brother François. "These latter should be the special object of the zeal of the Brothers" says Rev. Brother Louis-Marie in his circular of 16.07.1868, in which he informs the Brothers of the establishment of the first juniorate, properly speaking, at Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage on a trial basis. It was to last for ten years before its definite adoption, as forming part of the formation structure, in 1877 by the General Chapter which ruled that three juniorates should be established, at Saint-Genis-Laval, Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux and Beaucamps. Already in 1869 Rev. Brother Louis-Marie thought fit to remind the Brothers of the existence of the Juniorate in Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage and called on their zeal to send good aspirants there.

This called for a considerable increase in expenditure on formation and to help meet this a supportive scheme was set up and given the name "Work of the Juniorates" to which Rev. Brothers Nestor and Théophane each consecrated a circular. This scheme had the twofold aim of financing and recruiting. The whole circular of Rev. Brother Théophane, 24.02.1886, dealt with means at our disposal for building up a fund to help our juniorates.

Recruitment from our schools does not seem to have been looked on favourably by the Brothers, at least prior to the establishment of juniorates. However, Rev. Brother François seems to encourage the Brothers to do so as early as 1854: "... even foster them (vocations) with prudence among the children ... with whom you are dealing". And in the circular of 02.07.1855 he says: "We have also the consolation of learning that God is blessing our schools more and more along with the children who are attending them and that the Blessed Virgin is still choosing for herself some new postulants from among them." Finally, in the circular of 29.02.1856 he adds: "That is why we again exhort you to foster vocations among your pupils -..."

The establishment of the first juniorate at l'Hermitage takes for granted

the recruiting of young aspirants from our schools. The circular of 14.06.1877 announcing the opening of the three juniorates mentioned above points out that aspirants may be accepted from the age of 12 upwards, therefore recruiting from among the school population is accepted. Indeed, on 19.03.1881 Rev. Brother Nestor exhorts the Brothers to “be zealous in finding vocations for the religious life, especially in our schools.”

However, the practice of recruiting for our juniorates from among our pupils, so strongly recommended and organised since the first attempts in 1868, did not cause us to give up, but rather give preference to, the practice of recruiting young men of 15 years and upwards who came from Christian families and whom the Brothers would meet outside the school situation (Rev. Brother Nestor, 19.03.1881).

Rev. Brother Théophile defines clearly the part the Brothers play in recruiting and fostering vocations. It is up to them to discern signs of a vocation in young people, their aptitude and inclination, “two things which stand out, in both the moral and physical aspects, in those qualities and sentiments which make a young man fit to play in the world the role assigned to him by Providence.”

The Rev. Brothers François, Louis-Marie and Théophile insist equally on collaboration with the clergy in our vocations work.

Finally, Rev. Brother Théophile gives great importance to the obligation incumbent on each Brother to make good use of the gift of a religious vocation, the pearl of great price of the Gospel, and exhorts each Brother to follow the advice of the enthusiastic Br Pascal in the field of recruiting. His teaching and practice became the system followed by Rev. Brother Louis-Marie and his successors. It states quite clearly what Rev. Brother François understood by prudently encouraging, promoting and fostering good vocations (Circular 09.04.1853). This same doctrine is duly completed by the means preached by Rev. Brother Nestor (Circular 19.03.1881) and the nineteen ways of recruiting enumerated in the circular include the conclusions reached by the meeting of Superiors General that Rev. Brother Théophile attended.

One notices that, especially since the time of Rev. Brother Nestor, more insistence is made on recruiting from the schools which soon become the favoured field, to the extent that, when people spoke of recruiting, it was the juniorate which was considered the normal introduction to the Marist life. It maintained its importance as a training centre for vocations until after the Second World War and even into the second half of the twentieth century, so that we could call the years from 1870 to 1970 the century of the juniorate in Marist Champagnat life. We know what has become of it since then and are perhaps inclined to regret somewhat the passing of this youthful stage.

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The charming Pope who gave the Institute its ecclesial character by approving the Constitutions in 1863, spent the last seven years of his life in suffering and humiliation, feeling the effects of the blows that the world of his day was dealing to the principles on which his policies had been built. They had had their day.

He died on 7th February 1878, stripped of the temporal power that history had snatched from the Church and after having proclaimed the primacy and the infallibility of the successor of Saint Peter.

In three days the cardinals had elected as Pius IX's successor Joachim Pezzi, the young man who had read an address to Pope Leo XII on the occasion of the opening of the Holy Door on Christmas Day, 1824. He was in his 68th year and had been a bishop for 32 years. He is the man to whom Christ confided His Church through the conclave on the 20th February 1878.

He is the one who blessed the new enterprise, The Work of the Juniorates. This work, to which the Superiors attached such importance, had its newssheet, its Bulletin for publishing documents relating to its organisation, its operation, its progress, the development of the juniorates and the vitality of the Institute. The first number appeared in January, 1879.

On 27.05.1879, at the request of Brother Louis-Marie, Cardinal Caverot obtained from His Holiness Leo XIII a special blessing for the work, which he blessed again and approved on 9th June of that same year. It was to produce in the field of vocations, using means similar to those used by Pauline Jaricot in her work for the Propagation of the Faith, similar, although more modest results.

Fr. R.S.

DOCUMENTS

2.3

SERMONS ON THE FOUR LAST THINGS

From the drafts in AFM 134.6, a 4-page leaflet, 23.5x19.5 cm
 134.7, an 8-page leaflet, 26x20.5 cm
 134.8, a 16-page leaflet, 20x14 cm

We possess four partly-developed texts dealing with the Four Last Things. Since the first three (136.06, 136.07 and 136.08), are very similar, we will treat them together. The first two are only outlines, which are more fully developed in the third. We will quote the latter verbatim, while inserting passages which are found only in one of the first two drafts.

All three texts are built around the same outline:

- Introduction
- The past: the sinner recalls sins committed:
 against God;
 against his neighbor;
 against himself.
- The present: on his death bed, the sinner is tormented:
 by the pain of his physical illness;
 by the uneasiness of his mind;
 by his powerlessness to help himself.
- The future: the sinner is tormented when he thinks of the future:
 the relatives and friends he must leave behind;
 created things in general, which he will no longer enjoy;
 the devils awaiting him in hell.

The last section is developed only sketchily; the sermons on hell which follow will more than make up for that.

Memorare novissima et in aeternum non peccabis
Souvenez-vous de vos fins dernières
et vous ne pécherez jamais.

Pourquoi, M.C.F. tombons nous dans le péché et suivons nous nos
5 mauvais penchans? C'est parce que nous oublions nos fins dernières,
parce que nous ne pensons pas à ce qu'il doit nous arriver à la fin de notre
vie.

C'est parce que nous oublions que nous devons mourir, que
nous devons être jugés,
10 (var.) *et que ce jugement a de grandes suites, c'est-à-dire
qu'il décide irrévocablement notre destinée ou pour l'enfer
ou pour le ciel que nous tombons dans le péché.*

Nous rejettons la pensée de la mort, du jugement et des suites terribles
de ce jugement et cependant cette seule pensée est capable d'après
15 l'expression du St Esprit d'arrêter la fougue de nos passions. Souvenez
vous de vos fins dernières et vous ne pécherez pas : *memorare novissima*
etc...

Pour vous rappeler une de ces quatre fins de l'homme que dans un
moment votre pasteur viendra au milieu de nous portant la cendre bé-
20 nite que l'Eglise lui met aujourd'hui à la main et vous adressant ces paroles
que Dieu adressa au premier homme devenu pécheur: Souviens toi, ô
homme que tu n'est que que tu n'est que poussière et que tu retournera
en poussière. *Memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris.*

We can only guess at the chronological order of these texts. We do not know if the two brief texts come before or after the developed one, which was obviously written for the ceremony of the imposition of ashes. That rite, held at the beginning of Lent, is certainly a call to conversion, but that in itself does not indicate that the other two were written for the same occasion. In point of fact, they make no reference to it, and the necessity for the sinner to change his lifestyle is perennial. None the less, it seems most probable that the developed text was written first. We may suppose that the preacher first composed it at the beginning of his priestly ministry, at a time when he could not yet risk improvising as he spoke. On other occasions, or for another audience, he made two summaries of it. Made confident now by experience and his mastery of his subject, he merely took the main ideas, adding one or another detail to make them more concrete and more on the level of his hearers.

Whatever the case may be, these texts show us how carefully Fr. Champagnat prepared his sermons, recopying them at least in part, to adapt them to different situations, even though he could have rested satisfied with the text he had already written out, and simply improvised its adaption to his listeners.

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Memorare novissima et in aeternum non peccabis.
Remember your last end and you will never sin.

Why, my dear brothers, do we fall into sin and follow our bad inclinations? Because we forget our last end, because we do not think
5 about what is going to happen to us at the end of our life.

Because we forget that we must die, that we must be judged,
[variant: and that this judgment will have powerful effects; in other words, our falling into sin will irrevocably determine our destiny for hell or for heaven].

10 We reject the thought of death, judgment, and the terrible effects of that judgment, and yet, that one thought is enough, according to the expression of the Holy Spirit, to halt the mad onrush of our passions. Remember your last end and your will never sin: *memorare novissima*, etc....

To remind you of these four last things, in a moment your parish
15 priest will come into our midst carrying the blessed ashes which the Church places in his hands today, and he will speak to you the words which God spoke to the first man, now become a sinner: "Remember, man, that you are only dust and to dust you shall return. *Memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris*".

25 Que ce peu de cendre parle éloquamment à qui veut prêter l'oreille de son coeur. Méditons les, M.C.F. pendant ce carême, cette année, notre vie toute entière. La mort, nous trouvant occupé de cette sainte pensée, ne nous épouventera pas. Voyons combien est terrible la mort à celui qui n'y a jamais réfléchi et qui par conséquent ne s'y est jamais préparé: *Mors peccatorum pessima*; – la mort des pécheurs est très mauvaise. Mauvaise
30 par rapport aux circonstances qui la précèdent, à celles qui l'accompagnent et à celles qui la suivent. Ces trois points feront tou(t) notre sujet.

A la mort Dieu se moque de ceux qui se sont moqué de lui, en refusant d'écouter ses ministres et de se convertir. Nous allons nous entretenir aujourd'hui de la fin malheureuse des pécheurs. Nous allons les considérer tristement étendus sur un
35 lit, considérant le passé, le présent, l'avenir.

Mors peccatorum mala in egressu. St Bernard nous dit qu'il n'y a rien que le pécheur momurant repose avec plus de soin que le souvenir de ses iniquités passées, et rien cependant qui se retrace plus vivement à
40 sa mémoire que ce souvenir. Voyons ce fameux pécheur dont nous parle la Sainte Ecriture: *Nunc reminiscor malorum quae ego feci in Jerusalem.*

in quantam desolationem deveni et in quo fluctus tristitiae inivi.

Maintenant que je suis étendu sur ce lit, accablé par la maladie, je me souviens de maux que j'ai faits dans Jérusalem. *Nunc*, maintenant que
45 j'ai plus de mal que je n'en puis supporter, le cruel souvenir vient encore par surcroix. *Quae ego feci.* Voyez mes Ch.F. comme l'approche de la mort lui fait bien reconnoître la vérité : il ne dit pas, qu'on m'a fait faire, qu'on m'a conseillé de faire, mais: *quae ego feci*, que j'ai fait moi-même. La mort lui fait encore discerner la qualité du mal qu'il a fait et contre
50 qui il l'a fait: in Jerusalem, c'est contre ma ville consacrée à Dieu, consacrée à son culte, consacrée à sa religion : in Jerusalem.

C'est contre les ministres de Dieu qui habitoient dans Jérusalem auxquels j'ai fait tout le mal que j'ai pu.

Ha ce souvenir m'accable, ce souvenir m'abat. *Nunc*, au moment
55 de la mort le pécheur, comme un autre Antiochus dit: *Nunc reminiscor*, je vois à cette heure tout ce que j'ai fait: péchés de mon enfance, péchés de ma jeunesse, péchés d'un âge plus mûr, enfin l'histoire entière de

20 How eloquently this pinch of ashes speaks to one who is willing to listen to his own heart. My dear brothers, let us meditate on them this Lent, this year, our whole life. Death, finding us busy with this holy thought, will not terrify us. Let us see how terrible death is for someone who has never thought about it and who consequently never
 25 prepared for it: *Mors peccatorum pessima* — the death of sinners is very bad. It is bad in terms of the circumstances which precede it, those which accompany it and those which follow it. These three points will compose our whole presentation.

30 At death, God will mock those who mocked him by refusing to listen to his ministers and to be converted. Today we are going to talk about the sad fate of sinners. We will picture them lying sadly in bed, thinking about the past, present and future.

Mors peccatorum mala in egressu. St. Bernard tells us that there is nothing the dying sinner rejects more vigorously than the memory of his
 35 past iniquities, and yet nothing is more deeply engraved in his mind than that memory. Let us look at that famous sinner of whom Holy Scripture tells us:

*Nunc reminiscor malorum quae ego feci in Jerusalem.
 In quantam desolationem deveni et in quos fluctus tristitiae inivi.*

40 “Now that I am stretched out on this bed, struck down by illness, I remember the evil things I did in Jerusalem. Nunc, now that I have more pain than I can bear, that cruel memory comes along to add to it. *Quae ego feci.*” See, my dear brothers, how the approach of death forces him to admit the truth:

45 he does not say, “which they made me do, which they advised me to do”, but
 “*quae ego feci*: which I myself did”. Death also makes him aware of the sort of evil he has done, and against whom he did it: in Jerusalem, against the city consecrated to God, consecrated to his worship, con-
 50 secrated to his religion: in Jerusalem.

“I did all the evil things I could against the ministers of God who lived in Jerusalem.

“Ah, that memory overwhelms me, that souvenir crushes me.” Nunc, at the moment of death the sinner, like another Antiochus, says,
 55 “*Nunc reminiscor*, I see now everything I have done: the sins of my childhood, the sins of my youth, the sins of my adult life — in a word,

toute ma vie. Je vois les péchés contre Dieu et sa religion, contre ses ministres et son culte. *Reminiscor*: ici se présente à mems yeux tous mes murmures contre la divine Providence, toutes mes imprécations, mes
60 blasphèmes : *in quantam desolationem deveni*, dans quelle triste situation je me trouve.

Il voit le pécheur mourant, il voit les sacrilèges, railleries qu'il a faites contre ce qu'il y avait de plus saint dans la religion.

Il voit comme un autre Judas, l'énormité du sacrilège usage qu'il a
65 fait des sacrements et il dut comme ce fameux réprouvé: mon crime est trop grand pour en espérer le pardon: *in desolationem deveni quantam*.

Péchés contre le prochain : jalousie, envie, haine, médisance, calomnie, injustice, scandale, mauvais conseils, en un mot, tous les maux qu'on lui a fait commêtre

70

Péchés contre soi-même : orgueil, avarice, paresse, intempérance, impudicité, etc... etc...

A la vue de toutes ces saletés impudiques dont il ne pouvoit soutenir le souvenir, même lorsqu'il se portoit bien, dans l'état où il est réduit il ne peut y penser sans saisissement ; il dit avec encore plus de force qu'Antio-
75 cus, parce qu'il est plus instruit que lui, par conséquent plus capable: *in quantam desolationem deveni*, dans quelle terrible désolation me trouve-je réduit ; *et in quos fluctus tristiae*, et dans quels reflux de tristesse.

Pendant que le pécheur jouissoit d'une bonne santé, tout le mal qu'il faisoit ne lui sembloit rien, il avaloit l'iniquité comme l'eau, mais il
80 en est plus de même maintenant que la maladie l'a atteint: *Circum dederunt me vituli multi, tauri, pingues obsederunt me*, mes péchés se présentent à moi sous la forme de bêtes affreuses ; *Cum dormierit apperiet oculus suos*, le pécheur ouvrira les yeux au moment de la mort.

Quelle étrange expression, s'écrie Saint Grégoire, nous fermons les
85 yeux pour dormir et nous les ouvrons à notre réveil ; d'où vient donc qu'il est dit que le pécheur ouvrira les siens pendant son sommeil. C'est que deux choses entrant dans la composition de l'être du pécheur, l'âme et le corps et que le sommeil se saisissant d'une de ces parties, l'autre s'éveille et ouvre les yeux.

90

the history of my entire life. I see my sins against God and his religion, against his ministers and his worship. Reminiscor: now my eyes see all my murmuring against divine Providence, all my curses and blasphemies:
60 in *quantam desolationem deveni*, what a sad situation I find myself in”.

He sees the dying sinner, he sees his sacrileges, his mockeries against what what is holiest in religion.

Like another Judas, he sees the enormity of his sacrilegious reception of the sacraments, and like that famous reprobate, he must say, “My
65 crime is too great for me to hope for forgiveness: in *desolationem deveni quantam*”.

Sins against the neighbor: jealousy, envy, hatred, backbiting, calumny, injustice, scandal, evil advice, in a word all the evils he was led to
70 commit.

Sins against self: pride, avarice, laziness, intemperance, immodesty, etc., etc....

In his present condition, he cannot keep from trembling at the sight of all the indecent filth whose memory he could not bear even when he
75 was healthy. Even more forcefully than Antiochus, because he is better educated and hence more capable than he, he says: “*in quantam desolationem deveni*, to what a terrible state of desolation I have been reduced; et in quos fluctus tristitiae, and amid what waves of sadness”.

While the sinner was in good health, all the evil he did seemed to
80 him to be nothing at all; he swallowed iniquity like water, but it is another story now that illness has struck: “*Circumdederunt me vituli multi, tauri pinques obsederunt me*, my sins appear before me in the form of terrifying animals”; *Cum dormierit aperiet oculos suos*, the sinner
85 will open his eyes at the moment of death.

“What a strange expression”, says St. Gregory — “we close our eyes when we go to sleep and we open them when we awake. So why is it said that the sinner will open his while asleep? It is because there are two parts to the sinner’s being, his soul and his body, and when sleep
90 takes over one of these parts, the other awakens and opens its eyes.”

Le présent afflige le pécheur aux prises avec la mort.

Jugez, mes F. par trois choses : 1 - par les douleurs aiguës qu'un pécheur au lit de la mort éprouve dans son corps ; par les alarmes effrayantes que la mort livre à son esprit ; par l'impuissance où il se trouve de se
95 secourir lui-même dans ses misères.

1° Par les douleurs aiguës; De tous les maux qui peuvent affliger l'homme il n'en est point auxquelles il soit plus sensible qu'aux maladies, surtout quand elles sont mortelles. Tandis qu'il n'est affligé que dans (ses enfans) ses amis, dans ses biens, dans ses proches ; il supporte ses peines.
100 Quelque soit cette disgrâce, elle ne le touche que de loin, dit Saint Grégoire, en comparaison de la douleur intime et particulière qu'il souffre quand il est frappé et tourmenté dans sa propre personne.

105 C'est la réflexion que fait ce savant Pape sur la réponse que fit le démon à Dieu à l'égard de Job: il est inutile de dire que le démon fit contre Job tout ce qu'il put, mais tant qu'il ne sera affligé dans les choses qui ne tiennent pas à son corps, il gardera la paix: *moveri his quae extra se sunt negligit, sed jam veraciter quid sit agnoscitur si in supra quod dolet experiatur.*

110 S'il n'est pas fort ému des choses qui lui sont étrangères, il rentre en lui-même, il se trouble quand il fait une sensible expérience de sa propre douleur. Si cela est généralement vrai à l'égard de tous les hommes, à combien plus forte raison est-ce vrai à l'égard des pécheurs

2° Par les effroyables alarmes que la mort qui se présente à ses yeux
115 livre à son esprit. La mort du juste produit des effets bien différens dans l'un et dans l'autre, dit Saint Bernard. Dans le juste la mort est bonne à cause du repos qu'il y trouve, de la nouvelle vie qu'il va recevoir et de l'éternité qui va lui être assurée. Il n'y a rien de si intime que l'âme et le corps et, par conséquent, que la séparation fasse plus de peine.

120 3° Pour que le pécheur put se secourir il faudroit qu'il eût absolument quatre choses, une des quelles manquant, le pécheur ne peut se convertir: 1. le temps ; 2. l'usage des facultés de son âme ; 3. la grâce de Dieu ; 4. enfin la coopération à la grâce.

Y correspondront ils après l'avoir si souvent rejeté, cette lumière
125 qu'on auroit pas voulu voir dans un jubilé, dans une retraite.

* * *

The present torments the sinner who is struggling with death. You can judge this for yourselves, my brothers, by three things: 1 - by the intense pain which a sinner on his death-bed experiences in his body; by the terrifying alarm which death arouses in his mind; by his powerlessness to help himself in his misery.

1 - The intense pain; of all the evils which can afflict man, there is none to which he is more sensitive than illnesses, especially when they are mortal. As long as he is afflicted only in (his children), his friends, his possessions, his neighbors, he puts up with his sufferings. "Whatever may be his misfortune, it touches him only from a distance", says St. Gregory, "in comparison to the intimate personal pain he suffers when he is struck and tormented in his own person".

That is this wise pope's reflection on the devil's reply to God concerning Job: needless to say, the demon had done all he could to Job, but so long as he was afflicted only in things which were not part of his own body, he remained at peace: "*moveri his quae extra se sunt negligit, sed jam veraciter quid sit agnoscitur si in supro quod dolet experiatur*".

"If he is not deeply moved by things which are outside himself, he is at peace with himself; he becomes upset when he begins to feel pain himself." If that is generally true for all men, how much more so for sinners.

2 - The terrifying alarm which death, which is staring him in the face, arouses in his mind. Death produces very different effects in the just person and in the sinner, St. Bernard tells us. To the just person, death is something good, because of the rest it brings, the new life he is going to receive, and the eternity which he has been guaranteed. Nothing is more intimately joined than soul to body, and hence their separation is more painful.

3 - For the sinner to be able to help himself, he would absolutely have to have four things; if one were lacking, he could not be converted: 1. time; 2. the use of the faculties of his soul; 3. God's grace; 4. finally, cooperation with grace. Will he correspond with these, after having so often rejected that light which he did not want to see during a jubilee year or a retreat?

* * *

Le pécheur promenant ses regards dans l'avenir sera terriblement épouventé: *mors peccatorum mala in egressu*; la mort des pécheurs est malheureuse dans leur sortie de ce monde ; *pejora autem in ingressu*, elle est encore plus mauvaise dans l'entrée dans l'autre vie ; très mauvaise
130 par la réprobation qui suivra. La terre (se soulèvera contre lui), les créatures qu'il a souillées et qu'il a forcées pour ainsi dire à lui aider à assouvir ses passions (ne voudront plus être à son usage), lui livreront la guerre.

J'en distingue trois: celle qui lui ont été amies ; celles qui lui ont été
135 indifférentes et dont il a abusé ; d'autres qu'il ne connoit pas et qui lui ont été ennemies.

Les premières sont les parents et les proches ; les secondes, les créatures en général ; les troisièmes sont les démons.

The sinner looking to the future will be terribly frightened: *mors*
 125 *peccatorum mala in egressu*; the death of sinners is unfortunate in the way
 they leave the world; *pejora autem in ingressu*, it is still worse in the way
 they enter the next life; worst of all in the condemnation which will
 follow. The earth (will rise up against him), the creatures he has dirtied
 and which he has forced, so to speak, to help him to gratify his passions
 130 (will no longer be willing to serve him), will wage war on him.

I will single out three of them: those that were his friends; those
 that were indifferent to him and that he abused; others that he did not
 know and that were his enemies.

The first are his parents and those close to him; the second, crea-
 135 tures in general; the third are the demons.

2.4

SERMON ON THE FOUR LAST THINGS

From the handwritten original in AFM 134.10, a four-page leaflet, 29x21 cm, written on three and a half pages.

This fourth sermon on the Four Last Things was composed according to the same plan as the first three, but here only the first section is developed, while the other three are merely mentioned.

Since it contains much new material, the text is here transcribed in its entirety, even though certain passages are already found in the preceding versions.

It is impossible to determine the chronological relationship of this text to the others. Given its very concrete details, we could just as easily imagine it to be the efforts of a determined neophyte who wishes to make a strong impression, as of an experienced pastor of souls who wants to shake up his hearers who are slow to work at their conversion. The handwriting is different from that of the three preceding texts, which are in an open hand, with fairly large letters which can be easily read by a speaker who does not want to keep his eyes fixed on his text. The present text is in fine, close writing, and in one place there is even an insertion between the lines. In addition, the paper is quite a bit larger than that of the others.

If this in fact does represent not just a simple instruction but a sermon — which we may suppose it does, from the reference to the distribution of ashes — then we would lean more toward the first alternative offered above. In other words, this text predates the other three. Under this hypothesis, the successive texts demonstrate the preacher's method. But we must emphasize the purely hypothetical character of this suggestion, which the reader can judge for himself.

* * *

Memorare novissima et in aeternum non peccabis
Souvenez-vous de vos fins dernières et vous ne
pecherez jamais.

Telles sont les paroles mêmes de l'Esprit Saint. C'est donc, mes
5 chers F. parce que nous oublions que nous devons mourir un jour et
qu'après cette mort nous devons être jugé et que ce jugement décide irrévocablement notre sort ou pour le ciel ou pour l'enfer.

N'oublions donc pas que nous devons mourir : *memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris*, – souviens toi ô homme que tu n'est
10 que poussière et que tu retournera en poussière. Ce sont encore les paroles du St. Esprit que votre pasteur, la cendre à la main, nous adresse à tous en général et à chacun en particulier. Il en demeure pas là pour que vous ne l'oubliez jamais, il grave avec la cendre que l'Eglise lui met en ce jour à la main, (le) signe de la croix sur votre front en disant: *Memento*
15 *homo*, – Souviens toi homme, quelque soit ton âge, quelque soient tes projets, quelques puissent être tes prétentions. Souviens toi, – *Memento*, que ce peu de poussière que je tiens à la (main) est ton origine et que sous peu de jours ce sera la fin.

Mes F. que ce peu de cendre parle éloquamment à chacun de nous.
20 Prêtons seulement l'oreille, mais l'oreille de notre coeur. Disons nous : Je dois mourir et à la mort, si je vis mal, quelle sera ma détresse à ce dernier moment, si, comme dit encore le St Esprit dans les Proverbes de Salomon (1), je refuse de me convertir comme Dieu m'y engage par la voix de ses ministres. Dieu se moque à la mort de ceux qui se sont moqué de
25 lui, en refusant de changer de vie.

Vous voyez, mes Frères, que je veux vous parler aujourd'hui de la fin malheureuse des pécheurs. (Nous) les considérerons tristement étendus dans leur lit, livrés à ces trois considérations : reflexions sur le passé ; réflexion sur le présent ; ref. sur l'avenir.

1ère partie

30 Le souvenir du passé accablera les pécheurs aux approches de la mort Tous les objets se présentent à l'homme pécheur au moment de la mort. Il n'y en a point, selon St Bernard, qu'il tache de fuir davantage et qu'il peut cependant moins fuir que la vue de ses désordres, de ses iniquités passées, ces fornications qu'il a commises à la faveur des ténèbres
35 et de la solitude, ces injustices, ces voles, ces haines, ces pensées d'ambition, d'impuretés qui n'ont jamais paru au dehors paroîtront aux yeux de son ame qui ne voudroit pas les voir.

Memorare novissima et in aeternum non peccabis

Remember your last end and you will never sin.

These are the very words of the Holy Spirit. So, my dear brothers, it is because we forget that we must one day die and that after that death
 5 we must be judged and that that judgment will irrevocably determine our fate, either heaven or hell.

Let us not forget that we must die: *memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris* - Remember man that thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return. These too are the words of the Holy Spirit which
 10 your pastor, with ashes in hand, addresses to all of us in general and each of us in particular. He will not remain here, but so that you may never forget them, he marks the sign of the cross on your forehead with the ashes the Church today places in his hands, while saying: "*Memento ho-*
 15 *mo* — Remember, man, whatever your age, whatever your plans, whatever your pretensions — *Memento*, that this bit of dust which I hold in my (...) is your beginning and that in a few days it will be your end".

My brothers, may this pinch of ashes speak eloquently to each of us. Let us only listen, but with the ear of our heart. Let us tell ourselves, "I
 20 must die, and at death, if I have lived badly, how distraught I will be at that last moment, if as the Holy Spirit once again says, in the Proverbs of Solomon ¹, I refuse to be converted as God is urging me to do by the voice of his ministers. God laughs at the death of those who laughed at him by refusing to change their life.

You can see, my brothers, that I want to speak to you today about
 25 the unfortunate end of sinners. Let us picture them lying unhappily upon their bed, involved in three considerations: reflections on the past, reflections on the present, reflections on the future.

1st Part

As death approaches, the memory of their past will overwhelm sinners. Everything comes back to the sinner at the moment of death.
 30 There is nothing he more wants to avoid, according to St. Bernard, and yet can less avoid, than the sight of his disorderly life, his past iniquity, the fornications he committed under cover of darkness and solitude, the injustices, the thefts, the hatreds, the thoughts of ambition, of impurity which never appeared exteriorly will appear to the eyes of his soul which
 35 would rather not look at them.

Tous ces péchés que ce malheureux avoit toujours voulu cacher se présenteront à lui en trois différentes manières: premièrement, ils l'environneront de toutes parts, – *circumdederunt eum vituli multi, tauri pingues obsederunt eum*, – mes péchés se présenteront à moi sous la forme de taureau et de bêtes affreuses qui m'environnent de toutes parts. Je croyais, en les commettant, – *nunc reminiscor malorum quae feci in Jerusalem*, – que ce n'étoit rien, mais aujourd'hui je vois bien le contraire. Qu'est-ce que ces monstres qui semblent vouloir se jeter sur moi? Est-ce là cet adultaire, cette impureté, cette fornication, ce péché que j'ai commis seul, ce mauvais désir, ce péché infame que je n'ai jamais osé accuser, que je ne voulois pas même me repentir ; qu'est-ce encore qui frappe ma vue, est-ce cette vangeance que j'ai commise, cette envie, ce jugement téméraire, cette médisance, cette calomnie, cette ivrognerie que je comptois pour rien ; est-ce cette négligence de mes devoirs, mes pâques manquées, dimanche mal observé, abstinence, jeûnes, privations, prières des quarantes heures, jubilé, avertissement charitable de mes pasteurs, de mes parens, de mes véritables amis, touche secrète de la grâce, bons mouvements intérieurs qui me pressoient fortement de me donner à Dieu, tout cela se tourne maintenant contre moi. Le pécheur apperçoit encore quelque chose de plus effrayant: ce sont les péchés commis directement contre Dieu; blasphème, les raillerie contre la religion, les fauts serments, la profanation des sacrements et des choses saintes. Mon Dieu que de crimes! Quand je voulois me confesser, je n'en pou(vois) presque point trouver, et aujourd'hui ils se présentent par milliers. N'en soit point étonné, tu t'étois fait une fausse conscience, tu ne faisais aucune réflexions, tu cherchois de confesseur relâchés ou des confesseurs que tu pusse tromper, tu avois les yeux de ton ame comme fermé, mais aujourd'hui que ceux de ton corps vont se fermer, comme nous dit l'Écriture Sainte(2), ceux de ton ame s'ouvrent. O funest et horrible réveille de l'ame, – *qua dormierit apperiet oculos suos*, – il commencera à ouvrir les yeux lorsqu'il mourra.

Quelle étrange expression, dit St Grégoire, nous fermons les yeux pour dormir et nous les ouvrons à notre réveil! d'où vient donc qu'il est dit que le pécheur ouvrira les siens pendant son sommeil? C'est deux choses entrent dans la composition de l'être du pécheur: son ame et son corps et que quand le sommeil se saisit d'une de ses partie, l'autre s'éveille et ouvre les yeux. Le corps commence-t-il à s'endormir aux approches de la mort, l'ame qui s'étoit jusque là comme assoupie, s'éveille et voit ce qu'elle a négligé de voir.

Elle se représente ses ordures, ses abominations, ses infamies, la manière indigne avec laquelle elle a vécu, – *nunc reminiscor malorum quae feci*, – c'est à présent, dit un malheureux pécheur, que je me souviens des péchés que j'ai commis, c'est à présent que je vois ce que auparavant je prenois tant de soin de me cacher.

All these sins which the unfortunate man always tried to hide will appear to him in three different ways: firstly, they will surround him on all sides – *circumdedderunt eum vituli multi, tauri pingues obsederunt eum*: “My sins will show themselves to me in the form of bulls and frightful
 40 beasts which will surround me on all sides. I thought, when I was committing them - *nunc reminiscor malorum quae feci in Jerusalem* – that they were nothing, but today I see things very much to the contrary. What are these monsters that seem to want to pounce upon me? Is that that adultery, that impurity, that fornication, that sin I committed alone, that
 45 evil desire, that infamous sin I never dared confess, of which I did not even want to repent? What is it that confronts my sight; is it that act of vengeance I committed, that envy, that rash judgment, that backbiting, that calumny, that drunkenness that I counted as nothing? Is it that neglect of duty, my missed Easter duties, Sunday not properly observed,
 50 abstinence, fasts, privations, Forty Hours, jubilee years, the charitable warnings of my pastors, my parents, my true friends, the secret touch of grace, the good interior movements which urged me to give myself to God, all that is now turning against me.”

The sinner sees something still more frightening: the sins committed directly against God: blasphemy, mockery of religion, false witness, profanation of the sacraments and of holy things. “My God, how many crimes! When I wanted to go to confession, I could hardly find any, and today there are thousands of them.” You shouldn’t be at all surprised: you created a false conscience, you never stopped to reflect,
 60 you looked for lax confessors or confessors you could deceive, you closed the eyes of your soul, but today when those of your body are about to close, as Holy Scripture tells us, those of your soul are opening². Oh, what a distressing and horrible awakening of the soul – *qua dormierit aperiet oculos suos* – he will begin to open his eyes when he is dying.

“What a strange expression”, says St. Gregory; “we close our eyes
 65 when we go to sleep and we open them when we awake! So why is it said that the sinner will open his while he sleeps? It is because there are two elements in the sinner’s being: his soul and his body, and when sleep overtakes one part, the other awakens and opens its eyes. As the body begins to go to sleep at the approach of death, the soul which until then was, so to
 70 speak, drowsing, wakes up and sees what it had neglected to see.”

It pictures its filth, its abominations, its infamy, the unworthy way in which it lived - *nunc reminiscor malorum quae feci*: “Only now, says the unhappy sinner, do I remember the sins I committed, now I see what before I was so careful to hide from myself”.

80 Non seulement les pécheurs seront comme environé et assiégés de
toutes parts par leur actions criminelles, mais leur substance en sera toute
pénétrée. Cela paroît étonnant et cependant cela est très véritable. Com-
me l'ame est individuelle et qu'elle est toute entière dans chaque partie du
corps qu'elle anime, elle est toute pénétrée de ses péchés et ses péchés la
85 transforment en quelque manière en eux. La moël, les tendons, les cartil-
lages, les muscles, les nerfs des pécheurs seront remplis de vices, – *ossa
ejus replebantur vitiis* –. Est-ce là tout? Ils descendront dans le tombeau
avec lui, ils lui tiendront compagnie jusqu'au grand jour des vengeances,
que dis-je, ils descendront avec lui dans l'enfer et là tout grouillant de ces
90 vers dans cette infame pourriture qui alimentera les feux allumés par la
colère de Dieu. Pour peu qu'on approche d'une charogne on en sent la
puanteur ; mais approchez malgré la puanteur, que voyez-vous? Une four-
milière de vers qui grouillent. Vous diriez que c'est une charogne qui re-
mue, mais point du tout, ces vers que vous voyez en si grand nombre sont
95 une même chose à vu ce cadavre. Voilà l'image parfaite d'un pécheur qui
va mourir: son ame, son corps, son entendement, ses mains, ses yeux, ses
oreille, sa bouche, sa langue, tous ses sens, sa volonté, ses ore... tout est
plain de péchés. Voyez vous ce pécheur qui se remue, non mes F. ce sont
ses péchés qui le remue sur son triste grabas. Approchez seulement les
100 yeux de votre foi, – *interiora ejus offerbuerunt sine requiem* –.

Enfin ses péchés lui donne le coup de la mort. Il n'y a rien de si ef-
froyable que ce qui arriva à Senacherib, roi des Assiriens(3), ce prince im-
pie avoit commis une infinité de crimes dans la Judée, traitant les Juifs avec
cruauté, profanant tout ce qu'il y avoit de St et de sacré, ne craignant ni
105 les hommes, ni Dieu, ni la terre, ni le ciel. Enfin la justice divine ne pouvant
plus soutenir de pareils horreurs, envoya un Ange qui défit toute son
armée, réduisit ce prince à prendre honteusement la fuite. Mais à peine fut
il retourné dans son royaume que ses enfans, sa propre substance, ceux à
qui il avoit donné la vie, se révoltèrent contre lui, (lui) donnèrent la mort.
110 Vous comprenenez sans peine ce que je veux vous dire.

Quand un pécheur est au lit de la mort, quand ses parens, ses amis,
toutes les créatures l'ont abandonné, ses enfans, c'est à dire ses péchés
l'environnent pour le tuer ; oui les enfans de sa tête, cette vanité, ce or-
gueil, ce monstrueux dessein de s'élever et de s'enrichir ; les enfans de
115 son coeur: son hypocrisie, son impiété, ses mauvaises pensées ; les enfans
de ses reins: ses fornications, etc... lui porteront le poignard dans le sein.
Tel est le sort qui attend le pécheur.

1) - Prov. 1, 23-26 ; 3, 34.

2) - cette idée ne se trouve pas dans l'Ecriture Sainte ; le Père l'a donc copié chez un
auteur sans aller vérifier les sources.

5 3) - 2 Rois, 18, 13 - 19, 37 ; 2 Chr. 32, 1 - 22 ; Is. 36 - 37.

75 Sinners will not only be as it were surrounded and besieged on all sides by their criminal acts, but their whole being will be steeped in them. That may appear astonishing and yet it is very true. Just as the soul is individual, and just as it is totally in every part of the body it animates, it is completely steeped in its sins and its sins transform it, in a
 80 certain sense, into themselves. The marrow, the tendons, the cartilage, the muscles, the nerves of sinners will be filled with vices – *ossa ejus replebuntur vitiis*. But is that all? They will go down into the grave with him, they will keep him company until the great day of reckoning; what am I saying? – they will go down to hell with him, and there, all
 85 crawling with those worms in that infamous rottenness which will feed the fires lighted by God's anger. You don't have to get very close to a corpse to smell the decay; but if you do get close despite the smell, what do you see? A swarm of crawling worms. You would think that the corpse is moving, but it's not; those worms you see have become one
 90 with it. There is the perfect image of a sinner at the point of death: his soul, his body, his understanding, his hands, his eyes, his ears, his mouth, his tongue, all his senses, his will, his...everything is full of sins. Do you see that sinner moving? No, my brothers, those are his sins which are making him move on his sorrowful cot. Look at him only with the eyes
 95 of your faith – *interiora ejus offerbuerunt sim requiem*.

Finally, his sins deal him the death blow. There is nothing more frightening that what happened to Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians¹; that impious prince had committed an infinity of crimes in Judea, treating the Jews with cruelty, profaning whatever was holy and sacred, fearing
 100 neither men nor God nor earth nor heaven. Finally, divine justice could no longer put up with such horrors, and sent an angel which destroyed his whole army and forced this prince to flee in shame. But he had hardly returned to his kingdom when his children, his own flesh and blood, those to whom he had given life, revolted against him and put
 105 him to death. You understand readily enough what I am telling you.

When a sinner is on his death bed, when his parents, his friends, and all creatures have abandoned him, his children, that is to say his sins, surround him in order to kill him. Yes, the children of his head: that vanity, that pride, that monstrous plan to raise himself and enrich himself;
 110 the children of his heart: his hypocrisy, his impiety, his bad thoughts; the children of his loins: his fornications, etc....will plunge the dagger into his breast. Such is the fate that awaits the sinner.

1) - Prov. 1, 23-26 ; 3, 34.

2) - ??

3) - 2 Kg 18, 13 - 19, 37 ; 2 Ch 32, 1 - 22 ; Is. 36 - 37.

Premier essai:

*Creatus est homo ad hunc finem ut Dominum Deum suum
laudat et revereatur eique serviens salvus fiat ig.*

L'homme est créé pour connoître, aimer et servir Dieu
et pour acquérir par ce moyen la vie bienheureuse.

5 A voir la conduite de la plupart des hommes on diroit que l'homme
est est créé pour être riche, honoré, en un mot pour goûter ici-bas les
plaisirs des sens. Je veux donc aujourd'hui, mes f., en vous ramenant à
une des premières demandes de votre (...) vous rappeler ce que vous
n'oubliéz que trop souvent, c'est à dire que Dieu vous a créé pour le con-
10 noître, l'aimer, le servir et par là obtenir la bienheureuse éternité.

2.5

REFLECTIONS ON THE END OF MAN

From the handwritten text, AFM 134.12, on two sheets, 26x21 cm, written on both sides.

Fr. Champagnat began this text on the first page, but after several corrections and crossings-out, he crossed everything out and started over again on the second page, this time without retouching. Below you will find his first attempt, and then the final version.

Given the sense of the text and the closing prayer, this may not be a sermon properly so called, but rather an instruction, or a reflection offered during some ceremony or other. Hence the title we have chosen for this presentation.

*
* *

First attempt:

*Creatus est homo ad hunc finem ut Dominum Deum suum
laudet et revereatur eique serviens salvus fiat ig.*

Man was created to know, love and serve God and by
this means to attain to the life of the blessed.

5 If we look at the way most people live, we would say that man is
created to be rich, honored, in a word to enjoy here below the pleasures
of the senses. So today, my brothers, in bringing you back to one of the
first requirements of you...I want to remind you of something you all too
often forget, that is to say, that God created you to know, love and serve
10 him and thus obtain a happy eternity.

Et d'abord Dieu m'a créé pour le servir. Et jusqu'où s'étend ce devoir.

Je dis donc que Dieu nous a créé pour le connaître. Quand jeune encore on vous a demandé pourquoi Dieu vous a-t-il créé? Qu'avez vous
15 répondu, mes frères? Vous avez répondu que Dieu nous crée pour le connaître.

Texte définitif:

20 *Creatus est homo ad hunc finem ut dominum Deum suum
laudet et revereatur, eique serviens, salvus fiat ig.*

L'homme est créé pour cette fin c'est à dire pour connaître, aimer, louer et servir Dieu pour mériter par là la bienheureuse éternité.

A voir la conduite de la plupart des hommes on diroit que l'homme n'est au monde que pour y être riche, honoré, qu'il n'y est en (...) mot
25 que pour y goûter ses aises, ses commodités et tous les plaisirs des sens. Pour vous tirer, mes frères, de cet égarement fatale qui malheureusement peuple les enfers, je vais vous ramener à une de ces premières demandes de votre catéchisme afin de vous rappeler ce que vous n'oubliez que trop, c'est à dire que vous n'êtes en ce monde que pour servir Dieu.

30 Quand, jeune encore, on vous demande pourquoi Dieu nous a-t-il créé, n'étant pas encore aveuglé par les préjugés et les passions, vous répondez sans hésiter que vous y étiez pour connaître, aimer et servir Dieu et mériter par là la vie bienheureuse. C'est donc là, mes f. ce que Dieu s'est proposé en vous créant. D'une seule parole ce grand Dieu
35 créa tout ce qui existe: – *dixit et facta sunt* – il créa la terre, l'eau, l'air, le feu, les bois, les métaux, les animaux, enfin tout ce que renferme la vaste étendue des cieux pour le service et l'utilité de l'homme. Vous en convenez, je le pense. Mais vous mêmes, mes f. pourquoi Dieu vous a-t-il créé, chef d'oeuvre du Tout Puissant Créateur doués de la raison, est-
40 ce pour que vous goûtiez le bonheur ici-bas? Hélas non, sans doute, car si cela étoit, Dieu auroit manqué la fin pour la quelle il vouloit vous créer, puisque vous convenez sans peine avec moi que vous n'avez encore pu goûter aucun bonheur. Je dis plus, six mil ans de recherche n'ont encore pu suffire pour le trouver, mais ce qui est bien déplorable,
45 c'est que six mil ans d'expérience n'ont pas encore pu désabuser l'homme sur ce point,

And first of all, God created me to serve him. And just how far does that duty extend.

I say that God created us to know him. When you were still young, you were asked, "Why did God create you?" What did you answer, my 15 brothers? You answered that God created us to know him.

Final text:

*Creatus est homo ad hunc finem ut dominum Deum suum
laudet et revereatur, eique serviens, salvus fiat ig.*

20 Man was created for this end, that is to say, to know, love
praise and serve God in order to merit a blessed eternity

Looking at the way most people live, one would say that man is in this world only to be rich, honored, in a word, that he is there only to enjoy his ease, his comforts and all the pleasures of the senses. My 25 brothers, in order to lead you out of that fatal error which unfortunately is populating hell, I am going to bring you back to one of the first questions of your catechism, to remind you of something you too often forget, that is to say, that you are in this world only in order to serve God.

When you were still young, you were asked why God created us. Being not yet blinded by prejudices and passions, you answered without 30 hesitation that you were here to know, love and serve God and thus merit the life of the blessed. So that, my brothers, is what God had in mind in creating you. With a single word, this great God created everything that exists – *dixit et facta sunt* – he created the earth, the water, the air, fire, wood, metal, the animals, everything under the vast 35 sweep of the skies for the service and use of man. I think you will agree with me on that.

But you yourselves, my brothers, why did God create you, the masterpiece of the All-Powerful Creator, gifted with intellect, was it so that you could enjoy happiness here below? Alas, undoubtedly not, 40 because if that were the case, God would have failed in the purpose for which he wanted to create you, since you will readily agree with me that you have not yet been able to enjoy any happiness. I will go further, six thousand years of seeking have not sufficed to find it, but what is most deplorable is that six thousand years of experience have not yet been 45 able to disabuse man on this point.

puisque, mes chers frères, vous convenez qu'on ne peut trouver le bonheur ici-bas, convenez aussi que vous n'êtes point sur la terre pour cela. Mais y êtes vous pour goûter les plaisirs des sens? Si cela étoit l'homme ne seroit point au-dessus des animaux
50 privés de la raison. Au reste, si l'homme étoit créé pour goûter ainsi ces sales et infames plaisirs, ces infames plaisirs des sens détruiroit ils sa santé. L'homme éprouverait-il ce qu'il éprouve après avoir assouvi sa passion. Eprouverait-il cet ennui, ce mécontentement, cest espèce de désespoir.

55 Concluons donc mes f. que nous sommes destiné à quelque chose de plus relevé, car un(e) sagesse aussi grande ce celle qui paroît dans ma création ne peut agir à l'avanture. Quel but s'est donc proposé le Tout Puissant en créant. Il pouvait se passer de moi, je le sais puisqu'il s'en étoit passé jusques à présent. S'il y avoit un être plus parfait que lui il au-
60 roit pu travailller pour lui, mais non, étant seul et méritant il est impossible qu'il se soit proposé d'autre fin que lui-même. Dieu m'a donc fait pour lui et il n'a pu me faire que pour lui. Son droit sur moi comme sur tout ce qui existe inaliénable. Qu'il cesse d'être Dieu et je pourrai appartenir à quelqu'autre. Tout Dieu qu'il est, il ne peut pas me dispenser
65 d'être pour lui. Il n'étois pas nécessaire que je fusse, mais posé que je sois, il est nécessaire que je sois pour lui.

Si Dieu m'a donné un esprit capable d'intelligence ce n'a pu être qu'afin que je le connusse ; s'il m'a donné un coeur libre, ce ne peut être qu'afin que je l'aimasse et que je m'attachasse à lui. S'il m'a donné un
70 corps, de la santé, des forces, ce n'a pu être qu'afin que je les employasse à son service ; si je suis enfin tout ce que je suis, ce n'a pu être que pour que je sois tout pour lui.

O mon Dieu, seul créateur, seul conservateur de mon être, quelle triste et affligeante image se présente à mes yeux, car enfin toute ma conduite jusqu'ici qu'a ce été qu'un désordre(1), un reversement, une injustice étrange et continuelle. J'ai vécu, à peu près, comme si je m'étoit fait moi-même. A quoi ai-je pensé, qu'a moi-même ; qu'ai-je aimé, que moi-même ; pour qui ai-je travaillé, que pour moi-même. Sur quoi me suis-je rassuré, sur ce que la plus part des autres ne vivoient pas mieux
80 que moi, c'est tout ce que je puis en dire ; mais leur égarement ne peut justifier le mien. Quelle obligation vous ai-je, mon Dieu, pour que vous veuillez bien aujourd'hui m'ouvrir les yeux (?) – *Notum fac Domine viam meam.*

Since, my dear brothers, you agree that we cannot find happiness here below, agree also that you are not on this earth for that at all. But are you here to enjoy the pleasures of the senses? If that were the case, man would hardly be above the animals who are deprived of intellect.
 50 Moreover, if man were created to thus enjoy these dirty and infamous pleasures, these infamous pleasures of the senses would destroy his health. Man would experience what he experiences after having gratified his passions. He would experience that depression, that unhappiness, that sort of despair.

55 Let us then conclude, my brothers, that we are destined for something higher, for a wisdom as great as that which appears in my creation cannot act at random. So what purpose did the Almighty have when he created? He could have done without me; I know that because he has done without me until now. Had there been a being more perfect than
 60 he, he could have worked for him, but no, being alone and deserving, it is impossible that he could have proposed any other end than himself. So God made me for himself, and he could not have made me for anything but himself.

His rights over me, as over everything which exists are inalienable.
 65 If he ceased to be God, I could belong to another. Being totally God, he cannot dispense me from existing for him. It was not necessary that I exist, but since I do, it is necessary that I exist for him.

If God gave me a mind capable of understanding, it could only have been so that I might know him. If he gave me a free heart, it could only
 70 have been so that I might love him and attach myself to him. If he gave me a body, health, strength, it could only have been so that I might use them in his service. If, finally, I am all that I am, it is only so that I might be totally his.

O my God, the only creator, the only preserver of my being, what a
 75 sad and sorrowful sight presents itself to my eyes, for my entire conduct until now has been nothing but a disorder, a reversal, a strange and continual injustice. I have been living almost as though I created myself. I have thought of nothing but myself; I have loved only myself; I have worked only for myself. What did I find most reassuring? That most
 80 other people did not live any better than I; that is all I can say about it. But their straying cannot justify mine. What an obligation I owe you, my God, that you have deigned to open my eyes today - *notum fac Domine viam meam*.

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