

I close by telling you that the contents of my younger brother's letter also express my own feelings.

(Thevenet Senior)

### DOC. III

TESTIMONY ABOUT THE INSTITUTION CALLED THE "PROVIDENCE" for the education of girls established in the parish of St. Bruno, Lyon, by the Servant of God, 1815-1816.

We have put together here a series of documents which present Claudine Thevenet in the full exercise of her charitable activity among poor and abandoned children and young girls, which would later become a characteristic note of her life.

After the tragic death of Louis Antoine and Francois Marie (cf. Doc. II), the Thevenet family moved from the centre of the city to the Croix-Rousse, a place selected by the well-to-do people of Lyon for their country houses and which only developed into a densely populated working-class district with the growth of the silk industry in the nineteenth century. The widow Antoinette Steinman owned a villa there, which still exists, in rue Masson — now rue du Bon Pasteur, No. 30. It was in this house that the Thevenet lived with the same widow Steinman, who had remained alone after the marriage of her son Henry, and Anne Guyot, who had been obliged to leave the Convent during the Revolution; both of them were maternal aunts of the Servant of God.

At that time the Thevenet family became smaller; Jean Louis had gone, because of his work, to Valence and Macon; Fanny became a religious in the Congregation of St. Thomas of Villanova in Paris; Eleanor entered the then newly-formed Congregation of the Nativity in the diocese of Grenoble; Elisabeth married Jean Baptiste Mayet, settling in L'Isle (Dordogne). Only Claudine remained with her old parents and the two aunts, and the centre of religious attraction for her soon became the near-by church of St. Bruno, already opened for worship before the Concordat of 1802 as a chapel of ease and then as a parish church.

Up to the time of the foundation of the *Providence* in 1815 biographical notes are rather fragmentary and scarce. But here is what we have been able to draw from the registers of the above mentioned parish of St. Bruno and from some other documents in which the Servant of God is mentioned:

in 1795, on the 10th January, in the certificate of marriage of the cousin Henri Steinman:

1802, on the 9th June, in the certificate of marriage of her sister Elisabeth:

1804, 11th June, 1805, 12th August, 1807, 12th August, in the successive certificates of baptism of her nephews and nieces Jean, Emma & Melanie Mayet;

1809, her name figures on the first page of the register of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, erected in the parish of St. Bruno, on the 22nd January of that year; again in 1809, on the 11th December she was godmother of her nephew Claude, the future Marist, whom she consecrated to the Blessed Virgin;

1811, 2nd April, Anne Guyot, in her will, named her niece Claudine her sole heiress, leaving everything to her to do what she liked with it. This disposal of her goods in the will of Anne Guyot, which left out her two sisters and her brother-in-law with whom she lived, as also her other nephews and nieces, is an indication of the trust which Claudine inspired in her by her shrewdness in business matters, and, taking into account the pious inclinations of the testatrix, it is a clear proof of the virtues and of the works she had seen her niece practise. On the 5th June of that same year Anne Guyot died, and on the 15th October Claudine executed, before the Civil Tribunal, the legal dispositions relative to the will;

1813, the widow of Antoine Burdet, godfather of the Servant of God, made her will on the 29th January, in which a legacy figured in favour of Claudine; the widow Burdet died on the 8th May. On the 4th May we see the Servant of God assisting, with her mother, and with the eldest of the nieces, at the wedding of their servant, Stephanie Barbaret; on the 23rd at the baptism of her niece Elizabeth, sixth child of the Mayet couple; and on the 16th December at the wedding of a cousin, in the parish of St. Bruno, and later at other ceremonies which followed.

On the 16th March 1815, Claudine's father died and she remained alone with her mother and her mother's sister, the widow Steinman; Elisabeth Thevenet (Mayet) who on the 4th May was to become mother of a seventh child, had joined them at the house in rue Masson. It seems that Claudine desired to see her mother well cared for so that she could devote herself more to her works of charity.

From the beginning of 1815, to the sparse data that we possess, we can add an important group of documents which attest that the Servant of God must already have become well known in the parish because of her charity and her collaboration with the parish priest.

The priests who took care of the parish of St. Bruno, the parish priest and the curate, belonged to the Association of the "Carthusian" Missionaries, so-called because the church and property around had belonged to the "Chartreuse du Lys Saint Esprit". These priests knew the Servant of God and held her in high esteem (cf. *infra*, 4). Thus is explained how Fr. Andre Coindre, missionary, who arrived at the end of 1815, and was still new to the post, had picked up two abandoned children, and, desiring to help them, after returning to the parish priest, went immediately in search of Claudine. From

this first meeting would be born the work of *the Providence*, the subject of this document, which marked the beginning of a new direction in the life of the Servant of God.

Andre Coindre was born in Lyon on the 26th February 1787 of profoundly Christian parents, Vincent and Marie Mifflet. In 1804 he entered the junior seminary of Argentiere and in 1809 the major seminary of St. Irenaeus in Lyon. Ordained priest in 1812, he was curate of Bourg-cn-Bresse parish, but only for a short while (14th March 1813 to 20th November 1815); the vicar general then called him to Lyon on account of his gift as an orator and assigned him to the parish of St. Bruno, where he was already present on the 27th November 1815; from 1816 he belonged to the association of the "Carthusian" Missionaries, which numbered him among its most illustrious first members (J. P. MiGNE, ed. *Dictionnaire des Ordres religieux*, IV, Paris, 1859, pp. 607-611).

Besides the work of the Missions, Fr. Coindre dedicated himself to various works of zeal, and while he was directing the Servant of God in her foundations (cf. Docs. VIII, *intr.*, p. 200 and X *intr.*, p. 245), he himself founded the Congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in 1821. His quality of preaching and his priestly virtue had attracted the attention of various bishops who asked for his collaboration; (Secret Vatican Arch., Napoleonic Period, *France 2, fasc. "Cardinal Fesch"*) and the same authority considered him as one of the most competent priests of the diocese (Paris. National Arch. F<sup>19</sup>, 1482).

In 1825 the Bishop of Blois wanted him to work near him and he named him vicar general and superior of the Seminary. Fr. Coindre died at Blois on the 30th May 1826, only 39 years old (cf. *Vie dupere Andre Coindre, fondateur de l'Institut des Freres du Sacre Coeur et des Re/igieuses de Jesus-Marie*, Quebec 1947; *Les Freres du Sacre Coeur. Historique de l'Institut*, Rome 1956, pp. 1-21).

1) *The Providences of Lyon*. The *Providences*, centres of charitable works, which were multiplying in Lyon and elsewhere in the first half of the XIXth century, had for their aim to gather poor children, in order to give them a solid Christian formation and to enable them to acquire a skill with which they would be able to earn a livelihood.

All the *Providences*, whether for boys or girls, had in common a rule prescribing that the inmates should remain there until the age of about twenty years; the most common trade they learnt was that of silk manufacture, the most important industry in Lyon; in this way, when they left, they all had the possibility of finding a job without passing through the dangers of apprenticeship. Some *Providences* were parochial, and took only the young boys and girls of poor families of the parish; others had a general character and admitted boys and girls from the whole city and even the whole department.

Parallel to these, there were also orphanages which, at the beginning, admitted only orphans; with the passage of time the orphanages and *Providences* took orphans and non-orphans without making any distinction.

The conditions for acceptance of boys and girls and those for their maintenance were in part fixed by the State and in part imposed by the respective institutions. The age for acceptance varied from six to nine years. They demanded the certificates of birth and of baptism, certificates of health and good conduct, etc. Moreover, they sought to have a charge, however modest, which would decrease as the boys or girls gradually progressed in learning their trade and became capable of earning their keep. In general these institutions succeeded in maintaining themselves from the proceeds of the work of the boys or girls; an association of ladies of the parish however, provided their own donations to make up the balance if it was necessary.

Among the works of charity that existed in Lyon in the XVIII century we mention an ancient institution called "Oeuvres des Messieurs", erected in the parish of Saint-Martin-d'Ainay in 1773. It resembled a Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. It was reconstituted after the revolution, and *VALmanack de Lyon* of 1813 speaks thus of it "... served by the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, who also distributed free to the poor of their district, medicines and help, according to the season." This pious work which in 1840 we find transformed into a *Providence*, was one of the 19 *Providences* referred to in the *Annuaire of 1844* (cf. A. VACHET, *Lyon et ses oeuvres*, Lyon 1900, pp. 14-26).

The most ancient *Providence* of Lyon was that of the Trinity; it was founded in 1716 and looked after the education of poor young girls whom it received from the age of seven years, if they were in danger resulting from the scandalous life of their parents. It flourished marvellously until the French Revolution, when it was destroyed; it was reorganized in 1804 (cf. A. VACHET, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25).

2) *Foundation and development of the Providence of St. Bruno*. The beginning of this *Providence* which is still in existence, dates from 1816 (cf. *infra*, 4) and it was the second to be instituted in Lyon after the reorganization in 1804, of the *Providence* of the Trinity.

The report of the Association of the Sacred Heart dated 31st July 1818 (cf. Doc. IV, 2, 28, c, p. 121) reveals interesting details on the first year of the existence of this work which was so dear to the heart of Claudine. The Servant of God called it the *Providence of the Sacred Heart*, but it was known as *Providence of St. Bruno*, especially after Claudine had founded a second *Providence of the Sacred Heart* at Pierres Plantees, and above all, when in 1825 she decided to cede to the parish priest all the rights which the Association had over the *Providence of St. Bruno* (cf. Doc. IV, 2, 82, b, p. 167).

3) *The Providence of the Sacred Heart at Pierres Plantees and at Fourviere*. In 1818, when the Pious Union of the Sacred Heart and the *Providence of St.*

*Bruno* directed by Claudine, were in their full development, the Servant of God (cf. Doc. VI, p. 182) founded the religious Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary at Pierres Plantees, organizing there a new *Providence* to which she gave the name of *Providence of the Sacred Heart*.

In 1820 a property was acquired at Fourviere, which became the definitive seat of both Institutions of Pierres Plantees: the Congregation and the *Providence*. *The Providence of the Sacred Heart* at Fourviere developed in a flourishing manner until 1848 when it was destroyed by the Revolution. It should be noted that, as it was near the Mother House of the Congregation which in 1842 assumed the title of "Jesus and Mary", it was also commonly known under the name of *Providence of Jesus and Mary*, and so we find it mentioned in various works published in Lyon.

## I

*Extracts from diverse registers of the parish of St. Bruno, Lyon, 1809-1823.* - From the originals preserved in the archives of the parish of St. Bruno.

We present some extracts from the registers of the parish of St. Bruno which show the participation of Claudine Thevenet and some members of her family, especially her sister Elisabeth, wife of Jean Baptiste Mayet, and their children, in the life of the parish.

## a)

*Confraternity of the Sacred Heart. Parish of St. Bruno, 1809-1820.*

In this register we find the name of Claudine Thevenet on the first page, in the list begun on the 22nd January 1809 by the parish priest with the names of the first twelve inscribed. We find it again in the lists of 1818 and 1819, in which she gave the familiar name of "Glady". This shows that even before 1809 the Servant of God was already at the height of her activity in the parish. We note that in 1818 her residence was indicated as Rue Masson No 6, and in 1819 at "Pierres Plantees".

We have transcribed the whole of the first page of this register, and have noted that on the following pages are found the names of relatives and connections by marriage of the Servant of God, her mother, Marie Antoinette Thevenet, and various members of the Guyot, Mayet, Steinman, Germain, Dutillieu, Dumolard, Eymard families, and the servant of the Mayet household, Marie Allard, who had all followed Claudine in her pious work, attracted so it would seem, by her zeal. On the same pages we find the names

of numerous companions of the Servant of God, her collaborators whether in the Association of the Sacred Heart, or at a later date in the foundation of her religious congregation. Such inscriptions were renewed every year.

Joined to the name of Claudine and of some of the Associates the word "tenet" appears. This document does not explain the significance of this word. According to the opinion of Can. Joseph Joman, archivist of the archbishopric of Lyon, it could signify: continues to belong to the Confraternity; but it is more probable that it signifies "to keep one's promise".

On the first page of the register the notes for each member are not arranged in order. For this reason we believe it opportune, as far as possible, to put the page which is reproduced in order. From 1818 onwards, the register is more carefully kept.

P- CATALOGUE  
of the members of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, established in the parish of St. Bruno-les-Chartreux, Lyon, on the 22nd January 1809

Admission, sheets, hours of perpetual adoration.  
Men, Ladies and young ladies received on the 22nd January 1809

	S. Gagneur, parish priest							
	Jean Fr. Courajod	6 1	tenet 3	annual	3 1			
	Marie Chirat	6 1	tenet 3	annual	3 1			
	Jeanne Marie Louis	3						
	Jeanne Marie Fr. de Rubod	24 1	id					
	Marie Vagnon	6 1	id					
	= Marie Françoise Repond		id					
	+ Antoinette Reynaud	3 1	id 3	annual				30 s
	Pierrette Guillot	5 1	id 3	annual	3 1			6 s
	+ Marie Andree Courajod	6 1	id 3	annual	3 1			
	Rosette Reynaud	3 1	id 3	annual				30 s
	<i>Claudine Thevenet</i>		tenet					
p. 3	Marie Elizabeth Mayet							
	nee Thevenet	3 1						
deceased	Anne Guyot	3 1	id	annual	1 1			10 s

b)

*First Communions and Confirmations. Parish of St. Bruno from the year 1818.*

In this register, which begins in 1818, we note first of all the names of Marie Melanie Mayet and Julie Ferrand who made their First Communion in 1819. The first was the niece of the servant of God, and the other was the daughter of Françoise Blanc, widow Ferrand, later Mother St. Borgia (cf. Doc. XI, p. 251). Julie also entered the congregation founded by Claudine, receiving the name M. St. Paul, and was one of the first group of missionaries who set out for India, where she lived for many years, working with zeal; she left numerous paintings in the Cathedral of Agra, and painted with her own brush one of the well-known portraits of the Servant of God (cf. Doc. XXII, 3, c, p. 451).

On the 23rd April 1820 we find the names of a group of six children under the title of "Girls of the *Providence* of St. Bruno", and another of seven under the heading "Girls of the *Providence* of Pierres Plantees". At that time the two *Providences* were directed by the Servant of God. There is also another list of eight children of the *Providence* of St. Bruno, on the 24th March 1822.

At the end of the register is a list of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, beginning with the names of "Mr. and Mrs. Mayet", which are followed by various other names of the relatives of the Servant of God.

p. 1 Register of 1st Communions of St. Bruno's Parish since the 5th June 1818 until

GOD ALONE!

p. 7 1819. Communion, 2nd May.

Julie Ferrand  
Marie Mayet

p. 8 Confirmation of the 27th July 1819 by Mgr de Mons, the Bishop of Mende.

Melanie Mayet

p. 11 First Communion of the 23rd April 1820  
Girls of the *Providence* of St. Bruno

Eugenie Chenaud  
Catherine Colonjar  
Pierrette Galet

Anne Londe  
Claudine Senson  
Pierrette Guerin

Girls of the *Providence* of Pierres Plantees

Claudine Tram bonze  
Françoise Cantont  
Françoise Gamier  
Marguerite Letanche  
Marie Leve  
Jeanne Sabbatier  
Marie Monnet

p. 13 Confirmation by the Bishop of Mende. 24th July 1820.

All the children who were on the lists for the First Communion of the 23rd April 1820 and the feast of the Holy Trinity of the same year, were also confirmed.

c)

*"Lenten Pardons, St. Bruno's"* 1818-1838

In this register of indulgences or almsdeeds for Lent we also see confirmed the life of piety that Claudine Thevenet and all her family practised in the parish, as did also her collaborators. In the year 1818, the year in which the register begins and in 1819, we find the names of Claudine's mother, Mme Thevenet, and of Mme Steinman her sister, of Mme Mayet, already mentioned, and of Claudine herself who figures under the name of "Mlle Thevenet". The name of Sr. Clotilde, the sister who was in charge of the *Providence* of St. Bruno and who contributed so efficaciously to its development, should be noted. In the following years the same names are repeated and those of other relatives and collaborators of Claudine.

(On the inside of the first cover):

"Boys to clothe for 1st Communion. Easter 1833: Louis Perret at Zelay's house, Rue Flesselles, No 6, 4th floor, 19 years.

(There follow another 8 names)

"Girls to dress for first communion. Easter 1833:

Claudine Alouitre . . ."

(There follow another three names)

p. 3	Lenten Pardon 1818	F. C	
	Mile Chirat	12.	
	Mesd. Steyman and Thevenet	10.	
	Madame Mayet	5.	
	M. Germain	5.	
	Mile Repond	10.	
	Md. Steyman	5.	
	M. Dutillieu	5.	
	M. Eymard	5.	
	Md. Courageot	20.	
p. 4	Lent 1819:		
	Mile Thevenet	5.	80
	Mile Repond	10.	„
	Md. Thevenet and Steyman Germain	5.	
	Sr. Clotilde	1.	„
p. 5	1820:		
	M. Md. Mayet	5.	„
	M. Eymard	4.	75
	M. Germain	5.	„
	M. Thevenet	4.	75

*Extract from the register entitled "St. Bruno. Petite Providence, Bulletin du mois". 25th February 1819. - From the original preserved in the Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Lyon.*

On the first page of this register we find the deed of re-organization of the *Providence* of St. Bruno, dated the 25th February, 1819, signed by Claudine Thevenet, Julie Genoud and the parish priest of St. Bruno's, Nicolas Augustin de la Croix.

It is a register which contains the names of the girls of *the Providence* and the monthly notes in accordance with the norms established in the deed. The register continues to the end of 1842. We reproduce only what directly concerns the Servant of God.

Nicolas Augustin de la Croix d'Azolette was born in Propiere (Rhône) on the 15th July 1779. He was ordained priest in 1806, was successively superior

of the seminaries of Alix and Argentièrè and of the "Carthusian" Missionaries, vicar general of Belley (1823), Bishop of Gap (1837), Archbishop of Auri (1840). In 1856, feeling his energy declining, he gave in his resignation and retired to the "Carthusian" house at Lyon, where he died on the 6th June 1861. His heart was taken to the Cathedral at Auch. Cf. A. DESSERT, *L'épiscopat français depuis le concordat jusqu'à la séparation*, Paris 1907, p. 79.

25th February 1819-Deliberation of the Council of Ladies protectors and benefactors of the Group of young girls, or little *Providence* of St. Bruno.

It was proposed and decided by the Committee of Ladies protectors and benefactors of the group of young girls known as the little *Providence*, under the presidency of the Parish Priest of St. Bruno's:

1. that a register should be kept which would contain the monthly report on each child: that the said report should indicate under each name the marks that the pupil had merited for writing, reading, etc., as was indicated;

2. that on tin- least of St. Aloysius these marks would be taken into consideration for the distribution of prizes; and that the prizes would be awarded according to the greater number of good marks;

3. that the committee present at the distribution of prizes should be presented with some samples of the pupils' work, in sewing, embroidery, etc., Or in writing, etc.

The letters capital A, small a, capital B, small b, capital C, small c, capital D, small d, will serve to indicate the marks. The best is A, after that little a, then capital B, small b, capital C, small c, capital D, small d. Small c is a bad mark, capital D is worse, and small d is very bad. A certain number of . . . ' these last deserve punishment, at the discretion of the committee,

Claudine Thevenet  
Julie Genoud  
N. A. De la Croix  
Parish Priest of St. Bruno's.

<sup>1</sup> Crossed mil in the original.

## 3

*Extracts from the register entitled "Deliberations and decisions of the Committee", of the Providence of St. Bruno, 1820-1823. - From the original preserved in the archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Lyon.*

This register contains the record of agreements of the managing board named by the Servant of God to direct *the Providence of St. Bruno*. The board, called the "Committee of the Providence" was subordinate to the Association of which its members formed part. Its president was Catherine Laporte (Doc. IX, 2, p. 221), and the secretary was the niece of the Servant of God, Anne Aline Mayet, who in fact wrote the register of which we publish the first two pages and some other extracts.

As Claudine Thevenet was, for a time, Superioress of *the Providence and* President of the Association, there is no doubt that she dictated the directives contained in the register or at least that they were submitted to her for approval, as can be verified in the register of the Association (cf. Doc. IV, 2, 79, b, p. 166).

The document which we publish we judge to be important for knowledge of the development of the *Providence*, so dear to Claudine, but above all because, through the arrangements made by the Committee, are revealed at the same time the prudence of the Servant of God, her habitual charity and especially her great interest in the spiritual and material welfare of the girls (cf. *infra*, 7th June 1821, 8th February 1822); we see her also with a fine pedagogical sense favouring the special dispositions of the children (cf. *infra*, 4th April 1820), persuading them not to leave the *Providence* before they had completed their formation, following them with solicitude in their new life, and even taking care that, in case of death, the girls would have a worthy burial (cf. *infra*, 3rd March 1823).

The norms which are put together here not only were valid then for the good functioning of the work, but are valid even today, according to the Sisters of St. Joseph who still direct the *Providence of St. Bruno*.

We are grateful to the Sisters of St. Joseph for putting at our disposal documents 2 and 3; as also to the "Carthusian" missionaries and the parish priest of St. Bruno's who made available material for documents 4 and 1.

*Meeting of 4th April 1820.*

Placement of children. The members of the committee, having assembled, and having recognized many difficulties met with in

placing the young girls in the homes of middle class people as cooks and servants because, once they leave these places, they find themselves without work, and are exposed to danger, especially if their parents lead a bad life and take them home again, decided as follows:

1. that steps should be taken to find out, in those positions which arise, if the children can learn a trade;

2. that when a position arises, one of the ladies of the committee should be appointed to find out about the morals and conduct of the persons who want to receive the child; if the investigation is favourable, the child will be placed there on trial for a month; at the end of the month on the advice of the committee, an agreement can be made with the employers, and in the presence of prudent witnesses;

3. that from time to time, the child shall be visited to find out if the employers are satisfied, and to ascertain the way she behaves, and an account of this will be given to the committee.

It was recognized that sewing, spinning, and other processes in the fabrication of silk were usually the most suitable kinds of trade for these children, whose taste and facility should be considered in order to give them one that pleases them.

It was noticed that warping, picking cord and working at the loom present many difficulties because children cannot work at these jobs without going too often into all kinds of houses.

*Meeting of 2nd May 1820.*

It was decided by the committee that each child will be obliged on entering the Providence to present her baptismal certificate, and that they must have the assurance of their parents that the children have been vaccinated or have had smallpox.

The Superioress shall keep all the baptismal certificates in a file so that they can be given to the girls when they leave or be presented, if necessary, for their first Communion.

Age of reception. It was decided that children under nine years of age should not be admitted. The children who have been received shall be kept until they are eighteen years old, nevertheless they shall be placed in advance so as to give them a trade.

*Meeting of 2nd January 1821.*

The ladies of the committee agreed that, around the 1st January, the children would not be allowed to go into the town to make the visits customary at that time. Many difficulties arose from allowing them to go out at that season. If, for serious reasons, the children had to pay a visit to benefactors, a Sister would accompany the child, take her there and bring her back. Each child would make up for the failure to visit by sending a letter wishing a happy new year to her parents and benefactors.

*Meeting of 7th June 1821.*

After due consideration the members of the Committee decided firstly, that as Mile Louise Guigue has completed her time here and her parents have again asked to have her back, it should be suggested to them that for their daughter's good, they allow her to spend another year in the *Providence*. At the end of this period she would be given a loom in payment for work done during the year. In this way, she would be able to work at home — her parents are good people — and thus safeguard the benefits of the Christian and religious education she has received and is still receiving while she remains in this house.

*Meeting of 8th February 1822.*

After discussion, the members of the Committee have decided: that one hundred francs would be given to Madame Choussy in respect of Pierrette Crochat, a young girl who was educated in the *Providence*. She wants to join that lady's community and to consecrate herself completely to God. This amount of money was requested for the keep of the said young lady, and it has been granted with the unanimous approval of all the Committee members.

Cf. Doc. IV, 2, note 62-63, p. 151.

*Meeting of 10th May 1822.*

The members of the committee decided:-

1. that Miss Anne Loude would be given a machine with eight spools when she leaves the *Providence*; and 2. that, to begin with, one or two looms would be set up at the *Providence*, so that those children who have a liking for it can be taught to make a success of the production of silk material.

*Meeting of 5th August 1822.*

The committee members decided that when several of the children of the *Providence* have equally merited the rewards granted to those who, during the year, have distinguished themselves from their companions by their application to work and by their good conduct, they shall draw lots among themselves for the first prize. Those who have not the good fortune to draw the ticket for the first prize will be rewarded with something equivalent but of a little less value.

*Meeting of 6th January 1823.*

The members of the committee decided:

1. that only one child of eight years of age, proposed by Mile Laporte, would be accepted, for five hundred francs. Their extreme poverty and the number of children with whom this child's parents are burdened made the committee members decide to set aside the ordinary rules according to which they admit no children to the *Providence* under the age of nine years.

*Meeting of 3rd March 1823.*

After examining the marks that each child merited during the month, the members of the committee decided:

- ... 2. that henceforth if one of the children of the *Providence* should die while in it, her body is to be taken to the Loyasse cemetery, and not to the public grave. The deceased child's benefactors shall be asked to

contribute to the funeral expenses; if they refuse, then the *Providence* will undertake everything.

3. that the children of the *Providence* will be divided into two distinct sections or classes, separating the older ones from the younger children, so that the younger ones can aim, in spite of their age and according to their good will, at obtaining a prize awarded to those who merit some recompense by their application and good conduct.

#### 4.

Extract from *Notice Historique de la Providence paroissiale de St. Bruno (1815-1816)*. - From the original kept in the archives of the "Carthusian" missionaries, Lyon, register 1.

It provides a good report on the origin and first development of the *Providence*.

This report was written by the parish priest of St. Bruno's, Jean Bissardon, around 1859. Born in Avieze in 1798, he had been superior of the "Carthusians" from 1838 to 1856, the year in which he gave up his office, remaining for another eight years as parish priest. The historical value of his account is all the greater because of the length of time Fr. Bissardon remained in the parish, first as student and missionary and then as superior, thus obtaining a sure knowledge of persons and things. In this report the author does not propose to make a defence of the Servant of God, but to prove that the *Providence* of St. Bruno belongs to the parish. As appears from other documents (cf. Doc. IV, 2, 28, c, p. 121) Claudine Thevenet had obtained for the *Providence* the collaboration of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and Sr. Clotilde was the first of them; afterwards she became the superior and gave a great thrust to the work. On the death of this religious, the Sisters of St. Joseph tried to sell the building as if it belonged to them, and, as the *Reclamation contre la vente de la Providence de St. Bruno* says: "The project for the sale of the *Providence of St. Bruno* by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, began to be known in the parish of St. Bruno. This news was a painful source of worry." It was necessary therefore to draw up a detailed account, of the origin and the early development of the *Providence*, in order to prove that it belonged to the parish, to avoid the sale and calm people's fears.

This report was part of a collection of documents, which afterwards formed the first register of the "Carthusian" Missionaries; and it is preserved

in two accounts, which differ slightly but only in style. We reproduce the text which seems definitive, namely, the text which comes first in the register. In this report I in person of Claudine Thevenet, the soul of the *Providence*, stands out.

In the same register is another account of the *Providence* entitled *Reclamation com re la vente de la Providence de St. Bruno*, written to show that the Sisters of St. Joseph had no right to sell the property, as they had claimed. Since the Servant of God and her collaborators are only mentioned in passing, we did not think it necessary to reproduce the document.

From this document we are publishing only what concerns the Servant of God.

#### Historical account of the Parish Providence of St. Bruno

The *Providence of St. Bruno* was begun in 1816. Its real founder was Fr. Coindre, Senior. He fulfilled at one and the same time, in the "Carthusians", the functions of missionary and curate of St. Bruno's, under the venerable parish priest, Fr. Gagneur.

The orphanages, known in Lyon by the name of Providences, were held in high esteem there. Fr. Coindre who was both a gifted preacher and full of zeal for good works wished to found a Providence at St. Bruno's, in agreement with Mile Thevenet, a parishioner who shared the zeal of her fervent director.

One day, Fr. Coindre brought from Lyon, two little girls who were without parents or shelter, picked up, quite literally, off the street. Having paid for their food, he left them for the time being in a little sewing room, kept by the Sisters of St. Joseph, in the "cell" at the east corner of the cloisters, where the community of St. Joseph lived for a while, before going to Chateau Yon.

Fr. Coindre went and told the parish priest, Fr. Gagneur, and Mile Thevenet what he had done. All three regarded the incident of the two little girls as an indication of God's will. It was necessary to find a lodging and resources.

For the lodging they spoke to Mile Chirat who came from the highly respected family of Chirat de Souzy, and who lived with a companion called Mile Adele, in the third "cell" of the south cloister.

Mile Chirat assigned, rent free, one of the three apartments of her "cell" to the little Providence. The two little girls who had been found in the street were taken there, and a few days afterwards the *Providence* numbered seven little girls.

Mile Thevenet was the Superioress and directress of the Providence.

As for resources, they thought of financing the new foundation by forming an association of Ladies of the Parish.

Mile Thevenet governed the *Providence* without living there. They obtained from Mother St. Jean, Superioress General of the Sisters of St. Joseph and from Fr. Bochard, superior and restorer of that Congregation in the diocese of Lyon, a Sister as cook for the little *Providence* and to supervise the little sewing room, the only work that the children were given to do at the time.

The Sister was assigned for a stipend of one hundred francs a year, as was the invariable practice at St. Joseph's under the direction of Fr. Bochard and Mother St. Jean.

The Sister assigned by Mother St. Jean was Marie Marquet, Sister Ste-Clotilde, a name always dear to the *Providence* and the parish of St. Bruno, if the work in which she played such a part is not condemned to die out.

Sister Clotilde was never placed in the *Providence* as Superioress, she was at that time far from being judged capable of becoming a superioress; completely illiterate, hardly able to sign her name, having until then been a servant and seamstress in the country, she was only cook and sewing mistress of the *Providence*.

Mile Thevenet was superioress and governed it for five years. She would have continued to direct this Providence, the first work of her creation, if the designs of God had not directed the zeal of Mile Thevenet and Fr. Coindre elsewhere.

In 1821, Fr. Coindre left the house of the "Carthusian" Missionaries. He brought a piece of land at Fourviere to establish a Providence there as well. Mile Thevenet followed him there, and instead of a simple Providence, they soon founded the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a work that was much greater and more distinguished than the little *Providence of St. Bruno*.

From the moment of its installation in the "cell" of Mile Chirat the little Providence was known as the *Providence of St. Bruno* and it has been called that ever since.

For about eighteen months the *Providence of St. Bruno* was lodged in the house of Mile Chirat, until it began to be overcrowded. Mile Chirat herself felt cramped for space; she realized that her charity had taken her beyond the limits of prudence. They had to think about looking for other accommodation for the work.

The parish priest of St. Bruno's, Fr. Coindre and Mile Thevenet cast their eyes on an empty "cell" forming a part of the donation made to the work of the Missionaries by Cardinal Fesch. Fr. Coindre asked Fr. Bochard for this "cell". Fr. Bochard had a particular liking for Fr. Coindre, even though he often blamed him for dissipating on small works his first-class talent for preaching. The Vicar General generously gave his consent to the parish priest and the curate of St. Bruno's. He assigned, rent free, the "cell" asked for: it had been enlarged by recent building, and was worth a rent of one thousand francs at least. The assignment of the "cell" by Fr. Bochard in 1817, was continued by Fr. Mioland until 1828, the time of the transfer of the Providence to the house it possesses today. The "cell" ceded by Fr. Bochard was situated on the right hand side of the side entrance to the Church of St. Bruno.

At the time of the transfer of the *Providence of St. Bruno* from Mile Chirat's "cell" into that belonging to the Missionaries, to cover the expenses of the new establishment, a charitable appeal was made in the parish. The Providence had more children now, and those in charge wanted to introduce the silk industry there.

It was then that Mgr de la Croix, the new parish priest of St. Bruno's subscribed 600 fr.; Fr. Coindre and Fr. de Lupe, another curate of St. Bruno's and Fr. Mioland, head of the Missions, also subscribed.

Mile Repond contributed the largest share of the expenses of the establishment of the Providence, in its second home, and she paid for the setting up of a silk work-room.

The Ladies of the Committee all contributed by a special subscription.

From the first days of the foundation of the Providence, there was formed, as we have said, a society of Ladies of the Parish of St. Bruno;

this parish, then sparsely populated, was inhabited by richer people than it is today. The Society of the Ladies patronesses and supporters of the Providence was composed of about thirty-five persons. Mile Thevenet was the president; the parish priest of St. Bruno's and Fr. Coindre directed the meetings. The Ladies of the Committee did not give a regular annual subscription. They provided for the needs of the Providence, furnished it and provided the food; they gave according to necessity; a collection was made at the end of each meeting and the meetings were frequent. The work of the patronesses of the Providence lasted for about twelve years.

For its part, the workshop of the parish of St. Bruno gave chairs or benches free to the Providence; the priests of the parish gave everything for nothing, and the Parish Priest of St. Bruno's served free of charge, for 30 years as chaplain for the Providence.

It was thus that the parish Providence, lodged free of charge by the Missionaries, supported by the committee of Ladies, favoured by the workshop and by the Parish Priest, object of the incessant charity of the parishioners and aided by the work of the children, which was very profitable from 1815 to 1830, was in a position, within the space of two years, to buy and pay for the building which it still owns today.

We are entering here the names of the Ladies of the Association of the Providence and those of its principal benefactors. This is not to assure worthless praise of these venerable names, but to record the origin of the stream which is in danger of drying up.

1. Mile Thevenet, Rue Masson, Superioress of the Providence and president of the Association of Ladies. She had money; she consecrated her income and her person to good works.

2. Mile Repond; she had a considerable fortune. She owned the house which serves today as the presbytery of St. Bruno. The Providence in its second house was beside hers: a corridor separated the two houses, and there was a communicating door. Mile Repond was old. She assisted at the assemblies of the Ladies but she did not take part in the direction of the work; she was content to donate to it; she gave very much; she was the "foster mother" of the Providence, for which reason it was almost about to lose its name *of Providence of St. Bruno*; people began to call it "Providence Repond". Mile Repond had a niece, Mile Julie; this niece was pious and charitable; but her aunt's gifts to the Providence worried her, so that the aunt gave in

secret after a time. Mile Repond was taken from the Providence about eight years after its foundation.

3. Mile Julie, niece of Mile Repond. She was a member of the Ladies Committee. She left the "Charterhouse" on the death of her aunt.

4. Mme Eymard, arrived at the "Charterhouse" in 1817; this lady was very charitable, and immediately devoted herself to all the good works of the parish; she was one of the most active and influential ladies of the Association; Mme Eymard and those of her household have been for 44 years among the most distinguished benefactors of the Providence which is in her neighbourhood. Mme Eymard is living; she is one of the parishioners of St. Bruno's who regrets most bitterly the project to sell the Providence.

5. Mile Laporte came to the parish of St. Bruno in order to associate herself with the works of Fr. Coindre and Mile Thevenet; she gave a lot of money; she went to Fourviere with the founders of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary; she was a powerful aid to that work. 5, 6, Mile Chirat who provided the first free lodging for the Providence and helped it until the end of her life.

6. Mile Adele, companion of Mile Chirat.

7. Mile Griat, tailoress, well off and very fervent. She was the one who at the first meeting of the committee gave the first twenty francs she had received from M. Baboin de la Barolliere. This first gift was welcomed with joy. It was a good omen for the newly founded work, they said. Mile Griat was a regular member of the Association, she contributed herself, and was often the channel of important gifts.

8. Mile Jouve, was a member of the Association from the very beginning; she helped the Providence for forty two years; she loved Sr. Clotilde, who consulted her on all occasions. Mme Jouve died six months before Sr. Clotilde.

9. 10. 11. Mme Mayet and her two eldest daughters; Mme Mayet was the sister of Mile Thevenet; her family held a distinguished position in the parish; she brought to the Providence all the interest that this fervent family accorded to every kind of good work.

12. Mile Ducreux, at the Cloisters; she was a member of the Association and helped the Providence as long as she lived, namely for about twenty years.

13. 14. 15. The two Dcsmarct ladies, and MmeLavicJmiiui Poor Clare Sisters. They were members of the Association until they could re-establish their Convent of St. Flizabeth, in the house which is today occupied by the institution of the "Carthusians".

16. 17. 18. Three Morel young ladies (Place Morel); they wci< \< i \ rich, and gave in their own name and that of their mother.

19. Mme du Tillieux. Rue Masson. She seldom wen! to the meetings.

20. 21. Mme Germain and Mme Adam her relative.

22. Mme Donat, Rue Neyrct.

23. Mme Riindel, today Clos Champevert.

24. 25. 26. Mme Prudent and her I wo daughters, Maison du panlei fleury, Montee des Carmelites.

27. 28. 29. Mesdames Steyman, (iermain, Dumolard, Maison di Carmelites.

30. Mile Eymard, at the Cloister.

3 1. 32. Mesdames Laurencin, Janoray. We have omitted, without doubt, some names.

This Association of Ladies provided considerable sums of money for the Providence. The money collected at the meetings of the ladies was at first put into the hands of Mile Thevenet, Superioress ol the Providence; after Mile Thevenet left, the funds were given to Si. Clotilde who became then, as it were, the Superioress in fact, withlOUl having the title, but who could not act, except with the authority ol the Ladies of the Committee who had charge ol I he administration ol I he Providence.

#### DOC. IV

TESTIMONIES ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF TIN, SACKED HEART founded b\ the Servant of God in Lyon, 1816.

The documents which we publish here present the Servant of God in one of the first works which characterize her activity in an important way and which best show her spiritual aspirations up to and after 1816, when she was 42 years old. As all these activities revolve around the Pious Union or Society of the Sacred Heart, organized by her in collaboration with Fr. André Coindre, in 1816, we shall briefly explain the history of this Association,

The Association which we are studying in this document receives the name of Congregation in the rule; but on the contrary, in the acts it is vaguely called Pious Union, Association, Congregation, and more often, Society. Traditionally the religious of Jesus and Mary have always called it *Association*, thus distinguishing it from the religious *Congregation* which originated from it. In this introduction we shall do the same.

This brief historical explanation is based on the Rule of the Association and the Register of the Minutes of the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the same. For greater clarity, we indicate herewith the order in which the questions are treated in this general introduction:

- A) The Association of the Sacred Heart.
- B) Organization and activity of the Association.
- C) Works of' charity which it practised.
- D) The part played by the Servant of God in this work.

#### A)

Tin; ASSOCIATION OF THE SACRED HEART

To understand well what the Association of the Sacred Heart with which we are dealing was, it is necessary to fix the historical moment of its appearance in Lyon.

After the restoration of 1815, the political and religious unrest common to the whole nation was aggravated in Lyon by the situation created by the exile of the archbishop, Cardinal Fesch and by the semi-schismatic tendency of the "Petite Eglise" de Lyon (cf. C. LATRELLE, *La Petite eglise de Lyon*, Lyon, 1911).

If the political and religious situation was delicate, the moral, intellectual and social state of the population was still more precarious. The new generation lacked religious instruction, and, very often, any kind of instruction. Poverty was very great, especially among the working classes. The needs of the soul could not be satisfied with political measures, nor could these alone, even in the best possible conditions, restore Catholic life. True restoration was realized in Lyon, as elsewhere, by zealous bishops, missionaries, priests, laity, men and women of exemplary life, who carried the love of God and their neighbour in some cases to the point of heroism.

On the 26th May 1816, the priest Nicolas Augustin de la Croix, in his own name and that of various ecclesiastics established in the ancient Carthusian monastery of Lyon, which had been converted into the parish of St. Bruno, requested from the ecclesiastical authorities permission to institute the Association of the Cross of Jesus, according to the rule of the Congregation of St. Ambrose, founded by St. Charles Borromeo in Milan. The authorization