

MARIST NOTEBOOKS No.16

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MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT, EDUCATOR

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Reflecting on the work and the personality of Marcellin Champagnat while looking at the founders of the religious teaching congregations, a question arises. How is it that he succeeded so well with his undertaking? Perhaps this thought even tickles your intelligence, especially in view of our present situation which could give the impression of a stifling of first fervor. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, some Marist Fathers asked the same question.

THE PROBLEM

1.1 THE PROBLEM AND HOW IT PRESENTS ITSELF

Father Maîtrepierre, one of the first Marist Fathers, who researched the origins of the Society of Mary, said, "Father Champagnat possessed, in fact, everything that was humanly necessary to prevent the success of his undertaking."¹ Father Terrailon, who knew Father Champagnat as second in command for fourteen months at the Hermitage, from August 1825 until All Saints Day 1826, said, "Father Champagnat is gathering Brothers in order to form them and he is not quite aware of what he is teaching them. He is teaching them to read without himself knowing how to read properly, and to write while he himself doesn't observe the rules of grammar."²

Father Champagnat had a similar reputation among the clergy of the area. The curate of Marlhes, Father Alirot, said to Brother Louis one day, "Your superior is a man lacking in experience, ability and intelligence."³

¹ OME doc. 157 (357), p. 363

² Id. doc. 162 (707) p. 396

³ F. Jean-Baptiste, *Vie de M.J.B. Champagnat*, éd 1989 p. 91

They did not hide from him what they thought of him. Father Mayet, another Marist Father from the start, reports that someone might have said to Father Champagnat, “How do you want them to approve the Brothers? You are their teacher and expected to be more instructed than they, yet your letters are not written in good French.”⁴

We know, in fact, that during his school years, he did not regularly attend school because of his dislike of the teacher. He started studying when he was fifteen, upon deciding to become a priest. In a letter to King Louis-Phillipe, he admitted that he had started reading and writing with infinite difficulty, mainly because of the lack of capable teachers⁵ And this is the man who takes the lead in founding a congregation of teachers!

The amazing thing is that he succeeded even beyond what he himself had envisaged for the job in hand. “An immediate success, in no time at all, has justified my expectations and gone beyond my hopes,”⁶ he wrote shortly thereafter. The success is even more remarkable in that, other priests, at the same time, attempted similar projects and did not get very far, although, on the intellectual level, they had been much better prepared. Take the case of Father Douillet of Côte-Saint-André, or of Father Rouchon, curate of Valbenoîte, or of Father Mezelier of Saint Paul-Trois-Châteaux. Father Querbes, himself in Vourles, did not achieve the rapid growth from which Notre-Dame de l’Hermitage benefited.

1.2 THE BASICS ON THE LEVEL OF THE PEOPLE CONCERNED

On the other hand, for the tool in the hand of God, that is to say, for Father Champagnat himself, the chances of success were rather slim. They were even slimmer as far as the available material was concerned: the young men placed in his care. The first one who arrived at la Valla, and those who later came to Notre-Dame de l’Hermitage, made it evident that they did not possess, save for one or two exceptions, the intellectual equipment which would destine them for a teaching career. The first recruit, Jean-Marie Granjon, told Father Champagnat, at their

⁴ OME doc. 157 (537), p.367

⁵ Lettre au Roi, du 28 Janvier, 1834, LMC, vol 1.doc.34, p.100

⁶ Vie, p.166

first meeting, that he couldn't read. The fourth, Brother Antoine Coutourier, is presented to us as "a young man, good and pious, but without any education." Brother Jean-Baptiste, Father Champagnat's biographer, informs us that "the young men, who were then (1826) in the house, came from the mountains, and, for the most part, could neither read nor write."⁷ The Registry of Candidates, begun in 1822, corroborates this opinion, noting that nearly under every name appeared "can't read, can't write" or "knows very little about reading and writing."

These are the young men the founder sent to teach in the neighboring hamlets, often after less than a year of formation. And much of this year would be spent doing manual labor. Father Courveille, who spent more than a year in this formation program, in order to help Father Champagnat, reproached him "for receiving too easily, all kinds of subjects, most of whom withdrew, after causing great expense to the house. He accused him of not forming the Brothers enough in piety and the virtues of their state, of occupying them too much with manual work, of neglecting their instruction, and finally, of being too good and indulgent and, as a result, of weakening discipline and regularity."⁸ Although some of the reproaches may be justified, it remains true that those charged with the formation of future teachers faced a reality that they were seeking positively to correct. They had to hire an experienced schoolmaster and, by virtue of courses during vacation time, to complete the work done during their training period.

Nevertheless, despite this intellectual weakness, from the beginning the Brothers were successful. Brother Jean-Baptiste, after reporting how Father Champagnat formed the Brothers for teaching catechism, concluded, "In a very short time, he had several Brothers who were good catechists and who succeeded in their mission beyond his hopes."⁹ The same author states that Brother Jean Marie, after about a year, was suitably prepared to do the job, had great zeal and great devotion. He was able to replace the hired lay teacher at la Valla while, at the same time, forming the Brothers in teaching so well that the behavior at the school and the teaching of the children did not suffer from the change. The same was said of the school at Marles: "Upon their arrival the Brothers found

⁷ Id. p. 150

⁸ Id. p. 142

⁹ Id. p. 81

the children profoundly ignorant, and, in less than a year, most of the children could read, write and do arithmetic and, what is more important, they knew by heart the four parts of the catechism.”¹⁰ In addition, the children of the school were so well behaved that they impressed the Mayor of Saint-Sauveur who asked for these teachers for his school.

2. The Solution

We must therefore wonder by what special gift the humble curate of la Valla was able to form in such a short time intellectually weak young men from the countryside and make of them schoolmasters who” distinguished themselves by their zeal for Christian instruction and, by a special talent, to form the children to virtue.”¹¹ I am now going to give an answer to the question.

2.1 EDUCATION RATHER THAN INSTRUCTION

We must, first of all, consider that Father Champagnat never attempted to form learned teachers. What he wanted were educators. According to his biographer, he expressed himself very clearly on this point. “If it were only a matter of teaching human sciences to the children, the Brothers would not be necessary, since schoolmasters do that task. If we claim only to give religious instruction, we could be content to be simple catechists, gathering an hour a day to make the children repeat Christian truths. But our goal is to do more; we want to bring up children, that is to say, to instruct them in their duties, to teach them to practice them, to give them the spirit, the feelings of Christianity, religious habits, Christian virtues and good citizenry. For that, it is necessary that we live in the midst of the children and that they stay with us for an extended period of time.”¹²

Of course, that supposes beginning by teaching reading and writing, then the elements of knowledge, and to form good citizens, to know how to behave in society. But these basics must allow the building of the edifice, not the replacing of it, since they are only means to an end. The

¹⁰ p. 142

¹¹ id.p.547

¹² id. p. 547

goal is to assure their salvation which requires spiritual education. Certain convictions and lifelong habits suppose a culture which is acquired and sustained only by education. Father Champagnat did not fail to transmit these principles to his disciples, not by learned displays but by practice and example while living in their midst. To say that example was a strong point in the educational method of Father Champagnat is certainly no exaggeration. The legacy left to the first Brothers underlines this admirably. Whether he ordered or proposed something, he was the first in line to do it. The Brothers' community existed for scarcely two years when he left the more comfortable life of the presbytery to join them in their destitution. Whether it was a question of improving, enlarging, even of constructing their home with their own hands through lack of resources, he was at the head of the working force. Evidently, to be able to encourage his followers to imitate him, he needed personal qualities which are not equally shared by all. Consequently, the solution to the problem resides principally in the personality of Father Champagnat, in his solidity, perhaps we could say, in his pleasant disposition, as Brother Jean-Baptiste called it, in the gift of self for others and finally in his love of God. These four aspects deserve to be brought to light with the help of the facts which are furnished by incidents in his life.

2.2 THE DEPTH OF HIS PERSONALITY

The word "depth" such as it is found here, designates, at the same time, his sure judgment and his courage to undertake without fear or hesitation. It is part and parcel of strong personalities in whose company we feel secure, with whom we feel there is no fear of being out of step, seeing that the leader travels on solid ground in the same direction, without obstacle or detour. Early on he gave proof by showing that he was not afraid to make decisions and that he had courage to carry them out unhesitatingly. While still young, he judged his schoolmaster to have little respect for the person of the pupil and being incapable of teaching his pupils because of his personal ideas of the job. Consequently he decided peremptorily to stop attending school. At what level did he stop? To what point did his personal curiosity and his family remedy the situation? His biographer does not give an answer. There was always his father, who was not without culture, and, as a cloth merchant, taught his sons a variety of things, notably the means of increasing money through domestic animals. Immediately, Marcellin, who never pulled back from

challenge, threw himself into the little business of sheep raising. But when he understood that God wanted him to be a priest he followed the call, at the price of abandoning his little business and prepared himself for it without delay, despite the obstacles that he foresaw. When the occasion presented itself, demanding that the catechist Brothers be joined to the Society of Mary, he brought his disappointed companions around to his way of thinking.

Later, when the situation presented itself, his assurance and courage pushed him into the adventure which he pursued against winds and tides, beyond the dark hours when everything seemed to be stacked against him. When his work was put in peril and the Brothers were fearful of their future, he comforted them and told them to fear nothing, that "he shared all their misfortunes, even up to the last morsel of bread."¹³ The same assurance was there in facing the threats raised by the Revolution of 1830. "Don't be afraid, we have Mary for our defense," he writes to Brother Antoine.¹⁴ In short, his tenacity helped him to triumph over so many trials by means of his savoir-faire and his trust in Providence. The change in the way of spelling consonant sounds and the adoption of cloth stockings bring more evidence of his pedagogical sense. Contrary to the wishes of some of the Brothers, the Founder imposed on them his method of spelling which he judged to be better and made them accept his ideas through a clever presentation where he revealed his method through practical application.¹⁵ To his way of thinking, it was not a theory of education but principles based on common sense and realistic views of the situation which again demonstrate a sound and clear judgment. He possessed, in fact, the assurance of appreciating a problem of the moment and he put his decision into practice without delay.

When he left the seminary he was certain of three things:

1. Youth is neglected as far as Christian education is concerned.
2. Only teaching religious educators can bridge that gap.
3. It was up to him to form this group of religious educators.

From the first day that he was in la Valla, says Brother Jean-Baptiste, he busied himself with starting up a congregation of Brothers.¹⁶ We admit,

¹³ cf. Lettres de M. Champagnat, vol. doc. 30 p.84

¹⁴ id. doc. 16, p.57

¹⁵ See Vie First part, chapter 16

¹⁶ Vie, First part p. 43

¹⁷ Origines Maristes Extraits, doc 166 (754) and note 4, pp. 437-438

with Father Bourdin,¹⁷ that the expression “first day” is not to be taken literally, but in a broader sense, extending over a short period of time. Father Champagnat came to la Valla on August 15; he met Jean-Marie Granjon on Oct 6; on Oct 28 he ministered to the young man called Montagne; then he returned to Granjon to ask him to be the first member of the congregation. At the beginning of November he invited Jean-Baptiste Audras to do the same. From that time on, it was a question of finding a house, buying it, furnishing it with the basic necessities and, some six weeks later, moving them into their home. During this time, his semi-nary companions, who vowed to each other to found the Society of Mary, continued thinking over their project in the expectation of a favorable event for its concrete realization. Father Champagnat judged his side of the project to be more urgent. His temperament dictated that the execution of a decision taken could not be deferred. In this situation, he might have had many excuses, but he felt in possession of the means, his ability to gather men together.

2.3 A “PLEASANT DISPOSITION”

Brother Jean-Baptiste sketches a moral portrait in these few words: “Under a rather stern appearance and an exterior which seemed rather severe, he hid the most pleasant disposition. He had a sharp mind, sure and deep judgment, a good and sensitive heart, noble and elevated feelings. In character he was cheerful, open, honest, firm, courageous, ardent, constant and always uniform.” A few lines later he clarifies, “It is to this cheerful, open, easy, foresighted and conciliatory character that Father Champagnat owes a great share of success in the holy ministry and in the foundation of his Institute. His simple and affable ways, his honesty and the appearance of goodness which were spread over his face, won hearts to him.”¹⁸ Repeated adjectives like “cheerful” and “open” are found again in Chapter Four of the First Part. They speak of his character which was cheerful, honest, open, simple, modest, laughing, good and noble at the same time.¹⁹ Joined to nobility and serious behaviour, these traits denote a personality which imposed itself quickly enough on those who approached him. If reserve kept one at a distance on first meeting, it quickly gave way to a feeling of deeper respectful affection, which grew

¹⁸ Vie, second part pp. 273-274

¹⁹ *ibid.* First Part p. 41

with time. In the minor seminary, timid in his first days and annoyed by his peasant appearance, he soon became part of the “happy band” of which, one can easily imagine, he was probably not the last in anything. His retreat resolutions, marking a serious rethinking, showed signs of it. In 1812, he resolved to “flee bad company” and asked the Lord to give him the gift of humility. According to the context, this means a certain “standing aside” and an unwillingness to put himself forward. In fact, in the following years it is the tendency to talk too much that he attempted to stifle. “I will not speak ... without necessity; I will try during recreation to share my thoughts less ... to fight speaking ill ... not to speak to my advantage ... to be more recollected and less dissipated.”²⁰ If writing seemed painful to him as the restrained number of letters and writings testify, he must have felt more at ease speaking since it was a less demanding form of communication, not burdened with rules of grammar and punctuation. This ease with speaking could only reinforce the influence that he exercised on those who spent time with him. Reports of the early Brothers permit us to believe that the influence was great. “He was firm, yes, certainly,” confides Brother François. “We all trembled at the sound of his voice, under a mere glance... he was above all good, he was compassionate, he was a father...a word, sometimes repeated, but spoken by him, struck deeply into the heart.”²¹ Let’s recall the episode of the election through which Father Courveille thought of taking the superior’s place, supplanting Father Champagnat. Through two voting turns, despite the evident interference of the latter, Father Champagnat “had still obtained almost all the votes.”²²

No less significant is the reaction of the Brothers after his sickness in 1826 when he appeared in the Community Room. “It is our good father,” they cried out, braving the seriousness of the situation and the presence of Father Courveille who was presiding at the chapter of faults.²³ Another incident which occurred during the final illness of Father Champagnat shows the deep affection in which the Brothers held him. They sought mightily to find ways of easing his pain and giving him pleasure. The Brothers and the novices avoided, with extreme care, making the least noise near his room, and, while passing his room, although the corridor

²⁰ cf. Résolutions, in “Cahiers Maristes” Number 1

²¹ F. François, Carnet 13, p.197

²² Vie, p. 197

²³ id. p. 146

²⁴ id. p. 245

²⁵ id. p 91

was carpeted, they took off their shoes when they approached his room. Father Belier, a missionary from Valence, who was at the Hermitage at that time, marvelled at the great attention and wonderful care, showing such deep feelings.²⁴

The veneration paid to the Founder by the Brothers showed clearly how much formation he instilled in them. Replying to the Curate of Marlihes, Brother Louis defends the reputation of his superior, affirming, "Everybody looks upon him as a wise and knowledgeable man, and we, his Brothers, look upon him as a saint."²⁵ This praise was not usurped by Father Champagnat, who gave himself, without reserve, and without concern for his own person.

2.4. AN ALTRUISM GOING BEYOND SELF

Love of work, the courage to undertake, manual skills, in short, Father Champagnat put everything he had and was at the service of his work, to the detriment of what he could have legitimately held back for himself. Applying himself to study, instructing and forming his Brothers, taking care of correspondence, following every aspect of the administration of his Institute, visiting schools, meditating upon, studying and improving the rules which he wished to leave them as his legacy, listening to all sorts of people with whom he had to deal, interviewing the Brothers, taking care of their needs and assessing their personal contact; these were the occupations which filled his day, or rather, which filled his entire life, wore out his strength, destroyed his strong constitution and which led him to the grave before his time.²⁶ As any leader, he had to keep an eye on everything for the proper functioning of the whole. Because he was the enemy of half measures, incapable of being at leisure when there was something to be dealt with, and less yet, to do nothing, was impossible. All this because he was convinced that this was God's will. Didn't he say one day, "I could have easily led a quiet life in a small parish instead of being continually overwhelmed by the government of the Society, but the Glory of God and the salvation of souls demanded this work of mine. I could have remained in my family, working, instead of facing so many difficulties, needs and travels that the direction of the Brothers demands, but God wants it and I am happy."²⁷

²⁶ id. pp. 426-427

²⁷ Fr. François, Carnet, Notes p.77 – AFM 5101 . 310, p.27

His happiness derived, he said, from doing God's Will. It came, more directly, from the fact that he could more easily respond to the affection that he had for his fellow man, and for children in particular, and by responding also to the affection he had for his Brothers who so generously corresponded to God's call in the service of others. The real love which he had for his Brothers was strong, born of a temperament which was without affectation or pure sentimentality. The fifty-five letters to Brothers and fifteen circulars which have been preserved, show clearly his affection without distinction of persons, when he had, according to the witness of Brother Laurent, "so much to suffer from so many different characters and some strange minds which were very difficult to guide."²⁸ We might note, in his letters addressed directly to individuals that the verb "aimer" "to love" is never used but replaced by words like affection, attachment, while for one third of the Brothers he wrote to, his love is quite explicit. For example; the ending of the letter to Brother Theodoret reads, "to God, my dear friend do not doubt my attachment for you. My best wishes to Brother Director, whom I love also."²⁹ Brother Dominique who was a constant problem, and who apparently got on his nerves, received this short but tender note, loaded with understatement: "You say that you love me, and I can assure you that it is well reciprocated."³⁰

More powerful than speech was certainly the fact that the Founder was with them as often as possible. The first community existed for only two years when he came to share their home. He loved his Brothers as the children of his fatherly heart, telling them that he wanted to be in their midst, to live with them and, like them, to share their poverty...to submit himself, like them, to all the demands of the religious life."³¹ To measure the value of this gesture we must remember the grandeur of the priestly vocation which the seminary instilled in its students. According to Jean Eudes, "The least priest is superior to Louis XIV, he is the coadjutor of the heavenly Father in his generation of his son."³² It is not amazing therefore, that the neighboring clergy, seeing Father Champagnat on the scaffolding, trowel in hand, might be indignant. According to his way of seeing it, it was a necessity to be with the poor, and the humblest human condition did not appear to him as less Christlike. The only concession which

²⁸ Témoignage de Frère Laurent, OME. doc. 167 (756) p. 456

²⁹ LMC, Vol. 1, doc. 205, p. 411

³⁰ id. doc. 36, p.107

³¹ Vie, p. 78

³² Y. Krumenacker, L'Ecole française de spiritualité, Paris 1998, p. 457

he made to his priestly rank was to eat alone at a table in the Brothers refectory but not separating himself from them during recreation, mixing in with them in their games and amusing them with his humorous anecdotes. Such conduct couldn't fail to win over his Brothers and permit him to make a lasting impression on them.

It is evident that such self-giving demanded an effort of self-mastery and sacrifice. Father Champagnat found, in his altruistic character, a springboard which propelled him in this direction. It was not only to the Brothers that he felt linked by affection, but also to the children, such as they were, and especially to the most deprived. The sentence "I cannot see a child without feeling a desire to teach him catechism, without desiring to tell him how much God loved him"³³ has become famous. When he met, wandering in the streets, children whom he suspected of being without Christian education, he would say to himself, "Poor child; how I feel for you!"³⁴ According to his accounts ledger, these were not meaningless words. He translated them into action by welcoming to the Hermitage, in addition to the elderly without public assistance, children, more or less abandoned, as boarders.

He manifested this attitude to the Brothers in turn, with regard to the children whose Christian education was confided to them. To him, the vocation of the Brother was not a profession, but a ministry which requires the love of children in a special way. "To raise children well, we must love them all equally,"³⁵ he repeated, again and again. The Brothers did not at all find this difficult to understand or to put into practice. They had only to copy the example which he gave them by his behavior. His goal was to communicate to them the apostolic zeal which filled him. "To make Jesus known and loved, that is the purpose of your vocation and the goal of the Institute." That is why it is easily understood why some Brothers benefited from a few months and others from a few days of resting and instruction at the Novitiate of l'Hermitage, while others remained there for more than a year. There existed no program to assimilate, but it was imperative to give proof of zeal for the apostolate. He demanded an interior drive, strong enough to be communicated to the young.

³³ Vie, p. 504

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *id.* p. 550

³⁶ *id.* p. 556

2.5 A MORE AND MORE INTENSE LOVE OF GOD

In fact, according to Father Champagnat's thought, which ran through his whole way of life, the necessary and sufficient condition to succeed in the Christian education of children is not the possession of great scientific knowledge but having an ardent love of Jesus Christ. "To raise children well," said Father Champagnat, "we must love Jesus Christ ardently."³⁶

Nothing was more evident than this love of his neighbor, especially of the most in need. One cannot last if one is not animated by an authentic love of God which, for Father Champagnat, constituted the motive for all his activity, becoming the ultimate secret of his success. Consulting the witness of Brothers who knew him to know his confidence in Providence in difficult moments, to observe his attitude while celebrating the Eucharist, was to become convinced of his ever-growing intimacy with God. The end of his life found him, doubtless, at the threshold of mysticism.

It is not less true that, beginning with the middle of his career towards 1834, after overcoming great difficulties, he became convinced that God had chosen him to be His instrument in the foundation of the Institute. According to his way of thinking, whether it was the mediatorship of Jesus or Mary did not matter at all. When a group of eight postulants presented themselves after his begging Mary fervently that his work might not disappear "like a lamp that has no more oil," these subjects seemed visibly brought to him by Providence.³⁷ When one February evening in 1822, in the midst of a snowstorm, he and Brother Stanislas were on the point of perishing, an unexpected light saved them after a fervent prayer to Mary. It was she, once again, who "pulled them from certain death,"³⁸ which would have been calamitous for the future of the Institute. At the time of the construction of L'Hermitage, the workers were preserved on several occasions from fatal accidents. He was convinced that the "Bonne Mère," the "Good Mother," was keeping watch over them. In other similar cases which threatened the survival of the congregation, Father Champagnat saw the intervention of heaven. As he said to a Brother who expressed his sorrow at the coming loss of Father Champagnat, "Hasn't

³⁷ id. p. 101

³⁸ id. p. 354

³⁹ id. p. 233

Divine Providence done everything for us? Who gathered us together, who helped us triumph over all obstacles?"³⁹ He could not have made it any clearer that he considered himself only as the instrument which God used to bring to life the designs of Divine Providence.

This assurance, far from cooling his zeal, stimulated him to consecrate himself completely, even to the total oblation of his life. He believed that God gave him the honor of being chosen to witness for Him to so much love, in taking him into His service.

Rubbing shoulders with such a personality shone through in the eyes of the Brothers. By virtue and ability, he knew how to captivate his disciples, change them by his words and, in a more convincing way, by the solid example of his life. By observing the fire which consumed him, how couldn't they but feel attracted to what he had sown. In him they found the answer to their great preoccupation with salvation. Biographies of some early Brothers show clearly that this was the primary motive for entering the Institute. On the other hand, these sons of peasant families, numerous in general, discovered in the function of educator a value-giving side to their modest condition. Without being brilliantly intellectual, which demanded great effort, and gifts which only a few possessed, they were able to be appreciated as sowers of a promising seed, for a religious as well for a community future.

There is no question that the impulse, transmitted by Father Champagnat throughout his life, the spirit which he transmitted to them, was mirrored in the actions of his disciples. He marked them with his stamp; characteristics to which his congregation owes its success, and of which it still keeps the imprint.

To speak of success concerning the work of Father Champagnat, in view of the facts, is certainly merited. We must not make odious comparisons with other founders. What must be said is that Father Champagnat, much less equipped and, perhaps, luckier than some of them, far outdistanced most in the success of his undertaking. We attribute this, first of all, to his fundamental personality, his ability in many areas and especially to the use he made of his talents, almost to exhaustion, for the exclusive service of God, the fruit of his love for Him. Having said all this, we cannot neglect the intervention of God's grace. Father Champagnat's admission cannot be taken lightly: "Isn't it Divine Providence which has done everything for us, which has gathered us together, which has helped us triumph over every obstacle?"⁴⁰ What is repeated is that he slipped

⁴⁰ Vie, p. 223

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into the background himself to allow Divine Action to take place. It isn't necessary, to do Divine Work, to have at hand able human means, intellectual competency, financial resources. It is sufficient to abandon oneself in a total giving of self to the Being whose infinite love for us human beings is the measure of His creative power.

Brother Paul Sester, March, 1999

⁴¹ The fact that he does not mention the Manual of Piety can mean two things: on the one hand that Bro. Jean-Baptiste attributes a secondary role to it; on the other, that this passage was written before the Manual was written.

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Between the death of the Founder in 1840 and the publication of his Life in 1856, there is a long period during which the Institute managed his memory orally while, at the same time, undertaking to build a written body of doctrine. This is what Bro. Jean-Baptiste shows us on p.267 of the Life (ch.23):

"In order to fulfill this work, the Régime did three things:

1. It wrote down all the rules which were only traditional, but the practice and use of which were constant, which dated from the time of Father Champagnat, and which had been established by him.

2. It studied with great care all the writings, all the notes, all the instructions on the rules left by the Founder; it gathered and took from these everything that served to enlighten or explain certain points of the Rule, tie them together and complete them.

3. It coordinated everything, put it all in order, and divided it into three parts under the titles of Common Rules, Rules of Government, and School Guide."⁴¹

It seems we still have, with the notebooks of Bro. François and the copybooks of Bro. Jean-Baptiste a good part of these collections of the Founder's instructions, which in 1852-55 resulted in the Congregation's clear legislation with the Common Rules (1852), the School Guide (1853), the Rules of Government (1854) and the Manual of Piety (1856). The fact that the Life is published only later shows what the order of priorities was for the Superiors: the organization of the Congregation first of all, then consolidating the memory of the Founder.

Besides, the circular of 21 June 1856⁴² indicates that the publication of the Life of Fr. Champagnat was not as important an event as that of the Manual of Piety of 1855, considered the happy conclusion of the Congregation's legislative work since it is a guide to formation. Bro. François says simply:

⁴² Circulars, v.2, pp.250-259.

“The life of our venerated Founder, which we will give you at the retreat, will be of great help to see clearly the obligations of your state [...] We can say that it is the rule in action [...] That’s why [...] we are taking the liberty this year to replace the reading of the Rule during retreat with the reading of the Life of Fr. Champagnat.”

Thus, for more than fifteen years after the Founder’s death, the great preoccupation is to finish his work by having his teaching enter everybody’s daily practice. That is not so much devotion to a person as to the rule of life which he gave. It is not, therefore, by chance that the Life of Fr. Champagnat figures chronologically as the last of the fundamental books of the Institute: in the eyes of the Superiors, it is the least urgent and the one which crowns all the rest.

It is nonetheless true that, if most of the documents preparatory to composing the books of the Institute have remained in manuscript form and confidential, there are some which have been spread among the Brothers, particularly the circulars of Bro. François.

PART I: THE CIRCULARS OF BRO. FRANÇOIS: FROM LITHOGRAPHY TO PUBLICATION

The Institute could not, between the death of the Founder and the compiling of his fundamental books, live only on oral tradition. It had to give the Brothers disciplinary advice and information, and these had to be accompanied by spiritual teachings. That’s why Bro. François, continuing the custom of Fr. Champagnat, left us circulars which inform us not only about the administrative doings of the Congregation but also of the elaboration of its spirituality.

It is not unimportant, moreover, to dwell a bit on the technical conditions of the compiling of these texts. Bro. Avit mentions⁴³ that Fr. Champagnat had first of all written them by hand “or had them transcribed by Brothers more or less competent.” Then he had them lithographed by Bro. Marie

⁴³ Annals of the Institute, v.2, p.176.

⁴⁴ Ibid., v.1, p.239; Fr. Champagnat’s Letters, N° 210.

⁴⁵ Circulars, v.1 and 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., v.2, pp.134-140.

Jubin in Paris at the beginning of 1838. On 22 May that same year Fr. Champagnat (letter 193) orders Bro. François to buy him a lithographing stone. The first circular printed by lithography is dated 21 August 1838⁴⁴ but, poorly equipped, Bro. Marie Jubin can reproduce only brief texts. After 1842 Bro. François has the circulars printed, but nobody thinks of setting some aside before 1848 in order to collect them into volumes which will constitute a first collection of circulars before the edition of 1917.

Between 1838 and 1848, therefore, the Institute undergoes a minor revolution in the manner of distributing and collecting its doctrine: the manuscript, recopied more or less accurately and quickly lost, gives way to lithography which allows the message to remain uniform. Finally, printing allows a great number of copies to be made and, consequently, the passing from an essentially oral memory to a written memory.

// COMMEMORATIVE TEXTS

In examining the circulars⁴⁵ we see that until 1847 the interventions are very short, tied to practical advice, perhaps because of thrift and to perpetuate custom. For example, the circular of 22 April 1843 pp.73-75 asks that the month of Mary be properly observed and summarizes the Marial doctrine of the Institute. Starting in 1848, there are real instructions, often tied to an event. For example, the one dated 11 January 1853 on the Rule⁴⁶ is occasioned by the publication of the Common Rules of 1852. The one of 2 February 1855 (pp.203-222) celebrates the Immaculate Conception proclaimed a dogma in 1854. The circular of 31 December 1859 (pp.376-394) develops the theme that we are the temples of the Holy Spirit and that the Church is a spiritual edifice, because the announcement is made therein of the beginning of the construction of the chapel of Saint Genis Laval. True, some instructions are not directly tied to particular events: like the instruction on trust in God, dated 8 December 1857 (pp.302-309), or the one of 21 June on charity (pp.293-297).

2/ A CIRCULAR OUT OF THE ORDINARY

The circular on the spirit of faith has a totally exceptional place,

⁴⁷ Probably the 1st and 2nd parts, dated from 1848 and 1849.

both by its length and by the fact that Bro. François returns to it for several years. A first part, 15 December 1848 (pp.5-23), develops the necessity of this spirit, notably in the work of education. The circular of 16 July 1849 (pp.29-41) presents the spirit of faith as the foundation of the Christian virtues which reminds us of six great truths: God is our beginning and our end, He is present everywhere, and governs the world; Jesus Christ became man to be our model and our savior... It also has a practical side: the spirit of faith will excite us to love our vocation, to be zealous towards the children, to bear the trials of life. The circular of 21 December 1851, just like the second one, presents the spirit of faith as the foundation of the Christian virtues, but in a much more doctrinal way. This spirit enables man to give God the cult of adoration, persuades him that divine Providence directs and orders all for His glory and the good of the elect, leads him to revere all that touches worship, gives him the courage to bear the hardships of religious life... finally, forms Jesus Christ in us. The practical part is not absent: respect for the Rule, for Superiors, fraternal charity, zeal towards the children are consequences of the spirit of faith. And the circular ends only on 9 April 1853, after the publication of the Common Rules (pp.145-168) with the means of acquiring the spirit of faith by prayer, spiritual reading, meditative prayer, and the Eucharist. Spread over five years, counting a total of sixty-six pages, this text seems to be the great doctrinal work of Bro. François' generalate. However, not once is Fr. Champagnat quoted. We thus seem confronted with a paradox: Bro. François, his faithful disciple, seems to make little of the Founder in his circulars.

3/ WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS CIRCULAR?

Bro. Avit in his *Annales* (v.2, p.221, year 1850) seems to furnish an explanation for this absence of reference to the Founder by affirming that "the two circulars on the spirit of faith⁴⁷ were the work especially of Fr. Matricon and dear Bro. Louis-Marie." He repeats this statement later (p.431), specifying: "Rev. Fr. Matricon and especially dear Bro. Louis-Marie had collaborated on the circulars of the Very Rev. Bro. François." Admitting that this statement is well founded, we still don't see why these two, any more than Bro. François, would have neglected to cite the Founder. Besides, the introduction to the circular makes the role of Bro. François perfectly clear:

"I spoke to you several times, during the last retreat, about the spirit of faith, of the need we all have, to be good Christians and especially

good religious, to live a life of faith, to think, judge, speak and act in all things according to the perspectives of faith. I proposed this spirit of faith to you as the principal fruit to take from the retreat exercises, as the particular goal towards which all your efforts this year must tend [...] and it is to help you and encourage you in this holy work that I come today, guided by the masters of the spiritual life, to speak with you again, in writing, about this important matter, reminding you: 1° of the necessity of the spirit of faith; 2° of what is its base and foundation; 3° of its various degrees or practice; 4° of the means we have to acquire and preserve it.”

The circular of 16 July 1849 (p.29) shows us, consequently, the 2nd part of the program:

“In this part I will tell you in a few words what must be its base or foundation.”

The circular of 21 December 1851 (p.75), announced as the sequel to the preceding one, and insisting, therefore, on the practice of the spirit of faith, is in fact a repeat of the same theme. There are, thus, two simi-

Volumes of the Circulars	Number of quotations and references to Fr. Champagnat
I (1840-1848)	4
II (1848-1860)	7
III (1860-1869)	27 (only 4 of which are noted in v. XIII) ⁴⁹
IV 1869-1874)	10 (none noted in v. XIII) ⁵⁰
V (1874-1878)	0
VI (1878-1882)	0
VII (1882-1889)	5 ⁵¹
VIII (1890-1895)	12
IX (1896-1900)	18
X (1901-1905)	15
XI (1906-1912)	17
XII (1912-1914)	8
XIII (1914-1917)	13

⁴⁸ Circulars, v.2, pp.264-284, 6 January 1857.

⁴⁹ SEE PP.8F, 27F, 41-45, 55F, 59, 97, 126, 134F, 137, 138, 148, 279F, 282-285, 288, 295, 332, 336, 381, 414f, 420f, 425, 450.

⁵⁰ See pp.18, 28, 30, 146, 250, 256, 269, 450, 461, 481.

⁵¹ Starting with the announcement of the steps to introduce the cause of the Founder, 2 February 1886 (p.254).

lar instructions which suggest that two different authors worked on the same subject of the foundations of the spirit of faith and their practical consequences.

To summarize: it is clear that Bro. François certainly had an important part in the elaboration of this circular on the spirit of faith since he himself, at the 1848 retreat, orally developed the first part, on the necessity of the spirit of faith. We can also rightfully think that he elaborated the overall plan. It is also probable that he is the author of the second circular on the foundations of the spirit of faith. On the other hand, the authorship of the third circular, which repeats the second in a much more scholarly way, is open to doubt.

That said, positions cannot be hardened, for the superiors worked as a directive team, little sensitive to the idea of intellectual property. The circulars were probably collective works in which several could participate for various reasons. Let us say, therefore, that Bro. François' mark is not seen much in the third circular on the spirit of faith, whereas it seems more discernible in the first two. As for the fourth, we'll come back to it later.

4/ THE PROBLEM OF THE ABSENCE OF QUOTATIONS FROM THE FOUNDER

Let's go back to the paradox of the absence of quotations from Fr. Champagnat by noting immediately that before 1855 he is not cited in any circular. Then, he is cited, but very little. The only important passage on him is the table of maxims drawn from his Life.⁴⁸ On the contrary, Bro. Louis-Marie, from the very beginning of his taking charge in 1860, evokes his Life explicitly and repeatedly. Therefore, this silence on Fr. Champagnat is caused, not by people, but by circumstances.

Volume XIII of the circulars, published in 1917, which gives—with many omissions—thematic tables for the volumes previously published, lists under “Champagnat” (pp.513ff) the texts which mention the Founder. The table given below records the contents of that list, with the results of our own research added.

Therefore, it seems clear that, outside the personal interest shown by Bro. Louis-Marie at the beginning of his mandate in 1860-69, until the introduction of the cause of the Founder in 1886, he is evoked very little. Furthermore, the phases of clear interest in him coincide with times of

difficulty: the 1860's are the years of quarreling with Rome over the Constitutions, of internal struggles, and a crisis with the Marist Fathers. The years 1886 on are years of laicization and all its consequences: founding Catholic schools, obligatory "brevet"... Returning to the memory of the Founder seems to mean a search for legitimacy as well as the desire to reassure the Brothers. Can we put forth the hypothesis that invoking the Founder is stronger and more frequent when the Institute is in crisis? But we'll have to come back to this silence about the Founder in the years 1840-1855, which has specific causes.

The Rule of 1852, 2nd part, Ch.1, "On the Spirit of faith," p.39	Circular on the spirit of faith, v.2
<p>"The Spirit of faith consists in judging all things according to the principles of faith, and not according to the world's opinion or the feelings of nature, in regulating one's conduct according to these principles; in valuing, in seeking out creatures only insofar as they can lead us to God and further our salvation; in seeing God in all things, and His divine Providence directing all that happens to His glory and the good of His Elect."</p>	<p>p.6 (15/12/1848): "To live the life of faith is, therefore, nothing but submitting one's mind to all the truths which God has revealed to us, and to conform one's life to one's beliefs, regulating oneself, interiorly as well as exteriorly, in the details of one's conduct, on the principles of faith. It is to be Christian and to live as a Christian, namely, to think, speak, and act according to the Gospel and conformably to the Gospel, no matter what the world and nature can say and do otherwise."</p>
<p>"2/ The Spirit of faith is absolutely necessary to understand the excellence, the advantages and the obligations of the religious life. The Brothers who are animated by it, will love their state and will strive to acquire its virtues; they will find all their happiness in renouncing themselves and immolating themselves for God. Those who do not have it will be religious without virtue and will persevere in their Vocation with difficulty."</p>	<p>pp.21f (15/12/1848): "Faith alone can show us the incomparable advantages of the religious state, and enable us to rejoice in it. No doubt, our vocation is among the most beautiful and happiest in all respects, and that there is none more meritorious or surer; but it is for those who embrace it with the spirit of faith, and who live therein a life of faith"[...] "Without the spirit of faith we will be neither good Christians nor good religious nor good teachers; [...] our virtue will have nothing solid and our salvation nothing guaranteed." p.21: "The spirit of the Brothers of Mary, their</p>

Rule	Circular
"4/ The Spirit of faith will make them love the hidden life, humble chores, dependence, poverty, sufferings, humiliations, the contempt of the world, in order to be more like Jesus and Mary.	distinctive character must be a spirit of humility and simplicity, which leads them, after the example of the Blessed Virgin, their mother and model, to have a special predilection for the hidden life, for humble chores, for the poorest places and classes, which makes them do good everywhere and always quietly and without fanfare, which makes them love teaching which is modest and restrained, but solid and religious."
"5/ It will teach them to find God everywhere, to lift their soul to Him, to love Him and bless Him in all His creatures; it will lead them to submit to His will in the various accidents and afflictions of life, such as sickness, persecution, temptation, contrary happenings, and pressing needs of whatever kind they be; to adore then the hand of God which strikes and humbles them, and to count only on His goodness to be helped in the evils which afflict them or be delivered from them."	p.80 (21/12/1851): "Faith will fix our attention on God's Providence, which controls all events, which directs and disposes of all things for His glory and the good of the elect. [...] it is His powerful hand which rules the universe, which presides over the generations, which prepares and directs political revolutions, ⁵² empires, and families. [...] Thus in all contrary accidents, public calamities, sickness and persecution, in pressing needs of any kind, faith will teach us to turn our eyes away from the instruments which God uses to afflict us, to consider only His paternal hand which strikes and blesses us to heal us, and to count only on His goodness to be delivered from our evils or helped in our needs."
6/ To see only J.C. in the person of their superior.	p.91, No.13
7/ The Rule is the expression of the will of God	p.90, No.12
8/ Children are "like the members of J.C., the temples of the Holy Spirit, like the sacred deposits which God has given them to keep	p.92, No.14 Children are regarded "as the members of J.C., the temples of the Holy Spirit, as the sacred deposits which God has given us to

⁵² The 1848 Revolution is very near.

Rule	Circular
and of whom He will ask them an account”...	keep and of whom He will ask us an account”...
9/ “The goal of their ministry being a supernatural goal, namely the salvation of souls, it is only by supernatural means that they can achieve it: prayer, virtue, good example.”	p.93, No. 16 “The spirit of faith will teach us that the goal of our ministry among children being a supernatural goal, namely the salvation of souls, it is only by supernatural means that we can achieve it, namely by the practice of virtue, good example, and prayer”...
11/ The spirit of faith being acquired by reading and meditating on the word of God, the Brothers will read every day a few verses of Scripture.	p.148 (9 April 1853) Do spiritual reading ⁵³
12/ The spirit of meditative prayer, frequent communion, the exercise of the presence of God: other means of acquiring the spirit of faith.	p.162 Meditative prayer, the second means of acquiring the spirit of faith. P.166, the Eucharist, 3rd means. Pp.148 and 81f, the presence of God 4th means (21/12/1851)

PART II: THE CIRCULAR ON THE SPIRIT OF FAITH, THE COMMON RULES, AND THE LIFE OF FR. CHAMPAGNAT

We will now spend time showing that, although this circular has no explicit reference to the Founder, it does constitute the Congregation’s first doctrinal synthesis, which has strongly influenced its spirituality and legislative texts.

⁵³ Note that this part of the circular is posterior to the composition of the Rule and is its extension rather than its inspiration.

// BRO. JEAN-BAPTISTE AUTHENTICATES THE CIRCULAR.

We know that chapter two of the second part of the Life of the Founder is entitled: “On the spirit of faith of Fr. Champagnat.” Now, in

Rule, Part 1, ch.1, “On the goal of the Brothers,” article 6	Circular, v.2, p.94
“To advance in virtue they will strive: 1. To do their ordinary actions well and to be faithful to the smallest things, doing each exercise at the time and place and in the manner indicated to them; 2. to act with a great purity of intention, that is to say, through love of God, aiming to imitate Our Lord, to be acceptable to Him, and to earn the protection of the Blessed Virgin.”	“One of the principal exercises which the spirit of faith will have us strive for will be to do our ordinary actions well. [...] It will make us do all our actions attentively, diligently and fervently, as having to be presented to God; and it will have us follow all the prescribed circumstances of time, place and manner, without which an action is necessarily defective and imperfect.”

this chapter (p.291) Bro. Jean-Baptiste says: “The just man lives by faith, Holy Scripture says. This life of faith was great in Father Champagnat. Read the chapter on the spirit of faith in the Rule: it is the faithful expression of his feelings, his teaching, and of the principles which were the

Circular, p.91	C.R., p.44
“It is then an article of faith that I obey God and do His will when I obey my superior. Is not the memory of this truth also helpful in making obedience sweet and easy for us; but especially in making it meritorious, if we practice it in this spirit!”	“9/ To make their obedience more meritorious and easier, they will accustom themselves to seeing in their superiors, whoever they may be, only the person of Jesus Christ, and they will obey them as they would God Himself.”

mainspring of his conduct.”

This statement, therefore, authenticates a chapter of the Rule and at the same time the circular on the spirit of faith, since we are going to see that this chapter is directly inspired by the circular.

The General Chapter of 1852-54 states, likewise, in the introduction to the Rule: "Those among you who had the happiness of living with him (the Founder) and to be present at the frequent instructions which he gave us, will once again find, especially in the two last Parts, the summary of all his teaching and often his own words."

2/ THE PROOFS OF A CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE CIRCULAR AND	
Life, p.134	Circulars, v.2, pp.92s
<p>"The Brothers, therefore, will never forget that, coming to live in community and uniting so as to form one single family, they assumed the obligation to love each other as Brothers, to alert each other of their faults, and to help each other reach salvation. Charity, which J.C. calls His commandment, must be one of their principal virtues, and they must endeavor to practice it towards everybody, but particularly towards the Brothers and children. Towards the Brothers by helping them at every opportunity, by hiding and excusing their faults, by alerting them charitably if needed, by notifying the superior when the fraternal admonition has had no effect, by praying for them and giving them good example."</p>	<p>"We will consider them only as the members of the same body whose head is J.C., as children of the same father Who is God, as co-heirs of the same kingdom which is heaven, as children of the same family whose Mother is the Blessed Virgin. In this spirit, we will all love each other sincerely and effectively [...] And we will have this charity consist mainly in bearing with the faults of our Brothers with patience filled with sweetness; in being interested in everything which touches them; in helping them at every opportunity, according to our power; in always speaking well of them; and, above all, in bringing them to God and in obtaining their salvation with all our strength."</p>

THE RULE

We are going to present, therefore, a comparative table of the chapter of the Rule and of the circular which will eliminate all doubt about the strong continuity between the circular and the Rule.

Barring two articles (3 and 11) which are not clearly in agreement, the entire chapter on the spirit of faith is, therefore, a re-use of the circular or of the text which served as its base. Simply, the articles of the Rule are briefer or simplified. Let us note also that articles 11 and 12 of the Rule are anterior to the fourth part of the circular and that in this case it is the rule which influences the circular, as we read in the latter: "I now

have to explain to you the means of acquiring it [the spirit of faith] and preserving it; and that is what I am going to do in this Letter, developing for you the First chapter of the Common Rules.”

3/ OTHER CHAPTERS OF THE RULE ARE INCLUDED

We can find traces of this circular elsewhere in the same Rule of 1852. For example, in chapter 1 of the first part (p.2):

Life, p.340 (Ch.VI: His love for Our Lord)	Circular, p.94
<p>“Again it was the love he had for J.C. that inspired him with that ardent zeal to procure His glory, which led him to exhort, engage his Brothers, in all circumstances, to study this divine Savior, to make Him known and loved. In his instructions he always returned to that topic. “To make J.C. known, to make J.C. loved,” he would repeat endlessly, “that’s the purpose of your vocation, the goal of the Institute. If we did not fulfill that purpose, our congregation would be useless, and God would take His protection from it. Return then to the mysteries and the life of Our Lord; speak often to your children of His virtues, His sufferings, the love He showed them by dying on the cross, the treasures of graces He left them in the sacraments. The science of religion consists entirely of knowing J.C.: much more, it is in Him that eternal life consists, and the saints in heaven are occupied solely in studying, contemplating, and loving J.C. Who is their beatitude. Knowledge of Our Lord, then, must be the goal of all your catechism classes, and you must not give any without speaking of this divine Master. The more you make Him known, the more you make Him loved, the more you will weaken the reign of sin, the more you will establish that of virtue, the more you will guarantee the salvation of your children.”</p>	<p>“In looking at zeal (the education of children) this way, we will strive to grow always in the knowledge, the love and the imitation of J.C., in order to be able to make Him known and loved by our children. We will study and ponder without end His adorable grandeur, His example, His maxims, and the mysteries He accomplished for us. The living and animated faith of the saints drew without ever tiring from these abundant sources, sentiments ever renewed of thanksgiving and love, amazement and embarrassment, contrition and confidence. [...] The same faith must inspire in us the same ardor to study Our Lord and to spread the knowledge of His person and His mysteries among the youth confided to us.</p>

Another example in the chapter on obedience (C.R. 2nd part, Ch.II, p.44):

Life, p.323 (Ch.V: “His reverence...”)	Circular, p.81, 5th practice: the presence of God
“The way in which Father Champagnat practiced the exercise of the presence of God consisted in believing with a lively and living faith that God is present everywhere, filling the universe with His immensity, the works of His goodness, His mercy and His glory.”	“5/ The spirit of faith reminds us that we are always in the presence of the living God (III Kings, 17:1), that He fills heaven and earth with His immensity (Jer 23:24) and that His divine essence penetrates and encompasses us from all sides.

It is therefore certain that the first three parts of the circular on the

Life, p.326	Circular, p.81
“The presence of God will make you avoid sin; it will give you strength to practice virtue, to bear with the troubles of your state and will inspire in you sentiments of piety. When one is tempted, this thought alone: God sees me! is enough to drive temptation away. In fact, if we don’t dare do wrong before men, how would we dare do it before God if we recalled His presence! Forgetting God is the primary cause of all crimes.”	“We will believe then with a firm faith that God notes every one of our thoughts and words, as if we were the only beings in the universe, that He considers and weighs every one of our actions and that He sees even the most secret movements of our heart; and this lively and living faith in the presence of God, ⁵⁴ while turning us away from sin will at the same time carry us very powerfully to virtue. Who, in fact, would dare do wrong, if he thought seriously that God is intimately present to him, that He sees him and fills him entirely”...

⁵⁴ See the same expression above, in a different context.

spirit of faith are clearly a text which recapitulates the teaching of the Founder and serves as a basis for establishing a fundamental chapter of the Rule and a few articles of other chapters.

PART III: SOME PASSAGES IN THE “LIFE” TIED TO THE CIRCULAR

This circular also finds numerous echoes in the Life, for instance in this passage which deals with charity among the Brothers.

// ON CHARITY

Chapter X (p.121) of the third part of the Rule seems to take these texts up again, particularly in article 2:

“The Brothers, then, will all be united by a sincere friendship in Jesus Christ. They will have one heart and one soul as children of the same family, remembering that it is to love each other, edify each other, and help each other to reach holiness that they banded together under the same Rule.”

Consequently—the Rule continues—they must let their union show externally and, if the situation arises, side with their confrères (article 4),

Life, p.466 (ch. XVII)	Circular, p.87
“to know the mystery of the cross is to be profoundly convinced that the works of God are all marked with this sacred sign; it is to look upon the cross as a pledge of success, as the most efficacious means of succeeding in our work [...] it is impossible for the devil and the world not to oppose it. The cross and afflictions are necessarily the lot of every person who does the work of God, and who works usefully at the salvation of souls.”	“Our Lord having redeemed the world by poverty, work and the cross, everybody who is called to work, closely or from a distance, at the salvation of the neighbor, must expect to suffer like Him and to do good only through difficulties and struggles of all kinds, only by wearing oneself out and exhausting oneself in works of zeal [...] Troubles and tribulations are, therefore, the mark of the divinity of our mission and of the holiness of our work.”

help and bear with each other (article 7), edify each other and inspire each other to good (article 8), speak honestly with each other (article 9),

Life, p.291	Circular, p.87
“We have even more to fear from ourselves than from all the world and all of hell: for we are our own greatest enemies, and we do ourselves more harm than the wicked and all the devils together can do us.”	“If the spirit of faith makes us return to the source of the worries and bitterness which sometimes overwhelm us, we will find that the cause is in ourselves and that they come especially from the fact that we are not at peace with God, that we have withdrawn from Him by some sin, by some resistance to His wishes.”

bear with the lack of respect and the troubles occasioned by the confrères (article 10), charitably admonish each other (article 11), alert the superior of serious faults (article 12).

2/ KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST

We find the same similarity in reference to the knowledge of Jesus Christ:

3/ THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

The third part of the circular, on the practice of the spirit of faith, seems particularly tied to the Life. Thus, the 5th practice, on the presence of God, sends us back to chapter V which appears to take up its elements again.

Brother Jean-Baptiste, who does not give Bro. François’ Biblical references, seems clearly to have adapted his text. A little further on it seems that Bro. François again takes up one of Fr. Champagnat’s statements.

The circular then invites us to practice the spirit of faith by annih-

⁵⁵ Circulars, v.2, p.5.

lating ourselves before the Eucharist and respecting all that relates to worship. The Brothers, consequently, are invited to genuflect profoundly before the tabernacle, walk without haste, eyes lowered. Likewise, whatever touches worship (ceremony, holy water, cross, images, statues of Our Lord and Our Lady) must be treated with respect. These details return us again to pages 288-290 of chapter II of the Life which describe for us the respect Fr. Champagnat had for holy things “such as the crucifix, images of the saints and the holy water font” (p.289) and also the sign of the cross.

Circular, p.36	R.52, p.96	A.D.F.M., ⁵⁶ pp.98-104
<p>“As this pious and zealous Brother works without stopping to do more good among the children, to earn their trust by the goodness of his teaching even secular subjects; their esteem and respect by his exemplary and constantly even-handed conduct; their affection, by words and procedures which are always fair; by a devotedness without limits and which extends to all indiscriminately; and as a result he has full authority over the children and is sincerely loved and esteemed by them, words are insufficient to express what fruits of salvation he will be able to produce among them.”</p>	<p>“2/ He must neglect nothing to attract the esteem, respect, and affection of the children, in order to win them more easily to J.C.. The means to that end are: 1. To be always even-handed, to have a happy, good and serious disposition all at once; 2. To make classes and work agreeable to the children by emulation, rewards and praise judiciously given; 3. To be neither too severe in punishing nor too difficult to please in homework or lessons; 4. To show the children the goodness of a father, sharing their sorrows, helping them, encouraging them, showing them by his zeal and his devotedness in teaching them and helping them make progress, that he has only their interest at heart.”</p>	<p>p.98: “a teacher must show his love for the children: 1. by his devotedness in instructing them in the truths of religion and by his application in giving them all the knowledge that can be useful to them in their state and their condition. 2. By his zeal in forming them to virtue [...] 3. By his attention in having them avoid mistakes [...] 4. By good teaching methods, using emulation, praise, rewards and anything that can attach the children to the school and make work pleasant and agreeable to them. 5. By his affability and great fairness in all his dealings with them and their parents. 6. By the paternal feelings he must have for his pupils [...] p.101: “To gain the esteem, respect and love of the children, a catechist must constantly behave uniformly in all circumstances”...</p>

⁵⁶ A Marist Brother's Apostolate or Treatise on Education, composed by Bro. Jean-Baptiste.

4/ VOCATION

In his circular Bro. François insists on pointing out all the advan-

Circular, p.36	A.D.F.M., pp.178f
<p>"You know, my very dear Brothers, that students naturally tend to imitate a teacher that they like and esteem, to accept his thoughts, his ways of acting and to believe everything he tells them. Consequently, how fortunately impressed will their young hearts be when they see him so filled with horror of sin, scorn for the world, love for virtue, esteem for things of faith; when they hear him speak of these with such a profound conviction and when they notice that, always and everywhere, he treats everything that touches them with absolute respect!"</p>	<p>"Children are born imitators [...] Children learn more with their eyes than their ears. Nature makes them curious and their eyes look for instruction and example avidly and everywhere. But on whom do they gaze if not on those who teach them and whom they look upon as models they can copy in everything. A Brother can be sure to have as many observers and imitators as he has students. [...] Thus, it is by his reverence, his union with God, his attention to prayer, his demeanor and concentrated tone that a Brother will form his students to piety. It is by the respectful manner in which he speaks of the truths of faith that he will make them conceive a high idea of the mysteries of Religion, and that he will inspire them with a great respect for God and holy things."</p>

tages of religious life, filled with exercises of piety and... "a state in which all the means of salvation are given us in abundance, where we find ourselves in the happy necessity of doing good and as if in the impossibility of committing sin or, at least, of staying in sin." Thus he refers to chapter XVIII in the Life which gives one of the Founder's instructions on vocation (p.475), insisting on "the abundance of the means of salvation" and on "avoiding dangers."

Still, religious life is not without trials, and both texts have correspondent statements on the necessity of embracing the cross.

Furthermore, these troubles are very often nothing but the consequences of our own unfaithfulness.

⁵⁷ AFM. 5101.308

The overriding impression at the end of these comparisons is that the circular and the Life are inspired by the same teaching, but treated in a different way. The first does not seek to cite textually the Founder's doctrine but rather to integrate it into traditional spirituality, as Bro. François suggests in announcing that he composes "guided by the masters of the spiritual life." On the contrary, Bro. Jean-Baptiste, in the Life, presents Fr. Champagnat as a spiritual master and is more concerned with sticking to the instructions which he gave. Nevertheless, in a circular which

Circular, p.84	Notebook 308, p.1192
<p>"What happiness, in fact, is it not for us to be freed of the cares of temporal things and, like the angels, to have nothing to do but praise, love, bless and serve God, work for His glory and for the salvation of our brothers, to have given everything to God, goods, honors, pleasures, liberty even, and to be able to say like Saint Francis of Assisi: My God is my all, and I no longer have anything but Him! To see ourselves continually as the favorites of J.C. and the object of His divine communications"...</p>	<p>St. Liguori, speaking to some religious: "Your life," he told them, "is an angelic life, your convent heaven and your actions the triumph of religion and the Church." "What name worthy enough will I be able to give you?" adds St. Bernard. "Shall I call you celestial men or terrestrial angels, since, though you still live on earth, all your words and all your thoughts are in heaven!"... p.1336: "The religious, leaving all for God, finds it all again in God. He can say with St. Francis: My God and my all; and with the prophet: What is there for me in heaven or what would I desire on earth, if not You, O my God!"</p>
<p>p.86 The cross is the mark of our resemblance to J.C.</p> <p>"It is thus that all the Saints have looked upon them [crosses]. In the impatience in which I find myself to see God," Saint Teresa used to say, "nothing but the happiness of suffering can make life bearable to me." "To suffer or to die," she would repeat endlessly. "More, Lord, more!" Saint Francis Xavier used to cry out when God</p>	<p>p. 1233 "I can't resist the desire to suffer," St. Teresa cries out; "my God, You must send me tribulations or death." "To suffer always, never to die," added Saint Magdalen of Pazzi, and St. John of the Cross used to ask Our Lord for no other reward than to suffer and be despised for love of Him. "Enough, God, enough consolation; but more, Lord, more troubles and tribulations," St. Francis Xavier would cry out. As the sufferings of J.C. increase in us, St. Paul said, so do the consolations by J.C. (2 Cor 1)</p>

Circular, p.36	A.D.F.M., pp.178f
showed him all the tasks and troubles and sufferings which were waiting for him in India and Japan. "Enough, Lord, enough," the saint said when God flooded him with consolations in the solitude of Goa.	
As for the world: (p.89) "its goods are nothing but vanity, its pleasures nothing but crimes or illusions, its honors nothing but trickery. Rarely do we achieve good fortune in the world; and if we do by dint of effort, we keep it only with extreme worry, we hardly enjoy it for a few moments, and we lose it with the most extreme regret."	p.1248 "We consider ourselves happy in the world if we have a gainful employment, a thriving business, if we make good business deals, earn large sums of money, achieve finally a brilliant and colossal fortune; to do this, we don't complain about time or effort; [...] and yet, how many disappointments we generally experience? How many times are we not fooled in our expectations [...] A reversal of fortune plunges us into misery and desola-

seems to discuss spirituality in general we remain close to the words of Fr. Champagnat; this for two reasons, it seems: first, because Champagnat lived in a classic spiritual culture and his instructions bore that mark; secondly, because Bro. François and the other authors of the circulars were impregnated with the Founder's spirituality which they wanted to pass along and permeate the spirit of the Brothers. The circular on the spirit of faith is, therefore, interesting, for it shows how Marist spirituality is tied to tradition. At the same time, written by Marists for Marists, it is the first systematic manifesto of the Institute's spirituality.

PART IV: THE CIRCULAR AND THE MANUSCRIPTS OF BB. FRANÇOIS AND JEAN-BAPTISTE

II / A MARIST BROTHER'S APOSTOLATE AND THE CIRCULAR

Bro. Jean-Baptiste left us a voluminous treatise on education which

⁵⁸ Circulars, v.2, p.5: "Guided by the masters of the spiritual life, I come today to talk with you, in writing, about this important topic."

Bro. Paul Sester entitled *The Apostolate of a Marist Brother (A.D.F.M.)*. A certain number of passages in it are akin to the circular. We rest satisfied with giving two samples below, on relations with the children.

The overriding impression, then, is that A.D.F.M. retained the original instruction, from which Bro. François adapted an excerpt. The rule of 1852 fixes a norm in function of this twofold teaching. Besides, the table here below offers us very significant similarities.

One senses, therefore, behind the circular the presence of the instructions of Fr. Champagnat on education which certain other manuscripts have also reported.

2/ ONE OF BRO. FRANÇOIS' NOTEBOOKS AND THE CIRCULAR

Bro. François' second notebook of instructions⁵⁹ contains three texts entitled thus: "Comparison of the obligations of lay people and religious," pp.1185-1215; "Comparison of the troubles of religious and lay people," pp.1230-1255; "Comparison of the state of religious and that of lay people," pp.1329-1361. It is not a matter, strictly speaking, of instructions: their content is very long and theoretical. One thinks, rather, of notes Bro. François took from ascetical writers. Certain indications allow us, however, to think that they have a link with pp.84-90 of the instruction on the spirit of faith in which certain sections have similar headings: "The religious state is the holiest and happiest we can desire on earth" (p.84); "Let's be careful not to exaggerate the troubles and difficulties of religious life" (p.85); "The troubles of religious life and virtue are incomparably less than those of people in the world" (p.88) The texts themselves offer important analogies. For example, about the angelic life led by religious:

⁵⁹ Note that this title corresponds with the terms used in the circular.

Notebook 307, p.148 Bro. François	Writing 3, p.128 & Writing 4, p.353. Bro. Jean-Baptiste	A.D.F.M., p.284 Bro. Jean-Baptiste
"We have to conclude from all of that:	"Whence we must conclude:	"It follows then from all we've just said:
1. that humility and simplici- ty must be the cherished virtues of the L.B. of Mary...	idem	1. that humility must be the cherished virtue of the Brothers of Mary
2. that they must have a particular predilection for the hidden life...	idem	Idem
3. that each Brother must look upon humility as the princi- pal virtue of his vocation.	idem	3. that by the spirit of their vocation they are called to live unknown in the world as much as possible, that is to say, to do good quietly"
4. that the Brothers must do good quietly"...	idem	4. that it is by humility, by modesty, that they will work efficaciously at the sanctifi- cation of their souls...
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

Bro. François has probably incorporated in the circular, as he had announced,⁵⁸ a few excerpts from his own ascetic readings. In addition, he clearly seems to be the author of the third part of the circular, from which the above passages are taken, and which seemed to us to be from a different author.

PART V: THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE

There is a passage in the circular (p.21) which resonates very particularly with the teaching of the Founder and numerous other passages of Marist manuscripts and publications. Here it is:

"Let us add, my very dear Brothers, that a particular reason which

obliges us to hold on to this spirit of faith, which makes the life of faith necessary to us, is the very character and spirit proper to our congregation. In fact, the spirit of the Brothers of Mary, their distinctive character, must be a spirit of humility and simplicity, which leads them, after the example of the Blessed Virgin, their mother and their model, to have a particular predilection for the hidden life, for humble work, for the poorest classes and places, which leads them to do good everywhere and always without fuss and fanfare, which makes them love teaching which is modest and limited, but solid and religious.”

We already discussed this theme in the Introduction to the Life of M.J.B. Champagnat (ch.XIV). We recall here only the passages which say similar things.

Life, p.408, ch.XII: “Their life must be humble, hidden and unknown to the world”... “Humility must be their preferred virtue;” p.413: “He who possesses this virtue [humility] lives noiselessly in community”... “He does good without trumpeting.”

Bro. François: notebook 307, pp.147-150: “Characteristics and spirit of the Society of the Little Brothers of Mary”⁶⁰: “Our life must be humble, hidden, unknown to the world. Humility and simplicity must always be the principal virtues, endorsed by and characteristic of each one of us”... notebook 308, pp.544-554: “Mary, model of humility: Humility must be the cherished and special virtue of the Little Brothers of Mary. [...] the hidden life, humble practices, tiring and disgusting jobs, scorn; in a word, the continual exercise of humility must be their delight.”

Texts very close to those of the notebooks of Bro. François, and which are retranscriptions or adaptations of the same original instruction of Fr. Champagnat, also figure in the manuscripts of Bro. Jean-Baptiste. We give here-below very abridged samples of these.

We would have to add to these texts those of the Rule of 1852 whose chapter V of the second part on humility speaks of “a particular predilection” for humility which must be their “particular virtue”. Their spirit is “to do good quietly” and “to live unknown and forgotten by the

⁶⁰ Yves Krumenacker, *L'école française de spiritualité. Des mystiques, des fondateurs, des courants et leurs interprètes*. Le Cerf, Paris: 1998, pp.373-380.

world”.

The circular of 1848 shows us, therefore, how the Founder’s teaching on a central point of Marist spirituality could have been re-endued. We will note, likewise, that Bro. François adds a coda which in all likelihood was not in the original text, when he specifies that the teaching will have to be “modest and limited but solid and religious.” He thus introduces a new idea, in the context of which the Brothers’ schools, driven by the rise in the level of schools and by the spread of boarding schools, tend to teach less basic matter and where the place of catechism is less preponderant.

PART VI: A THEOCENTRIC SPIRITUALITY WITHOUT EQUAL IN THE REST OF MARIST LITERATURE

Until now we have insisted on the ties between the circular and the Congregation’s other books or manuscripts in order to show how this circular, apparently without ties with Fr. Champagnat, was in fact entirely filled with his teaching. Now we are going to show the circular’s great originality by presenting an excerpt (p.76) which seems to have no equal elsewhere. Here it is:

“In recalling, as first and fundamental truth, the infinite being of God and our nothingness, faith will lead us efficaciously to give to His sovereign majesty a cult of adoration, love and dependence which we owe Him. On the one hand, in fact, faith will show us God as the only necessary being, sovereign, independent, immense, immutable, of absolutely infinite excellence and perfection. On the other, it will make us see with the same certitude that all that exists draws being only from Him, and that all creatures are dependent on His sovereign power, so absolute, so universal, so continual, that, without His assistance at every instant, they would immediately fall back into nothingness whence His power and goodness alone have drawn them; that, consequently, of ourselves we are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing. [...] Everything then is from God alone, to God alone and for God alone. It is therefore to Him alone that we must return all our being and all that we can do or think. Thus, on this great truth of God’s infinite being and our nothingness, the spirit of faith will make us pour the foundations of a solid humility; it will set us firmly in contempt and detachment of ourselves and creatures, it will teach us to prize God above all, adore Him, love Him and serve Him with

all our heart.”

Bro. François does not specify what spiritual master inspired him to develop such a strongly theocentric spirituality. Nevertheless, in treat-

OLD TESTAMENT	Bro. François
Leviticus	1
Kings	1
Psalms (especially Ps. 118)	9
Proverbs	1
Wisdom	2
Ecclesiasticus	1
Isaiah	1
Habakuk	1
TOTAL OLD TESTAMENT	17 (24%)
NEW TESTAMENT	
GOSPELS	
Matthew	8
Mark	2
Luke	9
John	5
TOTAL	24 (39%)
PAUL'S EPISTLES	
Romans	7
1 Corinthians	2
2 Corinthians	3
Galatians	2
Ephesians	1
Philippians	1
Colossians	1
1 Timothy	2
Hebrews	4
TOTAL	23 (33%)
ACTS	3
CATHOLIC EPISTLES	
James	1
1 Peter	2
Revelation	1
TOTAL NEW TESTAMENT	53 (76%)

ing of the infinite grandeur of divinity and the nothingness of man, he is in agreement with fundamental aspects of the French School of spirituality.⁶⁰

For sure, we find similar ideas in the Life, notably p.291, ch.II:

“Enlightened by this spirit of faith, he saw starkly his own weakness, the nothingness of creatures, the vanity of human means, and he counted on God alone for the success of his undertakings. [...] Let us pray Our Lord, therefore, to bless our work, for, *Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam,...*”

In the chapter on Fr. Champagnat’s humility we also find:

“The founding and the progress of the institute,” he would repeat on every occasion, “are all God’s work and not ours; it is He Who has done everything; it is to the protection of Mary that we owe this blessing and all our success. As for us, we are only fit to mess up what God entrusts to us, and we must beg Him without ceasing never to stop protecting this community, because of our failings.” (p.407)

The chapter on Fr. Champagnat’s trust in God is the one which appears closest to this text, notably in this excerpt from one of his instructions (p.299):

“What is proper to man is weakness, misery and nothingness.”

Nevertheless, the tone is different. Father Champagnat seems less sensitive to God’s grandeur than to His Providence helping those who

⁶¹ A. Lanfrey, Introduction à la Vie de M.J.B. Champagnat, p.103.

Saints and spiritual authors	Number of quotations
Saint Bernard	6
The Imitation	5
Liguori	4
John Chrysostom	2
Saint Augustine	2
Saint Jerome	2
Annals of the Propagation of the Faith (1849)	1
Saint Ignatius, martyr	1
Saint Teresa of Avila	1
Saint Francis of Assisi	1
Saint Athanasius	1
Saint Benedict	1
Saint Epiphanius	1
Saint Thomas	1
Saint Cyprian	1
TOTAL	30

count on Him alone. His spirituality seems more that of a man of action than that of a speculative man. But we say this only as a hypothesis, for it is possible that we have overlooked some of the Founder's texts.

No matter what, in recalling that humility is not only a virtue in the moral order but the consequence of a strongly theocentric theology, Bro. François allows us, better than Bro. Jean-Baptiste and perhaps better than Fr. Champagnat himself, to perceive the profound meaning of this fundamental virtue of the Founder, a consequence of his strong trust in God and of the consciousness of his own nothingness. If the Brothers have to lead a humble and hidden life, it is in imitation of Mary, yes, but because living thus is to give God the adoration to which He alone has a right.

PART VII: BRO. FRANÇOIS' SOURCES

It is certain that to reach the point of formulating so rigorous a

⁶² The Sinners' Guide.

theocentric and self-negating spirituality Bro. François was inspired by spiritual authors. His circular is studded especially with Biblical quotations; here is the list:

// BIBLICAL SOURCES

Bro. François, then, makes a heavy use of the Bible, especially of the Gospels and the epistles of St. Paul. He even provides (p.158) an instruction on reading the Bible, in the tradition of the *lectio divina*:

“Entering into deep recollection, he reads this divine word with religious respect, he absorbs it fully, he loves it, he relishes it; his spirit is illuminated by the pure light which pours from it, his heart receives its divine impressions with docility; and, disillusioning himself little by little from the vanities of the earth and the deceits of the world, he fills himself with the spirit of faith, he attaches himself solely to God and becomes inflamed with His love.”

Following the example of the saints, a Brother must particularly cherish the Gospels and consider “all the writings of the holy doctors, the masters of the spiritual life”, as “the Gospel explained”. Curiously, he does not speak of Saint Paul, probably because, for him, the word “Gospel” is synonymous with the New Testament. Let us note simply that Bro. François favors the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and the epistle to the Romans, whereas the French School stresses John, the epistle to the Romans and the two epistles to the Corinthians. In Fr. Champagnat’s *Life* we will find the same insistence on Matthew, Luke and Romans, but also on 1 Corinthians and Galatians.⁶¹

2/ BRO. FRANÇOIS AND SPIRITUAL TRADITION

Who are, for him, the holy doctors and masters of the spiritual life who, he tells us, inspired him?

The most prominent, therefore, are the Fathers of the Church and saints before the seventeenth century. Only Liguori, an eighteenth century saint, deserves to be mentioned. The only contemporary literature quoted, the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, has only anecdotal interest. It is true, however, that Bro. François, at the end of his circular (p.151), recommends reading the great classics of asceticism: Rodriguez (Christian

Perfection), Saint Jurius (The Knowledge of O.L.J.C.), Grenada,⁶² Liguori and the lives of the saints. The number of quotations shows us, then, that for Bro. François the New Testament is the main hearth of all teaching, with its precursor, the Old Testament, and its extension, the words of the saints. Classical view no doubt, but which we do not always find in Marist literature, often encumbered with quotations, examples of the saints and edifying stories, and which use Scripture as one authority among others. By unifying Marist spirituality around the spirit of faith and basing this spirit largely on Scripture, particularly the Gospels and Saint Paul, Bro. François does solid doctrinal work.

Furthermore, it is legitimate to wonder if we are not here face to face with the profound reason which leads him not to mention Fr. Champagnat even once: because he wants to tie Marist spirituality to an ancient and indisputable tradition. The Founder is still too recent to rank among the authorities and, besides, the originality of his life and doctrine is still poorly coalasced since it is based on oral tradition. By establishing both between 1852 and 1856 and by affirming the holiness of Fr. Champagnat in the introduction to his Life, the Institute will finally be able to place him among the great ancestors and thus complete its work of mourning. Nonetheless, we can wonder if this circular which never once quotes the Founder but which is the first systematic writing on Marist spirituality, composed by one of the very first disciples, isn't more filled with his spirit than the collections of rules, facts, and doings and virtues of Marcellin Champagnat composed subsequently by the Chapter and Bro. Jean-Baptiste, and which chop his doctrine up to give it an easily assimilated doctrinal character. That's why we must, it seems to me, give this writing, situated between the death of the Founder and the codification of his thought, a privileged place.

CONCLUSION: THE COMPLEXITY OF MARIST SPIRITUALITY

⁶³ AFM....5201.21. Developing "what is a saint" in meditations 43-48, Bro. Jean-Baptiste does not cite the spirit of faith as a characteristic of holiness. This text is repeated in the A.L.S.

⁶⁴ AFM. 5201.22.

⁶⁵ Bro. François' late manuscripts treat it only anecdotally.

⁶⁶ It is located under the heading of "faith," which has little under it.

Examining this circular has allowed us, therefore, to think that, if Bro. François is not perhaps the exclusive author, he did at least play a capital role in its elaboration. But, fundamentally, the question of the author of the circular is rather secondary. What is important is that we have before us the first systematic manifestation of the thought of the congregation on its own spirituality at the end of the first half of the XIXth century. We are also in the presence of a capital stage in the elaboration of the Rule and of the Life of the Founder, tied into other manuscripts of Bro. Jean-Baptiste and Bro. François who, in a less elaborated way, also undertake the same effort of reflection. Finally, the inventory of the sources used is for us an excellent indication of the way in which that elaboration was done by having recourse to Scripture and a rather precise spiritual tradition on which they based the Founder's teachings.

This effort to integrate the Founder in a long history of spirituality showed itself creative, for the theme of the spirit of faith seems not to have come directly from the Founder even if he himself practiced it. Through the Life we have some idea of the contents of Fr. Champagnat's instructions. Thus, we read (p.107) that during the construction of La Valla in 1822 his instructions "were almost always based on piety, obedience, mortification, love of Jesus, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and zeal for the salvation of souls." Recalling the instructions Fr. Champagnat gave in 1824, during the construction of the Hermitage (p.133), Bro. Jean-Baptiste adds:

"That summer he gave them solid instructions on the religious vocation, the goal of the institute and zeal for the Christian education of children."

In neither case is there question explicitly of the spirit of faith. Moreover,

⁶⁷ In the Annals of the Institute (v.1, p.109) Bro. Avit gives us a lesson by Fr. Champagnat on the spirit of faith for the year 1830, but he appears to be only copying the Life, pp.286-292. Besides, what he calls a lesson is more like a series of sentences.

⁶⁸ Circulars, v.4, p.250: "Is he not like a second founder?"

**A FUNDAMENTAL WORK WHICH HAS BEEN
FORGOTTEN: THE MANUAL OF PIETY (1855)**

this theme is not found in the Manual of Piety (1855) which is, we know, the summary of Marist doctrine and which the Brothers had to learn in the novitiate. Neither is it present in the manuscript of Bro. Jean-Baptiste's Meditations on the Great Truths,⁶³ nor in his collection of examinations of conscience.⁶⁴ Bro. Jean-Baptiste's and Bro. François' handwritten collections of instructions, for all practical purposes, do not mention it at all.⁶⁵ The Biographies of a Few Brothers (1868) lists as follows the virtues characteristic of a Marist Brother:

"The fear of and flight from sin, attachment and devotion to their vocation and their institute, charity towards the neighbor, entire obedience to the superior and the Rule, love of Jesus Christ, zeal to draw children to Him, devotion to the Blessed Virgin, etc."

The thematic index of the circulars (1917) is itself very meager on this topic. Under the heading "spirit" there is no indication even of the spirit of faith.⁶⁶ In short, the texts of the Institute are extremely skimpy on the theme of the spirit of faith or, rather, the spirit of faith is found diluted a bit everywhere.

Bro. Sylvester speaks of Fr. Champagnat's spirit of faith only twice (pp.68 and 309f) to affirm his conviction that it is indeed the unifying principle of his life but without mentioning any of his teaching on that subject.

All these reasons lead us to think that the spirit of faith is not an original theme with Fr. Champagnat, but the result of Bro. François' doctrinal elaboration after re-reading the life of his spiritual master in the light of his own experience and his biblical and spiritual readings. His situa-

⁶⁹ Not to be confused with the Directory of Solid Piety.

⁷⁰ This is found in the Circulars, Vol 2, pp 227-232. It is reproduced in part in the editions of the Principles of Perfection.

⁷¹ It is by this title that the Brothers refer to it.

tion as Director General and his prestige as disciple of the first hour allowed him to have this interpretation included in the rule of 1852 and in the *Life of Fr. Champagnat*.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, in these two works this unified vision of spirituality around the spirit of faith is found drowned in a list of virtues. Furthermore, Bro. Jean-Baptiste's preponderant influence in the formation of Marist spirituality, clearly evoked by Bro. Louis-Marie in his biographical sketch of Bro. Jean-Baptiste,⁶⁸ oriented this sketch towards "the solid virtues," namely the preponderance of asceticism.

We are, consequently, it seems, in presence of a beautiful example of the complexity of Marist spirituality in which we see the teaching of the Founder along two different tracks: Bro. François', who goes beyond the original instructions and does not hesitate to reformulate so as to unify and highlight what, in Fr. Champagnat, seems to have been profoundly lived but not systematized; the other, that of Bro. Jean-Baptiste, perhaps more attached to the original formulation of the doctrine of the Institute, but lacking a bit of sublimity and, especially, a sense of synthesis. The books of the Institute, therefore, bear the mark, not only of the Founder, but of the two interpretations of his spirituality which tend in two different directions and blend only awkwardly.

Manual of Piety, p.141, Ch. XIV: "Maxims of Fr. Champagnat."	Life, 2nd Part, Ch. 1, p. 274 ⁷²
"1/ To edify the children, to get them to love virtue and to lead them to God, it is not enough to be pious and virtuous; one must also have a personality and manners they find pleasing and attractive. A Brother should, then, work unceasingly to correct his defects of character and anything in his person which may repel or hurt his neighbour."	"To edify the children, to lead them to God, it is necessary to have true piety and solid virtue, but that is not enough; one must also have a personality and manners they find pleasing and attractive."
<p>"2/ Do not trust men of a sly character, melancholic, who like to be by themselves and keep out of sight, for they are almost always full of perverse thoughts."</p> <p>"3/ There are two sorts of men with whom the devil does what he will: the lazy and those who give in to sadness and discouragement."</p>	<p>Life, Ch I. p 268</p> <p>"There are two sorts of men with whom the devil does what he will: the lazy and those who give in to sadness and discouragement. Do not ask what temptations they experience, for they have them all. Religious of a sly, melancholy disposition, who like to be by themselves and keep out of sight, nearly always have perverse thoughts on their minds."</p>

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Not enough attention, perhaps, has been attached in Marist studies to a body of literature produced between the death of the Founder and the publication of his Life, which makes up the congregation's first body of doctrine. For it is a fact that before this biography, which made the Life

⁷² Bicentenary edition (English), 1989. The chapter numbers in Roman numerals indicate the chapters of the second part.

Manual of Piety	Life
4/ What causes most trouble today will be our consolation at death.	Ch. II p. 279
5/ We should not be afraid of the wicked, but of God, and especially of ourselves, for we are our own worst enemies.	Ch. II p. 282
6/ God alone can give us success. We ourselves can only ruin things.	Ch. II p. 282
7/ It is through God, Mary, piety and virtue that our schools are successful and not by human means.	Ch. II p. 283
8/ It is not genius that is needed for the works of God but devotedness, virtue, piety, confidence in God.	Ch. III p. 289
9/ A Brother should not only teach his pupils but pray for them.	Ch. IV p. 302
10/ Prayer is the source of all the virtues (Wisdom 7,11).	Ch. IV p. 304
11/ Pious Brothers are precious to the Institute. The more there are of them the more prosperous the Institute.	Ch. IV p. 311
12/ A good religious is necessarily a man of prayer.	Ch. IV p. 308
13/ The thought 'God sees me' chases away temptation.	Ch. V p. 316
14/ The more obedience costs, the more God blesses us.	Ch. VIII p. 351
15/ The body gets used to anything. We must refuse to gratify nature.	Ch. XI p. 384
16/ The glutton is faint-hearted in the practice of virtue.	Ch. XI p. 385
17/ One who wants to be strong must mortify himself in little things.	Ch. XI p. 386
18/ Impurity comes from gluttony and idleness.	Ch. XI p. 386
19/ When you are tempted by vanity, consider that there is little good in you.	Ch. XII p. 400-1
20/ The proud man is good for nothing, whatever his talents.	Ch. XII p. 401
21/ To bring up a child: a function more sublime than governing the world.	Ch. XX p. 497
22/ A well-taught catechism is worth more than the greatest penances.	Ch. XX p. 497
23/ A good first communion is a pledge of salvation.	Ch. XX p. 499
24/ It is necessary to instil in children a great horror of sin.	Ch. XX p. 501
25/ Instructions, counsel and correction are seeds which must be watered by prayer if they are to grow.	Ch. XX p. 502
26/ Not to seek to spread devotion to the B.V.M. shows one has no zeal.	Ch. XX p. 503
27/ A Brother cannot without blame neglect catechism studies.	Ch. XIV p. 423
28/ The devil wastes his time with busy men. He succeeds with the lazy.	Ch. XIV p. 420
29/ When one gives oneself to God one must do so completely.	Ch. XXIV p. 552
30/ Detachment from parents is indispensable for religious.	Ch. X p. 378
31/ One much attached to his parents is less attached to his vocation.	Ch. X p. 378-9
32/ A Brother who loves his parents more than his duty is a religious	

Manual of Piety	of	the Life
only in name.		Ch. XVI p. 444
33/ Anyone who is secretive and does not live like the others is not fit for religious life.		Ch. XVI p. 445
34/ Man is sheltered from temptations when he is where God has placed him.		Ch. XVIII p. 464
35/ To become a Brother is to undertake to become a saint.		Ch. XVIII p. 465
36/ A Brother is a soul predestined to high virtue.		Ch. XVIII p. 465
37/ The remedy for temptation against one's vocation is openness of heart and submission to the superiors.		Ch. XVIII p. 473
38/ To go seeking counsel in Egypt is to perish with the counsel of Egypt.		Ch. XVIII p. 474
39/ No one is more suited than the superior to judge a religious's vocation.		Ch. XVIII p. 474
40/ Conceal yourself in your house and you will assure your vocation.		Ch. XXIV p. 550
41/ For seculars, few are chosen. The opposite for religious.		Ch. XVIII p. 464
42/ Mary receives us only to give us to Jesus.		Ch. 10 p. 104
43/ Talented subjects are no good unless they are humble.		Ch. III p. 289
44/ A religious without piety cannot love his vocation.		Ch. 10 p. 103
45/ Virtue is easy when one loves Jesus.		Ch. 10 p. 103
46/ Jesus gives devotion to Mary only to privileged souls.		Ch. 10 p. 104
47/ The virtues are like roses among thorns. The religious does not notice the thorns.		Ch. 10 p. 104
48/ A religious is happier in piety than a worldly person in good fortune.		Ch. 10 p. 104
49/ The worldly make a lot of noise in their rejoicing because their hearts are unhappy.		Ch. 10 p. 104
50/ A Brother should desire nothing so much as to be a good catechist.		Ch. 10 p. 104
51/ We teach catechism well when we pray for the children and give good example.		Ch. 10 p. 104

Founder accessible to a wider public, there were the Common Rule of 1852, the School Guide (1853), The Rules of Government (1854), the circulars of Br Francois and a little work almost impossible to find today, the Manual of Piety⁶⁹ of 1855, on which we are about to focus our attention.

THE MANUAL OF PIETY IN THE CORPUS OF MAJOR TEXTS OF REFERENCE

The introduction⁷⁰ has the advantage for us of positioning it in the vast doctrinal effort of the congregation between the death of the Founder and his official biography. Having, by the Common Rule , obtained uniformity of religious life; by the School Guide , uniformity of teaching; by The Rules of Government a firm authority, the Institute wished to establish uniformity of prayer and the formation of young brothers. The Manual of Piety answered this objective since its first part includes the ‘Principles of Christian and Religious Perfection’⁷¹, the second the ‘Qualities of a Good Brother,’ the third, ‘Various Prayers to Sanctify the Day’. But the work had a

Manual of Piety	Life
1/ Joy: Nos 1-3	Ch. I
2/ Spirit of faith and confidence in God: 4-8	Ch. II-III
3/ Prayer and presence of God: 9-12	Ch. IV-V
4/ Obedience: 14	Ch. VIII
5/ Mortification: 15-18	Ch. XI
6/ Pride, humility: 19-20	Ch. XII
7/ Zeal: education, catechism, 1st communion, devotion to Mary: 21-28	Ch. XX, XIV
8/ Detachment from parents: 29-32	Ch. X, XXIV
9/ Vocation: 33-41	Ch. XVIII

further aim: ‘to give all the brothers the capability and the means of forming themselves in virtue, of becoming instilled more deeply with the spirit of the Institute and the principles of our holy Founder’. Thus - the introduction continues - ‘these principles of perfection will be for all the Brothers a sort of catechism of the spiritual life’ destined to strengthen and give uniformity to the Brothers’ initial and continuing formation. This work, therefore, is the ancestor of the Principles of Christian Perfection (1863), which retains only the doctrinal section of the Manual, substantially increased, and of the Directory of Solid Piety (1865), which includes the prayers. It is also the first formation guide.

Published in catechism form, it is no longer readable as such today. This does not prevent it being anterior to the Life of the Founder - if only by a little - and because of that it deserves close attention, for it is the fruit of the experience and reflection of the Institute and one of the sources of inspiration for the Life.

1ST PART: THE “MAXIMS OF FR. CHAMPAGNAT”

Not being able to offer a complete study of this book in a short article, we choose to study several passages which appear the most important. We will begin with an analysis of Chapter 14 of the second part which provides a numbered list of 52 maxims or sayings of Fr. Champagnat which are all repeated in various chapters in his Life. As they are not absolutely identical in form from one work to another, we provide a table of correspondences between the texts of the first sentences, reproduced in full.

1. Correspondences between the sentences of the Manual and the Life

The two sources present some variants which is quite understandable since we are dealing with two different literary genres but also, perhaps, because their authors are quoting from memory or referring to different copies. In order not to overburden the text, we continue simply by summarising the maxims and indicating the references in the Life.

2/ THE ORDER OF THE SENTENCES

One can easily see how the order of sentences, in most cases, follows the order of the chapters of the Life; this shows a strong link between the two sources. However, many chapters are not represented and sentences 45-52 almost all come from a single chapter in the first part of the Life. It seems that these resemblances and divergences reveal different traditions and degrees of development of Marist thought on the heritage of the Founder.

3/ TRACES OF A FIRST ORDER OF THE CHAPTERS OF PART 2 OF THE "LIFE"?

In our view the summary of sayings comprises two distinct series: one close to the order of the second part of the Life; the other (maxims 42-52), presented by chapter 10 of the first part, is autonomous. The

⁷³ He was probably the author.

themes of the maxims of the first series appear to be arranged in the following way:

This thematic scheme appears to reflect the grand axes of Marist spirituality during the years 1840-1850. It can be seen in fact that the order of the subjects touched on is close to that of the Life on one side, but that on the other only thirteen of the twenty-four chapters of the Life are represented. Certain ones, very important, like the one on Marial devotion (Ch. VII), the love of J.C. (Ch. VI), on regularity (Ch. IX) do not appear, but they are treated implicitly in certain sayings. Thus, on Mary, sayings 26 and 42 are explicit enough; the maxim on obedience (No 14) implicitly includes the rule. In the same way Nos 42 and 45 are basically christological.

The absence of other chapters is less surprising: thus chapters XV-XVII on the formation of the Brothers; or XXI-XXIV on teaching and education, which are merely an extension of chapter XX on zeal and vocation.

We have the impression, therefore, that Br Jean-Baptiste was inspired, for the second part of the Life, by a first organised elaboration of doctrine,⁷³ which the choice of sayings reveals. Having at hand abundant material, but also wanting to achieve a complete body of doctrine, he would have made important additions, either in dividing the chapters or in creating new ones.

We can now, by exploiting the order of sentences 1-41, reconstitute a doctrine of the Institute probably given to the novices in the era 1840-1855, which could be reformulated as follows: to be a Little Brother of Mary one ought to have an agreeable, happy and constant character, trusting in God and in Mary, filled with piety and the spirit of faith. Obedient, humble, mortified, filled with zeal, the Brother will be suitable for doing

Life, p. 103	Life, p. 288
<p>“A Brother who does not know how to pray, does not know how to practise virtue, nor to do good among the children: for it is only in prayer that he learns the one and the other.</p> <p>Religious life is essentially a life of prayer, for apart from the fact that it is to pray more than the ordinary faithful, and to commune more frequently with God that one becomes a religious, it is impossible to fulfil the obligations of the religious life without a true and solid piety.”</p>	<p>[...] “We should of course study religion and prepare our catechism with care; for one cannot teach others what one does not know oneself, but we deceive ourselves greatly if we believe that this is sufficient to do good [...] Let us take care not to count on our own talents; they are useless for good [...] That is why a prayer or office well recited, a rosary said with piety, a Mass attended with devotion, a fervent communion, are more useful for the success of the catechism lesson than learning and all the natural talents”... then follows sentence 43.</p>

good among the children. By his openness of heart, his detachment from his relatives, his faith and the grandeur of his vocation the Brother will assure his perseverance in good.

4/ A MORE ANCIENT TRADITION COUPLED WITH THE FIRST?

Let us now take into consideration the second series of maxims which has very strong links with pages 103-104 of chapter 10 of the first part of the Life, which tell us about the building of La Valla during the summer of 1822, and that Fr. Champagnat, despite this, did not neglect his instructions which were “short, but lively and enthusiastic” and “focused almost always on piety, obedience, mortification, love of Jesus, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and zeal for the salvation of souls.” And, so as not to take too long, Br. Jean-Baptiste restricted himself to quoting “some of his favourite sayings.”

There follows a collection of fifteen sayings which summarise the teaching given by Fr. Champagnat about 1822. Ten of them (Nos 42, 44-51) have been kept in the list of the maxims in the Manual of Piety. We think we are on the right track then in holding that this series of maxims in the Manual comes from a collection of sayings taken from instructions going back to 1822.

5/ ONE SAYING ALLOWS THE DATING OF AN INSTRUCTION.

However, we need to resolve a few little problems. First of all, saying No. 43 does not appear in chapter 10, p. 104, but at the end of a long excerpt from an instruction of Fr. Champagnat recorded in Ch. III p. 289, on the necessity of preparing one's catechism but also of frequent prayer:

"I am not afraid to say that those subjects who are most talented are least fitted to do good, unless they also have great humility; because they count too much on themselves and not enough on God."

Maxim No. 43 is absolutely identical except for the words of introduction: "I am not afraid to say." And we know, thanks to the Life, the instruction it is taken from. Br. Jean-Baptiste even suggests its approximate date for, before beginning this instruction, he tells us that Fr. Champagnat scarcely had time to prepare his talks for "the occupations of his priestly ministry and the care of his community took up almost all his time." That means that we are still at the beginning of the Congregation when Fr. Champagnat is a curate. He will only be relieved of this function in November 1824. It is true, nevertheless, that a little further on he tells us that these were words "he often repeated to his Brothers". This is an

Life, Ch. 10, pp. 103-104	Manual of Piety
1/ A Brother who does not know how to pray is incapable of doing good to the children. ⁷⁵	Probably No. 43
2/ Without piety, it is impossible to live as a religious.	
3/ A religious without piety cannot love his vocation.	No. 44
4/ Virtue is easy when one loves Jesus...	No. 45
5. It would be shameful if the love of Jesus had less influence on the religious than money had on the worldly.	
6-7/ Anyone who loves Mary loves Jesus.	No. 42
Mary only receives us to give us to Jesus.	No. 46
8/ Jesus gives devotion to Mary only to privileged souls.	No. 47

⁷⁴ AFM. 5101.302

⁷⁵ The formulation is not literal but simply gives the sense.

A FUNDAMENTAL WORK WHICH HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN:
THE MANUAL OF PIETY (1855)

Life, Ch. 10, pp. 103-104	Manual of Piety
9/ The virtues are like roses among thorns.	No. 48
10/ A religious is happier in piety than a worldly person in good fortune.	No. 49
11/ Worldly people are full of noise because in their heart they are not happy.	
12/ By their vocation the Brothers are apostles.	No. 50
13/ A Brother should desire nothing more than to be a good catechist.	No. 51
14-15/ Praying frequently for the children	

important reflection, inviting us to remember that a word of the Founder did not acquire the status of a saying unless he frequently repeated it. What he said to Br. Jean-Baptiste is telling us here basically is that in 1822 certain of his words had already acquired this status.

Life, pp. 103-4	Manual of Piety
<p>"Anyone who has a great devotion to Mary will certainly have a great love for Jesus. So we see that the saints who had a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin, such as Saint Bernard, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Liguori, Saint Therese, were notable for a great love for Jesus.</p> <p>Mary keeps nothing for herself; when we serve her, when we consecrate ourselves to her, she receives us only to give us to Jesus, to fill us with Jesus.</p> <p>Jesus confided his mother only to the beloved disciple; so to make us understand that it is only to privileged souls on whom he has particular designs of mercy, that he gives a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin."</p>	<p>No. 42 "Anyone who has a great devotion to Mary will certainly have a great love for Jesus.</p> <p>No. 42 (cont.) "Mary keeps nothing for herself; when we serve her, when we consecrate ourselves to her, she receives us only to give us to Jesus, to fill us with Jesus."</p> <p>No. 46 "Jesus confided his divine mother only to the beloved disciple; so as to make us understand that it is only to privileged souls on whom he has particular designs of mercy, that he gives a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin."</p>

6/ DIFFERENT TRADITIONS OF MEMORISING THE SENTENCES?

But inasfar as they were not officially fixed in writing, these sayings, conveyed by memory or by more or less reliable writings, could sustain variations. Thus, the collection of sentences in the Life pp. 103-4 shows that the first two, which were not included in the collection of maxims in the Manual, have an important link with both saying 43 and with the instruction reported on pages 288-89 which includes maxim No. 43.

These texts, different in their form, say basically the same thing: without prayer, learning and talent are useless for doing good. That is exactly what maxim No. 43 says.

As well maxim No. 9 of the Manual of Piety, which forms part of an apparently later series, also tells us:

“A Brother who is content with teaching the children does only half his work; if he wants to carry out his task properly, he should pray for them and recommend them to God in all his exercises of piety.”

These few examples suggest that there must have existed different copies of the sayings , blending with each other and copying each other. It is certain on the other hand that Fr. Champagnat very frequent-

Maxims 1-41	Maxims 42-51
1/ Joy: Nos. 1-3 2/ Spirit of faith and trust in God:4-8 3/ Prayer and presence of God:9-12 4/ Obedience: 14 5/ Mortification: 15-18 6/ Pride, humility: 19-20 7/ Zeal: education, catechism, 1st communion, Marial devotion....:21-28 8/ Detachment from parents: 29-32 9/ Vocation	1/ (No. 42) Mary gives us to Jesus 2/ (No. 43) Humility 3/ (No. 44) Piety 4/ (No. 45) Love of Jesus 5/ (No. 46) Marial devotion 6/ (No. 47) Poverty, mortification, humility 7/ (Nos. 48-49) Happiness of the religious life (vocation) 8/ (Nos. 50-51) Zeal

⁷⁶ It is found notably in the works of Marie of Agreda in the 17th century.

ly repeated himself on subjects so central, and the majority of the 52 sentences retained by the Manual could be compared with numerous equivalent expressions preserved in the Life or other texts. We have a good example in No. 42, which tells us:

“Anyone who has a great devotion to Mary will certainly have a great love for Jesus. Mary keeps nothing for herself; when we serve her, when we consecrate ourselves to her, she only receives us to give us to Jesus, to fill us with Jesus.”

Isn't this the equivalent of the famous: “All to Jesus through Mary; all to Mary for Jesus” which we find at the date 1827 in Br Francois' first retreat notebook?⁷⁴ Maxim No. 42, much less striking, and longer, seems closer to the origins and must have served as the basis for the expression of the final formula already known in 1827.

The choice of the Manual of Piety then is the fixing of at least two traditions. If we can situate the origin of the older (maxims 42-51) in the instructions of the years around 1822, the origins of the second are more fluid. In any case it appears to have served as a canvas for working out the second part of the Life since it seems to have influenced the order of chapters. Besides, in having these two series of instructions appear in their entirety in the Life Br. Jean-Baptiste shows he set great store by them.

7/ TWO VERSIONS OF THE TRADITION OF 1822

We consider we have established, thanks to the text of the Life pp. 103-4 and the series of maxims Nos. 41-51 that these sayings go back as far as about 1822. Let us consider point by point the resemblances and variants of the two sources:

We observe that the resemblances in the order of the sayings are remarkable but not absolute. Certain maxims of the Life were not kept in the Manual and others are not in the same place. Differences also appear in the texts. This is particularly noticeable with the articles on devotion to Mary:

The close similarity between the two texts is striking. But the variations are also interesting. One can see why the Manual has not kept the passage on the saints devoted to Mary which is very secondary. The presence of the expression “Divine Mother” in the Manual, and its suppression in the Life, is to be noted. This theologically dubious formula had

Chapters of Life	Maxims of Fr. Champagnat (1-41)	‘Qualities of a Good Brother’ Ch. 1-13	Maxims (42-51)
1/ Sadness and joy	1/ Joy: No. 1-3	10/ Of holy joy 11/ Of sociability and sensitivity	
2/ Spirit of faith 3/ Confidence in God	2/ Spirit of faith and confidence in God:4-		
4/ Love of prayer 5/ Presence of God	8 3/ Prayer and presence of God:9-12	1/ Of piety	3/ (No. 44) Piety
6/ Love of Jesus		2/ Of love of Jesus	4/ (45) Love of Jesus
7/ Devotion to Mary		3/ Devotion to Mary and Joseph	1/ (42) Mary gives us to Jesus 5/ (46) Marial devotion
8/ Obedience	4/ Obedience: 14	6/ Of obedience	
9/ Love of poverty			6/ (47) Poverty, mortification, humility
10/ Detachment from relatives	8/ Detachment from relatives: 29-32	8/ Of devotion to one's institute	
11/ Love for mortification	5/ Mortification: 15-18		
12/ Humility	6/ Pride, humility: 19-20		2/ (43) Humility
13/ Love of purity, horror of sin			
14/ Love of work			
15/ Attachment to one's brothers			
16/ Formation of brothers in virtue			
17/ Formation of directors			
18/ Vocation	9/ Vocation: 33-41	5/ Of opening the heart to the superior 12/ Of gratitude	7/ (48-49) Happiness of religious life (vocation)
19/ Regularity		7/ Of regularity 9/ Of family spirit	
20/ Zeal 21 Charity for the poor 22 Teaching and discipline 23 Advice on education	7/ Zeal: education, catechism, 1st communion, Marial devotion....: 21-28	4/ Of zeal	8/ (50-51) Zeal
24/ Constancy in		13/ Of constancy	

been in popular usage for a long time⁷⁶: Fr Courveille used it and so certainly did Fr. Champagnat. The Manual of Piety therefore has retained a text closer to the origins than the Life. Finally, it is not clear why the articles concerning Mary, which follow one another logically in the Life, are found broken up into two articles separated from one another in the Manual. Perhaps we have here two versions of an earlier condensation of the doctrine of the Founder.

8/ TWO STAGES OF MARIST SPIRITUALITY?

If we study the order of themes we notice that the Life devotes three articles to prayer, two to the love of Jesus, three to Mary, one to the religious virtues, two to the comparison between the religious life and lay life, that is to say, vocation, and three to zeal. The Manual of Piety appears to be less organised even though the same elements are found there. Whatever the case, sentences 42-51 constitute a mini-treatise on the religious life, independent of the 41 previous sentences. If we compare this second list to the first we observe some notable differences.

We can establish some important differences: in maxims 1-41 devotion to Mary and love of Jesus are not explicit. On the other hand, joy, the spirit of faith, obedience, detachment from parents are not mentioned directly in the second list of maxims. It seems to us that the collection of 52 maxims amalgamates two successive steps in the development of Marist spirituality. The first, recalling the spirituality of the beginnings, appears more “mystical”, less oriented towards the religious life. The second, in contrast, is concerned more with ascetics and was probably developed after 1830. In putting them together the editor, probably Br. Jean-Baptiste, wanted to link, at the risk of repeating himself in some cases, two steps in the spiritual life of the Congregation so as to effect a synthesis in which spirituality and asceticism balance each other.

As for saying 52 which closes the list, and which is an extract from the spiritual testament requesting the practice of fraternal charity, it is obvious that it serves as conclusion. Elsewhere in the Principles of Perfection, where the number of sayings reaches 80, it appears as No. 80.

⁷⁶ AFM 5101. 309

9/ THE PLACE OF THE “QUALITIES OF A GOOD BROTHER” IN THIS DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT

Summaries of Instructions	Manual of Piety
<p>p. 116: Devotion to the Institute</p> <p>p. 119: Holy joy. Sadness.</p> <p>p. 122: Constancy. Discouragement</p>	<p>Ch. VIII p. 120: Of devotion to the Institute</p> <p>Ch. X p. 126: Of gaiety and holy joy</p> <p>Ch. XIII p. 137: Of constancy</p>

We have not yet taken into consideration the fact that the maxims

Summaries of Instructions No. 3 p. 116, “Devotion to the Institute”	Manual of Piety, Ch. VIII p. 120, 1st section. What is necessary to acquire this devotion.
<p>“Devotion to the Institute is an entire gift of oneself, one’s talents, one’s works and one’s whole life to one’s Institute. To acquire and show this perfect devotion it is necessary:</p> <p>1. to work unceasingly to acquire the spirit of one’s Institute;</p> <p>2. to make all efforts to acquire the virtues and knowledge necessary to attain its end and make oneself ready for the various employments one may be responsible for;</p> <p>3. to always prefer the advantage of the Congregation or the common good of a house above one’s personal interests, to freely sacrifice one’s goods, desires, rest and, if needed, health and even life to make oneself useful to the Institute and to serve it;</p>	<p>“Q. What is the 8th quality of a good Brother?</p> <p>A. It is devotion to his community.</p> <p>Q. What is this devotion?</p> <p>A. It is an entire gift of oneself, one’s talents, one’s works and one’s whole life to one’s Institute.</p> <p>Q. What must one do to acquire this?</p> <p>A. One must do five things.</p> <p>The first is to work unceasingly to acquire the spirit of one’s Institute.</p> <p>Q. What is the second?</p> <p>A. It is to make all efforts to acquire the virtues and knowledge necessary to attain the end of the Congregation and to make oneself ready for the various employments one may be responsible for.</p> <p>Q. What is the third?</p> <p>A. It is always to prefer the advantage of the Congregation or the common good of a house to one’s personal interests; to sacrifice one’s goods, desires, rest and, if needed, health and even life to make oneself useful to the Institute</p>

Summaries of Instructions No. 3 p. 116, “Devotion to the Institute”	Manual of Piety, Ch. VIII p. 120, 1st section. What is necessary to acquire this devotion
4. to contribute by good example and by constantly edifying conduct to maintain piety, regularity, good spirit, charity, peace and union among the Brothers, the respect and submission due to the supe- rior.	and to serve it. Q. What is the fourth? R. It is to contribute, by good example and by constantly edifying conduct, to maintain piety, regularity, good spirit, charity, peace and union among the Brothers, the respect and submission due to the Superiors.
5. to carry out the assignment one is given	Q. What is the fifth?

of Fr. Champagnat in the Manual of Piety are the last chapter of its second part entitled “The Qualities of a Good Brother”, which includes fourteen chapters. Logically the chapter of maxims, the fourteenth, should reproduce, in the sayings, the order of the qualities in the previous thirteen. We know, besides, that the Life of the Founder, in its second part, is also a doctrinal presentation of the virtues of Fr. Champagnat that a good Brother should imitate. By comparing the virtues of Fr. Champagnat, the qualities of a good Brother and the sayings of chapter XIV, we obtain three versions of Marist spirituality whose points of resemblance and difference may prove instructive.

10/ FOUR STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE?

In the table below we have taken as basis the order of the chapters of the second part of the Life, that is to say, of the issue of the Congregation’s doctrinal development.

Contrary to what might be thought, the “Qualities of a Good Brother” are not clearly linked, either in order or in subject, with the maxims of Fr. Champagnat. They appear to be a intermediate step between the maxims of 1822 and the two other series. So in order to follow the progressive development of doctrine which ends in the Life the table has to be read from right to left. Thus, maxims 42-51 provide the most ancient strata, as we have already said. The “Qualities of a Good Brother”, much

⁷⁸ The opposite, which would suppose that Br. François has gone from the genre of catechetics to the conference does not seem likely. Besides, he speaks in his notebook of “summaries of instructions.”

⁷⁹ AFM 5101.307

Manual of Piety: Ch. II Of Vocation p. 4	Instructions of Br. J.B. and Br. François
1st section: On vocation in general	E3 pp. 103-110; E4 pp. 338-345; Notebook of instructions No. 1 pp. 131-135
2nd section: The means God uses to make us recognise a vocation	1st notebook of instructions p. 1
3rd section: On religious vocation and its excellence	E4 p. 345: "Religious spirit"
4th section: What is needed to know one's vocation and persevere in it	E3 pp. 25-26, 111-120; 1st notebook of instructions

m o r e oriented towards community life, obedience and vocation imply an institute where relational life and perseverance are more delicate to manage. That is why two new preoccupations appear: happiness and constancy, the latter appearing in the last chapter, just as in the Life.

Finally, the hypothesis can be presented that maxims 42-51 reveal the spirituality of the years around 1822; that the order of the chapters of the "Qualities of a Good Brother" show a later phase, perhaps the years 1830-1850; that the maxims 1-41 are the sign that a more organised doctrine is developing, perhaps during the years 1845-1850, which will reach its peak with the Life.

2ND PART: THE MANUAL OF PIETY AND THE MANUSCRIPTS OF BRS. FRANÇOIS AND JEAN-BAPTISTE

Up to now we have been working almost exclusively with the printed sources.

Now we are going to compare the Manual of Piety with a number of manuscripts of instructions, examens of conscience and meditations which Brs. François and Jean-Baptiste have left us but which are not easy to date.

⁸⁰ Br. Jean-Baptiste is not its writer; his handwriting is very different.

⁸¹ But which Br. Paul Sester has introduced in his publication.

⁸² Ch. III, "On devotion to the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph", sections 1 and 2: "Method for inspiring devotion to the Blessed Virgin."

The Manual of Piety, duly dated at 1855, will be valuable for us for it was largely inspired by numerous texts drawn from these instructions, which would allow us to establish that these manuscripts, at least in part, are from before that date.

1/ THE NOTEBOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS OF BR. FRANÇOIS AND THE MANUAL

Manual of piety Ch. IX p.123	Br. François, notebooks of instructions	Br. Jean-Baptiste, "Ecrits 3" "Ecrits 4" and A.D.F.M. ⁸³
"On family spirit" 1st section: What this spirit consists of and what is needed to acquire it 2nd section: What the spirit of humility requires of the Brothers	Instructions No. 1 pp. 147-150: Character and spirit of the society of the P.F.M. Instructions No. 2 pp. 544-545: Mary, model of humility	E3 pp. 123-130: Spirit of the Institute; pp. 349-356: Spirit of the Institute A.D.F.M. Ch. 15 3rd part pp. 281-286 ⁸⁴ : "Humility is necessary for us to merit Mary's protection."

The case is very significant with No 3 of the notebooks of instructions of Br. François,⁷⁷ which comprises 199 pages of summaries of instructions. Three chapters of the Manual of Piety are directly inspired by three of these summaries. The following tables shows how they correspond.

We will confine ourselves to giving a sample of the textual correspondences evident in the three texts.

There is no doubt then that the chapter of the Manual comes from this summary of a circular kept by Br. François.⁷⁸ We can then affirm that at least some of the instructions in this collection date to before 1855. It is even possible that many of them go back to the Founder.

2/ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON OBEDIENCE AND ON VOCATION

⁸³ A.D.F.M. is the treatise on education edited by Br. Jean-Baptiste.

⁸⁴ The numeration is that of the edited manuscript, not the original.

This is probably the case with the subject of obedience which the Manual of Piety treats in Chapter VI, p. 112-117, making use in large part of an instruction contained in the notebook of instructions No. 1 of Br. François⁷⁹ pp. 195-204. This is itself very close to an instruction contained in the manuscript “Ecrit 4” of Br. Jean-Baptiste, pp. 366-387, which can be found again in parts in manuscript “Ecrit 3” on pages 66, 152, 241. Such an accumulation of copies is a strong indication that this doctrine comes originally from the Founder.

It is the same with the theme of vocation in the first part of the Manual in chapter 2 pp. 4-13. There we find many borrowings from the instructions transcribed by Br. Jean-Baptiste or Br. François on the same theme and which by their close similarity of content show a common

Examens of conscience	Manual of Piety
1/ Importance of vocation	Ch. II On vocation. 1st section: On vocation in general
2/ The means God uses to help each recognise his vocation	2nd section: On the means God uses to help each recognise his vocation
3/ Advantages of the religious life	3rd section: On the religious vocation and its excellence
4/ Excellence of the religious life	4th section: What is needed to know one's vocation and to persevere in it
5/ Means to preserve one's vocation	
6/ Dangers to vocation	
7/ Temptations against vocation	
8/ Remedies for temptations against vocation	
9/ Esteem we ought to have for piety	Ch. III On prayer. 1st section: Necessity of prayer 2nd section: Conditions of prayer 3rd section: Of mental prayer or meditation
10/ On the necessity for prayer	
11/ On the fruits of prayer	4th section: On the fruits of prayer
12/ On the fruits of prayer (cont.)	

⁸⁵ AFM 5201.22

A FUNDAMENTAL WORK WHICH HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN:
THE MANUAL OF PIETY (1855)

Examens of conscience	Manual of Piety
13/ On the fruits of prayer (cont.)	
14/ On preparation for prayer	5th section: Preparation for prayer
15/ On immediate preparation for prayer	
16/ On the Consideration	6th section: On the body of the meditation
17/ On the affections	7th section: On the affections
18/ On the resolutions	8th section: On the resolutions
	9th section: On the conclusion
19/ On the obstacles to prayer	10th section: On the obstacles to prayer: distractions
20/ How it is necessary to combat distractions and other obstacles to prayer	11th section: On aridity
21/ How one should regard the distractions and other problems one experiences in the holy exercise of prayer	12th section: On temptations in prayer
22/ Means we ought to take to acquire the spirit of prayer and the gift of piety	
	13th section: Different methods to use to draw fruit from prayer
	14th section: Three ways of praying according to Saint Ignatius
	15th section: Table of the principal acts one should make in prayer
23/ On the Office and other vocal prayers	
24/ On what should be done during the Office	Ch. V On the Office
25/ On the examination of conscience. Of the esteem we should have for it	
26/ On the examen of conscience and the conditions one ought to have	Ch. IV On the examen. 1st section: Excellence and aim of the examen
27/ On the means it is necessary to take to correct the fault which forms the subject of the examen	
28/ On the reasons why the particular examen produces little fruit	2nd section: On the faults it is particularly necessary to combat 3rd section: What it is to subdue the

origin. They are found: for Br. Jean-Baptiste in “Ecrit 4” pp. 338-345, “Ecrit 3” pp. 103-120; for Br. François in the first notebook of instructions pp. 44-46 and 131-142. Several other instructions have also been utilised. The table below summarises the data.

3/ THE MANUSCRIPT “DIVERSE WRITINGS NO. 8” AND THE MANUAL

2nd examen. On the means God uses to help each recognise his vocation	2nd section. On the means God uses to help each recognise his vocation
<p>“2nd point. Let us examine the different ways God uses to let men recognise their vocation.</p> <p>1/ He calls certain souls by himself or makes them know his will by extraordinary ways; this is the way he acted with regard to the Apostles, Saint Paul or many other saints to whom he made known the vocation he was calling them to in a quite miraculous manner.</p> <p>2/ Normally he uses attraction, that is to say, that he gives souls a taste, a secret inclination for the state to which he calls them, and gives a grace of strength or light which brings them to embrace it despite all the difficulties flesh and blood may pose.</p> <p>3/ God often also uses the good counsels of the superiors to make known to a soul his vocation.</p> <p>4/ Fortunate or unfortunate accidents, reverses, human motives, troublesome events are frequently in the hands of God the means he uses to draw souls to him and to determine them to embrace a holy vocation”...</p>	<p>[...] Q. What is the first?</p> <p>R. It is to manifest his will immediately by himself or by some prodigy; this is how he acted with regard to Saint Paul when he threw him down on the road to Damascus;</p> <p>with St. Matthew when he said: “Come, follow me”; with the other apostles called in the same manner and with many other saints to whom God manifested his will by extraordinary ways.</p> <p>Q. What is the second?</p> <p>R. [...] It is the attraction [...]</p> <p>The attraction is the taste and the inclination we feel for a thing; it is a secret voice by which God intimates his will to a soul and makes it recognise clearly the choice he has made for it and the vocation he calls it to [...]</p> <p>The third means God uses to help one know one’s vocation are the good counsels of the superiors, such as the director of conscience, and others who have authority over a soul [...]</p> <p>The fourth are all sorts of accidents, fortunate or unfortunate events or even human motives which may determine a soul to embrace a vocation. So Saint Paul the hermit withdrew into the desert to avoid persecution, Saint Arsenius to avoid the traps laid for him by the emperor Arcadius, Saint Romuald to escape justice when implicated in a murder”....</p>

The archives of the Congregation in Rome possess a file of 67 pages containing part of a treatise on education edited by Br. Jean-Baptiste and recently published by Br. Paul Sester under the title "Apostolate of a Marist Brother". This fragment⁸⁰ includes a chapter, which Br. Jean-Baptiste did not keep in his definitive manuscript⁸¹, entitled "Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a powerful means of winning children to God." This chapter is picked up at length in the Life of the Founder in chapter VII on his Marial devotion. We also find traces of it in the rule of 1852 in chap-

Life, Ch. 2 p. 10	Manual of Piety
<p>"Those then make a serious mistake who question their vocation because they entered religion at a young age, and at the advice of their father, their mother, a pious teacher, following the example of a childhood friend or for other human motives. God, says Saint Francis de Sales, does not draw all those he calls for the same motives, and it even happens that few come for solely supernatural motives. Among the women whose conversions are recorded in the Gospel, Magdalen alone came to Jesus out of love; the woman taken in adultery was forced to, the Samaritan woman came by chance, the Caananite woman looking for help. It does not matter, adds the saintly prelate, what way one has come, provided one perseveres in good. Those who were compelled to attend the wedding feast in the Gospel enjoyed its delights all the same. A large number of subjects have been brought into religious houses by one or other of these last means and have stayed and become great servants of God and excellent religious. On the other hand, some who were called in an extraordinary manner did not persevere and were lost. Witness Judas, who had been chosen by Our Lord himself, like the other apostles."</p>	<p>"Q. What may one conclude from the preceding? A. One may conclude with Saint Francis de Sales</p> <p>1. that it does not matter, whatever may have been the motive which determined the vocation, provided that one is resolved to persevere and to finish well. Those, says the holy bishop, who were compelled to attend the wedding feast in the Gospel enjoyed its delights all the same; 2. that it is mainly perseverance then and the actual dispositions it is necessary to consider, rather than the beginning and the motive which determined the vocation.</p>

⁸⁶ We will not quote it since the reader can easily refer to it himself.

ter VI on Marial devotion.

Finally, the second part of this chapter, entitled “What one must do to inspire devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the children”, provides direct inspiration for the chapter on Marial devotion in the Manual.⁸² This fact confirms the antiquity of the file “Diverse Writings No. 8” and moreover, by showing that this document was made use of many times, underlines its great importance in the development of Marist spirituality. It even links it with an instruction of the Founder, since the Life tells us in introducing this topic (p. 339): “Here are some of our venerable Father’s thoughts on this important subject.”

4/ “FAMILY SPIRIT” AND “THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE”

We also notice that chapter IX of the “Qualities of a Good Brother” entitled “On family spirit” is associated with a series of instructions of Brs. François and Jean-Baptiste on “the spirit of the Institute.” Here is the table of correspondences.

Such a number of repetitions in the manuscripts and the printed works - and we have not yet indicated the traces we find in the rule of 1852 - cause us to believe the notion that they go back to the Founder.

We are not going to go any further in demonstrating the relationships between the manuscripts and the Manual, but we would easily be able to set up a comparable table for most of the chapters. So the Manual of Piety is not a simple catechism but is built on the base of a body of doctrine which we still possess and which appears, at least in part, to go back to the Founder. The Manual is valuable to us in a certain number of cases to show that undated manuscripts go back before 1855 and to reinforce the theory that certain themes treated go back to the Founder himself.

3RD PART: THE MANUAL OF PIETY AND THE SUBJECTS OF THE EXAMEN

⁸⁷ The book in question, *la Vie des Peres d'Orient*, (Lives of the Desert Fathers) by Fr. Michel Ange Marin, was a classic ascetical work of the 19th century.

Br. Jean-Baptiste has left us a manuscript containing eighty-eight topics for an examination of conscience⁸⁵, not dated. A perusal shows us that a very large number of the topics have a direct connection with the chapters of the first part of the Manual treating of “the principles of Christian and religious perfection.” It is important then for us to try to understand how these two sources combine and try to date the one by connection to the other.

1/ THE ORDER OF THE CHAPTERS

We are taking as a basis the order of chapters of the collection of exams of conscience in showing the correspondences in the Manual of Piety.

The correspondences in order and themes are remarkable despite some gaps and variants. In order to prove the textual relationship between these two documents we will transcribe two significant passages.

2/ CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE TEXTS

So it is clear that the two passages have a common source which we find as well in the Life in chapter 2, pp. 9-10 which reproduces almost exactly the text of the Manual of Piety⁸⁶.

3/ THE SOURCE OF THE TWO TEXTS: AN INSTRUCTION RECORDED BY THE LIFE

We will confine ourselves to comparing the endings of the two texts: The Life and the Manual of Piety therefore include the same instruction. This seems to have been taken up again a second time in Ch. 6 of the Life p. 65 where Br. Jean-Baptiste comments on the beautiful attitude of Br. François “who was too young to judge his own vocation, but was perfectly obedient and docile” and therefore relied for his vocation on his superior. He continues:

“They (the Brothers) must remember that when God gives a child,

⁸⁸ This work is the *Conduit des enfants* (The Direction of children) by the Jesuit Reyre.

⁸⁹ This fact appears to be confirmed by the absence of this theme in Br. Jean-Baptiste’s collections of instructions.

not yet capable of reflection, the grace to leave the world, he is speaking not to his intelligence or his reason, but to his heart. He causes that heart to be docile to the advice of a wise director, a father, a mother, a friend. He gives it a taste for piety, an attraction towards the religious life and the grace to take the way pointed out to him. [...] When Jesus Christ called the apostles, he did not tell them: Think about it then follow me; but simply: Follow me. The grace which touches the heart and leads it to good is just as good as that which enlightens the mind, and the vocation comes equally from God, whether he draws us to him through the heart, the feelings or some attraction, or whether he takes us through the mind, that is to say, by inspiration, by reflection and by judgement.”

This instruction therefore comes from before 1855 but in all likelihood it does not come from the Founder, because both times he quotes it, Br. Jean-Baptiste does not attribute it to him. This implies indirectly that he is its author. The Manual is then not only the reflection of the Founder’s teaching but also that of his successors. As we said about the sayings there are several strata in Marist spirituality. These texts on the recognition of vocation seem to be from the second, which comes after 1840.

4/ THE CONTRIBUTION OF BR. FRANÇOIS

In his first notebook of Instructions (p. 1), Br. François provides the plan of a treatise on vocation close to the one the Manual of Piety and the manuscript of the subjects of examens have developed. Here is what we find concerning the above-mentioned subject, in the fifth part:

“V. Three vocations or means (Vies PP. Orient, L(ivre) IV, C(hapitre) VIII⁸⁷)

1st God: interior or exterior voice

Ex(ample). The Patriarchs, the Apostles; St. Anthony; St. Augustine.

2nd Men: advice, instructions, examples.

Ex. Saul, David, St. Francis Xavier.

⁹⁰ See Br. Paul Sester’s critical introduction to the copy of the “Subjects of Examen.”

⁹¹ Another version of “All to Jesus through Mary...”

Collection of examens: On prayer	Manual of Piety: On piety
9/ Esteem we should have for piety	
10/ On the necessity of prayer	Ch. III On prayer. 1st section: Necessity of prayer
	2nd section: Conditions of prayer
	3rd section: On mental prayer or meditation
11/ On the fruits of prayer	4th section: On the fruits of prayer
12/13/ On the fruits of prayer (cont.)	
14/ On the preparation for prayer	5th section: Preparation for prayer

3rd Things: events, accidents.

Ex. Joseph; the Magi; St. Ignatius; St. Francis Borgia; St. Paul the Hermit.”

One would have noticed that he does not mention attraction which is found further on in paragraph X in this form:

“ Signs of vocation. (Conduit Enfants. C(hapitre) XI⁸⁸)
 1st No impediment
 2nd Dispositions; inclinations
 3rd Purity of intention
 4th Prayer; grace
 5th Advice of Superiors, directors, wise persons.”

Obviously, Br. François presents another version of the same doctrine which he has probably drawn from the manuals of spirituality.

Let us summarise then: the collection of examens and the Manual of Piety are obviously inspired by an instruction of Br. Jean-Baptiste prior to 1855. Br. François offers us a summary outline close in spirit. It seems therefore that the Founder provided no systematic discourse on the theme of the means by which God causes a vocation to be recognised.⁸⁹ We understand quite well, on the other hand, why Brs. Jean-Baptiste and François developed it later: the growth of the Institute and its moving away from its origins, together with the rise of individualism, were weakening vocations. A theme relatively subordinate in Fr. Champagnat’s

⁹² Written by Scupoli

⁹³ Ch. II p. 4

time, when the Founder's charism and community spirit were strong, became a central one. Then again, the examination of this collection suggests that many other subjects are likewise linked to these instructions. A systematic comparison would permit them to be dated according to the same method.

4TH PART: DATING THE COLLECTION OF EXAMENS OF CONSCIENCE

There is no doubt then that this collection is closely connected with the Manual of Piety. But the question remains: which comes first? We can indeed suppose that the examens served as inspiration in the editing of the Manual rather than the opposite. We will then proceed with our analysis so as to clear the matter up if possible.

1/ A LATE ELABORATION OF THE WORK

First of all, it is certain that Br. Jean-Baptiste is the author of the greater part of it since the copyist explicitly affirms that it is based on two exercise books of Br. Jean-Baptiste⁹⁰. The work as well begins with this invocation:

“All for Jesus, all for Mary ⁹¹. Jesus, Mary, it is on you alone I count and by your aid and your spirit that I hope to complete this work; do everything so that it turns uniquely to your glory.”

This is therefore to declare that the collection was destined to be published. As it was not finished (the last examen - the 88th - is not complete) one may suppose that it is late and that death, in 1872, prevented Br. Jean-Baptiste from completing it. This work, besides, has no strategic importance for the Congregation. The case then seems agreed: we have before us a manuscript from the end of the 1860s or the beginning of the 1870s.

2/ A SIGNIFICANT LACUNA : SPIRITUAL READING

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ We must nevertheless notice that examens 23 and 24 speak of the Office “and other vocal

However, we must be careful of too quickly declaring that the texts themselves are late, for some strange gaps appear in the series of subjects of examen, notably when there is question of prayer and meditation. One can judge from the following table:

It is indeed curious that one passes without transition from the 10th examen on the necessity of prayer to the fruits of prayer, without an examen on the esteem we should have for prayer, as does the Manual. In the same way, the collection of examens has no article on spiritual reading though the Manual possesses one. This lacuna appears the more significant in that the rule of 1837 does not envisage spiritual reading strictly speaking. Article 3 of chapter II (p 16) simply says:

“After the (morning) office one reads a chapter of the New Testament on which the Brother Director, or one of the other Brothers on his orders, may make some reflections.”

Article 7 adds:

“On Thursdays, feastdays and Sundays, the Brothers will read some books of piety or some edifying stories.”

Article 37 is a little more explicit:

“At half past five, the Brothers recite the holy Office, after which they spend five to ten minutes reading the Imitation of Christ or of the Blessed Virgin, or even the Spiritual Combat⁹².”

The word “spiritual reading” never appears and the readings are merely complements to the Office or optional exercises proper to certain days.

The rule of 1852, on the other hand, tells us in the chapter on the exercises of piety⁹³:

“7. They will do every day a quarter of an hour of spiritual reading;

⁹⁶ The fact that it does not involve affectivity shows that it is not mental prayer properly speaking but a meditation. However a special section is reserved for the affections viewed as “the soul of mental prayer” but “which are formed in the will.”

⁹⁷ Ch. II article 40, p. 26

⁹⁸ In his presentation of this collection of examens Br. Paul Sester mentions two, published in 1857 and 1859, one for the use of the Christian Brothers.

this reading will be done in community.”

In chapter IX, “order of daily exercises”, article 14 (p. 27) indicates that after the Office “they will do a quarter of an hour of spiritual reading from the works of Rodriguez, Fr. Saint Jure or Saint Liguori, or from some other ascetical work approved by the Brother Superior.”

So it is legitimate for us to wonder if the collection of examens does not show traces of a period at the beginning when spiritual reading did not have a fixed place and therefore did not merit an examen of conscience.

3/ SOME IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES CONCERNING PRAYER

It is possible to make the same remark about some gaps on prayer. The rule of 1837 provides that from half past four to five o'clock, the Brothers would make a “meditation”, but it says nothing about vocal prayer apart from the Office which begins at five o'clock. The rule of 1852 includes some significant particulars:

“Every day they will do half an hour of mental prayer, not including vocal prayer.”⁹⁴

A difference of dimension appears: what was “meditation” has become “mental prayer”, clearly differentiated from vocal prayer. It appears that between 1837 and 1852 the Institute's practice and theory of prayer gained refinement. The “meditation” of 1837 must have included some exercises of vocal prayer joined to a period of meditation properly speaking. In 1852 the two types of prayer are strictly separate; there is a time for vocal prayer and a time for “mental prayer.”

On the level of the terms employed we also find great differences. The collection of examens cheerfully mixes the concepts of prayer, mental prayer and meditation⁹⁵. Thus the 10th examen, “On the necessity of prayer”, begins its first point as follows:

“Let us adore Our Lord praying on every occasion and even spending the whole night in the exercise of mental prayer”...

In the 11th examen which treats “Of the fruits of mental prayer” it says:

“Let us adore the Holy Spirit telling us by the mouth of the prophet king: Approach God by prayer and meditation and you will be enlight-

⁹⁹ Examens 50-88 seem to come from the treatise on education entitled “Apostolate of a Marist Brother”, whose development finished in 1852.

ened”...

The Manual of Piety is much more precise: when it speaks of prayer it means the raising of the soul to God, whatever form it takes. It defines “mental prayer and meditation” as “an exercise of the faculties of the soul”, that is to say, the memory, understanding and will.⁹⁶

So, there again, several factors lead us to think that the subjects of examen testify to a way of considering the spiritual life more archaic than that of the Manual of Piety.

4/ TWO STAGES OF THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN

Let us conclude with an important observation on the particular examen. The rule of 1837⁹⁷ tells us that one will consecrate ten minutes to “the very particular examen” “which is made on the dominant passion” for five minutes and “the other five minutes are employed on reading the ordinary examen book.” The rule of 1852 says simply (art. 6, p. 5):

“To acquire purity of soul and that solid knowledge of oneself so necessary to correct one’s faults and to work for one’s perfection, they will do ten minutes particular examen every day.”

On the subject of the examen the movement seems to have been the opposite of prayer, towards a less precise form but, at base, towards greater freedom. In any case, the 27th examen in the collection seems still to bear traces of the usages of the 1837 rule since it is entitled: “The means one should take to correct the fault that is the subject of our examen.” In another connection, what is the “ordinary examen book”? One can suppose it was a guide somewhat similar in form to the collection we are concerned with⁹⁸. One may then wonder if Br. Jean-Baptiste had in mind, in this collection, to give the Marist Brothers a guide for examens of conscience especially adapted to them but preserving traces of a period before the rule of 1852.

5/ A LATE WORK BUT WITH ANCIENT TEXTS

Finally our present judgement on the collection of examens is qualified. Its development is certainly late for it appears to belong to the editorial effort of Br. Jean-Baptiste, who at the end of his life felt the need to complete the body of doctrine developed in the years 1852-1856 with the Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions, the Biographies of some Brothers, The Good Superior and various works on meditation.

BROTHER FRANÇOIS, RETREAT OF 1826

But this late development does not mean the texts are late, for the ageing Br Jean-Baptiste undertook this editorial effort to recall the tradition at a period when the memory of the origins was fading. The Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions, which are largely a collection of the instructions of the Founder, are a witness to this determination to give new life to the tradition. And if the collection of examens shows traces of a spirituality which seems closer to the rule of 1837 than that of 1852, it is probably because some of them at least are ancient. The indications we have provided, and others we could not take into account here⁹⁹, lead us to think that the texts of this collection are prior to the Manual of Piety. But it requires a much more detailed study to draw solid conclusions on this subject.

CONCLUSION: HOW THE LITERATURE OF THE YEARS 1840-1856 THROWS LIGHT ON THE ORIGINS

This limited study has allowed us to display some major axes of research. The most interesting, perhaps, is the richness of a Marist manuscript and printed literature, almost unknown to most Brothers or judged without interest by them, developed between the writings of the Founder and the publication of the Life, in the period 1840-1856. Little studied up to now, it is however an irreplaceable witness on the spirituality of the origins about which we often talk, without knowing much about it.

It is true that it is not easy to see clearly in this thicket of manuscripts hardly dated if at all and printed works, which repeat each other, correspond with each other, copy each other, ceaselessly giving the impression of saying the same thing and being different all the same. To make progress, however, it is necessary to treat manuscripts and printed texts as a whole, whose elements provide mutual enlightenment, the printed works helping date the manuscripts which themselves show how this literature had developed. Thus a picture evolves of the way in which

¹⁰⁰ See below, No.45

the Institute, after the death of the Founder, recollected his memory by transcribing and using the notes taken during his instructions and also by the oral tradition. One can, then, thanks to these collections of sayings and instructions, go back to the beginning of the 1820s and observe the great evolutions of spirituality between those origins and the fixing of the tradition in printed works of an official character. At the same time, the study of this corpus allows us to see here and there the contributions proper to the superiors, conscientious to respond to new problems raised by changes in society and the growth of the Congregation.

Thanks to this study, which has only skirted the thicket of texts, we also believe we can discern some great phases in the development of the spirituality: one going back to the years around 1822, when the Institute was still a limited group, not very structured but fervent; then a second where it is difficult to date the beginning but which could go back to the 1830s, when the need to give structure to a group that had become numerous became apparent. In the third period (1845-1852?) one senses the elaboration of the great legislative texts and the Life of the Founder. One may equally divine a fourth strata, the years 1860-1870, when the superiors, on the one hand free themselves further from the origins and create their own texts, and on the other, concerned at seeing the Congregation neglect the tradition, recall it forcefully in new works entirely imbued with the tradition of the origins.

Our work therefore places in relief the key importance of the years 1840-1856 in which were elaborated the great legislative and spiritual texts of the Congregation. After a slow maturing, it curtailed the oral tradition, predominant up to then, by putting in place, in 1852-56, written norms applying to everyone everywhere, and attempting to fix what had been simply usage and opinion.

The history of these sixteen years of intense activity has not yet been written but we possess the necessary material to do so. No doubt the further we advance the more light we throw not only on this intermediate period but also on that of the origins whose heritage it gleaned.

¹⁰¹ Life of M.J.B. Champagnat, Edition of 1989, p.143.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ id. p.150.

¹⁰⁴ Id. p.154.

¹⁰⁵ Letters of Father Champagnat, vol.1, doc.30, pp. 82-85.

Br. André LANFREY

¹⁰⁶ Cf. O.M. 4, pp. 355-357.

¹⁰⁷ O.M. 3, doc. 819, p. 229.

Following the article in the preceding issue of 'Cahiers Maristes', concerning the retreat notebooks of Brother François, I think that it would be interesting, in order to deepen still more profoundly an understanding of the personality of the latter, to analyse in detail one or other of his records of retreat. Because it is significant in more ways than one, I am choosing the retreat of 1826. It is the retreat preparatory to the profession of perpetual vows.

Historic situation

According to indications given by Brother François himself, who declares that he pronounced vows on 11 October at the end of the Spiritual Exercises,¹⁰⁰ a retreat would have taken place at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage from 4 to 11 October. Born on 12 March 1808, François was therefore, at this date, at the age of 18 years and 8 months. The story of the first years of his religious life is but poorly known, but based on reconstructions made by his biographers, we may place him first at Marlhes in 1821, then at Vanosc in 1823. During the course of the year 1825 he would have replaced Brother Jean-Pierre, who had just died at Boulieu on 28 April and would have taken the direction of this school until the following holidays. It is therefore with a year as Director behind him that he came to the retreat of 1826.

According to Brother François' 'list of retreats made under Father Champagnat', which list may be found in the same retreat notebook that contains the retreat notes that are the subject of this investigation, this particular retreat was conducted by two preachers, Father Champagnat himself and Father Terraillon.

Father Champagnat, if one can believe his biography on the matter, had just passed a particularly difficult year. We recall that it commenced with a grave illness which gave cause to predict the worst for the future. 'A crowd of creditors arrived and demanded payment.'¹⁰¹ But graver still was the complete discouragement among the Brothers: 'Everyone, Brothers and novices, were persuaded that he was dying, that all was lost, and that the only thing remaining for them to do was to withdraw.'¹⁰² Father Courveille, who was in charge of looking after those at the Hermitage, reinforced this attitude even more deeply by the rigorous procedures he

had adopted previously. Less than two months later, when Champagnat was not as yet restored to health, the archbishop deemed it fitting to send a Visitor to the Hermitage, a man who devoted all his zeal to reveal the weaknesses of the management of the house of formation. 'Several days after this visit'¹⁰³ there came to light the Father Courveille affair, which obliged the latter to leave the house definitively - Courveille, the one whom Father Champagnat held to be the true founder of the Society of Mary and on whom he thought he could lean, as much for spiritual support as for temporal. It was Courveille indeed who had been a great help in the acquisition of several properties on which the present Hermitage establishment was built. 'During this same period', when Father Champagnat saw himself obliged to dismiss Brother Jean-Marie from the congregation, Roursey, on whom Champagnat counted no less strongly, left in his turn. 'The loss of these two Brothers was a source of great distress for the Founder, for they were the only ones capable of helping him in the government of the Institute.'¹⁰⁴ In addition, Brother Louis, his second recruit, gave him anxiety by wanting to become a priest. These events made the Founder understand the necessity of attaching the Brothers to their vocation by vows, which would be pronounced for the first time at the conclusion of this retreat. Doubtless these different facts influenced Champagnat, since he expresses the sorrowful recollection of them seven years later, in the autumn of 1833, in his letter to Father Cholleton.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, all this could have confirmed him in confidence in the will of God and in the abandonment of himself to God, which the notes of Brother François seem to indicate actually did occur.

On the other hand, we cannot see how Father Terraillon was able to inspire the Brothers in the situation which must have been his at that moment.¹⁰⁶ Seminary companion of Father Champagnat from 1813 to 1816, Terraillon helped him at the Hermitage from 25th August 1825. 'In May 1826, it was Terraillon who discovered the delinquencies of Father Courveille and persuaded him to take himself off to La Trappe.' But Terraillon himself did not feel at ease while he stayed at the Hermitage. 'Under pretext of preaching the Jubilee, but in reality because he was not pleased with the Brothers,'¹⁰⁷ he discreetly quit the Hermitage. What displeased him about the Brothers we do not know. In any case, nothing indicates any kind of discord whatsoever with Father Champagnat, who subse-

¹⁰⁸ Letters of M. Champagnat, vol. 1, p.419.

¹⁰⁹ See below, Annexes.

quently was to do all he could to bring Terraillon back to the Society of Mary. But, in the interim, collaboration must have been strained, even though the account does not admit of anything particular about this matter.

General Impression

This retreat account, in regard to length, can be placed a little below the average in the collection of retreat notes of other years; but from general appearances this account is marred by some plagiarism. Nevertheless, it does seem that we can place it comfortably enough under the general classification of retreat notes. The references to spiritual authors are certainly numerous, but the texts are not often cited. Besides, there are some paragraphs which are supported by several passages from works, even up to five in number. This poses a problem in the editing date of these texts.

If, as everything leads us to believe, they are notes taken in the course of instructions given by the preachers, how can we believe that the preachers could have dictated a whole list of references for the very same idea, however important it was? We must therefore admit that these texts have been put in literally after the notes were taken at the conferences, and after the texts were verified from their actual sources. Another hypothesis would be that only the references would have been added after the lecture. But we can scarcely distinguish a difference in writing between them and the actual text. Moreover, the lack of erasures, beyond the first page of the note book, shows a serene application to work, well beyond the pressure that the speed of the spoken word imposes.

In transcribing at an advanced age the notes taken during his youth, Brother François has probably modified them to some extent. Certain indications would lead us to believe so. We read in paragraph #19: 'I must therefore ... direct, instruct in a manner which is worthy of God and of my position.' Don't we feel in those words the tones of a Superior? More explicit still is this other passage from paragraph #39: 'It is therefore necessary to bear and to correct the faults (of the) Brothers, ... to visit and to serve them more carefully in their illnesses.' These ideas appear more like those which we encounter in a Brother François who is

¹¹⁰ Life, p. 401.

superior of the community of Notre Dame de l'Hermitage after he had finished his generalate than those which are suitable for the director of a community of two or three Brothers. Then again, two references clearly carry the date 1868: # 25, Rosier, 27 September 1868, and # 26, Sentences, Leçons, ... a work which appeared in 1868. It is therefore necessary to conclude that here there is a question of a late transcription of notes carefully conserved.

Even if the author does not always resist the weakness of adding later ideas to these notes or even adding notes taken from some other connection, the certitude remains that the source of these texts is authentic; they faithfully reveal his psychological state in the year indicated. It is with this care for a better knowledge of personality that these retreat notes of 1826 are presented. They are transcribed as exactly as possible, with explanations to facilitate an understanding of them.

Retreat of 1826

A.MD.G AND MD.G.H.

1. It is impossible that hearts, even the purest and the most religious, do not contract a little of the contagious dust of the world (St. Leo the Great). It is therefore a necessity to renew oneself interiorly at certain periods in order to make up for, by a redoubling of fervour, the losses which the soul is ceaselessly faced with.

2. To stir myself to make my retreat better I must consider:
a. the graces I have received from God;
b. what he expects of me in the way of gratitude;
c. the punishments which will follow my ingratitude; e.g., the fig tree, Pharaoh, the vine. (Matt. 21; Exodus 14; Isaiah 5)

3. Since I receive so many benefits, I must render gratitude to Him; I have the duty of giving thanks to Him, in order to avoid the penalty which my ingratitude would merit.

Hugues of Saint Victor says that all creatures may say to mankind these three words: Take!... Repay !... Fear!... (Hugues of Saint Victor: The Guide for Sinners, L.1, C.3; Saint Jure, Conn. From J.C., L.III, C.25,

¹¹¹ Letters of M. Champagnat, vol. 1, doc. 10, p.45.

T.V, p.321; Sermon, Father Champagnat; Judde, T.1, p.69).

These three paragraphs probably correspond to the opening conference of the retreat given by Father Champagnat, whose name, furthermore, appears among the references. As we see it, the retreat is considered, not through the sombre colours of sin, of repentance and of hell, but in a mood of thanksgiving and of revitalisation. This perspective fits in well with that which Father Champagnat will express some dozen years later in the Circular of 21 August 1838, in inviting the Brothers to the retreat in these words: 'Come, join together once more and warm yourselves again at the sanctuary which witnessed your becoming the children of the most tender Mother.'¹⁰⁸ He will hardly be setting a general retreat pattern, for, in the 'Instructions' of Brother François, as in the 'Writings' of Brother Jean-Baptiste, the purpose of the retreat is presented in a more rigorous fashion.¹⁰⁹

As for the references in # 2, they correspond reciprocally with the examples and it would have been necessary to put it thus: "the fig tree, Matt. 21:18", and in like manner for the others. His way of doing this is doubtless an indication that the references are later additions.

For the quotations from the third paragraph we would, in addition, have been able to refer to Judde, 'The Long Retreat', whose text we can read in Annex No.3; we can conclude that this is an idea greatly shared among spiritual authors (cf. Annex Notes, No.1). In this regard, we can rightly wonder how a young Brother of 18 years could have read all these authors; this corroborates the idea of a later editing.

4. God has created me to know Him, to love Him, to glorify Him in His life and to possess Him in the next. God Himself is my end. Oh! how excellent this is! (Father Bourdaloue, Spiritual retreat, First Meditation, and following).

5. As a Christian, I must follow Jesus Christ, renounce myself and carry my cross every day with courage and joy. But, as a religious, I must be crucified to the world and the world must be crucified to me. I must, above all, die to the world which is in me. To be dead to myself in religion is to have no more self-will, no more temper, no more pretensions, no human viewpoints.

6. My God! Where could I be right without You? But where can I be wrong with you? O my creator! My God and my all! O Jesus, the love of my heart!

(Saint Francis Xavier = Assisi (sic).

We perceive here an echo of one or several meditations ranging from the end of man to the contemplation of Jesus, wherein the life of renunciation is especially held up to us. If we can believe the biography of Father Champagnat on this theme, the second of these paragraphs links up very well with the thought of Champagnat saying to the Brothers: 'To live according to God,... it is necessary to immolate to God all the powers of the soul and all the senses of the body.' ¹¹⁰ In any case, the end proposed for this retreat, that is, to experience a fitting preparation for the profession of vows, does not leave any ambiguity at all, and the final exclamations show that the young Brother François is wholeheartedly into the process. (In regard to the quotation from Bourdaloue, cf. Annex Notes, No. 6.)

7. I am totally yours, O my Jesus! My heart is like a garden which you have fashioned, seeded in your holy house, cultivated, sustained by your teachings, flooded by your graces, watered by your tears and by your blood. It must therefore produce abundant fruits. Ah! Please, do not allow the enemy ever to lay hands on it.

8. Go off, Satan, you cruel beast! There is nothing here belonging to you. Everything is God's; everything is of God; everything is for God (Saint Martin).

9. I consecrate myself entirely to you for ever, O my Saviour and my God; I give you the whole garden, the tree and all its fruits; my soul with all its powers; my body with all its senses; that they may continually be employed in serving you.

10. Help me, Lord, to uproot all the brambles and the thorns of my heart. Pour into it the rain of your grace so that worthy fruits of penance may be produced.

The pastoral image of the 'garden' shines like a ray of light into this spirituality. The theme, it is true, often comes back to the Bible, notably to Isaiah 5: 11, where the just man who gives himself to fasting and to good works 'will be like a well-watered garden.' Father Champagnat evokes this in his Circular of January 1828, to encourage the Brothers by assur-

ing them that 'the Blessed Virgin has planted us in her garden; she takes care that nothing is wanting to us.' ¹¹¹ Concerned, however, about the evil inclination of mankind, Brother François does not forget that in his garden weeds are also growing. Thus, in this retreat, in which the positive aspects of enthusiasm and love are quite strongly marked, other aspects that are strongly affected by evil and sin are not to be excluded from the whole list of outcomes.

11. Death is a good and wise counsellor. I therefore want to familiarise myself with it in everything, and, for that end, I want to meditate on it, to envisage it, to consult it, principally in important affairs. Further still, I want to meditate on it if, by misfortune, I were to depart from my duty, from the observance of the Rule, or from the practice of penance.

12. I shall also reflect on death in order to detach myself entirely from the world, which finishes for us at death, just as everything in the world does, for death leaves us with nothing at all and even our body is given to the worms. But what will become of our soul? *Mori non malum, sed male mori pessimum.*

13. Death is the echo of life. Now, the echo repeats the sound in the way the sound has been produced. Thus, such as life has been, so death will be (Crasset, *Considerations*, Ninth Sermon after Pentecost; Judde, G. retreat, T. 1; Religious retreat, Third day, Second Meditation).

14. How would I have wished to perform this action, this prayer, this meditation, this Confession, this Communion; how would I have wished to assist at this Mass, to have heard this reading, this exhortation, etc... when I shall appear before God to be judged. That is perhaps the last day of my life. At least, I am sure that one day will be my last (Crasset, First Tuesday, Advent.).

The fact that these paragraphs on the theme of death follow one another and that this theme afterwards appears no more shows that they have been suggested by an instruction on death which, as we know, always makes part of the programme of a retreat. It is to be noticed that it is spoken about here, less for arousing fear than for underscoring the positive side of the matter, that is, as stimulation for a virtuous life. The expression in the twelfth paragraph 'the body given to the worms' is in line with

a certain realism in Brother François that we often meet up with in his writings. It leads us to note the distrust of the body, which he would like to achieve, it seems, more through piety than through fear itself. On the subject of the reference from # 13 to Judde, cf. Annex Notes Nos. 2,4,5.

It is clear that the expression: 'the end of my life' indicates what preachers rarely forget to recall during the course of a retreat.

15. My perfection consists of these two things only:

a. to do all that God wants me to do.

b. to do it as he wants me to do it.

I do what God wants by observing my Rule; and I do it in the way he wants it to be done by doing it as perfectly as possible (Rodriguez, 1st P., 2ndT., C. 1).

16. My God, my Father, my Master full of attention, of reasonableness, of compassion, Who asks only to give and Who rewards so magnificently; Who, in commanding, helps us to obey and, in putting us to the test, consoles us and helps us (Judde, retreat for profession, T. 4, 1st Meditation).

17. God does not ask extraordinary things of me, but He wants me to have much exactitude, much fervour and much constancy in doing the common and ordinary things; these will become things of great value before Him. Through Jesus Christ, we unite them to all which has been done, and which will yet be done by all the saints in the entire Church, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

These three paragraphs are inspired, as the reference indicates, by the work of Father Rodriguez, 'The Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection', the second treatise, 'Concerning My Perfection in Ordinary Actions'. Was it the preacher or the personal reading which inspired these notes? It is evidently not possible to reply to this question. In any case, this proves the important place of Rodriguez in our spirituality.

For #15, cf. Annex Notes, No. 9.

18. The good God offers me, and gives me, all the means of giving efficaciously to Him my fidelity, my love, my thanksgiving - and I neglect them; or, if I do make use of them, it is only with lukewarmness and indifference. What will be the result of this? (Bourdaloue, retreat, 1st day, Consideration)

19. To love God above all, to love one's neighbour for the love of God, therein lies the whole Law. To love only oneself and to seek oneself in everything, therein lies the deadly source of all sin (Sentence from the Golden Book).

20. Here I am doing the work of God. He has commanded me (sic) and he sees me act. He knows my thoughts, my intentions. I must therefore act, think, pray, speak, direct and instruct in a manner which is worthy of God and of my position in life (Rodriguez, Christian Perfection, 1st Part, 2nd Treatise).

Paragraphs 18 and 20 join with those above, 15, 16 and 17, as the reference indicates. The last-mentioned (#20) is not at all concerned with a quotation, for the sentence is not to be found in the Second Treatise of the work indicated. It is the general idea which is meant to be manifested. The sentence is therefore from Brother François himself, which makes even more astonishing the choice of the verbs: 'to speak, to direct, to instruct' - from a young Brother of 18 years.

21. When God wishes to manifest that a work is entirely from His hand, He reduces everything to powerlessness and to despair, and then he acts... (Bossuet).

This idea follows only distantly the preceding idea and will not subsequently be followed by any other similar idea.

22. God is the infinite source of all graces. He filled with grace the Virgin Mary who is all-powerful with Him for our enrichment. Her maternal hands draw graces from the Divine ocean and then spread them out over the whole universe, and principally over her faithful servants. Devotion to Mary is as ancient as the world. The angels recognised her as their Queen. All saints have had a particular devotion to her.

O most holy Mother of God, O Virgin powerful and full of goodness, you are our Mother! (Father Terraillon)

We may think that this refers to an instruction by Father Terraillon on the Blessed Virgin. The little that remains of it suggests no reflection at all on the author.

23. In order to stir itself to regularity, a lukewarm soul does not

propose to itself as models those souls who do better than it does, those who acquit themselves well of their duties and who work ceaselessly at their perfection. It does not reflect on its state and its fatal consequences. Instead of considering the evil that it is performing and the good that it is omitting, it considers only the good which it does and the evil which it avoids in order to prefer itself to those whom it believes less perfect, and it reassures itself on its good fortune, like the Pharisee in the Gospel. (Luke 18) My God! What a state! What a way of life! And what grace is it not necessary to have to know oneself properly and to reform!

The first sentence becomes more understandable if we put in the subordinate clause: in order to excite itself to regularity' immediately after the principal clause, namely, between 'models' and 'those who'. As for the punctuation, the replacement of the semi-colon by the full-stop would make the text more fluent. We may record here that the style of Brother François is not always simple and clear.

As for the theme of lukewarmness, it will return further on. This shows the lack of logical sequence of these notes, which seem to deviate from the logical development of the retreat.

24. I must recite the Office every day. (Judde, Religious retreat, 2nd Consideration, T. 3; Bourdaloue, retreat, Third day, Consideration)

This is a happy and holy consideration, which makes me perform on earth what in heaven is being carried out by the angels and saints. With these, by my imitating them on earth, as in a novitiate, I hope to have the good fortune one day to be associated in Glory, where the Office will be perpetual. Thus, all united, many saintly souls, plus the Pope, bishops, priests and religious communities recite it in like manner with me. By uniting my intentions and my prayers to theirs, with love, fervour, zeal and humility, I shall receive a great degree of confidence from this holy and salutary union. And then what confidence will I not have to obtain from the Divine goodness the granting of our requests; since we are speaking to God, we are speaking about God, and God is speaking to us. In this holy exercise the Holy Spirit himself puts into our mouths the expressions which we make use of to render our duties to God! (Gaume, Catechism of Perseverance, 4th P., Lessons VII, VIII, IX, T. VII)

25. After the Hypostatic Union, the dignity of the Mother of God surpasses all dignities possible. (Saint Bonaventure; Rosier, 27 September 1868; D'Argentan, Greatness of Mary, Mother of God).

Concerning the Office, cf. Annexed Notes Nos. 10 and 11.

As for the last sentence, #25, it seems we must link it with #22, but the second reference: 'Rosier (of Mary) of the 27 September 1868' puts it in an entirely different context. It is possible that the sentence is from Saint Bonaventure, which is not easy to prove, whilst the reference to Father d'Argentan, without the precise details about volume and page, has probably no other purpose than to help fill out the numbers. It remains to wonder whether they are references added only after 1868 or whether it is the entire text which has been transcribed at that date. The last hypothesis, although it pushes even further back the definitive correction of the text, is not unlikely.

26. In view of the way in which I acquit myself in this matter, I become more criminal, more culpable through what should be making me more just and more holy. What is it, therefore, which would be able to justify me and make me find grace before God, if my prayers themselves serve to condemn me and stir the Lord against me? (Sayings and Teachings of Father Champagnat, T. II of the Chronicles, C. 15, p.159; St. Augustine, Césaire)

First of all, it is necessary to put this paragraph after #24. This text certainly does not shine because of its clarity. Only the reference to 'Sentences, Leçons et Avis' of Father Champagnat, collected by Brother Jean-Baptiste, allows us to see clearly into it. Was it at the time of this retreat or was it at another time that the Founder gave the conference on the Office which is mentioned in this work? Nothing allows us to establish this. The ideas of these two paragraphs are still clearly to be found in the notes, as we can see by the extract below, Annex No 10. It is to be noted that the first edition of this work dates only from 1868. In regard to the names of the saints Augustine and Césaire, whose words are brought back into the text, Brother François feels the need to recall them, without making the pretence of saying that he has read their works.

27. When the Lord made known to Saint Francis Xavier what he would have to do and to suffer, the saint cried out: 'Still more, Lord, still more!' And, in regard to the consolations with which he was often suffused, he said, as did Saint Philip Neri: 'It is enough, Lord; it is enough. I do not merit to be so consoled.' In the midst of so many cares, journeyings and

fatigues, he preserved an equanimity of soul and a gaiety of spirit which never gave the lie to his state of soul; meanwhile imperfect souls fell into dissipation, became disturbed, and troubled themselves over the very slightest matters. (Life of the Saint. T.1, p. 65; L.VI, C.II.p. 207; L.IV, 261 Eulogy, p. 278, II; L.II, T.1, p. 110)

A moment of weariness in which fervour becomes blurred could suggest this note, which seems to be drawn from a reading rather than from a retreat instruction. It would show, in this case, the will not to allow oneself to be felled by adversities.

28. O my God, my sovereign judge, if, after having appeared before your dreaded tribunal and having heard the delaying of my condemnation, I were to be given yet a little time to come back to You and to repair the past, how would I employ this most precious time, so that I may still gain heaven. (Crasset, Considerations, 8th Week after Pentecost)

29. You very much desire, O God, sovereign good, not to judge me yourself, but that I become my own judge, and that I carry out all the justice which I have accepted in my own regard. With your grace, I accept this condition, O my God. I am therefore going to be my own accuser at the tribunal of my conscience. There, I shall be both plaintiff and witness against myself and I shall try to satisfy your justice while still imploring your mercy. I shall make of my whole life the most rigorous and most severe scrutiny. I shall make my penance proportionate to the result of the scrutiny of my life and I shall make this penance with an ardent desire to please you and to satisfy you. I shall make it as holy and as complete as it will seem to me that it must be, and yet as much as my weakness will be able to bear. I shall not rest there, O my Saviour. I shall also regulate my future, I shall sanctify it. I shall neither permit myself nor pardon myself anything at all, so that nothing will stop me when you call me to yourself, and that I may without delay, and without any obstacle in the way, take possession of the eternal beatitude which you have promised me. Yes, My God, I want to avoid sin and save my soul, even at the price of great sacrifices.

It is easy to see in these two paragraphs an instruction on the Particular Judgement. Nevertheless, #29 is a more or less romantic transposition from the simple examination of conscience to the Particular Judgement. The last sentence, comparing poorly vis à vis the quality of the preceding lines,

proposes an ideal which derogates from the exaltation of the preceding paragraphs concerning deeds, love and the gift of self. Nevertheless, the exclamations which follow take up the tone again but at a more idealistic pitch.

30. Oh! How beautiful you are, how lovable and desirable, my dear homeland, city of my God! (Saint Bernard)

Oh! When will I be able to fly away and rest in this happy place? (Imitation, Book III, C. 48)

This last sentence is not to be found in the given Chapter of the Imitation. On the other hand, it contains similar passages on the same theme.

31. Heavenly Jerusalem, Church of the here-below, living temples. (Saint Jean François Régis)

32. Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine virtutum! concupiscit et defuit anima mea in atria Domini. (PS. 83,2)

Quam sordet terram cum caelum aspirio! (Saint Ignatius Loyola, in his Life, L. 1, C. 2; Rodriguez, 1st Part, T.III C. III)

Laetatus sum il his quae dicta sunt mihi: il domum Domini ibimus. (Ps. 121,1)

33. O God, the joy of my spirit, the delight of my heart, the paradise of my soul. O, that I cannot love you as much as you merit to be loved and as much as I desire to love you!... That I cannot have all the hearts of men to offer them to you and all the fervent love of the Blessed to consecrate to you !

34. The thought of, and the hope for, Paradise is like a firm and solid anchor which sustains us in the midst of the waves, the tempests and the storms. (Heb. 6)

A normal retreat plan does indeed arrange for an instruction on Judgment to be followed by one on Heaven, the celestial homeland, which proves that it is indeed a matter of retreat notes. As much as it can be established, the last sentence is not a quotation, but a simple allusion.

35. The whole of life is full of bitterness, of miseries and of afflictions, but only one glance towards heaven makes all that agreeable and

even desirable. Life to me would be insupportable if, in it, I had nothing to suffer, for to suffer is the paradise of this world. It is necessary, therefore, to suffer or to die, says Saint Therese. Sufferings were the lot of Jesus, the well-beloved Son of God the Father, and there is glory and happiness in being treated like Him and in suffering for Him, since, over and above the precious advantages which we find in suffering in this life, it is a consoling guarantee of eternal happiness. (Judde, *The Long Retreat*, 3rd Part, p. 373; 4th Part, p. 500)

From the ideal we revert to reality, from heaven to the sorrowful uncertainties of life on earth, but this time looked at from the perspective of a future happiness. Nevertheless, how can we agree with the second sentence? How pretend that life is 'insupportable' without suffering? We can accept that this idea has been put in by a fervent inexperienced young man. We must specify that it is not to be found in the work mentioned, whose thesis does not go beyond the imitation of the suffering Christ, and whose intention is no other than only to win us back from our sins to assure us of blessedness in God. It is therefore not a question of seeking out suffering for its own sake. We have to note elsewhere, that, from the preceding retreat, 1825, the theme of suffering takes an important part in the spirituality of Brother François.

36. I belong to you under so many titles, O God, my Father! O Jesus, my Saviour! O Mary, my tender Mother! I therefore consecrate myself to you purely, totally and irrevocably. I no longer have anything for myself, I no longer have anything for the world! (Judde, *Retreat for Profession*, Tome 4, 1st Meditation)

37. I shall try never to do anything which could displease you or diminish the love which must unite us closely. I put before you lovingly and confidently all my miseries, and I hope that you will have pity on me and that you will give me the grace to always be totally yours. Ah! I should be only too happy to be admitted to the number of your servants, (Luke, 9) and you desire very much to count me among your most cherished children! That is my consolation, my glory and my happiness.

Preparation for a definitive engagement in the religious life is mani-

¹¹² O.M.2, doc. 674, p.514

fested here. The sincerity of the sentiments is not to be placed in doubt, nor the very positive will of making a total gift. We gauge the whole depth of the spirituality of Brother François, which will be maintained right up to the end.

38. Let each one be fully persuaded that, of all things in the house, the worst ones will often be given to him for his greater mortification and the salvation of his soul (Rule of Saint Ignatius). Just as a poor beggar receives, even with thanksgiving, something bad, so, if we are truly poor according to the Rule, we must persuade ourselves that we will be given whatever is worse. That is what Saint Louis Gonzaga often repeated to inspire the love and the practice of poverty. He was not put out by whatever happened to be in the articles of the Rule; he observed them all scrupulously, and, if you should ask him, or should he find himself in the position of doing such or such a thing and that the Rule was opposed to: 'I cannot do it,' he then said, 'because it is against the Rule.' (In the Life by Father Cepari, 2nd Part, C. 14, 83)

39. Saint Louis Gonzaga further says that to be overly afflicted by a fault could be a sign that we do not know ourselves well enough, and that whoever knows himself well enough must know that he is a terrain capable of producing only brambles and thorns. Also, his great care was to discover the source of his thoughts, of his desires and of his actions in order to know whether there would be anything of his own fault about it and to amend it in himself. In his confessions he was clear, precise, w i t h o u t scruple. His obedience was perfect, as Saint Ignatius desires. He regarded all his superiors, as well as those who, by their command, were proposed as such, as being people who held the very place of God Himself for him and he thus rejoiced to be able to obey the supreme Majesty in their person. Moreover, he always showed himself very respectful in their regard and was very submissive to their will.

That these reflections are drawn from a reading or from an instruction matters little to us. What allows no doubt at all, is that they are in line with the preparation for the profession of vows, although the vow of chastity is replaced by openness of heart. 'St Louis Gonzaga, our patron, our model,... was born in the same year as the death of Saint Stanislaus Kostka, in 1568, and Saint Jean François Régis came into the world in

1597, six years after the death of Saint Louis Gonzaga,' noted Brother François on the 21 June 1874, in his 'Projects of Instructions', p. 235. cf. Annexed Notes, No. 12, which, moreover, makes us see the manner in which Brother François uses his sources.

40. Does not Jesus Christ say today, as to the young man of the Gospel: 'To serve me well and to please me, one thing is wanting to you.' (Luke 18) Yes, for to love me truly you must first of all appear at the holy tribunal of penance with a Faith more lively, with a compunction more sorrowful, with a desire more ardent to satisfy my justice. You must also present yourself at the sacred table with a soul more pure, a love more ardent. You must receive my gifts with more thanksgiving, with more care and fidelity. Then you must combat your inclinations with more courage, correct your vices and your imperfections with a new ardour, and make sacrifices with more generosity. You must then prevent lukewarmness by a great spirit of recollection, by a life more pure, by a vigilance more exact, by a renunciation more entire, more absolute, more universal, in order to support your difficulties and your crosses with more submission, courage, resignation. You must suffer and correct the faults of your Brothers with more calmness, more humility, more zeal and more charity. You must visit them and serve them with more care in their sicknesses; you must soothe them in their miseries, help them when they need your advice and your support, console them in their afflictions, relieve them in their sorrows and entirely take up their interests, as you would wish it to be done for you.

This is a rather grand manner of taking a position on the Gospel by replacing the sober 'one thing' by enumerating about a dozen others which are far removed indeed from poverty. Nevertheless, the superlatives and the words 'ardent', 'pure', 'care' reveal both dissatisfaction with the present state vis à vis the ideal and a desire for the ideal towards which one tends. As we can see, great is the fervour of this young professed Brother!

41. To choose a wise director of conscience, to regard him with respect, to listen to him with confidence, to speak to him with openness, to obey him with fidelity. (Tronson, Particular Examen)

This note has something about it which is astonishing to us because of the absence of any mention of Father Champagnat or of the parish priest to whom the Brothers normally had to present themselves for Confession. Besides, we come to wonder whether the Brothers had the

custom of having a spiritual director other than the usual confessor, and whether Brother François does not present in this matter some exceptional needs dictated by his advance in the spiritual life.

42. I know what your endeavours are, your works and your patience. You cannot endure the wicked, you are patient, you have suffered for my name and you have not become discouraged. But I have one reproach to make to you; it is that you have slackened in your initial charity. Do penance concerning this and re-enter the practice of your first good works. (Apoc.2)

Truncated quotation from the Apocalypse, 2, 2-5, To the Angel of the Church of Ephesus

43. To remain tepid, while thinking that my God has so often filled me with his favours, must be for me the utmost bitter reproach. I must fulfil all my duties with a holy ardour and a great exactitude, must love to be unknown, forgotten, forsaken, even from the community in which I live, in order to seek only in God my consolation and my joy.

44. It would be a great lowering of my religious profession to adjust otherwise the esteem which I must show concerning things which, through the grace, virtue and holiness which are attached to them, are deserving of my esteem. In a special way, my esteem must be motivated by my accomplishing the will of God concerning them.

45. One of the most assured means of acquiring and preserving peace is a life withdrawn, pure and hidden in God with Jesus Christ in the practice of the duties of our state. (Imitation of Christ, L.1, C.XX, XXV; L.II,C.I)

In these three passages we recognise without difficulty the spirit of the Society of Mary according to the Reverend Father Colin, who desired that a Marist remain 'ignoti et quasi occulti.'¹¹²

46. The year is 1826, on the eleventh day of the memorable month of October, at the end of the retreat, and I have had the good fortune of receiving my God, and of making the perpetual vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. By these I am consecrated entirely to God, my Father and to Mary, my Mother, under the protection of all the angels and all the saints, particularly of my good Guardian Angel, of Saint John Francis Regis and of Saint Francis Xavier, by whose merits and intercession I

hope to obtain, through the mercy of God, the grace to observe them faithfully until the last breath of my life.

It is a matter of perpetual vows made secretly, that is to say, not officially, the Society not yet being recognised by the Church.

47. Saint Francis Xavier used to say (in his Life, L.VI, C.13; L.IV, p.299) that it is not only in the times which are specially allocated to them that we have to renew the vows which we make, but that, in imitation of the pious and saintly Abbé Paphnuce, it is necessary to renew them every day. He added that, as he scarcely knew any better weapons which a religious could make use of against all sorts of temptations, it was very appropriate and very advantageous to equip oneself every evening and every morning against the enemies of our salvation. It is good to renew vows, especially every time we receive Communion, and to ask ourselves often for an account of ourselves on the manner in which we observe them. To that end, we ought examine with great care whether our conscience does not reproach us with anything contrary to fidelity to our promises. (Rodriguez, 3P., 2T., C.8; Life of the Fathers of the Desert, L.IV, C.VIII, Paphnuce Bubal, priest and solitary; Life of Saint Francis Xavier, by Father Bouhours, L.IV, p.299)

The text is Rodriguez, but with some little re-arrangement.

48. We speak with an entire sincerity as if commissioned by God, in the presence of God and in the spirit and the person of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 17b)

For what reason is this quotation to be found here all alone? It is difficult to say, unless the young Professed Brother wishes to underline the sincerity of his engagement.

49. In the presence of all his good religious, the Abbé Pinuphe said to a novice whom he received: 'You have just given yourself entirely to God and renounced all things on earth. Guard yourself well against ever taking back anything of all that you have given up by this renunciation. You have renounced all riches by the vow of Poverty. Now take good guard against attaching yourself to the least thing in your new life, for it would advantage you nothing to have deprived yourself of all that you possessed in the world, if, in religion, you would attach yourself to some

possession, no matter what it may be. You have renounced your own will and your own judgement by the vow of Obedience. Take good care not to take them back, but say, along with the spouse, and with a deep sentiment of abnegation: “I have despoiled myself of my tunic, how would I be able to take it back?” (Cant. 3) I have despoiled myself totally of all that is myself. May God preserve me from clothing myself with those things again.” Moreover, you have renounced all pleasures and all the frivolous amusements of this century. Take good care never to give them entry into your heart. You have trampled down pride, vanity and the good opinion of this world. Take good care against allowing them to exert new pressures on you. When you have passed a longer time in religious life, when you have had positions in the houses or when you have been charged with responsibilities, then take good care to rebuild what you have formerly destroyed; otherwise, after having put your hand to the plough (Luke, 9), you would become a prevaricator and one who looks behind. But, persevere to the end of your life in poverty and absolute destitution in all things that you have promised to God and exercise yourself continually in the practice of humility and the other virtues of your state.’

50. Saint Basil, Saint Bernard, Saint Bonaventure add: ‘Think that you are no longer yours, but that all that you are, that all that you have belongs irrevocably to God to Whom you have made a gift of these things by means of your vows. That is why you must take good care against wanting to take back what you have given and consecrated to Him, for it would be to commit a theft, a sacrilegious larceny to act in this way.’ (Life of the Fathers, L.V, C.VIII; Rodriguez, Ille P. Ile, Tté , C. IX)

These two paragraphs are extracts from the work of Father Rodriguez, with some arrangements according the custom of Brother François, that is to say, that, throughout the texts he drops words, expressions, even entire sentences, but without disguising the sense.

51. As soon as I believe myself to be nothing before God, I commence to be something, and as soon as I believe myself to be something, then I am nothing, and I spoil everything, for God resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble.

52. Have we practised humility, goodness, patience, charity, gentleness with our Brothers? In Mansuetine Sapientiae (James, 13). What conde-

scension, what modesty, what mortification, what purity, what zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of our Brothers have we made apparent in our conversations? *Illos suscipe, illos dilige et illos te associa, quos videris contemptores seculi, sectatoris virtutis, amatores disciplinae.* (Saint Bernard) *Numquam in corde nisi Christus, nunquam in ore tuo nisi pax, nisi castitas, nisi pietas, nisi caritas.* (Saint Hilary of Arles, -three words illegible)

53. Resolutions

A.M.D.G. and M.D.G.H.

I. I shall suffer with patience and resignation and even with joy all the sorrows, the inconveniences, the afflictions and the pains of body and soul and all the privations of my state, being well convinced that, having made profession of religious poverty, I must not have nor look for all manner of ease here below.

II. Something asked of me by my superior or by those who, through his orders, have been appointed over me, I shall perform with promptness and with joy, seeing God in their person and acting so as to please Him, as well as Mary, my very dear Mother Mary, for I have not come into religion to do my own will but that of God.

III. To preserve myself from tepidity:

a. I shall often recall my last end: death, judgement, hell, heaven; reflecting on these things.

b. In a spirit of thanksgiving I shall also often renew the engagements which I have had the happiness to undertake with my God, especially in moments of temptation and on the beautiful days of Holy Communion.

c. My God lives in my soul; I shall keep him company. I shall praise You in presence of the angels and I shall adore You in your holy temple.

d. I shall esteem everyone, especially my good, dear Brothers, speaking to them always with gentleness, frankness, modesty, cordiality, and saluting in their person their good guardian angels and praying often for them.

e. Finally, I shall consider myself as the least of all, the most unworthy, the greatest sinner. (Saint Francis)

Prayer Before Going to Bed

54. I offer you, O my God, my body, my soul and the repose of this night. I want to take it only to have renewed strength to serve you in the

future with more fervour. I put my soul into your adorable hands and I beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of Saint Joseph, of my good angel and of all the saints, to accord me the grace to pass this night without offending you.

55. Holy Virgin, my tender Mother, receive me under your protection during this night and obtain for me from your divine Son the grace of a holy life and of a good death. Remember that you are my Mother and that I am your child.

56. My good guardian angel, my patron saints, all the angels and all the saints, I beg you to praise God for me during my sleep and to preserve me, by your prayers, from all unfortunate accidents which could occur during this night. Pray to the Saviour that He may give me His blessing, and give me yours, please, for the present time and for the great eternity. Amen.

Prayer to ask God for the grace of state

57. O God, whose wisdom regulates all things and whose providence assigns to all people the place which is proper to them, I thank you and I am happy with the situation and the employment to which it has pleased you to call me. Make known to me my duties therein and give me the grace to carry them out. Arrange that, loving my vocation, I may remain faithful to it and that I may conduct myself in a manner which is worthy of it, and which is worthy of you who have called me. Don't allow me to give way to the agitation of an uneasy spirit which becomes bored or which slackens in its work, which loves change and which envies the happiness which it imagines to exist in the state of life of other people.

58. Give me submission to your will. Fill me with your spirit, with the wisdom, the intelligence and the knowledge which are necessary for me in the employment you have confided to me. Make fruitful in my hands the talent which you have put into me, and about which I must render you an account. Make me apply myself to everything that you ask of me. Make me fulfil the purpose of my vocation according to the spirit of my state, so that I may advance more and more towards the perfection to which you have called me for your glory, for my salvation and that of my neighbour. I ask this through the merits of Jesus Christ, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels and of the saints.

Act of Consecration and of Perfect Union

59. I desire, O my God, to be absolutely and perfectly united to you, to walk always in your holy presence, to think continually of you, to honour you, love you, serve you and praise you by everything that is in me and everything that I can do. But, since the occupations, the distractions and the spiritual miseries of life often oppose my desires by turning me from you, here are the agreements which I dare to make with you and which I beg you to accept. (Devotion to the Sacred Heart)

60. I wish that each of my inhalings may draw you to me and that each of my exhalings may give me to you, but in the most perfect manner through the motive of the purest love and through the sole desire of your greater glory. I want each beat of my heart to tell you that this heart is yours. I give it to you with all the affection possible, and I disavow all its wanderings; I detest all its infidelities and I beg you to make yourself the absolute master of it in order to make of it a perfect holocaust which will make it pass into, and keep itself within, your divine Being.

61. Every time that I shall look at the cross or at a picture, and every time that I shall see a church or raise my eyes to heaven, I assert that I am saying to you that my happiness consists in seeing you, in loving you, in thinking of you, in serving you in this life and in contemplating you in the next, with all your amiable perfections. I assert that I unite myself to you in all the acts of love which have been made, which are being made and which will be made throughout eternity by Jesus Christ, by the very holy Virgin, by all the angels, by all the saints of heaven and by all the just on earth.

62. Further, I wish, by all my sighs, all my prayers, my thoughts, my words, my actions and my sorrows, to renew all the acts of consecration, of union and of honourable amendment that I have made to you up to the present time. And I desire, by these, to give myself so perfectly to you that all that is within me may belong to you absolutely, totally and irrevocably. I desire to enter so intimately into you that I may no longer be only a mere creature for you, so that it is not I who live, but that it may be you who are living in me. Thus I may praise you with your own praises, I may adore you through all the grandeur of your being and that I may love you with all the ardour of your love. Amen.

If it is true, as I said in the Introduction above, that these texts have

been brought to life again in this notebook, at a rather late epoch, we must nevertheless agree that they carry the tone of the young religious who is on the point of engaging himself definitively in the religious life. The resolutions and the prayers which follow are a sufficiently convincing witness to this.

On the other hand, it is true that we also find in them the instructions of Father Champagnat who, according to Brother Avit, 'gave the conferences during the retreat' at a time when the Father preacher 'gave the sermons.' (Annals of the Institute, 1, p. 209). The passage on the Office is one of the most pertinent proofs of this.

The psychological profile of Brother François which emerges from these texts is that of a young religious who does not take lightly his definitive engagement in the religious life. Certainly, he cannot yet foresee the future, but, with the fervour of a beginner, he is determined to face up to it. To do this he puts his confidence in God and goes ahead without anxiety, at the same time remaining vigilant in order not to allow himself to be surprised by the obstructions which could rise up en route. As for the end towards which he is aspiring, it is nothing less than a 'perfect union' with the Lord through 'the submission of his will' for the glory of God, for his own salvation and that of his neighbour.

Annexed Notes:

1. Louis of Grenada, *The Guide for Sinners*, Edition, Lyon, Paris 1843, vol. I.

'Everyone cries out to you in a loud voice: "Look, mortals, and consider just what has been the love of the One who has created you, since it is for you that He made me, and consider that He wishes, for love of Him, that I serve you, so that you may love and may serve the One who has created me for you and for Himself.

That voice, Christian, is the voice of all creatures. Will you not confess, therefore, that it is a strange stupidity to have no ears at all to hear it, and an incomparable ingratitude to be insensible to so many benefits? If you have no shame in receiving good things, why do you refuse to the One from Whom you have received them a simple duty of thanksgiving in order to avoid the chastisement which your ingratitude merits?

F O r
there is not one creature in the world, according to what has been said by a great Doctor, Richard of Saint-Victor, whose three words to mankind are: 'Take, thank, fear'; that is to say, 'Take the good, repay what you should, and fear the punishment that will follow ingratitude.' (pp. 29-30)

2. Judde, *Spiritual Retreat*, called the Great Retreat of Thirty Days, three tomes in one volume, Clermont-Ferrand, Riom, the House of Thibaud, 1835.

Preparation for the retreat or Preliminary Meditations:

We shall make three meditations, the first of which will be about the necessity of making this retreat well; the second, on the purpose and the general plan projects which we must propose to ourselves in the retreat; the third, on the dispositions of heart and spirit with which we must undertake the retreat.

First: Necessity of employing the time of retreat well.

The necessity, founded, in the first place, on the need we have of the retreat; secondly: on the option we have of making ourselves virtuous; thirdly: on the reasonable fear of not subsequently becoming so, if we are negligent this year.

Second: The Purpose of the exercises of piety and of retreats.

Those who enter into solitude...must... propose to themselves a plan, to which they will not cease to refer all their views and intentions... The plan of which we speak here concerns the past, the future, the present: the past, which we must repair; the future, which we seek to forestall; and the present, in which we must fight and exert ourselves.

Third: Dispositions of Heart and Soul required to occupy oneself usefully during the time of retreat.

The first disposition that we must have is a great confidence in the assistance of God; the second is a generous effort to rise above ourselves and above all the difficulties associated with a holy and perfect life; the third is 'a scrupulous exactitude to follow the direction and the regulations of the exercises which are proposed for the retreat, without allowing ourselves to be tortured by the importance of it.'

3. Judde, 'The Thirty Day Retreat', T. I, Second Fundamental Meditation on 'The Purpose of Creatures',

Second Point: 'What rules must we follow and practise to help us with whatever is on earth, according to the viewpoint and the intentions of God?'

Creatures whose use is necessary ... 'These sorts of creatures,'

said a holy man, 'all tell us, in silent eloquence, these three words: "Accipe, Redde, Time; accipe obsequium, redde beneficium, time judicium." "Receive the service which I render you; give thanks for it to the One through whom and for whom I render it to you, but don't abuse it, for fear that, though me, a rigorous vengeance may be drawn down." (T. I, p. 66)

4. 'Judgement after death depends... on the state of man at death, but the state of man at death depends on the judgement borne during life...For, what you merit is, more than probably, what you will find at death. (p. 188)

5. Saint Jure, On the Knowledge and Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Book III, Chpt XXV

'Once we die badly, we die badly forever and we are damned forever. But who will procure this gift of a good death for us?

'I reply... that it will be the good life, for with such a life, with such a death, it is not possible, according to the ordinary laws, that a wicked man who has dragged his days in the muck of vices should die well; and that it is not possible that a virtuous man who has kept himself in the fear of God and in the observance of His laws should finish badly.' (Ed. Saint-Brieuc, 1846, vol. 3, p. 439)

6. Bourdaloue, Complete Works, Paris 1822, Tome XV, Spiritual retreat

1. Meditation for the eve of the retreat:

First point: The retreat is a grace which God gives me: 'It is perhaps the last retreat of my life.' (p. 2)

Second point: 'I must, during these holy days, separate myself absolutely in spirit and in heart from all that would be able to distract me and to turn me from God.' (p. 3) The purpose of the retreat must be to reform my life, to make me know myself well and the designs of God on me, to discover once and for all the depth of my dispositions, of my imperfections, of my bad habits; to regulate my whole conduct, all my actions, all my duties; to renew myself in the spirit of my vocation; in a word, to change myself and to become, as St. Paul says, a new creature in Jesus Christ.

7. First Day - First Meditation

'Why has God created me? - To know him, to love Him, to glorify Him in this life and to possess Him in the next.' (p. 9)

‘It is not sufficient that He be my end through the necessity of his Being; it is necessary that He be it and that He wants to be it through my choice. That is what makes His glory.’ (p. 13)

8. Purpose of the retreat. How Father Champagnat viewed it, according to the notes of Brother François and of Brother Jean-Baptiste:

Brother François

Resumé of Instructions, p. 55:

1. Not a time of repose;
2. To reform my life;
3. To return to the theme of the end of man; on oneself (to know oneself); on one’s obligations;
4. To see what I must correct;
5. To clean the ‘within’; to control the spirit and the interior;
6. To work on my character;

Then he revises page 688 of the ‘Instructions’.

Resumé of Instructions, p. 177

1. To know oneself;
2. To make oneself known to the confessor, to the superiors;

Then he revises page 55 of the ‘Resumé of Instructions.’

Instructions I, p. 255...

1. Days of grace,...about which it would be necessary to render a rigorous account.
2. To reform my life; to know myself better;
3. To learn self-knowledge;
4. To know my duties;
5. To review all my actions;
6. To renew myself in the spirit of my state.

Instructions 2, p. 688...

What the retreat is:

1. A time of prayer;
2. A time of struggles, of temptations;
3. A time of preparation for grace;
4. A time of recollection, of union with God;
5. A time of renewal;
6. Days of grace and of salvation.

Brother Jean-Baptiste:

1. To look into ourselves: to see whether we are living with a mortal

sin; whether we have a right conscience;

2. To convince ourselves of the importance of salvation;

3. To understand the obligation of working for our salvation;

4. To look into ourselves and learn to know our passions, our good inclinations;

5. To know the obligations of our state;

6. To draw up our plans for good works, for the apostolate.

9. Rodriguez, 'The Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection.'

Second Treatise: Concerning the Perfection of Ordinary Actions.

'It is established that the good or bad state of our soul depends on our good or bad actions, because we will be such as are our works, and because, in the long run, it is our works which will disclose what we are.' (p. 93)

'What are the actions concerning which all our well-being, all our advancement and all our perfection depend? I maintain that they are the most ordinary actions and that we perform them every day.' (p. 94)

'Our advancement and our perfection consist of only two things: to do what God wants us to do and to do it as he wishes us to do it; for, assuredly, these two points include everything.' (p. 95)

... 'Therefore, without anything more to do than what we do every day, we can make ourselves perfect.' (p. 97)

The goodness and the perfection of our actions consist in the intention with which we perform them. 'The second thing required for the perfection of our actions is that we do our best to do them well.' (p. 100)

10. The Office, 'Avis, Leçons, Sentences, Instructions' 1868 Edition, Chapter XV, Extract pp. 158-159.

We say the Office badly because we say it with too much speed:

'Saint Augustine assures us that the barking of dogs is more agreeable to God than the Office of him who recites it precipitately or without devotion.' 'Each word of your Office,' adds Saint Francis de Sales, 'must be for you the source of new merit if you recite it attentively and piously; on the contrary, it will cause a new loss to your soul if you recite it badly.'

'It is a real fault to say one's Office badly.' 'Those,' says Saint Thomas, 'who, in reciting a prayer which is not even of obligation, voluntarily allow their mind to wander, cannot be excused from sin, for it seems that these sorts of people wish to hold God in contempt, like the one who, in speaking

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to another, pays no attention at all to what he says. Yes, you who say the Office negligently or with undue speed, you commit a fault, for you do an injury to God, to Whom you are speaking without respect; you outrage and sadden the Holy Spirit, who wants you to pray with piety; you dishonour Jesus Christ, in whose name you are reciting this prayer; you gladden the Devil; you afflict the angels and saints; you abuse your senses; you waste your time; you turn against God what ought serve to give Him glory.'

'Do you not fear,' says Saint Césaire, 'that what must sanctify you may make you more of a criminal, and that what ought to serve as a remedy for your soul may be a poison for it?'

It is a misfortune to say one's Office badly. Indeed, each voluntary distraction makes a wound on your soul, and makes your deserve a new punishment. Each time that you commit it, over and above the stain which it imprints on your soul, deprives you of a degree of grace, of merit, of charity and also of a degree of glory. Moreover, you deprive of assistance the souls for whom you should be praying; you deprive God of the glory which you should and could procure Him by saying your Office piously. Is not this a great misfortune from all points of view?

11. Gaume, 'Catechism of Perseverance', vol. 7, Book IV, Lesson VII 'A Sensitive Christianity.'

'Oh! What power over the Heart of God those three or four hundred thousand Catholic priests must have - priests who, each day, present themselves seven times before the throne of the Spouse of the Church to ask for the Church, as He wants it to be done, the favours which He Himself has promised and of which His cherished spouse has need! And, when we think that, at each hour of the day and of the night there are thousands of priests busy at this sublime activity, that the East prays when the West sleeps so that the voice of prayer is never interrupted, does it not seem to you that you are in the heavenly Jerusalem, where the Blessed ceaselessly repeat the Canticle of eternity: Holy, holy, holy,

Lord God of hosts?’ (p. 117)

12. Cépari, ‘Life of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga’, Edition Pélagaud, Lyon, 1854, Second Part Chpt XIV - On the Obedience of Aloysius:

‘This perfection of obedience was born in him from the fact that he regarded all those who were his Superiors as holding the place of God; and he said, in this regard, that men, being obliged to obey God, Who is invisible and, consequently, not being able to receive orders immediately from Him, find that God has established Superiors on earth as his vicars and interpreters of his wishes.’ (pp. 135-136)

(On the subject of the Rule). ‘In this matter He was not embarrassed by anything whatsoever; so much so that, when he was invited one day to pay a visit to Cardinal de la Rovère, his relative, on the Cardinal’s request that he would like Aloysius to stay to dinner, the latter answered that he could not do it, because it was against the Rule.’ (p. 138)

Chpt XV - On the Religious Poverty of Aloysius:

‘Here is how he customarily interpreted the Rule which said: “That each persuade himself that of everything in the house, the worst will be given to him - for his greater mortification and the profit of his soul.” ‘Just as a poor beggar,’ he said, ‘when he asks for alms, persuades himself that people will not give him whatever is of the best to cover himself, but rather whatever is of the worst; in the same way, if we are truly poor, we must persuade ourselves that they will give us whatever is of the worst in the house. This word “to persuade oneself,”’ he added, ‘does it not tell us that we hold for certain that it will be thus, and that it is suitable that it be thus?’ (p. 141)

Chpt XVI On the Purity of Aloysius, on his Sincerity, on his Spirit of Penance and Mortification:

‘He used to say that to distress oneself too much concerning a fault could be a sign that we do not know ourselves sufficiently well, that whoever knows oneself well must know there is only one earth and that it is capable of producing brambles and thorns.’ (pp. 145-146)

13. Under the titles indicated, here are the authors, in order of importance (according to the references), who nourished Brother François’

spiritually during that year.

1. Judde: The Great retreat: 3 Religious retreats: 2 retreats for Profession: 2 (Total = 7)

2. Rodriguez, Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection: 6

3. Bouhours, Life of Saint Francis Xavier: 3

4. Bourdaloue, retreat: 3

5. The Imitation of Jesus Christ: 2

6. Marin. Life of the Fathers of the Desert: 2

7. Louis De Grenade, Guide for Sinners: 1

8. Saint-Jure, Knowledge and Love of Jesus Christ: 1

9. Cépari, Life of Saint Louis Gonzaga: 1

10. Tronson, Particular Examens: 1

11. Gaume, Catechism of Perseverance: 1

12. D'Argentan, The Greatness of Mary: 1

13. Bartoli, Life of Saint Ignatius Loyola: 1

14. Rosebush of Mary: 1

15. Sacred Scripture: A.T. : Ps : 3; Exodus; Isaiah; Canticle.

N. T. : Luke: 3 ; 2 Cor. ; Heb.; James; Apoc.

Names cited, without reference:

Saint Leo the Great; Hugues of Saint Victor; Bossuet; Saint Bonaventure; Saint Bernard (2); Saint Martin; Saint Francis.

Extracts giving various notes concerning the Brothers

Among Br. François' "Notebooks", there are two with the title "Notes". These contain various items of information taken from correspondence and other things he read during the course of many years. The first of these Notebooks gives a number of points about the Brothers which give an idea of the way our early Brothers lived.

It was judged interesting to put together different items taken from here and there in the texts and play them out as historical documents. There is an added advantage: in most cases the date of the text is given - this is in the form of numbers in brackets at the end of each paragraph. So, for example, the figure (56) is to be read as (1856). We have given the extracts in chronological order apart from one or two which have obviously been added as remembered when writing about other items. It will be seen that the whole work covers from 1852 to 1870.

To make for easier reading, sub-titles have been added which are not in the original. In each section, the extracts follow the order in the manuscript, except for some rare examples such as favours obtained through the intercession of Fr. Champagnat, which have been grouped together.

On occasion words have been forgotten or remained unfinished. To help in understanding the text, these have been completed as far as possible, and put in square brackets. Punctuation has been modified in accordance with modern usage.

Br. Paul Sester

Religious Life

1. A Brother wrote to me: When I learned that you did not want to give me permission to go to see my parents, I went to the chapel, with tears in my eyes, to throw myself into the arms of Mary, my good Mother,

to offer her this sacrifice and to ask her to obtain for me in return the grace of being delivered from my temptations. I think my prayers have been heard; this year has gone very well... Also, I never stop thanking this good Mother, and I have been wanting for a long time to thank you for the sacrifice that you made me do in spite of myself... but of which I am very happy now. (Nov. 53)

2. Another wrote to me that he did not go to immerse himself in family matters - his mother is very pious. Another said that he met there with a man who tried to disgust him - Br. Isidore the same; Br. Six went to make arrangements, and stayed there - Br. F. Aug., following on his journey home, experienced disgust, annoyances, left us, but wants to return. His mother is really worried and with tears in her eyes looks at her son who left us but did go back to her, and yet his excuse was the needs of his mother. Temptations, danger.

3. A doctor prescribed tobacco for a Brother suffering from headaches. Instead of lessening, the headaches got worse. Another doctor told him to give up tobacco (Br. Victorin) Since tobacco simply makes the disease worse or at least does nothing to improve it, what are we to think of a remedy like this used for such a long time? (M. Seguy)

4. A Br. Director pointed out a Brother and asked for him as his helper. The Brother gave him so much trouble that he was obliged to send him back and accept another, one whom he took care not to recommend himself! He would have done better to say nothing to start with.

5. A Brother gets a letter to tell him that his father was seriously ill and wants to see him. The Brother leaves his house and asks permission in such a way as to give rise to fears for his vocation. The permission is refused, or at least put off until we get more certain news about the illness and general state of his father from the parish priest. The Brother goes back to his community and a few days later says that he wants to leave. The parish priest informs us that the father is not ill, that he has seen him outside and that he attends church. (10 Nov. 53)

6. Another Brother gets word that his father is at the point of death, and that he should come quickly. The Br. Director of Valbenoite) informs us that the man has been ill, but is now on the road to recovery. The parish priest adds that he is not too ill "because I have not yet been sent for." (53)

7. A certain Br. Director pointed out a Brother and asked for him to be in his community. Later he had a lot of trouble and worry from this Brother. (Sep. 53)

8. Br. M. Sebastian went on a family visit to make certain arrangements. Here he learned of the deaths of three soldiers, classmates and friends from his childhood. One had joined the army by his lot being drawn, the others had sold themselves into it, after spending their worldly good in debauchery. The three died within a week, of a sudden and premature death. (52)

9. A Brother wrote to me: "Holy Communion is my strength; without it, everything is difficult. Mary is my refuge and my defence against temptation." Another wrote: "I get many troubles and difficulties, but one Holy Communion cures them all." (Gebuin 53)

10. The Brothers in the lower class (in a school run by the Brothers) asked the Br. Director to let them learn the Rule by heart and to recite it to him. What consolation and holy joy this news gives us, and we grant this request, which shows such good spirit! (53)

11. A Br. Director (Epaphrodite) who doubtless had never used pillows, found himself in a house where he found them in place, because his predecessor had used them. Br. Superior noticed this during a visit, and told Br. Epaphrodite to put them aside. He did so, but some days later, he wrote that he could now not sleep without them, though he had slept well before. The danger of acquiring habits contrary to the Rule. (32)

12. A young Brother wrote: One method which has served me well in preserving me from wicked temptations during the night is to put myself into the care of the purity of Mary, and to ask her to bless me before I fall asleep. (53)

13. Two Brothers who had not got on well together during the year, asked to be put together at the Retreat, so as to be able to make up for the faults and wrongs they had done each other. (62)

14. Fr. Champagnat said to a Br. Director: "You never complain

about that Brother I sent you." "No, Father, we get on well." " But the others can do nothing with him." "Well, I know his character, and I never ask him to do anything more than is really necessary, without putting myself out over trifles." (21)

15. A Brother came one day to complain about his Director. The Superior told him, "I have had that man myself as Director, and I never complained about him." (30)

16. A Brother wrote to say that he had noted 10,000 victories in his notebook. (53)

17. A Brother Director was taken up by the Superior because he had failed in an article of Rule. He took the occasion of this reprimand to increase his love and esteem of his holy state and his vocation, and to abandon himself with new affection and confidence to his Superiors, who had the charity of pointing out his error and not allowing him to wander from the true path. (53)

18. One good Brother wrote, "I do not think I have offended God mortally since I entered the Society." (53)

19. I read Rodriguez carefully, and from it I take the best means of living well in community and of guiding others. (53)

20. Work, persecution, loss of health, premature death Nothing frightens me when I look at heaven and at the cross, wrote one Brother. (53)

21. A professed Brother did not wear his profession cross for some weeks, and found that he was tempted much more than normally. (53)

22. Someone was talking to Fr. Champagnat about the defects of a young Brother. His answer was: "One great merit this Brother has in my view, is that since he entered the Society, he has never once asked permission to go and see his parents. Attachment to one's parents is one of the great temptations for a religious. There are Brothers who have caused me a lot of suffering, but there are others who have been a source of great edification. Jesus Christ said a man's enemies (in matters of his salvation and perfection) are those of his own household (his parents,

because of the temptations that his natural affection will cause him.)

23. A short time after the February Revolution, when they were setting fire to the religious houses in St. Etienne and Lyons, a mother came rushing to see her son at the Hermitage, and suggested that he go home with her. The boy refused. "But what if they come and attack you, pillage and burn the house... You will have to come home quickly." "If that happens, I will go where the other Brothers go." An admirable reply from a young novice!

24. A Brother who was competent not only in spelling and arithmetic, but also in drawing and geometry, failed in his first exams, because of his timidity and his lack of self-confidence.

25. A Br. Director expressed great repugnance at the thought of going back to his house because of certain disagreements he had had there. Fr. Champagnat saw that the Brother was capable of carrying out his work, and besides, he had great difficulty in finding a replacement for him. However, he did not want to give him a brusque command to go back, but instead, he asked him in a kindly way to continue in this position, and spoke to him in a familiar way, saying, "If you go back to St. Sym. D'Oz, I will give you a holy picture!"

26. A Brother wrote, "Since I began to pray to St. Joseph and put myself in a special way under his protection, temptations no longer rule my life, and I can say that I hardly notice them.

27. A Brother wrote to us: "Do you ask a sick man to be as regular and to do the same work as a man in good health? In the same way, you cannot ask it of someone who is suffering in his mind, as I have been. I have envisaged the possibility of going mad with boredom - I think that from time to time I was! - and while in this state, I could well have said and done things which I would have condemned at other times. And so, those who have been scandalized by me are neither totally right nor totally wrong. They do not understand me, and they do not understand the interior combats I have been through, so they cannot appreciate how much or how little I am to be blamed. Besides, Br. Director does not know how to make use of the little things that make family life so sweet and agreeable. (1854)

28. A Brother, already past the critical age and strengthened in his vocation, said: "Oh! How great can be the temptations when we are young!" Another Brother added: "The same thing applies when we are old, and they are even stronger!"

29. A certain Brother felt that he was suffering from the way he was treated by his Br. Director, but when the latter was changed, he wrote to us: "I see now what I have lost in losing Br. S. This good Brother was not happy unless he knew what I was, what I was doing and if I was occupied in doing something useful. What devotedness he showed to someone so ungrateful as I was! How happy I would be if I could be back with him again!" (54)

30. A certain Brother did not follow the rules in dealing with matters of ecclesiastical administration, and the Cardinal wants him to be expelled from the Society or sent back to the noviciate. (Sorb.54)

31. A Brother had a visit from two of the clergy, and went out of his way to make a good meal for them. But, noticing that the Brother had overstepped the limits of a modest meal, they commented on this to him, and did not want to take what seemed to them too rich a meal for a simple Religious. They complained about it to other clergy, and the result was that the expense the Brother had gone to served only to cause their discontent. (Villen.54)

32. A Brother wrote a letter in which he tried to use fancy phrases. It was shown to a Father and other clergy, who had a good laugh at it. (Bret.54)

33. A Brother was ill and suffering from malnutrition. The Director called the doctor but the Brother did not tell him everything that was wrong, hiding the main cause of his illness. The doctor prescribed medicines which would have harmed him if he had taken them, but he did not want to take them without asking the advice of someone who knew him, and to whom he had been more open earlier on. (Direction)

34. Every time I fail in observing the Rule, something bad happens to me, said one good Brother. We never fail in our Rule without subsequently falling into sin... when I do not observe my Rule faithfully, my class work suffers, said another.

35. A young Brother said to his Br. Assistant: "You have been asked to allow me to go and see my parents. I am asking you not to allow me. You have also been asked to put me in a house quite near them. I am asking you to send me as far as possible from them." (54 St P3C) Detachment.

36. A certain Director had a Brother who caused him a lot of annoyance with his jokes, and who was also wavering in his vocation. This good Director, far from allowing himself to ask that the Brother be changed, asked the Superiors to leave him with him, so that, in his words, he could gain his confidence and bring him to a good end. He told me one day that he was always happy to have some Brother who gave him the opportunity of exercising his zeal and charity in a careful way, so as to learn how to manage others, to win their hearts and to strengthen their vocation. (24 April 55)

37. Br. Leotard, unjustly condemned to hard labour for life by the court at Toulon, 4th April 1848, wrote to Br. Thraseas, Director at Toulon: "Do something for me with the Commissaire General, and try to arrange things for the best. Otherwise, as soon as possible, they are going to transfer me to N° 4 Prison, near Mourillon, where I will not be able to go to Mass in the hospital, nor to receive Holy Communion as I am used to doing. Where else can I get the strength to put up with my great suffering? " (18 Jan 1850) Unfortunately, the Brother did not need all this help, since his state of health declined so rapidly that on 21 Jan he had to be taken back to the hospital, where he died on the 26th. On the 24th, he made the following statement to the Commissaire of the Republic, in the presence of Fr. Marin, chaplain to the prison, who was his confessor: "On the point of appearing before God, I wish to make this final declaration to you as I made it to the judges, that I am innocent and I have no knowledge of how and by whom this terrible double crime was committed, the crime for which I have been condemned." He ratified this declaration just before receiving the Viaticum : "If I insist on protesting my innocence this last time, it is not for my own sake, but for the consolation of my family and the honour of my Institute." In a letter, Fr. Marin says: "This man who has so solemnly protested his innocence both before his judges and on his deathbed, had, from an early age, known and followed the law of God before his condemnation. He has shown that he was a good Christian and a good Religious. Since his arrest, his conduct has been irreproachable. His comrades in misfortune have received from him nothing but wise advice and good example. In full submission to those over him, complete-

ly resigned to his misfortune, faithful to his duties to God, he was always full of gratitude to his benefactors and has never uttered one word of ill feeling towards those who brought about his condemnation."

38. A certain Brother who was always complaining about his Director was himself lacking in what demonstrated a good upbringing, and, at the same time, complaints were made about him - who found so many faults in his Director - that he behaved badly at table, that his conversation was not befitting his state, that he was lacking in tidiness and cleanliness in the dormitory And yet, he flattered himself that he was good-mannered and polite, and that he was loved and esteemed for these qualities. He found fault also with the administration, and in the end, he had to be removed from his employment because of the lack of good administration he showed. (Sept. 54)

39. A sick Brother was very upset and agitated, and these symptoms alarmed the Infirmarian so much that, thinking the Brother was in danger of death, he called the chaplain, as he was asked by the sick man, even though it was the middle of the night. Once the Brother had made his confession, there was an immediate improvement, he became calm and peaceful, and his alarming symptoms gave way to a calm sleep which lasted till morning. (Oct. 54)

40. A drink had been prepared for Br. Superior, one which he normally took when ill. On this particular day, he did not need it, and another Brother, seeing the infirmarian carrying it away, said "I'll have that!" - he was convalescent at the time. The infirmarian gave it to him but, as soon as he tasted it, he said: "That is really bitter!" and wanted no more of it. Sometimes people think the Superiors have the best of everything, but they have not tasted it themselves yet!

41. A Br. Director had a young Brother as cook who was a difficult character, very strong in his opinions. However, he wanted to keep him so that he could learn how to deal with this type of character and to try all kinds of ways of helping him. This gave him the chance to draw up a set of very wise rules for the conduct of a Director in his dealings with the Brothers confided to him. (54)

42. Another Br. Director had a Brother who gave him a lot of trouble. He was left with him the following year, and was asked later if he

was happy about this. His answer was: "Much better than last year. I would have been annoyed not to have him, because I wanted to make my peace with him before we parted."

43. A young Brother who suffered a lot from temptations wrote to us: "You have told me so often to have recourse to Mary that I finally did it, and I am saved! I have the joy and consolation of letting you know that I have kept myself free from temptation since the retreat." This is the result of devotion to Mary, confidence in Mary, perseverance in having recourse to her.

44. Another Brother wrote: "I always feel great consolation and happiness when I say my Rosary, particularly when I pronounce the name of Mary. This holy name brings me happiness, and I never say it in vain. If I am in any way upset, I say "Mary!", and at once my sorrow turns to joy."

45. Another young Brother wrote in the same vein: "Whenever I am in trouble, I throw myself into the arms of Mary, tell her my woes, and she comforts me. She is my refuge and my consolation." (55)

46. On Jan 1st 1855, a Brother wrote: "In spite of all the annoyances and troubles I have in this post, in spite of the pain I suffer here and the deprivation of many happy things which I found elsewhere and do not find here, I would not change my position (even if it cost me the last drop of my blood) for that of the king of the whole earth! I love my Rule, I am happy when I observe it, and sad when I fail. I would like to have all the virtues it lays down."

47. A Br. Director writes: "There is peace and contentment among us. A good spirit is needed in a community, and we suffer when we find someone who looks always at the bad side of things and causes divisions in the community. Those who speak ill do great wrong, and even inside the community they destroy the reputations of the members." (55)

48. A certain priest, a good man but who could be rather outspoken, began one day to reproach the Br. Director, without giving him the chance to say a word in his own defence. The good Brother listened quietly, modestly and respectfully, until he was finished, then simply answered: "Father, thanks for the remarks and the complaints you have made, but,

if you knew me better, you would have made more! However, I will try to profit from what you have said, and to be careful in future." Hearing this, the priest was astounded, and did not know what to do or say. Until then he had looked on the Brother as an ordinary man, not very expert in anything, but since then he has changed his ideas and his attitude to him completely, and holds him now in high regard, looking on him almost as a saint. He often comes to see him, and now that he knows more about his knowledge and his merits, his esteem and affection for him have grown. Br. Visitor was told about this by the priest himself while he was visiting the house. (Viriville 55)

49. A good thought from a Brother: "Whenever one talks openly about a temptation, it is already conquered and in the past." (55)

50. A Brother came to the Superior and told him of his repugnance to the thought of going with the Br Director who had just been appointed. The Superior told him that he should not martyr himself with this, but should rather express his gratitude at being given such a good Director, and that he should not believe all the unfavourable remarks he heard about him. So he resigned himself to it, and at the end of the school year, he wrote to the Superior: "This year has been a very happy one, to such a degree that it seemed so short, and came to an end without my being aware of it!" (5)

51. A young Brother had such a horror of sin, that, for fear of being surprised during the night, he tied his hands together in such a way that they could not move.

52. A certain person, very respectable and of good will, wrote to us: "I have no serious complaints about the Br. Director of the school, but there are a host of small things which I feel are infractions of your Rule (which, I must admit I do not know). In the first place, I often see him alone in the street without another Brother accompanying him. He goes by himself to visit the neighbouring parish priests, and accepts their hospitality. He also invites those who have invited him, to eat with him. He went alone to M. to see the illuminations at the feast of the Immaculate Conception. I have seen him return home alone in the evening. I know all this, because I have seen it myself. He also receives women into the house outside the parlour, a very dangerous thing. None of the above is bad in itself, and would be tolerated in a lay person, but is insupportable

in a Religious. A Religious has his Rule to keep, and these escapades could easily lead to a fall which would make the enemies of our Holy Religion rejoice. It seems to me that this Brother has not got the common sense to watch his own conduct, nor even less to lead others. I do not have the honour of knowing you, my dear Brother, but I wish to make clear that the only aim of this letter is the greater good of a school of which I am the founder, and which is very dear to me for many reasons, and the good of a Congregation which is doing so much good and which is continually called on to do more." (55)

This is an example of what a well-meaning and religious-minded layman said about infractions of the rules on visits and journeys, and of how he judged the Br. Director who was guilty of them.

53. On a number of occasions, a young Brother was on the point of being dismissed. Several Directors were tired of putting up with him; however, he clung to his vocation. Finally, out of pity for him, in view of the sad situation he would find himself in if he returned to the world, and out of compassion for his parents, it was decided to give him one last chance. The young man was given into the care of a Br. Director known for his piety and regularity, who was asked to make an effort to straighten out the young man. The good Director accepted, and took every possible care, and soon the young man felt the good influence of the piety, the virtue and the wise advice of the Director. The latter could only congratulate himself on leading the young man on the right way, for he did excellent work in class and showed himself ready to do whatever he was asked. The Director later wrote to us, "His submission is perfect. I am very happy with him. Any time I point out a fault to him, he thanks me in all humility, and in the twenty years I have been Director, I have never had anyone who gives me more satisfaction than this one." (55)

54. A Brother told us: "I always bear in mind what my first Director told me - many souls are lost because they do not pray. This made a great impression on me, and I try to profit from it. This is what has saved me." Often a word, a phrase, have decisive effects for the future of a subject.

55. A Director complained about a young Brother who, he said, did not do his work properly and was lacking in cleanliness and obedience. Finally the Superiors said the young man could be sent away if he did not improve his conduct and show signs of working hard. When the young

Brother was told this, he tried to do better. But when he came to the Mother House for the retreat, he said that the Director had never held the Chapter of Faults, nor given him any direction during the course of the year. He added that he would have corrected his faults if he had been made to perform his exercises (of piety) regularly. It is painful to hear such recriminations, and it is hard to know how to excuse and support the Br. Director. (55)

56. A child at the Brothers' school at Valence began at the age of seven to bring together his little companions on free days and to teach them the catechism. From this he went on to get the idea of becoming a Brother, and he did, once he reached the age for the noviciate. (StP3Ch)

57. On the day a Brother made his Vow of Stability, he went to the Br. Superior and, with much emotion, told him: "I cannot express the happiness I feel today." (1 Oct 55 StP3Ch)

58. At St. Paul Trois-Châteaux a Brother tried to throw the community mastiff into the pond. The dog put up a fight, and defended itself to the point of drawing blood from the Brother. It ran away round the garden, then came back and jumped into the pond, as if it wanted to make up for its fault. Patience is better than violence.

59. A Brother went to Fr. Cholleton to ask whether he should follow the advice of the doctor that, in view of unpleasant experiences he was having, he should get married. The good Father's reply was admirable. "Brother, none of that obliges you to quit your holy state. Even were you a martyr to chastity, think of all those who are victims of the opposite vice!"

60. A Br. Director had a terrible attack of apoplexy, in a house among people who he himself confessed to visiting too often. He was very afraid, and looked upon this attack as a punishment from God. For some time the Superiors had been at him to be more careful of his relationship with these people. (55)

61. A Brother wrote: "Apart from going to Heaven, you could not find yourself in a better place than this." (StP3Ch, Nov. 53)

62. A Brother had suffered from strong temptations for a long time, and finally wrote: "Since I prayed to St. Joseph for help, I have been able

to conquer them." (56)

63. A certain parish priest was strongly opposed to a particular Brother being changed from his school, and spoke in an imperious and threatening way to the other Brothers there about it, ending by writing to the Superiors. Br. Superior, for the sake of peace, granted his request, but six months later, the same priest wrote an urgent letter asking that this Brother be changed at once. He said that at the start few people had given him so much consolation as this Brother, and that later none had caused him such great trouble and justified worry. (56). The Brother, contrary to the Rule, had allowed himself various visits, which gave rise to terrible calumnies.

64. A Br. Director said about two Brothers in his community: "These are real models of social and religious virtues. I have no cause for complaint against either of them, in fact, I have nothing but praise for both. Union, concord and charity are perfect among us. Piety and regularity reign in this house. Joy and happiness never give place to sadness and boredom. I find that everything goes well, thanks to the prayers of these two Brothers, these two holy Religious. As for myself, I do not work miracles, but I have an ardent wish to become stronger." The Sub-director said about a third Brother: "This Brother is a Saint, and everything about him urges you to virtue. For us, he is a living Rule. Whenever I wish to behave modestly during the exercises of piety, or to do anything else well, I have only to look at this Brother and to imitate him. He is another Berchmans, always the same, always ready to help. Everyone notices his simple ways, his humility and modesty, which lead everyone to like him. He is regular, studious and quiet, and his class responds perfectly to all he does. I have never seen a better managed class, and the children knew their prayers and their catechism, and profit also from his other lessons. We are fortunate to have him with us, this man whom we could call an angel of peace." And this third Brother always said that he was full of vices, defects and imperfections, which he humbly acknowledged. (La Valette 56)

65. "I have placed myself under the care of St. Joseph" writes a good Brother, "I have offered him all I do in the form of a novena. I also use the Litany of the Immaculate Conception, and since I started this, I am free of my troubles. Thanks be to God, to the protection of our Blessed Mother and of her august Spouse." (Mar. 56)

66. A Brother told the Hermitage doctor that it was useless giving

medicines to a certain sick Brother, since he had no hope of a cure. The doctor answered: "My dear Brother, we must never stop treating a sick man, nor stop giving him the remedies prescribed 1) because we see him recovering at least somewhat, and 2) because we always have the consolation of knowing that we have done our duty right to the end." If doctors treating the body behave in this way, what should be the conduct of those treating the soul?

67. In January 1836, a Brother wrote: "I love and esteem my Rule, and it is by observing it that I find my consolation and my happiness. I know from my own experience how true are these words of our Founder: 'You will not have the consolation and peace of your holy state, except insofar as you are very exact in following the rule'. I have experienced this ever since I joined the Society, but particularly so since the last Retreat."

68. A Brother told Fr. Champagnat that he was worried about the future, because there were many wicked tongues, and they could spread calumnies about him. The good Father said to him: "Brother, do not be afraid of calumny, but rather be afraid of being a target of slander." He wanted to show him that there was no need to fear false accusations, but there was when our conduct gave rise to true accusations.

69. A Br. Director wanted to be placed in a lower position, and asked for it for a long time. At last, his wish was granted. Some time after, he wrote to say that he regretted having done this. This shows that it is true that we are happiest when following the direction of our Superiors in everything, and in abandoning ourselves to Providence.

70. A Br. Director wrote: "To please my Superiors in everything - that is my aim, because for me they represent God, they speak to me on God's behalf, their will is God's will and if I please my Superiors, if I love them, it is God whom I please, whom I love. Yes, the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary, its Rule, its Superiors - this is the very picture of happiness, of the paradise on earth enjoyed by a Brother who has good will." (56)

71. A young Brother wrote to us: "You told me to fast on Saturdays if my health allowed it. Since then I have fasted every Saturday, and my health has never been better." (56)

72. A Brother - no longer young - kept asking for a number of years to be taken off his post as Director. His wish was finally granted, and he wrote to us: "I must tell you that if I had guessed that I would be given a lower position like the one I have now, I would never have asked to be relieved of my former post." (56)

73. Brother DD used to use candles instead of a lamp in his room, with the help of a little gadget he had got from the Br. Econome. Fr. Matricon made some remark about this to him, and from then on, he stopped using it, gave it back to the Econome, and used a lamp like everyone else. (56)

74. A Brother told me one day: "Everyone says I am ill, and yet I feel well." "What would you prefer," I asked him, "when they say that you are ill? That it is true or false?" "I would prefer them to say I am when I am not", said the Brother, and added, "However, there are those who get angry because people say things about them that are not true." (56)

75. A Br. Director wrote: "What a little Brother you sent to teach here! Perhaps it is because I sent you two little postulants! But if you did it to punish me, you have made a mistake, because I am very pleased with this little Brother. I think he will do very well. He has the best dispositions in the world, and has carried out all I have asked him. We will carry out our tasks to the best of our ability, and let the world laugh and say what it likes. In return, I am sending you a big Postulant, who has the vocation of an angel, and all the qualities needed to become a good Brother." (56)

76. A good parish priest wrote: "If you have any trouble about Br. A. whom you were asked to send to our school at M., and who you had the goodness to send to us, have no fears about sending him back to us to take charge of the school at M. I am in no way complaining about the present headmaster. I only wish to calm your fears and treat Br. A. with the justice he deserves. I regret that you are taking him from us, and all my parishioners join with me in this." (56)

77. Cardinal Bonald, at the pastoral Retreat of 1855, spoke about priests who "wipe their foreheads" - comb down their hair in a stylish way. The good parish priest who told me this added: "And there are some of your Brothers who do the same!" (56)

78. A Brother writes: "The devil redoubles his rage, and I, with the

help of Mary, I redouble my courage!" (56)

79. A Brother who had a few run-ins with his Director, was very worried about being sent to the same Director. This is exactly what happened a few years later, without any malice on the part of the Superior, but with God's permission. Another Brother said, "I was justly sent to the one school in the Province that I was most afraid of." (56)

80. A Director writes: "I have never bought any fancy stuff to eat, and I think that the Brothers' health has not suffered. I have never had a sick Brother in my community, because I always give everyone healthy and abundant food." (56)

81. A Brother writes: "I have noticed that whenever things are not going well, it is because I have not carried out my exercises of piety properly."

82. A postulant, who was a bit sickly, was put in charge of the lamps. Some days later, he came to the Director and said he was afraid of the smell of the oil, which made him feel ill. The Director took him off the job, but some days later, he came back and asked to be put back in order, he said, to conquer his fear of the smell. This was granted and, wonderful to relate, the smell gave him no more trouble and caused him no more distress. It was the boy himself who told me this. (56)

83. One day they were talking about a Br. Director in the presence of some young people, who said, "He is a good type, and we like him. He let us eat and drink with him. But that is not befitting a Brother. His successor does not do that, and we have more regard for him." (56)

84. A Br. Director had bought a drink for a stranger, and later had to punish his Brothers, whose behaviour on that occasion was not what it should be. But did he not deserve to be punished more than them?

85. A Brother wrote: "Whenever I put down on paper what is causing me distress, so that I can show it to my Superiors, I find that I am encouraged, and feel happier than ever." (56)

86. "Since I had the joy of making the Vow of Stability," wrote a Director, "I look at the Institute and think, there is my family, there are the

children I have to bring up in a Christian way, there is my inheritance." (56)

87. A Director writes: "It is only in prayer, speaking to God frankly and openly on a one to one basis, that true consolation is found. A few words that Mary uttered in secret are sufficient to restore calm." (56) If only the Brothers knew what could bring them peace! (Lk. 19)

88. Another wrote: "The Manuel de Solide Piete is for me a sun which lights up and warms my will, shows me my obligations, and the great good that we get from fidelity to our religious duties." (57)

89. A Brother Director: "We observe the Rule as closely as we can. But above all, we try to recite our Office well. We take 18 minutes in the morning and 35 in the evening. It is to this recitation of the Office that I attribute the good spirit among our pupils and the affection they have for us." Later, he adds: "I was wrong to be afraid about Br. X, and you were right to pay no heed to what I said about him. He is an excellent Brother, a source of edification for me and a great help. We get on very well together. Once again I see that we should put no faith in reports on another - they can do a lot of harm." Another Brother wrote: "The Office is the prayer I like best, and the one I say through choice." (57)

90. Another Br Director wrote to us: "It is enough to get a letter from you to be freed from all my troubles." (57)

91. One Brother told another to be careful about what he told the Superiors about what went on in the house, for, he said: "No one likes a cat!" The other replied: "Whoever does what he should do need have no fear of what is said to the Superiors, and in any case, cats are necessary to get rid of the rats." (57)

92. A Br. Director wrote to the Inspector without acting in accord with the Rule, and another dealt with business with the parish priest without taking advice from the Superiors. This not only caused the latter great embarrassment but harmed the good of other people. (46)

93. One Brother said: "I performed my exercises of piety well in the noviciate, but now I have been appointed to a house where they are badly performed, and I cannot get back to my former fervour because of the bad habits I have acquired."

94. According to an old Brother, if you see the Brothers of a house, you can tell at once whether they get on well together and if everything is going well.

95. A Br. Director had to perform an act of penance in front of the community. This troubled him a lot, and he spoke to the Superior about it. To make it easier for him, he was told that he could do it in a corner, where he would not be seen. However, he answered, "If I have to do it, I prefer to do it as it should be done, in the middle of the room." This is what he did, to the joy of the Superior and the general edification of the community, and he himself was happy that he had done it in this way. (57)

96. A Brother heard a talk where it was said that the Brothers who do not observe their Rule have more trouble and suffer much more than those who behave as Religious and follow their Rule exactly, in a deep spirit of faith. The Brother later said to the Superior: "If I had been asked to speak, I would have added that I know this from experience, and I would have insisted strongly on this point, for I have been in a pitiful, unsupportable situation on this point for some time now. When you go out without permission, when you make visits contrary to the Rule, the pleasure comes from hoping to enjoy it when you are there but, when you do get there, you do not experience the pleasure you hoped for, and when you come back, you have nothing but regrets." (56)

97. If I make a bun, contrary to the Rule, then I must eat it at once, and I pay dearly for it, writes a Director, confirming what has just been said. Another Brother says that he has noticed that if he goes against the Rule, "I suffer strong temptations, as happened to the young hermit who went out to get water without getting permission from the Abbot, who was talking to others at the time (St. Jure, *The Religious Man*, T1C7§1). On the way, he was assailed by a bad thought which gave him a lot of trouble."

98. On his Final Profession Day, a Brother said, "This is the most beautiful day of my life, after that of my First Profession. (56)

99. A young Brother suggested something against the Rule to another Brother, who immediately told him: "Read Ch. 13 §2 in the Manual of Piety: Ruses of the Devil to cause the loss of souls." Whoever remains

within the rule is like a soldier in a fort.

100. After being Director of a school, director of the noviciate house, Procurator, and finally Assistant, a Brother was sent to a small house as cook, for his health's sake. He carried out his duties admirably, and the Brothers were full of respect and esteem for his many virtues. In the neighbourhood, not a very religious one, it must be said, he was looked on as a saint, a wise man, an oracle! - (Br. Jean Marie) He did his work in the kitchen promptly, then went to take a senior class, or to help in one of the junior classes. He himself was happy in his position, and made the vow of stability. See how virtue embellishes every employment, and ennobles the Religious.

101. Br. D. wrote to the Prefect, the Mayor and other people, contrary to the Rule, and was taxed with ignorance to such a point that the very existence of his school would have been compromised if he had not been changed. (56)

102. A parish priest, very attached to our Institute, wrote to us: "The Br Director is frequently absent or out on visits. Have you by chance given him permission for all this? If so, the Brother is open to danger to his religious spirit. The youngest Brothers cannot be edified by such conduct and, being left to themselves during the absence of the Director, are exposed to the danger of giving way to relaxation. I am afraid also that these journeys he makes are the occasion of regrettable expense, for it seems that they do not serve any useful purpose." (57)

103. A Brother writes: "If I am troubled by temptation, a well-made prayer cures me at once."

104. A Brother who had recently recovered from a serious illness wrote: "I thought that my condition was no different from that of Br. X, who had recently died. So, I remembered with pleasure the years I had spent as a religious, and became more resolved to persevere."

105. A certain Brother, contrary to the Rule, wrote to the parish priest, who looked on his letter as an act of stupidity. Another wrote similarly to the Mayor, who treated him as a dishonest person. (56)

106. A young Brother wrote: "There are days when I am depressed, and nothing seems to go right. Then I read a chapter of the Imitation, and

my foes disappear! I also have recourse to Mary, my Good Mother."

107. A Brother wrote: "I have mounted my cannon (my vow of chastity) on the citadel of my love, and I have positioned myself in the Tower of David, with the sword of mortification in my hand. From there, I fire red-hot balls at the demon and defend myself like a hero. What have I to fear? Jesus is my captain and Mary my fortress. St. Joseph provides me with ammunition, and my Guardian Angel carries before me the flag of hope. My pupils, like little soldiers, help me by their prayers. The Rule and the religious virtues are my defence, my shield." (57)

108. A Brother complained one day that the soup he had at supper was a very poor soup, made up of the leftovers from dinner and with poorly cooked vegetables, etc. I assured him that I had found the soup very good. He answered that I had not had the same soup. I wanted to be sure, so I made enquiries, and found that it was indeed the same community soup, and that I had found it excellent. (57)

109. One of a Brother's pupils told the Brother who was directing the Retreat preparatory to First Communion that one of his companions, who was also preparing for it, had been chased by his father with a stick because he would not eat meat on Friday. The boy, who was present when the Brother was told, added: "That's true, but I would let myself be killed before I would eat meat on days when it is forbidden." (57)

110. A young Brother was looking at the grave just dug for another young Brother, and I asked him what were his thoughts. "I have given it a little thought," he said, "but it seems to me that I will not die yet, and they will not carry me there for a time yet." This is what often happens with regard to the world. We know that there are unfortunate people, but it seems to us that we will not be among their number if we abandon our vocation. However, a good father of a family told me one day that he had been so bored and troubled that he would have liked to die before finding himself reduced to such extremities. (57)

111. A young Brother who had been dangerously ill said later that the happiest day of his life was when he was given the Last Sacraments, and that at that moment, it seemed that he saw God and he had no thoughts of hell nor purgatory, but only of heaven. This young man was one of the wisest and most pious of all our young Brothers. (57)

112. A Belgian Brother, from circumstances beyond his control, had to do his military service, and had already spent some time in the army when his parents had the generosity to have him replaced by another, at some considerable cost. He returned in haste to his community and told us that if we wanted to give a Brother a really big penance, we had only to send him into the army, which, he said, was painful for the body, and even more painful for the soul. (57)

113. A Brother told me one day that he wanted to be in the same community as another Brother, but he had abstained from asking for this, but Providence arranged that the two should be stationed together. (57)

114. In a school where, from the foundation, the Br. Director and his successor were in charge of the kitchen, they became used to thinking that this was part of the work of the Director. The pupils took it as a privilege to sweep up, to help to prepare things for him, and they said, "We have come to learn what it is to be a Superior." (57, Airaines)

115. A Brother who had acquired the habit of taking tobacco while still young, said to me one day: "They told me to use tobacco for my eyes and for my migraines. I have been doing so for a long time, and I still have sore eyes and migraines. I would like to be able to give it up." (57) When other remedies do not do any good, we stop using them, but not tobacco!

116. A young Brother said, like St. Dositheus and St. Aloysius Gonzaga: "My intention in becoming a religious was to work for the salvation of my soul, and this thought has helped me to overcome all temptations against my vocation." This Brother came into the noviciate at the age of 14.

117. "I do not advise you to visit the museum," a Marist Father said to a Br. Director. "You would do better to ask your Superior to forbid you formally, in writing, to accompany the Brothers who want to go there.

1. The de la Salle Brothers do not go; 2. The Brothers will not find anything useful there; 3. They are exposed to the danger of seeing dangerous things there; 4. They are a source of scandal to those who see them, or they can become an object of ridicule." (Fr. Choison, Beaucamps Retreat 57)

118. A young Brother was with his parents in the parlour, when the bell went for prayers. He left them and went to the Director's door, which was closed, so he went Br. Assistant's room, and it also was closed. Finally he went to Br. Superior General himself, to ask permission to stay a little longer with his parents, and to keep the book which they had brought for him. (Beaucamps 57)

119. A Brother said: "I thought that after I retired and no longer had any contact with the world, I would have neither temptation nor worry. But I find that the opposite is true, and I suffer more than before. Let everyone remain in his own state and employment, and not envy others." (57)

120. For a long time a Brother asked to be changed to another Province, so as to be near his family. His wish was finally granted, but hardly had he received the order to go, than he was very upset, and as soon as he arrived in his new Province, he asked with tears in his eyes to be allowed to go back, giving among other reasons, that his vocation would be in danger because his parents were so near. (57)

121. A good parish priest once told the Br. Visitor that he knew a number of people who gave themselves the discipline every day to ask God to overcome the difficulties experienced by the Brothers in setting up a new school in the parish. (57) What a disappointment and disillusion if the Brothers, once established, did not do well there!

122. A Brother wrote: "The efforts I make to do my exercises of piety well, to be faithful to the smallest prescriptions of the Rule, take a lot of hard work on my part, but they bring me such contentment, such victory over my passions, that every day I renew my resolve to be more generous in them." (57)

123. A Brother wrote: "The world with all its attractions, youth with all its affections, pleasure with all its seductiveness - none of these can fill nor content a heart which has once tasted and seen how sweet is the Lord, how light His burden. Even the scruples and the fear which afflict timorous souls in the presence of the holiness of God and the rigour of his judgments, can be regarded as the sweetest of pleasures compared with those which the world offers us and which are always followed by remorse and fear." (57)

124. I told a sick Brother, who was coughing a lot: "There are many Saints in Heaven who coughed like that." "I wish I was with them!" he said. "But if every time you coughed, you got an hour off your time in purgatory - and you knew you had a long time in store there - would you not rather spend more time coughing in your bed here?" "Without a doubt, so long as it was the will of God." (56 StP3Ch)

125. The parents of a sick Brother asked him to come home for a time till he was better. He answered: "Here I receive all kinds of attention: good heating, a good room, good bread, good soup, good medicines, good care, good Brothers, a good Superior, good priests. I could go on with a litany of the good things I have here. You can't imagine the half of them! I am the happiest of men, happier than the Emperor. I rejoice here in my illness from morning to night, and I am right. You have no idea of what a good, agreeable state I am in! God be praised!" (57)

126. A Brother wrote: "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is very precious to me. Something is lacking when I cannot attend, or when I do not follow it with devotion." (57) And a Director adds: "My responsibilities are painful when I do not observe the rule. As for the exercises of piety, I see that it is from them that I draw my strength, and when I have the misfortune to neglect any one of them, or to miss it, or to do it poorly, there is always something bad that happens to me on that day." (57)

127. A Brother said that whenever he was tempted against his vocation, he simply said to the tempter, "My vocation is in the hands of my Superiors. Go and fix it with them." (57)

128. A ex-Brother wrote: "Once I had a vow of poverty. Now I have poverty itself!" (57)

129. A Brother said: "I know that the enemy is all around me, and that I must expect ever new assaults. But what joy and what renewed courage when I gain another victory over him!" (57)

130. While I was on a visit to a certain house, the Br. Director came to me and pointed out that the stove in the kitchen needed to be replaced. I told him that if it was not working any more, I had no objection. Years later, in the same house, the new Director said to me, "I was present

when you gave my predecessor permission to replace the stove. That was nine years ago, and it is still working. However, I think I will have to replace it soon." (56)

131. A Director wrote: "People imagine that you are cutting back on the food when you save a few coppers, but they do not take note of the silly expenses you are avoiding, nor of the trouble you take to do things conscientiously." (56)

132. A Brother was asking for a replacement to be sent for him, since, according to him, his parents needed him, and so he was obliged, with great regret, to leave the Institute. At the same time, a certain very respected person who took an interest in this Brother, let us know that the reasons he gave were completely unfounded, that he knew the family, and that the parents could easily get on without him.

133. The Director in a certain house wrote to say: "We try to observe the Rule as well as possible, and I have already found what you told us often, that keeping the Rule leads to perfect happiness and contentment." The Brothers under him wrote the same thing: "I have never been in a house where the Rule was better observed than here. When the head is very regular, the others usually are the same. Thank you for sending me here. I would like to stay here for a long time."

134. A Brother told us: "When I was changed to another place, nature put up a hard struggle but, thank God, I was able to overcome. I repelled its assaults by thoughts which I believe were inspired by God. My Superiors do everything well. They are no more than the instruments which God uses to carry out his designs of justice and mercy for me. And when I can think of a whole crowd of plausible human reasons, I answer: 'None of these reasons carries any weight against the will of God. If he asks me for this sacrifice, can I dare refuse? And besides, how many other Brothers are in the same position, and yet persevere?'"

135. A Br. Director wrote: "I have never blamed the conduct of my Superiors, and I hope and believe that my Brothers do the same for me." (56)

136. A Brother writes: "I do not feel a lot of fervour in receiving Holy Communion, but I would not miss one for all the goods of the world." (56)

137. If I see a Brother wearing the same Habit as me, and armed

with obedience to his Superiors, I love him, I look on him and receive and treat him as my Brother, of the same Society as me, who became a Religious as I did, who wishes to live with me as a Brother, a relative, another me. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1), and became like us in all things except sin. And all this for love of us, for our happiness. And we did not love him!"

138. A young English Brother was cooking in one of our houses, and saw a workman taking a match to light his pipe. He took it from him and said, "There is some paper which is good for nothing else. Use that to light your pipe." - Economy.

139. A Brother told us that he had learned from his mother that there should always be fire and water in the house. (Br. Hilarion)

140. A Brother wrote: "I love all my Brothers, especially the Br. Director, because he makes us observe the Rule." (58)

141. A Brother recovering from illness wrote to say: "It is only in a serious illness like the one I have just had that one appreciates what it is to be a Little Brother of Mary! I owe my cure not to the medicines, but to the Blessed Virgin. On the 8th December the fever left me and, since then, I have always been more pious."

142. To help himself overcome the temptations of the devil, a certain Brother used to say to the tempter: "If you don't leave me alone, I will go and tell the Blessed Virgin, my Mother and Ordinary Resource, and we will see who comes out on top! More than that, I will tell my Superior the next time I write, and we will see then who is put to shame!" (58)

143. A Brother consulted Mr. Pommier, a well-known doctor in Lyons, and an associate of the late Mr. Bonnet, and was told: "I myself suffer from rheumatic pains, but I have no confidence at all in the mineral springs. If I had the choice between the springs and a flannel or hair brush, I would choose the brush every time, since it works far better. Do not let yourself be bathed in sweat or anything else. Make sure you have good living quarters and decent food. Don't act imprudently, but take plenty of exercise." The Brother asked how much he owed for the consultation, and was told: "Mr. Bonnet used to ask the Brothers for an Our Father and a Hail Mary. All I want from you is a De Profundis for the repose of his soul."

(24 May 1860) This story was confirmed by a number of Brothers who had the same experience.

144. A young Brother wanted to wear glasses, and had gone to the doctor a number of times, saying that he had trouble with his eyes, in the hope of getting a prescription for glasses. Nothing seemed to work, and finally he rubbed his eyes hard enough to inflame them before he went to the doctor. This worked, and the doctor told the Director to get him the glasses. But the poor Brother soon found out what often happens - when you get what you want, you soon become fed up with it. After wearing his glasses for a short time, he found them troublesome and uncomfortable, so he stopped wearing them and never went back to them. (Told us by the Brother himself)

145. A Brother once told me that once he had made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and put his studies and his work in the care of Our Divine Lord, they became easier and were better done. Another gave himself the penance of kissing the ground in front of the Blessed Sacrament each time he broke silence. (Special School in the Hermitage, 1869)

146. A Br. Director told me once: "I have been in a number of houses where there had been a need to take precautions and to be careful, because of the attitude of the local people, of the obstacles they put in the way of the Brothers, or because of a lack of understanding with the Parish Priest and with the Mayor. But I have always succeeded by employing these three methods: 1. remain at home; 2. mind your tongue; 3. do your class work well. This is what I always advise Brothers who find themselves in the same position."

147. At the end of the Retreat, one Brother said: "The man of the world who is most given to its pleasures has never spent such happy days as I have during this retreat."

148. At the retreat, a good parish priest wrote to ask us not to change the Br. Director of the school in his parish, because everyone was very pleased with him, he succeeded in all he did and his conduct had gained the esteem and affection of everyone. However, various reasons compelled us to change him. The new director arrived and brought the letter from the superior to the parish priest, and told him that he was quite worried at taking up the post, because he was afraid he would not do it as well as his predecessor, who had done so well, and who had had the

support of the parish priest. The priest answered, "Yes, and from now on, you also have all my support." When he had read the superior's letter, he told the Brothers that he was very happy with the change. As time went on, he showed that his words were sincere. A lovely example for directors receiving a new Brother into their Community! (1850)

149. A priest who wanted to set up a school in his parish (Suze la Rousse) said to the director of the noviciate at St. Paul Trois-Chateaux, "Give me Brothers who are pious and who do their schoolwork well, and I will be responsible for all else for the success and prosperity of the school. I do not ask for highly intellectual Brothers, only that they can take an ordinary class of children, but I do ask that they be pious, regular and devoted, and everything will go well.

150. At the retreat a Br. Director was told that a certain Brother had been appointed to go with him. He had heard various reports and pieces of information about this Brother which were not very favourable, and he accepted him with a certain amount of trepidation. Some months later, on a visit to the Mother House, this director told me that of all the Brothers in his community, this one, about whom he had heard so much, was the one who most pleased him and who showed himself the most devoted, the easiest to get on with and the best in his class work. There we have a good lesson for directors and others. (1859)

151. One day I asked a young novice: "What do you do during the meals?" He answered: "With my eyes, I look at the meal I am eating. With my ears, I listen to the reading."

152. A Br. Director once told me: "I always try to get the Brothers to make their exercises of piety well, because I remember that whenever I went wrong, before I was director, it was when I had not carried them out well. (1859)

153. A Brother complained to another about the conduct of the Br. Director, in terms which were hardly charitable. The other, instead of supporting or condemning what he said, answered: "Talking in this way, you are going along the road taken by those who lose their vocation, and I am afraid that this misfortune is coming your way!" It was not long coming - the poor Brother left the next day.

154. A Brother wrote: "I was in a house where the Rule and the Guide were observed perfectly, and I have never seen a house where the Brothers were more happy and united, and where the school carried on with so much taste and success." "What a good thing it is to have peace among the Brothers!" wrote another, "it takes away all our troubles, makes us less tired in everything we do." (1839)

155. A priest invited a certain Brother to dinner, and the Brother went, contrary to what the Rule lays down. But soon, they were at loggerheads, and from then on, goodbye to the dinners and the friendship! (1859)

156. A young Brother came to tell me of the illness which afflicted him, and which he seemed to suffer a lot from. I tried to make him hope that it would not last long, but said also, "If God wanted it to last a number of weeks, would you accept it?" "I would be happy to accept it," he said. "And if it lasted for months?" "The same." "And if the Lord told you that you would suffer it for three years, and that at the end of that time, he would call you to himself, and you would only have to pass through the flames of Purgatory?" "I would accept with joy and gratitude." Beautiful sentiments! (1859)

157. A postulant told me one day that when he was afflicted by temptation, the thought that he wanted to be a religious was enough to drive it away. In truth, we do not hark after what we do not want to have, what is incompatible with our state, what we cannot do without committing a crime, without considerable loss, or condemnation to eternal torture. (1858)

158. A sick Brother went to consult his parish priest, who had a great reputation as a healer and, though he passed his parents' house, he did not go in, and did not let anyone in the parish know he was there, even though he had lived there. (Diocese of Viviers, 1858, Retreat at La Bégude)

159. A Br. Director wrote to us about a Brother whom he knew well, and who wanted very much to go back to a spa for treatment. He wrote: "I would not have it on my conscience that I gave him this permission, and if I was forced to give a decision, it would be immediate - I would refuse outright! 1. because it is very doubtful whether these spas are

necessary for him, or even if they would do him any good; 2. in the second place because of the numerous dangers met with there. This is what this Brother himself told me last year, that there you are in contact with people of both sexes and of every kind, who often come as traps of the devil. You eat together and during the meal, jokes and open speech abound, each one vying to outdo the other. After the meal, they enjoy themselves with music, dancing and so on. In my opinion, that is why we must never allow a Brother to go to these places." (1859)

160. The Brother in charge of gathering in the fruit in the Hermitage was being helped one day by a young Brother. When they came back to the storeroom to lay out what they had gathered, the Brother in charge showed a nice pear to the young Brother and said, "You have been a great help. Here, this is to reward you." The young boy answered, "No thanks, Brother, I cannot accept it, since I have not got permission." Three times the Brother offered it to him, and three times had the same answer. Later, telling about this good example of mortification, the Brother said that he had been very edified by the young man. (1859)

161. A Brother told me one day, "Every time someone fails in observing some article of the Rule, something bad happens to the Brothers in the community."

162. A young Brother told me, "To fight against impure temptations, I make an act of spiritual Communion, and the devil goes away."

163. A Br. Director used to get visits from some young people, contrary to the Rule. He talked with them and played with them. One day one of them started to argue with him, first of all in a friendly way, but it became more serious and heated. Finally the young man gave way to anger and came out with words which were not only regrettable but even blasphemous, to the great scandal of the Brothers and others who heard them. Did this poor director realize what he was exposing himself to when he went against the Rule? (1959)

164. A director used to visit another house where he had been director previously, and made arrangements to meet some young people in a certain house. One of them eventually said to him: "Brother, your conduct is not very edifying. You come here contrary to your Rule. You speak ill of your superiors. You are losing the spirit of your vocation, and you will

not remain long in your Institute." How happy the Brother would have been to profit from this charitable reprimand, made by a layman to a religious who forgot what he ought to be. (1859)

165. A young Brother wrote to us while he was ill: "You tell me I should always rejoice. All right, I am happy to be oppressed by pain and trouble which nature cannot support and which make me sad and are worse for my health than my illness. I am happy to suffer with Jesus and for Jesus. Long live the Cross! That is what saves me! I can tell you confidently that since the day it pleased the Lord to try me, I have not let a day pass without blessing the pains and suffering that he sends me, and without praying to him not to take them away, so that I can have the chance of doing penance for my sins. I wish with all my heart to come out of this trial purified like gold from the furnace, and it is with all my heart that I say to the Lord with St. John of the Cross, "Lord, I wish only to suffer and to be despised for love of you." (24 Nov.)

166. A Brother told me one day: "I use tobacco, but I would not recommend it to anyone. I swear it has caused me more harm than good."

167. The Mayor of Lens (Pas de Calais), a rich landowner, said to the Brothers: "You are right not to paper the walls of your rooms. Wallpaper leads to dirt. When the paste goes bad, it becomes a breeding ground for insects, and gives out a bad smell. I never paper the walls of my rooms, except the reception hall."

168. A young Brother was sent to pick cherries, and did not eat one. Did this not make him happy? (1862, NDHerm)

169. A professed Brother, quite a good man, had no hesitation in picking up and eating cherries and other small fruit. A confrere spoke to him about it, and he answered: "What harm is there in that?" Poor man! A year later, he had left the Institute! (1862)

170. Mr. Mazelier, parish priest of St Paul Trois-Châteaux and superior of the Brothers of Christian Instruction there, saw Br. Edward going into a church in the Dauphoné, and was very edified by the way he made the Sign of the Cross before starting his prayers. Telling us about this later, he said, "The evening before, a priest arrived whom I would not have allowed to say Mass without seeing his Celebret, but if this Brother

had been a priest, I would have had no difficulty in allowing him, so touched was I by his piety and modesty!" (1843)

171. Br. Raphael, then director at Firmin, came to my room one day, completely astonished, and said to me, "I am lost in wonder and amazement! I noticed a Brother in the chapel who did not raise his eyes during the whole of Vespers! " It was Br. Abraham, now in Oceania, always a model of piety, modesty and obedience.

172. I sent a Brother a letter from his father, whom he had not seen for ten years, asking him to come home for some family business. I waited for the Brother to put up all sorts of arguments to get permission, but what was my surprise and joy when he started by suggesting what I thought I would have trouble in persuading him to do, to name a proxy! (1859)

173. A young Brother told me, "I have noticed that since I stopped making the Coulpe regularly, things do not go so well as they did before." (1864)

174. A Brother from one of the schools came to spend some days at the Hermitage during the holidays. As soon as he arrived, he took part in all the community exercises, the same as the Brothers of the community. He made the Coulpe with them. Outside recreation time, he kept busy either in his room or outside. He had brought his books with him. Far from being a distraction to us, he was a source of edification. (1866)

175. A young Brother was sent to a house in Saone et Loire and took the train. However, either he did not hear the announcement about the station he was to get off at or he did not understand it; anyhow, he missed it and went by another station. He would have ended up even further away had not someone heard where he was supposed to get off, and told him he had gone too far! The poor Brother was thunderstruck, and did not know what to do, and burst into tears. A good lady saw this and, touched by the tears of this young simple, modest and unworldly religious, came and asked what was wrong. He answered, "Madame, I have gone beyond my station and I have no money to get back." "Don't worry, little Brother," said this woman, so full of good will and charity, "I will look after you and will make sure you get off at the station you should go to. Calm yourself, we will get off at the next stop and you can come

with me." What a consolation, what a happy meeting for the poor child! The good lady, acting more like his mother, got off the train with him, and went to see the station master. She explained the situation and the embarrassment of the Brother, and asked the time of the train the next day for the Brother's destination. The station master was kindly and did not even ask for the fare for the extra stations the Brother had gone to by mistake. The lady took her little protégé home with her, as if he was her own child, gave him a meal and put him to bed. Next morning, she brought him to the station and paid his fare. Then, content and happy that she had been able to help the young Brother, she left him. For his part, he was really pleased at how Providence had helped him. "You can see the way the words of our Saviour are carried out - "whoever leaves father and mother for my sake...." (Mark 10) What more could the most loving of mothers have done for her most loved child? (1869. Told by Br. Avit, Visitor)

176. A good Brother (Azarias) told me once that the bottle and the cigar are the precursors of desertion. (1870)

177. A professed Brother wrote: "Today I can see clearly that to be happy, even in this life, we must hold on to God, follow the Rule and love mortification. I can see that to be a good religious, I must break completely with the world. This is against nature, and it is only grace that can change a man in this way." (26 May 1860)

178. A certain Brother (Eleazar) came back from doing the exams for his Certificate, and sat in his normal place in class, and continued to study as he had done before. "But now, you have your Certificate." "Oh yes, but I don't think I am any more educated than I was before. I still need to study and learn like the others." I would say also to one who has failed in his exams that he has lost none of his knowledge, and that he still has this even if he has not got a Certificate. Modesty. Courage.

179. To obey always and in everything, this always stands us in good stead. Obedience always has its influence, even in delirium. A certain sick Brother was very agitated, and was trying to get out of his bed in spite of all the efforts of those looking after him. I arrived and told him to stop behaving like that, and he at once calmed down. (1865)

180. A young Brother expressed his feelings about taking the Habit as follows: "Every moment of our existence belongs to God, and each

day of our life brings a new gift from Providence. But there are always some days which are more definitely the Lord's days, in which he is pleased to pour on us the abundance of his graces and favours. There are days whose memory will never perish, days whose memory will lend a sweet perfume to our existence, chase away our worries and bolster our courage. Among these happy days, there is one for me, a Little Brother of Mary, which I will keep in memory all my life. It is the day when I had the happiness of taking on the religious Habit, a day forever blessed, when Jesus chose me in a special way to be his brother and poured on me his most tender caresses, a day when Mary took me for her privileged son, when St. Joseph adopted me as a beloved foster son. On that day my tears were so sweet, my hymns so pious, my prayers so fervent, my heart so full of love! O day of holy joy, of sweet happiness, of real pleasure whose only precedent was my First Holy Communion, and which will be repeated only when I make my religious vows! How happy I will be if I remain faithful to the promises I have made, if I spend my life practising the virtues and the duties of my state and, while I honour the Habit which honours me, I pray that it may finally serve as my shroud and my vestment of glory for all eternity." (9 Mar. 1872, NDHerm.)

WORTHY OF NOTE

181. Br. Adele, who died on 25th March 1855, said a few days before that he would die on that day. All through his life and his last illness he had been a source of edification, and a few minutes before he died, he smiled and joined his hands, saying, "I can see the Blessed Virgin. Kneel down."

182. On Holy Thursday, the parish priest of LL came to my room, knelt down and kissed the ground before me. When I saw this, I did the same, saying, "Father, just think that every day you go up to the altar, and your ministry raises you above the angels." "Yes," he said, "but my humanity is always there. I had to do a penance in your presence." On Good Friday, he had made the Stations of the Cross beautifully with the community, but when he came to the words "and to undergo the torments of the Cross", his voice failed, and he could go no further. He tried to pronounce the words of the blessing, but when he arrived at "who was scourged for us", he could say no more, such was his emotion. Just think what an impression that made on the community. (55)

183. A Brother who had a slight illness went to swim in the pond in the garden - a pond which had been built for this purpose. His illness got worse, and a few months later he died. Another who swam in it for a short while was seized by trembling. A third noticed that his skin was turning black. At length, it was remarked that the Brothers who went to swim there took ill, and the Director resolved not to allow it any more. (StP3Ch 1854)

184. A Brother went to swim in one of the locks on the Rive du Gier canal and, although he was a strong swimmer, he drowned. Another went to swim in the Loire, and he also drowned. The same happened to another who went to swim in the Loire. Their bodies were recovered for burial only with great difficulty.

185. A Brother suffered from hoarseness for two months and lost his voice to such an extent that he could not be heard three feet away. On top of that, he caught a flu, which added to his sufferings. He had taken various remedies, including foot baths and blistering pads - which caused him such pain and suffering that often he fainted during the treatment. The doctor wanted to continue this treatment, but the Brother had had enough. This lasted till the day of the promulgation of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in the diocese of Lyons, i.e. 25th February 1855. The Brother asked our Lady to give him back his voice so that he could both sing himself and teach the children to sing hymns in her honour. In the evening, they had a little illuminated feast in the yard, centred on a statue of Our Lady. The Brother helped as well as he could in arranging and adorning it, and at the same time, he prayed for the grace and help he needed. He found that he could speak better, but could not sing. Once everything was ready, he summoned up all his filial confidence and prayed: "O Blessed Mother, give me back my voice, so that I can sing!" And at once, he began to sing with his natural voice and without becoming tired, and this has gone on till the present. (Told by himself)

186. Br. Faust died on the feast of the Visitation, 2 July 1855. During the last two days of his illness, in his almost continuous delirium, he spoke constantly of edifying things, and sang a lovely choice of hymns. Finally, the day before he died, he foretold the day and time of his burial.

187. When Br. Canut was on his deathbed, he asked Fr. de la Lande, his confessor, "How many days till the Immaculate Conception?" "A fortnight," said the priest. "Oh," said the sick man, "I will see wonderful things before that!" Nine days later, he asked what day it was, and on being

told it was Saturday, he said, "Our Blessed Lady is coming to take me with her." An hour later, he fell asleep in the Lord during the community Mass, at a quarter to six on the 2nd December 1854.

188. A Brother was suffering from sciatica, which defied all the doctor's efforts to alleviate it. During the 1844 retreat at the Hermitage, he made a novena to Fr. Champagnat, and had a sudden and lasting recovery.

189. A Brother found himself in a dangerous situation which threatened his virtue and his vocation. He said an Our Father and a Hail Mary to Fr. Champagnat, and at once was delivered from what was for him the cause of scandal and of temptation.

190. A young Brother was suffering from continual serious stomach problems, and was afraid that it might lead to his being dismissed. He was very worried, and none of the remedies he took made him any better. An old Brother who had known Fr. Champagnat advised him to make a novena to the Founder to ask for his cure. He did so very fervently, and within a few days, he was completely cured. (StP3Ch 1844)

191. A nine year old child had a bad leg which had prevented him from walking for a long time. He was brought to Fr. Champagnat's grave and, shortly after, he was perfectly cured. (Told by J.M.Grandjon)

192. A young Brother who wet his bed was advised by his Director to make a novena to Fr. Champagnat. He did so and, from then on, was never troubled by it again. (StP3Ch 1855)

193. Br. Archelaus died at St. Paul 3 Ch. on Friday 25 June 1855, Feast of the Sacred Heart. Shortly before he died, he sang the Te Deum and the Benedicamus Domino, and said the Hail Mary in a loud voice.

194. Br. Cloman died at St. Genis on 13 February 1856. After making his vows and receiving the Viaticum, he could not contain his joy. He told those who came to see him, "How happy I am to die! How happy I am that I am dying as a Little Brother of Mary!" He continued to say this until a few moments before he died. A young postulant at St. Genis, who was witnessing this kind of thing for the first time, could not contain himself and, when his mother was told about it, she could not hold back her tears.

195. A Br. Director wrote to us on 20 May 1846: "Our good Br. Nepomucene died yesterday, almost suddenly, without our having the consolation of being with him or of helping him. On Sunday evening, since it was fine weather, and since it was some time since we had been able to go out, because of bad weather, we went for a walk. He came with us and on our return, told us that he was feeling fine. He took a little supper and went to bed. Next day, when we asked if he wanted something to eat, he said that he would get up to eat. After breakfast, the Brother Cook went to the dormitory and asked him if he was getting up. He opened his eyes, but said nothing. Thinking he was sleeping, the cook did nothing further, but went to Mass with the rest of us as usual. After Mass, the cook went back to see him, and saw some little sign of life. He came to my class to tell me. I hurried to the bedside of the Brother, but he was already dead. Imagine how thunderstruck I was! I went at once for the priest and the doctor, but we were too late! I did not know where I was! The poor deceased had received Communion with us the day before. We noticed with regret that he was not wearing the scapular (he was a new Brother). But if his death shocked us, what happened next day at the funeral edified and consoled us. We were touched by the affection and attachment the people of St. Agrève showed for the Brothers at this time of distress, even though we had been there only a few months. The parish priest mentioned the death at the May devotions in the evening, and the whole population turned up for the funeral. It was like a procession of the Blessed Sacrament - members of various organisations, penitents, well-to-do people and dignitaries of the place, were all there. Even the Justice of the Peace and the notary who, up till then, had shown scant sympathy for the Brothers, came with their families. The women were crying their eyes out! As we went up at the Offertory, an old soldier went to the bier, where the Brother looked as if he was asleep, and kissed him as if it had been his own son. We were almost ashamed, as we appeared to be the least affected. And yet this young Brother had been in that place for only two weeks, and had been ill all that time. It was not the person but the profession of the Brother which was being honoured. We should never forget that.

196. The same thing happened at the funeral of Br. Martin at Carvin in 1846, and of Br. Leon at La Côte-St-André in 1856 - the whole population turned up spontaneously.

197. In London, a young Catholic boy made a three mile journey each day to attend the Brothers' school. On days when there was no school, he went with one of the Brothers who, at age 15, was younger than he was, to visit the sick in the hospital. Going round the beds, if the patients said they were Protestants, they offered some words of encouragement and, if they were Catholics, they asked them how long it was since they had been to Confession and, depending on their answer, if they wanted a priest, they went to get one for them. As a reward for this good work, God gave the young man a vocation to religious life and, at the moment, he is in the noviciate at Beaucamps. (July 1856) (Translator's Note: The only two young men from Britain in Beaucamps in July 1856 were Br. Alphonsus, later to become the first Provincial of Great Britain, and Br. Vincent Walstan, who died in the congregation in 1906.)

198. The Brothers in one of the communities had quite an argument one day and, some days later, a woman went to the Director of another house nearby to tell him that the Brothers had been fighting and that she had read about it in a newspaper. (1856)

199. On 30th November 1847, the Gier was swollen to an extraordinary degree and carried away a large section of the garden wall. The water spread into the yard, went through the gateway and through the dining room windows that open onto the front yard. The dining room was flooded, the wall along the river was washed away and the water, rising higher and higher with the torrential rain that was coming down, almost reached the height of the bridge. The community were terrified, and started to get out of the part of the house fronting the river and retreat to the part near the rock in case of any accidents during the night. Eventually it was decided to go and pray in the chapel. The whole community went, and made the Stations of the Cross, followed by the Rosary and the Miserere with the fervour that only imminent danger can bring out. And what a pleasant surprise, what joy, when they saw when they came out of the chapel that the rain had stopped, the sky was clearing and the river had already started to go down! However, since the dining room was still soaked, they took their supper in two shifts in the small dining room near the rock. So they were calm during the night, and those who stayed on watch had nothing new to report. And yet, all these misfortunes are not as great as one venial sin!

200. In June 1856 when the Rhone burst its banks and the water

spread all over the left bank in the outskirts of Lyons, a remarkable thing happened in Charpennes. A little dog jumped on to his master's bed - the man had not heard the alarm - and woke him by pulling the covers off the bed. Eight people were saved by the instinct of this faithful pet.

201. A Brother had swallowed something poisonous and at first paid no attention. Later, however, he felt ill and went to the sickroom to take some infusion, without stating exactly what was wrong with him. His illness got worse and he finally went to the Superior, who gave him the needed remedies, but it was too late, and three hours later, the poor Brother was dead. Whenever there is a danger of offending God or of losing one's vocation, the Superior should be told as quickly as possible. (1856)

202. The Director of Marguerites wrote to tell us of the death of Br. Daniel on 30 March 1847: "This was the first time I had seen a Brother die, but now, more than ever, I am convinced that it is a wonderful thing to die as a child of Mary and in her Society when, as was the case with this excellent Brother, one has lived faithful to the Rule and to our religious duties. In spite of the severity of his illness, he always took great pleasure in joining with us in the exercises of piety; he asked them to make them at his bedside and he answered the prayers with angelic fervour. He kissed in turn his crucifix and the picture of Our Lady which was next to his bed. Finally, just as we were finishing the prayers for the dying, he breathed his last. There was great emotion among the local people when they were told of his illness. But it was above all at his death and during the time when the body was laid out in the school that they showed signs of the affection, esteem and attachment that they had for him. The funeral was conducted with extraordinary solemnity and with a great number attending. The authorities and other local notables gave the example and a huge crowd came to pay their respects to this good Brother who, even after his death, preserved his lovely smile. The parish priest, not content with proclaiming the sanctity of the dead Brother, asked the Lenten preacher to talk on the same subject, first of all from the pulpit, then after the funeral High Mass and finally in the cemetery. Tears flowed freely in the hall, particularly among the 23 Brothers who were present. Oh! What encouragement this gives us to follow in the footsteps of this holy Religious

203. Br. Finien, who died at St. Paul Trois-Châteaux on Good Friday 1847, was, according to his Director, perfectly resigned, and showed an

admirable piety and unlimited confidence in the mercy of Our Lord during his illness. However, he was afraid of Purgatory and, one day, when I was trying to reassure him with the thought of the sufferings he was undergoing, he answered that St. Aloysius Gonzaga was more of a saint than he was, and he had gone through the same. He added: "I beg you to pray for me during the seven or eight days after I die!" All the Brothers who saw his calm and confidence, were envious of the way he died, and said that it was enough to see this young Brother to be convinced how good it was to die in the Little Brothers of Mary.

204. Br Theogone, aged only 17 years, having returned sick from a school where the Brothers were very pleased with him, spent three hours in the parlour with his mother and his aunt, without raising his eyes to look at them, which astonished and edified them, as they told another Brother later on. The good Brother, during his illness, had continually spoken of his contentment and satisfaction at being given all the necessary treatment and remedies of all kinds. The other young men said, "How I would like to go with him, and in the way he does!" He received Holy Communion regularly every week, and edified everyone by his piety, his patience and his resignation. He wanted to bind himself in a more special way to the Institute before he died, and this grace was given to him on the Feast of the Ascension, after which he received the Last Sacraments. He died on 26th May 1857, like a sleeping child, and after his death his face continued to radiate peace, innocence and happiness.

205. A young Brother wrote to us in October 1857: "Our house is being renovated, and recently they took away a staircase. It was done in the evening, and the next day, I got up as usual and came out of my room, after recommending myself to my Guardian Angel. I had not reckoned on what was going to happen! I was hurrying because I was a little late, and hurried without remembering that the staircase was no longer there! I fell down, landing on my right side from a height of some 4 metres. I should have been seriously injured, and yet I suffered no hurt. The Br. Director arrived in fear of what I had suffered, but I had already got up and I was able to make my meditation as usual. I have sincerely thanked my Guardian Angel.

206. A Brother was sent to look after Br. Urban in his last illness at St. Bauzille, and he wrote: "I wish to thank you for choosing me to look after this holy Religious, although I am not worthy of it compared to so many others who could do it better than me. How lovely it was to see him

receive Holy Communion! His face shone with love of God and the serenity of the saints!" (56)

207. At the moment of his death, Br Ignatius told Br. Cesaire, Director of Hautefort, "When I meet Fr. Champagnat, I will send you some postulants." The day after he died, four came forward, two in person and the other two by letter. (1861)

The doctor of the Mother House (St. Genis), Dr Bonnefoi, a very religious man, was visiting two sick Brothers who were in adjoining beds in the sickroom, and he told them to prepare to receive the Sacraments of the dying. This news made both of them very happy. A short time after, the older, Br. Autal, said to the younger, Br Francis Xavier, "Brother, we are going to go together." "Perhaps," said the young man to the infirmarian, "Br. Autal has such long legs, I will not be able to keep up with him," as if he was talking about going for a walk. A few hours later, I went to see them, and they asked me if they could make their vows before dying (11 June 1860) They made them together before receiving the Last Sacraments. Br. F. Xavier was only 15 and a half years old, and he made the vow of obedience. Br. Autal, aged 18, had already made this vow, so he made the others. They died happy!

209. A Brother had lost his voice, which annoyed him no end, as it stopped him from doing his work. He made a novena to Fr. Champagnat and his voice came back. (1859)

210. A Brother said that since he entered religion, he had often suffered temptations, but he had always overcome them by telling his superior, and by following his advice; and by his devotion to Jesus, Mary and Joseph, he had received many favours. This Brother also had a filial devotion to our Venerable Founder and to all the Brothers who now enjoy that glory of heaven. Another Brother added, "I have had the same experience, and I have always found great comfort in it." (1859)

211. Br. Peregrinus, Antoine Briallon, who died at Nantua on 4th Nov. 1857 at the age of 18, took to his bed on Monday morning. By midday he was delirious, and this continued till Thursday, when he had some lucid moments. The Brother looking after him took advantage of this to tell him how serious his illness was, and asked if he wanted to go to confession. The good Brother answered, as Br. Jerome had in similar circumstances,

"I went to confession last Saturday and received Holy Communion on Sunday, and since then I have nothing on my conscience." He dropped back into delirium and died after a short agony. When the children in his class heard about his death, they wept as if he were their father. There were eight priests at the funeral, for which they did not charge the Brothers. The dear deceased had only been in religious life for three years. (Told by Br. Boniface, an eyewitness, who was looking after the Brother during his illness.)

212. A Brother at Charlieu when Br Ignatius was Director had large swellings on both knees. Several doctors were consulted, all of whom said an operation was needed to get rid of the swellings. Br. Ignatius put some of Fr. Champagnat's hair on each swelling and, along with the sick Brother, made a novena to Fr. Champagnat. At the end of a fortnight, the swellings had completely disappeared. (Told by Br. Modeste, 12th August 1869, at ND de l'Herm.)

213. A child of 8 to 9 years old, son of a rich merchant of Rive de Gier, had been at the Brothers' school for some time, when he fell ill. His mother was distraught, but the child, on the contrary, seemed happy and content and said to his mother, "Soon, I hope, I will be in heaven!" "Why are you saying that?" said the mother; "I hope that you will soon recover." The child said, "Mother, why are you so worried? If you really loved me, you would be very happy to let me go to Heaven!" The priest who visited this admirable child reckoned that he was ready to receive his First Holy Communion, and told him so. What joy! Tears of joy filled his eyes and his innocent heart warmed in transports of love and gratitude! He told his mother to make sure everything in the house was clean and in good order, because God was going to come there. He said that he wanted to get out of bed so that he could receive Holy Communion with due respect. His mother objected at first, but finally gave way. She dressed him and put him on a chair near a table prepared for the event. After receiving Communion, he remained a long time as if he were absorbed in God and when his mother said he should go back to bed, he answered, "There is no need. I prefer to remain in the chair. Tomorrow I will not have any more suffering, because I will be in heaven!" And in fact, the next day, still in his chair, he slept in the Lord, his face already looking like one of the predestined. As soon as we heard of his death we went to see him, and looked at him with admiration. The Br. Director, 80 years old, went with his Brothers and they looked at the child with great emotion as

they kissed his hands. The funeral was attended by a great number of the faithful, including all the children of the school.

214. A very young child was told by his mother not to leave the house while she was away. He asked her for a book which had a picture of Mary Immaculate on the cover, and he stayed quiet, looking at this picture till his mother came back. This pious boy became a pupil in the Brothers' school at Pelussin, his parish, and later went to the Hermitage, where he put on the religious habit and became known for his practice of all the virtues of the religious state. (Br. Beatrix, told by Br. Modeste. (1870)

215. Fr. Champagnat never brought the Brothers at the Hermitage to Valfleury (a church of Our Lady, a well-known place of pilgrimage); neither did he allow them to go in community. When there were half a dozen of us at the Hermitage, he brought us once up the nearby mountain, and we had milk for our lunch. When there were about fifty of us, he brought us two or three times to Mont Pilat. Later on, the holiday walks after the retreat were restricted to going to Lavalla, where the community went to the local church and sang the Salve Regina, with the parish priest's permission. After Fr. Champagnat's death, I do not remember ever giving a general holiday, and only on rare occasions I gave permission for someone to go on a pilgrimage. For a religious, the place of devotion and of pilgrimage is his own monastery and chapel....

216. One of our Brothers (Br. Appollinaire) was all set to take the train which had the terrible accident on 1st March 1846 when so many people were killed, when the Superior received a letter which required the Brother to go elsewhere on urgent business. This same Brother was later travelling from Lyons to Paris, and met up with some soldiers going to Paris. He told them that he knew Paris well, and would be only too pleased to act as their guide, but unfortunately he had to get off at Chagny to visit Santenay. Shortly after, the poor Brother felt an urgent need to get off at a small station, which he did, but the whistle went and he could not get back on the train. He spoke to the stationmaster, who allowed him to take the next train to Chagny. When he got there, he saw a policeman waving the kind of hat the Brothers wore; the policeman gave it to him, and also his bag, which one of the soldiers had given to him to pass to their owner. Imagine the joy and gratitude of the Brother! Was not Providence looking after him?

217. Br. Louis Marie wrote to me from Rome on 20th May 1858: "Br. Rainier has died after six months of terrible suffering, endured with a patience which never let up for a moment. I have never seen such a beautiful face, so gracious a smile, as that of this good Brother for the 24 hours after his death. Everyone was going to the sick room to see it."

218. A Br. Director had a member of his community who gave him a lot of trouble and caused him much concern with his irregularity and his indiscretions. He made a novena to Fr. Champagnat and the Brother changed almost at once and began acting well.

219. Br. Therese, who set off from St. Paul Trois-Châteaux on 11th October 1859 for the missions in Oceania, told me on the day he left that ever since he went to the noviciate in La Bégude, he had wanted to consecrate himself to these missions, which he had heard talked about. He had always had the hope that St. Therese, whose name he had taken, would obtain this favour for him. Some time later, a fever had brought him to the door of the tomb, and when I went to see him in the sickroom after the retreat at La Bégude, I found him unconscious, and gave him what I thought was my last blessing. But the Lord willed otherwise, and he regained his health. He was a model of piety, docility and devotedness. Working in the garden, in the lowest classes, in his studies, as a prefect, in the kitchen.... He was always active, intelligent, a good Religious, a good confrere, pious and regular. During the course of the year, he wrote to us to tell us of his longtime desire to go to the missions of Oceania. He was at the retreat at St. Paul, and since a group was leaving for the missions shortly after, and the Marist Fathers had asked us for a Brother, we kept him back at the noviciate house. It was on Sunday 9th October that I announced that he had been assigned to the group. In his joy and astonishment at the news, he could not believe his ears and did not take it seriously until next day, when I called him to my room. His preparations were soon made. He had not seen his father for five years, but he was satisfied with writing a letter to say goodbye and to ask him to send another of his brothers to the Noviciate, one who had already expressed a wish to join another who was already there. From then on, his happiness and extraordinary joy were noted by all. He himself said, "I feel that I am simply going where I am sent." The Brother in the Special School remarked on his joyful appearance when he went to say goodbye to them, and a number of Brothers

came to tell me of their desire also to go to Oceania.

220. A young Brother had the bad habit of not controlling his hands, pushing and pulling at others, contrary to the Rule, in spite of all the Br. Director said to him. One day he annoyed an older Brother, who pushed him away with such violence that the poor young man fell and broke his leg. Both were shocked by this. But we can see God's justice in this exemplary punishment. (1859)

221. A young Brother wrote: "Whenever I felt tempted, I prayed to Fr. Champagnat, and everything turned out well. (1859)

222. After making his First Communion, a boy had such a great wish to receive Jesus Christ often that he asked, nay, demanded, the favour of receiving Communion every Sunday. Due to his good conduct, his exemplary life and his fervent devotion, he deserved and was granted this favour. One day he was invited to a wedding, and he asked his confessor if it was all right for him to go. The priest told him that it would be all right provided he behaved well, but that there were dangers, and it would be better for him not to go. So he resolved to follow this advice. His mother wanted him to go with her, but he refused on account of the priest's advice. The mother brought him to the priest in the hope of making him grant her wishes. The priest, however, gave her the same advice as he had given the child, and the boy persisted in his resolution, and was quite calm about it. When the others came back from the wedding, and told him how well they had eaten and drunk, and how they had enjoyed themselves, the boy answered, "Perhaps I did not eat and drink as much as you nor had such fun, but I can tell you that I was happier than if I had gone." Our good Lord rewarded such edifying and generous conduct in a child so young by giving him a vocation to the religious life. He was only

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when he entered the noviciate at St Paul Trois-Châteaux, and his piety, his talents and his happy dispositions developed more and more. Since he was too young and too small to be sent to teach after his noviciate, he was given the job of bellringer and sacristan. The two tasks were in conflict, and the Director did not want one person to hold down both, so he asked the young Brother which one he preferred. He answered, "Sacristan, because I will be more often with our Lord in the chapel." The Director was delighted with this answer and left him as sacristan. He carried out his task with admirable piety, modesty and exactness. During his free

time, he was seen cleaning the candlesticks and putting everything in his care in order. For quite a while, he was the only sacristan and was able to do all the work that was needed. It was only on big feasts that someone helped him to adorn the altar. (Br. Benildus 1859) The priest who had seen how the child behaved in the world told the above to the Brothers' Superior, who had seen how he behaved as sacristan in the noviciate.

223. A certain Brother found that he had become completely fed up, and he did not know what to do. He was at his wits' end. He remembered Fr. Champagnat and the words of encouragement that he had given them years before and, at once, he became calm again and peace returned to his soul. Another, in the same state, went to pray at Fr. Champagnat's tomb. The latter had been his confessor when he was young and had given him a copy of "Think well on it." At once he felt great consolation. (1858)

224. A young child in the parish of Doizieu had suffered for some time from epilepsy, and usually had at least one attack every week. In desperation, his mother brought him to La Valla and asked the Director, Br. Vincent, to give her some remedy for her poor child. The Brother told her that he could do nothing for her, that earthly remedies were useless against this illness, and it would be better to have recourse to heaven. So, he said that if she wished, he would take the child to the room that Fr. Champagnat had occupied when he was alive, and they would pray that our good Father, who so loved children, would help them. The mother agreed and the Brother went with the child and said a Hail Mary and a Memorare in the room. Wonderful to relate, the child has not had another attack since then, and that was three months ago! (21st August 1859)

225. A Brother was strongly tempted against his vocation, and prayed to Fr. Champagnat for help. Immediately he was consoled and strengthened.

226. When one of our Brothers was a child, his mother called him to her bedside and said, "Child, I am going to die soon, and you will no longer have a mother on this earth. The Blessed Virgin will be your mother. Take this book (It was the Imitation of the Blessed Virgin.) and make sure you say your Rosary every day." The boy did so and, while still young, he entered our noviciate. (Told by himself in 1858, in the noviciate of St. Paul Trois-Châteaux)

227. A young Brother (Br Claude Nicholas of St. Pierre aux Champs, who entered the noviciate on 12th June 1856) had such a painful eye affliction that he could not stand the light. His eyes became red and ulcerated, and his face also was inflamed and covered with spots. He put up with all this with admirable patience and resignation, accepting that it was the will of God as long as He wished it to continue. He accepted his sufferings with joy in the hope of being more glorified. His eyes were continually bandaged up and were always very painful. On the night of Saturday, vigil of Pentecost, this young Brother, who had always being very edifying during his noviciate, dreamt that he saw the Blessed Virgin with the child Jesus in her arms, standing at the foot of his bed. She had a rosary round her neck, and the Child Jesus looked at the Brother and at the whole dormitory with an expression of joy and happiness. The Brother said the Child smiled at him. The Brother then stretched out his hand to touch him, but he pulled back so that the hand could not reach him. This went on for a quarter of an hour. After this, the Brother woke up and when he took the bandage off his right eye, he was astonished to find that he could clearly see and that he felt no more pain. When I went to see him, he told me this story himself with sentiments of joy and gratitude. I could see that his eye was as clear and clean as it should have been. The Brother told me, and repeated it several times, that the moments he had spent with the Child and his Mother were the most beautiful and happiest of his life. (Br. Athanase. St. Genis Laval 1860)

228. In August 1859 Br. Leucius was seriously ill at the Hermitage. His stomach was all swollen, continual dysentery had weakened him immensely, he could not move, and he spoke only with great difficulty. He asked to receive the Last Sacraments, which he did with admirable piety and, wonderful to tell, he answered the prayers and recited the 'Confiteor' as if he had his full health. After this, he improved a little, and this lasted till the next day. When I went to see him, he said sadly, "Oh, if only I had died yesterday, after receiving my Saviour!" "You were happy with him," I said. "My room is a happier place and I am happier since he came here," he replied. The next Thursday, he said to the Brother who was looking after him, "Come to me after you receive Holy Communion, so that I may have the happiness of adoring my Saviour in you." When the Brother came into the room, he joined his hands and, in a state of deep recollection, said the prayers which his piety and fervour inspired.

He told me that he had counted up the Communions he had missed because of his illness, but that once he recovered, he intended to make them all up. I was called a short time before he died and found him quite calm, though I could see that the end was near and suggested a few prayers to him. The Brothers of the community did all they could in looking after him and, seeing this, he said, "How good it is to die a Brother!" We said the prayers for the dying and he fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday, 27th August. Those who saw him said that he was like a religious asleep.

229. Young Br. Arcontius, a novice, died at St. Genis Laval, and looked so beautiful after his death that the other novices hurried to see him. During his life, he was an angel of piety and during his long illness, he continually gave the example of all the virtues. Happy life! Happy death!

230. Br. Isidore, (Alexander Rivat), Director of Lens (Pas de Calais), as he neared death, asked the Brothers for three things: 1st, to forgive him all the trouble and disagreements he had shown them; 2nd, to promise him that they would persevere in their vocation and be faithful to it, no matter what happened or how much it cost; 3rd, not to forget to pray for him after his death. He then embraced them all, as if to say goodbye, with such tender affection that they were touched to the bottom of their hearts (10 January 1860). He died four days later, on Saturday 14th. On the Sunday, his body was laid out in one of the classrooms. Almost all the people of Lens came to pray and to weep for him. They were all touched to the heart by the sight of this Brother, who seemed to smile at them even after his death. He looked so full of grace and so happy that the Rev. Dean and others said that his joy was written on his face! All the dignitaries of the town came to the funeral. The Mayor and his Council, the pupils of the school and the inhabitants of the place were all present, as well as the Brothers from neighbouring houses. The Dean gave a homily which brought tears to the eyes of all who heard it. The Brother was buried in the cemetery of Lens in a corner which was henceforth reserved for the Brothers who died there. This is what happens after the death of a good Brother, a poor Religious, whose only possessions are his Rule, his piety, his charity and his talents, used in the obscurity of a primary school without seeking to be seen outside. During the three months Br. Isidore had directed the school at Lens (October - December 1859) he had gained the esteem and the sympathy of the authorities and of the people, all of whom had a high regard for his capacity and his merit.

231. Two Brothers were travelling and at nightfall found themselves at a wide and deep stream, with no bridge or even a plank to cross by, and they were told that they would have to go upstream about three miles to find a crossing. They were undecided and worried, not knowing what to do, when they noticed, on the other side of the stream, a man with a cart pulled by cattle on the road. They asked him to carry them across on his cart, which he did, and they carried on their journey happily. A sure sign of the care of providence for us! (Brs. François and Marcellin, on the way back from Charlieu, 1840)

232. Fr. Galabert, priest of the Assumption at Nîmes, was chaplain to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Rome during my stay there, and since he was a close friend of Fr. Nicollet, Marist, he used to come and see us in the Palazzo Valentini. I came with him from Rome to Marseille. I asked if I might travel with him on the journey, and he readily agreed. Since he was fluent in Italian and was well up in dealing with customs officials, ports and so forth, I am sure that he saved me a lot of money! I remember him with affection and gratitude. At Marseille we met his Superior, Fr. d'Alzon, who in his size, the way he moved, his face and his conversation, made me think of Fr. Champagnat.

233. On 15th September 1864, on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, the young Brothers and the postulants of the Mother House were on holiday at St. Genis. I was taking a walk in the cemetery when a young postulant came to me with a pear in his hand, a "Bon Chretien", fully ripe and looking delicious. The boy said, "This was the only one on the tree, so I picked it for you." I took it and thanked him. I was overcome by the candour, the simplicity and the mortification of this child. He had been alone, he could have eaten the pear with no one seeing him, but he listened to the voice of grace and his conscience, and followed the Rule. As for me, I gave the pear to a young Brother who was passing, and told him to bring it to the kitchen. Shortly afterwards, I passed that way and saw the pear on the table, so I told the cook to keep it till the mealtime. A number of young Brothers were helping in the kitchen and they must have been tempted - a real trial for them! Next day after breakfast, I asked the
Br.
Cook what had happened to it. "I took it away", he answered, "no one had touched it." It reminded me of the story of the grapes someone brought to St. Macarius of Alexandria, who would have liked to eat them, but who

sent them to another Brother. This one, in his mortification, passed them to another, who passed them on, and in this way the grapes went round the whole community and came back to St. Macarius. He was lost in admiration of the virtue and solidarity of his brothers, and refused to eat them. (Lives of the Desert Fathers, Bk 3, Ch. 11)

234. When Fr. Champagnat and the Brothers were putting up the last building on the St. Joseph's yard perimeter, two young novices were working on the ground while a huge stone was being lifted on a plank pulled up by a rope. All of a sudden the plank twisted and the stone fell down where the two young men were. But, a wonder to see, it fell between them and neither was hurt! I was told this by Br. Didymus, one of the two.

235. A young Brother was seriously ill at St. Genis Laval and he was asked if he wanted to go to confession. He replied, "It is a week since I went to confession, and I have been here in bed since then and have done no wrong." Another Brother, an older man, also dangerously ill, was asked if he wanted confession. His answer was, "I have done nothing to cause me concern." These stories remind us of the good Br. Jerome in the sick room at St. Chamond. Happy the man whose conscience is pure and tranquil at the last!

236. The first time I made the journey from La Louvesc to St. Felicien, I did not know the road, nor how far it was. I set off in good weather; it was afternoon. I said my Office, and then I saw a cloud on the horizon, heading my way. I was in a deserted place, in the middle of the mountains and the forest. I met a man and asked, "Is there any house along this road?" He said there was none! The cloud came nearer and grew bigger, and my anxiety grew with it. I prayed to Our Lady to find me a house to shelter in. The thunder started and the rain began to fall. I looked down and saw a house some distance from the road. I ran there at once and had hardly reached the door when there was a terrible thunder clap and hail that whitened the whole countryside. I was well received. They lit a fire to dry me and when I left the house about an hour later, the lady of the house lent me an umbrella, in case I needed it, and told me to leave it with the Brothers at St. Felicien, which was about an hour's journey away. I arrived there just as night fell and the next day Br. Callistus, Director at St. Julien Molle Sabate, brought me back to La Louvesc on horseback.

237. A small boy, aged between 5 and 6, got up during the night to relieve himself, and went to the stairs that went down to the stable. The first step was very low and, not seeing anything, he tripped on it and rolled all the way down the other steps, which were roughly cut stone. He should have injured himself or nearly killed himself, but he suffered no harm - it was as if he had fallen down steps covered with mattresses! He went back up quite happily and went to sleep, and slept peacefully all night. He had a bad leg, and it was not harmed in any way by the accident. The child never doubted that he had been protected by his Guardian Angel, who had carried him in his arms, so that he would not hurt his foot against a stone. (Ps. 90: 18-19)

238. "I was just a small child, I had a bad leg and slept in the loft. I got up during the night and went to the stone stairs leading to the stable. One of the top steps was missing. I made a false step, fell, and rolled all the way down. I could have killed myself or broken my legs or arms, but I did not have a scratch nor a bruise - it was as if I were rolling down on cotton. I attribute it to the guardian angel. "They will carry you in their arms." (Ps. 90. See the last entry)

239. In 1869, Br. Hymère, director of Solliès-Pont(Var), was struck down by a lung infection which, humanly speaking, gave little hope of recovery. The Br. Assistant of St. Paul Trois-Châteaux, who had a high regard for this Brother and wished him to remain alive, had prayers said for him. He wrote to me to ask for my prayers and for those of the community for this dear Brother, who also wished and prayed for a cure. We addressed our prayers to Fr. Champagnat, waited for him to act, and got from him what we wanted. The sick man had obtained permission from the Superior that if he recovered, he would make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Fr. Champagnat. He sent me a letter, a petition to Fr. Champagnat, and asked me to place it on the tomb, which I did. However, I was told that although his condition had improved, there was still cause for concern. We continued to pray for him and one day I was told that there was a Brother from the s o u t h in the chapel. I thought of our sick man, and lo and behold! he came himself into my room! Imagine my joy and happy surprise as I embraced him! He went to Fr. Champagnat's grave to thank him, took away the petition and, after seeing the house and the relics of Fr. Champagnat at both the Hermitage and Lavalla, he received Holy Communion and edified all the Brothers during the few days he stayed with us. He then put himself

at the disposal of the Superiors for whatever task they wanted him to do. He was cured, but was a little weaker than he had been.

240. While Br. Dorotheus (J. Villelongue) was a servant at Lavalla, first of all in a house, then at the parish house, where his brother was studying Latin, although I was only 9 or 10 years old I was very edified by the way he made the Sign of the Cross and by his modesty and recollection in the church. Not only did he not turn his head, but I do not remember him ever raising his eyes. He stayed on his knees without moving, with his eyes down or fixed on his prayerbook, in front of the altar and the tabernacle. Later, when he was in charge of the animals at the Hermitage, he heard that those who could not attend the Office could replace it by 72 Our Fathers and Hail Marys in honour of the 72 years of Our Lady's life. From then on, each morning he put 72 little stones in his pocket and each time he said an Our Father and a Hail Mary, he threw one out, until there were none left and he knew he had completed the number. He always worked at the lowliest of tasks, in charge of the stables and the loft or sweeping the yard, cleaning the toilets, etc. In all his work, he maintained his modesty, silence and recollection, and I do not think anyone ever had a critical word to say about him in these matters. However, there were times when he could be happy and joyful. One day, Br. Stanislaus, who suffered a lot from headaches, said to him, "Br. Dorotheus, make me laugh, cheer me up a little. I have a terrible headache." The Brother answered, "Working in the field, I found a little bird which could not yet fly. I placed my skullcap on the ground and put the bird in it. The poor wee thing, after a moment or two, emptied its bowels in it!" This made Br. Stanislaus laugh, and he laughed when he told me about it. When Br. Dorotheus was dying, he was quite happy and when anyone came near they saw him smiling, in such a way that he seemed to be saying with St. Aloysius, "We are going away happy!" (See Our Models in Religion)

241. On 6th May 1872, we came out from Mass and were horrified to see that the stream had swollen enormously and was still rising alarmingly because of the heavy rain which looked like it would continue. The sky was covered with clouds and the water was flowing all over the place, into the field and almost up to the level of the garden. The washroom was covered with water, it went into the dining room and almost covered the bridge. It was starting to breach the wall of the house and the danger of collapse was imminent, in spite of all our efforts to contain it. After prayers in the chapel, I remembered that the scapular had prevented a

fire and I was sure that it could stop a flood. In this hope, I put the scapular, or rather the two scapulars, of Mount Carmel and of the Immaculate Conception, at the window of my room along with an indulgenced rosary, on the side the water was coming from. I did the same at the window facing the stream. Wonderful! The rain stopped, the water lowered, and sky cleared and all our fears vanished. The stream continued to go down till it reached its normal height. Thanks be to God! Glory to Our Lady! For our help is in the name of the Lord and Mary is our Ordinary Resource.

EDUCATION

242. A good priest once said to a Brother, "Even if you have only one child in the class, make it a good lesson." A Br. Director followed this advice to the letter, and taught one child as if he were teaching 50, for a whole month, himself answering the prayers and the rosary which the child said, according to the Rule.

243. A Brother was criticised because it was said that his teaching was too religious in character, and this took away from secular subjects. Now the same Brother has written for permission to increase the size of the house because it is too small to hold all the boarders sent to him from all sides. (1853)

244. The parish priest and the Br. Director in a certain place were insistent on having a class for adults, which they looked on as indispensable. The priest announced it without asking for our consent, and the Director, after seeing the young people who turned up, wrote to us to say that we should refuse. When God commands us to love him, it is for ourselves and not for him that he makes this commandment, for what need has he of our love, he who is complete happiness? So, according to St. Augustine, it is man who benefits from the worship we give to God. Who would dare to say that it is a good thing for the fountain that we drink from it, and for light, that the eye sees it?

245. A Br. Director writes: "The adult class is not successful. I think this is the first and the last year we will run it. We had up to 80 pupils, and now there are between 30 and 40. They are not very studious, and the work is too hard for them. Besides, it causes great upset in the house. (Dec. 1853)

246. When I do what I should do, when I observe my Rule, writes a Brother, my pupils are more docile, more obedient, and the catechism classes go better. If I let up and relax a little, I see the results in the children. So the good of the pupils depends on my advancement in virtue.

247. On the topic of the plays put on by the pupils at the Prizegiving ceremonies, the Mayor of A... said to the Director of the school: "I do not understand how religious societies like yours do not stop this kind of thing in their method of teaching. Some little dialogues within the capabilities of the children, some fables interspersed with a few songs, that is what we should have from religious like you. With these plays, you may get applause from the lower classes, but the civilized and well-brought up classes disapprove and criticise you. In putting them on, you are facilitating and bringing sooner licence, presumption and insubordination among our good people. Those who make up the elite of our nation have their eyes fixed on you religious, you teachers, and invite you to commit yourselves wholly to moderate and reform these dangerous dispositions in the generation that is growing up. If, instead of fulfilling this holy mission, you are making things easy for them and corroborating in their unfortunate dispositions, you are lacking in your true aims and you are deceiving your Society. I wish therefore that, to earn a solid and enduring reputation, you limit yourself to establishing good discipline and emulation in your classes, so that your pupils can take profit from them, and that you end with simple exercises conforming to the spirit of your profession and to the principles which we should inculcate in our youth. These other exercises are often the cause of loss to both pupils and to religious, in that they inspire the former to sentiments above their capabilities and take the latter out of their own sphere, and make them men of the world instead of religious. (15 June 1854)

248. A young novice lacking in experience was imprudent enough to try to be different and began to make changes in his class. This caused him a lot of embarrassment and trouble and in a short time he was unable to maintain order in his class. (St. Paul Trois-Châteaux)

249. A young Brother, well taught and well able in classwork, was sent to replace a Brother who was as well taught as he was and had more experience. They carried out perfectly all that is laid down in the Guide in these circumstances. The Brother giving up the class told the other all about how he worked, his methods etc. The new Brother took it all in and

followed it so well that the pupils hardly knew that there had been a change, to such an extent that they were astonished at the continuity and continued to do their best as they had done before. (Char. 1884)

250. A Br Director of a boarding school took such sensible precautions that, on the eve of the distribution of prizes, which although a private function with no outsiders, is so much liked by the pupils, that the running of the house was not upset any more than normal. (Bret. 1854)

251. A Brother struck a child in his class. The mother, a pious woman with a lot of good sense, came to speak to him about it. "Brother, we can see that you are young. You strike my child, but that is not the way to bring up children! Did your mother beat you when you were young? You keep a grip on the children by encouraging them, and promising them rewards, and giving them some small penances." The Brother profited from this lesson and changed his conduct towards the children. The children, as a result, changed their attitude to him, and he became as loved and respected as he had been detested before. The same woman said to another Brother who had her children in class, "My oldest boy is quiet and soft, and you like him, you give him little rewards, while the youngest you ill-treat and punish because he is lively and turbulent. And yet, he is a much better character than the other." Later life justified the mother's judgment of their characters. (Montelimar)

252. A Br. Assistant wrote about a school he visited: "I have never seen a better run school than this. The Rule is observed down to the smallest point. The Brothers are happy and content. Everyone holds them in high regard, from the Bishop down to the humble coachman. Oh! How well everything would be if we always had pious directors!" (Hautef. 1854)

253 A Brother Director wrote to us in 1855: "I did not exaggerate in my last letter when I told you that some of our pupils are prodigies of wisdom, piety and charity. Here are a few examples: One, who eats at the house, usually (perhaps every day) gives some of his food to the poor. Others each day offer a flower to Jesus or Mary, by practising exact obedience, or keeping a strict silence, or in often raising their hearts to God, behaving well in class, paying close attention to the lesson, doing everything in union with Jesus and Mary, etc. All of this helps to assuage the trouble and misery we come across in carrying out our work.

254. A child who was a pupil at the school at M. was remarkable for his piety and devotion to Our Lady. He had made a little oratory to her in a hole in a tree, and while he was looking after the flock, he went there to say his rosary. He was noticed staying a long time in Our Lady's chapel in the church, to such a degree that often he was nearly locked in at night! (1855)

255. A priest said to a Brother: "We have the Brothers of CH especially to run a class for adults. It is not doing well, it is getting smaller, and that is not surprising, because we see that when the children have been to the Marist Brothers' school, they do not need to come back later to the adult class." (Drome 1855)

256. At Anduze (Gard) the son of a Protestant minister, who was a justice of the peace in the canton, brought a young boy from Savoy, nine years old, to ask them to prepare the boy for his First Communion. The boy was working for his father but, since he was a Catholic, he felt it would be against his conscience not to have him instructed in his religion. The Brothers there had 24 Protestant children in their classes, and more came every day. (1855)

257. The director of a small school said in a letter: "The Brother in the Infants Class teaches well and is a good Brother, very pious, doing everything he can for the good of the children. And yet, strangely enough, the children do not want to go to his class, even though he does not ill treat them, and he does all he can to attract them! The little ones feel that he is too big, and they are afraid of him! As for the little Brother, an excellent boy, with good judgment, plenty of know-how, and very open. I use him in both the upper class and the lower one. He teaches well, and the children like him, especially the little ones. When some of the mothers asked their children which Brother they wanted to teach them, they answered quite naively: "We want to go into the class of the 'péquelet' - the little fellow!" (1855)

258. A Brother Director wrote: "One method I had which helped me to succeed in my teaching. This was to make sure that piety had a prime place among the children, that they loved God. I tried to make them pray as they should in the church and in school. I understood that where the fear of God reigns, the result is good - where God is served, sin is banished. I did not like the children to start with, but they became dear to me when

I saw them praying with attention and generosity. They are exact in school and learn their lessons better. This influences the conduct of the Brothers also, and they have adopted the same method of making the children like school. I pray every day that God will make us realize more and more that true, solid happiness is to be found only in serving him. " (1856)

259. (This is a repetition of 258)

260. A Br. Director wrote to the Prefect, without letting his superiors know and, although the Brother was well enough educated, the letter was so poorly written and contained so many mistakes that the Prefect threatened to have the Brother dismissed from his post. The parish priest of the place sent us a copy and said that the letter was being passed around the area, to the joy of the teacher who had been ousted by the Brothers, and that this sad matter was paralysing his efforts for the good of the school. This good priest had recently sent us a letter giving an excellent testimonial to the Brother. God blesses.... and punishes.

261. A Br. Director wrote to us: "I asked the Mayor if he wished us to put on a play for the end of the year. He said no, that the shorter the better for the distribution of prizes.

262. A father said to the Director of a boarding school where his son's conduct and progress had gone from bad to worse: "I would rather have been given the corpse of my son than to have him sent back to me like that. I have only the one son, and I thought I was safeguarding his innocence by putting him in your school. Look at how sad I am now!"

263. A priest said to a Br. Visitor: "I am saddened to see that since we have your Brothers, the children do not know their catechism any better than before. However, all the people wanted it, and expected that the religious instruction given by religious would be much better. I know that your Brothers take a lot of trouble, but the interest I have in your Institute makes me bring to your notice everything that can cause trouble and rightly cause the ecclesiastics and the inhabitants of this place to be unhappy with the situation." (1856)

264. Two Brothers teaching in the same school were in the baker's. The baker had his children at the school, and said to them, "I don't know

if the Brother teaching the children speaks familiarly to the children (addresses them as 'tu') but when he comes to our place, the children call him 'tu!'" One of these Brothers told me this. When one fails in observing the Rule, one is punished and humiliated! (1864)

265. At Fleurus, all the children who had gone to a school run by the old teacher there knew their catechism perfectly, even those who could not yet read. This is why the parents made sure they went to him for an hour or so every day, even when they were attending the newly-opened Brothers' school. (1856)

266. A Br. Director learned that a teacher had come to set up a school in the commune. He made out a list of all the pupils in the Brothers' school and placed it in front of a statue of Our Lady, along with a letter asking her to keep all those she wanted in the school. However, one left the top class because the teacher was giving lessons to his older brother, and three left the lowest class. But hardly a month passed before the parents brought these children back and begged the Brothers to re-admit them, because they were not happy with the teacher. At first the Brother put difficulties in their way, and finally obliged them to get a letter of admission from the Mayor. They were only too happy to do this to get their children back to the Brothers. It was on account of this that the Municipal Council voted the funds needed to set up another class and to pay for a fourth Brother. (1856). - Pray, and get others to pray, is an infallible means of success. To succeed in our work, teach well and observe the Rule.

267. A good priest said to the Brothers: "In order to succeed, a Brother should have three-quarters religious spirit, and one-quarter other talents."

268. A good Br. Director told his pupils: "Saturday is the day when the Rosary is said, but it is Our Lady who makes it, according to the modesty, the attention and the devotion of each of you while we say it." (1857)

269. A Brother got his pupils to behave well in church by praising those who behaved well when they returned to school.

270. A parish priest wrote to ask us to stop the adult class and the music class, because they caused serious inconvenience and were the

occasion of scandalous divisions in the parish. (1858)

271. The Director of a school in a parish of some 900 inhabitants, wrote to us in August 1857: "We still have 80 pupils in our class, more than we expected, since the parish priest thought that we would have no more than a dozen in the top class during the summer when the school would be at its best. But we had 40! *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*. One of the causes of the small number during summer in our schools, in my opinion, is the slackening off of zeal among the Brothers. When the top pupils leave, there is a tendency to make two classes into one, and for the Brothers taking turns to teach this new class. Even the Director sometimes takes a rest! The success of the school then depends on two or three or, rather, on no one in particular. Each one follows his own method, one aims at being feared by the pupils, another at being loved. The pupils are neglected, they become bored and the parents take them away on the slightest pretext. When they come back, it is the same story. People say, the Brothers are having a good time. But they are doing nothing or almost nothing to encourage the children to come to school in the first days and November and even December come by and still some of the pupils have not returned. The second year I was here, I had only one pupil for the first whole week in October. Instead of putting him in the lowest class, for he was not well educated, I neglected no means to give him a love for school. I taught him all day, without cutting any lesson short. He said the rosary and the prayers, and I was the only one there to answer. God blessed, and always blesses, the constancy which he gave me. The next year, I had 15 pupils in the top class at the start of October, although the pupils did not normally come back during this month because of the harvest and the fruit picking. How I wish that all the Brothers would understand the importance of each man doing his work constantly, without cutting it short, even when he has only two or three pupils. How many other Directors have had the same experience!

272. A Br. Prefect spent a whole year without ever giving a single penance to any pupil, without even putting them in detention once. He said, "I am always the first in the room. I never get out of my chair. I never say a word or use the signal without a real need, and that is very rare." (1857 St. P. Apoll.)

273. The father of a boarder wrote to the Br. Director to say that he did not want his boy to follow any lessons in drawing, as he did not see

any need for it either now or for the future.

274. A Brother (Aidan), passing through a little town (La Clayette) which was about to have a Brothers' school, noticed that the children looked at him and came to him with an expression of affection and of confidence that seemed to say: "We are made for one another, the Brothers to teach and we to go to school." One tiny boy (de Ronck) was standing at the door of his house when the Brothers passed on their way to church, and he said to them in a sad tone of voice, "I am too young to go to school," showing the desire he had to go. Another child in his mother's arms saw a Brother (Francis) coming along the same road, and looked at him fixedly. The mother understood what he was thinking and said, "When you are bigger, you will go to school also." When you meet the children while travelling, in towns, in the country, on public transport, you can see that there is a certain attraction, an instinct which draws them to the Brothers. When you see how eagerly these children go to school, sometimes from far enough away, and behave themselves all day, in spite of their natural exuberance and their need for movement, we are encouraged to give them every care and to put up with the troubles which they can give us in teaching them.. "Who knows whether each of our Brothers has a St. Aloysius, a Stanislas, a Berchmans, in his class?"

Vocation

275. An unfortunate father turned up one day at the parlour in the Hermitage and asked to see his son, who was in the noviciate. The poor man was in a pitiable state, barefoot, and his clothes in tatters, even though it was the middle of winter. The Br. Assistant who went to see him, and who told us of this, saw the state he was in and was touched with compassion, and let him know how affected he was by his sorry state, above all when he heard that the poor man had eaten nothing all day, and he began to do something to help him. But the man said to him: "Brother, do not be sorry for me. I have got no more than I deserve. I used to be a Brother, but I threw away my vocation!"

276. A certain Brother left the Society. Some time later, he was obliged to flee from the place where he was teaching in order to escape the police who were after him. He joined the army and shortly after, he died
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hospital.

277. A Brother wrote to his parents: "If Napoleon offered me his throne, I would not exchange it for my soutane."

278. A Brother left the Congregation, although the Superior had made every endeavour to persuade him not to abandon his vocation, and finally gave his consent only to avoid exasperating the poor Brother. Once back in the world, he became more depressed than ever; he asked to be re-admitted, he begged, he made all sorts of promises. Finally he was re-admitted, came back and made a new noviciate, lasted a short time in a post given him, and fell prey to his old illness. He wanted to leave again, and he had to be let go. He is no happier than he was the first time. He tries everything, and begs the Superiors to help him to get into an educational establishment. With no success in this project, he decides to go into a new community. They receive him, then he leaves them and goes to another. Once more he is received, and later leaves. He goes to another teaching Congregation and is admitted. Finally he writes to his first Superior that he is having neither rest or peace, and that it is imperative that he return to his first vocation, and come back to community, that the parish priest has told him that this is the best thing for him. So he begs to be re-admitted again, and promises that he has learned his lesson. He begs for readmission, and it is not granted. (1858)

279. A Brother receives a legacy, leaves the Society, marries, separates from his wife, runs into business trouble and, in his final illness, depends on charity. A priest had told him this would happen when he saw him eating between meals when he was a Brother!

280. Another who had left came back a few days later to ask for help because he was dying of hunger. He married, and a week later he was dead! Would he not have been happier to die as a Brother in vows? (1821)

281. A professed Brother left the Society after asking for a dispensation from his vows, which was granted with difficulty. He married in July 1853 and died five months later.

282. A Brother in temporary vows left to become a priest, to the chagrin

of Fr. Cholleton. He died after only two or three years of ministry. (1853)

283. A young Brother, 15 years old, wrote to his parents, who were asking him to abandon his vocation: "If you had sent me a rope to hang myself with, you would have caused me less pain than you do by trying to bring me back and make me lose my vocation". A good example of strength of soul and heroic firmness in a child. He wrote the above without any prompting.

284. A Brother leaves the Society and meets with much misfortune and is snubbed by those who knew him. He even ends up in prison for a time. His wife turns against him and persecutes him, and they end up separated. He comes to ask our help against calumnies which are circulating. "Oh, if only I could come back! I am sure I would be a good Brother, that everyone would be pleased with me. I have suffered so much!" 1854

285. An ex-Brother writes: "People think that I am quite happy in the world. Oh, when I was with you, you were my father, I was happy. Now a thousand troubles overwhelm me because I have left my father's house! Alas! No more happiness on earth! No more salvation to hope for! Living in a house which is like Hell, bringing other unhappy beings into this world! No, it is not possible to exist like this. Only a tragic end will deliver me from all this." (1854)

286. A Brother left the Society and later wrote: "Now I recognize how mistaken I was when I had doubts about the Superiors and the Rule, and criticized them. I see now how wise and to our advantage are all the things that were laid down and prescribed." (1854)

287. A professed Brother left the Society in order, he said, to help his parents. Some time later he wrote a heartbreaking letter: "Have pity on me! I am without bread, without money, without a place to lay my head, and I do not know what will become of me." (1854)

288. After leaving the Society, a Brother wrote: "When I think of the lovely feast days at the Hermitage, of all the religious symbols displayed there, of the touching solemnities, the exercises of piety, the ceremonies at the end of the annual retreat, and realize that now, by leaving, I have deprived myself of all this, I find myself in a terrifying void, in the depth of desolation."

289. A Brother liked to write poetry, and did it rather well. His Superior was not unaware of the inconveniences and dangers such a hobby held for a religious educator, and ordered him to stop, forbidding him absolutely to continue this kind of work. He went so far as to threaten him with expulsion if he insisted on continuing. The poor Brother preferred to give up his vocation rather than his poetry. But alas! He also had the sad experience of what normally happens to those who lose their vocation and abandon the holy state to which God has called them, and go on to satisfy their passions and their wayward will. You could have said that all he had in the way of talent, means of success, good qualities - all were attached to his holy Habit and his profession. "For hardly had he left his religious state than he degenerated totally, and instead of having the same success as he had formerly in his work as a teacher, he reached the point when he was turned down by the Academy because of his bad conduct and was obliged to flee to a distant place, after leaving deep rifts in the commune where he worked, forced the parish priest to be changed, and ruined himself. It was noted that after he left religious life, he never wrote another line of poetry." (told us by Fr. de la Lande)

290. On a Brother leaving unexpectedly, a Br. Director wrote to us: "I don't know to what to attribute this precipitous departure, unless it was his recent visit to his family. During that time he saw the world with its vanities, its honours, its pleasures, and it would seem that he got some dangerous impressions which had results which were sad and fatal to his vocation. Indeed, since he came back from that unfortunate visit, he had never been the same. He no longer had any taste for classwork, nor for the exercises of piety, and his moral sickness grew steadily worse. What a difference in one I was so happy with last year!" (1854)

291. A Brother had left the Institute, and while he was in the barracks at Orleans, he wrote to his father: "I left the Institute because, for a long time, I had been depressed in it. But why was I depressed? It is because I allowed myself to consider and examine life in the world. The world is a seductive deceiver for a young man. I was always wanting to look back and little by little I let myself be caught, like an inexperienced little bird which goes too far and ends up in the hunter's net. If I still wore the soutane, knowing what I do now, I would never take it off. I have already suffered from hard times, I suffer the cold in the night, and the drill in the morning. The other day, some of my bread was stolen and I did not have

the 5 or 6 sous I needed to buy more – I had perforce to fast!”

292. An ex-Brother wrote to us from Daya, in the province of Oran in Africa: “It is such a long time since I had the misfortune to leave you. I have started this letter a hundred times, but did not have the courage to finish it. If only I had the happiness of hoping to get some of the good advice that your paternal goodness lavished on me when I was a happy child in the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary! This lovely name of “Brother” was my joy and my glory, and your counsels, so wise, so precious, made me really happy, while today the thought of my apostasy leaves me ashamed and desperate. When I left the Brothers, I was acting without thinking, stupidly, without knowing what I was doing. Alas! I was bored with my happy state! The glory of being a religious, a child of Mary, was too beautiful, and I was not wise enough for such a noble vocation! I was ungrateful to the divine Master who had poured such benefits on me. Tepidity made itself felt in all I did and in all my exercises of piety. It brought me to destruction! Oh, now I understand the greatness and the importance of a vocation! Once I was happy, because I was where the Lord had placed me. Today I live cast down and dejected, like a fish out of water. It is not the bodily pains I endure in Africa that make me speak so. Bodily sufferings are nothing. I put up with them in expiation of the fault which has poisoned my life. May the good Lord grant me the grace to accept them as a real penance! Dear Rev. Brother, I have the happiness of never falling into the temptations I see daily before my eyes. It is the memory of the good advice and the holy lessons I had in the Institute that has kept me going. May our Good Mother protect me, even though I abandoned her - she has never allowed anyone who has lived in her dear Society to go under in such a shipwreck. May her motherly goodness be blessed! May she continue to look after her poor Prodigal Son!

293. Some time ago, when I was at St. Etienne, I had the pleasure of climbing up a few times to the mountain where we find the chapel of the Franciscan Friars. From there, I dreamt of Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, and went back there in spirit. I saw all the good Brothers celebrating the feasts of Our Lady. I saw them also (it was during the retreat) at the moving ceremony of the vows. And then my betrayal seemed to me to be more shameful than ever. I saw the place I had so often occupied in this venerated and dear sanctuary, deserted, or occupied by another. This memory made me weep bitterly. I had the advantage of having kept my Office Book, my rosary and my scapular. Along with my New Testament,

these are the only pious objects which remain with me. I am happy to be able still to honour Mary by saying her Office and her Rosary - I always do this in union with the Brothers and, if possible, at the same time. May the Lord be good enough to grant me some day the grace of once more being numbered among his faithful and fervent servants! I no longer have the honour of being a religious in the body, but I am more and more in the spirit. My dear Rev. Brother, be good enough to have me prayed for. I pray for you as much as I can. (2 March 1856)

294. A Brother wrote: "If I have lost my vocation, it is simply because I hid myself, I did not disclose the truth, or disclosed only half of it. (1856)

295. A Brother seemed to be heading towards returning to the world, and I asked him: "When you were in the noviciate, what did you think of your vocation?"

- I would not have left it for anything in the world.
- And now, look at what is bringing you to abandon it.
- I count it as nothing.
- You have allowed it to be spoiled. But what has changed? The good God is always the same; the religious life is the same; the eternal truths are the same.
- It's because I have been bored for a long time.
- And you said nothing to me about it?
- No, unfortunately, and I made a bad mistake. But one can be saved in the world by doing one's duty.
- Yes, but what is a man's duty? Is it not to do what God wants? And if God wants you to be a religious, and you go back into the world, are you doing your duty? If one of your pupils, instead of staying in class, studying his lessons and doing the work you have given him, goes out to work in the garden or some other thing, is he doing his duty? Would you be happy with him? Do you really think that you are free to change your vocation, your destination in life, as you think fit?
- All right, I will tell you my reasons and will follow your advice. (1856)

296. A Br. Director wrote about his brother: "While he was still young, this poor fellow drank deep of the cup of misfortune, and that was because he was deaf to the voice of God, who called him to the religious life, which others have abandoned in their folly after tasting its advantages! May Jesus and Mary preserve us from their pitiable fate, by making us cher-

ish humility, simplicity and modesty as befits good and true Little Brothers of Mary! (1856)

297. A good Brother once said to me, "I have always noticed that those who are about to abandon their vocation begin by attacking and criticizing the Superiors." I answered, "Yes, that is how the heretics have behaved towards the Church and her Pastors."

298. An old Brother left the Institute quite suddenly, on the pretext that only the north was suitable for his temperament, that he would be all right there, and that the Superior would not let him go back there. Once he left, instead of going back there, he went into one of the most smoky and dirty towns of the department of the Loire. He was not even able to teach in class. Now he gives private lessons in people's houses. Look at the strength and courage he must show in order to gain a living! (1857)

299. A Brother wanted to leave the Institute and asked for a dispensation from his vows, on the pretext that he was out of sympathy with the Superiors and that he had not enough independence. Once he received it, he changed his mind and asked to be allowed to stay. This was granted on condition that he would submit entirely to living according to the Rule and the spirit of the Institute, and that he would accept the tasks given to him and would try to carry them out well. It was then proposed that he undertake the direction of some school, the choice being left up to him. He refused on the grounds that he did not like teaching and that he did not want any other employment either in which he did not feel happy. The Superior did not pander to his capriciousness, so he left and got a job in business. Hardly three months passed when he became bored with this and asked the Inspector for a school, saying that he did not want to remain in a position where he was under two employees who were younger than him and who treated him like a schoolboy. The Inspector himself told this to the Brothers, and added that he had been very displeased with the conduct, the feelings and the behaviour of the ex-Brother whom he knew had been a member of our Congregation. This man had found and accepted in the world what he would not accept or put up with in religious life. (1856)

300. A Brother left the de la Salle Brothers after twelve years, during which he had been a Director. He opened a private school in a commune

and had a large number of pupils. His knowledge, his good behaviour, his modesty in church gained for him the esteem and confidence of the people, to such a degree that the town teacher came and worked as his assistant. However, they did not stay together long, and the two schools separated again. One day the ex-Brother told his class there would be no school the next day. On the following day, they came back as usual and were surprised to find the door locked and no one answering their knock. They called some of the neighbours, and some of them went in through a window to see if the teacher was in the house. What a terrifying sight they found! He was hanged in the corridor next to the classroom, and his face had already blackened. Fear, terror, despondency, reigned in the village. What had caused this terrible thing! No one knows. It had been noticed that the poor man had been sad, downhearted, and going around in a dream for several days. Who would have said that he would meet such a tragic end when he abandoned his religious state! (Told us by Br. Bt. who was a witness.)

301. A Brother had left and then asked to be re-admitted, adding: "I assure you I have had a good lesson, and I hope to do better in the future by letting myself be guided by my superiors without seeking advice from laypeople, for they are the ones who caused me to lose my vocation. I have sad experience of what you had told me." (1856)

302. A Brother had left the Congregation on the pretext of helping his family. He went to Paris and took a job in a wine merchant's, which went bankrupt shortly afterwards and caused him considerable loss. A lawyer who took an interest in the poor man's fate, asked for charity and compassion from the Superior of the Institute that the unfortunate man had abandoned, leaving enormous debts behind him. In the end, he got employment working for an iron merchant. What a difference from his former state! He had been Headmaster, with eight or nine Brothers working under him, and a proportionate number of pupils, both boarding and day! Out of the Institute, he had to take whatever post he could, and his future is uncertain. (1856)

303. The world, the study of Latin, and the Trappist life (the contemplative life) – these are three great temptations for the Brothers.

304. I would not abandon my religious Habit even if I knew I would be as well off as any wicked rich man in the world, and had the hope of being saved. But how many are deceived by the desire for change and

the thought of being better off elsewhere! (Imitation of Christ) A young Brother thought he would have a good position on leaving the Institute, but ended up working as a labourer following his father from house to house to repair walls. (1856) Another ended up in the coal mines. (1856)

305. A professed Brother left the Institute quite suddenly on the pretext of helping his father. Some time later, the father wrote to us to ask us to continue sending him some clothes as we had already done, since he had no help at all from his son since he left us and had not even sent his father any news of how he was. (1857)

306. A young Brother wrote to his parents: "If they wanted to make me lord of the whole parish, I would not give even half of my kitchen apron." And another wrote: "If they offered me the empire of the universe, I would not abandon my vocation."

307. After about fifteen months in the Institute, a Brother wanted to go to the Trappists. But instead of finding peace and happiness there, he was more and more tormented by temptations. At last the Father Abbot, seeing the state he was in, advised him to return to his first vocation. So he came back and asked humbly and earnestly to be re-admitted, saying that whatever punishment he was given, he would accept it, even if it lasted for ten years, provided he was in the Institute. (1856)

308. One day a Brother asked a man who had left the Institute whether, since he left, he had realized all the hopes and ambitions he had. The other replied: "Not one! When I left the Institute, I promised myself this and that, and nothing has succeeded."

309. A postulant was asked what he would do if the devil came to tempt him to abandon his vocation. His answer was; "I would tell him he had come too late!" (1856)

310. A professed Brother came one day to the Superior to tell him he was determined to leave. The Superior persuaded him to stay and, three months later, God took him away! Would his death have been so peaceful if he had abandoned his vocation? Would he have even thought of leaving if he had known he would die in three months?

311. A Brother consulted a Jesuit on his great desire to enter the

Trappists, a desire his Superiors did not approve of. The Jesuit's advice was: "Pray to God, and make everything known to your Superior. Be careful not to make any decision without his advice. It is to your Superior and not to you that God will make his will known. So you run no risks in submitting to him. If you are truly called to be a Trappist, God will work a miracle to ensure that your Superior gives his consent. Anyhow, you are doing well in your present Congregation, and since you have been called to this one first, it is hardly likely that God wants you to change. If you keep your Rule carefully, you will not lack for mortification." (1856)

312. A young Brother who had been strongly tempted to abandon his vocation wrote to us a few days after being changed to another house. "My troubles have not left me, but with the prayer and perfect regularity that reigns in this house, it is easy for me to face up to them. To dominate them and my passions, it is enough to look at my excellent Br. Director. What piety I see there! What exactness! Always on time to the minute! What caused me the most trouble in my previous house was the lack of regularity, for nothing was ever done at the right time. It is impossible for a young Brother to remain faithful in such a position." Another one wrote: "Temptations against one's vocation disappear where the Rule is well observed." Piety and regularity are the lungs of the religious life, and a good spirit is the air. What happens to a man who has unhealthy lungs, or has no air to breathe? He is lost unless a prompt remedy is offered him.

313. An ex-Brother met another who had just left the Congregation, and said to him: "Remember the reproaches you piled on me at such and such a place on the matter of my leaving, and look at you now! But know that your troubles are only starting. You will take a wife. It is possible that you will be happy for the first year. But if what happened to me happens to you, I am sorry for you." In fact, this poor man had had to separate from his wife, who had given him so much trouble and disagreement, and had run up considerable debts by her infidelities and her loose living and, what is more, she continued this style of life after they separated. (1857)

314. A young Brother wrote: "I pray to God to allow me to die rather than to send me back into the world." (1857)

315. A postulant was returning home, because he could not get used to the noviciate. He had already gone a number of miles, and was only a couple of miles away from his home, when he saw coming towards

him a public service coach going in the opposite direction from him. Without realizing what he was doing, he asked if there was a place for him on it. The driver said yes, and the postulant got into the coach almost as though by instinct and without realizing it. So he came back to the noviciate, and became an excellent Brother (told by himself.)

316. A ex-Brother wrote to us: "My position has not changed. I had some sickness which left me hypochondriac, depressed and miserable. I was poorly looked after. Apart from that, people said to me every day: "Hard luck, you miserable defrocked religious!" It is terrible, it makes me despair! I have lost this holy and sublime vocation. I know I was made for religious life and not for the world, which I abhor with all my heart. I know now why I am so unhappy. It is because heaven and hell are in league against me. A curse on those directors who gave my relaxation full rein, who encouraged me by their example! A curse on those houses where the Rule was not observed, where I went on the wrong road! Oh my dear Br. Superior, if you can help me to get out of this hell, I will make good use of your kindness! My selfishness made me hide my sad fate and my terrible position, but misfortune has chased it from my heart, which is so distressed with sorrow and full of remorse. But you are still my Father in Jesus Christ, the one who has never turned his back on me, you whom I have so thoughtlessly abandoned. In the name of the Gospel I beg you to do something to lessen my despair and the horrors of my hell. Pray, oh pray, for this prodigal, who wandered from you. Let your letter come and console me!" (1857)

317. A Brother had been asking for a long time to leave the Institute on the grounds that he felt called to the priesthood. Then he announced that he had written to his parents to send him all that he would need to join the army, and that he was determined to leave as soon as he received it! How many successive vocations, all ill-thought out! Happily, the Brother changed his mind and admitted his stupidity. (1857)

318. In spite of all the representations of his superior and of the parish priest, a Brother left the Institute to study Latin. Once he arrived home, the protection he had been promised did not materialize and, to add to his misfortune, he became afflicted by a disease of the eyes and the doctors told him he could not continue his studies without the risk of going blind. This in spite of the fact that while he was with us, he never had any trouble with his eyes. (1856)