

coach, as her father has indicated. I shall put her in the care of the driver who is an honest man, but I really would want to know where this child is going to be placed, if it is a pious household and if she will be supervised a little. She is only nineteen, and inexperienced. I have strongly advised her to go and see Mr. Donay. Please will you be so kind as to tell him about her, because this poor girl will have no one else to advise her, and at that age, one has so little common sense, especially this girl, who is very immature and whose character is not yet formed.

You would oblige me, my dear, if you could tell me something about the house where she is to be placed. If from time to time you could offer her good advice, you would be doing an act of charity, which would please God very much and would give me real pleasure. I am so anxious that these children should behave well on leaving our house, but alas, my desires are not always fulfilled.

Madame Perroud, nee Mayet,
Maison Perroud
Villefranche
Dept. Rhone.

e)

Extract from a letter of the Servant of God to her niece Emma Mayet Perroud, Lyon, 4th January 1836.

The Servant of God treats at length of business matters, demons! rating her administrative foresight, and she refers to a girl of the Providence.

4th January 1836

My very dear Friend,

You must have received my letter which crossed with yours. I heartily congratulate you on the improvement in your husband's health. I am very grateful for your kindness in writing to me, with your husband ill and all your difficulties; and you still find time to think of a cow. You do not forget anything that would give your relatives pleasure. In this I recognise you only too well, my dear Emma; I told you that we would pray with all our heart for your dear husband. We shall continue our prayers until he has completely recovered. Tell him please, how happy I was to hear that he was feeling better. Let us hope

that this improvement will continue, and that he will soon be completely restored to health. You ask me for news of the little Duchaux girl. There are many ups and downs in her behaviour, but this child is good at heart. When I told her that your husband was suffering very much she immediately said to me: "Mother, I am going to make a novena for him". She has many faults, but with time, these faults will grow less and, if piety can get the upper hand, I hope that she will grow into a good person.

Madame Perroud, nee Mayet
Villefranche, Dept. Rhone.

DOC. XVIII

THE CONDUCT OF REV. F. X. POUSSET towards the Servant of God, 1836. —
From documents examined below.

With the unforeseen departure of Fr. Rey towards the end of 1835, the Servant of God found herself without a chaplain and deprived of the help that he had effectively given to her work from 1828 (Doc. XXVII, *Histoire*, p. 601).

The Foundress requested Mons. de Pins to appoint a new chaplain, who would at the same time be able to help her put the final touches to the text of the Rules, at which she had been working carefully for many years, and which she wanted to present for the approval of Rome (Doc. XXVII, *Histoire*, p. 621). The appointment was given to Francis Xavier Pousset, priest of the diocese of Bourges; in the meantime Rev. Nicolas Desgaret had been acting as chaplain (Doc. XXVII, p. 620, n. 5). For an objective interpretation of this page in the life of the Servant of God, it is necessary to get a closer knowledge of the personality of the new chaplain.

Fr. Pousset belonged to a modest family of farmers of Bourges. He was the sixth child of Charles and Marguerite Thibaud, who were married on the 3rd October 1781. He was born on the 30th November 1794, and he was given the names of Francois Andre, as is seen from his Birth Certificate (cl Bourges, Arch. Depart. 5 — 3E, 1171). Later, he was to sign himself more frequently Francois Xavier, sometimes Andre Augustin, and in some cases Francois Xavier Andre Augustin Marie, variations which have often caused difficulty in identifying him.

He was ordained priest in Bourges on the 26th July 1818, and will successively assistant parish priest in Saint Amand (Cher), "priest in i hoi •••• in Prissac (Indre), parish priest of Buzancais (Indre) and finally "I Saint Genitour in Le Blanc (Indre) (cf. Parish registers), from where, ten years later, in the Unpolitical events of 1830, he fled (*infra*, 1), taking refuge with his family at Bourges, and after a short time he was appointed Professor at ilu- <I>v Un- <I>v csan

Minor Seminary. From the Registers belonging to the above mentioned parishes one can follow step by step the presence of Fr. Pousset. It should be noted that in the parish of Prissac various deeds before his appointment and his entry bear his signature, while there are others without it at different times in which they should have had his signature. On June 12th, 1832, he entered the Novitiate of the Company of Jesus, recently opened in Fribourg (Switzerland) and the catalogue preserved in the archives of the Jesuit Generalate in Rome, contains the following data: "Pousset Francois Xavier, Born 30th November 1794. — Entered, 12th June 1832. — First year Novitiate, Fribourg, 2, Staviaci, 1833. Worked in Lyon, 2nd year Novitiate 1834. — Dismissed 1835".

Unsuccessful in remaining in the Company and failing in his attempt to obtain a post in the archdiocese of Paris (cf. A. A. Lyon, "*Dossier Mgr de Pins*", two letters of the Marquis of Mirepoix, 1835 and one of Fr. Pousset, 30th December 1835), Fr. Pousset requested Mons.de Pins for admission into the diocese of Lyon. As this request arrived simultaneously with the request for a chaplain on the part of the Servant of God, the Apostolic Administrator, with a single appointment, satisfied the desire of both one and the other. This appointment bears the date of the 13th February 1836 (cf. A. A. Lyon, "*Approbation 1803-1846*"), although on the 4th Fr. Pousset was already exercising his ministry in Fourviere (cf. A. G. Roma, Ledger, Lyon 1837-1839, p. 15).

Fr. Pousset was undoubtedly the most efficacious instrument for the sanctification of the Servant of God during the last year of her life. It seems that Fr. Pousset's lack of success in the Company of Jesus left him with a certain aversion for anything Ignatian. This, united with his authoritarian character, set him in opposition to the Servant of God almost as soon as he entered the house in Fourviere. Acting in her capacity as Foundress, she strove with all the energy of her character and notwithstanding the failure of her physical strength, to maintain for her Congregation the spirit and form that it had been given from its origins. The *Histoire* p. 620, says that the Servant of God could not leave to Fr. Pousset the right to direct everything, to transform everything according to his caprice, and to consider himself absolute superior. From this originated differences of purpose and method, bitter reproaches that the Servant of God had to support daily. "She had no peace", says Sr. St. Bernard, "from the time when Fr. Pousset entered the house."

Mother St. Ignatius endeavoured to hide from her community the hidden struggle the chaplain carried on daily against her, a struggle which could not pass entirely unnoticed by the community (Doc. XXVII, *Histoire*, p. 621). The modifications introduced in the formula of the minutes of profession (*infra*, 2) and the scene when Fr. Pousset administered the Last Sacraments to the Servant of God (cf. Doc. XXVII, pp. 622-623), are clear indications of long, heroic endurance. After the death of the Servant of God, Fr. Pousset continued to exercise his ministry in Fourviere, in agreement, at least judging

from appearances, with the Superioress General, successor of the Foundress, who was, for some time, docile to the directives of the chaplain, admitting modifications which we see reflected in the official Registers of the Congregation. But in 1848 a breach took place between M. St. Andrew and Fr. Pousset, as we see confirmed in various letters of the then Vicar General of Verdun, J. Rossat (Doc. XXVII, *Histoire*, p. 649, note 1), which refer to this disagreement between 1848 and 1849. Thus for example he says on the 10th March 1848: "I have just learnt with regret of the devastation of your house of Fourviere, the dispersion of your entire community and the numerous losses which have unhappily resulted from it . . . They tell me that Fr. Pousset has run away, no one knows where!" On the 31st January 1849: "I have not written to Fr. Pousset since my return to Verdun, and likewise I have not received any letter from him; it follows from this that I do not know at all what he intends to do with regard to your Congregation. I am sincerely sorry that this kind of breach between your Congregation and him has taken place." On the 28th November 1849 he wrote: "I am very sorry to know that it has been impossible for you to come to an agreement with M. Pousset" (cf. A. G. Roma "*Lettres Mr. Rossat*").

From 1843, as well as Fr. Pousset, who was chaplain of the Mother House and of the boarding school, the *Providence* had its own chaplain, Fr. Vincent Coindre, younger brother of Fr. Andre, who had resigned as Director of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart on the 12th September 1841 (f 12.1.1858). In 1848, the fall of Louis Philippe and the proclamation of the Republic in France gave rise to serious disorders with the plundering and burning of various religious houses, and one of those that suffered the most damage was the *Providence*. Under these circumstances Fr. Vincent Coindre, at the risk of his life, by disguising himself and joining the revolutionaries, succeeded in avoiding greater damage, an action for which he later received a decoration. The day after the fire he exerted himself among relatives and friends to procure a refuge for the religious and pupils of the *Providence* and he continued to watch over their safety until the situation was normal again. Fr. Pousset, at the first sign of the revolt, disappeared, and only some months later was it known that he was in Vernaison in the house of retirement for sick priests, where, in the month of December, the Vicar General of Le Puy, Fr. Montagnac met him "in a very sad state" (cf. A. G. Roma, Letter of M. St. Bruno, 16th December 1848).

This house of Vernaison, which still exists today, had been inaugurated, but was not finished when Fr. Pousset betook himself there; but the origin of the establishment goes back to 1735, the year in which the clergy of Lyon requested and obtained from the Archbishop, Mons. de Rochebonne, the creation of an institution which at the beginning was called "Seminary of St. Pothin" and was established in the Croix Rousse. On the 27th April 1738, the same clergy requested the aid of the whole diocese in an appeal from which we give the following extract in which the nature and end of the hospice at the time of its foundation are reflected. These have been preserved until our days,

notwithstanding its vicissitudes: "Here is an object truly worthy of your zeal and your charity ... to procure for priests of the living God a powerful means of sanctification and salvation, and to prevent their priestly character from being exposed to shameful degradation ... Is it not sad to see persons who have grown old in the exercise of their holy duties and who are worn out by long and assiduous work, unable to find a refuge where they can retire and take some time to prepare themselves for the terrible passage from time to eternity? Is it not deplorable to see priests, such respectable men ... become the dregs of society, some begging shamefully, lodged in places unbefitting their character and too often reduced to dying deprived of the most necessary assistance; others constrained to occupy posts where their infirmities or their great age do not permit them to be of service any more, or to celebrate Holy Mass, as they are blind or so handicapped that they cannot do it with proper decorum? Many, finally, who have had the misfortune to become insane, or whose faculties are totally weakened, are wandering in the countryside and are a most distressing sight".

In 1745 this Seminary of Saint Pothin was transferred to the Ile-Barbe, and in 1782 it was suppressed by the Archbishop Malvin de Montazet.

In 1806 it was re-established in Fourviere, on a very modest scale, until in 1846 the zeal and generosity of Cardinal de Bonald procured for it the magnificent property of Vernaison, where a new stage of the institution began under the name of *Hospice de Saint Francois de Sales* (cf. M. BfARBIER], *Notes historiques sur la Maison deretraitedespretresduiocesedehyon*, Lyon 1899).

M. Barbier, the author of the work cited, was appointed Superior of the house in 1892. He published the edifying necrology of 164 priests who died in the house before 1898. The malady from which 105 of them suffered was named: 7 were suffering from cancer, 11 from heart disease, 24 from tuberculosis, and 34 from mental or nervous diseases of various kinds, epilepsy, serious mental illness, imaginary illness, infantilism, obsession with the devil, senility, etc. Regarding Fr. Pousset, it says that he had fallen into infantilism and he believed that he was still the chaplain of Fourviere. Fr. Pousset remained in the hospice for 30 years, and died on the 28th August 1878.

When we visited the house of Vernaison in June 1960 looking for data regarding Fr. Pousset, Canon Jean Marie Fayolle, Superior of the hospice from 1951, said that the fact of having entered the house at 54 years of age "in a sad state", and of remaining there for 30 years, together with other circumstances, clearly indicated that he was suffering from mental illness; this category of patients found shelter there as long as they did not become dangerous, in which case they were transferred to the hospital of St. John of God or to the Antiquaille.

The attitude of Fr. Pousset towards the Servant of God was unjustified in a normal person. The psychiatrists Y. Emericof Lyon, C. Vasquez Velasco of

Madrid and N. Ancochea of Barcelona, who have studied the "case of Fr. Pousset" by means of the data which we have been able to collect, agree in almost all points of their diagnosis, considering Fr. Pousset as a psychiatric case.

1

Biographical information about Fr. F. X. Pousset, 1874. — From the original preserved in the parish archives of Saint Genitour, Le Blanc (Indre).

In a register (34 x 22 cm) entitled "List of parish priests of Saint Genitour since 1442, according to a chronological table together with some biographical notes, made in 1776 by M. deLacouxdeMarivaux, parish priest of Saint Genitour", is found the biographical information which we are reproducing in this document, written by the parish priest Etienne Alexandre Bazin in 1874.

In general the author seems well informed because the date of birth, of ordination to the priesthood, etc., are exact. However, he omits the entrance of Fr. Pousset into the novitiate of the Company of Jesus and the period of his chaplaincy in Fourviere, covering the whole of this period by the phrase "He was admitted into the diocese of Lyon". The author certainly errs when he says: "After an uprising which he had quelled, he received the decoration of the Legion of Honour" (cf. *infra*, note).

Some information contained in the notes deserves to be pointed out:

a) In 1830 "under the stress of fear" which the political events inspired, he fled from the parish and abandoned it for ever. This conduct was repeated in 1848 in Fourviere, in identical circumstances.

b) "He was said to be too severe in practice . . ." yet others affirmed the opposite. The unevenness of character of Pousset is reflected in the different evaluations of those who knew him when he was parish priest in Le Blanc; the same unevenness was evident in Fourviere where, while he was very severe with the Servant of God, he was amiable with M. St. Andrew and with other religious, in the period between 1837-1848.

c) The last lines of the "information" must be interpreted in the light of what is said by the witnesses of Vernaison: "He had fallen into a state of infantilism and he believed he was still in Jesus-Marie".

Francois Xavier Andre Auguste Pousset, was born in Bourges on the 30th November 1794; he was Bachelor of Literature of the Academy of Bourges. He was first priest-in-charge of Prissac, then parish priest of Buzancais. From that parish he went to the parish of St. Genitour du Blanc on the 14th March 1828. He resigned on the 1st August 1830, and left Le Blanc, frightened by the political events of the

period and scared by certain threats from the enemies that his zeal had made in his parish. The advice of Mr. Moreau, his curate, who was even more frightened than he, contributed greatly to his resolve to take flight. His house had been broken into by the ringleaders, under the pretext of making a search. He was said to be too severe in practice, but the most intelligent persons whom he directed affirmed the contrary. Malevolence, always disposed to paralyse through calumny the ministry of a priest who does good, left a cloud hanging over his direction of a pious lady, Mile ..., who in a most providential manner, when she died, left in Fr. Pousset's written correspondence with her the most complete justification of him. Mr. Adrien Bernard, former president of the Civil Tribunal of Le Blanc, an extremely intelligent man, one of the most honourable and highly esteemed in that district, found in this correspondence, which he had read, something like that of Bossuet and Fenelon.

After some time spent in the Minor Seminary of Bourges where he was the teacher of the fourth class, Mr. Pousset was admitted into the diocese of Lyon, where, at the end of an uprising that he had quelled, he received the decoration of the Legion of Honour.¹ Whilst I am writing these lines, in 1874, this venerable veteran of the priesthood prepares for eternity in retirement. Prayer is his great, or rather his only occupation.

2

Minutes of Professions, Lyon 1836. — From the originals preserved in A. G. Roma. Register VI.

Under this number we are copying two minutes from Register VI of Professions, corresponding to the year 1836, the last ceremonies at which the Servant of God was present and the first in which Fr. Pousset took part.

a)

The minutes of March 25th preserve their usual form and it should be noted that as with preceding minutes they end with the phrase "in our dear

¹The author has confused him with Fr. Rey, also a chaplain of the Convent of Jesus and Mary, Lyon, who received this decoration (A. G. Roma, information of National Archives of Paris).

Congregation according to the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, in the presence of... "This is the act of profession of M. St. Louis (Elisabeth Levrat) who died in Lyon on the 25th June 1853. She was the sister of M. St. Marie, who was the Assistant General (cf. Doc. XXVII, *Histoire*, p. 627, note 2). The act bears the signatures of Cattet, Pousset, M. St. Andrew, M. St. Paul, M. St. Francis.

On the 25th March in the year eighteen hundred and thirty-six, we the undersigned Superiors and Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, assembled in Chapter, after invoking the light of the Holy Spirit, having tested in the Novitiate for two years and having examined, according to our Statutes, our dear Sister Elisabeth Levrat, legitimate daughter of Francois Levrat and Marie Guingard, with the authorisation of Monsieur Cattet, Vicar General, have admitted to her profession. She has freely and voluntarily made it into the hands of our Very Rev. Fr. Superior, in our chapel in Fourviere, making the simple vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, for 3 years in our dear Congregation, according to the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, in the presence of:
Cattet, V. G.: Abbe Pousset, chaplain, M(ar)ie St. Andre,
M(ar)ie St. Francois, M(ar)ie St. Paul.

b)

On the 6th October 1836 in Lyon, a ceremony of three professions took place; the three sets of minutes which correspond to them are the same with the exception of the data of each religious. We are reproducing the first, referring to M. St. Leon, Josephine Maissat, daughter of Jean and Marie Antoinette Gueyton, born on the 21st September 1816 in Annonay (Ardeche). She entered the Congregation on the 1st May 1834; in 1850 she left for India where she held the office of Superioress for many years. She died in Bombay on the 10th December 1888.

In these minutes we note the following details. In place of the phrase "and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius", is substituted "and our Statutes". The word "constitutions", previously scratched out, is still legible. The preceding minutes (cf. *supra*, a) ended with the formula "Constitutions of St. Ignatius in the presence of:" followed by the signatures of the witnesses.

In these minutes, Fr. Pousset added in his own hand: "M. l'Abbe Pousset chaplain of the house who has signed with us", and there follow the signatures of the abbe Pousset, chaplain, Cattet, V. G.; Marie St. Andre, Marie Ste. Therese, Marie St. Francois, Marie St. Paul.

On the 6th October in the year 1836, we the undersigned Superiors and Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, assembled in

Chapter, after invoking the light of the Holy Spirit, having tested in the Novitiate for two years and having examined according to our Statutes, our very dear Sister Josephine Maissat, Sr. M(ar)ie St. Leon, aged 20 years, native of Anonay, dept. of Ardeche, legitimate daughter of Joseph Maissat and of Antoinette Gueyton, have admitted her to profession. She has freely and voluntarily made it into the hands of our Very Rev. Fr. Superior, Monsieur Cattet, Vicar General, in our chapel in Fourviere, making the simple perpetual vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience in our dear Congregation, *according to the Rule of St. Augustine and our Statutes*, in the presence of Father Pousset, chaplain of the house, who has signed with us.

Cattet, V. G., Abbe Pousset, Chaplain, M(ar)ie St. Andre, M(ar)ie St. Francois, M(ar)ie St. Paul, M(ar)ie Ste Therese.

DOC. XIX

DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE CONSTITUTIONS of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, 1837-1843.

Chronologically parts of this document go beyond the date of the death of the Servant of God; however, given the particular character of the information collected, it seems appropriate to include it here.

Claudine Thevenet and her first companions came together at the end of 1818, in Pierres Plantees, to initiate their new religious Congregation. They observed the Rule of the Association (cf. Doc. IV, 1, p. 50). Fr. Andre Coindre, at an imprecise date, but before September 1821, added some rules containing general lines of conduct for religious life (cf. Doc. VIII, p. 200). From 1821 until his death (30th May 1826), Fr. Andre Coindre worked in collaboration with the Servant of God at the drawing up of a Rule which would become definitive after some time of trial, because "laws and rules", said Fr. Coindre in a letter of the 25th February 1826, "are not perfect until experience has shown what to do and what to avoid" (cf. Rome, Gen. Arch. of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart). In the meantime Fr. Coindre and M. St. Ignatius had presented some statutes, the text of which we do not know, for the approval of Mons. de Pins (1825) (cf. Doc. XIV, p. 259), and these were undoubtedly a compendium of what they were preparing.

Fr. Coindre had wanted to incorporate the Ignatian spirit in the three institutes he founded. This idea is repeated with insistence, under various forms, in the documents which are preserved, concerning the Society of the Missionaries of Le Puy, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and the Religious of

the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: "Having adopted the Ruli Ol Si Augustine and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius" (cf. Doc. X, 2, p. 148) all conformably to the Summary of the Constitutions of St. Ignatius. In everything that does not derogate from the present Statutes" (cf. Rome, Gen. Arch. Brothers of the Sacred Heart, *Projet de Statuts de la Congregation clericale etablie a Monistrol - L'Eve que sous le nom du Sacre Coeur de Jesus*), etc. Evidently the Founder proposed to substitute for the rules given in 1818 another more complete set, inspired by the above mentioned documents, in which the connection with the Constitutions of St. Ignatius would be clearly manifest. His premature death did not permit him to finish this project. The Servant of God remained alone to govern her Congregation and to complete the definitive drawing up of the rules, in which she sought to imprint and preserve the spirit which both she and Fr. Coindre had intended for them. Later, when Mons. de Pins gave her an assistant in Fr. Pousset, instead of being a collaborator, the latter was a serious obstacle to M. St. Ignatius (cf. Doc. XVIII, p. 363), and after a hard struggle, she died without being able to see the approval of those rules on which she had worked for so many years and with such prudence.

A few months after the death of the Servant of God, when the rules were presented for the approbation of Mons. de Pins (cf. *infra*, 1), by M. St. Andrew, who was her successor in the office of Superioress General, they were in their totality the work of M. St. Ignatius and of Fr. Coindre, though modified in various details, some of which were important (cf. *infra*, 2, *intr.*).

On the 24th January 1838, Mons. de Pins provisionally approved these rules, to which he was to give definitive approval on the 7th April of the same year (cf. *infra*, 3). Later on, when the final steps were being taken with a view to obtaining Pontifical Approbation, the approval of the Bishops in whose dioceses the Congregation was established was requested and easily obtained. The first, as was logical, was granted by the Archbishop of Lyon, Cardinal de Bonald (14th February 1843) followed by that of Mons. Darcimoles, Bishop of Le Puy (22nd March 1843), then by that of Mons. Borghi, Bishop of Agra in India (1st June 1843), that of Mons. Gros, Bishop of Saint-Die (6th June 1843) and, later on, that of his successor, Mons. Manglard (27th January 1847) (cf. A. G. Roma, "Approbations"). All these prelates expressed their praise of the Congregation, of which they saw the works and spirit reflected in the rules. The expressions of the Bishop of Agra were especially laudatory. His correspondence at that time, which showed his desire to obtain Pontifical Approbation, is particularly interesting (cf. Arch. of the S.C. for the Propagation of the Faith, *India*, Vol. 8, p. 332, Vol. 9, p. 935, Vol. 10, pp. 266, 1063, 1363).

All these steps led to the approbation so much desired by the Servant of God. On the 4th September 1847 the Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were approved by Pope Pius IX. The Decree, signed by Cardinal Orioli, is dated the 21st December 1847.