

just been set up there, but the lack of personnel had always made it necessary to postpone such a step, to the great detriment of Catholic children, whose parents found themselves obliged to put them into Protestant schools, or leave them without education.

Round about the same time, His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal was requested by the Archbishop of Quebec, to look in France on his behalf for missionary Religious who would accept an educational establishment at Pointe Levi near Quebec. He addressed himself to the Religious of Jesus and Mary, who, after seeking light from God in prayer, believed that they saw His Will in the appeal that had been made to them. With the authorisation of His Eminence Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyon, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary accepted the new mission which was offered them. On the 24th November 1855 eight religious embarked at Le Havre for America. They landed in New York on the 10th December. Eight days afterwards they arrived at their destination. They were welcomed with most paternal kindness by their Lordships, the Archbishop of Quebec and his Coadjutor, as well as by the clergy, and the civil authorities who gave them possession of the house that had been prepared for them at Pointe Levi, by M. l'Abbe Boutier,⁶ the parish priest of the locality. On the 2nd January 1856 they opened their schools, which after one month counted one hundred and forty pupils, between boarders and day scholars. Already new establishments on the banks of the St. Lawrence River were offered to these religious.⁷

Many other requests have just reached them, both from Europe and Asia, but they can only be accepted if the Good Master, by multiplying the members composing that missionary Congregation, provides the means to accept all the work offered, for the greater glory of Jesus and Mary and the salvation of children *oi'* all parts of the world, to whom they gladly devote their existence and their life.

For twelve years,⁸ the Congregation of Jesus and Mary of Lyon has been established in the East. There they have founded five boarding schools, five orphanages, and one home for poor children. A big group of these religious embarked again at Marseille on August

26th, 1854, to go to India to direct these charitable foundations and schools and to establish new ones. Here are their names: Marie St. Bruno, Marie Ste. Agnes, Marie Ste. Eugene, Marie St. Bernardin, Marie Ste. Rosalie, Marie St. Edmond, Marie Ste. Lucie, Mile E. Adam, Sr. Ste. Angele, Sr. St. Martin, Sr. Ste. Julie, Sr. St. Georges, Sr. St. Celestin, Sr. Ste. Claire, Sr. St. Norbert.

DOC. XXV

LETTERS OF Father Claude Mayet, Priest of the Society of Mary, nephew of Mother Mary St. Ignatius, 1857-1889.

In this document we have put together a letter and some extracts from two others, written by Fr. Claude Mayet at different periods, and which contain information about the Servant of God of varying importance.

To appreciate the value of the evidence of Fr. Mayet, we must take into account that he was an eye-witness of events. He was in intimate contact with the Servant of God because of blood relationship, and at the same time as a religious, who was inclined to judge some facts from a particular point of view. He had an extremely sensitive conscience, so much so, that even in some family affections he saw an imperfection, and he always feared being imprecise or inaccurate in his information (cf. *Writings of Fr. Mayet*, Archives of the Generalate of the Society of Mary, Rome).

Fr. Claude Mayet, nephew and godson of the Servant of God (Docs. I, p. 6-8 and XVII, 4, a, p. 353) was among the first Marist Religious, having entered the Society of Mary on the 10th October 1837. He knew the Founder, Fr. Colin, with whom he was on intimate terms. Prevented by an affection of the larynx from carrying out any active apostolate, Fr. Mayet dedicated himself to study, and during his long life, he composed diverse works of which some have gone through several editions and others on the contrary have remained unpublished. In the Society of Mary he is considered as the greatest of their historians. His writings are the principal source of information about the origin of the Society itself. The extensive and well-documented work of the Marists J. Coste and G. Lessard dedicates the whole of the second volume to the study of Fr. Mayet and of his memoirs (cf. J. COSTE — G. LESSARD, *Origines maristes*, II, Roma 1961).

Fr. Claude Mayet died in Paris 8th December 1894, on the day he had completed his 85th year. He was a Religious of great piety, and very devoted to Our Lady, and was constantly preoccupied with his spiritual perfection. Fr. Marcellin Gay who was his Provincial Superior, presents him in this way: "In his piety he excluded neither cheerfulness nor sensitivity of mind. He knew

⁶Should read Routhier.

⁷Cf. AUGUSTE VIATTE. *op. CIL*, p. 150.

⁸From this phrase it is seen that, as we have already pointed out at the beginning of this document, the account was composed in 1854.

how I" laugh and enjoy jokes with his confreres... He was very polite, with the cultured tone of the well-educated native of Lyon; above all, his charity and goodness of soul rendered his dealings with people pleasant and easy. He was both a man of the world and a man of God, in a happy mixture, but the religious dominated in everything" (cf. J. COSTE-G. LESSARD, *op. cit.*, II, p. 35).

1

Extract from a letter of Fr. Claude Mayet to his sister Elisabeth, May 1857. — From the original preserved in the archives of the Mayet family, Lyon.

This is a letter with family news, but it is more properly one of spiritual direction, Melanie, the elder of the sisters who had remained at home had died a little while before, and Elisabeth felt very lonely. Fr. Mayet consoled her and gave her advice. In the letter we find a reference to the Servant of God, godmother of Claude, who consecrated him to Mary on the day of his Baptism. He could not think of "My Aunt Gladys" and what she had done for him without being filled with gratitude, and he considered that he was indebted to her for the favour of being adopted by the Blessed Virgin. The letter is dated "Month of Mary 1857".

Let them not forget to put the new-born baby on Mary's altar. Didn't they forget it once? Tell them to make up for that forgetfulness in some way, if it is true that it took place. Great graces and sometimes eternal salvation can depend on this consecration.

I always remember with gratitude what my aunt Gladys did for me after my Baptism; it is to her, I think, that I owe my being adopted by Mary, without whose protection, headstrong as I was, what would have become of me?

2

Letter of Fr. Claude Mayet to his sister Elisabeth, Paris, 2nd January, 1878. — From the original preserved in A. G. Roma.

This long letter, written forty years after the death of the Servant of God, is one of the most important documents for the knowledge of M. St. Ignatius. Fr. Mayet addressed it to his sister Elisabeth, who had asked for detailed information "about our much-loved and venerated aunt", on behalf of M. St. Pothin Superioress General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. He

expressed his regret that so many years had already elapsed and that the brother and sisters of the Servant of God were already dead, and that Mile Jaricot was no longer alive — "the close friend of my aunt" — nor "the holy lady Mile Laporte, a truly great saint and friend of my aunt".

Fr. Mayet says that he has little to recount, but that in searching his memory he is "surprised and profoundly edified" to note that his aunt *never once spoke of herself* and that this explains "why she did such great things for God". He speaks of the goodness of M. St. Ignatius, especially on the occasion of a serious illness of his mother, and he says that "the love bestowed on her by my aunt made her recover". He retained an impression of her obedience and he still seemed to hear the oft repeated phrase "With the permission of Mr Cattet". He describes interesting family scenes in which the patience and prudence of the future Foundress were put to the test; but he lets it be seen that one of the virtues which he saw his aunt practise and which most impressed him, was poverty.

Paris, 2nd January 1878.

My very dear Sister,

I received your letter yesterday evening and I am beginning this very day to reply through you as intermediary to what the very Reverend Mother Superioress General of the Religious of Jesus and Mary and her very Rev. Sisters and Daughters desire of me. I find nothing so right and legitimate in Congregations, as veneration for their origins. Generally speaking, in going back to the sources, one finds many good lessons, many graces that God has placed in reserve there, and so to speak hidden for all those works which originated from them.

I ask you therefore to offer my respectful greetings, my deep religious interest in our Lord, my esteem, my devotion, to all these excellent Sisters of our much-loved and venerated aunt, and in the first place to the one who has succeeded her. My age warns me that I probably do not know any of them now, and my long *{and blessed}* infirmity of thirty-nine years has always prevented me, as a priest, from giving their holy house the marks of the respectful and lively interest that I bear towards it. But from my tomb, where God has buried me while I am still alive, I have always followed with great depth of feeling and gratitude the progress and works of the apostolate, and for these I bless with all my heart Jesus and Mary without forgetting Joseph whom we cannot separate from this divine

company. Most lovable Trinity of I his earth, be with the good Sisters living under the mantle of Our Lady of Tourviere, and setting out from there like carrier pigeons to carry a I ; i i He true and only good news that there is in this world, the love of .Icsus and Mary.

It is a little late to recall the memories connected with our dear aunt. Our much-loved mother, our mule Louis, Mile Jaricot who was a close friend of my aunt, the holy lady Mile Laporte, sister-in-law of Mr Serre, a real saint and great friend of my aunt, and so many others who were her contemporaries are no longer alive. I do not even know if any are still alive. If the Sisters did not make enquiries earlier, and I do not know if they did so, they will find very little left to glean. There would certainly be moving episodes relating to the Terror, to the siege of Lyon, to the imprisonment and assassination of her two brothers by the Jacobins, and to what our aunt must have done for them.

Personally, I have nothing to say, nothing, almost nothing. You will see it from what follows in this letter.

Only one thing has struck me as extraordinary, since yesterday. Turning over the pages of my memory to bring back to my mind all that my aunt could have confided to me, related to me, told me, whether about herself, about the work of the Community, or about any other thing concerning herself, above all, when the good God, through the all-powerful mercy of Mary, drew me to Himself in 1827, especially when I entered the Major Seminary 1829-1830, and when I became a priest in 1836, I was profoundly surprised and edified in realising what I had never known, seen, or remarked until the 1st January 1878. — *She never spoke about herself!*

And now I understand why she has been able to do such great things for God. And this reminded me of what happened in the Visitation Convent in Lyon, when the Daughters of St. Francois de Sales, a little before his death, presented him with a piece of paper saying: "Father, write what you most want of us." He wrote with extraordinary care this one word — *Humility*.

Regarding myself, I learnt that at my Baptism (she was my godmother) she offered me to the Most Blessed Virgin, and she consecrated me to Mary, probably at her altar. I have often thought that it is to this that I owe all the graces which I have received from the all-powerful mercy of the Most Blessed Virgin, and which will be the

object of my gratitude for all eternity, especially the grace of the 27th January 1827, when I received a very special spiritual experience. I believe that the salvation of very many children would be assured if immediately after their Baptism they were consecrated to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, at her altar. She is a mother and thinks of everything.

I have said nothing to you of her kindness towards us (you know it as well as I do), of her special affection for our mother who was so deserving of love; she was a great comfort to her during a very long and dangerous illness that she had in about 1823. I have a strong belief that we owe mother's preservation to her tender care for her as much as to the prayers of the Prince of Hoenlowe. The great love bestowed on her by my aunt made her recover.

But, as far as I could see, Mother Ignatius never did anything outside the ordinary, without the express permission of the Vicar General appointed by the Bishop as spiritual Father of the house, M. Cattet, Vicar General. It seems to me that I still hear the expression "With the permission of Mr Cattet". It is fair to add that our dear father M. Mayet rendered many temporal services to the Community.

I have only confused memories, such as those linked with the age of 6, 7, 8, 9 years, when one listens without hearing, and sees without seeing, or taking account of things.

When my father, with a little ironical but friendly air used to address her as: "*Madame l'Abbesse*", it still seems to me that I can see her, very embarrassed, blushing, half smiling, not answering anything, continuing to turn those little bobbins with which women make lace. It was undoubtedly the time when she was thinking about her foundation, and preparing to leave us. I understood nothing then of these little scenes. But they remained in my memory, just as I have described them. From that, I can conclude that she had to undergo much teasing from those at home, but especially quips from outside it, and not friendly ones like those of my father, but insulting and humiliating; in a word, little Mile Glady (though tall in stature) Thevenet, was indeed ridiculed, wanting to make herself the foundress of a Congregation! That must have been the theme of the gossips of the district. One could not do a thing like that without being made fun of, discredited . . . A good foundation.

A little while after, the day came when the thoughtless nephew saw his aunt established in a very poor little room in the place where the Tour Pitrat is now situated, with a person of very common appearance (Mile Jallade, I believe, sister of the "Carthusian" Missionary, who, I think, did not remain there until the end) and perhaps one other person. Everything was poor, very poor. I understood nothing about it. I did not try to understand it. I was perhaps seven years old, perhaps less. I believe that I only saw it once. Moreover I felt very little liking for that aunt, who was naturally very serious, and who often took me to task because of my character and my mischievousness, whilst Grandma Thevenet, who used to spoil me, had all my preference. Later, when I belonged to God, not however as much as I should or would have liked, I understood that the work had been built *on nothing, on poverty*, which is the true foundation, the necessary foundation, for all God's work. Today when I am a priest and religious, and, failing other worth, I shall soon have that of being almost a septuagenarian, I take the liberty, as nephew and disciple of their Mother, and as a brother who respects and esteems them very much, to say to the Mothers and Sisters of Fourviere: "Continue to love poverty very much, holy poverty, to have the spirit of poverty." St. Jeanne de Chantel says: "Walls which separate from their foundations collapse, and Congregations which separate from the spirit of poverty fall in ruins." Our venerated Founder, a little before his death, wrote in our Rule, *at which he had worked for fifty years*: "Oh! With what great severity God will punish those who, by relaxing poverty, topple the *wall* and *citadel* of religious discipline, and thus open the way to all *abuses* and *vices* in the Society." I translate literally from the Latin. I tremble when I think of the maledictions which he called down on the contrary spirit. May the good Sisters of Jesus and Mary pray that their brothers the Marists be very faithful in this respect also to the Spirit of Mary. Let us compete as to which of us will love poverty most. But I forget myself perhaps and speak out of place. Ask pardon for me of the Mother General and those of her daughters and sisters who will read this or hear you read it.

Regarding these memories of early childhood, I must add that it is possible that some inaccuracies may have crept in. Here are some more memories of the same kind which have come from things that I heard from various hints, etc. and which refer to M. St. Ignatius's family.

During the reign of Terror my aunt, who was young at the time, would disguise herself as a soldier to go into the prisons and save a Mr de . . . whose name I have forgotten.

The continual nervous tremor of her head that we have always seen, came to her in consequence of what she saw during the terror, of all the horrors of that period.

Her two brothers had gone through the siege of Lyon fighting bravely against the Jacobins.

When Mr de Precy and the soldiers abandoned the city, the citizens who had fought with him . . . (you know the rest).

It was probably my aunt who took them food and drink in prison; I suppose this but I do not know.

They shared things with a priest prisoner who did not have what he needed and who, in exchange for the food and drink which he received from them, procured eternal life for them. For although very upright, as the world judges, there was a bit of the philosopher in them, as there was in nearly all young people of that time. You have their letter to their mother on that subject.

In going to their execution, they passed by their servant. "Stoop down, as if to pick something up, and take a letter for our mother from our shoes." The servant was upset and wanted to show signs of sympathy for his masters, but one of them, pretending to be angry, said to him: "Be quiet, wretched man, you will betray yourself." Compassion was a crime worthy of death in the eyes of the tyrants.

They were shot at the Brotteaux. There was also another member of the family who was guillotined, Mr Guyot, an uncle I think. The crime that he committed was that he was rich. Mother St. Ignatius's mother was a Mile Guyot. One of the Guyot family had been a magistrate of the town. Our aunt's father was from Seyssel; Seyssel-France, I think, not Seyssel-Savoy. He was the son of an inn-keeper, I think I heard it said. There were great difficulties about money occasioned perhaps by the extravagance of our grandfather who wanted to be up to the social standard of his wife's family. She asked for a separation of goods, went into business and brought up all her family, four daughters and three sons. Our aunt Gladly must have helped her, because she was the only one besides our mother, who was still with our grandmother when I was about seven or eight years of age.

On r grandfather was there as well; he was very old and very kind.

After the reign of Terror, when there was a respite in France, there w.i', a reaction. The family knew the person who had denounced the Iwo uncles to the cruel Proconsuls, but they refused to give his name, in order to practise *forgiveness*. He would have received capital punishment I think. What part did aunt play in this noble and Christian resolve? I do not know.

A word relative to the schism. — A Vicar General, an intruder of the intruder Archbishop (Lamourette no doubt) having requested Mme Guyot (a relative, I do not know what degree of kindred) to open her drawing room for a charity meeting, she replied: "You can go and hold your meetings under the Tree of Liberty."

There, my dear Elisabeth, is all that I can say of our aunt; it is a real hotch-potch, both regarding the substance of it, and its form. Perhaps I would have done better to say nothing. I doubt if anything worth using can be found in it. But the respect, the esteem, the great religious affection that I bear to that dear Congregation *related to us, and like a sister to me*, as a priest and religious, has made me undertake to do this willingly, and to obey the request which was addressed to me, straightaway. May I ask you, my dear Elisabeth, to earnestly recommend to the prayers and sacrifices of the Very Reverend Mother General, and through her to all the good Sisters, something extraordinarily important for the glory of God and of Mary, and for the good of souls. I specify nothing for fear of not asking enough. I depend on their generosity and their zeal. What I ask for is especially that cry of the heart, which follows us *everywhere* coming from the depths of the soul in the midst of all the actions of the day, that heartfelt cry like that which Moses uttered when God, seeing that he would be overcome, said to him: "Let me be, I want to punish this people", such a cry to God as burst forth from the heart of David and forced the Lord to advance the Incarnation *because of the prayer of his only Servant*. Also, please thank in advance these Spouses of Christ, and present my respectful compliments in J.M.J.

To yourself I send all my brotherly and priestly affection in the Sacred Hearts

Cius (Claude) M. Mayet S. M. p.p.

P.S. I imagine that in heaven, my aunt must be praying ardently that the Providence be re-established. She loved it so much and it was the first object of her zeal, her efforts and her hopes. I did not know either when or why it was suppressed, nor why it has not been re-established.

Please excuse me from re-reading this. If in it my memory was inexact, rectify it.

3

Extract from a letter of Fr. Claude Mayet to Julie Maurin, author of various works about Pauline Jaricot. Paris, 8th May, 1889. — Informative Process, p. 64v.

Fr. Mayet thanks Julie Maurin for the almanac and the two works on Pauline Jaricot, which she sent him. Reading them is doing him much good. He says that notwithstanding his eighty years, he remembers the persons, the places and the events mentioned by the author, some of which he witnessed. At this point he speaks of the Servant of God and of her brothers who were shot, refers to Fr. Wurtz, and supposes erroneously that this priest could have been the one who heard the last confession of the Thevenet brothers (Doc. II, p. 11). He gives some information on the youth of the Servant of God, which is not found in any other testimony.

This letter together with other writings, was presented at the Diocesan Process of Lyon by the witness Auguste Molin, then (1926) Archpriest of the parish of St. Pothin, and he says that he copied it from the "dossier of Pauline Jaricot which I possess, having inherited it from Mile Julie Maurin, her biographcr\

Month of Mary, 1889

Dear Sister, Your two books and your poor almanac have immersed me in reading again both the "*Souvenirs d'une amie*\ and the "*Vie de Marie Pauline Jaricot*". You would see these three volumes on my table with many book-marks in them. They do me so much good! I return to them continually. In contemplating this great soul, who will certainly be raised to the altars one day *{I think that God has destined for this her meeting with the saints, and also your work}* the sight of her, what she has done, what she has said and written and what she has suffered fills me with transports of joy, elates me and makes me blush with shame. Then I find myself in country that I know for I come from Lyon. A crowd of people, places, events described by your pen,

are present to my 80 years, whether it be by hearsay or the witness of my own eyes. Like Pauline's father, my two maternal uncles belonged to the heroic army of the defenders of Lyon in 1793. (They were shot after the siege by those whose glorious centenary was celebrated throughout France yesterday). The name of Mr Wurtz has echoed in my years in different ways for a long time. Before going to their death, my two uncles were able to tell my grandmother, in order to console her, that they had found a *priest* in prison. Perhaps, or probably, this was Mr Wurtz, about whom *you have informed me*, sent from Rome by God for this very purpose. My aunt, my godmother, was a friend of Mile Jaricot. I suppose that like her, she was also a little worldly in her early youth, disguising herself as a soldier to go into the dungeons to save her fiance or suitor. I can also see her, when I was about five years old, dressed up for God in I don't know what kind of clothes, withdrawing from her family, going to live in a kind of attic with a common girl, the sister of a priest, the laughing stock of many people, and . . . (here is God's part), becoming *the Foundress of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary*. I knew through a companion of Fr. Jaricot, of the great virtues of that admirable priest and of the *odious treatment* given in that hospital to poor newcomers, treatment which the most common decency forbids me even to mention, *his martyrdom*. Everything makes me say *his martyrdom*. We shall know about it one day. I considered he had been *poisoned*. How many other things, other names, other memories I find again in your interesting books! . . .

DOC. XXVI

TESTIMONIES OF THE REPUTATION FOR SANCTITY OF THE SERVANT OF GOD FROM THE YEAR 1868 UNTIL THE YEAR 1896. — *From documents mentioned below.*

In this document we have put together different pieces of evidence about the reputation of sanctity of the Servant of God, from 1868 until the publication of the *Histoire* in 1896. During this period, the first years of which correspond to the Generalate of M. St. Pothin (1867-1885), the preoccupation of the latter, shown frequently in her letters, about considering the heroic virtue of the Foundress and the outstanding religious spirit of the first generation, is seen. The anti-religious policy of France, the spread of the Congregation with the corresponding difficulty of communications at that time, made the Superioress General fear that customs would be introduced

among the religious that were different from those established by the Foundress, and that the true spirit of the Congregation, of which she herself was the vigilant depository, would be lost. She saw with sadness the disappearance of the last collaborators of the Servant of God, and at some moments the future appeared obscure. She believed she had found two means of defence against the danger which seemed to her to threaten the Congregation: to consecrate it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to recall the virtues of the Foundress to the religious (cf. *infra.* 1, and the correspondence of M. St. Pothin, A. G. *Roma*), means which she put into execution promptly and efficaciously.

1

Extract from the Memoir of Fr. Roch de Cesinale O.F. M. Cap. on his visit to the Mission of Agra, 1868. — From the copy preserved in A. G. Roma.

Fr. Roch de Cesinale, secular name Roch Cocchia was born in 1830 and was clothed in the Capuchin habit in 1846. In 1861 the Minister General of the Order gave him charge of writing the history of the Missions and he travelled in Europe, Asia and Africa. He was Procurator General of the Missions from 1870-1872 and at that time he published the *History of the Capuchin Missions* in three volumes, the first in Paris in 1867 and the other two in Rome in 1872 and 1873 respectively. Regarding India, he speaks only in this work of the introduction of Christianity into that country. After being Titular Bishop of Oropo (1874) and Apostolic Delegate to the Republics of Haiti, S. Domingo and Venezuela, in 1883 he returned to Italy, and, refusing the archbishopric of Otranto, he was sent as Internuncio to Brazil. He was Bishop of Chicla from 1886, and he died there on the 19th December 1900 (cf. *Lexicon capuccinum*, Rome 1951, col. 422).

Fr. Roch de Cesinale, having finished the visit to the Mission of Agra, wrote his interesting memoir which contains much laudatory information about the apostolic works of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. In Agra he met various religious who had known the Foundress, among whom were Mothers St. Bruno, St. Paul, and St. Ambrose, who had lived with her from the foundation of the Institute, which gives their evidence a noteworthy value, as they saw and heard what they related.

Fr. Clemente de Terzorio in *Le Missioni dei Minori Cappuccini IX*, Rome, 1935, pp. 311-351, in giving detailed information on the missions in India, reproduces some paragraphs of the Memoir of Fr. Roch de Cesinale and he refers briefly to the Servant of God.