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The Marist Notebooks aim to disseminate documents and research on the origins, spirituality, development and expansion of the Marist Institute in the world. It addresses studies on the Society of Mary, historical personalities and themes that characterize the apostolic mission of the Marist Brothers. The production of the content is a collaborative work made by several authors. It is printed in four languages: Spanish, French, English and Portuguese.

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André Lanfrey
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EDITORIAL

The patrimony Commission responsible for producing the Marist Notebooks having come to the end of its mandate, and the new team not having commenced work, it seemed useful to us to compose a sort of transitional issue of Marist Notebooks, so as not to interrupt the regular appearance of one per year.

Readers will observe that this edition is essentially devoted to Lavalla. This is a rather daunting subject because every Marist, during his formation, has learned about this cradle of the Institute; many writings have been published on the subject, and a great number of Brothers and Lay Marists have even visited the place.

To avoid repeating things already known, we saw two possible ways: to draw up a collection of completed works, or to try a different approach.

We have chosen the second course by working in some way on the periphery of Marist history. So we recall Lavalla and its region before the arrival of Champagnat, then the life of the community in its more physical aspects; and finally the problematic passage from Lavalla to l'Hermitage. Br Louis Vibert, of the current community at Lavalla, is the link between the origins and today.

In these different articles, we make use in a more or less systematic way of the financial documents and various registers of taking of the habit and professions left by Fr Champagnat and made very accessible by the publication in 2011 of *Origines des Frères Maristes* by Br Paul Sester.

An article of Br Jean Roche on the portraits of Fr Champagnat flows naturally from *Marist Notebooks* N° 29.

I. THE TROUBLES OF THE REVOLUTION AND THOSE OF THE EMPIRE



André Lanfrey
fms

1. THE AREA OF SAINT CHAMOND AT THE END OF THE OLD RÉGIME AND UNDER THE REVOLUTION

Father Champagnat was ordained to the priesthood in the latter part of July of 1816 and assigned to the village of Lavalla located on the side of Mont Pilat on a hillside overlooking the Gier valley and the city of Saint Chamond near Saint Étienne. On his arrival in August he was entering an area that had undergone major upheavals. Although relatively old, those of the revolution of 1789-1799 had left a deep impression. The invasion of foreign troops in 1814 and 1815 had left more recent traces of a different kind.

1.1. Saint Chamond and its territory¹

From 1768 to the Revolution, Jean-Jacques Gallet de Montdragon ruled over the marquisate of Saint Chamond

that included the town, Izieux, Saint Julien and Saint Martin, as well as the lordship of Thoil-Lavalla which extended to Le Bessat as well as to Doizieu, which was another valley on the side of the Mont Pilat mountain range. Although the Revolution had put an end to these feudal divisions, the people of Saint Chamond considered the communes of Lavalla and Doizieu as their territory, giving them the right to make use of their resources to satisfy their own personal needs. In a word, the people, the new rulers, considered themselves heirs of the ancient prerogatives that formerly belonged only to the nobility.

1.2. The predominance of industry – a relatively poor agricultural economy

At the beginning of the Revolution, Saint Chamond had a population of 9,125 inhabitants, Doizieu of 1,625, and Lavalla of 1,675. Economic ven-

¹ The basic source is Lucien Parizot's "*La Révolution l'oeil nu. L'exemple du Lyonnais vécu Saint Chamond et en Jarez*", Published by Val Jaris, Saint Chamond, 1987. Although arriving at conclusions hastily at times, the work does provide a detailed description of this specific area.

tures were numerous. First was the production of nails, principally by the Neyrand Brothers, who later would become Champagnat's benefactors. Coal was readily available in many areas, and although coal mining was unorganized, it produced several thousand tons of coal every year. The manufacture of ribbon was widespread both in the city and throughout the countryside. Finally, in a dozen mills, the silk industry flourished.

Less favoured was the rural economy: the soil was poor and subject to periods of drought. Both Lavalla and Doizieu had land on very steep slopes. Very little wheat could be produced but sufficient quantities of rye for the needs of the local population and the markets. Fodder was in ample supply in the upper basin of the Gier and large forests of conifers provided potential wealth, particularly at Lavalla, where the forest belonged to the commune. However, systematically plundered, it ultimately produced very little. The making of nails, ribbon and wooden articles were secondary sources of revenue for the rural inhabitants of Lavalla and Doizieu.

1.3. Religious parameters

On the eve of the Revolution, Saint Chamond was a small religious centre made up of three parishes:

- Saint Ennemond, where Julien Dervieux, future benefactor of Champagnat, was curate.
- Notre Dame, administered by the parish priest Antoine Flachat (1725-1803), three curates and a group of four visiting priests, (*prêtres habitués*)²
- Saint Pierre, with Antoine Chaland as parish priest (1732-1804), three curates and a society of 7 visiting priests.

As for men and women religious:

- Capuchins: 6 priests and 9 brothers
- Ursulines: 34 women religious
- Order of Minims: 4 friars, and a collegiate church - Saint John the Baptist

The *Hôtel-Dieu* for the needy was managed by a board of 10, and served by 8 to 10 "Sisters of Saint Joseph"³. "*La Charité*", founded in 1764 by parish priest Flachat, gathered in the poor, the elderly and children ranging in age from 8 to 15. The girls would work with silk while boys made nails under the watchful eyes of ten or so "Sisters of Saint Joseph".

While the "*little schools for the poor*" appear to have stagnated, the Ursulines, the visiting priests, and the Sisters of Saint Joseph made a significant educational and charitable contribution at a time when catechism, and therefore reading skills, were widespread but distributed unevenly or in structures not called schools.

² The visiting priests, "*les prêtres habitués*" were originally from the parish and carried out charitable, cultural or teaching activities under the authority of the parish priest

³ These were not members of a religious congregation but were linked to the hospital as an association of pious unmarried women

Finally, there were the fraternities: the makers of ribbons and soft furnishings, the millers, were fraternities of trades with a loose religious connection. On the other hand, “*the Penitents*” of the banner of the parish of Saint Pierre, and “*the Penitents*” of the Blessed Sacrament from the parish of Notre Dame were confraternities whose devotions were far more demanding. Both had their own chapels that would later serve as assembly and meeting halls during the Revolution.

This entire religious, social and cultural network would be severely shaken by the Revolution; however, it would be quickly reestablished.

1.4. A socio-economic overview

From a socio-economic point of view, the payment of “*la taille*”, which was a direct system of taxation under the *Ancient Régime*, was a reliable indicator of conditions that existed at the time. Before the Revolution, in Saint Chamond, of the 1,251 households in the commune, 43 belonged to the privileged class and therefore paid no direct taxes; 531 households were subject to direct taxes, while 627 were exempt from taxation because of their poverty level. In Doizieu, located near Lavalla⁴, in 1772, 5% of the households belonged to the privileged class, 20% were subject to taxation, and 50% were deemed to be too poor to be

taxed. A similar distribution must have existed in Lavalla.

The Revolution would do little to alter the socio-economic levels of the people as reflected by the tax system. What is evident, however, is that there existed in Saint Chamond an upper and a lower middle class, as well as a large urban working class from which the Revolution would recruit its zealots. Life for the poor living in rural areas appears to have been less precarious, and rich people were rare. This would be an important element in the city-country conflict during the Revolution: Saint Chamond would be dominated by Jacobins while rural areas, such as the area around Lavalla, would provide fertile ground for the resistance.

1.5. A local chronology of the revolution

It is not necessary to be overly concerned with a detailed account of events of the Revolution, for if its effects were deeply felt nearly everywhere in France, only certain events have importance.

Beginning in 1788, preparations were being made to convene the Estates-General and lists of grievances⁵ were being drawn up in an effort to establish reform of the kingdom. The year 1789 was particularly rich in events: political revolution in Versailles during the month of June, the transformation of the Es-

⁴ “*La Révolution l’oeil nu. L’exemple du Lyonnais vécu Saint Chamond et en Jarez*”, by Lucien Parizot, Saint Chamond, 1987, p.22

⁵ The clergy, the nobility and the Third-Estate each drew up their separate lists of desired reforms.

tates-General into the Constitutional National Assembly, and the Storming of the Bastille in Paris on July 14th.

This last event caused the “*Grande Peur*”, throughout much of France: brigands would come to massacre the people. Warning bells were sounded, volunteers were assembled in order to provide some kind of defense; many went into hiding. Ultimately, people came to realize that it was only a rumor. On July 28th, Saint Chamond was one of the epicentres of the Great Fear and Lavalla felt its ripple effects. From that moment on, semi-anarchy reigned and the new authorities could scarcely restrain it, in spite of the setting up in each of the communes of popular militias: the National Guard. In the Mont Pilat area, the forests of Lavalla and Chartreux that had been nationalized were systematically plundered.

Because the harvest of 1789 had been so poor, Saint Chamond experienced a lack of bread and shortage continued until 1791. Famine and the fear of starvation would be fundamental and permanent results of the Revolution. The popular classes were ready to rise in support of anyone who promised bread or pointed to those responsible for the shortage.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy adopted on July 12, 1790, created trouble for it had been adopted without Rome’s being consulted. Most priests in Saint Chamond took the oath of loyalty with or without conditions. However when the Pope condemned the Civil Constitution on March 10th 1791, many of

them withdrew their original commitment. Clergy and people were divided: some for the Constitutional Church and others for the Church *réfractaire*.

With the declaration of war in April of 1792 came the need to recruit an army; however, no one wanted to join. The problem of recruits resisting military service began as early as 1793 and would continue until the Empire in 1814. Particularly noticeable for their lack of compliance were those living in the area of Lavalla, and it became a haven for deserters. The density of its forests, its rough terrain and the sympathy of local inhabitants prevented any real repression.

Although King Louis XVI was sent to the guillotine on January 21, 1793, it was from May to June of 1793 that the Revolution turned into tragedy. In Paris, on June 2nd, Jacobin extremists succeeded in overthrowing the moderate Girondins, or Federalists. However, as early as May 29th in Lyon, the Jacobins of Chalier were overcome by the moderates and Lyon gradually moved into open revolt against Paris. Saint Étienne specialized in the manufacture of arms. Wishing to secure the support of the surrounding region and obtain the necessary arms from Saint Etienne, centre of the armaments industry, the citizens of Lyon sent troops to capture Saint Chamond where they set up their own government. The Jacobins who had previously occupied the city withdrew to the forests of Mont Pilat. However, the Lyonnais were unable to maintain their position and the revolutionary armies concentrated on Lyon. The Con-

stituent Assembly sent as representative into the Loire valley, with full dictatorial power, a scoundrel named Javogues who terrorized the area and who, with the intent of besieging Lyon, imposed a draft for all men aged 18 to 35. The National Guards of Saint Chamond and neighboring communes were stationed at Saint-Genis-Laval quite satisfied, it seems, at the prospect of pillaging Lyon which surrendered at the beginning of October. There immediately followed an extended period of executions and massacres. Between November 27, 1793 and May 3, 1794, 1,684 executions took place.

Power was retaken by the extremists in Saint Chamond and the Jacobin Club was re-established. The tribunal and guillotine for revolutionary justice in the Loire valley was located in Montbrison which was the administrative capital of the department. However, people soon turned against that bloody form of politics with its requisitions. Furthermore, the law of maximum fixed prices operating between September of 1793 and December of 1794 did not encourage commerce, the more so since peasants were paid in paper money that was greatly devalued. This resulted in people buying and selling on the black market.

Beginning in November of 1793, repression and de-Christianization went hand in hand promoted by the two executioners of Lyon, Fouché and Collot d'Herbois. Even priests who supported the government were forced to submit their letters of obedience. Churches were stripped of bells and church or-

naments. Priests resisting control or authority, who until that time had been generally ignored, had to go into hiding and celebrate the Sacraments in various hidden locations. For the government in Saint Chamond, it was at Lavalla that the campaign met its strongest opposition. Hatred for Saint Chamond was at its peak but the local population of Lavalla lived in constant fear of expeditions of fanatics from the town.

The terror did not end with the fall and execution of Robespierre in July of 1794, (9 Thermidor). The parish priest of Lavalla, Jean Gaumont was arrested in August on Mont Pilat. He was sentenced to death and executed on September 2nd, 1794.

Nevertheless, the downfall of Robespierre broke the nerve of the Revolution. From then on, the best that the revolutionaries could hope for was to maintain their power by having their army pillage all of Europe in order to provide the resources that they needed. Within France itself, there was anarchy, with coups d'état either against the Jacobins, or against the Royalists who were raising their heads. From 1795 to 1796, a white terror raged in both Lyon and Saint Étienne against former Jacobins. Among them was Ducros, the cousin of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin's father. The coup d'état of Fructidor in September of 1797 re-ignited the furore against the clergy and the Royalists but was not felt in the area of Saint Chamond. As a matter of fact, a large part of France escaped the authority of a power that had been thoroughly discredited. Bonaparte's Coup

d'état of late 1799 (18 *Brumaire*), occurred in a France that had become tired of so many disorders.

With the Consulate (1800-1804) and the Empire (1804-1814), a sense of security and order returned in the state but conscription and despotism came to be regarded more and more as insupportable. The invasions of 1814 and 1815 brought with them new kinds of requisitions and troubles and a long occupation of France.

2. LAVALLA UNDER THE REVOLUTION AND THE EMPIRE

Memoirs of Jean-Louis Barge

Jean-Galley, a 19th century historian of the Saint Étienne area, made copies of two notebooks of memoirs of Jean-Louis Barge in March of 1887. They were given to him by the nephew of the former notary public of Lavalla, M. Thibaud⁶, and they give us a vivid and detailed account of the history of the village of Lavalla.

2.1. A somewhat limited author

Born in Lavalla on August 24th, 1762, J.L. Barge was the son of Pierre Barge who was a tailor. His mother, Antoinette Champalier, came from a

family of drapers in Lavalla⁷. At the time of his marriage on June 4th, 1787, Jean-Louis was also a draper. He married Anne Préher, daughter of the deceased notary public of Lavalla. The four witnesses to the marriage were tailors, makers of soft furnishings or drapers. Only one of them was not able to sign. Jean-Louis Barge, therefore, was not a peasant, but linked rather to the world of handcraft and textile commerce established in the village of Lavalla. The fact that he married the daughter of the notary public indicates that he enjoyed a certain level of education and a respectable situation. When he died at age 90 on January 8th, 1853, he was listed as a farmer and no longer lived in the village, but in the hamlet of "la Surchette", (today, Serchette) where he had some property. His death certificate sheds some light on how the manuscript came down to us, for one of the beneficiaries was Louis Thibaud, the notary public in Lavalla who, at the time, was 53 years of age. It was he who preserved the manuscript which was later made public by his nephew. Extending over 57 chapters, the work covers the years 1789 to 1815 and provides us with a mass of local events of those troubling times.

It would appear that M. Barge was aware of the fact that he had witnessed a significant part of history for he entitles his memoirs: "Notes on the

⁶ A copy is preserved in the library in Saint Étienne. The original seems to have disappeared.

⁷ The census taken in 1815 notes that there were four drapers bearing the name Champalier. They certainly must have been from the same family.

⁸ Which is perhaps the date ending the writing of the manuscript. The account does not go beyond the year 1814. One may wonder if part of the manuscript may not be missing.

major events that occurred in Lavalla from 1789 until the day January 1st, 1819”⁸ In 1816, at age 54, he had to give up official duties in order to record the events that he lived through, without hesitating to describe, a little naively, that he had been the main hero in them. So his memoirs have the disadvantage of addressing only those events in which he played a part and come to an end at about the time that Marcellin Champagnat, whom he never mentions, arrived in Lavalla. On the other hand, his account highlights the religious, social, economic and political realities of the territory where the young Champagnat was going to exercise his ministry. We can be sure that Barge and Champagnat knew one another but it is unlikely they had continuing relations.

We know from the author himself that prior to the Revolution he was in the military. As the historian Jean-Galley observes, he must have had some educational background for he knows how to write; he quotes La Fontaine and compares Robespierre to Cromwell and Mohammed. He tells his story with great amount of clarity. He no doubt must have benefited from having attended a little college or a presbytery school. While serving in the military around the year 1780, he was exposed to new ideas. Moreover, throughout his memoirs, he makes no apology for his perceived intellectual superiority and his ability to get the commune out of difficult situations while accentuating the mistakes, lack of courage and hypocrisy of those who surrounded him.

His personal financial situation however, remained modest. The census of 1815 reveals that he was a farmer, that he lived in a village, was married, and had no children. Some passages in his memoirs lead us to believe that he did not get along well with his wife. He was not a *notable*, nor would he ever be mayor. The community made use of his competence in reading and writing by employing him as a clerk of the court. This employment certainly provided him with some supplementary support, but kept him in secondary roles.

In short, M. Barge was not really in any social class: he was superior to most of the other inhabitants by his knowledge but he did not enjoy a financial situation commensurate with his ability. At first, he zealously supported the Revolution, and looked upon it as an opportunity to have his skills valued. But the turn of events quickly made him return to a more moderate attitude. A comparison could be made between his situation and that of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin’s father. Both were above average in education, and both supported the Revolution. However, after having been actively engaged in the struggle, both were disappointed. Their political involvement may have contributed to their lack of success in the financial world.

2.2. The village under the revolution

Between the years 1789 to 1800, life in Lavalla was very much in keeping with the rhythm of the major po-

litical events of the day. However, Barge refers to the broad scope of events only to the extent that they had repercussions in Lavalla.

He hardly mentions the Estates General and the Storming of the Bastille (May-July 14th, 1789). On the other hand, he features the Great Fear that gripped Lavalla on the evening of July 28th: the ringing of bells sounding the alarm, the brave men who formed an armed militia, the others who went into hiding or who hid their possessions, the women who organized prayer groups. The episode ended in tragi-comedy. The armed militia descended upon Saint Chamond where they were greeted with cheers and reassurance. There were drinks, and then quarrels (Ch. 1). However, from that moment, "...every town and village was on alert, taking turns to mount guard and go on patrol." (Ch.1)

The Revolution brought about a lively renewal of political life in the village. The leading representative of the commune had Barge read the many decrees issuing from the National Assembly as people left church after Sunday Mass. The first elections were held in church on February 28th, 1790. They resulted in a tumult. Those living in the lower part of the commune facing Saint Chamond had their candidate while those living in the upper with Saint Étienne as its center had theirs. Finally, the upper part won and Pierre Tardy from Le Bessat

was chosen as mayor. He was assisted by five councillors. Barge was appointed secretary.

The fall of the *Ancient Régime* created a climate that favoured anarchy. As mentioned earlier, the beautiful communal forest of Lavalla was destroyed by those who had no legal rights to it, and who reacted violently when opposed. As for goods belonging to the nobles and to the clergy, they were sold. But at Lavalla, the land belonging to the parish priest and the church warden were preserved, perhaps out of respect for the Church, but most of all because they were considered as public property.

2.3. The religious division

Barge dedicated a lengthy commentary to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The parish priest Gaumond and his curate, Robin, refused to take the oath and recognize the legitimacy of the Constitutional Archbishop Lamourette of Lyon. This was the occasion for a violent quarrel between the parish priest and Barge who, of the party of the Revolution, seems to have been rather isolated, (Ch. VII). In August of 1791, Jean-Marie Berne, a young seminarian left in order to be ordained outside France by the exiled archbishop of Lyon, Msgr. Marbeuf. On October 2nd 1791, he celebrated Mass in public in Lavalla, which was seen as a provocation and disturbed the municipality⁹. How-

⁹ J.B. Galley, "*Saint Étienne pendant la Révolution*", t.2. St. Étienne, 1906, p.690. Listed among 28 refractory priests: "Berne, 'dit' Balaira, from la Vallia, curate in Graix".

ever, the authority of the parish priest seems to have prevailed, and Barge accused him of wanting to have him dismissed from his position.

2.4. Barge's disappointment with the revolution

Beginning in April of 1792, hostilities broke out between Europe and revolutionary France. The problem of supplying contingents of soldiers now presented itself (Ch. XIII). The defeats radicalized the Revolution. The king was arrested. The Legislative Assembly drew up a second Constitution to which Barge had to take an oath on 11 October 1792 (Ch. XV).

All of these events, and especially the oath disheartened him: "Although I enthusiastically supported the first Constitution, I became the secret enemy of the second. This idea of equality suddenly cast me into a quagmire from which I could not extricate myself". Many French people experienced the same disillusionment with a regime that in the name of Liberty and Equality brought nothing but anxiety within and open warfare without.

A new municipal government was elected in December of 1792, and Jean Rivat Jr. was responsible for the keeping of the official public registry. In fact, he let the parish priest Gaumond continue to register baptisms, marriages and burials. Already prepared for

clandestine activity, or not wishing to submit to the civil authority, even in form, the latter did not make use of the official registry, but kept records on separate sheets of paper.

Whatever the case may be, according to Barge, the parish priest Gaumond "...always believed in the re-establishment of the *Ancient Régime*. At a time when most parishes were administered by a clergy supporting the Constitution he openly exercised his priestly ministry with the approval of the local government and the majority of the local population. Barge describes him as being "...haughty and accustomed to the flattery and the adulation of the people of Lavalla" (Ch. XVII). The fact is that Barge had no understanding of the underlying reasons why Gaumond opposed the Revolution, and one detects in him some jealousy toward a very influential person.

But who was this Jean Rivat junior who was responsible for the keeping of the official public registry? Probably Jean-Baptiste Rivat, an agricultural worker at "les Maisonnettes", the father of Gabriel Rivat, the future Brother François, the first successor of Marcellin¹⁰.

2.5. Reconciliation of Barge with Gaumond

Barge describes to us how he and the parish priest with whom he had been at odds since 1789 became rec-

¹⁰ In the parish, there certainly were several with the name Rivat. However none of them appears to have had the background which earned for him a position on the council of the local government.

onciled. He mentions "...the tempest of the Revolution became progressively worse", and "...no one else in Lavalla could serve it." Barge was perhaps boasting but the fact is that since 1789, he was deeply involved in the Revolution and during the Terror he was doubtless appointed as national agent of the commune charged with denouncing those suspected of taking part in the opposition¹¹.

The reconciliation was secret: "In public, we pretended that we were at odds with one another and we succeeded so well that people would come to me seeking information against him." At the same time, Barge raises a corner of the veil on the network which supported the parish priest and negotiated the reconciliation: "Father Gaspard (Gonin)", Gaumont's curate, the Paras ladies from Saint Étienne who seem to have a house in Lavalla, and J.M. Tissot, a friend of the parish priest¹².

This settlement of differences happened at an opportune time: probably in the spring of 1793, at the beginning of the Terror. A certain priest Guérin accused of monopolizing grain was put to death by the populace in Saint Chamond. In order to "...stir up a row among the so-called aristocrats and fanatics", the Jacobin "hot heads" in the

city planned to go up to Lavalla and apprehend the parish priest and the curate, both accused of a similar crime.

2.5. Saint Chamond vs. Lavalla

Those living in Saint Chamond were convinced that a plot had been hatched by those living out in the country to starve them, and that the refractory priests were responsible. The frenzy reached its peak in the springtime when the winter provisions had been exhausted, and when the crops were not yet ready to be harvested.

In early September of 1793, (Ch. XVIII), a woman from Lavalla unwittingly mentioned that the parish priest of Lavalla and his curate were still residing in the presbytery. A group of twelve men immediately set out on horseback. It was four o'clock in the afternoon. Warned at the last moment by a woman, the two priests were able to escape in time. The revolutionaries had to be content with pillaging the hay and the poultry that was found. A few days later, a second attempt was made, this time under the cover of darkness, but it also was unsuccessful.

It would appear that from then on, Gaumont lived a clandestine life until his capture, but first without going far

¹¹ See Chapter XVIII, in which he describes having been given an order from the representative on assignment, Javogues, to arrest the parish priest.

¹² The census of 1815 indicates that in the village of Lavalla, there was a certain Claude Louis Tissot, draper. This is perhaps the same person because there is no other person by that name in the parish and Barge notes that he buried his most valuable possessions, a sign he certainly belonged to Lavalla. M. Barge capitalizes on these negotiations to complain that in 1789, his right to a church pew was withdrawn. It is possible that this loss was a consequence of his involvement in the Revolution – a form of reprisal.

away¹³. After that there is hardly any mention of him. It seems it was M. Bertholon¹⁴, a refractory priest, who celebrated Mass secretly during the time when Jamet, the constitutional parish priest of Izieux, often found it difficult gaining access to his church. As Barge indicates, “public matters went from bad to worse”. The commune was to provide 20 men for military service¹⁵ and no one wanted to be counted among them. Obviously Lavalla resisted anything to do with the draft or with the Constitutional Church.

2.6. Attempted return of the royalists

The counter-revolutionary movement of the Royalists was not inactive in Lavalla, (Ch. XXIV). Barge notes that shortly prior to the siege of Lyon in the summer of 1793, “...a former important nobleman”¹⁶, came to the Tissot home where M. Charvet celebrated clandestine Masses. He was a “former Minim friar from Annonay” who was certainly a refractory priest. He had the task of promoting the uprising of all of southern France. He finally succeed-

ed in persuading Charvet, “Father Gaspard”, curate of Lavalla, Tissot, and even Barge himself to join the movement. A troop under the direction of Tissot’s two sons was formed.

With the help of a contingent coming from Chevrières¹⁷ and others coming from the Midi, they were to take Saint Chamond. The attempt ended in a complete disaster. There were no reinforcements, and everyone returned to their homes. Fortunately, the expeditionary force was not detected during its nightly sortie by opposing troops on patrol. Rumors persisted, however¹⁸.

2.7. The seige of Lyon

From May until October of 1789, Lavalla suffered from the effects of the uprising in Lyon directed against the Montagnard Constitution. The local government had to provide grain for the military. But also “they caused a mass movement¹⁹ of the people of the country and the towns using plunder as bait. Lavalla was among the number.” People were divided²⁰. As M. Barge indicates, “It was a sign of the times.

¹³ See Chapter XX. He would come under the cover of darkness to have his laundry done by a former house-keeper.

¹⁴ He was parish priest in Longes at the time M. Barge was writing his memoirs.

¹⁵ It relates to the order to draft 300,000 men in March of 1793 or the mass draft a short time later.

¹⁶ He is a well-known counter revolution Royalist: Bésignan. (Ch. XXIV)

¹⁷ A commune from the “*monts du Lyonnais*”, an openly Royalist area promoting armed resistance.

¹⁸ It could be that M. Barge may have made a mistake in dating the event. The Great Royalist Uprising in this region occurred in 1795. See “*La Révolution française dans la région Rhône-Alpes*” by Louis Trénard, Perrin, 1992, p. 587

¹⁹ The reference being to the mobilization of the National Guards which were established in each of the communes after the year 1789.

²⁰ J.M. Tissot, a friend of Fr Gaumond, was at first the commander of the commune’s detachment and was forced to flee. Jean-Baptiste Galley became his replacement. The latter was accused of stealing M. Tissot’s horse and was arrested. In order to set him free, the Galley family pressured M. Tissot’s wife to drop the charges thereby liberating the accused who was probably guilty in the first place.

Everything was in turmoil”, (Ch.XXIII). It seems, in fact, that many of the peasants of Lavalla were anxious to improve their lot at the expense of the people of Lyon under the pretext of a patriotic cause. This time, the war between urban and rural areas was waged on the large scale. One witnessed a settling of accounts between families, between town and hamlets, and also perhaps between the upper and lower parts of the of the commune.

The return from the siege shows that many of the villagers who had taken part in it had had their heads turned. The festivities paid for by the communes turned to drinking bouts, insults and fights. And even “... the morning after, they said that they wanted to put an end to aristocrats and fanatics: (Tardy, du Coing and de Soulages, the Rivats, de Luzernod, du Pinay and de Maisonnettes, Tissot, etc...were those heading the list for proscription, (Ch. XXII), and plunder their houses.” Not only was the civil discord between cities and rural areas reflected in the village, but it even became politicized. In any case, M. Barge gives us the names of the main *notables* who most resisted the Revolution, and among them was the Rivat family.

He makes note of the fact that this moment of high excitement quickly calmed down²¹, however, he also

adds that “...after the siege, acts of terror were at their peak. All that could be seen were arrests, firing squads, and the guillotine was a permanent fixture both in Lyon and in Feurs”²².

2.9. Dechristianization

On December 18, 1793, dechristianization struck Lavalla. The revolutionary, Monatte, arrived from Saint Chamond with the purpose of confiscating sacred objects. The Jacobins only found a few of them, for the rest had been hidden. They destroyed the statues of the saints with their swords, tore up sacred books, and emptied the hosts from the tabernacle: “...before a large number of people who were indignant, but did not dare say a word for they were paralyzed with fear”. (Ch. XXIV) Barge provides us with an itemized list of sacred objects that had been hidden, indicating that the only ones who knew of their whereabouts were the mayor, (Jean Matricon), Jean Rivat, Jean Thibaud, all three of whom were members of the local government, and M. Tissot’s two sons who appear to have been hardcore anti-revolutionaries. The fact that only a minority of the local government took part in the project indicates that from then on, a party of the *notables* was not certain.

He also mentions the families that housed these objects. Thus, Jean Ri-

²¹ There would be neither Clubs nor public revolutionary societies in Lavalla

²² In fact, in Montbrison. A young man from Châlons-sur-Saône who had sought refuge with Mlle Ferriol after the siege was exposed by someone in Lavalla. Having been arrested, he was executed by firing squad in Lyons. The woman who helped him was subsequently arrested; part of her furniture was destroyed and the remainder sequestered by local authorities. The Tissot family, implicated in the Royalist attempted takeover, found its home sealed off and the father of the household had to go into hiding.

vat and M. Bise, his neighbour, took away some of the statues of the saints from the altar. He more precisely notes that: "...the Confraternities of the Holy Rosary stripped their chapel and removed the iron grill" giving access. It was at this time, no doubt, that the painting of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary was transferred to the Rivat home in the Maisonettes. It was subsequently given to Champagnat by Mme Rivat and is actually located in the community room of the brothers at Lavalla.

Thus it was that those from Saint Chamond came to see Lavalla as being populated by counter-revolutionaries with whom negotiations were impossible. Barge, on the other hand, shows us that the determined opposition constituted only a minority. For some time, the church would only be opened every ten days in keeping with the new revolutionary calendar so that it might be used as a Temple of Reason, (Ch. XXXI) where the delegates sent by the Club of Saint Chamond clumsily officiated. In order to increase attendance at these functions, members of the Saint Chamond Committee of Surveillance would go out into the fields to scold anyone working on the tenth day and prevent the Catholic cult on Sundays. (Ch. XXXV). Masses were, in fact, celebrated on the outskirts of the village in the chapel of L'Etrat. Barge never makes reference to Masses being celebrated privately in secret places.

2.10. Saving the bells

There remains the issue of saving the bells that were to be turned over to the Republic in order to have them melted down and turned into cannon. Barge highlights the fact that it was difficult to save them because: "...we have among us false brothers and everyone is terrified of losing his head." When he suggested putting them in safe keeping, his two partners responded: "You lose nothing but your head but we lose both our heads and our possessions²³."

The commune ultimately ignored the orders of the authorities of Armeville, (Saint Étienne). Finally, probably in the spring of 1794, three men arrived from Isieux to dismantle the bells. Copiously wined and dined, they consented to leave the people of Lavalla to take down the bells themselves. They did in fact take them down, but they would not be taken to Saint-Étienne.

2.11. Struggle to provide basic needs

Barge goes at length to describe the most serious accusation against Lavalla. It was expressed by the Clubs of Saint Chamond when it described them with the words: "...we hid our produce rather than supply the markets of Saint Chamond."

In Chapter XXX, he describes for us what occurred on the last Sunday

²³ This anecdote points to the fact that the negotiators had assets. M. Barge, on the other hand, had none or very few.

of December in 1793 when the Club of the Jacobins of the famished town gathered troops to go up to Lavalla and attack its inhabitants. Having gone down to Saint Chamond to try to discourage them from carrying out this threat, Barge specified that his commune was not the only one responsible for supplying the city with basic food commodities. He then provides us with an important detail: "...the upper part of the commune of Lavalla has always sent its produce to the Weapons Commune" (Saint Étienne). He then promised the Jacobin leadership that he would provide them with basic supplies and advised the municipal council: the mayor, M. Matricon, could contribute some wheels of butter and Rivat and Galley had some excellent cheese. The three *notables* accompanied Barge to supply the leaders of the *sans culottes*, offering them a delivery every two weeks. They, in turn, agreed to relieve the pressure on Lavalla. The town of Saint Chamond does not seem to have been better provided for.

1.12. M. Barge's second conversion

That same Sunday, December 28, 1793, a serious event took place in Lavalla. Five gendarmes from the Rive de Gier suddenly came upon the faithful as they gathered for vespers in the chapel of L'Etrat a short distance from the village, (Ch. XXI), "...as if they were free to exercise their religion²⁴." They descended upon the faithful on

horseback, terrorizing those who had been gathered, and then continued on their way. Barge, who had just returned from Saint Chamond, found a very distraught congregation saying to itself: "That does it! Goodbye to our religion!" That event became a turning point in his practice of religion.

"The apparent indifference that I showed toward religion was the result of the misuse of religion and not religion itself." I harboured a secret desire for its return and I encouraged those who favoured my enterprise."

It was at that time that the Revolution lost the sense of legitimacy that it had enjoyed in its early years. Most people began to feel differently. The refractory Church had now become the barrier of resistance to revolutionary fanaticism.

1.13. The execution of the parish priest of Lavalla

In August of 1794, Father Gaudmond was arrested in the area of Saint-Genest-Malifaux and on September 2nd, he was executed. Barge gives the impression of trying to justify himself for not having come to his rescue with the words:

"He was apprehended by two Jacobin fanatics, who led him to Saint-Genest-Malifaux. It would have been easy for us to rescue him by ambushing the trio the next day in sufficient numbers, under cover of disguise and the woods.

²⁴ It was the chapel that Champagnat would often visit on pilgrimages with the brothers.

But we were being closely watched, especially by the same B...²⁵ who owed him some 50 crowns for wheat that he had the received from him, etc... and would have been quite happy to see him die so that he would be freed from his debt.”

The attempt to free someone by the use of force was not far-fetched. Priests being escorted to prison were often set free by bands of villagers. However, this is the only time Barge lifts the veil on an armed resistance being considered by the people of Lavalla. Furthermore, he sheds some light upon one of the bases of Gaumont's influence in the commune while at the same time exposing the sometimes base motivation behind arresting refractory priests, namely money.

1.14. Non-compliance and the draft

Barge briefly describes the spirit of the times:

“It was a time of total confusion. Those living in the rural areas were uncertain about their future. They were constantly in a state of alarm, as much because of the Committee of Surveillance and its henchmen, as because of the troops who often came looking for conscripts that they could send abroad.”

On this last point, he notes that on January 20th 1795 mounted and foot soldiers coming of the National Guard came down upon the commune, mistreating the people, ransacking every-

thing without finding any priest or draft-dodger. This kind of action was often repeated between 1796 and 1797.

At the end of 1798, a change in strategy was introduced: hussars were billeted between 30 November and 9 December with eight families who certainly had a son evading military service. As the operation was not successful, fifteen days later there was a new occupation with pillaging and extortion of funds. Fearing a popular uprising, the troops withdrew six days later.

At the end of October 1799, that is, a few days after Napoleon's coup d'état on 18 *brumaire*, soldiers, gendarmes and national guardsmen, 150 men in all, came and took up residence in the homes of the families of draft-dodgers or with those suspected of hiding them. Barge states: “The people denounced one another which only prolonged the occupation.” However, it appears that, all in all, the villagers maintained a degree of solidarity.

At 6:00 p.m., May 4th, 1800, (14 *floréal*, year VIII), on the day of the “vogue”, (patronal feast), a group of gendarmes and volunteers from Saint Chamond tried to surprise the young people at a dance. This time they killed one man and those who resisted and were chased defended themselves by throwing stones. Fearing a revolt, the troop quickly retreated to Saint Chamond. There followed a long

²⁵ This entry is not quite clear. It would appear that the expression “B...” may have referred to the word “*bougre*”, a derogatory term (*rascal*). Barge seems to imply that one of the two “*sans-culottes*” was from Lavalla.

and costly lawsuit against the gendarmerie, unwilling to recognize its wrongdoing, and the commune.

On July 30th, 1800, thirteen gendarmes once again went up to Lavalla to compel the draft-dodgers to obey the order for military service. They again resided in the homes of the families of the rebellious ones. The drama that had occurred previously and political changes that had taken place since then brought about a new approach. The contingent that had been sent was smaller in number and better disciplined and not too inclined to pillaging. These repeated excursions had an objective which Barge underlines, (Ch.XLI):

“Because of their religious beliefs and the resistance of the young men who departed only under force and then deserted, Lavalla was denigrated by a clique of Saint Chamond. General Rey and the department, therefore, decided to keep a close watch on our poor commune, burdening it with troops.”

And so it was that a new component was added to the traditional war between Saint Chamond and Lavalla, that used by Louis XIV against the Protestants: imposing military occupation upon the population until it acquiesced.

2.15. Religious peace and civil peace

The result of the Concordat of 1801 was the re-establishment of Catholic worship throughout France. The church

was re-opened on November 15th, 1801, (Ch. XLI). Residing at the presbytery was Father Berne, who was certainly the same Jean-Claude Berne of Lavalla, (Ch.VII), who had left and gone abroad for ordination in 1791²⁶.

After having undergone a long period of terrifying anarchy which began with the uprising and siege of Lyon in 1793, and concluded with the opening of the churches, Lavalla was able to breathe again. The new government, less violent, was more effective. Those pillaging the forests were arrested, (Ch. XLVI and XLVII), and in April of 1803, numerous draft dodgers were taken after a funeral Mass. The commune seemed to accept without too much difficulty the power of the emperor and resistance to the draft diminished.

The squabbles of village political life continued to hold centre stage. Barge strongly condemned the machinations of a Father Rivory who wanted to have him excluded from the local government council. (Ch.XLIX). But he includes very few chapters describing life in Lavalla between 1803 and 1814, no doubt because life under the Napoleonic regime was more to his liking. Having been a soldier, he must have appreciated the military glory of the regime. Strong minded, he saw that the reign of the clergy had not fully returned. It was during this time that he was an adjunct to the mayor. However, with the fall of the Empire, many difficulties would lie ahead.

²⁶ It is curious to note that he is installed as de facto parish priest at a time when Barge does not mention him between 1791 and 1801. One presumes that he ministered clandestinely in the nearby area.

2.16. The invasion of 1814 and the return of the royalty

The first allied detachment passed through Saint Chamond on March 24th, 1814. M. Barge relates: "It was a time when basic necessities and fodder were being requisitioned seemingly without end, (Ch. LIII). On March 29th, one hundred and four Austrian dragoons and infantry came through Lavalla. Because of previous experiences, some of the local residents hid their valuable possessions, while others offered the troops something to drink.

Barge is harsh in his assessment of the clergy at this time, particularly Father Rebos²⁷ who, from 1816 to 1824 would be Marcellin Champagnat's parish priest. He found him too friendly with the Austrians who were passing through, adding: "He is naturally vain and conceited. Furthermore, he was convinced that the clergy would regain its previous status with the restoration of the legitimate sovereigns²⁸." A little later, (Ch. LIV), he adds: "Being greedy for possessions and recognition, he never missed an opportunity for acquiring them." Still further (Ch. LIV), he denounces the methods of Rebos who "...never ceasing to insist on his authority", wanted to control the duties of the sacristan and the bell ringers who were, according to the local government, their responsibility. Barge

also reproaches him for prohibiting people from dancing, (Ch. LVI).

Although well recovered from his revolution sympathies, Barge continued to entertain his reservations about the clergy from the time of Father Gaumond. He was an anti-clerical Christian who did not understand why the clergy should be involved with politics. This sentiment was held by most people during the entire time of the Restoration and was one of the most significant changes brought about by the Revolution; the Christian laity did not want to let themselves be led as in the past.

Two days after the first troops had passed through, things took a turn for the worse. Seven armed Austrian soldiers sent from Tarentaise came to requisition basic food necessities. Speaking only German, they made themselves understood by violence; even the parish priest Rebos, his curate, and the religious sisters were mistreated. Barge had to accompany the carts containing fresh supplies to Tarentaise, located beyond le Bessat on the Pilat plateau. After having rested from his journey with the parish priest Montchovet, who was billeting the Austrian captain, he complained about the poor treatment that they had received at the hands of the Austrian troops. Speaking in impeccable French, the officer responded that since he had spent time in the military himself, he must have certainly committed some

²⁷ The spelling of his name varies: Rebaud, Rebot.

²⁸ The Bourbons.

blunders, an observation that Barge did not deny. The officer further added: "Our troops would never do to you what your troops did to us." On April 7th, five Austrian hussars returned to Lavalla to requisition hay.

This first occupation ended, overall, in moderate vexations. Barge hardly mentions the return of Napoleon in 1815, which was to bring with it a long period of occupation and probably more requisitions. The account is abruptly cut short at this point²⁹ because Barge no longer holds a position in public office. The attitude of the parish priest may have had something to do with this withdrawal but Barge was most of all a victim of a Royalist backlash that went sometimes as far as the white terror that was dominant after the second fall of Napoleon. One may presume that he began putting final touches to his writings shortly afterwards.

2.17. A precious document

Barge's memoirs, overall, provide us with a valuable insight into what life was like during the Revolution. If he has a tendency to boast at times, he nevertheless also projects an image of someone who is intelligent and capable of seeing beyond narrow local points of view and his insights are both perceptive and profound. His writings remind us that those living in rural areas were far less uneducated than the urban *notables* believed.

One of the qualities that is most appealing in his writings is his sense of realism. Through his pen, we come into contact with a complex society in which the interests, the clan struggles, the problems of power are constant realities. Through him we learn that the commune is socially, economically and perhaps politically divided in two; its upper part turning toward Saint Étienne, and its lower toward Saint Chamond.

Furthermore, if Lavalla is basically faithful to its religious heritage, this loyalty is to be nuanced and combined with other factors, such as its resistance to the draft and its opposition to urban power and a centralized government. We have also seen that the problems of provisioning play an essential role in the hostilities between Saint Chamond and Lavalla.

Many other factors should also be kept in mind. For those interested in furthering their knowledge about the beginnings of the Marist Brothers, the name of the Chirat clan appears frequently among the defenders of religion. The appointment of Marcellin Champagnat to such a parish is not without significance: to master so rugged and vast a territory, and govern a population severely tested would require a curate vigorous and well acquainted with the rural world of the mountains of Pilat. To a certain point, it is a post of confidence.

Finally, by his detailed account, Barge gives us an overview of what life

²⁹ It is not beyond the realm of possibility that a section of his memoirs may have been lost.

may have been like in many rural areas under the Revolution, particularly in the Marlihes area. During his childhood, Marcellin Champagnat must have felt strongly the dangers run by his father and the problems of a partisan of the revolution who found himself forced to manage day by day a situation of anarchy, which provided him with many headaches and little benefit.

Basically, the history of Lavalla can be reduced to four time periods:

- 1789-1793 when the Revolution was beginning to spread and Lavalla chose its position under the influence of the parish priest, Gaumond, with Barge, a warm partisan of the revolution, featuring as a somewhat isolated extremist.
- 1793: A time of uncertainty – With the siege of Lyon, a certain number of people were drawn into the revolutionary camp, while others chose to adhere to a deeper religious and political resistance. The parish priest's entry into clandestine activity seems to have prompted the local authorities of the commune to take initiatives. Finally, the commune maintains a muted resistance. The Royalist counter-revolution does not seem to have gained a solid foothold.
- 1794-1800 – The parish had to sustain a veritable war against Saint Chamond and its terrorist government. The reason Barge fails to give us specific information about Catholic worship during this time is perhaps due to the fact that, suspected of complicity with the Revolution, he participated in clandestine worship only to a limited degree. The issue of religion gradually diminished while the challenges of resistance to the draft and providing for everyone's basic needs remained critical. It was a time when local authorities honed their political skills and appear to have become more and more the protectors of religion rather than its servants.
- 1800-1814: This is a period of calm if we exclude the brief invasion of 1814. One can justly presume that at the end of the Empire, deserters and draft dodgers were numerous in the forests of Lavalla. Barge's silence on this matter raises some questions. Similarly, we have little information about the issue of requisitions during the second invasion of 1815 and the long occupation by the allies that followed it. Whatever the case may be, M. Barge clearly denounces a local clergy who wish to bring closure to the Revolution by trying to re-establish a politico-religious power structure.

3. THE REFRACTORY CHURCH AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION IN SAINT CHAMOND AND LAVALLA (1789-1812)

Thanks to the memoirs of J.L. Barge and various related sources, we have been able to trace the broad outlines of the religious history of Lavalla from 1789-1794. However, he says little about the critical period that followed: 1794 – 1801, a time of persecution and living underground, and

scarcely anything more about the re-establishment of the practice of religion from 1801-1816.

The signature of the curate of Lavalla, Proton, appears on J.L. Barge's baptismal certificate. His marriage certificate is signed by the curate, Chapuis. Through Barge's memoirs, we know that both parish priest Gaumont and his curate Robin refused at once to sign the oath of loyalty demanded by the Civil Constitution, and that Jean-Marie Berne, a seminarian, left Lavalla in order to be ordained abroad by the legitimate Archbishop Mgr. de Marbeuf. This occurred in 1791. Apparently, no constitutional priest was able to be installed in the parish and up September of 1793, the parish priest and his curate, "Father Gaspard", lived in the rectory and publicly conducted services while Charvet, "the former Minim of Annonay", moved around the parish. Barge also mentions the priest Rivory and parish priest Rebod. Seven priests, therefore, are mentioned between 1789-1815. Barge, however, does not appear to be aware of the broad picture of how the refractory church functioned during this time. To know more about this period, one has to rely upon other sources.

3.1. The linsolas missions

The Diocese of Lyon, under the direction of Vicar General Linsolas³⁰ devised an inventive and effective ecclesiastical network of ministry to which no doubt Lavalla belonged³¹.

Linsolas has left us memoirs describing the history of Catholic resistance in the Diocese of Lyon³². The major issue until 1792 was the Constitutional schism. At the end of that year, only some 30 parishes (of which Lavalla was one) out of 850 in the diocese, escaped the schism almost entirely, which means that elsewhere, deprived of the pastors they once had, the Catholic faithful were forced to exercise their faith as an underground church more or less. The religious situation was aggravated by the persecutions of 1793. However, what became clear was the need to offer an organized resistance.

In the spring of 1794, the parochial system was abandoned and the diocese was divided into missions, which at the beginning consisted of groupings of 40-60 parishes with a priest directing the mission, supported by an assistant and directing 6 to 8 missionaries, each of whom was responsible for 6-8 parishes.

³⁰ Linked by confidential correspondence with Mgr. de Marbeuf who sought refuge in Germany.

³¹ A basic and insightful treatise on this issue is: *"Le culte caché sous la Révolution. Les missions de l'abbé Linsolas"*, Bonne Presse, Paris, 1947, 430 p.

³² *L'Eglise clandestine de Lyon pendant la Révolution*, t. 1 (1789-1794), t.2 (1794-1799), Editions Lyonnaises d'art et d'histoire, collection du bicentenaire de la Révolution française à Lyon, Lyon, 1987

They were supported by lay people: catechists who went ahead of the missionaries who would assess the situation in parishes that had not yet been involved and find places of refuge to allow regular visits the appointment of a permanent ecclesiastical structure. Each parish had a “head layman” who presided over the assembly in the absence of a priest, communicating to them instructions from the Diocese³³ while also directly corresponding with the missionary. He was supported by a “permanent catechist” whose duty it was: to visit the poor and the sick, to encourage the faithful who were undergoing persecution, to attend to the proper instruction of the children, to make the faithful aware of the schedule of visiting missionaries and to bring the “head layman” up to date about the present status of the parish. Itinerant catechists accompanied the missionary as he went on his journey from one parish to another in order to ensure his safety.

At the beginning of 1795, there were only 12 missions. Toward 1800, there were 25 of them because many of the priests who had signed the oath of loyalty to the Constitution reversed their decision and many who had gone into exile returned and could now be used as missionaries.

Toward 1800, the Linsolas missions included 677 priests, 186 of whom served in Lyon and surrounding areas. In the Loire region there would be 9 missions that included Saint Étienne having 31 missionaries, Saint Chamond with 14, and the Rive-de-Gier with 16³⁴.

3.2. The Saint Chamond mission

We have little information about the mission in Saint Chamond³⁵. In 1802, the mission was about to be abandoned, and its leader, Fr Gabriel, is described as follows:

“The former parish priest of Saint Symphorien d’Ozon, the leader of the mission in Saint Chamond. He is close to 60 years of age, and hard-working during the revolution. He is a man of many talents, religious and zealous³⁶.”

Also ministering in Saint Chamond was 55 year old Fr Jossierand, who had Jansenistic tendencies, as well as 36 year old Michel Novet whom Fr Courbon found mediocre.

In 1804³⁷, the diocese launched a survey of parish priests who were to submit their *curriculum vitae*. The principal pastors of the Saint Chamond canton were as follows:

³³ Linsolas, t. 2p. 21-25

³⁴ C. Ledré, op, cit.p.96

³⁵ Archives de l’archevêché de Lyon, carton 1 II 9

³⁶ Ibid. General Tableau of the priests of the diocese on Lyon on 1 vendémiaire 1802 drawn up the vicar general Courbon.

³⁷ Archevêché de Lyon, carton 2 II 92

Location	Priest in charge	Assigned	Prior to French Revolution	During French Revolution
Saint Chamond Saint Pierre parish	Dervieux, Julien, born 01/29/1754. No government pension	02/20/1803. Installation 09/28/1803	Parish priest of Saint Ennemond (Saint Chamond) from 1781	Exiled missionary in Lyon, then in Saint Chamond
Saint Chamond Notre Dame parish	Gabriel, Marie-Gabriel, born 11/07/1735. No government pension	02/20/1803 Installation the following Sunday	Parish priest of Saint Symphorien d'Ozon for 25 years	Head of missionaries in Saint Chamond
Saint Chamond suburb Saint Julien parish	Brun, Blaise, born 11/14 or 15/1756 02/20/1803	Installation the following Sunday	Parish priest of Pusignan	Missionary to Saint Chamond for 7 ans
Farnay (Saint Eucher parish)	Nolhac, Jean, born 12/01/1741 With a government pension	02/20/1803 Installation March 14	At N.D. du Puy	At Saint Julien-en-Jarez for 6 years
Izieux (Saint André parish)	Farge, Pierre-François, born 06/26/1763 No government pension	02/20/1803 Installation the following Sunday		Missionary in Pouilly-les-Feurs
Lavalla (Saint Andéol parish)	Abrial, Pierre born June 25, 1750 No government pension	02/08/1803 Installation the following Sunday	Curate in Tarentaise	Missionary in Lavalla for one year
Doizieux Saint Just parish	Limosin, Jean, born 12/08/1763	02/20/1803. Installation March 11		
Missionary in Jonzieu	Coallieux Saint Martin parish	Granjon, Marcellin, born 07/ 25/ 1745 Pension of 133 F. per semester	09/0 5/1803. Installation immediately following	Parish priest of Périgneux

From this table, we learn that regular worship was re-instated in February of 1803 and that as a consequence, the missionary network came to an end even though the pensions that were provided for by the Concordat of 1801 had not yet reached most of the pastors, who had to provide for themselves through alms or from their own resources. Nevertheless, the continuity with the Revolution can be seen from the fact that most pastors were appointed to the place of their missionary activity or close to it. On the other hand, the discontinuity with the Ancient Régime can be seen by the fact that most priests who had exercised their ministry prior to the Revolution were not assigned to their former parishes. All were born between 1735 and 1793 and so they were all between the ages of 41 and 69 with an average age of 53. They are an aged clergy, especially for the time, and diocesan officials were anxious to establish a new priestly body which would include Champagnat recruited the same year, 1804.

As for the quality of those involved, the Table of clergy of 1802³⁸ provides us with some interesting details: Fr Julien Dervieux, future adversary and eventual friend of Fr Champagnat is described as: “a good person from every point of view but whose weak health affects his personality³⁹, political.” On the other

hand the parish priest of Farnay, Fr M. Nollhac, is described as: “an intruder”⁴⁰ from Saint Julien in Jarret [...] persecutor carried away, frequently visits drinking establishments”. Marcellin Granjon is also a “sworn schismatic”. As for Jean Limosin, he is simply described as being “from the diocese of Le Puy.

3.3. The re-establishment of religious worship in Lavalla

As for providing clandestine religious services in Lavalla beginning in 1793, we may well surmise that Gaumont continued to find ways of providing them until his arrest in 1794 and that Abrial, former curate of nearby Tarentaise, succeeded him in his ministry. In his memoirs, Barge refers to Abrial (Ch. XL VIII) unfortunately, without providing a specific date but prior to 1800, in recalling a village affair. Jean Joseph Tardy⁴¹ agreed to succeed mayor, M. Tissot, who had died. This happened only after some hesitation and the positive influence of the curate, Rivory “...who had left the priesthood during the period of terrorism and who had reobtained it thanks to the credit Fr Abrial, the priest in charge of Lavalla at the time, enjoyed with Fr Courbon, the Senior Vicar General of the Cathedral of Lyon. He (Rivory) showed so much gratitude for this ben-

³⁸ Archevêché de Lyon, registre 2 II 83.

³⁹ Fr Champagnat would have a bitter experience of this.

⁴⁰ A priest supporting the Constitution.

⁴¹ One of the duties of the mayor is to provide young men to be drafted into military service, which was not an easy task.

efit and made such a fuss of his protector that he (Abrial) requested that he become his curate.”

However, Barge relates in (Ch. XIV) that the church in Lavalla was reopened on November 15th, 1801, on the occasion of the peace agreement. He does not mention the presence of M. Abrial as the celebrant, but that of M. Berne who “resided at the presbytery”. The fact is corroborated by the “The general table of the priests of Lyon”⁴² which describes Berne as: “...originating from Lavalla, ordained at the beginning of the revolution, about 37 years of age, parish priest in Lavalla, of adequate ability, zealous and religious.” Would it be possible, that given the post-revolutionary atmosphere and before ecclesiastical authorities re-established order, that the native son could have, for a time, replaced the missionary? In any case, the same Tableau of 1802 is effusive in its praise of Abrial and also recognizes him as being a parish priest in Lavalla:

“Former curate of Tarentaise, about 45 years of age, of adequate ability, zealous and religious, parish priest in Lavalla having ministered during the entire revolution.”

In order to better understand this apparent discrepancy, one must keep in mind that perhaps as early as 1794, Berne and Abrial shared the responsibility for the administration of the parish: Abrial taking the upper part (Le Bessat, les Palais...) towards Tarentaise, and

Berne directing his pastoral ministry toward the lower part towards Saint Chamond. The ecclesiastical authorities could hardly leave Berne to in his native parish. Abrial was given the responsibility that his age and apostolic reputation deserved, that of being responsible for the parish. Answering a diocesan survey of August 1st, 1804⁴³, Jean-Marie Berne, born November 5, 1758, declared he had been appointed to the parish of Planfoy in the canton of Saint-Genest-Malifaux on February 7, 1803 (*18 pluviôse - year 11*), and specifies: “I was in charge of the parish of Lavalla in the canton of Saint Chamond.”

Concerning Rivory about whom Barge has a great deal of negative comments, the general table of priests partly confirms his assertions: “A native of Saint Martin-en-Coallieux, age 50, former curate of Doizieu, re-instated, average ability, fairly good judgment, and good conduct.” The term “re-instated” means that Rivory took the oath of fidelity to the Constitution followed by a retraction and a period of probation prior to 1802. As Courbon makes no mention of an abdication, Rivory certainly had not left the priesthood for a time as Barge alleges. He was probably curate in the nearby constitutional parish of Doizieu prior to regularizing his situation and ministering as an auxiliary of Abrial. Whatever the case, in 1802, Courbon had not yet given him an official assignment. He must have been assigned as curate to to Abrial during the course of the year 1803.

⁴² Archevêché de Lyon, carton 2 II 83

⁴³ Archevêché de Lyon, carton 2 II 92

M. Barge adds that as soon as he was installed as curate, he endeavored to replace his pastor. He supported the mayor, M. Tardy, who: "...did not like M. Abrial for reasons too lengthy to mention". By his machinations, Rivory would succeed in securing the secretarial office of the mayor and the removal of Barge.

On March 29th, 1806, M. Pierre Abrial, who up to now had not received any salary from the government, was assigned to La Chapelle in the Monts du Pilat, in the canton of Pélussin, a parish in which the government provided a salary for parish priests. On the very same day, M. Benoît Rivory, his curate, born on January 19th, 1747, who received a government pension of 266 F. was named as parish priest in the parish of Rochetaillée, in the canton of Saint Étienne⁴⁴.

Succeeding Abrial on April 17th, 1706 in the parish of Lavalla still a post "not paid by the government"⁴⁵ was M. Joseph-Marie Bussot, born on July 3rd, 1764, with a government pension of 266 F. He certainly had a curate whose name we do not know but probably it was M. Rebod⁴⁶. Barge says nothing about him, but Courbon's

Table of the clergy specifies the following: "Bussot⁴⁷, former member of the Society of Lazarists, approximately 38 years of age, constitutional sympathizer, schismatic intruder, retracted in 1797, reconciled in 1801, parish priest in Sury, good manners, faint hearted toward sacred ministry." He was, therefore, a former religious who became a constitutional priest in charge of Sury. After having retracted his oath in 1797, he seems to have hesitated a considerable amount of time to acknowledge his culpability as required by Linsolas⁴⁸. After having been finally absolved, he underwent a period of probation as curate in Saint Étienne, possibly beginning in 1803 before coming to Lavalla as parish priest in 1806. It could not have been a pleasant experience for him to come to a parish that had continually harbored hostility towards the Constitutional Church. This was compounded by the fact that it was located in an area that was not suited for someone who might be faint hearted in his ministry. As no one speaks of him, he seems to have been an unobtrusive person. When he resigned on 31 January 1812, he was only 48 years of age. It was then that Fr Rebod, at age 34, became parish priest on February 5th, 1812⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ Archevêché de Lyon, register des nominations I 19

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ The registers do not include the names of curates. For the eventual curacy of Fr Rebod, see the article that follows.

⁴⁷ No first names were recorded.

⁴⁸ Unlike many others, Linsolas was intransigent with former constitutional priests who then had to make an explicit act of repentance.

⁴⁹ Archevêché de Lyon, register I 19.

CONCLUSION

This brief study suggests that between the years 1798-1799 underground worship occurred almost everywhere in the canton of Saint Chamond but in rather informal way in spite of the efforts of Linsolas to co-ordinate the action. The great setting in order took place in 1803 with Fr Courbon, Vicar General, often formalising the earlier situations. The departure of both Abrial and Rivory in 1806 marked the end of the mission period in Lavalla.

Obviously, many questions remain un-answered. We have seen that to a large extent, the mission network depended on lay people. But who was the "lay leader" in Lavalla? Furthermore, who was the permanent catechist? It seems necessary to consider the prominent people in the parish, particularly those who openly opposed the Jacobins such as the Tardy family from the hamlets of Coing and Soulages, the Rivat family from Luzernot, Pinay and Maisonnettes, the Tissot family... considered, after the siege of Lyon, as aristocrats.

Whatever the case may be, from 1794 to 1803, a revolutionary Church in its way functioned in the diocese of Lyon not relying on parishes governed by parish priests but rather on a collaborative effort of an itinerant missionary clergy and a dedicated body of lay people who made it possible for religious activity to continue. The hierarchical Church was never theo-

retically called into question. However on a practical level, it would have been difficult for a pure and simple return to the old order of things, for the laity who had been responsible for giving life to the church during a time of persecution no longer looked upon the church the way it had prior to the revolution, which had forced them to make their political education. More strictly than before, they distinguished religious and temporal competencies. Fr Gaumont, who seems to have exerted such a profound influence on the parish until 1793, may well pass as a parish priest of the Ancient Régime.

Champagnat's vision of providing catechist brothers in Lavalla places him in line with what the Diocese practised during the revolution. He seems to have thought himself like a missionary in a territory that he cannot and should not evangelize without the active support of devoted lay people. The question of a link between the pastoral approach of Linsolas and that of Champagnat deserves further attention. During his childhood, Marcellin certainly must have come into contact with itinerant missionaries and seen the devoted lay people who assured the functioning of the local church.

4. Fr Rebod, parish priest of Lavalla (1812-1815)

Jean-Baptiste Rebod, (or Rebot, Rebau...)⁵⁰ was assigned as parish

⁵⁰ He is named "Rebod" in the archives of the archbishopric. In *The Life* he appears to have remained nameless. F. Avit refers to him as "Rebot".

priest to Lavalla on February 5, 1812. According to diocesan archives⁵¹ he was born December 10, 1778⁵² in Saint Just-Malmont in the Upper Loire.

As Saint Just and Marlihes are only a few kilometres apart, Rebod and Champagnat lived in close proximity. Prior to the Revolution, both were in the diocese of Le Puy. However as a result of the Revolution, the country was re-structured into departments and Saint Just-Malmont was located in the department of the Upper Loire, and Marlihes was situated in the department of Loire. At the Concordat of 1801, Marlihes joined the diocese of Lyon once more, while Saint Just-Malmont became part of the diocese of Saint-Flour-Le Puy⁵³.

Rebod did not pursue his studies for the priesthood in the diocese of Lyon and could hardly have become a priest before having reached the age of 25 because during the Revolution, seminaries were discontinued and would resume only toward the year 1800⁵⁴. Therefore, his ordination would have taken place sometime between 1803-

1806. At that time, he would have been between 25 to 28 years of age which would be in keeping with the ages of most seminarians after the Revolution. He is not mentioned in the records of the archdiocese of Lyon until 1812. He no doubt received his seminary training in the diocese of Saint Flour-Le Puy and was later incardinated into the diocese of Lyon⁵⁵.

There is an entry in Fr Bourdin's memoirs that seems to provide an important clarification on the beginning of his presence in Lavalla, for in 1817, on the occasion of his dispute with Champagnat involving the purchase of a house, he writes: "He does not wish (to buy the house) out of concern that he may not be here as pastor ten years from now". The fact is that M. Rebod had been pastor for only five years and it is hard to believe that he refused this purchase on the grounds that he would no longer be there five years later. Rather, we should look upon the episode as indicative of the fact that it affirms his presence in the parish for some ten years: first as curate and then as

⁵¹ Registre I 19. Information repeated in OM 4, p. 428.

⁵² One of the descendants of the Rebod family would have him as the son of Jean Rebod, who was born in 1746 and who lived in Marlihes, and of Marie Louison who worked making ribbon. She was a native of Saint-Just-Malmont. He would be the second of their eight children, born in Marlihes on February 5th, 1776. On the occasion of the parish census, the parish priest Alliot met with the Rebaud family in the hamlet of Joubert. At that time, the father was noted as being a landowner, which indicates that a certain progression in social status had taken place, for at the time of his marriage in 1774, he was listed as a day laborer. However, 14 year old Jean-Baptiste is not living with the family and could be placed as a servant. This hypothesis seems to us to be rather unfounded, and this J.B. Rebeau would be a homonym for our parish priest.

⁵³ The diocese of Le Puy would only be re-established in 1823.

⁵⁴ In Lyon, regular courses in theology would resume on All Saints Day, 1801. The Major Seminary opened its doors in January of 1803 and had as many as 60-80 theologians. Classes were held in a temporary facility. (Vie de M. Duplay, t. 1 p. 170) The former seminary of Saint Irénée re-opened its doors in 1805.

⁵⁵ This transfer supports the thesis that Rebod was originally from Marlihes and he was subsequently reclaimed by the diocese of Lyon as later happened to Fr Courveille.

parish priest, which would send us back to the years 1806-1807⁵⁶.

The fact that he was given a significant ministry at age 34 indicates that he was highly regarded. The list of the population of Lavalla⁵⁷ indicates that in 1815, he lived in the town with his mother⁵⁸ his sister, and a servant. His curate was named Artaud.

4.1. Barge's severity toward Rebod

We have already mentioned that in his memoirs, Barge refers to the parish priest as being vain, authoritarian "...greedy for possessions and honours". In chapter LVI of his memoirs, he deplors his "unceasing insistence on his authority", his desire to control the duties of the sacristan as well as those of the bell ringers. Barge also reproaches him for wanting to prohibit people from dancing (Ch. LVI).

What are we to think of such a severe appraisal which may appear very partisan and, when all is said and done, quite commonplace at a time when the clergy was trying to rebuild the parish structure and retake con-

trol of its fabric, now more or less confused with the municipal administration?

4.2. From Barge to Brother Jean-Baptiste

In chapters 4 and 5 of *The Life*, Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet paints in 1856 a rather conventional picture of the parish of Lavalla at the time of the arrival of the Founder in 1816. Thus, (p. 35), he writes: "...the parishioners of Lavalla were good people, full of faith, without sophistication or education". A certain number of people no longer went to confession and others only went to perform their Easter Duties, (Ch. 5, p. 48). The principal vices and abuses against which Champagnat struggled were drunkenness, evening gatherings⁵⁹, dancing, swearing⁶⁰, blasphemy, and the reading of bad books.

Such a description could well have applied to most parishes in France if not to all of Europe. One might ask oneself how bad books might have been the scourge of people who had just been described as being ignorant⁶¹. It is true, however, that venders would go from one farm to another

⁵⁶ OM 2, doc. 754, §2.

⁵⁷ We only know of a photo copy of the original which comes to us through the archives of the commune of Lavalla.

⁵⁸ However, the genealogy of one of her descendants establishes that she died in 1812, which is a very strong argument against the hypothesis of a Rebod being born in Marlihes in 1776.

⁵⁹ Evening get-togethers during the winter months were occasions of contact between young men and women, often leading to a dance.

⁶⁰ The expression used here connotes crude and vulgar language.

⁶¹ The fact is that peddlers sold all kinds of books to a population that was more literate than the elites believed.

selling thread, needles, trinkets as well as books considered a priori dangerous because not censored by the ecclesiastical authorities⁶². The fact is that the parish in Lavalla was a good one in which Catholic worship was never interrupted. Were the people ignorant? Their level of literacy may not have been very high, but was neither better nor worse than elsewhere, and they were certainly not uncultured. The Revolution had taught them how to be self-sufficient, and that would include the matter of religion. They had seen many parish priests and curates come and go since the death of Fr Gaumont in 1794 and their attitude toward the clergy had evolved.

To an extent, Brother Jean-Baptiste agrees with Barge in his evaluation of the pastor who, "...although a good priest... was not well liked" because he had a speech impediment that made his homilies irritating⁶³. The reason stated appears to be unsatisfactory⁶⁴. One might wonder about the nature of the impediment which could be less a difficulty in speaking than a tendency to say in public things that were disagreeable and even humiliating. Chapter 11 of *The Life* gives two such examples involving M. Champagnat that might shed some light on the issue:

"One Sunday while Marcellin was giving a short instruction to the faithful at the end of Compline, the Pastor suddenly burst into the Church through the main door and from there intoned the 'O crux ave', which ends Compline. The congregation, amazed and scandalized, turned in his direction and, as they listened to him sing, they stared at him with an air of disapproval which must have made clear to him how much his conduct was resented. When the pastor had finished singing, Father Champagnat continued with his instruction without showing the least sign of emotion or annoyance."

"On another occasion, while Marcellin was giving instructions for Confirmation, he pointed out that the minister for the sacrament was the Bishop. At that very moment, the pastor entered the church and shouted out: 'Priests can also administer this sacrament under certain conditions.' Although such performances were quite frequent, Father Champagnat responded with unflinching patience."

It mentions another fault of the pastor that Barge never mentions: his tendency to drink which would have scandalized the parish. Fr Étienne Bedoin who was parish priest of Lavalla from 1824-1864 disapproved of the observation made by Brother Jean-Baptiste, but does not deny it: "...it would do no good to make public what only the little circle of Lavalla knew." The unfortunate reputation of the parish priest on this point may also have come from the support he gave to the drunken school master.

⁶² See: *The Life*, Ch. 5, p. 55, which describes his struggle against bad books and his introducing a library of good books. (Translator's note: the original French edition of *The Life* will be used throughout this article for references to chapters and pages.)

⁶³ Ch. 4, p. 37.

⁶⁴ In his critique of *The Life*, Fr Bedoin, Rebod's successor, is critical of this judgment. See: "Documents Maristes" no. 1, Rome, 1982 which provides an analysis.

But is it necessary to accord so much importance to a fault which the local inhabitants, themselves given to drink at least during festive occasions, looked on with a certain indulgence? It could be that the departure of the schoolmaster in 1819 and Champagnat's sobriety in this regard restrained the pastor from going too far. What is more, Fr Rebod became chaplain of the Ursulines in Saint Chamond in 1825, a ministry that presupposed behaviour beyond reproach and an ability to preach effectively. To summarize the situation: Fr Rebod was a parish priest jealous of his authority and wanted to run his parish as in former times. That is besides what Barge accuses him of.

4.3. Rebod's difficulties with Champagnat

Rebod had the same authoritarian attitude toward his curate. However, the key to understanding their basic differences lay deeper. Rebod looked upon the parish as a territory to administer whereas Champagnat saw the role of the priest as a missionary one: more respectful of the civil authorities, winning the hearts of people, and including lay people in his ministry. That is why he founded the brothers.

Their basic differences provoked a conflict whose developments are summarized in chapter eleven of *The Life* (p. 119-120).

"The pastor of Lavalla, who had been among the first to find fault with the good priest, criticized his plans

for the brothers and kept M. Bouchard informed of developments. He intensified his opposition to him.... The Rev. Pastor even denigrated him before his brothers and tried to encourage them to leave the Congregation. He offered to take the best among them to serve him as household helpers. He told many others that he could find gainful employment for them in the world or that they could enter into other communities.

When Brother Louis was sent to Bourc-Argental in 1823, he did everything possible to keep him and tried to dissuade him from obedience: 'I am your pastor. You are originally from this parish', he said to him. 'Don't listen to Father Champagnat. He doesn't know what he is doing.'

In notes for his memoirs written toward 1830 and based largely on the testimony of Father Champagnat, Fr Bourdin⁶⁵ gives, in a summarised way, details of the tension between the parish priest and his curate allowing us to reconstruct the various stages that it went through. As early as 1817, Champagnat tried to persuade the pastor to purchase the Bonner residence with the intent of turning it into a school and the cornerstone of his undertaking. As the pastor refused, Champagnat bought it himself. The pastor then incited some discontent between the Bonner father and son, forcing Champagnat to purchase the house in 1818 under more onerous conditions. Finally, the parish priest provided some money for the purchase.

With the approval of the parish priest, the brothers began receiving children. This caused competition with the alcoholic schoolmaster, whom the

⁶⁵ OM2, doc. 754

priest supported but who had to leave in 1819. Probably at the end of the previous year, a party no doubt supported by the pastor, went before the Vicar General Bochart, with the accusation that Champagnat was having un-authorized meetings with young people (no doubt the brothers), and misappropriating donations. However, Champagnat seems to have easily defended himself, and by moving in with the Brothers at the end of 1819, thereby declared his independence from the pastor and that of his undertaking as well. All of this no doubt occurred with at least the tacit approval of M. Bochart. In order to minimize the impact of the episode and soothe the self esteem of the pastor, he moved in with the brothers at night. The minor conflict between the parish priest and his curate begun in 1817 ended in 1819 with the defeat of the parish priest. We might ask ourselves if, as a result of this, the moral authority in the parish passed from the parish priest to his curate.

Did Rebod play a role in a new and far more serious attack probably in 1820, one involving the principal of the college at Saint Chamond, and the parish priest of Saint Pierre in Saint Chamond, M. Dervieux, who was also president of the canton's Committee of Public Instruction? One may suppose that his reserve and bad humour continued but from then on the problem lay at a higher level.

4.4. Reaching a certain mutual agreement

The differences between the two were not without periods of mutual understanding. Rebod seems to have been a somewhat weak character, quick to violently oppose the initiatives of his curate, yet inclined to laissez-faire in case these proved sound. And, when all is said and done, in spite of occasional outbursts, the pastor and his curate lived in relative harmony from 1816 to 1824. Brother Jean-Baptiste⁶⁶ gives all the credit to Father Champagnat but one must admit that a curate full of initiatives and whose work was drawing attention was not most comfortable of assistants. The pastor, however, never appears to have requested that his curate be replaced. Furthermore, would all parishioners completely agree with a curate who was ready to denounce intemperance, and go out at night to put an end to dances in the hamlets, as Brother Jean-Baptiste describes at length⁶⁷. It might well have been that at times Rebod had to act as arbiter between parishioners and curate.

Concerning the relationship between the two men, we have the significant report of Inspector Guillard who came to visit Lavalla on the 20th of April, 1822. His visit came after having visited Bourg Argental and Saint Sauveur⁶⁸ where he discovered that the teachers were "...some so called

⁶⁶ *The Life*, Ch. 4, pp. 39-40

⁶⁷ *The Life*, Ch. 5, pp. 52-55

⁶⁸ The 22nd and 23rd of April.

brothers ... formed by the curate of Lavalla whom they referred to as their Superior General⁶⁹.”

When he arrived in Lavalla, he noted: “The parish priest (a poor poet)⁷⁰, is very unhappy with his curate who, in truth, does not have any Latin students⁷¹ but who has 12-15 young country boys that he is training in the method of the [Christian] Brothers to spread them through the parishes.”

M. Rebod, therefore, did not support what was said about Champagnat in Saint Chamond. Having seen the brothers perform in Saint Sauveur and Bourg Argental, however, the inspector did not let it go at that and the parish priest had to recognize that his curate: “...had gone too far by wishing to set himself up as superior of a congregation without being officially authorised and having himself given the inheritances⁷² of these young men who could be victims should the congregation fail.” Previously, he had taken care to point out that “he agreed with his curate on every issue” except that dealing with the congregation. Guillard then visited “the location of the congregation” which he found to be poor and dirty, but did not see any of the brothers. Interestingly enough, there was never any question about the communal school.

The visitation seems to have taken place as follows: word came to Lavalla from Bourg Argental or from Saint Sauveur that an inspection would soon be made and the brothers and those in formation were removed. Unlike the visitation of the two previous parishes, Guillard found no brother⁷³, and the pastor did not avow immediately that his curate was setting up a congregation but a kind of normal school destined for rural teachers. As this pious lie could not stand up for long, Champagnat had to then acknowledge his project. Guillard understood. It would be useless for him to go any further and look for the brothers he knew were somewhere in the commune.

In this instance, then, Fr Rebod tried to protect Champagnat’s work. Had not Guillard previously visited Bourg Argental and Saint Sauveur, he might have succeeded. As for his point of view about the congregation being formed, it was quite moderate and not without some pertinence. It sums up as well the opinion of many of the clergy of the region. Finally, Rebod never accused Champagnat of acting without due authorization from the diocese.

Other reported anecdotes reveal a Rebod who was generally accommodating. Bourdin notes in his memoirs that on the issue of the purchase of the

⁶⁹ OM 1, Doc. 75.

⁷⁰ A person who claims to make poetic verses but is without talent.

⁷¹ So he is not running a college as the principal of Saint Chamond accuses him of.

⁷² Their inheritance.

⁷³ The eight postulants from la Haute-Loire arrived at the end of March.

Bonner home in the years 1817-1818, the parish priest ended by making a contribution⁷⁴. It may be that on the death of the cantor of the parish in 1816, he had hired J.M. Granjon to succeed him⁷⁵. *The Life* (Ch. IX, p. 371) has another interesting anecdote: "The parish priest of La Valla, passing through the dining room one day at supper, noticed on the table⁷⁶ the sole course, a salad. Besides, there was hardly enough to satisfy the eight Brothers seated at each table. 'Poor children!' he sympathized with a shrug of his shoulders, 'I could carry off your whole supper in one hand!'⁷⁷"

Besides this anecdote pointing to a community of at least 16 members, it presents a parish priest who is at ease with the brothers and not without compassion. The diocesan collection of documents leading to the beatification⁷⁸ offers the testimony of Joseph Violet, a boarder, who relates an event that took place in 1822 while the residence in Lavalla was being expanded: "One day, he (Champagnat) was challenged by the pastor to lift a large stone with the mason who was helping him, and he succeeded in putting it in place." Finally, Bourdin's memoirs

makes reference to Fr Rebeau's embarrassment upon having received a letter from Fr Bochard dealing with accusations against Champagnat that perhaps originated with him and who did not know how to present it to him⁷⁹. All in all, Rebaud appears to be a good and intelligent person but a little unstable of character; one who did not know how to make himself accepted by his parishioners and who found himself outshone by his enterprising curate.

4.5. Of greater significance: the Seyve - Champagnat disagreement (1824)

It was at the time of preparation for the construction of the Hermitage in the spring of 1824, (*The Life*, pp. 123-124), that he was going indirectly to play a significant role in Marist beginnings. A petition was circulated in the parish demanding his replacement. *The Life* claims that a member of the clergy was behind it. However, Fr Bedoin assigned as pastor of Lavalla on May 24, 1824, following this affair⁸⁰ would criticize this interpretation⁸¹. It would be good to compare what is described in *The Life* side by side with its rebuttal.

⁷⁴ OM 2, doc. 754, ¶ 3: "...and he helped, providing money."

⁷⁵ Memoirs of M. Bourdin: (separate paragraph) ¶ 8 "...cantor died young....We need a man like the one you described to me". One might suppose that such a conversation took place at the end of 1816. The position would have provided J.M. Granjon with a source of income. Champagnat then persuades him to settle in the village.

⁷⁶ Table setting.

⁷⁷ The episode reveals a certain familiarity between the community and the pastor. His attitude of pity toward the community could also be interpreted as a criticism against their superior.

⁷⁸ Transcribed by Brother Carazo, Rome, 1991, p. 85

⁷⁹ OM 2, doc. 754 ¶ 16.

⁸⁰ OM 1, doc. 104

⁸¹ The "Documents Maristes" series, no. 1, Rome, 1982, p. 16.

<i>The Life</i> p. 123-124	M. Bedoin
<p>“When Father Champagnat returned to Lavalla, he found the parish to be in a state of disarray. A member of the clergy who had been requested by the ailing pastor to assist with the Easter liturgies used Marcellin’s absence to stir up the parishioners against their pastor. At his instigation he initiated a petition calling for the pastor to be transferred and be replaced by the instigator himself. Although Father Champagnat had ample reasons to find fault with the pastor, he found no adequate reason to justify the proposal and did not hesitate to side with the pastor and support him. He called in the leaders of the parish who had supported the petition and expressed his discontentment with the proposal pleading with them to reverse the process. He even directly expressed his strong objections to the clerical instigator and told him that he would have nothing to do with him, which made him very upset.”</p>	<p>was Marcellin himself and not the pastor who requested that the priest in question come to Lavalla to celebrate the Easter liturgies. In order to better persuade him to come; he went out of his way to present his request to him personally which was not an easy thing to do. He finally agreed to come. To claim that the replacement was the one who instigated the petition requesting that the pastor be transferred is utterly false. M. Champagnat was not unaware of the controversy taking place in the parish and had big expectations for the priest who at the time shared his vision. As one whose hair has turned white over the years and whose reputation and respect has remained intact, this priest is ready to provide evidence and testify against the unjust calumny that was perpetrated⁸².”</p>

The priest in question was Father Jean-Baptiste Seyve (1789-1866), an aspirant to the Society of Mary. He was pastor of Arthun in 1821 and withdrew on October 20, 1823 “...it was no doubt then that he came to Lavalla to assist Fr Champagnat⁸³.” Furthermore, Fr Bourdin also mentions in his memoirs: “... Fr Seyve also supported the work⁸⁴”.

The effort to undermine the pastor and Champagnat’s intervention occurred in the springtime and thus before the construction of the Hermitage since Fr Seyve was named pastor of Burdigne on May 5, 1824⁸⁵. Having lost him as a replacement, Champagnat asked the ecclesiastical authorities to appoint Fr Courveille in his place⁸⁶. On May 12, 1824, Arch-

⁸² The 1989 edition of *The Life* does not include M. Bedoin’s rebuttal which can be seen as a significant omission.

⁸³ OM 4, p. 354. It is an indication that even before the arrival of Mgr. de Pins the diocese supported M. Champagnat who began seeking a location for his undertaking as early as 1823.

⁸⁴ OM 2, DOC 754 § 29

⁸⁵ OM 1, doc. 98.

⁸⁶ Letters of M. Champagnat no. 30, ¶, August-September 1833

bishop de Pin's council authorized the latter to come to assist him "...in his institution of the brothers of the schools⁸⁷." He was not, therefore, assigned as a substitute curate, but as an auxiliary to the work of Champagnat who no doubt had similar hopes of Fr Seyve. Courveille withdrew from Epercieux on June 30, 1824, (OM 1, doc. 111), at the time of the beginning of the construction of the Hermitage.

The withdrawal of Fr Seyve and the intervention of Champagnat were not enough to lessen the campaign against Fr Rebod. The register of decisions made by the archdiocese (OM 1, doc. 103), records that on May 24, 1824: "The complaints against Fr Rebod, in charge of Lavalla, continue without end." It was decided therefore that: " 1) Fr. Bedoin, curate of Saint Marie in Saint Étienne be assigned as parish priest of Lavalla; 2) that Fr Rebod be advised of this decision as tactfully as possible and made aware of the fact that he could still without difficulty stay in Lavalla."

The leaders of the Archdiocese therefore gave in to the campaign of denigration but in encouraging Fr Rebod to remain in the parish they sought to give the impression that his replacement had another cause. Finally, an honourable solution to the problem was found when Fr Rebod was assigned as chaplain to the Ursulines of Saint Chamond. This contradicts the interpretation found in *The*

Life that claims "...the pastor of Lavalla's conduct had caught up with him." The fact is that the petition affected a man who was already ill and who died in his 46th year on January 27, 1825.

Because it was written by someone closer to the situation, M. Bedoin's version is much more credible than that given in *The Life*. It has the advantage of showing that the parish experienced some upset as a result of the commitment of Champagnat to the construction of the Hermitage and his many involvements outside the parish. It was as if the authority of the pastor depended on that of his curate. Fr Seyve, then, found himself in an impossible situation between a parish priest on the defensive, a curate in name occupied with extraneous concerns, and an opposition group resolved perhaps to blame Fr Rebod for Champagnat's absence from the parish.

Whatever the case may be, this episode had long-term effects on the beginnings of the Society of Mary. Fr Seyve was at odds with Champagnat and was excluded from the project. As a result of the crisis, Marcellin was forced to install a man who would later compromise his entire effort. It would not be inappropriate however, to note that, in spite of claiming to be the man elected to direct the Society, Courveille was not Champagnat's first choice and that he had certain reservations about him from the beginning.

⁸⁷ OM 1, doc 101

CONCLUSION

As we come to the conclusion of our study, we find a Fr Rebod who is portrayed rather differently from the way in traditional Marist accounts. Among his major shortcomings we find a somewhat temperamental character quick to wounding words, and an authoritarianism poorly concealing

feelings of insecurity. His quarrels with Champagnat appear more irritations than serious matters and rather typical of relations between parish priests and curates. What is more, Champagnat was certainly not a person easy to deal with. The real problem with Rebod was that he did not succeed in having himself adopted by his parishioners, a deficiency that would



Bulletin de l'institut (1913)

have major effects on the development of Champagnat's project by indirectly bringing about the replacement of Fr Seyve by Fr Courveille.

5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY OF LA VALLA ABOUT 1815

We can have a very clear idea of the demography, social and economic life of Lavalla at the time of Champagnat's arrival thanks to the *Table of the population of the commune of Lavalla 1815*. Its 11 pages in format 36 X 24 consist of seven columns showing from left to right for each household: name of hamlet, family and first names of individuals, profession, number of male children, number of female children, number of servants and finally the total of the habitants of each home. Thus, we learn that in the hamlet of Maisonnettes Jean-Baptiste Rivat is a ploughman; that he has 4 boys and 3 girls, which makes a household of 9 persons with his wife. Unfortunately, the document is not complete and the hamlet of Les Palais, in the extreme south of the commune, where Champagnat will meet the young Montagne in 1816, has been left out.

5.1. The burden of the requisitions of 1814-1815

This table has served as well to establish the quantity of requisitions imposed by the foreign armies. Jean-Louis Barge also gives us an insight in Chapter LIII of his memoirs: "At this time

the requisitions of all types of foodstuffs and fodder went on all the time". As the government made provision for indemnities "... le mayor," says Barge, "had a list drawn up for the recovery of the expenses he had made for the aforementioned troops." The return of Napoléon imposed a new municipal authority and Barge found himself assistant to the new mayor Tissot, who

"... walked from hamlet to hamlet to collect the receipts of the tax collector relative to the aforementioned list in order to have the share of each inhabitant reimbursed ... I was responsible for making a summary by alphabetic order and by column in the form of a list to present to the Prefect with a petition signed by almost all the inhabitants who knew how to write."

But the requisitions of 1814 were not much since the Allies quickly withdrew. On the other hand, after Waterloo, France would be occupied by foreign troops who would live off the land until the end of 1818. It is not insignificant to mention in passing that, when Champagnat arrived in Lavalla, France was still subject to military occupation and therefore to requisitions.

The document considered here seems to us, therefore, to correspond to two dates: a population table made up in 1815 and, superimposed on this, a table of the requisitions exacted in the course of 1815-1818 on the following products: hay, rye, barley, oats, truffes (potatoes). Practically, it means that the same household is seen from two different angles. This is why, in the example below, we represent each inhabitant by two lines.

Place	Name	Profession	Sons	Daughters	Servants	total
Main town and his wife	J.L. Basson	bourgeois	0	0	2	3
Hay : 12 rye : 40	J.L. Basson and his wife	bourgeois	Barley : 2	Oats : 15	Truffes : 30	
Main town	J.L. Barge	farmer	0	0	0	2
Hay : 1 Rye : 3	J.L. Barge	farmer	Barley : 0	Oats : 1	Truffes : 5	
Maisonnettes	J.B. Rivat and wife	ploughman	4 sons	3 daughters		9
Hay : 3 Rye : 18	J.B. Rivat and wife	ploughman	Barley : 1	Oats : 5	Truffes : 18	

We have here an idea of the weight of the requisitions in terms of wealth: M. Basson, the only member of the bourgeoisie in Lavalla, pays the maximum; Jean-Baptiste Rivat, father of Gabriel, the future Brother François, is a well-off peasant and Barge a peasant of average means. The units accompanying the figure of the products requisitioned are not precise but it is almost certain that, for the grains and potatoes, it concerns the bichet of 27.30 litres. For the hay, it may be measured in cart loads of uncertain volume. Thus, M. Basson would have supplied 1100 litres of rye,

Barge, 82 litres and J. B. Rivat nearly 500. In addition, these products requisitioned give us a good idea of the agricultural produce of Lavalla: plenty of hay, rye and potatoes, very little barley and a little more oats.

5.2. Payment of the requisitions and wealth

It should be noted also that many households do not pay the five products required but only some of them. The reasons for this inequality may be that some places are more or less fa-

avorable to such and such cultivation than others, but it may also reflect the relative wealth of the inhabitants, ploughmen paying in general 4 or 5 of the products required and day labour-

ers from 3 to 1. In systematising the data of the document, we can thus get an approximate view of the range of wealth in the hamlets.

Localities	5 and 4/5	3/5	2 and 1/5	0/5	Number of households
The town	25 %	6,8 %	50 %	17,2 %	58
La Loge, Surdel, Le Coing, Lolagnier	66	33	0	0	9
Laval	50	16	32	0	12
Le Mont	33	50	16	0	6
Maisonnettes	54	36	9	0	11
Chomiol	60	0	40	0	5
Le Bessat	0	88	11	0	27
Chabourelon, Le Toil, Les Gallots	0	100	0	0	7
Le Bréat, L'Ollagnery, La Fourchina	0	90	10	0	10
Larmusière, La Moneteyre, Chez Colomb	33	50	16	0	6
Les Chazaud, Les Pervenches, Le Rossin, Le Citré, Vasseras	61	30	7	0	13
Luzernaud	52	29	17	0	17
Le Sardier	37	66	0	0	3
Le Bos	0	61	38	0	13
Les Roberts	0	50	50	0	6
La Cognelière, Bourchanin, La Comba	0	57	42	0	7
La Fara	0	39	60	0	28
La Rive	50	0	50	0	6
Les Mures	85	0	14	0	7
Saleyre	75	12	12	0	8
Revicola, La Grenary, La Logne, Lacours	44	22	33	0	9
Sezinieu, Le Planil, La Fojasse	70	30	0	0	10
Le Crozet	33	44	16	5	18
Bertois, les Saignes	43	36	20	0	30
Pioré	42	14	28	14	7
Gurney, Le Ney, Chomienne, La Most	0	100	0	0	8
Ceres ?	16	25	25	33	12
Les Cotes, Le Pinay, La Combe	75	25	0	0	12
Les Surchettes, La Cote	60	40	0	0	10
Le Fleurieu	0	100	0	0	7
Fonfoi	70	11	11	5	17
Pont Ch., Rossillol, Soulages	76	15	7	0	13
La Chirat, Pialussin	90	9	0	0	11
Average	39.3 %	39.2 %	18.8 %	2.2 %	100 %

It is normal for the town not to provide a great diversity of products because part of the population is involved in craft activities and has little land. Nevertheless, this seems to be the place where there is a strong contrast between rich and poor. Moreover, the first activity of the brothers will consist in gathering in and feeding the poor children of the town. For the hamlets, we observe that those delivering 4 or 5 of the products requisitioned are mainly in the lower part of the commune, where the conditions of climate permit diversified and more remunerative crops. This seems to be the case of Pialussin. In contrast, La Fara, in the upper valley of the Gier, appears a place typical of poor agriculture compensated by exploitation of the forest.

5.3. Social hierarchy

In general, the social hierarchy is clearly indicated in the first lines of the document which begins with the *notables*: the parish priest Rebod, living with his mother, his sister and a servant ; his curate, M. Artaud ; M. Jean-Louis Basson ; M. Lagnet ex-notary, and the mayor Jean-Claude Ronchard. Apart from these *notables* who appear to have right to the title of *sieur*, the rest of the population are divided into peasants and artisans.

For the peasants, the document distinguishes *laboureurs*, *journaliers*, *cultivateurs* and *fermiers*.. The first and second terms are classic, for almost everywhere in France the *laboureur* (ploughman) is the one

who has at his disposal at least a yoke for ploughing. In principle, he is a well-off peasant. The *journaliers* (day labourer), on the other hand, is one who gains his bread from day to day: he is a poor peasant. The status of *cultivateurs* (cultivator/farm gardener) and *fermier* (farmer) may be considered somewhere between the ploughman and the day labourer. In any case, the peasant hierarchy seems to be established quantitatively thus :

- Ploughmen : about 176
- Farmers : 40
- Cultivators : 11
- Day labourers : 148

As for the artisans, they are especially present in the town and in the hamlet of La Fara. Their economic condition appears very diverse. Most of them, besides, must have the right to some land.

- Masons: 3
- Shoemakers: 3
- Drapers: 6
- Carters: 2
- Forest ranger: 1
- Pit sawyers: 2
- Blacksmiths: 2
- Carpenters: 2
- Makers of soft furnishings (The 10 sisters of the congregation)
- Weavers: 2
- Tailor: 1
- Millers: 3
- *Mde* (?): 1

To these categories, can be added 134 servants, 16 households headed by a reasonably well-off widow, and 6 houses which seem particularly

poor since they provide no requisitions, not even potatoes.

This then appears to be the village of La Valla :

- 5 *notables*
- 176 relatively well-off peasants
- A more or less equivalent group of average or poor peasants
- 40 or so artisans
- A proletariat of 134 servants
- About thirty poor people and widows.

All distributed across 434 *feux* (literally, "hearths" – that is, households), 66 hamlets and localities, on the slopes of Pilat between 460 and 1160 m. above sea level.

5.4. Demography of Lavalla

The hamlets, very numerous, are of very uneven importance. The following table gives a precise idea of the principal hamlets and the county town :

Hamlet	Population	Number of of feux	Number of inhabitants per feu
La Valla (town)	228	60	3.8
Laval	85	12	7
Maisonnettes	55	11	5
Le Bessat	127	27	4.7
Luzernod	88	17	5.1
Le Bos	63	13	4.8
La Fara	134	28	4.7
Saleyre	48	8	6
Le Crozet	76	18	4.8
Les Saignes	119	30	3.9
Cérès [?]	47	12	3.9
Fonfoi	80 ?	17	4.3 [?]
Total	1100	253	4.3

Thus, almost half the population live in demographic units comprising at least 8 houses and close to 50 inhabitants. The population of the town appears to be slightly above 10 % of

the population of the commune. The most difficult aspect of Champagnat's ministry, then, is not acting in the town and the important hamlets but to reach the myriad of little hamlets.

5.5. The “sisters of the congregation”

We have seen that Fr Rebod did not live alone but that his presbytery was occupied by five people: himself, his mother and sister, a servant and a curate. This could contribute to explaining why Marcellin Champagnat, as soon as he arrived, looked around to buy a house which would allow him a little independence for his apostolate.

We also learn that there were in the town 10 “sisters of the congregation” practising the trade of making soft furnishings. Apparently poor, they provided a very modest requisition in potatoes. J. B. Galley notes that in 1806 they appear, already 10 in number, in a departmental table of “sisters vowed to visiting the poor at home and ... to the instruction of youth”. Galley classes them among the 244 “Sisters of Saint Joseph” of the department, this title not meaning belonging to a congregation but being more or less equivalent to a *béate*.

In another work Galley cites a document of 12 June 1795 which describes very well their status under the *Ancient Régime*:

“The generally less wealthy girls were linen maids, ribbon makers, retail sellers, etc. Everywhere they taught the young girls for fees agreed on

with the parents; they made no public vow which deprived them of their civil rights; they became associates, on entering, by an act passed before a notary stating the dowry they were bringing ... ”

They were, therefore, associations of private right, which were very active in the resistance to the Revolution and, for that reason, often denounced by the revolutionary authorities who were inclined to exaggerate their influence. Galley, who had no liking for them, also acknowledges their role among the women and says :

“One sees these country sisters weaving ribbons on a small scale, like poor people ; trying to teach (the girls and little children) to read the prayers of the diocese and the first pages of the catechism.”

After the Revolution, a certain number of these communities, sometimes partly made up of former religious, became affiliated to the reborn congregations. This seems to have been the case with the sisters of Lavalla, for the Brother annalist indicates that this community founded in 1533 joined the congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of Lyon in 1803. But they continued to take the habit and make profession at Lavalla.

“Father Champagnat as curate presided at several of these ceremonies: his signature is seen there⁹⁰.”

⁸⁸ *L'élection de Saint Etienne à la fin de l'Ancien Régime*, St Etienne, 1903, p. 567.

⁸⁹ *Saint Etienne et son district pendant la Révolution*, St Etienne, 1907, t. 3 p. 85.

⁹⁰ *Annales de Lavalla-en-Gier*, fascicule transcribed by Br. Louis Vibert, Lavalla, 2009, p. 38.

In founding a group of brothers who were both manual workers and teachers, Champagnat created a similar work for the men and boys.

5.6. Les palais, Champagnat and young Montagne

It was to Les Palais, the hamlet in the extreme south of La Valla, on the border with the parish of Tarentaise, that Marcellin Champagnat was called to administer to the young Montagne. Unfortunately, the fourth page of the census of 1815, after listing the inhabitants of le Bessat, indicates "les Palais" but gives no name at all, leaving a blank space of two centimetres necessary to describe four households, one of which

was certainly the Montagne one. It is understandable that the censor did not judge it useful to make a detour for such a small population and whose wealth he probably judged similar to that of the inhabitants of Le Bessat.

Les Palais would, therefore, be one of those frontier places depending on two different authorities and so rather neglected as being without a very clear status and too distant from their official spiritual centre. Basically, the religious ignorance of young Montagne, which we should not perhaps exaggerate, would be the result of this marginal situation. The death register of the commune gives some details on the young man and his entourage.

"In the year 1816 and on 29 October at six o'clock in the morning, before us, Jean-Baptiste Berne, mayor and civil state officer of the commune of la Valla, canton of Saint Chamond, Departement of la Loire, appeared François Montagne carpenter in the place les Palais commune of la Valla aged fifty-seven years and Jean-Baptiste Montagne day labourer of the same place of fifty-two years who declared to us that Jean-Baptiste Montagne son of the said François Montagne and of Clémence Porta had died [yesterday at seven o'clock in the evening] in their home in the said place of les Palais aged seventeen years. Following this declaration and the presentation of the corpse we drew up the present act which the said informants could not sign because not knowing how to do so.

Berne m[ayor]⁹⁴."

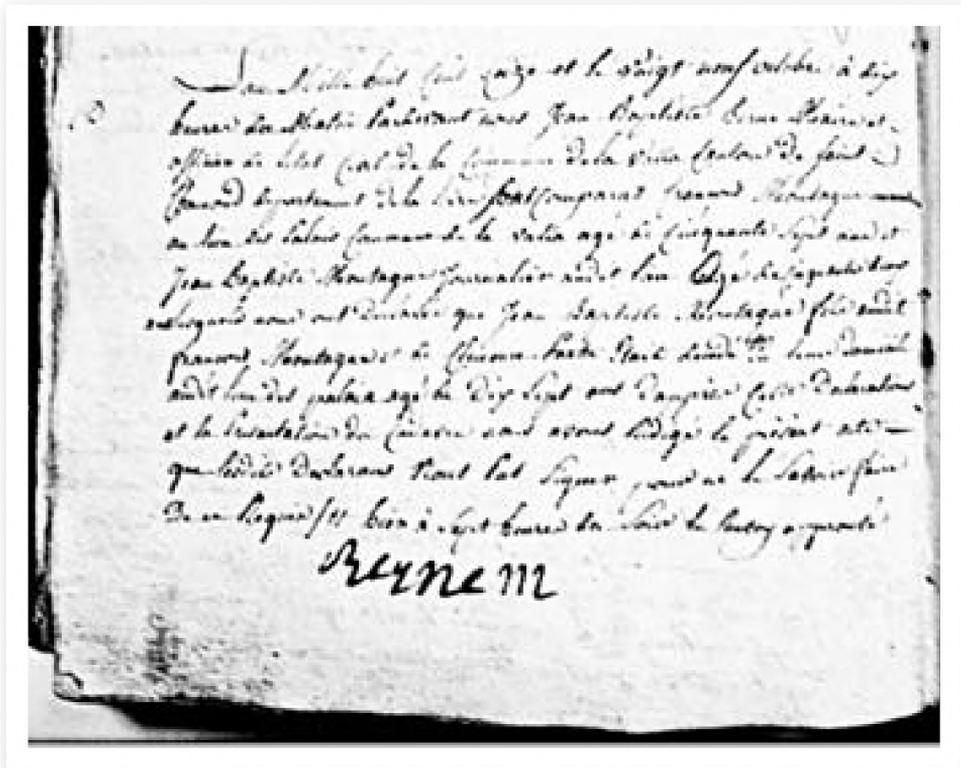
⁹¹ The Bourdin memoir speaks of a child at the foot of Pilat. This is not exactly the case for young Montagne who is a young man living on the plateau.

⁹² He is dying and obviously no longer has full use of his faculties.

⁹³ The part in brackets having been forgotten, it was added at the end with the note: « the approved version ».

⁹⁴ Communal Archives of Lavalla.

The father and paternal uncle of young Montagne appear to have no education and to be of a very average economic condition.



Death certificate of young Montagne

5.7. The deaths of young people at the same period

Young Montagne was certainly not the only young man assisted by Champagnat in his last moments: the civil estate register, in fact, gives the following deaths during his first year in Lavalla.

Date	Name	Age	Place
16 September 1816	J.B. Frécon	24	Les Fleurieux
29 October 1816	J.B. Montagne	17	Les Palais
17 January 1817	J.C. Tardy	11	Les Palais
24 May 1817	G. Farat	20	La Petite Gerbe
31 May 1817	F. Matricon	7	Laval
7 July 1817	F. Verney	24	Le Bessat
26 September 1817	J.J. Chavanne	17	Les Mures

5.8. Le Bessat, poor but homogeneous

Even if the meeting with J.B. Montagne played a decisive role, it is clear that Champagnat found himself very quickly faced with similar cases which could only have confirmed him in his decision. This is why, justifying to Fr Bourdin his haste in founding the brothers, he will simply say, “a sick child at the foot of Pilat” thinking of Montagne but most likely of the many other children and young people administered to by his care. This is why in the *Life* Br Jean-Baptiste also speaks of a child of twelve without specifying the place .

Le Bessat, close to Les Palais, seems at first sight poor: no one provides the requisition in hay or supplies any barley. On the other hand, nearly everyone is able to provide the other requirements, including the widows. So it is a hamlet of average economic condition but homogeneous, with a dominance of day labourers. Situated more than 1000m above sea level, it also experiences climatic conditions much rougher than the rest of the parish and its agricultural production reflects this. Four or five plougmen stand out and two poor people, one a widow, who cannot contribute much.

LE BESSAT	Status	Hay	Rye	Barley	Oats	Truffles
Cl. Matrat + wife.	Forest ranger		7		4	8
Jn. Tamet + w.	Day labourer		4		4	8
Widow Merlioux	?		3		2	6
Maurice Vernay + w. (+ mother)	dl.		6		4	6
Jn. Pichon + w.	dl.		4		4	6

⁹⁵ OM2, doc. 754, § 6. Les Palais is not at the foot of Pilat but on the plateau.

⁹⁶ Vie, ch. 6 p. 61.

Math. Bertail + w.	dl.		6		6	8
Jn. Bongrand + w.	dl.		4		4	6
Ant. Gourdon + w.	Ploughman		12		10	15
Et. Furet + w.	lab.		12		10	15
J.B. Mathoulin + w.	dl.		2		2	6
J.B. Drevet + w.	dl.		2		2	6
Widow Colla	?		2		2	6
J.B. Morel + w.	dl.		2		2	6
Jn. Beraud	dl.		2		2	6
J.B. Beraud + w.	dl.		2		2	6
P. Dufour + w.	dl.					6
Ant. Varnay + w.	dl.		4		4	5
Ant. Sud + w.	dl.		2		2	6
J.B. Macabeaud + w.	dl.		2		2	6
Jn. Varnay + w.	dl.		3		2	9
Widow Tardy called Pentouery	?					9
C. Pichon + w.	farmer		25			9
Cl. Tardy called Pentouery + w.	? (lab. ?)		10		10	20
Joseph Degraix	? (lab. ?)		25		10	20
Widow Bredoux	?		4		4	8
Widow Casson called Lange	?		4		4	8
Joseph Noir	? (dl.?)		8		6	8

We know that around 1819, Br Laurent (Jean-Claude Audras) began to work as catechist-teacher in this hamlet and that then (1820-22) he replaced his brother (Brother Louis) at Marlhes, to return in 1822-23 to Tarentaise, near Le Bessat, in the Latin school of the parish priest, M. Préher,⁹⁷ whence he went on Sundays to catechise the people of Le Bessat.⁹⁸

The activity of Brother Laurent in these three places reminds us that the people of Le Bessat were less directed towards La Valla and Saint Chamond than towards the plateau where Tarentaise, Bourg-Argental and Marlhes are situated, and thus towards the city of St Etienne which is reached through Tarentaise and Rochetaillée.

⁹⁷ Lettres de M.J.B. Champagnat, t. 2 répertoires, Ropme 1987, p. 516

⁹⁸ Vie, édition du bicentenaire, p. 92.

As Le Bessat is on the west-east route from St Etienne to the Rhône valley, it is not a remote place – as its numerous population testifies – but a place of transit with an economy like that of Marlihes: handicapped by the altitude but not suffering, like La Vallala, from steep slopes nor an unfavourable exposure to the sun. J.B. Galley also indicates that two fairs were held there each year. The specific character of Le Bessat is such that the hamlet will be established as a commune separate from La Vallala, thus connecting its administration more logically with its geography. The link with La Vallala, however, remains with the crossroads at the Croix de Chaubouret which ties the upper part of Lavalla to the main route from St Etienne to the Rhône valley.

For the Marist Brothers, this crossroad was not insignificant since Marist schools quickly spread to the south of Lavalla, Le Bessat constituting a sort of balcony by which the congregation reached an area that its founder knew well and where he knew the needs were great. For the Brothers, and particularly Brother Laurent, this country figured as mission territory: although economically relatively important, it was religiously on the margin of the parish⁹⁹. And it should not be forgotten that it was near Le

Bessat that Fr Champagnat and Brother Stanislas, lost in the snow, found refuge with the Donnet family.

5.9. The first brothers and the census

We have already spoken of the family of Jean-Baptiste Rivat in the hamlet of Maisonnnettes. At Pioré¹⁰⁰, we find the family of Jean-Marie Odrac (Audras), day labourer, composed of 8 persons, which gives the Institute two of its first Brothers: Louis and Laurent¹⁰¹. It does not provide any hay, but delivers 12 units of rye, one of barley, 3 of oats, and five of potatoes. Although the family is of average economic level, it does not neglect education since the future Brother Louis is already reading the *Pensez-y bien*¹⁰², a manual of popular devotion, which inspires him to enter the FSC.

The family of Antoine Couturier, son of Damien Couturier and Marguerite Bois, who joined the community on 1 January 1818, resides in the hamlet of Coingt, near Maisonnnettes, in the East of the commune. The father is a ploughman. The family has three boys and a girl. It is taxed at 12 units of rye, 1 of barley, 5 of oats and 15 of potatoes, like the Audras family.

⁹⁹ J.L. Barge records a case of infanticide at le Bessat.

¹⁰⁰ Variable spelling : le Péorey today ?

¹⁰¹ The censor mentions only one boy and one girl, but ends up, with the father and mother, at 8 persons.

¹⁰² *Biographies de quelques frères*, 1868, p. 1.

Barthélemy Badard, son of Jean-Marie Badard and Jeanne Marie Teillard (*Lettres* Vol. 2 p. 71) is a native of the hamlet of La Fara, in the upper Gier valley. His father is a day labourer. The family has 5 boys. It provides for a requisition of 7 units of potatoes. It is a family with little land and which is probably involved in some lower-level trades.

As for Brother Jean-Marie Granjon, the first disciple of Champagnat, we know that he made contact with him in October 1816, when he came looking for him on behalf of a sick person in La Rive, a hamlet situated at the very base of the commune, on the bank of the Gier as its name indicates. The census shows six households. The widow Pitiot, who delivers only 10 units of potatoes, works a mill with the help of a servant. She has a boy and a girl. Jean-Marie Galley and his wife are also millers. They have one son, 4 daughters and a servant. It was probably in one of these two houses that Jean-Marie Granjon worked.

The census, therefore, helps us see that the first disciples of Champagnat represent quite well the social hierarchy of Lavalla, from the plowman's son to the servant.

5.10. M. Basson, Bourgeois and friend of Champagnat

We have seen that the sole bourgeois of Lavalla, M. Basson, paid the most tax in requisitions. A widower or bachelor, in any case without children, he was one of the rare inhabitants of the commune to have two servants in his service. The Bourdin memoir, composed about 1829 (OM2/75§ 13) states: "M. Basson excellent man, advised, helped Fr Champagnat". In the *Life* Brother Jean-Baptiste reports that in May 1824 Fr Cholleton came to the Hermitage to lay the first stone and then went to dine with M. Basson "who was a rich man and great friend of the Brothers".

This friendship with a *notable* was precious to Champagnat. But the account books show no financial transaction between the two men. It may be supposed that Champagnat received gifts or loans from him which he did not feel useful to record, without counting the benefit of his influence in Lavalla and perhaps in his relations with the bourgeoisie of St Chamond.

¹⁰³ Ed. du bicentenaire ch. 12, p. 129

CONCLUSION

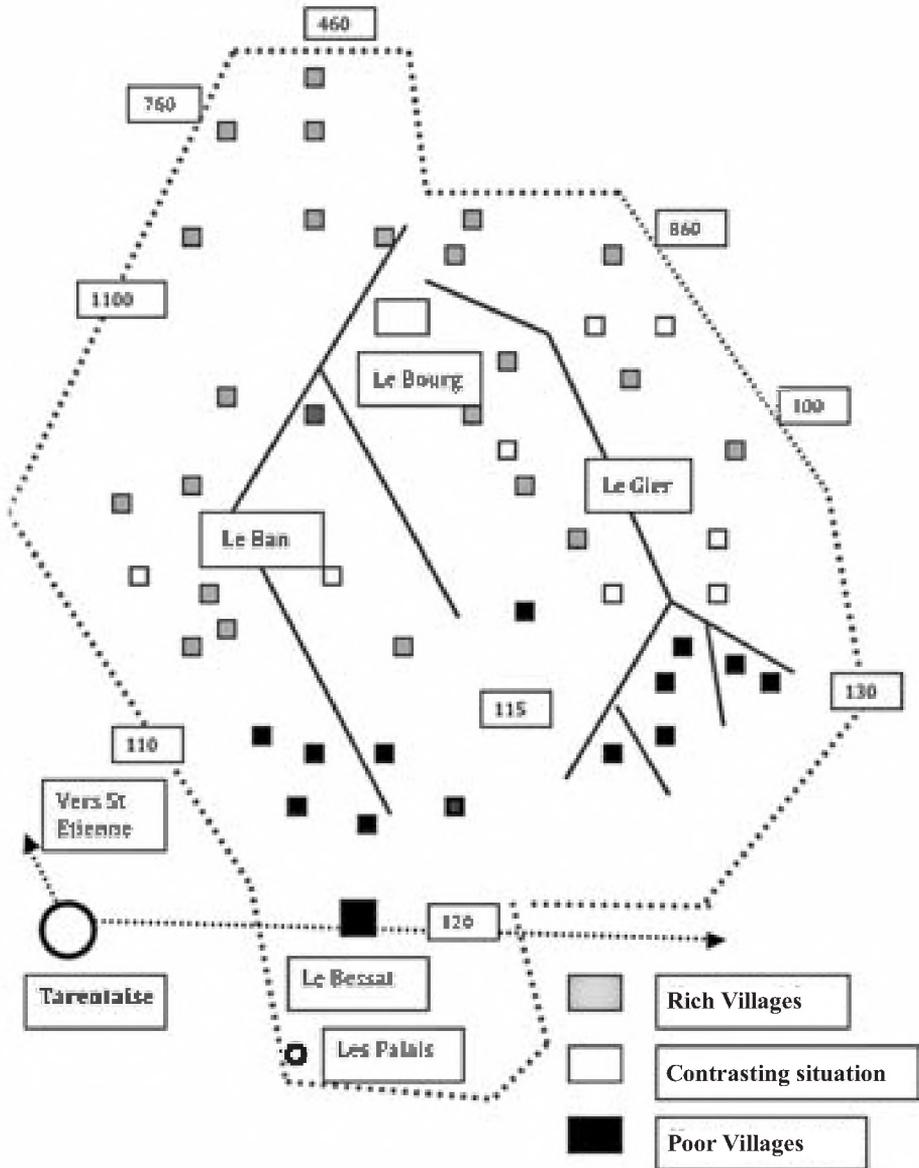
La Valla, therefore, was a commune divided socially, economically and perhaps culturally into four units corresponding more or less to the four areas of its settlement: the town, with a population divided between rich and poor, without a substantial intermediary class; the hamlets of the lower part of the commune and the west oriented towards Saint Chamond and rather well-off; the upper part of the commune, on the edge of the forest, much poorer; and finally the rim of the plateau, of average

wealth but homogeneous enough and in relationship with St Etienne, the Rhône valley or the plateau.

The infant institute of the Marist Brothers would first colonise this mountain area before crossing the Gier valley to install itself in 1823 at St Symphorien le Château on the other plateau formed by the Monts du Lyonnais. Finally, the installation at the Hermitage would show a determination to open up to the areas of the plains and the valleys with larger populations and easier of access, without however turning the back on the preceding phase.

To Saint Chamond

LA VALLA IN 1815



II. THE MATERIAL LIFE OF THE BROTHERS AT LAVALLA

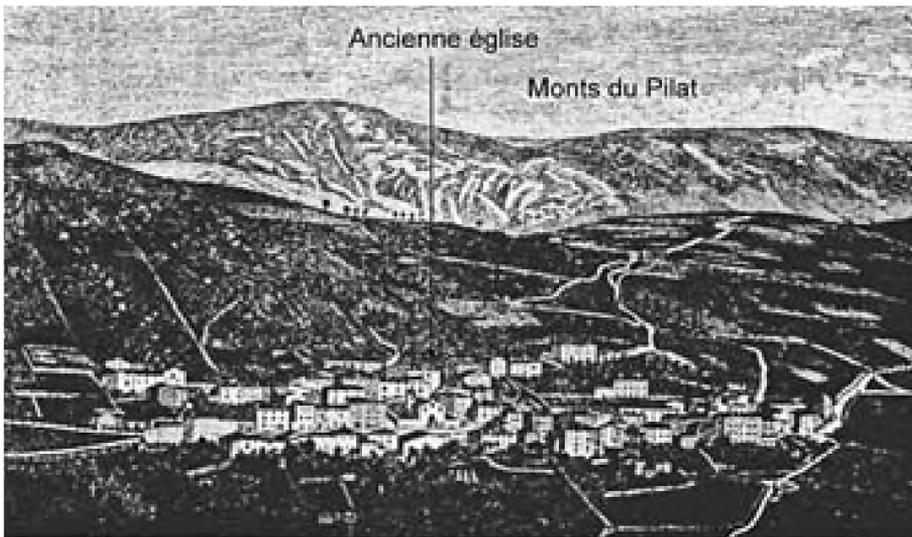


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1. THE LAVALLA PERIOD (1816-25)

The *Life of Fr Champagnat* by Br Jean-Baptiste remains an irreplace-

able document for our knowledge of the first years of the Institute because it draws on the testimonies of the actors and eyewitnesses of this history.



Vue panoramique du village de La Vallée en 1818.

Attempt at a chronology

Unfortunately, its chronology is only approximate.

Above all, the *Life* largely reflects the oral tradition of the Marist Brothers and offers often biased or partial interpretations of persons and events. For example, it blackens the character of Bochard, who seems to have protected Champagnat more than opposed him, and shows itself a little too favourable to Archbishop de Pins. From time to time, it piles up testimonies to the same fact, giving the impression that a series of events is involved. At other times, it mixes two distinct events. This is the case with the attacks on Champagnat's work: one coming from the parish of Lavalla, most likely in 1819, in which Champagnat seems to have easily won; the other coming from St Chamond, much more serious.

In addition, the *Life* projects onto the foundation years the organization familiar in the Institute after 1840 while, during the Lavalla years, the Brothers of Mary were not yet a congregation but, rather, an association of laymen without clear status. At this time, the words "brother" and "novitiate" did not have the precise meaning they would assume later on and there were no vows. Even parish priests, such as Fr Allrot of Marlhès, considered Lavalla to be a teacher-training school, and the brothers of their parish as school masters under their exclusive authority. A certain number of brothers thought much the same way. It would require all the

conviction of Champagnat and the most faithful brothers, as well as the support of the diocesan ecclesiastical authorities, to make it clear that his work was more ambitious than a simple training school in the pedagogy of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The foundation event that allowed the work of the Brothers of Mary to overcome these challenges is obviously the Marist pledge of 1816, but the *Life* of Champagnat hardly mentions this because, in the Brothers' tradition, the founding event was 2 January 1817. Besides, it was only slowly, during the Lavalla years, that Champagnat acquired, in the light of events, the certitude that his work was willed by God. The fidelity of the brothers in 1820, the support of Bochard, however ambiguous, and the arrival of the postulants from the Haute-Loire in 1822 were the major steps in forming this conviction.

The chronology below, established from a critical reading of the *Life* of Fr Champagnat and in the light of the historical documents of *Origines Maristes* and other sources, such as the *Annales de l'Institut du F. Avit* does not claim to be absolutely exact but is intended to give an overview of what is not yet a congregation but an association of apostolic laymen sharing the views of an inspired priest. It has seemed wise to us to propose three main axes for this period.

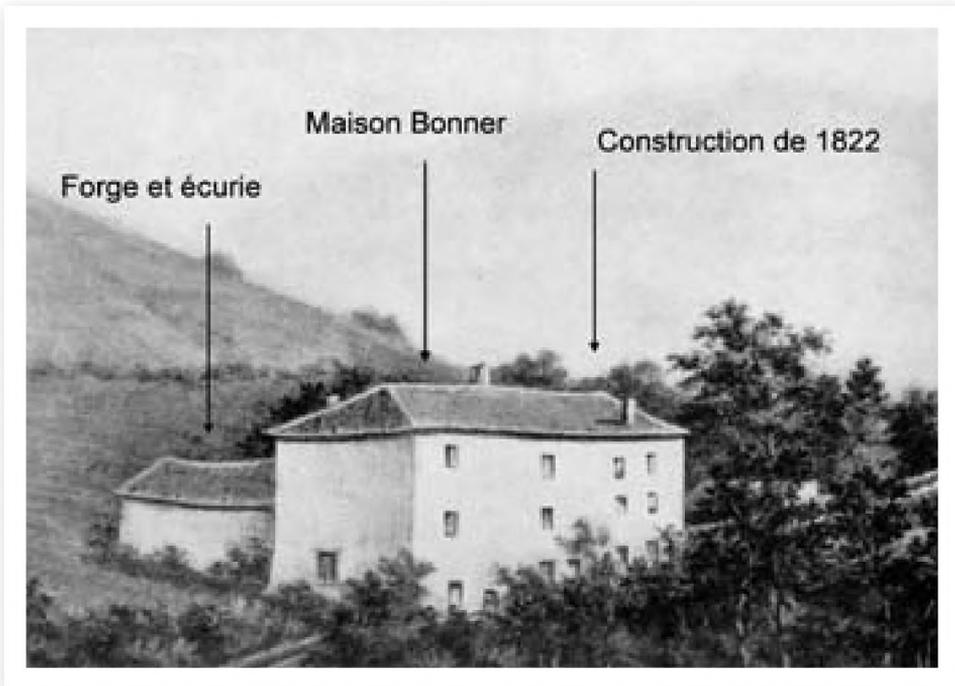
Champagnat: priest, founder	Champagnat, the brothers and the Society of Mary	Catechism and school
1. THE PROJECT (1816)		
	1816: Drawing up of the Pledge. Champagnat desires a branch of brothers in the S.M.	
22 July 1816: M. Champagnat ordained priest	23 July: Consecration of the first Marists at Fourvière	
12 August: Champagnat is appointed to Lavalla. He takes up his functions there a few days later.		
2. THE FOUNDATION MEETINGS (October-November 1816)		
28 October: Champagnat assists the Montagne youth	26 October 1816: 1 st meeting with J.M. Granjon 2 November: meeting of J.B. Audras - Champagnat	
3. A PARISH CATECHETICAL AND CHARITABLE WORK (1816-1818)		
End 1816: Renting of a house from M. Bonner	2 January-end of March 1817: novitiate of the first two disciples concluding with their taking the habit.	This is an enthusiastic group of catechists in the spirit of the Society of Mary.
Champagnat and Courveille buy the Bonner house on 1 October 1817. The parish priest strives to have the purchase annulled.	December 1817- January 1818: J.C. Audras and A. Couturier enter Lavalla.	Probably after All Saints 1817 the brothers commence to take catechism in the hamlets on Sunday and Br Jean-Marie gathers the poor children to feed and educate them.
April 1818: The house is definitely purchased.	May 1818: B. Badard and G. Rivat enter Lavalla 15 August 1818 Taking of the habit by J.C. Audras and A. Couturier.	
4. OPTION FOR THE SCHOOL AND MODERN PEDAGOGY (1818-1819)		
		Around All Saints 1818, Champagnat installs in the hamlet of Sardier a young teacher, Maison-neuve, who uses the simultaneous method. At the same time, foundation of the school in Marlihes.

1818-1819. Controversy between Champagnat and the parish priest who supports his teacher. Fr Champagnat teaches Latin to some boarders.		During the school year 1818-1819, in the town, the work of the brothers is in competition with the public school conducted by the school-master Montmartin.
	8 September 1819, taking of habit by Barthélemy Badard and Gabriel Rivat (5 th and 6 th brothers)	Summer 1819: Retirement of the communal teacher Montmartin. Maisonneuve replaces him at All Saints. The teaching of catechism in the hamlets continues.
5. CHAMPAGNAT SUPERIOR OF A COMMUNITY (1819)		
1819: Local attack on Champagnat: illegal meeting of young people and misappropriation of donations. (OM2, doc. 754) Champagnat justifies himself before Fr Bochard who gives his work official support.	At the end of 1819, Fr Champagnat comes to live with the six brothers who set themselves up as a community directed by J.M. Granjon. Taking of habit by Etienne Roumésy (Br Jean-François) at an undetermined date.	All Saints 1819? Br Laurent at Le Bessat All Saints 1819? Brothers go out daily in winter to teach in the hamlets of Luzernaud and Chomilol (Life).
6. SUPPORT OF THE DIOCESAN AUTHORITIES AND THE BROTHERS IN THE FACE OF THE ATTACKS (1820)		
1820: The principal of the college of St Chamond and Fr Dervieux accuse Champagnat of running a clandestine college. Threat of dissolution of the work and the transfer of Champagnat.		
The vicar generals Bochard and Courbon do not agree with Fr Dervieux. Champagnat ceases teaching Latin	The support of the brothers and the ecclesiastical authorities contributes to persuading Champagnat that his work is willed by God (Mémor of Bourdin)	
		All Saints 1820: Foundation of the school of St Sauveur. The crisis appears passed.
7. A CRISIS OF GROWTH (1820-21)		
1821-22: The vicar general Bochard envisages eventually integrating the Brothers of Mary into the diocesan work of the Brothers of the Cross of Jesus.	Recruitment in Lavalla seems to have dried up and vocations from elsewhere are very rare: Antoine Gratalon (Br Bernard) enters the novitiate on 30 November 1821 ¹ and Claude Fayol on 12 February 1822.	The school of Bourg-Argental is opened in January 1822. J.M. Granjon is transferred from Lavalla.

¹ The *Chronologie* indicates November 1820 but the Register of temporary vows indicates 30 November 1821 (OFM/ 3 p. 172).

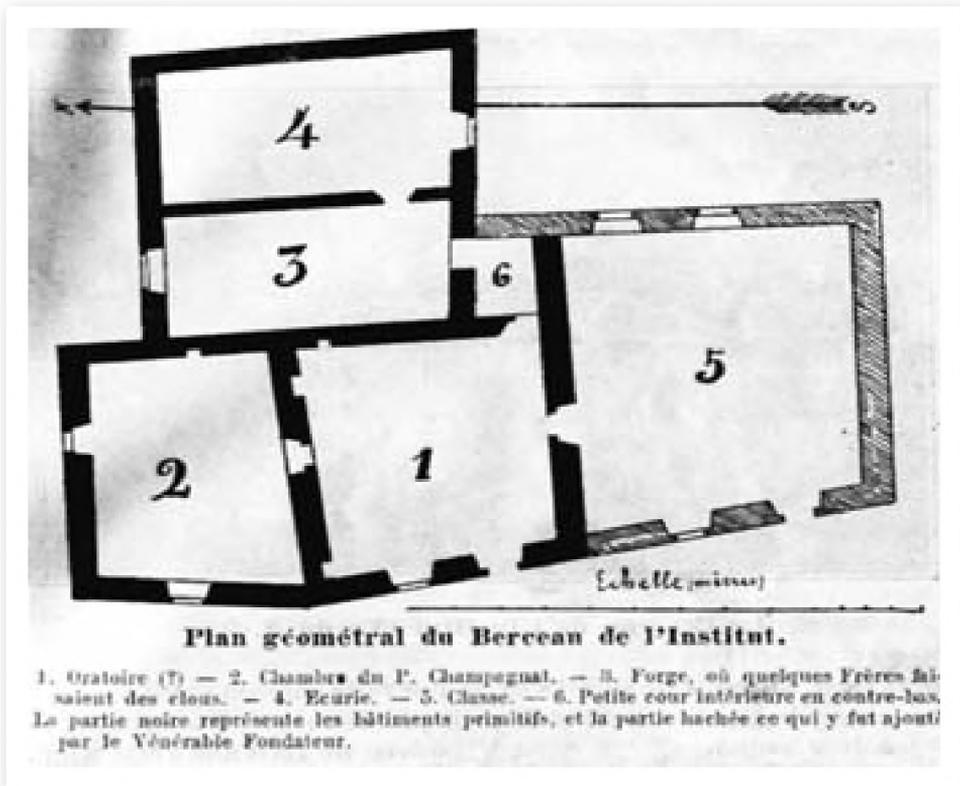
8. TOWARDS A DIOCESAN TEACHING CONGREGATION (1822-1823)		
	28 March 1822: An ex-brother of the Christian Schools brings eight young men. After meeting with the brothers, Champagnat decides to accept them.	
Inspector Guillard visits the house in April 1822 and reports that Champagnat is teaching about fifteen young peasants. The parish priest accuses Champagnat of establishing a congregation.	May 1822: Failure of an attempt at union with the brothers of Fr Rouchon, established in Valbenoîte.	Spring 1822: Br J.M. Granjon spends time at the Trappist monastery of Aiguebelle
	Summer 1822: Extensions to the house at Lavalla.	Summer 1822: Closing of the school at Marlihes
The work of Champagnat is in the grip of Bochart. But the opponents of the vicars general are working for the election of a replacement for Cardinal Fesch.	With two brothers, Fr Champagnat tours the surroundings of Lavalla to find a new site for the work (Life). End of 1823-beginning of 1824: Fr Seyve, Marist aspirant comes to help Fr Champagnat.	1823: Foundation of schools at Vanosc, St Symphorien-le-Château and Boulieu. Closure of Tarentaise where Br Laurent is working.
9. AFFIRMATION OF A DIOCESAN VOCATION (1824-25)		
22 December 1823: Archbishop de Pins recommended as apostolic administrator of Lyon. On 18 February 1824. He takes possession of the diocese of Lyon. Protest and exile of Fr Bochart		
3 March 1824, Abp de Pins receives Fr Champagnat	The work of the Brothers of Mary freed from Bochart's	
	May 1824, Fr Seyve, who would have supported the opposition to the parish priest of Lavalla, falls out with Fr Champagnat who asks the archbishop to appoint Fr Courveille as auxiliary priest.	
13 April: the archbishop authorises Champagnat to buy the properties at the place known as Les Gaux	13 May: Frs Champagnat and Courveille buy the Les Gaux properties. June 1824: Fr Courveille installs himself at Lavalla.	19 July: Publication of the prospectus of the congregation of the Little Brothers of Mary.

The Little Brothers of Mary considered by the archbishop as a diocesan congregation of brothers.	May-October: Construction of the house of the Hermitage with the aid of the brothers. October: Fr. Champagnat gives the brothers the "Petit Ecrit", a précis of the spirit of the Institute (Life).	All Saints 1824 Foundations of Chavanay and Charlieu ²
November: Champagnat discharged of his function as curate.		
	Winter 1824-25: Fitting out of the house of the Hermitage	
	May 1825: The community from Lavalla is installed in the Hermitage: 20 Brothers and 10 postulants. 22 Brothers in the schools.	Lavalla is no more than a school where two brothers teach during the winter.



Le berceau de l'institut après 1822. Tableau

² This is on the order of the Diocese to counteract the influence of Bochard.



Bulletin de l'Institut (1913)

2. BROTHERS AND BOARDERS AT LAVALLA AND THE HERMITAGE (1817-1827)

The *Letters* of Champagnat and the *Origines Maristes* constitute for us a fundamental base of documentation. The *Origines des Frères Maristes*, a collection of all the documents concerning Champagnat and the first decades of the Institute, published in 2011, completes this important corpus by making available the numerous

registers and account books, already known but still hardly studied. This article will, therefore, be based in good part on these documents, which merit detailed study.

2.1. Overview of the registers

1/ First register of admissions of postulants (OFM/1, doc. 105 p. 297-310)

Started on 28 March 1822, with the arrival of the postulants from the Haute-Loire, it finishes on 26 November 1824.

It notes the names of the postulants, the date of their arrival, the amounts they pay, eventually their departures and the books, paper and pens they purchase through the house for their studies. So it is in some sort a chronicle of Lavalla over nearly three years.

**2. Register of admissions
(OFM/2, doc. 142-153, p. 3-247)
(1822-1848)**

This second register partly recopies the first and especially extends it by noting the entries and sums paid by the novices or boarders. Kept up to 1838 by Fr Champagnat, it indicates most often the name of the postulant, his parish of origin, his age, the names of his father and mother, his intentions (novice or boarder), the amounts he pays for his formation. We find there the complex functioning before 1822: novitiate, boarding hostel, orphanage, school. We are content here to study the years 1822-1827.

**3. Register of receptions
(OFM/3, doc. 497-568 p. 4)
(1824-1858)**

This begins, in fact, in 1829, and does not indicate the receptions of those who departed before this date. So it is not of much use for a study of the years 1822-27.

**4. Register of temporary vows
(OFM/3, doc. 569-574 p. 171-242)
(1826-1841)**

This is very useful for a study of the years prior to 1826, because the newly professed indicate in their declaration the date of their entry into the house and their reception of the habit.

**5. Register of perpetual vows
(OFM/3, doc. 575-598, p. 244-300)
(1826-1858)**

Like the preceding register, this allows a partial return to the origins of the Institute.

**6. Register of deaths
(OFM/3, doc. 599-603 p. 301-361)
(1825-1875)**

This complements the other registers since it indicates the deaths of brothers from 1825.

**2.2. From 1817 to 1822:
ten brothers?**

The Institute has preserved the names of ten brothers who entered the work during the first five years of its existence. The first six (1817-1818) were all native to Lavalla or resided there. The second group (1818-22) came from else where, sometimes from quite a distance, and show that the work, first a purely parish one, was slowly spreading.

Name	Born	Place	Novitiate	Habit
J.M. Granjon (Br Jean-Marie)	1794	Doizieu	2/1/1817	End March 1817
J.B. Audras (Br Louis)	1802	Lavalla	2/1/1817	End March 1817
J.C. Audras (Br Laurent)	1793	Lavalla	24/12/1817	15/8/1819 ?
Antoine Couturier (Br Antoine)	1800	Lavalla	1/1/1818	15/8/1818
B. Badard (Br Barthélemy)	1804	Lavalla	2/5/1818	8/9/1819
Gabriel Rivat (Br François)	1808	Lavalla	6/5/1818	8/9/1819
Etienne Rouméty (Br Jean-François)	?	?	1819	1820
Antoine Gratallon (Br Bernard)	?	Izieux	1820	11/11/1822
Claude Fayolle (Br Stanislas) ³	1800	St Médard- en-Forez	2/2/1822	25/10/1822
J.P. Martinol (Br Jean-Pierre) ⁴	1798	Burdigne	1821	1823

2.3. Taking of habit and promise

According to Br Jean-Baptiste, from the beginning the brothers pronounced a promise to consecrate themselves for five years to the education of children⁵. But this did not necessarily coincide with the clothing ceremony. Thus the *Life* relates (p. 153) that Br Louis, who took the habit in March 1817, frightened by the obligations of this promise, refused to

sign it in 1818, while Br Jean-Marie did so and was scandalised by this reluctance.

In the first years of Lavalla, adhering to the work of the Brothers of Mary, therefore, could consist of two distinct steps. This is the more likely since the reading of the *Life* suggests that the brothers of the beginnings are relatively numerous⁶, the taking of the habit being considered as conferring the right to the title of “brother” with-

³ *Our Models in Religion*, Grugliasco, 1936, p. 76-90. He was directed to Lavalla by his parish priest.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 59-66. Recruited by the Brothers of Saint Sauveur en Rue, he died in 1825.

⁵ See the texts of the promise in the *Life* ch. 15 p. 152/3 and in OM1, doc. 168.

⁶ He sends them two by two into the hamlets (*Life*, ch. 7, p. 78): “a trained Brother and a novice” (*Life*, p. 105). There is question here of a little brother 13 or 14 years old whose name has not been preserved.

out, however, committing its wearer to be engaged by a formal act. This could be the case with the schoolmaster, Claude Maisonneuve, living with the brothers, probably in 1819-1820, whom Champagnat sends away because of "his misconduct and worldly attitudes" (Life ch. 7 p. 71). Would he have worn the habit of the society without having made any promise and would others have done the same? In this case, the history of the Institute would only have retained, for the period before 1822, those brothers who not only took the habit, but also engaged themselves formally in the society and persevered for a significant time.

2.4. Entry into the house and entry to the novitiate

Admission to the Brothers' house did not necessarily mean entry into the novitiate. This seems to be the case for Gabriel Rivat (Br François),

who makes his first communion at 10 years old on 19 April 1818, and enters the house on 6 May 1818. However, as the *Life* (p. 64) states clearly that Champagnat undertakes to give him Latin lessons, which are not part of the preparations for being a brother, Gabriel must have been for a time a simple boarder. Besides, he does not take the habit until 8 September 1819, eighteen months later.

Did he make the promise at that time? Such a question poses itself because such an act is addressed in principle to persons who have come of age. Although of private right, the promise has practical consequences, such as placing goods in common and the absence of remuneration for work performed. This problem concerns half of the first ten brothers who are minors at the time of their clothing. If this is accompanied by a promise, it must be supposed that it involved an agreement with the parents and even some financial arrangements with them.

Name	Year of birth	Taking of habit	Age at time of the taking
J.M. Granjon (Br Jean-Marie)	1794	End March 1817	23
J.B. Audras (Br Louis)	1802	End March 1817	15
J.C. Audras (Br Laurent)	1793	15/8/1819	24
Antoine Couturier (Br Antoine)	1800	15/8/1818	18
B. Badard (Br Barthélemy)	1804	8/9/1819	15

Name	Year of birth	Taking of habit	Age at time of the taking
Gabriel Rivat (Br François)	1808	8/9/1819	11
Etienne Roumésy (Br Jean-François)	?	1820	Probably of age
Antoine Gratalon (Br Bernard)	1803	11/11/1822	19
Claude Fayolle (Br Stanislas) ⁷ .	1800	25/10/1822	22
J.P. Martinol (Br Jean-Pierre) ⁸	1798	1823	25

2.5. The inheritance question

The nature of these arrangements is suggested by the parish priest Fr Rebod who, in 1822, accuses Champagnat of establishing a congregation by having himself taken the inheritance of the brothers; and the prospectus of 1824 still provides for the novice bringing with him his inheritance which will be returned to him if he leaves the society, minus the expenses he may have incurred. So it seems that at least a certain number of the first ten brothers passed through this type of contract, committing themselves to allow their confrères to benefit from their patrimony, whether they disposed of it already or were still waiting for it.

2.6. Three statuses in the community

The Lavalla community, then, functioned according to three statuses. On his entry to the house, the young man is in lay clothes and pays a fee for his instruction: he is a postulant. If he is satisfied with his condition and shows signs of a vocation, the taking of the habit makes him a brother, easily recognizable, but unless he makes his promise at the same time as he takes the habit, he is only a novice and must still pay for his formation. Jean-Claude Audras, (Br Laurent) is perhaps in this case: he declares he entered the novitiate on 24 December 1817 but did not take the habit until 15 August 1819, eighteen months later, which is a very long time of probation.

⁷ See note 2.

⁸ See note 3.

As he was of age and then went to evangelise Le Bessat by himself, it can be considered that his taking of the habit was accompanied by a promise.

The case of Jean-Pierre Martinol (Br Jean-Pierre), native of Burdigne, near St Sauveur-en-Rue is even more specific. Br Avit (*Annales des Maisons* § 17) declares that he entered in 1818, whereas his biography⁹ shows that he could not have come to La Valla before 1821. But the same biography explains the difference by stating that Martinol began living in the community of St Sauveur before being sent to the novitiate. He would then have entered the brothers in 1818 and the novitiate in 1821. Appointed director of the school at Boulieu at All Saints 1823, he certainly took the habit in 1822 or 1823. As he was director, it is certain he pronounced the promise before taking up his post.

2.7. Blue habit or black habit

In 1822, Inspector Guillard describes the habit of the brothers at Bourg-Argental: “Their costume consists of a black frock coat with a large cloak” (OM1, doc. 75 § 3). Going on to St Sauveur, where “two brothers of Lavalla” are teaching, he sees “M. Badard” without mentioning his costume, which means it is black also. Arriving at Lavalla, he does not meet any broth-

er. At Feurs, where there are two of Courveille’s brothers, he observes: “They wear similar clothing, as to form, to those of St Sauveur and Bourg-Argental; but the frock coat here is sky blue, buttoned like a soutane, with a very large black collar”. From this observation, it has been deduced that it was Courveille who imposed the blue habit at the Hermitage. One can, in any case, affirm that the frock coat of Champagnat’s brothers was buttoned normally and did not resemble, like Courveille’s one, a soutane: it was the dress of a layman.

So, was it a black habit or blue habit at Lavalla in 1822? In either case, Br Avit writes (1822 § 35) that 7 brothers “took the blue costume in 1823” and four others (§ 76 p. 81) in 1824-26. For him, it is not until 1827 that ten brothers take “the religious habit” (§ 70, p. 74).

Further on, he records a testimony affirming that it was after the visit to Archbishop de Pins (Spring 1824) that Champagnat would have changed the form and the costume of the brothers “to make it more religious”¹⁰. But at this period, Champagnat had other concerns and it was also the time of the arrival of Fr Courveille, supposed to have brought the blue costume with him. The passage from the blue to the black is very likely to have occurred in 1827. And it was doubtless this year when: “The blue had been replaced by

⁹ *Our Models in Religion*, p. 59.

¹⁰ *Annales de l’Institut*, 1828 § 74.

the black, the pantalons by the short trousers, the short soutane by a soutane descending as far as the ankle, buttoned to the bottom ¹¹“...

The sewn soutane appears to come into service in 1829, without arousing much controversy, unlike the cloth stockings and the reading method. For a long time to come, the novices only take the rabat when they leave the novitiate. The cord is taken on the making of temporary vows (1826) and the cross on the day of profession (1828 § 74). The blue habit disappears only gradually since Br Jean-Joseph (Jean-Baptiste Chillet), who entered the novitiate on 4 July 1826, taking the blue habit on 11 October the same year and making his perpetual vows on 2 February 1830,¹² is the last to lay aside “the blue habit of Lavalla” in 1838. But Br Avit mentions this fact to underline the spirit of devotion of this brother in charge of the clothing workshop who clothes everyone before himself.

12.8. A hypothesis about the habit

So there is an apparent contradiction between the irrefutable witness of Inspector Guillard who speaks of the black habit at Bourg-Argental and St Sauveur and the blue habit at Feurs while the tradition of the broth-

ers passed on by the *Life*¹³ and Br Avit recalls the blue habit before the arrival of Courveille at Lavalla.

One can imagine that the brothers may have worn for a time both habits, the blue being that of the novices and the black distinguishing the brothers who had pronounced their promises or (and) were employed in the schools. This blue habit, being like the uniform of college students, could have contributed to the notion that Champagnat was setting up at Lavalla a college in competition with the one in Saint Chamond. And the name “blue brothers” would come from the fact that the local population see many more brothers in blue than in black. The blue, moreover, is more distinguished from lay dress, generally dark or black.

And then, when Fr Champagnat gives the brothers in 1827 a short black buttoned soutane close to ecclesiastical dress, no one dreams of revolting as if this colour caused a problem. In choosing the black habit for everyone, Champagnat would only be gradually making general a habit of a colour reserved up to then for a certain élite. At the same time, the introduction of the vows from 1826 gradually marginalises the importance of the promise, while the cord for the temporary professed and the cross for the perpetually professed create new visible distinctions.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² OFM/3, p. 257.

¹³ *Life* Ch. 6, p. 67. See the note summarising the article of Pierre Zind in *Bulletin de l'Institut*, XXI, p. 536.

2.9. Br Sylvestre and the habit

The case of Br Sylvestre, however, pushes us to go deeper into this question. In the *Annales de l'Institut*, Br Avit reports that this brother, who entered the Hermitage in March 1831, took the soutane on 15 August 1831 at the age of 12 and a half. And he adds: "A child, brother of Br Grégoire, had made his first communion and taken the habit the same day¹⁴, at the age of 9, the same year, and had received the name of Br Basile." As, unlike Br Sylvestre, Br Basile does not appear in the register of clothings and he is really too young, the habit he took is not the soutane but most likely the blue habit. It is astonishing, besides, that this child already has the brother's name as if the donning of a uniform signified a first step towards entering the congregation. Br Sylvestre most probably wore a similar habit during the months of his novitiate.

Having taken the soutane, the mischievous Br Sylvestre, having had to cut his companion's hair, gave him a tonsure and, the fault having been discovered during the chapter of faults, a senior brother recommended that he be deprived for a time of the soutane, and this Fr Champagnat

ordered¹⁵. Br Avit does not specify which habit Br Sylvestre then wore but it could have been the blue one. The lesson is clear: whoever behaves like a child is dressed again like a child. And this is why "Br Sylvestre was not proud".

But the matter does not end there: Br Sylvestre recounts how he succeeded in regaining his soutane¹⁶. Fr Cattet, vicar general, visiting the Hermitage and "seeing that there were many young brothers in the room, took it on himself to question them on the catechism". Fr Champagnat then suggested to Br Sylvestre to go and make his chapter of faults in front of everyone and Fr Cattet authorised him to resume the religious habit. But the point is not that: Fr Cattet easily recognised the young brothers in the assembly, from their size and appearance, but also because of their habit. We would be tempted to say that with the blue habit being given, Fr Champagnat takes the opportunity to oblige Br Sylvestre to do something to show he is worthy of wearing the religious habit once more.

This testimony of Br Sylvestre is, then, of a nuanced interpretation, since it allows one to understand that the usage of a special habit for the novices, which might be the blue habit, continued for some time. Thus,

¹⁴ As his first communion.

¹⁵ In *Frère Sylvestre raconte Marcellin Champagnat* p. 239, the author states that Fr Champagnat found him a bit young. He tells this story himself (p. 246)

¹⁶ *Frère Sylvestre raconte...* p. 246

around 1832, when Br Sylvestre had to take off his soutane, he did not certainly have to put on lay dress again, for he was not sent away but only reduced to the rank of novice. This use of a specific habit, possibly blue, halfway between lay dress and soutane, would also explain why “for a long time later the novices took the rabat only when they left the novitiate”¹⁷. The wearing of the blue garments and the need for uniformity must, however, have pushed towards the general use of the black soutane, which seems to have been almost completed in 1838. For all that, the case of Br Sylvestre is not unique and, it seems, once the soutane became general: “The rabat was permitted to the novices only when they knew their prayers well. It was often taken from them as a punishment, just like the soutane”¹⁸.

2.10. The boarders from 1819-1822

This question of the habit has taken us a bit far and it is necessary to go back to the period of Lavalla when, over and above the postulants, novices and brothers committed by a promise, there was a category of the boarders. This is recorded in a late but precious document: the letter of Joseph Violet, an inhabitant of Doizieu, of 19 November 1888, contained in the diocesan process of beatification¹⁹. Born on 24 April 1807, he claims to have entered Lavalla at the end of 1819, probably on All Saints, and to have stayed there two years, but his stay seems to have lasted a year more because he affirms he was an eyewitness of the extensions at Lavalla which took place in summer 1822.

“... I was born at Malval. My mother, becoming a widow, placed me as a boarder in Lavalla, at the end of 1819. I stayed there two whole years, under the direction of Brs Etienne (Roumesy) and François (Gabriel Rivat); the first was director and the second my teacher, for I was very behind. There were two of us boarders, at the time, and we slept among the Brothers. My boarding companion was named Tissot, from Plagry²⁰, who was learning Latin under the direction of Fr Champagnat. The latter treated him firmly because of the great neglect he brought to his studies. I saw a great part of the extensions made at Lavalla. Fr Champagnat tried his hand at all the works of construction, masonry, carpentry, etc., and he succeeded well. One day, he was challenged by his parish priest to lift a large stone with the mason who was helping him and he succeeded in putting it in place.

¹⁷ *Annales*, 1828, § 74.

¹⁸ *Annales de l'Institut*, 1840, § 704.

¹⁹ *Enquête diocésaine. Témoignages sur Marcellin Champagnat*, prepared by Br. A.C. Carazo, Rome, 1991, 17^e session, p. 85.

²⁰ Hamlet of Lavalla.

While I was at the house, a band of 10 young people arrived. Faced with our meagre fare, they went away the next day, minus two, one of them lame, who remained behind.

Our ordinary fare was soup, quite enough, and a little portion of fricassée, with badly baked bread; for drink, we had water. At 4 o'clock in the morning, Fr Champagnat shouted from his room: 'Benedicamus Domino', and we replied: 'Deo gratias', then we went as promptly as possible for prayer. Between 6 and 7 o'clock, we assisted at his Mass, which he said with great devotion. [...]

He was much loved at Lavalla and every Sunday we saw people arriving bringing him fruit and other foodstuffs. Every day, he visited the school and took account of our work. He took us for catechism and greatly encouraged competition, often giving rewards to those who knew it best".²¹

The richness of this document is considerable for it gives details about the life of the community which can scarcely be found elsewhere. Thus, the life of the boarders appears hardly different from that of the brothers, and we can ask if they were not, apart from the Latin, mixed up with the novices, Brothers Roumézy and François taking on the task of teaching both. However, J. Violet appears also to attend the village school. His account gives the impression of a mixed status: life with the brothers at table and in the dormitory; elementary teaching with the village children but special lessons with Fr Champagnat and the two brothers mentioned²² who seem capable of giving them more extensive instruction.

2.11. The boarders in 1823-27

The second register of admissions²³ (OFM/2 p. 5) gives an inter-

esting overview of the boarders received at Lavalla, then at the Hermitage without always making clear how to distinguish them from the novices. Besides, the word "pension" is used without differentiation to indicate the sums to be paid by both. But from April 1825, the register specifies if the arrival is a novice or a boarder, a sign that the two categories are beginning to be differentiated. It is also the time when the community is being installed at the Hermitage.

Thus, on 30 May 1823 the nephew of Br Stanislas arrives, whose name is not mentioned but who may be called Fayol. He pays 100 F. twice. We do not know if it is as boarder or as novice. On 25 November 1826 Joseph Hyacinthe, of St Paul arrives. His father pledges 500 F. On 8 February 1828, he will have paid 404 F. As this young man does not become a brother, he doubtless entered as a boarder.

²¹ Final note from the parish priest : I certify the perfect respectability of M. Violet, my parishioner, and a good parishioner, worthy of faith and sound in mind. Doizieu, 3 December 1888. / LACHAL, Curé.

²² But he leaves at All Saints 1820 for St Sauveur-en-Rue.

²³ OFM/2 p. 5

The clearer cases are more numerous: we arrange them by year.

- On 17 November 1823, Benoît Claude Roche enters the house as a boarder and on 8 August 1825, 260 F. have been paid for his boarding fees, or 130 F. a year, that is, a little more than 10 F. a month.
- On 10 January 1824, Fr Champagnat notes: "Jean-Jacques Couturier received into the house to learn the trade of joinery or draper. He must pay me for his food for six months at 12 F. per month". However, it is envisaged he will have instruction since Couturier buys a Bible (de Royau-mont), a school reading book. On 7 February 1824, Jean-Baptiste Brunon, aged 15, pays 12 F. a month. On 20 May 1827, his father pays 27 F and still owes 113 F. André Despinace, entering on 21 April 1824, is certainly already known by Champagnat who arranges with his father for a boarding fee of 10 F. a month.
- On 1st March 1825, Antoine Nolin is received as a boarder "provisionally". Native of Lyon, aged about 12, he appears to be an orphan paid for by the Contes sisters of Lyon "including laundry, sewing, book, paper". The annual boarding fee is raised to 240 F (OM/1 p. 306). On 10 March 1826, the Contes ladies are still paying

his fees as well as that of "little Ayoux", another boarder.

- On 1st August 1826, Ausier (or Osier) from St Jean Bonnefons enters as a boarder and pays 24 F. per month. But the house has to provide him with books, paper, bedding, laundry, mending. Between October and June 1827, l'Hermitage will receive another 143 F. payment, perhaps in part for school year 1826-27. In October 1827 and January 1828, M. Osier pays another 96.30 F. On 2 November 1826, Jean Antoine Vère, native of Rochetaillée, enters as a boarder: he gives 15 F. as first payment, doubtless for one month. On 26 February 1826, André Chalayer of St Etienne, aged 11, enters as a boarder. His uncle pays various amounts. On 3 August 1829, the pension of Chalayer would have cost 1078 F.
- On 23 September 1827, Bonjour, of St Chamond, is received as a boarder: he pays 25 F. a month.

It happens that some youngsters entering as boarders finally opt for the novitiate.

On 20 February 1824, Jean Fara aged 12, boarder, has to pay 12 F a month and his mother pays on account 100 F. He appears to want to prepare to himself for teaching since he buys a copy of the *Conduite des frères*²⁴. On 20 August 1825, aged

²⁴ The manual containing the simultaneous method, called in fact *Conduite des écoles chrétiennes*.

13, he is received into the house as a novice: "he pays 10 F. per month", but "he has been in the house for 14 months". For this stay, he paid 100 F and still owed 44. His pension became then a little more than 10 F a month. On 16 January 1825, the father of Jacques Poinard, aged 13, gives 200 F. a year for his pension. But the register notes that on 18 November 1826, he enters as a novice. His father gives 177 F.

Once at least, the contract provides for the case where the entrant to the novitiate might not persevere. This is the case with Christophe Courbon, of the hamlet of Chirat at Lavalla: in March 1825, Fr Champagnat notes that the father is giving 72 F. "for the whole pension for the year 1825" and must give another 200 F. in a year, while the aunt, living in Sardière, promises to provide a pair of stockings and a shirt each year. The father promises to pay 15 F. a month as pension for his son "if he comes to withdraw from the house or if for very serious reasons he must be sent away". Courbon enters as a novice but does not take the habit, and his stay will in fact be that of a boarder.

On 17 September 1825, the pension of Jean Chalagner is paid: 350 F. and Marianne Chalagner, his mother or his aunt, adds 100 F. for the habit. As for the outfit, it has

been completely provided "even extra". He will become Br Joseph. In the *procès-verbal*, he will declare he entered on 25 April 1825, and took the habit on 25 October 1825.

The register gives the impression, then, that up until the installation in the Hermitage, there is no clear boundary between novice and boarder, probably because the distinction between the teacher-training school for lay teachers and the community of brothers is itself fluid. Various testimonies, notably that of Joseph Violet, have given the same impression for the years before 1823. After 1827, no more boarders are accepted at the Hermitage and a letter of Fr Champagnat to Mgr. Devie²⁵ explains this decision:

"We set ourselves, in principle, to receive at the Hermitage, some external students and some boarders.

We have seen ourselves forced to give this up, seeing that they have led to the loss of a good number of novices and caused everyone a lot of trouble".

Such a decision only confirms the emerging thinking regarding the work of the Brothers of Mary: moving from a very flexible form of lay association towards a clearer but more rigid monastic arrangement. The establishment of temporary vows (1826), perpetual vows (1828), the black habit (1827) are other signs

²⁵ *Letters*, No 305 p. 517, 3 December 1839.

of this same evolution. In the meantime, for more than a dozen years, at Lavalla and then at l'Hermitage, the community received a not inconsiderable number of boarders paying board of between 10 and 25 F. a month.

2.12. The schoolboys at the Hermitage

The accounts of the register of receipts begun by Fr Courville in 1826²⁶ give an idea of the functioning of the school for external pupils to which Fr Champagnat alludes above:

Date	Receipt	Sum
17/1/26	Received from little Coquet	25 F.
17/1/26	Received from M. Crapanne one month for his little boy	4 F.
20/1/26	Received from the two little Gallays for schooling, one month	3 F
27/1/26	Received from Chomiennes for their schooling, two months	1.20 F.
1/2/26	Received from little Gerin for one month schooling	2 F.
1/2/26	Received from little Tribly for one month of his schooling	1 F.
4/2/26	Received from little Frécon du Creux for one month schooling	1 F.
20/2/26	Received from little Crapanne for one month of his schooling	4 F.
23/2/26	Received from little Tardie for two months of his schooling	3 F.
24/2/26	Received from little Pervanchon for two (months) schooling	2 F.

There are other mentions of revenue from school fees but without details of names. From August 1826, these receipts no longer appear, for the reasons mentioned by Champagnat. From them, in any case, we learn that the monthly school fee was from 1 to 4 F.

2.12. Indigents before 1822

Joseph Violet gives evidence of another function of the house: the ac-

ceptance of indigent boys and young men looking for hospitality and even an opportunity to settle down in a place where they could procure bed and board without too much constraint. He then shows us that the poorness of the sustenance, and doubtless the work required, made the vagabonds run away. As for the two who stay, under what title do they remain? Certainly not as boarders. As postulants? Probably not either, at least in the beginning. So there would be a category, certainly very unstable,

²⁶ OFM/2 p. 332...

of children and young people taken in for charity who do not live with the brothers, and are not mixed with the school boys, but are put to work while receiving the rudiments of religious instruction. The work of Lavalla seems to have started like that²⁷.

Certain of these children are then received into the novitiate, like Jean-Baptiste Berne, of whom the *Life*²⁸ reminds us that, when he was taken in in December 1820, he was unteachable and ran away many times before settling down. Having asked to enter the novitiate, he took the habit on 18 October 1825 and made temporary vows on 24 September 1829. He died on 2 October 1830²⁹. It was because this case was exceptional that it was retained by Br Jean-Baptiste: most of the boys and young men must have left or been sent away after a brief time in residence.

To these young vagabonds must be added the cases of adolescents sent by benefactors. On 4 January 1823, there is question of Jean Praire for whom a lady by the name of Colomb pays 45 F. for three months. On 9 November 1823, the same lady pays 70 F. for six months board. This must be a child without instruction since he buys three alphabets. This

Colomb lady appears to be concerned also for Jean-Louis Rivat of St Pal, aged 18, for whom she pays 20 F. board on 27 December 1824³⁰.

On 8 April 1825, the register³¹ announces the entry of Augustin Barrey, native of Lons-le Saulnier, a town of the Jura, aged 15 and an orphan, sent by the parish priest of Tartaras. No sum of money is indicated.

On 5 September 1824, entered Augustin Bellin (or Balant) aged 13: "he must be looked after" says the register³². The 1st register of enrolment³³ specifies that he has taken several books to a value of 4.50 F: an Instruction, a grammar, an office book, a manual of manners, an exercise of piety, an "Hours of Lyon" (prayer book) and a catechism. Obviously, the books he receives indicate he is taking full part in the life of the novitiate.

On 28 October 1826, Jean Cholleton, native of Clermont, aged 14, abandoned by his parents but cared for by his uncle, the vicar general, enters the house. He will become Br Jean and Fr Bourdin will write his life.

On 23 November 1825, someone by the name of Batardier of Lyon entered, "fed at our table"; "he has giv-

²⁷ *Life* Ch. XXI, p. 509-510.

²⁸ Ch. XXI, p. 512-513.

²⁹ OFM/3, p. 180: Register of temporary vows and Register of deaths .p. 305.

³⁰ OFM/1, p. 307

³¹ OFM/2, p. 7.

³² OFM/2, p. 8

³³ OFM/1, p. 303

en one hundred francs for his petty expenses”.

So, the passage of an ex-Brother of the Christian Schools who requests entry about February 1822 is not exceptional. As for Violet’s account of the arrival of the ten young men who are only passing through, it bears a strange resemblance to the arrival of the postulants from the Haute-Loire on 28 March 1822. Either Violet is reporting this arrival and partly confusing it with that of other passing groups, or he is relating a similar event. In any case, he witnesses to an important charitable activity of the community of Lavalla, which seems also to be a means of recruitment, not very effective but significative of a strongly utopian spirit: proposing to the most poor a new life, stable, useful and Christian. In sum, passing from savagery to civilisation.

2.13. A complex model

If we bring together the information collected about Lavalla prior to 1822, we must move beyond a picture constructed later by Br Jean-Baptiste, which exaggerates the strength of continuity with the beginnings. It is necessary, on the contrary, to emphasize that entry to the house and entry to the novitiate are different things, since those entering can be postulants, novices, boarders, or poor children taken in out of charity. So the house harbours youth in secular cloth-

ing (postulants, indigents, boarders), novices in the blue habit and, perhaps, others who, having made the promise, would be in the black habit.

When all is said and done, how many persons took the blue habit at Lavalla before 1822? Certainly many more than the ten brothers retained by the tradition. One could risk venturing a figure of around thirty.

These differences of status are very much smoothed over by a brotherhood, an apostolic zeal and a somewhat excessive spirit of sacrifice³⁴ but these eminent virtues do not exclude a hierarchy of rights and responsibilities linked to the various degrees of engagement. Up to 1822, then, the work of Champagnat is in a phase dominated by mysticism and utopianism but already institutionalised to a not inconsiderable degree. With scarcely any more novices, Champagnat observes about 1821 that he could not rely for recruitment on the youth of Lavalla or on the passage of poor children or young people whom he hopes to keep in his house. He needed to give his work a better foundation.

2.14. The change of 1822: massive recruitment and registers

Accordingly, he takes the unexpected arrival of the 8 youths from the Haute-Loire as a sign from heaven, but

³⁴ See *Life* Ch. 10 p. 105-6, the testimony of a brother about the community atmosphere at this period.

also as the opportunity to put some order into his work. So in opening a register of enrolments, he moves from a family style management to a stricter administration which becomes ever more detailed, leaving us with sources, as we said in the introduction, still little exploited. But the publication of *Origine des Frères Maristes* makes them readily available for consultation.

2.15. The entries in 1822-1827

The great novelty of the year 1822 is the beginning of a massive recruit-

ment, and by combining all the registers, we can know quite precisely the numbers of people who lived at Lavalla from 1822 and during the early years of l'Hermitage.

In less than 6 years (March 1822-December 1827), the Institute received 102 novices, or a median of 17 a year. Of this total, 61 would have gone on to taking the habit. But it is probable that a much smaller number of brothers went as far as making the promise.

As for the number of boarders, it is not inconsiderable.

Year	Entries novitiate	Boarders	Total	Taking of habit
1822	23	0	23	12
1823	3	4	7	2
1824	16	7	23	10
1825	16	3	19	8
1826	21	4	25	14
1827	23	4	27	15
Total	102	22	124	61

Obviously, many novices or postulants quickly leave. For example, of the 8 postulants from the Haute-Loire who entered on 22 March 1822, Pierre Aubert leaves in June, Antoine Vassal and Barthélemy Vérot, both from Ste Sigolène, entering on 1st May 1822, leave together on 8 June the

same year. So the permanent roll of the novitiate can hardly exceed about ten persons³⁵. In total, the number of occupants of the house, including the founder and the staff, must be about twenty, which is already large and requires additions to the building in the summer of 1822.

³⁵ This is what Inspector Guillard reports on 26 April 1822, on his visit to Lavalla, whose curate has "12 to 15 young peasants whom he is training in the Brothers' method in order to spread them through the parishes" (OM1, doc. 75 § 9).

Recruitment in 1823 marks a transition, Champagnat seemingly handicapped by a lack of room, hence the small number of novices received. The need for finding finance encourages the acceptance of four boarders, each paying in principle 240 F. a year. However, in a letter of 1st December 1823 to Br Jean-Marie Granjon, Champagnat explains: “Many novices are presenting themselves but almost all poor and very young” as well as three men over thirty years old. This is why Champagnat tours the area around Lavalla with two Brothers looking for a new site to accommodate the numerous candidates offering and whom he cannot receive even after making the extensions.

The year of the construction of the Hermitage is 1824. Of the 14 novices received that year, 6 entered between January and May. The other 8 enter only between September and December. One can reasonably suppose that the brothers of the schools (about 15 available?), those of Lavalla and their novices provided a workforce of 25 to 30 individuals. For the first time, Br Avit, certainly making use of the register of taking the habit, signals (§ 76) that the blue costume was taken that year by Jacques Furet (Br Cyprien), Cavier (Br Régis), Fara (Br Placide), Peronet (Br Bernardin).

In the spring of 1825, the community of Lavalla transfers to the house of l’Hermitage. According to Br Avit (Avit § 3 p. 54), it then comprises 20 brothers and 10 postulants. There is no mention of the boarders (3 entered between January and April), but they certainly did not remain at Lavalla, and the number of permanent residents must undoubtedly have been about forty persons, including the priests. Twenty-two brothers are in the schools at this time. In 1827, a letter of Champagnat speaks of more than 80 persons during the holidays³⁶.

2.16. Table of the monthly rhythm of entries

One could, à priori, assume that the rhythm of entries is calculated on that of the school year at the time, that is to say, with a very strong contingent of entries in October-November. But the table below only partly verifies this hypothesis, and it is surprising to note that the spring months are a period favourable for entries to the novitiate. This is because they mark, around Easter, the end of the school year in the countryside and the departure of the children and young people to look after the animals, either at home or as hired labour. Moreover, the arrival of spring encourages the migration – and sometimes the vagabondage – of young people. It was not, then, by

³⁶ OM1, doc. 173, letter to a vicar general in May 1827, § 10.

chance that the postulants from the Haute-Loire arrived at Lavalla at the end of March, and that Champagnat proposed to some of them, as a test,

to hire them out as shepherds³⁷. In sum, recruitment at Lavalla appears to have followed the same agrarian rhythm as the times of local schooling.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1822			8	1	2			3	2		4	1
1823	1				1				4		2	
1824	3	3	2	1				2	3	4	1	3
1825	3		1	4	4	1		2	1	4	1	
1826		1	3			1	1	1	6	2	3	1
1827	1	3		6	2			2	3	4	3	1
Total	8	7	14	12	9	2	1	10	19	14	14	6

CONCLUSION

Between 1817 and 1822, the house of Lavalla became a little centre for the spread of instruction, provided with a hard core of ten members and a periphery fluid but involving not a few people. It was a multipurpose institution delivering not only elementary schooling but advanced primary teaching for future teachers and even the beginnings of Latin for some. About 1820, it was a work which had a reputation

at the local regional level, and in the years 1822-27 it was established as a training centre whose influence extended to the Haute-Loire, the Ardèche and the Loire. In 1824, recognized by the diocese of Lyon as a diocesan congregation³⁸, it was already a supra-diocesan work. Transferred to the Hermitage, the work was gradually transformed, abandoning a complex operation which must have been tricky to manage but which allowed it to live in symbiosis with its surroundings.

³⁷ *Life* Ch. 9 p. 98.

³⁸ The term "congregation" has not yet a precise canonical meaning. It still signifies "religious association". Moreover, the members of the congregation do not make vows.

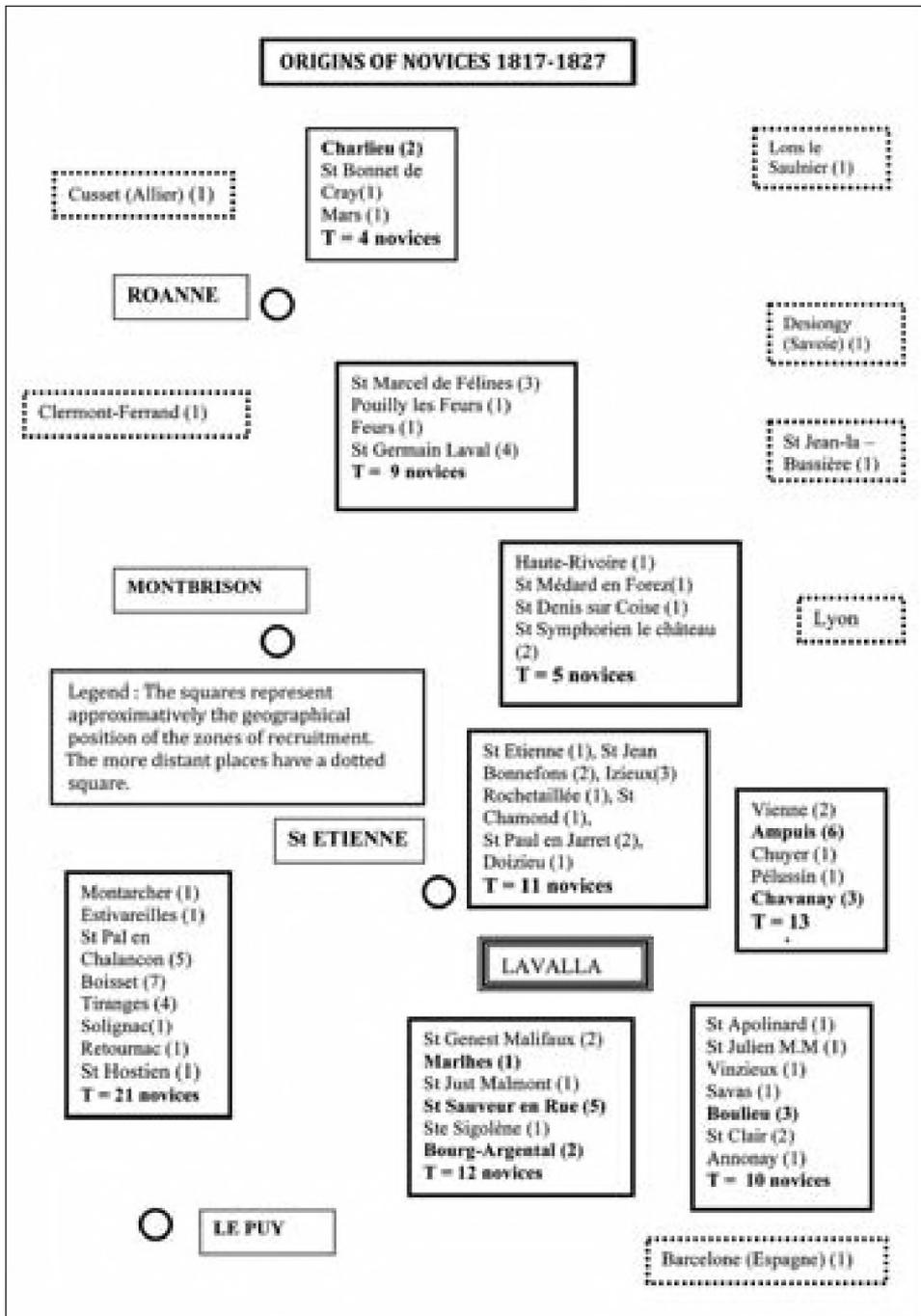
APPENDIX**Geography of recruitment**

A diagram drawn up on the basis of the origin of the novices in 1817-1827 allows us to define a certain number of major characteristics: it concerns a central zone comprising Lavalla and the neighbouring populated areas which, by themselves, provide 21 novices. This zone extends naturally towards the South as far as Annonay and to the East up to the Rhône. It is, in sum, the natural recruitment area offered by cultural and commercial exchanges. Forty-six novices come from this zone.

We know that the West zone, situated in the Haute-Loire but also in the Southwest of the Loire does not contribute any vocations until 1822 and that without any school being es-

tablished there. Their number is absolutely remarkable: 21. But it must be emphasized that it is less than half the vocations of the zone described previously.

Finally, to the North of Lavalla and St Etienne the zones are more modest: the Monts du Lyonnais; the plain of Feurs and the edge of the Forez, the region of Charlieu. The link between these zones and the foundation of schools is shown in two cases out of three. However, it is not unimportant to observe that the Haute-Loire and the region of Feurs, which provide a significant number of vocations, are places where Fr Courveille lived. Finally, some vocations have more distant origins: they are often young people coming from emigration or vagabondage.



3. INSIGHTS INTO ECONOMIC LIFE AT LAVALLA AND L'HERMITAGE

In his *Annales de l'Institut*³⁹, Br Avit was interested in the material conditions in which the Institute was born and grew up. He even consulted the existing archives on this point. He reminds us that in 1817 Fr Champagnat had only his curate's stipend, which was not paid by the government but by the commune, and the exact amount of which is not known. Nor is it known what was the rent of the Bonner house where he established his two disciples on 2 January 1817. For furniture, there are some items donated and two beds of planks constructed by Champagnat. Linen and kitchen utensils are rare or absent.

3.1. Few sources in the years 1817-1822

We know that on 1st October 1817, Frs Courveille and Champagnat purchase the house for 1000 F. But it will be necessary to sign a new deal on 26 April 1818 for 1600 F. In order to make a living, the first brothers make nails and do gardening. We know from the *Mémoire Bourdin* that, when they begin concerning themselves with the children, they beg for donations in kind and that the parish priest, Rebod, seems to have contributed to-

wards paying for the house. Br Avit notes⁴⁰ that a widow named Oriol gives 200 F. to Champagnat. In addition, a certain number of the school children pay a fee and the house gives lodging to some boarders. Offerings (Masses, burials, baptisms...) must also have provided Fr Champagnat with a not negligible extra money.

As for the habit given from 1817 and certainly paid for by the one receiving it, Br Avit affirms (1826 §52) that, up to 1826, it was made by the tailors and shoemakers of Lavalla.

Some other questions can be raised. For example, when the teacher Maisonneuve comes to take school for the brothers and live in community with them, probably in 1819, what payment is made by the commune and did the sum go in whole or in part into the brothers' cashbox? As the *Life* signals that Maisonneuve was sent away because of "his misconduct and worldly attitudes"⁴¹ it is possible to deduce that one of the causes of his dismissal was of a financial nature. Moreover, we see that the brothers exercised auxiliary parish functions such as cantor, and it may be that the factory provided them some compensation.

In any case, the community of the beginnings is certainly poor and, even in 1822, Inspector Guillard makes

³⁹ Year 1817, § 13-16.

⁴⁰ *Annales des maisons*. Lavalla

⁴¹ *Life*, Ch. 7, p. 71.

note of that poverty⁴². Nevertheless, when, around All Saints 1819, Champagnat comes to reside with the brothers, this poverty is compatible with the priestly dignity.

In fact, it is a day-to-day existence, with random amounts of income and provisioning dependent largely on the land cultivated by the brothers. It is an uncertain time, even a time of simple survival, while waiting for Providence and experience to show the way forward. Still, the registers kept from 1822 allow us to follow in some detail the economic life and even suggest the situation previously. The transfer to the Hermitage will allow this economic organisation to be improved.

3.2. The manufacture of nails

The making of nails was the first source of revenue for the brothers at Lavalla, for winter did not allow work in the fields, and this was a winter activity on the farms almost everywhere. However, the account registers make only a late mention of it. The first mention is made on 24 January 1826: "received for the making of nails: 30 F" and on 6/2/1826, the same register records: "Given to Br Jean-Pierre for the iron taken to M. Nérand at St Chamond: 140 F⁴²." As Neyrand is a nail merchant, one can

suppose that at least part of the amount concerns the famous iron rods called "sticks" which were then cut and hammered to make the heads and points of the nails. This was doubtless still the activity of Br Jean-Marie Granjon who, according to the *Mémoire Bourdir*⁴³, withdrew about 1826 into a hut below the Hermitage where he worked at the forge. Another mention in the accounts leaves no room for doubt: on 25/12/1828 "Given to M. Estienne in payment for iron for making nails: 10.50 F". (OFM/1 p. 423).

So two things are certain: up to 1826, nails were forged and sold by the Marist Brothers. Then, the work of the forge continues but we have no certainty as to the commerce: it may be that the fabrication was destined only for the needs of the house. The low amount spent on the purchase of 1828, would support this hypothesis. Moreover, the register of expenses does not mention any purchase of nails before 1835. That year, in April and July, the register notes two purchases from M. Brosse, nail merchant at St Julien, for an unimportant sum: 18.6 F. (OFM/1 p. 456).

From 1837, purchases of nails increase: 10 January 1837, purchase from the widow Rossillot of 10, 000 nails and 3000 points for 70 F. 29 September 1837: "Given to Fara of Lavalla,

⁴² OM1, doc. 75

⁴³ Register of expenses, OFM/1 p. 333 and 409.

⁴⁴ OM2/ doc 754

nail maker: 46". In December a further purchase from the same for 42 F.

These expenses are mainly connected with the shoemaking workshop at the Hermitage, whose operation is described by Br Avit:

"Since 1817, Fr Champagnat had made use of the shoemakers of Lavalla for the footwear of the Brothers⁴⁵. After some years⁴⁶ (he mentions the year 1833), two named Diosson and Roux practised this trade in the house. The former took the habit in 1834 with the name of Br Pacôme and the good Father appointed him head of the workshop. He was not skilful but the brothers' footwear was not dainty. Sometimes poorly tanned leather was used where you could count all the hairs".

The hypothesis that the making of nails was abandoned about 1835 seems, then, quite reasonable, inasmuch as the Marist brothers were beginning at that time to enjoy a certain financial comfort.

3.3. Textile work at Lavalla then l'Hermitage

Claude Fayol, the future Br Stanislas, entered the novitiate on 12 February 1822, at the age of 22. As he was a weaver "a loom was placed in the kitchen on which he made cloth for

some time in order to earn a few sous"⁴⁷. Br Stanislas himself does not seem to have continued this activity at the Hermitage. But the house would become a centre of textile production which provided the cloth necessary for the tailoring shop established from 1826, which Br Hippolyte "who knew a bit about sewing" would run for 43 years (Avit, 1826 § 52).

From 1827, a workshop for ribbon making was set up where brothers and postulants, tired or incapable of other work, were employed. In a letter of 1829, Fr Champagnat mentions it was directed by Fr Séon.⁴⁸ The same year 1827, Fr Champagnat, Br Pierre and some others enclosed the south court and created a building comprising a bakery, "vacherie" (stable) and several storerooms. A little later, a place for carding wool was set up there (Avit, 1827 § 60), to which would be joined a mill for weaving cloth directed by Br Jean-Joseph (Chillet Jean-Baptiste)⁴⁹. Br Avit reported that this brother had no aptitude for teaching "but he was skilful in weaving linen and cloth". The expense book includes numerous purchases of wool, and the receipts book notes numerous sales of cloth by Br Jean-Joseph. Br Avit (1840 § 703) makes it clear that "the cloth for

⁴⁵ In the acts of the diocesan beatification process, Mlle. Françoise Baché, of la Valla, declared in 1886: "My parents made his shoes and those of the first brothers"; information provided by Br Henri Réocreux.

⁴⁶ About 1830. see Avit, 1833, § 112.

⁴⁷ *Annales de l'Institut*, 1822, § 34.

⁴⁸ OM1, doc. 185. The making of ribbons was abandoned before 1838.

⁴⁹ Native of St Denis sur Coise, entered 4 July 1826, taking the habit on 10 November the same year. He made perpetual profession on 8 September 1828.

the soutanes, the cloaks and the stockings being made at the Hermitage was quite coarse, but it lasted a long time". The choice of cloth stockings for the brothers in 1828-29 would, then, have been basically motivated by economic reasons, the house from then on being capable of making the brothers' socks itself.

Finally, in 1827, "an old woman named Gabrielle came to settle beside the house to take care of the linen". The accounts show traces of some of her expenses but also mention frequently the days of the washerwomen, certainly women living in the vicinity and paid 1, 30 F a day, quite a good income since a manual labourer at the time hardly earned 1 F. The expenses register mentions for the first time on 27 February 1827 "Given for washing linen or for ashes⁵⁰: 12 (F)". One has to wait until 8 February 1832 to find: "Given to the women who do the washing 7, 80 F» and the 10th "Given for the laundry: 28, 50 (F.)". Mention of the washing can be found in April, June, September, October, November of the same year. So one has the impression that until 1832 the washerwomen were called upon only occasionally, but that then, with the house becoming more populated and less poor, the laundry was entrusted to the women.

3.4. Bookshop of Lavalla and l'Hermitage

The register of enrolments mentions not only the price of the board paid by the novices or boarders but also the school supplies they purchase at the house, which makes Lavalla a little centre for the diffusion of books and school materials, certainly well before 1822. Often the same book has different prices, probably according to how used it is. It is to be noted that ink is not bought, probably because made on the spot from gale nuts⁵¹. The house does not sell slates, accessories which the mutual teaching method spreads quite widely, but "hands"⁵² of paper. Finally, there is no sign of works for the beginnings of Latin or manuals of history or geography which are part of college teaching. The programme of studies at Lavalla is then confined to basic matters.

For learning reading, alphabets are quite rare, doubtless because the majority of arrivals (novices and boarders) already know their letters. The work for elementary reading is the "principle" (of reading). Then the readers train themselves in reading following the "*la Bible*" of Royau-mont: a sacred history. We could then distinguish three levels of reading for the novices and boarders: a

⁵⁰ Little use was made of soap but the linen was boiled with ashes.

⁵¹ Plant parasite on the oak with the shape of a marble. Ground it provides an ink of a brown colour.

⁵² Bundle of 25 sheets of paper.

small number needing to be taught the alphabet; most working on the “principle” before being initiated to the standard reading, then to grammar, and to writing, requiring the purchase of pens and paper. As for arithmetic, it is probably confined to learning the four operations. Civility (good manners) is learned through the work of J.B. de la Salle: *Les règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne*. Like the *Bible de Royaumont*, it serves to help complete the teaching of reading⁵³.

The last basic element of teaching is the catechism. But the diocesan one is not the most commonly used: the novices appear to have available a more developed work whose author

is not mentioned. Such a choice would not be surprising, since the catechetical vocation of the brothers is strongly stressed. The Catechism of Calot, expensive, seems to be an exception.

Therefore, Lavalla is a primary school offering a quite developed level of formation. And the presence of the *Conduite des frères* of the Christian Schools among the important books, above all, shows that it is forming future teachers in the simultaneous method. It is what is beginning to be called a normal school. The numerous books of piety remind us that a novitiate is involved, but it is also true that pious literature was a normal component of teacher training at that time.

Books	Sous ⁵³	Francs and centimes
Alphabet		0.25
Arithmetic	5.	0.25
Bible (de Royaumont)		1 25
Bible (de Royaumont)	27	1,35c
Bible (de Royaumont)		1 25c
Bible (de Royaumont)		1 40c
Bible (de Royaumont) in 12	28	1.40
Canticles	9	0.45
Catechism		0.40
Catechism	11	0.55
Catechism	11	0.55
Catechism of Calot in 12		2.65
Catechism of the diocese	5	0.25
Catechism		0.25

⁵³ It is printed in characters of civility which resemble Gothic script.

⁵⁴ Calculations are still done in two ways : in sous and in francs. One franc is worth 20 sous.

Way of the Cross	18	0.90
Chronology (Biblical ?)	17	0.85
Civility		0.25
Civility		0.20
Civility	4	0.20
Conduite des frères	32	1.60
Exercices of piety	5	0.25
Grammar		0.50
French Grammar	16	0.80
Grammar in 12	16	0.80
Heures de Lyon	27	1.35
Heures de Lyon avec Chemin de croix in 18	36	1.80
Heures de Lyon		1,50
Instruction (of youth ?)		1,50
Instruction of youth ⁵⁴	17	0.85
Office Book (of the Blessed Virgin?)		0.50
Office Book		0.50
Office of the Blessed Virgin in 24	13	0.65
Livre d'or (ou <i>L'humilité en pratique</i> par Dom Sans de Ste Catherine)	14	0.70
"Hand" of paper	8	0.40
Pens: packet of twenty-four	8	0.40
Principe (of reading)	5	0.25

To obtain these works, Lavalla is in relation with the bookseller-publisher Guyot of Lyon who certainly grants reductions. The brothers of the schools as well provide themselves with books and school mate-

rial from Lavalla which they sell, deducting a little profit: in 1824, Br J.M. Granjon, director of Bourg-Argental pays 133 F for "money from books"⁵⁶. This bookshop will evidently continue at the Hermitage. In

⁵⁵ *Instructions chrétiennes pour les jeunes gens*, a work of devotion. I possess a copy printed in Lyon by Lambert-Gentot, in 1826.

⁵⁶ OFM/1, doc. 105, p. 303.

1829, Fr Champagnat states that Fr Bourdin has charge of it⁵⁷. In 1838, it will be Br Louis (Avit, 1838, § 387)

rich in debts but the money comes in very slowly and the treasury problems are almost permanent.

3.5. The boarders and the novices

We hardly need to return to the revenues procured from the boarding fees which rise to more or less two hundred francs a year, like that of the novices. But each entry seems to come from a particular contract which the status of the boarders illustrates well: certain pay 10 F; others 15,20 or even 25 F. per month but with different services, sometimes expressly noted. It is necessary to emphasize in each case that it is a matter of very significant sums: a qualified worker then earned 2 F. a working day and so more or less 600 F. a year. In these conditions, it is not surprising that the pensions or the cost of the novitiate are paid gradually or require some accommodations. In fact, l'Hermitage is

3.6. Some astonishing delays of payment

Some documents on the payment of novitiate fees appear to us worth special attention from the persons involved and from the importance of the amounts concerned. The register of enrolments, in an "Approximate account of what is owed us" (OFM/1, doc. 109, p. 328) dated 6 November 1825, reveals that certain brothers of long standing figure among the debtors, in particular Gabriel Rivat. Another surprise: the document mentions "the two Chomats", that is, the two teachers from Sorbiers, Louis Chomat and Arsène Fayol who would become Brothers Cassien et Arsène, and who appear already secretly associated with the work of Champagnat. But their biography⁵⁸ provides some clarification.

	Civil state (added by us)	Sum due
"Poinard	Claude Poinard. Br Etienne. Entered on 11/11/23 ⁵⁹	60
Brother of Br Jean-Pierre	Br Benoît (Deville). Entered and received habit in 1828 ⁶⁰	400

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *Biographies de quelques frères*, édition 1868 p. 195-198, indicates contacts between them and him around this time. They do not do a novitiate but, entering on 19 September 1832, take the religious habit on 7 October and return to their school. It seems that the inhabitants of Sorbiers take this affiliation as a betrayal and Fr Champagnat will have to close the school. This is a little after the Revolution of 1830, in an anticlerical ambiance, but it may be that Louis Chomat, up to then practising the mutual method, passed to the simultaneous method, which, in an atmosphere of a new war of the schools, could have been seen as a provocation.

⁵⁹ We have added this column to allow us to place the person.

⁶⁰ As with "the 2 Chomat" Benoît Deville appears to be associated with the work without yet being a brother.

Furet of st Pal	Br Cyprien. Entered on 3/9/22	400
Br Pierre	Souchon Jean. Entered on 20/10/24	400
Br Hilarion	Girard. Entered on 28/3/22	180
Br Marie-Lin	?	50
Br Ambroise	Pinsonnel Jean. Entered on 7/9/24	300
Br Dominique	Exquis Benoît. Entered on 14/10/24	200
Br Joseph Bret	Entered on 5/8/1825	400
Jean-Claude Jalon	Br Clément. Entered on 27/6/25	400
Brs Louis and Laurent	The two Audras brothers entered in 1817	1000
The two Chomat	That is, Brs Cassien and Arsène (Louis Chomat and Césaire Fayol) who entered on 19 September 1832	2000
Auguste Ayou	Boarder	220
Nolin	Boarder	220
Jean Fara	Boarder then Brother	120
Gabriel Rivat	Br François. Entered on 6 May 1818.	400
Br Jean-Pierre"	Jean Deville. Entered on 14/5/25	200

It is difficult to understand why Brs Louis, Laurent and François still owe large sums in 1825, as if they had not yet completed their novitiate. In Doc. 140 (OFM/1, p. 557), there appears another inventory entitled, this time:

“Brothers who have not finished paying for their novitiate”. Undated, it seems to have drawn up around 1830. A first list of 13 names still includes two brothers who entered before 1822, one of them Br François.⁶¹

	Sum received	Entered on	Civil name
1° Br François.	Received 100	6/5/1818	Gabriel Rivat
2° Br Barthélemy	100	1/5/1819	Barthélemy Badard
3° Br Joseph		28/3/1822	Georges Poncet
4° Br Jean-Bap(tist).		28/3/1822	J.B. Furet
5° Br Théodoret		20/1/27	Thomas Fayasson
6° Br Hilarion		28/3/1822	Joseph Girard
7° Br Jean-Marie		2/12/1826	Claude Bonnet
8° Br Abel		25/9/1825	Jean Etienne Dumas

⁶¹ But the mention of the amount seems to signify the end of the payment. It could be the same for Barthélemy Badard who is not mentioned as a debtor in the 1825 list.

9° Br Damien		31/10/1824	J. M. Mercier
10° Br Xavier		11/4/1825	Gabriel Prat
11° Br Hyppolite		20/9/1826	Jean Remillieu
12° Br Enselme		5/2/1827	Etienne Poujard
13° Br Mathieu		19/11/1827	Philibert Derisson
14° Régis (sic)		28/3/22	François Civier
15° J. Chrysostome		25/2/1829	Doche Louis
16° Br Benoît"		19/5/1828	Jean Deville

We must consider, then, that the payment for the novitiate extended over a very long period and also that a certain number of persons were attached to the work without being officially brothers, whether because they were formed at Lavalla or because they were officially linked to the work of Champagnat. So these accounts appear quite strange. Perhaps some of these amounts were connected with the inheritance of the brothers who must use them for the benefit of the house. In any case, if the payment of the novitiate fees often extended over a very long period, no one seems to have been exempted from them.

CONCLUSION

The economy of the work of the brothers at Lavalla was established in the early years on threefold footing: on one hand, the exploitation of the agricultural resources of the proper-

ty; on another hand, the activities of the workshops destined from the start to procure financial resources and then to reduce expenses; finally, the operation of the novitiate-board-ing hostel-normal school which slowly assures a financial return. That these resources are complementary is obvious: the agricultural production more or less assures daily living; the income from the workshops allows the growth of a basic treasury; the amounts provided for formation yield more important resources but in the long term.

Moreover, an examination of the financial sources gives a more complex picture of the work of Lavalla than the classical accounts of the origins: the brotherhood does not prevent each one from paying what he should and it seems to have, during the Lavalla period, more fluid and wider boundaries than the restricted group whose memory we have been left by tradition.

4. THE RUNNING OF THE SCHOOLS FROM 1818 TO 1827

4.1. From the parish to the communal school

Between the establishment of the school at Marlihes in 1818 and the prospectus of 1824, which offered the services of the Little Brothers of Mary to the public, there were six years which allowed Fr Champagnat to refine the financial and material

conditions for founding and running schools.

4.2. The prospectus of 1824

In July 1824, the Little Brothers of Mary published, with the authorization of the diocese, a prospectus probably drawn up by Fr Cholleton, vicar general, which was inspired by a project certainly very close to the thought of Champagnat⁶². Still, the differences between the project and the prospectus appear quite marked.

Project (June 1824 ?)	Prospectus (July 1824)
Stipend: 400 F. for two brothers; 600 F. for 3 brothers	Stipend: 800 F. for two brothers; 1200 F. for three
Basic furniture worth 1500 F. for three brothers; 1000 F. for two; 800 F. when the brothers only stay for the winter	A suitable house provided with the necessary furniture
400 F. lodging and furniture suitable for 2 brothers teaching only in winter.	
A building suitable for classes	The communes can expect a school fee from the well-off parents.
	A garden
	A recreation area for the children
	Appeal to the prayers and generosity of the parishioners and the goodwill of the priests

⁶² F. Pedro Herreros, *La regla del Fundador, sus Fuentes y Evolucion*, Rome, 1984, p. 20-24.

It appears that the project, faithful to the desire to respond to the needs of the smaller towns, reduces requirements of finance and furniture to a minimum. It also places itself in the tradition of school during the winter: from All Saints to Easter. The prospectus makes a choice of a quite different work, which can only concern the larger communes but seems, from many aspects, more realistic. In particular, the prospectus allows for a school fee to be received by the town and not by the brothers, which saves them many problems.

As the project does not mention school fees, although they are already received in many schools, it is necessary to consider that, addressed to the town councils, it indicates the amount paid by the council and leaves aside any money received directly by the brothers by way of school fees. The project also supposes financial support from some better off people, whether in the form of allowances or directly by annual subsidy. This is the scenario of the foundations of Bourg-Argental, St Sauveur and St Symphorien-le-Château. As for the prospectus, it makes a discrete appeal to the generosity of the inhabitants (article 12).

In sum, the project provides only for the public funds spent on the establishment of the schools while the prospectus is more global.

4.3. Experimentation in the years 1817-1822

This normative text is, in any case, the fruit of the experience acquired between 1818 and 1824 at the cost of many difficulties. We have a good example of this period in looking at the financial situation of the schools founded before 1824.

The status of the school at Lavalla seems never to have been fixed. After the move to the Hermitage, the school became an annex of the mother-house, two brothers taking school there only during the winter, and coming down on Thursdays to collect provisions, just as Br Laurent did around 1819 at Le Bessat⁶³. At Tarentaise, Br Laurent, about 1822, was in an even more precarious situation: "He prepared his scanty meals himself, slept in the dormitory of the Latin students (of the presbytery school of Fr Préher) and took classes in a barn".

Marlhes, founded in 1818, appears no better off financially. The school was considered an annex of the parish priest and relied on him for its resources. The material conditions were not very satisfactory either. The boarders had to be put up in a very restricted space: "some space was saved by making 2, even 3 children sleep together in slightly bigger beds" as was still the custom in many families and "the brothers had difficulty in getting a corner for themselves"⁶⁴.

⁶³ F. Avit, *Annales des maisons, Province de l'Hermitage*, Lavalla

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Marlhes.

Faced with the unwillingness of the parish priest to remedy this situation, Fr Champagnat withdrew the brothers in 1822. Vanosc, founded the same year 1822, was no better off: very poorly lodged, the brothers would be withdrawn in the holidays of 1826 or at Easter 1827.

St Sauveur, founded in 1820, was a different case because founded by the mayor, M. Colomb de Gaste. He would have spent 400 F. on the installation and furniture of the same value. For the stipend of the brothers, the commune would have given 350 F. and M. Colomb 200. An annuity of 100 F. from the hiring of a field, another annuity of 50 F. coming from M. de St Trivier, as well as the school fees from the older students (the more advanced ones who were learning to write): 100 F. The total was in theory 800 F. But there was difficulty in getting the fees, the people being reluctant to pay for teaching and the number of pupils in the writing class being small.

At Bourg-Argental, we have a similar scenario: M. De Pléné, the mayor, and the Vicomte de St Trivier assure the foundation. They provide the furniture and it seems that the foundation payment was obtained by subscription from benefactors. As for the upkeep of the brothers, it is in two parts: 600 F. of guaranteed revenue, it is not known from whom, and the other 600 obtained from school fees. On 7 February 1824, the register of enrolments (OFM/1, doc. 105 p. 303) indicates that Br Jean-Marie Granjon paid 600 F for the year 1822

and, for the year 1823, 300 F stipend of the brothers. There is also 133 F. from book money, probably the profit from school supplies to the children, but only 59 F. from school fees. Finally, Br Jean-Marie repays 60 F. borrowed from the mother-house. As the fees do not provide the money expected, in 1824, M. de Pléné promises to supply 1000 F. As for M. de Saint Trivier, he grants capital of 10, 000 F. which gives an annual allowance of 500 F. But Br Avit notes that up to 1832 the revenue for 3 brothers is only 980 F instead of the 1200 promised.

Boulieu was founded in 1823 by Dumas, the parish priest, Mignot, the mayor, and the de Vogüe family. Br Avit thinks that the house was “furnished in kind”, that is to say, composed of donated furniture, and doubts that a foundation premium was paid. As for the stipend for the two brothers, it was 800 F. provided half by the commune and the rest by the de Vogüe family. The children did not pay school fees.

At St Symphorien-sur-Coise (St Symphorien-le-Château), it was the mayor, M. Clérimbert, who took the initiative of writing to Champagnat on 15 September 1823 announcing that the commune was ready to give 400 F. for the lodging and furniture for two brothers, the rest being paid from school fees. The parish priest, Fr Roch, also wrote. This foundation seems to have been rather precipitate, perhaps to compete with a mutual school. Opened around All Saints 1823, from 1825 the school had three

brothers. The income must have been very modest, since the Marquis de Nobletz in 1828 endowed the school with an allowance of 650 F.

The foundation of Chavanay, at All Saints 1824, after negotiations with the parish priest, Fr Gauché, does not yet correspond to the application of the prospectus, but is very close to the project. Br Avit mentions, for this school of two brothers, an installation premium of 400 F; furniture worth 500 F. and a stipend of 400 F. per brother. The premises are in a very poor state⁶⁵.

4.4. Three models of foundation

Lavalla, Marthes, Tarentaise and Vanosc are parish schools and hence dependent entirely on the parish priest who treats the brothers as minor clerics. Apparently, no precise financial commitment is made and these houses are wretched, to the point where Champagnat quickly closes them, except for Lavalla which continues after 1825. A school exclusively dependent on the parish priest is, therefore, not viable for the Brothers of Mary.

Bourg-Argental and St Sauveur are communal schools owing to the initiative of the civil authorities and leading citizens. Quite precise financial commitments are made, apparently without the intervention of the

parish priests. The system works passably well.

Boulieu and St Symphorien-le-Château are intermediary models, which will become the most common way. They rest on an understanding between parish priests, commune authorities and leading citizens. As in the preceding model, the financial conditions are precise. And with Chavanay, although the founder is the parish priest, one seems to end up with something close to the conditions of the prospectus project.

4.5. The outline of a basic change

These facts illustrate a beginning of the laicisation of the school, the civil authorities, even and especially good Catholics, considering that instruction comes within their competence. In sum, St Sauveur is the first Marist school of the modern type: a modernity which makes the brothers less dependent on the parish priest, offers them decent material conditions and a reasonably decent remuneration.

There remains the problem of school fees because the parents, anchored in the old tradition of the Church which considers education as one of the works of mercy and not a paid work, balk at paying. So the perception of remuneration is difficult, and Br Avit remarks that when Br Louis, successor of Br Jean-Marie at

⁶⁵ The information on these schools comes from the Annals of the houses.

Bourg-Argental, proved more severe in exacting the fees, “many children left the school”.

During the years 1818-1823, Fr Champagnat was able to experience different situations and get an idea of the conditions necessary for the existence of a school of two or three brothers. He was able to observe the failure of purely parish foundations and to evaluate very precisely the minimum to require. Thus the foundation conditions of the prospectus of 1824 flow on from these years of experimentation marked by failures or foundations poorly established.

4.6. The difficulties of the schools

However, even when there are financial agreements, money does not come in easily. In the register of enrolments, an approximate record of what is owing, established on 6 November 1825 (OFM doc. 109 p. 328), gives an idea of the delays in payment for the year 1824:

Boulieu:	500
Bourg-Argental:	1700
St Sauveur:	400
Vanosc:	300
Chavanay:	500
Ampuis:	800
St Symphorien:	700
Charlieu:	800

It is to be noted that Bourg-Argental seems to have a delay of at least two years. So there are 5700 F. of Champagnat’s finances that are not available to him just before he and Courveille have to borrow 12000 F in December 1825.

4.7. The case of Charlieu: a poorly implemented prospectus

This establishment was not desired by Champagnat but imposed by the diocese wishing to eliminate the influence of Grizard, a supporter of Vicar General Bochard and opposed to the coming of Archbishop de Pins. Moreover, it was a town where there was a college and with teachers of the mutual method. Fr Courveille, sent to negotiate with the municipality, tried to set up there a novitiate for brothers and even a missionary house⁶⁶. He tried, however, to base negotiations on the prospectus of the Institute, recently printed, asking from the commune 600 F. per year stipend – the remainder owing doubtless to be provided from the school fees – as well as 1000 F. for the purchase of furniture and the costs of installation. Finally, the commune accepted his conditions.

Br Avit⁶⁷, who certainly did not know the letter from the mayor giving the details of the negotiations, presents slightly different information: a

⁶⁶ See OM1/doc. 120 p. 343

⁶⁷ *Annales des maisons*. Charlieu.

premium of 400 F. a stipend of 425 F. a brother; that is to say 1275 F. a year, and furniture of 1500 F. The town would have pledged only 500 F. for the annual stipend and the fees would

provide the rest. "But they had to be obtained at sword point". From these various sources, we can draw up an interesting table of the passage from theory to practice:

	Project of prospectus (3 brothers)	Prospectus (3 brothers)	Conditions of Fr Courville (OM1/120)	Avit (Annals of the houses)
Stipend in theory	600 F	1200 F	1200 F. (3 brothers)	1275 F
Communal stipend	Not stipulated	Not stipulated	600 F	500 F
Fees	Non stipulated	Collected by the commune	Theoretically 600 F	Collected with difficulty by the brothers
Furniture and costs of installation	1500 F	Not stipulated	1000 F.	1500 F.

This foundation, therefore, although made with reference to the prospectus of 1824 is very far from applying it. In fact, with or without prospectus, the basic problem remains the refusal of municipalities to consecrate substantial sums to public teaching and the reluctance of families to spend money, even in a modest amount, on their children's education. We are still in an old educational system which Champagnat and the brothers have to adapt to. It will be necessary to wait until the Guizot Law (1833) for a basic wage of 200 F. to be imposed on the communes by the State. As for Fr Champagnat, he will systematically look for

free schools or those where the commune collects the school fees. But in 1824, we are not at that stage. The prospectus, then, is anticipating the future.

4.8. The contributions of the schools to the common fund (1825-1832)

The account book⁶⁸ allows us to follow year by year the financial life of the schools, even if the indications given are often difficult to interpret. It is particularly tricky to know the annual stipend because the payments are very irregular and most often late. The

⁶⁸ OFM/1 p. 544

least unreliable way of coming to know the brothers' revenue is to add up expenses and payments to the common fund. A sample of 10 of the oldest schools gives the following results:

School	Year	Range of the brothers' expenses	Range of the annual payments to the common fund
Chavanay	1825-31	305-511 F/year	90 - 141
Bourg-Argental	1825-32	364-665	450-937
St Sauveur	1825-32	300-561	48-100
Boulieu	1825-31	306-330	73-153
St Symphorien	1825-32	342-389	34-250
Charlieu	1825-32	350-666	107-766
Ampuis	1826-32	514-700	30-141
Mornant	1826-32	400-455	300-654
St Paul en J.	1827-32	457-747	132-221
Neuville	1826-32	420-700	100-317
Median		375-572	136-368

The medians allow us to suggest that in a low year the median income of a school is from 375+136, or 511 F.; and in a good year: 572+368, or 940 F. Taking into account additional income (sale of books⁶⁹), incidental income and money in the fund, one can value the median revenue as between 600 and 1000 F. a year. As the communes and the benefactors seem to pay when they please, when they can, or after pressing demands, it is impossible to establish a provisional budget, and a certain disorder in Champagnat's accounts is partly explained by an economy over exposed to the negligence of debtors in

paying what they owe within a reasonable time frame. The very modest living standard of the brothers comes less from low incomes than from the obligation of living without cash when debtors do not pay.

Finally, it is necessary to take into account times of political trouble which may engender financial crises. Thus Champagnat keeps an account of debts for the years 1830-31 in 7 communes. The total adds up to 1611 F., and goes from 450 F. (Bourg-Argental) to 61 F. (Feurs)⁷⁰. Such indebtedness flows very probably from the revolution of 1830.

⁶⁹ In 1826, 40 F. at Charlieu and 79 at Ampuis. (OFM/1 p. 548-549)

⁷⁰ OFM/1, doc. 138, p. 554.

4.9. The furniture of the brothers of the schools... and of Lavalla

The *Life* of Fr Champagnat gives us some details about the material life of certain schools in the chapter on poverty.⁷⁰ We learn there that the brothers, even the sick ones, sleep on palliasses and not mattresses, using sheets of coarse material, do not

drink wine, eat rye bread, mend their own habits... The prospectus project, less detailed than the prospectus itself on many points, presents, however, a list of furniture. As the schools are carbon copies of the Lavalla community, they give a good idea of the brothers' furnishings in 1824 and certainly well before. We think it useful to produce here this list which seems to apply to a community of two brothers:

"Furniture required for the brothers:

- 1/ A crucifix, a font of lead, a picture of the Bl. Virgin, St Joseph, and the Guardian Angel*
- 2/ Two prie-Dieus*
- 3/ Three beds⁷¹ set up as follows: 1° three bedsteads; 2° three palliasses stuffed with maize leaves, 80 pounds each⁷²; 3° three bolsters stuffed the same; 4° six woollen blankets.*
- 5/ A dozen sheets of common cloth*
- 6/ Two dozen good and common towels*
- 7/ A dozen tablecloths*
- 8/ A dozen cloths*
- 9/ A dozen blue cloth aprons*
- 10/ An alarm clock*
- 11/ Two cupboards; one with two doors*
- 12/ Two small tables with drawer and one for the kitchen and for dining*
- 13/ Four soup plates, four plates for the helpings, two a little larger for serving the food, a soup tureen; all of pewter*
- 14/ Half a dozen forks, the same number of spoons and table knives; a basket to hold six glasses; a basket for the salad*
- 15/ A sideboard or sort of cabinet for the kitchen*
- 16/ A chest for containing wheat or flour*

⁷¹ *Life*, ch. IX, p. 361-374.

⁷² One bed is doubtless for the visit of the superior or a passing guest.

⁷³ The pound is worth 0.422 kg. So the weight of each palliasse would be about 34 kg.

- 17/Two watering cans, two buckets, two cruets; all of tin
 18/A dozen chairs
 19/A lantern
 20/A frying pan
 21/Kitchen utensils of all kinds

This list is more indicative than actual. But it gives a good idea of the brothers' way of life, having an oratory with holy water font, images and prie-Dieus, and tables allowing them to study, probably in the same room. For lighting, a single lantern is indicated, but the brothers certainly had individual lamps available. The clock makes it possible for them to rise on time and follow their timetable. The absence of furnace or stove means that the cooking is done in a pot suspended in the kitchen chimney-place, which is also the sole source of heat in the house. The first mention of the purchase of a stove appears in the Lavalla accounts in March 1824 for 60 F⁷⁴.

As for bedding, the brothers do not have a mattress but simple palliasses. There is a good supply of linen since there is a long time between washings. The dishes, glasses aside, are not of terracotta, too fragile, nor of earthenware, a little luxurious, but of pewter. The chest for wheat or flour means that rye bread is the staple food and that the brothers, apparently, knead and

bake it themselves. The presence of a frying pan suggests the consumption of fried potato and the plates indicate the habitual consumption of soup and "fricot", a dish with diverse ingredients but certainly vegetables, potatoes and, at least from time to time, lard. No cellar is required for storing potatoes, salting-tub and wine cask but only a sideboard in the kitchen. The kitchen utensils, only mentioned, must consist at the minimum of a pot for making the fricot and the soup, some casseroles and an assortment of ladles, skimmers...The presence of the buckets recalls the need to provide the house with water from the village fountain or a spring. The watering cans serve to irrigate the soil and show that the brothers have to garden, although there is no provision for tools. The presence of a dozen chairs appears a little high, even if two or three are needed for the kitchen, at least two with the work tables, and probably two more near the beds. There seems to be provision for the brothers receiving different persons: the mayor, the parish priest,...and holding little meetings.

⁷⁴ OFM/1, doc. 106, p. 318.

In total, this list of 1824 shows that the way of life of the brothers is very close to that of peasants of average means, intellectual activities aside. The dignity of their vocation also forbids too lowly a way of life. In 1838⁷⁵, the Institute will provide a new list of furnishings for a school of three brothers much more detailed: for kitchen and crockery, it provides for 42 items; 15 for the brothers' workplace and gardening and 17 for the linen and bedding. It is almost four times more than in 1824. The comparison of the two lists shows, better than any document, the progress made in 14 years, but this is another topic.

CONCLUSION

In a little more than a dozen years, the work of Champagnat has experienced different types of contracts with the local authorities founding schools, the prospectus of 1824 constituting a norm interpreted on an ad hoc basis rather than really applied. For Champagnat, the best formula seems to be the school resulting from the collaboration between leading citizens capable of providing a

regular allowance, communal authorities prepared to pay a significant sum and provide decent premises, and a parish priest taking on the moral responsibility for the foundation. So the ideal is the free school because school fees yield little and, when the brothers have to collect them, they are a source of conflicts. As such a model is not practical in the smaller parishes, Champagnat orients his work towards the more important communes or the towns. Thus, the school of two brothers operating only in winter, still considered in 1824, is hardly going to last.

As for the material life of the brothers, it is, in theory, close to that of villagers of average means, but the material conditions are quite different from one school to another and the slowness or lateness of payments, as much as the spirit of mortification, encourages them to live meagrely. It is, then, at the price of many sacrifices that Champagnat imposes on the communes a modern educational system from which everybody wants to benefit but for which very few are willing to pay the price.

⁷⁵ *Circulaires*, Vol. 1 p. 242

5. THE POSTULANTS OF THE HAUTE-LOIRE

5.1. Indigents and recruitment

About the postulants from the Haute-Loire who arrived in March 1822, Br Gabriel-Michel wrote a very important article in the *Bulletin of the Institute* (T. XVIII, 1969). If we are taking up this subject again, it is from a slightly different angle, based on two aspects: the material and financial conditions of the event, and research on the famous ex-Brother of the Christian Schools who brought this group with him.

For lack of a register up to 1822, we do not exactly know what the financial conditions were for the reception of novices. Moreover, in the first years, the brothers formed an autonomous community living from its work, the income of Champagnat, donations, and also payments from boarders. Nevertheless, the taking of the habit leads us to suppose that a sum of money was paid at that time, for it marks the entry into the community and the cost of the habit was far from cheap. The prospectus of 1824 is very clear as to the cost of the novitiate: 400 F. for the two years of the novitiate and a wardrobe consisting of the habit of entry into religion, a dozen shirts, six towels, four pairs of sheets, a dozen handkerchiefs, two pairs of shoes. It is obvious that these requirements are largely theoretical and express an ideal rather than the reality. Still, the years

1822-24 served as a sort of experimental period during which Fr Champagnat was able to establish a scale allowing the community to live.

5.2. A probable scenario

The account in the *Life* (ch. IX) about the arrival of the eight postulants and their guide, on 28 March 1822, is full of information and also of contradictions about how the would-be recruiter went about his work. Having left with a letter of recommendation from Fr Champagnat, he does not appear to have used it but to have rested his case on two arguments: his connection to the Christian Brothers and the status of his family. All eight postulants were not thinking of going to the FSCs, as the author of the *Life* recognises: "several had already decided to enter religion". Written agreements had even been made "to determine the boarding fees and the times of payment". But the number of true candidates to the novitiate in Lyon cannot have exceeded two or three young men and the recruiter had promised Fr Champagnat half a dozen subjects. So he inflated his group with other young men looking to find a place as shepherds or minor servants during the spring and summer, or attracted by the desire to see the country, to discover the big city. With the families of these latter, there was obviously no agreement made.

Champagnat's surprise at their arrival is not to see a troop of young people asking for hospitality, but to

hear them asking for entry to the novitiate. In questioning them, he quickly takes note of the lack of seriousness of the project. He has also seen that “most of these youngsters offered little in the way of capacity to pay”. So he refuses to receive them as novices but cannot do less than accord them hospitality until the next morning. Like many other groups before them, they will sleep in the barn.

The next day, Champagnat authorises them to stay on a few days if they desire in order to test their motivations and to take counsel from the brothers and his friends. He gives them a rosary, exhorts them to devotion to Mary and then employs them for some time in work on the land. It seems unlikely, however, that he imposed on them the chapter of faults and public penances as the *Life* says, seeming to confuse different periods. On the other hand, the *Life* quotes a very credible testimony from one of them: they sleep on straw, eat black bread “which crumbles to pieces”, vegetables, and drink water. Spring occasioning the resumption of agricultural work, they are obliged to hard work “for which the only pay was reprimands and punishments”.

How long did they have to endure this trial? Certainly several weeks. The dismissal of the recruiter would have taken place after 15 days, or about mid-April “for a fault against morals” says Br Jean-Baptiste, perhaps blackening the character of a person with little inclination anyway to follow such

a regime. Taking his initiation into the teaching profession into account, he could easily find a place elsewhere. The fact is that his departure does not lead to that of his companions and hence he had little influence over them.

The *Life* also recalls that “when it was decided that the postulants would be admitted, Fr Champagnat sent one of the principal brothers to their parents to gather some information about them and collect the pension for the novitiate”... and also to recruit “four new subjects”. Such an operation could not have taken place until after Easter (7 April).

Champagnat envisages hiring the youngest, and perhaps those who have not brought money, out as shepherds until All Saints. This solution would have avoided mouths to feed, resolved problems of accommodation, allowed the youngsters to earn some money to pay their pension, and to learn more about their intentions. Finally, All Saints being the beginning of the school year, the time of novitiate would coincide with the return to school. Champagnat does not in fact implement this solution for practical and especially spiritual reasons: he is going to employ the workforce of these youngsters on enlarging the house while commencing their formation, and especially because it is Our Lady of Le Puy who has sent these subjects. In 1835, in a letter to Archbishop de Pins, he returns to this idea which was perhaps born at that time:

"I do not dare refuse those who come to us,
I consider them as having been led here
by Mary herself."⁷⁶

In opening a register of admissions in 1822, Champagnat shows symbolically that his work is taking on a new dimension. So it is necessary to establish more clearly the conditions of entry and determine a boarding charge which, more theoretical than real, can serve as a basis of negotiation. But this decision raises a question: in accepting postulants from far away and whom he does not know, is Champagnat not abandoning a first form of his work to give it a mixed organisation: at once a novitiate and a teacher training course? This is the impression Inspector Guillard has when he states that the curate of Lavalla in April 1822 is not teaching Latin students "but rather 12 to 15 young peasants whom he is training in the brothers' method in order to spread them around the parishes"⁷⁷.

5.3. Teacher training and the FSC

The history of the FSC by Rigault⁷⁸ reports that the ordinance of 1816 provided for certain important schools offering lessons in the art of teaching to their most gifted students and for granting the 2nd degree brevet to

teachers who would use the simultaneous method. Rigault adds that "the experiments were restricted to rough outlines" but one may ask if these sorts of normal courses did not have more importance than he says, even if the practice remained largely informal.

We have an interesting indication from Inspector Guillard who visited Bourg-Argental on 23 April 1822. There he found M. Brole-Labeaume, a teacher⁷⁹ supplanted by Champagnat's brothers. To put him back in the saddle, the inspector decided that he would go: "to learn the brothers' method at Condrieux or at Annonay, he would send the certificate stating he knew it well, and he would practice it with the books he would have sent from M. Rusand"⁸⁰.

Rigault also mentions that the prefect of the Rhône, Lezay-Marnésia, in a letter of 14 November 1821, invited Br Gerbaud, Superior General, to open the classes of the novitiate in Lyon to student-teachers destined for country schools. And on the 1st of December, Br Gerbaud consented to this request. In concert with the Inspector of the Academy, sixteen candidates were chosen and followed the course during the second term of 1822. Satisfied with the

⁷⁶ Letters, No 56, p. 128.

⁷⁷ *Origines Maristes*, Vol.1, doc. 75 § 9.

⁷⁸ Vol. IV p. 468-469.

⁷⁹ He was reasonably old since he had been a teacher at Condrieux before the arrival of the BCS.

⁸⁰ *Origines Maristes*, Vol. 1, doc. 75, § 2.

result, the authorities renewed the credits for 1823.

These facts, then, invite us to situate the postulants and Champagnat in a slightly different ambiance from the one we mentioned earlier: the centres for training teachers multiplied under the leadership of the FSC, whose method is supported by the university. Champagnat's work can be seen as one of these centres of the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine, a generic term covering various teaching institutes. Well aware of this situation, the ex-FSC and Champagnat benefit from the prestige of the FSC, the one to create a situation for himself, the other to recruit brothers. The youngsters can observe that, if it is not a matter of the novitiate of Lyon, they are still getting the formation that they expected, whether they consider becoming brothers or not. In accepting this situation, Champagnat resolves his recruitment problem, while quite aware that the youngsters recruited have less clear motivations than his first disciples.

5.4. Between the teacher-training course and novitiate: finances and perseverance

The first register of enrolments (OFM/1 doc 105, p. 237) gives us an idea of the entry process. Admission is not acquired while the financial agreements have not been made with the families of the postulants. That is the task of the brother sent to

the Haute-Loire. But the results of his negotiations seem quite uneven, Champagnat's requirements, perhaps not properly spelled out, running up against the limited possibilities of the families.

Thus, Claude Aubert, of St Pal, is registered on 28 March 1822 as owing 100 F. and having paid 40. On 27 October, he pays another 60 F. He certainly completed his novitiate since he received the name of Br André, but his clothing did not take place until 18 October 1827.

Pierre Aubert, from Boisset, arrived on 28 March 1822 but is mentioned in the register only in April. He owes 300 F. but has paid nothing. He leaves in June 1822.

Civier François, from Boisset, is noted on 28 March 22. He owes 400 F. but that day pays only 12. Between 28 March and 10 May, he has taken a pair of clogs, a "hand" of paper and two pens valued 0.80 F. It is a sign that he is partly literate since he is considering taking exercises in writing, which only comes after reading. On 10 May, Fr Champagnat notes that he has given him 10 F. sent by his father, but that he left the same day. However, his departure was only temporary and seems due to a trip home to resolve the financial situation. The register, besides, records on 28 June a payment of 180 F. In the register of taking of the habit drawn up in 1829, François Civier indicates that he arrived in the house of Lavalla on 27 March 1822 and took the habit on 25

March 1824 with the name of Br Régis. He was then 23. He later left the Institute at an unknown date. Did he pay the rest of his board?

Mathieu Cossange, native of Bas-en-Basset, also entered on 28 March 1822. On 6 August 1823, his brother paid 104,8 F and on 25 April 1824, he is down as owing 200 F and having paid 50, probably that day. With the name of Br Augustin, he must have taken the habit in 1823 and the payment from his brother was probably made at that time. In 1829, he was one of the two rebels in the affair of the cloth stockings who refused to submit.

Jean-Baptiste Furet, the future Br Jean-Baptiste, is well known to us. The register signals on 28 March 22 that he owes 100 F. and has given 30.

On 28 April 1822, Girard Joseph, of Solinhac, is recorded as owing 200 F. without any payments. At an unspecified date, the register shows that he owes 150 – which supposes a first payment of 50 F.- and that he has paid 100. In the register of perpetual vows, he indicates he entered the house on 28 April 1822, or a month after the others, took the religious habit with the name of Br Hilarion on 25 October 1822 and made his perpetual vows in October 1828. The question of the date of his entry to Lavalla is interesting because he appears to have come on 28 March, but the register of professions as well the one of admissions indicate the same date of entry to the novi-

tiate a month later. It seems, then, that arrival at the house and admission to the novitiate are two different things and that his admission was not affective until an arrangement had been made with the family.

Ponset Georges, from Tiranges, is signaled on 28 March 1822 as owing 120 F. but paying nothing. A first payment of 72 F. takes place on 30 October 1823 and a second of 100 F. on 13 October 1824. So the payments exceed the amount originally set. The register of vows indicates that he entered on 27 March 1822 and took the habit with the name of Br Joseph only on 25 October 1825, but that he made his perpetual vows on 8 October 1826. Such a long time of residence in the house (3 and a half years) without the postulant taking the habit poses the question of what the word “brother” meant then. We saw the same thing with Claude Aubert. Both, in fact, give the impression that after their training they were able to carry out the functions of teacher without officially being brothers.

Jean-Pierre Vertore (Vertoie, Vertove according to the registers), of Tirange, is recorded on 28 March as owing 100 F. Leaving the novitiate on 1st June, he does not seem to have paid anything.

Jean Dantogne, from Boisset, is recorded on 28 March 22 as owing 100 F. As nothing else is recorded about him, his stay must have been very short.

Jean Fleury, from Tiranges, owes 50 F. on 28 March but pays nothing. Like the preceding, he was only passing through.

Jean Antoine Monnier, from Boisset, is recorded on 23 April 1822 as owing 200 F. without any record of payment. But on 4 May 1823, André Monier (probably his father) is noted as owing 96 F. and paying 60. He does not seem part of the first group of postulants but of the second which came back with the brother sent by Champagnat to regulate the admission of the first. Although staying more than a year in the house, he does not receive the habit, and it is possible that the payment of 4 May is an arrangement for settling affairs on the occasion of his departure.

As well, there is a Michel Marconnet, from Boisset, registered on 23 April with the figure "12 p.m." difficult to interpret (perhaps "12 F. For the record"?) who on 30 September gives 30 F. On 2 July 1823, one André Marconnet (his father or a relative) pays 50 F "for lawful right", that is to say, probably for the dues of his time in the house, which means that by this date he has already probably left.

There is also a Jean Aubert recorded on 15 September 1822, native of St Pal en Chalancon who contributes 24 F but quite regularly after that pays sums of money up to 8 October 1824. He becomes Br Jean-Louis and is one of the two rebels in the affair of the cloth stockings in 1829. In total, he pays 304 F.

The case of Jacques Furet, brother of Jean-Baptiste, resembles that of Jean Aubert. Coming from the same place and entering the same day, he certainly travelled with him. He pays 30 F. without an amount due recorded. Certainly wanting instruction, he buys at the house a copy of the *Conduite des frères* (32 sous = 1, 6 F) and a hand of paper (40 centimes). In the register of perpetual vows which he pronounced on 20 Octobre 1826, he declares he entered the novitiate on 23 September 1822 and took the habit with the name of Br Cyprien on 22 October 1824. Br Avit declares he subsequently left.

Finally, the register records one Jean-Claude Bonnefoix, from St Genest Malifaux, without any date or sum due or paid, and who appears to have become Br Régis. His case appears peculiar.

In sum, the arrival of the postulants of the Haute-Loire appears to us a little more complex than the account given us by Br Jean-Baptiste in the *Life*. It seems that, for most of the 8 youths, the prospect of the FSC novitiate was only a vague one. The three among them capable of providing on 28 March a significant sum: Claude Aubert (40), François Civier (12), J.B. Furet (30) are perhaps the ones who had the intention of entering the FSC. As for the financial conditions of their entry, they lead to numerous negotiations and staggered payments of which the register leaves us a rather confused picture.

5.5. The question of the recruiter's name

Br Gabriel Michel at another time posed the theory that the famous recruiter of these youngsters was Benoît Grizard, who effectively twice entered the FSC and remained with them a total of six years. But this man, coming from the north of the Loire department, cannot fit. On the other hand, there are Auberts in the group coming from the Haute-Loire in 1822, two from St Pal en Chalancon and one (Pierre Aubert) from Boisset who leaves in June 1822. The two villages being very close to each other, one may ask if the recruiter was not himself an Aubert who would have recruited brothers, cousins or nephews. The register of entries of the FSC in Caluire signals, besides, under the entry number 445, a Paul Aubert, native of Boisset, who entered on 27 January 1820, aged 19.

Other hypotheses are possible based on the list of entries into their In-

stitute from 1805 to 1838 established by the Brothers of the Christian Schools⁸¹. We observe that the number of novices coming from the Haute-Loire from 1805 to 1822 reaches 86, but that the places from which the postulants of the Haute-Loire come is not very representative of the whole region. The balance is as follows: from St Pal-en-Chalancon, 1 novice in 1809; from Boisset, one novice in 1816 and one in 1820. Finally, from Tirange, one novice in 1819. Only the town of Bas-en-Basset is fruitful for them, and at the time when the postulants from the Haute-Loire come to the Hermitage, it has provided: 1 novice in 1811, 2 in 1820, 4 in 1821 and 10 in 1822. The ex-Brother of the Christian Schools, then, seems to have gone hunting in lands not yet well prospected.

A comparison of the list of the FSC with that of the postulants from the Haute-Loire gives some convergences of family names, which are not without interest, even if they do not arrive at any certainties:

Postulants from the H.L. in 1822	Origin	FEC	Origin and date of vesture
Aubert Claude (Br André)	St Pal-en Chalancon	Aubert Paul (Br Abel, 19)	Boisset (1820)
Aubert Pierre	Boisset		
Aubert Jean (Br Jean-Louis)	St Pal-en-Ch.		
Civier François (Br Régis)	Bas-en Basset	Civier Pierre (Br Natal, 16)	Bas-en Basset (1821)
Poncet Georges	Tirange	Poncet Louis (Br Pérégrin, 21)	Tirange (1819)

⁸¹ Lasallian Archives, Lyon.

In proposing that the ex-FSC chose some aspirants from his own family, we would have three possible candidates for the function of recruiter. Moreover, Louis Poncet who bears among the FSC the name of Br Pérégrin draws our attention because Br Avit, who gives us the list of takings of the habit in October 1823,⁸¹ mentions among them a Br Pérégrin who is not mentioned anywhere else.

Another person appears to disappear almost immediately: Jean-Claude Bonnefoix, from St Genest-Malifaux⁸² whose entry is made on 28 March 1822 but without any details. Now, the lists of the FSC mention a Jean-Paul Bonnefoy native of Apinac, where Fr Beynieu, Fr Courveille's uncle is parish priest. It is in the Loire but quite close to St Pal, Tiranges, and Boisset. He entered the novitiate in 1816 at the age of 18. It is not unthinkable that these two Bonnefoys were in fact one⁸⁴, especially since his stay with the FSC would have lasted six years, as the *Life*⁸⁵ says.

In sum, the problem of the identity of the recruiter of the postulants from the Haute-Loire remains, although the above mentioned hypotheses may contribute elements towards further research.

5.6. Fr Courveille and the recruiter of the postulants

It is striking to observe that the villages where the ex-FSC is operating are in the proximity of Usson-en-Forez, birthplace of Fr Courveille, and Apinac where he did part of his clerical studies with his uncle, the parish priest. Moreover, in 1822 Courveille founded the brothers at Feurs⁸⁶ and found himself ministering in Epercieux. One may suppose that the ex-brother, looking for a place and knowing Courveille, could have been sent by the latter or authorised to make the approach, which would explain why Fr Champagnat hears him out and even gives him a letter of recommendation. The strong connection with Apinac is again illustrated by the proposal of an inhabitant of the place in 1824 to give three properties to the Brothers of Mary: one yielding 800 F. in revenue, and the two others worth 8000 F each⁸⁷.

5.7. The enlargement of Lavalla in 1822

We know that, during the summer of 1822, Champagnat and the brothers added extensions to the Lavalla house and the register of enrolments⁸⁸

⁸² *Annales de l'institut*, 1822 § 35.

⁸³ OFM 1 doc. 105/2.

⁸⁴ His name figures in the register only as a reminder, whence comes the uncertainty as to his names and origin, and in expectation of bill for his stay.

⁸⁵ Ch. 6 p. 98.

⁸⁶ OM1, doc. 75.

⁸⁷ OM1, doc. 110. The archbishop is of the opinion to accept and transmit the proposal to Fr Champagnat. But nothing comes of it.

⁸⁸ Document 106 (OFM/1 p. 316-317)

gives us an echo of the expenses made then. On 22 October 1823, Champagnat paid 12 F. for cut stone and on the 1st of December, he gives 45 F to Poson “for loads of tiles and others”. On 5 December, he pays 100 F. to Matricon, mayor and carpenter. On 10 December, he twice pays 52 F; for the “iron fittings”⁸⁹ and on 27 December, he pays another 138 F. to a carpenter, probably Matricon. On 8 January 1824, he pays 65 F. for “the tiling”.

Without a doubt, these payments at the end of 1823 give us an idea of the routine delays between purchase and payment: more or less 18 months. It is certain that not all the expenses are included in the accounts, whether from forgetfulness or lack of precise description. For example, the *Life* says that the stones were not joined by mortar but by rich clay. But in June 1822, the register of entries indicates in passing: “lime” without further detail⁹⁰. It would be astonishing, anyway, if the house had been built without this material. In any case, as Champagnat does not indicate any payment to masons, one can credit the *Life* which states that the construction was done by Champagnat

and the brothers. On the other hand, the carpenter Matricon made a major contribution to the work in wood.

The total certain expenses were 412 F. If one notes that nothing is indicated for the purchase of wood for the carpentry and planks and very little for the tiles, one probably has to quadruple the sum paid by Champagnat for the extensions. In a financial balance of 7 August 1826⁹¹, Champagnat estimates 4000 F. “which I had at Lavalla”. And as he purchased the house for 1600 F. in 1818...

CONCLUSION

During the year 1822, the area of influence of the work of Lavalla is suddenly extended by an outside recruiter relying on a network of relationships about which we know almost nothing. This influx of a large group is not without ambiguities or difficulties, but Champagnat interprets the event as a sign that his work is willed by Mary. And the extension of Lavalla foreshadows the construction of the Hermitage.

⁸⁹ Pieces of metal serving to fit out a work in wood. Probably for the windows.

⁹⁰ OFM/1, doc. 105 p. 300.

⁹¹ OFM/1, doc. 136, p. 541.

III. FROM LAVALLA TO THE HERMITAGE: EARLY CRISIS AND GRADUAL MATERIAL CHANGE



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1. THE FIRST YEAR AT THE HERMITAGE (1825-26)

1.1. Financial Problems and Identity Crisis

The relocation from Lavalla to the Hermitage was not merely a move from one place to another. In fact, it brought about a major shift in the understanding of the Brothers as a branch of the Society of Mary. Up to then, it seems that Champagnat regarded them as a preliminary expression of the Society. In jointly financing the construction of the Hermitage, Courveille and Champagnat envisaged themselves as setting up the Society of Mary in the spirit of the pledge made at Fourvière in 1816. The house would serve as novitiate for the Brothers and a mission centre for the priests, with Courveille as spiritual director and Champagnat as administrator. But Father Terrailon, the third

priest involved, envisaged the Society along the lines begun by J.C. Colin in the diocese of Belley¹. The archbishop of Lyon, though, viewed the group as a diocesan congregation of teaching Brothers directed by Fr. Champagnat with the help of two other priests. The brothers, for their part, regarded their origin not as the consecration at Fourvière in 1816, but as the foundation in Lavalla in 1817.

Once the house had been built and the community moved down to the Hermitage, these divergent views soon became apparent. The differences led to a number of conflicts on the nature of the Society of Mary, disputes that came on top of a very difficult financial situation. The documents at our disposal enable us to partially unravel the numerous disputes leading to the nomination of Champagnat as founder and superior of an entity that was more than a branch of the Society of Mary but also to a first

¹ See OM1, doc. 115? Letter of Fr. Terrailon to J.C. Colin 31 October 1824.

setback in the setting up of the branch of priests at the Hermitage.

1.2. The financial aspect of the problem

Up to 1824, Champagnat's project was virtually limited to the locality of Lavalla, and financial needs were relatively small. The situation became completely different with the construction of the Hermitage: substantial capital was needed. Since his trust in providence was not detached from the real world, he did not start the work without having secured some loans.

Thus on 13 May 1824, Champagnat and Courveille bought a piece of land from five proprietors at Les Gaux. The property, containing some stands of trees, brush and rocks and a small meadow, officially cost them 6600 F. but in fact they spent much more. Brother Avit speaks of 10000 to 12000 F. He notes that the cost of the house was unknown, "nor what donations were received, except for the 8000 F donated by Archbishop de Pins", adding "Our dear Br Jean-Baptiste believed that it had cost more than 6000 F."

A letter of J.C. Colin dated 27 November 1824 mentions a donation by Archbishop de Pins² but the truth of

this is doubtful. In fact on 13 April 1824, the Bishop's council, in noting Champagnat's plans to purchase land, had added: "Let's leave it to him." (OM1/doc.98). On the other hand an individual from Apinac did make an offer to donate some land worth 800 F and two other areas worth 8000 F each. On 28 July, the diocesan council thought that the offer should be accepted and Fr Champagnat consulted. This matter came to nothing (OM1/doc.100)³ but may be the source of the rumour mentioned by J.C. Colin.

From whom then, did Fr. Champagnat get the money needed to build the Hermitage? Firstly, from Fr. Courveille, whose contribution seems to have been about 5000 F, since that is the amount paid off to him by Champagnat on 5 October 1826 (OM1/doc. 166). As for the rest, he benefited from local donations and loans. We can get an idea from the accounts, particularly the book of entries (OFM, doc. 109) in the "updated financial statement" 22 February 1826 that lists the debts of the house during the time of Champagnat's convalescence. Unfortunately, it is difficult to decipher this document since, on the same line, it includes two persons and two different sums of money without clearly distinguishing lenders from borrowers.

² OM1, doc. 121 : "He has already made several advance payments and donated eight thousand francs towards a house; and this is causing a stir in Lyon".

³ The donor seemed to have envisaged a farming colony, not at all the aim of Champagnat. Apinac is close to the area of recruitment in Haute-Loire, the home area of Fr. Courveille, an indication that news of the endeavour at Lavalla had already spread quite far. It seems that it was thought to be social and agricultural venture rather than an educational one, in some ways similar to a Trappist monastery.

M. Maréchal à Lyon		12.000	12.000
Fr. Bonard de Rive-de-Gier ⁴		3.500	3.000
The parish priest of St. Pierre ⁵	Journoux ⁶	2.300	3.800
Montellier de St. Chamond	saddler	35	3.000
Fr. Faivre de Lyon	invoice	720	1.000
Fr. Royer's domestic		1.000	1.000
Fr. Fias, notaire à St. Ch.		200	1.600
The parish priest of Izieux		3.000	4.000
M. Lagier		1.100	600
Odras from Lavallas	doctor	160	900
Crapanne from Lavallas	principal ⁷	200	800
Fr. Journeux, vicai. St. Ch.	hospital	400	400
Fr. Tardy de St. Etienne	wool		200
Fr. Grangier St. Eti.		260	400
Ferblantier St.		200	300
Blaehen de St.	Minard	150	180
Le Maréchal		200	
à St. Etienne autre dépense	Giller		100
cobbler from St. Ch.	f. fabres	1.000	280
cordonnier from Lavallas	Guyot ⁸	700	200
parish priest of Empuys	Achard (?)	12.000	12.000
the widow Bridou		700	1.000
Courbon	Chevalier	400	1.000
	domestic	300	1.000
	married		3.550

A likely interpretation of the above data follows:⁹

Creditors and lenders	Sum borrowed	Debts for work done and services	Repaid	Balance to pay
M. Maréchal of Lyon	12000			12000
M. Bonard, of Rive-de-Gier	3500		500	3000
Parish priest of St. Pierre and M. Journoux	3800		1500	2300
Montellier of St Chamond	3000			
A saddler		35		
M. Faivre of Lyon (payment of an invoice)		1000	280	720

⁴ The meaning of the strikethrough lines is difficult to interpret. One can suppose they were put there once the debt was paid off.

⁵ Dervieux

⁶ Curate at St Chamond

⁷ Perhaps the principal of the college at St Chamond.

⁸ Librarian.

⁹ Where there is only one name in the line, the higher sum indicates the full debt and the smaller is the balance remaining after a partial repayment. Where there are two names, the debt owed by each is uncertain.

M. Royer's domestic	1000			1000
M. Finas, notary		1600	1400	200
The parish priest of Izieux	4000		1000	3000
M. Lagier	1100		500	600
Odras [Audras] of Lavalla	900			
Docto		160		
Crapanne de Lavalla	800			
Principal [of the collège ?]		200		
Journoux, curate at St Ch.	400			
Hospital [St Chamond ?]		400		
Tardy from St Etienne		200 (wool)		
Grangier from St Etienne		400	140	260
A tinsmith from St Chamond		300	100	200
Fuller from St Chamond		150		
Minard		180		
An ironmonger		200		
Giller & Fabre, St Etienne		100		
Cobbler from St Chamond		280		
Guyot [bookshop in Lyon]	1000			
Cobbler in Lavalla		200		
Achard		700		
Parish priest of Empuis [Ampuis]	12000			12000
Widow Bridou	1000			
Chevalier		700		
Courbon	1000			
A domestic	400			
Marie	1000		700	300
?	3550			3550
Total	50450	6803	6120	39130

Using the above interpretation, the grand total of loans and debts comes to about 57000 F, of which a little more than 10% had been repaid. The various debts, however, are not equally urgent: the two sums of 12,000 F, for instance, are long-term loans. At the end of February 1826, the most pressing debts seem to

have totalled 15130 F (39 130 F – 24 000 F).

The account records, particularly those of expenses (OFM, doc. 120) allow one to identify lenders and creditors more reliably and to follow the subsequent repayments corresponding in part to the above data.

Creditor	Other?			Record of expenses (repayments)
M. Maréchal à Lyon (proxy for Mlle de Divonne)		12.000	12.000	12/7/26: Given to M. Maréchal of Lyon 240 F. 1/27: To M. Maréchal of Lyons 240 F. 22/11/27: 120 F. to M. Maréchal
				2/6/28 Given to Maréchal for M. Séon 1000 F. 22/2/33: Reimbursement of 6480 F.
M. Bonard of Rive de Gie		3500	3000	1/4/27 : To M. Bonard of Rive-de-Gier 3000 F.
Parish priest of St. Pierre (Dervieux)	Journoux (curate)	2300	3800	See the <i>Life</i> ch. 13 p. 143. (page in EN edition ?) M. Dervieux would have paid 6000 F to compensate creditors.
Monteiller from St. Chamond	saddler	35	3000	3/5/26. To Montellier iron merchant: 3400 9/1/28 : Given to David, saddler in St Chamond 40 F.
M. Faivre from Lyon	Invoice	720	1000	10/5/26 : Given to Lion : 1500 F.
M. Royer's servant		1000	1000	20/5/28 : Given to M. Royer's domestic 1015 F.
M. Finas, notary in St. Ch.		200	1600	20/2/26 : Given to P. Champagnat for « master » Finas 116 F. 3/5/26 : Given to M. Finas : 1000 F.
Parish priest of Izieux		3000	4000	22/11/27: Given to M. le curé of Izieux 45 F. 5/6/28: Given 1000 F. Sept. 28: 1000 F.
M. Lagier		1100	600	5/5/26: A M. Lagier, merchant: 1000 F 22/6/26: A M. Lagier: 1000 F; Mai 27: 600 F. to younger brother Lagier; 400 F. to elder Lagier 18/2/28: given to M. Lagier 1014 F.
Odras from Lavalla	doctor	160	900	22/11/27: given to Odras older brother 1000 F. 9/1/28: Given to M. Bernard doctor in St Chamond 40 F.
Crapanne Lavallas	principal	200	800	17/9/26: given to Crapanne of La Rivoire for corn 55 F. 17/1/27: To Crapanne of La Rivoire, 327 F.
M. Journoux, curate St. Ch.	Hospital	400	400	(OFM 110), 15 march 1827: «received from M; Journou, vicar, 1050».

M. Tardy of St. Etienne	wool		200	1/4/27: To M. Tardy decos 300 F.
M. Grangier St. Eti.		260	400	23/6/26: M. Grangier : 100 F. 29/4/27: To M. Grangier of St Etienne 200 F + 210 F.
Ferblantier St.		200	300	19/12/27: Given to Bertolin tinsmith in St Chamond 213 F.
Blachon of St.	Minard	150	180	14/3/ 26: given to M. Blachond of St Chamond 123 F.
Le Maréchal		200		13/3/26: Given to Marcou locksmith in St Chamond 100 F. 5/5/26: 350 F. 1/27: Given to Marcou, marshal in St Chamond 232 F
St. Etienne other expenses	Giller f. Fabres	100		26/7/26: Given to pay the Fabre brothers: 20; more, for M. Gillet: 85 F.
cobbler from St. Ch.	Guyot	1000	280	8/9/26: given to shoemaker 200 F. 3/12/26: Given to shoemaker Vincent in St Chamond 104 F. Given to shoemaker Dion in St Chamond 191 20/10/27: Given to M. Guyot 280 F.
cobbler from Lavallas	Achard (?)	700	200	To Jean Bacher, shoemaker, Lavalla: 200 F.
Parish priest of Empuys		12000	12000	This is an annuity (OFM 3, doc. 657) payable without a precise deadline.
The widow Bridou	Chevalier	700	1000	24/3/27: Given to Courbon for his widowed sister Bridou 50 F. being interest on the sum of 1000 F. expired sometime in February.
Courbon	Servant	400	1000	18/12/26: Given to Courbon Lyonnell of St Etienne 700 F. 1/4/27: 50+400 8/11/28: Given to Courbon du Bachat 1015
	Marie	300	1000	
			3550	

The list of creditors includes a number of priests: not only Fr. Dervieux, but also the curate of Izieux and the curate Journoux. The lenders include merchants, inhabitants of Lavalla, and even some servants. To sum up, Champagnat got the necessary funds for his project with the support of his social and economic network. This practice was common in places where there were few financial institutions. At any rate, the cost of the house seems to have been more than 20,000 F.

1.3. Champagnat and Patouillard

According to Brother Avit, Les Gaux was chosen as the site on account of its isolation. However, on 3 July 1824, shortly after the purchase concluded by Champagnat and Courveille, the land and buildings on the opposite bank of the Gier were bought by Mathieu Patouillard from Antoine Thiollère-Laroche. There, according to Br Avit himself, Patouillard set up some workshops (Avit, 1839, § 468). Surely there were better sites if one required solitude. The Institute had to wait until 1839 to purchase Patouillard's property at a sum of 39,000 F, precisely to have a quieter environment.

How much did Patouillard pay for that parcel of land in 1824? Were Champagnat and Courveille tempted to buy it as well? Perhaps they did not have enough capital to compete with Patouillard. In any case, the purchase

of an industrial site did not fit in with their plans. For lack of a better option, then, they chose to buy immediately opposite that location. However, their own site enjoyed the benefits of water from the Gier.¹⁰ The name "hermitage" given to the spot did not correspond to reality. In any case, the very name discloses the ambiguity between an ideal to withdraw from the world and the desire to create a centre for ministry close to people. The contradiction between utopia and necessity was but one of the identity crises experienced at the time.

1.4. Construction of the Hermitage

The urgent work was the cutting of the rock for the building of the east wing of the house. Br Avit provides the names of the artisans: Roussier, a master-mason from Lavalla; Benoît Matricon, a carpenter also from Lavalla; and Robert, a plasterer from St-Chamond. He noted that since lime was too expensive, the mortar was made from crushed rotten rocks. But the accounts indicate that fairly inexpensive purchases of lime were also made.

Champagnat's purchases and the amounts paid for services can be roughly tracked from the accounts. Unfortunately, the book of accounts, our chief historical source, begins only in 1826. The partial details it provides have to be supplemented by information gleaned from scraps with earlier dates.

¹⁰ But without the right to construct a mill-race or weir

Date	Provider	Products and Services	Cost
	from OFM/1, doc. 105, p. 302...		
21/10/1824	J.FR. Payre	wood	600
17/2/1825	J.FR. Payre	wood	300
20/10/1824		15 buckets of lime	15
22/10/1824		300 tiles	300
23/10/1824		300 tiles	300
?/2/1824	Tibau	<i>pannes</i> [lumber]	?
18/10/24		loads of planks	?
	Dans OFM/1, doc. 106, p. 316...		
29/5/1825	Jacques (Couturier ?)	900 bricks ; 600 tiles	
1825	Rembeau	1800 tiles ; 2000 bricks	?
	Dans OFM/1, doc. 108, p. 320		
?/3/1825	Matricon Benoît	carpenter	30
	Robert	plasterer	60
27/4/1825	Gerin	2 loads of rafters	44
30/4/1825	Gerin	2 loads of boards	64
30/5/1825	Gerin	total sum paid	1.045
July-Oct. 1825	Matricon du Bessat	39 loads of boards	1.100
Feb-Oct. 1825	Benoît Matricon		172
April-May 1825	Benoît Matricon		60
July-Aug 1825	Etienne Roussier	mason (82 working days)	395
Nov. 1825-Sept.26		sheets of glass	97
July 25-Feb 27	B. Matricon	435 wages per working day	1.136
31/7/1825	Jean Marcou	metal fittings	600
Total			6.918

Besides bricks, tiles and a few wooden wagons whose cost is not mentioned, the amount spent already came close to 7000 F. Moreover it is clear that the amounts paid to Robert, the plasterer, and to Étienne Roussier, the mason, are underestimated.

1.5. Register of expenses

Another document, a register of expenses, provides supplementary information. It provides an overview of payments seemingly related to the construction of the house.

This is the period of major disbursements caused by the rumour of imminent bankruptcy with creditors knocking at the door. The sum of ap-

proximately 10 000 F added to the 7000 F for the years 1824-25, gives one a fair idea of the cost of the house.

23/1/1826		lime	314
4/2/1826	Matricon	carpenter	20
6/2/1826	Neyrand	iron	140
9/2/1826	Matricon	carpenter	33
23/2/1826	Matricon	carpenter	60
23/2/1826		tiler (bricks)	107
14/3/1826	Neyrand	glass	195
17/2/1826	Monjou minor	mason	100
28/3/1826	Monjou minor		50
8/4/1826	Monjou minor		50
22/4/1826	Antoine Robert	plasterer	100
?/5/1826	Antoine Robert		600
3/5/1826	Finaz	notary	1000
3/5/1826	Montelier	iron merchant	3400
5/5/1826	Lagier	merchant	1000
10/5/1826	Lion [Lyon?]	A supplier from Lyon?	1500
14/5/1826	Matricon		100
14/5/1826	Monjou minor		20
10/6/1826	Roussier		285
22/6/1826	Lagier		1000
26/6/1826	Matricon Benoît	carpenter	60
8/7/1826	Roussier		50
Total			10184

The accounting records thus indicate that the house cost at least 17 000 F

1.6. Completion of the work by the brothers

The community left Lavalla in May 1825. At that stage it comprised 20 brothers and 10 postulants, with 22 brothers elsewhere in schools. Br Avit does not mention the presence of boarders, but there must have been

some. The chapel dominating the house at the south-east corner was not yet complete and a temporary chapel on the first floor of the east wing had to be used for three months. The blessing of the chapel proper by Fr Dervieux on 13 August 1825 marked the end of major construction work at the house until 1836. Fr Dervieux, the parish priest of St Chamond, was a person with some influence, and his presence on this occasion indicates

that he had become a good friend of Champagnat's for some time.

At that stage, the surroundings of the house had not yet been developed. Br Avit recorded that to channel the Gier, a wall of dry rocks several hundred metres long was built during 1824. (§52). In the same year, trees and brush were uprooted, rocks removed, and ground was levelled to create a garden. But these long and arduous tasks must have occupied a much longer period, probably between 1825 and 1829.

Admittedly, when on 13 December 1825 Champagnat and Courveille borrowed the sum of 12000 F from Mlle Justine de Divonne in Lyon (OM1/doc. 142), mortgaging all their goods and in particular the Hermitage, the property is described as follows: "huge buildings, courtyards, gardens, an orchard, a poultry yard, meadow land, timber and a water inlet" (OM1/doc. 142). But since the repayment took place only on 13 December 1829, Courveille and Champagnat must have been describing the state of the property at that time.

The development of the surrounds was one of the causes of dissent between Fr Courveille and Champagnat. The novices must have been heavily employed at this for several years, and Courveille complained that the novices were not being formed well enough. Further evidence comes from Br Avit (1830 § 134) "Despite the severity of the winter of 1830, Fr Champagnat, Philippe his nephew, and several brothers cut down trees, re-arranged

the rocks, and created the large terrace and the path leading to it on the western slope of the hill lying to the east." The fact that the slopes were tackled is an indication that work on the level section had been completed.

1.7. 1825: A conflict of authority

Financial and material difficulties became secondary issues when Champagnat was elected as Superior in the autumn of 1825 (probably in October). The account of this event in the *Life* (Ch. 13) shows that it upset Champagnat as well as Courveille. It also caused tension between the first brothers and Courveille, while embarrassing Champagnat caught between the two camps.

We have already mentioned the nub of the problem in the introduction. Fr Courveille, considering himself as the founder chosen by Mary, wished to set up the Society of Mary according to the Pledge of 1816 composed under his inspiration. For him, Fr Champagnat was but a pre-cursor, like John the Baptist in relation to Jesus, and was destined to play a secondary role by confiding his disciples to him [Courveille]. It is a position that Champagnat seemed to accept.

According to the *Life* there was a crisis of authority. More correctly it was a debate on the origins of the group at the Hermitage. Did the foundation begin in 1816 at St Irénée and Fourvière? or in 1817 in Lavalla? As the only one who had participated in both

founding events, the quandary of Champagnat, torn between his confreres and his disciples, is understandable. However, the opposition of the brothers to Fr. Courveille did not seem to substantially affect the relationship between Champagnat and Courveille. For instance, on 13 December 1825, they jointly obtained a substantial loan of 12000 F from Mlle di Divonne, certainly with the moral backing of the archdiocese (OM1, doc. 142). They also collaborated in another major purchase in February 1826.

1.8. Champagnat's illness and the threat of bankruptcy

Our various Marist sources (*The Life*, Avit, Sylvestre) describe the difficulties that arose from Champagnat's illness beginning on 26 December 1825. These problems did not prevent Fr. Courveille from taking his role as administrator seriously. On 1 January 1826, he opened a register of receipts and one of expenses. The ill-

ness suddenly took a turn for the worse and on 3 January, Courveille wrote a circular to the brothers in the schools asking for prayers for Champagnat (OM1, doc. 147) without however recognising him as superior. He referred to Champagnat as "my beloved son" and as "venerable Father director". On 6 January, Champagnat dictated his will. So feeble was he that he was unable to sign the document. Courveille accepted to be his sole heir seeing that Fr Terrailon refused to be a beneficiary.

Our Marist historical sources¹¹ concur that the spread of rumours of the imminent death of Champagnat in the locality gave rise to the arrival of a number of creditors threatening to sell the furniture and the house. At the urging of Br Stanislas, Fr Dervieux, parish priest of Saint Pierre, intervened to pay 6000 F of the debts. If one accepts this account, the financial crisis occurred during the months of January and February. But the register of expenses paints a completely different scenario:

Month/Year	Total expenses	Details
January 1826	2905 F.	Including: "to Fr. Champgnat in his illness: 200" and "for M. Rigolos, doctor at St Etienne: 35"
February	1744	Of which "given to Fr. Champagnat to pay the doctor, or Mme Lagier or for M. Finaz: 600"; "given to Fr. Champagnat for Badard of Lavalla: 12 F ; "given to Fr. Champagnat for M. Finat: 116"
March	965	
April	200 ¹²	
May	9204	Including: "M. Finas, notary in St Chamond: 1000"; "M. Montelier, iron merchant: 3400"; M. Lagier, merchant: 1000; Lion [resident of Lyon?]: 1500"; "Antoine Robert, plasterer: 600".

¹¹ The *Life*, Avit, Sylvestre

¹² This unusually low sum could be due to negligence in bookkeeping .

According to the register, Champagnat's illness caused additional expenses of only some one thousand francs, most of these in February. The major financial crunch actually occurred during May, specifically between 3 and 10 May when the community had to expend 7568 F.

Thus the financial crisis was sparked not by the fear of Champagnat's death but by another event or a series of them. To get to the root cause, we need to re-consider the sequence of events reported in the Marist sources.

1.9. Conflict between Courveille and the brothers

Marist sources reporting the tradition of the brothers record their low spirits brought about by the prospect of Champagnat's death and the severity of Courveille marked by threats, punishments and dismissals. Their frustration had almost reached its limits when Courveille publicly declared his intention to resign. Brother Stanislas, his chief opponent, encouraged the brothers, remonstrated with Fr. Courveille, informed Fr. Champagnat about the situation, and approached Fr. Dervieux to help them

cover their debts. Finally, Champagnat made an appearance before a meeting of the brothers affirming his presence as superior and then going to stay with Fr. Dervieux for a period of convalescence. Courveille then organised for a diocesan inspection that confirmed his assertion that the brothers' formation was inadequate. But Courveille himself had to withdraw from the Hermitage and go to Aiguebelle after a serious lapse in conduct. These events must have occurred over the period 25 December 1825 to the end of May when Courveille departed. The scenario depicted by Br Jean-Baptiste in the *Life* citing a number of sources, is difficult to reconcile with the record of expenses and even the testimony of Champagnat himself.

1.10. A letter by Father Champagnat paints a different picture

In 1833, during negotiations concerning the amalgamation of his brothers with those of Fr. Querbes, Champagnat made mention of "the sad affair of Fr Courveille" and "desertion by Fr Terrailon" in 1826.¹³ Here, he was almost as severe on Fr Terrailon as on Fr Courveille.

¹³ OM 1, doc 286. The letter in question is actually a draft of a letter.

"During a long and serious illness, I had major debts hanging over my head, and I wanted to make Fr. Terraillon my sole heir. He refused my legacy, saying that I had nothing, as he and Fr. Courveille kept telling the brothers. 'The creditors will soon be here to drive you out of the house; all we have to do is take a parish and leave you to yourselves.' Finally, God in his mercy, and perhaps in his justice¹⁴, restored me to health. I reassured my children; I told them not to be afraid, that I would share all their misfortunes and share the last piece of bread with them.

Under the circumstance, I could see that neither one nor the other had any fatherly feelings towards my young men. On the other hand, I have absolutely no complaints against the parish priest of Notre-Dame¹⁵, whose behaviour in our house was always edifying.

Though I found myself alone after the withdrawal of Fr Courveille and the departure of Fr Terraillon, Mary did not abandon us. We are gradually paying our debts, and other confrères have replaced the first ones. I have to find money for their upkeep all by myself. Mary is helping us, and that is enough."

Champagnat admitted, then, to having had two persons opposed to him, and he was not far from indicating Terraillon as the chief one. Indeed, he insinuated that they were manoeuvring to get all the brothers to leave. He did not mention any steps taken by creditors, but the use of the debt crisis by Courveille and Terraillon as a way of getting the pioneer brothers to leave the Society. Nevertheless, he did not deny the possibility of bankruptcy during a time when it was a question of sharing the last piece of bread.

The scenario painted by Champagnat has four stages:

1. His illness causing Fr Terraillon to lose faith in him.

2. Terraillon and Courveille urging the brothers with opposing views to leave.
3. His return to health and the steps he took to reassure the brothers.
4. His lack of support as a priest and the gradual improvement in finances.

1.11. A problem in chronology

We are certain that the Archbishop appointed Fr Terraillon to the Hermitage on 25 August 1825¹⁶ and that he [Terraillon] was present when the brothers elected Champagnat. As a new arrival one can understand why he stayed in the background. On the

¹⁴ He seems to suggest that the lapse by Courveille was actually a punishment from on high.

¹⁵ Terraillon occupied this post in 1833.

¹⁶ Archbishop de Pins had not allowed him to join the Colin brothers.

other hand, in refusing to be Champagnat's legatee in January, he clearly showed his mistrust of the plans of Champagnat and Courveille.

On 14 February 1826, Champagnat and Courveille purchased two plots of land from M. Berthelon for 1000 F. paid in cash.¹⁷ Champagnat's presence on the occasion at the office of notary Finaz indicates that he was no longer bed-ridden. The payment of the sum proves that between them, Courveille and Champagnat, were not without funds, that they were still of one accord, and that there was no intention of abandoning the project. What happened between 14 February and the end of May when Courveille left the house? These events occurred before Courveille wrote from the Trappist monastery at Aiguebelle on 4 June. As for Fr Terrailon, he remained at the Hermitage until about All Saints Day 1826.

It is relatively easy to date the conflict between Courveille-Terrailon and a group of brothers led by Brother Stanislas between 6 January and the beginning of February. From the account in the *Life* one gathers that the conflict lasted three weeks and that the other houses were not informed about it (*Life* Ch 13 p. 14). The crisis was intense but of short duration. Nevertheless it left a lasting impression among the brothers that the house was in danger of bankruptcy.

According to the *Life*, while Champagnat was recuperating at Fr Dervieux's residence, the Hermitage was subject to a diocesan inspection in response to a letter of Fr Courveille's stating that Champagnat was incompetent. There is no trace of this letter nor of the report of an inspection in the archives of the Archdiocese. On the other hand, the minutes of the archdiocesan council (5 July 1826)¹⁸ records that:

"Fr. Cattet has agreed to preach a retreat to the primary school teachers¹⁹ in the locality of the Ermitage [sic] in the parish of St Chamond."

It could be that the visit of Fr. Cattet occasioned by this undertaking was understood by the brothers (particularly suspicious at this time) as an inspection. At all events, on 2 August 1826, the archdiocesan council noted that "The deplorable material condition of the Brothers of the Hermitage makes a detailed assessment imperative"²⁰ But these dates do not square with the inspection reported in the *Life* as having taken place before the departure of Fr. Courveille, that is, in April or May.

Whereas conventional Marist sources indicate that the series of events took place over a short period ending with the departure of Courveille, financial records of the crisis and archdiocesan documents suggest a much longer course of events. For

¹⁷ OFM, doc. 654

¹⁸ OMI, doc. 155

¹⁹ Thus, not only for the brothers. In those times, the clergy dominated in university life.

²⁰ OMI, doc.158

one, Champagnat's stay with Dervieux occurred much later, namely in July-August. Additionally, during his absence, Fr Terraillon was in charge of the house, leading to another crisis culminating with his [Terraillon's] withdrawal on or about All Saints Day.

1.12. Assessment of the years 1825-1826

We are inclined to opt for the longer sequence of events. For one thing, Champagnat is very clear on the point that Terraillon played a key role in the crisis that did not come to a head until the end of October. Secondly, the silence of the Brothers' tradition about the role of Fr Terraillon has a simple explanation: at the time of the composition of the *Life*, he was still alive and a Marist Father to boot. He died only in 1869²¹. His obituary suggests that he was an independent even dominating character, and that he took great care of his own concerns. Further study in this area would be helpful. In any case, Fr. Courveille does not deserve to be the only one to have to shoulder a *damnatio memoriae* on the part of the brothers.

In this entire affair, the very early brothers played a decisive role. It seems that the younger priests wanted to restart the entire project: firstly, by dispensing with the early brothers faithful to Champagnat and the

Lavalla tradition; and then by forming the novices according to their own designs. The tradition of the brothers emphasises the determined resistance of Br Stanislas, but also reveals a profound unease in their ranks as shown by the departure of Brothers Jean-Marie Granjon and Etienne Rouméty, and by Br Louis's inclination towards the priesthood.²² Fr Terraillon was also deeply disturbed by the course of events, as Br Avit noted about him before his departure: "After a period of illness, he became extremely lethargic" to the extent some believed he had died.²³ In his letter from Aiguebelle, Fr Courveille clarified the fundamental cause of these illnesses and surprising departures: "for a start, the differences in viewpoints regarding the goal, the organisation, the aims and the spirit of the true Society of Mary."²⁴

To sum up, the election of Champagnat took place over two phases. Firstly, in 1825, the brothers chose him as superior, taking both Courveille and himself by surprise. His illness was caused in part by the dilemma in which he found himself. But within a short space of time, certainly before 14 February, he re-asserted himself as superior much to the delight of the earlier brothers. Nevertheless, this event was followed by an unsettled period partly on account of Champagnat's poor health. One gets the

²¹ OM4 p. 355-356, biographical notice.

²² The *Life* ch. 14 p. 151-156

²³ *Annals of the Institute* Year 1826, § 57.

²⁴ OM1, DOC ; 152 ? § 13 ;

impression that two conflicts became intermingled: that among the early brothers, and that among the three priests. Moreover, it was Terrailon who was decisive in ensuring that the departure of Courveille became permanent. By All Saints Day 1826, Champagnat was the only priest left, one might say, elected as superior for a second time by disciples who seemed to be more resolute than he.

As for the financial difficulties, real though they were, they seem to have been largely manipulated by Courveille and Terrailon. The substantial repayments made during May 1826, were probably prompted by the rumour of conflicting opinions among the leaders and not by the possible death of Champagnat. Moreover, in a letter to one of the Vicars General in 1827²⁵ Champagnat recalled: "The unfortunate affair of Fr. Courveille and the departure of Fr. Terrailon put me in an awkward situation when speaking to the public who talk about events without knowing the background. He was even clearer during the same period when writing to Vicar-General Fr. Barou:

"I am alone here, as you know, which leads me to think a great deal about persons who might be attracted to this work and who would help it along. The public, who nearly always talk without knowing the facts, blame me first of all for the departure of Fr Courveille and Fr Terrailon."²⁶

In 1827, Champagnat's reflections centred on the problems that arose during that dreadful year. Six years later, in 1833, he wrote of the spiritual impact of these trials:

"Mary does not abandon us.
With time, we gradually pay our debts and other confreres replace some of the early ones. I am alone when it comes to covering the cost of keeping them. Mary is our helper: we need no more."

However, even though by 1828 the brothers looked upon Champagnat as their founder, he still had no thought of setting them up as entity independent of the founding project [of the Society of Mary].

"The society of brothers cannot be explicitly considered as Mary's work, but only as a branch, posterior to the society itself."²⁷

Even though the brothers had *de facto* declared the legitimacy of the foundation in Lavalla, Champagnat did not see this event as superseding the formula and consecration made in 1816. The conundrum remained: how to combine the specific nature of the work of the brothers with the original project in a practical manner. The Society of Mary did not resolve this dilemma until after the death of Champagnat with the amicable separation of the branch of priests from that of the brothers.

²⁵ OM1, doc. 173, § 6

²⁶ OM1, doc ; 173, § 16

²⁷ Letter to Fr. Cattet, Vicar General, OM1, doc 185.

2. FROM AUSTERITY TO RELATIVE COMFORT

2.1. The Brothers' meals in 1822-40

We know from the *Life* that the physical existence was particularly austere at Lavalla and Br Avit (1822 § 34) reports that the usual fare consisted "of clear stock and in oil, rye bread, cheese, dairy products, vegetables, sometimes a little lard and water". He recognised that in 1832 (§ 198) "the Brothers' nourishment began to improve... a little meat was served at dinner.; the good water of the Gier was reddened with a little wine [...] The other dishes consisted of potatoes, carrots, cooked in the soup then lifted out with a ladle and tossed on the plates to be served with a little salt". The same year, in the schools "a hectolitre of wine was enough to satisfy three Brothers for a whole year".

In the light of the account books easy to consult in *Origines des Frères Maristes* we have the means to verify and give precision to these statements. As in this article we are going to use numerous units of weights and measures, we recall that at that time France lived according to the old measurements, still widely observed, and the metric system just beginning to be imposed. Thus the unit of capacity for grains and potatoes was the *bichet* equivalent to 27.3 litres. For weights, the pound was used, equivalent to 421.9

grams, and the quintal (different from the metric quintal) weighing 100 pounds or 42.199 kg. As for money, the official unit was the franc but people often used the sou, one franc being worth 20 sous.

To have an idea of salaries, one must know that a good worker (mason, carpenter...) earned about 2F per working day and so about 300 F a year. But it is true that most people used a piece of land from which they drew a great part of their food. Since the XVIII century, France had not known famine but there were times of scarcity and expensive bread.

2.2. "Bled" and rye

Bread was then one of the staple foods. It was made from *bled*, a word meaning cereals in general and more especially rye, which gave the brownish-grey bread common in a great number of French regions. What in France is today called *blé* (wheat) was then called *froment* with which was produced white bread, still rare and expensive, but which, in the XIX century, would gradually become the standard bread.

The rye and wheat must have been milled in one of the many mills the length of the valley of the Gier, notably at the bottom, in the hamlet of La Rive at the junction of the Gier and the Ban. The first mention of a payment of a miller appears in the accounts of October 1823: "plus paid

to the miller: 70”²⁸. Several documents show that at Lavalla the brothers kneaded and baked their bread themselves. For this, they must have had the use of a kneading bowl or dough trough. But it is not known if they had an oven. In any case, it was no little task to make bread but there was no choice: the town of Lavalla does not appear to have had a baker.

To obtain rye, there was no need to go far, for Lavalla produced this ce-

real in quantity. Almost always, the unit used is the *bichet*. One document²⁹ indicates in February-March 1824 several purchases of wheat from inhabitants of Lavalla: Chovet, Rivat, Brunon... for a sum of about 200 F. The register of enrolments³⁰ signals on 1 May 1824: “Received 10 *cartes* of wheat at 3 F. a *carte*: 30”³¹. The book of expenses³² opened in 1826 includes numerous mentions of purchases.

In 1826 only:

7/1/1826	Wheat	950 F
2/3/26	Wheat from Géraudet Antoine of Lavalla	102
14/3/26	Wheat and hay	70
3/5/26	Wheat from Poëton (Poyeton) of Lavalla	155
14/9/26	Wheat from Tardy of Soulages	157
17/9/26	Wheat from Crapanne of la Rivoire	55
18/11/26	Wheat (200 bichets)	800
30/12/26	Wheat from the wheat merchant	300
Total		2589 F

It is the main annual expense of the community run up especially in November-January, at the time when the threshing, which takes a lot of time, has taken place and the peasants sell their grain. The prices then must be quite low: 4 F. a bichet in November 1826.

The purchases are made from the inhabitants of the various hamlets of Lavalla and the register shows a certain Gallet of the hamlet of Péalussin as a regular supplier. However, once situated closer to St Chamond and increasing in number, the community begins to buy provisions

²⁸ Error of interpretation in OFM/1, doc. 106 p. 317 which understands “carpenter”. In fact, the spelling “munier” reproduces the patois pronunciation of “meuniere”.

²⁹ OFM/1, doc. 106 p. 317

³⁰ OFM/1, doc. 105, p. 301

³¹ The “carte” seems equivalent to the bichet.

³² OFM/1, doc. 120.

from wheat merchants capable of providing a more regular service and perhaps better prices. In any case, from 1827 this seems to be the practice:

8/3/27	Gallet, 53 bichets of wheat and a pig	200
1/4/27	Wheat merchant	534
Mar 1827	Wheat merchant	500
May 1827	Wheat merchant	540
22/6/1827	Wheat merchant	300
Aug 1827	Wheat merchant	180
12/9/27	Gallet of Pialoussin, of Lavalla	400
20/10/1827	Royer of Izieux, wheat	?

Evidently, it was necessary to grind this grain and the costs of milling appear reasonably often in the accounts. For example, on 5 May 1827, 26 F was paid to the miller of Izieux and on 3 December 90 F for 500 bichets to a non specified miller. A purchase of flour in St Chamond (115 F.) appears only on 13 October 1832. It seems that from this time purchases of wheat become rare and that the flour was procured by Courbon Lyonnet, a wholesale grocer of St Etienne.

The purchases of “bled”, then, indicate an evolution in provisioning: starting in 1827 there was a partial disconnection from the original area and a branching out to larger networks of distribution.

2.3. Wheat

Br Avit³³ and the *Life* report the angry outburst received by the Brother

Director of Ampuis who, during a visit by Fr Champagnat in 1823 kept a big supply of white bread, probably donated by the inhabitants since it was so hard it had to be broken up with a hammer. The Br Director excused himself by saying it was more nourishing than brown bread and that less was eaten. But the Founder retorted that most parish priests ate only brown bread and that the use of wheat was contrary to the spirit of poverty.

This strict attitude seems to have faded quite quickly since on 2 June 1825, at the time when the community of Lavalla had just installed itself at the Hermitage, there was a purchase from Gerin, of Bachat, of 40 quintals of wheat flour at 11 F. a quintal, so for 440 F³⁴. On 3 February 1829 (Register of expenses), wheat was purchased from Gallet of Péalussin, and especially on 11 September 1830, the

³³ *Annales des maisons*, Chavanay

³⁴ OFM/1, doc. 108, p. 321.

Hermitage bought from Chovet, of the hamlet of Chazeaux, 12 and a half bichets of three months wheat³⁵ for 90 F. ; this indicates a price per bichet of 7, 2 F., more or less double the price of rye. The accounts then show hardly any purchase of wheat, perhaps because the wheat merchants, Courbon Lyonnet, wholesale grocer, among others, delivered flour of wheat or rye without distinction.

Whatever the case, one sees that the principles of Champagnat in 1823 seem to have been applied with flexibility. It may also be that the purchase of June 1825 was justified by the fatigue caused by the work of fitting out the Hermitage: at once a reward and a means of rebuilding strength.

2.4. “Truffes” (potatoes)

Today in French the word *truffe* designates truffle, a mushroom growing underground and serving to flavour dishes. Since it cannot be cultivated, it is an extremely expensive product. In Fr Champagnat’s time, this term was used in patois for potatoes, cultivated in the region of Lavalla since the middle of the XVIII century. The account registers use both terms *truffes* and *pommes de terre* but not the word *patates* so familiar today. With the *bled*, they were at the beginning of the XIX century, the staple foods.

Paradoxically, the account registers have little mention of *truffes* for it was a cheap product and not commercialised, each farm having its own crop. One can be sure that the Brothers, at Lavalla and then at the Hermitage, cultivated themselves a good part of the potatoes necessary for their consumption, the rest coming to them as gifts or occasional purchases.

We find the first mention of a purchase of *truffes* in November 1826, from a certain Chappard and only for 25.50 F. Another purchase is indicated, in 1827, from a man in Sardière for 23.50 F. In 1830, Chovet, of Chazeaux, delivered thirty bichets and, in 1832, Audras of Lavalla sold them 50. That year, potatoes must have been expensive since Chovet sold them for 25 F. at 2.25 F. a bichet. In the years 1837-40, the house bought between 40 and 45 bichets at a price of about 1 F. a bichet. A certain Perche seems to have been the accredited supplier to the house. The Hermitage appears to have maintained strong ties with Lavalla for its supply of potatoes, while in the case of wheat, as we have seen, it was quite otherwise.

2.5. Purchases of wine

Visiting the school of Saint Sauveur-en-Rue on 24 April 1822, Inspector Guillard declares: “These types of brothers live with the great-

³⁵ Spring wheat sprouting in three months.

est frugality and never drink wine”³⁶. The register of enrolments³⁷ which seems to provide the earliest financial information on the institute mentions on 21 January 1824: “given to Prénat for delivery of wine: 8 F”. This is evidently not the price of the wine itself but the cost of its transport. The register of expenses which begins in 1826 mentions, in September, the payment of taxes on the wine and the price of its transport : 15 F. And in October, David, a wine merchant, receives a payment of 80 F. We do not come across purchases of wine again until 1830, from a certain Lagarde: 150 F. in February and 45 F. in July. Another two purchases are noted in 1832: from a man in Millery for 60 F and in December 4 barrels of wine bought from David for 250 F. It is only starting from 1837 that regular purchases are recorded : for 352 F. that year; 488 F. in 1838; 2089³⁸ in 1839, (notably of wine sent from St Paul trois-Châteaux). Finally 1450 F. in 1840.

Purchases of wine, then, commenced earlier than our usual sources tell us but, as the accounts do not mention purchases in 1827-29, 1831, 1834-36, there was a certain fluidity, these interruptions perhaps due to an incomplete keeping of accounts but also to financially difficult phases during which there was a return to the

tradition. For example, the 1831 year of abstinence would be explained by the consequences of the revolution of 1830. In total, the choice of 1832 as the beginning of regular and quite important consumption seems pertinent.

2.6. Consumption of pork

Every farm in Lavalla raised at least one pig, slaughtered generally in December-January to provide lard and meat, carefully preserved in a salting-tub, as well as smoked sausages, sausages and hams hung to dry in the lofts or chimneys. Curiously, there is no document, to our knowledge, which indicates that the community raised pigs either at Lavalla or the Hermitage. If this is easy to understand at Lavalla, it appears less evident at the Hermitage.

One can imagine, however, that the brothers received gifts of pork. Moreover, the custom must have been established quite early of buying pork on the hoof from the peasants of Lavalla. The register of enrolments³⁹ mentions in January 1824 the purchase of a pig for 122 F. The expense book, begun in 1826, is full of these purchases. Thus, in January 1826, the house bought from Audras of Lavalla two pigs for 221 F. and the

³⁶ OM1, doc. 75.

³⁷ document 106 (OFM/1, p. 317)

³⁸ Letter of Fr Champagnat to Br François 7 March 1838: “You know that I think M. Vieno is counting on our taking a hundred barrels of his wine. Br Stanislas will have to work out the details with the railroad to bring them from Perache (the station in Lyon)”. Document indicated by Br Henri Réocreux.

³⁹ doc. 109 (OFM/1 p. 317)

novice Bret bought another the same month for 72 F⁴⁰.

In January 1827, four pigs are purchased, one from Fara and another from Tibeau, both of the hamlet of Fleurieux. The total amounts to 530 F. As in 1828, the price of a quintal⁴¹ (100 pounds) of pork costs 33 F., that means the purchase of sixteen quintals or 675 kg of live pork, later slaughtered and prepared by the brothers or a skilful worker, to provide provisions of lard, hams and sausages... a great part of the year. And the regular purchases of pork continue each year. But it is true that at this period pork does not pass for a highly regarded meat and it is the purchase of beef that is a sign of being well-off.

2.7. Meat from the butcher

The register of enrolments⁴² signals the purchase of a cow on 7 January 1824 for 72 F and Doc. 106 (OFM/1 p. 317), on 18 January 1824, a second purchase for 45 F. But it is not likely these two animals were eaten. It should rather be thought that the community made use of them to procure milk and doubtless make butter and cheese. Besides, the account books note frequently

enough the purchase of hay and bran destined to feed an animal. In any case, in January 1826, the expenses register records another purchase of two cows at the very cheap price of 27 and 28 F⁴³. As in two years the community had purchased four cows, it may be considered that some of them must have served to provide meat. But it seems that beef remained a rare dish until 1830.

In any case, it is from the end of 1830 that the house is paying to the butcher Dervieux of Izieux significant amounts without our knowing whether pork or beef is concerned. The register notes in November 1831 payment of 175 F. for "500 pounds of meat". A single purchase is recorded in 1832: 185.50 F. In 1833, three payments are made, probably to Dervieux: 86 F. for 231 pounds (0.37 F a pound); 164 F. for 438 pounds at 7.65 sous (0.375 F) a pound, and further 184 F. which should be equivalent to 500 pounds of meat. The house would then have consumed in more or less one year about 1200 pounds of meat or a little more than 500 kg.

The accounts confirm quite well what our sources tell us: in 1831 purchases of beef become significant and, from 1833, they are frequent.

⁴⁰ This appears to be a way of paying his board.

⁴¹ It is not a question of the metric quintal (100 kg) but the traditional quintal weighing 42,2 kg.

⁴² OFM/1, doc. 105 p. 309

⁴³ It could be that these were heifers.

2.8. Other foods

It is very evident that the account books did not note down all the purchases of food products, either from forgetfulness or because, relying more and more on wholesale grocers, the house paid overall bills whose details are not noted by the registers.

In any case, there is no question of purchases of fruit in the registers before 1837 apart from two purchases of cherries in 1832. By contrast, from 1837 to 1840, purchases of cherries and grapes become quite frequent at harvest time: in June–July for the cherries, in September for the grapes. Their prices are then low: in June 1840 140 pounds of cherries (59 kg) cost 7 F. In September, two quintals of grapes (85 kg) cost 10 F. For eggs, it is a little like the fruit: a modest purchase appears in 1826 but important and regular purchases begin at the end of 1837. Prices fluctuate between 0.40 and 0.80 F a dozen. As for dairy products, butter features quite regularly in the accounts from 1826 and for important sums but cheese does not appear until 1837.

Salt is cited only four times in the accounts but for important amounts, from 1826. Two important purchases in January are connected with the killing and salting of pigs. As for salt, purchases of oil are rarely indicated.

However, in 1827, a purchase of 100 kg of olive oil costing 180 F is noted. And the purchase of fish is noted only once, in 1839.

2.9. Food for the sick

The introduction of new foods is linked to care for the sick and a better organisation of the infirmary. Thus, starting in 1837, there are increasing purchases of tobacco (for snuff), bread, coffee, chocolate, fruit, prunes, honey, sugar, Gruyère cheese, mineral water. Attention to curing the sick and preserving health really accustomed the congregation to use foodstuffs long forbidden. Moreover, improvement of communications, the lowering of prices and the general enrichment of society, made these foodstuffs accessible to those of modest means.

CONCLUSION

In 1831, the mayor of St Martin en Coailleux⁴⁴ declared that the maintenance of the Hermitage was assured “by the product of the fees of the novices, by the crops of a garden they cultivate themselves and which provides them with the great part of what is necessary for the frugal life they lead, eating hardly any meat, and finally by the work of many of these brothers who give some hours each day to the making of cloth”.

⁴⁴ OM1/ doc 231, reply of the mayor to a request for information from the Rector of the Academy of Grenoble

It is not necessary to take entirely at face value this description, which seems to apply more to the situation at Lavalla and the Hermitage before 1830⁴⁵. And even the sources of supplies have already diversified in the direction of Izieux, St Chamond, St Etienne, even beyond. At the time the mayor was writing, the food had already improved somewhat since the congregation had more financial re-

sources. From 1837, the community was capable of supplying nourishment "health, abundant, cleanly and properly prepared, but common and ordinary"⁴⁶. And it could even offer the sick supposedly dear foodstuffs to foster their return to health.

After 1830, the agricultural production of the house really provided only an important extra contribution.

⁴⁵ No allusion is made to resources procured by the schools. The mayor's response must have been written in accord with Fr Champagnat

⁴⁶ Rules of Government, 1^o part, ch. X, article 1, 1854.

APPENDIX

Recollections of Br Henri Réocreux and his mother on the preparation of a pig (2012)

"In the country around St Chamond and in my family, a pig was killed each year. That was done in winter for it required a cold and dry period. My brother, residing in Brittany, tried the drying but had to give it up in his adopted region as it is too humid.

It was necessary to book a date in the calendar of the "slaughterer", as the persons capable of carrying out the 'slaughter' of the pig were called. They thus did a circuit from several weeks to two months according to demand, often at the homes of established clients where they would arrive with their specific equipment. The killing of a pig was done generally over two days.

The first day the killing proper took place. The beast solidly fixed on a cart shaft or hung up by the feet, the slaughterer cut the carotid artery and collected the blood for the making of black pudding. Once dead, the pig's bristle was burned with burning straw then the hide was scraped to eliminate all the hairs from the lard. The slaughterer then proceeded to the cutting up, the family treating each part according to what the different parts of the pig were destined for. The meat, salted, would remain in a cold and dry place overnight to favour good preservation. The black pudding with the blood and chosen ingredients, onions and garlic first, was cooked the same day.

The parts not being kept were shared out with neighbours, family and friends. As a child, I thus carried the 'fricaude' to our neighbours. When they killed their pig, they would send us one in return. The 'fricaude' was composed of black pudding, lard and the 'coiffe' (diaphragm). They were augmented by other choicer pieces, depending on the degree or closeness of family relationship. We ate them in fricassée. I still have the memory of an old brother who said, in private, that they received so many of these 'fricaudes' that they were forced to bury them in the garden rather than offend the people by refusing them. It is true that there were only two of them in this little country school.

The second day, work was done on the meat, in particular for making smoked sausage and sausages. It was minced with fat, then seasoned and kneaded. During this time, the entrails, emptied, were washed in the river, once on the outside, then, turned inside out, on the inside. They were then ready for the 'embossage' which made the smoked sausage and sausages. The large intestine, filled with sausage meat, became enormous, was called 'Jesus' and constituted the choice piece. The part of the intestine preceding it more regular and rectilinear, but of a diameter greater than the other sausages was called 'Rosette'. It also constituted a choice piece often offered as a prize in popular competitions. These works completed, the slaughterer could receive the wage for this work and leave the rest to the family.

Sterilised terrines and pâtés include certain offal such as liver. The fat melted and refrozen, the lard, was very useful for the cook. There were two ways of preserving the meat over an entire year: in brine, which consisted in plunging the meat in a very strongly salted preparation; the coating of lard like the ham were covered with thick salt. The second way was by drying. For several weeks, the kitchen ceiling supported wooden bars with smoked sausage, sausages, hams. The fire in the hearth, as well as drying, provided a pleasant taste from the smoke. To continue the conservation operations, when the skin was sufficiently dry, there were two methods, depending on the family traditions: either they were hung up in a loft in cold dry air, or packed in a box filled with the ashes of certain broad-leaved trees (that is to say trees with deciduous leaves and not coniferous).

At that time, the raising of a pig was part of the family economy. It was the means of making use throughout the year of the various family scraps, the spoiled or small potatoes; certain plants for feeding them were also cultivated like cabbages, turnips and beets. Their food was often cooked in 'boilers' and reduced to mash. The pig came from the family farmyard or from a purchase from the neighbours so that, during the year it could be fattened in preparation for its slaughtering."

IV. LAVALLA AND THE MARIST BROTHERS FROM 1825 TO THE PRESENT



Louis Vibert
fms

1. LA VALLA-EN-GIER TODAY

1.1. Countryside and outlying suburbs

La Valla en Gier is well known to the Marist Brothers. We all know it is the foundation place of the Brothers on the 2nd January, 1817. Copious

Marist writings have spoken of this village where a saint lived from 1816 to 1824 and gave it its international reputation. But what about this village today?

Since the time of Fr Champagnat its physical geography has been transformed somewhat through the construction of three dams but its



La Valla en Gier today (with the permission of the publisher)

human geography has changed a lot. Today the town has more than a thousand inhabitants (2583 in 1831) and it extends over 3478 hectares on a mid-level zone in the Pilat massif. In 1831 le Bessat was separated from La Valla to become an independent commune. The communes of St-Chamond, St Etienne, Le Bessat, Colombier, Graix and Doizieux surround it. La Valla also makes up one of 43 communes in the network of communes of "St Etienne Metro-pole".

The altitude ranges from 440 metres at the Soulages dam to 1390 m. at Cret de la Perdrix. The town is situated on the mountain side south east of St Chamond between the valleys of the Ban and the Gier. The altitude indicated on the surveyor's mark at the foot of the church to the left of the main entrance is 651 metres.

The narrow and deep valleys of the Gier and the Ban drain the waters of these torrents towards two dams which supply water to St Chamond. The Rive dam, on the Ban, was built in 1869 and the Soulages dam, a little bit below on the Gier, was completed in 1970. A third dam built at Piney and opened in 1954 to dam the waters of the upper reaches of the Gier was emptied as a security measure¹. But its vault-

like outline remains intact and is still very visible.

About 60 hamlets², spread along the banks of the Gier and the Ban, make up the territory. Their distance from the "town" varies from 300 metres to 10 kilometres. Fifty-five of them are inhabited³, very alive, either maintaining their character or being renovated in this beautiful region of Pilat. Some are spread out on gentle slopes where cows, sheep and goats graze; others, tucked away in a wood or concealed behind curtains of trees, appear to be at the edge of the world... Some shelter main or secondary residences; others include farming activity, industrial (connected with timber) or tourist (lodgings, guest houses), restoration, craft centres... 40 per cent of the population live in hamlets and 60 per cent in the town.

It is in this very hilly landscape, right at the top of the commune, that the Gier Falls strike the visitor. It is an impressive cascade accessible after a climb over piles of stones called "chirats" which are a feature of the commune.

La Valla forms part of the Regional Natural Park of Pilat, which includes 47 communes of the Loire and Rhone spread over a territory of 700 square kilometres with a density of

¹ It had been constructed on the model of the dam at Malpasset, near Fréjus, which burst on 2 December 1959, five years after being completed (423 dead or disappeared).

² The hamlets include certain ones having only a single house.

³ In 1697, the parish priest of La Valla counted 43 hamlets, La Valla included.

79.4 inhabitants per sq. kilometre. Covered with forests, marked tracks and paths, it is frequented by numerous tourists, picnickers, cyclists⁴, cross country riders, skiers and sight seers attracted by its landscape, its celtic monuments, its megalithic paths or by its winter and summer sporting options. The park is traversed by three long distance trails⁵ which include 9 walking tracks ranging from 30 to 104 kilometres allowing the Pilat massif to be explored in different ways. Track No 10 of 32 kilometres in length bears the name of Marcellin Champagnat. Its starting point is Notre Dame de l'Hermitage (altitude 400m) and ends at Marlhès (1000m) Numerous walking tracks, a few kilometres in length, allow people to do circuits of more modest length starting from the main villages of the park. Three of these start from the town of La Valla.

Although rather narrow and winding the routes can be traversed easily. The town of LaValla , seat of the

municipality, of the church, the school and some businesses is the main centre for the "vallauds"⁶ (residents of La Valla en Gier). The roads which head north join the autoroute Lyon-St Etienne-Clermont Ferrand. To the south is the Rhone valley through Le Bessat. St Chamond (pop. 35,608 in 2009) is only a quarter hour by car as well as Le Bessat (pop. 439 in 2009). From St Chamond station it is a 40 minute train journey to Lyon and 10 minutes to St Etienne. Today LaValla is in no way an inaccessible place.

1.2. Population of La Valla

In 1697 the parish priest of La Valla made a census of the parish which counted 865⁷. With the help of various documents (including those of INSEE⁸ for the current situation) which record the population since 1793 we can provide the following table.

1793	1831	1901	1975	1990	2008	2011
2.146	2.583	1.800	581	745	912	Over 1.000

⁴ Mountain bikes.

⁵ Tracks allowing walkers to cover great distances over national and even European territory.

⁶ 'Vallauds', 'Vallaudes' : inhabitants of La Valla en Gier.

⁷ He notes: « that at one time the number of inhabitants was greater by a third and before that, almost a half. » And he adds: « that the cause of the diminution was the high price and scarcity of grain and lack of work and sickness among the people. »

⁸ Institut National de la Statistique.

The population of La Valla which fell from 2583 in 1831 to 581 in 1975 has seen a huge erosion of 2002 inhabitants over a period of 144 years. The example is typical of a rural exodus which affected all of France and even a good part of Europe in several waves. Since 1975 a slow increase in

population has taken place. The decade 1999–2008 records 129 births and 44 deaths. At present the number of households is estimated at 460.

In 2008 the classification by ages for the 912 inhabitants is shown in the following table.

0 – 14 Years	15 – 59 Years	60 – 74 Years	– 89 Years	+ 90 Years
194	556	105	54	3

With 750 less than 60 years old it is an exceptionally young population, at least for Europe. The neighbouring town of St Chamond has seen a reversed development. At its height in 1982 its population rose to 40,267 but in 2009 it had fallen to 35,608 making a loss of 4600 over 27 years.

This reverse tendency has some general causes. The urban centres lose people who go to the suburbs where land is less expensive and affords a better lifestyle. But St Chamond has suffered, moreover, from the crisis of the traditional, metallurgical industries. Creusot-Loire (iron and steel manufacturing) was closed down in 1984 and Giat-Industrie (armaments) shut down in 2006. La Valla, on the outskirts of the city, is the beneficiary of a deep change in the urban milieu whilst St Chamond feels its full impact.

La Valla then experiences a new vitality but the increase in population has its limits. Geographical restraints are there as well as those imposed by the Pilat Natural Park⁹. Furthermore the La Valla residents tend to maintain the identity of their village.

1.3. Housing estates and properties

Local elected members and municipalities had become well aware that the village was at risk of dying if measures were not taken to attract new residents and young couples. They gambled on the drawing power of the region in the Pilat Park due to its quality of life, sheltered from the main highways and to the quietness it offered.

The commune then pursued the creation of housing estates and ren-

⁹ Whose regulations limit the rate of urbanisation.

ovation of buildings with all the infrastructure needed for present urbanisation. In 1986 the estate of Fougères was created with 27 houses and in 2006 that of Terrasses de Leytrat with 19 houses of which 17 have been built.

Former buildings were converted into lodgings. That is the case of the former public school (5 lodgings); of Andeolaïse, a former factory, (5 lodgings) and the former presbytery which offer fifteen apartments to be leased, four of which are for public use. Privately owned buildings are also offered as locations: that of la Renaissance and the former school of the sisters of St Joseph offer 9 lodgings. Even if this list is not exhaustive it allows us to understand how, thanks to a policy of welcoming outsiders, the population now exceeds a thousand inhabitants.

1.4. Occupations in 2008¹⁰

The difficulty with outer urban zones is that they are set up as , “dormitory villages” which offer few activities on the site. Lavalla is one such example. Only 17.4% of residents have their work places in the town; 82.6 % of residents work out-

side the town, the majority (73.9%) in the Loire region¹¹.

Although restricted, the local business activity is still significant. In the town are found:

- Two agricultural enterprises offering full time work (cowhand and goat herd) and a score of those handling two jobs, one of them relating either to agriculture or animal husbandry.
- A family business: the manufacture of wood chips for heating. Craft work linked to building.
- A pottery workshop
- Restaurants or catering services at La Valla, Planil, Jasserie, La Rive and Barbenche.
- These last two years have seen the beginning of a rest house in la Sorchette hamlet and a guest room at Moulin du Bost.

In the town are found the usual agencies: the town hall, the church, Our Lady of Victories school¹², the only one in the town, with over a 100 students, a post office, the restored Café de la Poste, a bakery, a grocery and a hair salon. The Rochelaine centre under the management of the Sisters of the Holy Childhood¹³ is a therapeutic, educational institute. Put

¹⁰ INSEE, files published in June 2011.

¹¹ 7.3% in another department of the region of residence, and 1.4% in another region of Metropolitan France. In fact, Lavalla is close to the departments of the Ardeche and the Upper Loire and a part of its inhabitants are attracted by the city of Lyon.

¹² Established in a part of the buildings of the Marist Brothers. There is no secular public school in La Valla.

¹³ Founded in La Valla by the parish priest Fr Bedoin in the XIX^e century.

together these agencies provide a hundred jobs.

Among the 617 inhabitants aged from 15 to 64, La Valla has:

- 70.3 % employed
- 2.4 % unemployed
- 12.5 % retired
- 7.3 % students
- 7.5 % others

1.5. Town project

In 2010 the budget amounted to 622,000 euros in running costs and 412,000 euros in investments. Its sources of income: an extensive forest, planned and natural: 1800 hectares of which 300 hectares is town forest; income taxes and rates; professional taxes and the annual state grant. In the near future the town council foresees an improvement in the road system; the completion of the fifth section of the water purification system; the repair of the wet network, ie. the separation of rain water and dirty water; the repair of the drinking water system; the piping of water to a number of hamlets to improve their viability. As for dry reserves, it is planned to complete having electricity and telephone lines laid underground. Finally plans are in place to see to the repair of the church windows, the standardising of its electricity system and an up-grading of its roof.

That is the picture of La Valla at the beginning of 2012. The understanding and co-operation between municipality, town officials and associations have ensured the renewal of the commune and settled a new population on its soil.

1.6. The parish of St Ennemond-en-Gier

As well as the city-country balance being upset in recent decades the parish has also undergone restructuring. Lavalla has now become part of the large St Ennemond-en-Gier parish centred in St Chamond and including nine churches serving a population of just over 36,000. The pastoral animation team includes three fulltime priests, one from Columbia and another from Lebanon, and two deacons. Three other priests lend an occasional hand to this team. Each church is entrusted to a team to prepare the Sunday liturgy and to keep contact with the parish centre. Four churches hold a weekly Mass either on Saturday evening or Sunday and the five others, including Lavalla, once a fortnight. As in the majority of French parishes today a number of other responsibilities are delegated to lay people: scripture study groups, caring for the sick, funerals, preparation for the sacraments, catechesis, the adult catechumenate, school chaplaincies...

Four religious communities form part of the parish: the Marist Brothers with three communities (Our Lady of the Hermitage, Fonsala, Lavalla); the Sisters of Gethsemane¹⁴; the Little Sisters of the Holy Childhood and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. In Lavalla a feature of the Sunday Mass is the faithful attendance of the elderly and at funerals a strong, communal solidarity is evident.

Where does the heritage of Marcellin Champagnat fit in this “new world”? I attempt to respond to this question in the following article.

2. THE HISTORY OF THE MARIST BROTHERS AT LAVALLA FROM 1825 TO THE PRESENT

2.1. Emergence of the place of memory and the trials of the task of education

Fr Champagnat left Lavalla in 1824 to build the house Our Lady of the Hermitage. In May 1825 the community of Lavalla (20 Brothers and 10 postulants) moved into the Hermitage. From that point Lavalla becomes solely a school. But we are going to see that gradually it becomes much more than that.

To produce this article I rely up to the year 1902 on the Annals of the Brothers of the time entitled “*Annales de Lavalla en Gier*”. It is not a well-known document. The annals are recorded on a manuscript, 22.5 cm in length and 17.5 cm wide, consisting of handwritten 204 pages. I made a computer copy of this in 2009 to make it available to a wider audience even though it is basically for internal use. The annals were commenced in the last decades of the 19th century, about 1885, and cover a period beginning with the foundation of the institute, 2nd January 1817, up to 5th July 1902. They speak a lot of the Brothers and their works – works understood then in a wider material and apostolic sense. They have a strong connection with the account of Lavalla which appears in the *Annales des Maisons* produced by Br Avit on the 13th May 1885.

The *Annales* record the names of the first two directors: Br Jean-Marie Granjon in 1818 and Jean-Baptiste Audras (Br Louis) who was appointed there in 1824¹⁵. They continue:

“Starting from this period up until 1st November 1847 nothing is known of what happened in this school. We only know that there were just two Brothers and that the school was only open from All Saints day to Easter. They were employed elsewhere during summer¹⁶.”

¹⁴ Founded at Valfleury, a pilgrimage place near St Chamond.

¹⁵ This last date is not certain; another document has him at Charlieu at this time. The *Life* states that he replaced Br Jean-Marie in 1822 as master of novices.

¹⁶ *Annales*, p. 49-50.

The *Annales* record the names of the five Br Directors and the five assistants during this period lasting 23 years. The two Brothers went down every Thursday to the Hermitage, spent the day there and brought back modest provisions for the week¹⁷. How many students were there at this time? A statistic of 1833 notes that the Lavalla school “numbers 90 well behaved students and that the house is too small¹⁸.” The population of Lavalla in 1831 was 2,583.

In the *Annales de l'Institut* Br. Avit reports that on the 1st May 1827 the founder sold the annex built in 1822 to Fr Bedoin PP of Lavalla and on the 5th February 1829 Mr Couturier purchased the Bonner house for the sum of 1000 francs¹⁹. So, starting from 1827, the Brothers operated in a parish school. Such an arrangement, with the parish priest as owner of the property, dispensed the commune from paying for its upkeep. As for the Brothers, they occupied a very poorly maintained part of the original cradle of the institute.

2.2. Frugal living

It seems that there was never a definite contract between the commune and the Institute concerning this school which was regarded as a charitable work basically supported by the Institute. That is why the *Annales* often insist on the austere life of the Brothers:

“The furniture was in poor condition, the salary of the Brothers was the very minimum and irregular. Their lodging was so dilapidated that Brothers Victor and Petrone, reacting good humouredly to their situation, had placed several little windmills facing the cracks; these novel toys, almost always in motion, cheered them up and kept them patient²⁰.”

2.3. Problems with the municipality

In September 1848 the Institute had Br Athanase appointed as director of the school. As he did not have his teaching licence, the Brother assistant used that of Br Avit, the Brother Visitor at that time, without even informing him²¹. The latter, without knowing it, was to remain officially as the director until 1856²².

¹⁷ As Br Laurent had done as school master-catechist at le Bessat around 1819-20.

¹⁸ Doc. Bardyn in a monography of La Valla en Gier.

¹⁹ *Annales de l'institut*, t. 1, 1829, § 93.

²⁰ *Annales*.p. 50.

²¹ See *Annales des maisons*: The brevet was considered then as an administrative formality; the name of the holder was not important. Br Avit seems not to have appreciated not being informed.

²² «For eight years he was thought to be in charge of this school without being aware of it and without ever setting foot in it. He did not visit it because it was under the control of the Superiors.»

From 1849 the school remained open during summer but there was only one class per day from ten to three o'clock.

The school then was "under the hand" of the superiors, in particular the Superior General Br François, from the hamlet of Maisonettes. Aware of the disrepair he intervened with the municipality in October 1853 to ask the mayor, Mr Mayéry²³, to carry out repairs and erect more buildings. Since the commune was slow to respond to this request²⁴, Br François held back the Brothers at the Hermitage in 1853, 1855 and 1857²⁵ so as to rectify the situation and obtain payment of salaries. The commune seems to have planned the purchase of the Poyeton field to construct a "new building"²⁶ as is indicated by the mayor's response to Br François recorded by Br Avit in the *Annales des Maisons*. In fact the commune will limit itself to a few repairs.

As for Br Athanase, he plays a certain part in the general history of the Institute for at the 1852 chapter he became involved in intrigues on

which the superiors came down heavily²⁷. After being replaced in 1856 by Br Vincent, he left the Institute and "became installed at a house for Italian religious in Provence."

2.4. Br. Vincent and the repurchase of the cradle of the Institute

The *Annales* relate the exploits of a director acting somewhat outside the normal rules of behaviour. His activities remind us of many Brothers caught up in the local scene and taking initiatives which raise our eyebrows. It is worthwhile quoting the *Annales* at length on this matter:

"From 1856 to 1866 the head of the house was Br Vincent who cannot be put forward as a model director but who, nonetheless, in the Annals of the establishment, played an important role. Active, enterprising, a tireless speaker, an optimist through and through, he had become popular in the region and district through his charm and ability, real or pretended, as a dentist, doctor and even surgeon... At the very least one can attest that he had at heart the prosperity of the school and that he did not work without some success²⁸."

²³ Father of the Marist Father of the same name.

²⁴ The mayor excused the tardiness in responding to the demands of the Superiors, « the lack of funds has been the sole cause for our lateness ».

²⁵ So it is a matter of the arrears which the commune was late in paying. The Brothers remained at the Hermitage to the holidays of 1857. *Annales*, p.58-59.

²⁶ *Annales*, p.58.

²⁷ Their letter is cited in the *Annales des maisons*. See also the Acts of the Chapter. Above all, in the *Annales de l'Institut* (T. 1 1852, § 52-64) Br Avit gives his own account of the affair.

²⁸ *Bulletin de l'Institut des Frères Maristes*, janvier 1913.

"His first concern was to repossess for the Institute the small house which had served as the cradle and which Fr Champagnat had sold to Mr Couturier, then in the hands of the Cheney family and the Tissot ladies²⁹. Thanks to his good rapport with some charitable and well-off persons in the region, Br Vincent had soon raised the necessary money and with the authorisation of the government the purchase was made in December 1858. It was done in the name of the religious teaching Association called Little Brothers of Mary, recognised seven years before as an establishment of public utility."

"With the help of the savings which his skill and talents had provided, he put forward plans to double the number of buildings so as to add a boarding hostel to the school³⁰." On the 16 June 1859, he acquired in his own name not the Poyeton field but a jointly owned one which cost him disputes and endless legal procedures with one of the owners of the field who had not consented to the sale. Finally they reached an agreement and the two owners sold the field under contention to Br Louis Marie on the 16 March 1865³¹."

The *Annales des Maisons* of Br Avit sheds light on the consequences of Br Vincent's exploits at Lavalla "which displeased Fr Bedoin PP and his brother, the curate", because he was quite negligent on many matters, according to the reports of the Visitor which stated in 1862: "the Rule is not well kept and meditation, fraternal correction, silence, rising all suffer.... The accounts are poorly kept..... I

have discovered in the two classes children who are ignorant of the main mysteries of the faith." As early as 1860, the parish priest and his curate had obtained a transfer of Br Vincent but a communal petition forced the superiors to reappoint him and his return was a triumph for which the parish priest and his curate bore the cost. A new attempt failed again in 1864 following intervention from the commune and the prefecture.

We have here a fine example of rivalry between Brother Director and parish priest - a rather common occurrence before 1870. The *Annales des Maisons* of Br Avit provides numerous examples. He, himself, in the *Annales de l'Institut*, boasts of having "caused the rain and fine weather" at Bouge-Chambalud in 1843-46³² and he speaks of his disputes with parish priests in other places. At Lavalla the reputation of Br Vincent rested on some ambiguous aspects. The people admired an enterprising man and one capable of bringing to them medical help; the municipal council was not unhappy to see him contest the authority of the parish priest and fully appreciated that the school was costing it next to nothing.

As it was not possible to withdraw Br Vincent from Lavalla he finished as director in 1866 but remained as the

²⁹ See the copy of the act in the *Annales des maisons*: Province de l'Hermitage, La Valla.

³⁰ *Annales*, p.63.

³¹ «This affair would furnish material for a veritable novel», *Annales*, p. 65.

³² *Annales de l'Institut*, t. 1, p. XXI.

assistant of Br Celien the new director. But "he was often absent from the house"³³ and it was due to his ability once again that the Institute on the 8 July 1871 took possession of

the house³⁴ which Fr Champagnat had sold to Fr Bedoin. After this acquisition, Br Vincent was recalled to St Genis-Laval, where he died on the 21 April 1884.



The cradle of the Institute and the boarding of F. Vincent to 1861-65

2.5. A barely viable boarding school

The boarding school³⁵ built in 1861 catered for three classes and the two floors above served as dormitories. The Br Visitor, on his trip to Lavalla, 5 December 1861, recorded

that there were a hundred students, that the building was "very impressive" but that the furniture was inadequate and that there was an urgent need to relieve the poverty of the Brothers. The report of 1862 noted that Br Vincent had only one assistant and that the number of students

³³ *Annales des maisons* : La Valla, report of the visitor in 1867.

³⁴ This house appears then to have been unoccupied and in a very poor state because the act of sale (*Annales des maisons*: La Valla) indicates an official price of 500 F and a real price of 800.

³⁵ It was rather a hostel: the students came on Monday with their provisions and went home on Saturday.

was only 80 in winter and 35 in summer. It added "The Hermitage feeds the Brothers³⁶. Their only drink is water" and recommended that a litre of wine be provided. The tables below

show the development of the boarding school during the time of Br Vincent regarding the number of students and the Brothers in charge of them³⁷.

1833	1861	1862 ³⁸	1865	1866	1867 ³⁹
90	100	80 35	84	idem	114
2 Bros	2 Bros	2 Bros	2 Bros	3 Bros	2 or 3 Bros

1868	1869	1879	1882	1880-1885 ⁴⁰
98 Ex 7 In	99 Ex 16 In	81 Ex 36 In 23W	110 Ex 30 In	80 Ex 45 In 20 W
105	115	140	140	135
2 Bros	2 Bros	8 Bros	6 Bros	?

Opened in 1865 to accommodate a maximum of 62 boarders, the boarding section had only a dozen⁴¹ in 1874. From 1866 to 1878, during which time four successive Br Directors tried to find new boarders, there were still vacancies. However, it was noted that after Br Vincent's departure there was an increase of external (day) students.

In 1872 the school was designated as communal and the municipality contributed 400 francs for local students. "But the number of boarders

remains small⁴²." To sum up, the school struggled to survive and the founding of the boarding school was a failure. Although it was the starting place of a teaching congregation, Lavalla seems to have dragged behind in the massive current of schooling which was taking place in France over several decades.

Br Vincent and the Lavalla commune were only partly to blame for this situation for, after the departure of the Brothers to the Hermitage, the school, regarded as an annex to the

³⁶ That is, the school was not sufficient by itself and the brothers lived poorly.

³⁷ Ex: externs (day students); In: interns (boarding students); W: weekly boarders.

³⁸ 80 is the number of pupils in winter, and 35 in summer.

³⁹ Without precise numbers of externs and interns.

⁴⁰ These numbers are an average. And about ten Brothers passed through La Valla during this period. *Annales*, p. 96.

⁴¹ Two of them from Lyon and others from Izieux, St-Chamond and St-Étienne

⁴² *Annales*, p. 76.

mother house, seems to have become marginalised. It had very few resources (hence the entrepreneurial activity of Br Vincent), poor student attendance and incompetent teachers. Fr Bedoin and his brother seem to have tried in vain to remedy the situation. It was to be much later that a productive change took place.

2.6. Br Gentien

He arrived at Lavalla in the first fortnight of June 1874 and he represented a new generation of Brothers; less gregarious but more professional and religious. He had a prospectus printed which bore the heading: "Boarding School of the

Cradle of the Little Brothers of Mary"⁴³, established a fixed boarding fee⁴⁴ and introduced a school uniform⁴⁵. All these measures brought "some relief to the boarding school" and in four years (1874-1878) Br Gentien brought about major improvements: construction of walls, pool, transformation of classrooms, rough-casting of Br Vincent's building, reconstruction of the building erected by Fr Champagnat which had burnt down in 1872 and the creation of a garden. He seems to be the first to have taken an interest in honouring the memory of the founder by restoring his dilapidated bedroom and setting up a glass case to store objects which belonged to him.



The cradle of the Institute and the boarding of F. Vincent joined the chapel (1886)

⁴³ Without a doubt, it was this prospectus which made official the expression «cradle of the Institute».

⁴⁴ Up to then, there were as many different prices as there were students.

⁴⁵ «a cap with silver braid and gold monogram.»

The resources used to finance these improvements appear to have been quite meagre. They consisted of:

1. a salary of 1000 francs paid by the education board⁴⁶;
2. a grant of 400 francs paid by the commune;
3. the amount paid by the boarders. But Brothers and students helped out with a lot of the work during recreation and walk times⁴⁷. The annalist states:

"All these expenses, enormous for a small school, have been paid for through the thrift of the community and it can be confidently stated that the health of the personnel has not suffered because of it. One statistic provides clear proof of this. In four years (from 1874 to 1878) on no occasion was there a need to summon the doctor from St Chamond either for the teachers or the boarders."

At the end of four years, though, there was not much to show for all these efforts: thirty boarders "not counting those from the commune cared for by parents⁴⁸ and who only attended during winter." But political circumstances were to complicate the situation.

2.7. The politics of laicisation

After 1870, a republican current spread throughout France, anticlerical and lay, which did not spare Lavalla. The commune, which up to then had benefited from the Brothers' school without having to build a communal one, was no longer able to rely on this secure income. According to the annalist:

"Certain candidates from the list, more or less anticlerical, were seeking to make it (ie. the boarding school which also housed the communal school) the reason for their repeated failures in municipal elections. They were proposing to their friends its transformation into a lay school as the sole springboard which offered them a chance of success⁴⁹."

In 1879 the inspector put pressure on the municipality for the commune to have a school distinct from the boarding school. Finally in 1883, the school was relocated in the municipal centre⁵⁰ and Br Arpin was named as incumbent. He had to teach 60 children by himself because the inspector refused the presence of an assistant⁵¹.

⁴⁶ Lavalla being a communal school the Brothers are public teachers.

⁴⁷ *Annales*, p. 86.

⁴⁸ These children were called «caméristes» (weekly boarders). See note 21.

⁴⁹ *Bulletin de l'Institut*, janvier 1913.

⁵⁰ The mayor's office.

⁵¹ The annalist interprets the inspector's harassment thus: «On his last visit, on the pretext that the results were too weak, the same inspector gave an official and unmerited reprimand to this devoted brother whose task was very difficult. This punishment was inflicted under the influence of the school master Thibaud who, furious at having been ousted at the elections, wanted to have the school laicised. »

2.8. From boarding school to juniorate

As for the boarding school, now known as a free school, it was to be directed by Br Sisoës who arrived in 1878 and who could hardly relaunch an undertaking located too far from communication lines and urban centres. On the other hand, a remote place could be suitable for a juniorate at a time when the Institute was increasing these centres to maintain a high level of recruitment. At its meeting on 9 April 1889, the General Council of the Marist Brothers recognised that the numbers at the St Genis-Laval Juniorate were too large and recommended the formation of a separate juniorate for the new province of l'Hermitage. The Council was to return to this issue on several occasions and on the 2 July 1891 it envisaged "a juniorate to be established in the Hermitage province." In fact, from April 1889, fifteen juniors transferred from St Genis-Laval to Lavalla living together with the boarders in conditions about which there is no information. Their number increased quickly to thirty. A decision was then made to terminate the boarding school in August 1892.

This closure did not take place without problems, for the children from the hamlets who boarded weekly with the Brothers no longer had a place to stay. The parish clergy, the mayor and

his council protested and a petition signed by a good number of fathers spoke out against the closure.

"The superiors persisted with their decision but so as not to offend the population of Lavalla and to be of service they had a building constructed⁵² to accommodate two classes and a dormitory above for the children from remote hamlets. Br Theodore was the architect and Mr Rivory the foreman. All was in readiness for the return of classes in 1892⁵³."

The commune came out very well from this arrangement. It was the Brothers who had built a school and would continue to provide teachers for it. At this time, with public teaching having been laicised, it was to be classified as a "free" school.

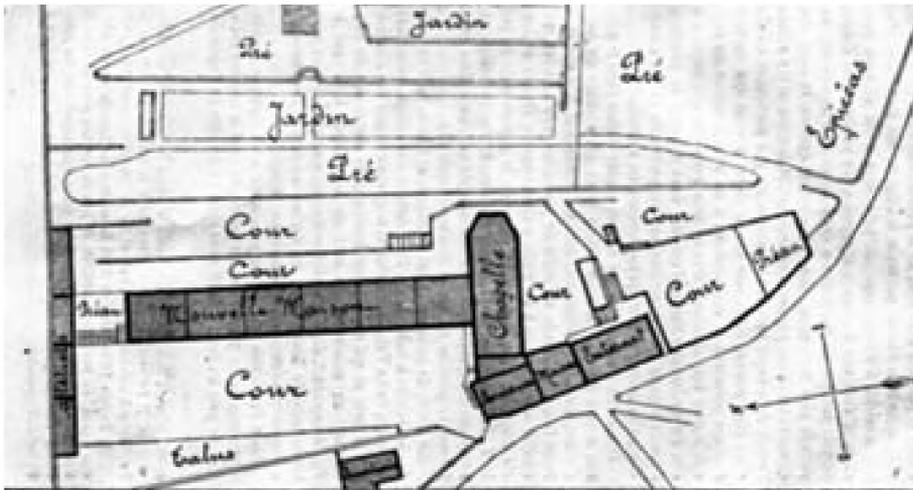
From an administrative point of view, the juniorate was still a boarding school accommodating 62 boarders. But as the number of juniors increased to 85 during the period 1892-1893, there was a need to plan a new building following on from the one built by Br Vincent. Br Sisoës was to be the second great builder at Lavalla. In 1892-93 he directed the construction of the school, the juniorate and the enlarging of the chapel⁵⁴.

"Mr Collet was the architect of the juniorate and Mr Rivory the foreman. During this important construction, the bald and bareheaded Br Sisoës could be seen every day at the construction site, working at one thing and another and keeping

⁵² It is in this building that the Brothers' community lives today.

⁵³ *Annales de La Vallée*, p. 98-99.

⁵⁴ A first construction was made in 1886.



Plan général de la maison de La Vallée et de ses plus proches dépendances.

Bulletin de l'institut (1913)

an eye on things to ensure the construction plan was adhered to correctly⁵⁵."

This building designed to become the juniorate was an extension of Br

Vincent's. According to the annalist the juniorate and former boarding school could accommodate 160 to 180 children⁵⁶. In effect, it seems the number of juniors did not exceed 160.

Table of number of juniors according to the Annals⁵⁷

1889	1891	1892	1900	1901	1902
15	30	85	154	164	159

2.9. The chaplains

The *Annales* provide the names of the first four chaplains. The annalist wrote concerning one of them:

"The chaplain is very devoted and always at hand when the Brothers or juniors seek his help. He is well disposed⁵⁸." They lived at first in a room or two put at their disposal by the

⁵⁵ *Annales*, p.105.

⁵⁶ In fact, the juniorate and former boarding school were authorized by the Departmental Council for Public Instruction for 144 boarders and a staff of 8 persons.

⁵⁷ These numbers differ somewhat from those published by the author of the article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut*, janvier 1913.

⁵⁸ *Annales*, p.139.

Brothers. Later, following a request from one of them, they rented a house to accommodate them. "Finally the 'Chapard' house was purchased on 24 July 1898 by Farabert Jean-Baptiste (Br Sisoès). The house was demolished and a new building erected⁵⁹. It was occupied as a chaplaincy in June 1899."

2.10. Recruitment

This seems to have relied mainly on the understanding between Br Sisoès and parish priests in areas rich in vocations. The priests were invited to put him in contact with children and adolescents likely to become Brothers:

"In March 1897 Br Sisoès travelled to Haut-Loire to recruit young men for the juniorate. His trip lasted three weeks. During this time he visited 38 communes. He did not bring back any juniors. He was content just to speak to each parish priest. His journey proved to be far from fruitless⁶⁰."

A later table, which emphasises the importance of schools in the politics of recruitment, shows that even if a significant number of juniors came from Marist schools, more than 70% had hardly any previous contact with the Brothers. Recruitment seems, then, to stem primarily through an understanding among families, priests and recruiter.

Year & No. of juniors	Marist Brothers' Schools	De La Salle Schools	Brothers of Sacred Heart ⁶¹	Schools Other ⁶²	Sisters' Schools
1900 (154j)	46	36	?	7	65
1901 (164j)	55	27	8	21	53
1902 (159j)	36	27	17	13	66
Total 477	137	90	25	41	184
%	28.72%	18.86%	5.24%	8.59%	38.57%

Concerning places of origin: in 1900-1902, 55.43% came from Haute-Loire; 22.87% from Loire; 10.91% from Ardeche, that is to say from regions making up the province of the Hermitage. The

Brothers accepted new juniors at any time of the year as well as sending them home for one reason or another. The following table⁶³ shows what happened over the course of a year.

⁵⁹ Annales, p. 106-107.

⁶⁰ Annales, p.116-117.

⁶¹ This statistic does not give the breakdown between the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

⁶² What are these other schools? No detail. And what does «Instit» mean? The word is unclear.

⁶³ Annales, p.135.

Juniors present in June 1899:	150;
in June 1900:	154
Juniors sent home from June 1899 to June 1900:	31
Returned home due to sickness:	1
Withdrawn by their parents:	1
Total:	33

2.11. Death of Br Sisoès

Up until 1898, Br Sisoès directed the juniorate devotedly. The annalist devotes two full pages to his sickness, his death and his funeral. The account seems to have been inspired by that of Fr Champagnat's death. Having been called to make his second novitiate, "this sedentary type of life proved to be fatal to his health⁶⁴". Having succumbed to pneumonia⁶⁵ he received the last sacraments⁶⁶ on 3 October 1898. At 8.30 p.m. he summoned his community, made his farewells and expressed his final wishes. "He, himself, could not hold back his tears, so much did he love his Brothers. In return he was greatly loved⁶⁷." He asked the Brothers to pass on his farewell to the juniors. "Later on he expressed satisfaction in leaving the juniorate in the hands of Br Marie-Abraham. 'It is you,' he said, while embracing him 'who will be the Di-

rector of the juniorate and I'm happy for that to happen⁶⁸.'" He died the next morning at 4.10, "the time of day he had awakened the community for 20 years⁶⁹."

His body was laid out in the room of the Venerable founder and a great number of people from Lavalla came to pray near his corpse. The funeral Mass took place in the parish of Lavalla on Thursday 6 July. After Mass, his mortal remains were taken to the Hermitage where he wished to be interred."

"The Hermitage community and the whole juniorate of Lavalla accompanied the hearse followed by the parish clergy, the chaplain, two former chaplains (Fr Magat and Fr Basset) and finally a crowd of people from Lavalla and elsewhere. On entering the Hermitage cemetery a modest cross which indicates his burial place⁷⁰ can be seen on the left."

He had certainly earned such homage. The work continued to prosper under the new Brother Director. The juniorate had 6 classes and numerous personnel.

⁶⁴ Annales, p.120.

⁶⁵ Annales, p. 121, «Fluxion de poitrine»: pulmonary congestion, pneumonia.

⁶⁶ «Last Sacraments», now called «Unction of the sick».

⁶⁷ Annales, p.121.

⁶⁸ Br Marie-Abraham will be director of the Juniorate from October 1898 to September 1901, then Master of Novices at the Hermitage. Annales p. 126 and 192.

⁶⁹ Annales, p.124.

⁷⁰ Annales, p. 125. This cross no longer exists; but his name figures on the list of the deceased in the cemetery of the Hermitage.

YEARS	1898 – 1899	1899 - 1900	Sept 1901
Direction Personnel ⁷¹	3	3	3
Juniorate Teachers	7	7	7
Supervisors	2	2	2
School Teachers ⁷²	3	3	2
Service personnel	6	6	4
TOTAL	21 Brothers	21 Brothers	18 Brothers

2.12. House of formation and place of pilgrimage

Let us put aside the sequence of events for a moment to detail the daily reality of a community which already had taken on a markedly monastic aspect and was gradually beginning to figure as a place of pilgrimage.

The juniors contributed only small sums by way of fees. The juniorate was poor.

"They aimed at great economy; wastage was avoided. Efforts were made to obtain as much as possible by way of fees from the juniors; purchases, suppliers and provisions were supervised; there was care that nothing was spoiled or damaged. The household linen of the Brothers especially was in a poor state. For a long time finances did not

permit purchases of this kind. However this could not continue: five or six hundred francs was needed⁷³."

So "to feed the juniors, clothe them and provide them with school books the Brother Director received 25 francs per month for each junior⁷⁴ from the mother house."

There were also benefactors, both men and women, to support the juniorate. On 23 April 1902 the annalist writes: "Sung mass at the Hermitage in honour of the patronesses of the juniorate." On 20 July 1901 "All of the first camp⁷⁵ went to the Hermitage to be presented to Very Reverend Mother Candide, Superior of the Work for children with tuberculosis at Ormesson. She was quite touched by the occasion, especially the promise of religious vocations for her charitable work. She adopted 20 juniors whom she undertook to maintain⁷⁶."

⁷¹ By direction personnel are meant the Brs Director, Sub-director, Econome. Service personnel comprise the Brothers cook, kitchen aid, tailor, shoe-maker. Some Brothers sometimes had two functions: teacher and organist, teacher and sacristan, for example.

⁷² The school is to be set apart; the brothers assigned to it have no responsibility in the Juniorate. But they form part of the community of the Brothers. *Annales*, p. 139-140.

⁷³ *Annales*, p. 139-140.

⁷⁴ *Annales*, p.104.

⁷⁵ At La Valla, the juniors were divided into two groups called «camps». Each camp had a Brother Supervisor in charge.

⁷⁶ *Annales*, p.187.

The Brothers, living almost at subsistence level, carried out four trades in the community: cook, tailor, shoemaker and gardeners.

“The first garden was begun in 1895 and five others with retaining walls were made in 1898⁷⁷” The fowl house was built in 1895. A building at the bottom of the western yard, planned as a piggery and a stable for cows, even if it saw the light of day, was never used for that purpose⁷⁸. They took from the soil any nourishment they could get and economised in every way. In July and August it was collecting bilberries and in autumn chestnuts⁷⁹. The plans for the property in 1900 featured orchards of cherry trees and chestnut trees. On the occasion of feast days the menu was modestly improved as shown on the 25 December 1899:
Midnight supper: soup, sausages, rice, two desserts, white wine. Morning: chocolate. Evening meal: three courses, two desserts.”

2.13. Piety

This occupied a central place in the running of the house. The Marial feast days were honoured. ‘All to Jesus through Mary’ was the juniorate’s motto chosen by the Brothers

in 1897⁸⁰. There were many exercises of piety: prayer, daily mass⁸¹, sacraments⁸², the rosary, the office, adoration of the Holy Sacrament, novenas, stations of the cross, retreats, months of Mary, the Sacred Heart, St Joseph, perpetual adoration... All were observed according to the religious calendar of the day and the established customs.

2.14. Study

Secular studies were given due recognition. One gets the impression that the juniorate followed the program of an upper primary school. The term exams, which could last three or four days, were taken seriously and were presided over by the Br Provincial⁸³ or Br Vicar Provincial, accompanied sometimes by the Br Visitor. For the oral exams Brothers from Izieux, Valbenoite and the Hermitage came to help out⁸⁴. Even agricultural exams conducted by the agricultural syndicates of the south-east⁸⁵ were sat for. But this had no bearing on the certificate of studies nor the teaching licence, official exams.

⁷⁷ *Annales*, p.112.

⁷⁸ *Annales*, p.112.

⁷⁹ At present, there remain only four productive chestnut trees and some wild cherries, lost amidst spruce and sycamores. The road to Luzernod was once lined with poplars, now disappeared.

⁸⁰ *Annales*, p.117.

⁸¹ «The juniors receive, on average, Holy Communion three times a week. No order of rows in approaching the the Holy Table.» (*Annales*, p. 138).

⁸² First Communion, Confirmation, Confession.

⁸³ This office has as yet no canonical status. It is a question rather of the director of the provincial house.

⁸⁴ 8 August 1900. *Annales*, p.164.

⁸⁵ Catholic syndicates organising training in agriculture.

2.15. Vacations

There were no home holidays. The 16 August was the official opening date for the juniors' vacation. It

consisted of a daily schedule which was somewhat lighter. The following table shows the daily timetable for the 16 August 1900 and also 1901.

16 Aug	Holidays Begin ⁸⁶		
4.30am	Brothers rise	1.00pm	Rosary – Mon, Wed, Fri. Walk
5.15am	Juniors rise	1.40pm	Rosary – Tues, Thurs, Sat. Class
5.35am	Prayer & Meditation	3.00pm	Half Hour Break
6.00am	Mass, Study	3.30pm	Class
7.10am	Breakfast & Recreation	4.05pm	Visit to Blessed Sacrament
			– Tues, Thurs, Sat
8.30am	Reading	4.15pm	Afternoon Tea & Recreation
8.45am	Class	5.15pm	Vespers & Compline, Study
9.45am	Half Hour Break	6.40pm	Prayer, Evening Meal,
			Recreation, Bed
10.15am	Class		
11.00am	Singing practice		
11.30am	Visit to Blessed Sacrament, Dinner & Recreation		

This vacation time allowed the Brothers to make their annual retreat. Classes began again at the beginning of October⁸⁷.

2.16. Relaxation

There were some breaks provided in this very strict schedule. Normally in

July a day's holiday on Pilat where the juniors gathered ten bags of arnica which were then sent to St Genis-Laval⁸⁸. From time to time a superior visiting Lavalla granted a holiday⁸⁹. The Annals list afternoon walks, games during times of recreation, performances: drama, speeches, singing, "slide shows and grammo-

⁸⁶ The hour is the solar hour.

⁸⁷ From 1889 to 1891, the juniors spent their vacation at St-Genest-Malifaux and in 1892 at St-Genis Terrenoire, to make room at La Valla for the Brothers who were making the 30 day retreat, recently instituted.

⁸⁸ It happened that sometimes things did not turn out well. Once, one of them brought a bouquet of aconite and offered it to the Sub-Director who turned pale with shock. «He hastened to find out which of them had tasted some. They rushed to the pharmacy. Everyone was more or less indisposed; but no one died. A novena of thanksgiving was made». *Annales*, p. 113.

⁸⁹ 13 November 1901, break at Tarentaise. *Annales*, p. 192.

phone⁹⁰.” In June 1900 “the juniors played the game of croquet for the first time⁹¹.”

2.17. Pilgrimages

It was perhaps around 1890 that, in the minds of the Brothers, Lavalla

became more concretely the “cradle” of the Institute. They came to recommend themselves to the prayers of the Founder in the room he occupied from 1818 to 1824.

The annals record a number of visits:

March 1891	7 Brothers who are leaving for China.
October 1899	Others leaving for China and Turkey.
21 st Nov 1899	A Brother from Algeria thanks the founder for the cure he has obtained through his intercession.
December 1899	8 Brothers leaving for Canada and South America.
9 -25 th Feb 1900	The Directors of Izieux and Copenhagen making Second Novitiate at Sainte-Marie come for a rest.
8 th May 1900	Brother Director of Die makes pilgrimage to Lavalla.
25 th June 1900	2 former juniors leaving for Canada accompanied by 2 Canadian Brothers returning there ⁹² .
17 th August 1900	Some Brothers from Bourbonnais preparing for The Great Exercises at la Cote St-Andre.
18 th August 1900	Some Brothers from Nord preparing for The Great Exercises at Bourg-de-Péage
August 1900	2 young Brothers leaving for Canada.
5 th March 1901	2 young Brothers, former juniors, preparing to go to China.
25 th June 1901	3 Brothers leaving for Mexico and 1 for Canada.

⁹⁰ Annales, p. 148. The phonograph of Thomas Edison dates from December 1877. The juniorate was well up with its time.

⁹¹ Annales, p. 161.

⁹² «The juniors were excited at leaving for the missions by the prospect of winning souls for Jesus Christ and escaping conscription.» Annales, p.160.

2.18. Continuing relationship between Lavalla and the Hermitage

The annalists recorded 25 visits by Brothers from the Hermitage. Novices and scholastics came up to Lavalla either for an afternoon or, more rarely, a day⁹³. They usually came for a specific purpose – to visit the crib at Christmas time or to “see the month of Mary” as was the case on the 29 May 1900. Sometimes it was simply to take a walk or catch up with their former teachers and companions. Each year on the feast of St Francis, the scholastics came for the midday meal or else, as on the 5 October 1901, they finished their holidays there and celebrated with the 47 graduates at the conferring of the elementary and higher teachers’ licence. When, on the 17 April 1902, 26 newly professed Brothers and the juniors who had recently gone down to the Hermitage returned to Lavalla, the annalist could not help adding: “Afternoon tea: sausage, chocolate and pastries.”

As for the juniors at Lavalla, the *Annales* record their presence at the Hermitage on certain occasions: for a gathering of patronesses; the taking of the habit; a pilgrimage to the Hermitage at the tomb of the Venerable Founder to put their resolutions for

the retreat under his protection, as on the 7 October 1899. They were also invited by the Brothers at Izieux for an afternoon celebration: “Gramophone session. Afternoon tea with the Brothers: tables, tablecloths, sausages etc. white wine; nothing was lacking to implant in everyone’s memory this festive day⁹⁴ of Easter Tuesday of April 1899⁹⁵.”

On the 21 September 1901, 41 juniors from the Hermitage came to gather with those at Lavalla: “The dear Br Assistant and Br Visitor were present at the reception.” This seems to have been a significant development in the formation practice of the province.

2.19. Singing

Another activity carried out at the juniorate was singing. It was focused essentially on the liturgy and based on Gregorian chant. An organist, Br Joseph Conrad, was on the appointment list in 1899. As the annalist notes in 1900: “The juniorate at present possesses seven harmoniums.⁹⁶” There must have been practical courses for those wanting to learn to play this instrument. The juniors sang at functions outside the juniorate. Already in 1896 on the 2, 3 and 4 November they provided a choir for singing at Lavalla parish and at the Hermitage during the triduum in honour of Fr Champag-

⁹³ On 23 July 1899, the novices spent the day at La Valla and had dinner there.

⁹⁴ *Annales*, p.129.

⁹⁵ Patronesses: *Annales*, p. 113; taking of the habit, p. 149-195; Izieux, p. 129.

⁹⁶ *Annales*, p.116.

nat's⁹⁷ being declared venerable. On the 7 December 1896, the juniors from Lavalla went to the Valbenoite church with the novices and scholastics from the Hermitage for the second day of this triduum. They sang at the mass for the Patronesses when these gathered annually at the end of April or the beginning of May at St Etienne or the Hermitage. The Annales record five such meetings. The one held on the 1 May 1900 shows that there were 80 singers at the juniorate.

They sang also in the parish on a number of feast days⁹⁸. Conversely, the parish clergy and other guests came to heighten by their presence the occasion of the patronal feast day of the juniorate, the Presentation of Mary in the Temple, on 21 November. For major feast days there was a customary title "Great Solemnity" which referred to the liturgy of the day as on the feast of the Sacred Heart, the 22 June 1900. We find also the expression "Mass in music" which must have given still wider scope to the ceremony⁹⁹.

2.20. Manual work and water supply

We have seen how manual work played a role in its history. Certainly

the main work was performed by the contractors and masons but the Brothers and juniors did a lot to help the masons. The provision of water was an extremely important work.

Where was the source or well from which the first Brothers drank? We do not know. The Annals only make mention of water from the year 1879. Br Sisoës had a reservoir measuring nine cubic metres built "in the higher part of the field to supply water to various sections of the house through lead pipes¹⁰⁰." After the extension of the house in 1893 another, with a capacity of 12 cubic metres, was built next to the first to which it was joined. In 1895, a year of drought, "for two months they had to fetch water from the dam using a barrel; they drew water from the river as best they could and, having filled the barrel, they transported it up over difficult pathways." With the 600 francs granted to him by the Superior General, Br Sisoës had a third built in 1896 with a capacity of 140 cubic metres. Even though the Brothers and the juniors had worked on the digging the cost rose to 1800 francs which forced Br Sisoës to ask for a supplement from the General Procure which proved to be insufficient:

⁹⁷ «These celebrations were splendid...during the three days the room of the Venerable Founder was never empty....The crowds were such that for the three days the church was discovered to be too small, whether for the morning services or for the evening ones : everyone wanted to attend the imposing ceremonies.» Annales, p. 113-114.

⁹⁸ Feast of the Rosary 7 October 1900, at vespers for Corpus Christi on 17 June 1900, at Masses for the Missions, on 16 September 1900.

⁹⁹ Sung High Mass and 5 acolytes, (choir boys), for the feast of Pentecost (3 June 1900).

¹⁰⁰ «Misinformed, the Reverend Brother Superior sharply reprimanded him. But after hearing his explanation, he approved the expense», Annales, p.107.

“He had to use all his ingenuity to pay for the remainder¹⁰¹.”

2.21. A pre-novitiate

The juniorate at that time had a primordial role in the expansion of the Institute. The major superiors kept an eye on this expensive but indispensable work. The *Annales* on the 9 November 1899 recorded: “Visit of Br Superior General to Lavalla. He was accompanied by Br Assistant and the provincial procurator. They arrived at 11 am and left at

1.30 pm. They visited the classes and after dinner looked at the work being done on the property¹⁰². “At another time, the annalist is laconic in describing a short visit on 13 September 1900: “Br Assistant made a brief appearance!” But for most of the time their visits took place on a feast day. “Our guests were the Assistants, Br Procope and Br Stratonique. Reception at 10.45 am. Greeting song. Welcome and secular singing. Meal in dining room¹⁰³.” The table below shows that the juniorate fulfilled its goal entirely.

2.22. Entries to the Novitiate

1899 17 th Apr	1899 4 th Aug	1899 2 nd Dec	1900 23 rd Apr	1900 2 nd Oct	1901 20 th Apr	1901 25 th Sep	1902 10 th Apr	TOTAL
24	25	12	25	40	29	57	31	243

This transition to the novitiate was marked with solemnity. It took place in a festive atmosphere and began with the “proclamation of the chosen¹⁰⁴.... mass, banquet. Normally, before departure, the future novices visited the room of the Venerable Founder and on their way to the Hermitage they stopped by at Our Lady of Pity Chapel¹⁰⁵.

2.23. The end (temporary) of the juniorate

On 1 July 1901, the Waldeck-Rousseau law instituted legal recognition for all associations except for religious associations which had to be authorised. The government turned down all requests for authorisation and on 3 April 1903¹⁰⁶ the pre-

¹⁰¹ *Annales*, p.108.

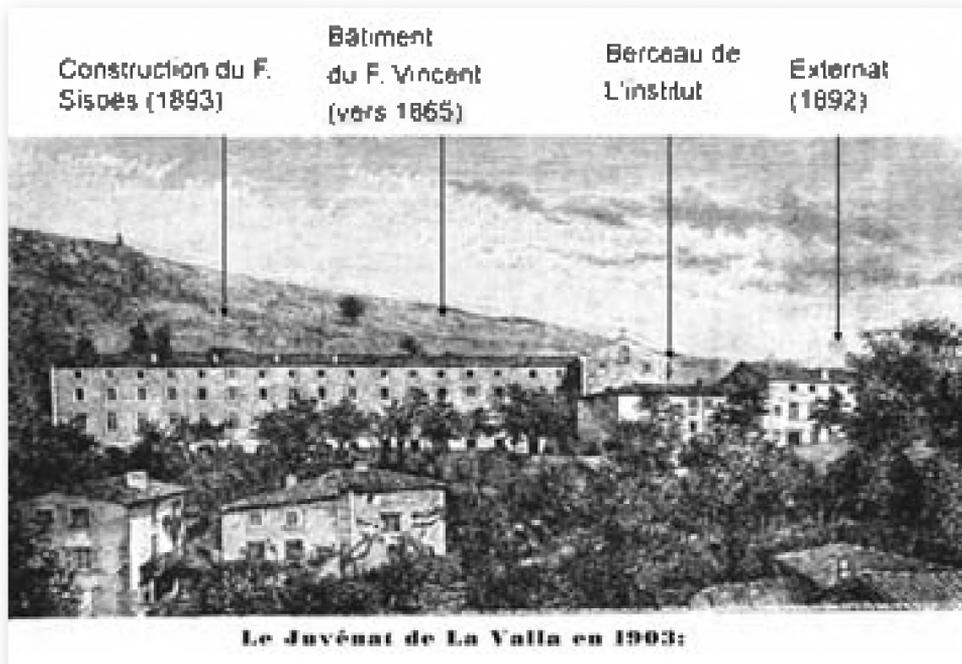
¹⁰² *Annales*, p.143-144.

¹⁰³ 6 February 1900, *Annales*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁴ *Annales*, p. 153, 23 April 1900.

¹⁰⁵ «Departure in passing by Notre Dame de Pitié in memory of the Venerable». *Annales*, p.153.

¹⁰⁶ See *Chronologie Mariste*, p.111 et 115.



Bulletin de l'institut (1913)

fect of Lyon notified Br Theophane that on the 1st of April the Minister of the Interior had rejected our request for authorisation of the Institute made to the Chamber of Deputies. The commissioner of police, acting for the government, came to serve notice for the evacuation of the Lavalla house before the end of July. The last juniors departed on 31 July for San Mauro near Turin¹⁰⁷.

Despite the despoiling of buildings in 1903, the school carried on in a building near the parish church purchased by Mr Ginot, which then became a parish school. Following the expulsions, the Brothers' houses were sold by auction in October 1906. Fr Aubrun, the parish priest of Lavalla, acquired them in order to convert them into a holiday resort named "Hotel St Andeol."

¹⁰⁷ La Valla keeps a material «proof» of this expulsion. It is an oval medallion in black wood, 19 cm long by 16 cm wide. In the interior oval, encircled by a thin gilded metallic border about 12 cm long by 9 cm wide, is a rectangular white band, quite well preserved, of 12 cm. It bears the inscription: «Seal placed on the door of the Juniorate chapel at La Valla by the commissaire of police of St-Chamond. July 1903.»



Bulletin de l'institut (1913)

2.24. Reopening of the juniorate¹⁰⁸

The reopening was linked to the events of the Great War. The government ceased for a while to hound religious congregations and in October 1917 the defeat of the Italian army at Caporetto hindered the sending of juniors to an Italy threatened with invasion and revolution. The Hermitage annals

record the existence of a juniorate in 1917-18¹⁰⁹ directed by three secularised Brothers on post at the Hermitage: Messrs. Martin, Merle and Thomas¹¹⁰ who were looking for a place to “recommence a work which had been interrupted for 14 years¹¹¹.” This temporary juniorate was to last for three years.

In the autumn of 1919, the Brothers learnt that the furniture of the Ho-

¹⁰⁸ We still possess three other books of *Annales* which cover the periods 1920 to 1969, 1920 to 1934, 1935 to 1961, 1962 to 1969. To distinguish them from the first which covers the period from the Foundation of the Institute up to 1903, I will use the No. In order of these books: 2*Annales* or 3*Annales*... in the footnotes. The references used in this article are the dates indicated which permit reference to the events they record.

¹⁰⁹ Juniors' retreat 18-21 July 1918. *Annales de l'Hermitage*, 1918.

¹¹⁰ Because of secularisation the Brothers are referred to by their civil names.

¹¹¹ 2*Annales*, p. 3.

tel St Andeol was up for sale. After sometimes arduous negotiations Fr Aubrun, the former parish priest of Lavalla, sold the Hotel St Andeol to Mr de Boisseau, representing the Association Immobiliere du Gier responsible for the interests of the Marist Brothers. As the hotel had undergone many modifications both to the buildings and the surroundings it had to be renovated. Starting from 30 March 1920 a whole class came up from the Hermitage to Lavalla to undertake a cleaning up operation.

After 15 months of toil in an unceasing to and fro between the Hermitage and Lavalla, the juniorate was able to reopen its doors. Following the visit to Lavalla of Br Stratonique, Superior General, and Br Provincial on 13 October 1920, the decision was made to name the building Our Lady of Victories¹¹² whose statue, brought up on 12 February 1921, was inaugurated on Tuesday 30 March in the presence of "the community, the

cream of the juniors and some students¹¹³."

But it was not until 4 August 1921 that 46 juniors from the Hermitage went up to Lavalla to reoccupy the place after an absence of 18 years¹¹⁴. Mr Thomas, the Director, and Mr Martin, in charge of the group, "went to pay the respects of the new community" to the clergy and the Sisters of the Holy Childhood and on 7 August 1921¹¹⁵ the parish priest, in surplice and stole, blessed every room of the house. The annalist adds: "It was quite necessary, it appears¹¹⁶."

2.25. Second book of annals. The juniorate from 1921 to 1934

This book does not provide clear and precise figures as did the first. However, in going over it, the following numbers of juniors enrolled can be found.

1921	1921	1927	1929	1930	1932	1933	1934
6 th Aug	5 th Nov	6 th Aug	2 nd Oct	19 th Feb	27 th Aug	7 th Nov	27 th Dec
46	50	29	40	56	44	55	70

¹¹² There is, above the high altar of the chapel of La Valla, a statue of O.L. of Victories; but is it the one of Mr Grasset delivered on 12 February 1921?

¹¹³ 2Annales, 30 March 1920: «They sing a vibrant Salve Regina intoned by Mr Imbert».

¹¹⁴ 2Annales, p. 11, 4 August 1921.

¹¹⁵ 13h, in our current notation.

¹¹⁶ 2Annales, p. 11, 7 August 1921. He lets it be understood that the conduct of the hotel clients was not always of the highest standard.

In recording the number of 70 for 1934 the annalist exclaims: "The symbolic number has been attained! As was announced there will be a little feast to celebrate the occasion." In effect this figure was never surpassed, for in a France whose fields were bloodstained by war and affected by a fall in the birth rate recruitment became more difficult.

However it was still the "recruiter" who determined the number of juniors. He called on the parish priests, visited the homes of Christian families and the schools run by the Brothers¹¹⁷ and became the intermediary of the Institute. Due homage is paid, in the 4th book of the *Annales* on the 21 September 1964, to the then Brother Recruiter, Br Colombat "who tirelessly over a period of thirty years devoted himself to the search for vocations before handing over his role to Br Claudius Goutagny and retiring to Valbenoite¹¹⁸."

2.26. Third book of annals. Juniorate 1935 to 1961

Although the number of juniors was now smaller their average age was higher than before 1903 and their commitment more demanding.

The book of visits¹¹⁹ in 1935 states: "It is better to admit only children who have a sincere desire to enter the Institute." That is why the admission of juniors is accompanied by the following statement of application:

We the undersigned declare that today, 20 September 1936, we have been, following our request, admitted by our Superiors as juniors of the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary and that under this title we have solemnly consecrated ourselves to the Holy Virgin Mary in the chapel of Our Lady of the Hermitage in the presence of Br François de Borgia, Assistant General."

There follow the names of 32 signatories dated 20 September 1936. The reverse side of the document shows the same request made on the 16 September 1938 followed by 27 signatures.

The level of studies demanded seemed particularly searching. On the 29 January 1935, Br Assistant announced the creation of a higher juniorate at the Hermitage, St Joseph Juniorate, where juniors who had attained a higher certificate¹²⁰ and had not reached the required age of fifteen and a half years to begin the postulancy were to be admitted.

¹¹⁷ Among the juniors, more than half come from the Brothers' schools.

¹¹⁸ 4*Annales*, 21 September 1964.

¹¹⁹ This book contains the observations of the Superiors on the life of the Communities.

¹²⁰ The juniorate seems to function like a higher primary school.

Number of juniors in the period 1935 to 1961					
17 th Sep 1935	7 th Sep 1936	1 st Oct 1942	3 rd Oct 1943	9 th Sep 1944	29 th Sep 1945
41	33	51	43	30	35
1 st Oct 1946	Sep 1948	4 th Sep 1951 ¹²¹	Sep 1952	15 th Sep 1953	16 th Sep 1954
30	50	(Not given)	65	53	37 ¹²²
4 th Sep 1955 ¹²³	25 th Sep 1956	2 nd Oct 1957	26 th Sep 1958	21 st Sep 1959	15 th Sep 1960
(Not given)	55	65 ¹²⁴	53	58	55

In 1961 there were 63.

2.27. The juniorate becomes an interprovincial one

The *Annales* are silent for the years 1938-42 but on account of feeble recruitment and the ravages of the war, the juniorate started to become interprovincial. Between 1939 and 1941 some juniors came from Mazères¹²⁵

and in September 1945 some from Aubenas. Others would be sent from Lacabane and Varennes. A Higher Juniorate was established at St Paul-Trois-Châteaux in September 1947 under the direction of Br Paul Candide grouping juniors from Aubenas, St Paul-Trois-Châteaux, the South West and Lavalla. But the experiment did not last long.

Fourth book of annals. Juniors from 1962 to 1968							
	17.09.62	20.09.63	21.09.64	22.09.65	19.09.66	18.09.67	22.09.68
Juniors	63	63	53	39	56	52	23
Classes	3	3	3	?	3	3	2
Brothers	7	9	8	6	7	8	4
School		2	2	Closed			

The statistics reveal a steady intake of candidates at Lavalla up until 1967 and a sudden slump in 1968. The causes are known: the transfor-

mation of society leading up to May 1968, Vatican Council II.... The 21 June 1969 saw the official closing of Our Lady of the Hermitage Juniorate.

¹²¹ 3Annales, 4 September 1951: «entry beyond expectations». No number given.

¹²² 3Annales, 16 September 1954: «the recruitment has not provided many».

¹²³ 3Annales, 4 September 1955: «This year, because of the small number of juniors, the 5th class will be at La Valla.» No number given.

¹²⁴ 3Annales, 2 October 1957: «65 of whom 13 externs».

¹²⁵ Juniorate situated 3km from Pau (Atlantic Pyrenees).

Its fourteen students were to continue their studies at the Marist Fathers' college at St Chamond¹²⁶ and reside at the 'Foyer de l'Hermitage'¹²⁷. Fostering vocations continued under a different form which was quickly shown to be less than satisfactory. In summary, the juniorate from 1921 to 1969 was more the survival of a work whose finest moments were the period from 1876 to 1903. The steady numbers at the juniorate up to 1967 in reality hid a progressive erosion in the vocational effectiveness of juniorates especially after 1945.

2.28. The restructuring of teaching in France... and at Lavalla

The twenty years after the war were the baby boom years followed by a strong economic upturn. From this sprang a complete restructuring of the schooling system. It was a time when, almost everywhere, boys' and girls' schools were combined and colleges were established.

As previously noted, the school catering for the boys of the parish continued in a building purchased by Mr Ginot and situated near the parish church. A lay person, Mr Mathevet,

was the director until his death on 6 May 1930. After a short interim period of several directors, another layman, Mr Fournet, took over and was the director from 1932 to 1957. Br Raymond followed by Br Demartin continued after him up until 1965, the year which saw the establishing of a co-educational school with the Sisters of St Joseph in Luzernod Street¹²⁸.

When the juniorate closed its doors in 1969, the co-educational primary school was relocated on this site and Br Marcel Arnaud, appointed director, opened a boarding section. In September 1969, the school counted 76 pupils of whom 27 were boarders¹²⁹. With the advent of both boy and girl boarders the number of pupils, spread over six classes, rose to 160 in 1978¹³⁰. But because of its situation in a remote area, recruiting became difficult and in 1997 the number of pupils fell to 88, 38 of them boarders¹³¹. In the year 2000 with only 24 boarders - 18 boys and 6 girls - the boarding section closed.

The direction of the school was then assumed by lay teachers under Marist guardianship from 2001 to 2009. In 2003-2004 the building constructed by Br Sisoës was renovated from top to bottom on its three levels.

¹²⁶ College of the Marist Fathers.

¹²⁷ This is the period when vocation centres are set up in all the Provinces of France. In general, they have very brief lives.

¹²⁸ The people of La Valla today have passed through this school.

¹²⁹ 4Annales, 8 September 1969.

¹³⁰ Document Bardyn: *La Valla en Gier, Monographie d'un village*.

¹³¹ Annales de la communauté des Frères, 1997.

Since 2009 the Catholic Education Office of the Loire has taken responsibility for the running of the school. Presently it is a primary school, the only one in the town, which caters solely for day students. In 2011-2012 it numbers 134 pupils including a crèche for infants less than two years old. The teaching staff numbers five, of whom two are part-time, together with some maternal carers and those who are on standby to offer help. The number of youngsters which has grown in Lavalla over the last few years has ensured an increase in enrolments.

2.28. The Brothers' Community

The Brothers occupy the school house built in 1892 and renovated in 1997-98. There are four Brothers whose ministry is to welcome visitors: about 5000 per year making a pilgrimage to Marist places.

2.30. Our Lady of Pity

This small chapel which can seat 80 persons and which belongs to the commune is dear to the Marist Brothers. Renovated in 2003-2004 on the initiative of the "Association des 3 V" (Vallauds, Valorisons, Lavalla!) opened on the 5 June 2004. The passing through of groups visiting the Marist places gives it a certain vitality. Each year the choral society of Lavalla performs there. At the time of its renovation, the commune recommended

that this place be a centre for artistic events: concerts, exhibitions¹³²...

2.31. The home of Br François at Maisonnettes

We should add that at Lavalla Br François is the object of popular piety. His family home is still maintained by the Institute. Each year on Holy Wednesday an afternoon mass is celebrated in the kitchen of the house. On the 4 April this year, 80 people attended.

2.32. The future of the buildings

About a third of the space is unoccupied. Br Vincent's building is empty or serves as storage area. The original house which includes Fr Champagnat's bedroom is much frequented and three rooms serve as offices for "Presence Mariste", the magazine of the French Marist Brothers. All the rest is on hold. The chapel is silent. The committee for Marist places is looking at various projects of renovation. It has been proposed to establish there the former Hermitage library as well as the archives of the French provinces.

To conclude this story, starting from the foundation of the Institute up to the present, is to recall the enormous material, financial and human investment needed to establish

¹³² The statue of O.L. of Pity, dating from the 16th century, once in this sanctuary, is currently in a safe place.

and maintain the five buildings which make up the property. Even if today this site seems to be too large a jewel case for containing the cradle of the institute, it reminds us of the numerous missionary vocations which blossomed there, people inspired by the gospel to bear witness to other races. In addition many Brothers, products of this juniorate, could tell their story and relate all they have gained from it. As much

could be said for lay folk who came there in their childhood and who return as pilgrims to Lavalla, not without emotion, in recalling the cheerful atmosphere which prevailed there. But most important is the whole symbolic power of this place referred to from the 19th century as the cradle of the institute. Indeed it has not the prestige of the Hermitage, "the great reliquary of Fr Champagnat", but it is still its source.

APPENDIX

LETTER OF BR GENTIEN, IZIEUX [LOIRE]

Testimony on Marcellin Champagnat.

(Diocesan inquiry transcribed by Br Carazo , Rome 1991)

Reverend Brother Superior,

Here are some of my memories and impressions concerning Fr. Champagnat during my stay at Lavalla. Firstly his piety. There is evidence of it even on the walls of his room, a room only 6 metres long, 4 metres wide and 2.5 metres high. Oh! If these walls could speak! people sometimes say. Well, the walls and even the floor of this room have always said to me: "Fr Champagnat was full of the spirit of piety and poverty". Permit me to reproduce the pious sentences he had written in large letters on the walls of his room and which I had Br Cecilien go over again (for they had faded in part.)

- Blessed be the pure and immaculate conception of Blessed Mary, Mother of God.*
- To God alone belongs the glory.*
- Praised be the blessed sacrament of the altar.*
- Embrace my whole heart with your heavenly fire.*
- Jesus, all my love; Jesus, all my happiness.*

His room and especially the parquet (yes, it's really a parquet, a sort of mosaic) speak of his love of poverty. This mosaic consists of wide planks poorly joined, a number of bricks, and in another corner several large flat stones, either smooth or scratched by hobnailed boots. All this could have been easily replaced by a good floor at little cost. The good Father was not lacking in good taste nor in love of beauty and order.

The proof of this is the care he exercised in the construction of the infirmary at the Hermitage and especially the chapel, but his love of poverty was greater. This room, so poor, was for him, and for that reason he wanted it and loved it in this condition.

When I got permission to repair the burnt section of the old building constructed by Fr Champagnat and his Brothers, the masons noticed the solidity of these walls without lime and they demolished barely a third of them. Old Pont, master mason, told me they could build on these old walls with confidence. That convinced me that, even if Fr Champagnat was thrifty, what he did was done well.

Before these repairs were carried out, an elderly gentleman of Lavalla passing by there to fulfil his Sunday duties, would always leave his stick in the burnt house and express to anyone willing to listen to him, the regret he had in seeing deserted a house built by a person, whose memory was so sacred to him.

Former possessions of the good Father . . . veneration of Brothers come from the Nord and the Midi.

The small boarding school of Lavalla houses Fr Champagnat's hat, his belt and a few other things he made use of. All of these were stored in a cupboard made, I'm told, by Fr. Champagnat himself.

When Brothers from the Nord or the Midi visit the Hermitage all of them, as you know, want to see the cradle of the Institute and they come up to Lavalla. I noticed that through pious thefts the Father's hat was losing its edges and growing smaller, his belt was getting shorter and that in a short period of time all was going to disappear. So I had all these objects put in a glass case which was locked and placed in his room.

I recall how pleased our dear Br John was when, before leaving to visit our Brothers in Oceania, I gave him a small piece of Fr Champagnat's belt. The fervour of these Brothers always edified me and showed clearly the deep conviction of these good confreres that Champagnat was a saint in paradise.

One day I came upon a Brother of the house with axe in hand ready to chop into pieces an old table with drawers which, in fact, was only good for firewood. On investigation it turned out to be the first table of the Brothers made by Fr Champagnat. I had it put in his room and it is rare if, on the occasion of a visit, the Brothers from the Nord and the Midi do not make some notch in it so to take away a little souvenir¹³³.

I remain, Reverend Br Superior, your humble and obedient servant.

Br Gentien

Izieux 24th March 1886

¹³³ It seems, rather, that this may have been a table made for the use of young boarders lodging at the house during winter. The existence of drawers for their provisions and the very short table legs, unsuitable for seating adults, point to this. The boarding section having been begun in 1822, it is quite possible that the table may originate from this time.

THE PORTRAIT OF CHAMPAGNAT BY RAVERY AT N.D. DE L'HERMITAGE



Jean Roche
fms

Number 29 of the *Marist Notebooks*, centred almost exclusively on the portraits of Marcellin Champagnat, is very interesting. André Lanfrey tells us very professionally about the portraits made by Ravery. Because he implicated me, and also on his own suggestion, I owe it to myself to give some explanations.

The origins of the three pictures painted by Ravery

The one kept in Rome (R) is the portrait delivered by Ravery, on 20 February 1841, to Br François, following the request made to the painter on 6 June 1840. It is considered as the official portrait.



Comparison of the three portraits.

Another portrait is at St-Genis (SG), commissioned by Br Benoît. We know its history from a circular of Br Louis-Marie of 31 May 1870. Very

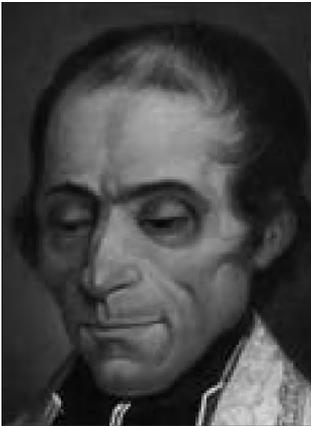
grateful to Marcellin Champagnat for his vocation, Br Benoît asked Ravery for a copy of the painting already made.

What about the one at l'Hermitage (H)?

Brother Jean Borne, economer of the house of N.D. de l'Hermitage, and a great artisan of the works done at the time of the Beatification, showed me this painting. He stressed that it came from the studio of Ravery. When his studio was liquidated, the picture was given to the house, either by Ravery himself – he died in 1868 – or by his heirs.

This picture was housed in a loft, on the 4th floor, on the Gier side. It was shown to Gérard Crépin, the creator of the historical and the frescoes of the common room. He realized immediately the historical interest of such a document and set it in a place of honour in the bedroom-chapel of Marcellin Champagnat.

These three portraits represent Champagnat, but many of the details are different. Let us look at some:

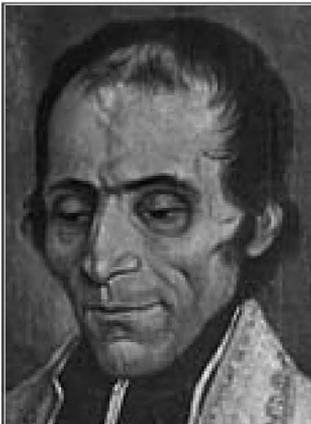


Head of the portrait in Rome

The rounded head is emphasized by a light nimbus. We admire the fineness of the hair. The pupils are fixed in the dull eyes. The design of the ear is sketchy.

No scar on the forehead.

Notice the angular fold of both sides of the rabat at neck level.



The head of the portrait at Saint-Genis

The head retains its corpse-like aspect. But it is highlighted by the clearer colours surrounding it. It is also more expressive, with its heightened colouring, larger forehead, more open eyes, the eye better outlined. The forehead is more realistic with its scars, one of them on the left eye.

The rabat has an angular fold only on the left side.



The head of the portrait at ND de l'Hermitage

The nimbus which surrounds the head is hardly visible on the original. It cannot be seen on a photo or in weak light. The head is more elongated. The eyes are quite hazy, the right eye almost faded. The ear is scarcely outlined. The scars on the eyebrows are perceptible. The locks of hair are not as fine as in **R** or **SG**.

As in the preceding picture, the rabat has a fold only on the left side.

Let us examine the crucifix Marcellin is holding in his hand :



The cross of the portrait in Rome

Only one remark: the body of Christ is very small on this long cross!



The cross of the portrait at Saint-Genis

The cross is a copy of the one given to the Brothers at the time of perpetual profession. It has kept its cord. But where then is it attached ?

Note the writing on the top of the cross which is not visible on the other two. The body of Christ is well dimensioned. Ravery surely painted it from a crucifix in his possession.



The cross of the portrait at ND de l'Hermitage

The contours of the cross are less distinct. The body of Christ is excessively long.

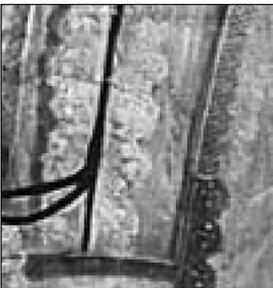
Let us look now at the sacerdotal vestments :



Detail of the portrait in Rome

We can admire the lace of the rochet and of the stole. They show all the painter's savoir faire.

Note the distance between the edge of the lace and the transversal braid : an element of a scallop and a half.



Detail of the portrait at Saint-Genis

The lace of the rochet (surplice) is less regular and that of the stole is summarily designed.

There again we see the distance between the edge of the lace and the transversal braid: a little more than two elements.



Detail of the portrait at ND de l'Hermitage

There, the painting is less fine. It requires an effort to see the lace which surrounds the stole.

There, too, we observe the distance between the edge of the lace and the transversal braid: a little more than two elements.



The hand deserves special attention

The hand of **H** is well drawn, slightly closed. It is identical to the one in **SG**, on the right. It is repeated in **R** but more open. The wrist is circled by lace.

The cross and the hand do not seem to fit together. They are not on the same axis, nor apparently in the same perspective.

One can conclude that the hand is a **creation** of Ravery.

Some conclusions

1. The three portraits, with some differences, have many common links : this justifies the attribution of **H** to Ravery.
2. The latter is previous to the other two. In fact, it is rougher, more imperfect in its making. To claim otherwise would be to say that Ravery painted it when his talent was on the decline. This is not the case. Did he not successfully paint, in 1860, the portrait of Br François which he signed, whereas the others are not ?

Moreover, the head of the Hermitage painting does not stand out from its background. This is an inad-

missible failing in a portrait. So, it cannot be claimed that Br François ordered it that way.

3. There is no choice but to state that Ravery made use of it as a the sketch for painting the **R** portrait and, several years later, the Saint-Genis one.

How Ravery proceeded

From the preceding observations, we can understand how Ravery went about his task.

Called to the Hermitage to paint the portrait of Marcellin Champagnat deceased the same morning, Ravery did not arrive with a canvas of 50x60 cm

set up on an easel. The size of the room, the incessant visits would not have allowed this. He must have had a short time to concentrate and draw on the paper some features of the face of Marcellin.

Ravery's work is difficult. The portrait is not his specialty. Moreover, he has to make lifelike the cadaverous face of Champagnat he has only had a quick look at. Under these conditions, a sketch was necessary.

He will apply himself to painting the head as faithfully as possible. As far as the vestment goes, the painter must borrow from a parish stole and surplice, pieces decorated with fine lace. Would he ask the Hermitage for them? It is doubtful because these pieces have much value.

The sketch finished, the painter undertakes the portrait. He straightens the head, gets rid of the scars and combs the hair. Then he dresses Marcellin with the borrowed vestments.

It will take him a lot of time to paint the lacework in detail.

After more than eight months, on 28 February 1841, the picture is delivered to Br François.

André Lanfrey speaks about the disappointment of the Brothers at the sight of the portrait (CM 29 p.12). For those who knew Marcellin, this face is still too marked by suffering and death. This too refined clothing does not suit Marcellin humble and hard-working, even if it reminds us of his priestly status.

Ravery has done his best, and we can know it pleased him to have given us a portrait of Marcellin – the only one before his burial – which more than one painter has subsequently made use of.

CONCLUSION

I think that what we have just seen justifies the reality of a sketch painted by Ravery prior to the official portrait. It helped him make the portrait commissioned by Br François. He kept it in his studio for eventual use. The opportunity was provided for him by the order of Br Benoît. Far from the constraints of an official portrait, this portrait will be more simple, less academic, with a more realistic head. So we can understand why Br Louis-Marie finds it 'more of a resemblance'.

One knows the fate of 'the sketch': given to l'Hermitage during the liquidation of Ravery's studio, it does not seem to have received any warmer a welcome than the official portrait. We find no mention of it in the list of relics (souvenirs) kept in the two rooms of the house of ND de l'Hermitage (Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage pendant son premier siècle 1825-1925 p.101-106). The document must have been left in the loft. The arrival of Gérard Crépin gave it new life.

PS This history of the portrait of Marcellin Champagnat reminds us of another very recent one. Longeon is the creator of two statues of Marcellin Champagnat, the one which dominates the chapel of Le Rosey at Marlies and the one at the entrance to the house of Lavalla.

To make one, the sculptor first made a life size plaster model. These models remained in his workshop at Saint-Etienne up to 2011. He proposed that the Brothers should recover them, otherwise they would be destroyed.

After consolidation, repairs and being covered with a coating of resin, the Lavalla model has been placed in the church of Pélussin, thus giving it a statue of Marcellin.

The model which served for the statue at le Rosey, after 56 years, has come to the house of Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, expecting, after the necessary attentions, to welcome visitors into the entrance hall.

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