

## PART I

### DOCUMENTS WHICH PERTAIN TO THE LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF THE SERVANT OF GOD CLAUDINE THEVENET, FROM HER BIRTH UNTIL THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY (1774-1818)

We have collected here the documents relative to the first period of the life of the Servant of God. These, though lacking in detail, present the profoundly Christian environment in which Claudine was born and lived, and give a glimpse of the energetic and strong quality which her character, sensitive by nature, acquired from the teaching she received at home and from the dramatic circumstances through which France was passing and which had even deeper repercussions in Lyon.

Later on we shall see the Servant of God expend her zeal and charity in a silent and hidden apostolate, which will carry her forward, almost imperceptibly, to become the foundress of a new religious Congregation in 1818.

As it is necessary to refer frequently to documents preserved in particular archives, we give here the key to those which will be quoted with greater frequency:

- A. *G. Roma* = General Archives of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.
- A. *A. Lyon* — Archives of the archbishopric of Lyon.
- A. *D. Lyon* = Departmental Archives of Rhone, Lyon.

We point out that, in the whole of the *Positio*, the stated documents are reproduced just as they are preserved, with their original spelling. Only the punctuation has been occasionally rectified, as also the use of capital letters. Moreover, we add that the biographical data of the religious of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary are taken from the registers of their general archives.

## DOC. I

INFORMATION REGARDING THE FAMILY AND BAPTISM OF THE SERVANT OF GOD. — According to the documents referred to below.

Claudine Thevenet was born in Lyon on the 30th March 1774, the second child of Philibert and Marie Antoinette (iuyot de Pravieux).

*The Thevenet.* - As far as one can judge, they originated from Haute Savoie; already from 1693 we find them established in Scysscl-en-Bugey (Ain), where on the 10th May of that year, the grandfather of the Servant of God was born — Francois Thevenet, who married Jacqueline Bou/oud on the 29th April, 1726. The families of Thevenet and Bouzoud, both property owners, were among the most cultured persons of their town at that time. Francois Thevenet was mayor of Scysscl until his death, which took place on the 30th May, 1768. Jacqueline Bou/oud died the year after, on the 21st November.

The spouses Thevenet-Bouzoud had thirteen children, of whom the sixth and eldest of the boys, Philibert, the father of the Servant of God, was born on the 21st October, 1734 (Parish register of Scyssel, Arch. dept. Bourg), The exact date is not known when he transferred himself to Lyon and entered the business of the "Noble Sieur Pierre (Iuyot de Pravieux, manufacturer of cloth of silk, gold and silver, in that town; living there in Rue de l'Arbre Sec;" on the 7th August, 1770, Philibert Thevenet married the daughter of the said Pierre, Marie Antoinette Guyot de Pravieux (Register of the parish of St. Pierre and St. Saturnin, A. D. Lyon).

*The family of Guyot de Pravieux.* - "Jean Guyot, merchant draper", the first member of the family of whom there is any record, was a native of Villerest in "Roannais" (Loire). Already established in Lyon, one of his nephews, Jean Guyot de Pravieux, lawyer in Parliament, married to Jeanne Duxio, was the father of Pierre Annet, grandfather of the Servant of God. He was born on the 10th April, 1698, he died on the 9th February, 1786, and was buried in the Church of St. Pierre. Of his first marriage with Claudine Boucharlat were born two daughters, Jeanne (1725) and Claudine (1728-1778) the godmother of the Servant of God; after a second marriage with Marie Marchand, he had another five children: Antoinette (1733-1833) who married Alexandre Steinman, Claudine Francoise (1740-1774), Anne (1745-1811), Marie Antoinette (1746-1820) mother of the Servant of God. Louis (1749-1793) the only son, married Elizabeth Arcis (1755-1782) and died a victim of the Revolution. The family Guyot de Pravieux occupied a distinguished position in the society of Lyon; their business affairs prospered, as the various documents of the time testify (marriage contracts of Antoinette, 1759; of Marie Antoinette and of Louis, 1779; inventory, 1777; testament of Pierre de Pravieux 1779; sequestration, 1793). These are kept in the archives of the family, and in A. D. Lyon, and we have copies of them.

*The parents and brothers and sisters of the Servant of God.* - Of the marriage Thevenet-Guyot seven children were born: 1) Louis Antoine, 26th February 1773; 2) Claudine, 30th March 1774; 3) Francois Marie, 25th April 1775; 4) Jeanne Marie Francoise Elisabeth, 9th October 1777; 5) Elisabeth Francoise, 19th May 1779; 6) Jean Louis, 29th September 1780; 7) Eleanor Antoinette, 25th October 1782. Of the three boys, the two eldest died heroically, victims of the Revolution; the other, Jean Louis died a bachelor on the 23rd September 1851, so the Thevenet had no direct successors. Of the four daughters, the eldest, Claudine, was the Servant of God; Elisabeth Francoise and Eleanor Antoinette entered Religious life respectively in 1807 and 1813; only the fourth called Babette or Elisabeth, contracted marriage, becoming Madame Mayet.

Claudine then, was born into the heart of a rich and well connected family, in the rue Neuve, parish of St. Nizier, where the Thevenet spouses had settled after their marriage, in the district where those engaged in the silk trade lived, including the Guyot family. Then the Thevenet family moved successively to the rue Griffon and rue Royale, in the parish of St. Pierre and St. Saturnin. It seems that the Thevenet wanted to retain the same level of living as the Guyot and Steinman families, but the burden of such a numerous family did not allow them such luxury for long, and in 1783 when Claudine was nine years old they had to embrace a more modest way of life. In fact there is preserved a document of separation of goods of the Thevenet parents dated 1783, made with the intention of safeguarding the dowry of Marie Antoinette Guyot; and an inventory of furniture, clothing and all the effects of the house. (Arch. Mayet family, Paris). Philibert Thevenet, from that time, no longer figures in the business management of the Guyot family and a new business was opened on a smaller scale in the name of Marie Antoinette Guyot.

Probably it was then that Claudine entered the Abbey of St. Pierre as a boarder, remaining there, it seems, until the age of fifteen, when the Benedictine community (1789-1790) sent their novices away, and was later suppressed, as were all the others, in the Revolution of 1792. Without doubt this period left a profound impression on the soul of Claudine; with her unusual intelligence she must have perceived the gravity of the economic change that took place in her family, and she must have felt it very much, especially the necessity of adapting herself to life in the Abbey, which on the other hand, opened up new horizons in her spiritual life. It was probably in the parish church of St. Pierre, which was part of the Abbey, and was where various members of the Guyot family were buried, that the Servant of God received her First Communion and Confirmation of which, however, we have not found the certificates.

*The Mayet spouses.* - Elisabeth Thevenet and her husband, Jean Baptiste Mayet, deserve special mention as the only descendants of the Thevenet family, on account of their relationship with the Servant of God, and because various members of their successors and descendants are the best witnesses of her virtue (cf. Docs. XXV, XXIX, XXX).

Jean Baptiste Mayet was born in L'Isle (Dordogne) on the 23rd September 1771, the son of a lawyer Jean Baptiste and of Sicarie Fargeot. From 1793-1796 he served in the army as can be concluded from some certificates; in 1794 he was in Rastaff "in Company No. 3 of the Light Cavalry . . . that he was involved in all the events of the final campaign . . . that he conducted himself with honour while he was in the army and that he showed much zeal, courage and good will;" in the two years that followed he belonged to the "Cavalry Corps of the Crown . . . he carried out this campaign of 1795 with zeal and distinction and also that of 1796" (Arch. Mayet family, Paris).

During the Consulate, Mr. Mayet returned to France and arrived in Lyon in difficult circumstances. Forced into hiding, he entered a house unknown to him. It was that of the Thevenet family. There he met his future wife. In fact he married Elisabeth on the 9th June 1802 at the Archbishop's Residence. The civil marriage took place on (he 6th July in the presence of the Mayor of the North Lyon division, where the spouses were living. Mr. Maul left his military career and took up com me ice. In virtue of the law in favour of emigres he tried to recover some of his property, but without any noteworthy result. During the Bourbon restoration, his loyalty to the monarchy merited rank and decoration for him. On the 1st December 1814 Count de Prccy bestowed on him the right to wear the *decoration du Lis*. In 1817 Mr. Mayet was captain of the National (fuard >w^\ Judge of the Tribunal of Commerce.

Of the marriage Mayet-Thevenet seven children were born: Anne Aline, Jean Eusebius, Emma Antoinette, Marie Mclanie, Gabriel Claude, Elisabeth Francoise, and Antoine Anne. All, with the exception of Jean Eusebius who died before he was two months old, wereon intimate terms with the Servant of God.

Jean Baptiste Mayet was always a good adviser for Claudine Thevenet and a support in her administrative and economic affairs. He was a fervent Catholic, to whose virtue his son, IT. Mayet bore eloquent witness. The Mayet spouses and their children left an unusual example of virtue (v. *infra*,

Let us mention here some among the descendants of this exemplary family who gave evidence at the informative process of the Servant of God:

1) Marie Louise Mayet, Sister Julie *of'* Jesus, discalced Carmelite, daughter of Antoine Anne Mayet — called familiarly Tonny — and grand-niece of the Servant of God.

2) Edmond Mayet, brother of Marie Louise.

3) Emma Morel de Barrioz, grand-daughter of Emma Antoinette Mayet, who at the time of the Informative Process lived in Lyon. She generously ceded to the Congregation the collection of original letters of the Servant of God which she had preserved as relics.ao

(a) Translator's note: She ceded them for the Informative Process, unci they were given back to her later. One of her daughters, Jeanne Barrioz de Milliat, ceded them definitively to the Congregation in 1968.

4) Regis Mayet, grandson of Tonny.

5) Joseph Mayet, also a grandson of Tonny, who at present lives in Saint-Leu-la-Forest near Paris. In his possession are the family archives, which he put at our disposal.

## 1

*Baptismal Certificate of Claudine Thevenet, 31st March, 1774.* - From the original, kept in A. D. Lyon, page 44 V.

The certificate of baptism of the Servant of God is preserved in two registers of the Parish of St. Nizier, which are kept in A. A. Lyon and A. D. Lyon respectively. It is signed by her father and by the curate of the parish who administered the baptism, as well as by Guyot de Pravieux her maternal grandfather, by Antoine Burdet, her godfather, by Claudine Guyot, godmother and maternal aunt of the Servant of God, by the widow Steinman, also a maternal aunt, by Chenavard, architect, cousin of the Guyot family, whose signature is found also on the certificate of marriage of Thevenet-Guyot, and who was to be the godfather of their third child Francois Marie.

On the 31st March, I baptized Claudine, born yesterday, daughter of Mr. Philibert Thevenet, silk-merchant, and of Madame Marie Antoinette Guyot, his wife. Godfather, Antoine Burdet, silk-merchant; godmother, Claudine Guyot, spinster, who signed with the father.

|                  |                |                         |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Thevenet         | Claudine Guyot | Guyot de Pravieux       |
| Ant(oin)e Burdet |                | Widow Steiman nee Guyot |
| Chenavard        | Reynard        |                         |

## 2

*Attestation of the death of the spouses Elizabeth and Jean Baptiste Mayet.* - From the original preserved in Paris (Arch. Family Mayet).

As we have indicated in the introduction, Jean Baptiste Mayet dedicated to his wife, who died on the 4th August 1841, some touching phrases filled with praise and grief (a). In his turn, his son the Marist, Fr. Mayet, in a *postscript* of the 4th May 1881 recorded the exemplary conduct of his own father, who died on the 20th August 1843 (b).

Here we have the testimony of two witnesses taken from the original handwritten document preserved in the archives of the family.

a)

On the 4th August (1841) the saddest day in memory, my beloved wife died. She was the most gentle and affectionate of wives, and I loved her with the greatest tenderness; I shall never cease to miss her until my last breath, and shall pray constantly for her, although I have the greatest confidence that God has crowned her with glory, and I ask Him to grant me a similar death, in spite of the fact that my life has been far from resembling hers.

b)

The respected and beloved father who wrote all the preceding statement, died a holy death on the 20th August, 1843, a Sunday, at about the same hour as, for very many years, he used to prepare to go to Mass in the Parish, during the octave of the Assumption, surrounded by his daughters, Emma, Melanie, Elisabeth, his sons Tonny and Claudius Marie Mayet, undersigned, Marist priest.

I add these words on the 4th May 1881, anniversary of the birth of my brother. *We are the children of saints.*

Gabriel-Claudius-Marie Mayet, s.m.p. Marist.

## DOC. II

OF THE VICISSITUDES OF THE THIJVENET FAMILY UP TO THE YFAR 1794. -

From the documents referred to below.

We present here two important documents which confirm the information, unfortunately scarce, that we possess referring to the period corresponding to the childhood and youth of the Servant of God. The serious events which were taking place in Lyon at that time (1789-1802) explain in great part the lack of particulars and the absence of documents.

The beginning and course of the Revolution around Lyon were very stormy, as in the rest of France; political and religious agitation were especially serious in the hilly part of the new department of Rhone-et-Loire;

there were difficulties provoked by recruitment and by requisitioning on the part of the military; there was the siege of Lyon, the time most critical for the city, which brought about its ruin; while the struggle between the revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries caused a state of general insecurity.

On the 14th March, 1789, the members of the clergy, the nobility and the third estate (delegates from the parishes) met in Lyon in the Church of St. Bonaventure, to nominate the representatives for the Estates General. The news of the fall of the Bastille (14th July) provoked general panic throughout the country, known by the name of "La Grande Peur". It gave rise to disturbances in Dauphine and Maconnais, that is to say on the very frontier of the region of Lyon which was a prey to serious agitation: "Fear reigns everywhere and we have not slept by day or night for several days . . . , Unrest and threats are as widespread as ever, but unfortunately I have not sufficient men to cover the region adequately" (letter of Clapeyron to the sub-delegate Bouche, 13th August 1789: *A. D. Lyon, C, 6*).

During the Revolution, Lyon, the capital of the new department of Rhone-et-Loire, was Girondin; later Chalier imposed the dictatorship of the Jacobins (1793) and their excesses provoked the revolt of the opposition which seized power for a short time. The establishment of the new regime and above all the civil constitution of the clergy provoked great unrest in the department.

Notwithstanding all this, the most important event of that period was the revolt of Lyon. In September 1792 the Reign of Terror began; Chalier was overthrown in May 1793 and he was executed on the 16th July. Lyon overwhelmed by the fire of the federalist and monarchist insurrection, was besieged by the army of the Convention (8th August—9th October) and subjected to violent and continuous bombardment. The city was condemned by the Convention to destruction and to the loss of its name which was changed to that of "Ville Affranchie" (12th October 1793), and its administrative jurisdiction was reduced to the present department of Rhone. A revolutionary tribunal formed by Collot d' Herbois and Fouche condemned more than 2,000 citizens of Lyon to death. They were guillotined or shot in the marshes of the Brotteaux.

Towards the end of 1793, Lyon was in ruins; during the period of the Directory it continued to be in a deplorable state as regards housing and health, whilst industry and commerce were languishing and insecurity reigned in the city and the surrounding region (cf. 1 L 382, 1 L 393, *A. D. Lyon*). After the 9th Thermidor (28th July 1794) Lyon resumed its name; then it passed through the "White Terror", the triumph of the monarchists (1796) and through a new republican repression, "Terror under the Directory", after the 18th Fructidor, year V (4th September 1797). The coup d'etat of the 18th Brumaire (9th November 1799) and the new regime of the Consulate were welcomed in Lyon where the city saw relief from ruin and the end of religious