

Ongoing Formation in the Institute during the 19th Century

The arduous path to implementing the plan for the Second Novitiate (1854 - 1897)

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Initial formation of the Brothers clearly rested on time in the novitiate, fixed theoretically at two years by the Prospectus of 1824. The 1837 Rule confirmed this regulation in these terms: “The novitiate lasts two years, for which four hundred francs is paid.” There were two phases: in the novitiate-house then in a school where the novice cooked and was an assistant teacher in the infants’ class. It was the Brother Director who took on the formation of his young and not-so-young assistants each day. He was helped and supervised in this task by the Founder and then by his successors at times such as, from 1819, the annual retreat¹, during visitations to communities, and by regular correspondence.

With the spread of the Congregation and the multiplying of schools, correspondence became the privileged means of contact between each Brother and his Superior. The 1837 Rule codified this as a practice at one and the same time administrative and religious: the Brothers in charge of a district comprising several schools would write every month, headmasters every two months, and “second-rank” Brothers every four months. Like many Congregations, the Institute was inspired by the Jesuit Constitutions, which were careful to protect the unity of a widely-dispersed body: “All local Superiors or Rectors will undertake correspondence with the Provincial [...] the Provincials doing the same with the General.”

We have hundreds of letters of direction of Brothers Jean-Baptiste, François, Louis-Marie, and their successors up to 1890². It’s an enormous dossier, still scarcely touched by researchers. So, around 1850 initial and ongoing formation of the Brothers rested principally on the following tripod: a novitiate and apostolic apprenticeship of more or less two years, an annual retreat, regular correspondence with the Assistant in charge of the Province. The writing of the Constitutions at the General Chapter of 1852 - 1854 would allow the introduction of a new element: the Second Novitiate.

¹ The Rule of 1837, which presents the Institute as an association rather than a Congregation, speaks only of monthly retreats and does not mention vows.

² The Decree *Quemadmodum* of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars at that time put a limit on the spiritual direction carried out by female and lay male Religious and this correspondence had to stop.

More than forty years to put a body on the plan for the Second Novitiate

The section of the Constitutions on “the means to be taken to preserve the Institute” proposed thirteen ways, of which no. 4 was: “the care to form the Novices well in the religious virtues and the duties of their state.”

“For that, they must be left for at least one year under the direction of the Master of Novices, completely applied to forming themselves in virtue and to laying down the foundations of their perfection before employing them in the Schools. Beyond that, they will later make a second Novitiate of six months to get to know more perfectly the duties of Religious Life, to immerse themselves in piety and to form themselves particularly in solid virtues.”

The Institute, then, did not envisage modifying its initial formation to any great extent, but rather vaguely proposed to strengthen its ongoing formation with the introduction of a custom of Jesuit origin: the Second Novitiate. The Superiors and capitulants were worried about the great fragility of vocations faced with a lengthy and insufficient formation, notably those of Directors. Unfortunately, the Institute was being overwhelmed by requests to found schools and did not have the material resources to put the plan into action. It would have to wait forty years to achieve that since it was on 24th October 1897 that the Marist chronology noted the inauguration of the Second Novitiate of six months in the retreat house of Saint Mary at St Genis-Laval, very close to the Mother House.

The Circular of 25th December 1897 (Chapter 9) gives an account of Reverend Brother Théophane’s talk in which he recalled the principal goals of the Constitutions: “to instruct you more perfectly in the duties of the Religious Life; to immerse you in piety and form you particularly in the solid virtues”. However, he said nothing about the story of ongoing formation between 1854 and 1897, mentioning only that “the creation of the Second Novitiate was for a long time the object of the wishes of the Major Superiors of the Institute”. We will see the many attempts which had taken place in the decades preceding the realisation of the six-month Second Novitiate. However, there are scarcely any traces left of these, particularly for the period 1854 - 1884.

Sketchy memories of the forerunners of the Second Novitiate prior to 1893

In the Acts of the 1893 General Chapter, we find, for 24th April 1893, the issue of the creation of the Second Novitiate clearly raised:

“The Brother Procurator General (Brother Césaire³) spoke of the considerable advantages which would result from the twofold formation of the Religious and the teacher if the six-month Second Novitiate prescribed by our Constitutions was put in place. He asked if we should not make a supreme effort for this aim.”

It is astonishing that such an effort should be proposed by an administrator. However, it was a way of telling the capitulants that the Institute had the material resources to set up this costly project. Also, Brother Césaire, coming from the Province of Beaucamp, was also the spokesman for Reverend Brother Théophane, former Assistant for the North, who wanted a prudent involvement in this sensitive topic.

The proposal was immediately given a favourable opinion and important historical perspective:

“The Brother First Assistant (Brother Philogone) replied that, by inserting the article into the Constitutions, the intention of the Superiors was certainly to proceed towards its execution. However, up until the present, the project had not been able to be completely realised and a month-long retreat had first been tried 25 or 30 years ago. The Regime had organised this retreat and the exercises were given by Brother Jean-Baptiste. A few Directors from the different Provinces had been invited to this retreat, which was run for three or four years. The Thirty-Day Retreat of St Ignatius then replaced this month-long retreat.”

This account is in essence correct and we are going to check it as best as we can. Thus, around 1863 - 1868, a series of month-long retreats had been directed by Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet. However, Brother Philogone perhaps confused this month-long retreat with the creation of that of the Regime recalled in the Annals of the Institute (1864 nos 19 - 20):

“Up to that time, the members of the Regime, the Procurator, the Secretary General and the Visitors had picked up what bits of the retreat they could, while being busy with drawing up accounts and correspondence, and with interviewing the retreatants. These bits of retreat could not have had sufficiently serious results: something was lacking. Happily, in 1864, the lack was filled with a special retreat for the members of the Administration. The first retreat took place from 4th to 11th August.”

Indeed, this “little retreat” for “the members of the Regime and the Brothers responsible with them for the administration of the different Provinces of the Institute” is mentioned in the

³ Born 1854, Victor Lesobre became a Brother in 1871. Prior to 1890, all his Marist life was lived in the Province of Beaucamp. He was Procurator General between 1890 and 1905. He then left the Institute, undoubtedly because of a disagreement over the Institute’s economic policy, and became a priest.

Circular of 16th July 1864. Nothing is said there about Brother Jean-Baptiste. Around 1864, then there would have been two types of retreat created: the one official, the other not.

The pioneers of the Third Year project under Brothers François and Louis-Marie

It was clearly earlier, from 1856, that a first attempt had been made to set up what the documents call “the Third Year”: an evident reference to the Jesuit tradition. The Minutes of the General Council meeting of 16th January 1856 give a fairly precise description of this month-long exercise:

“The arrival of the Brothers for the Third Year is set for 4th February and the opening of the exercises for the 6th of the same month, with closure on 8th March.⁴ The ordinary timetable of the house will be followed, except for these specially organised exercises:

9.30am: Visit to the Blessed Sacrament

11.00am: Meditation

2.00pm : Talk

4.00pm: Meditation

In the intervals between the exercises, each one will write an analysis of the chapter of the Rule assigned to him. This work will be checked at 6.30 in the evening. The places of recreation are the garden and the eastern corridors.”

These thirteen Brothers, of whom five were apparently Directors, had to spend around a month at l’Hermitage, in what appeared to be a course as much as a retreat, in which personal study of the very recent Rule played an important part. By employing the expression “Third Year”, the Superiors were referring to the final stage of Jesuit initiation which gave access to the status of Professed of the Four Vows and to the most senior posts in the Society. They undoubtedly wanted to imitate in a modest way this model through a retreat benefitting the Brothers judged suitable to make the Vow of Stability, instituted, not without fierce opposition, at the Chapter of 1852 - 1854, which had taken a decision reported in the Circular of 29th January 1856:

“until such times as there are fifty Brothers with the Vow of Stability, Brothers with five years of profession can be admitted to this vow, provided they have the necessary qualifications.”

It can be confirmed that all the Brothers invited to this Third Year, apart from two, had made their final vows at the latest by 1851 and were eligible for the Vow of Stability from 1856. Nevertheless, only the three Brothers who had ten years of profession were admitted to stability that year. The others only attained it from 1861 at the earliest. It is clear that the plan to rapidly

⁴ [Translator’s Note] There then follows a list of the names of thirteen attendees, along with the names of the Brothers who will replace them in their schools for the duration of the retreat.

increase the number of professed had been thwarted or slowed down. There was unease following the 1852 - 1854 Chapter about the proposal to create the Vow of Stability, about the very rapid expansion of the Institute, about the construction of the house at St Genis-Laval and about the progress in Rome in 1858 towards canonical recognition: all of that made the regular holding of the Third Year difficult, placed as it was in the charge of already-overburdened Superiors.

The Third Year in 1865 - 1867 according to the letters of the Superiors

It was only in 1865, in an undated letter, probably to the Superior of the Provincial House at Beaucamp, Brother Aidant, that Brother Louis-Marie set out his thinking and intentions around the formation of Brothers.

“My dear Brother,

I had intended to reply to you through a Circular to all the Novitiate Houses, as in the past few years; however, time is running out.[...] Fortunately, that did not cause any problems, and Brother Assistant has perfect knowledge of your business. Continue to have a good relationship with him and help him as best you can, within your house or in the Province as a whole.[...]

I have become more and more aware of the need for the whole Institute to strengthen the piety, zeal and fervour of all those who have the direction of Brothers and houses, whatever title and grade they may have. The Administrative Body’s retreat had an excellent effect: we will carry on with it. Like you, everyone was happy with it and asked that it should be made, if not an express rule, then a well-established custom.

We are also going to initiate our Third Year in the form of a retreat, and for a month, if only to more rapidly have our entire world spend time there. After the first month, there will then be five others, in line with needs and resources: we will begin with Directors, as far as possible, but I hope that all the professed will come to make the exercises, and even other Brothers, according to the circumstances. I am counting on you to pray, and have prayers said, for the success of this work, which will begin on 6th of next month.⁵ From the North, we are calling Brothers Alphonse, Gébuin and Candide.”

There is continuity with the 1856 project, but the link with the Vow of Stability is less clear. Brother Louis-Marie now envisages the entirety of the professed rather than a restricted elite. As for organising the Third Year in blocks of one month, that can only be a long-term plan. Moreover, the number of Brothers invited to each retreat remained low. If, as is supposed, just

⁵ The lack of a date on the letter does not allow us to know which month is intended; perhaps March or April.

like the North⁶, there were three or four Brothers from each Province, the number of retreatants would be around fifteen.

We find two letters of Brother Jean-Baptiste which allude to this Third Year, but he thinks of it as a remedy for Brothers in spiritual difficulty. On 15th December 1865 he writes to a clearly scrupulous Brother:

“Your Third Year will come next March, so prepare your conscience well for this time. It is very easy to resolve what concerns confession. You are wasting time doing a half-hour examination of conscience; five minutes is enough. Why torture yourself to find faults you have not committed.⁷”

Letter no 1356 of Brother Jean-Baptiste, from 22nd January 1869, addressed to a Brother who needed to rediscover a better religious spirit, would display the same pastoral concern: “If there is a Third Year, that would be useful, you should take part in it.”

What the General Council registers say

The General Council’s registers provide details on the organisation of this Third Year. On 16th February 1865, there is the statement: “Each Assistant will prepare his Brothers for the 2nd meeting of the Second Novitiate, the opening of which is set for 12th March.⁸” On 20th July 1865 it is necessary “To prepare a session of the Third Year for October and the lists of participants.” A first session would already have taken place in 1864 and the opening of a second in March 1865 was imminent and even a third session seemed to have been foreseen in October of the same year. Each Assistant was responsible for the recruitment of the professed or Directors of his Province. In the meeting of 21st March 1866, the Minutes had a change of the dates of the session: “In order not to miss the Holy Week services, we will only have the Brothers come for the Third Year on 7th April.”

The 1867 retreat was mentioned in the Life of Brother Louis-Marie published in 1907⁹, where Chapter 6 tells us that the Reverend Brother gave that year “which saw the last of these retreats” twenty talks “to too few privileged Brothers”. The author quotes lengthy extracts of the talks on the serious spirit, vocation... If this retreat had unfolded like the others in March-April, the Council Minutes of 4th May would look forward to the 1868 session:

⁶ Brother Alphonse, finally professed in 1844, never made the Vow of Stability; Brother Gébuin became Stable in 1865 and Brother Candide in 1867.

⁷ He adds an interesting quote from the Founder: “As for corporal penances, you can practise some of them. Father Champagnat used to say that a hair-shirt was not bad.”

⁸ However, on 22nd February: “The second meeting of the Third Year is put back until 23rd April, to last until 23rd May.”

⁹ Written by “A Brother of this Institute”, probably Brother Gerald.

“A sharing of the Third Year talks among the Assistants was proposed, but, in the interests of unity and liaising about teaching, the idea that they be given by just one or two prevailed. For this year, everyone was of the opinion that Brother Eubert (Assistant for St Paul Province) should give the majority of them.”

Had a retreat taken place in 1868? There is no indication in any of the documents consulted. As for the year 1869, letter 1356 from Brother Jean-Baptiste, already quoted above, casts some doubt: “If there is a Third Year, that would be useful, you should take part in it.” More probably, it was because the Regime was not successful in organising these annual sessions in 1868 - 1869, sessions which had no clear status and which constituted a sort of school for managers of the Institute, albeit unofficial and occasional.

The Third Year, sometimes called the Second Novitiate, was in operation from 1864 to 1867. Members of the Regime gave spiritually intense talks on Marist spiritual tradition. The war of 1870¹⁰, with its procession of troubles, contributed to the definitive ending of these irregular formation-sessions.

The Annals of the Institute: a source to be viewed with caution

Brother Avit, a former Visitor and Assistant, belatedly gave his own, personal account of the attempt at the Second Novitiate¹¹:

“We also omitted to note a trial of the Third Year, or Second Novitiate of six months duration, which had been carried out in 1866. The daily talks were given by the Reverend Brother or by one of the Assistants, in particular Brother Pascal. Brother Euthyme, at that time Secretary General, and several others gave lessons on subjects necessary for the advanced teaching certificate. About ten middle-aged Brothers had been called to it.”

Relying on this text, the Marist Chronology of 1916 noted for the year 1866: “First attempt at the six-month Second Novitiate”. This was not true, however. Nevertheless, Brother Avit links this trial to the clear failure of the formation.

“[28] One of them, Brother Anthime, surname Paradis¹², got scarcely any benefit from it because he left Marcigny where he had been Director; a little later, he went to Tarare where he attracted the widow he had his eye on as her son had been in his class, and he married her.”

¹⁰ [Translator’s Note] i.e. the war between France and Prussia.

¹¹ Annals of the Institute, 1868 nos 27 - 28. Edited 1884 - 1891.

¹² There is no record of this Brother in the Institute’s database.

The manuscript biography of Brother Jean-Bapiste, drawn up from 1917 by Brother Amphiloque, presented quite a different story on the 1866 Third Year by emphasising Brother Jean-Baptiste's role:

“The trial of the Third Year which had taken place in 1866, provided Brother Jean-Baptiste, who had been given special responsibility for it, one more occasion to show, in the face of duty and truth, his character's indomitable energy [...] he had to, on more than one occasion, stiffen himself against the rebellious wills and hard hearts of those who, through selfishness, were running towards the abyss [...].”

This is an allusion to the story of Brother Anthime, who “threw off his habit during the 1866 holidays and went off with her (a widow from Marcigny) to Tarare, where he is now a lay teacher.” It was also reported in the annals of the school at Marcigny.

“‘It's too late’, he said when receiving his summons. [...] he nevertheless went off, but with such dispositions that grace, which he had already abused so much, slid off him without any benefit to him and without leading to a happy result.”

Brother Amphiloque was influenced by the Annals, but had also made enquiries among the old Brothers. It is also possible that Brother Jean-Baptiste was interviewed as the retreat-giver in 1866. But he was already ill. He could not have intervened alone. Similar talks had been given by Brother Pascal. The lengthy biography of this Assistant, who died on 19th June 1867, made no mention of the story, even if it did quote from some of his talks, undoubtedly given on that occasion. We can see once more a concern for keeping, in this session and in the teaching given there, its unofficial, even confidential, character, which astonishes us.

As for Brother Avit, he is the only one to present this session as having a spiritual section and another, more professional, section, which was highly likely. However, contrary to the understanding he left, the Third Year did not last six months and it was not the only year in which the Third Year was held. It was the scandalous tale of Brother Anthime which had given an unsavoury flavour to this retreat and had contributed to its suppression.

The Second Novitiate project after 1870

Scarcely had things got back to normal after the 1870 war when Brother Louis-Marie, in a letter dated 8th January 1873, informed a Visitor of his intention to open a “special school” for teacher-training for which “all the Assistants themselves recognise the urgent need.”¹³ However,

¹³ This statement tends to confirm Brother Avit's suggestions when he speaks of a Second Novitiate delivering spiritual formation and secular training.

he wanted, “perhaps still more strongly” to bring back his “month-long retreats so strongly demanded by many of the Brothers, particularly those from distant Provinces, and so necessary for several who did not request them.” His intentions, ‘tho, do not seem to have come to anything; I found after that only a brief allusion to the Second Novitiate in a meeting of 2nd June 1876 in which the Regime discussed the period of novitiate which the Congregation of Religious wanted to last two years:

“The Council returned to Article 36¹⁴ and recognised that we could not have a two-year novitiate spent entirely in the novitiate-house. We would stick to a complete year of novitiate after the Taking of the Habit and the second year would be spent as a trial either in post or in a job in a house, with a second novitiate of six months prior to Final Profession.”

Even if expressed in passing, this idea of tying the Second Novitiate to Final Profession was new since, prior to 1870, ways were being sought to prepare professed Brothers for the Vow of Stability.

A second phase in ongoing formation: the Thirty-Day Retreat established in 1884

As I believe I have shown, Marist sources have few documents on the origins of the Second Novitiate prior to 1884, and those they have are difficult to interpret. The Circular of 24th June 1884 which set up the “retreat before profession” marked a real break since it no longer became a question of semi-private retreats at highly indeterminate intervals.

The reasons for strengthening formation are clear: the Republicans inaugurated an anti-Congregations policy through, among other things, the secularisation of schools (1881 - 1882). Worried about how to spiritually arm their Brothers, the Superiors contemplated “a supreme effort to bring into reality from this year the idea formed a long time ago of a month-long preparatory retreat for [final] profession.” So, “all the Brothers from the Provinces of France who have been admitted to profession would meet for a month in one of the Institute’s houses and make this important retreat.”

Brother Théophile confirmed that the measure was not entirely new: preparatory exercises prior to profession had taken place “these past two years before the retreat”, in 1882 - 1883 and had given satisfaction. Even “this retreat is not an innovation” since “it is a re-run of the retreat known as the ‘Third Year’ made in the past to great profit by those who had the advantage of taking part”. However, this was a false continuity since this Third Year had been for Brothers already professed. Whatever the case, the Circular of 18th January 1885 gave an account of the retreat preparatory to profession which had taken place in the boarding-school at La-Côte-Saint-

¹⁴ Of the draft Constitutions. The Superiors were in conflict with Rome on this topic. The definitive Constitutions would only come into operation in 1903.

André. Brother Romain, Director of the group of retreatants gave an enthusiastic account of what he called “the Thirty-Day Retreat”. It was really a typically Ignatian retreat, preached by Father Siveton SJ.

The Circular of 11th July 1885 listed two places for the retreat before profession: the boarding-school at La-Côte-Saint-André from 18th August to 15th September for Brothers from the Provinces of l’Hermitage, St-Paul and Aubenas and that of St Didier-sur-Chalaronne from 20th August to 15th September for Brothers of the other Provinces. Brother Théophile declared that “The work of the Thirty-Day Retreat preparatory to profession has definitely begun.” He explained why the Brothers were split up between two places: “it is necessary for the Father directing them to see the retreatants often [...] there are doubts to clarify, a direction to point out [...] so that perseverance may be assured.”

The aim of forming a limited elite for whom the Vow of Stability remained the symbol was not abandoned but supplanted by that of also having the Professed attain to a more solid religious life. The abandoning of the expression “Third Year” would be a symbol of this change. However, the Second Novitiate would have to wait because the Thirty-Day Retreat imposed its presence. Also, in agreeing to confide the privileged moments of spiritual direction to non-Marist specialists, the Superiors gave up in part - but provisionally - what they considered to be one of their essential prerogatives. This is why the question of the establishment of a Second Novitiate remained open in the minds of the Regime.

Restoration of the Third Year

The announcement that “The Third Year in which around forty Directors or Professed Brothers from the Provinces of the Centre or South (of France) could participate”, showed a will towards continuity with a previous epoch. It would take place from 25th August to 22nd September 1885 in the boarding-school of Bourg-de-Péage. In particular, the Superiors had already considered a lengthening of the time of this stage of formation since Brother Théophile spoke of preparing “a specifically-dedicated house”.

So, the years 1884 - 1885, at the start of Brother Théophile’s time as General, were marked by two major events concerning the ongoing formation of the Brothers: the Thirty-Day Retreat for future-professed and the Third Year, highly ambivalent in that it took up the tradition of the Third Year again, but in the form of the Ignatian Thirty-Day Retreat.

The Circular of 24th February 1886 spoke at length of “The Thirty-Day Retreat of 1885” beginning with these words, “The Thirty-Day Retreat known as the Third Year announced in our Circular of 11th July 1885 took place in Bourg-de-Péage from 23rd August to 30th September.” Sixty-six Brothers participated, “Directors or Professed from the five Provinces of the Centre or

South”¹⁵ (this would exclude the south-west of France and the Province of the North). The retreat was preached by Father Combaluzier, a very well-known Jesuit preacher, whom Brother Théophile had asked to point out the “spiritual needs” of the Brothers, that is, the points on which they needed to do better. The Circular quotes his very diplomatic letter in which he names five problematic areas. First of all, “the study of religion and spirituality” seems to him to be too superficial. To nourish their prayer-life, they should have “quite an abundance of well-chosen, solid and interesting books.” He then recommends “the flight from idleness”, with Directors having to keep their subordinates busy. As for “frequenting the sacraments”, it seemed to him “that several would too easily omit the confessions and communions of rule.”¹⁶ The fourth point concerned “the knowledge of their duties of state particularly in relation to poverty and the temporal administration of goods” which seemed to him to be insufficient. Finally, on the 5th point, a little more rigour was required for “relationships with people outside” and children.

These “simple indicators” of Father Combaluzier offered an altogether interesting view of the spiritual state of the most active part of the Institute by an outside specialist. Whatever it may be, the Thirty-Day Retreat henceforth had a double function: preparing for profession and a brief spiritual updating to older Brothers and those with responsibilities, whether they were Stable or just Professed.

The Thirty-Day Retreat up to 1897

As these retreats had, at that time, an official character, it is easy to follow, in the Circulars announcing the retreats, the yearly sessions, which were almost always held in boarding-schools for clearly practical reasons. Each year there were at least two centres for retreats preparing for profession: La Côte-Saint-André, St Didier-sur-Chalaronne, La Valla, Charly (a house for old Brothers). For Directors and Professed the retreat was often at Bourg-de-Péage. Only the Province of the North (with small numbers) occasionally brought together the two groups of retreatants. This was the case in Breteuil, near Paris, in 1891, the year of the foundation of the six-month Second Novitiate, when there would no longer be a retreat for Directors and Professed.

¹⁵ This number indicates the success of the initiative since Brother Théophile only estimated around forty Brothers in July 1885

¹⁶ [Translator’s Note] The point of this is that, at that time, Brothers were required to go to confession once a week. Generally, communion was received only once per week. Permission of the Director had to be sought for more frequent reception, and this was only given for special reasons. The priest is therefore saying that some Brothers would be happy not to go at all to confession or receive communion.

The plan for the Second Novitiate still threatened at the 1893 Chapter

The foundation of the Second Novitiate in 1897 was not, however, plain-sailing. At the beginning of this article I mentioned Brother Césaire's proposal to found it, but I have not yet mentioned the lively debate that provoked.

“A Member of the Chapter observed that the Thirty-Day Retreat, to which the same Brothers could be called several times, could take the place of the Second Novitiate, if difficult in practice. It was insisted upon again, and requested [...] that it would not be opportune to have that taken out of our Constitutions.”

Finally, “A Member of the Regime [...] expressed the wish that the article not be suppressed; but that we do whatever we can while waiting to implement it.” The Chapter rallied round this decision, which basically gave the Superiors a free hand. However, the foundation of the six-month Second Novitiate four years later was carried out without any clear support from the Chapter. It would allow the Institute to take up again, at a deep level, the Marist spiritual tradition which the works of Brother Jean-Baptiste had illustrated up to his death in 1872.

Brother Jean-Baptiste and the Third Year

One of the questions posed by this historical outline is the exact role played by each of the Superiors in the ongoing formation of the Brothers. We have recalled the teaching of Brother Pascal in 1866 and of Brother Louis-Marie in 1867, but my research has not allowed me to make any noticeable progress with the role of Brother Jean-Marie for the Third Year Brothers. I think, nevertheless, that a large number of his books result from his activities as a speaker, not only benefitting the Brothers of the south of France¹⁷ during the annual retreats but also the Brothers on a wider level. I am thinking in particular of two late works: firstly *The Sayings, Lessons and Opinions of the Venerable Father Champagnat*¹⁸, published in 1868 and which compiled a veritable summary of the Marist spiritual tradition, and particularly *The Good Superior or the qualities of a good Brother Director according to the spirit of Venerable Father Champagnat*¹⁹, published in 1869, which taught Brothers in charge of a community how to act as leaders, full of reasonableness and indulgence.

¹⁷ A manuscript entitled *The Directors' Manual* gives a glimpse of his talks, especially in Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux.

¹⁸ [Translator's Note] This book has gone through a number of translations into English, with variations on the title. It is probably better known in the English-speaking world under its later French title of *Avis, Leçons, Sentences* regardless of the title in English.

¹⁹ [Translator's Note] Another work with a number of translations into English, but better known in the English-speaking world under its shortened French title of *Le Bon Supérieur*.

The story of the plan for the Second Novitiate in the years 1854 - 1897 is underpinned by the Superiors' very clear awareness of the need to set up around them an intellectual and spiritual elite in spite of all the constraints imposed by very rapid growth and elementary initial formation. The plan for the Second Novitiate would therefore be carried out in four phases: from 1856 to 1870, intermittent organisation strictly tied to the Institute's government, in which Brother Jean-Baptiste played an important, but badly-understood part. During the years 1870 to 1884, the plan seemed to be at the point of death, but this could be illusory due to the scarcity of documents or (and) insufficient research. 1884 to 1897 was the time of the Thirty-Day Retreat for the young and not-so-young, perhaps with less care being taken to transmit Marist identity; and finally, from 1897, a true Second Novitiate, a permanent mode of transmission of the Institute's spiritual tradition. This innovation appears to have caused serious reservations in the body of the Institute, but the longevity of the six-month Second Novitiate is remarkable considering a particularly difficult 20th century for the Institute.
