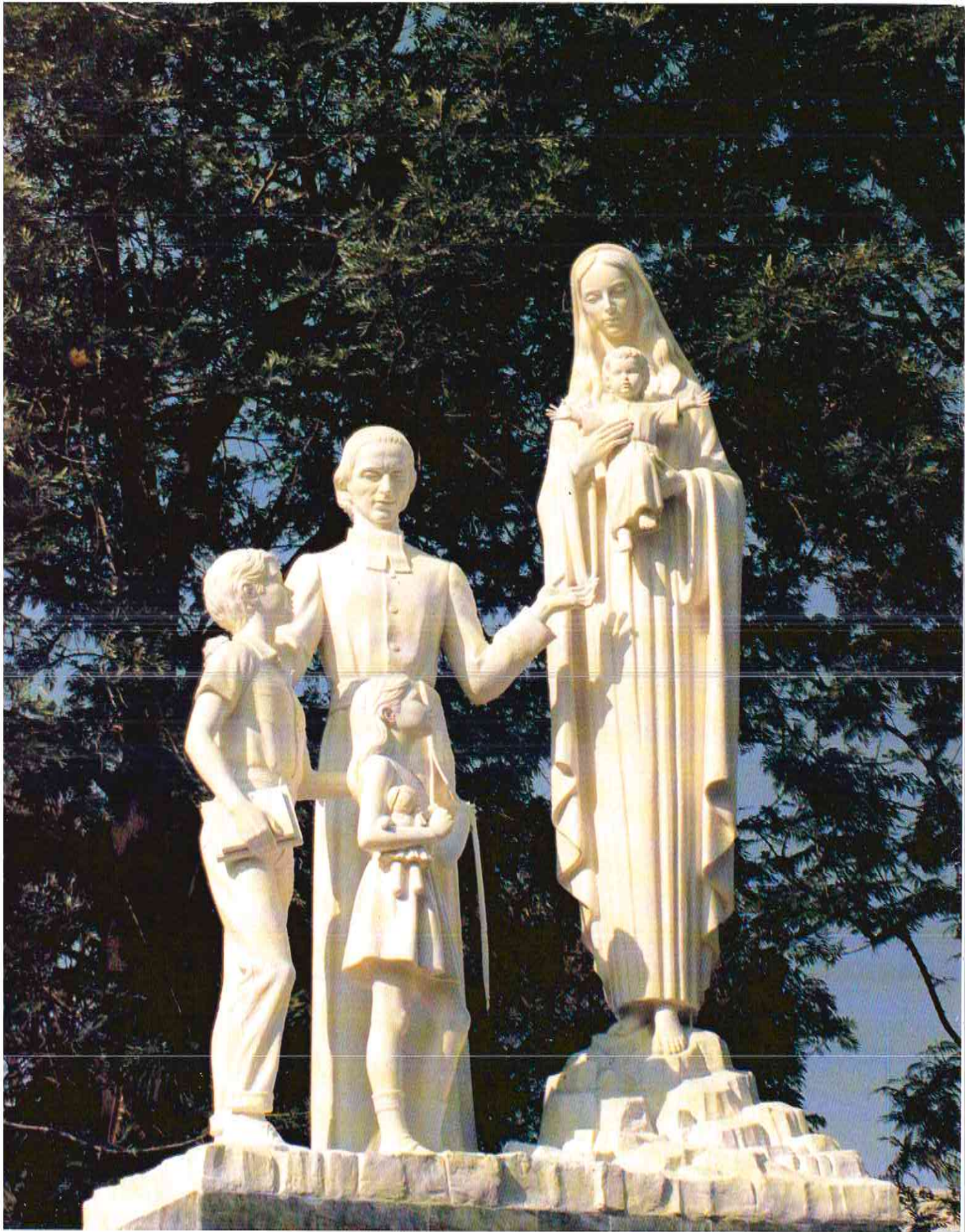


A Message

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS OF THE SCHOOLS



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Statue of Fr. Champagnat in the western Province of Mexico.

Editorial



Br. Charles Howard during the closing address of the Champagnat Year.

Excerpts from Bro. Charles' Homily on the occasion of the closing of the Champagnat Year (June 6, 1990)

Throughout the Marist world, special efforts were made to stress this year of grace. There were liturgical, cultural and social ceremonies, special publications, projects and exhibitions. Several provinces undertook new apostolates or seriously reexamined their apostolic priorities in order to accentuate the deepest meaning behind all the celebrations of Champagnat, of the person that he was, what he accomplished and what he left for us to do after him.

But the most meaningful events took place in the heart of each one of us, in our efforts to deepen our understanding of what Champagnat means both for our Institute and for each of us individually.

A great source of joy for all of us is the clearer realization that this gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the world is not limited to the Brothers. It is gratifying to see an increasing number of lay persons so eager to share our charism. I am always impressed by the young people in the various countries I have visited who show such enthusiasm for Marcellin Champagnat and who see him as someone not only to admire and pray to, but to imitate.

I am personally convinced that lay people, living the spirit and the spirituality of Marcellin will have much to share with us in the future, and also much to teach us. And we hope that the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family will give a special push to the spread of Marcellin's charism.

On another occasion, I mentioned the words of Bro. François to all the Brothers of the Institute, the day of Marcellin's death:

"It is up to us now to gather and to carry out faithfully his last and moving instructions; to make him come to life again in each of us, by imitating the virtues that we admired in him."

One very important aspect of Marcellin's spirituality was his family spirit. We know that this was a point to which he used to refer often during his conferences to the Brothers. He wanted their communities to resemble those of the early Christians, where all loved one another, shared with one another and prayed for one another. And further, he wanted this spirit to radiate around them to facilitate the unity of the human family. This is an important element of our mission in the Church and in the world.

This brotherly love and this family spirit strongly impressed all those who came into contact with Marcellin and his Brothers.

Now, I would like to present three reflections on the recreation in our own lives of this family spirit, this sense of communion with others. The first reflection concerns the entire human family, the union of all humanity; the second refers to the poor; and the third, to our prayer for one another.

“Experts in Communion”

In his encyclical, Sollicitudo rei socialis, Pope John Paul II very strongly stressed the fact that every man and every woman is a member of God’s family, and he developed the consequences deriving from that fact. I think that most of us recognize the need to develop this spirit of communion, this global family spirit, with a sense of responsibility towards others. We must find new and better ways of working and sharing together, to create a more just world.

The Church has called religious men and women “experts in communion”, persons whose work and whose life are consecrated to encouraging community among men and women, to promoting the sense of the human family, to spreading and living the Good News of our common brotherhood in God.

And we, Marist Brothers, with our strong tradition of family spirit inherited from Marcellin and our first Brothers, surely have to be experts in communion. Whether in our own communities, the community of the school —parents, teachers, students— or the community of the local parish, this expertise must burst forth in our lives; our obligation towards communion, our pledge to strengthen the bonds of family spirit wherever we are, in everything we do.

Preferential Love For the Poor

In the world family of men and women, there are some who have a especial claim on our love and our care. This appeal comes very clearly from the Gospel, from the Church, from the signs of the times in which we live and from our own tradition. It is a very clear call from the Holy Spirit for our time, and as I stressed Saturday night, as a call from the Holy Spirit, it is a gift; a gift which will bring us new life, provided we respond to it. But if we do not heed this call, it will not produce its fruit and stagnation will follow.

I believe that this is quite evident in our dear Institute, in the life of certain Brothers and of certain provinces. Quite frankly, one of these attitudes expresses fidelity to Jesus Christ; the other, infidelity. As Pope John Paul II said in Mexico, “I want to reaffirm that deep in its heart, the Church keeps a preferential love for the poor. This love —without wishing to be exclusive, since the Church offers universal salvation which embraces all people— is an unequivocal sign of the Church’s fidelity to Christ.”

Pray For One Another

My third point is that a true spirit of communion will express itself naturally in our prayer. Marcellin carried his Brothers in his heart and used to recommend them and their needs to God and to Mary. His letters bear witness to his unceasing prayer for them. Writing to directors, he often said: "Tell your Brothers that I love them as my children, that I think of them often, and that I pray without ceasing for them." And in his circulars to all the Brothers, he used expressions like: "My heart likes to recall your memory and to present you to the Lord at the holy altar," and, "You know that there is nothing for your good that I do not ask God for every day."

It is therefore a natural aspect of our family spirit, of the spirit of communion, that we pray, each in his own personal way, for those with whom we live and work —our confrères, our lay co-workers, our students, the parents of our students, our families and friends— and that we do this not only in a general way but individually and by name.

To lift up in this way before God every person and especially each Brother of our community should be a normal element of our spirituality.

Let us continue, then, to rejoice together in the gift God made to the Church in the person of Marcellin Champagnat. Let us thank God for this gift. And then, in a practical response, let us strive to imitate him more closely in promoting communion among all the sons and daughters of God, in our prayers for one another and in our love for the poor.

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Ceramic relief (Br. José Santamarta, Castilla).

MARIST THEMES

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INTERVIEW WITH FATHER JOHN COSTE, SM

Father John Coste, a Marist Father, is well known as one of the great historians of the Society of Mary. His volumes, "Origines Maristes", the fruit of long years of detailed work, have contributed to bringing the sources of Marist history much closer to us.

By formation a biblical scholar, Father Coste worked for one year as Postulator of Causes. He has remained most interested in the study of our origins. Having family background in the Lyons region, he feels very close to the spiritual milieu of the Marists, even through his own family's history. He does not conceal his satisfaction in affirming that Father Cholleton, spiritual director of Colin and Champagnat, was also spiritual director of his own great-great-grandfather.

The researches undertaken by Father Coste have already taken thirty-five years. Now, at sixty-four years of age, he is still a dynamic person, located in the heart of Rome, in an office loaded with books and papers. He carries on his research, he writes, he prepares conferences. To our questions he replied with force, enthusiasm, and conviction.

In your opinion, what are the most remarkable traits of Father Colin's personality?

I would say that Father Colin is, first of all, a great enthusiast, one of those people who build their whole life around a desired objective, around an idea. For him this objective was the Society of Mary. He was an activist, a leader, and that, perhaps, has not been given enough emphasis in the first biographies, where the authors stressed the hidden life... Certainly, he was a man of action.

On the other hand, he was undoubtedly a man of great sensitivity; one could almost say of hypersensitivity. This was caused by events and situations associated with his childhood, things which led him towards fear of making social contacts, things which prevented him from launching himself into affairs like Champagnat, his contemporary. This sensitivity enabled him to understand his times, a period which was very conscious of the position of the Catholic Church, and in which every imposition, every overstrong influence of the Church brought about a reaction. In brief, Colin, through his experiences, was able to understand the harm which one could do in seeking attention, prestige, publicity, etc. These early experiences helped him very much in conceiving a Marist manner of acting and of being present.

What are the influences, the circumstances of life which affected Colin the most?

Certainly, at the beginning, the French Revolution. It affected French villages and towns in different ways. Take, for example, the three villages of the Founders. We know the role played by Champagnat's father in the town Council at Marlhes. It was a very different situation at Chavoin's Coutouvre. St Bonnet-le-Troncy is perhaps one of the communes of the entire Lyons region where struggles were the most violent. There was opposition between two groups and John-Claude Colin's father was a member of the group that opposed the changes brought by the Revolution. As a result of the persecutions, he died from his sufferings. John-Claude was an orphan at the age of four. He had to hide in the woods. His mother died in the very same month as his father and the little boy was confided to the care of an old maid servant. All those incidents left their mark.



«Société de Marie», a wall painting of the Mother House.



Father Jean Coste, SM.

Afterwards, he went to study in a small seminary of the archdiocese of Lyons, a diocese with a strong Marial tradition. The first book he was given to read, a book which influenced his whole life, was entitled "Life Hidden in God"

I believe that these experiences came to influence Father Colin enormously when he became curate, and especially in his manner of carrying out his ministry.

Colin was curate at Cerdon, a missionary—in the sense of popular missions to the parishes—an educator at the college of Belley, a founder... Do you see an evolution in all these roles?

Certainly. It would be a pity for him if he had not passed through these different periods. He said that, from minor seminary days, he had had the idea of a Society consecrated to the Holy Virgin. It certainly was not something very definite. One could say that, at the major seminary, when Courville spoke of the Society, there was already a basic intuition which was ripening in Colin. Something had to be done. Mary has a role to play and the more Marial a person is the more he would respond to the needs of the times. That much intuition he already had within him when he left the major seminary, and it was going to grow and be nourished through his contact with different ministries.

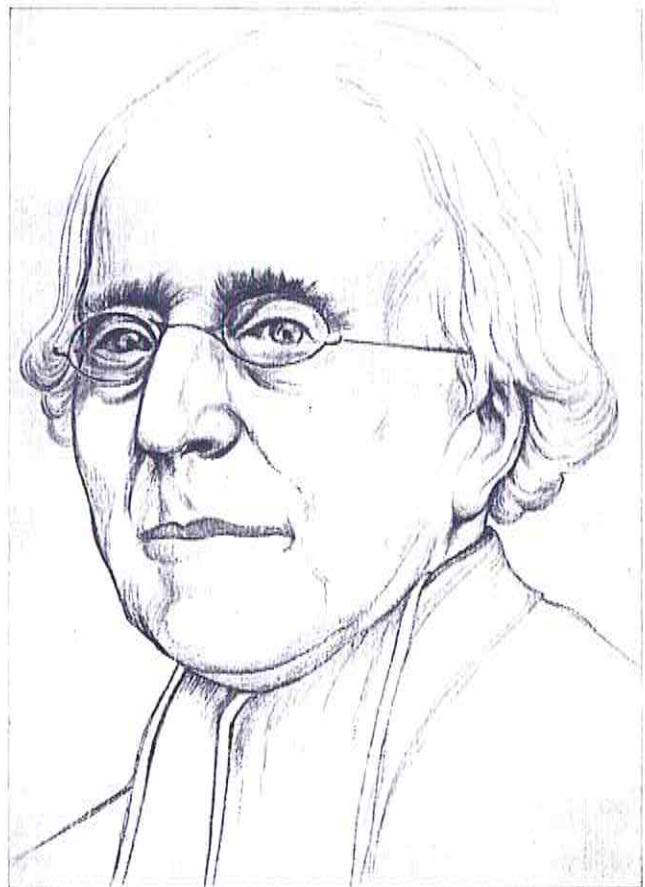
First of all as curate, but especially as inland missionary, he came to feel the need of a type of mission different from that being preached during the Restoration period. As an educator, he came to understand how all ways of being and of acting could be expressed in special ways. And I believe that his role as Founder, which crowned all his activities, came from the fact that he really based the Society, not simply on a vague idea, but on precise and solid foundations—there was a Rule of life and, when he sent the Fathers on mission, there were directives to be followed. He not only launched an idea, like Courville, but, as Founder, he also conveyed

a true spiritual and apostolic experience to those whom he gathered together for he himself had commenced by the practice of this ministry. It was a progressive enrichment.

What, then, would be the great lines of strength of the spirituality of Father Colin?

The word "spirituality" is, perhaps a difficult word here. I think that one would not find in Father Colin a spirituality that has been systematically outlined. Certainly, not as much as Father Chaminade has done. There was once a publication of a collection of Father Colin's thoughts, entitled "Spiritual Teaching". I think that the title is too strong, especially in that, with Colin, there is no elaborated, systematised doctrine, such as has been presented by many authors. There is no teaching from Colin that is distinct from a certain manner of being and of acting that belonged to his own times. Colin was a man who felt things; he was not an intellectual who would outline a doctrine for you.

One could say that his very heartfelt spirituality was existential. The fundamental expression always attached to the name of Colin, "Unknown and hidden in the world", is inseparable from his own existence. He had, as a boy, a natural tendency to hide himself in the woods, and, with the grace of God, he came to understand how that experience could lead to a manner of



Jean-Claude Colin, drawing of Mr. Hermans, Belgium.

living "unknown and hidden IN THE WORLD". He was to build everything around that particular concept. Under this expression we find, at one and the same time, both a deep personal experience and a very profound sense of God. It is a spirituality where what really counts is God, the God who sees in secret. It is not the impression that you give to others that counts, rather, it is the God who sees in you what is true, what is solid. The hidden virtues are the things that really count.

At the same time there is a manner of dealing with the world. Colin used to say: "Take care to approach humbly, ask the advice of the parish priest, act with much modesty, capture souls by submitting yourself to them." The expression "unknown and hidden" is therefore a personal experience, a true discovery of God, and, at the same time, a manner of being engaged in the apostolate. There is the central theme of his spirituality. It encapsulates everything about him in this regard.

Colin, yes... but Courveille, Champagnat, Chavoine were also there. What was the role of Colin in the foundation of the branch of Priests and in the whole assembly of the Society of Mary?

We know very well that Colin was not the one who gave the idea of the Society of Mary; he did not even give the name. He himself recognised this quite well. The name was given by Courveille, the first one to launch the idea. In spite of this, I have no scruple whatsoever in giving to Colin the title of Founder of the **Marist Fathers**, for it was he who put down the foundations which allowed for its establishment. It was Colin who gave us a structure, a spirit, a manner of acting. He is truly the Founder of the Marist Fathers, and I believe that no one will take this title from him.



Jeanne-Marie Chavoine, drawing of Mr. Hermans, Belgium.



Françoise Perroton, drawing of Mr. Hermans, Belgium.

As far as the **Marist Sisters** are concerned, the Holy See has accorded him the title of Co-Founder, and the Sisters have very much agreed with this. Actually, Mother Chavoine, in spite of the difficulties she had with him, in her very last letter, written several days before her death, said to Colin: "Father, finish our Rule. You alone know what the Blessed Virgin wants us to be". Right to the end she recognised in him the one who had the mission to tell the Sisters what they should be. He is therefore considered by Mother Chavoine as the Founder of the Marist Sisters.

As for the **Marist Brothers**, the case is quite different. You know very well that the idea of the Brothers came from Father Champagnat. Champagnat it was who kept on saying, "*We must have Brothers*". Colin was Champagnat's superior from as early as 1830, for, even though they were not yet religious, the future Marist priests recognised Colin as central superior, and from that time onwards we have quite a correspondence between Colin and Champagnat. But it was especially from 1836, when he was officially elected Superior of the priests' congregation in which Champagnat made his vows, that Colin became the point of reference, the point of obedience, for the others. We know that Father Champagnat strongly desired that his Testament be placed in the hands of Father Colin, and it is still in the archives of the Marist Fathers. But I do not believe that we could say any more than that concerning the role of Father Colin in regard to the Marist Brothers.

As for the **Missionary Sisters**, he was not the initiator of the movement. In regard to women, his vision was too limited for his daring to launch this idea of female missionaries. It can be said with certainty that the idea did not come from him. He did not put a stop to it, but he did not play a direct role at the beginning of the period that introduced the pioneer missionary women. On the other hand, they made much contact with him.

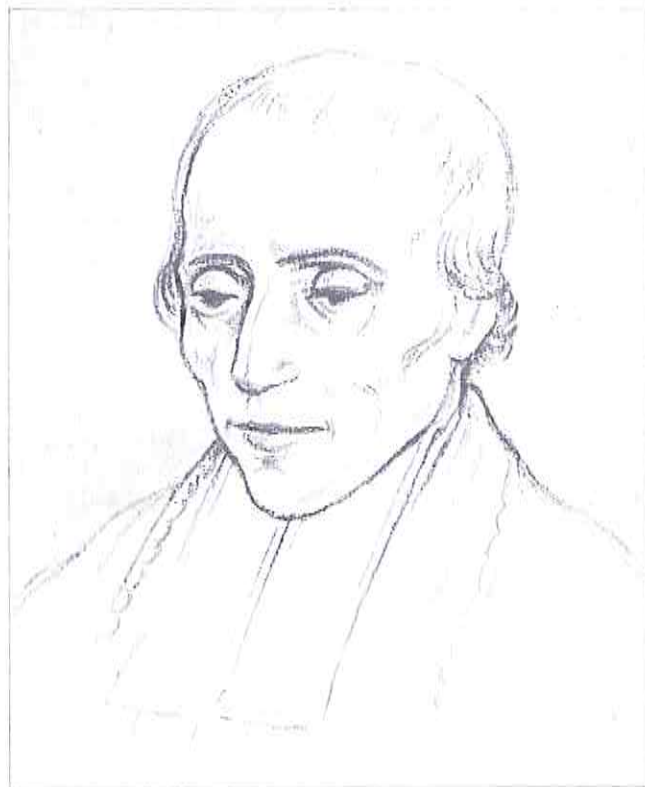
They were lay women who had no spiritual point of reference at all. It was through the Marist Fathers, then, that they came into indirect contact with the spirit of Father Colin. Sister Mary de la Croix, one of the most remarkable of the Missionary Sisters, lived the spirit of Father Colin in a very profound way, in so far as she could do so through Father Poupinel and others.

The most difficult to understand is the **Third Order**. The idea seems to have come from Courville — a tree with three branches. But those three branches are not the Fathers, the Brothers, and the Sisters, but the Fathers, the Sisters, and the Third Order. Among those who brought about the realisation of this idea, there was first of all Pompallier, who began the Tertiary Brothers, and then, in a special way, Father Eymard, Saint Peter Julian Eymard, who brought real organisation to the third Order. As for Colin, you could say that he did nothing in this regard. It was because of his temperament, which was a little timid, a little hesitant. For him, the launching of the Third Order movement was like a competition with the parishes, showing that we Marists also have our "troops"... and Colin did not like that idea. On the contrary, it was he who gave the vision of the Society as an anticipation of the People of God at the end of time, when Christians of all ages, male and female, from all conditions of life, would be united under the mantle of the Virgin Mary. It is this grand vision which nowadays gives the sense of the Third Order as a group rediscovering its inspiration in the first ideas of Colin.

Mary plays a particular role in the spirituality of Father Colin. What are the characteristics of his marial devotion?



Heart with a ribbon, with the formula of the consecration and the names of the first members of the Society of Mary.



Marcellin Champagnat, drawing of Mr. Hermans, Belgium.

Like Champagnat, Colin was formed in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation. Mary was a person to whom devotion was paid, she was worthy of all dignity and carried all privileges. This was a reaction against the Protestants, who wanted to deny the greatness of Mary. What is beautiful is that this entire generation does not step aside from the tradition, but takes a lead in promoting it.

For Colin, the work which perhaps influenced him most, giving him a certain manner of viewing Mary, was *"The Mystical City"*, by Mother Mary of Agreda. According to this book, the mystical city, that is to say, the Church, is Mary. There is therefore a direct link between Mary and the Church, between Mary and history. Mary intervenes in all epochs of history and will continue to intervene, especially at the end of time. Instead of there being a vertical devotion, in which you honour Mary and her privileges, you see in Mary a way of viewing the Church, of viewing history, and this process is going to continue to go on right to the end of time. The spirituality of Colin was to be very much marked by this concept.

I think that we could say that the most fundamental characteristic of Colin's Marial devotion is that Mary, rather than being an object of cult or of devotion, is a subject with whom you identify. That appears, even from a grammatical point of view, in the text of the Constitutions. Mary is rarely a complementary direct object (e.g., I love Mary, I pray Mary...); rather, she is a subject (e.g., she did, she said...). Colin was not a man who spoke of Mary as complementary object, or who dedicated many praises to her. Rather, he said:



Father Colin, above all, an enthusiast...

“We try to continue her, to make her present, to do what she has done”. In all circumstances, for Colin, Mary is clearly seen as subject, as acting.

In the early stages there were Priests working in the inland missions, others engaged in education, while still others departed for Polynesia. What was the point of view of Father Colin in regard to the work of the Priests?

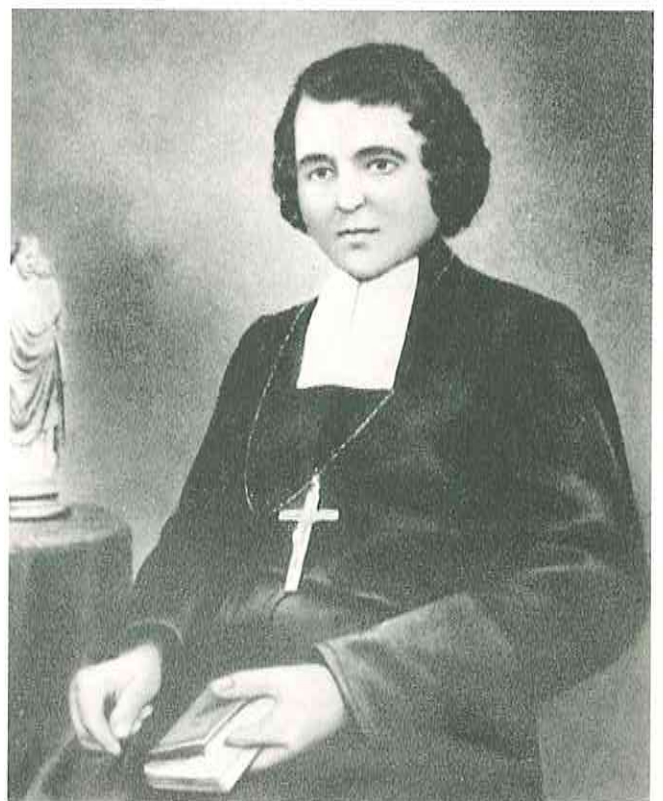
One thing is clear, the mission of the Society of Mary did not and does not consist of the desire to put one more pearl in the crown of the Mother of God. From major seminary times, we see the outlook of the first aspirants. It is Terrailon who tells us about it: “We sustained the fervour of our desires, sometimes by the thought that we were the first children of Mary, sometimes by the consideration of the great needs of the people.” There is, therefore, a double reference: Mary, for sure, for we belong to her; we must be like her. And then, the second point —there is the great need for the people. But it is always with the conviction that the two things form but one object. The more I belong to Mary, the more I have a Marial heart, then the more I shall respond to the needs of the times. Indeed, if I do and act like Mary, I shall no longer try to dominate, to take things by assault, to pursue prestige, to seek influence, but, contrariwise, I shall try to act in a modest and hidden fashion. The more one acts in this Marial manner, the more one responds to the needs of the

times. That is truly, I believe, the grand idea of Colin concerning the mission of the Society of Mary.

In conforming itself to Mary, the Society of Mary will help the Virgin to realise her wishes, for Colin was very strong on the idea that, now that we are approaching the end of time, Mary has a special mission. She who is present to the Church at all times is going to redouble her efforts at the end of time, for it is when a child is sick that the mother leans over the infant with even more love. Her Society is a means of allowing her to go everywhere —to bring back sinners, to show mercy, and the Society is to act in such a way that Mary can reach all her children, can reunite them, and can save them. The mission of the Society of Mary is therefore that of Mary herself. Moreover, as much for Champagnat as for Colin, in their correspondence of the early years, they do not speak so much of the “Society” of Mary, but of “the Work” of Mary. That is very beautiful concept —one doing what Mary wants one to do; that is what the work of Mary is all about. The word “Society” is a much more juridical expression.

In making the parallel between Colin and Champagnat, what are the points of convergence and divergence that you have noticed?

I believe that here it is not a question of taking precise matters in which, at definite times in their lives, they could have had their differences, could have had their difficulties. That would be a purely historical matter which I shall leave aside, to speak, rather, of their general attitudes.



Br. Marie Nizier, first missionary Brother sent to Oceania and companion to Father Chanel.



Saint Pierre Chanel, Marist Father, first martyr of Oceania.

In what concerns convergence, I say that both men had a similar faith in the work of Mary, in one sole work. Champagnat died with the idea that there was only one manifold Society of Mary. Colin and he were truly united in the same conviction: Mary wants something today; we are going to try to do it, both through the Brothers as through the Fathers, with the intention of consecrating one's whole life to Mary without reserve.

Moreover, they give Mary the same central place. Mary is seen from the fundamental Marist perspective of humility, simplicity, and modesty —those Marist virtues which have been more "canonised" by the Brothers, and which, for the Fathers, are perhaps less clearcut. But it is the same essential vision of Mary.

On the other hand, one very quickly feels that there are considerable differences, which come precisely from temperament. Both men are Founders who see Mary as a model of humility. But humility, for each of them, has very different meanings. For Colin, humility is tied to his temperament, to his somewhat negative experiences of life. He understood it in the sense of a hidden life, hidden, both before God and in the apostolate. Champagnat had a quite different temperament. From his childhood he learnt all the skills associated with farm life. His father exercised a full social and political life in the Commune. Champagnat oneself hidden simply for the joy of being so. His humility was very much closer to the truth. Champagnat faced the world four square; there was no question of keeping was a builder. He knew that a certain stone was good for a particular place in the wall, and that another stone was for the foundations. He knew how to put everything in its true place. I see the humility of Champagnat as something much truer. It was not a matter of hiding yourself or of calling yourself little, but, rather, of not believing yourself to be bigger than you really are, of putting yourself in the place where you must be and of doing what you must do.

Colin had a temperament which was much more visionary and utopian. He spoke about the end of time. Can you imagine Champagnat gathering the Brothers together to tell them: "Brothers, take care, the end of time is approaching." No, not at all. He spoke to them of things much simpler; there was no question of filling their heads with such esoteric topics.



*Futuna Island:
church built
on the spot
of the martyrdom
of Fr. Chanel.*

There are, therefore, from the point of view of temperament, great differences. But there are also other differences, which were to emerge from the very types of apostolic works which they were to undertake. Colin was a priest who founded a society of priests, and, as a consequence, he would concentrate much more on the pastoral aspects: the manner of conducting confessions, of dealing with souls, of preaching, etc.

Champagnat was taken up by his responsibility for the Brothers. Nowadays, Brothers carry out spiritual direction, provide spiritual animation of groups of young people, indeed, all the activities performed by the priests except for the consecration at the Mass. But, in Champagnat's time, the Brothers had to conduct school, live together in a very strong community life, do their work well. Therefore, Champagnat would speak to them of Mary, but more in this context, not in the same way as Colin. The type of work to which they devoted themselves helps us to understand their differences.

During the life of Father Champagnat there was already a collaboration between the Fathers and the Brothers. The most typical example is perhaps that of the Brothers who accompanied the Fathers to Polynesia. How do you see this collaboration from an historical point of view?

It is a matter made more complex by the existence of what we call the coadjutor Brothers. Colin had envisaged their existence from Cerdon days. He spoke about them in the first Rule of 1822. Nevertheless, they found their identity, they were distinguished from Champagnat's Brothers only very slowly. There was therefore a period of great uncertainty. Colin, at a given moment, said that there was only one type of Brother. When they were in the kitchen they were coadjutors, and when they were in the classroom, they were teachers. And they changed their costume according to their activity. Champagnat's Brothers did not understand this idea of changing costume, of being Marist Brothers for half the day. There certainly was confusion for some of the Brothers.



«Mary becomes a way of looking at the Church and the world.»

There were also many equivocal situations. Think, for instance, of the famous letter of Colin to Champagnat, asking him to send Brothers to Verdélais to do the cooking. Champagnat didn't want this, for there was too much need for the Brothers in the schools. Colin told him: *You have not understood the purpose of the Society; the purpose of the Brothers is to help the Fathers... Yes, for certain Brothers the aim was to help the Fathers, but the purpose of the teaching Brothers was to teach. We must not therefore idealise this collaboration at the beginning, for it*

was lived through with a lack of precision. A long period of time had to pass before they came to sort matters out clearly.

After 1841 an attempt was made to remove this ambiguous position. Colin spoke about a clear separation of the two branches and Co-adjutor Brothers began to be received into the Fathers' novitiate. The ambiguity, however, still remained, for, among those who left for the Missions and who did more than the simple manual service, there were those who were called Catechist Brothers, a title which better suited Father Champagnat's Brothers. The relationship between Fathers and Brothers in the apostolate, and especially in Oceania, was always very complex. Many aspects of it were clarified only towards the end of the last century.

In regard to the correspondence between Colin and Champagnat, have many letters been preserved? What does this correspondence reveal?

The great pity is that the letters of Father Champagnat have not been preserved. At a certain period of his life, Colin destroyed practically everything. A correspondence of which you have only one part is very imperfect; it is so necessary to know what Champagnat said to Colin. The letters reveal Colin's temperament, the breadth of his views in the manner in which he considered the whole Society, his impatience—he was a leader, and for him it was necessary that things were going well. At times this made him become too demanding, even unjust. We note this especially in his letters to Mother Chavoïn. There are several letters to her which are truly painful and unjust in her regard. With Champagnat, the same applies. The famous letter which Colin sent to Champagnat about Verdélais, —“*You have never understood the aim of the Society*”— was really somewhat exaggerated. The letters reveal the temperament of Colin very well; he was just like that.

On the other hand, the correspondence also reveals the difficulty which Colin always had in coming to a good understanding of the work

of the Brothers. I think that Colin was so much taken up by the first idea of a Society with three branches (Fathers, Sisters, Third Order) like the great Orders of times past, that he didn't see how to fit in the much repeated idea of Champagnat concerning the teaching Brothers. Something that is peculiar in the correspondence is that, when Colin speaks of the Sisters, he always says "our Sisters", and when he speaks of the Brothers, he says, "your Brothers". Never does he use the expression "our Brothers". Perhaps it was to avoid confusion with the Co-adjutor Brothers, but then he adds: "It's YOUR affair, it's YOU who have begun..." "The correspondence reveals the difficulty that Colin had in fully integrating this aspect into his spirituality.

The correspondence also reveals the esteem in which Colin held Champagnat. Despite the elements of misunderstanding, despite the moments of impatience or of injustice, it can be seen that Colin speaks of Champagnat in a manner quite different from that in which he speaks of Pompallier or others. For Colin, Champagnat is a true Marist. Colin presents a very positive impression of the Founder of the Brothers.

Can you give to Champagnat the title of co-Founder of the Marist Priests?

Certainly. On the 24th September, 1836, twenty Marist priests made their profession. Ten of them had been centred on Belley and ten on the Hermitage, around Champagnat. Because of that, and in spite of certain hesitations at the beginning about calling Champagnat a co-Founder, we find that, finally, Benedict XV officially gave him this title in a Pontifical document. In my own regard, when they started to prepare the readings from the breviary for the feast of Father Champagnat, I insisted that he be given the title "co-Founder", because I believe that this title is just.

Colin lived much longer than Father Champagnat. What were the relationship between Colin and the Brothers after the death of Champagnat?

When Champagnat died, the Brothers turned towards the Fathers. It was the Fathers who were going to protect them and assure their future. Colin had presided at the election of Brother François. Afterwards, a very significant event took place in 1842. Father Colin was going to leave for Rome to have the Constitutions approved. He convoked a General Chapter of the Fathers to speak to them about it. Then the Brothers delegated Brothers Jean-Baptiste and Louis-Marie, Assistants-General, to go to the Priests' Chapter. "We beg you", they said, "not to have your Constitutions approved independently of ours; we are the same congregation." The Fathers were extremely moved; Colin promised to concern himself with the matter. He went to Rome, where he spoke in these terms. It was then he came to realise that Rome did not want the project. Cardinal Castracane explained to him the inconveniences of this proposed union. Furthermore, Colin did not succeed in having the Constitutions approved, either.

After that, Brother François continued to submit to Father Colin, not the internal affairs of the Brothers' congregation, but the requests for foundations. He felt that these requests in some way involved the responsibility of Father Colin. At first Colin responded, but, little by little, he gave François to understand that it was he, François, who must make the decisions. From 1845 onwards it was François who took all responsibilities.

In precisely that same year, 1845, there was held a General Chapter of the Fathers which voted on a certain proposition: "Is it really necessary that the Superior General of the Fathers continue to regard himself as the Superior General of the Brothers and of the Sisters?" The reply was "No". It was most necessary that these congregation administer their own affairs. They voted simply that there be kept to the Superior General the "right of general supervision, whether of matters temporal or spiritual", which would permit him, as need arose, to recall to the Brothers the observance of the spirit of the Society. It was something somewhat vague, which in fact did not mean very much.

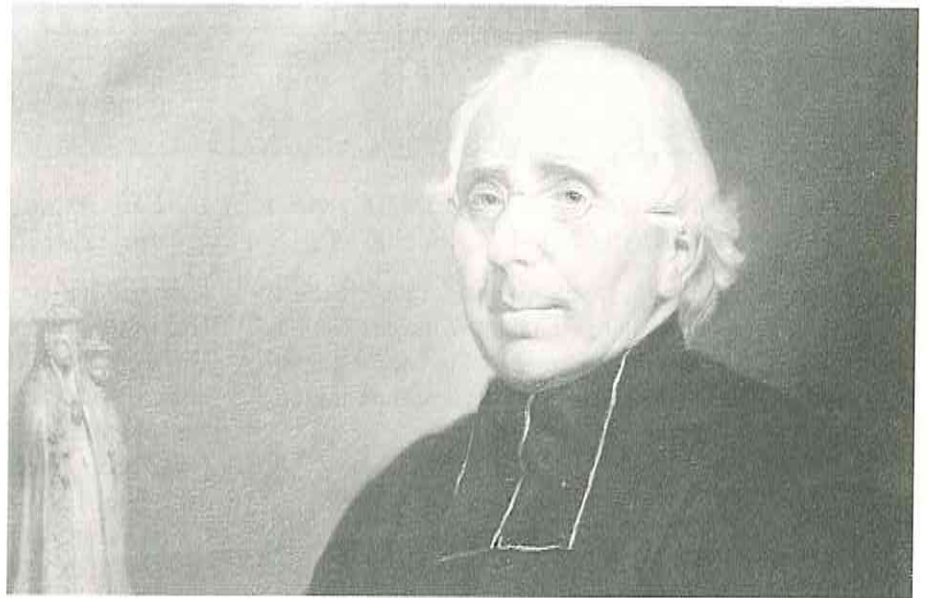
The decisive step was taken in 1852, at the time of the General Chapter which approved the Common Rules. Colin came to it and said, "We have grown up together, but Rome does not want it to continue. Now you are fully adult; take over your responsibilities. Perhaps that was the moment of official separation, but it was a separation without any rupture.

The final act was in 1862. On the 22nd April came the opening of the first session of the Fourth General Chapter, during which a project concerning the Constitutions was brought to the knowledge of the Brothers capitulants. The session was, necessarily, under the presidency of Reverend Father Favre, Superior General of the Marist Fathers, who assured the Chapter of his having accepted the presidency only "to save the Chapter from a President less friendly". A definitive edition of the Constitutions was made after careful analysis of, and voting for each article, followed by their approval by Cardinal de Bonald and Reverend Father Favre.

What is the image of Colin that emerges from your research?

Before 1955 there was, fundamentally, only one image of Colin. It was the picture painted by his first biographer, Father Jeantin, who was a remarkable man, but who had known Colin when the latter was more than seventy years of age. Of Colin, there was only the image of an old man who said: "Pay strict attention, you young ones. Concentrate on the essentials, on the hidden virtues, etc." Jeantin presents, therefore, a Founder who leads us back to essential things, but from an ascetic point of view, from a viewpoint which perhaps lacks the broad horizons. It is the image of a Father Colin who very strongly insists on the Nazareth idea, an idea which was assuming a great amount of importance in the Church at that particular time. It was a period close to the pontificate of Leo XIII, a period which put emphasis on asceticism, the hidden virtues, etc.

«Our researches have surely contributed to change the picture we had of Colin.»



Our studies... and I insist on saying "our", for I have always worked with Father Gaston Lessard... have first of all led to taking into consideration the Colin of the Generalate years. Colin was not always old! For eighteen years he was a man of extraordinary activity. Then we perceived, especially through reading the ten thousand pages of Father Mayet's memoirs, that, in conversations during his Generalate, Colin often spoke of the hidden life, not in the ascetical sense, but in the apostolic sense. The hidden life is also a manner of dealing with other people. There was a whole apostolic spirituality based on this idea of Mary in the Church "hidden and unknown". It was much more than simply the imitation of Nazareth. In that particular aspect we have certainly contributed to changing the image of Colin.

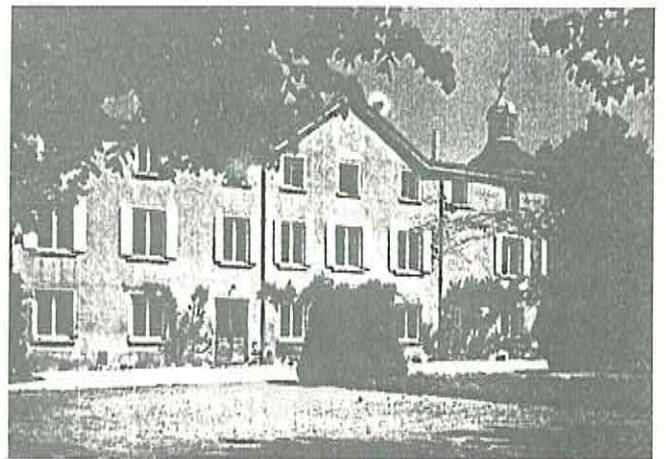
Then there was a stage further, when we rediscovered the Colin of the period before the Generalate —the Colin who was then a curate, who had not yet the responsibility of the Society, who was capable, so to speak, of dreaming. It is the picture of the Colin of the beginnings, Colin of the great theme concerning Mary —the Mother of Mercy who wishes to save all her children. "At the end of time there will be only one immense people of God." This seems to us to-day somewhat utopian. It is Colin who dreams and who helps us to enter into his viewpoint and thus to understand his later behaviour during his Generalate.

There, too, I have discovered another picture of Colin. Nowadays, in my researches, I am trying especially to discover the Colin of the final years, the Colin who, at first, was the most known. I am doing this to see how, in his last years, he recaptures his very first ideas —ideas which have run right through his life, which you find both at the beginning and at the end, and which, by that very fact, are the most characteristic. Starting from that point, I am going to try to reconstruct his spirituality. I believe that the true Colin must

combine these three images: the one who, at the beginning, dreamt a little, the one who, as General, succeeded in incarnating all of this into the way of life of a well established Society, and the one who, towards the end of his life, came back to certain essential points of the beginning. It is by unifying these three ages that we find the true Colin.

Is the cause of beatification of Father Colin making progress?

I am no longer the Postulator but, at this particular period, I do not think that much progress has been made. There are some very weighty problems. There are certain statements which Father Colin made towards the end of his life which do not quite correspond with reality. We prefer to await the progress of historical studies to clarify all that area, for it would be difficult to push the Cause at the present time.



La Neylière (France) place where F. Colin died and was buried.

MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT AND THE MARIST FATHERS

*(Message from the Rev. Edwin KEEL, SM, to all the Marist Fathers;
published in L'Étincelle Mariste, No. 167, October, 1989, pp. 8-9)*

May 20, 1989 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Marcellin Champagnat. I've often heard it said that it was strange that the teaching Marist Brothers had sometimes lost sight of the fact that their Founder was a Marist Father.

Whatever the truth of this observation, have we not ourselves at times forgotten that he is one of our confreres, that he labored hard for our congregation and that his contribution to our founding was in some way crucial?

Right up to his last breath (he died on June 6, 1840, less than four years after pronouncing his first vows in September, 1836), Champagnat clung tenaciously to the

original dream of a Marist family with several branches. He directed many candidates to the Marist Sisters. In a letter to Msgr. Devie, he supported Colin's early efforts to establish a Third Order at Belley at the beginning of the 1830's. In his spiritual testament, dictated only three weeks before his death, and when Marists still hoped to found a single congregation with several branches, Champagnat insisted on the unity of spirit, of heart, of will and of soul that should exist between the Fathers and the Brothers of the Society of Mary, under the governance of a single Superior General. This was only one year after Colin, in a rather caustic letter, had written to Champagnat that he had understood nothing of the real role of the Brothers, and that his teaching Brothers would do much more good looking after the temporal needs of the Fathers than teaching, at least in the cities where other means of forming young people already existed.

Champagnat seems to have accepted Colin's rebuke gracefully. His attachment to the Society of Mary had already survived great ordeals such as the meddling and defiance of Courville, the desertion of Terraillon when Champagnat had been sick unto death and had found himself in severe financial difficulties, a period of discouragement when the Society of priests did not seem willing to share his vision, and his problems with the community of priests of the diocese of Lyons living in Valbenoîte, who were aspiring to be Marists. Of the price he paid for this fidelity, he himself said, "*The Society of Brothers cannot be considered Mary's work by itself, but only as a branch of the Society itself. There is nothing I am not prepared to sacrifice to save Mary's work from shipwreck. I assure you that I believe more than ever that God wants this work.*"

Let us thank God for this persistence. We can surely wonder whether the Society of Mary would ever have seen the light of day, had not Champagnat pressed for the election of a Superior General in 1830, at a time when Colin was being excessively cautious and hesitant; if he had not kept alive in himself and in the diocese of Lyons the dream of a single Society with several branches; and if he had not formed a thriving group of Marist priests in this diocese, 8 or 9 of whom were to be among the first group of 20 to be professed in 1836.



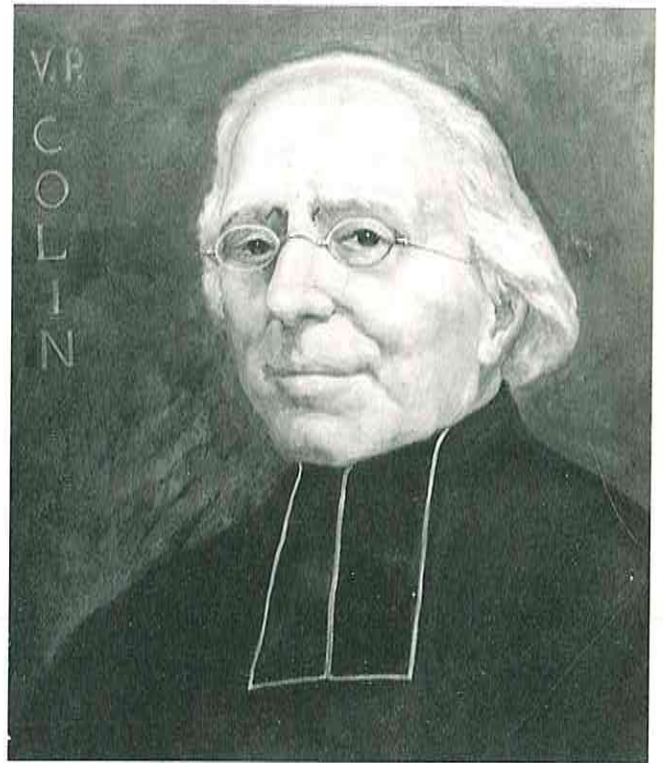
*Bronze statue of Fr. Champagnat
at the entrance of the Mother House.*

Marists who live the spiritual tradition of Colin often ask themselves if Champagnat did not develop among his Brothers and bequeath to them a different spiritual tradition. I do not see it this way. One of the problems is that Champagnat died 33 years before Colin's spirituality was expressed in a standard rule for Marists. Moreover, none of Champagnat's letters to Colin survived the flames to which Colin consigned most of the early Marist archives. A real loss, because, apart from his spiritual testament, it is mainly in his correspondence with Marists other than the Brothers, such as Chavoine and Pompallier, that we find in Champagnat the use of themes that we share, such as *Mary's work, a single heart and a single soul, Mary, founder and superior*, and the significance of the name of Mary given to the Society.

Nevertheless, the spirituality that Champagnat transmitted more directly to the Brothers seems quite different



*Father Champagnat with a few Brothers
(wall painting from one of the chapels of the Mother House).*



*Painting of Fr. Colin
(Mother House, corridor of the Superiors).*

from Colin's. But in the same way that Colin's tradition bears the mark of the more visionary and intuitive gifts of our Founder, so the Brothers have inherited from their Founder, whose transparent affection is evident in each of his letters or dealings with them, a more affective spirituality. The emphasis is on a filial relationship with Mary, and the Marist is placed in the orbit of the mutual love of Jesus and Mary.

I wonder whether some among us would not see in the insistence on this relationship a useful complement to the emphasis placed by Colin on our identifying with Mary. Whatever the case may be, the different approaches of Colin and Champagnat allow us to recall that the initial Marist inspiration, born of Courveille's experiences at le Puy and shared by those who made the promise of Fourvière in 1916, can bring to life more than one creative and fruitful expression.

As the Brothers celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Marcellin Champagnat, I hope that we also can rejoice and honor one of our confreres, whom the old office of Matins for his feast recognized as having labored *in union with Jean-Claude Colin* in the founding of our congregation.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS of the various branches of the Society of Mary

(From the book "Présences de Marie", by Father Antoine Forissier, SM.
Éditions Nouvelle Cité, 1990, pages 279 to 285.)

The first common characteristic is reference to Our Lady.

Mary in Nazareth for Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn; Mary in the Acts of the Apostles for Jean-Claude Colin who later will also consider her life in Nazareth; "the Holy Virgin" and "the Good Mother" for Marcellin Champagnat and Françoise Perroton, with the former insisting on her universal motherhood and the latter remembering more clearly Our Lady of Fourvière and the golden heart which carries her name. Whatever the mystery, the place, the title, contemplation of Mary and prayer lead all four to a number of similar attitudes which can be summarized under six headings.

1. APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Probably first is their *approach to education*, which included a *motherly spirit, patience and optimism*. What-



Fr. Antoine Forissier, SM.

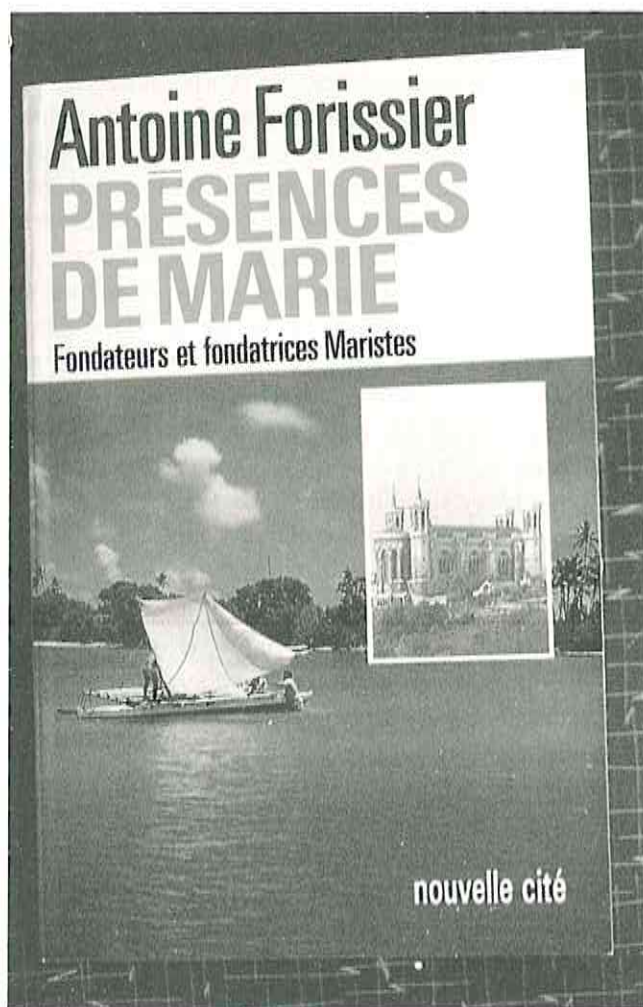
ever led them to it, they were all involved in education proper, but —may be because of a vocational bias— they tended to think that evangelization is an educative work which requires time, and therefore patience as well as some of that Christian concept of time that is called optimism. It involves believing that time is not a vacuum, that God can use time to act, that he chooses his own time for certain things. And optimistic patience, if we use the words together, is another name for hope.

But the most typical aspect of this approach is the motherly spirit, with its implication of a sense of the individual, a sense of the person. Each one is known for himself, by his name, with his own, unique history, personally loved by God —as Marcellin Champagnat was fond of saying. Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn, writing her "Cerdon Manuscript", easily recalls those stories of events, complete with dialogue. Neither Marcellin Champagnat nor Jean-Claude Colin, both priests who go to hear confessions through mountains and snow, need to remind themselves "that every single soul is itself one large parish". And what does one say of Françoise and her companions whose letters lead one to discover so clearly Princesses Amélie and Hortense as well as a whole host — Marcelline, Nominata, Anna, Sara, Marie-Françoise, Caroline, Scolastique, etc.

To personal attention, the motherly heart adds not only affection, but also positive pedagogy, concern to reveal and expand each one's good points, trust rather than its opposite, encouragement and refusal to give up.

2. FAMILY SPIRIT

Next is a *family spirit marked by frankness*. "God's family", "Mary's family", "united heart and soul": it shines at community level as a lived reality, notions of spiritual fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood become a reality well beyond the notions of social solidarity often advocated nowadays. A place where each feels favourably prejudged and accepted as he is, an "a priori" trust, a possibility of unreserved forgiveness, a gratefulness for one's aptitudes, progress and success. An ideal rather than a recipe, which can achieve the



Cover of the book.

quality of Pine Island's "Asile de Croix": the gratitude freely expressed at the start hints at the personal situations when a reciprocal love was the mainspring of growth, renewal, comfort, faith reborn, security, joy or happiness.

And great numbers crowd in: not only little girls and young women, but all those from the concentric circles radiating from the "family" created in children's homes to the sick who ask to join them. As in "Bon-Repos", in Brother Laurent's "Bessat", in the schools of Valbenoîte or La Seyne, in the centres of Sigave and Kolopelu, these community-families are not exclusive but open to all who come. The love-charity is neither possessive nor selective, it is for everyone. The work of the pioneer Sisters in Oceania gives the impression of a new "Acts of the Apostles" to whoever discovers it because this reality of the "open family" attracts hundreds of women and children. It is not the wonder of miracles that makes them come, but the simple wonder of love.

3. SIMPLICITY

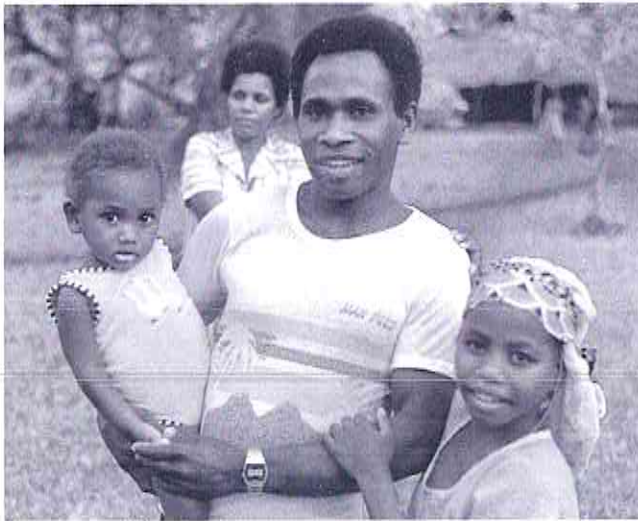
The third characteristic, ever evident in the early days of all four branches in what we now call *simplicity*. Brother Balko explains somewhere that calling simplicity a virtue was something new at the time, when the words "simple" and "simplicity" referred to a lack of education or even to a low degree of intelligence. In one of his quoted texts, Father Colin speaks out one day against the misinterpretation of this word, thus confirming this explanation.

Incidentally, the discovery of "simplicity as a virtue" comes more from the men than the women: it is insisted upon in Father Champagnat's and Father Colin's world. The reason was that this new virtue is usually expressed in manual work and humble services. At this period, some duties were strictly women's and no man could, for example, be a housekeeper or a cook. And even among men, some social levels could not, with dignity, be seen doing some jobs: the cleric who surprised Father Champagnat on scaffolding ingeniously



«Before all else, recourse to the Blessed Virgin»
(painting of Sister Maria V. Galen, Papua New Guinea).

bears that out. This is so true that Verlaine, many years later, wrote two decisive lines which express this new sensitivity as though it were a discovery, "La vie humble, aux travaux ennuyeux et faciles, est une oeuvre de prix qui veut beaucoup d'amour. (The simple life, with its boring and uncomplicated occupations, is a valuable work which requires a lot of love.) For a man and his wife, within the family, to share the work is one thing, but when the former refers to his spouse's work with scorn, such as "this is a woman's job", "that is women's work", this is something else.



«An educative standpoint marked with patience and optimism» (catechist of Vanuatu).

Simplicity sweeps away barriers. Ever since Jesus washed his disciples' feet, there are no longer any "servile occupations", there is no hierarchy of dignity in the deeds done by one or the other: good turns and love are the new criteria. The Little Brothers of Mary all know how to cook and do household work. One had to be very cautious before telling the priests-novices of the Fathers' Society that they would have to clean their own room, but clean it they did! Father Mayet noted with admiration that Father Colin himself joined the lay Brothers in endeavours that he found very humble. Of course, no one mentions such things where women are concerned: it is considered so perfectly normal for them to do it.

Simplicity at the same time affects language, relationships, the easy access and welcome, the smile, the unquestioning help, the less solemn and more relaxed way of fulfilling the functions life required of each one Priest, Sister, Brother and others.

4. THE HIDDEN LIFE

We need not be surprised that the fourth characteristic is common to all four, since they were in contact with each other: what we are talking about is this attitude which goes beyond simplicity, and which is called *discretion*, "the hidden life", "being unknown and hidden in this world" as Father Colin puts it, something that had already become a recognized saying in his days. Jean-Claude Colin passed it on to Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn in Cerdon's parish house, Father Eymard explained it to Françoise Perroton in the first letter he wrote to her, saying he had put her name down on his list of Third Order ladies, those pious women "who attempt to imitate Mary's hidden life". The letters of Marcellin Champagnat are not quite so clear.

But a theme mentioned is not necessarily lived. Many of Jean-Claude Colin's ideas about religious women were not introduced in Jeanne-Marie's own synthesis. The success of a theme depends greatly on the endorsement, conscious or not, one gives it. This theme is so clearly implied in Marcellin Champagnat's marital spirituality that there was no need to suggest it to him. It fits perfectly in Jeanne-Marie's lifestyle. As for Françoise, her "petty whim" leads her to compare what she calls her "feat" to the ideal of the hidden life. Her feat is to start on a new venture at the age of 49, but —it is a safe bet that she always suspected it— she must have been amused in her spiritual conversations with Our Lady when she discovered, lost in her two islands and her mission, that she deserved first prize, without competition, for the ideal of the hidden life. This point also is more clearly exemplified in the lives of the priests. Marcellin Champagnat eliminated anything that could go against it right from the start. In the name of his Christian concept of preferments. He considers his Brothers literally immersed in the world they must try to develop. The evangelical parable of the leaven in the dough describes his project exactly and the forms taken by this immersion, pragmatic and properly guided, are expressed explicitly in his rules and regulations: the living conditions, the work within the school or outside it, the caution when dealing with eminent persons, etc.

Father Colin, as previously mentioned, covers this theme through intuition and reflection, and shows how it can affect every aspect of personal, community and apostolic life. He is even conscious of the possibilities for renewal in the Church which, as it were, rest with him.

5. WORK AND HUMOUR

The fifth common characteristic is *work* and the *humour* that goes with it. Jeanne-Marie had made love of work part of the programme of Nazareth. The house may have been called "Bon Repos" (Pleasant Rest), but one had to be part of the community who used it and there was no shortage of work —too much of it sometimes according to Father Colin. He could have said the same thing to Father Champagnat whose work destroyed his health. To the end of his Generalate, he would never be himself a poor example in this. As for Françoise, we know that retirement age, when one normally quickly tires of children, did not mean a

slower peace to the active community life she led with all her charges.

Humour with work? Françoise repeats in all her letters that she has done nothing. For Father Colin and Father Champagnat, God and Mary have done everything, the only difference being in the words they use to say it. While Jeanne-Marie waits for Providence's hour as long as needed and even finds herself one day separated from her work, she never doubts that God and Mary will end up stronger than the deviations that crop up and, since they started something through her, they will manage without her the corrections which become necessary.



«Of one heart and one soul: The Marist Family» (Fathers, Sisters and Brothers in Great Britain).



*Common celebration
of the four
General Councils.*

Humour in this context means an attitude of mind which acknowledges a distinction between one's actions and the power God gives them. One must take action of course, do the best one can, but with trust in God who reaches the hearts through this action. An attitude of calmness in success or failure. Failure, which has become sacrifice since the sacrifice of the cross, may contribute even more effectively to the mission than success. An attitude of freedom where the person acting no longer clutters up his action, no longer confuses it with himself. And in the more ordinary periods of time, an attitude of relaxation and humour which is well expressed in Joseph Folliet's beatitude, "Blessed are those who can make fun of themselves, for they haven't stopped laughing."

6. THE PRESENCE OF GOD

This humour leads to the sixth common characteristic: *the consciousness of God's presence, more or less permanent, which is the base of a spirituality of action.* We elaborated on this when speaking of Father Colin. Action is no mere output of energy. Lived with God before it starts, while it goes on and when it is over, it becomes a presence of the whole being in God's sight, a complete expression of love of God and neighbour, a source of personal holiness quite different from activism and restlessness, it is based and grounded, in a manner of speaking, in the power of the Spirit which Saint Paul mentions often.

*Love of work, Marist
characteristic feature
(novices of Save, Rwanda).*



The origin of the different branches is stamped with this insistence on the spiritual life, a life of faith and prayer, on frequent references to Our Lady and heaven, stating and repeating that our very being and our actions are thus filled not only with light, strength and peace, but also with a joy deeper than any trial, with a transforming love. This recurs in Jeanne-Marie Chavoin and Marie Jotillon, in Marcellin Champagnat and Gabriel Rivat who commented on the regulations while

the founder was still living, in Jean-Claude Colin with particular frequency in the Constitutions and the Spiritual Talks. It forms the very soul of their teaching. As for Françoise, she remains discreet. One gets the impression that the confidences we come across in her letters have been written without her thinking about it. One has to wait for the work of Croix to read on this basic theme texts that are the equal of those of the other leaders, but with a stress very much her own.



*Presence of God, the soul of every active life
(chapel of the Marist residence of Los Molinos, Madrid).*

INTERVIEW WITH FR. ALBERT DIANI

Vicar General of the Marist Fathers

Please, Father, do you mind telling us the number of members of the Society and the countries in which you work?

As of January 1, 1990, the number of Fathers and Brothers in the Society of Mary was 1639. There are 15 provinces, 4 missionary districts under the General Administration and 2 missionary regions tied to individual provinces. The countries in which we work are: Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, Japan, Philippines, U.S.A., Canada, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, France, England, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Norway, Senegal, Cameroon and Burundi.

What is the present state of vocations?

In general they are plentiful in third world countries, like Mexico, Peru, the countries of Africa and Oceania, but they are scarce in first-world countries of North America, Europe and the Pacific. Italy has recently experienced an increase especially due to involvement of Italian Marists in the neo-catechumenate movement. We have greatly appreciated the aid of the Marist Brothers in directing candidates to us in Zaire and Cameroon.

As of January 1, 1990, there were seventy-five post-profession seminarians in the whole Society. This is down from ninety-five just two years earlier. Our hope is that especially through the strong rise of vocations in developing countries, the membership of the Congregation will stop declining and at least stabilize. (I wonder if the Marist Brothers have as yet reached such a point of stabilization). There is a problem of discernment of vocations where they are plentiful and of stimulating interest in the Marist project in industrialized lands.



Fr. Albert Diani, from the United States, Vicar General, SM.

What are the key elements of the spirituality of the Marist Fathers?

The Marist Fathers derive their spirituality especially from the thoughts and actions of their founder and first superior general, Jean-Claude Colin. He lived for 85 years and his ideas and actions are preserved by Fr. Mayet who left a copious diary detailing the sayings and action of Colin during his generalate from 1836 to 1854.

Is this spirituality very much under Mary's inspiration?

For us Mary is less an object of devotion than a subject alongside whom we stand and with whom we try to identify in spirit and in her continuing work on behalf of the people of God.

Colin was convinced that Mary had manifested her wish that a congregation be established bearing her name. Partly through this congregation, she would be the support of

the Church of modern times, as she was for the Church at the beginnings. Through her hidden and prayerful presence, she was the support of the apostles. She would be such also for today's apostles, and imitating her hidden way, they would be a source of grace for the Church, helping it develop into a Marian people of God. The new Marian church would be a church of mercy, modelled on Mary, Mother of Mercy. It would avoid triumphalism and all semblance of greed and hunger for power and prestige. It would identify itself with the poor and the simple, and through them come to a deeper understanding of the gospel.

Twenty-five years after the Council, how has the Congregation experienced this time of renewal?

Our experience has been similar to that of most apostolic religious congregations. New Constitutions have been written and approved. We have shifted toward a more decentralized government and decisions are taken in a more democratic and participative way. We depend less on structures and more on working things out interpersonally. We try to be more concerned for a person's personal talent and career and attempt to integrate this into the total project of the Society or the province. In apostolates we have tended to move away from formal education in schools toward different types of education in parishes or retreat houses. Some have moved into direct work with the poor. We have tried to evaluate apostolates in order to take up everywhere a more missionary stance of evangelization.

The negative aspect of this move away from clear-cut specific goals

—e.g. Marists are mainly for formal education in schools or foreign missions— there is also less of the *esprit de corps* which comes from having such common goals. There is a felt-need for new ways of agreeing on concrete goals. There is a need for focus in the Society at large and in individual provinces. This need shows up in the call at every level for some form of mission statement. Where the goals are clear, as in the third world, vocations are plentiful. Where they are ambiguous, vocations are scarce.

How do you see the apostolic mission of the Marist Fathers at present?

I do not think there can be a general answer to this question, for example, to say simply that the mission is that of peace and justice, or education in colleges, etc.

I think that the Fathers in each country or area should together repeatedly ask themselves the question: What is the greatest need of the people of God in our country or area? They should keep asking this objective question over and over again until they come to some consensus on an answer. Specific apostolic decisions will then follow as the night the day.

What should be the criteria for your apostolic priorities?

There are general Marist criteria to aid us in making choices about apostolates, for example, we should work closely with the local church; our work should be of a type which will transform the Church by bringing to it a Marian consciousness; we should work not alone but out of communities, we should everywhere stress work with the poor and disadvantaged, etc. However, apostolic decisions cannot remain at this level of vagueness. There is need for a focus, for the setting of priorities. These will not be the same everywhere. There is a need to identify definite goals in each geographical area. We need to analyze concretely



Fr. John Jago, Australian, Superior General of the Marist Fathers.

the spiritual and material needs of a certain place and seek an answer to those needs in much theological and pastoral reflection.

In the final analysis, Marist should be willing to put aside undue consideration for their own career and devote their energies to common goals, but this will not happen until the goals become much clearer, and are accepted as goals by the majority. What we are looking for is the re-forging of the *esprit de corps* which was present when formal education in schools and work in overseas' missions and home mission were clearly our principal goals.

Now the goals will not be so clear and simple. They will be new goals relevant to a particular geographical or cultural area. Briefly stated: we are looking for a corporate response to the new signs of the times as they call to us in different ways in different parts of the world.

The danger is that in writing mission statements we begin from the wrong end. I mean that we begin by asking: what kind of things would I (or we) like to do? An then project this as needs upon a situation. This is the danger in a culture bent upon self-fulfillment. We need to be careful that people are basically fulfilled and not frustrated. But there is also another extreme that we become too self-involved and keep coiling about ourselves instead of becoming more objective and asking what our situation is calling us to do? What are the crying needs of the age?

What are the great challenges of the congregation at this time?

The great challenges are for growth in terms of quantity of personnel and quality of community life and ministry. And these needs are connected. We need vocations in order to have any future. But we will not gain vocations until the quality of our life together improves and especially until those who enter have a sense that we are moving together toward a mission which is clear and which clearly is a religious mission.

The move toward pluralism has been refreshing but also debilitating. The next move has to be toward some form of consensus, a consensus arrived at not from above by authoritarian fiat, but from below by dialogue and mutual reflection. But the direction must also be religious and Christian. By this I mean that we must take care not to substitute other things for religion, such things as sociology, psychology, or even morality conceived totally in a humanistic way. All of these are important tools but they cannot be allowed to hide the fact that we are religious involved in a religious task.



Emblem of the Society of Mary.



Mother House of the Marist Fathers in Rome (rear view).

And the religious task is in some way to bring people into contact with the transcendent God and through this to an ardent love of one's brothers and sisters.

What motives do you have for hope?

The forging of mission statements at the level of general and provincial chapters gives me hope. It shows that at least on the intellectual level there is an awareness of a need to beget a unity and a corps. The great challenge now is to transfer this conviction from the mind to the heart. There is need for conversion of hearts and for a re-discovery of a will to sacrifice on behalf of goals which a community deems important. Our deepest hope is in Mary, whom the Constitutions of all the congregations of the Marist Family agree to call "our first and perpetual superior" and whom the Marist Brothers are fond of referring to as their "ordinary resource".

What are the priorities of the General Council?

These can be summarized as follows:

1. A re-capturing of the original Marist vision through serious courses and programs in ongoing Marist formation.

2. Conversion of hearts through prayer and reflection on Marist spirituality.
3. A greater emphasis on a missionary thrust in all of our ministries, with a special emphasis on the poor and disenfranchised.
4. A closer bonding and caring at the level of community life.
5. A greater poverty of life-style.
6. Inviting the laity concretely to take up ministry as is their duty and privilege through baptism. This can be done by sharing with them our Marist spirituality.

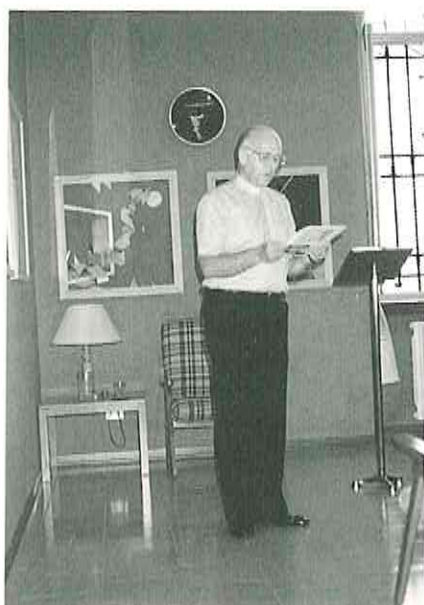
What does the celebration of the bi-centenary of Colin signify for you?

Frankly, the Marist Fathers are not as excited by the Colin celebration as they might be. Why? I think it is fair to say that they are not as attached in a personal way to Fr. Colin as the members of the other Marist congregations are to their founder or foundress. Many of us have noticed the great affection which Marist Brothers exhibit toward Champagnat and noted that our relationship to Colin is different. This is probably due to the fact that Champagnat was a straightforward, uncomplex, and sincere person, a person who evidently loved the brothers and evoked love from them. Colin was a much more complex person, a person of many warts, but who also had deep spiritual insights. An insightful person is respected but not necessarily loved or followed, unless he happens at the same time to be also lovable!

I wonder whether part of the success of the Marist Brothers over the years in the area of vocations does not have something to do with their relationship to their founder. They find it easy to present Champagnat to prospective candidates as a living person, as a model for life; the Marist Fathers prefer to speak to



Celebration of the bicentenary of Fr. Colin in the chapel of the Mother House.



Intervention of Fr. John Jago during the bicentenary celebration.



Three Marist Major Superiors Generals: Missionary Sisters, Brothers and Fathers.

candidates more in terms of Colin's vision and ideas.

For me personally the bi-centenary is a hermeneutical moment. It is an occasion for us living in the present to listen to the past in an effort to think out a future, a future faithful to the deepest inspirations of Colin and the early Marists. It is a time to listen once again to the same call of Mary which Colin heard, and to respond in new ways. Colin set in place structures which gave expression to the Marist vision for his day; our task is to create the structures of community life and apostolate which bring the vision to bear on our new world and age.

How do you see the relationship of fathers-sisters-brothers at present and what are your hopes for the future?

I think that relationships have improved immensely. There is much more contact and mutual help. The history of our life together has not always been smooth. Fr. Colin himself, did not always treat the other founders kindly. The Fathers have not always been free of the clericalism of the clergy and have at times considered being priests more important than being Marist. But in my opinion

things have now changed for the better. There is certainly far more concrete cooperation in the first world and in the third world. The General Councils meet together regularly. There are joint efforts in apostolate. A book "Présences de Marie" by Fr. Antoine Forissier has appeared juxtaposing the lives of the three founders and the original SSM pioneer. There is a growing interest in Marist spirituality as understood by each of the congregations. Several other congregations have been formed by the SSM sisters in Oceania. There is talk of forming another female congregation following the spirituality of Fr. Champagnat. There is great interest on the part of each

congregation concerning the spread of our spirituality to the laity. Many initiatives are being tried. I think that all these are signs of hope.

I think it will be important to draw out differences as well as similarities in the way the different congregations have developed this spirituality. It may point to depths or to a higher unity that we have imagined to be there. It may lead to mutual enrichment and ultimately to greater sharing in apostolates together and with the laity.

May Mary our Mother aid us as we identify with her in bringing about a Marian church of compassion and mercy. ■



Common celebration of the four general Councils.

INTERVIEW WITH FR. ROBERT BARBER, SM

Robert Barber, 42, is a Marist Father from Canberra, Australia. In 1987 he was appointed chaplain of the Marist International Centre in Nairobi. His three years working hand by hand with the Brothers has been a beautiful experience and a proof that co-operation is more than merely a word. Recently his contract has been renewed for three more years.

Bob, what kind of contacts have you had with the Marist Brothers before coming here?

When my family moved to Newcastle in 1962 I was fortunate to get a place in the Brothers' school at Hamilton. I spent five and a half very happy years there. It was during my time at Hamilton that the Brothers prompted me to consider a vocation and it was the Brothers who directed me to the Marist Fathers.

In 1971-72, when I had to do some secular/professional studies, during my seminary course Brothers Kieran and Cornelius got me a place in C.C.E. (Catholic College of Education), the newly amalgated Teachers Training College of the Marist and De la Salle Brothers. During those two years I was always welcome at Champagnat College, Dundas, and encouraged to feel at home.

While working in Marist Fathers' schools in Australia, between 1977 and 1988, I had occasional contacts with Brothers' schools nearby, first Campbelltown and then Lismore in New South Wales.

How did you come to Nairobi?

Confreres knowing my interest in the mission and my deep regard for the Brothers, directed me to a request that appeared in INTERCOM, our newsletter from the General House, for a chaplain to the new Marist International post-novitiate formation house in Nairobi. I showed some interest. Word of it got to my Provincial, and next thing I knew Bro. Charles was ringing me up and welcoming me aboard. I have not regretted my move for a minute.

What are your main activities at the M.I.C.?

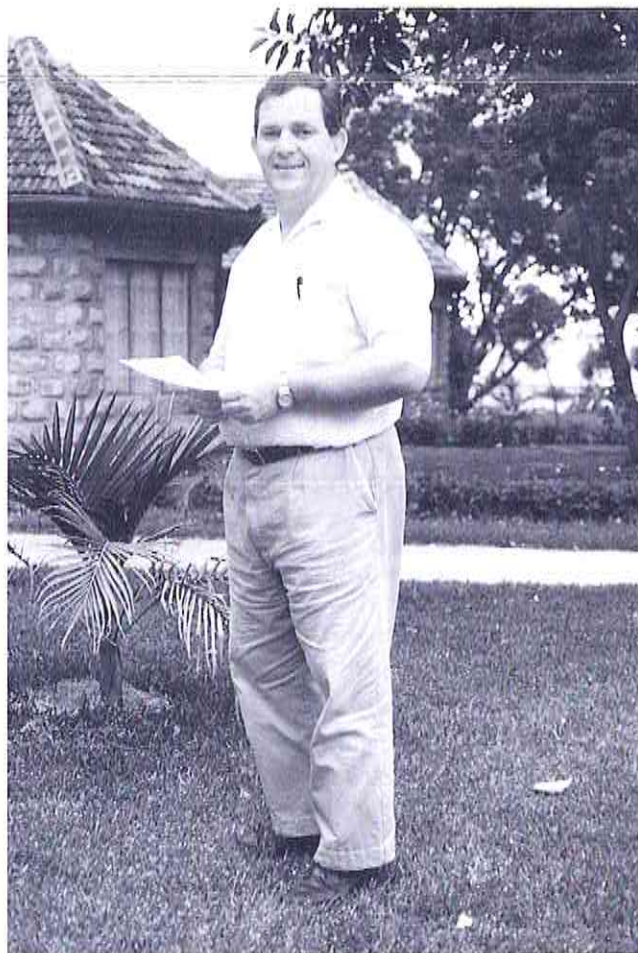
As chaplain I help out with some priestly duties (e.g. Mass each day). As part of the accompaniment team I have a group of young Brothers to accompany. I do a little teaching, mainly English to French-speaking Brothers. I supervise the kitchen at M.I.C. and do a few odd jobs here and there.

Would you share with us your experience of living with the Marist Brothers in Nairobi?

It has been a wonderful experience. I once lived for six weeks with Marist Brothers in Australia and I knew before coming that I would appreciate it very much. A family atmosphere marks the Centre in Nairobi. Living with the Brothers has helped me to develop a deeper love of Mary and her way of doing things.

Are there some other Marist Fathers in Africa?

Under the General Administration the Marist Fathers officially opened their District of Africa in April 1989, in French-speaking West Africa. The District is growing very rapidly. Already there is a good group of young men in formation. A recent newsletter from the Gen-



«My life experience with the Brothers has been very exciting.»

eral House mentioned that it was the Marist Brothers of Zaire who had sent quite a number of candidates to the novitiate in Senegal. It is a great hope for the Marist Fathers that this project will be a wonderful new shoot taking root in the Marist World.

Which are the characteristics of Colin and Champagnat you consider more relevant today?

Champagnat and Colin were both visionary men, very determined and courageous. What they achieved in establishing two of the Marist Congregations was really remarkable. There were so many problems before them and it was always a struggle, yet they remained committed to their Marist vision and calling. What we are called to do today in re-founding our Congregations is difficult but no harder than the work before Colin and Champagnat —surely it must be significantly easier! There is much the sons of Colin and Champagnat can do today in passing on to our lay brethren the charism and tradition of Mary's spirit as found in our respective Institutes. What we need is a big dose of hope.



The Sons of Colin and Champagnat can achieve a lot of good even to-day.

MARIST SISTERS: PAST AND PRESENT

I. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON JEANNE-MARIE CHAVOIN (Mère Saint-Joseph)

The Foundress of the Marist Sisters, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, was born on 29th August, 1786 at Coutouvre (Loire, France). After a childhood, rather hidden and unknown, she appeared when she was 16 years old, as helper to her Parish Priest, Fr. Guillermet.

At the time, she developed a real and deep friendship with a girl of her age called Marie Jotillon. Both belonged to an association founded by a young seminarian, Fr. Lefranc, called the "Association of Divine Love".

In 1810, she came to know Fr. Pierre Colin, new curate in the parish where he stayed four years. With the help of Marie Jotillon, she directed retreats at the "Chartreux" of Lyons and paid frequent visits to the nearby convent of "Pradines".

His Eminence, Cardinal Fesch, friend of the convent, strongly invited Jeanne-Marie to join a convent already well established, but she preferred to wait patiently for a clear manifestation of God's will. Other appealing offers came to her to join a group of teachers at the house of "Belleville" but she refused, although she allowed Marie Jotillon to part from her. In 1816, F. Lefranc, who remained the spiritual director of Jeanne-Marie, told her



Jeanne-Marie Chavoin (M. St.-Joseph),
foundress of the Marist Sisters.

these prophetic words: "You are not meant to join a well established community but rather to start one."

In fact, towards the end of 1817, called to Cerdon to start the female branch of the Society of Mary, she went there accompanied by Marie Jotillon, boarded for a short while with the Sisters of Saint-Joseph, and then after sending Marie Jotillon to Saint Clair, came back to the rectory as a housekeeper and shared the concerns of Fr. Colin for the project of the Society of Mary. Jeanne-Marie herself undertook a

few trips for the future of the Society either in Lyons or in Le Puy. Moreover, she had his nephews come and live with her.

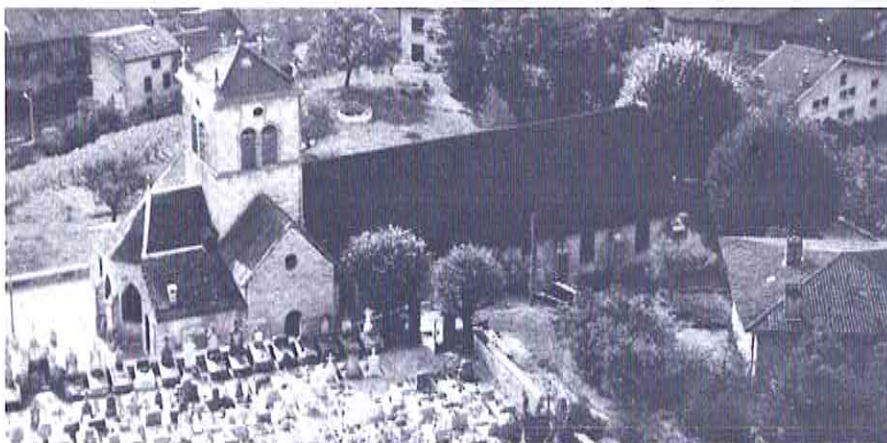
When Bishop Devie came in, she received permission to join Marie Jotillon, who came from Saint Clair, and then together with Marie Gardet they established themselves at Cerdon. On the 6th of June, 1824, the first benediction of a temporary religious habit took place. This was followed on 8th December of the same year, by the first official taking of the religious habit. On the same day, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin was elected Superior General with the name of Mère Saint-Joseph.

One year and a half had passed at Cerdon, when the community moved to Belley, to occupy the country house of the bishop, called Bon Repos. This house remained the only one of the congregation up to 1835. In November of the same year, the first foundation took place at Meximieux and in the following year, 1836, two other foundations came along, one in Lyons and the other at Sainte Foy. Then, Mère Saint-Joseph had to cope with a congregation in full expansion and present in two different dioceses. All this at the time when Fr. Colin, who had failed to obtain the approbation from Rome for the Society of Mary, planned to make the Marist Sisters a diocesan congregation.

Unfortunately, this situation led both Mère Saint Joseph and Fr. Colin into a period of painful misunderstandings that finally brought about the resignation of Mère Saint Joseph as Superior General. Mère Saint Ambroise was elected to replace her.

Mère Saint Joseph withdrew to Meximieux and then, in 1855, to Jarnosse, near Coutouvre, where she started a parochial organisation. She died there on 30th June, 1858.

Lettres de M. J. B. Champagnat,
vol 2, RÉPERTOIRES, Rome



Parish church of Cerdon, cradle of the Marist Sisters.

II. INTERVIEW WITH THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF MARIST SISTERS

What has been the contribution of Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn to the Society of Mary?

Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn joined fully the founding scheme of Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, mainly reproducing in her own life the *unknown and hidden life of Nazareth*, simply because she was already, unknowingly, living this situation.

At Coutouvre, then at Cerdon and Belley, and more specifically at Jarnosse, she spent the last years of her life teaching her Sisters how to reproduce in their own lives the virtues of Mary at Nazareth.

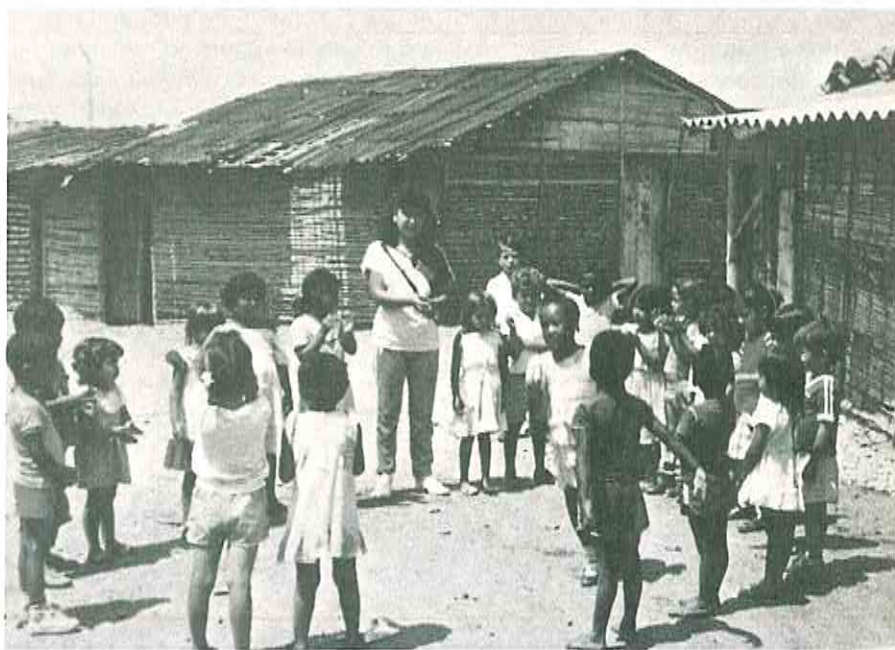
An ordinary woman of a village, ever available to the needs of the people, discreet but efficient, humble and hidden, pondering all these things in her heart, opened to the guidance of the Spirit who, one day, would guide her towards the Society of Mary, she waited patiently for God's call. In times of trials, she proved to be patient and courageous and she eventually offered to the Society of Mary her own life marked with her "Marist spirit".

Her way of understanding *hidden and unknown* in no way matched the one Fr. Colin had already designed for her and her Sisters, i.e. to live behind high walls and closed doors. On the contrary, Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn wanted to be *like the yeast in the dough*, or like Jesus, Mary and Joseph at Nazareth. In other words, a simple family among the other families of the village, but how much more efficient for the spreading of the Kingdom!

It has been written that Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn was a very sensitive and practical woman. Did it influence her way of understanding the religious life of the Marist Sisters?

Jeanne-Marie shared with Mary her ability to sense and see the needs of others and to quietly know what to do and where to turn for help without panicking.

She knew that she did not want religious life as she knew it from tradition and from those around her. Her



A young Colombian Aspirant started a kindergarten.

view was prophetic, of an active praying presence among the people, especially among those in greatest need. It was her great sorrow and courageously borne frustration, that Fr. Colin was afraid to allow the sisters to develop in this way.

Has Fr. Colin had an influence on Marist Sisters' spirituality?

Jean-Claude Colin imparted and bequeathed to the Marist Sisters his own inestimable vision of the Marist vocation, and his sense of identity with Mary:

Let them constantly try to breathe her spirit...

They must think like Mary, judge like Mary, feel and act like Mary in all things...



In Fiji, a Sister attending to a sick person.

As I said before, Colin's view of the meaning of *hidden and unknown* was different from Jeanne-Marie's. His view did prevail for the first several generations of Marist Sisters.

Were there other different points of view from Fr. Colin's?

1. *The name.* After the beginning he did not want the Sisters known as Marist Sisters, but as Sisters of the Holy Name of Mary. Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn did not make a fuss about this at the time, but quietly bided her time and in the end prevailed to be known as Marist Sisters.
2. *Style of life.* Jeanne-Marie did not want semi-enclosure as Colin wanted for the Sisters. She was prepared to take risks and to go among the needy wherever they were to be found, in inner city or in remote country areas.
3. *Conflicts of authority.* There were no real conflicts of authority. As Jeanne-Marie always recognized Jean-Claude Colin as being the only recipient of Mary's wishes for her Society. She always submitted, though often with great pain and inner disagreement. But she was patient and loyal and strong.

4. *Constitutions.* Jeanne-Marie did write a Rule of sorts for the Sisters because of Colin's long delay in giving the Sisters a Rule. But she always saw this as Colin's privilege and task, and she never ceased reminding him until in the end he did write it.

Which are the main features of your Marian spirituality, at the beginning and nowadays?

We do not have special Marian devotions, but a constant awareness

of Mary. Love of the poor and yearning to help the deprived, whether the deprivation was material, spiritual or educational. Both worked among their own neighbouring poor from a very young age. Both worked to help earn a living for their Brothers and Sisters. Both had great organizing ability. Both loved building.

Champagnat was present at the first profession of Marist Sisters in 1826. He sent several vocations to the Sisters in the early days, and he shared with Jeanne-Marie her view of the

the Marist apostolate and the way Champagnat saw it. But since the time of our second Superior General — Mother Ambrose— the Sisters did give priority to education as the chief means of helping the little ones to rise and develop. This tendency and view have changed since our return to our sources in 1954. The sharing of the original Marist vision would therefore be the main thing that the Brothers and Sisters have in common, but this is enough to make them real brothers and sisters in the love of Mary.



A friendly appearance among old people.



Together to share hopes and projects.

of being called to make Mary present in our world. To be her discreet and compassionate presence. There is a greater awareness growing today of the MERCY aspect of Mary's presence. Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn left with us, and it remains today, a great devotion to the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Jeanne-Marie understood and lived out the spirit of Nazareth. She said: *"Our Congregation must have its own spirit, which is a love of poverty, simplicity and love of work."*

How were the relations between Champagnat and Chavoïn?

They had a lot in common, in their family, their upbringing, their level of education and their inspiration. Love

dispositions necessary in young girls aspiring to be Marist religious, and the way they should be formed (cfr. *Letter from Champagnat*). They both had a vision of the Marist project, and committed themselves totally to it. Both met with misunderstanding where they might have expected support and encouragement. Both loved the spirit of the Society -unity, simplicity, work, prayer. Both desired to commit their lives to God as Mary had done.

Do you see common points between Marist Brothers and Marist Sisters?

Originally, there would not have been many points in common between the way our Foundress saw

Which is your main apostolic mission in today's Church?

We do not see education as the chief means of helping people today, though we do still see it as one very valuable apostolate. But others, especially the State, are doing it, so it is no longer the crying need it was in Chavoïn's and Champagnat's day. Also we see education in a wider sense, extending to adult education, chaplaincy work in schools and on the tertiary level, parish catechetics, education through liturgy, etc. We have also extended and consolidated our apostolates in the nursing and social work areas.

How many Sisters are you now?

We are just over six hundred Sisters

today, working on four continents and in sixteen countries.

What do you think about cooperation with the other branches of the Society of Mary?

In the past, a very uneven record. We are becoming much more aware of our entity and identity as a Marist Family with different branches. There has been very good collaboration in recent new missions of the Sisters; and there is a great desire to consolidate relations, and to share our heritage and learn from one another.

Twenty-five years after Vatican II, how do you see this time of renewal?

We started our *retour aux sources* after the 1954 Chapter, so we were well launched before Vatican II. We have felt inexpressibly enriched by what we have discovered of our roots and our heritage. In itself, that has been a sign of hope and a catalyst for renewal among all our sisters. We are slowly but —we hope— surely putting it into practice for our world today.

Which are the key-elements of your spirituality?

They are well expressed in chapter one of our Constitutions corresponding to the chapter from Jean-Claude Colin's Rule on *Spirit of the Society*, which finishes with the key words:

Each one of the children of her Society must apply (himself) to live the life of this divine Mother, which is none other than the life of Jesus Christ.

No particular Marian devotions, but a constant awareness of our identity with her. Celebration of her feasts with familiarity and joy. "*Breathing her spirit*", being her discreet, active and compassionate presence with the strong background of prayer which is necessary to make that real. Our whole life is strongly community-oriented, and this element is strong too in our prayer; great importance is given to prayer in common as far as possible.

In Columbia, a Sister brings Holy Communion to the sick.



Which are the priorities of your General Council?

Refounding, renewal, through our Pastoral Plan in particular, but also through spiritual renewal programmes for individuals and for groups. A deep renewal of faith in the Marist vision as lived and interpreted by Jeanne-Marie Chavoin has grown since the 1950's, and Superiors General and councillors have worked hard over the past several years to strengthen this "pride" in our identity, by letters, visits, renewals, and other means as appropriate.

And the challenges you are facing?

They are the same challenges all religious are facing today: loss of credibility in the eyes of an increasingly materialistic world; breakdown of some traditional ways of ministering, and fear sometimes of new ways; the challenge of making *le troisième âge* fruitful in ministry for Sisters whose generation tended to think of "retirement" as a time of quiet prayer and of supportive rather than active ministry; the falling-off of vocations from traditionally fruitful areas...

And your main reasons for hope?

The response of the sisters to the challenges above. A renewed sense

of, and pride in, our identity as a branch of the Society of Mary with a special and very valuable contribution to make to the Marist vision for today. The growth in mutual understanding and respect among the branches. The development of the Marist laity. Exciting new developments in our missionary undertakings, and the growth of vocations in some of these new areas of mission. Above all, we feel a sense of hope because we know that our Marist vision has something very valuable and very necessary to offer our world.



Religious profession of a Mexican Sister.

SOME KEY PHRASES FROM JEANNE-MARIE CHAVOIN (Mother Saint-Joseph):

"I prefer a spendthrift to a miser. I hate to see a person with a narrow outlook. He will have the same attitude towards God as he has towards creatures" (RMJ, 241.81).

"Do you not know that Mary, our good Mother, truly wishes to be at the head of those who are entrusted with her Society? She will guide them even in little things, if they are careful to do nothing without consulting her..." (CMJ, 15.1).

"We left home and family to start the Society of the Blessed Virgin" (RMJ, 101.7).

"O my child, love prayer. Once again, love prayer, love to converse with God, speak to our Lord, to the Blessed Virgin, quite simply, like a child to its Father or Mother" (RMJ, 107.2).

"Our Congregation was not founded to imitate this or that congregation, but to have its own spirit, which is a love of poverty, simplicity and love of work... The house of Nazareth must be our model" (CMJ, 88.2).

**III. EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM FR. CHAMPAGNAT
to Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn (Mère Saint-Joseph)**

This undated letter was surely written before 30th August 1832 since, on that day, were registered at "Bon Repos" the new candidates whose names appeared on this same letter. Obviously, these young girls had not been recruited by Fr. Champagnat himself but rather by Fr. J. Fontbonne, curate of Saint-Laurent-d'Agnÿ, before going to the "Hermitage". We don't know how Father Champagnat came across these girls but we know that he had at heart the development of the Society of Mary as a whole. He helped the Fathers and the Sisters as well to whom he sent ten young girls.

To Mère Saint-Joseph, Superior of the Marist Sisters, Bon Repos, Belley.

Reverend Mother Superior,

Not long ago, I spoke to you about three girls of Saint-Laurent-d'Agnÿ. I am sending them to you. If, according to their present condition, they don't bring to you much as far as wealth is concerned, on the other hand, they are quite ready to do whatever you might ask of them. I mentioned to them already that if they are not ready to deny themselves, to be obedient whatever may come, to show a great openness of heart and to love and imitate Jesus and Mary, they must not try any further to enter religious life. They answered me that their wish was firm and they were decided to give themselves to God.

I told them that you would keep this letter and, from time to time, use it to remind them of their promises. They told me that they wanted it and were even ready to sign with their blood this letter, if necessary.

I can testify that they belong to very good Christian families.

I am yours devotedly,

Champagnat, P.M.
Superior of the Brothers

(Lettres de M.J.B. Champagnat, vol. 1, Textes, Rome, 1985, pages 74-76.)

MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY: PAST AND PRESENT

(Interview with Sr. Claudine Nakamura, member of the General Council.)

THE ORIGINS

Can you give us some background information about Françoise Perroton?

Françoise Perroton was born on 7th February 1796, to a family of modest means in the parish of St. Nizier in Lyons. She became a private teacher for a middle-class family in that city. In 1810, Pauline Jaricot founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, which Françoise immediately joined; in 1820, she became the head of one of its local groups.

The Marist Fathers and Brothers arrived in Oceania in 1837. Fr. Chanel was martyred on Futuna in 1841. In 1842, two women of Uvea, on Wallis, wrote a letter to the Christians of Lyons, in the name of all the women of the island:

"We have already had proof of your charity and we are making one more request: if you love us, send us some pious women (some sisters) to teach the women of Uvea."

Françoise must have read this letter, which appeared in the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* in September 1873. For her, it was a call. She decided to answer the women's request. Knowing that that part of the world had been entrusted to the Society of Mary, she consulted Fr. Eyraud, who was then provincial of France and director of the Third Order. He advised her not to speak to Fr. Colin, who was opposed to the idea of sending women to Oceania.

But she went, none the less?

Yes. In 1845, she met Commander Marceau in Lyons, and presented her request: that he take her aboard



*Françoise Perroton
(Sister Mary of Mount-Carmel).*

his ship which was about to weigh anchor for Oceania. He was impressed by the determination of this woman, who was no longer young, so he gave her a vague promise. When she did not hear from him, she wrote him a letter:

"... What I want is to spend the rest of my life in the service of the missions; and only you, Sir, can give me the means to get there, by giving me your protection on such a long and costly journey... God will, I trust, provide for my needs, since all I am seeking is his glory and the salvation of those good people of Oceania, for whose benefit I will willingly sacrifice myself, if such be His holy will."

The Commander's reply was positive, and she sailed on 15th November 1845 on the *Arche d'Alliance* [Ark of the Covenant] with several Marist Fathers and Brothers. During their eleven-month trip, Françoise gave ample proof of her courage and endurance.

The *Arche d'Alliance* reached Wallis on 23rd October 1846. Bishop Bataillon refused to welcome Françoise; he did not want any European women on the island. The king took her under his protection; he had a hut built for her on the seashore and sent three young ladies, including his daughter Amélia, to live with her. A new life was beginning for Françoise on that little island in the Pacific. Her dream was coming true. Being free, she could evolve a form of presence adapted to the Oceanian setting; she could meet the needs of the women...

She lived alone on Wallis from 1846 to 1854. Then, feeling discouraged and unable to put up with the solitude any longer, she embarked for Sydney; but the ship stopped at Futuna, where she lived alone for another four years.

Your tradition also goes back to the "ten pioneers". Tell us about their departure for the missions.

In France, many young ladies who wanted to devote their lives to the service of the people of Oceania applied to the Marist Fathers. Fr. Favre, who had succeeded Fr. Colin as Superior General, was favorable to the idea of sending women to Oceania. A period of discernment was undertaken, to choose the candidates, who were then given a brief period of formation. There were four successive departures:

—In November 1857, three Tertiaries went to join Françoise on Wallis and Futuna; on 29th May 1858, they met amid great rejoicing. The first community of Marist missionary women was born at Kolopelu.

—In July 1858, three sisters were sent to New Caledonia at the re-

—Marist themes—

quest of the Vicar Apostolic of that island.

- In October 1858, three more sisters left for Wallis and Futuna.
- Finally, in October 1860, Sister Marie de la Présentation left for New Caledonia.

That ended the era of the departures of our Pioneers. The initial impetus had been given!

Were Françoise and the Pioneers really the beginning of the SSM?

Definitely. The origins of our Institute are closely linked to the life of

Françoise Perroton and *these ten extraordinary young women, all lay missionaries whose intrepidity and heroism were beyond all praise, involved in the work of evangelization and the promotion of women, on unknown islands in far-off, mysterious Oceania* (Br. Basilio Rueda, in the preface to the book *Présences de Marie*). **They were the foundation stones of our congregation.**

Those first eleven set out with practically no formation. When they arrived in Oceania, they found themselves under the authority of the Vicar Apostolic of each island. The

Marist Fathers, being aware of this lack of formation and organization, wanted to open a house of formation in France, because, as Fr. Poupinel wrote, "I will certainly not be unworried if the number of women sent to Oceania without first making a novitiate increases, and if we have a number of these little makeshift communities".

An attempt was then made under the direction of Sr. Marie du Coeur de Jésus, but difficulties arose between her and the Fathers. She founded the Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions. Then came the separation. Except for Françoise, the Pioneers who had made profession in that congregation did not renew their vows; they preferred to remain simple Tertiaries rather than separate themselves from the Society of Mary and have to leave Oceania (1861-1869).

—From 1869 to 1881 the Pioneers were part of the TOMMO: the Third Order of Mary for the Missions of Oceania.

—In 1881, the TORM was organized: the Third Order Regular of Mary. The Congregation emerged from its embryonic stage and began a normal existence. All this was done while respecting the essentials:

- * born in the missions, the congregation affirmed its missionary nature;
- * by remaining in the Third Order of Mary, it affirmed its links with the Society of Mary;
- * having become a Third Order Regular, it could guarantee its members an authentic religious life.

—Between 1881 and 1931, the congregation became organized.

—On 30th December 1931, it was finally approved under the name of MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY.



Grave of Françoise Perroton in Futuna Island.

What aspects of Françoise Perroton's personality do you find most significant?

Her first striking trait is her *strong character*. She was a resourceful woman who knew what she wanted. She showed that at the outset of her missionary vocation and during her twelve long years of solitude on Wallis and Futuna. She was able to stand up to Bishop Bataillon's authoritarianism when he tried to force the sisters to give up their direct apostolate and to raise chickens and pigs instead. Fr. Poupinel wrote, "Thick-skinned Soeur Marie du Mont-Carmel (Françoise) was not about to give up the goal she had set for herself when she left her native land".

She showed her *audacity* in carrying out what she had decided on, and she was willing to *risk* everything to reach that goal; but she did so very *clear-sightedly*.

She also displayed a great deal of *tact* and *delicacy* in her personal contacts and correspondence. Fr. Mathieu said, "She is an *active, prudent* and *intelligent* woman; her intelligence is colored with a great deal of *humility*".



Sister M. de la Croix, one of the pioneers, foundress of the «P. Filles de Marie.»

Her letters reveal a good *sense of humor*. She could laugh, for example, at her poor head, rebelling against learning the local language; she spoke of her prayers, "colder than a Lyons January". When it was hard to find mutual support in community, she immediately reassured her correspondent that, "None of us has ever thrown a bottle or plate at the head of another sister".

How about the outstanding characteristics of Françoise's spirituality?

As a fervent Christian, with solid faith and great devotion to Our Lady of Fourvière, Françoise was oriented toward missionary work.

She was *full of confidence in God*. She demonstrated her total abandonment to Him; she told Commander Marceau that God would provide for her needs when she was in the missions.

Her *love for the Lord* was immense: "When I want to make many acts of the love of God in a few words, I tell Him, 'My God, I love you and I adore you as many thousands of times as there are drops of water in the ocean'".

She seized every opportunity to give *thanks to God*; but what she wanted most of all was *to do his will*, to accept it just as it came to her, even if it did not agree with her own.

Mary held a major place in her life; she wanted to imitate the Blessed Virgin's hidden life.

Briefly, love of God, unshakeable confidence in him, fidelity to her mission, affection for the girls and women, unconditional devotedness



View of the Island of Futuna.

to them: that is the way Françoise lived. During her years of solitude, she abandoned herself totally to God.

How about the ten Pioneers?

Each of them, of course, had her own personality, which comes through in their letters and those of the priests. But there are some fundamental traits which are more or less pronounced depending on each one's temperament.

To undertake such an adventure in that day and age, they had to be women with extraordinary *strength of character*. Their capacity for *adaptation* and their *enterprising spirit* are evident; like Françoise, they had great *daring*, which was colored by *humility*. Their endurance aroused great admiration.

Is there any one personality among them which especially attracts you?

It's hard to choose. Let me say something about Sr. Marie de la Croix, who was a strong, well-educated, "mystical" person. This is how Fr. Vigouroux summed up her life: "She is a beautiful soul who



*Sister Claudine Nakamura,
from New Caledonia,
General Councillor of SMSM.*

cannot go to God all alone; she draws along in her wake all the New Caledonian women around her."

She was a passionate woman who staked her whole life on God and consecrated herself body and soul to the mission in New Caledonia. At the age of six, she had promised God to dedicate her life to him:

"I was not yet six years old when, with all the energy of my soul and with all the willpower of which I was capable, I promised Our Lord that I would die as a religious. The missions were the constant goal of my desires eight years before I got there."

Despite her shattered health, her whole life was a total gift to God, sustained by the constant presence of Mary, in the service of the girls and women of New Caledonia. Confidence in God, love of Mary... but she also had total confidence in the girls who lived with them; that confidence and her love worked wonders: several of "her girls" wanted to imitate her by consecrating themselves to the Lord.

Could you tell us a bit more about your links with the Society of Mary in the beginning?

Françoise had gone to Fr. Eymard before speaking to Commander Marceau. But when she sailed in 1845, she had no juridic bond with the Society of Mary. When she reached Tahiti, she learned that Fr. Eymard had enrolled her in the Third Order of Mary:

"A thousand thanks, Father, for the honor you have done me in enrolling me in the society of your Third Order. One more grace. My gratitude to God will have to be as wide as the ocean."

On Wallis and Futuna, she was the Marist Fathers' auxiliary, even if collaboration became difficult at times. On 23rd August 1858, she made profession in the Third Order of Mary. As for the other women, it was the Marist Fathers who took the responsibility for sending them to Oceania. They made a vow of obedience to the Vicar Apostolic, who was a Marist.

When Sr. Marie du Coeur de Jésus left the Society of Mary, the pioneers who had made vows in her congregation did not renew them, so that they could remain within the Society of Mary. Sr. Marie de la Croix wrote to Fr. Poupinel:



Sister Patricia Stowers of Samoa, Superior General SMSM.

"I do not want to separate myself from the Society of Mary, just as I do not want to renounce my life's only goal: the missions. It is not an obligation based on love which binds me to the Society of Mary, but one based on gratitude, which is certainly my heart's most compelling motive... it was my first mother."

In Oceania, as in France, there were solid bonds between the Pioneers and the Society of Mary.

To what extent were Françoise and the Pioneers influenced by Marist spirituality?

They all belonged to the Third Order of Mary. They were not only influenced by Marist spirituality, but imbued with it. One could say that they also enriched and developed that spirituality, since they lived the Marist missionary spirit on a daily basis. And they did so in simplicity, "unknown and hidden". Sr. Marie de la Croix wrote:

"I understood that the happiness of working for the salvation of



Sister Claire of the United States, pioneer in Mauritania.

these people, for the glory of God and our divine Mother, and of working far from the world and its applause, ignored, known only to God, that this happiness was cer-

tainly worth everything I have suffered and everything that I still hope to suffer. Our vocation is to be forgotten, to live a life hidden in God, a life of zeal, but Mary's zeal, without noise, without attracting attention, in the silence of Mary's heart."

They therefore gave Marist spirit that world-wide missionary coloration, since they gave birth to it in the far-off islands of Oceania.

What aspects of that initial missionary and pastoral activity would you most emphasize?

- presence
- family life
- the promotion of women
- concern for evangelization

The Pioneers set out to "contribute to the salvation of the people of Oceania". The second Rule explicitly states:

"Called to the honor of working to spread the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and to make Mary known to the ends of the earth, the sisters should consider themselves fortunate and humbly proud of the honor granted them."



Community of missionary Sisters at Butare (Rwanda).



Sister Anna Frank works in a Centre for persons victims of AIDS in Washington.

women. By training the women, they were preparing Christian families. As early as 1847, Françoise wrote to Fr. Eymard:

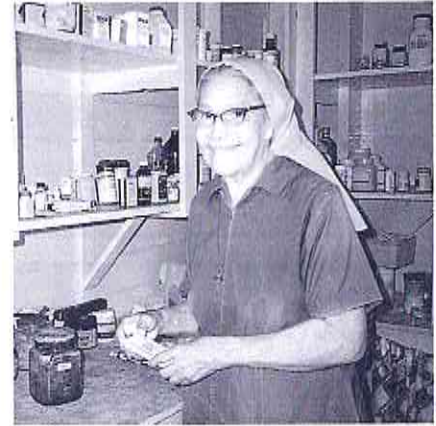
"I am particularly interested in the women. They are the ones who give the children their initial education, which will influence the way they live their entire lives."

Didn't Françoise educate Amélia, the future queen of Wallis; and Sr. Marie of the Cross, Hortense, the future queen of the Ile des Pins?

The sisters were so close to the women that their apostolate was adapted to the local culture: there were no restrictive structures to interfere with their creative response to the needs of the people.

Could we say that the key elements of your vocation were already present in the Pioneers?

As I have already pointed out, these women —the eleven who came from France and the Oceanians who very quickly joined them— are for us "THE FOUNDATION STONES OF OUR CONGREGATION". They gave the initial impetus. During the congregation's long years of gestation, evolution and organization, they were its motivating element, the main nucleus. The different Rules drawn up in France were writ-



Sister Malia Soane from Tonga, cares for a clinic at Vava'u.

Having been called by the women of Oceania, they dedicated their power to love, their savoir-faire, their creativity, their energy, their whole life, to giving these women their dignity, to making them responsible wives and mothers, consecrated women happy to give themselves to God.

How did they do that? Françoise set the tone: she lived with the women, gathered them into a living community in which the older ones became her fellow-workers. There was no barrier between her and the women. Those who came after, whether on Wallis and Futuna, New Caledonia, Samoa or Tonga, used the same "method" in educating the girls and

ten with them in mind, adapted to their life and apostolate. We find in their lives the three elements which constitute our proper vocation in the Church: MISSIONARY, MARIST, RELIGIOUS.

MISSIONARIES they were from the time of their departure since they went out to evangelize the women of Oceania; in the missions they lived as the Marist Fathers' auxiliaries. By their presence and their apostolate, especially among the women and girls, they evangelized those islands of Oceania.

MARISTS: They were all enrolled in the Third Order of Mary, and therefore considered themselves as belonging to the Marist Family. According to the second Rule, they left their homeland "to make Mary known to the ends of the earth". For them, missionary service and Marist vocation were one and the same call.

RELIGIOUS: They were not religious but they wanted to be. Before their departure, they made a vow of obedience to the Vicar Apostolic. Tertiaries at first, after 1881 they were the Third Order Regular of Mary, a true diocesan congregations.

"These will be genuine religious congregations, with vows and community life, the Rule of the Third Order of the Society of Mary and the spirit of that Society, which is so well suited to the missions of Oceania."



Community of Bangladesh.

The Marist Fathers in France saw to the organization of a novitiate and to the organization of these missionaries into a congregation... But because of the distance involved, and a number of misunderstandings, that took a long time!

TODAY

How many Sisters are you at present and in what countries are you working?

At this moment we are 673 sisters, 57 being in temporary vows. There are eighteen novices in formation in the novitiates in New Zealand, New Caledonia, Peru and Italy. Ten postulants are taking their first step into religious life.

We come from thirty countries, and have been blessed during the past ten years by being able to welcome vocations from Vanuatu, Bougainville, Madagascar, Venezuela, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and the Philippines.

During these past few years have you rediscovered the charism of your origins and returned to your roots?

Vatican Council II asked religious congregations to rediscover the charism of their origins. That is what we have tried to do. The General Chapter of 1971 decided to undertake research in that direction. The work was entrusted to Sr. Marie Cécile de Mijolla, who under the direction of Fr. Coste, presented us in 1973 with a large collection of letters or excerpts from letters. So we fortunately have many letters from the sisters and the fathers who were in contact with them, as well as other documents about them. This work is a gold mine whose richness we are constantly uncovering with astonishment. The eleven Pioneers are for each of us, extraordinary witnesses to the love of God incarnated among the peoples of Oceania.

All through our history, the sisters have lived the charism of our origins



Sister Malia Anita in a school for domestic science in Tonga.

with greater or lesser intensity. Our return to our roots has allowed us to understand it better, to define it more clearly and to deepen it. Our charism is to be MISSIONARY, MARIST, RELIGIOUS. These three elements are the foundation of our vocation; we try to unite them in our life. We live in the present while drawing on the past and looking boldly toward the future.

How do your Constitutions define your present mission within the Church?

Our Constitutions are very clear on this point: *"The call to be simultaneously Missionaries, Marists, and Religious constitutes our vocation in the Church"* (Const., art. 5). We evangelize by being present in the way Mary was, by proclaiming the Word, and by a variety of apostolic services. And we are still being sent to those who do not know Christ, to those who are on their way towards him, to the local churches which need missionary assistance (art. 17).

We try to join apostolic daring to unassuming presence, in line with Marist spirit, as we watch Mary in Nazareth and at Pentecost.

What are your apostolic priorities on the congregational level?

For us as for our Pioneers, MISSION is the priority of priorities: to be among the people, especially the most disadvantaged, to be with women and girls, to be "witnesses to love and instruments of God's mercy", to be witnesses to the universality of the Church.

Our 1987 Chapter emphasized certain aspects of that Mission:

- evangelization of cultures and inculturation,
- justice and peace, respect for human rights,
- promotion of women and the family,
- communion among ourselves and with others.

And to make sure the sisters are available to carry out that mission, we are to work at improving the quality of SMSM life.

In 1989, the expanded General Council insisted on: our presence among the believers in the major religions; the formation of lay leaders and basic Christian communities; work among those on the fringes of society; involvement in various women's movements and formation on all levels.

And the priorities of your General Council?

First of all there are priorities inherent in our service, which are:

- to safeguard the unity of the congregation,
- to foster an authentic religious life,
- to see that the congregation carries out as well as possible the missionary mandate the Church has entrusted to it.

We are seeking ways to put the congregation's priorities into practice. This work is being carried on in close collaboration with the provincials.

ary presence and apostolic service. These appeals come, for instance, from Algeria, Mauretania, Bangladesh, Madagascar, Liberia, Venezuela...

- How to live today as daringly as our Pioneers did? How to be in the outposts of the missions?
- Family life is increasingly dysfunctional... what can we do? How can we be present to young people... and evangelize them?
- The need to be inventive, to create new forms of apostolate, and not to impose unsuitable structures on the young sisters.
- In a changing world, prepare the sisters to change their profession,

they are working, or what they are doing.

- Then there is the missionary vocation "ad extra" of these young women who come from the so-called "mission" countries; but that desire to leave our own country is in the heart of each one of us. How else explain the fact that a 74-year-old Tongan sister was part of the first community in the Philippines? Or that an 80-year-old French sister was ready and willing to go to work for several months in a country she did not know? We could fill a book with similar examples.
- There is the courage and daring of the sisters who live in situations made difficult by violence and isolation, in Peru and Colombia for example, or in the community of Ain-Salah in the middle of the Sahara desert, and so on.
- There is the readiness to answer new calls (from immigrants, from persons with AIDS) which has led us to begin several new communities.
- And especially, the vocations coming from the Southern Hemisphere: Peru, Rwanda, the Philippines, and those from Oceania — the Oceania evangelized by the Pioneers and those who came after them. "If the grain of wheat falls into the ground..."
- Finally, there is also an upsurge of vocations in Europe!



Sister M. Susanne from New Zealand teaches tailoring in Tonga.

Among these various priorities, several are closer to our hearts:

- to revitalize our missionary spirit,
- to insure the renewal of apostolic community life.
- to further the formation of formators.

What are the major challenges your Institute is currently facing?

There are many challenges, among which let me emphasize:

- The pressing appeals of the churches and the world for a mission-

their trade, make them capable of adapting, help them to prepare for retirement.

Faced with these challenges, we are very aware of how few we are and our rising average age... but our hearts are still filled with hope!

And where does that hope come from?

From many sources:

- First of all, the *missionary dynamism* to which the sisters cling, regardless of their age, or where

What does it mean to you to be a specifically missionary Institute?

We know that by its very nature, the whole Church is missionary, but certain institutes are more specifically so. For us, this charism is intimately bound up with our history. The Pioneers first left for the *missions*, before they were religious, and they went there for life.

For us, being "a specifically missionary Institute" means that all the SM-SM "are ready, with total availability, to leave their own country to go or to return to other peoples,

other cultures..." (Const. art. 16). Even though we are aware that "mission" has more than a geographical signification, we are missionaries "ad extra". One of the criteria for admitting a candidate to the postulancy is her willingness to leave her own country to live in another culture.

Today, for a variety of reasons, sisters are returning to their own country and staying there... In their choice of an apostolic presence or activity, we recommend that they chose a multi-cultural milieu, among immigrants or among the poorest people.

Today there is much talk of inculturation. What does that word mean to you?

Inculturation, acculturation... The words are new, but when I read the wealth of correspondence from the Pioneers, I realize that they were already living those concepts, although with the mind-set of their own times, naturally.

They were acculturated, because as soon as they arrived, they tried to learn the local language, to live among the women and girls, to share their food, their work, their sufferings and their hopes. By giving the girls a Christian formation, by working for the promotion of women and of the family, by very early suggesting consecrated life to the women of Oceania, were they not making it possible for those women to incarnate the gospel in their own culture?

For us, *inculturation* is an essential aspect of evangelization; it is the foundation, without which the latter remains something foreign and superficial. It was the first theme treated at our 1987 General Chapter. That enabled us to sensitize all the sisters to this concept. The document *Evangelization of Cultures and Inculturation* expresses what inculturation means for us. Let me cite a few elements: "We are sure that each culture has its own values and

that the Spirit is already present there; the gospel should challenge every culture, every mentality."

I find that Marist spirit harmonizes perfectly with that missionary attitude: an unassuming and active presence; remaining hidden and unknown in the world; simplicity and humility; "as ready to receive as to give, having no other goal but to seek humbly with everyone else the coming of the Reign of God".

Your Institute established several religious congregations in missionary countries. Would you tell us about them?

and Sr. Marie de la Croix, approved in 1962.

- The SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF NAZARETH, in Fiji, founded in 1891 by Bishop Vidal and entrusted to Sr. Marie de Jésus, approved in 1950.
- The SISTERS OF NAZARETH, in Bougainville, begun in 1930 by Sr. Marie Ignace Schaal, with the encouragement of Bishop Wade. This congregation disbanded during the war but reorganized in 1947 and was approved in 1962.
- The DAUGHTERS OF MARY IMMACULATE, in the Solomon Islands; founded by Bishop Roucas



Sister Susana Vito from Samoa, teaches in the primary school of Savalalo (Samoa).

I am amazed at the confidence the first Marists —bishops, priests, brothers and Pioneers, had in the young ladies of Oceania. It is striking to see how soon they suggested consecrated life to them. Some of them became Tertiaries; others were formed into diocesan congregations. For many years they were guided by an SMSM; today they are completely autonomous:

- The DAUGHTERS OF MARY, in New Caledonia and on Vanuatu, founded in 1875 by Bishop Vitte

in 1935, scattered during the war, it was reorganized and approved in 1947.

These four congregations inherited the Marist spirit of the first missionaries. Today they are a forceful presence in their respective dioceses.

We must also mention the little congregation of OUR LADY OF OCEANIA, founded by Bishop Elloy and Sr. Marie de la Miséricorde in 1875. After a very flourishing and promising beginning, it faded out in 1905 when Sister died.

The Marial element plays an important role in your spirituality, doesn't it?

Mary has held an important place in our life from the beginning; it is by a "free choice" that we are part of the Marist Family... Many articles of our Constitutions express the Marial dimension of our spirituality: "*Inspired by Mary and trusting in her help, we try to serve as she did, humbly and discreetly and without imposing ourselves*" (Const., art. 20). I will cite four others passages which outline this Marial spirituality:

—*As we contemplate Mary in the Scriptures, our whole life will be-*

at Cana: she is present among the women, for a family celebration; she is attentive to people's needs; she intercedes with her Son and brings people into contact with him; she fades into the background as soon as she has done so.

There is much emphasis today on the role of the laity, and I think you have a great contribution to make regarding the role of women and their ministry in the Church. What do you think?

It was in answer to the appeal of the women of Oceania that Françoise Perrotton set sail for the islands at

Today it is one of our priorities and many sisters devote themselves to this task with a great deal of love and conviction. *The promotion of women and the family* was one of the themes of our last General Chapter: "Attentive to the aspirations of the women of our day, we want to be with them in their efforts to discover their dignity and their own values and to take responsibility for their own life."

Following the example of our pioneers, we want to work with the women in the villages, neighborhoods, and tribes, seeking means to bring about the formation of the whole person, so that they may be whole women, responsible persons on every level: the family, society, the church, politics... To bring that about, our main concern is to train leaders who are capable of animating their sisters.

Mary the Woman, Mary the Virgin, Mary the Wife, Mary the Mother: we use every means to help girls and women to weave a special relationship with Mary, so that she may be their inspiration, their confidante, the one in whom they can place complete trust.

What is the present state of your relationships with the other branches of the Society of Mary, and with the Marist Brothers in particular?

We have always had very close relationships with the Marist Fathers in Oceania and with the Third Order of Mary in the islands where it exists. I believe that for the past twenty-five or thirty years, all the branches of the Society of Mary have been drawing closer together; there have been meetings at every level: general, provincial, local. There is an effective program of mutual assistance. Particular mention must be made of collaboration on the level of formation: common courses in the initial formation program; Marist renewal programs for the five branches (the four religious branches plus the lay branch). Today we feel that we all belong to the same family.



Sister Jenny, Australian and doctor in medicine works in a clinic of Bangladesh.

come imbued with her way of acting (C. 50).

—*We never stop watching Mary, so as to learn how to think, speak and act like her* (C. 49).

—*...So as to be a little bit of her presence in the world* (C. 10).

—*Our vocation in the Church is to combine apostolic daring with unassuming presence* (C. 53).

One of the gospel passages which best expresses that for me is Mary

the age of 49! She devoted her entire life to them. The ten other pioneers and those who followed them shared the same concern: the total formation of women.

This ministry has never ceased throughout our history, but there was perhaps a time when it was less evident. I think that the "return to our roots" which we have carried out has shed light on that ministry and given us a better appreciation of what was so dear to our Pioneers.

As for collaboration with the Marist Brothers, let me give you some examples:

- When the sisters arrived in Peru in 1960, the brothers welcomed them as teachers in their schools, which helped them to take root in that country.
- The same thing is happening today in the Philippines and in Kiribati, where the SMSM, who are recent arrivals in those countries, can carry out their apostolate and earn their livelihood in a Marist Brothers' school.
- The brothers have called us to several countries (Colombia, the Philippines, Kiribati) when young women there gave evidence of a vocation to religious life. And as I have just said, they helped the sisters get settled.

—The brothers in Madagascar have sent us young Malagasy women who wanted to be Marists.

These are just a few samples, because the real collaboration is a day-to-day affair, in the countries where we have the happiness of working together.

Still on the subject of collaboration, do you have any special wishes as you face the future?

There is already real collaboration, but we need to go further, to be more creative, because the Marist Family would have much more to give if we were more united. Here are a few of my wishes:

- That a renewal program for French-speaking Marists be finally organized.

—The renewal of the Third Order of Mary: could we not take the time to study it *together* in order to come up with a new formula for this Third Order?

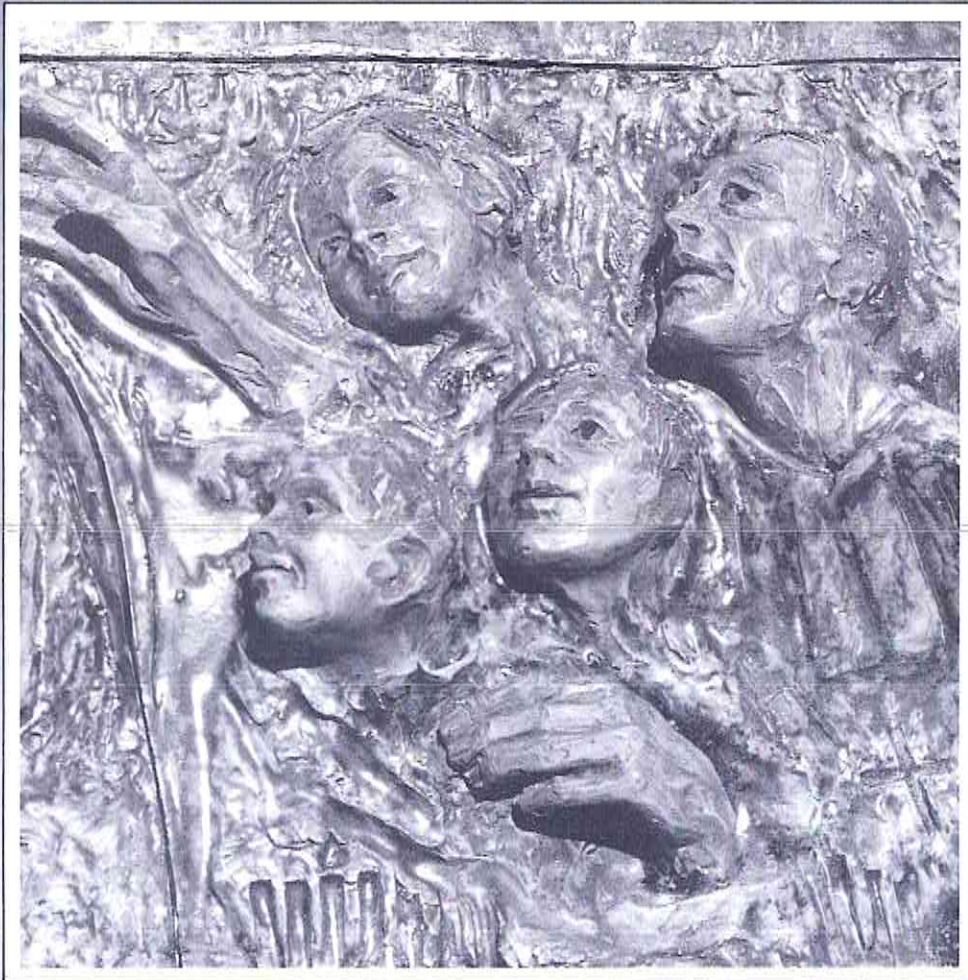
—Could not the five Marist branches choose a common theme to study, to put into practice in their schools, parishes, reflection groups, and our communities? For example, the integrity of Creation (ecology), the family, refugees, "the whole world must become Marist", etc. What are we doing about all of those?

—At the formation level, to study a topic together so as to come up with a "Marist" way of dealing with it; for example, Inculturation and the Vows. Naturally, each branch would remain free, but we could have a "common trunk", a Marist spirituality!



A group of Sisters of New Caledonia gathered around Sister Patricia, Superior General.

AROUND THE MARIST WORLD



- *Course for future Novice Masters.*
- *Hungary: The return of the Marist Brothers.*
- *Meeting of the Brothers Provincial of Europe.*

COURSE FOR FUTURE NOVICE MASTERS

HISTORY OF THE COURSE

The priorities of the present General Council are: Formation, Constitutions, Discernment and Vocations. The Council considers that we have an excellent Formation Guide, but that there are few formators to put it into practice and thought about an international course based essentially on the Constitutions and the Formation Guide.

During the year 1989 the course was thought out and organised. The selection of candidates was helped by intense communication between the General Council and Provincials. The General Council designated the *Formation Commission* to finalise the details of the course. This commission is made up of Philip Ouellette, Claudio Girardi, Eugenio Magdaleno, Marcelino Ganzarain and Powell Prieur. They established the number of Brothers taking part and the formators. The formation team is made up of Brothers Basilio Rueda (Central Mexico), Gaston Robert (Iberville), Michael Hill (Sydney), Alejandro González (Western Mexico), and Victor Sixto (Esopus) who is bursar.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

- 1) The formation for the Institute of a group of Masters of Novices or Formators with areas of knowledge, techniques and experience of life.
- 2) The formation of the Brothers who take part in order to face up to new situations in the world so that they might be able to animate and give direction to the formation of our Brothers.
- 3) The cultivation, in the Brothers who follow the course, of wisdom of heart, the spiritual dimension, self-knowledge and personal acceptance, the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Paschal mystery, in order to reach a full understanding of the formation of the Marist religious and our vocational apostolate.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 1) The personal conversion and spiritual growth of each individual.
- 2) Knowledge of the stages through which a Marist novice or aspirant will pass.
- 3) An apprenticeship and experienced knowledge of spiritual discernment and vocational accompaniment starting from one's own manner of life during the course.
- 4) An apprenticeship in elemental areas of knowledge related to the Novitiate, Theology, Religious Life.



Attending the course.

MEANS ADOPTED

- 1) Experiencing a programme of accompaniment which takes place twice a week.
- 2) Personal and community assessment of the course.
- 3) The theoretical study of topics with a view to deepening faith, loving knowledge of God, of our consecration and of our Marist mission in what pertains to formation.
- 4) Living prayer and the sacraments at a deep level.
- 5) Living the family spirit. Forming a community after the fashion of La Valla or Nazareth where all are Brothers in spite of differences. Building together a community of living, prayer, work and rest.
- 6) Special experiences: Retreat, visits to places of Marist interest, to the Holy Land, to "model" novitiates.

RESOURCES

The General Council obtained the use of a house which belongs to the OASI movement. The latter part of the course was conducted at the General House, Rome.



Community gathering.



Manual work.

The common language we use, French, has also been decided by the Council. The general programme of studies and experiences has been worked out by the General Council.

The formation team has also been chosen by the General Council. The special speakers and teachers have been chosen by the General Council. The expenses pertaining to academic matters and to board and lodging are borne by the General Council. Provinces collaborate by supplying travelling expenses.

COMMUNITY ANIMATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

Our community is made up as follows

Managerial Staff Basilio, Gaston, Michael, Alejandro and Victor.

Brothers taking part Jesús Bayo (Chile), Jesús Caballero (Venezuela), William Chiola (Malawi), Sébastien Chupa (Zaire), Anthony Clark (Australia), Rodrigo Cuesta (Central América), José Luis Elías (Bética), Nicholas Fernando (Sri Lanka), Sebastião Ferrarini (Brazil), Alfonso García (Perú), Libardo Garzón (Colombia), Leon Hebert (Zimbabwe), Luis Miguel Herrero (León), Michael Hoare (South Africa), Carlos Kihn (Argentina), Anselmo Kim (Korea), Volmar Loz (Brazil), Michel Morel (France), Spiridion Ndanga (Ruan-

da), Chima Onwujuru (Nigeria), Réginal Racine (Canada), Fidele Ramarosaona and Joseph Ramaroson (Madagascar), Julio Suaesi (Samoa), Bernhard Tremmel (Germany), Lorenzo Urién (Spain, Norte), Raúl Valles (Mexico), Joe Wara (Fiji), Dominique Rhyan (Korea).

During the first month (January) we were getting to know each other and organising things. We are divided into *Commissions* which work together on different aspects of our community life: the commission of liturgy and prayer, which assures active participation in community celebrations and prayers; the commission for feasts and family life, which animates the times for recreation, sport and feast days; the commission for culture, which organises cultural visits, excursions and events; the commission for manual work which organises house jobs and manual work; the commission for studies and for the library; the commission on poverty and the apostolate.



Br. Spiridion (Rwanda) and Br. Michael (France).

Every fortnight we have a community meeting and from time to time we evaluate our life and our activities.

The managerial staff see to the development of the programme planning of the course; they inform, consult, make suggestions, evaluate within their field of competence and in matters which do not conflict with other commissions.

SUBJECTS STUDIED AND METHODOLOGY

The main subjects studied during these eighteen months are the following: Constitutions; Formation Guide; Theology of Religious Life; Personal growth; Poverty; Pedagogy of personal accompaniment; Psychology of young people; Man and the Christian vocation; basic course on faith; Liturgy of salvation; Chastity; Discernment; Pedagogy of conversion; Obedience; Liturgy; Christology; Champagnat; Marist charism; History of the Institute; Mariology; Liturgy of the Hours; community life; Canon Law; History of the Religious Life; Vatican II; Marist apostolic spirituality; Prayer; Inculturation; Mission; ...



Br. Nicholas (Sri Lanka) and Br. Joseph (Madagascar).

Community
prayer.



These systematic courses are given by the formation team, by other invited Brothers or by lecturers from different universities in Rome.

If any lecturer cannot speak in French we have a simultaneous translation service which allows us to follow without difficulty.

We have at our disposal a good library with books in different languages and we get a considerable number of reviews on a variety of topics.

The different courses are given in the magisterial method where the lectures give certain points or suggest an appropriate bibliography. The learning of the topic is assured by personal work and assignments which each one works out for himself.

ACTIVITIES

Mornings are given over to the academic work of the different courses.

In the evenings we have "Personal Accompaniment", personal work and prayer, manual work, sport or relaxation.

Saturdays are dedicated in a special way to community sharing, the study of French, singing practice.

Sundays are free according to the initiative of the individual or of small, spontaneously organised groups.

In the first week of April we had a holiday in Lavarone.

Once a month an outing is organised.

Brother Jesús Bayo
Chile



Leading Team:

*Br. Gaston (Canada),
Br. Basilio (Mexico),
Br. Michael (Australia),
Br. Victor (USA),
Br. Alejandro (Mexico).*

HUNGARY: THE RETURN OF THE MARIST BROTHERS

(Interview with Bro. Remi Vericel, Superior of the new Community.)

Let's begin with a little history: What has been the Marist presence in the countries of Eastern Europe?

We are going to open a community in Hungary, but the Marist presence in these countries of the East has a long history, unfortunately interrupted by events.

The Institute was present in Bulgaria from 1905 to 1936; in Poland from 1937 to 1940; in Romania from 1909 to 1916; in Yugoslavia from 1905 to 1945; in Turkey from 1892 to 1934.

In Hungary, the Brothers were present for nearly forty years, from 1909 to 1950. The juniorate at Orsova opened in 1909. The orphanage of St. Louise de Kispeszt was functioning from 1923 to 1944. And in 1928, the École Champagnat was founded in Budapest.

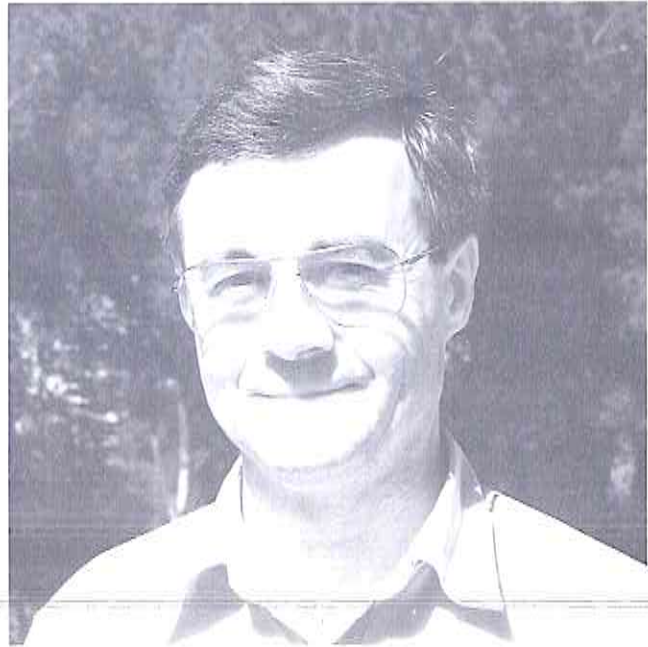
In 1947 the Communist government nationalized all the schools and all activity by religious was forbidden. Since it was not under the jurisdiction of the Hungarian Church, the École Champagnat escaped this ban, but it functioned under mounting restrictions. In 1949, the situation became untenable. The Brothers entered into long negotiations with the government. They finally were forced to give up the school and leave Hungary.

Seventeen Hungarian Brothers died in the Congregation and eleven are still living. The Marist presence in Hungary is maintained by a former Brother and by the alumni of the École Champagnat who are proud of the education received from the Brothers.

Brother, you have recently traveled to Hungary to study the possibility of reopening a community there. What were your impressions?

During the course of the trip which I made with Bro. Joseph Sandor, we met many ecclesiastical authorities, many bishops, including the Primate, Cardinal Paskai, and the bishop in charge of religious. We also met with the provincials of the Jesuits and of the Piarists (of St. Joseph Calasanctius). We spoke with members of the clergy and visited several religious communities.

We discovered that the top priority of the Church of Hungary is the Catholic school. The Church believes that everything must be renewed after forty years of Marxism and that it is through the Catholic school that the Church in Hungary will be rebuilt. The four projects which we brought back are aimed in this direction.



Br. Remi Vericel, Superior of the new community.

During the revolution, there were only 4 congregations which were permitted to remain in the country: the Piarists, the Benedictines, the Franciscans and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion. They continued to run schools even under quite restrictive conditions.

Other congregations remained, but clandestinely, certain religious lived alone in apartments; others, priests, exercised their priestly functions in parishes, in spite of some constraints. Now they are resurfacing and want to resume community life with other members of their congregations who are coming into the country. Sixty-three religious communities are already re-registered by the government.

We met, for example, a Premonstratensian Father who has restored an old monastery near his church. With the help of some American priests, he is launching the rebirth of the Premonstratensian Order in Hungary.

Is the State returning to the Congregations their former houses?

Many congregations are awaiting a house to resume their religious life. I don't know what is going to happen, but I don't think this will be possible. There is a

severe housing crisis in Hungary. The government cannot empty former schools and religious houses because it does not have the means to relocate the tenants of these buildings.

In Czechoslovakia, for example, the government has just refused to return to religious orders their former buildings, even though the communities had asked for the return of only 96 houses or 10 % of the number they had before communism.

We had two houses in Budapest: one has become an extension to the medical school; the other is a home for girls. I don't know if we will ever be able to recover them.

In what state did you find the Church in Hungary?

We are dealing here with two types of Church; one Church which has survived forty years of persecution, which has suffered unimaginable constraints, its priests and bishops tortured, imprisoned, deported, and which, as a result, has remained very traditional. We see, for example, Sunday celebrations mainly with elderly people, singing 50-year old hymns in Hungarian, with a very traditional liturgy.

And then, alongside this Church, we have the return of the young. There are a certain number of them coming to the Church, bringing with them new life.

It is difficult, however, to make a general statement. Alongside the persecuted Church, there was unfortunately the Church which compromised with the political system. The great majority of Hungarians profess themselves Christians, and 60 % of these are Catholics. All the bishops are Hungarian.

We are awaiting the Pope's visit in September, 1991. Parliament and the Basilica are in the process of restoration. The bishops hope to obtain from this visit the rehabilitation of Cardinal Mindszenty and the return of his body.

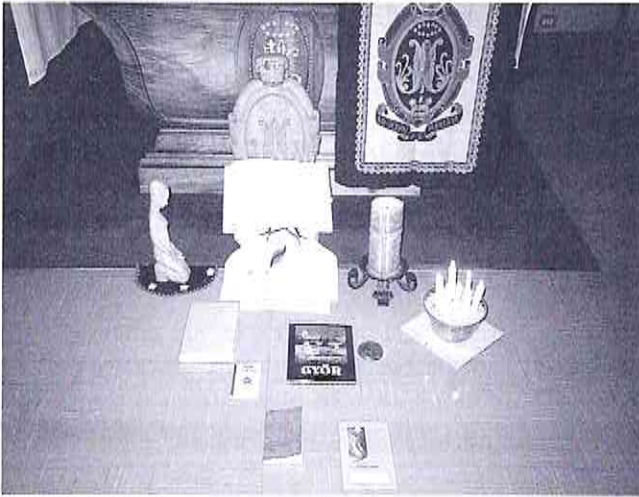
Is it possible then to open Catholic schools in Hungary?

At the present time, yes, without any problems and with total freedom. The law guaranteeing freedom of conscience and of religion, which established the separation of Church and State and which is wideranging, was passed in April and religious institutions are now legally recognized.



The seven pioneer Brothers in Rome with Br. Superior General.

Around the Marist World



Some emblems used during the send-off ceremony.

Truly, there are spectacular changes occurring. It is likely that from the beginning of the next school year, religious instruction will be mandatory in all of the country's schools, except for those students who wish to be exempt from it. This is a reversal of the previous situation where religious instruction was forbidden except by written request.

What is your opinion of the family situation?

Families have two or three children, as in many European countries. They are of peasant origin and Christian background but with little religious practice. Many divorces. The big difference is that we see many young people returning to the Church, or rather coming to it for the first time.

At the family levels, the faith has survived. But we have to realize that at all social levels, people under the age of fifty who have endured the era of communism and of indoctrination have learned nothing or very little about the Church. It is a whole new discovery to them. I attended the first public procession held since 1950. People walked all the way to a Marian shrine: there were chants, prayers and rosaries.

One sees, for example, many elderly persons at Mass on weekdays, and each time there are always between twelve and fifteen altar boys and girls. And they are not always the same ones! The bishops and priests believe that it is through the young that the adult population will return to the Church.

And how about the economy?

Hungarian society is a consumer society. The stores of Budapest are full. One finds everything. This is economic liberalism. Since 1956, there has been an evolution in this sense: quite a few cooperatives have been established.

The problem is that there is not much money. Imported goods are very expensive. People have two or three jobs to survive or even to live well. But unemployment, vagrancy, pornography are appearing. Four-fifths of the houses in Budapest are still scarred by the shells of the war. If it was well maintained, Budapest would be one of the most beautiful cities of Europe.

Are there still links with former Marist students?

Certainly. The former students had a reunion in April, 1989, and there were to meet again in August, 1990. At that time, they expect more than 100 in attendance. Most of them studied at our school in Budapest and have preserved an unforgettable memory of the Brothers. There are also some former Brothers, friends, and Christian families of Jewish origin who had taken refuge with the Brothers during the war.

Tell us about the project of reopening a Marist community

Among the projects submitted to the General Council, the Győr project was the one chosen. Győr is an industrial city of 140,000 inhabitants, 50 km from the Austrian border and 13 km from the Czechoslovak border. There is a bishop (Mgr Kornél Pataky) and ten parishes in the city.

Our foundation will be in a new suburb, which has some 25,000 inhabitants, mostly office workers, civil servants, technicians, teachers, and other professional people.

A very dynamic Hungarian priest came to this new suburb. He built a brand new church and rectory directly in front of an immense complex of buildings. And he has one more bold project: to build a Catholic school for 700-800 students, including boarders. The plans



Győr, former house of the canons, temporary residence of the Brothers.

have been drawn up. He is in the process of raising funds from friends and benefactors to begin construction. It is this school which is to be confided to the Brothers in 1993.

And until that time?

From 1990 to 1993 we will have three years to prepare ourselves for this mission, to learn the language, to begin the apostolate to the young and the work of vocations. During this time, the Brothers will live in a former ecclesiastical residence, in an old section, very quiet, in the heart of the city, right near the cathedral, 2.5 km from the new suburb.

Could you give us some statistics on the parish in Győr where the Brothers will be going?

The parish is called *Szentlélek* (Holy Spirit) and it was founded in June, 1987. The curé, Ferenc Benkovich, 52 years old, is also Chancellor of the diocese. Among the 25,000 inhabitants, practicing Christians number between, 2,500 and 3,000.

Participation in the religious education program of the parish has been increasing:

- In 1987-88: 300 participants
- In 1988-89: 500 participants
- In 1989-90: 1,000 participants

In 1989-90, there were 110 baptisms, of which 50 adults (ages 14-30); 410 first communions, of which 110 adults, and 300 confirmations, of which half were adults.

I assisted at one of these first communions of young people. It was a real celebration: Taizéchants, guitars, etc. This is a new Church which is rising.

Will the Catholic school which will be entrusted to you be subsidized by the State?

We are not sure how this will take place. Catholic schools will certainly receive some financial aid for the same reason that state schools do. There are two possibilities being discussed: Either the teachers will be paid by the State, or the government will assign to each school a lump sum to cover teachers' salaries and operating costs of the school. It is this latter solution which seems more probable. Everything is changing in Hungary and many things move uncertainly.

Is there one Marist province directly responsible for this foundation?

No. It will not be any one province. It's a European foundation. For the time being, it is the responsibility of the General Council, but the provincials of Europe are going to study the manner and details of eventual sponsorship.

We want to give a strong European vision to the new foundation through language classes and also through cultural, spiritual, linguistic, and other exchanges.

The community will be international: Brothers of Hungarian origin, Spanish Brothers, a French Brother, and we hope to have one day an English or German Brother. We want the community to give the school an open-



General view of Győr district where the Brothers will reside.



Budapest, former Champagnat School.

ing to Europe. We believe that Western Europe has something to bring to Hungary, but also that Hungary has something to offer Western Europe.

Quite an ambitious project, isn't it?

Yes, and one which presents great challenges. First of all, there is the language, we have to learn it, and fast. Hungarian is a very different language, reputed to be very difficult. It is neither Latin, nor Slavic, nor Germanic. It is classified as Finno-Hungarian, somewhat related to the Baltic languages. It appears that it will be difficult to master it, but we are counting on the valuable help of our Hungarian Brothers. The language and culture of the country are our first major challenge.

Another project in which we are vitally interested is the recruiting of vocations. Our foundation will be total only if young people join us.

The curé also wishes that the school, in addition to its overture to Western Europe, be open to the life of the neighborhood —an area where people are comfortable with cultural activities, pastoral or other, outside of school hours. Since it will be a boarding-school, we are considering the possibility of welcoming young people on weekends or holidays for meetings, retreats, etc. Obviously, five or six Brothers will not be enough to direct such a school. It will be necessary to share responsibilities on the pedagogical as well as the catechetical and pastoral levels.

Do the other congregations have any vocations?

Up until now, the four congregations who remained in the country were quite limited in their apostolate. They could accept only one or two novices per year. So they have few young people. Still, according to what I've been told, there are a certain number of young people who are awaiting the establishment of congregations to enter religious life. But I would not be able to confirm that there are many vocations at the moment.

A final question, Remi: what are your feelings about this foundation?

I've been preparing myself for a year already. It's an adventure which is a little frightening, first, because of the language, second, because the project is very ambitious. At the same time, I know that I will not be alone. We will form a team of five or six Brothers where each will have his place. In the countries of Western Europe, we know how difficult it is for a community to assure vigorous religious activity in the schools, because we meet a certain resistance. In Hungary, the situation is different. The young have not rejected religion. They were never exposed to it. It was a time of oppression.



MEETING OF THE BROTHERS PROVINCIAL OF EUROPE

Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, 24 to 28 September 1990

Meetings of the Brothers Provincial of a country are held fairly frequently in the Institute. Similar meetings, on a continental scale, have rarely been organized, except in Latin America, before the General Conference of Veranópolis in October 1989. This provided the occasion for the Provincials to become more conscious of their common interests with the Marist Brothers working in the same part of the world, be it Asia, Oceania, Africa or Europe. But as regards Europe, another fac-

pressing some wishes, although this meeting was not meant to reach decisions. The main idea was, for the time being, to get an overall view of the various themes that emerged and to promote a spiritual unity in the assembly, based on the information, on the debates, on the ideas brought forward. The daily celebrations contributed in no small part to creating that unity.

Some of those celebrations consisted of special common prayers prepared, in turn, by various groups of



Members of the assembly.



One of the working sessions.

tor was emerging: the political provisions for 1992, when the European Community would take another step towards unification. Thus, following an initial contact in Veranópolis, the Superiors of the 16 Provinces and autonomous Districts of Europe, whom the District Superior of Lebanon-Syria had joined, had agreed to get together at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage at the end of September 1990. Also invited by the organizers were representatives of the General Council, namely Brother Superior General, Brother Vicar General and Brother Secretary General.

Since this meeting was a first of its kind, a good period of time was given over to presentations. Each one of the Superiors gave a report on his Province or District: numbers, projects, problems, hopes.

After studying some relevant topics —European cooperation, mainly in formation, our responsibilities towards Central and Eastern Europe, preparation for the General Chapter—, the Provincials felt the need of ex-

Provincials, which were held at different Marist sanctuaries near by: Notre Dame de Pitié's chapel in La Valla, the Maisonnettes, Father Champagnat's room, Le Rosey, the sanctuary of Father Champagnat's shrine in Notre Dame de l'Hermitage's chapel.

Other greatly appreciated contributions came from Brother Superior General, Brother André Lanfrey, historian, and Father Paul Berger, the responsible authority for school "pastorale".

The meeting ends with a beautiful eucharistic ceremony, during which Brother Superior General presents each Provincial with Brother Bossaert's picture of Father Champagnat, large size, which all the participants have signed. He gives it with the exhortation, "Be a sower of hope".

Br. Yves Thénoz

HEED THE CALLS OF THE CHURCH



Ceramic relief (Br. José Santamarta, Castilla).

- *Vatican document on Formation in Religious Institutes.*

VATICAN DOCUMENT on Formation in Religious Institutes

"The proper renewal of religious institutes depends chiefly on the formation of their members." These are the opening words from the document *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes*, published in Rome this year. My first question about the document was: "Is there anything new? Does it add anything to the guidelines and directives in our own Constitutions and Formation Guide?" But the document is actually a lot more — and of course — has a wider application.

"Directives on Formation" is the most recent of a series of documents and guidelines the Church has issued since the Second Vatican Council and it presents a summary of these teachings. It is theological, theoretical and practical. It is written specially for Religious Institutes and has one chapter dealing only with the formation of Religious Priests.

The document does not present any new ideas or thoughts but it does make some very important, positive and forceful statements on many aspects of Religious Life, and on formation. Like our Formation Guide, it presents the religious life as a "gift from God" and as a "call of God for which there is no explanation apart from the love which He bears for the person" (Par 8). In responding to and accepting this call, the religious strives to follow Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit. This invitation and response allows for and encourages the growth of the religious to a full balanced maturity and a deep spiritual life. The document rightly points out that it is the action of God and the response of the individual, are brought together by the act of religious profession, which is also an act of the Church.

Some of the more forceful and positive statements are made in the sections on the vows. *"Their vows give outstanding and striking testimony*



International College in Rome.

that the world cannot be transformed and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes" (Par 12). Religious life is characterised by an "evangelical radicalism" which does not withdraw us from the world.

The short treatment on the vow of chastity is very positive and balanced. The vow is presented as sign and source which allows for a more immediate relation with God

through Christ in the Spirit. This brings about the "possibility of a true dedication to and openness towards others, in sharing their joys, in being faithful and constant in love, without a thought of domination or exclusiveness" (Par 13). The outline of the pedagogical programme for formation takes into account the spiritual, physical and psychological needs and development of the person.



Young professed Brothers of the Solomon Islands.

"Heed the calls of the Church"



The first Brothers of the Indian Sector.

Sensibility to poverty is nothing new... What is perhaps new, is "a particular sensibility for the poor and for the poverty that exists in the world, which characterizes religious life today" (Par 14). And from that starting point the document forms a direct link between the vow of poverty and the "option for the poor". The call is very clear —we have to live a life united in spirit and in fact with those in want, a call which "implies an interior detachment, a certain austerity... and a sharing at times in their life and struggles without forgetting the specific mission of religious" (Par 14). The document, when detailing the educational programme for evangelical poverty, points out that the cultural differences and difficulties need to be taken into account.

Obedience is linked with mission. Obedience to the imitation of Christ is obedience to His mission: the salvation of the world. Hence obedience without mission is not obedience. When giving guidelines for formation, the document states that the candidates need "to leave the anonymity of the technical world, to know themselves as they are, and to be known as persons" (Par 15). Which is an indication of the impact of technology on the values and development of the human person in more developed countries.

The section on the vows concludes by making the link between commitment and mission, something which is of current concern to our Institute. There is no division be-

tween "the end of religious life and the aim of an institute, between consecration to God and mission in the world" (Par 17).

In general there is a remarkable resemblance between this document and our Formation Guide. The general principles are the same and the same stress is given to certain points and areas of concern such as; the need for accompaniment, the importance of the novitiate as a time of prayer and reflection and the necessity of a balanced formation programme. This agreement confirms strongly our position within that of the Church. The role of the Church in Religious life and as a principal agent in formation is given a strong emphasis, for while the vows are a personal response by the religious to God's love, it is the Church who receives and recognises them, and thereby gives a mission to the religious, as individuals and as Institutes. For the Church is "a people on a journey...

- a people which is rooted in human history,
- a people which finds... the word of God... in Scripture, tradition and the magisterium.
- a people not unaware of the changes,
- a people which identifies itself as the Body of Christ and finally
- a missionary people" (Par 24).

Throughout the document, the religious are encouraged to work with the Church, support it and be supported by it.

When dealing with the content and method of formation in all its stages from the pre-novitiate to ongoing formation, the document gives a good overview of the Church's expectations and guidelines. Useful references to the new Canon Law are given. In the programme there is a sound balance between the spiritual and psychological aspects so that there is a "harmonious fusion of spiritual, apostolic, doctrinal and practical elements" (Par 1), of the religious life.

The chapter entitled "Actual Questions concerning Religious Formation" provides three sections of interesting reading:

- i) one dealing with the young candidate and vocation promotion.
- ii) a section on Culture and Formation —short but has some very significant points, particularly for those who are in situations where culture is a big issue in formation,
- iii) questions regarding inter-congregational formation programmes.

This document is well presented and reads easily. It confirms our documents on formation and also provides good reading for reflection and study on the vows, religious life and mission within the Church. It is not only for those in formation work, it is of interest to all.

Br. Michael Hoare (South Africa)



Surge of vocations in Malawi.

BROTHERS PROVINCIALS

Brother Joseph DE MEYER was born on the 25th of July 1937, in the Anvers region, Belgium. He entered the Habay Postulate-Novitiate in 1953, and pronounced his first vows on the 15th of August 1955. After two years of scholasticate in Arlon and four years of studies in St-Gilles, he started teaching in 1961 at Malmédy and goes for his military service in 1962. He then goes to teach at St-Hubert. He does his second novitiate in St-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, from August 1966 to January 1967. He is then appointed to Couvin, then to St-Hubert, where he is in turn teacher, supervisor, director. In 1981, he becomes director at Malmédy. On the 26th of May 1989, the General Council appoints him to succeed Brother Édouard BLONDEEL as Provincial of Belgium and the Netherlands. Brother Édouard then becomes the director of the French-speaking Centre of Spirituality in Rome.



Brother Joaquín FLORES SEGURA was born on the 16th of August 1940 in México. After four years of Juniorate in Morelia and two years as a Postulant and a Novice in Tlalpan, he makes his first profession on the 8th of December 1958. Then he goes to the scholasticate of Querétaro where he remains until 1962. From 1962 to 1989, his apostolate, interrupted by one year of studies in Paris (1976-1977) takes him to Querétaro, Orizaba, México, San Luis Potosí, Tlalpan. He is, at different periods, teacher or administrator. On the 17th of March 1989, he is appointed Provincial of México Central.



Brother John LEK, born on the 27th of December 1940, entered the Juniorate in his home town, Singapore, in 1953. Four years later, he does his Novitiate in Tyngsboro, in Malaysia. He pronounces his first vows on the 15th of August 1961. From 1961 to 1965, he is a scholastic in Poughkeepsie. He then teaches in Sibü, then Singapore, then Kowloon. In 1984, he completes one year of studies in Manila, and from 1985, he carries on teaching in Singapore. In 1989, he is called upon to replace Brother Joachim HENG as Provincial of China.



Brother Mariano VARONA GREGORIO was born on the 17th of May 1943, in the province of Palencia, Spain. He entered the Juniorate at the age of 10, to start his Novitiate five years later in Pontós. His first profession was on the 16th of July 1960. Immediately, he was sent to Chile, and started his scholasticate in Limache, then carried on with his studies in Quillota (1977). He started teaching in San Fernando (1978), then became Master of Postulants in Santiago (1980). From 1985, he comes to Rome, at the International College, for further studies. In 1988, he is appointed Master of Novices in Santiago. On the 2nd of June 1989, the General Council appoints him Provincial of Chile.



Brother Achylles SCAPIN comes from Julho de Castilhos - RGS, Brazil, where he was born on the 19th of August 1928. He was a Junior from 1943 to 1946 in Apipucos, where he also did his Novitiate, then his first profession on the 18th of January 1948. He then did one year of scholasticate. In 1949, he is already teacher at Maceió and, in 1957 at Fortaleza. From 1960 to 1962 he studies in Paris, with an interval for a Second Novitiate in St-Paul-Trois-Châteaux. In 1962, he is director in Salvador. From 1978 to 1984, is Provincial of Brazil North, in Apipucos, where he remains until 1985 as Provincial Bursar. He is then called to Fortaleza Mondubim to become Master of Novices. In March 1990, he kindly accepted to do a third term as Provincial.

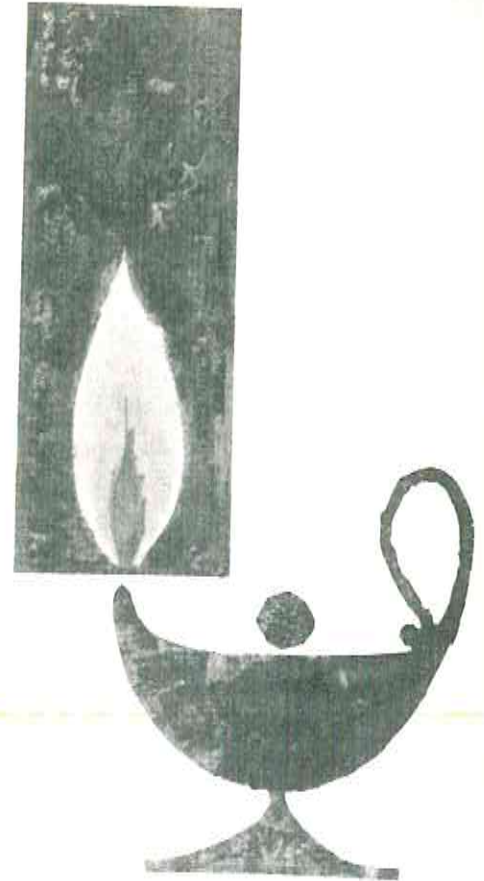


GENERAL STATISTICS OF THE INSTITUTE

AT 31 DECEMBER 1989

PROVINCES & DISTRICTS	POST	NOV	TEMP	PERP	TOTAL	DEC	LEFT	1 V.
01 ADMINISTRATION GÉNÉRALE (INDE)	00	00	05		5	00	00	00
02 AFRIQUE DU SUD	00	00	04	31	35	00	01	00
03 ALLEMAGNE	00	02	05	66	71	06	00	00
04 AMÉRIQUE CENTRALE	11	14	39	149	188	02	02	09
05 BEAUCAMPS-ST-GENIS	02	03	06	228	234	08	00	01
06 BELGIQUE-HOLLANDE	00	00	00	149	149	03	00	00
07 BÉTICA	09	16	27	169	196	02	00	01
08 BRÉSIL NORD	07	08	14	72	86	02	05	04
09 CASTILLA	23	09	21	155	176	01	03	06
10 CATALUNYA	14	20	42	211	253	02	14	06
11 CHILI	03	04	05	97	102	02	02	00
12 CHINE	03	00	03	44	47	01	01	01
13 COLOMBIE	04	07	17	76	93	01	06	06
14 CÓRDOBA	02	01	04	83	87	05	01	00
15 ÉQUATEUR	02	00	08	41	49	00	01	02
16 ESOPUS	00	03	02	158	160	03	02	02
17 GRANDE BRETAGNE	01	04	12	63	75	00	02	02
18 IBERVILLE	00	00	03	195	198	06	00	02
19 IRLANDE	00	00	01	38	39	00	00	00
20 ITALIE	00	01	03	108	111	01	01	00
21 LEÓN	04	10	14	162	176	07	01	02
22 LEVANTE	07	10	10	102	112	01	03	01
23 LIBAN-SYRIE	00	00	00	17	17	00	00	00
24 LUJÁN	04	01	04	102	106	02	03	01
25 MADAGASCAR	00	02	24	47	71	00	04	09
26 MADRID	00	03	04	119	123	01	01	00
27 MELBOURNE	00	00	03	141	144	02	02	00
28 MEXIQUE CENTRAL	15	13	28	130	158	01	10	09
29 MEXIQUE OCCIDENTAL	01	14	18	164	182	05	08	04
30 MIDI-CENTRE-OUEST-HERMITAGE	00	00	01	249	250	05	00	01
31 NIGERIA	03	03	16	64	80	00	02	03
32 NORTE	06	09	04	140	144	04	01	00
33 NOUVELLE ZELANDE	08	10	17	167	184	02	05	03
34 PÉROU	02	20	21	62	83	01	02	06
35 PHILIPPINES	05	08	07	42	49	00	04	02
36 PORTO ALEGRE	07	04	08	145	153	01	00	01
37 PORTUGAL	00	01	06	57	63	00	00	00
38 POUGHKEEPSIE	00	00	03	135	138	03	02	00
39 QUÉBEC	00	23	17	150	167	03	01	05
40 RIO DE JANEIRO	01	05	11	84	95	00	00	01
41 RWANDA	01	01	06	32	38	00	01	00
42 SANTA CATARINA	05	02	14	64	78	02	03	02
43 SANTA MARIA	06	07	09	89	98	01	00	02
44 SÃO PAULO	10	07	13	87	100	02	04	01
45 SRI LANKA	00	02	04	42	46	03	01	00
46 SUISSE	00	00	00	24	24	01	00	00
47 SIDNEY	02	02	16	311	327	03	03	06
48 URUGUAY	00	00	00	34	34	00	00	00
49 VENEZUELA	12	11	29	44	73	00	01	02
50 ZAÏRE	03	06	20	31	51	00	01	02
TOTAL 1989	183	266	548	5 170	5 718	95	104	105

OUR DECEASED



FERNANDES Manuel Pereira	Brésil Nord	01.03.90
BARRIUSO CARRASCO Donaciano	Bética	06.03.90
BOILY Gérard	Québec	11.03.90
PACHO FERNÁNDEZ Lorenzo	León	12.03.90
BOUCHER Alfred-Roméo	Iberville	28.03.90
WILKINSON Joseph A.	Esopus	02.04.90
PEREDA PEREDA Ángel	Norte	05.04.90
DOOLEY William	Esopus	18.04.90
FLOOD Peter	Ireland	22.04.90
POERSCH Pedro Otto	Santa Maria	26.04.90
BARNILS MASAT Domingo	Perú	27.04.90
BOUDRY Eugène	Beaucamps-St. Genis	30.04.90
CARDONA GARCÍA Sinforoso	Colombia	13.05.90
COLOMBAT Claude-Marie	M.C.O. - Hermitage	22.05.90
ORDÓÑEZ GARCÍA Alonso Antonio	América Central	27.05.90
ISERN ISERN Miguel	Chile	28.05.90
BOULET Paul-Émile	Québec	05.06.90
MARTÍN GIL Donato	América Central	06.06.90
HAGAN Christopher	South Africa	14.06.90
BERMOND Justinien	Beaucamps-St. Genis	18.06.90
McTIERNAN Michael F.	Ireland	22.06.90
BOENKE Werner	Allemagne	24.06.90
BORELLI Bruce	Poughkeepsie	27.06.90

VIÑAS PRAT Pedro	Perú	28.06.90
VEYSSET André	M.C.O. - Hermitage	29.06.90
DEWILDE Michel	Belgique - Hollande	02.07.90
WALSH Tomás	Luján	02.07.90
FELINTO PEREIRA Euclides	Rio de Janeiro	03.07.90
CANEDO Luis	South Africa	05.07.90
LANKES Josef	Allemagne	08.07.90
ARBUÉS RUBIOL José	Catalunya	20.07.90
LI SHU YEN Gabriel	Chine (intérieure)	23.07.90
CINQUIN Joanny	M.C.O. - Hermitage	29.07.90
CASTAÑÓN FERNÁNDEZ Juan Antonio	Chine	02.08.90
BAZANTE GÓMEZ Gabriel María	Colombia	05.08.90
BOETSCH Hermann	Beaucamps - St. Genis	09.08.90
VALLAINC Pablo	Luján	10.08.90
SIONGERS Florent	Belgique - Hollande	14.08.90
GRIOT Gilbert-Joseph	M.C.O. - Hermitage	17.08.90
GARCÍA DEL BARRIO José	América Central	19.08.90
McINTOSH Thomas Joseph	New Zealand	23.08.90
DE CREE Henri	Belgique - Hollande	23.08.90
DALRI Altino	São Paulo	31.08.90
FRANTZEN Jacques	Belgique - Hollande	01.09.90
MEDIAVILLA ANTÓN Cándido	Venezuela	04.09.90
BATALHA José Joaquim	Rio de Janeiro	09.09.90
TEISSEIRE Daniel	M.C.O. - Hermitage	12.09.90
YUSTON Ernesto	Luján	15.09.90
MOSCHHAIZER NETTO José	Porto Alegre	16.09.90
RODRÍGUEZ DE FELIPE Constantino	León	25.09.90
CALDERÓN RAMÍREZ Antonio	México Occidental	26.09.90
KELM Patrick Joseph	Great Britain	26.09.90
VACHON Joseph	Iberville	29.09.90



COLEGIO INTERNACIONAL, ROMA. AÑO ACADÉMICO 1989-1990

De izquierda a derecha y de delante hacia atrás

1. Hermanos: Víctor Preciado (México Occidental), José Igarza (Perú), Fernando Hinojal (Subdirector, Bética), Joaquim Sperandio (Santa Catarina), Honoré Rakotonarivo (Madagascar), Mateo González (Levante), Isidoro García (Cataluña), João Coelho (Santa Maria).

2. *De pie:* Fernando Nebreda (Madrid), Gregorio Bartolomé (Bética), Charles Munyengango (Ruanda), Juan María Fuster (Bética), Martí Enrich (Cataluña). *Sentados:* Rafael Kongfook (Perú), Roberto Moraglia (Italia), Charles Howard (Superior general), Jesús Conderana (Levante), Alfonso Murad (Rio de Janeiro), Carlos Mario McEwen (Colombia), Evilazio Tambosi (Santa Catarina), Ramón Martínez (Capellán, México), Vittorio Vuyet (diácono, Italia).

3. Adolfo Cermeno (América Central), Jesús Hernández (México Occidental), José María Custodi (Cataluña-Paraguay), Jaime Parés (Cataluña), Eugène Kabanguka (Ruanda), Rufino Luciani (Italia), Marcelino Ganzarain (Consejero general), Vicente Gutiérrez (Ecuador), Alfredo Crestani (Director, Porto Alegre), Elio Dotti (Italia), Ernesto Tendero (Madrid).

Ausentes: Alfredo Herrera (Corea), Isidro Azpeleta (Chile), Roberto Carrillo (México Central).

CURSO DE ESPIRITUALIDAD

San Lorenzo de El Escorial. Febrero-Junio 1990

FILA SUPERIOR: Eduardo Gatti (Luján), Padre Guillermo (Agustino), Javier Ocaranza (Méx. Occ.), Pedro Armando Fossa (São Paulo), Padre Porfirio Martínez, Luis Díez (América Central), Florentino Andrés (Madrid-Zaire), Daniel Ramírez Osorio (Colombia), José Luis Marcos (Perú), Matías Espinosa (Norte).

CENTRO: José Luis Ampudia (León), Félix Rodríguez (Cataluña), Carlos Asensio (Castilla), Marino González (Madrid), Jesús María Martínez (Norte), Manuel Laso (Luján), Manuel Fernández (León), Teófilo Pérez (Cataluña), Manuel de Jesús Badillo (Méx. Occ.).

INFERIOR: Avelino Jiménez (Bética-Bolivia), Federico Plumed (Cataluña), Javier Duarte (Méx. Occ.), Laurentino Albalá (Ecuador), Silvio Arteaga (Colombia), Hermes Balena (Santa Catarina), Ricardo Piña (Dist. Corea-Méx. Central).





ENGLISH-SPEAKING RENEWAL GROUP, NEMI, 1990

Seated (left to right). Brothers: Robert Lee (Great Britain), Daniel Cronin (Poughkeepsie), Patrick Brady (South Africa), John McDonnell (Assistant, Esopus), Brian Wanden (Superior, New Zealand), Charles Howard (Superior general), Ephrem Obris (Sri Lanka), John Wells (Sydney), Domingo Eceolaza (Zimbabwe), Harry Prout (Melbourne).

Standing (left to right). Brothers: Michael Jones (Sydney), Ewald Frank (Germany-Kenya), Joseph Mc Kee (Great Britain-Cameroon), Patrick Bignell (New Zealand), Tobias Okwara (Nigeria), Martin Pattison (New Zealand), Anthony Walker (New Zealand), John McMahon (Melbourne), Father Mark Coleridge (chaplain, Melbourne), William Lawley (New Zealand).

Absent: Br. Kenneth Curtin (Esopus).

GRUPO HISPANO-LUSO DE TERCERA EDAD, ROMA, ABRIL-JUNIO 1990

De abajo arriba, y de izquierda a derecha:

1. Hermanos: Ivo Piusi (Santa Maria), Arcadio Balbás (Córdoba), Andrés Carpintero (Cataluña), Fabián Echarte (Norte), Felipe Alonso (Córdoba).
2. Hermanos: Lauro Martín (Perú), Francisco Rabanal (León), Honorato Asarta (Norte), José Ramos (Director adjunto, Bética), Guillermo Casto (Director, Luján), Charles Howard (Superior general), Hermes Pandolfo (Director adjunto, Porto Alegre), Eliseo Allor (Capellán, México), Manuel Hernández (México Occidental), José Robles (Castilla), Estevão Müller (São Paulo).
3. Hermanos: Henrique Maurina (Santa Catarina), Lauro Neuwald (Porto Alegre), Faustino Gómez (Venezuela), Christiano Bernardi (Santa Maria), José Ibáñez (Levante), Avelino Madalozzo (Porto Alegre), Paulo Romanckiv (São Paulo), Germán Ares (América Central), Héctor Criado (Córdoba), David Preciado (México Central), Augusto Porro (Luján), Hipólito Cosío (Córdoba).
4. Hermanos: Augusto Jenemann (Uruguay), Benigno Aller (León), Luis Solórzano (México Occidental), Pedro Santillana (Chile), Feliciano Merino (América Central), Jesús Barbería (Cataluña), Antonio Rebollar (Castilla), Pedro Peña (Colombia), Anselmo Liessmann (Uruguay), Basilio Fidalgo (Chile), José Bernardi (Porto Alegre).
5. Hermanos: Leoncio Rodríguez (Bética), Emiliano Gutiérrez (Madrid), Julián Pérez (Bética), Baltasar Santillán (México Central), Jacinto Ruesga (Luján), Javier Navallas (Córdoba), Ramón Burgui (Bética), Pedro Martínez (Perú), Benito Baño (América Central), Mariano Puebla (Ecuador), Román Cotorro (Venezuela).



SESSIONS DE SPIRITUALITÉ