MARIST
NOTEBOOKS

information
studies
documents
Marist Notebooks:
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Contact:
Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi delle Scuole
Piazzale Marcelino Champagnat, 2 – 00144, Roma – Italia
Tel. (+39) 06 54 5171 / E-mail: comunica@fms.it / www.champagnat.org

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WRITINGS ON MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

_Cabiers Maristes_ proposes to give a list of all the works in the general Archives on the Founder, following the order given in the general classification.

1. BIOGRAPHIES

We give here the complete list of the biographies of Marcellin Champagnat that we have copies of, whatever their importance and whatever audience they were intended for. We simply follow the chronological order, which seems to be the easiest way of ordering them, and which points out the interest in the topic over the years.


-002 - id. Volume II

-003 - do. 1856, 1st edition corrected, Volume I

1885 -005 - Vie de Joseph B. Marcellin Champagnat, Prêtre Mariste, Fondateur de la Société des Petits Frères de Marie. X.Jevain, Lyon 1885. 232 pages, shorter version for the pupils in our schools.

1886 -006 - Abgrégé de la vie du Père Champagnat, sous forme de documents pouvant servir à l'introduction de sa cause. Br Sylvestre Tamet, manuscript, 482 pages.


-009 - do. pages 323 to 393 from the same.

1890 -010 - Vida de JBM Champagnat, Sacerdote Marista, Fundador del Instituto de los Hermanos Maristas de la Enseñanza. Publ. Feliciano Horta, Mataró. 112 pages, in Spanish.


-014 - Vie de JBM Champagnat, Publ. Paillard, Abbeville. 32 pages in French.


WRITINGS ON MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

-017 - Vie illustrée de JBM Champagnat, Prêtre Mariste, Fondateur de la Société des Petits Frères de Marie. Nouvelle édition. Paillart, Abbeville. 106 pages in French.

-018 - Le Père Champagnat, Prêtre Mariste, Fondateur de l'Institut des Petits Frères de Marie 1789 - 1840. Baudoncourt JM, Ms signed by author. 38 pages in French.


1896 -020 - Vie du Vén. MJB Champagnat, Prêtre Mariste, Fondateur de la Société des Petits Frères de Marie, par un de ses premiers disciples (Fr Jean Baptiste Furet), new edition, shortened version of the "Life" in two volumes, prepared for school use. Publ. Vitte, Lyons. 336 pp. in French.

1897 -021 - Vie du Vén. MJB Champagnat, Prêtre Mariste, Fondateur de la Congrégation des Petits Frères de Marie, par un de ses premiers disciples. 2nd Edition in one volume. Vitte, Lyons. 647 pp. in French.


1901 -023 - Le Vén. MJB Champagnat, Prêtre Mariste, Fondateur de la Congrégation des Petits Frères de Marie, d'après le procès de béatification et de canonisation. Pub. Vitte, Lyons. 102 pp. in French.

1902 -024 - Leben des Ehrwürdigen MJB Champagnat, Maristenpriester. Publ. Verlag der Maristenbrüder, Arlon, Belgium. 34 pp. in German.


1907 -026 - Leben des Ehrwürdigen MJB Champagnat. Publ. Verlag der Maristenbrüder, Arlon, Belgium. 56 pp. in German.


-031 - bound copy of 030.


-035 - De Eerbiedwaardige MJB Champagnat, Priester Marist, Publ Jules de Meester, Rousselaar, 64 pp in Dutch.


-040 - Vie abrégée du Vén. Marcellin Champagnat, Publ. Vitte, Lyons. 60 pp in French.

1924 -041 - Compendio de la vida de ven. M. Champagnat, Fundador de la congregación de HH Maristas, Publ FTD Barcelon, 32 pp in Spanish.


-046 - id. paper-bound

1933 -047 - The Ven. Marcellin Champagnat, Founder of the Institute of the Marist Brothers. Publ. FF Maristes, Grugliasco, Italy. 74 pp translated from French into English.

1934 -048 - Le Vén. Marcellin Champagnat, Fondateur de PFM. Publ. Vitte, Lyons. 64 pp in French.


- 054 - Un Apóstol de la juventud, síntesis de la vida y virtudes del ven. siervo de Dios, Marcelino Champagnat, Fundador del los HH Maristas. Publ. HME, Buenos Aires, Argentina. 72 pp in Spanish.

1940 - 055 - Un apóstol de la juventud, el Ven. Marcelino Champagnat Publ. FF Maristes, Mexico. 46 pp in Spanish.

- 056 - Ensaio sobre Marcelino Champagnat, Guy Chastel, Publ. Livraria Fr Alves, Sao Paulo, Brazil. 160 pp translation of 052 from French into Portuguese.

- 057 - The Ven. Marcellin Champagnat, 1789-1840, Founder of the Marist Brothers of the Schools (Little Brothers of Mary) Publ EJ Dwyer, Sydney, Australia. 36 pp in English.


1941 - 059 - Un apôtre de Marie, le Vén. Marcellin Champagnat. Publ. FF Maristes, Genval, Belgium. 64 pp in French.


WRITINGS ON MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT


1949 -066 - Brevissima noticia sobre el ven Marcelino Champagnat, Fundador de los Hermanos Maristas y Apóstol de la Juventud. FTD, Santiago, Chile. 32 pp in Spanish.


1953 -070 - Father Champagnat, 1789-1840. English translation of 069.


-072 - De Eerbiedwaardige M Champagnat, Stichter van de congregatie der Broeders Maristen. Publ. Marie Médiatrice, Genval, Belgium. 64 pp in Flemish.


-075 - Un gran devoto de Maria, el V. M. Champagnat, Fundador de los HH Maristas. Publ. Luis Vives, Zaragoza, Spain. 16 pp. in Spanish.
1955 Year of the Beatification of Marcellin Champagnat.


-077 - El Padre Champagnat, apóstol de la juventud, Carlos de Maria y Campos. Ediciones recreativas, Mexico. Comic strip type, in Spanish

-078 - Beato M Champagnat, Fundador de los HH Maristas, Publ. Luis Vives, Zaragoza, 64 pp in Spanish

-079 - Seligsprechung des Dieners Gottes, Marzellin Champagnat, Stifter der Kongregation der Maristenschulbrüder. Publ. German Marist Province, 48 pp in German

-080 - Gelukzalige Marcellinus Champagnat, Publ. de Bruyne, Tiene, Belgium. 33 pp. in Dutch.


-083 - Síntesis biográfica del Beato M. Champagnat y su obra. Librería FTD, Bogota, Colombia. 38 pp. in Spanish.


-086 - Bl Marcellin Champagnat. English version of 084

-087 - Der Selige Marzellin Champagnat... German version of 084

-088 - Beato Marcelino Champagnat... Portuguese version of 084

-089 - Beato Marcelino Champagnat... Spanish version of 084

1956 -090 - Le Bx Marcellin Champagnat, Ignace Thiry fms. Publ. Marie Médiatrice, Genval, Belgium. 272 pp in French
-091 - Marzellin Champagnat, das Leben des Stifters der Maristenschulbrüder. JB Furet. German translation of the second part of No. 044


-094 - id. another edition, dedicated to Br Léonida, SG.


1958 -097 - De Zalige Marcellinus Champagnat, Cruysberghs. Publ. Maria Middelares, Genval, Belgium 100 pp. in Dutch.

-098 - Life of Bl Marcellin Champagnat. Publ. in HongKong 106 pp. in Chinese.


-101 - L'oeuvre du Bx M Champagnat. trans. of No. 100 into French.

1961 -102 - Der Selige M Champagnat. trans. of No 099 into German.


-105 - Ein Herzhafte’s “Ja”. German translation of 103.


-113 - id.


1979 -127 - Crónicas Maristas 1. El Fundador...Translation of 001 into Spanish by Br Aníbal Canon Presa.

-128 - Marcelino Champagnat e sua missão. Marist Provinces of Brazil. 208 pp. in Portuguese.


-131 - Marcellin Champagnat et le journal d'une communauté d'éducateurs. Original of 130.

- 133 - Marzellin Champagnat, was Zeitgenossen berichten. Typescript. Marist Province of Germany. 55 pp. trans. from Témoignages des contemporains de M. Champagnat.

- 134 - Il figlio del giacobino, Marcellino Champagnat. Alberti Claudio fms. Publ ITI Genova, Italy. 148 pp. in Italian.


- 138 - Mon ami, Marcellin. Vincent Maurice fms. 48 pp. typescript in French.


- 141 - Marzellin Champagnat und sein Werk. Marist Province of Germany. Furth bei Landshut. 66 pp. in German.

- 142 - El niño de la montaña. 2nd edition of 135.


-146 - Champagnat. translation of 145 into Portuguese.


-149 - Champagnat... translation of 145 into German by Br Pantel Siegwald.

-150 - Champagnat...translation of 145 into English.


-153 - Strong mind, gentle heart. A life of Bl Marcellin Champagnat, Founder of the Marist Brothers of the Schools. Frederick McMahon fms. Publ. Marist Province of Sydney, Australia. 160 pp. in English

-154 - Champagnat. Sanz Eugenio. 145 translated and adapted from Spanish into French by Gabriel Michel.

-155 - Champagnat. 145 re.edited by Edit. Progreso, Mexico, 72 pp. in Spanish.


-157 - Life of JBM Champagnat. English version of 156.
-158 - Vida de JBM Champagnat. Spanish version of 156.

-159 - Vida de JBM Champagnat. Ed. São Paulo, Brazil. Portuguese version of 156.


-163 - Marzellin Champagnat, Gründer der Maristenschulbrüder, Herbert Scheller fms. Publ. Maristendruck und Verlag, Furth bei Landshut, Germany. 24 pp. in German.


-165 - Marzellin Champagnat, de Gründer der Maristenschulbrüder and sein Werk. Publ. Marianischer Digest Maria, Berne, Switzerland. Collection Grosse Marienverehrter. 40 pp. in German.


-170 - Marzellin Champagnat. Forissier Antoine. 37 pp. typescript trans. of chapter 2 of “Présences de Marie” by F. Bernhard fms into German.

1991 -172 - Marzellin Champagnat, Einer der auf Felsen baut. Bernhard Tremmel fms. Publ. Marist Province of Germany, Furth bei Landshut, Germany. 50 pp. in German.


-175 - Quello che Champagnat non era, Appunti sul Beato Marcellino Champagnat. GB Bellone. Publ Centro culturale sportivo “M. Champagnat”, Genova, Italy. 44 pp. in Italian.

-176 - Témoignages sur Marcellin Champagnat. Complete text of the depositions towards the process of beatification. Transcribed and presented by Br Agustín Carazo. Typescript 282 + 140 pp. in French.

UN-DATED WORKS

- Vie de MJB Champagnat by Br Jean Baptiste Furet fms. Photocopy of manuscript, 2660 pp. in 8 volumes in Korean.

- Témoignages des contemporains de Marcellin Champagnat. Extracts from the Beatification documents, presented by Br Leonard Voegtle. 34 pp. typescript in French.


- Witness for the beatification of Marcellin Champagnat. English translation of above.


- Life of Ven. Fr Champagnat. 21 pp. in Samoan.

- Síntesis biográfica del B. Marcelino Champagnat y su obra, Fundador de los HH Maristas. Publ. FTD, Colombia. 40 pp. in Spanish.

- O Coração de um componês. Sebastião Ferrarini. Publ FTD, Brazil. 96 pp. in Portuguese.

MARIST PUBLICATIONS

A MODEST HERO: Br François, Gabriel Rivat, 1808 - 1881
Text: Br Gabriel Michel; photos: Br Nito Moraldi; line-art: Goyo.
published by La Litografia, srl, Naples.

The Office of the Postulator General of the Causes of Beatification and
Canonization of the Marist Brothers has just published this little work, 48
pages, fully illustrated with photos and drawings. The aim of the booklet is to
bring Br François to the attention of the general public, our only hope for
obtaining the miracles obtained through the intercession of our first Superior
General, without which his Cause of Beatification will not go further.

The book is published in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Italian,
and Portuguese. The entire printing has been distributed according to
language, and we can only hope that the best possible use will be made of it.

Né en 89, III, Bâtisseur et Educateur, 1824 - 1840
G. Michel, St Etienne, Loire, 1992, 230 pages.

The third and last volume of the biography of Marcellin Champagnat in
the form of a historical novel. It covers the last period of the life of the
Founder of the Marist Brothers, the most active period, during which he
founded and organized his Congregation. It is written in the same lively style
as the first two volumes. Rather than giving a static picture of the hero, the
author presents him in movement, at work. Despite some somewhat
imaginative interpretations of the sources, Fr Champagnat comes out as a
man of action, courageous, standing up to difficulties and not allowing
himself to be put down by the failures that occurred.

An interesting book, easy to read, enriched by a very full documentation
which leaves nothing to be desired in comparison with the first two volumes.
Obtainable from the publisher or from: the Centre d’Acceuil, Notre Dame de
l’Hermitage, B.P.9, F 42405, SAINT CHAMOND CEDEX.
**Maristes Laïcs, Recueil des Sources Historiques**

In its 1185 pages, this book brings together some 485 documents in the same way as the “Origines Maristes” of J. Coste and G. Lessard, to which it can be regarded as complementary, concerning the fourth branch of the Society of Mary, after the Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters.

In his Foreword, the author lays down the “fundamental aim of the book, which is to bring together source material for future study of the ideas of Fr Colin on the place of the lay person in the Marist Society. It gives, on the one hand, writings and talks of Colin himself, and on the other, various reflections, imperfect though they be, on the spirit which he cherished.”

The book well merits a place in the libraries of our noviciates and centres of study of our origins. The General Administration of the Marist Brothers has obtained a hundred copies to send to those houses which ask for them.

**TEMOIGNAGES SUR MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT**

Br Agustín Carazo. A collection of the depositions made by various witnesses at the diocesan process for the beatification and canonization of Marcellin Champagnat. A computerized publication by the Generalate of the Marist Brothers.

Br Agustín gives here a complete collection, verbatim, of the testimonies, with a care for detail, laid out clearly with all necessary explanations.

The work is divided into two parts: Part I, 281 pages, the Diocesan Enquiry; Part II, 140 pages, containing the Appendices: letters, articles, schemas of the “processus” and the “positiones” of the Cause.

It will be a useful source of references for quotations from the testimonies which can be used in talking about Champagnat. These can be found here more easily than in the “Summarium”, the use of which demands a certain expertise.

The print-run is small, but can be repeated if there is sufficient demand.

We draw attention to the publication of a work we announced in the last number of Cahiers Maristes: **Fr Sylvestre raconte Marcellin Champagnat.** Those interested can get copies from the Generalate in Rome.

Br Paul Sester.
This year, from 21st to 24th April 1992, the Marist Fathers' Centre for Marist Studies organized their third International Symposium on the subject: *Mary in the newborn Church and at the end of time: A critical study of a theme.*

Frs Edwin Keel and Gaston Lessard prepared the Symposium carefully and directed it in a masterly fashion. It was initially intended to be at the Generalate of the Marist Brothers, but a last-minute difficulty caused it to be transferred to the Domus Mariae, via Aurelia, Rome, and the final sessions were held in the Marist Fathers' College, Istituto S. Giovanni Evangelista, via Livorno 91.

About a hundred took part, from all the branches of the Marist Family, from the Fathers to the Apostolic Movement groups, including the Sisters, the Missionary Sisters, and the Brothers - of whom I was the sole representative!

The first two days were taken up by four speakers; on the other two days, there were three prepared talks, followed by a general session in the evening. The texts of the prepared talks were distributed previously in English and French; they were all of high quality, and delivered by competent speakers, most of them Marist Fathers. These were followed by a period for sharing, which was very fruitful in spite of the need to have everything translated into another language.
As announced in the letter of invitation, the aim of the Symposium was to do a critical study on the place in Marist spirituality of the theme: “Mary in the newborn Church and at the end of time.” The work of the first day was to define precisely the content of this theme in the spirit of the Founder and of his first disciples, trying to get into the mentality of the period. Then on the second day, to explore the sources Fr Colin would have used. The next two days were taken up with a more technical study - from the exegetical and theological point of view - of the theme in the light of Scripture and Tradition on the one hand, and modern eschatology and ecclesiology on the other, leading to the conclusion enunciated by Fr Thornhill that “Colin’s thought gives a concrete form to the vision which should inspire the Church in taking its part in the drama of human history.”

Altogether, I thought the Symposium was of great interest for us Marist Brothers. At least it made me understand better the personality of Fr Colin, his spirituality, the way that he - quite differently from Champagnat - fitted into the same setting in which they both lived. The contrasts between them throw up their own personal peculiarities. I have no hesitation in recommending to the readers of the Cahiers Maristes that they should get hold of the Reports of the Conference when they are brought out, since I hope - and wish - that they are printed.

While waiting for the full report to appear, I give here some of the main ideas which emerged in those four days.

Fr Coste set the theme in recalling a series of articles he had written on this subject “some twenty five years ago”. The theme is one used often by Colin, even putting the words into Mary’s mouth: I supported the Church at its birth, I will be with it still at the end of time. According to the Founder, the instrument she has chosen to accomplish her role at the end of time, is the Society of Mary. The fact that this Society has only come into being at this stage is perhaps an indication that the end is not far off, if we look at the upheavals, the revolutions, the loss of faith among our contemporaries. So, to fulfil their mission, the members of the Society must come to resemble Mary in what they are and in how they act. At the birth of the Church, Mary was with the Apostles, teaching them, encouraging them, but without pushing herself forward, always remaining in the background, hidden and unknown. Her attitude at the end of time will be the same. It is this attitude that the Marists must adopt if they are to be able to serve as her instruments.

This is an outline of Fr Colin’s original vision for the Society. Is it only a vision, or is it a realistic view of the future which can be translated into a
programme of life and action? To answer that, we have to examine the sources and their theological and practical value.

The initial idea came from J.C Courveille, who, in his own mind at least, had received it from Mary herself in the Cathedral at Puy. But Fr Colin, who was not slow to distance himself from Courveille, took the idea to himself, and brought it to life in making it the inspiration for drawing up his first Rule. In the meantime, had he also received a revelation or had he listened to some of those numerous prophecies which abounded at the time?

On this point, Fr B.Bourtot pointed out that in the 1830s there was an abundance of "prophetic literature" in the Lyons area. Great trials and distress were foretold particularly for the year 1840; then, all of a sudden, there was a period of calm, short as it was, with the return of the lawful King. Was J.C. Colin aware of these prophecies? Did he allow himself to be convinced of the imminence of the end of the world, as did Mgr de Pins, who was very interested in this type of literature and perhaps allowed himself to be influenced by it? However, the founder of the Marists said that the end was not yet, that the Society had to grow in strength, and that the whole Church would become Marist.

Fr Edwin Keel put the question: "Jean Claude Colin, what time is it now? Is it the end of time? What have we to do?" Is it not always the time to carry out the work of Mary, to gather people round the Mother of Jesus, to begin to combat in ourselves all that divides us - hate, egoism - to pass on the Marist spirit to lay people in order to spread the Society, to make Mary's instrument more efficacious?

Fr Luigi Gambero found that the patristic foundations of Colin's ideas are practically non-existent. There is no text in the Fathers which shows the role of Mary in the infant Church or in the Church of the final days. From the earliest centuries, the role of Mary was seen as a special call "to the salvation worked by God in and through the Church, and an appeal to the Church to a sanctity which finds its perfection in the person of the Mother of the Saviour."

There are however, some more recent authors that Colin could have relied on. Fr Stefano de Flores showed that St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort (1673-1716) has some passages in which he describes how, in the last days, Mary will intervene in a particularly striking way: "It is only when the Church becomes Mary that Jesus will be born again in the world, that is, he will come back to establish the reign of God in the Spirit."
A particular place is reserved for the “Mystical City of God” of Maria d’Agreda (1602 - 1665), a work which Colin himself tells us he read and re-read, and which brought tears to his eyes. It is a long re-telling of the life of the Mother of God, which Maria de Jesus, abbess of the Convent of the Discalced Franciscans of the Conception in Agreda, Spain, tells us she wrote under the direct inspiration of Mary herself. The authoress gives detail after detail on the role of the Mother of Jesus in the infant Church, where she was an example for the Apostles, and their adviser and guide. There is no doubt that Colin drew a lot of inspiration from this work.

This is what Fr G. Lessard tried to draw attention to in pointing out that Colin’s whole idea of the Society of Mary was inspired by Maria d’Agreda. How then can we explain the apparently small influence that this Spanish mystic had on Marcellin Champagnat? We recall that Colin one day reproached him for not really understanding the spirit of the Society of Mary. Perhaps it was that he had his attention taken up with the problems of the present, and had neither the time nor the taste to speculate on some vague future.

In any case, pointing out differences between two ways of looking at something is not making a judgment between them. As shown by Fr B. Viviano in his article on Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Mary, although it has little Scriptural basis, Fr Colin’s idea on the presence of Mary at the birth of the Church and in the last days can be defended, but only if we identify the reign of Mary with that of the Church. The fact that it is inspired by the writings of a “pious Christian imagination” does not mean that we have to reject it out of hand. “The first eleven chapters of Genesis are nowadays regarded as a kind of legend about the beginnings of humanity.....This edifying work of imagination can be looked on as being part of the whole process of digesting and assimilating the rich food of symbols and images that the Bible and the liturgy offer to the faithful.”

Fr Justin Taylor suggests that it is possible to go much further. Taking the text of Acts 1:14, which shows us Mary with the Apostles and the brothers of Jesus, along with John 19:27: “Woman, behold your Son....Son, behold your Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her as his own.”, can we not take it that after the Ascension the Apostles remained with Mary until her death, learning from her, the Magistra magistrorum? In the same way, making the parallel between the ascension of Jesus and the assumption of Mary, when the angels say “you will see him return in the same way”, could we not say the same thing about Mary, that she will come back in the last days to prepare for the coming of her Son?
However that may be, the orators are unanimous in affirming strongly that we cannot separate Mary from the Church. “Marists,” says Fr J. Hulshof, “are called above all to make their own the Marial vision of the Church....One thing which never ceased to astonish Colin, was that the people of the 19th century wanted, more than ever in the past, to preserve their freedom and their independence. Allergic to a indiscreetly protective attitude of the Church, the people, in Colin’s view, were still open to a message of the presence of God in the world according to the spirit of Mary, unknown and hidden among the Apostles....Fundamentally, the situation has not changed. The way that all the ideologies have been discredited in recent years has led to a growth in people’s aversion from all kinds of ideological noise, whether it is a socialist ideology or the Utopia of a Christian Europe. In the light of this, Colin’s idea of “hidden and unknown”, in the spirit of Mary, gains a new meaning for us in pastoral work and in the preaching of the Gospel.” This leads to the important role of the laity, and particularly of the Third Order, which can operate more and more as the leaven in the mass, but only if they lead an exemplary life.

In conclusion, Fr J. Thornhill said at the end of his talk: “I have suggested that the first moment of Christian experience was coming to an end. The experience of this decline of a whole order of things led Colin to telescope his eschatological perspective. Jean Coste invites us to recognize that, from the point where we are in history, this development can be taken as the prelude to a “new spring”. Seen from this angle, it should be clear to us, not only that the vision we have inherited in the Society of Mary from our Founder has a lasting value, but also that it is our mission to share this vision with the whole Church.”

Br Paul Sester.
MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT'S TALKS ON HELL

Under the heading of DOCUMENTS, which for the moment means the writings of the Founder, this edition of CAHIERS MARISTES gives the "Talks on Hell" of Marcellin Champagnat. The coldness of the topic, the repetition of the same phrases in all the talks, the fact that they are all unfinished - all of these tend to put the reader off and to prevent him from using the texts as a means of getting to know the author better. This is why I thought that giving all the texts of his talks in their entirety would serve no purpose. I do not intend to deal with any other than the four texts on hell given in this edition of Cahiers Maristes.

I am not going to make an exhaustive study of these documents, simply to present them, then to examine how they are made up. This will help to get an idea of the author's way of thinking and give some idea of his spiritual outlook.

PRESENTATION OF THE TEXTS

The resemblances between the texts are obvious. They are quite clearly four versions of the same text. However, they are not rough drafts leading to a final text. All of them are texts ready to be used. We can see that they have been written by the same person - the writing alone shows that - but probably at different times and for different audiences, as we can see from the variations and from the numerous additions. So I will simply draw attention to a few points I think deserve our interest.
**General overview**

The four texts are called “Talks”, not “sermons” or “instructions”. Is this deliberate on the part of the author? It is possible that he wanted to distance himself from the solemn manner in which this theme is usually treated, and treat it more gently, trying to convince his audience, not to frighten them. As we will see later, expressions such as “a simple account”, in the exhortations which end each section, would suggest that this idea is not too farfetched.

Each of the four talks begins with the same quotation from St Matthew’s Gospel, pointing to the similarities in the subsequent sections, which do no more than paint in detail all this condemnation implies. The structure of the talks is the same: being estranged from God; the pain of fire; the eternity of hell. The main body of each talk is made up of these three points, even if sometimes they are not fully developed.

The structure does not vary from one talk to the other. The same phrases follow one another in the same order, even to such phrases as “my dear brethren”, often abbreviated to “m.f.”, which appear in the same position every time. Now and again, the author draws out one of the points, as if on the spur of the moment, so adding variations to the original text. Obviously this gives each text its own character, and probably points to the audience it was aimed at.

This last remark applies also to some texts which are found at the end of the main body of three of the talks. These are isolated phrases, not all the same length, usually a paragraph, which have no logical connection with the rest. It would appear that they have been added after the full talk was made up, possibly copied from some other book, or inspired by something the author had read.

There are several reasons for thinking this. In talk 134.04, we find a peroration followed by three paragraphs, which are connected neither to the main body nor to one another. We find these portions at the end of one talk, and in the middle of another, as if what started as a note ended up being used to fill out a text. Another point is that in 134.02, we find four paragraphs numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4. It is clear that para.1 refers to the first point in the talk, para.2 to the second, and so on. This would indicate that these points do not form part of the talk itself. Finally, some of these notes are in a different writing from the rest of the text, suggesting that they were not written at the same time.
The presence of these “appendices” gives the Talks, taken in their entirety, a certain sameness which suggests that they are not finished talks which the preacher would read from the pulpit, but rough sketches to guide the speaker and to ensure that his doctrine was correct. Given the differences between them, I will have to treat them! separately, which I will do in the order given in the notebooks, distinguishing them by the last number in their classification code, 4, 2, 5 and 3.

Text N- 4

Text N- 4 is obviously the most finished of the four. Until the paragraph which starts: “Think well on this...” it is almost identical to the other three. Then, instead of finishing, this paragraph goes into a long exhortation to the congregation not to risk the pains of hell. In view of the size of this last section, should it not be considered a fourth point, even if it is not mentioned in the introduction? The talk finally comes to an end with the Saviour’s invitation: Come, you blessed of my Father...” and the Sign of the Cross.

There are another few lines filling up the rest of the page of the manuscript, but they are only reminders of ideas which are developed in the other talks: “I know you...you are my victims...listen to those who have gone before you....we are cruelly tormented...” etc. Then, at the bottom of the page, we have the note about Mgr de Mende, which has nothing to do with the text.¹

The next page takes up the theme mentioned in the preceding paragraph: “I know you....” He puts these words into the mouth of the devil so as to be as direct and to the point as possible. This is a bit awkward:

¹ Although the date - 3rd August 1817 - and the place - St Pierre in St Chamond - are interesting, this note leaves us somewhat perplexed. I do not think they give the provenance of the preceding text, and even less of the following one. The note is at the foot of a page, so it obviously does not refer to the text on the following page. Does it give the origin of the previous text? This would explain the disjointed phrases, which, however, judging by the writing, do not seem to have been jotted down while the preacher was speaking. On the other hand, the note itself is something of a mystery. The opening words, “Vous le...”, which we find quite often in Champagnet’s notes, are the opening words of the invocation “Vous le savez, mon Dieu...” a phrase he often scribbled to get a pen nib flowing. It would appear that this note and the passage before it were written at different times. Furthermore, how do we explain the repetition: “which I got from Mgr Mende....given by Mgr the Bishop of Mende...”? Finally, the word “Marianne”, written as if it were a signature, in the same hand as the rest, but this is certainly not the name of the Bishop of Mende, since, on the one hand, it comes at the very end, and not after the title of Mgr; on the other, the Bishop of Mende in 1817 was Mgr Etienne Maurel de Mons, and in any case, I cannot find any bishop in France in the 19th century whose name was Marianne.
change your lives in order not become “my victims”. Would any business advertise for its clients to take their business elsewhere? In any case, this theatrical style would appeal to Champagnat, if what Br Sylvestre tells us is true, that “whatever subject he was dealing with, he had the talent to give his voice a firm, energetic tone, sometimes even terrifying enough to stun his hearers.” We can imagine the effect he could produce in this talk! It finishes with the common image of animals wallowing the mud.

The last addition consists of an opening sentence where too many ideas are thrown together, and which the author has rejected. But he takes it up again immediately afterwards, retaining only the last idea, to which he adds a summary of the three points of the talk. This gives him a conclusion drawn up in accordance with the rules, but in the severe style of the additions, quite different from the conclusion of the talk properly so-called.

The text then, takes on a completely different appearance according to whether the preacher includes the additions or not, according to whether he wants to appear as a shepherd or as a judge, to witness to the God of mercy or the God of vengeance, to lead his flock by gentleness or by fear.

Text N-2

This text, in addition to the passages which are common to all, also has included in it those passages which are relegated to notes at the end of the others, and so may be considered as the most complete, even though the peroration is absent. Three passages, two of which are found only in this text, give it its own particular flavour. The first, at the very start, brings up the theological problem of the existence of hell, without however, offering any discussion or solution. We might wonder why Fr Champagnat felt it necessary to bring up this problem here. Perhaps he was speaking to a more sophisticated audience than that of his parish. In fact, the second paragraph found only in this text, mentions the martyrdom of St Laurence, patron of the parish, which would indicate clearly that he was not speaking in the church of Saint Andéol at Lavalla². Finally, the third passage, near the end of the

² I presume that the reference is to the parish of St Laurent-d’Agy for the following reasons. We know from Fr Lagniet that Fr Champagnat preached missions (OM III p.776). We know also that he sent three girls from St Laurent d’Agy as postulants to Mother St Joseph (Letters, N-25) How could he have known these girls if he had not stayed at some time in the parish? Finally, it is noticeable that the curate of this parish, Fr Fontbonne, went to the Hermitage on 1st December 1830 “and we have no details of the circumstances that led him to the Society of Mary” (OM IV p.281). Taking all these coincidences together, I surmise that it is probable that Fr Champagnat gave a mission in this parish, and one of his talks during it was the talk on hell.
second point, completes the list of the torments of hell with the immobility of beings who cannot ease their pain by moving.

It will be remarked that the long speech put into the mouth of the devil at the end of the last text, is here incorporated in its proper place. The reasons for considering it as a fourth point, as we stated in the commentary on text N-4, are reinforced here by the fact that this paragraph, which does not deal with the eternity of the suffering, does not follow on from the third point.

Even though there is a peroration at the very end, the paragraphs between this section and the peroration can be seen as additions, appendices. The first, which runs a number of ideas together, does not form part of a developed line of thought. It is a completely different set of ideas, very realistic, but not fitting in, which is probably why the author has scored it out.

The next four paragraphs, numbered, would seem to be, as I have said, ideas to be fitted in at various points in the talk.

Then comes a long passage about one or other of the damned which could complete or even replace the words put in the mouth of the devil. It is better than this last in that it leaves a glimmer of hope, which leads to the peroration, though this last is separated from it by another paragraph.

This paragraph, eventually scored out by the author, is also given as a conglomeration of ideas, with a gap in the middle. It is in fact two paragraphs, one on one side of the sheet, the other over the page, on a sheet the bottom half of which has been torn off. This is why the first phrase on the second side does not follow on from the first; in fact, the last sentence on the first is incomplete, and makes no sense as it stands: “I mock at you, I will insult you....”

The conclusions we can draw from this presentation of text N-2 are much the same as from N-4. The development of three points would suggest a certain elaboration of the material. The rest of it, on the other hand, leaves an impression of confusion, in spite of the two long paragraphs, giving the speech of the devil and the words of the damned, which develop another theme. But someone speaking is not tied down in the same way as someone writing, and can find ideas there to touch his audience.
Text N-5

Text N-5 is the shortest, and, at least in appearance, is the most pastoral. There are no appendices and additions, but it is characteristic of it that it goes outside the framework that the others keep to.

At the end of the first paragraph, in the translation of the Latin quotation, the author adds an idea which is not in the quotation: "I know you not...", a phrase he has taken from the story of the Foolish Virgins. He appears to be giving the plan of his talk, but then there is another paragraph, it also followed by developing the idea that the eternity of the sufferings takes away all hope from the damned.

We find the same in the transitional phrase, where the Latin text is paraphrased rather than translated.

There is a lacuna in the first part of this text. The second sentence is unfinished: "what could distract him...", while the next phrase begins with an imperative: "Look well...", without telling us who is speaking. In fact, comparing this with the other texts where the same sentences are found, we see that quite a long passage has been omitted here. In the manuscript, the lacuna corresponds to going from a left hand page to a right hand page, so there is little doubt that a whole sheet, i.e. two pages, is missing.

There are more differences at the end of the first point. The exhortation which usually comes at the end of each point, is lost in a crowd of ideas which come in for the first time: mortal sin and continued venial sin make us lose sight of God, and are punished by hell; so we must search for God on this earth while we can find him, since in hell we will not be able to do so.

The second half of the second point has quite a different thrust: Fr Champagnat delights in detailing the physical sufferings which abound in hell. It is "the fatal reef towards which the delights of this world drive us,"

3 The two talks 134.03 and 134.05 are written on similar sheets of paper. These are double sheets (a large sheet folded in the middle) put together like a jotter, without a cover. The first and last pages, which have been used, have become separated and are now single sheets. Since they have no page numbers nor headings, and some of the pages have only got isolated paragraphs, it is hard to say with any certainty which ones are the first talk and which the second. It would be quite easy to manipulate them in such a way as to invert the whole text, and so it is impossible to establish the last part of these texts definitely. To my mind, there is still doubt about this.
the shoreline "on which are wrecked the ill-fated pleasures of the world." He then comes to an end, as in N-4, by recommending conversion.

The third part is word for word as in N-4 as far as the quotation from the prophet Habakuk, and then finishes abruptly with the question: "What lessons are we to draw from this?" Is Champagnat deliberating finishing his sermon with a question? The fact that this comes at the bottom of a page might make us think that there is a page missing, corresponding to the one missing at the beginning. But then the number of pages between the missing ones should be an even number, which it is not. So, with insufficient evidence, we would just be making unwarranted assumptions. We just have to take the text as we have it.

Text N-3

Text N-3 differs from N-5 only in slight variations, which become more common until just before the exhortation which ends the second part of the latter. Text N-3 does not go into the third part - even though he has announced it - but goes more into sometimes long developments of original ideas which are not tied together. It is often difficult to say where the talk properly so-called, comes to an end, and what we could consider as appendices. The handwriting changes, showing that at least from the paragraph beginning: "Finally, brethren...", the text was not all drawn up on the same day.

What marks this text most is its frankly positive approach. The preacher does not dwell so much on the horrors of hell, but dwells more on how to live in this world in order to escape these sufferings in the hereafter.

With hints of the texts we already know, Fr Champagnat shows how the damned would behave if they could come back from their place of torment. The next three paragraphs, the first two of which are numbered, recall ideas we find in the other texts - except the second - and would appear to be later reflections to fill out some of the passages in the talk, though where they are to be inserted is not marked.

Finally, the last paragraph, the start of which is scored out and then taken up and re-developed more fully, is found almost entirely in N-4. This is the end of the text, and shows that it is not an integral part of the talk, for it does not have the appearance of a conclusion.

Having presented the texts, it must be remarked that we should take them as they stand, no more, no less. In the mind of the author, they were
drawn up for him alone. So, not being afraid to speak spontaneously during the talks, he did not draw them up in such a way as to be read directly in the pulpit. He wished to be one of the people, to speak like the people. So he was not aiming at a literary style, at making up fine phrases - his main concern was to be clear, to make himself understood by his hearers, and to keep their attention. The text was to serve as a guide in his development, as an aide-memoire, to help him to keep his doctrine correct. Owing to lack of time, and also perhaps owing to lack of literary gifts, Fr Champagnat was not concerned to prepare texts in the full sense of the term.

From this, and from his character which was more intuitive than deductive, comes the fact that his sentences do not follow on from one another. Even in his letters, which are more worked on, we find this same mark of his style.

As to the spelling, it is often incorrect. It is evident that he was not a natural good speller, probably because he did not learn to read and write early enough. The same thing happens to educated writers who are more taken up with their ideas than with how to express them, so we can pardon him for his mistakes in spelling!

THE COMPOSITION OF THE TEXTS

If we look at these texts in their entirety, certain questions arise. Even if it is not possible to answer them fully, examining them might be not only interesting, but profitable.

The copies

The first question to be asked is why four copies of the same text? On the one hand, it is probable that Fr Champagnat has dealt with this subject four times. On the other, do the various additions not show that the same basic text could be used a number of times in different circumstances? If this is the case, why not be content with the same basic text all the time, adding to it now and again from things he read?

Without claiming to answer this question fully, I will make two points, the result of a lot of research on the topic.
In our archives in Rome we have a huge file of texts of sermons, talks, and meditations from the church in Lavalla. Among them are four sermons on hell, three of which, written by the same hand, repeat themselves in the same way as those of Champagnat. The first is the most developed; the second has a number of passages cut out which were really only padding; and the third is incomplete, half of the pages being blank. Unfortunately, I do not know who is the author. It goes without saying that they are nothing like our Founder’s talks. However, is it merely coincidence to find two such similar cases (i.e. constant re-working of the same theme), or was this a common practice among the preachers of the time? At any rate, we can say that the case of Champagnat was not unique.

Secondly, I wonder if there is some connection with the recommendation of Fr Colin that sermons should always be written down. In one of the chapters of Doctrine Spirituelle, Vertus et Esprit du Vén. J.Cl. Colin, we find: “Let us write our talks carefully... (p.66);... I insist more than ever than we should study our sermons, and that we preach nothing without writing it down and learning it... (p.67);... I want to forbid our young men to say anything in the pulpit that they have not written down... I want them to write out their sermons... if necessary, I will recommend this in virtue of holy obedience... (p.80)” He is giving salutary advice here to those preaching missions, but does he imply that adding new matter should lead to a text being completely rewritten?

There is another possible explanation. At first, Fr Champagnat was content to add a few paragraphs at the end, leaving it till later to incorporate them properly in the text. When he had the chance, he rewrote the whole text, including the additions. Then new ideas came into his head, which he noted down as before. Then, perhaps when going on a mission, he again put the whole thing in order. This went on, and at some stage he did not have the time to put it all together, or he simply wrote down ideas as they came, forgetting the plan he had started with. It is easy to believe that he would have been happy enough with three of these attempts; that he goes on to a fourth might indicate his concern to be correct, to finish off the work properly. What we know of his character might support this interpretation, but who can say for sure whether this is the reason for the four copies?

The variations

We can leave those questions open, and have a closer look at the differences between those texts which seem to repeat one another. The
printing of this part of the article will try to show these more clearly. Are these differences the result of distraction, or are they deliberately done with the idea of bringing out some point more strongly? In either case, they reflect the way he was feeling at the time, and came either from his response to a set of circumstances or from some psychological state. In any case, we cannot neglect them.

I will take as my example a passage found in N-2 and N-3. I have chosen these two purposely, because both times they are in an appendix, and thus do not have the same value as ideas in the body of the text. However, even here, the variations are significant, as we can see:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
2 & 3 \\
...allow me, my brethren. & May I be allowed, \\
to draw from this place of horror & for the instruction of a large number 
of infamous vice... & of my hearers 
the foul sin of impurity... & slaves of vice... 
by their shameful acts.... & the filthy sin of impurity...
ears that you have soiled... & by their sinful acts...
throwing fire.... & ears that you have soiled... 
and the burning sulphur.... & throwing fire... 
Listen also, you sinners... & and the boiling sulphur...
these heartrending screams.. & But listen also 
for it is against you, & to those heartrending screams.. 
unhappy slaves of sin... & for it is against you, 
in terrible misfortune.. & miserable and immodest as you are.. 
\end{array}
\]

It appears to me that the words: shameful, lamentable, heartrending, in version 2, as well as the place of horror instead of flames, shameful acts instead of sinful acts, - all of these have been chosen deliberately for effect. Even the variation in the opening phrase is significant. “Allow me, brethren...” instead of “May I be allowed etc...” Version 2 is more direct, more personal, closer to the audience, while version 3 is more polished, more distant, for an audience he is trying to capture.

From this example, it would seem that the talks we are dealing with were made up for different audiences, and show what the speaker thought of these audiences. Again, if some passages have been copied from other authors,
they have been taken in such a way as to leave the way wide open for the copier to express his own personality. Perhaps another example will bring this out better:

2

...while you blush yourselves to see yourself so filthy and to have such spoiled and corrupt hearts as you have. The very animals do not go so far in the way they act.

4

...while you blush in your hearts at the wickedness of which you are guilty

Have you ever seen animals wallowing in the filth of impurity as you have been doing for so many years? (What kind of confessions did you make? What kind of communions?) Admit that you are blushing for your own filth!

It is not easy to say which is the original text, even if there are signs in favour of N-4, even if we don’t know what is missing in 2. In any case, the differences are big enough, which again brings up the question of the sources, a question I am going to deal with now.

The sources

Certain things must be made clear at the start in order to put the problem in the simplest terms possible. This search is not made out of simple intellectual curiosity, nor with a view to evaluating the capabilities of the author. I will try to see what he has kept and what he has not kept of his sources, then how he has used his material, in order to see whether his own personality shows through.

In talking about his use of his sources, we must not confuse copying whole passages from an author with allowing oneself to be guided by him, inspired by him, even if, in doing this, certain phrases from the source keep coming up from memory. This is common among preachers, particularly in sermons on hell, where the ideas are taken largely from the Fathers of the Church like St Augustine, St Gregory, St Hilary of Poitiers, St Bernard,
among others; there are few preachers who do not use such men as their authorities.

Champagnat tells us himself that he is no exception. Can we go so far as to say that he copies out whole passages? Judging by the texts we have, it does not seem likely, and my reply would be in the negative.

Among the numerous sermons and meditations which I have consulted, I can find the plan of the Talk on Hell in only one, not printed - the fourth of the Lavalla Sermons I mentioned earlier. I give the plan as set out so that we can see at a glance the similarities and the differences:

What is Hell? Or, if you prefer, my brethren, what is a damned soul in hell? He is the unhappy victim of God's hatred, of God's omnipotence, and, if I can put it this way, of God's eternity. What does God's hatred do? It keeps that soul at a distance, it separates it from its supreme good. What does God's omnipotence do? It makes use of everything to torture that soul, it even uses miracles, it gives the fire a strength and virtue which go beyond its own strength and virtue. What does God's eternity do? It takes away all hope for the future - there is no going back, no more peace. These, my brethren, are the truths I want you to reflect on today.

The sermons I have been able to examine dwell largely on the latter two points, but the few which do treat the first never do it separately, except one where the text stops in the middle of point two. Is this text before or after the "Talk" of Fr Champagnat? Is this one of the sources which influenced him? Impossible to say, except that the place might be an indication. The way the first point is developed distances this text from the one we are dealing with, rather than drawing them closer. We can judge by the following summary:

1st reflection:
- Man seeks happiness; the world deceives him by showing him a false happiness.
- At death, man sees clearly, he sees his purpose, he begins to know God, and to understand the errors of the world.
- The soul wants to hurry to God, but there are obstacles in the way, an invisible hand holds it back.
The soul seeks you, O Lord, and you hide from it. It comes closer to you, and you pull back from it.
- It is difficult to make Christians see the unhappiness of a soul separated from God. To do that, they must learn to know God.
- The sinful soul whose only horizon is the world cannot understand what God is. It is only after death that it seeks him, and it is repulsed. Look at the Foolish Virgins - here we hear the despairing cry of the soul rejected through its own fault.
- Rage, anger, useless regrets - the soul wants to destroy itself, but it cannot. All that remains is suffering.

We might well ask if Fr Champagnat would have copied this sermon if he had seen it.

On the other hand, among the numerous sermons on hell I have seen, I have not come across any passages which I can say definitely that he has copied. Comparing his text with the published ones, gives the impression that he would have found them too learned, outside the grasp of the people of the country, who were hardly capable of a direct conversation with him. Certainly, my research has not been exhaustive, but at least it allows me to state that Fr Champagnat did not follow the most common road in the way he develops the theme of hell.

His ideas often echo various works he has consulted, read, meditated. I will not examine each phrase in detail, but simply give a few examples which will support my argument.

On the first point, his inspiration almost certainly came from Massillon. His bookcase held the collection of the "Works" of this writer, and on page 2 of the first volume is written: "To Fr Champagnat". In the sermon "for the Thursday of the second week in Lent", under the heading "the rich sinner", the writer describes in his opening point, the parable of the Gospel, Luke 16:19-31, then in the second point, the pains that rich sinner will endure in hell. Unlike many of the other authors, he speaks of separation from God in a long passage which Fr Champagnat must have found to his taste, as we can see:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Massillon</th>
<th>Champagnat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Here below we do not feel the violence of the natural love our soul has for God; because the false good that surrounds us and that we take for real good either occupies our soul completely or shares it.</td>
<td>In this life we cannot understand how great is this torment.. We are here below as it were in a dream where our soul lives continually taken up with phantoms. The real good for which we were created is seen only at a distance....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But once separated from the body,

Ah! all these phantoms

which abused it will disappear,
all these irrelevant attachments
will perish;
The soul will be able only to love
God, because He, the loveable,
will be the only thing it knows.
All its leanings, all its lights,
all its desires,

all its movements, all its being,
will be joined in this one love;
Everything will carry it, will throw it, if I can use the phrase,
to the bosom of God,
and the weight of its sinfulness
will make it fall back unceasingly
on itself;
Eternally forced to fly
towards heaven;
eternally repulsed and pushed back
into the abyss.
More unhappy because it cannot
stop loving, it feels the terrible effects
of the justice and of the vengeance
of the One it loves.

What a terrible destiny!
The home of glory is always open
to the eyes of these unfortunates.
Unceasingly they say
Behold the Kingdom prepared for us!
Behold the reward that is waiting for us!
Behold the promises made to us!
Behold the Lord, the only one to be loved,
the only strong one, the only
merciful one,

Let us think, my dear brethren, ot the soul
at the moment of death, all the phan-
toms
which used to amuse it have vanished,
the fatal blindfold is raised,
a light shines in its eyes.
God shows himself in all his beauty
and in all that is attractive in him.

Then the soul sees that it was created
only for him, that the only peace it can have
is the peace that comes from him.
It will feel irresistibly carried
towards him.

The more it tries to be united to God
the more obstacles it finds in its way.
Its efforts are all in vain...

A strong arm pushes it away
unceasingly.
The soul is pulled towards all that
is loveable in God
all that is perfect, and is frightened off
by the hatred of an indignant God.

Look up to heaven,
see what you have lost!

See the pleasures that my elect
are enjoying, listen to the wonderful
concerts
ringing out through the halls of heaven.
This is what I would have given you
in the world for good works,
the only immortal one, for whom we were created.  
but, since you have done nothing  
but the works of darkness, this is taken from you.  
We threw it away for a dream,  
for the pleasures that lasted but a moment!  
I should have been your reward,  
but since you did not obey me,  
I will no longer be your God!  

Other phrases from the same sermon find an echo in our preacher:

Sorrows which will come to an end are not without consolation, and hope is a soothing occupation for the unfortunate.  

We all know that the fornicators, the impious, those who steal the goods of another, have no place in his kingdom.  

Describing the wicked rich man, the orator says: “Every day he feasted well, meals sumptuous and magnificent..but they don’t tell us about the excesses, the debauchery, that his guests were impious libertines, that his meals were seasoned with dissolute conversations; that at the end of the meal, he went out to some profane performance to spend his leisure time and to recover from the fatigue brought on by his heavy meal.”  

Massillon hardly mentions the physical pain, though most of the other preachers speak of it at great length. Compared to them, the Talk of Fr Champagnat is a pale reflection. In spite of some phrases which we might feel shocked at today, he keeps well away from the excessive descriptions of so many “missioners” who were certainly well-known to him. The one he is closest to is probably St Alphonsus Liguori. Here are some passages from Preparation for Death, or Considerations on the eternal truths, which we find echoed in Champagnat:

The existence of hell is a truth guaranteed by God himself in a large number of passages from Scripture (308).  

Even on earth, the pain caused by fire is the greatest of all tortures. But the fire of hell is so strong compared to that of earth that, as St Augustine tells us, the latter is only a shadow of the former. (299)  

It is God’s anger that lights this avenging fire. (299)  

The fire of earth is only a shadow of the fire of hell. (295)
The damned will be in an abyss of fire. He will see nothing but fire, touch nothing but fire, breathe nothing but fire. Fire will be his element. (299)

St Bernard tells us the fire will not take away his life, he will live in it as in his element. (308) As long as the sinner is alive, he can hope, but after his death, if he has died in sin, there is no more hope for him. (311)

In Duquesne The Gospel, meditations for every day of the year, Vol.2, Meditation CXLVII, On Hell, we find some passages which might have inspired Champagnat:

A man being burned alive is a horrible sight that makes us turn our eyes away. But he suffers only for a moment before death takes him out of his pain. (401)

To deny this eternity will not take it away; on the contrary, it is one way of deserving it, of being sure of it, for to deny it, we must also deny Jesus Christ, his Gospel, and his Church. (405)

It is the eternity of hell which crowns the torment of the damned. (404)

If one of the unfortunate victims of hell were to come back to earth, would he find anything difficult in the practice of virtue and of all his duties? (406)

It is possible that someone else had been inspired by these sources, and that Champagnat only copied out the notes of another, but we have not found anyone, and the hypothesis seems somewhat weak when we take the style of the Talk into account.

On the subject of the personification of the devil, “I know you....”, we might wonder whether both the content and the style are Champagnat’s own, or whether he copied them. The content could have been inspired, but not copied as it was, because of the error of logic I pointed out above. The oratorical form of putting words into the mouths of the devils and of the damned is quite common in this type of sermon. The “Lavalla Sermons” cited above, contain a passage which bears a close resemblance in the form, but not the content.

“Would that I were able to evoke one of these unfortunate sinners...Impious libertines, he would say to some people, you laughed at
religion and at those who practise it. I was like you, I looked on hell and its pains as fables, and now look at me, burning in these flames. Crucior in hac flamma!

You men of sensual pleasure, he would say to others, like you, I sought to satisfy my passions, and now look how dear I pay for those fleeting pleasures!

And to others again, You who profane the divine mysteries, like you I also crucified Jesus Christ....”

Undoubtedly a closer study would uncover more corresponding passages, but those we have seen will suffice to show our conclusion that Fr Champagnat, like all the mission preachers of his day, found himself in a climate of ideas, formulas and means from which he could draw as he wished. No doubt he prepared his sermons by reading and meditation, and noted down passages which would let him express himself, first in writing, then in the pulpit, where he could give full rein to his apostolic ardour. His “Talks on Hell”, in large part inspired by the authors of his time, keep their own originality, and that is what we are going to look at next.

The Content

Champagnat brings nothing new in the line of ideas. In any case, it is not the job of a preacher to always produce new ideas, but to put across the doctrine in a convincing way so as to encourage the faithful to put it into practice in their daily lives. Reading the four texts of the Talks, it is noticeable that the number of ideas is quite small, always the same, within a fixed framework whose boundaries he does not attempt to cross. However, here and there we find some surprisingly original images.

The body of the Talks, that is in general the first two thirds of the texts, shows some effort at composition. Following the example of the great orators, the framework is respected: it begins with an introduction which gives the main points; then the congregation's attention is called, and this is followed by a prayer to Our Lady, usually the Ave Maria. Then the three main points follow on, clearly and explicitly put. The author shows some exactness which, for example, we do not see in the Curé of Ars, in whose sermons we can hardly see any structure. Champagnat, on the other hand, keeps to the framework he lays down.

In his idea of a well constructed sermon, the three points should follow one another in growing order of intensity. But, since in the first point he gives
“the most terrible suffering”, he goes on in his second to treat of “suffering which will make more impression on us”, and culminates in his third point with “the sufferings which bring the deepest despair.” He develops his theme in each point in an orderly way, but does not always succeed in keeping to the development, as a detailed analysis will show.

The first point in his most complete version begins with the problem of the existence of hell, but reminds us that a Christian has already solved this problem by his faith. Then he goes on to the suffering of the damned from the negative point of view in order to bring out more strongly the statement that this is the most “terrifying suffering of the damned” because their crime is rejecting God during their life, and their punishment for that is having to be without him for all eternity. He then goes on to bring out the truth of this proposition, which is then restated as a conclusion. But we are not totally convinced because here on earth we cannot understand fully what God is for us, and only after our death will God be seen as our supreme good. Then we will not reject him, but our only wish will be to possess him. However, what we have freely chosen on earth is what we will get: God will reject us. The damned soul will be irreparably deprived of his unique wish, and nothing can take away from the remorse which will continue to grip him.

In order to convince his hearers, he has to take his time, and hammer his points home. Lacking sufficient mastery of the language, his points follow one another in any order, unlinked, carrying both his premises and his conclusions, so that he has to continually go back on some points.

Sometimes the link up of the ideas is broken by a sudden thought, like the image of the amputated limb, the example of St Lawrence, the remark on the subject of merit. But when we look at them closely, these remarks bring out what he is talking about.

The example of the suffering caused by the amputation of a limb is more than a trite image when we remember that in hell “the soul is cut off from its centre.” Many other preachers on this topic restrict themselves to pointing out how loveable God is, in order to make him more desirable. Champagnat, bringing in the idea of the “centre”, goes further. The limb, cut off from its natural place, is now useless. “Cut off from its centre”, from what gives it its meaning, the soul is torn apart by the useless passion of its immortal being. The deepest desire, the most vehement desire, of the human is “being”, to be one with “He who is”. But this identification will be granted, will be realized, only by the person himself, by free, totally responsible acts which are in conformity with his nature, that is, capable of bringing about his desires. If
after death, the soul realizes that it has voluntarily missed its aim, the very reason for its existence, and that it is now impossible to change anything, is that not already a hell, whose inextinguishable fires will burn it, whose worm will never cease to gnaw at it?

Champagnat's approach is from an entirely different angle, though his way of treating it is similar; he looks at the reality of hell, but starts from the love of God. His own deep intimacy with God lets him understand that he is nothing without God, that the only way the human soul can develop is in the love of God. From this comes his conviction that the "most terrifying torment of the damned" is "being deprived of God." To possess God, to be deprived of God, "I am no longer your God" - a phrase he repeats a number of times: the idea behind all these phrases, not to see that God is everything for him, to be separated from God and repulsed by him, would be for him an insupportable torment.

The same way of thinking is seen in the reflection on deserving that he brings into the first point also. In his view, direct knowledge of God would take away from us the possibility of deserving; he links deserving not to suffering but to the free choice of the person. Merit is in fact the growth of our being by our acts which have a value in the sense of what we can become. God created us capable of reasoning and free in our reasoning, so that we ourselves could be the builders of our future, a future that can be attained only by our acting in full knowledge and liberty. If then, we knew God as he is, that is, as our sovereign good, as our supreme value, our choice would necessarily bring us straight to him; on the other hand, since by faith we have only an indirect or partial knowledge of him, he will not be thought of subjectively as a greater value than others, and this is why the alternative is possible. Only in this case can we be fully responsible for our own destiny, freely chosen, only thus can we truly bring about our own eternal happiness or misfortune. I don't claim that the Founder reflected on the topic completely in this way, but I simply want to show the correctness and the depth of the phrase which he used, whether it came from himself or from another, because it expresses his own thought.

The second point in the Talk, though less difficult, is not any better structured. The ideas jump from one to another instead of following in logical sequence. However, the intention of following a certain progression of thought can be seen.

As in any theological treatise, the author supports his thought from Scripture and the Fathers of the Church, noting that they speak of "a real
fire, a miraculous fire which includes every torment and torture”; this allows him to call to mind all sorts of physical suffering, in this point in which he says he will speak of the fire. When he says: “Let us go deeper into this thought,” he takes it in two parts. In the first, he tries to explain what the fire of hell is, and in the second what are the sufferings the damned will undergo.

The first part begins by stating that fire causes terrible suffering but this is followed almost at once by death. To bring this out, it describes first the fire of a pyre on which the condemned man is burned alive (note the detailed description of the preparations), then goes on to the fire in a furnace used for melting iron or glass - each time it comes back to the idea that the victim’s sufferings last only a moment.

What would it be like then, if by some miracle, God kept the man alive to suffer for a full day at the stake, or if he remained in the furnace “like a fish in water”? And yet these sufferings are as nothing compared to those of hell, for there, by a second miracle, the fire attacks the soul as well as the body and all its senses, including sight and hearing, and, to make it worse, in an everlasting immobility. He explains the difference between the natural fire and that of hell by comparing the anger of God against Egypt, which he punished with his finger, whereas in hell he uses all his strength, and the effects are such that “no man, no matter how cruel, has ever invented any to compare.”

It must be said at once that all these pictures have been described with all sorts of details by the most eminent preachers. Champagnat’s originality lies in the fact that he retains only a small number of the cruel sufferings, each more refined than the last, that we find in plenty in the pious literature of the time. He alludes to the considerations, so-called theological considerations, on the nature of this fire which is at the same time material and immaterial, which burns the body as well as the soul without destroying them. He speaks sparingly of the anger and the vengeance of God, for he never forgets that his mercy and goodness are infinite.

He is just as temperate in the third point where he deals with the eternity of hell, but without dwelling, as so many others do, on the mathematics of centuries and millennia which increase and multiply! In a structure like that of the second point, he begins with proofs from Scripture, and then contents himself with showing that hell has no future, that it will not finish even after millennia of centuries, and that consequently, it is always just beginning.

Obviously, Fr Champagnat feels ill at ease with these more or less abstract considerations, and prefers to deal with themes more in keeping with
the life of his audience. So he quickly moves to the practical application of the doctrine without worrying that sometimes he is going on without reaching a conclusion. He attacks the most common faults, such as immoral behaviour and the impiety shown in the profanation of the Sunday and the neglecting of the Sacraments.

The two passages already mentioned, where the devil and the damned speak, are the most typical in this regard. Whether they are his own or copied from someone else is less important here than the fact that they come up time and time again. Even apart from their theatrical nature, which would not have worried Champagnat in the least, these texts appeal directly to the audience, who must have felt that the finger was pointing at them, individually. Those who heard the warning: I know you... you who run from this holy place into the bar..., were they going to dare to go to the village bar for an aperitif before going home for dinner? The woman who knew her sin, would she not be horrified by the realistic description of the damned soul “the face covered with filth, the hands scorched and burning”, whose eyes, ears, and mouth “belch forth fire and burning sulphur.”? Other images, less macabre, like the “horrors of war, plague, famine, hailstorms, floods, earthquakes” are even more everyday and concrete, so as to make these country people understand the power of God.

Another type of image, but no less of the earth, is the relationship between the seed and the harvest which Champagnat quotes more than once in one of the texts. A common theme in Scripture, which underlines the responsibility of the individual for his own destiny.

Without noticing it, or at least without saying it, he comes back to the theme of the first point: the heaven which God makes to shine forth as the reward of good works. It would be easy to deduce from all this that God intervenes through the laws he has given to nature, leaving each person the entire responsibility for his own reward or his own punishment, for which there is no need for the intervention of the anger or the vengeance of the Almighty. But the atmosphere of the time was still far from this type of thinking. However, the Church did not lack preachers, more apostles than theorists, who would have been slow to subscribe to such a theory. Champagnat was one such, more ready to help than to condemn. This comes out strongly in the passages of N-3 and N-5 where concern to heal comes over more strongly than to frighten: “O Christians! if the damned had the time...and if there was only a rigorous enough life for them! How miserable we are, that we have so many times deserved hell, and we do not think to repent!” This last remark, where the preacher includes himself among those
at the bar of judgment, shows the absence of all pretentiousness in one who considers himself less as a leader than as a companion on the road, whose only desire is to bring all the travellers together in a common journey towards salvation.

Conclusion

It is this picture which best shows the personality of Fr Champagnat. From studying his “Talks on Hell”, we can see at once that he had no literary talent. But he has ordered his text according to a plan which he follows faithfully, something he learned no doubt in the seminary. However, the way he develops his theme, often with phrases and expressions he has taken from other writers, is not so strict, even though there are sometimes happy phrases and even flights of sheer poetry.

Add to this the fact that the same text has been written out four times, and we can see a man who was conscientious, concerned for order, exactness, and of turning out a good work, a worker who does not draw back from his task, even when it is difficult. There are plenty of witnesses in the documents of the beatification, to his gift for preaching, to his use of voice and gesture in putting over the points he was making.

On the spiritual side, we find a pastor who does not take himself too seriously when he spells out, even with fervour, the cruelties dictated by convention, but who does not refuse any task traditionally demanded by his function as a priest. At heart, he is impelled by a burning love for Jesus and for his brothers. A child of the country, less brilliant in intelligence than in a clear sighted wisdom, he feel that he is one of the people and his only ambition is to remain one of them as the leaven in the mass.

Br Paul Sester.
ANTOINE LINOSSIER
OUT OF THE SHADOWS

In the first volume of “Né en 89”, I gave a fairly important role to a priest, Antoine Linossier, a man who has, for the last century and a half, been unknown among the Marist Brothers. He is, however, a person of some interest.

I. The documents which bring him out of the shadows.

He died in the month of August 1822. Br Jean Baptiste had been at Lavalla for about six months. It is unlikely that Fr Champagnat went to his funeral, since the burial was carried out with some haste, perhaps because of his illness, or perhaps because of the excessive heat at the time. He died on 30th August, and was buried on 31st. We can well imagine that when Fr Champagnat learned of the death, he had prayers said for him, and that he told the Brothers that he had learned a lot from this great teacher. But such prayers, almost incidental, would hardly have remained in the memory of the future biographer, who was not to write the life of Marcellin till 34 years later.

It so happens that the first to tell us of Antoine Linossier is Etienne Bedoin, who was to criticize Jean-Baptiste’s biography in strong terms. This critic - whose censures we know about from Br Balko1 - was not happy about the good conduct marks attributed to Marcellin in the seminary by Br Jean Baptiste, and, drawing attention to the dubious exploits of Marcellin and the “La Bande Joyeuse” he says:”The sudden death of one of his fellow students

and the salutary reprimands of Fr Linossier, rhetoric professor, were the occasion of the solid and lasting conversion of M. Champagnat."

For a long time, the Brothers probably knew nothing of this criticism of Fr Bedoin, unless he passed it on orally to the Brothers at Lavalla, where he replaced Fr Champagnat in 1824. But another biography that the Brothers could have read some years later would have told them a bit more about this mysterious Linossier. It was a biography in two volumes of Jean Louis Duplay, by a Fr Jean Matthieu Chausse:  

While the book is about Jean Louis Duplay, friend and spiritual director of Marcellin Champagnat, and Superior of the Major Seminary in Lyons, Fr Chausse talks, sometimes at great length, about many another priest of the diocese, not least among them Fr Linossier, who had taught Jean Louis Duplay. One gets the feeling that Chausse is trying to defend him against possible accusations, and so he says all the good possible about him.

So what was there about the life of this priest, a man who should be of interest to both Marist Fathers and Brothers, because of his role in the seminaries of Verrières and Lyons? That is what we are going to try to find out.

II. His origins.

a) Birthplace:

The documents which give information about his origins tell us that he came from St Genest Malifaux. Document G76 of the departmental archives of the Rhône lists all priests at the date of their ordination, but gives also, when they received the tonsure, the names of their parents and their place of birth, but not the birth date. So we find Antoine Linossier noted as receiving the tonsure in 1783, and that his parents were Jean Baptiste and Denise Gobert of the parish of Planfoy.

The topographical dictionary of Forez published by JB Dufour at Macon in 1946, tells us that Planfoy, between St Genest and St Etienne, formed part of the commune of St Genest in 1819; it did not become independent till

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2 Life of Fr Jean Louis Duplay...followed by notes and memories of the diocese of Lyons, by Fr Chausse. Delhomme and Briguet, Publishers 1887.
3 The tonsure is in doc. G76, the ordination in G77 (ADR)
1863. In the same way, it had not become an independent parish till towards the end of the 19th century. So, all those who spoke of Linossier gave St Genest Malifaux as his place of origin, Planfoy being only a hamlet in the eyes of the civil authorities and a chapel of ease in the eyes of the Church.

At the time of Antoine’s birth, then, Planfoy had a chapel with a priest serving it, and the chapel was dedicated to St Etienne, as was the church in the parish town of St Etienne, to which Planfoy was attached at the time.

b) Family:

Antoine was born and baptized on 9th December 1762. His father is written down as a shopkeeper, in Bayon, not far from Guizay, about halfway from Planfoy to St Etienne. The godfather is another Antoine Linossier, a businessman at St Etienne.

His parents had been married on 22nd February 1762. His father was then 31 years old, and his mother 20.

c) Start of priestly ministry.

So there are no doubts about the origins of Antoine Linossier. His story in the years to come show that he is a remarkably endowed man with no lack of ambition and dynamism. He thought of the priestly vocation, and in the intellectual ferment of the period, soon became a progressive priest who threw himself wholeheartedly into the ideas of the revolution.

In addition, Fr Jamon de Ribeyre, parish priest of St Genest, encouraged him in these ideas; this left-wing priest not only was far ahead of him in the movement, not only “abdicating” his priesthood through human respect, but going so far as to give up his faith and ending up in secular employment as a librarian at Le Puy. We can wonder whether he was one of those who took part in the spectacular denial of the faith at the end of 1793. He was however, buried with the rites of the church, on 14th January 1807, which would suggest that he was reconciled before the end.

Antoine Linossier became a priest towards the end of 1786, and his first post was as curate at Firminy. Here he came into contact with the “working class” - not what it was to become in the industrial period 20 or 30 years later, but more of a craftsman class, with all its claims, its life so different from the
agricultural class which surrounded it, and already the victim of the "clubs" which sought to lead it into violence.

From 17th November 1787, his name appears on the registers of births, deaths, and marriages. He must have made himself readily available, and, when we know the enthusiasm with which he could preach in later years, we can well imagine that he soon became a success in his parish. According to Chausse, "...he was of an amiable intelligence, and full of zeal for the things of the spirit. He was also a University graduate in both Civil and Canon Law." 4

III. The years of enthusiastic revolution.

a) Nationalization of the goods of the clergy.

He remained at Firminy during 1788, 89, and 90. He would have been the first to rejoice at the night of 4th August 90 - that night of thunder and lightning, as Mirabeau was to call it - when the privileged renounced their privileges, an act which was the prelude to a more concrete renunciation on the part of the clergy in October and November of the same year.

The clergy were to accept the demagogic suggestion of Talleyrand: that to save the public economy, the fortunes of the Church, amounting to some 2 billion francs, should be nationalized. All the properties were to be sold, and in recompense, the clergy and religious were to be given a fitting salary.

All priests were asked to give details of their own resources and those of their parishes with a view to arranging a salary which would be realistic.

The years before the Revolution had already seen some improvement in the stipends of those priests who had no benefice and who were on the minimum scale. For example, at St Sauveur, the basic salary of Robert, the parish priest went from 500 francs to 700, and even as far as 920 in 1789 and 1790 - though this last figure included parish expenses which he had paid and which were being given back to him.

However, when the new law took effect on 1791, it is easy to see that certain parish priests who had huge benefices would be worse off, while those without benefice would be better off, with a more realistic salary: the new

4 Chausse op. cit I.25
minimum for parish priests was 1,200 francs - e.g. Gaumont at Lavalla got this sum, and soon got 1,800; Allirot at Marlhes started with 1,600, which rose to 2,000⁵. The normal for curates was half that of parish priests, and Linossier at Firminy got 700 francs. He knew that if he had a chance of even a small parish like Jonzieux, he would get at least double that.

b) The Civil Constitution for the Clergy.

He had the chance with the Civil Constitution, set up by the Decree of 12th July 1790. The number of bishops was reduced from 125 to 85 (one for each department); parishes were grouped together, and as a result, there were fewer posts for both bishops and parish priests.

To make matters worse, bishops and parish priests were to be elected, like the deputies, by "active citizens", even if these were not Catholic. Once elected, the bishop was to ask for canonical recognition from his metropolitan, and the Pope was to be informed of his election.

These were completely unjustifiable measures, and had not figured in the "List of Complaints", and were so surprising that the Catholics were struck dumb to start with! But the idea took root gradually. Dates were set for compliance: a decision had to be made by such and such a date. Was the Pope going to pronounce on it? When was he going to speak? He did speak, and condemned the Constitution, but not till March and April 1791, and the last date for the clergy to take the oath was December 1790.

The canonical Bishop of Lyons, Mgr de Marbeuf, had already taken refuge in Germany, and was in no condition to give orders. Many of the priests, very good priests, in the region of Jonzieux-Marlhes, decided to take the oath with reservations. Dervieux at St Chamond did the same - he accepted the Constitution except for "all that might injure the Church, and it being understood that I do nothing against my conscience and my faith..." ⁶

Gaumont at Lavalla, d'Allirot at Marlhes, de Robert at St Sauveur, and many others....they all took the oath, but with reservations.

⁵ See A D L L 979
c) ...and Linossier took advantage of it.

Unlike these others, he does not seem to have hesitated. No doubt, he looked more to progress than to tradition, and probably looked down with a certain condescension on those who, unlike himself, were not ready to face up to the future. Much later, he would be described as “a man of caustic spirit, full of enthusiasm, with a good critical attitude in literary matters, but full of heart.” The overtones of this judgment allow us to imagine what happened. The opportunity arose for him to start up the ladder. Among the parish priests to be replaced was the man from Jonzieux, quite close to his birthplace. So he put himself forward. The parish priest at the time, Pradier, had taken the oath, but retracted it later when Pius VI condemned the Constitution of the Clergy.

On the 19th June 1791, the 650 “active citizens” of Marlhes-Jonzieux-Riotord picked the 7 electors who were to go to St Etienne from the 10th to the 13th July, there, in company of about a hundred others from the district, to elect the “constitutional” parish priests.

They met in the main church, assisted at Mass, and M. Gony, the Procureur Syndic (Mayor), pointed out to all the electors the obligation they had to choose worthy pastors!

Linossier was elected on 11th July, with 63 votes out of a possible 66.

He was a man who could get on with Jean Baptiste Champagnat, father of Marcellin, like himself a man of ambition, and also like himself, a man who had everything in his favour in Marlhes. The only fly in the ointment was that at Jonzieux, Linossier was going to come across Jean Pierre Ducros, cousin of Champagnat, who was not only ambitious, but completely unscrupulous, and ready to do anything to get the most out of the Revolution.

Linossier’s promotion coincided with the downfall of the King, whose flight to Varennes ended in disaster on 21st July 1791.

IV. The Revolution - the dark years.

a) The time of hesitation.

With a Constituent Assembly which would soon give way to a much more left-wing Legislative, things began to move swiftly. But, at the start, it appeared that Linossier’s charitable side made it easy for him and his curate
Despinasse, whom he had chosen himself, to live with the old parish priest, Pradier, and his curate Peyrand. A Decree of the Directory of the Rhône et Loire dated 13th August 1791, foresaw the case where there would be friction between the old and the new, and stated that the old should withdraw to at least ten leagues from the parish. An exception could be made for anyone over 70, or for the sick and infirm. Pradier seems to have been among the latter. His curate, Peyrand, disappeared shortly after, and exercised an underground ministry - something that was remarkably well organized by Linsolas, the Vicar General.

It is all very fine being progressive, but one is forced to admit that the evolution of the regime does not justify everything. After the massacres of September 1792, J.B. Champagnat as well as Linossier must have realized that they were in a tricky situation that it would be hard to get out of. In 1793, with the death of the king, the general uprising, the revolt in the Vendée, followed by other revolts in various towns, culminating in that in Lyons, all this was the start of a really dangerous phase.

The Jacobins won. The Girondin party was eliminated 7 and before long it was a life and death struggle between the Convention and Lyons, which had risen up against it. Whose side were Linossier and Champagnat on? It is very hard to be sure, but at one stage both of them came down on the side of the Jacobins, and were supervised by the fiercely revolutionary J.P. Ducros.

We have definite knowledge of Champagnat: “Considering that the citizen Champagnat, delegated....to confiscate the goods of the criminals throughout the canton of Marlhes, has not taken all the action required by the orders he was given, and considering that the citizen Ducros has gained the confidence of the representatives of the people....we name the said Ducros to work along with the said Champagnat.”

This proclamation was made on 12th October 1793, that is, immediately after the fall of Lyons, at which Champagnat had managed to show a really

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7 In 1793, the democratic movement was already split into two groups, the Jacobins and the Girondins. From the religious point of view, the Girondins were more antireligion than the Jacobins, but they began to be irked by what was seen as a dictatorship growing steadily under the Jacobins, particularly the trio: Robespierre, Couthon and St Just. Those Girondins who did not manage to escape were massacred. In the Lyons revolt, there was the same opposition to the Jacobins, and it brought together all kinds of opposing groups: royalists, Catholics, and Girondins who, for various reasons, wanted to see the end of the government by the Convention.

8 Register of the Deliberations of Marlhes.
Jacobin zeal, at least outwardly, when he led a column of conscripts from Marlhes towards St Genis Laval to the help of the army of Javoques, a fierce Jacobin, who was to spread terror in the Loire district for five months.

But at this period, even a man as revolutionary as Fr Jamon, parish priest of St Genest, could have accusations levelled at him. Probably he had said something or done something which could be interpreted as favouring the rebels in Lyons, for he had to defend himself. Already the bells had been taken from his church, and work had started on demolishing the belfry. There is a tradition that Champagnat was able to make the demolishers drunk and in this way to save the church.\(^9\)

For his part, Linossier went to St Genis with Ducros in search of Javoques on the 13th August. True, it could be understood as a humanitarian act, going as delegates to get help for the “representatives sent by the people” who were taking part in the siege of Lyons. But it is also possible, even probable, that they wanted to be able to say: we are with you against all that is from Lyons, all that is Girondin, royalist!

b) Giving up the priesthood.

In addition to his priestly duties, Linossier also looked on himself as a Civil Servant. The Law of 16th September 1792 had taken the registers of births, marriages and deaths out of the hands of the clergy, and took effect on 1st January 1793. Linossier continued to keep the registers, no longer as a religious act, but as a civil one. He must have known also of the numerous families in Jonzieux who worked together to keep the practice of their faith and to defend those who suffered for it. It is certain that he turned a blind eye to a lot, and probably this is what Chausse is referring to when he says: “In his favour, it can be said that his life remained unblemished, and that he never associated in any act of persecution of Catholics.\(^10\)”

But Chausse would like to give the impression that Linossier’s period of “weakness” was a short one, and that it was in recognition of his error that he gave up his parish. The date given by Chausse for his resignation, 29th December 1792, would appear to be mistaken. This is the last date when his signature as parish priest appears: “On this day 29th December 1792, 1st

\(^9\) Br Avit, Annals of St Genest Malifaux.
\(^10\) Life, I p.34.
Year of the Republic, I officiated at the funeral of.... Then, on 30th January 1793, he stops signing the registers as parish priest, but only to become an official of the State, a post he will hold till 26th December 1793, when he handed over “all his registers in order and in good condition” to Ducros.

We have it from other sources that he gave up his priestly duties, and it was probably about this same date. This problem of “abdication” is, in fact, part of the whole problem of dechristianization of Year II of the Republic, beginning from September 1793. The Convention was pushing priests to get married, or at least to give up all priestly duties.

c) The ten years of mystery.

In 1802, Linossier is still “merchant at Marseilles”. It is quite evident that, like so many others, e.g. the future Cardinal Fesch, he had not given up his parish at Jonzieux out of repentance for the way he had gained it, but had simply given up his priesthood for an undefined time, and had left the region to carry on civil work.

We lose sight of him for at least ten years, and it is the Concordat that will bring him back to his priestly duties.

In 1802, Fr Courbon, Vicar General, wrote a brief account of all the priests of the diocese who were still alive, and notes about Linossier: “Born at St Genest Malifaux, illicit parish priest of Jonzieux, at present keeps a shop in Marseilles.”

V. THE CONCORDAT

a) Reconciliation of the priests who had “abdicated”.

We do not know on what date Linossier came back to the fold, but it was on 18th June 1806 that the Archiepiscopal Council approved his appointment to the Seminary at Verrières.

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11 We find also another funeral on the same day, 29th December 1792, that of a child of JP Ducros, signed by both Linossier and Ducros. There are a number of details like this that give the impression that the two worked together.
12 It is hardly thinkable that Linossier was one of the two priests who in 1803 turned Marcellin’s thought towards the priesthood.
In the words of Chausse: “Faced with the excesses of the Revolution.... he examined his conscience, and, conscious of the mistakes he had made, he repented sincerely of them. His return to the fold was complete, as one might expect of such an upright and generous soul”.

That may be correct, but when did it happen? Was it 1793 or 1805? Chausse’s judgment would seem to point to the latter date. Writing some 80 years after the event, Chausse may unwittingly be making a somewhat coloured interpretation of the facts. We get a better idea by examining the Concordat and its effects.

Bonaparte had opted for the Roman Church rather than the Constitutional Church set up by Henri Grégoire, constitutional Bishop of Blois. This man, more Jacobin than the Jacobins themselves, had in fact demonstrated a spirit of faith, of decision, and of constancy which were truly to be admired. When the constitutional Bishop of Paris, Gobel, made a “solemn abdication in front of the Convention, and put on the red bonnet”, Grégoire, in a rage, “flew to the speaker’s chair”, and, in spite of threats, protested that “he would remain bishop, for it was not the people that had given him his mission, nor the Assembly.”

Twice Grégoire tried to call a national Council - unsuccessfully, we might add - the second time being in 1803. Would a progressive priest like Linossier, one who was, in addition, well versed in theology, not have been convinced of the sure foundations of the constitutional Church? Perhaps he was in touch with Grégoire.

Because of the extremely independent character of Grégoire, Napoleon did not want him. However, in the Concordat with the Roman Church, he had demanded that some of the bishops be taken from the constitutional Church. For example, at Lyons, Fesch, Napoleon’s uncle, had been of the constitutional church and had given up his priesthood. Linossier could have thought then: “I am in no hurry to retract oaths which I thought in my soul and my conscience I was justified in making. But with a bishop who is in the same boat as me, I should be able to come to an understanding.”

For a constitutional priest, retraction would be renouncing a whole theology he had thought was well-founded, but on principles somewhat different from those of the Roman Church. Leflon gives some of principles on which the constitutional church was based: 15

1. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy is canonical and legitimate, and they have saved the Church by adopting it. The oath of 1790 does not imply any fault, or any need for retractation. (In the dioceses held by constitutional bishops who did not “repent”, i.e. Angoulême, Cambrai, Strasbourg, Dijon, Besançon, priests who had taken the oath were better treated than in the others.)

2. The constitutional Bishops professed complete independence from the Pope; this implied submission to the civil powers, and for that reason, Napoleon’s government supported them in spite of all the troubles they caused.

3. They had their own theology of the sacraments. For example, in their eyes, marriage is a purely civil contract; it is the State which decided impediments which can lead to annulment. The marriage of divorced persons, of religious and of priests, is then, valid. Since, however, it is not licit, they are merciless towards priests who have been weak enough to marry. These men must regularize their position through other bishops who are more merciful towards the weak. As for the sacraments administered by constitutional priests during the time of the Revolution, they maintain that they are valid, but they do not admit that power of jurisdiction goes with power of order. So, during the Restoration, quite a number of the missioners who went around, declared that the sacraments given by constitutional priests were null and void, because these men had not received their jurisdiction from the legitimate authority. Obviously this could be a source of trouble to many consciences.

It must be admitted that the constitutional Church also had its martyrs; 8 Bishops went to the guillotine, among them Lamourette of Lyons; it did help to save the Church during the bad times; it did bring about certain prophetic initiatives, such as, e.g. liturgy in French. And it is from these positive points that the constitutional clergy, until the death of Grégoire in 1831, maintained their spirit of resistance or even rebellion, which, joined with other phenomena which would appear to be completely opposite in nature, such as Jansenism or the “Little Church”, would cause a lot of tension in a number of dioceses.

In his manuscript history of the Diocese of Lyons, Desloges gives an idea of the problems caused at the start of the Concordat by ex-constitutional

\[\text{14} \text{ i.e. those who had taken the oath; those who did not were called “refractory” priests, in French “refractaires” or “insérermentés”}.\]
priests living with the people who had remained faithful to the Pope and with priests who had never taken the oath. He quotes a priest from that time called Montagnier: “What troubled us most were the denials of these men who had just been reconciled; they maintained that they had retracted nothing. But an answer we had from the office of the Archbishop reassured us that the principle of the communion of the church had been maintained, since these priests had received and freely accepted absolution from all censures incurred by the schism, which implied that they implicitly accepted their culpability.”

This shows how the archbishop had had to give way in order to reintegrate these recalcitrants in the church. Since Fesch himself had taken the oath, then given up his priesthood, he was doubtless able to persuade more than one of his priests to make the same act of humility as he had done. Effectively, his diocese developed quite quickly to the two kinds of priest accepting each other.

We can well believe Chausse when he says: “Linossier remained full of confidence, of respect and gratitude for Fr Payrard, who had helped him to see where his duty lay.” And he gives other examples of favourable testimony for these men, among them Fr Duplay.

b) The reconciliation of Linossier.

In any case, even if Antoine Linossier took his time in coming back to the fold, he was back by 1806. Was he well accepted by the authorities from the beginning? We cannot tell, since the registers of Verrières for 1807-08 do not give much information. It gives the names of the superior and of seven of the staff, headed by Linossier, teacher of the 3rd Class, with the following note: “Fr Antoine Linossier, priest, 46 years of age. Check on his piety and his zeal.”

At the end of the list, there is another note by the “canonical visitor”: “With the exception of Fr Crépu, the teachers do not possess, in general, the tone and manners that show pious and zealous hearts. It would appear that several receive communion very rarely. There is not sufficient agreement between them and the superior.”

c) Discussion on this beginning of re-intregation.

The problem is knowing what gave rise to this impression, and if it was given by Fr Périer, the superior. This man, who had shown a lot of courage
and merit during the Revolution, and also has the merit of re-opening the
seminary of Verrières in 1804, in very difficult conditions, does not
demonstrate the qualities required of a superior.

Fr Courbon, Vicar General, gives a severe judgment on him in his notes
on the priests of the diocese in 1802: “Mediocre in his gifts, unenlightened in
his zeal.” In a letter to the Prefect, dated 2nd July 1804, he writes: “The
complaints brought against Fr Périer by the Mayor of Verrières are so serious
that, if the facts are correct, we would have no hesitation in removing him
from this position. We will write to him....”

The fact that his conduct could give rise to such complaints may well
explain why the superior (who held two posts: parish priest and superior) did
not give complete satisfaction, and consequently, risked having imputed to
the teachers in general what was to a large degree his own fault. He was not
be changed till the holidays of 1809, but in the meantime, it is quite clear that
it is Fr Linossier who put the seminary at Verrières on a firm footing.

VI. THE BRILLIANT TEACHER AND ANIMATOR

a) Verrières.

As prefect of studies, he fought against mediocrity and lack of a taste for
work. We can see his hand in this side of things from the scholastic year
1808-09. Marcellin was probably still among the tail-enders, but he had at
least to give up being the leader of the “bande joyeuse” and become the
young seminarian conscious of his vocation. In any case, the “Conduct
mediocre” mark disappears after 1807-08.

Those of his old pupils who speak of Linossier always do so with
admiration, but we cannot really distinguish whether they had him in
Verrières or at St Jean, the Junior Seminary at Lyons.

b) Lyons

Chausse tells us that it was in 1811 that he moved to St Jean, a famous
seminary whose origins go back to Leidrade, Bishop at the time of
Charlemagne.

15 ADL V 14
In charge of the First Class, he also was responsible for the training in preaching of the Major Seminarians. Cardinal Fesch wanted to set up a kind of Academy for the elite of the seminary, where advanced courses would be given in theology, eloquence, Sacred Scripture, and Church history.

Linossier showed himself to be particularly brilliant in this post. Chausse tells us: “To his great knowledge of the holy Fathers and the most renowned preachers, he added a deep knowledge of Latin and French literature, and was fluent in elocution. In his talks, all the grace of his fine, delicate spirit shone through. All who heard him spoke of his precision, the purity of his taste, the tact of his appreciations, the correctness of his observations.”

Chausse also tells us: “He was completely clear of ambition. He was offered the Rhetoric Class at the Lycée of Lyons, with a salary of 3,000 francs. He refused the post, saying, “I am not used to being paid so much.”

c) His role on the whole.

As an animator, he knew how to direct his pupils and the teachers, “to co-ordinate everything so that there was a single plan, a single spirit in the house. His authority was considerable, and yet it was exercised gently with the prestige that his knowledge, his experience, and his superior intellect gave him. At the same time, he was a model of patience in the way he put up with severe infirmities, especially a partial paralysis of his legs.”

It can be seen that Chausse wants to preserve a very high reputation for this priest, for even Duplay’s good qualities seem to him to be due to his teacher. He points out that Duplay had Linossier as his mentor for two years, in the 2nd Class from 1807-8 and in the Rhetoric Class from 1808-9, i.e. at Verrières.

He points out above all that Linossier shone not only as a teacher, but as a former of others, in charge of a house of education and formation. “He did everything he could to spread the spirit of faith that was his. Every Sunday he commented on the Epistle and Gospel in his homily. He was simple and clear, so as to leave something precise in the minds of the pupils. This clarity showed at once the work of a high intelligence.”

16 Chausse, Life I p 202:3
17 Pourrat, The ancient School of Leidrade
18 Chausse, Life I p.92
19 ibid.
“In the evenings, he made sure he presided over the spiritual reading. He had readings taken from the life of a saint or from a work of piety. He then questioned one or more of the pupils, and, by successive questions, taught them to make a proper judgment on the facts given in the book. With careful attention, he followed all the important things the saint did, and gave its full meaning to each answer he got, correcting the misunderstandings or the exaggerations of the pupils.”

There was nothing to equal the charm of these spiritual readings. Everything in them gave Fr Linossier’s keen spirit the opportunity for an interesting remark, a moral appreciation, a keen allusion.  

**VII. THE LAST YEARS**

How long was he professor in the Cathedral School of St Jean? The Council of the Archbishop approved him for the post on 25th February 1815; this approval was renewed on 8th October 1816; and then nothing. Did his illness allow him to continue his good work right up to his death? What we do know is that he had a lot of suffering, and that he put up with it well.

Desloges’s manuscript history of the Seminary of St Irenaeus gives notice of his death. He died on 30th August 1822, and was buried at Loyasse on 31st “in the presence of the whole Chapter.” Had he been made a Canon?

The fact that the whole Chapter was present is, in any case, a mark of the esteem which he enjoyed right to the end. But in that year, none of the Marist aspirants would appear to have made the retreat at the end of August 1822 which would have allowed them to be present at the funeral of Fr Linossier.

**CONCLUSION**

There are still some small points to be cleared up in this biography, a biography which in any case, is interesting in that it helps us to know a priest, typical enough of the period, who went through the stages of being a young progressive, a priest in anguish who gave up his vocation - at least outwardly - who was reconciled thanks to the Concordat, and who finally became, in every sense, an excellent priest and former of other priests.

Br Gabriel Michel

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20 id. p.96
THE MARIST TEACHING TRADITION

Introduction

"The pedagogy of the Congregation of the Little Brothers of Mary at the time of their Founder, i.e. from 1819 to 1840, is still a vast unexplored area, whether we are looking at its aims, its spirit, its methods, its methodology...."

These are the words of Br Pierre Zind in his posthumous book *Blessed Marcellin Champagnat and his work in schools seen in the context of his time*. Br Zind, former professor of the history of education in the Lumière University at Lyons, died during a visit to Brazil in 1988, where he had gone to give a series of conferences on Marcellin Champagnat at Mendes, in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

The book, edited by Br Paul Sester, archivist in the Generalate in Rome, gives the text of the conferences which Br Zind had carefully prepared for this seminar on the Founder. It is a work of patience and erudition quite typical of the author, who, as he tells us in chapter 1, "began his research in the school of Greco-Latin antiquity."

We are not going so far back in time as that. We will confine ourselves, in all modesty, to the period when Marcellin Champagnat set his work afoot and began his practical research into education and pedagogy, during the years 1819 to 1840. But we will try to open out our field of vision, and, if possible, look towards the future, as these talks invite us to. Marcellin

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Champagnat's educational thinking is not only an inheritance from the past, but it should be a light for us on the road, a dynamic source of energy in facing up to the challenges of the new evangelization in a European community which takes an important step forward on 1st January 1993.

In the text we have mentioned, Br Pierre Zind points out four aspects of this vast area of exploration: the aims, the spirit, the method, the methodology.

After long and patient study of this topic, the author is of the opinion that he cannot deal fully with it, so he takes only the last two points and deal with them in Chapter 8 of his book, Pédagogie didactique des Petits Frères de Marie, a chapter which is about 120 pages long, almost a quarter of the whole book.

So the study still has to be made on the first two points, the aims and the spirit of our educational tradition, a vast and challenging field to cover.

I was tempted to undertake the task, not realising that it would be impossible....I make no claim that I have succeeded where Br Zind did not dare to go. I have simply brought together some reflections on the major points of an interdisciplinary field where there is work for a whole team of specialists.

Guided by Br Zind's preliminary remarks, I take as my topic the first two main points he mentions:

- the aims of Marcellin Champagnat's educational ideas;
- the spirit of his educational philosophy.

1. The aims of Marcellin Champagnat's educational ideas.

It is not easy to separate the two ideas, the aims and the spirit, since the one flows naturally from the other.

In the case of the first, the aims, we have to be as objective as possible, so that we can be sure that the second does not come from our own imagination, or from the common enough desire to see the past in a modern context, and risk not seeing it in its true colours. Luckily we have enough authentic historical documents which we can read and analyze in a careful and honest fashion.
THE MARIST TEACHING TRADITION

Fr Champagnat stated that his aim in educating children was to allow them to become men worthy of their condition as children of God. With this in view, he was ready to use any effort, any method, of teaching which would help the children to grow. In my view, the expression “educational pedagogy” is not really the right one to express this aspect of our Founder’s work.

A man of action as he was, and continually having to defend and promote his work, he must have spent hours explaining the Brothers’ educational work both by word of mouth and in writing. The result is that we have a substantial number of documents to which we can refer in this matter.

In January-February 1825, he set about, for the second time, trying, with the support of Mgr de Pins, Archbishop of Lyons, to get the legal authorization necessary for his young Congregation, and had to draw up a complete file on it to present to the authorities. I quote some passages from it:

Since the Brothers of this Congregation have in mind only the GOOD OF SOCIETY, I dare to hope, Monseigneur, that Your Excellency will not refuse them your protection, and that His Majesty, whose only wish is the wellbeing of his subjects, will not refuse them what they ask for. (Introductory letter, 9th February 1825, quoted by Br Gabriel Michel in “Marcellin Champagnat and the legal recognition of the Marist Brothers”.)

This aim, frankly social in character, is set out in two documents:
- the PROSPECTUS, dated 29th July 1824, and
- the STATUTES, the first edition of our Rule of Life, January 15th 1825.
From these we quote the following three short passages:

The aim of our establishment is the instruction of children in general, and particularly of poor orphans. As soon as we have finished the buildings at the Hermitage and the means at our disposal enable us to get a good water supply to help us in our work, we will take in children from the “Houses of Charity” and set them up in life by giving them a Christian education. Those of them who are disposed to virtue and knowledge will be employed in the house. (Prospectus, 65)

A Christian and religious education is the most efficacious way of forming good subjects for society and fervent Christians for the Church. Unfortunately this means is lacking in most of our country areas. (Statutes, Foreword)
The Little Brothers of Mary have as their aim, elementary education. They will teach reading, writing, arithmetic, the principles of French grammar, Church music, Sacred History. The method they will use in their teaching is that used by the Brothers of the Christian Schools; their schools will be free, and they will agree with the local civic authorities on what is necessary to ensure them an honourable existence without undue burdens being placed on them. (Statutes, art. 1)

These three texts, each one in its own way, insists on the frankly social aspect of the Christian education and primary instruction that the Marist Brothers intend to offer to children in rural districts. The expression "forming good subjects for society" demonstrates the same concern, but in terms better adapted for the King of France, Charles X, for whom this text was intended.

In spite of frequent attempts, Fr Champagnat did not manage to get the authorization which he felt was absolutely necessary. 1833 saw the passing of the "Guizot Law", which was more demanding in requirements for opening schools and for the diplomas needed by teachers if they did not belong to a recognized religious congregation. Champagnat tried again, for the sixth time, but his efforts came to nothing.

In 1837, three years before his death, he tried again for the seventh time, but again without success. For three years, he knocked on the door of M. Salvandy, Minister of Education, a man who was not in the least favourable, he met with various politicians and highly-placed Civil Servants, presented file upon file, and built up a huge volume of correspondence.

We are not going to go into a close reading of all these documents, but they show that the aim of Champagnat remains what it had been at the start. It is well summed up in a letter written by a friend of Champagnat, M. Baude, secretary of the General Council of the Loire, to Salvandy, on 5th November 1838:

The Little Brothers of Mary constitute a new and excellent instrument for the spread of a primary education which is complete, moral, religious - nothing more, nothing less. (quoted by Gabriel Michel, op.cit. p.193)

In the historical context, the phrase "primary education" means an education which follows the ideas of the University - to form citizens who are sufficiently instructed to take their place in the society of the time, and to lead to their political and economic development. M.Baude gives his own version
of the phrase “the good of society” used by Champagnat in his letter of 9th February 1825.

This far-seeing aim is made more explicit in a letter Champagnat wrote to M. Libersat, who worked in the Ministry of Public Education:

Our aim...is to form good Christians and good citizens from among the inhabitants of the rural areas.” (Letter no. N-273, edited by Paul Sester, Rome, 1985)

I feel that this rapid look at some of the historic official documents of the Marist Brothers is largely sufficient to define the main aim of Champagnat’s pedagogical thought.

We can sum it up: We should aim at educating the whole man in his religious, moral, and civic dimensions. Research into this aim is not hindered by the social or family situation. Poverty in all its forms - abandoned children, orphans of the countryside and of the towns - should not put the Marist Brothers off. On the contrary, the marginalized of all kinds should engage their attention, without, however, taking it away from the others. This demands of educators patience, perseverance, dynamism, and ingenuity in their teaching.

So we have now put down what in my view is a solid foundation for the discovery of the spirit of the education pedagogy of Fr Champagnat. The next step is to underline some of the larger aspects of this second topic.

2 - The spirit of Marcellin Champagnat’s pedagogy

We find this expressed throughout the whole career of the Founder of the Marist Brothers: in his life, his writings, his attitudes, his relationship with his Brothers. As we said above, we cannot even try to do an exhaustive study of the topic, but will concentrate on three major aspects:

2.1 - Human pedagogy of being close to the children;
2.2 - Pedagogy of the educational team and the educational community;
2.3 - Pedagogy of creativity and project.

These ideas - project, creativity, team...- are not found in the writings or in the talks of Fr Champagnat. They are our ideas, not his. But they can help us to understand and to explain what he said, what he did, how he lived, when he was training his Brothers to be authentic educators.
- 2.1 - Human pedagogy of being close to the children

Here is an important text on this subject:

To bring up children properly, we must love them; we must love them all equally. To love the children is to devote oneself completely to teaching them and to take all the means that an industrious zeal can think of in order to form them to virtue and piety.

We must never forget that children are weak, and in consequence, they must be treated with kindness, charity, and indulgence, and must be instructed and trained with the greatest of patience.

To love the children is to put up with them without complaint, to put up with their defects, their lack of docility, even their ingratitude. In caring for them, we must be motivated solely by supernatural motivations, that it, the glory of God, the good of religion and the salvation of these young children. (Life, Bi-centennial French edition, p. 550)²

This is the golden rule of Champagnat's pedagogy: “To bring up children properly, we must love them, and love them all equally.”

Some educational experts of today would shy away from the word “love”. Psychoanalysts point out the ambiguity of this relationship between adult and young person. There are all sorts of possible results according to the situation: excessive dependence on the part of the very young, Oedipus complex, Electra complex, varying degrees of paedophilia more or less hidden... And above all, the school is a necessary antidote to the home, where unchecked affectivity can lead to egoism. The school should be the place where the child can go from the closed society of the home to the society of the world at large, where in civic matters, economic matters, and so on, one must be more open to others. So, “love the children” - yes, but be careful!

Luckily, Champagnat adds the words: “Love them all equally...” The word “all” avoids all that certain modern educational experts or psychoanalysts would see as harmful consequences for the psycho-affective development of the child or the adolescent. It does not imply a one to one relationship which could be pathological, but an interpersonal relationship

² For the remainder of this document, this is how we will refer to The Life of M.J.B. Champagnat, by one of his first disciples Br Jean Baptiste Furet, new edition 1989, on the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Marcellin Champagnat.
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open to the group and the community. For us as Christians, this is getting close to charity, if it has not already reached that stage. Champagnat further clarifies his meaning when he adds the word “equally”. Equality - a democratic virtue, but also a Christian one. God and his Son Jesus have no favourites. By an “equal love” for all his pupils, however lacking in docility or gratitude they are, the Marist Brother shows all of them the love which God has for them.

This is what Champagnat wants when he adds: “To love the children is to devote oneself entirely to teaching them.” The teacher must use an “industrious zeal” - or as we might say nowadays, “a spirit of initiative, of looking for the right way” - since “the children are weak beings.” The great virtues for a teacher must be goodness, charity, patience, readiness to put up with everything. A high ideal, and one which is almost too high if not underpinned by “supernatural intentions”: the glory of God, i.e. the spreading of his love, and the spiritual salvation of the young. So we have a human educational programme, very close to the children, in the sense that God has made himself close to us in his Son Jesus Christ, in order to save us and make us share in his glory. We might say also that it is a divine programme, a programme of incarnation and redemption, in which suffering and joy are intimately mixed in the daily exercise of our “beautiful profession”.

This is the main general principle of Champagnat’s educational philosophy. Rising from it we have the concrete attitudes and modes of behaviour necessary for daily life in the classroom with the pupils.

To make it clearer, we can divide them into two categories:

a) extremes to be avoided;

b) positive attitudes to be adopted.

Here we touch, very rapidly, on an area dealing with the pedagogy of teaching, for we are at the heart of the famous “teacher/pupil relationship” which has a positive or a negative effect on the learning process, the area of motivation. There is a lot of discussion of this topic in educational circles today, for in fact, no one can say why, how, or even when the pupils are “motivated”. Fr Champagnat was too busy with the urgent need for teaching to give much time to these largely theoretical questions.

a) Let us point out a few of the main extremes that Champagnat, following a book called “La Conduite des Ecoles”, told his Brothers to avoid carefully:
- no loss of temper, no nicknames, no undue familiarity;
- no corporal punishment.

The 1838 edition of the book goes on to say:

*Care should be taken not to strike the pupils with the hand, the foot, or even with the pointer; it is unbecoming and lacking in dignity for a teacher to pull the nose of the pupil, or his ears, or his hair, or to strike or push him roughly, or to pull them by the arms, make them trace the sign of the cross with their tongue or kiss the feet of others, or make them stand with outstretched arms.... It is equally forbidden to shut the pupils in a cupboard or small room alone, to detain them after school, etc, etc.... To make them wear a gag, or a dunce’s hat, or other such, can only show that the teacher is inexperienced or incompetent.... (P. Zind, Bl. M. Champagnat, his work in the schools seen in its historical context, p.417)*

In this area, Champagnat goes further than the “Conduite”, forbidding the punishment of making the children kneel with joined hands at the door or in the middle of the class, and also forbids the use of the “férule” (a leather strap which, according to Zind, “produces more noise than pain”, since the business end was wrapped in thread or cloth!)

We will conclude this list of extremes to be avoided by giving three very wise general principles:

- no serious punishment to be given without taking time to think it over and to discuss it with the headmaster;
- no excluding a child from class (we will come back to this later), except in case of immorality which might spread to others;
- no excessive or finicky supervision.

b) As opposed to these extremes to be avoided, what are the positive attitudes to be cultivated?

In the first place, as a matter of daily practice, the important thing is *presence*, without going to extremes in supervision, as we said above.

However, Champagnat insisted that his Brothers be careful to avoid faults, bad behaviour, and violence among the pupils. They had to watch them in class, in the yard, in going with them to church, or in the streets at the end of lessons. But he insists always on the Brothers *being present and giving good example.*
To train, to educate a child, the teacher must have a claim on his respect and obedience. The claims that the child recognizes and understands best are virtue, good example, capability, and the fatherly sentiments shown towards him. Education is above all else, the work of good example, since virtue strengthens authority; it is natural for man to imitate what he sees, and actions do more to convince and persuade than words and commands. The child learns more with his eyes than with his ears; it is by watching his parents and his masters that he learns the various tasks of his profession. In the same way, it is mainly by seeing good done, by good example, that he learns to practise virtue and to live a good Christian life. The Brother who is pious, regular, charitable, patient, devoted, faithful to all his duties, is giving a constant lesson in religion. By his good example, without even thinking about it, he instils in the children piety, obedience, charity, love of work, and all the Christian virtues. (Life of the Founder, bicentennial ed. p.550)

As a comment on this text of Marcellin Champagnat, I could offer you a text I saw in October 1990, in the entry hall of a primary school in Quebec; it was rather long, so I just quote a few lines:

Every child learns from example.... if it is surrounded by hostility, it learns to be aggressive... if it is surrounded by tolerance, it learns to be patient...by approval, it learns to accept itself for what it is... by friendship, it learns to love life. (Ross Laboratories, manufacturers of baby food...!)

With his 19th century wisdom and common sense, Champagnat has told us what the modern experts in childhood are not discovering, but rediscovering. Is it so astonishing to find, among the educational attitudes recommended to the Marist Brothers such things as trust, encouragement, zeal, and, not least, prayer?

In order not to dwell too long on this aspect, I would simply like to give two extracts from the “Conduite” quoted by Zind (op.cit.p.421):

(p.149) The teacher should not give all his attention to correcting the faults of the pupils. He should be more inclined to rewarding them when they deserve it. There are so many ways of doing this. A simple look of satisfaction can revive the child’s courage and bear more fruit in a school than a whole series of punishments...A word of encouragement brings joy to the heart of a child, a child who would be crushed by a repellent look.
(p.75) Rewards, whatever their material value, bring about good results in a well-run school, provided that they are given out properly, always because they are deserved, not just at random....

The “Conduite” gives five types of reward: 1. Privileges; 2. pictures, prayer books, other articles of some use to the child; 3. Medals and ribbons; 4. Good conduct marks; 5. Notes of satisfaction.

Concluding this section on Champagnat’s teaching philosophy, so full of humanity, I want to give as an example the story of the young Jean Baptiste Berne, so well told by Br Gabriel Michel in the second volume of his “Né en 89”, chap. 19:

Jean Baptiste was an orphan, and lived like a young savage. Fr Champagnat, helped by a few good people, came to help the boy’s mother when she was dying in extreme want after being abandoned by the father. After the death of his mother, Jean Baptiste was not able to live with the children of the charitable neighbours who took him in. So Fr Champagnat turned him over to the Brothers. Br Jean Baptiste Furet, who wrote the biography of the Founder, tells us: “Used to a beggar’s life and to being free to follow all his bad instincts, he could not put up with the ordered life of a school...He ran away a number of times, preferring to beg his bread and live in want rather than giving in to the discipline in a school...The Brothers lost heart, and finally asked the Founder to send the boy away and leave him to his unhappy lot...They said: “We are wasting our time with this child, and sooner or later, we will have to send him away.” Fr Champagnat encouraged the Brothers to have patience, for a number of months. In the end, Jean Baptiste Berne changed completely. He became well-behaved, docile, “as pious as an angel.” After he made his First Communion, he asked if he could become a Brother. “He was a pious Brother, regular, obedient, and he died a holy death, aged twenty one, in the arms of Fr Champagnat, after thanking him for all he had done for him.” (Life, bi-centennial edition, pp. 524-5)

After hearing this story, we can better understand when Champagnat told his Brothers:

Take good care of the poor children, the most ignorant, the most limited. These children must be shown a lot of kindness. Speak to them often, do not be afraid to show them that you appreciate them, and that you think more of them because they are not endowed with the gifts of nature. Poor
children are to a school what sick people are to a family: a source of blessing and prosperity when you look at them with the eyes of faith and give them the honour due to suffering members of Jesus Christ. (Life, p.520)

2.2 Pedagogy: Educational team and/or community

My starting point is a paragraph from the Spiritual Testament of Marcellin Champagnat, drawn up a few days before his death on the 6th June 1840:

I ask you, my dear Brothers, with all the affection of my heart and by all the feeling you have for me, to always act in such a way that holy charity may always reign among you. Love one another as Jesus Christ has loved you. May you have always but one heart and one mind. May it be said of the Little Brothers of Mary, as it was said of the first Christians: See how they love one another! This is the most ardent wish of my heart at this, the last moment of my life. Yes, my dear Brothers, listen to the last words of your Father - they are the words of our beloved Saviour himself: Love one another!

You could rightly draw my attention to the fact that this advice, very spiritual as it is, was given to a religious community, a community of Marist Brothers, and that now in many countries, the Brothers in the schools are small in number. However, in my opinion, they would seem to apply also to the lay people dedicated to education in a Marist school.

In the first place, Champagnat saw the religious community of Marists as a praying and a working community. The first Rule of Life that he gave his Brothers in 1837, after twenty years of reflection and experiment, is a collection of rules for a spiritual life and for a life of work in education.

So the phrase “May you always have but one heart and one mind” means not only the fraternal charity that exists between religious living together, but also the spirit of collaboration and solidarity between members of the same educational team in a primary school, high school, boarding school. The same is true of all the partners in the educational work of the school, whether administration, maintenance, teaching, direction, and including the parents and the pupils themselves.

When Champagnat reminds us of the words of Christ: “Love one another”, he reminds us that, as for the pupils as we have seen above,
understanding, mutual help, devotedness to one another, service of one another, are essential for the dynamism of what we call the educational community.

The way that Champagnat tried, all through his life, to govern his community, shows us that he tried his hardest within the parameters of the mentality of his age, to build up educational teams and communities. A few examples will suffice to show this.

*When he saw that the number of his disciples was growing, Champagnat wanted to give them a more regular form of life, more in keeping with them, and since he felt that they should not be left to their own resources, be wanted to give them a Director who would give them the lead, make sure that the rule was kept, and who would pull up those who failed in their observance of the rule or committed some other fault. To make their obedience and submission easier, he decided that they themselves would choose their director, and suggested that they should elect him by secret ballot. When each of them had written down his vote and put it in the box, he himself counted the votes in their presence, and named as director the one who had received the majority. It turned out that the oldest, Br Jean Marie, had most of the votes, and was made director of the community. (Life, bicentennial edition, pp. 69-70)*

This was in 1818, barely a year and a half after the foundation. Champagnat already wanted to give the young community a certain amount of autonomy, and not only that, but to allow them, in a democratic fashion, to choose their own leader.

Later, when he came to live with his Brothers, he left the Director “complete liberty in what he did, and, far from getting in his way or taking away his authority, he set himself to strengthen it and increase it.” (op.cit.p.79)

Later, in 1822, in answer to his prayers, in a most peculiar way, Mary sent him a good-sized group of future novices, but the house was too small and too poor.

*For this reason, Fr Champagnat did not want to put this load on to the community without consulting the principal Brothers. Next morning, he called the postulants, and told them: “I cannot promise you yet that I will accept you. I have first to consult the Brothers. I will let you stay a few days with us, but, since your acceptance is anything but certain, those who*
want to go home can do so." At the same time, he wrote to the Brothers of Bourg Argental and St Sauveur, and asked them to come to him at Easter, some ten days away. When they came, he met them a number of times in his room, showed them the way that God's plans for the growing congregation seemed to be shown in this event, and told them that his own opinion was that they should receive the postulants who seemed to have been sent by Providence. The Brothers were in entire agreement, and it was decided that the eight postulants should be accepted, together with the one who had brought them, but that they should be given tests to be sure of their vocations. (op.cit.p.101)

So from the beginning, Champagnat worked towards having his community organized in a spirit of autonomy and of responsibility accepted by all. This is what we are looking for in our educational teams and communities.

Later on, even when the congregation became more numerous in its schools, he always acted with this "management" orientated idea, to use the modern term. He went even further; his chief concern was always to train directors whom he saw as true leaders in both the spiritual and the educational fields.

*During the two months' holidays, he often talked to the directors on the way the houses were to be governed, on the material administration and on the direction of the classes. In these talks, he gave great play to the qualities necessary for a good superior and the way to obtain them; to the obligations of a teacher and of a Brother Director, and to the way these duties should be carried out.* (op. cit. p.462)

He made no claim to be the sole possessor of the truth. He listened to what his Brothers had to say. We could say that he had an innate sense of communication:

*In his talks to them, the holy Founder left his Brothers completely free to put forward their difficulties and their doubts, and whatever was causing them trouble in the details of their work. The Brothers took full advantage of this freedom, and each one made his observations, put forward what he thought on a whole pile of questions of administration, or of the running of their houses, or asked him to point out what was in line with the Rule or with the spirit of the congregation in such and such circumstances, or how to act in all the situations in which a Br Director has to give a ruling. He often took in the senior Brothers as a kind of council, and did practically nothing without getting their opinion. He wanted to initiate*
the Brothers into the business of the Institute and to consult them on the rules he was drawing up and on the methods of teaching he wanted to adopt. This was a sure way of training their thinking, of putting their ideas right, of developing their judgment, so that they could deal with things later intelligently and successfully. Sometimes, after discussing the pros and cons of some measure in council, he confided the business to a Brother and left it to him to carry it out successfully. But once the work was completed, the Brother had to give an account of how he had done it. The Founder then praised and approved what had been well done; pointed out how it could have been done to avoid some difficulty, overcome some obstacle, win over someone who disagreed, or simply said that if it had been done differently, it would have been done better. (op.cit.p.463)

Is there any need for me to point out that what we have here is all the ingredients of good management on the part of a school management committee: consultation, discussion, putting forward of various points of view, delegation...not to mention report on what has been done and evaluation in view of better work in the future? This includes a constant interaction of theory and practice.

More than a century later, in a cultural context quite different, we can find here a practical model which can serve us well in the orientation and functioning of our modern educational communities.

And now the third aspect, which will reinforce this way of looking at Champagnat's thinking.

- 2.3 - Pedagogy of creativity and project

In my view, Champagnat is essentially a man of creativity and of project. All through his life, his creativity led to a project, and the project in turn blossomed into more creativity, in a positive interaction which dynamized both his spiritual life and his educational work.

His creativity is already evident in his early life, when, before he found out that God was calling him to the priesthood, he was already preparing for his life as a farmer. His father gave him some young sheep, and with them he began his own sheep-rearing and started his first commercial venture, his first project.

God brought him to use this aptitude for initiative in his priestly ministry. At the Major Seminary, with a small group of future priests like
himself, he got the idea of a “Society of Mary” to bring the Good News to the people in the country areas. To this group initiative, he brought his own personal inventiveness. If the young country people were to be able to find out “how much God loves them”, they need education, and in particular, they must learn to read and write. For Marcellin, the future Society of Mary had to have a branch of teaching Brothers alongside the Fathers, Sisters and lay people envisaged by the others. And the others told him: “All right - you look after the Brothers!”

He accepted the challenge and immediately his creativity got to work. Only months after the start of his ministry at Lavalla, the spiritual poverty of a dying boy demonstrated to him the urgent need to begin the foundation of the Institute of teaching Brothers, and on 2nd January 1817, he brought together his first two disciples.

From that moment on, his projects followed one another more and more rapidly as the needs were seen, and his creativity developed to such a degree that some confreres and friends could not follow it, and thought him mad.

This area is so vast that it would take too long to cover it adequately, so I will give only the main points of his work in the field of education.

He was only a junior curate in a small, poor country parish. He had no money. His followers were too many for the small house he bought for them a couple of hundred metres from the church in Lavalla. There were too many of them, and they had no resources either, either in money or in kind. However, the needs were pressing and more and more demands were being made on the Brothers to open small country schools, demands which they could not meet. There was only one solution: to build a noviciate house big enough and well enough planned to be used as a Training School for the Brothers who would teach in the country schools.

With money he borrowed from fellow priests, he bought up some property on the banks of the river Gier. No flat meadows to build houses on, just woods and above all, steep rocks and cliffs. Along the river bank a few buildings more or less abandoned which had been used by local cloth workers and metal workers. No matter - the project had been conceived in the heart and in the head of Marcellin Champagnat, not without long praying over it and, as we have seen, asking the opinion of the Brothers, whom he consulted on all important occasions.

Once the project was thought up and put into effect, it led to a new burst of creativity. The young Brothers were divided up into teams of
builders' labourers. Professionals helped him with the plans and the overseeing of the work. They lived in an old building, heard Mass in the wood, the bell for calling them to their duties was hung from the branch of a tree. The lack of all sorts of things only made Champagnat and his young Brothers more inventive, more creative. The rocks were broken down, the walls rose, and soon the project came to fruition in a fine big building rising almost like a miracle in a place which a few months before had been seen as wild and inhospitable.

The Hermitage was the result of Champagnat's essentially inventive and creative nature, nourished by the grace of God, which came to him through the intercession of Mary, his Ordinary Resource. No rock, no obstacle, either human or material, ever put him off. The rest of his life was to be a series of projects his creativity would bring about. Other buildings of other Hermitages were to spring up in the spiritual and educational fields, and again he had rocks to break: jealousy, petty-minded opposition, all that mean human nature could bring against him.

The growth and development of his young congregation brought his creativity into play in a thousand ways, in a thousand circumstances. His priestly confreres did not always understand him, and he had to be his own advocate with the parish priest of St Chamond, with the Archbishop of Lyons, and even with Fr Colin, Superior General of the Society of Mary, a man who, more mystic than practical, did not always see the practical side of the educational apostolate Champagnat had in view for the Brothers' branch of the Society.

Against all this narrow-minded lack of comprehension, Champagnat multiplied his meetings, his contacts, his proposals. In the end, his foundation not only grew itself, but drew to itself two other similar foundations, the Brothers of St Paul Trois Châteaux in the Drôme, and of Viviers in the Ardèche.

These two amalgamations were also, in their own way, a victory for his enterprising spirit which had been hindered by the French government of the period, particularly under the reigns of Charles X and of Louis Philippe, as we saw briefly above.

Like many young men of the time, the young Brothers were threatened with conscription, to do military service for a minimum of six years. This long time in the army brought the risk of loss of vocation. So to avoid it, steps had to be taken to get legal recognition for the Congregation, and for
that, Champagnat had to become a political negotiator. As we have seen, he made frequent trips to Paris, to meet the Minister of Public Education, M. Salvandy, or his officials. He had to make up files, dossiers, lists of statistics, reports. He was helped by a number of friends in political circles. But to no avail. He did not get the required recognition, but he avoided the difficulty by the amalgamation mentioned above, since these two Congregations had already been recognized by Louis Philippe's predecessor, Charles X.

You will say that these last two examples have nothing to do with educational theory. Agreed, and I will go on to mention two aspects more directly concerned with our subject.

The first I will call by the modern term, SANDWICH COURSES in teaching during the holidays. Br Avit tells us in his Annals:

At the time when the Brothers came to the Hermitage, the summer holidays were, as they had been before, two months long. Fr Champagnat used this time to teach the Brothers what they needed to know for their primary school work, how they should develop the best ways of keeping discipline in their classes. He used the time particularly to train the Brothers in the virtues of their state of life, and to study the Rule with them, the Rule he had given to the congregation. To start them off on teaching, he made the more capable give sample lessons, something he also did himself. He made them show the others the ten pages of writing they had to complete during the year, and samples of their end of the year work; in this way, he got some measure of their progress. He also set up committees, in which he took part, to examine the work of the young Brothers and the postulants. (Marist Brothers Archives, Rome)

Br Jean Baptiste Furet, the official historian of the early years, gives other interesting details:

To inspire the Brothers with a love of study and to urge them on, during the holidays he made them make up sample lessons; this continued for a long time, so long as there were not too many of them. He made them undergo a public examination on all points of teaching, noting down the marks each one was awarded, so that the progress of each Brother could be monitored. To make sure that they were all well trained in the various methods of writing, all those who worked in the 1st and 2nd classes were obliged to make their own model pages, and not to use printed models. He made a rule that every year, each Brother should bring to the retreat,
ten pages of model writing done by himself; all this was to arouse emulation as well as to see what progress was being made. In order to give the Directors a love of work, order and carefulness and to train them in the administration of their finances and material goods, not only did he himself go over their account books, but he set up a kind of competition for the correct keeping of these books. A committee was set up of senior Brothers, whose job it was to examine these books under three headings: correctness in writing up, exactness of the details required by the Rule and the customs of the Institute, and good, clear handwriting. The committee drew up a list in order of merit and brought it to Fr Champagnat. In spite of all that, some Brothers were somewhat negligent during the year, or left their preparation for the exams till the last months. So he established quarterly meetings, whose agenda was set out in a circular letter, and each Brother not only had to prepare the topics, but do a written exposé on them. For the most part, he presided over these meetings himself, a task which often called for long and difficult journeys, but he did not count the cost when there was a question of passing on to the Brothers his own love of work and of preparing them well for their work. (op.cit.pp. 432-433)

The second and last aspect of his creativity in the field of education that I want to draw attention to is the question of the reading method; the adoption of this method, and the decisions about the dress of the Brothers at the same time, brought about the great crisis of 1829, a crisis which could have been fatal for the young congregation.

Again we quote from Br Jean Baptiste Furet:

The changes in dress were followed by changes in teaching method. Until then, in their teaching of reading, the Brothers had followed the system in vogue at the time, that is, spelling out the words, and using the old names for the consonants. Fr Champagnat was convinced that this method led to difficulty in teaching reading, and laid down the new names for the consonants, and forbade the spelling system. Brothers who were not used to this new system were strongly against this innovation.

After explaining the obvious advantages of the new system and shown them the disadvantages of the old, Fr Champagnat proposed that they should try the new one, saying: “Give it a serious try for a year, and during the next holidays we will have learned from experience whether it is preferable to the old, and we will make up our minds definitely on the question.”
During the next year, he consulted a fair number of experts on the question. After serious consideration, they all advised him to adopt the new system as more rational and better suited to help the children to progress. The Brothers who were not keen to try the new method, had not really used it properly, and were not satisfied with the results. So, at the next holidays, they all voted against its adoption. The Father called them all to a meeting, and they all put their objections with as much force as if they had given it a fair trial. Fr Champagnat listened to their objections, then gave the advantages the new method had over the old, and concluded that they would use the new. “But, Father,” said one of them, “almost all the Brothers find fault with this method. How can we take it as superior to the old? How can we adopt a system which is condemned by the majority?” Fr Champagnat replied, “My dear Brother, there are times when you don’t count the votes, you weigh them! You are all headmasters, and don’t have to teach in the lowest classes. In any case, you were against this from the start; you have not tried out the new system, nor studied it seriously. The small number of Brothers who have tried it out are pleased with it, and don’t see any of the disadvantages that you point out. On the contrary, they see that it is much better than the old system and leads to quicker progress with the pupils. Experts whom I have consulted and people with experience have all given me the same advice: that we would do well to adopt it, even against the wishes of a majority which is prejudiced and which has made its judgment without full knowledge of the case.” (op.cit. pp.167-168)

This example leads me to a general conclusion. On the matter of reading as on many other points which I have not touched on, Fr Champagnat would have undertaken nothing, and would have achieved nothing, if he had not been a man of God and a man devoted to education of the young. He would not have been the Founder that we know. Today we would not speak of him, nor of his work. Certainly he was a man of deep faith and God gave him strength, but he must, together with his Brothers, have reflected much, worked much, suffered much. All for THE GOOD OF SOCIETY, and, above all, that the young be GOOD CHRISTIANS AND GOOD CITIZENS.

Our aim in the field of education is the same. We want society to be a place where men can live together, and that is the reason we want to form good Christians and good citizens.

To that end, we want to follow in the footsteps of Champagnat in his work in education. Happily for us, he has not laid down strict rules of
method, nor a system well marked with signposts. Following him, we can use our own creativity, our own initiative, our own dynamism. Like him, working as a team, an educational community, supported by Mary, our Ordinary Resource, we can go forward, we can form projects and set them going with courage and boldness. What a great journey, what a beautiful perspective, is open to us if we but want it!

Br Maurice Bergeret
Delegate to the Educational Mission.
SERMON ON HELL

Introduction

Our archives contain four texts written by M. Champagnat with titles supplied by their author himself: Talks on Hell. These documents are numbered: 134.02; - 03; -04; - 05. In fact they are all different copies of a same text with more or less important variations in an identical structure and background.

Going by their general appearance, they can be grouped in twos: 02 and 04 are more alike because of their severe and harsh character, while in 03 and 05 more mercy shows through, more pastoral concern, if only because each point ends with a positive exhortation.

In order not to have four repetitions of the same text, we shall print the whole text of only two, but we shall add the variations on the corresponding text so that they can be seen quite clearly. In spite of that, three quarters of the words and ideas are repeated. It does not seem possible to spare you this repetition if you want to recognise at the same time both the resemblance of the one text to the other and their differences. In fact, it is in the way the author uses the same material in different ways that he betrays something of his personality.

These texts have a fair amount of spelling mistakes, which should not surprise us, since they were meant only to be spoken. Besides, since these mistakes do not occur in the same words in the four texts, we shall not take them into account in this transcription which will respect all the rules of current (French) orthography. We shall make an exception, however, for the form of the imperfect of verbs, which are invariably written as “oi” instead of “ai”, and of words ending in “ent” where the “t” was dropped in those days.

To simplify things there will not be a critical analysis. Therefore, words which have been crossed out will not be indicated, but if the author crosses out a whole sentence, or paragraph, even a page, these texts will be printed in brackets. Words which are missing for one reason or another will be restored and put in brackets [ ]. Other points which come up will be indicated in the introductions to each text.
2.6

SERMON ON HELL

From manuscripts in the Annales des Frères Maristes:
- 134.05 on 9 sheets (18 pages), format 18.5 X 14, greenish colour. The first two pages are blank, as are the last four.
- 134.03 on 12 sheets, format 18.5 X 14, greenish colour. The text is on 17 pages. It is followed by another text of 3 pages which treat of gratitude towards God. The basic text which we print here is 134.05. It is the shortest of the four talks. The only part proper to this text with regard to the others is the third point. This last, N-3, on the other hand, has some passages and some additions which are transcribed in an indent. An asterisk * indicates the place in the text where the additions begin and so the place where the texts diverge. Consequently, while avoiding repetitions, you will easily be able to reconstitute these two texts.

Concerning the additions, you may wonder if one or the other does not belong to the first text. Since the leaves of the two manuscripts are separate and identical in form, and since they are not numbered they could easily have been mixed up. What gives rise to this question is the way text N-5 ends on a question mark, which does not seem to be a pure form of oratory, and among the additions of N-3 you can find some which would normally be the continuation of the interrupted texts. But, failing more precise indications, the texts printed here are just as they are found in the archives.

To facilitate the reading, the Roman numbers will indicate the different points of the talk.
Discours sur l’enfer

Discedite a me maledicti in ignem aeternum en St Matth. 25
Retirez-vous maudits, allez au feu éternel.

Cette sentence de réprobation mettra le comble au désespoir du malheureux pécheur. J.Ch. d’une seule parole renversa les soldats qui venoient le saisir au jardin des olives. Ah! si la majesté de l’homme Dieu fut si terrible dans un temps où il paroissoit comme Sauveur, que sera-ce, mes f. lorsqu’il paroîtra et parlera en juge irrité et tout-puissant et qu’il prononcera d’une voix plus effrayante que les tonnerres les redoutables paroles: Discedite a me maledicti – retirez-vous de moi, je ne vous connois plus, in ignem aeternum – retirez vous dans le feu éternel.

Quelle triste situation, mes frères, de se voir pour toujours séparé de Dieu pour être précipité dans un gouffre embrasé. Il faudroit connoître Dieu comme nous le connoîtrons après notre mort pour comprendre combien sera grand le supplice de la séparation du pécheur d’avec son Dieu.

Mais comme l’espérance fut toujours la consolation du malheureux, si ce supplice n’étoit pas éternel, le pécheur pourroit dire, à la vérité; Je souffre de grands maux, mais ces maux finiront un jour. Non pécheur il n’en sera pas ainsi. Cette consolation te sera enlevée, car en même temps que tu éprouveras toute la violence des tourments, tu sauras que ces mêmes tourments doivent durer éternellement.

Enfin pour ne pas vous retenir trop longtemps, je vais me borner à vous développer dans une simple exposition, cette sentence que Dieu prononcera au jour de ses vengeances: Discedite a me maledicti – retirez-vous de moi, maudits – premier tourment que souffrira le pécheur; in ignem – allez brûler dans un feu allumé pour les méchants – second tourment; in ignem aeternum – dans un feu qui brûlera toute l’éternité – troisième tourment.

Daignez m’honorer de votre favorable attention.

I

Menacer le pécheur d’être séparé de Dieu, cela paraît étrange, car est-ce pour lui un supplice? Ici bas il fait son possible pour s’en éloigner et tout ce qui peut l’en distraire est à son goût. Pécheurs aveugles, voilà votre crime, voici votre supplice!
[1] Sermon on Hell

"Discedite a me maledicti in ignem aeternum. in St Matth. 25. Away from me, you that are under God’s curse! Away to the eternal fire."

[2] This sentence of reprobation will be the crowning despair of the wretched sinner. With one word Jesus Christ caused the soldiers to fall back when they came to seize him in the Garden of Olives. Ah! if the majesty of the God-Man was so terrible at a time when he was appearing as a Saviour, what will it be like, my dear brethren, when he appears and speaks as an angry and all-powerful judge and pronounces in a voice more frightening than thunderclaps these dread words: "Discedite a me maledicti – "Away from me, I no longer know you, in ignem aeternum, – to the eternal fire."

[3] What a sad plight, brethren, to see yourself forever separated from God and cast down into a flaming abyss. You would need to know God as we shall know him after our death to understand how great will be the torment of the sinner who is separated from his God.

[4] But since hope has always been the consolation of the wretched, if this suffering were not eternal, the sinner could truly say: “I am experiencing great sufferings, but one day they will come to an end.” No, sinner, it will not be like that. This consolation will be taken away from you, for at the same time as you are experiencing all the violence of your sufferings you will know that those sufferings will last for ever.

[5] Finally, in order not to keep you too long, I shall limit myself to developing in a few words the meaning of that sentence which God will pronounce on the day of his vengeance: “Discedite a me maledicti- Away from me, you that are under God’s curse” – the first torment the sinner will suffer; “in ignem – go and burn in a fire that was made for the wretched” – second torment; “in ignem aeternum in a fire that will burn for all eternity” – third torment.

Please honour me with your kind attention.

I

[6] Threatening the sinner with being separated from God, that seems strange, for is that a punishment for him? Here below he has done his utmost to distance himself from God and anything which can keep his mind off him is just what he wants.

Blind sinners, there is your crime, there is your punishment!
[7] Le tourment le plus terrible des damnés est sans doute la privation de Dieu. Nous ne pouvons, dans cette vie, comprendre la grandeur de ce tourment, cependant nous pouvons l'entrevoir en considérant, d'un côté, que Dieu est un bien infini, et de l'autre, que l'âme est faite pour le posséder. Car de même qu'un membre démis languit, souffre et est abattu, de même l'âme est comme démise, puisqu'elle est hors de son centre, souffre, mais des tourments d'une autre nature et infiniment plus grands.

[8] Dans cette vie nous sommes comme dans un sommeil où notre esprit est continuellement occupé de fantômes. Le vrai bien pour lequel nous sommes faits ne nous paroit que dans le lointain.

Il étoit nécessaire que la chose fût ainsi, sans cela il nous aurait été impossible de mériter, étant invinciblement entraînés vers ce bien infini. (Nous ne pourrions mériter si notre liberté nous étoit ravie.)

[9] Représentons-nous, mes f., une âme à l'instant de la mort. Tous les fantômes qui l'amusaient sont évanouis, le bandeau fatal est levé, la lumière incréée brille à ses yeux, Dieu se présente à elle dans toute sa beauté et [dans] tout ce qu'il a d'attrayant.

[10] Quel ravissement! Elle voit qu'elle n'est faite que pour lui, elle s'y sent invinciblement portée. Mais quel est son supplice! Plus elle s'efforce de s'unir à Dieu, plus elle rencontre d'obstacles ; elle n'entend d'autres paroles que cette foudroyante sentence du prophète Osée: "Vous n'êtes plus mon peuple et je ne suis plus votre Dieu, – quia vos non populus meus et ego non ero vester.

Oui, c'est en vain qu'elle s'efforce, un bras tout puissant la repousse sans cesse.

[11] Pécheur obstiné, lui dit l'auteur de son être, vois, examine ce que tu as perdu?

Regarde ce ciel et les plaisirs qu'y goûtent mes élus ; écoute les admirables concerts qui réjouissent toute la cour céleste. C'est ce que je t'aurois donné pour récompense de tes bonnes œuvres ; mais comme tu n'as fait que des œuvres de ténèbres, tu seras privé de ce bien. Je devois être ta récompense, mais puisque tu ne m'as pas voulu obéir, je ne serais point ton Dieu: Ego non ero vester. Non, Dieu ne sera jamais pour toi qu'un ennemi irréconciliable et un vengeur tout-puissant.
[7] There is no doubt that the most terrible suffering of the damned is being deprived of God. In this life we cannot understand the degree of this suffering, yet we can get a glimpse of it when we consider that, on the one hand, God is an infinite being, and on the other, that the soul is made to possess him. For just as a dislocated limb languishes, suffers and is depressed, in the same way the soul is, as it were, dislocated, since it is out of its proper place; it suffers, but its sufferings are of quite a different kind and infinitely greater.

[8] In this life we are, as it were, in a sleep, where our mind is constantly filled with phantoms. The real good for which we were made seems only like something far away.

It was necessary that things be like that, otherwise it would have been impossible for us to gain merit, being irresistibly dragged towards this infinite good. (We would not be able to gain merit if our freedom was taken from us.)

[9] Let us consider, brethren, a soul at the moment of death. All the phantoms which entertained it have vanished, the fatal blindfold has been removed, the uncreated light shines in its eyes, God shows himself to it in all his beauty and [in] all his attractiveness.

[10] What rapture! It sees that it was made only for him, and feels itself irresistibly drawn to him. But what punishment it receives! The more it strives to be united with God, the more obstacles it meets; the only word it hears is this crushing sentence of the prophet: "The people of Israel is not my people, and I am not their God. — quia vos non populus meus et ego non ero vester."

Yes, it strives in vain, an all-powerful hand keeps pushing it back.

[11] "Obstinate sinner," says the author of its being. "Look! Do you see what you have lost?

"Look at heaven and the pleasures that my elect enjoy there. That is what I would have given you as a reward for your good works; but since you have only performed works of darkness, you will be deprived of this reward. I was to be your reward, but since you did not wish to obey me I will not be your God: Ego non ero vester." No, God will never be for you anything but an irreconcilable enemy and an all-powerful avenger,
[12] Tourment incompréhensible! L’âme est sans cesse attirée par tout ce que Dieu a d’aimable et de parfait et repoussée par tout ce que la haine et l’indignation d’un Dieu ont de plus épouvantable.

[13] Non, comme nous l’avons dit, en cette vie nous ne comprenons pas ce que c’est que la perte de Dieu, mais le réprouvé le comprend et ressent si cruellement la perte qu’il a faite que si, au milieu de ces brasiers, il pouvait espérer de voir son Dieu, de le posséder une heure après chaque mille ans, il serait content et souffrirait ses tourments avec consolation.

[14] A quoi pensez vous lorsque vous perdez Dieu en perdant sa grâce par le péché mortel?

Pensez vous que cette nouvelle ingratitude sera peut-être cause que Dieu portera contre vous la terrible sentence de réprobation que vous avez peut-être méritée tant de fois.

[15] Et vous, âmes tièdes, que faites-vous lorsque par tant de fautes légères que vous traitez de bagatelles, vous vous exposez à tomber dans le péché mortel et à perdre Dieu?

[16] Les damnés pleurent cette perte et vous y êtes insensibles. Les damnés voudroient retourner à Dieu mais ils ne le peuvent plus. Vous en avez le temps, vous le pouvez; cependant vous ne le voulez pas, vous avez donc le coeur plus dur qu’un réprouvé. Cherchez Dieu dans le temps que vous pouvez le trouver, retournez à lui, à présent qu’il vous en presse et qu’il m’envoie pour vous en prier. Dans l’éternité vous ne le pourrez plus.

[17] Au rapport des st. P., la privation de Dieu est le plus grand des supplices qu’éprouvent les damnés. Néanmoins il en est un autre qui n’est pas moins épouvantable, c’est la peine du feu, sujet de mon second point.

II

[18] En mille endroits les divines écritures font mention d’un feu qui dévorera les malheureux réprouvés. Les ss. PP., les théologiens disent quelles parlent d’un feu réel et miraculeux qui renferme tout supplice.

[19] Nous ne connoissons point sur la terre d’agent plus terrible que le
[12] Suffering beyond our comprehension! The soul is ceaselessly drawn by all that is lovable and perfect in God and repelled by all that is most frightening in the hatred and indignation of a God.

[13] No, as we have said, we do not understand in this life what the loss of God means, but the reprobate understands and resents so bitterly the loss he has sustained that if, in the midst of this inferno he could hope to see his God and possess him for one hour after every thousand years, he would be content and would be consoled in his suffering.

[14] What are you thinking about when you lose God by losing grace through mortal sin?

(1)
Are you thinking that this new act of ingratitude will perhaps be a reason for God to inflict on you that terrible sentence of reprobation that you have perhaps deserved so many times?

[15] And you, lukewarm souls, what are you doing when, by committing so many venial sins that you treat as mere nothings, you expose yourself to the risk of falling into mortal sin and losing God?

[16] The damned weep over this loss and you are indifferent to it. The damned would like to return to God but they are no longer able. You have the time, you can do so; and yet, you do not want to, so your heart is harder than that of a reprobate. Seek for God while he may be found, return to him now that he is urging you to and is sending me here to beg you. In eternity you will no longer be able.

[17] The Fathers of the Church tell us that the loss of God is the greatest suffering that the damned experience. Nevertheless, there is another which is no less frightening, the pain of fire, which is the subject of my second point.

II

[18] In a thousand places Holy Scripture mentions a fire which will devour the wretched reprobate. The Fathers of the Church and theologians say they are speaking of a real and miraculous fire which contains all torments.

[19] We know of no agent on earth more terrible than fire and it would
feu et ce seroit le tourment le plus épouvantable si on pouvait le souffrir longtemps dans toute sa violence. Mais quelques instants de ce supplice suffisent pour faire expirer celui qui le souffre.

105 [20] Supposons un criminel condamné à être brûlé tout vif. Le voilà placé sur un bûcher entouré d’un bois très sec et très combustible. A peine le feu est-il allumé que la flamme s’élève et l’enveloppe de toutes parts.

[21] Qui pourra se faire une idée de ce qu’a de violent et d’insupportable cette première atteinte. Mais elle ne peut durer, le sentiment s’émoussait d’abord et, après quelques moments de douleurs, le patient expire.

[22] Supposons encore que Dieu fasse un miracle pour conserver la vie à ce criminel au milieu du feu et qu’il souffre pendant un jour tout ce qu’il a éprouvé au premier abord.

[23] Cette pensée, mes frères, ne vous remplit-elle pas d’effroi? Cependant allons plus loin, portons nos regards dans ces fournaises où l’on fait fondre le verre ou le fer. Si quelqu’un y’était jeté, à peine aurait-il le temps de pousser un cri qu’il serait mort.

[24] Ce n’est donc plus sur un bûcher qu’il faut placer notre criminel, c’est dans une fournaise capable de fondre une masse énorme de fer ; que la force épouvantable agisse toute sur lui et qu’il soit forcé d’y vivre comme le poisson dans l’eau.

[25] Malgré l’épouvante qui nous saisit, approfondissons cette pensée et faisons-nous, si nous le pouvons, une juste idée de ce que souffre ce malheureux. Quand nous en serons venus là, nous n’aurons encore rien compris de ce que souffre un damné.

[26] Feu miraculeux ; il n’y a point de proportion entre le feu de l’enfer et celui des fournaises embrasées dont nous venons de parler. Les feux d’ici-bas ne sont qu’une ombre, celui de l’enfer fait souffrir tous les tourments.

130 [27] Il fait également souffrir l’âme dans toutes ses puissances et le corps dans tous ses sens. Il n’y a point de supplice qu’un réprouvé n’endure: omnis dolor irruet super eum.. Job 20. Jamais les hommes n’ont rien inventé de pareil quelque cruels qu’ils aient été. Ici c’est un Dieu qui punit en Dieu et qui dans sa fureur emploie toute sa puissance: Ignis succensus in furore meo.. Deut 34.
be the most frightening one if we were to suffer its full violence for a long time. But a few moments of this torture are enough to cause the death of the sufferer.

[20] Consider a criminal condemned to be burned alive. He is tied to the stake and surrounded with very dry wood that will burn easily. The fire is no sooner lit than flames rise up and envelop him on every side.

[21] Who can imagine how violent and unbearable the onset must be? But it cannot last. The feelings are dulled, first of all and after a few moments of suffering the patient dies.

[22] Now let us suppose that God performs a miracle to save the life of this criminal in the midst of the fire, and that he suffers during one day all that he suffered in the first moments.

[23] Does this thought, Brothers, not fill you with fear? Yet, let us go further, let us look at these furnaces where they melt glass or iron. If anyone were thrown in there he would hardly have time to utter a cry before he would be dead.

[24] So it is no longer at the stake that we shall put our criminal but in a furnace that is capable of melting a huge amount of iron; let all its frightful power act on him and let him be forced to live there as a fish in water.

[25] In spite of the terror that grips us, let us go deeper into this thought and let us get a clear idea, if we can, of what this wretch is suffering. When we have reached this point we still shall have no idea of what a damned soul suffers.

[26] Miraculous fire! There is no comparison between the fire of hell and that of the fiery furnaces we have just been speaking of. Fires on this earth are only a shadow, that of hell makes one suffer all torments.

[27] It makes the soul suffer equally in all its powers and the body in all its senses. There is no pain that a reprobate does not suffer: “Omnis dolor irruet super eum” (Job 20). However cruel they may have been, men have never invented anything like it. Here it is a God who punishes as God and who in his fury uses his full power: “Ignis succensus in furore meo” (Deut 34).
L'esprit humain ne peut rien imaginer de plus horrible que la situation d'un réprouvé.


[29] Les cris qu'arrache aux réprouvés la violence des tourments qu'ils endurent sont si perçants qu'ils seraient capables de faire fendre les rochers ; leurs douleurs si cuisantes et si vives qu'une heure de ces tourments est plus insupportable que vingt ans en ce monde de maladie la plus aiguë ; la puanteur de ces corps est si infecte qu'un seul serait capable d'infester l'univers.

[30] Tout ce qui se présente à eux les tourmente. Ils ne voient que du feu, ils n'avalent que du feu et ils ne respirent que du feu, ils ne touchent que des objets pénétrés de feu. Tout les remplit d'horreur et d'effroi. Ils ne voient que des figures hideuses, des monstres horribles, des démons cruels sous des formes épouvantables. Ils n'entendent que lamentations, hurlements, cris de rage, grincements de dents: Ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium. O grand Dieu, quelle malheureuse situation.

[31] Voilà l'écueil fatal où conduisent les délices de ce monde ; voilà, dis-je, où viennent échouer les funestes plaisirs du voluptueux et les projets que l'ambition seule a formés.

[32] Flatte aujourd'hui tant que tu voudras, misérable esclave de la volupté, ce corps qui doit éternellement sustenter les flammes dévorantes de l'enfer. Demain, oui demain, et peut-être avant demain, les démons se réjouiront de pouvoir le tourmenter avec les autres victimes de leur rage.

[33] Qui ne frémira à la vue de pareils supplices. Cependant tout ce qu'on en peut dire ne saurait enapprocher, car de même que la gloire du ciel est au-dessus de nos pensées, de même les tourments de l'enfer sontau-dessus de notre intelligence.

[34] Non l'intelligence humaine est bornée pour pouvoir se faire une idée de la justice du tout-puissant.
The human mind cannot imagine anything more horrible than the plight of a reprobate.

[28] Imagine bodies enveloped in flames, stinking, covered in leprosy, in corruption, plunged into an abyss of fire and burning sulphur, living bodies, torn apart, broken, heaped up one on top of the other, their smell, taste, sight, all their limbs, all their senses suffering each one the most violent torture, without mitigation, without respite: "Congregabo super eos mala..." (ibid).

[29] The cries that the violence of their torments forces out of the reprobates are so piercing that they would be able to split the rocks, their pain is so excruciating and so intense that one hour of these torments is more insupportable than 20 years of the most acute sickness in this world, the stench of these bodies is so foul that one alone would be enough to pollute the world.

[30] Everything that they come into contact with torments them. They see only fire, they touch only objects steeped in fire. Everything fills them with horror and fear. They see only hideous faces, horrible monsters, cruel demons with frightful shapes. They hear only lamentations, howls, cries of rage, gnashing of teeth: "Ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium" O, great God, what a wretched plight!

[31] That is the fatal reef whither all the pleasures of this world lead, there, I tell you, is where the fatal pleasures of the voluptuary and those projects inspired by ambition alone come to founder.

[32] Wretched slave of pleasure, gratify as much as you like this body which must feed for ever the devouring flames of hell. Tomorrow, yes, tomorrow, and perhaps before tomorrow, the demons will rejoice at being able to torment it along with the other victims of their rage.

[33] Who will not tremble at the sight of such suffering? Yet all we can say could not come near the reality, for just as the glory of heaven exceeds our imagination, so the torments of hell are above our intelligence.

[34] No, human intelligence is limited in its ability to form an idea of the justice of the Almighty.
La désolation de l'Égypte entière n'étoit, dit l'écriture, que le doigt de Dieu, mais s'agit-il de punir Lucifer et les réprouvés, toute sa puissance et toute la force de son bras est employée.*

[35] Vous craignez les disgrâces et les maux de cette vie qui ne durent qu'un moment, pourquoi ne prévenez-vous pas des maux qui ne finiront jamais? Vous auriez peine à souffrir la piqûre d'une épingle, comment souffrirez-vous l'activité du feu dévorant? Que votre aveuglement est déplorable! Vous n'avez point devant les yeux le terme où doivent vous conduire votre vanité et votre attache aux biens de la terre.

[36] L'homme sensé agit bien autrement. Il sait qu'on ne peut être heureux en ce monde et en l'autre, jouir des plaisirs de la terre et de ceux du paradis. C'est pourquoi il ne s'attache point à ce qui flatte les sens ici-bas, et pour gagner les futurs, il ne fait pas difficulté de sacrifier les présents.

[37] S'il a fait des fautes, il les pleure et en fait pénitence, pour ne pas les pleurer en enfer. Il dit comme disoit saint Paul: "Je châtie mon corps pour ne pas devenir un réprouvé." "Je me suis réduit comme un prisonnier dans un désert, disoit saint Jérôme, de peur de tomber dans l'enfer et de me perdre avec les mondains, *ob gehennae metum tali me carceri damnaverim.*

[38] C'est donc avec raison qu'un chartreux a dit que si la pénitence et les tribulations de cette vie sont la semence d'une joie et d'une gloire immortelle, les plaisirs du temps, l'attache aux biens de la terre sont aussi une semence de douleurs et de regrets qui poussent leur germe dans l'éternité, *Temporalia gaudia, futurorum sunt semina dolorum.*

[39] Regrets désespérants qui, comme un ver rongeur, déchirent sans relâche le coeur du réprouvé. Je pouvais, dit-il, gagner le ciel, j'en ai eu le temps et les moyens, mais j'en ai abusé. De quoi me servent maintenant tous les plaisirs et tout ce que j'ai possédé sur la terre, *Quid profuit mihi?*

[40] Oh! chrétiens, si les réprouvés qui souffrent présentement toute la violence des tourments avoient le temps que vous perdez en mille occasions, ah! qu'ils en profiteroient bien. Non, ils ne feroient point comme vous qui marchez en aveugles vers une éternité de supplice.
The desolation of the whole of Egypt was only the finger of God, says Scripture, but when it comes to punishing Lucifer and the reprobate all the power and all the might of his arm are used.

[35] You are afraid of disfavour and the ills of this life which last but a moment, why do you not take preventive action against ills which will never end? You can hardly endure the pain of a pinprick, how will you endure the action of a devouring fire? How your blindness is to be deplored! You do not keep before your eyes your journey’s end, and where your vanity and attachment to this world’s goods must lead you.

[36] The man of good sense acts quite differently. He knows we cannot be happy both in this world and in the next, enjoy earth’s pleasures and those of paradise. That is why he does not become attached to the things that gratify the senses here below, and in order to win future pleasures, he has no difficulty in sacrificing those of the present.

[37] If he has committed some faults, he weeps for them and does penance for them. He says, as St Paul said: “I harden my body with blows ... to keep myself from being disqualified” (1 Cor 9,27). “I have become like a prisoner in a desert,” said St Jerome, “for fear of falling into hell and becoming lost with worldly people. ob gehennae metum tali me carceri damnaverim.”

[38] So a Carthusian monk was right when he said that if the penance and tribulations of this life are the seed of immortal joy and glory, the pleasures of time and attachment to the things of earth are also the seed of the sorrows and regrets which sprout in eternity. “Temporalia gaudia, futurorum sunt semina dolorum.”

[39] Despairing regrets, tearing the heart of the reprobate like a gnawing worm! He says: “I was able to win heaven, I had the time and all I needed, but I misused them. What use to me now are all those pleasures and all I possessed on earth? Quid profuit mihi?”

[40] Oh, Christians, if the reprobate had the time that you are repeatedly wasting, how well would they make use of it! No, they would not do like you, who are walking like blind men towards an eternity of torment.
[41] On ne verrait pas, dis-je, parmi eux ces rendez-vous, ces entre-
tiens inutiles où la réputation des uns et des autres est impitoyable-
ment déchirée.

Ah! qu'ils seroient contents, s'ils pouvoient par la pénitence la
plus austère de trois ou quatre mille ans, s'arracher aux flammes
dévorantes!

S'il leur étoit permis de revenir en ce monde, quels exemples
ne nous donneroient-ils pas? Y aurait-il une vie assez rigoureuse
pour eux? Avec quelle gaieté de coeur rempliroient-ils notre divine
loi! Rien, rien ne seroit capable de la leur faire violer.

[42] Misérables que nous sommes, nous avons peut-être mille fois
mérité d'être précipités dans les cachots infects de l'enfer et nous ne
pensons point à faire pénitence!

[43] Enfin, M. f., pour éviter tous les malheurs qu'encourt le pécheur
obstiné, commençons dès aujourd'hui à changer de vie. Mettons ordre à
notre conscience et, à l'exemple du grand apôtre des Gentils, déclarons
la guerre à notre ennemi capital qui est notre corps, réduisons-le en
servitude, car, disoit ce grand apôtre: "Je châtie mon corps pour ne pas
devenir un reprouvé." "Je me suis réduit dans un désert comme un
prisonnier, disoit saint Jérôme, de peur de tomber dans l'enfer et de me
perdre avec les mondains."

[44] Quelque pénible que soit la privation de Dieu, quelqu'in-
supportable que soit le tourment du feu, tout cela nous semble peu de
chose en comparaison de l'éternité.

Il me reste encore à vous faire envisager les peines de l'enfer sous un
autre point de vue, c'est la durée de ces mêmes peines, troisième et
dernier point.

III

[45] Le réprouvé est tourmenté en toutes les manières, cependant le plus
désespérant de ses tourmens est de voir que tout ce qu'il souffre il le
 souffrira toute l'éternité: Vermis eorum non moritur et ignis non
extinguitur - le ver qui les ronge ne meurt point et le feu qui les dévore
ne s'éteint point. L'apôtre St. Jean dit encore dans l'Apoc[alypse].:"La
fumée de leurs tourments s'élèvera dans les siècles des siècles."

[46] Oh, vous venez de l'entendre, cent années de souffrance passeront,
mille passeront et l'enfer ne fera que commencer. Il se passera cent mille
[41] You would not see them, I tell you, engaging in these secret meetings and useless conversations where reputations are mercilessly torn to pieces.

Ah! how happy they would be if, by doing penance over three or four thousand years, they could free themselves from the devouring flames!

If they were allowed to come back to this world, what example would they not give us! Would there be any life that was sufficiently rigorous for them? With what cheerfulness would they obey our divine law! Nothing, nothing would make them break it.

[42] Wretches that we are, we have perhaps deserved a thousand times to be cast into the foul dungeons of hell, and we do not think of doing penance!

[43] Finally, brethren, to avoid all these evils incurred by the obstinate sinner, let us start from today to change our lives. Let us put order into out conscience and, following the example of the apostle of the Gentiles, let us declare war on our capital enemy, our body. Let us reduce it to slavery: “I harden my body with blows and bring it under complete control, to keep myself from being disqualified.” “I have become like a prisoner in a desert,” says St Jerome, “for fear of falling into hell and being lost with worldly people.”

[44] However painful it may be to be separated from God, however unbearable the torment of fire, all that seems nothing when you consider eternity.

I must still show you the pains of hell from another point of view, the duration of these pains, in my third and last point.

III

[45] The reprobate is tormented in every way, but the torment which causes most despair is that he will suffer all this for eternity: *Vermis corum non moritur et ignis non extinguitur* – the worms that eat them never die and the fire that burns them is never put out. Again, the apostle St John says in the Apocalypse: “The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up for ever and ever.”

[46] Oh! You have just heard it; a hundred years of suffering will pass, a thousand will pass, and hell will just be beginning. A thousand
et mille millions d’années et de siècles et l’enfer sera à commencer de nouveau.

[47] Si Dieu faisoit connoître à un damné qu’il veut le délivrer de l’enfer quand il se sera écoulé autant de millions de siècles qu’il y a de gouttes d’eau dans la mer, de grains de sable sur les rivages, cette nouvelle lui causeroit infiniment plus de joie que ne vous en pourroit causer la nouvelle la plus avantageuse. Cela est très vrai, car le damné pourroit dire à la vérité: J’aurai bien longtemps à souffrir, mais enfin mes souffrances finiront un jour.

Mais il n’en sera pas ainsi, car réellement autant de siècles s’écouleront et l’éternité restera encore toute entière: Vermis eorum non moritur et ignis non extinguitur.

[48] Réfléchissez-là-dessus, mes frères, mais réfléchissez y mûrement et si, pour la plupart, vous ne changez de vie, l’enfer après votre dernier moment sera votre partage. Mais non, mes chers frères, qu’il n’en soit pas ainsi. Écoutons plutôt ce que nous dit l’enfer: Dedit abyssus vocem suam... Habac. Mais quelles leçons veut-il nous donner?

*[49] (1) – Non, M.f., ni le tranchant des épées, ni les roues, ni les verges, ni les ongles de fer, instrument avec lequel on enlevait par violence la peau des martyrs, ni les chevalets, ni les foies (2) les plus cruels, parce que tout cela n’étioit que d’invention humaine, mais ici...

[50] (2) – Les horreurs des guerres, les pestes, les famines, les grêles, les déluges, les tremblements de terre qui écroulent et engloutissent des villes, des provinces entières, tout cela n’est, dit l’écriture, que le doigt de Dieu.

[51] On ne peut éviter l’enfer si on ne fait une bonne mort ; on ne peut faire une bonne mort, si l’on ne mène pas une [bonne] vie, car la bonne mort est le fruit d’une bonne vie. A quoi pouvez-vous donc vous attendre, vous qui, au lieu de bonnes [œuvres], entassez crimes sur crimes? Mors peccatorum pessima, à une mort horrible aux yeux de Dieu.

[52] ( Qu’il me soit permis de tirer de ces mêmes flammes dévorantes le camarade, l’ami, l’associé, le compagnon de polissonnerie, de

(1) Partie encadrée dans le texte.
(2) Il faut sans doute lire “fouets”
million, a million million centuries will pass and hell will have to be begun again.

[47] If God gave a damned soul to understand that he would deliver him from hell when as many millions of centuries have passed as there are drops of water in the sea, or grains of sand on the shores, this news would cause him infinitely more joy than any other, however welcome. That is very true, for the damned soul could truthfully say: “I shall certainly have a long period of suffering, but one day it will finally end.”

But it will not be like that for, in fact, so many centuries will pass and eternity will still be undiminished: “Vermis eorum non moritur et ignis non extinguitur.”

[48] Think about it, brethren, but think seriously about it, and if, for most of you, you do not change your life, hell will be your lot after your last moment. But no, dear brethren. Let it not be so. Let us rather listen to what hell is saying to us: “Dedit abyssus vocem suam” (Habbakuk). But what lessons will it give us?

*[49] (1) – No, my dear brethren, neither the sword blades, nor wheels, nor rods, nor iron hooks which were used to strip the skin off the martyrs, nor the rack, nor the most cruel scourging, because all that was human invention, but here . . .

[50] The horrors of wars, plagues, famines, hailstorms, deluges, earthquakes which topple and engulf whole towns and provinces, all that, Scripture tells us, is only the finger of God.

[51] You cannot avoid hell if you do not die well, if you do not lead a [good] life, for a good death is the fruit of a good life. What, then, can you expect, you who, instead of good [works], heap crimes upon crimes? “Mors peccatorum pessima.” – A horrible death in God’s eyes.

[52] (May it be given to me to drag from these devouring flames the comrade, the friend, the associate, the companion of my obscenities,

(1) This part is framed in the text.
libertinage, de débauche, et, pour tout dire en un mot, d’impudicité d’un grand nombre de ceux qui m’écoute. Oui, qu’il me soit permis, ô mon Dieu, de tirer le contemporain de ce vieillard, de cet homme, de cette femme qui depuis longtemps croupit dans le vice.)

[53] Qu’il me soit permis, pour l’instruction d’un grand nombre de ceux qui m’écoute, de tirer de ces flammes l’ami, le compagnon de débauche de ce jeune libertin, le contemporain de ce vieillard impudique. Qu’il me soit permis, jeunes et vieux, esclaves du vice de l’impureté. Qu’il me soit permis, dis-je, de tirer du fond de l’enfer le complice de vos crimes.

[54] Le voilà au milieu de vous; approchez-vous les infâmes partisans du sale péché de l’impureté. Le voyez-vous, ce damné, voyez sa figure couverte de saletés dont il s’est souillé et dont vous l’avez souillé vous-mêmes. Voyez ses mains écorchées et toutes brûlantes, juste châtiment de ses actions mauvaises et sales attouchements. Voyez ses oreilles que vous-mêmes avez salies par vos paroles obscènes, ses yeux, ses narines, sa bouche qui lancent le feu, le soufre bouillant à gros tourbillons.

[55] Voyez ces serpents furieux qui le déchirent à l’envi. Voyez ce dragon infernal, excité par la juste fureur d’un Dieu qui prend à tâche de déchirer les membres qui ont participé aux crimes.

[56] Voyez aussi ce jeune enfant à qui il avait appris le mal qui, un fois (2) à la main, anime tous les monstres infernaux à le tourmenter… Mais écoutez aussi ses cris déchirants, car c’est contre vous, vous, misérable impudique, qu’il enrage. Viens malheureux, viens malheureuse, toi qui m’as précipité dans le malheur où je souffre d’incompréhensibles tourments.
my licentiousness, my debauchery, in a word, of the unchastity of a
great number of those who are listening to me. Yes, may it be given
to me to save the companion of that old man, of that man or woman
who have long been wallowing in vice.)

[53] May it be given to me, to serve as a warning for a large
number of my listeners, to withdraw from the flames the friend, the
companion in debauchery of that young libertine, the associate of
that unchaste old man. May it be given to me, young and old, slaves
of impurity, may it be given to me, I say, to drag from the depths of
hell your companion in crime.

[54] There he is in your midst; go up to him, you vile devotee of
the filthy sin of impurity. Do you see him, this reprobate, do you
see his face covered with the filth with which he defiled himself and
with which you yourself have defiled him? Do you see his hands, all
scorched and burning, a just punishment for his wicked actions and
obscene sins of touch. Look at his ears, which you yourselves have
defiled by your obscene words, his eyes, his nostrils, his mouth from
which fire shoots out, the sulphur boiling in great whirlpools.

[55] Look at those furious serpents tearing at him, the one trying
to outdo the other. Look at that hellish dragon, urged on by the
just wrath of a God who aims to tear the limbs which took part in
these crimes.

[56] Look, too, at that young child, to whom he taught evil ways,
and who, with a scourge in his hand is inciting all those infernal
monsters to torment him ... But listen, too, to his rending cries, for
he is venting his rage on you, you unchaste wretch. “Come, you
wretched man, you wretched woman, you who are responsible for
my misfortune here where I am enduring sufferings beyond all
comprehension.”
2.7

SERMON ON HELL

According to the manuscripts in the A.F.M.
- 134.04, on 6 sheets, format 24 X 18, greenish colour, very badly cut on two sides: bottom right. The text is written on ten pages, the last two being blank.
- 134.02, sheaf of 36 pages, format 19 X 12; the first two pages are blank, also the last.

We know already that in this second group of "Talks on Hell" we shall often find the same sentences as in the first group. The plan is exactly the same. However, what appeared to be the exordium in the preceding text, starting with "Think about it, brethren..." (line 259 in the French text), is further developed here, to the extent that it can be considered as a fourth point, although this is not announced at the beginning. Moreover, the additions here are longer and the invectives they contain are longer and harsher. Therefore their repetition is not superfluous if we wish to have an exact idea about the preacher.

As to the dating of these texts, we find some indications here, although they are not strong. The first text has a note at the foot of a page which bears the date "3rd August 1817". We may be allowed to think that there is a relation between this date and the text which might be a little previous to that. Can we not deduce from that the possibility that it is the first in this series, all the more so since it is the most rounded off, right to the final: "In the name of the Father etc."

In the second text the mention of the patronage of St Lawrence may open up a trail. Looking through records of churches round about St Chamond, and comparing M. Champagnat's letter to Mère St Joseph (L.25, August 1832) with Father Lagnet's remark on O.M.I. III, p. 776, which hints that M. Champagnat had joined his confrères in preaching missions, we could suppose that this was a "Sermon" preached during a mission at St Laurent d'Agy. Its style, in fact, would seem to correspond to what we already know about the way these missions were preached. If this hypothesis has any basis, have we not a right to think that this text...
Discours sur l'enfer

Discedite a me maledicti in ignem aeternum. En St. Mat. 25
Retirez vous de moi, maudits, allez au feu éternel.

Cette sentence de réprobation mettra le comble au désespoir du
malheureux pécheur. J.C. d'une seule parole renversa les soldats qui
venoient pour le saisir au jardin des olives. Ah! si la majesté de l'homme
Dieu fut si terrible dans un temps où il paroissit comme Sauveur, que
sera-ce, mes frères, quand il paroitra et parlera en juge irrité et tout-
puissant et qu'il prononcera d'une voix plus effrayante que les tonnerres
ces redoutables paroles: Discedite a me.

Quelle terrible situation, M. f. de se voir pour toujours séparé de
Dieu pour être précipité dans un gouffre embrasé. Il faudroit connaître
Dieu comme nous le connaîtrons après notre mort pour comprendre
combien sera grand le supplice de la séparation du pécheur d'avec Dieu.
L'espérance fait toujours la consolation du malheureux, mais après la
mort tout espoir est ravi au pécheur.

Enfin tout mon dessein est de
me borner à vous développer dans
une simple exposition les paroles
de mon texte: séparation de Dieu;
peine du feu ;
éternité ; voilà tout.
Daignez m'honorer de votre favo-
rable attention.

Je viens, mes f., dans une
exposition courte et simple vous
développer les paroles de mon
texte séparation de Dieu
peine du feu ;
éternité.
Veuillez m'écouter un moment,
je ne serai pas long.
Esprit St. éclairez-moi de vos
lumières ;
Vierge Ste. votre intercession ;
et vous, m.f., votre attention.
would be the last of this type written by the Founder? As we can see, it is the longest and most complete, as far as ideas go. These two texts are printed here as they are. The first (0.4) must be read in the lines to the left (the left column); the second in the indented lines (the right column). In the body of the text, the passages between asterisks (*) belong to the (04) text and are not printed in text (02). As to the additions, it is clearly indicated to which text they correspond.

[1] Sermon on Hell

"Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum" in Matt 25. “Away from me, you that are under God’s curse! Away to the eternal fire.”

[2] This sentence of reprobation will be the crowning despair of the wretched sinner. With one word Jesus Christ caused the soldiers to fall back when they came to seize him in the Garden of Olives. Ah! If the majesty of the God-Man was so terrible at a time when he was appearing as a Saviour, what will it be like, my dear brethren, when he appears and speaks as an angry and all-powerful judge and pronounces in a voice more frightening than thunderclaps these dread words: “Discedite a me”?

[3] What a terrible plight, brethren, to see oneself for ever separated from God, and cast down into a flaming abyss. You would need to know God as we shall know him after our death to understand how great will be the torment of the sinner who is separated from his God. Hope has always been the consolation of the wretched, but after death all hope is gone for the sinner.

[4] Well, then, my whole plan is to limit myself to developing in a simple talk the words of my text: separation from God; pain of fire; eternity. That is all. I have come, dear brethren, to develop in a short and simple talk the words of my text: separation from God; pain of fire; eternity. Please listen for a moment. I shall not be long.

Holy Spirit, enlighten me.

Holy Virgin, your intercession, and you, brethren, your attention.
I

[5] Je ne m’arrêterai point ici, mes fr., à vous prouver l’existence d’un enfer ; elle [est] si évidente qu’entreprendre de nier cette vérité, il faudrait aussi nier l’existence de Dieu lui-même ; or, nier l’existence de Dieu, voilà ce qui n’a presque pas d’exemple.


[7] Le tourment le plus terrible des damnés est sans doute la séparation de Dieu. Nous ne pouvons en cette vie comprendre toute la grandeur de ce tourment, cependant nous pouvons l’entrevoir, en considérant d’un côté que Dieu est un bien infini et de l’autre que l’âme est faite pour le posséder. Car de même qu’un membre démis souffre, languit et est abattu, de même l’âme qui est comme démise, puisqu’elle est hors de son centre, souffre, mais des tourmens d’une autre nature et infiniment plus grands.

[8] Nous sommes ici-bas comme dans un sommeil où notre esprit est continuellement occupé de fantômes, le vrai bien pour lequel nous sommes faits ne nous paroit que dans le lointain. Il étoit nécessaire que cela fût ainsi sans quoi il nous eût été impossible de mériter étant invinciblement entraînés vers le bien suprême.

[9] C’étoit, m.f., ce bonheur de posséder Dieu qui rendoit les martyrs de la primitive Eglise si insensibles aux tourmens que leur faisoient endurer les bourreaux. C’étoit, dis-je, ce qui rendoit St. Laurent, votre patron, insensible au feu qui consumoit sa chair ; tandis que son corps étoit ainsi tourmenté, sa ste. âme nageoit dans la joie. Ha, m.f., c’est qu’il comprenoit, même dès cette vie, ce que c’est que de posséder Dieu. Nous le comprendrons aussi un jour, mais, hélas, peut-être trop tard.

[10] Représentons-nous, mes f. une âme à l’instant de la mort. Tous les fantômes qui l’amusoient sont évanouis ; le bandeau fatal est levé, la lumière brille à ses yeux ; Dieu se présente à elle dans toute sa beauté et tout ce qu’il a d’attrayant.
I

[5] I will not stop here, brethren, to prove to you that hell exists; it is so evident that, to deny that truth, you would have to deny the existence of God. Now, to deny the existence of God is something almost unprecedented.

[6] Threatening the sinner with being separated from God! That seems strange, for is that a punishment for him? Here below he has done his utmost to distance himself from God and anything that can keep his mind off him is just what he wants. Blind sinners! There is your crime, there is your punishment.

[7] There is no doubt that the most terrible suffering of the damned is being deprived of God. In this life we cannot understand the degree of this suffering, yet we can get a glimpse of it when we consider that, on the one hand, God is an infinite being, and on the other that the soul is made to possess him. For, just as a dislocated limb suffers, languishes and is depressed, in the same way the soul is, as it were, dislocated, since it is out of its proper place; it suffers, but its sufferings are of quite a different kind and infinitely greater.

[8] In this life we are, as it were, in a sleep where our world is constantly filled with phantoms. The real good for which we are made just seems like something far away. It was necessary that things be like that, otherwise it would have been impossible for us to gain merit, being irresistibly dragged towards this supreme good.

[9] It was, dear brethren, this happiness of possessing God which made martyrs in the early Church so insensitive to the tortures to which their executioners subjected them. This, I tell you, is what made your patron, St Lawrence, insensitive to the fire which consumed his flesh; while his body was tormented in this way his holy soul was swimming in joy. Ah! brethren, that is because he understood, while in this life, what it is to possess God. We, too, shall understand this one day, but, alas, perhaps when it is too late.

[10] Let us consider, brethren, a soul at the moment of death. All the phantoms which entertained it have vanished, the fatal blindfold has been removed, the light shines in its eyes, God shows himself to it in all his beauty and attractiveness.
[11] Quel ravissement! Elle voit qu'elle n'est faite que pour lui, elle s'y sent irrésistiblement emportée. Mais quel est son supplice! plus elle s'efforce pour s'unir à son Dieu, plus elle rencontre d'obstacles. Elle n'entend d'autres paroles que la foudroyante sentence du prophète Osée: Vous n'êtes plus mon peuple et je ne suis plus votre Dieu —*Quia vos non populus meus*...(I,9) Oui c'est en vain qu'elle s'efforce, un bras tout puissant la repousse sans cesse.

[12] Pécheur infortuné, lui dit l'auteur de son être, vois, examine ce que tu as perdu, regarde ce ciel et les plaisirs qu'y goûtent mes élus, écoutes les admirables concerts qui réjouissent toute la cour céleste. C'est ce que je t'aurais donné pour récompense de tes bonnes œuvres, mais comme tu n'as fait que des œuvres de ténèbres, tu seras privé de ce bien. Je devois être ta récompense, mais puisque tu n'as pas voulu m'obéir, je ne serai point ton Dieu: *Ego non ero vester*. Non, Dieu ne sera jamais pour toi qu'un ennemi irréconciliable et un vengeur tout-puissant.

[13] Tourment incompréhensible: l'âme est sans cesse attirée par tout ce que Dieu a d'aimable et de parfait, et repoussée par tout ce que la haine et l'indignation d'un Dieu ont de plus épouvantable.

[14] Pécheur, si tu ne comprends point maintenant ce que c'est que la perte de Dieu, le damné le comprend et ressent si cruellement la perte qu'il a faite que si, au milieu des brasiers de l'enfer il pouvait espérer de voir son Dieu et de le posséder une heure après chaque mille ans, il serait content et souffrirait ses tourmens avec consolation.

[15] A quoi pensez vous donc, Pécheurs, lorsque vous perdez Dieu en perdant sa grâce par le péché mortel (?)

De quoi parlez-vous donc, jeune libertin, et vous, filles sans pudeur lorsque vous perdez Dieu et que vous le faites perdre aux autres par les manières affectées, par vos danses, par ces rendez-vous et ces fréquentations dangereuses?

[16] Les damnés pleurent cette perte et vous y êtes insensibles. Les damnés voudroient retourner à lui, ils ne le peuvent plus. Vous le pouvez, vous en avez le temps, cependant vous ne le voulez pas. Vous avez donc le coeur plus dur qu'un réprouvé. Retournez donc au Seigneur maintenant qu'il vous en presse,

Dans l'éternité vous ne le pourrez plus.
[11] What rapture! It sees that it was made only for him, and feels itself irresistibly drawn to him. But what is its punishment? The more it strives to be united with God, the more obstacles it meets; the only word it hears is this crushing sentence of the prophet: “quia vos non populus meus” (1,9) Yes, it strives in vain, an all-powerful hand keeps pushing it back.

[12] “Obstinate sinner,” says the author of its being. “Look, do you see what you have lost? Look at heaven and the pleasures that my elect enjoy. Listen to these wonderful concerts that the whole court of heaven enjoys. That is what I would have given you as a reward for your good works, but since you have only performed works of darkness, you will be deprived of this reward. I was to be your reward, but, since you did not wish to obey me, I will not be your God: “Ego non ero vester”. No, God will never be for you anything but an irreconcilable enemy and an all-powerful avenger.

[13] Incomprehensible suffering! The soul is ceaselessly drawn by all that is lovable and perfect in God and repelled by all that is most frightening in the hatred and indignation of a God.

[14] Sinner! If you do not understand now what the loss of God means, the reprobate understands and feels so cruelly the loss he has sustained that if, in the midst of this inferno, he could hope to see his God and possess him for one hour after every thousand years, he would be content and would be consoled in his suffering.

[15] What on earth are you thinking about, sinners, when you lose God by losing grace through mortal sin? What on earth are you talking about, you, young libertine, and you, shameless young woman when you lose God and make others lose him by your affected manners, your dances, your secret trysts, these dangerous haunts you frequent?

[16] The damned weep for their loss and you are indifferent to it. The damned would like to return to God, but they are no longer able. You have the time, you can do so; and yet you do not want to, so your heart is harder than that of a reprobate. Return, then to the Lord now that he is urging you; in eternity you will no longer be able to do so.
La privation de Dieu, au rapport des Sts Pères, est le plus grand des supplices. Néanmoins il en est un autre plus capable de toucher les pécheurs, c’est la peine du feu, sujet de mon second point.

En mille endroits les divines écritures font mention d’un feu qui dévore les malheureux réprouvés. Les SS. Pères, les théologiens assurent qu’elle parle d’un feu réel et miraculeux qui renferme tout supplice.

Nous ne connaissons point ici-bas d’agent plus terrible que le feu. Ce seroit le tourment le plus épouvantable si on pouvoit le souffrir long temps dans toute sa violence. Mais quelques instants de ce supplice suffisent pour faire expirer celui qui le souffre.

Supposons un criminel condamné à être brûlé tout vif. Le voilà placé sur un bûcher entouré d’un bois très sec et très combustible. A peine le feu est-il allumé que la flamme aussitôt s’élève et l’enveloppe de toutes parts.

Qui pourra se faire une idée de ce qu’a de violent *et d’insupportable* cette première atteinte? Mais elle ne peut durer, le sentiment s’émousse d’abord et après quelques moments de douleurs le patient expire. Supposons encore que Dieu fasse un miracle pour conserver la vie à ce criminel au milieu du feu, et qu’il souffre pendant un jour tout ce qu’il a éprouvé au premier abord. Cette pensée, mes f., ne vous remplit-elle pas d’éffroi?

Cependant allons plus loin, portons nos regards dans ces fournaises où l’on fait fondre le verre ou le fer. Si quelqu’un y étoit jeté, à peine aurait-il le temps de pousser un cri qu’il seroit mort. Ce n’est donc plus sur un bûcher qu’il faut placer notre criminel, c’est dans une fournaise capable de fondre une masse énorme de fer ; que la force épouvantable de ce feu agisse toute sur lui et qu’il soit forcé d’y vivre comme le poisson dans l’eau.
The Fathers of the Church tell us that the loss of God is the greatest suffering that the damned experience. Nevertheless there is another, more capable of touching the hearts of sinners, the pain of fire, which is the subject of my second point.

In a thousand places Holy Scripture mentions a fire which will devour the wretched reprobate. The Fathers of the Church and theologians say they are speaking of a real and miraculous fire which contains all torments.

We know of no agent on earth more terrible than fire. It would be the most frightening torment if we were able to suffer its full violence for a long time. But a few moments of this torture are enough to cause the death of the sufferer.

Consider a criminal condemned to be burned alive. He is tied to the stake and surrounded with very dry wood which will burn easily. The fire is no sooner lit than flames rise up and envelop him on every side.

Who can imagine how violent and unbearable the onset must be? But it cannot last. The feelings are dulled, first of all, and after a few moments of suffering the patient dies. Now let us suppose that God performs a miracle to save the life of this criminal in the midst of the fire and that he suffers during one day all that he suffered in the first moments. Does this thought, brethren, not fill you with fear?

Yet, let us go further, let us look at these furnaces where they melt glass and iron. If anyone were thrown in there he would hardly have time to utter a cry before he would be dead. So it is no longer at the stake that we shall put our criminal but in a furnace that is capable of melting a huge amount of iron; let all its frightful power act on him and let him be forced to live there as a fish in water.
[23] Malgré l’épouvante qui nous saisit, approfondissons cette pensée et faisons-nous, s’il est possible, une juste idée de ce que souffre ce malheureux. Quand nous en serons venus là, nous n’aurons encore rien compris de ce que souffre un damné.

135 [24] Feu miraculeux ; il n’y a point de proportion entre le feu de l’enfer et celui des fournaises dont nous venons de parler. Les feux d’ici-bas ne sont qu’une ombre, celui de l’enfer est la réalité et fait souffrir tous les tourmens. Il fait également souffrir l’âme dans toutes ses puissances et le corps dans tous ses sens. Il n’y a point de supplice qu’un réprouvé n’endure: Omnis dolor iruet super eum. (Job. 20,22)

[25] Jamais les hommes, quelque cruels qu’ils aient été, n’ont rien inventé de pareil. Mais ici c’est un Dieu qui punit en Dieu et qui dans sa fureur emploie toute sa puissance: Ignis succensus est in furore meo. (Deut. 32,22)

[26] L’esprit humain ne peut rien imaginer de plus terrible que la situation d’un réprouvé. Tout ce qui se présente à lui le tourmente. Il ne voit que du feu et n’avale que du feu, il ne respire que du feu, il ne touche que des objets pénétrés de feu. Tout le remplit d’horreur et d’effroi. Il ne voit que des figures hideuses, des monstres horribles, des démons sous des formes épouvantables. Il n’entend que lamentations, hurlements, cris de rage, grincements de dents: Ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium. (Mt. 13,42) O grand Dieu, quelle horrible situation!

[27] Ajoutons encore à tout cela, mes frères, que le damné dans l’enfer n’aura pas même la liberté de changer de situation et qu’il sera au milieu de ces tourmens aussi perclus de ses membres que s’il étoit enseveli par des masses énormes de rochers.

[28] Qui ne frémira à la vue de pareils supplices, cependant tout ce qu’on en peut dire n’est rien, car de même que la gloire du ciel est au-dessus de nos pensées, de même l’enfer est au-dessus de notre intelligence. La désolation de l’Egypte entière n’étoit, dit l’écriture, que le doigt de Dieu, mais s’agit-il de punir Lucifer et les réprouvés, toute sa puissance et toute la force de son bras y est employée: Fecit potentiam in brachio suo. (Lc. 1,51)

[23] In spite of the terror that grips us, let us go deeper into this thought, and let us get a clear idea, if we can, of what this wretch is suffering. When we have reached this point we shall still have no idea of what a damned soul suffers.

135 [24] Miraculous fire! There is no comparison between the fire of hell and that of the fiery furnaces we have just been speaking of. Fires on this earth are only a shadow, the fire of hell is the reality, and makes one suffer all torments. It makes the soul suffer equally in all its powers and the body in all its senses. There is no pain that a reprobate does not suffer: “omnis dolor irruct super eum” (Job 20,22).

[25] However cruel they may have been, men have never invented anything like it. Here it is a God who punishes as God and who, in his fury, uses his full power: “Ignis incensus est in furore meo” (Deut 32,22).

[26] The human mind cannot imagine anything more horrible than the plight of a reprobate. Everything that he comes into contact with torments him. He sees only fire, touches only objects steeped in fire. Everything fills him with horror and fear. He sees only hideous faces, horrible monsters, cruel demons with frightful shapes. He hears only lamentations, howls, cries of rage, gnashing of teeth: “Ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium” (Mt 13,42). O, great God, what a wretched plight!

[27] To all this, let us add, brethren, that the soul damned to hell will not be free to move from where he is, that, in the midst of his sufferings, his limbs will be as incapable of movement as if they were buried under huge heaps of rocks.

[28] Who will not tremble at the sight of such suffering? Yet, all we can say is nothing, for just as the glory of heaven exceeds the imagination, so hell is above our understanding. The desolation of the whole of Egypt was only the finger of God, says Scripture, but when it comes to punishing Lucifer and the reprobate, all the power and all the might of his arm are used: “Fecit potentiam in brachio suo” (Luke 1,51).

[29] * Finally, brethren, to avoid all these evils incurred by the obstinate sinner, let us start from today to change our lives. Let us put order in our conscience and, following the example of the apostle of the Gentiles, let us declare war on our capital enemy, our body. Let us
Réduisons-le en servitude, car, disoit ce grand apôtre: Je châtie mon corps pour ne pas devenir un réprouvé (1 Cor. 9,27). Je me suis réduit dans un désert comme un prisonnier, disoit St Jérôme, de peur de tomber dans l'enfer et me perdre avec les mondains.

autre écriture – Joignons à tout cela la durée de ces mêmes peines.-*

III

[30] Quelque pénible que soit la privation de Dieu et quelque insupportable que soit le tourment du feu, tout cela nous semble peu de chose en comparaison de l'éternité, sujet de mon second point. (sic) sujet d'une troisième réflexion.

[31] Le damné est tourmenté en toutes sortes de manières, cependant le plus désespérant de ses tourmens est de voir que tout ce qu'il souffre il le souffrira toute l'éternité: Vermis earum non moritur et ignis non extinguitur : le ver qui les range ne meurt point et le feu qui les dévore ne s'étend point (Is. 66,24 ; Mc. 9,48). L'apôtre St Jean [dit encore] dans l'Apocalypse: La fumée de leurs tourmens s'élèvera dans les siècles des siècles (Ap.14,11).

[32] Oui, M.f., vous venez de l'entendre, cent années de souffrances passeront, mille passeront et l'enfer ne fera que commencer. Il se passera cent mille et mille millions d'années et de siècles et l'enfer sera à commencer de nouveau.

[33] Si Dieu faisoit connoître à un réprouvé qu'il veut le délivrer de l'enfer quand il se sera écoulé autant de millions de siècles qu'il y a de gouttes d'eau dans la mer, de grains de sable sur les rivages, cette nouvelle lui causeroit infiniment plus de joie que ne vous en pourrait causer la nouvelle la plus avantageuse, car il pourrait dire à la vérité: je souffre de grands maux, mais enfin mes souffrances finiront un jour. Mais il n'en sera pas ainsi, car réellement autant de siècles s'écouleront et l'éternité restera encore toute entière: Vermis eorum non moritur et ignis non extinguitur.
reduce it to slavery: “I harden my body with blows and bring it under complete control, to keep myself from being disqualified” (1 Cor 9,27). “I have become like a prisoner in a desert,” says St Jerome,” for fear of falling into hell and being lost with worldly people.”

To that let us add the duration of these same sufferings. – *

III

[30] However painful it may be to be separated from God, however unbearable the torment of fire, all that seems nothing when you consider eternity, subject of my second (sic) point. Subject of our third reflection

[31] The reprobate is tormented in every way, but the torment which causes most despair is the knowledge that he will suffer all this for all eternity. “Vermis eorum non moritur et ignis non extinguitur; the worms that eat them never die and the fire that burns them is never put out” (Is 66,24; Mk 9,48). The apostle St John [says also] in the Ap[ocalypse]: “The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up for ever and ever” (Ap 14,11).

[32] Yes, brethren, you have just heard it, a hundred years of suffering will pass, a thousand will pass, and hell will just be beginning. A thousand million, a million million centuries will pass and hell will have to be begun again.

[33] If God gave a damned soul to understand that he would deliver him from hell when as many millions of centuries will have passed as there are drops of water in the sea or grains of sand on the shores, this news would cause him infinitely more joy than any other, however welcome, for he could truly say, “I am suffering terrible pains, but one day they will finally end. But it will not be like that, for in fact many centuries will pass and eternity will still be undiminished: “Vermis eorum non moritur et ignis non extinguitur”.
IV

[34] Réfléchissez là-dessus pécheurs, mais réfléchissez-y mûrement, car si vous ne changez de vie, l'enfer après votre dernier instant sera votre partage. Non, mes f., qu'il n'en soit pas ainsi. Ecoutez plutôt ce que nous dit l'enfer : Dedit abyssus vocem suam. C'est à vous tous, mes f. à qui il adresse la parole, c'est-à-dire aux justes, aux pénitents et aux pécheurs.


[36] Pour vous qui êtes maintenant revenus au Seigneur, espérez et tremblez en même temps en pensant que peut-être déjà un grand nombre de ceux que vous avez, par vos mauvais exemples, entraînés dans le désordre sont condamnés à brûler éternellement avec les démons. Remerciez le Seigneur de ce que dans sa miséricorde il a bien voulu vous épargner des regrets aussi inutiles que cuisants. Que votre vie exemplaire ramène au chemin de la vertu ceux que vous en avez détournés par vos scandales et par vos mauvais conseils. Enfin dites avec le roi pénitent : Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea – lavez Seigneur, lavez de plus en plus mon iniquité. (suite du Discours 134.02 à partir de [38]

[37] Pécheurs enfin,écoutez-moi et comprenez ce langage. Oui il est temps de fuir. Demain, peut-être même dans une heure il n'en sera plus temps. Ne mettez plus de délai à votre conversion. Dès cet instant changez de vie sans cela vous allez augmenter le nombre de mes victimes. Allez sans délai, le coeur humilié et brisé de douleur, aux pieds d'un charitable confesseur qui vous réconciliera avec votre Dieu qui, au lieu de la sentence de réprobation, vous fera entendre ces consolantes paroles: Venez les bénis de mon Père posséder le royaume qui vous a été préparé dès le commencement.

C'est la grâce que je vous souhaite, au nom du P. F. S.

[38] Pour vous, pécheurs, écoutez, écoutez je vous prie ; c'est l'enfer lui-même qui vous tient ce langage: dedit abyssus vocem suam.

[39] Je vous connois, jeunes personnes, vous qui n'êtes venus ici que
IV

[34] Think about it, brethren, but think seriously about it, for if you do not change your life, after your last moment hell will be your lot. No, dear brethren, let it not be so. Let us rather listen to what hell is saying to us: “Dedit abyssus vocem suam”. These words are addressed to all of you, brethren, that is to the just, to penitents and to sinners.

[35] You, innocent souls, listen, you who have had the good fortune to keep yourselves pure and spotless in the eyes of the Lord. Redouble your precautions: “Vigilate et orate”, so that sin may not come to tarnish that brilliance and that angelic beauty that you received at baptism. May that prayer of the prophet be always on your lips: “Custodi me, Domine, ut pupillam oculi – Guard me, Lord, as the apple of your eye.”

[36] As for you, who have now come back to the Lord, hope and tremble at the same time as you think that perhaps at this moment a great number of those whom, by your bad example, you have led into a wicked life, are condemned to burn eternally with the demons. Thank the Lord who, in his mercy, has been good enough to spare you regrets which are as useless as they are bitter. May your exemplary life lead back to the path of virtue those whom you have turned away from it by your scandalous example and bad counsel. Then say with the penitent king: “Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea. Wash away all my evil.”
(continuation of sermon 134.02 from [38])

[37] Finally, sinners, listen to me and understand this language. Yes, there is time to escape. Tomorrow, perhaps within an hour, there will no longer be time for it. Do not delay your conversion. From this moment change your life, otherwise you will increase the number of my victims. Go without delay, with a heart humbled and broken with sorrow, to the feet of some kind confessor who will reconcile you with your God who, instead of a sentence of reprobation, will let you hear these consoling words: “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, come and possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the creation of the world.”

That is the grace I wish for you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

[38] As for you, sinners, listen, I beg you; it is hell itself that is talking to you like this: “dedit abyssus vocem suam.”

[39] I know you, young people, you who have come here only to
pour offenser le Seigneur. Je vous connois, profanateurs des saints jours
de fêtes et de dimanches, danseurs et danseuses, vous qui, au mépris des
sages avis, avertissements de votre digne pasteur, courez, au sortir de ce
st. lieu, dans les cabarets, repaires des démons. Vous pouvez, chrétiens,
dire avec vérité que cette effrontée, que ce jeune libertin que vous allez
voir dans un instant entrer dans ces maisons de débauche, vous pouvez,
dis-je, dire que ces personnes seront un jour assurément mes victimes.

[40] Je vous connois encore pour m'appartenir, calomniateurs,
rancuneux, médisants, ivrognes, fornicateurs, orgueilleux, et vous avarces,
et vous injustes ravisseurs du bien d'autrui, je vous connois tous, vous
êtes mes créatures. C'est en vain, oui, c'est en vain que vous vous flattez
de pouvoir m'échapper si, tout de suite, vous ne changez de vie?

[41] Peut-on moissonner quand on a rien semé, et quand on a semé des
crimes, peut-on moissonner des bonnes œuvres?

(Ce qui suit sont des annexes écrites par le Père lui-même
à la suite des deux discours.)

[42] C'est à vous jeunes personnes que n'êtes vous ici [que] pour
offenser le Seigneur. Je vous connais, vous jeunes et vieux danseurs et
danseuses, profanateurs des st. jours de fête et des dimanches,
calomniateurs et médisants, ivrognes et fornicateurs orgueilleux et vous
hommes avarces et injustes qui enlevez par toutes sortes de moyens...

[43] Je vous connois tous, vous êtes tous mes victimes et c'est en vain
que vous vous flattez que vous m'échapperez. Ecoutez la voix de vos
devanciers dans le crime.

[44] Ceux qui comme vous disoient vouloir se sauver: Crucior in hac
flamma nous sommes cruellement tourmentés dans ces flammes.

[45] Peut[-on] semer de l'ivraie et moissonner de bon froment? (*)

[46] Je vous connois jeunes personnes, vous qui n'êtes venus ici que
pour offenser le Seigneur ; oui, je vous connois tous, profanateurs des
sts. jours de fêtes et des dimanches, danseurs et danseuses, vous qui, au

(*) A cet endroit, qui est le bas de la page, se lit ce qui suit:
V Vous le que j'ai reçu de Mgr. de Mande
donnée par Mgr. l'évêque de Mande, 3 août 1817,
à St. Chamond, à l'église de St. Pierre. Marianne (?)
offend the Lord. I know you, profaners of holy days and Sundays, dancers who, rejecting good advice, warnings from your worthy pastor, rush from this holy spot into cabarets, haunts of devils. Christians, you can truly say that that shameless girl, that young libertine whom you will shortly see going into these abodes of debauchery, you can say, I tell you, that these young people will one day assuredly be my victims.

[40] I know you too, as belonging to me, calumniators, spiteful people, scandalmongers, drunkards, fornicators, you proud, you miserly people, you who unjustly take other people's property, I know you all, you are my creatures. It is useless, yes useless, to deceive yourselves that you can escape from me if you do not change your life at once.

[41] Can you reap when you have not sowed any seed, and when you have sowed crimes can you reap good works?

[What follows are additions written by Father Champagnat himself after the two sermons.]

Addition to D. 134.04

[42] It's you, young people, who are here [only] to offend the Lord. I know you, dancers young and old, profaners of holy days and Sundays, calumniators and scandalmongers, drunkards and fornicators, you proud, you miserly people, you who unjustly use all means to take away...

[43] I know you all, you are all my victims, and it is useless for you to deceive yourselves that you will escape from me. Listen to the voice of those who have gone before you in their criminal ways.

[44] Those who, like you, said they wished to be saved: "Crucior in hac flamme. We are cruelly tormented in these flames."

[45] Can [one] sow cockle and reap good grain?

[46] I know you, young people, you who have come here only to offend the Lord. I know you, profaners of holy days and Sundays, dancers who, rejecting good advice, warnings from your worthy pastor,
mépris des sages avertissements de votre digne pasteur, courez en sortant de ce saint lieu dans les cabarets, repaires des démons. Oui, chrétiens, vous pouvez dire avec vérité que cette effrontée, que ce jeune libertin que vous voyez entrer dans ces maisons de débauche, vous pouvez, dis-je, dire que ces personnes seront certainement mes victimes.

[47] Je vous connois encore pour m'appartenir, calomnistes, rancuneux, médisants, ivrognes, fornicateurs, orgueilleux, et vous hommes avares et injustes qui enlevez par toutes sortes de moyens le bien d'autrui. Je vous connois tous, vous êtes mes enfans et c'est en vain que vous vous flattez [de] pouvoir m'échapper si dès aujourd'hui vous ne changez de vie.

[48] Ecoutez la voix de vos devanciers dans le crime, de vos parens, de vos amis peut-être qui comme vous disoient vouloir se sauver: *Crucior in hac flamma* – nous sommes cruellement tourmentés dans ces flammes.

Et vous impudiques de l'un et de l'autre sexe à qui appartenez-vous. O seriez-vous dire que vous appartenez à Dieu. Infâmes corrupteurs, tandis que vous rougissez dans votre coeur des turpitudes dont vous vous rendez coupables.

[49] Avez-vous jamais vu des animaux se vautrer dans la fa[n]ge de l'impureté comme vous le faites depuis plusieurs années. (Quelles confessions, quelles communions). Avouez ici que vous en rougissez vous-mêmes de vos saletés. Oui, ces flammes qui brûlent dans vos coeurs, cet ennui, ce chagrin que vous éprouvez, cet espoir de désespoir vous annoncent par avance ce que vous éprouverez au premier jour.

[50] (Enfin mes f. puisque la séparation seule de Dieu est un rude enfer au témoignage des Sts Pères, soyons plus sages que ceux qui ne veulent tout savoir par leur propre expérience et l'expérience vient trop tard, laissons-nous toucher à la vue de ce tas d'horreur.)

[51] Enfin mes chers frères, laissons-nous toucher à la vue de tant de maux qui nous menacent. Oui, que cette cruelle et déchirante séparation qu'éprouvera le misérable pécheur, que ce feu cruel, que les lamentations, les hurlemens, les cris de rage et de désespoir, que l'aspect et la laideur épouvantable des damnés et des démons, enfin que les ténèbres infectes de ces lieux de peines et d'horreurs, enfin que la longue durée, et que la durée sans fin de tous ces supplices réunis, oui, produisent dans vos coeurs de salutaires effets et de dignes fruits de pénitence pour que nous puissions tous un jour nous voir dans le sein de la gloire que je vous souhait[e].
rush from this holy spot into cabarets, haunts of devils. Christians, you can truly say that that shameless girl, that young libertine whom you will see shortly going into these abodes of debauchery, you can say, I tell you, that these young people will one day assuredly be my victims.

[47] I know you too, as belonging to me, calumniators, spiteful people, scandalmongers, drunkards, fornicators, you proud, you miserly people, you who unjustly take other people’s property, I know you all, you are my creatures. It is useless, yes useless, to deceive yourselves that you can escape from me if you do not change your life from today.

[48] Listen to the voice of those who have gone before you in their criminal ways, of your parents, of your friends, perhaps, who, like you, said they wanted to be saved: “Crucior in hac flamma. We are cruelly tormented in these flames.”

And you, shameless creatures of either sex, to whom do you belong? Would you dare to say you belong to God, base corrupters, while you are blushing in your hearts at the shameless practices of which you are guilty?

[49] Have you ever seen animals wallowing in the mud of impurity as you have been doing for years? (What confessions! What communions!) Admit here and now that you are ashamed of your filthy behaviour. Yes, those flames that are burning in your hearts, that unease, that vexation you are feeling, that kind of despair are telling you beforehand what you will experience on that first day.

[50] Finally, brethren, since separation from God is by itself a harsh hell, as the Fathers tell us, let us be wiser than those people who wish to find out everything by experiencing it themselves, and that experience comes too late; let us allow ourselves to be touched by that heap of horror.

[51] Finally, brethren, let us allow ourselves to be touched by the sight of all these evils that threaten us. Yes, may this wrench of separation that the sinner will experience, this cruel fire, those howling torments, those cries of rage and despair, the sight of that frightful ugliness of the damned and the demons, the stinking darkness of those places of pain and horror, the long duration, the endless duration of all those torments together, yes, may they produce saving effects is your hearts and bring forth worthy fruits of repentance, so that all of us may one day see each other in the midst of the glory I wish for you.
(Annexe du D. 134.02)

[52] (La bonne mort est le fruit d'une bonne vie. Or, mes f., vous le savez, peut-[on] recueillir le fruit si on a point d'arbre à fruit.

[53] 4) Ecoutez, mes f., la voix de vos devanciers dans le crime, de vos parens, de vos amis peut-être qui, comme vous, disoient vouloir se sauver et qui déjà du milieu des flammes crient avec le mauvais riche: *Cruciamur in hac flamma*, – nous sommes cruellement tourmentés dans ces flammes.

[54] Et vous, impudiques de l'un ou de l'autre sexe, à qui appartenez-vous? Oseriez-vous dire que vous appartenez à Dieu, infâmes corrupteurs tandis que vous rougissez vous-même de vous voir aussi sales et d'avoir le coeur aussi gâté, aussi corrompu que vous l'avez. Les animaux eux-même ne se portent peut-être pas même aux excès auxquels...

[55] 1) Non, N.f., ni le tranchant des épées, ni les roues, ni les verges, ni les ongles de fer, instrumens avec lesquels on enlevoit par violence la peau des martyrs, ni les chevalets, ni les fouets les plus cruels parce que tout cela n'étoit que l'invention des hommes, mais ici...

[56] 2) Les horreurs des guerres, les pestes, les famines, les grèles, les déluges, les tremblements de terre qui écroulent et engloutissent des villes et des provinces entières, tout ceci n'est, dit l'écriture, que le doigt de Dieu.

[57] 3) On ne peut éviter l'enfer si on ne fait une bonne mort, on ne peut pas faire une bonne mort si on ne mène pas une bonne vie, car la bonne mort est le fruit d'une bonne vie. À quoi pouvez-vous donc vous attendre, vous qui entassez crime sur crime, à quoi? à une très mauvaise mort: *mors peccatorum pessima*.

[58] 4) Ecoutez, mes f., la voix de vos devanciers dans le crime, de vos parens, de (vos) amis peut-être qui, comme vous, disoi(en)t vouloir se sauver et qui déjà du milieu des flammes crient avec le mauvais riche: *Cruciamur in hac flamma*, – nous sommes cruellement tourmentés dans ces flammes.

[59] Mais encore, permettez-moi, m.f., pour votre instruction de tirer de ce lieu d'horreur l'ami, le compagnon de ce jeune libertin, le contemporain de ce vieillard impudique. Oui, permettez-moi, m.f.,
(Addition of D 134.02)

[52]  (A good death is the fruit of a good life. Now, brethren, you know this: can [you] gather fruit if you have no fruit tree?

[53]  4) Listen, brethren, to the voice of those who have gone before you in their criminal ways, of your parents, of your friends, perhaps, who, like you, said they wanted to be saved and who, already in the midst of flames are crying out with the rich malefactor: "Cruciamur in hac flamma. We are cruelly tormented in these flames."

[54]  And you, shameless creatures of either sex, to whom do you belong? Would you dare to say that you belong to God, base corrupters, while you yourselves are blushing to see yourselves so filthy and your heart so spoiled, so corrupted. It is possible that even animals do not give themselves up to the excesses to which ...)

[55]  1) No, brethren, neither the sword-blades, nor wheels, nor the iron hooks which were used to strip the skin from martyrs, nor the rack, nor the most cruel scourging, because all that was merely human invention, but here ...

[56]  2) The horrors of wars, plagues, famines, hailstorms, deluges, earthquakes which topple and engulf whole towns and provinces, all that, Scripture tells us, is only the finger of God.

[57]  3) You cannot avoid hell if you do not die well: you cannot die well if you do not lead a good life, for a good death is the fruit of a good life. What, then, can you expect, you who heap crimes upon crimes? What indeed? A wretched death: "mors peccatorum pessima"

[58]  4) Listen, brethren, to the voice of those who have gone before you in their criminal ways, of your parents, of your friends, perhaps, who, like you, said they wanted to be saved and who, already in the midst of flames, are crying out with the rich malefactor: "Cruciamur in hac flamma. We are cruelly tormented in these flames."

[59]  But once more, my dear brethren, allow me, for your instruction, to drag from this horrible place the friend, the companion of that young libertine, the crony of that shameless old
jeunes et vieux, vous surtout esclaves du vice infâme de l'impureté, permettez-moi, dis-je, de tirer du fond des enfers le complice de vos crimes.

[60] Le voilà au milieu de vous tous, pécheurs, et vous surtout, infâmes partisans du vice, péchés sales de l'impureté, le voyez-vous ce damné, voyez-vous sa figure couverte des saletés dont il s'est souillé et dont vous l'avez souillé vous-mêmes.

[61] Voyez ses mains écorchées et toutes brûlantes par le châtiment de ses actions honteuses et de ses sales attouchemens. Voyez-vous ses oreilles que vous-mêmes avez souillées par vos paroles obscènes, ses yeux, ses narines, sa bouche qui lancent le feu et le souffre brûlant à gros tourbillons. Voyez-vous ces serpents furieux qui le déchirent comme à l'envie. Voyez-vous ce dragon infernal, excité par la juste fureur de Dieu qui prend à tâche de déchirer ses membres qui ont le plus participé au crime.

[62] Voyez aussi ce jeune enfant à qui il avoit appris le mal qui, un fouet à la main, anime tous les monstres infernaux à le tourmenter. Mais écoutez aussi, pécheurs, ses cris déchirants et lamentables, car c'est contre vous, malheureux esclaves du péché, qu'il enrage? Viens malheureux, viens malheureuse, toi qui m'as précipité dans l'épouvantable malheur où je souffre d'incompréhensibles tourments.

[63] Il me semble, mes f., vous entendre dire que vous voulez éviter de pareils tourments. Mais ces flammes qui brûlent dans vos coeurs, cet ennui, ce chagrin que vous éprouvez, ce désespoir qui suit le crime, ne vous annoncent-ils pas d'avance ce que vous éprouverez au premier jour. Vous vous convertirez, dites-vous, mais quand?

Le texte qui suit et qui est rayé de deux grands X, est le recto(R) et le verso(V) d'une feuille dont les deux tiers sont arrachés. La finale est en haut d'une troisième page qui ne contient pas autre chose.

[64] R (Vous vous portez depuis longtemps, et ces flammes qui brûlent dans vos coeurs, cet ennui, ce chagrin que vous éprouvez, cet espèce de désespoir, vous annoncent par avance ce que vous éprouverez au premier jour. Vous vous convertirez, dites-vous, mais quand, à l'heure de la...)
man. Yes, allow me brethren, young and old, especially you, who are the slaves of the vice of impurity, allow me, I tell you, to drag from the depths of hell the accomplice in your crimes.

[60] There he is in the midst of all you sinners, and you especially, disgusting devotees of vice, of the filthy sins of impurity; do you see him, this reprobate, do you see his face covered with the filth with which he defiled himself and with which you yourself have defiled him?

[61] Do you see his hands, all scorched and burning as a punishment for his shameful actions and his obscene sins of touch? Do you see his ears which you yourselves have defiled by your obscene words, his eyes, his nostrils, his mouth from which fire shoots out, the sulphur boiling in great whirlpools. Look at these furious serpents tearing him at will. Look at that hellish dragon, urged on by the just wrath of God, who aims to tear his limbs which played the greatest part in his crime.

[62] Look, too, at that young child, to whom he taught evil ways, and who with a scourge in his hand, is inciting all these infernal monsters to torment him ... but listen, too, to his rending cries, for he is venting his rage on you, you unchaste wretch. “Come, you wretched man, you wretched woman, you who are responsible for my misfortune where I am enduring sufferings beyond all comprehension.”

[63] I think I can hear you say, brethren, that you wish to avoid such torments. But those flames that are burning in your hearts, that unease, that vexation you are feeling, that despair which comes after the offence, do they not tell you beforehand what you will experience on the first day? You will be converted, you say, but when?

[The text which follows and which is crossed out with two big crosses is the recto (R) and the verso (V) of a sheet, two thirds of which have been torn off. The last part is at the top of a third page which contains nothing else.]

[64] (R) (You have been in good health for some time, - and these flames that are burning in your hearts, that unease, that vexation you are feeling, that kind of despair that are telling you beforehand what you will experience on the first day. You will be converted, you say, but when, at the hour of ...)
[65] V (M'en moquant je vous insulterai? de tous ceux, mes f. qui renvoient leur conversion à un autre temps, meurent sans avoir eu le temps de la faire, et leur mort est très mauvaise: *mors peccatorum pessima*. Mais revenons à mon sujet...)

[66] Pouissions(sic) tous un jour nous voir dans le sein de la gloire que je vous souhaite. Ainsi soit-il.
(V) (Shall I insult you when I make fun of you? of all those, my dear brethren, who put off their conversion to another time, (many) die without having had time to do so and their death is a wretched one: mors peccatorum pessima. But let us go back to my subject ...)

May we all one day see each other in the midst of the glory I wish for you. Amen.
Statutum est omnibus hominibus semel mori, 
post hoc autem judicium.
C'est un arrêt porté contre tous les hommes de mourir, 
après quoi vient le jugement.
2.8

CHAMPAGNAT, SERMON ON THE DEATH OF THE SINNER. AFM 134.13

From a manuscript in AFM 134.13, pages 10 to 16 of a 16 page booklet 20 cms by 11.30. The first 9 pages contain a sermon of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.

The text we are about to look at contains two openings for a sermon on the death of the sinner. The first takes up four pages of the manuscript, and stops abruptly on the first line of page five, in mid-sentence. Then follow two lines across the page, between which is written: “We look at (Jesus C) the sinner, from several angles.)” What we have here is obviously the start of an idea to be developed, but which has been abandoned. It is only after the second line that we have a complete text, the beginning of a second sermon on the same topic, the death of the sinner. Four points are noted, but only the first is taken up, and even it is dealt with very briefly. The text comes to an end at the foot of page 15, with the announcement of the second point; the next page, the back of page 15, is blank, except for the top right hand corner, where we find, noted across the ends of the top three lines, the phrase: “My God, I am lost if I do not change my life sufficiently.” This has a St Andrew’s cross through it, and would appear to be a thought or something remembered, but not part of the body of the sermon.

Statutum est omnibus hominibus semel mori
post hoc autem judicium.
It is appointed unto men once to die,
and after that the judgment.

Pensez y jeunes gens qui vous disposez à (prof) vous livrer au libertinage pendant ce temps qui devront être employé à se disposer à passer saintement le carême. Pensez [y] pères et mères, maîtresses et maîtresses qui avez la faiblesse de laisser courir vos enfants et vos domestiques dans ces exécrables assemblées.

Pensez y surtout, malheureux qui prêtez vos maisons pour en faire des lieux de prostitution. Vos maisons sont des soupiaux de l'enfer qui infectent l'univer.

Je vais M.f. vous faire une peinture de ce qui ce passe à la mort du pécheur (et à celle du juste. Accordez moi un moment) d'attention.

Vierge Ste, refuge des pécheurs priez votre adorable fils qu'il dispose les coeurs de mes auditeurs.

Je viens donc, mes frères, exposé à vos yeux le spectacle d'un mourant. Ecoutez-le, car nous devons tous mourir: statutum est omnibus hominibus, semet mori, pour que ce spectacle fasse sur vous plus d'impression, mes frères, laissez une supposition. Figurez vous, mes f. que vous êtes arrivé à ce dernier moment, car certainement il arrivera pour vous et peut-être y touchez-vous déjà. Imaginez-vous donc que vous êtes au lit de la mort, qu'il ne vous reste que quelques heures à vivre, que vous éprouvez déjà ce qu'on éprouve à ce dernier moment, c'est-à-dire une faiblesse extrême qui vous ôte le mouvement, une inquiétude mortelle qui ne vous laisse aucun moment de repos, une crainte affreuse qui trouble l'esprit, des palpitations fréquentes d'un cœur qui se meurt, une sueur froide qui se répand dans tout le corps qui déjà sent le cadavre, les joues abatues et livides, les cheveux mouillés par la sueur de la mort, les yeux enfoncés, égarés et affreusement ouverts, déjà ils n'aperçoivent plus les objets qui sont autour de lui, une lampe à demi éteinte brûle à côté du lit. Des parens, des amis s'éloignent les larmes aux yeux, se parlant à voix basse. Le ministre de la religion s'approche, lui présente l'image de Jésus Christ en lui disant: Mon cher frère, voici l'image de votre Dieu mort en croix pour vous racheter et vous délivrer de la mort éternelle. A peine peut-il desserrer les dents pour prononcer quelques paroles mal articulées. Enfin, abandonné de tout ce qu'il a de plus cher au monde, près de rendre le dernier soupir, entre le ciel et l'enfer, encore trois minutes et il aura paru au jugement de Dieu, sans avocat, mais seulement accompagné de ses bonnes oeuvres et de ses mauvaises actions.
My dear brethren, it is a decree for all men pronounced in punishment for their sins. We must all die, a word of terror which has brought anxiety and despair a thousand times to the hearts of the impious. But it is decreed, statutum est, all must die: omnibus hominibus. Dear brethren, what is it that so troubles the impious? Is it death? No, it is undoubtedly what comes after death, the judgment, post hoc autem judicium.

Think about that, you young men, who are preparing to spend your time in riotous living during this time when you should be preparing to spend the time of Lent in a holy fashion! Think about that, you fathers and mothers, you masters and mistresses, who are weak enough to allow your children, your servants, to go to these execrable meetings!

Think about that, you unhappy people who allow your houses to be used as places of prostitution. Your houses are vents from hell which pollute the whole universe.

My brethren, I am going to paint a picture for you of what happens at the death of a sinner – and later, of what happens at the death of the just man – just listen carefully for a moment.

Holy Virgin, refuge of sinners, make the hearts of those listening ready to receive my words.

So, my brethren, I am going to show you what the death of a sinner is like. Listen carefully, since we must all die: statutum est omnibus hominibus semel mori. So that this will make an impression on you, let us suppose that you have already come to your last moments – it is certain that you will come, and perhaps you are already there! Imagine that you are on your deathbed, that you have only a few hours of life left, that you are already experiencing what everyone experiences at this last moment, a total weakness which deprives you of all movement, a mortal worry which leaves you no peace, a terrible fear which troubles your soul, the frenzied beating of a dying heart, a cold sweat which covers your whole body, a body which already smells of death, your cheeks sunk in, your hair damp with the sweat of death, your eyes deep-sunk, staring wildly about, which already can hardly see what is near them, a half-extinguished lamp burning by the side of the bed. Relatives and friends withdraw with tears in their eyes. The priest draws near, carrying an image of Jesus Christ, and says: “Dear brother, look on this image of your God, dying on the cross to redeem you, to deliver you from eternal death.” The dying man can hardly unclench his teeth to mutter a few hardly intelligible words. At last, abandoned by all he held dear in this world, about to draw his last breath, hovering between heaven and hell, in another three minutes he will be before the judgment seat of God, without a lawyer to defend him, but accompanied only by what he has done, whether for good or for ill.
A ce dernier moment, pécheurs, quel sera votre consolation? Qui vous rassurera? Qui vous arrachera à l'enfer? Une confession, dites-vous, de votre vie passée. Je suppose que vous en ayez le temps et le jugement assez libre pour cela. Quelle sera votre confiance en la miséricorde de Dieu, vous qui avez abusé de tous les st. avertissements de vos pasteurs, de toutes les grâces que vous avez reçu et que vous comptez maintenant pour rien. Sera-ce la vue d'un... du ministre de la religion.

nous considérerons le pécheur sous plusieurs points de vue

Je vais, mes f. vous faire la peinture de ce qui se passe à la mort du pécheur. Nous verrons d'abord quel usage il a fait de la santé; quel usage il fait des premiers instants de la maladie; comment il se comporte dans le progrès du mal et enfin quel est son désespoir à l'heure de la mort. Accordez-moi votre attention, je ne serai pas long. Esprit St votre lumière, et vous Vierge Ste votre assistance.

D'abord quel usage ce pécheur a-t-il fait de la santé.
Il a employé à amasser du bien par d'infames usures, par des rapines, des volees, en un mot par toutes sortes de voies injustes. Il a employé, ou plutôt, disons mieux, il a ruinée en se livrant à l'ivrognerie, aux déboches, aux intempérances et au crime infâme contre la ste vertu de pureté. Pas un jour où il n'ait commis un grand nombre de péchés, soit par pensées, soit par paroles, actions et omissions. Maintenant qu'il est étendu dans ce lit de mort il ne commet plus de péché parce qu'il n'a plus la force de le commettre. Combien de fois n'a-t-il pas tourné en ridicule ceux qui faisoit mieux leur salut que lui.

Depuis de longues années il ne se confessoit plus ou s'il se confessoit, c'étoit sans envie de changer de vie, sans un ferme propos de s'amander, en un mot sans contrition et par là profanant les sacrements. Plus Dieu lui donnait du bien, plus il faisoit éclater son ingratidude. Dieu lui donnoit-il une bonne récolte, en la recueillant, loin d'empêcher ses ouvriers de se livrer au libertinage, il étoit le premier à leur donner l'exemple d'un libertinage plus éfréné. Mon Dieu quelle vie!

Voyons maintenant quel usage il fait des premiers instants de sa maladie.

mon Dieu je suis
perdu si je ne change
point assez de vie
O sinner, at this last moment, what will give you consolation? Who will give you re-assurance? Who will drag you from the gates of hell? Oh, you say, I will confess my whole life. I suppose you will have time and clear judgment to do that! What confidence will you have in the mercy of God, when you have disregarded all the holy warnings of your pastors, have disregarded all the graces you have received, and which you now count as nothing? Will it be the sight of...... a minister of religion......

we will look at the sinner from a number of angles.....

My dear brethren, I am going to paint you a picture of what happens at the death of the sinner. We will look first at what use he made of the time when he was in good health; what use he made of the time at the start of his illness; how he behaved as his illness progressed; and finally, his despair at the hour of death. Give me all your attention, I will not take long. The Holy Spirit will be your light, the Blessed Virgin will be your help.

In the first place, what use did he make of his time of good health?
He used to gather up the goods of this world by infamous usury, by stealth, by theft, in a word, in all manner of unjust ways. He used his time, or rather, he ruined his time in giving himself over to drunkenness, to debauchery, to intemperance, to infamous crimes against the holy virtue of purity. Not a day passed that he did not commit sin after sin, by thought, by word, by action, by omission. Now, lying on his deathbed, he sins no more, only because he no longer has the strength to sin! How often in the past has he not mocked those who made better use of their good health than he did?

Year after year, he did not go to confession, or if he did, it was not with any wish to change his life, it was without a firm purpose of amendment – in a word, it was without true contrition, and so was a profanation of the sacrament. The more graces God granted him, the more his ingratitude burst forth. When God gave him a good crop, at the time of the harvest, instead of stopping his labourers from throwing themselves into debauchery, he was their leader in all sorts of riotousness. Good God, what a life!

Let us look now at the use he made of the early period of his illness.....

my God, I am
lost if I do not change
my life sufficiently
Mors peccatorum pessima
La mort du pécheur est très funeste.

C’est une vérité que l’Esprit-Saint nous apprend par la bouche du roi prophète et que l’expérience de chaque jour ne confirme que trop. Touché du triste sort de tant de pécheurs qui, après avoir croupi toute leur vie dans le péché, périssent misérablement. Je veux, avec le secours de Dieu, en leur montrant combien la mort du pécheur est terrible, les exciter à changer de vie en voyant le bonheur que goutent les justes à leur dernier moment.
2.9

CHAMPAGNAT: SERMON ON THE DEATH OF A SINNER II

*From a manuscript in AFM 134.09 on a sheet 19.30 cms by 14 cms*

It is the intention of the author, as he tells us himself, to describe in the text which follows, the death of the sinner and the death of the just man. However, he stops at the start of the second part – he has even crossed out the introduction. Even though the topic is the same as the previous document, this text is different in the ideas put forward, and even in the style. However, it would appear to be written by M. Champagnat. Are we then dealing with a too faithful copy from an author we have not been able to identify? Or, perhaps, is this an exercise from his seminary days? In the latter case, how do we explain the absence of the second part? It is impossible to give a positive answer to these questions, so we present the text just as we have it. Perhaps it will give a different idea of the personality of the writer, but we must treat it with a certain reserve.

*Mors peccatorum pessima*

The death of a sinner is a terrible thing.

This is a truth which Holy Scripture teaches us through the mouth of the Prophet King, and which daily experience reinforces only too strongly. Moved by the sad fate of so many sinners who, after spending their whole life in sin, come to a miserable end, I want to show, with the help of God, how terrible the death of a sinner is, and in this way to prompt them to change their life when they see the happiness of the just man in his last moments on earth.
C’est pareillement ce que nous enseigne l’Esprit-St par la bouche du même prophète: *Preciosa in conspectu domini mors sanctorum ejus.* La mort du juste est précieuse aux yeux du Seigneur.

Et c’est aussi ce que je veux vous démontrer en peu de mots. Mais pour faciliter votre attention je diviserai en deux points ce petit discours.

Dans le premier je montrerai combien la mort de celui qui vit dans le péché est à craindre; dans le second, au contraire, combien la mort du juste est paisible et consolente.

Daignez, je vous prie, m’honner de votre favorable attention; Esprit-St vous à qui seul appartient de convertir les pécheurs, parlez à leurs coeurs tendis que ma voix frappera leurs oreilles.

C’est ce que nous obtiendrons par l’intercession de Marie: *Ave Maria.*

Tous les hommes craignent grandement d’être enlevé subitement de ce monde cependant une mort subite n’est point à craindre pour qui y est préparé d’avance, aussi l’Eglise honnore-t-elle du nom de saint plusieurs de ceux qui ont été enlevés de ce monde en un moment. Mais la mort du pécheur, subite ou non, est le plus grand des malheurs: *Mors peccatorum pessima.* Le pécheur, sans s’arrêter aux menaces que Dieu lui fait, sans, dis-je, reflexir sur les avertissements les plus exprets que l’Esprit-St a révélés aux prophètes qui nous les ont transmis, passe sa vie avec autant de tranquillité que s’il pouvait à son gré disposer de la mort ou s’il savoit en révélation qu’il n’en seraît pas surpris.

Néanmoins devroit-il trembler en voyant les morts subites si fréquentes et c’est presque toujours les pécheurs qui sont ainsi surpris, car, comme dit le prophète royal, les hommes de sang n’arrivent pas à la moitié de leurs jours ps. 54, v. 24. (Car) les uns sont surpris par une inondation soudaine, les autres par un ambrasement imprévu, ceux-ci, victimes de l’envie, meure par le fer, ceux-là par le poison, celui-ci est écrasé par le tonnerre, celui-là par la chute d’un édifice, d’autres, après s’être couché en bonne santé, sont trouvés morts dans leur lit, d’autres encore, sont saisis de la mort au milieu d’un repas, d’autres enfin, et en plus grand nombre, sont frappés dans leurs actions ciminelles comme Baltazard. Tous ces exemples sont autant de voix qui crient au pécheur: malheureux tu peux avoir le même sort et tu ne trembles pas? tu vis dans le désordre et tu ne songes pas que comme les autres tu peux être surpris? N’est tu pas de même nature que les autres? N’est ce pas pour toi principalement pécheur que notre divin Sauveur, plein de bonté pour nous a dit: *Et vos estote parati: quia qua hora non putatis Filius hominis veniet* – Soyez prêts car vous ne savez pas à quelle heure le Fils de l’homme viendra, en St. Luc, c.12, v.40, et ailleurs: il viendra comme un voleur.
This is taught us also by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of the same prophet: *Preciosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus* – precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

This is what I want to show you in few words. But, to help to keep your attention, I will divide this talk into two parts. In the first I will show how we must fear the death of one who has lived in sin; in the second, I will show the opposite, how peaceful and consoling is the death of the just man.

Be good enough, then, to honour me with your undivided attention. O Holy Spirit – for only you can convert the sinner – speak to their hearts while my voice speaks to their ears.

We will obtain this through the intercession of Mary: *Hail, Mary....* 

All men have a great fear of being suddenly taken out of this world, but a sudden death holds no terrors for those who are prepared for it, and the Church honours as saints a number who have left this world in this way. But the death of a sinner, sudden or not, is one of the greatest misfortunes: *mors peccatorum pessima*. The sinner, not being halted by the menaces God puts to him, not reflecting on the explicit warnings the Holy Spirit has revealed to the prophets to pass on to us, goes through life as calmly as if he was able to arrange his own death or as if he had revealed to him that he would not be taken by surprise.

But – should he not tremble to see so many sudden deaths, and it is almost always the sinners who are taken by surprise, for, as the royal prophet says, men of blood reach only half their years (Ps 54:24); some are carried off by a sudden flood, others by an unforeseen conflagration, others again victims of envy, some by the sword, some by poison; one struck by lightning, another crushed by a falling building; some go to bed in good health, and are found dead in the morning, others die while at table; others again, the most numerous, are struck down, like Balthazar, in the midst of their criminal activities. All of these examples are so many voices that cry out to the sinner: “Wretch! You could suffer the same fate, and still you do not tremble? You live a life of disorder, and you do not think that like these others you also can be taken by surprise? Are you not of the same nature as them? Is it not to you, sinner that you are, that our divine Saviour, in his goodness, says: *Et vos estote parati; quia qua hora non putatis Filius hominis veniet* – Be ready, therefore, for at what hour you know, not the Son of Man will come. (Lk.12:40), and elsewhere he says: He will come like a thief in the night.
Malgré tous ces divins avertissements le pécheur croit qu’il peut persévérer tranquillement dans ses habitudes criminelles, que la mort ne l’y surprendra pas, qu’il aura le temps de se convertir, c’est-à-dire qu’il croit pouvoir faire mentir la vérité éternelle.

Qu’arrivera-t-il, M.F. écoutez-le, gravez-le dans votre mémoire, vous tous qui êtes ici présents. Si le pécheur est enlevé par une mort subite, il est évident qu’il n’y a point de salut pour lui, mais qu’il est comme le mauvais riche, ensevelie dans les enfers.

Mais que faut-il penser de celui qui a été enlevé de ce monde par une fièvre violente après trois ou quatre jours de souffrances, supposé même qu’il ait eut le jugement bien sain, écoutez-le et réveillez, s’il vous plaît, votre attention, car, écrit le St-Esprit qui parle par l’organe de Salomon dont je vais vous citer les paroles mêmes sans y rien ajouter: Pour vous qui avez méprisé mes offres, mes instructions, mes menaces, pour vous dis-je, à qui nous ne cessons, de cette chaire de vérité, du sacré tribunal de la pénitence, de vous exhorter à changer de vie, de n’être plus ni médisant, ni calomniateur, ni ivrogne, ni avare, ni orgueilleux, lorsque le malheur qui vous attend sera arrivé je me rirai de votre infortune, j’aurai mon tours, je mépriserai vos prières, je me moquerai de vos malheurs, j’insulterai à vos vains regrets, c’est-à-dire que Dieu vous traitera en ennemis irrités: Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsanabo (Prov. 1,26)

Mais quand sera-ce que Dieu se moquera du pécheur? ce ne sera point quand il jouira d’une bonne santé, ce sera in interitu, à la mort.

Oui, pécheur, c’est là que Dieu t’attend, c’est à ce moment fatal et si redoutable au genre humain que le Seigneur veut avoir son tour, in interitu vestro ridebo. Pécheur ingrât que feras-tu alors? que deviendras-tu? à qui auras-tu recours? Sera-ce aux hommes? mais tes plus fidèles amis en pleurs autours de toi, loin de te pouvoir protéger la vie d’un seul instant, ne peuvent apporter à tes douleurs aucun soulagement.

Mais encore, à qui t’adresseras-tu? au ministre de la pénitence pour être absous de tes péchés? mais qui pourra t’absoudre, ayant pour juge implacable un Dieu irrité? qui pourra t’assurer que Dieu te pardonne? tendis que l’Esprit-St assure que (?) quand ce que le pécheur craint lui sera arrivé, c’est-à-dire la mort. Il invoquera le Seigneur, mais il ne sera point exaucé:(invocabit) Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam (Prov. 1.28)

Il se levera de grand matin pour me chercher, mais il ne me trouvera pas: Mane consurgent, et non inventent me (id). En voici la cause et c’est encore même Esprit-St qui nous l’apprend dans Proverbes du roi Salomon: Eo quod exosam habuerint disciplinam, et timorem Domini non susceperint (ibid.29) parce qu’ils ont eu en horreur ma doctrine et qui n’ont point acquis la crainte du Seigneur. Comment
50 In spite of all these divine warnings, the sinner believes that he can carry on tranquilly in his habits of crime, that death will not take him by surprise, that he will have time to repent, in a word, he believes that he can make a liar out of the Eternal Truth.

What is going to happen, my brethren? Listen, fix it in your memory, all you who are here present! If the sinner is carried off by sudden death, it is evident that there is no salvation for him, that he is like the rich man in the parable, buried in the depth of hell.

What are we to think of him taken out of this world by a violent fever after four or five days of suffering, even if his mind remains clear? Listen well and, if you please, renew your attention, for, as the Holy Spirit tells us through the words of Solomon which I will quote exactly and without adding anything: You who have despised my offers, my commands, my warnings, for you, I say, you who, from our throne of charity, from the sacred tribunal of penance, we have never ceased to exhort to change your life, to be no longer liars, calumniators, drunkards, misers, proud, – when the misfortune which awaits you finally comes, it will be my turn, I will turn a deaf ear to your prayers, I will mock at your misfortunes, I will insult your vain regrets – God will treat you as his enemies: *Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo* (Prov.1:26) I shall laugh at your distress, I shall jeer when terror befalls you.

At what point will God mock at the sinner? It will not be when he is in good health, it will be in *interitu*, at the hour of his death. Yes, you sinner, that is when God will be waiting for you, that is the fatal moment we have to fear, when the Lord will have his turn, in *interitu vestro ridebo*! Ungrateful sinner, what will you do then? What will become of you? To whom will you turn for help? Will you turn to men? But your closest friends, standing round you in tears, far from being able to protect your life for an instant, can bring no comfort in your sufferings.

To whom, then will you turn? To the priest who comes to confess you, to give you absolution for your sins? But who can absolve you, when an angry God is your implacable judge? Who can give you the certainty that God will forgive you, when the Holy Spirit assures us that what the sinner fears most, his death, has arrived? He will call on the name of the Lord, but he will not be heard: *Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam* (Prov.1:28).

He will get up early in the morning to look for me but will not find me: * Mane consurgent et non inventunt me* (id.) There is the cause, and the same Holy Spirit tells us in the proverbs of King Solomon: *Eo quod exosam habuerint disciplinam, et timorem Domini non susceperint* (ib.29), because they held my teaching in abhorrence and they have not learned
donc le ministre des autels pourrait vous promettre le pardon vu que
Dieu vous condamne? Comment, dis-je, pourroit-il vous arracher aux
flammes de l'enfer, tendis que Dieu vous y precipitera? Non le ministre
du Seigneur ne le peut, car tout son pouvoir (est su) vient immé-
diatement de (Dieu) Jésus Christ.

Mais, dira-t-on peut-être, il n'est aucun pécheur qui ne soit absout à
son dernier moment. Mais qu'importe ce que fait le ministre, si le maître
ne le ratifie pas le pécheur lui-même n'est-il pas persuadé du contraire?
n'en n'est il pas alarmé? ne fait-il ces desperantes reflexions? le prêtre
vient de m'absoudre et Dieu ne vient-il pas de me condamner? J'ai reçu
les derniers sacrements, n'est-ce point un énorme sacrilège que je viens
encore de commettre?

Si la maladie ne fut venue il est comme certain que j'aurois encore
persévéré dans le désordre vu l'habitude que j'ai contractée. C'est le
péché qui me quitte et non moi qui quitte le péché. J'ai tout lieu de
 craindre que ma conversion ne soit pas plus sincère aujourd'hui que tant
d'autres fois.

Sans cette maladie, ce jour auquel j'ai reçu les sacrements, ce jour
où je vais peut-être rendre le dernier soupir, ce jour, dis-je, où Dieu va
me juger, ce moment même où je vais paroître devant (mon juge) celui
qui sait tout, n'est-il pas remarquable par de nouveaux traits
ingratitude dont je me seroit rendu coupable? Si cela est, comment me
pardonnera-t-il, lui qui sait ce que j'aurois fait si j'eusse encore vécu.

A toutes ces tristes reflexions ajoutez une entière connoissance des
fautes qu'on ne se reprochoit pas ou qu'on traitoit de minutie, car
comme nous l'apprend l'Ecc. ch.41, (Ecclesiastique, 41.3): O mors,
bonum est judicium – O mort, ton jugement est droit et plein d'équité.

C'est que les préjugés qui nous aveuglent finissent où la mort commence.
Cependant on rappelle au mourant tout ce qui est le plus capable
d'exciter la confiance en Dieu, on lui rappelle son titre de chrétien, la
sang de Jésus Christ répandu sur la croix pour laver nos péchés, les
sacrements qu'il a reçu si souvent, les messes qu'il a entendues, en un
mot toutes les bonnes œuvres qu'il a faites, mais on ne reflexit pas que
c'est à un pécheur mourant qu'on parle et non à un juste ou a un
pécheur dont la conversion a précédée la maladie. Et d'abord le titre de
chrétien n'est pas pour le pécheur mourant un sujet de consolation:
premièrement parce qu'il a porté le nom de chrétien sans en remplir les
devoirs et sans en professer la doctrine ; secondement par ce qu'il a
mêmes rougit de porter ce glorieux nom.

Le sang de Jésus Christ répandu pour laver nos péchés ne saurait non
plus ranimer sa confiance, par ce qu'il l'a cent fois profanné en recevant
indignement les sacrements de pénitence et d'eucharistie, car s'il a reçu le
the fear of the Lord. How then can the minister of the altar promise you pardon when God himself has condemned you? How, I ask, can he drag you from the flames of hell when God himself has thrown you into them? No, the minister of the Lord cannot, because all his power comes from (God), from Jesus Christ.

But, perhaps you will say, there is no sinner who does not receive absolution at his last moment. But what does it matter what the servant does, if the master does not ratify it, if the sinner himself is persuaded of the opposite? Is he not terrified, do these despairing thoughts not pass through his mind? – The priest is here to absolve me, and God himself is here to condemn me! I have received the last Sacraments, but is this not a yet greater sacrilege I am going to commit?

If I had not become ill, it is certain that I would have persevered in sin, thanks to the bad habits I had acquired. Now it is not that I am giving up sin, but sin which is giving me up! I have every reason to believe that my conversion is no more sincere now than it was so often in the past.

If it had not been for this illness, this day on which I have received the sacraments, this day when I will perhaps take my last breath, this day when God will judge me, this day when I am to appear before my Judge who knows everything, is this not a day notable for the new marks of ingratitude of which I am guilty? If that is the case, how will he pardon me, he who knows what I would have done if I lived on?

Add to these sad thoughts the fact that he knows completely all the faults that he did not reproach himself with before, which he treated as of no importance, for, as we learn from Ecclesiasticus 41:3: Omnis, bonum est judicium – Death, your judgments are true and just! The prejudices which blinded us are at an end, at this moment when death begins. However, we can recall to the dying man everything that can renew his confidence in God, the Blood of Jesus Christ spilled on the cross to wash away our sins, the sacraments he has so often received, the Masses he has heard, in a word, all the good works he has done; but we forget that we are talking to a dying sinner, not to a just man or a sinner whose conversion came before his illness. The name of Christian is not a consolation to the dying sinner, in the first place because he bore the name without fulfilling the duties or professing the teachings; in the second place, because he blushed to carry this glorious name.

The blood of Christ, poured out to wash away our sins, can no longer restore his confidence, because he has profaned it hundreds of times when he received the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist
135 sacrement de pénitence cela a été sans contrition, sans amandement et sans envie de se corriger. Comment se rassurer ayant fréquenté les sacrements en de pareilles dispositions. Au seul mot de messe entendu se retraitèrent à son esprit toutes les irrévérences qu'il a commises dans le lieu saint, toutes les distractions volontaires qu'il y a eues, toutes les parties de plaisirs qu'il y a projetées, tous les rendez-vous et les scandales qu'il y a donnés. S'il a fait quelque bonne oeuvre, cela a été par hypocrisie et non par amour de Dieu. Rien de tout cela ne peut donc exciter sa confiance.

Si un confesseur l'engage à espérer en la miséricorde divine, les écritures semblent le contredire ouvertement: *Vocavi et renuistis... Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsanabo*

Ce que racontait un fameux missionnaire peut ici trouver place. Il faisoit mission dans une ville où il convertit un jeune cavalier fort débauché. A deux ou trois ans de là, faisant mission ailleurs, on vint le (trouver) prier d'aller confesser dans une auberge un gentilhomme étranger qui étoit fort malade. D'abord ils se reconnurent: Eh bien mon cher fils, dit le Père, où en sommes nous? avez-vous persévéré, gardé ce que vous aviez promis à Dieu? – Non, mon Père, reprit le cavalier, je suis retombé et je suis tel et plus mauvais qu'auparavant, aussi ne crois-je plus qu'il y ait pour moi de miséricorde, j'en ai trop abusé. Le vertueux missionnaire lui disant avec bonté tout ce qui peut exciter la confiance,
– Ah, mon Père, lui répondit-il, ce que vous me dites est bien contraire à ce que je vous ai (disiez) entendu dire si souvent en chaire et au confessionnal. Là vous prêchez l'Evangile, ici vous me trompez, vous me flattez, mais Dieu qu'on ne peut ni flatter, ni séduire va me rendre selon mes œuvres.

Voilà ce que vous direz un jour, pécheurs, si vous ne changez promptement de vie, si vous ne cessez de fréquenter telle et telle compagnie, si vous [ne] mettez un frein à votre langue, en un mot si vous ne reformez toute votre conduite. Mes chers frères, prenez en main vos propres intérêts.

Epargnez-vous des regrets inutiles et des remords éternels. Faites que votre conversion précède de quelques jours votre dernière maladie, et pour cela, convertissez-vous dès à présent, parce que le Fils de l'Homme viendra comme un voleur, et par là vous méritererez de gouter les douceurs, en un mot d'éprouver ce que éprouvent les justes à votre dernier moment.

(Ét c'est ce qui va faire le sujet de ce dernier point; daignez réveiller votre attention.)
unworthily – how often has he received the Sacrament of Penance without contrition, without purpose of amendment, without any desire to correct his way of life! After receiving the sacraments with dispositions like these, how can he be reassured? The very mention of the word Mass brings back to his mind all the irreverent actions he has committed in the holy place, all the times he has planned during it to give way to his desire for pleasure, all the voluntary distractions he has had, all the scandalous meetings he has arranged while at Mass.

If a confessor brings him to hope in the divine mercy, the very Scriptures contradict him: Vocavi et renuistis...ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo!

Perhaps this is a good place to recall a story told by a famous missionary. He gave a mission in a certain town and converted a young nobleman who was living a life of debauchery. Two or three years later, while on a mission to another town, he was called to an inn to hear the confession of a stranger, a gentleman, who was seriously ill. They recognized each other at once. “So, my son, how do we stand? Have you persevered, have you kept the promises you made to God?” “No, Father” replied the young noble. “I have fallen again, and I am even more wicked than I was. I do not think there can be any mercy for me, I have abused it too much.” The holy missionary tried to say everything he could to restore his confidence, but he replied, “Oh, Father, what you are saying now is the opposite of what I have so often heard you say in the pulpit and in the confessional. There you were preaching the Gospel, now you are deceiving me, you are flattering me! But God cannot be flattered or deceived, and it is he who will render to me according to my works!”

And that is what you will all say one day, you sinners, if you do not change your life at once, if you do not give up bad company, if you do not put a rein on your tongue, in a word, if you do not change all your conduct for the better. My dear brethren, look to your own interests. Spare yourself useless regrets and eternal remorse. Make sure that your conversion comes before your last illness – make it start from today, because the Son of Man will come like a thief. Do this now, and you will taste the sweetness, you will experience what the just man experiences when your last moment comes.

(And this is going to be the subject of my last point, so I beg you once again to focus your attention on what I say.....)
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Largo Cristina di Svezia, 17
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