

The reverend Mother chose the name Mary of St. Ignatius for herself, as if to draw down upon the new Institute of Jesus and Mary the inspiration which the founder of the renowned Company of Jesus knew how to communicate to his sons. In imitation of the holy Founder she also wanted to ask for her daughters a sign of predilection, but, perhaps because she feared the weakness of women, she did not dare to ask for the gift of persecutions. In her profound humility she asked Our Lord to give her Institute the inestimable grace of remaining hidden, in order to be more like its divine models, Jesus and Mary.

Meanwhile the new religious family was expanding, opening its first boarding school in 1822. The perfume of the virtues bestowed by the Heart of Jesus on these new virgins of the Church was spreading. In a short time their holiness became widely known, and the Bishop of Le Puy, established the second house of the Congregation in his diocese.

But if the sun of prosperity shone, it was only to prepare these courageous souls for the new battle that lay in store for them. The scarcity of their means and contradictions of all kinds filled the heart of M. St. Ignatius with bitterness more than once; but all these trials were of slight importance in comparison with the sad loss sustained by the Congregation in the death of Fr. Coindre. With the loss of this priest, all human support was taken away, and from that moment, the heart of the Reverend Mother turned in confidence to the Divine Master, trusting only in Him, and she put her daughters under His protection and guidance alone. Her hope was not in vain. Our Lord showed proof that he had made himself the support and guide of his spouses when eleven years later He called the saintly Foundress to Himself, and after this severe trial, gave the Congregation its greatest expansion. . . .

## DOC. XXVII

HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY, entitled: *Histoire de la Congregation des Religieuses de Jesus-Marie d'apres les temoignages des contemporains*, Lyon 1896.

In 1894 a brief biographical account of the Servant of God was published in "Revista Popular" (Doc. XXVI, 10). It does not appear that there were other publications in this respect before 1896, the year of the edition of the *Histoire* which we give in this document, and which contains the first printed biography of the Servant of God. To facilitate its study, we are giving a brief introduction, divided into the following sections:

1. Genesis and elaboration of the work.
2. The author.
3. The sources.
4. Use of the sources.
5. Historical value of the work.
6. Our edition.

### 1 — Genesis and elaboration of the work

Some letters dating from the end of the last century and other documents of that period (A. G. Roma) make known to us the mentality of the first generation of religious regarding the publication of biographies of the members of the Congregation. But the evidence that we consider most important and convincing is that of the minutes of the meeting of the General Council of the Congregation on the 21st September 1899 (cf. Doc. XXII, 2, p. 450). The minutes explain sufficiently well the late appearance of the *Histoire*.

But the fact that it was decided not to publish biographies of the religious because "it is better for us to preserve the customs that our first Mothers have left us and not to make public the memories of our mothers and sisters", does not mean that they had not thought of collecting biographical data of the Servant of God, of her first collaborators and of the origins of the Congregation. These biographies had as their aim to edify the religious who had not known the Foundresses.

With the documents preserved, of those used by the authors of the *Histoire*, we are able to establish a chronology which, although incomplete, reveals the genesis of the idea and the elaboration of this work.

- 1854 - Completion of the *Memorial*, the oldest essay that we know on the History of the Congregation and the biography of the Servant of God (cf. Doc. XXIII).

- 1856 - Information is given to the publisher Migne for an article on the Congregation, published in 1859 (cf. Doc. XXIV).
- 1867 - M. Aloysia collects information on the Servant of God from the lips of M. St. Teresa (cf. *infra.* 2).
- 1868 - A copy is made of the *Memoir* of Father Roch de Cesinale which contains information on the Servant of God (cf. Doc. XXVI, 1).
- 1869 - 85 A collection of anecdotes and biographical data is put together in a manuscript entitled *Notes detachees prises d'iei de la* (cf. Doc. XXVI, 2).
- 1878 - Rev. Mother St. Pothin asks the family of the Servant of God for information and biographical data with the intention of preparing a more complete biography of the Mother Foundress; Elisabeth Mayet gives copies of letters from her aunt, which she has kept (cf. Doc. XVII, 1) and Fr. Mayet writes the interesting letter of 1878 (cf. Doc. XXV, 2).
- 1880 - *Petit manuscrit*, biography of the Servant of God, of M. St. Andrew and of other contemporaries of the Foundress who were already dead (cf. Doc. XXVI, 4).
- 1885 - M. St. Dositheé completes her *l'essai sur l'Histoire de la Congregation*, written at the request of M. St. Pothin (cf. Doc. X, XVI, 5).
- 1890 - By this date it had been decided to publish the *Histoire*, as is proved by the account books of the Province of Spain, which indicate the sending to Fourvière of a sum contributed towards the expenses of the printing.

It is deduced from the information which we have listed that the preoccupation to preserve the memory of the virtues of the Servant of God began during the time of the Superioress General who was her immediate successor, Mother St. Andrew, who died in 1856. In fact the *Memorial* was finished in 1854.

Moreover, in the following Generalate, that of Mother St. Teresa, who died in 1869, the work was continued in the same sense, and Mother Teresa herself spent time correcting the *Memorial*, and took an interest in the publication by Migne and in the copy of the *Memoir* of Fr. Roch de Cesinale.

The fourth Superioress General, M. St. Pothin, gave great impetus to this work. As we see from her letters, the fact of seeing the first religious die grieved her very much, and this must have stimulated her to try to preserve as many memories as possible, and to urge the religious to think about the heroic acts of virtue of the Foundress. She made a fresh revision of the *Memorial* and she herself added some notes, she asked the nephews and nieces of the Foundress for information and during her Generalate various historical and biographical notes were written. It is thought that the long life of Fr. Pousset who was a patient in Vernaison (cf. Doc. XVIII, p. 363) had contributed to delaying the publication of a biography of the Servant of God and of a History of the Congregation.

## 2 — The Author

Although the *Histoire* is anonymously presented, in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary there is no doubt but that it was written by M. Aloysius in collaboration with M. St. Joachim. Both of them had been General Councillors for some time, after having been Superioresses of Rodez and Le Puy (France) and of Ipswich, Willesden-London (England), and Montreux (Switzerland) respectively. This was attested in the Ordinary Process, by Mother Euphemia, who is the most authoritative witness, and who knew the said religious while they were compiling the work (Doc. XXX, 4, p. 750). Moreover until a few years ago some Sisters were still living who belonged to the Generalate and had lived in Rome with M. Aloysius and M. St. Joachim, and they affirmed that these were the authors of the History of the Congregation.

M. Aloysius (Eugenie Hugon) daughter of Frederic and Henriette Brugeron, was born in Loudes (Haute Loire) on the 3rd January 1824. She was a pupil of the boarding school founded by the Servant of God in Le Puy (Haute-Loire). On the 27th April 1842 she entered the Novitiate in Lyon at the age of eighteen years. She made her Profession on the 4th May, 1844, and she died in Rome on the 4th October 1907. She filled successively the offices of Superioress in Rodez and in Le Puy, and Mistress of Novices in Lyon. She was later responsible for making the Visitation of the houses in India and England, and after that she held the post of Secretary General and Councillor for many years.

It is possible that, as a pupil, M. St. Aloysius might have known the Servant of God while she was a boarder in Le Puy. It is quite certain that as a religious she was in contact with fifty-six religious who had lived with the Foundress, among whom were some of those who had taken part in the foundation. This contact with the first generation of religious was maintained afterwards in her journeys as Superioress and in making the Visitations. She was a cultured religious gifted with a particular literary talent. She left some compositions and essays written for her pupils, but not published.

From an autograph letter found recently (28th September 1965) at Lauzon (Canada) (Archives "Jesus-Marie" *Let ires Diverses 1855-1901*) we know that in 1867 M. Aloysius had already begun to collect information about the Foundress. In fact on the 6th December 1867, she wrote from Lyon to M. St. Cyprian, Superioress of the house of St. Joseph de Levis (Canada): "Our Reverend Mother St. Pothin is keeping quite well. We are doing all we can to give her pleasure in order to lighten the burden of her Office. We love her. We esteem and appreciate her as she deserves. The Mother House offers the calmest possible atmosphere. Everyone seems to be united with one heart and one soul. Our dear Rev. M. St. Teresa spent a very painful day on the 4th. Yesterday she was better. I have been able to collect many details about our Mother Foundress from her personally. I shall not delay in sending them to you".

We have already spoken above about M. St. Joachim (Marie Creuzet) who collaborated with M. Aloysius (Doc. XXVI, 6, p. 512).

## 3 — Sources of the Histoire

For the compiling of this work the two authors had oral and written sources and various printed works at their disposal.

A) *Oral Sources.* — We have said that when M. St. Aloysius entered the novitiate fifty-six religious were still alive who had known the Servant of God, deceased five years previously. Sister Saint Bernard was one of those who provided most information to the authors. They recorded this in the following words: "She retained a prodigious memory and perfect lucidity right until the last moments of her long life (85 years 9 months). She provided a great number of the details that we have given here" (*cf. infra*, p. 621, note 7, and page 633). However, not all the fifty-six religious survived the Servant of God for such a long time nor had they all the same long contact as Sister St. Bernard. Below we give a list only of those religious who had actually lived with one or both of the authors, together with the date of birth, of entry into religion and of death, so that it may be possible to appreciate the value of each of these eye-witnesses.

Besides these fifty-six religious, the authors were in contact with three nieces of the Servant of God, Emma Mayet Perroud, and the sisters Melanie and Elisabeth who frequently visited the house of Fourviere until their death in 1870, 1854 and 1882 respectively.

LYON— M. Aloysius 1842-1856, 1880-1902.

M. St. Joachim 1867-1888, 1895-1900.

| NAMH AND SIRNAMH          | DAn oi'BIRTH | ENTRY      | Di: AIM    | CONTACT   |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| M. St-Stanislas Planu     | 6- 2-1793    | 20-10-1818 | 21- 1-1869 | 1842-1869 |
| M. St-Bruno Jubeau        | 27-10-1803   | 22-12-1818 | 6- 3-1879  | 1842-1854 |
| M. St-Andre Ramie         | 13- 5-1796   | 10- 3-1819 | 12-11-1856 | 1842-1856 |
| M. Ste-Elisabeth Falquicr | 1807         | 30- 7-1822 | 9- 1-1867  | 1842-1856 |
| Sr. Ste-Marie Miegé       | 7- 3-1778    | 15- 8-1822 | 24-11-1856 | 1842-1856 |
| Sr. St-Jerome Broillat    | 1797         | 26- 1-1823 | 27- 3-1861 | 1842-1856 |
| Sr. St-Antoine Fournier   | 1803         | 6- 3-1823  | 26- 3-1880 | 1842-1880 |
| M. Ste-Therese Motte      | 2-11-1797    | 25- 9-1823 | 7- 4-1869  | 1854-1869 |
| Sr. St-Benoit Gimbert     | 1803         | 26- 1-1823 | 5- 4-1875  | 1842-1875 |
| Sr. Ste-Ursule Bidale     | 7- 1-1800    | 9- 8-1824  | 5-10-1868  | 1842-1868 |
| Sr. St-Charles Coindre    | 25- 5-1796   | 16- 9-1824 | 23- 1-1863 | 1842-1856 |
| M. Ste-Marie Levrat       | 1797         | 16- 4-1825 | 31- 3-1865 | 1842-1856 |
| M. St-Augustin Greppo     | 3- 8-1798    | 17- 4-1825 | 17- 2-1850 | 1842-1850 |
| M. Ste-Chantal Thomas     | 1808         | 20- 6-1826 | 15- 7-1856 | 1842-1854 |
| M. St-Remi Delion         | 1811         | 4- 6-1827  | 5- 9-1878  | 1842-1855 |
| M. St-Pothin Cholle       | 7- 7-1806    | 7- 6-1827  | 15- 2-1885 | 1842-1885 |
| Sr. St-Bernard Chartoire  | 3- 3-1806    | 11- 7-1828 | 26-12-1893 | 1842-1893 |
| Sr. Ste-Marguerite Dubost | 4- 7-1810    | 20-10-1831 | 12- 5-1872 | 1842-1872 |

| NAMI- AND SIRNAMI-             | DATI.OI BIRTH | ENTRY      | DiATH      | COMACI    |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| M. St-Jean Limozin             | 23-10-1810    | 10- 7-1832 | 17-12-1893 | 1842-1893 |
| Sr. St-Pierre Vey              | 1802          | 29- 9-1832 | 7- 2-1874  | 1842-1874 |
| M. St-Leon Maissat             | 1814          | 1- 5-1834  | 17-12-1888 | 1842-1856 |
| Sr. St-Laurent Descroix        | 25-10-1812    | 5- 3-1835  | 10- 3-1897 | 1842-1897 |
| M. St-Xavier Teyssier          | 14- 4-1812    | 18-11-1836 | 16- 7-1887 | 1842-1875 |
| RODI-Z— M. Aloysius 1856-1874. |               |            |            |           |
| Sr. St-Esprit Burty            | 9- 5-1798     | 8-12-1823  | 22- 8-1880 | 1856-1874 |
| Sr. Ste-Agathe Porlay          | 20- 3-1811    | 5- 3-1835  | 5-12-1881  | 1856-1874 |
| M. St-Xavier Tevssier          | 14- 4-1812    | 18-11-1836 | 16- 7-1887 | 1856-1861 |

In the preceding list of twenty-six religious, we have indicated the years in which each one was in contact with one of the authors either in Lyon or Rodez. We now make some observations to bring out the greater importance of some of these witnesses.

a) The authors were in contact for a long time with three successive Superioresses General who had lived with the Servant of God:- M. St. Andrew, M. St. Teresa, and M. St. Pothin.

b) M. St. Bruno, M. Ste Elisabeth, M. Ste Chantal, M. St. Leon and M. St. Xavier left Lyon for India, where they remained until they died. M. St. Leon was the Superioress of Bombay and M. St. Bruno was the Provincial Superioress until her death. She was succeeded by M. St. Xavier who was already in India, after having been Superioress in Remiremont and Rodez, and foundress and Superioress in Ipswich, England.

c) M. St. Pothin directed the foundation of the first houses of the Congregation in Spain where she was the first Provincial Superioress. She remained there for eight years and when she returned to Lyon, she became the Superioress General.

d) Sr. St. Bernard remained in Lyon all her religious life, and was successively and sometimes simultaneously portress, in charge of the chaplain's quarters, and infirmarian during the last illness of the Servant of God. She was in a good position to know the facts narrated in the *Histoire*, at close range, and the authors stress the important part played by this Sister as an oral and eye-witness source.

e) Sr. St. Esprit even before she entered Religion, was the mistress of the workroom whom the Servant of God put at the head of the *Providence* of Pierres Plantees. Therefore she was for a long time in contact with the Foundress and with the authors of the *Histoire*, first in Lyon and then in Rodez, where she died while M. Aloysius was the Superioress of that house.

f) M. St. Remi formed part of the expedition sent to found the first house of the Congregation in Canada, where she died.

B) *Written sources.* — We give here the list of written sources preserved in the archives of the Generalate in Rome (A.G.R.) and used by the authors of the *Histoire*.

1) *Letters of the Thevenet brothers*, 1794 (Doc. II, pp. 15-16). The authors of the *Histoire* did not reproduce them in full, but they selected the paragraphs which they judged to be the most interesting.

2) *Rule and Register of the Association of the Sacred Heart*, 1816-1825 (Doc. IV, 1,2, pp. 54, 88), used to give the exact dates and other information referring to the Association and the *Providence*.

3) *Registers of the Congregation*, 1823. The authors reproduced various extracts as they judged appropriate. From these documents as from some of the letters listed below — published in the *Histoire*, sometimes in full, and at other times an extract — the reproduction is always faithful to the essentials; regarding the form, the authors frequently allowed themselves to touch up the style.

A) 34 letters, 1841-1843:

6 of Mons. Borghi, Bishop of Agra, 19th Feb. 1841-28th June 1843.

1 of Mons. Rossat, Bishop of Gap, 29th November 1841.

20 of M. St. Teresa. 30th January 1842-21st September 1843.

2 of Fr. Caffarel. 3rd February 1842, and 20th November 1842.

1 of the French Consul at Cairo, M. de Bourville, 21st February 1842.

1 of M. St. Andrew, 25th February 1842.

1 of M. St. Vincent de Paul, 1842.

1 from the Ladies of the Committee (India) 8th May 1842.

1 from the pupils of the boarding school, Agra, 21st September 1843.

5) *Memorial*, 1854, written by one of the first religious of the Congregation (Doc. XXIII). This document occupies a pre-eminent position among the sources. It was the first attempt to write a history of the Congregation, and was used extensively by the authors of the *Histoire*. We can say here and now that the *Memorial* is quoted 63 times in the *Histoire*.

a) 9 times ad litteram (literally),

b) 16 times almost word for word,

c) 10 times with some amplifications without modifying the substance,

d) 28 times with a simple reference.

6) *Notes detachees*, 1870 (Doc. XXVI, 2). This document was used particularly in Chapter XV, which is copied almost word for word; and in ten other cases.

7) *Letter of Fr. Mayet*, 1878 (Doc. XXV, 2) containing his personal memories of the Servant of God. It is quoted various times by the authors, and they reproduce some paragraphs.

8) *Various Biographies*, 1880 (Doc. XXVI, 4). The greater number of the details reproduced in the *Histoire* on the family and childhood of the Servant

of God, were copied almost literally from this document contained in a small exercise book, and referred to as *Petit Manuscrit*.

C) *Printed works used by the authors.* — From Chapter V of the *Histoire* and from other information about Fr. Coindre in different places in this work, it can be seen that the authors consulted: ANONYMOUS. *Vie du Pere, Andre Coindre*, Lyon 1888. For what refers to Fr. Rey, chaplain of the community from 1829 to 1835, they used R. GARRAUD, *Le Pere Joseph Rey, sa vie et ses oeuvres*, Citeaux 1891.

The *Histoire* also quotes, sometimes copying entire passages, from each of the following works:

D. COLON I A, *Histoire Litteraire de Lyon*, Lyon 1730.

D. MEYNIER, *Les grands souvenirs de l'Eglise de Lyon*, Lyon 1877.

J. M. MAURIN, *Coeur d'apotre et de mere, Pauline Marie Jaricot*, Lille s.d.

#### 4 — Use of the Sources.

In the footnotes we have taken care to indicate, as we went along, the sources used by the authors and how they have used them. Some pages of the work come from oral or written sources which are now lost, since they contain details that do not appear in the sources known to us. From an accurate and comparative study between the text of the original and its reproduction in the *Histoire* it is possible to establish in a general way that the authors reproduce the documents with fidelity, only allowing themselves to make some corrections of spelling or style, as was then the custom, and falling into some error of transcription such as the omission or repetition of some words. We give here an example by copying some paragraphs of a letter from M. St. Teresa to M. St. Andrew, of which the original is preserved. The parts printed in italics in the two columns represent the differences between the two texts: the original and the *Histoire*.

##### Original

*Enfin* nous avons regu votre lettre du 26 9bre, avec celle de mgr le Cardinal et celle du pere Aumonier. C'est jour de fete a Agra quand on recoit des lettres du toujours, a jamais bien cher et bien aime Fourviere!

Le bon Dieu vous *envoie* donc des sujets pour nous; qu'il en soit a jamais beni! Ma reverende Mere, Il nous *donne* une partie immense des Indes a defricher; et c'est notre chere petite Congregation qu'il appelle a

##### Histoire p. 285

Nous avons *enfin* regu votre lettre due 26 novembre, avec celle du mgr le Cardinal et celle du pere Aumonier. C'est jour de fete a Agra quand on recoit des lettres du toujours, et a jamais bien cher et bien-aime Fourviere!

Le bon Dieu vous *donne* donc des sujets pour nous? Qu'il en soit a jamais beni! Ma reverende Mere, Il nous *destine* une partie immense des Indes a defricher, et c'est notre chere petite Congregation qu'il appelle a

cette grande oeuvre! Preparez donc cette grande oeuvre! Preparez donc  
des *ouvrières*, car la moisson est grande. des *owners*, car la moisson est grande.

After an attentive analysis of the *Histoire*, and having compared it with the original documents which it had at its disposal, we have discovered the following errors. In general, it is a question of errors of little importance, some due only to misprints, and which do not touch the life of the Servant of God at all. The pages listed below are quoted from the original edition, which in our edition appear in the text in square brackets.

Page 9: *Us étaient 209 en tout*. [There were 209 in all] On that day, 5th January 1794, those executed were only 54. According to historians there were 209 on the 15th frimaire, year 2 (5th Dec. 1793).

Page 11: Regarding the death of Louis Guyot: *huit jours après*, [eight days after] instead of fifteen days before.

Page 18: *Sacres Coeurs*: [Sacred Hearts], on the contrary it is a question of the first Association of the Sacred Heart. This mistake occurs again on other occasions and it creates some confusion between the "Association" and the "Congregation".

Page 26: *Antoine Jaricot*: officially the property was held in the name of the son, Paul.

*30,000 frs*, as given by the deed of the notary — but in another private document it is 25,000 frs. more.

Page 36: *Baron* for Barou. It is not even a question of Barou but of Courbon.

Page 52: *Sifren Joseph Foncroise* instead of Louis Siffren Joseph de Salamon.

Page 58: *23rd February 1823* instead of 25th February 1823.

*de cette journée*, [that day] instead of the following day.

Page 86: *Juillet* [July] — instead of February.

Page 89: *au mois de novembre*, [in the month of November]; since the text omits the year one might have thought it was 1830, while it was a question of 1831.

Page 136: "Les Religieuses du Sacre-Coeur, plus anciennes que nous 'de deux ans settlement'" [The Religious of the Sacred Heart — older than we by two years only] — They were in fact eighteen years older.

Page 140: *1836* instead of 1837.

Page 143: *Les derniers années* — [the last years] — it was a question of one year.

Page 168: An error coming from the hand-written biography which says "en meme temps" [at the same time] but M. St. Andrew was professed in the following month.

Page 193: *September* instead of December.

Page 194: *Le 30th Janvier on recevait la lettre* [The letter was received on 30th January], according to the copy preserved the letter is dated the 30th January.

Page 209: There is a mistake in the date, it should be the 14th Feb (Hill)

Page 254: p. "Meyet": In the copy used as the source it reads Meyrel iblil it refers to More.

Page 296: The date of the letter is not correct.

As may be seen, the errors are about things of very little importance that do not affect the high quality of the work, the character of which is essentially informative. Apart from these mistakes, other editorial defects are not lacking, as for example, some exaggerations of a literary type in which things are reported which do not concern the Cause. All these passages, which in fact are not many, will be omitted in the present edition, but the reader will always be informed by a footnote.

The authors repeatedly mention historical facts relating to the city of Lyon. We have checked these facts and obtained positive results, making use of the following works:

A. M. CAHOUR. *Notre Dame de Fourvière ou les recherches historiques sur l'Autel tutelaire des lyonnais*, Lyon 1838.

A. BALLEYDIÉ, *Histoire politique et militaire du Peuple de Lyon pendant la Révolution française (1780-1795)*. 2 vols, Paris 1845.

J. B. MONFALCON. *Histoire de la Ville de Lyon*, 2 vols, Lyon 1847.

J. PORTALLIER, *Tableau général des victimes et martyrs de la Révolution en Lyonnais, Forez et Beaujolais*, Saint-Etienne 1911.

A. GRAND. *La Croix-Rousse sous la Révolution*, Lyon 1926.

A. STEYERT. *Nouvelle Histoire de Lyon et des Provinces de Lyonnais, Forez, Beaujolais, Franc-Lyonnais et Dombes*, 4 vols, Montbrison 1939.

J. ESCOT, *Fourvière à travers les siècles*, Lyon 1954.

D. BIJENNER, *Madame de Bavozy Abbesse de Fradines de l'Ordre de Saint Benoît (1768-1838)*, Lyon 1961.

J. JOMAND, *Chaponost en Lyonnais*, Lyon 1966.

### 5. — Historical value of the work

To appreciate the true value of the *Histoire*, one should take the following into account:-

a) The authors did not claim to be literary persons. They were cultured religious for their time. They wrote simply, commissioned by their Superior, in order to make known to new generations of religious and pupils the history of the Congregation, and, according to the custom of the community at that time, they did not sign their writings.

b) The authors were well informed. They used the sources which they had at their disposal and they evaluated them by using their common sense, without following the precise rules of modern historical criticism. The character of their work is essentially informative, but this does not take from their trustworthiness.

c) The work was planned to be in 3 volumes; but only the first was published. The exercise books prepared for the second, and a packet of letters with the indication: Notes for the third volume of the *Histoire*, are preserved. In these the account of events in the Congregation was to be continued.

From what has been said it is seen that the authors had at their disposal good oral and written sources, which they used with sincerity. Their work, though not without some defects and not free from errors — although unimportant ones — is worthy of serious consideration because it contains elements of first hand information which permit us to know the charitable activity of the Servant of God who dedicated 30 years of her life solely to works of charity and to consolidating her Congregation.

d) *The Histoire* is written with objectivity and simplicity. It was desired to preserve the memory of the virtues of the Servant of God, and the origins of the Congregation, in order that they might be known to new generations, and for their edification. Nevertheless, while the love and admiration that the religious had for the Foundress is made evident, the documentary value of the *Histoire* is not diminished and it is obvious that the authors were not looking for praise. They could have used, for example, some expressions of praise from Mother St. Pothin (cf. Doc. XXVI, 3, p. 498), but they did not do so.

#### 6. — *Our edition*

Considering the *Histoire* of noteworthy importance for the Cause, we believed it appropriate to insert it in the *Positio*. Therefore, the text of 1896 is published in its entirety, with the exception of some pages which do not directly refer either to the Servant of God or the Congregation, the omission being indicated in the corresponding place. Since the *Histoire* was used by the witnesses in the Process, by publishing it it is intended to increase the value of the depositions and also to make known the spirit of the Congregation in the first ten years which followed the death of the Servant of God. Moreover the publication makes it possible to prove the fidelity and sincerity with which the authors narrate the history of the Society of Jesus and of the Congregation. In the footnotes we have sought to clarify with new elements the biographical and historical information mentioned in the text. The references to documents collected in the *Positio* make it possible to prove the real efforts made by the authors to keep within the limits of historical truth.

The text of the original edition is reproduced exactly as it was; the original numbering of the pages is indicated in Square brackets; all the notes are ours.

*\*Histoire de la Congregation/ des Religieuses de/Jesus-Marie/ d'apres les/temoignages des contemporains./Lyon, Imprimerie M. Paquet, Rue de la Charite, 46, 1896 — 22, 5 x 14 cm, 330 pp.*

[1] PRAISED FOR EVER BE JESUS AND MARY

## CHAPTER ONE

### ORIGINS OF THE CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY

The Revolution of 1793 had ended. In spreading through all classes of society the Reign of Terror had shaken it to its very foundation. Like all the great centres of France, Lyon recovered only slowly from its disasters. The political situation showed little prospect of stability. It is true that the industrial quarters of the populous city were bustling once more with the business of commerce, but there was an atmosphere of apprehension. The working class and common people whose faith had been, as it were, submerged in the revolutionary flood, remained always as a permanent state of danger to the social edifice that others were trying to reconstruct. The new generation, brought up without God, could not improve on the preceding one, nor follow other ways. Therefore it was necessary to convert it, to lead it back to God, to re-establish within it a balance between the different classes [2] of society; and the best means to bring that about was to assure to all children — rich and poor — the benefits of Christian education.

Such was the end pursued, as soon as the political situation permitted, by humble priests, pious lay people and noble women, who did not recoil before any sacrifice in order to consecrate themselves without reserve to this work of Christian and social regeneration.

Mademoiselle CLAUDINE THEVENET, foundress of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, had the happiness of being one of the members of this valiant band of apostles who were fired with the desire to devote themselves to the instruction and good of the poor and of children. For although the Institute of which we wish to sketch the history had undertaken the education of children of wealthier classes from the beginning, just as we see it doing today in its numerous and

*\* History of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary according to the evidence of contemporaries.*

flourishing boarding schools in France and abroad, where all branches of solid and varied instruction are cultivated with success, its principal purpose was the Christian formation of young working girls.<sup>1</sup>

Mile Thevenet had, as it were, been formed by Providence to take the initiative in this great patriotic movement for the improvement of the working class and to draw other souls to follow her.

Marie Claudine Thevenet was born in Lyon on the 30th March 1774.<sup>2</sup> Her father, Philibert Thevenet, who was engaged in the silk trade, had married Marie-Antoinette Guyot, a daughter of a silk merchant of Lyon. They had several children of whom Claudine was the second.

[3] Although very few details have been preserved for us about her early childhood, we know that she was especially loved by everybody. Her kind heart endeared her to her family, and the precocious development of her mind gave her an ascendancy over her brothers and sisters to which they willingly submitted.

For some years she was placed as a boarder in the Abbey of St. Pierre, Place des Terreaux, Lyon.<sup>3</sup> It was the custom in that Abbey to confide each of its pupils to one of the lady Canonesses. Claudine's mistress gave her an elementary knowledge of history and literature, taught her to spell correctly, and, following the custom of those days, instructed her in all kinds of needlework and embroidery, but above all she developed in the child a love of order and care for everything.

<sup>1</sup>This idea is developed in the historical note presented to the Roman Pontiff in order to obtain the approbation of the Constitutions (Doc. XIX, 4. p. 417).

<sup>2</sup>The date is exact. In the Baptismal Certificate only the name Claudine is recorded (Doc. I, p. 7).

<sup>3</sup>Marie Louise Mayet says this (Doc. XXIX, 2, p. 704) and also other witnesses. Nevertheless D. Buennner in the life of Madame Bavoze denies that they received boarders in the Abbey of St. Pierre: "They received no boarders in the Abbey of St. Pierre", while Mollierc, quoted in the same work affirms: "There was a boarding school in the Abbey of St. Pierre, for the education of young girls" (cf. D. BUENNER, *Madame Bavoze abbesse de Pradine*. Lyon, Paris 1961, p. 52 and note 39). In fact at the time in which Claudine was a boarder there, 3 Benedictine Abbeys existed in Lyon, La Deserte, Chazaux, and St. Pierre. From documents of that time it is clear that the first two received boarders, but this does not appear to be the case for St. Pierre. However, in this last, children who did not all take the habit were admitted under the title of "novices". Therefore it seems probable that the family of Guyot de Pravieux, who lived near the Abbey, were on intimate terms with these religious and that Marie-Antoinette asked as a friend for the admission of her daughter Claudine among these special "novices". That the Abbey of St. Pierre received boarders is also confirmed by the Mayor of Lyon. D'Albon, 3rd Oct. 1814 (A. D. Lyon, V, 270, 271).

In the last years of her life, Mile Thevenet still remembered the advice of her wise instructress, and she spoke about her with gratitude and veneration.

In her own home she was just as carefully brought up. With the rest of the family she shared the concern of her parents, in particular, that of her good mother, an active woman who was profoundly Christian and applied herself incessantly to forming the hearts of her children to virtue.

At the time of the Revolution, M. Thevenet had suffered quite considerable reverses of fortune, for his enterprising character made him sometimes go beyond the bounds of prudence [4]; but the worthy merchant of Lyon, faithful to the noble traditions of his race, always found means of helping the unfortunate, in spite of his losses. To comfort those who were suffering, to discover the sorrows of others in order to alleviate them, to take the part of those who were weak or oppressed, such was the most pressing need, the most agreeable occupation of this family, a family after the heart of God. The angel of the home, Gladys, as she was called by her closest friends, had grown up in the midst of her family with this strong and gentle passion for doing good.

Inheriting a resolute and energetic character from her mother, she showed on different occasions evidence of fearlessness and self-sacrifice, amounting to heroism.<sup>5</sup>

In her adolescence, Claudine had known the horrors of 1793.

At the beginning of this bloody epoch, so aptly designated in history by the name of *the Terror*, the city of Lyon had undergone all the vicissitudes of a long siege.

An army of sixty thousand Jacobins, under the command of the fierce Dubois Crance<sup>6</sup> besieged it for two months; after an heroic

<sup>4</sup>The four preceding paragraphs are a literal reproduction of the "*Petit Manuscrit*" appendix, p. 31, of which we have spoken in Doc. XXVI, 4, pp. 499, 507. As this document is reproduced almost entirely in the *Histoire*, from now on we shall quote from it indicating how it was used by the authors, *ad litteram* or *ad sensum*. We shall do the same with regard to the *Memoriai* (di. Doc. XXIII, p. 454) and the *Notes Detachees* (cf. Doc. XXVI, 2, p. 494).

<sup>5</sup>These last two paragraphs are a summary of the four corresponding ones in the *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>6</sup>General Dubois Crance was born in Charleville on the 8th October 1747. He died in Bethel on the 29th June 1818. He was a friend of Rousseau and Robespierre. Commander of the Alpine Army, he directed the siege of Lyon, showing ruthlessness. As Minister of War in 1799 he was replaced by Berthier.

resistance, the shortage of supplies forced the people of Lyon to surrender. Like most of the inhabitants, the Thevenet family experienced as their lot anxiety and privation all the time the siege lasted.

Monsieur Thevenet had hastened to place his youngest children in safety, away from the danger of the advancing troops of the Convention. He was unable to return before the complete blockade of Lyon. So it was that Madame Thevenet stayed in the [5] besieged city with her daughter Glady and her two eldest sons, Louis and Francois.

These two young men, patriots at heart, could not resolve to stay quietly at home when so many of their friends were enthusiastically enlisting under gallant General de Precy.<sup>7</sup> They enrolled themselves in their turn to defend the ancient city of Lyon, and did their duty nobly until hostilities ceased.

We know that the last hours of the resistance were appalling. There had been deadly fighting on the Quai de Retz and Madame Thevenet and her daughter knew that the two young men had been posted in that area. But the fighting was over, it was night and yet there was no news of the combatants. The poor women were beside themselves, tortured with uncertainty. Seeing the mother's distress Claudine did not hesitate, she went out with an old servant and made her way to the scene of the battle. The area was strewn with the bodies of the dead. She approached each of them to find her brothers, if they had been killed or wounded. She did not find I hem and returned home, her mind full of the saddest conjectures. That same night, Louis and Francois arrived at home.

After the fighting, from which they had escaped unhurt, they had reached a small shelter and under cover of darkness, by making their

way over the roof tops, they had come to calm the distress of their mother and sister who were left alone at home.<sup>8</sup>

After the surrender of the city, the infamous republican [6] leader, Dubois Crance, who had promised complete security for everybody when he was dealing with the eminent citizens of Lyon, was not in the least worried about keeping this promise.<sup>9</sup> Installed in the Town Hall, he established a military commission whose duty it was to judge those who had borne arms during the siege. Each day his emissaries brought along some victims. The Thevenet brothers were denounced and imprisoned in the Town Hall. The place of their detention left no possible doubt as to their lot; after the rigours of the prison came the firing squad.<sup>10</sup>

During those anxious days of her brothers' captivity, Glady was transformed into a consoling angel, and with the help of a disguise, she made her way into the prison, where she was able to see her brothers and bring them food and clothing — all the more necessary because it was the middle of winter. One day when, braving the gaoler and gate-keeper, the courageous young girl appeared again, disguised as a servant, and asked to see the prisoners, the warder, as if to find out what kind of person she was, said to her roughly as he filled her glass: "Come citizeness, drink with us — to the health of the Republic!" As he pronounced these words, the Jacobin with his filthy hands presented her with the glass, after drinking half of it himself. The cheeks of the young girl reddened, her indignation was about to betray her, but the thought of her imprisoned brothers checked her emotion. She grasped the hateful glass and emptied it at one gulp . . . That was the price she had to pay to be able to see the condemned men. This visit was to be the last." Faithful to God and their country until the end, the [7] two young men showed themselves worthy of the admirable

<sup>7</sup> Louis Francois Perrin, Count of Precy, was born on the 15th January 1742 in Semur-en-Brionnais (Charolais); before the Revolution he held important military posts in Germany and elsewhere. As he was against the revolutionary movement he withdrew into private life. In 1793 he took part in the counter-revolutionary movement of Lyon ami. at the head of the troops, defended the city for 63 days against an army ten times superior to his own. After the victory of the revolutionaries he succeeded in fleeing to Switzrland whence he passed to England and Germany. In 1814, when the Bourbons were restored, he was appointed commander of the National Guard of Lyon. He died on the 25th August 1820.

<sup>8</sup> At that time the Thevenet family lived in the rue Royale, at the corner of rue Dauphine, near the Quai de Retz, the scene of the fighting. The house still exists, marked No 22. and the street keeps the name, rue Royale.

<sup>9</sup> The six paragraphs on pages 4 and 5 reproduce the *Petit Manuscrit* pp. 33-35 almost *ad Utteram*.

<sup>10</sup> The detained men were transferred to another prison. Generally the basements of the municipal palace were the waiting-rooms for execution. In a list entitled "List of men who were put in the prison of St. Joseph at Ville-Affranchie, who were enrolled in the Chasseurs de la Montagne, the names of Louis-Antoine and Francois Thevenet appear among the 42 names recorded there (*A. D. Lyon*, 1, L, 1199).

<sup>11</sup> These details are also found reproduced almost *adlitteram* in the *Petit Manuscrit*. pp. 36-37; and in an abbreviated form in the letter of Fr. Mayet (Doc. XXV, 2).



tenderness of which they were the object. In the same prison there was a sick and infirm priest whom the Thevenet brothers surrounded with care and respect. They shared the provisions they received with him. It was he who heard their last confession, and in pronouncing over them the word of holy absolution gave them peace of soul and the assurance of a better life in compensation for the life they were about to lose so prematurely.<sup>12</sup>

A few hours before they were led to execution they wrote in a firm hand their farewells to their family. I [ere is the text of their letter which we reproduce in its touching simplicity.<sup>11</sup>

It is Louis, the eldest in the family who begins.

16th Nivose, Year II of the Republic,  
(5th January 1794) 7 o'clock in the morning.

Father, mother, brother, sisters, cousins and friends,  
Goodbye, . . . Goodbye for the last time.

Goodbye my dear good father; you did all you could to save us, but to no avail; our fate was decided. My greatest regret is that I am taking my young brother to death with me. Without me, his age would have saved him.

Do not reproach anybody with my death, I alone am guilty, if anyone is . . . moderate your grief as well as that of my poor mother!

You who carried us in your heart as you carried us in your womb, the thought of you makes [K] my tears flow and momentarily shakes that confidence which is born of innocence; may you find consolation in the help of God at this time of sorrow.

Goodbye my sisters, goodbye my poor dear sister Glady, I beg of you to take care of yourself, for my sake.

Do not think that I forget my sisters Babet and Leonore. They are happy at Belley. Break the news of our death to them gently.

<sup>12</sup> The statement that the priest was there is correct (cf. Doc. II, *inn.*, p. II and *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 37). In the list and in the documents of the process in which are round the names of the Thevenet brothers, there are those of two priests: Antoine Marie Bruyas and Jacques Roux who were guillotined on the same day that the Thevenet brothers were shot. In A. />. / von, 42, L, 27, 16 Nivose. the interrogation is also preserved with the replies of these priests.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Doc. II, 2 and 3, pp. 15-17, the complete text of these letters, which are here much abridged, cf. also *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 38-41, which gives them almost in full.

After Louis, Francois took the same paper and expressed himself as follows:

Before going into the presence of God, I must do my duty.

Goodbye mother, goodbye father, goodbye for ever.

You need all the help that your religion can give to support with courage the death of two of your sons, to whom until now you have given your maternal and paternal care.

Goodbye my dear, good and too sensitive sister, Glady! It is you my dear friend who will have the painful task of consoling our mother. I am well aware that our death will be a terrible blow to her. Our excellent mother! Console her . . . Yes my dear friend, tell her that she still has a family of five children and that she must look after herself for their sake. Alas! we shall be happier than you, in four or five hours from now we shall be in God's presence, the presence of this good Father . . . We [9] shall be reunited one day. Goodbye! Pray for us.

In a few hours we go to our execution, and we shall go with that unflinching courage that comes from a clear conscience.

Louis THEVENET  
Francois THEVENET, junior

These lines, which need no comment, were to reach their destination by a touching stratagem of filial affection. Meanwhile, Monsieur Thevenet, their father, had taken numerous steps to obtain the release of his sons. All his efforts were in vain.

Not knowing that their sentences had been passed, Glady made her way once again towards the prison, after several fruitless attempts on the preceding days, with the lively hope of seeing her dear prisoners, even for a few moments. She was accompanied by a trustworthy servant. Near the Town Hall a detachment of troops appeared. Behind the detachment followed the condemned prisoners between a double line of soldiers. Her brothers were among the victims. Claudine Thevenet saw them and trembled. Her eyes caught those of Louis, the elder of the two brothers. She went as near as possible to the procession, and walked in step with this long line of patriots. There were 209 in all . . . the elite of the youth of Lyon, marching in fetters two by two.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> that day there were 54 (cf. Doc. II, 1, p. 13); there were 209 put to death on 15 frimaire, year 2 (5 December 1793) (cf. Arch. Nat. Paris F<sup>7</sup> 4485).

Louis Thevenet had not lost sight of any of his sister's [10] movements. When she and her servant had come nearer, Louis spoke to the faithful servant and said to him in a low voice: "Bend down as if to pick something up, and take a letter for our mother from my shoe." And, as the servant was upset and wanted to show some sign of sympathy to his young masters, one of them said to him with lively affection; "Keep quiet you wretched man, you will betray yourself." Then turning towards his sister, and indicating by a glance the letter which the weeping old messenger was handing to her, he said: "Gladly, forgive as we forgive."<sup>1</sup>

Weeping, and more dead than alive, Claudine still found the strength to follow the cortege as far as the Brotteaux, the ordinary place for executions. There, she witnessed the fusillade, uniting herself with all the energy of her sisterly love to the souls of her dear brothers who were passing so abruptly from life to death. At that moment of supreme anguish, the thought of Our Lord dying on the Cross with words of forgiveness on his lips was a light and support for her broken heart. The last prayer and only desire of her dear brothers at that solemn hour, "Courage, Gladly, forgive as we forgive" was like an echo of the words of her sweet Saviour . . . The poor girl joined her hands and tried to stammer in her turn, "My God, forgive these murderers, they know not what they do!"

When the last shots had died away, and while people were sadly withdrawing from the scene of carnage, some unsteady [11] shapes slipped furtively among the bodies to recognize the faces of their dear ones and respectfully kiss their mutilated remains. Claudine was one of those who were searching. Alas! She did not have to look for long... A sinister noise made her look up, but she quickly turned her eyes away as she suppressed a cry of horror. They were killing off the survivors with the butts of their rifles, and among those she had recognized her brothers!

All her life a nervous trembling of the head remained with her, and a painful sensation of suffocation which was thus a continual reminder of the dreadful scene she had witnessed.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Doc. 11, p. 12 and *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 41-44, reproduced *ad sensum* on pages 9-11.

Light days after this bloody tragedy, another member of the family, M. Guyot, brother of Madame Thevenet, was guillotined in the Place des Terreaux, for the sole crime of being rich.<sup>16</sup> During the siege of the city by the troops of the Convention, M. Guyot was at Massues in his country house. The Headquarters of the Republican army was installed in the house and was well treated. This civility did not safeguard M. Guyot from the pursuit of the victors. On the contrary. It was perhaps the first of the reasons which led to his arrest.

As for M. Thevenet, the father of the unfortunate victims, he survived them for a few years, and died in 1815.<sup>17</sup>

After the Terror, there was a short respite in France. This was followed by a reaction against the Jacobins who had shed so much innocent blood. The Thevenet family knew the person who had denounced Gladly's brothers [12] to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Perhaps this wretched man would have received capital punishment, if he had been denounced. They refused to do this, in order to practise forgiveness of injuries.

The last wish, the testament so to speak of the two brave men going to death: "Forgive, Gladly, as we forgive", was fulfilled perfectly by this act of mercy. The part that Claudine Thevenet played in this noble Christian decision can be easily imagined.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The date is incorrect. The condemnation and the death of Louis Guyot took place, instead of eight days after, fifteen days before the execution of the Thevenet brothers, that is, on the 1st Nivose, year 2 (21st December 1793) as is seen from the death sentence preserved in A. D. Lyon, 42 L. 27, where other documents are found which confirm all the details given here in the *Histoire*.

<sup>17</sup> This is correct, cf. in fact. Doc. IV, 2, p. 89, note 9.

<sup>18</sup> These two paragraphs are found almost word for word in Doc. XXV.2, p. 489, and in the *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 44-45. After these facts the sources of the *Histoire* give no details about the life of the Servant of God from 1794 to 1815. We have however, been able to follow her from 1802 (cf. Doc. III, /</>•). The years before (1795-1801) correspond to the time of clandestine religious worship in France, and in Lyon to the organisation and functioning of the so-called •"Missions Lyonnaises" (cf. C. H. LEDRE, *Le culte cache sous la Revolution*, Paris 1948). Mons. de Marbeuf, then Archbishop of Lyon (1789-1799) was never able to take up residence in his diocese, which was governed by Vicars General, Linsolas and Castillon. The latter was guillotined in November 1793; Linsolas remained alone in the diocese, keeping in touch with the exiled Archbishop. Prisoners and those condemned to death were the special object of his charity, and he helped them, above all spiritually, through priests and young people of both sexes who were zealous and fearless. In November 1794, with the approval of Mgr de Marbeuf, he divided the Diocese into

## [13] CHAPTER II

## THK APOSTOLATE OF THE HOME

Living quietly at home with her father, mother, young brother and sisters for whom she was a genuine consolation, Mile Thevenet, barely twenty years old, henceforth knew no other pleasure in life than that of spending herself for her neighbour. Her energy, her time, her fortune, everything went on this. Her tremendous desire for doing good made her find in her misfortunes themselves the fuel to feed her fervour. She dedicated herself to works of charity with all the more zeal and generosity, as these works seemed to her to have been arranged by divine Providence to make reparation for the disasters caused by the Revolution.

For Claudine Thevenet, the greatest misfortune was to live and die without knowing God. The lot of those thousands of poor little children, deprived of the goods of this world, who were destined to grow up perhaps without ever hearing the name of God, made her shudder.

If when she was out, she met one of these poor children in tatters on the streets, she was moved to tears.<sup>1</sup> [14] Together with some of her friends, she sought a solution to remedy this great misfortune. Assembled in Committee, they planned the means to be employed to

mission circles. A "circle" was composed of a specific area with a leader, a helper and some missionaries. Each of these was in charge of different parishes, helped by chosen seculars who acted as catechists, auxiliaries and intermediaries. Neither the leader nor the missionaries had a fixed residence. They travelled from place to place according to need. Three rural priests, in contact with the Council presided over by the Vicar General, together kept the different circles in touch with one another. These were the Missionaries of Lyon, also called "Missionaries of Linsolas". They produced consoling results which, being made known to other Bishops through Mgr de Marbeuf, were adopted in their respective dioceses following identical or similar procedures. It is thought that Claudine Thevenet took an active part in the Missions of Linsolas. The supposition is based principally on the resemblance between this organisation and that of the Pious Union of the Sacred Heart, of which she was the organiser and president in perpetuity (cf. Doc. IV, p. 39). Such a probability is also supported by the fact that the activity of the collaborators of Linsolas fits in very well with the character, virtues and successive works of the Servant of God. It is impossible to confirm this because, given the dangerous times, the *Memoirs de Linsolas* preserved in A. A. Lyon with other documents relative to the same, maintain a prudent reserve about the names of persons associated with the work.

<sup>1</sup> C\ Petit Manuscrit. pp. 3. 47-48, *ad sensim*.

rescue from their ignorance at least some of these young girls and to train them to lead Christian lives.<sup>2</sup>

A good priest, Fr. Coindre, who was a missionary of Lyon and a pattern of priestly virtues, gave his full support to the aspirations of his generous compatriots. To improve the conditions of the working class, by leading the workers to the knowledge of God and their duty, such was the ideal that his apostolic zeal pursued. The devout priest assisted at the meetings of the Committee of which he was the spiritual director and friend. It was thanks to his advice and encouragement that they resolved to make a first attempt.<sup>3</sup>

But first of all, it was necessary to give a name to the little Association. Fr. Coindre soon found one in his tender devotion to the holy Humanity of Our Lord: he called it "The Association of the Sacred Hearts",<sup>4</sup> as if to give those who belonged to it a sign round which to rally, as well as a token of hope. This name was received with both respect and joy by the new Associates, and in particular by Claudine Thevenet. It seemed as if, even as it was pronounced, a spark of love came forth from it. This first flame was never to be quenched. The inspiration breathed forth from the heart of the man of God was to become, in fact, the source of a work that Heaven destined to grow, to spread, and to [15] extend its humble but fruitful rays over the two worlds.

Until then, the total amount of good accomplished by each Associate in her own sphere of action, however encouraging it might be, left much to be desired, according to all. The poor were visited in their hovels in order to speak to them about God. The young working girl, bent under the double burden of poverty and ignorance, was taught to aspire to a happiness that was more genuine than the wealth, so much coveted, of the great lady. Often it was possible to get the girl sent to catechism. She was provided with the necessary clothing and the schooling was paid for in advance. When it was impossible for the parents to do without their child, the Associates obliged themselves to

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Doc. XIX, 4, p. 417; *Memorial*, p. 1, *ad sensim*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Docs. 111.4, p. 32, IV, 2.28 c.p. 121, *Memorial*, p. 1, *ad sensim*. *Petit Manuscrit*. pp. 3-4. 48 *ad sensim*; and Anonymous *Vie du Pere Andre Coindre*. Lyon. 1888. pp. 59-61. 64-65.

<sup>4</sup> The *Histoire* sometimes says: "Sacred Heart" and at other times: "Sacred Hearts". The exact title was "Pious Union of the Sacred Heart" (Doc. IV, p. 39).

go to their poor little dwelling for an hour every day in order to bring to life the gift of faith in this young child's soul and lead it little by little to that standard of instruction required for admission to First Communion. Fr. Coindre however, who was deeply moved on seeing these self-sacrificing efforts, also thought that by uniting these scattered works of zeal into one united movement more and better could be done. His plan was settled, he called a meeting of his collaborators: Miles Thevenet, Catherine Laporte, Pauline Marie Jaricot, Ootilde Revel, Victoire Ramie and some others hastened to answer his call, and the plan proposed by the good Father was discussed, namely, to found a class, or rather a small Providence. All subscribed to it wholeheartedly [16]. Some "cells" were rented in the ancient Carthusian Cloister and a few children were brought there whose parents allowed the Associates to have the entire supervision of them. Some beds were installed provisionally and the basic material necessities of life were provided.

To use the hours left free from elementary classes, and at the same time to cover the expenses of their upkeep, a workroom for making artificial flowers was established for the children.

But a difficulty arose at the time when the little work was entering on the first phase of its existence.

Among the generous persons whose initiative and services had given it impetus, no one was able to obtain the freedom to dedicate herself to it immediately. Refusals and harassment on the part of parents, duties of position, requirements of society, everything put obstacles in the way. The prudent associates, remembering that "It is better to let well alone", had to resign themselves to wait until circumstances and perseverance had made these numerous obstacles disappear.

"God has his own plans in all these delays", Fr. Coindre placidly replied to the complaints of this one and that. "Let us have patience, and see where we stand." It was decided that the little workroom would be confided to the Sisters of St. Joseph who willingly took charge of it, starting on the 13th September with 15 francs in hand. For the zealous foundresses, intent to do good, could not contribute of their own money, except in so far as their families allowed them. [17] "Let us do the little we can, the good God who provides the swallow

with a corner of the roof where it can build its nest, will do the rest," said Fr. Coindre.

It pleased God in his goodness to justify this abandonment to his Providence. Alms arrived just when needed, as if measured out by the hand of a father! One day the treasurer recited a *Te Deum* when she received the sum of 60 francs<sup>5</sup> all at once. It was the only gift of considerable size that she had had to enter into the receipts, up to that time.

Even so the little orphanage prospered — like those young plants which only need a little water and sunshine to become strong very quickly and grow into shrubs.

The good Sisters of St. Joseph had become attached to their adopted children. They were anxious to advance the work and to carry it through to a successful completion.

From time to time the Associates of the Sacred Heart appeared in the workroom to encourage the work and to do their share, but their presence was not so necessary as at the beginning. Happy at the success obtained and the good which was being done, they blessed God and waited until it might please His Divine Majesty to show His will in their regard in another way.<sup>6</sup>

[18]

## CHAPTER III

## THE CRADLE OF THE INSTITUTION

More than a year had passed since the foundation of the little Association of the Sacred Hearts in Lyon. Already its members were seen to be making the most admirable progress from the point of view of personal sanctification. At the same time their zeal was becoming enlightened and purified, and was becoming more and more eager to do good, desiring only to expand.

However, Fr. Coindre had not lost sight of his original plan, and the sad spectacle of the moral degradation and the neglected state of

<sup>5</sup> This should read 600.

<sup>6</sup> The principal sources of this final part of the chapter are recorded in Docs. III, /<#>, p. 21. IV. p. 2. 28c. p. 121; *Memorial*, pp. 1-2 *ad sensum*. *Peril Manuscril*. pp. 3-4 *ad sensum*.

souls which he witnessed every day was not such as to put a brake on his zeal.

During the short intervals of free time from his ministry, the pious missionary used to appear in the midst of his faithful co-operators to support and guide them in their humble labours, and also to enjoy the fragrance of their virtues and to bless God for what He had done for them.<sup>1</sup>

But soon, the ranks of the Pious Association began [19] to thin out. Some of Mile Thevenet's first companions left her to go their separate ways.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Pauline Marie Jaricot had become almost without knowing it the foundress of the work of the Propagation of the Faith, one of the marvels of our century. God, who had deprived her of the happiness of sharing in our apostolate, had reserved ample compensation for her, by calling her to be the first to collect for the foreign missions, that "halfpenny a month" which little by little has produced millions.

It is a pleasure for us to pause for a moment before that gentle, virginal woman who has been so highly praised, and so devoutly loved by some, so unworthily calumniated and so outrageously humiliated by others, that lady whom Pope Gregory XVI blessed and encouraged, whom Pope Pius IX exalted and defended, and whom Pope Leo XIII has called "a pious virgin, whose memory is venerated in the Church for more than one reason".

The close friendship between Mile Jaricot and Mile Thevenet, one still in the flower of youth, and the other already fully mature, was like a marriage between grace and strength and it was to exercise a happy and fruitful influence on both of them.

For the rest, Mile Jaricot always remained a dear friend of our venerated Mother Foundress, as well as of the three Superioresses General who succeeded her, namely: Mother St. Andrew, Mother St. Teresa and Mother St. Pothin. She never failed to take the greatest interest in our community, and each time that she came to visit it [20] she was always welcomed with marks of the sincerest affection.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Docs. III. 4. p. 33, IV. 2. 41d. p. 139.

-Cf. Doc. IV. 2. 28, c, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> For what refers to the relations between the Servant of God and Pauline Jaricot cf. Docs V. p. 172 and XVI. C. 6, b. p. 121.

These empty places in the Association of the Sacred Hearts made Fr. Coindre realise that the time had arrived to organise the work under another form, and open it up to broader horizons. It seemed to him that Heaven had chosen Mile Thevenet to be the cornerstone of the new edifice which he dreamt of building.

God, as this worthy priest knew, had Himself taken care of breaking the network of obstacles which, until then, had been opposing the desire of pious ladies of Lyon to give themselves to Him without reserve, and for ever.

With that authority and decision which reveal inspiration from on high, he announced to the group the intentions of God for the little Association of the Sacred Hearts. "You must form yourselves into a community without hesitation or delay," he said. And straightaway he traced the outlines taken from the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, that he planned to combine at a later date into a single code of religious observance adapted to their own needs.

*To form souls for Heaven by a truly Christian education;* such was the aim that they must make every effort to pursue from then on, under one and the same banner and leadership.

This mandate, which seemed to bear a divine seal, left the little assembly dumb with astonishment. But without giving them time to recover from their surprise, Fr. Coindre presented Mile Thevenet to her companions as the one whom Providence had designated [21] to accomplish its mission. And as she fell on her knees and seemed overwhelmed, he said resolutely: "Heaven has chosen you, answer its call". At these solemn words her former friends became her daughters. They raised her up giving her the sweet title of Mother, and each one embraced her silently in turn, in proof of their affectionate respect and entire submission.<sup>4</sup>

This took place in 1818. Marie-Claudine Thevenet was then 44 years old. Her first companions were Miles Victoire Ramie and Catherine Laporte, and they were soon joined by Miles Dioque, Chippier, Jubeau, Planut, Ferrand and Chardon, whose desire for the life of perfection was very ardent.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The facts referred to in the last 5 paragraphs are taken from the *Memorial* page 3 *ad sensum* and from *Peril Manuscript* page 4 *ad sensum*.

<sup>5</sup> The date and names are exact (cf. Register of entry. A. G. Roma).

Now that the new community had been constituted, its members agreed there and then to open a workroom for the manufacture of silk, which was the most important industry of Lyon at that time, as it is today. A humble dwelling was rented in "Pierres Plantees" not far from the gates of the populous and bustling suburb of the Croix-Rousse.<sup>6</sup> A silk weaver who was skilled in her art, one loom and one child were installed there. (This poor little workroom was not very promising.) An eye-witness, the nephew of the foundress, Rev. Fr. Mayet, the Marist, narrates that when he was seven or eight years old,<sup>7</sup> his childish heart sank more than once, on seeing his worthy aunt, whose serious and composed expression kept him a little at a distance, consigned to a humble, gloomy dwelling, with hardly any furniture, and only a poor silk weaver for company.

[22] "I understood nothing at the time", he said, "it was only long years after, when I had donned the religious habit myself that I understood this renunciation of my venerable aunt in Pierres Plantees. The work of God is indeed founded only on poverty, on nothing!!"<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The date and names are exact (cf. Register of entry, A. G. Roma) Victoire Ramie, M. St. Andrew (cf. Doc. XXI, p. 434); Catherine Laporte (cf. Doc. IX, 2, p. 221); Marie Antoinette Bedor, the widow Dioque, M. St. Peter (cf. Docs. X, *inir.*, p. 251; XV.4.p. 267.5. p. 268; Jeanne Pierrette Chipier, M. St. Xavier (cf. Doc. XI. 1. c); Jeanne Marie Plaiuu, M. St. Stanislaus (cf. Doc. XI. 1. c); Catherine Jubeau, M. St. Bruno (cf. Doc. XI. 1. c); Francoise Blanc, widow Ferrand, M. St. Borgia (cf. Doc. XI. 1. c); Suzanne Chardon, M. St. Gonzaga (cf. Doc. XI. 1. c); Marguerite Clotilde Revcl, M. St. Ambrose, daughter of Michel and Pierrette Joyet, was born in Lyon on the 22nd January 1797, and she entered the Congregation on the 19th July 1822. She made her Profession on the 19th August 1823, and died in Agra (India) on the 1st July 1856 (cf. Doc. IV, 2, note 27).

From the biographical data referred to above is seen the great difference between the age of the Foundress and that of her first companions, with the exception of the two widows: Marie Antoinette Bedor, who did not persevere, and Francoise Blanc. In various circumstances in the life of the Servant of God, one can observe in fact how in her works she was surrounded and supported by the young. Thus, already in her first Association, the associates were admitted from the age of fifteen years, and automatically, they left as soon as they got married. According to various documents, the girls of the *Providence* gave constant evidence of their affection for their Mother, even after her death. Such a strong influence exercised with such constancy by a person of mature age on young girls and youth, cannot be explained except as the effect of her charity and of other natural and supernatural qualities.

"The fact is confirmed in private documents as well as in official documents of the Municipality (cf. Doc. VI, p. 185); *Manorial*, p. 3. *ad sensum*; *Petit Manusait*, *ad sensum*.

• Rather than being 7 or 8 years of age Fr. Mayet was between 9 and 11. He was born in 1809 (cf. Doc. XXV. 2. p. 488).

Such as it was, the cramped lodging sufficed for the needs of the moment, since the little community did not live there yet, and it was only occupied habitually by the pious girl chosen by Mlle Thevenet to teach the children the making of silk materials in which she excelled. This young woman was called Jeanne Burty.<sup>8</sup> Her task was limited to teaching her only pupil the words of the catechism, morning and evening prayers, and a little sewing and mending, whilst awaiting the time when the child could be initiated into the secrets of the loom.

Other smiling little girls were not slow in joining this first pupil. They were formed into a class, to add a little reading, writing and arithmetic to the sum of their knowledge. The hard-working Jeanne Burty found time, in spite of the care she gave to the housekeeping, to devote herself to the lucrative work of the loom which was to become the only source of income for the future family. This courageous girl later became Sister Saint Esprit, and she edified the community until her death by practising the hidden virtues. Her example drew many of her former companions to dedicate themselves to God and their neighbour, whilst at the same time continuing to utilise their skills. These pious Christians, who also served the house as auxiliary sisters, were called [23] Sisters Saint Anthony, St. Dominic, St. Francis, etc.<sup>9</sup>

However, Mile Thevenet and her faithful companions regularly visited her dear little establishment every day. Her great preoccupation was to settle herself there in a definitive way. But how many trials had she not to undergo to reach that point!

<sup>8</sup> All the details regarding Jeanne Burty, Sister Saint Esprit are confirmed in the Registers of the Congregation. She was born on the 9th May, 1798, in Saint Genis d'Aoste (Savoie), the daughter of Joseph and Marie Decret; she entered the Congregation on the 8th December 1823, and made her Profession on the 21st May 1826. She died on the 22nd April 1880.

<sup>9</sup> Sister Saint Anthony, Jeanne Marie Fournier, was the daughter of Etienne and Marie Fournier; she was born in 1803 in Saint Maurice-en-Gourgois (Loire), and entered the Congregation on the 6th March 1823. She made her profession on the 1st December 1825 and died in Lyon on the 26th March 1880.

Sister Saint Dominic, Anthelme Cartel, was the daughter of Etienne and Adrienne Boron. She was born on the 19th October 1791, and entered the Congregation on the 7th October 1818, in Pierres Plantees. She made her Profession on the 19th August 1823 and died in Lyon on the 6th April 1855.

Sister St. Francis, Marie Lavire, was the daughter of Claude and Benoit Ducet. She was born in Loire (Rhône) on the 21st March 1778, and entered the Congregation in Pierres Plantees on the 4th December 1818. She made her Profession on the 18th September 1823 and died in Lyon on the 23rd September 1848.

The excellent mother of Claudine Thevenet was still living. She had been a widow for three years. More than once the absence of her dear "Glady" seemed to her to be neglect. She gently complained to her about it: "What silk-weaver's charm has bewitched you, that you should leave your old mother so often to be with these little girls of Pierres Plantces?". Alas, Mile Thevenet's love for her mother, strong as it was, was now to give way to a still stronger love, love for God and the souls created in His image!

Besides these powerful claims on the heart of her daughter, more or less teasing jokes abounded in the home. The relative already mentioned said: "When my father said with an ironical but not unkindly manner, addressing my pious aunt: 'Madame l'Abbesse' I still seem to see her even now, quite embarrassed, blushing, half smiling, saying nothing, and continuing to turn those little bobbins with which women made lace. It was undoubtedly at that time that she was thinking of her foundation and was preparing to leave us. I did not grasp the meaning of these little family scenes, because of my age; but they remained in my mind with the sense that I have just reproduced." [24] He adds: "It may be concluded from them that the future Reverend Mother had to undergo other teasing at home, and above all from outside, and still more humiliating jokes than those that my father allowed himself. In a word, this little Mile Thevenet, who wanted to make herself the foundress of an Order must have been often made fun of. It must have been the subject of all the gossips in the neighbourhood. Such works cannot be done without being ridiculed, scorned, etc., etc."<sup>10</sup>

However, this 'little soul' (according to the world) who was the object of these jokes, could not doubt the heavenly call; however, she struggled against the extreme severity of the sacrifice required of her; but God won the victory. According to the decision of Fr. Coindre, she left her mother and her family definitively on the 6th October 1818, on the evening of the feast of St. Bruno."

<sup>10</sup> The three previous paragraphs are found summarised in the *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> The foundation of the Congregation took place in fact on the feast of St. Bruno 1818, after the Vespers of the vigil, on which date, according to some documents, the Foundress and M. St. Borgia met in Pierres Plantées.

The first night that she spent away from her own home was a night of desolation and anguish for her, so much so that at the end of her life Mother Foundress still spoke of it as the most dreadful night she had ever known. "It seemed to me" she said, "that I had entered upon a foolish and presumptuous undertaking which offered no guarantee of success but which, on the contrary, taking everything into consideration, must end in failure." It was in remembrance of that first night of October 6th that Mile Jubeau, one of the first companions of Mile Thevenet, was given the name of Saint Bruno. Already some of them had gone in advance to the humble abode of Pierres Plantées,<sup>12</sup> and if she told [25] them about those terrible fears of the eve it was above all to thwart the deception of the evil spirit by mocking him and trusting in the words of Him who said: "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all the rest will be added, over and above." This generous woman of Lyon never had to regret her "foolish" action in leaving home. It was not that contradictions and setbacks were lacking from the very beginning. Outside, the little community did not always meet with good-will. On the contrary, the derision of passers by sometimes went as far as violence and insult. It was the seal of the Cross; how could they refuse to be marked with it?

"When we were going to Mass with the children" said Mother Foundress, "the street urchins used to throw stones at us. Then Fr. Coindre said to us for our consolation: 'It is a good sign my daughters, it is a good sign!'"<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> When the *Ilisioirc* says that some of the first companions had gone in advance of the intrepid Foundress to the humble dwelling, it is to be understood that they went beforehand to prepare the house. The first to join the Servant of God and her companion on the 7th October was Anthelme Cartel (cf. *supra*, n. 9). and the two who followed her did not arrive until the 20th of the same month (dates from the Register of entry. A.U.R.).

<sup>13</sup> Besides confirming these facts the *Memorial adds* on p. 4: "As they were not authorised to have a chapel in the house, they went for the services to the "Carthusian" church about twenty minutes distant from the house. For almost two years they lived in that house. Until then it had been simply rented and now they wanted to buy a property. They would have very much liked to remain near the "Carthusian" church but nothing suitable was found".

On the 6th January 1819, about the time in which these events took place, at the meeting of the Association, the Servant of God indicated as a practice of humility: "To suffer insults patiently and to answer with words of kindness and charity (cf. Doc. IV, 2, 31, c, p. 128).

"A gift to the poor is a loan to God." This was always the motto of the first Mothers who experienced its effect every day. Little by little the orphans increased in number. Whilst it was good for competition, the accommodation was becoming more and more restricted. Moreover the work at the looms promised well for the future. The result surpassed all hopes. Good orders were coming in at such a rate that it was judged opportune to change the humble abode that had been the first "cradle" of the work, for a more suitable house in that peaceful part of the town where they were becoming known and good was being done in a quiet way.<sup>14</sup>

[26] In spite of numerous efforts made to find a suitable house, Mile Thevenet was unable to find anything that suited her plans. Before taking further steps, she wanted to discover the Will of God through the intercession of St. Aloysius Gonzaga the glorious patron of youth. The parish was trying to revive his cult by dedicating an altar to him, as he was almost forgotten at that time. She requested the favour of having Mass celebrated at this altar with exposition of the relics, but as repairs had only just been undertaken in that part of the nave, and were not yet finished, the parish priest replied that the Mass she had asked for would be said at Our Lady's altar.<sup>15</sup>

In this refusal and unforeseen decision the devout foundress saw a new motive for confidence and hope. "The Blessed Virgin does not want anything to be done without her nor outside her domain", Mile Thevenet thought, and she offered this prayer: "St. Aloysius Gonzaga, you who are close to Mary's throne and her maternal heart, please intercede for us." A few days afterwards, they learnt that M. Antoine Jaricot, father of Pauline Marie Jaricot, had just put up for sale one of his properties situated in the Place de Fourviere, very near the celebrated place of pilgrimage of Lyon. God seemed to be revealing His will through this un hoped-for offer. Pauline Marie Jaricot, who was a close friend of Claudine Thevenet, undoubtedly served as intermediary for the Association of the Sacred Hearts in these circumstances, in order to facilitate the purchase of the extensive property. The acquisition was made for the payment of 30,000 francs.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Doc. XIX, 4. p. 417.

<sup>15</sup> According to the *Memorial*, p. 4, this refers to the parish of St. Paul, which is also confirmed by the position of the respective chapels of Our Lady and St. Aloysius in that church.

The contract of sale was signed in July 1820. Mile Catherine Laporte, [27] who was more favoured by fortune than the other associates, offered to pay half of the price, and the rest was entered in the budget of the Providence.<sup>16</sup>

Our property deeds show that this domain had belonged to M. Nicolas de l'Ange the first President of the "parliament" of Dombes, Lieutenant General, who at the same time belonged to the Academy of Fourviere.

The place where the members of this Academy regularly assembled was, says Fr. Colonia of the Company of Jesus, in his *Histoire Litteraire de 1730*, a beautiful house above the church of Fourviere; it was part of a palace of the Roman Emperors. It was called then and is still called "TAngelique", because it had belonged to M. de l'Ange who had collected a great number of ancient inscriptions there.

It is the same M. de l'Ange whose epitaph is seen in the Church of Saint-Georges in Lyon.

This great magistrate, who lived in the XVth and the XVIth centuries had preserved a sound mind in a healthy body until he was 81 years old. It is said that he was a direct descendant of the ancient Emperors of Constantinople.

The poet Vulteius knew personally nine other members of the academy of the *Ange/ique* in which even women wanted to share in the glory of great literature.

This property, I say, enchanting as far as the site is concerned, and which overlooks the whole city of Lyon, comprised at that time a very extensive vineyard, a large, shady arbour, the same that can be seen there today, [28] as well as an old building religiously preserved until now, and which still forms our Mother House properly so-called.

"All the circumstances described in this paragraph are confirmed by Doc. VII: by the *Memorial*, pp. 4-5, and by the *Peril Mamtserit*, p. 6. / *Histoire* says that the property belonged to Mr. Antoine Jaricot, father of Pauline, although officially it was in Paul's name. Paul was Pauline's brother ( Doc. VII. 1. p. 189).

<sup>1</sup> 1). COIONIA. *Histoire litteraire tie la li/le cle Lyon, avec line Bib/iolheqie cles auteurs Lyoniuiis. sacres etprofanos, clistrihtiesparsieciies*, II. Lyon: MDCCXXX. p. 466.



The holy and smiling hill of Fourviere, called so justly the "flowery footstool of the Immaculate Queen", besides the advantages of solitude, offered a series of the most varied and grandiose views. On the south side, the Rhone whose blue waters made a royal girdle round the city; Sainte-Foye with its clusters of villas and its green thickets; to the west the sombre cemetery *oi'* Loyasse, and a stone's throw from there, the ruins of the ancient palace where Claudius and Germanicus were born. It is under these ruins that the caves bear witness to the constancy and heroic death of the Virgins and Confessors of whom Lyon honours the glorious memory. Beyond this magnificent panorama, the eye, after resting in turn on the city and its delightful surrounding countryside, contemplates on the distant horizon the outline of the high Alps whose shining summits shimmer in the sun. Through entrancing shady arbours and bowers, paths where the luxuriant foliage *oi'* vines provides a background for clusters of lilies and roses, the Saone can be seen, flowing peacefully along between shady banks of greenery. From this height the eye overlooks the movement in this part of the great industrial city, people walking to and fro, the feverish and rapid pace of busy men, but the noise of the tumultuous throng does not reach the ears of the person [29] who is praying or meditating under the green arches which protect a Calvary, a statue of Our Lady or of our much-loved Saint.

Oh happy and beloved solitude where in a startling reality, the image of this world is revealed as being no more than it appears from this height, *a restless and disturbed ant-hill!* Let us taste your charms and savour the happiness of living for God alone!

Then opposite the house, and as if in everlasting blessing, we contemplate the shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere with its bell tower, which would be crowned later with a beautiful gilded statue, its sanctuary opening to numerous pilgrims, where for centuries past the people of Lyon both rich and poor, just and sinners, have been going to weep and pray, above all, when security and happiness did not come to them from this world.

Such, then, was the place of refuge bestowed on the newly-formed Society by the maternal liberality of the Queen of Heaven; true dovecot, sheltered under the folds of her virginal mantle, cradle

surrounded by holiness where Mary seemed to be inviting her children to live under her gaze, united in pious works of charity!

[30]

## CHAPTER IV

## INSTALLATION IN THE ANGELIQUE, ORGANISATION AND PROGRESS

In a periodical of Fourviere we read: When the skies are stormy in our town, the old people look at the hill and say. "Be careful, Fourviere has its cloak on." But there is another cloak which instead of threatening is reassuring. This cloak is the one with which Our Lady of Fourviere covers us, and under the protection of which we have nothing to fear, either from hostile elements or storms.

Such were the thoughts of the pious Associates of the Sacred Hearts, when they climbed the holy hill of Fourviere in silence, on their way to take possession of their new home. Moreover, before taking up their abode in it, they presented themselves before Our Lady, in her modest chapel, to receive Holy Communion and renew their consecration and sacrifice at the feet of the Madonna of Lyon. However, the joys of the present and hopes for the future were mixed with a feeling of sadness which they could hardly restrain as they said good-bye to "Pierres Plantees". How true it is that in this world, joy [31] and sadness walk side by side like two sisters clasping hands so to speak. Moreover, how could anyone not feel a pang of sorrow on leaving that humble retreat which had sheltered the laborious beginnings of the Congregation? It was there that the Congregation came into being. It was there that it had humbly made progress for two years, it was there that its first children had come, there that, in order to meet all requirements and utilise all physical or intellectual resources, Mile Thevenet had divided her first associates into two distinct categories: the first consisting of the Choir religious dedicated to teaching, and alone capable of being called to government in the houses; the second being that of the Coadjutor sisters who were subdivided into sisters who supervised the workrooms and the work of

<sup>1</sup> According to the accounts preserved, the transfer was made from the 2nd to the 12th November 1820 (Cf. Doc. VII, 3, a. p. 195, *Petit Maiuscree*, p. 6, *ad sen sum.*)

the children, "soeurs ouvrières", and sisters who were only occupied with the maintenance and manual work of the house "soeurs converses". Finally, it was in Pierrcs Plantees that they had made the sacrifice of their family, and of the joys that a well-born person usually experiences there.<sup>2</sup>

One can understand then, that the Religious of the Sacred Hearts left it with feelings of sadness and regret, even to go and live in the Angelique.

Besides, however preferable this new dwelling might be, however exceptional the site, it must be admitted that the house was neither convenient nor spacious. Its only merits were, more or less, the richness of its souvenirs of the past, and the solidity of its construction. The few habitable rooms were insufficient for the new personnel who had to live there [32]. However, they tried to organise themselves. The most suitable room, precisely the one which had been used formerly for literary meetings, was reserved for the chapel. They hoped to get permission very soon for the celebration of Mass. The other rooms that were large enough were chosen for the workroom, dormitory, and refectory for the children. The community had to be satisfied with the remaining rooms. They were small, few in number, and badly situated for a religious establishment. The furniture was insufficient. The scarcity of beds left ample scope for each one to practise mortification and keep holy vigils. These true spouses ol' a poor God cheerfully repeated over and over again "The Master had nowhere to lay his head", and in the evening, they counted themselves too well served when they could sleep on a poor palliasse or a mattress put down on the floor. Provided that their dear little orphans were well cared for, the Mothers did not worry about themselves; they blessed this new dwelling with its harsh destitution saying that they were better off than in Bethlehem!

If the lodging was too confined, the children were well compensated at recreation. They played joyfully in the spacious grounds where their shouting and singing intermingled with the songs of their little brothers, the birds, and seemed to invite them to share in their joy.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Memorial*, p. 3. *ad sensum*. Doc. XXIII. p. 461.

How happy and carefree were those romping young girls! What joy for them to inhale deep breaths of pure mountain air into their lungs!<sup>3</sup>

[33] Seeing the number of these dear children increase, Madame Thevenet had been obliged to provide more detailed organisation.

In the first place, the daily time-table was regulated. Prayer, recitation of the catechism and pious instructions lightened the work while sanctifying it, and alternated with hours of recreation, always too few and too short at that age.

The meals were as plentiful and substantial as required by developing limbs and a constitution tried and at the same time strengthened by work. The uniform was clean and suitable.

But the lack of space inside the house compromised the good work by limiting its action. Mme Thevenet hastened to get part of the building raised and to add an annex which could serve as a provisional chapel (it is the present oratory of the novitiate), thus procuring a very large room with a dormitory above it.<sup>4</sup>

Thanks to these improvements, from the year which followed the installation in Fourviere, Mother Foundress had the satisfaction of putting into execution a plan which she had formed from the beginning. This was to receive not only working class children, but also a certain number of young girls from good families, giving them education and instruction suitable to their social position. And so a boarding school was opened for that purpose in 1821. As well as utilising the superior talents of some religious in the house by this step, there was also the hope of attracting [34] vocations from among the young girls educated in the community, and of seeing some of them devote themselves to the same work.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In these last paragraphs the authors were inspired by the *Manorial*, p. 5, *ad sensum* (*supra*, p. 462).

<sup>4</sup> In A. G. Roma, most of the accounts are preserved. They also confirm the details given here on the work of building and restoration. The *Memorial*, p. 6, in the following detail, reveals an eye-witness account. "They were obliged to raise the house in order to enlarge it. But while the roof was off, one night there was a dreadful downpour. The rain let it in torrents, the beds were wet through, each one protected herself as well as she could."

<sup>5</sup> The foundation of a boarding-school for girls of the upper class, functioning simultaneously with the *Providencia*, was a project that the Servant of God brought into being according as circumstances allowed it (cf. Docs. VII, 5. p. 197; XIX, 4. p. 417; *Memorial*, pp. 6-7, *ad sensum*. *supra*, p. 463).

Soon the number of pupils in the two sections made it impossible to put off any longer the construction of a building more appropriate to the needs of the two classes of children whose social position demanded such a different kind of education.

They only wanted to give the young girls who were employed in the workrooms a sound elementary instruction. These were occupied especially with sewing, mending or the manufacture of silk materials. Therefore it was very necessary that they be entirely separate from the boarders. It was decided that a special house would be built for them adjoining the chapel, and that it would be called the Providence. In it there would be rooms large enough for the work of the looms, which at that time was the principal source of income for the house.

The plan for the building was soon prepared, and the work was begun at the end of the year 1821. A loan was raised to meet the requirements of the moment and the building was completed in 1822.<sup>6</sup>

But it was necessary to pay a great part of the bills of the tradesmen which amounted to the sum of 90,000 francs. The loan already raised was far from sufficient. They had counted on Mile Laporte's fortune; in spite of her keen desire to lend her assistance once more, it was impossible for her to do so, as she had not the consent of her mother. Besides, reasons which grieved her deeply obliged her to give way to the pressure of her family [35] by withdrawing from the Society and reclaiming part of her dowry.<sup>7</sup>

It was then a very painful and trying time for the Foundress. But God who had sustained her until then did not allow the lack of human assistance to hinder her work. Strong in faith and confidence in divine goodness, Mile Thevenet did not hesitate. She had recourse to a second loan. Her business manager, having found some anxiety among the lenders about the solvency of the associates, said to them with conviction, "Gentlemen, do not be afraid; in business such as this it is God who is the guarantor!".

This was sufficient for the money-lenders.

<sup>6</sup> The *Memorial*, p. 7, and the *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 8, *ad sensum* give the same information in more concise form. The rapidity with which the new building advanced is confirmed in the Census of each successive year, preserved in the archives of the Municipality of Lyon.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Doc. IX, 2 and 3, pp. 220-227 and *Memorial* n. 10. *ad litteram* (*supra*, p. 464).

So the Society was burdened with a debt of 90,000 francs at the beginning of its career. From then on there was redoubled activity in work; new measures were taken to save money, and above all there were new motives for trust in God.

The work was expanding greatly and the desire to see the house take on a truly religious aspect became very strong. Many times already, Mme Thevenet had asked the ecclesiastical authorities for permission to wear a religious costume, but she could not get it.

The Church of Lyon was deprived at this time of its Bishop by the enforced expatriation of Mgr Fesch, a relative of Napoleon I. This eminent prelate had retired to Rome and left the administration of his vast diocese to his Vicars General. It was undoubtedly this lack of certainty and this period of waiting which [36] was the cause of the refusal of M. Baron<sup>9</sup>, Vicar General, to grant the reiterated requests of the Foundress.

The authorisation which was given to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved and the privilege of Holy Mass, was however, as one can understand, a very consoling compensation as well as a subject of encouragement for the community. They practised patience, and while awaiting better days they continued to wear plain black clothes, and each of the associates applied herself to the exercise of religious

\*Cf. Doc. X, p. 246 and *Memorial* pp. 6 and 9 *ad litteram*.

"Printing error for Barou. This does not correspond to the truth. The assertion of the *l'histoire*, attributing the above-mentioned refusal to the Vicar General Barou, is incorrect because at that time he was not yet Vicar General, and he was always an admirer of the Servant of God. The diocese was administered by the Vicar General Courbon, in the absence of Cardinal Fesch.

Jean Joseph Barou was born on the 25th October 1772 in Chalmazel-en-Forez. He was ordained priest in 1803, and became parish priest of St. Mard in 1804. He was professor of the Seminary of Argenliere in 1808 and became Superior of the Seminary of Verriere in 1809. In 1819 he was made Parish Priest of Saint-Pierre, in Montbrison. When he became Vicar General of Lyon in 1824. He died on the 5th April, 1855.

Joseph Courbon born in 1749 in St. Genesl Malifaux (Loire) was professor of physics in the Seminary: he was later appointed "Knight" of the Chapter of St. John and parish-priest-custodian of Sainte Croix in 1788. He became Vicar Capitular on the death of Mgr de Montazet in 1788, and Vicar General of the new Archbishop Mgr de Marbeuf in 1799. Exiled for refusing to take the oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, he withdrew to Bologna and was given charge by the Archbishop of the direction of the French priests who were refugees in the archdiocese. He returned to Lyon at the time of the Concordat and became a member of the council of Mgr de Mereville, then Apostolic Administrator. Cardinal Fesch appointed him as his Vicar General, a post which he held until his death (7th February 1824).

virtues according to the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius,<sup>10</sup> as they had been combined at the outset for the new Congregation by good Fr. Coindre.

Moreover, in order to compensate themselves for not being able to break openly away from the world by taking off its livery, Madame Thevenet wished her daughters to abandon their name in order to place themselves under the special patronage of some saint. She herself chose St. Ignatius as her patron. Madame Ramie became M. St. Andrew; Madame Ferrand, M. Saint Francis Borgia; Madame Dioque, M. Saint Peter; Madame Planut, M. Saint Stanislaus; Madame Chardon, M. Saint Gonzaga; Madame Chipier, M. Saint Xavier; Madame Jubeau, M. Saint Bruno, etc.

How long would they have to wait before ecclesiastical approbation and public emission of vows? They did not know. But Heaven was quietly preparing for the realisation of this devout wish, and this at the very moment when new obstacles seemed to be putting it off indefinitely."

[37]

## CHAPTER V

## FATHER COINDRE

The worthy Father Coindre, Father Founder, had followed step by step in thought and heart the development and progress of his dear Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. He took a paternal interest in it and took pleasure in visiting it as often as he could. Just as in Pierres Plantees, so too in Fourviere, there was rejoicing when he appeared. The workrooms resounded with joyful songs. Everybody listened to the inspiring words of the zealous missionary. His opinion and advice were law. They were collected carefully to form little by little the fundamental Rule of the Community, and his "advice and counsels

<sup>10</sup>"That the Constitutions of St. Ignatius are at the legislative base of the newly-formed Congregation, is a fact noted by all the documents presented in *the Postio* (cf. in particular. Docs. X, 2, p. 247; XIX, intr. p. 370, and *Memorial*, p. 6).

<sup>11</sup>The last paragraphs of this Chapter, corresponding to pp. 35 and 36 in the *Histoire* are copied from the *Memorial*, p. 9, *ad lineam* and from *Petit Manuserit*, pp. X and 10, *ad sensum*.

were all the more useful because during the first years, it had only been possible to determine in a general way the observances to follow and the order of exercises held in common. It was desired, before fixing the Rule and Constitutions in a definitive way, to practise them as a whole, in their least details, so that they would have the authority of experience. But if the multiplicity of his apostolic [38] journeys and of his occupations left the good Father only rare and short intervals to consecrate to the work so dear to his heart, those moments were multiplied a hundredfold by the pious ingenuity employed on both sides, to make good use of them.

From time to time, Father Coindre presided over the meetings of the community, we are told by the religious who were his contemporaries. Generally his reprimands were less feared than those of the Mother Foundress. His paternal kindness moderated, in the ordinary way, the severity of his words. "He kindled in us a love for our vocation", one of our Mothers tells us. "All his talks tended to inspire us with esteem for our vocation and to stimulate us to fulfil its obligations." But it was above all for the Novices that the kind Father drew from his priestly and missionary heart the most lively expressions of affection. One day, when he had spoken to them with an unction they never forgot, he blessed them and rounded off his talk with these striking words: "Increase and multiply little flock, true daughters of the Heart of Jesus will come from here."

Father Coindre had spent his first years of priesthood in the Society of priests of Saint-Irenee, known as the "Carthusian" Missionaries because they lived in the ancient monastery of that Order. These priests, who today are still vowed especially to preaching and teaching, had not yet a definitive organisation. Fr. Coindre as well as several of his confreres had left the Society because of modifications it proposed to introduce which [39] would no longer correspond to their own personal aspirations. The separation was carried out amicably and each one remained free to follow the vocation he had received from Heaven.

Fr. Coindre had received, together with the gift of preaching which captivates the spirit "that of persuasion which wins hearts". He

gave numerous missions. He preached more by example than by words, and by his zeal, unselfishness and apostolic works he brought back many sinners to God.

At the same time as he founded at "Pierres Plantees" our Providence, for the little working girls of Lyon, he founded a workroom for boys not far from there, under the supervision of a twin society to ours, still known today by the name of the "Brothers of the Sacred Heart".

In default of more ample details on this man of God, we give in its entirety an admirable letter addressed by him to his religious family some years after its installation in Fourviere. This letter portrays faithfully his exalted views, the vigour of his direction and his great kindness of heart.

My very dear Daughters,

I would like to steal a few moments from my numerous occupations to give you, with all my paternal kindness, some advice which may help you and strengthen you in the spirit of your holy vocation.

Be on your guard against yourselves my dear daughters, [40] and be fearful lest, from too great a consideration for your weakness, your superiors may deal too gently with you.

I should wish that if your superiors have sufficient confidence in you to entrust you with some employment, you on your part should have enough generosity of soul and desire for your own perfection to beg them not to spare you, to break your pride, to take no account of your feelings, and, while allowing for your weakness, to lead you gradually to that state of flexibility of heart, humility of spirit and indifference of soul which is the glory and happiness of religious life; for it is all included there. A religious is not happy until her heart is as supple as a glove which can be folded as one wishes. In a community it is necessary to have the blind obedience of soldiers who carry out orders without question, who have only one idea, one sentiment, to do the will of the one who commands them. They do not ask why they are made to do such and such an exercise, such and such a march. They know that their safety lies in the unity of their confidence in their general, in his experience, in established military discipline, and they carry out the most difficult things in this way.

My daughters, here is the picture of each religious in a convent. They must give up their old worldly ideas, and let themselves be led, as the Rule says, "like an old man's walking stick, or a corpse which allows itself to be carried wherever one wishes".

The profession of a religious is charity; all her care must be to maintain by gentleness and humility, the union that she should have with her sister! [41] She must be neither ambitious nor jealous; she must always credit her sisters with the best intentions, never supposing them to have bad ones; she must do all in her power, just like the first Christians, to have but one heart and one soul. You will understand, my daughters, that this can only be achieved by striving hard, trying to repress all outward signs of emotion, until one is able to repress interior agitation and impressions, and even to listen to an insult as if it were praise, provided that one does not carry this indifference into the practice of one's duties and the service of God.

That is what makes for happy communities, as everything would be a source of evil and pain if each one wanted to be spared and humoured, if persons cannot be told the truth, and there is always reserve for fear of wounding. In these circumstances each one would be on her guard against the others. People would weigh their words which would often be misinterpreted. They would be roused to retaliate and the one whose tongue was the sharpest would be the most feared. Then there would be prejudice, divisions, quarrels, all the works of the flesh of which St. Paul speaks, which close the entry into the heavenly kingdom.

You realise, my dear daughters, that the shortest way is to put each one quickly in her place and say to the proud: take care, be indifferent, for here war will be waged on your vanity. You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God, says the Apostle.

Ah my daughters, meditate all your life on these words; [42] how beautiful they are to a religious who has chosen the hidden life in order to die to all her evil inclinations, to all that flatters the senses and to pride! The desire for evil, that she felt in the world, inclines her to fight against it in solitude and to descend as into a tomb. It is for that reason that she strips herself of the distinctive marks of the world, the signs of vanity, that she takes the veil and the black habit, like a shroud that enfolds her, and reminds her every day that she is not in the place where one comes to find the praises of men, but the approbation of God alone in whom her life is hidden.

You are dead, your life is hidden in God! How happy one is, when one is at peace, my daughters! Then, freed from the judgement of men, one accepts as true only what God sees in us, what He knows, what He judges! One is no longer dazzled by appearances, but has thrown off the yoke of what others think, is united with God, who sees not only the face, but the heart, and depends on Him alone. He is not fickle in His judgements as men are.

Your life is hidden in God! A religious says to herself: I am praised, I am blamed, I am scorned, I am not understood, I am forgotten. But all that

scarcely touches me, I am none the less what I am! Man wants to become a creator. He wants to give me a kind of personality according to his own idea or that of others, but this personality that he wants to give me does not exist. What is this [43] personality that he wants to give me and which nevertheless does not exist, except an illusion, a shadow, a phantom; that is to say, it is basically non-existent.

What is my shadow that follows me everywhere, sometimes in front, sometimes behind, sometimes at the side? Is it myself, or some part of my being? Not at all! . . . But this shadow seems to walk and to move with me . . . yet it is not part of my being for all that! . . .

And so it is with the judgement of men, who want to follow me everywhere, to paint me, to sketch me, to make me move at their will and at their fancy, and they believe that by this they give me a kind of existence . . . But basically I know well, this is only a shadow, a changing light focusing sometimes on one side sometimes on the other, which elongates, shortens, increases and diminishes. This shadow which follows me, appears, and disappears, without my losing anything of my being.

So it is according to the judgement of people.

And not only does it amuse me as does a game, but I attach importance to it as a true and real thing. What madness! Undeceived then from such error, I will say to myself: "I am dead, and my life is hidden in God!"

I consent then that the world, that my superiors, that my sisters leave me for what I am; I do not want praise from anyone. What would they make of me? Would they hide my faults from me, prevent me from correcting myself, make me conceited, inflate my pride with make-believe merit, and in this way make me lose my soul and earn for myself this terrible sentence from [44] my Saviour: "Verily, verily, I tell you, you have received your reward"?

Rather let them show me my weakness by pursuing my faults. I am only too ready to cherish them and I want other people to leave them alone. I have little need to be made aware of the few good qualities that I may have. I speak only too much about them to myself, indeed I speak of nothing else. But I want to change. I want to hide everything in God. Solid virtue loves to be unknown and counted as nothing. Our Saviour said: "Beware of doing your good works before men, for then you will have no reward in Heaven."

The virtues and talents that one wishes to be seen are vain and false. Let us seek the fulfilment of our duty and not the approval of others. Let us seek the truth and not the semblance of it. Let us seek the approval of our conscience and not the applause of men. Whoever does not find happiness and satisfaction in God alone does not know the meaning of perfection and happiness.

Is it necessary then to lose God in order to win the esteem of creatures who cannot give me anything? I deceive myself if I believe that I have some

talents, and the vain esteem I have for them is only the fruit of my vanity, the child of my pride, and perhaps matter for the eternal fires of Hell! After all, even though I should believe that I am superior to everybody, and even though I were praised and worshipped like an idol, I am neither better nor better endowed by reason of this, because our Saviour will reduce all human grandeur, every vain idol, to nothing. [45] Who are you, dns! ami ashes? And why are you proud?

Let me therefore be dust and ashes in my own eyes, dust and ashes in my body, whatever its structure.

And what is my soul? A vessel full of ignorance, imprudence, fickleness, temerity, weakness, pride, jealousy, susceptibility, cowardice, deceit, infidelity, in a word, all kinds of misery. For if I have not these vices in the extreme, I have the seeds of them, and at times I experience their fatal effects.

I should therefore be held in contempt. That is only justice. My life is hidden in God, in the depths of His light, so let it be hidden from the world, from my sisters, from myself. Let me see only my God and be so intimately buried in His Heart that mortal eyes cannot follow me there, and let my own eyes be so fixed on the object of my love that no vanity may turn them away.

Lord, I see you and you see me. That is enough for me.

My life is hidden in God with Jesus Christ who here on earth hid Himself from the proud to reveal himself to the humble and lowly, who remained hidden for thirty years in a carpenter's shop, employed in the lowliest tasks, who now hides in the Holy Eucharist for love of me, and who wishes to hide me in His Heart, having chosen me to be His spouse!

Well then, I wish to appear only when my Spouse appears. I want no renown except with Him. [46] As long as He is hidden, I want to be hidden with Him; as long as He is humiliated, I want to be humiliated with Him.

In my trials I shall always find my consolation in Jesus Christ suffering. If I find myself alone, My God will be my companion;

If I am weak, He will be my strength;

If I am afflicted, He will be my consolation;

If I weaken, He will sustain me;

Try me, do not spare me, and you will render me a service.

I am dead, and my life is hidden in God!

The letter of the venerated Founder finished thus: "Here my dear daughters, are the sentiments that I wish for you and that I urge you to stir up in yourselves by meditating on all this."

This last paternal recommendation was not neglected. Each one made it a duty to copy out for herself those lines which, with the

exalted idea they gave them of their religious vocation, also showed them the means for attaining the perfection to which all aspired.

Later on this letter was printed and a copy was given to each religious for her personal use after her profession. It was often used for meditation and it has always been regarded with such great respect until the present time, that after Holy Scripture, the Office Book and the *Imitation of Christ*, nothing is more dear to them than these precious counsels of their Father, a kind of silent but persuasive and eloquent sermon coming from a mouth which was alas! to be closed so soon here below, to open before the throne of God!<sup>1</sup>

[47]

## CHAPTER VI

FIRST ESTABLISHMENTS  
MISSIONS OF BELLEVILLE AND MONISTROL  
RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

The little community, whose development we have followed with interest, had lost nothing by moving to Fourvière. On the contrary, it was visibly growing, ready to branch out in all directions.

From one hundred and forty eight subjects who had presented themselves to the Mother Foundress between 1818 and 1826, to enrol themselves under the banner of the Sacred Hearts, only one third were finally chosen.<sup>1</sup> But however restricted the number, it promised success, like the little army of Gideon in former times. Only ardent and strong souls were to be counted in the new family, souls that were generous and resolute, who did not know what it was to flinch before a task or draw back in face of duty.

The profound experience of Mother St. Ignatius and her perfect tact were particularly useful to her when she examined and formed an opinion of candidates. Her penetrating [48] glance seemed to

<sup>1</sup>The contents of this chapter, dedicated to Fr. Coindre, come from *Vie (lit / ere Andre Coindre*, pp. 30-35, 65-68, 279-288 (cf. also Docs. III. p. 20, IV, pp. 48-50, XVI, C. 1. p. 301).

<sup>1</sup>The number of professed is only approximate (cf. *Petit Manuscrit* p. 9).

scrutinise the whole soul and grasp with rare insight, those lines and nuances which reveal the entire character. It was therefore very seldom that they did not justify her choice.

Some months after the inauguration of the boarding school in Lyon in 1821, two ladies, strangers to the town, presented themselves to Mme Thevenet and proposed to her that they should join her in the work of the education of youth. They themselves were at the head of a prosperous establishment which they would put at her disposal.<sup>2</sup>

Children to be instructed and good work to be done — that was sufficient for the request to receive a favourable reception. The two apostles of the new mission, Mother St. Borgia and Mother St. Xavier (Mme Ferrand and Mile Chippier) soon set out for their destination.<sup>3</sup>

This was Belleville (Rhône) — the attractive principal town of the Department, on the banks of the River Saône, in the midst of a vine-growing region forty-two km. from Lyon.

However, after some months of trial, these two former Directresses, apprehensive of the demands of their new position, and not feeling attracted towards religious life, asked permission to withdraw, each of them claiming an annuity of 800 francs. This amount, although relatively small, came as a heavy burden on the new foundation. But Mme Thevenet did not count it too dear a price to pay for the freedom to do more good.<sup>4</sup>

A boarding school was opened at Belleville and the number [49] of young girls who presented themselves for enrolment after the holidays soon made it necessary to increase the personnel. At the same time as the boarding school was opened, a class for poor children was begun. These children were taught needlework especially.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Memorial*, p. 7, *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 9, *ad sensum*; and for all that regards Belleville, see especially Doc. IX, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup>It seems that it was Mother St. Gonzaga rather than Mother St. Xavier who accompanied M. St. Borgia to Belleville (cf. *Memorial*, p. 7. "The proposition to work for God's honour and glory was accepted and Mme Ferrand with Mile. Chard on were charged with this new foundation.").

<sup>4</sup>The information about the house of Belleville is all confirmed by an abundant documentation kept in A. G. Roma (cf. Doc. IX, 1, C; Registers of the Congregation and account books of that time). The various properties acquired by the Servant of God for her work all still exist, with slight modifications, except the chapel, converted into a coach-house and the large garden occupied by two new buildings.

"While we contemplate the cedars, let us not tread the violets underfoot," said a German poet.

At this time there happened in the house of Belleville one of those strange things from which the Lord can draw glory to Himself but which, for the moment, make hearts uneasy and cold. A watch had been stolen, and for a long time a search had been made to discover the culprit, but in vain.

God, whose infinite wisdom proportions the reward to the trial, allowed suspicion strangely to fall on an auxiliary Sister. In fact there was no definite proof against her, but the suspicions seemed so strongly justified that Mother St. Borgia, the Superioress, believed she should inform Mother Foundress. The Council was generally of the opinion that the culprit should be sent away. Mother St. Ignatius opposed the dismissal of the accused, unless proofs of her guilt were conclusively established. Sister X . . . , questioned several times, kept complete silence, receiving the most humiliating reprimands on her knees, and accepting without excusing herself the penances which were imposed on her, either in public or in private.

Mother St. Borgia had done all she could to bring the poor, accused Sister to admit her fault, assuring her of leniency [50] and telling her that at the Mother House in Lyon, they were equally disposed to forgive her.

Perfectly submissive and absolutely edifying in every way, Sister X became like a dumb person whenever the subject was broached and humbly put up with separation from the community, and being left at the door during community exercises, like someone who was blameworthy.

Then two years later, the author of the theft in question, a former postulant who had left the Convent, the very one who had indicated Sister X, came and admitted her fault, giving back part of the value of the stolen watch and promising to pay the remainder as soon as her means allowed her to do so.

Why did Sister X . . . support the disgrace of such a stigma for so long, without opening her mouth to justify herself?

Sister X. was one of those simple and upright souls whom the Holy Spirit instructs interiorly. In the secret of her heart, He had

taught her that humiliation is better than honour in God's sight, and that scorn is better than praise. Sister X. had first consulted her confessor, and had declared her innocence to him, telling him at the same time that Our Lord made her feel that this hard trial had been allowed by Him, and that she should accept the consequences, and await the time when He Himself would make known her innocence, when the sacrifice He was asking her to make for a special intention, which she mentioned, would have sufficiently achieved its end.

[51] The confessor of the community was by no means ignorant of the fact that God often chooses victims among pure souls, so that His Justice may spare the guilty, whose measure of iniquity is full, but who nevertheless have been able to draw down His mercy on themselves by some act. He allowed the humble Sister to follow the inspiration coming from on high, but at the same time he obliged her to declare her innocence and support it with proofs, which she could easily produce, if the Superiors reached the point of threatening to dismiss her from the community.

After the confession and restitution of the true culprit, Mother St. Borgia on questioning Sister X., and receiving this touching confidence, began to reproach herself for her severity. "Mother", the admirable Sister said, "I have plenty of other sins to expiate, and besides, God helped me so much that I found nothing too hard in the punishments which were inflicted on me."

The excellent Superioress was anxious to justify the accused in the eyes of the community, as one can guess. But she had to yield to the insistence of this holy soul who asked her with tears in her eyes, through love of humiliation and scorn, to make nothing known, and to leave things as they stood. Faithful to her wish, M. St. Borgia kept her secret, and did not reveal the heroism of this poor child from the mountains until she had gone to Eternity to receive the crown so well merited by her.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The sources of this account have not been found. The protagonist seems to have been Sister St. Jean, Jeanne Claudine Marie Proton, daughter of Joseph and Anne Marie Guillermin, who was born in 1793 in Saint-Just-d'Avray (Rhône). She entered the Congregation on the 8th September 1821, made her novitiate in Belleville and was professed in Monistrol on the 7th January 1824. She died in Belleville on the 9th September 1831.



The establishment of Belleville lasted only as long as an ephemeral flower.

[52] For motives which we must not judge, other Religious were called to devote themselves like us, to the education of young girls and children.

The number of inhabitants was not sufficient for two teaching communities to hope to have a satisfactory number of pupils, so our Mothers decided on 27th September 1829, that without disputes, and without making a fuss, they would abandon the place to the new arrivals and would go elsewhere. That is just what they did.<sup>6</sup>

A little while after the first attempts at Belleville, Father Coindre, appointed Superior of the Missionaries of Velay, had undertaken to found a college at Monistrol,<sup>7</sup> a little village pleasantly situated on the banks of the Loire, in the midst of uneven countryside, and which in former times possessed the residence of the Bishops of Le Puy.

Mgr Joseph Sifren,<sup>8</sup> Administrator of the diocese of Le Puy, but residing in Saint Flour, was in touch with the zealous Fr. Coindre, for whom he had great esteem and affection and whom he supported in his various undertakings.

The good Father Founder profited from the kindness of the prelate to address to M. Richard, Vicar General of Le Puy, a request to introduce the Ladies of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary into the aforementioned diocese.

Here is what we have found in the Registers of the Minor Seminary of Monistrol:

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Doc. IX. 9, p. 241.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Memorial*, pp. 10-12. almost *ad litteram* and *Petit Manuscrit*. pp. 10-11, *ad sensum*.

<sup>8</sup> This refers to Louis Siffren Joseph de Salomon, born in Carpentras (Vaucluse) on the 23rd October 1750. He held a doctorate in law, and was auditor of the Rota of Avignon (1780) and successively Dean of the Chapter of St. Peter of Avignon, Councillor at the Parliament of Paris (1784), Internuncio of Pius VI accredited to Louis XVI until the death of the latter. In 1780 he was Apostolic Administrator of Normandy; then he was consecrated Bishop of *Orthosis in partibus* in 1817 and appointed to govern the diocese of Belcy, then of Bayonne, and finally he was transferred to Saint Flour (18th July 1820) where he died on the 11th June, 1829 (cf. Secret archives of the Vatican, *Nunciature of Paris*, No 6, and CHALUDET. /.' *Episcopal français depuis le concordat jusqu'à la separation*, Paris 1907, pp. 569-570).

[53]

## MINUTES

*Of the Canonical Institution of the Ladies of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, approved as a Congregation by His Lordship the Bishop of Saint Flour, Administrator of the Diocese of Le Puy.*<sup>9</sup>

In the year 1822, on the 10th October, We the undersigned Andre Coindre, Superior of the Missions of the Diocese, have drawn up conjointly with M. Mcnut, parish priest of Sainte-Sigolene, the petition addressed to Mr. Richard, Vicar General of the Diocese, for permission to introduce into the Diocese of Le Puy the Ladies known as the Ladies of Pious Education who have Educational Establishments for young girls in the town of Lyon, Place Fourviere No 3, and in that of Belleville under the name of the Ladies of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Convinced by mature examination that their discipline, their zeal and their special God-given talents have enabled them to educate young people in the practice of virtue and to give them the necessary knowledge to become good Christians, exemplary mothers of families and excellent teachers, we believe that, by encouraging their establishment here, we shall be rendering the greatest service, first to the town of Monistrol and then to other parishes of the diocese which may wish to receive them.

Having adopted the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, with the modifications [54] necessitated by the difference existing between the employments which women carry out and those of clerics, they inspire the greatest confidence in the Superiors of the Diocese.

We have written to Mile Thevenet, the Directress of the Establishments of Lyon and Belleville, and we have deputed Mme Dioque, nee Marie Antoinette Bedor, called Sister Saint Peter, to be Superioress of the community, Mile Jubeau, called Sister Saint Bruno, Mile Daval, Anna Noel, Marie Boisson, and the first foundations of the establishment were laid in the house, adjoining the Church of the Ancient Capuchins of Monistrol.

In witness whereof we have signed the present minutes.

*Signed:* Coindre.

## OTHER MINUTES

*Extract from the same registers*

In the year 1823, on the 15th February, we, the undersigned, Superior of the Missions of the Diocese of Le Puy, certify the following: Desiring to

<sup>9</sup> This report is reproduced, with some variations, in Registers I and III of the Congregation preserved in A. G. Roma. The authors of the *Histoire* have copied it from Register III (cf. Doc. XVI. A. intr., p. 272).

consolidate more and more the Establishment which we have begun, we have written to Mgr Sifren Joseph Foncrose, Bishop of Saint Flour, to obtain the approbation of these Ladies as a Congregation for the whole diocese of Le Puy, following the rule and Constitutions of which we have spoken in the previous minutes.

[55] In addition, we asked for the faculty of receiving their simple vows, and that we be established, if he judged it fitting, as their Superior.

His Lordship replied to us from Paris, on 4th February 1823. (His letter is quoted further on.)

We have notified M. Richard, Vicar General of the diocese, of the new favour which the Bishop had just granted us, and he replied in a letter written by M. Issartel, dated 22nd February 1823: "We are very happy that Mgr de Salamon has replied in accordance with your wishes, and that you have received the authorisation that you desired. M. Richard has only to subscribe to what the Bishop has judged fitting. He has requested me to tell you this. He will be pleased to watch over and protect the progress of your Establishments, and when Mgr de Bonald comes, he will do all in his power to show him the good you have done and will do in his diocese. I do not doubt that he will welcome you kindly and grant you all his protection."

Consequently, as Superior of these Ladies, we have examined some of them and we have encouraged them to prepare themselves to make their commitment in the near future.

*Signed: Coindre.*

This canonical institution was authentically confirmed by the approbation of the Constitutions, the Common and Particular Rules, as well as the Ceremonial for Profession, Clothing and Election of the Superioress General, in 1838, by the Archbishop of Amasie, Mgr Gaston de Pins [56] Apostolic Administrator of Lyon, and later by many other Bishops.

The letter of M. Coindre to the Bishop of Saint Flour, a letter so full of praise for a community still in its early stages, received a favourable reply, and on the 6th January 1823, M. Saint Bruno, M. St. Peter and M. St. Simon took possession of the Establishment of Monistrol. Its situation was very suitable for them. There was a tribune in their house which adjoined the Collegial Church. From this tribune the religious could assist at the services, without however communicating either with persons from outside or with those of the College.

"We have arrived happily at our Bethlehem under the guidance of the Magi's Star", wrote Mother St. Bruno to Mother Foundress. "On this beautiful feast of the Epiphany we appear before our Divine King more lowly and poor than the princes from the East, having no gifts to offer but our desires and good will. Alas! this is not enough to replace the gold, incense and myrrh of the Magi."<sup>10</sup>

One month after the arrival of the new colony in Monistrol, on the 4th February 1823, the Bishop of Saint-Flour, writing to Fr. Coindre regarding his college, added a word of welcome for the Religious, accompanied by an authorisation which fulfilled all their desires.

The Prelate said: "I cordially praise you, my dear Father, on the establishment you have inaugurated in Monistrol. I appoint you as its Superior, and I [57] have not the least doubt that it will prosper under such direction.

I approve of these Ladies to the full extent of my power as a Congregation for the diocese of Le Puy, and I authorise you to receive the simple vows of those who present themselves. If by chance, you have any cause for dissatisfaction in this diocese, I invite you to come to that of Saint-Flour, where I shall receive you with open arms."

His soul overflowing with joy, Father Coindre wrote to Mme Thevenet to inform her of this un hoped-for favour. He expressed himself as follows:

"The passage of the Red Sea is completed my daughter! You and your companions have had your years of wandering in the desert. Rejoice, for God has shortened them, and after these four years of trial, of waiting and hoping, he is opening for you the gates to the Promised Land of the Religious Life to which you aspire. In the meantime, I hope to meet you in the Cenacle of the preparatory exercises and I implore the Holy Spirit to fill you with His plenitude."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "The original letter has disappeared and there is not even a copy now.

<sup>11</sup> From this letter, of which the *Histoire* reproduces only some paragraphs, there exists one copy, authenticated in 1879, in the General Archives of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Rome (cf. Doc. X. 3, p. 249; *Memorial*, pp. 10-11, and *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 10-11, almost *ad Utter am*). The authors have made some modifications of style.

<sup>12</sup> The original of this letter has disappeared and in A. (>'. *Roma* there exists no copy.

Now, on the 10th February, the day that Father Coindre announced the happy news to the Foundress, the Church put on the lips of its Bishops priests and religious these wonderful words of the Sacred Liturgy: "Wise virgins, prepare your lamps. Your Spouse is coming, go out to meet Him. Virgins will be brought after her to the King. Her companions will be presented to you with joy and gladness Lord!, and they will be introduced into the palace of the King" (*Feast of St. Scholastica. Office* [58] and *Mass of the Common of Virgins*).

Ten days afterwards, Madame Thevenet and her companions set off on their journey.<sup>12i</sup> They had to travel by stage-coach. They had to hire the whole coach because of the number of travellers. Exercises of piety could be carried out with almost the same regularity as within the community, and the driver could say that he was driving a convent.

Towards the evening of the second day, the group of travellers alighted in Monistrol. The group from Belleville had arrived a few hours before. The next day the retreat began in preparation for profession, and on the 23rd<sup>13</sup> February 1823, under the arches of the Collegial Chapel, in the intimacy of a private ceremony, under the eyes of God alone and of his Minister, Madame Thevenet and her daughters, full of happiness and emotion, pronounced the solemn promises which bound them to God for ever, and they were clothed in the religious habit which distinguishes us from other religious houses.

On the evening of the same Heavenly day<sup>13"</sup> the Mothers proceeded to the regular election, by ballot, of the Superioress General and of the four Assistants. Madame Thevenet received all the votes for the office of Superioress General. This was only just. Moreover, the election was in conformity with the unanimous wish of all the members of the Congregation, for her daughters loved her as the true Mother who had brought them to birth in the religious life, at the cost of her labours and sacrifices. Mothers Saint-Andrew, Saint-Xavier, Saint-Borgia and Saint-Peter were elected Assistants General [59] and formed the Council of the Reverend Mother, the two last being at the

same time reinstated in their respective posts as Superioresses of the houses of Belleville and of Monistrol.

The other religious followed the Reverend Mother to Lyon. She knelt at the feet of Our Lady of Fourviere on her return as she had done at her departure, to show her gratitude and to pray more than ever for a blessing on the cradle of her religious family.<sup>14</sup>

[60]

## CHAPTER VII

THE WORK OF PREDILECTION. THE PROVIDENCE<sup>1</sup>

On returning to Lyon, the first concern of the Mother Foundress was to set about the task of the installation of the young workers in the new and spacious lodging destined for them and given the name of "The Providence".

Mother St. Xavier was given charge of directing this establishment, having under her a certain number of auxiliary Sisters who were capable of teaching the children the art of manipulating the long skeins of silk and of loading the nimble shuttles, as well as putting the precious threads on the loom. The house already enjoyed at that time, a well established reputation for the manufacture of silk cloth, a reputation so well established that in giving their orders the silk merchants mentioned as a condition of purchase that the work should be carried out at the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts in Fourviere.

The activity and enthusiasm of these little people was wonderful. The big ones helped the smaller ones so that at the end of the day they

<sup>14</sup>The *Memorial* adds the following detail omitted by the authors: "The name that the Society would adopt had not yet been settled. At first they wanted to take that of "Sisters of Pious Education", then they decided on "Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary". It was under this title that we were introduced into the diocese of Le Puy, in these circumstances. For all the details contained in pp. 52-59 of the *Histoire*, cf. Doc. XI. p. 250; *Memorial*, pp. 10-12; *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 10-11. Registers I, II, III of the Congregation. A. G. R. and H. FRAISSU. *Etude sur le Petit Seminaire de Monistrol-sur-Loire*. I 860 approx: the original manuscript is preserved in the Archives of the Minor Seminary of Yssingeaux (Haute Loire).

<sup>1</sup> Most of these details (pp. 60-64) are mentioned in Doc. XXVIII, 3, p. 688; in the *Memorial*, pp. 11-12, *ad sensum*, and in *Petit Manuscrit*. p. 9, *ad sensum*.

<sup>12a</sup>It should read *six*: they left on the 17th February (cf. Register III, A. G. Roma).

<sup>11</sup> A printing error which should read "25th February" (Doc. XI, p. 252).

<sup>11</sup> It was the next day.

could receive [61] a good mark or the sweets promised to the well-behaved children, and a holy picture or a medal at the end of the week.

The affection and tender interest that the Mother Foundress devoted to her young family were apparent in all her actions. Children of all social classes were equally dear to her, and she would have sacrificed herself without hesitation for any of them. She attached great importance to the education of the upper class; with legitimate satisfaction she saw the three boarding schools, already open, full of charming and happy crowds of students, but it was clear to everybody that the predilection of this excellent Mother remained always for the weakest, the most abandoned. These poor little creatures that were taken to her were often in such a state of raggedness and dirt that it was revolting at first sight. "It is the worst you could find in the streets", they objected sometimes. "What can you expect US to do with this child, Reverend Mother?", the Sister Portress said to her one day, showing into her room a puny and disgusting little girl of ten years. "Leave her alone", replied Mother St. Ignatius pleasantly, as she looked at the new arrival. "She will be a pretty girl at eighteen years of age, you will see!"

Never, according to the evidence of the first religious, did the good Mother cede to others the privilege of giving the last care to her dear children on their arrival.

To wash and comb their hair freeing it of the repulsive swarm of lice, [62] to put on clean and fresh clothing, a good pair of shoes, and to present them thus transformed and smiling, to their new companions, what a privilege, in her opinion! What satisfaction for her heart! How her ardent faith really understood the truth of the promise of Our Saviour, "All that you do to the least of these little ones, I take as done to myself."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The zeal of the Servant of God, when the Congregation was scarcely established at Lyon, Belleville and Monistrol, urged her to open *two new Providences*, one at Sainte Sigolene (cf. Doc. XVI, c. I, p. 303) and the other at Lucenay (cf. Letter of Moris. Mioland to the priest Ballet, 18th November 1824. Arch. Institution des Chartreux, Lyon). These projects were brought to a halt by serious circumstances.

Around that time (November 1824-October 1825) the community of Lyon was composed of 18 professed and 16 novices (cf. Register "Paroisses du diocèse de Lyon 1821. Communautés religieuses A. A. Lyon).

The hour of her time that she consecrated to visiting her dear little proteges of the Providence was the sweetest and best hour of the day for the Mother Foundress.

She returned from it joyful and happy, so that the community said "Our Reverend Mother gets younger when she visits the Providence every morning." She went round each workroom distributing sweets to the best-behaved children, encouraging the children to work, correcting gently if necessary, and she never left without receiving assurances and promises to make every effort to be docile and good. If somebody made a complaint about the laziness or the thoughtlessness of such and such a child the dear Superioress would say in her most encouraging voice: "Have patience! It will come!" How could she be harsh with these poor children when the thought that they had caused her displeasure was enough to upset them? And they too loved her in an extraordinary way; the greatest penance which could be threatened on any occasion was: "To tell Reverend Mother". The gratitude of the little flock corresponded to her tenderness; and they never let any anniversary pass, or any feast day, without showing their respectful affection [63]. The generosity which urged these children to sacrifice their small savings on all occasions to offer a present to "Mother" had to be curbed. It was in this way that their little purses were sufficient, from the first years of their stay in Fourvière, to have the Calvary erected which we still see there today, through the shrubs, in a hollow of the garden. How many times the venerated Foundress went to pray and shed copious tears on this same block of stone where stand the three crosses in front of which we kneel so often!<sup>3</sup>

Madame Thevenet wanted her dear little ones to lack nothing. She wanted them to have a good bed, healthy lodgings, appetising food and clean clothes. Sometimes she organised delightful feasts in their honour, a gala lunch, a whole holiday, an evening of amusements to

<sup>3</sup> This 'Calvary' was erected in that part of the garden which was expropriated for the construction of the funicular railway: *Saint Paul - Fourvière*. The big crucifix was transported near the house, where it is preserved with veneration.

which she went, completing their joy by her presence. The good spirit of these children, their innocent gaiety, as well as the joy that they showed at the sight of their dear benefactress were a real consolation for her heart.

If one of them fell seriously ill, the doctor was called immediately, and if the illness was grave, the child was kept in bed and received the most assiduous care until the end of her illness, without anyone ever mentioning taking her to hospital. One poor child who had to undergo the amputation of a leg, as a result of an accident, was immediately taken to the Mother House, where the operation took place; but she died. She was a little "chosen" one. They say that her habitual prayer was [64] this: "My God, give me the heart of a DOG" - and when the Sister Infirmarian asked her "Why do you ask God for that?" — "Because I want to love and serve Him like a dog, which is faithful to its Master until the end", the child replied. They tell this story of the same child. One day the doctor went to visit the patient accompanied by a medical student, some time before the amputation. This latter made this remark on moving away from her. "This child cannot live long; may we not have the leg when she dies?" . . . The little one had heard everything. She waited until her visitors had gone, to say to Sister Antoine who took care of her: "That man wants to have my leg, but I will not *give* it to him. I will *sell* it to him." "Well, well", said the Sister laughing at this original remark, "Tell him that when he comes." The advice was followed, the sale concluded; the little child sold her leg for a bag of sweets which she shared with her companions.

To die was a celebration for the children of the Providence, to die meant to go to Heaven. So Sister St. Antoine, their Infirmarian, could never understand the fear that certain people had of leaving this life. "A/ > *little ones* were never like that", she often said. "They wanted to die to go and see God."

It was extremely rare for Madame Thevenet to have the courage to refuse to admit an orphan. Her great heart seemed to expand so as to shelter all. One day when the work-room was full up and they were at the end of their resources, she said to [65] her daughters with tears in her eyes as they presented a new child to her: "Let us take her, Our

Lord will provide." Two others were likewise admitted on the same day.<sup>4</sup>

The hope of the admirable Mother was not in vain. Unexpected help allowed her to cope with the situation.

Heaven was sometimes pleased to support such great charity with genuine prodigies. A poor child who was stricken with St. Vitus Dance, was kept at the expense of the house for four years, remaining in a pitiful state, and almost always in bed, without anyone thinking of sending her away. Her uncle, who visited her from time to time, believed that the good religious were being deceived by the bad will of his niece. One day he wanted to try to make her stand on her feet, but as he got her out of bed his disbelief changed completely on seeing the contraction of the afflicted muscles. He soon put his burden back on the bed and, without troubling to continue his experiment, disappeared. Our Lady of Fourviere inspired Mme Thevenet with the idea of having the sick child carried to her blessed sanctuary, and she was completely cured on entering it. That same evening the child on whom the miracle had been worked, rejoined her companions in the garden and frolicked among them, as if she had never left them. Mother Foundress wished to perpetuate the memory of the miracle by a painting representing the sick child who was cured before Our Lady's altar, and an ex-voto offering was made of it at her altar in the shrine of Fourviere.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In confirmation of what is found in the *Histoire*, there is, for example, the case of the child Eugenic Fontaine. Eugenie was born in Charly (Rhône), the daughter of a working mother, called Josephine Fontaine and an unknown father. She was received in the *Providence*, a sick child of only five years of age. The Servant of God not only gave her all the necessary medicines but also some extraordinary ones (for example she bought asses' milk); but notwithstanding this the child died at five and a half years of age, without the mothers showing any interest. She lived in Lyon, rue Vieille Monnaie, No 17. At that date, 20th May 1828, in the account books we find the expenses of her burial noted. "Paid the Municipality for Eugenie's funeral 15 francs. Paid in addition, for Eugenie, 6.50 francs. (A. G. R.)

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Repiquet, the doctor of the community, attests the instantaneous cure of the 18 year old Jeannette Portier, which took place after four years of painful infirmity. "I was extraordinarily surprised to see her up, very happy, talking a lot and in a very animated tone", wrote the doctor, and a little further on: "She had been carried to the Church of Our Lady of Fourviere".

This fact is also recorded in the Rogatorial Process of Madrid where the witness, Pilar de Montoliu, M. Marie des Anges R. J. M. adds that the Servant of God said to the Sister Infirmarian: "Carry her to Fourviere and bring her back cured" (cf. *Public Copy*, pp. 98r-99r; Doc. XXX, II, p. 734). Also J. Escot, in *Fourviere a travers les siecles*, Lyon 1954, p. 120.

The tender, active solicitude of the Foundress [66] for the material well-being of her young proteges was only an indication of the interest she had in everything concerning their moral education. What vigilance she imposed! What pains she insisted should be taken to form these young souls to virtue! How much she recommended the study of their inclinations, the natural bent of each one, in order to protect the good seed and root out the bad in these young souls! How many pious exhortations, and gentle words of encouragement she lavished on her spiritual daughters to keep them up to the exalted level of their mission!

In the programmes adopted for the education of young girls, Mme Thevenet wanted religious instruction to be given the first place. After that, for the children of the Providence, came reading, writing, arithmetic, a little grammar and Church History, for the more intelligent and older ones, and much sewing and mending for all. "Above all", said the wise Mother, "Let us make them good house-wives who will know how to make use of everything in the house, and who will be a blessing in the homes which they may enter later on." She insisted in a special way on then mending their stockings. She had given Sister Saint Antoine the supervision of this. Sister was one of the first associates who had preceded Mother Foundress to Pierres Plantees.

"My heart was often wrung", said the good Mother, speaking on this subject, "when, while visiting the poor in their homes, I found heaps of stockings with holes in them, rotting away, piled up in some corner of a hovel, because there was no woman there who had learnt how to mend when she was young. [67] Then I thought to myself: 'If ever I have to look after children, I shall teach them to take care of their belongings and to mend them in time.'" And so the care which the pupils took over this branch of work was recompensed in an exceptional way by the Reverend Mother. It was even the condition for progressing to the silk work-room to which each one naturally aspired

relates this among other miracles of the Blessed Virgin, and says that they have been copied from MANIN. *Mois de Notre Dame de Fourviere*, Lyon, 1903, which guarantees the authenticity of the information.

Jeanne Portier was the daughter of Gabriel and Françoise Logier. She was born in the hospital in Lyon on the 25th January 1817.

A copy of the doctor's certificate was made by Elisabeth Mayet to send to her sister, Emma, whose descendants gave it to A. G. Roma.

and which was the last stage of their perfection as silk workers. The majority of them showed an aptitude for work, and an enthusiasm which gave the most gratifying consolation to their dear mistresses.

The admirable organisation of that young hive of workers was the first thing that struck visitors to the Providence. This is how the work-room operated. Each child had a task which was assigned to her for the day, and when it was accomplished the little worker could use the time left over for supplementary work according to whether she was more or less skilled at the loom. A register<sup>6</sup> in which the name of each child was written was kept scrupulously day by day, in order to check whether the task assigned to each one had been completed, and what extra work each child had been able to accomplish outside this allotted task. This surplus work belonged to the worker. She was faithfully paid and all her small savings, thus accumulated and well invested by the good Mistresses of the work-room, served to build up a dowry for her in readiness for the time when she would have to choose a new way of life.

[68] Several of the girls amassed quite handsome amounts in this way until they reached the age of twenty one, the age for leaving the house. It is easy to see how such an organisation would produce good results. The workers were stimulated thus by a powerful motive, that of their own personal interest, to become hard working and economical, and to redouble their zeal to improve themselves in the skill which would assure for them later on an honest and honourable livelihood.

Apart from this no girl ever left without a trousseau made by her own hands and worth from six to eight hundred francs, without counting her individual savings which amounted sometimes to 1,200 or even 1,500 francs.

As the time approached for seeing these young girls, who had cost her so much care and solicitude, leave the house, Mother Foundress interested her friends and acquaintances in them, with the intention of placing them advantageously, as apprentices or in the service of some Christian family. She never allowed the least one of them to leave her

<sup>6</sup> One of these Registers is preserved in A. G. Roma. The way in which the Servant of God administered the Providence may be seen from it.

without giving her some sign of maternal love, accompanied by wise and precious advice; besides this, she reserved for herself the right and the duty to watch over the girl's conduct from a distance as she had done near at hand.<sup>7</sup>

[69]

## CHAPTER VIII

## FOUNDATION OF LE PUY (1823)

It was during the course of the year 1823 that the episcopal see of Le Puy which had remained vacant since the bloody period of 1793 was confided to the pastoral care of Mgr Louis-Maurice de Bonald.<sup>1</sup>

The new Bishop realised that this diocese which had been deprived of its chief Pastor for so many years and during such disastrous times called for all his care and vigilance. Desiring to see for himself the extent of the evil to be repaired, and the reforms to be carried out, the zealous Prelate planned from the first weeks of his installation the itinerary of his pastoral visitation. For the first time since the revolution, the inhabitants of Velay saw a Bishop travelling through the mountains. From village to village, from hamlet to hamlet, he went, like the saintly Bishop of Geneva, reforming abuses, re-establishing the ceremonies of worship, putting back into vigour forgotten discipline, providing for the evangelisation of the people and promising, as far as he was able, [70] to come the following year and preside over First Communions and give Confirmation, that moving ceremony of which the people of the mountains cherished the memory, and asked to see again the pomp and pious solemnity.

The little town of Monistrol was situated on the route of the Prelate. It was there that the modest colony from Fourviere devoted themselves enthusiastically to the education of the young girls of Velay. His Lordship visited the new community and was received there

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Docs. XIII, p. 257, and XVII, 5, p. 356.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Doc. XV, *intr.*, p. 263; *Memorial*, pp. 12-13, partly *ad sensum* and partly *ad litteram*.

as a Father, Mgr de Bonald carefully examined the way of life of the daughters of Madame Thevenet, and the kind of education to which they applied themselves, and he left them expressing his satisfaction at the good order of the house and assuring them of his good will. This was all the more flattering and a good omen for the new religious family, as at the beginning of his episcopate His Lordship had said with a certain severity to those around him: "I will tolerate only what is good and useful in my diocese."<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, there was no delay before we received an encouraging proof of his pastoral solicitude, for on his return to his episcopal town, Mgr de Bonald proposed to the religious of Monistrol that they should transfer their establishment to Le Puy, the town of Mary, where the need for an Institution of this kind seemed to him to be urgent. Madame Thevenet gave full support to this project which served the glory of God and the interests of the Institute.<sup>3</sup>

The new residence of the "Ladies of the Sacred Hearts" rose on the banks of the Borne, not far from the parish church of Saint-Laurent, [71] and it combined all the conditions desirable for the present time. Pupils from the town and from different parts of the department thronged there from the first months, and the official examinations at the end of each year witnessed equally to the progress of the pupils and the satisfaction of their families.<sup>4</sup>

It was there that hidden in the cleft of the rock, like the nest of the turtle dove, the humble community developed under the protection of the august Queen of Velay, Our Lady of Le Puy, as in Lyon it had undertaken its first flight under the protection of Our Lady of Fourviere.

Le Puy, like Lyon, is indeed the town of Mary. It owes its origin to her, if the legends are to be believed, and they come from remote antiquity and are based on reputable authority. . . .<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Memorial*, pp. 12-13, almost *ad litteram*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Memorial*, p. 13, *ad sensum*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Doc. XV, 6, p. 270, and *Memorial*, p. 13, *ad sensum*.

<sup>5</sup> What has been said, in this last part of the chapter, and which is omitted here because it does not directly concern the Cause, comes from traditions related by local authors and collected also from modern sources such as from A. CHANAL, *Le Puy, villesainte et villed'art*, Le Puy 1957; J. PARADIS and A. FAUX, *Le Puy, Villed'art*, Lyon, 1957.

1771

## CHAPTER IX

A SACRIFICE, A FIRST SEPARATION, DEPARTURE OF FR. COINDRE FOR BLOIS,  
HIS DEATH. 1826

However, there was a great trial awaiting the community of the Holy Hearts. It was going to lose its Venerated Founder! Father Coindre, in his zeal for the glory of God, had succeeded in forming a phalanx of priests, animated by the same holy zeal, who would devote themselves to preaching, giving retreats and missions, and re-animating faith and piety in the people who had been neglected for so long. Haute-Loire had had the happiness of hearing them, and everywhere their vibrant and persuasive words had rekindled the feeble spark which was sleeping under the ashes, and produced the happiest results.

But the Divine Master, undoubtedly satisfied with the work carried out in this part of his vineyard, and seeing that it could be continued by other priests, assigned a new field of action to his valiant servant.

The Bishop of Blois,<sup>1</sup> knew and esteemed Fr. Coindre and wanted to attach him to his diocese, so he chose him to be his Vicar General, and at the [78] same time appointed him Director of his Major Seminary. The choice was a happy one. It was hardly possible to find a more suitable man to inculcate the spirit of zeal and of dedication in the young seminarians, whilst forming them to that holy eloquence which he possessed in such a high degree.

Fr. Coindre felt deeply the sacrifice which had been asked of him. He was leaving his dear collaborators, whom he had dreamed of uniting into a Society of Missionaries, and giving them to his new Congregation of the Sacred Hearts as protectors, supporters and fathers. He was leaving that religious family which had still such great need of his advice, his counsel, and his paternal visits which always brought joy, peace, courage or consolation to his dear Daughters. But seeing the will of God in the call of His Lordship, the Bishop of Blois,

<sup>1</sup> Philippe Francois de Sausin was born in Orange on the 11th February 1756. He was a doctor of the Sorbonne and Vicar of Lisieux. During the Revolution he emigrated with his Bishop; returning to France at the time of the Bourbons, he was Vicar of Valence, and on the 20th July 1823 he was consecrated Bishop of Blois, where he died on the 5th March 1844 at the age of 88 years (cf. E. DEVELLE in *L'episcopal francais*, cit., pp. 138-139).

the generous priest submitted to it, and heeding only the call of duty, he went to his new post, filled with the desire to dedicate himself body and soul to the glory of his Divine Master. His spiritual daughters felt no less deeply the consequences of this separation. The responsibilities of this post would weigh heavily on their Father, who would only very rarely be able to return to see them. It was true, they knew that nothing would alter or diminish the fatherly interest which he had pledged to his little community; but from now on they would have to stand on their own feet and expect letters and visits only at long intervals. It was in Blois that they received the memorable letter that we have quoted above, that true code of detachment, of obedience, and of religious humility.<sup>2</sup>

[179] This first sacrifice, however, was only the prelude and preparation for another, much greater still, that would soon be laid upon the new community!

In Blois, as in Lyon and Le Puy, Fr. Coindre displayed his customary zeal; but his health, ruined by the excessive work of the preceding years, could not stand up to the double task which his high position imposed on him. A serious illness soon obliged him to lessen his ardour, then to suspend all work entirely. Typhoid fever, added to other grave symptoms, reduced the sick man to the last extremity in a few days.

From the time when the news of the illness of the venerated Founder reached the Community of Fourviere, fervent prayers and supplications were addressed to God for the restoration of such precious health. At the Seminary of Blois the most zealous care was lavished on the worthy patient; the infirmarians and seminarists replaced each other at his bedside, the cleverest doctors were consulted, but the sickness resisted equally affectionate care and skilled treatment.

In his delirium, the former missionary saw himself in the middle of the crowds, preaching penance and return to God. At other times grasping his rosary, as in the days of his apostolate, he showed it to his listeners, kissed it with love and began the recitation of it which he continued until he was overcome by exhaustion and weakness.

<sup>2</sup> For all the details regarding Fr. Coindre, cf. *Vie de Pere Andre Coindre*, Lyon 1888, pp. 179-199.



Sometimes he sat up and seemed to want to go away. He said to those who tried [80] to hold him back: "Leave me, let me go and preach! God is offended and men are losing their souls."

One morning, as the sick man seemed more calm, the infirmarian who was looking after him, had left him to go and fetch some medicine for his patient. During his absence, Fr. Coindre, seized with another bout of fever, got up and approached the window. On his return the startled infirmarian advanced towards him to get him back to bed, but the sick priest, whose muscular energy was doubled by the fire of the fever devouring his body, freed himself quickly saying: "There is not one minute to lose, I must go and hear the confession of that unfortunate man who will die in God's wrath!" Before his guardian could seize him again, he had thrown himself out of the window!

When he was taken up from the pavement, spattered with blood by his fall, he was dead. His soul had left his mortal body to take flight for Heaven! It was the 30th May 1826!

This death and the heartbreaking circumstances which we have just reported were still unknown in the Community of Fourviere, where the serious illness of the Father Founder had already cast a pall of sadness over the Community.

Above all, Reverend Mother St. Ignatius felt extreme sorrow at the thought that the Father, the prop and support of her newly-founded Institute, might be taken away from her. Steam, at that period, had not yet been put to the service of man, and the slowness of postal communications was really exasperating.

[81] The Mother Foundress was awaiting the mail from Blois with anxiety. The end of May drew near. It was the 30th, and there was no recent news. During recreation, Mme Thevenet seemed so overwhelmed that her daughters could not fail to notice the alteration in her countenance and they asked her what was the cause. She replied: "I do not know, but I have a premonition of a great trial! I would like to make a note of the date", and she wrote it with a trembling hand in her diary.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Many of these circumstances are carefully recorded in the *Memorial*, pp. 13-16. and are reported here in part *ad sensum* and in part *ad litteram*, in the *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 1 *ad sensum*, in the *Notes detachees* pp. 1-2 *ad sensum*.

Mother St. Ignatius had the prayers doubled. She spent most of the days that followed either at the foot of the altar near the Tabernacle, or in her room before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, which in time of great sufferings she was seen so often embracing and watering with her tears!

On June 2nd a letter came from Blois announcing to the community the misfortune that had befallen it! For a long time the Mother House had the appearance of a family in mourning! Were not the last words pronounced by the Holy Missionary, at the moment of his fatal delirium, typical of his whole life? Did they not seem to be the supreme echo of that truly apostolic life, that life of zeal and dedication to the glory of God and the good of souls? Were not these words repeated by the Angels at the feet of the Sovereign Judge, when they escorted the holy missionary to receive his eternal crown? Were they not chanted by those privileged souls who, brought back by him on to the road to Heaven, had had the happiness of dying before him, as predestined souls?

[82] In one of those moments of outpouring when the humility and generosity of his soul revealed themselves almost without his knowing it, the Father Founder was heard to admit that he had asked God to let him die in humiliation.

Can the deplorable accident brought about by fever, be regarded as God's answer to His servant's prayer? However that may be, it is difficult to express the grief into which the community was plunged at this sad and distressing news.

In the bitterness of their grief and tears, his daughters wondered if this death was not a mortal blow for the future of their work. The little Congregation was just beginning. It had not yet passed through the first period of its formation; how could its existence and its development be assured without the one who had been its Founder and Father?

The Constitutions, the first foundation of every religious house, were hardly prepared! The Rule, that arsenal where each soul enrolled under the standard of the life of perfection finds its spiritual ammunition, was still only a rough draft!

Who would be able to complete it in the future, perfect it and adapt it to the needs and the aim of the new work?

The three dioceses through which the valiant and enthusiastic worker for the glory of God had passed, sowing the good seed, regretted his death to the same degree.

How many excellent works were compromised by that premature death! How many projects full of hope destroyed! What would become of that recently-founded College [83], and that flourishing Society of Missionaries whose struggles against ignorance, indifference, vice and impiety had already won so many beautiful victories for God?

Expressions of sympathy were not lacking to the Foundress and her daughters on this sad occasion.

M. Cholleton,<sup>4</sup> Vicar General of the diocese of Lyon, previously delegated by Mgr de Pins to exercise the office of Superior during the absence of the Father Founder, showed special interest in the Community, and a really paternal kindness.

At Le Puy, Mgr de Bonald took on himself the duty of announcing to Mother St. Gonzaga, the then Superioress, the great trial which had befallen the Institute.

After expressing his condolences and giving the greatest praise to the memory of him for whom they were mourning, His Lordship added: "Mother, you may count more than ever on my help. An orphaned family needs a Father and protector, and henceforth I will be both one and the other for your Community." And he kept his promise.

These expressions of kindness and sympathy coming from persons of such high rank, certainly made their grief easier to bear, but did not lessen it. For a long time, as we have already said, the house of Fourviere presented an aspect of most profound grief.

Both the pupils of the boarding school and the children of the Providence shared in the regrets of the Community; these latter especially, appeared to feel more keenly the loss that they had suffered.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Cholleton was born on the 18th June 1788 at Saint-Marcel-de-Feline (Forez). He was ordained priest in 1812, and was professor of moral theology and then (1817) director of the major seminary of Lyon. He became Vicar General of Mgr de Pins in 1825, entered the Society of Mary in 1840, made profession there on the 25th September 1841, and died in Lyon on the 9th February 1852 (cf. S. CATTET, *Notice sur la vie du R. P. Cholleton*, Lyon, 1852).

[84] This good Father loved them so much! He was so happy to show some signs of interest in his little orphans!

When he arrived in Fourviere, boarders and orphans asked with equal eagerness for the favour of a visit from him. But if he had only a quarter of an hour for the first, he took care to manage twice as long for the poor little orphan girls.

From room to room, from workroom to workroom he passed, bestowing on all words of encouragement, good advice, pleasing little rewards and paternal blessings.

He knew them all by name, this dear little flock for whom his charity had opened up this pleasant shelter. "I know my sheep", he could say with the Good Shepherd, "and they know me!" Yes these children knew their good father by that instinct of innocent hearts by which they recognise holiness and true dedication, and respect, venerate and love them, and these feelings added a new dimension to the sincerity of their tears and grief.

[85]

## CHAPTER X

### FIRST DEATHS IN THE COMMUNITY

1828

The death of Fr. Coindre was followed by some years of relative calm, like a halt on the road to Calvary along which the Foundress walked heroically followed by her numerous family. It was like a merciful truce accorded by Divine Providence to our Congregation, in order to prepare it for new sacrifices and new sufferings.

The boarding school of Fourviere quickly attracted pupils; all the members of the Institute were animated by one thought, one desire: to advance in perfection every day, to identify themselves, like Mary, with the life of Jesus, in order to bring Him to birth in souls, and thus realise the dream of the Father Founder, and form a crown of glory for him in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first two paragraphs of this chapter have been reproduced more or less textually from the *Memorial*, p. 17 (cf. *supra*, p. 470).

But in 1828, the Institute had to write at the head of its necrology the names of two religious who were called by the Celestial Spouse to receive their crown in heaven: Mother St. Xavier and Mother St. Borromeo.<sup>2</sup> They were two outstanding subjects.

[86] The first was one of the most dedicated collaborators of our Mother Foundress. She had been elected Assistant General on the 26th July<sup>3</sup> 1823, and Electress, on the 6th January 1824.

From her entrance into the Convent, she displayed the utmost regularity and fervour, trying to advance each day in the way of perfection.

The responsibilities which were confided to her brought to light her talents and her tact in business matters, but they never lessened her enthusiasm to attain holiness, which was her principal aim.

She enjoyed the confidence of the Mother Foundress, and used it only for the general good. The whole community esteemed and loved her, and her death, on the 2nd September 1828, left a great void and profound regret.

Mother St. Borromeo had preceded her to the grave by only a few months on the 21st July of the same year.

She was a brilliant class teacher, witty and talented, but above all she was a fervent religious.

She charmed everyone at recreation by her pleasant disposition, and wherever she went, a gentle and delightful gaiety prevailed.

She was a poet, and composed verses with great facility to express her feelings and impressions. For feasts of the Church, as also for family feast days and for some special occasions, she took up her pen, and within a few minutes, she had produced a fine poem.

Some of her songs [87] were greatly enjoyed by those who heard them sung . . .<sup>4</sup>

[88] The loss of these two precious subjects was a grievous wound for the heart of the Mother Foundress . . .<sup>5</sup> Father Coindre was dead, and

<sup>2</sup> Already in 1822 Sister St. Bonaventure had died in Belleville; in 1824 a novice had died in Lyon. She made her vows on her death-bed. In 1825 Sister St. Augustine died. She had been professed for two years.

<sup>3</sup> "July" written for "February".

<sup>4</sup> We omit the text of six songs, extolling the happiness of the religious soul.

<sup>5</sup> For the death of M. St. Xavier and of M. St. Borromeo cf. doc. IV, 2, 66, c, note 69, p. 159, and XVII, 1, p. 336; *Memorial*, p. 26, *ad senium*, *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 10, *ad litteram*; *Notes detachees*, pp. 9-10, *ad sensum*, from which it is seen that the information relative to these deaths is correct. The last lines of this paragraph are copied *ad litteram* from the *Petit Manuscrit*.

God had taken from her those whom she was pleased to regard as principal pillars of the edifice she was raising. For a moment she began to fear that her dear Congregation would disappear! But God likes to prove that nobody is necessary for His work, except Himself. The gaps were soon filled, and everything continued to make progress.<sup>6</sup>

[89]

## CHAPTER XI

1830 — REVOLUTION

However, the Revolution of 1830 broke out. It is true that in Lyon it did not have the character of impiety that it unhappily had in Paris, but it secretly agitated the masses, and indicated aspirations which sooner or later would have an effect.

For the moment, in Lyon, a meeting of some hundreds of *Bourgeois*, for the most part armed, some with guns used for hunting, and others with rusty old weapons, formed the whole group of insurgents. The least effort would have dispersed them; but the regular army had no orders; on both sides it was understood that the fate of France was being decided in Paris, and people lived in expectation. The insurgents, if they could be called that, took advantage of the inaction of the military leaders to march to the town hall, where they installed people of their own choice in authority.

The common people, apart from some rare exceptions, had at first no part in the movement; but pressed by some foremen, the workers ended up by taking to the streets.<sup>1</sup>

In the month of November,<sup>2</sup> these same workers rose up spontaneously in their turn, over a question of prices in dispute

<sup>6</sup> On the 12th November 1829, the Servant of God requested, in a petition made to Pope Pius VIII, that a plenary indulgence might be gained, on the usual conditions, for those who had visited the chapel of the Mother Mouse in Fourviere on the day of profession and of renewal of vows. The rescript with the permission bears the date 27th November 1829. Cf. Doc. XVI, c. 3, b. p. 308.

<sup>1</sup> These first paragraphs are copied almost literally from D. MLYNIS, *Les grands souvenirs de l'Eglise de Lyon*, Lyon, 1867, pp. 488-489. Cf. also *Memorial*, p. 17, and *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 11-12, *ad sensum*.

<sup>2</sup> The authors omitted to indicate after "November" the year 1831, and this makes the text incomprehensible.

between themselves and the merchants who gave them work. After a bloody struggle, they forced the troops of the garrison to leave the town and, having become masters of the city, they governed it for several days without any complaint of disorder.

But the Duke of Orleans arrived with troops commanded by Marshal Soult, and the insurgents had to surrender. However, the spirit of revolt from which the insurrection had sprung, was not stifled, and it broke out again in 1831. This time the uprising was much worse than in the preceding year, but with this difference, that those who were the victors behaved in a just and Christian manner even in the midst of their victory. Everything was within their power in our rich city, and nothing was stolen.

Some strangers who mingled with the workers of Lyon tried to take advantage of the situation in order to loot. They were arrested and punished with extreme rigour.

In the neighbourhood of the Cathedral of St. Jean, it was moving to see the insurgents, bearing arms, heads uncovered, accompanying the priest who was carrying the Holy Viaticum to the sick.

Thank God faith was still alive in all those hearts! The town of Lyon could be proud to see its poorest children, those who depended on their work for their livelihood, respecting religion and preferring justice to the treasures that their success put so to speak at their disposal.

Some concessions were made to the workers and order was re-established. [91] What was Madame Thevenet's family doing during these disturbances? It was praying, and it put its trust in God and in Mary.

The energetic Foundress did not in any way show her anxiety. She supported some and raised the courage of others. She took care that the children and community lacked nothing, and kept herself firmly united with the holy will of God. This sentiment was very necessary.

Obliged to give way to the workers, the General had sworn to come back soon and declared that when he did he would put the town to fire and the sword. Therefore people waited for a terrible return, and everyone was in a state of great anxiety, when the idea came to a pious widow to strew on the road which the soldiers would have to take in order to enter Lyon a large quantity of miraculous medals and small

pieces of paper on which was written: "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee".

Whilst awaiting the return of the troops, which they justifiably feared, devout people were praying with all their heart and getting others around them to pray. Everyone in the convent also prayed.

But if the people of Lyon were afraid of reprisals from the troops, the troops themselves were not without anxiety about re-entering a town from which a formidable crowd had ousted them. Pauline Marie Jaricot, from whom we have borrowed these details, said that when the battalions had passed through the gates, the soldiers and officers, at first astonished, and afterwards with a gentle and salutary [92] impression gathered up the medals and pieces of paper purposely strewn in their path.

Soon a feeling of confidence and gentleness succeeded to that of vengeance, so much so that both sides were willing to agree and make friends.

The influence of religion which made itself felt in the hearts of the people of Lyon as well as in those of the military, united them in mutual trust, in the presence of Mary, so loving and merciful towards all.

After a few months, a notable change took place among the soldiers, a great number of whom, not satisfied with wearing the medal, wanted rosaries and scapulars, and even organised several sections of the Living Rosary, stimulated by Mile Jaricot.

"It is worth a lot and it is soon done; he is a real fool who does not take advantage of it", they said.

The leaders also asked for medals for themselves and for their subordinates. As soon as one company was provided with them, others requested the same treasures. In this way more than 12,000 medals were distributed to the garrison, not counting those which were distributed elsewhere.

And from the Mother of Grace the soldiers went with faith and simplicity to Grace itself by receiving Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph which includes all the end of the chapter is copied from J. M. MAURIN. *Coeur d'apôtre et de mère; Pauline Marie Jaricot*, Lille s.d., pp. 124-125, except what regards the Servant of God, for which see *Memorial*, p. 17, and *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 11-12, *ad senium*.

## [93] CHAPTER XII

## THE CHOLERA

Calm and peace reigned in the city. Our work increased, visibly blessed by God and his Holy Mother. A wonderful fervour animated hearts; everyone wanted to run, to fly in the way of perfection, when some misgivings of a new kind came to darken the horizon and furnish a new subject for supplication and prayers. Cholera had just made its appearance in Europe . . .'

## [102] CHAPTER XIII

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHAPEL OF JESUS AND MARY<sup>1</sup>

*Lord I will raise up a modest  
temple to you where you will  
deign to dwell.*

As soon as calm and confidence were re-established, the daughters of Mme Thevenet begged her earnestly to carry out a project dear to all their hearts: that of building a chapel a little less unworthy of the Lord of Tabernacles, and more appropriate for the continually increasing number of religious and their pupils.

However desirous the Mother Foundress was to respond to this wish, which corresponded perfectly with that which she herself cherished in the depths of her heart, she did not want to take on the responsibility of this enterprise immediately after the popular disturbances which could break out again for the least cause.

<sup>1</sup> The whole chapter is inspired by D. MEYNIS, *op cit.* The text itself is omitted because it says nothing regarding the Cause. In Doc. XVI, 7, p. 286, are found some allusions to the epidemic and to its repercussions in the community.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Memorial*; pp. 18-19, and *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 12, *ad sensum* and some phrases *ad Utteram*; and also *Notes detachees*, pp. 11-13. See also A. M. C AHOUR. *Notre Dame de Fourviere*, Lyon 1838, p. 347; R. GARRAUD. *Histoire de la Vie et des oeuvres du R.P. Joseph Rey*, Citeaux 1891, p. 57 and J-B MARTIN *Histoire des eglises et chapelles de Lyon*. II, Lyon 1909 pp. 130-131. This chapel erected through the piety of the Servant of God, was partly destroyed in 1948, by a fire started deliberately by a person who was said afterwards to be abnormal. The flames devoured all the furniture, the vestments, the sacred vessels, and even the roof. It is now being restored.

Therefore she consulted the diocesan commission about the advisability of this building.

"Do not allow the uncertainty of the situation to stop you; carry out God's work every day, without worrying about the troubles that the next day may bring", the commission told her.

[103] The question was therefore resolved and the work was undertaken.

That same year, 1832, the foundation stone of the present chapel was solemnly laid.

The venerable Fr. Rey,<sup>2</sup> who was later the founder of the Institution of the Penitentiary of Oullins (Rhône) was at that time chaplain of the Mother House. He took this building to heart, and devoted himself to it with that persevering enthusiasm, which he knew how to apply to everything that concerned the service and glory of God, as well as the development and interest of the Congregation.

In order to reduce the expenses of the building of this chapel, he undertook to be its architect, contractor, and even mason!

Mother Foundress and her daughters, stimulated by this example, also considered it an honour to contribute their little part to the building of the holy place.

During the time when their occupations inside the house and their various employments left them free, the religious hurried in groups to the building site, and there they vied with one another in carrying the stones, water and sand used by the workmen.

The orphans of the Providence wanted to join them at recreation time.

Joyfully they formed a chain and buckets of water or sacks of sand were passed from hand to hand amidst laughter and exclamations, until they reached the good masons, who were astonished to be served so cheerfully by these improvised labourers. It seemed as if God had assembled, in advance, part of the materials necessary for the building of his Temple there within the enclosure itself.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Rey, son of Jacques and Marguerite Montmain, was born on the 5th January 1798 at Pouilly-les-Fleurs (Loire). Ordained priest in 1821, he was appointed parish priest of Nervieux, then in 1826 of Miserieux (Loire). He was officially appointed chaplain of the house of Fourviere on the 13th March 1830, by the archbishop, but in the Registers of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, his signature with the title of "Chaplain" figures already from the 8th December 1829. He remained chaplain until the 18th June 1835. He died on the 6th April 1874 (cf. *Notes detachees*, pp. 11-15, *ad sensum*, see also GARRAUD, *op. cit.* and the preceding note).

[104] In preparing the foundations of the buildings that had been put up, the debris of walls had already been found, piles of stones; and now the new excavations uncovered real treasures, of a kind which clearly indicated that they were in the presence of ancient Roman buildings. Moreover, this supposition presented all the characteristics of certainty. Were they not in the proximity of the palace where Claude and Germanicus were born (Antiquaille) and of the Forum of Trajan? ... that Forum built by Trajan, at the period when Lyon was beginning to arise from the disasters and ruins caused by the famous earthquake, and the terrible fire, which had put it within an ace of ruin, in the year 50 under Nero? It was indeed, this same Forum which was later called Fort Vetus, Fort Vieil, and finally Fourviere.

Cisterns, remains of aqueducts, the underground passage which extends under one of our avenues of trees, justified this presumption, and it was possible to think that when the Roman Emperors came to relax in Lyon, after their work and their brilliant success, some noble Patrician of their suite, captivated by the incomparable beauty of the site, had had a pleasant villa built there, in order to enjoy the charms of contemplating an imposing and ravishing countryside.

While continuing the excavations, a room which was completely covered with marble was found. Many pieces brought to light were perfectly preserved; they were used to make the High Altar which adorns our chapel so well.

Some enormous blocks measuring at times more than [105] a metre in length were brought to light; if one of them had to be carried to the site, the servant of the community surrounded it with huge cables; a team of 50 to 60 ladies courageously harnessed themselves to it, and the stone was triumphantly brought to its destination. Sometimes, these heavy blocks had to be dragged up a slope and reinforcements were called; soon all the difficulty was overcome, so true is it that union is strength.

The activity of the valiant Fr. Rey, his tact in directing the workmen, whom he animated by his words and example, the enthusiasm and eagerness of the religious, contributed not a little to the rapid advancement of the building.

The roof was just begun when a new civil upheaval, of which the Community had to bear the repercussions, came to hold up the work.<sup>3</sup>

[106]

## CHAPTER XIV

### A NEW INSURRECTION IN LYON<sup>1</sup>

It was during the year 1834 that the workers, dissatisfied with the considerable reduction which the manufacturers in the silk trade were imposing on them, had demanded in vain an increase in their pay.

Seditious gatherings formed and soon riot became open revolt, civil war.

The army of workers succeeded in putting the national guard to rout and repulsing troops of the line. They took possession of the Town Hall and the arsenals, from which they provided themselves with arms and ammunition.

One evening in the Place des Terreaux, in the midst of threatening and vociferous shouting, they piled up an immense quantity of silk and precious materials they had taken from the factories, and set fire to this wealth of the trade.

Keeping to their programme, these disorderly gangs made their way to Fourviere where they prepared for action two cannons which they found in an unfinished fort [107] and fired on the town. In weather was cold and the snow was falling heavily. The insurgents were considering taking shelter in the chapel, but the sight of the sanctuary and the statue of Our Lady visibly embarrassed them. It was why, after establishing their bivouac at the far end of the

<sup>1</sup>On the 24th March 1834, a few days before the revolution broke out, Mgr Plani Apostolic Administrator of Lyon, granted the request that the Servant of God in the chapel Fr. Rey, authorising the institution of the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit in perpetuity in the chapel of the Community in Fourviere. Cf. Doc. XVI, C, 3, I. p. 11(1)

<sup>2</sup>The revolution of 1834 has been the object of many studies, and all the authorities in recognising its causes and the circumstances in which it developed, notwithstanding diverse political leanings, which are clear from reading the works cited (cf. J. B. MONTEAU, *Histoire de Lyon*, II, Lyon 1847, pp. 1173-1182; A. STEYERT, *La Révolution de Lyon*, IV, Montbrison 1939, pp. 46-61; J. GODART, *La Lyon, en 1848*, Paris 1948, pp. 5-14). Regarding the Servant of God on this occasion, cf. Doc. XVII, 3, d, p. 349; *Memorial*, pp. 20-23, partly *de la vie de la communauté*; *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 12-13, *ad sensum*: Notes détachées, pp. 1-2, *ad litteram*.

sanctuary, they cut themselves off a little by piling up a lot of chairs under the middle arch.

Then Fr. Rey came in to take away the sacred vessels, and said very firmly to the insurgents: "Friends, what do you think you are doing? Do you not know that you are in the house of the Blessed Virgin, and in front of the altar?" "What should we do?" they replied taken aback. "Let me take the ciborium away . . . and afterwards, if you stay here, remember in *whose house you are*." No sooner said than done; and as the Blessed Sacrament was being removed from the Church, these insurgents paid it military honours and accompanied it as far as our small chapel. There they fell on their knees, sloping arms with one hand whilst they removed their cap with the other.

During this time, one of the religious took the most precious objects away from the chapel without anyone interfering with her in this delicate task. On the contrary, the wives of the insurgents helped her and had the greatest respect for her.

And so here was the Sanctuary of Mary transformed into a barracks! Meals were prepared there, cartridges were made there, and at night the insurgents slept there! At certain times they presented themselves at the Convent to requisition bread, wine and cheese.

Our excellent Superioress gave generously, [108] beseeching God to bring these poor straying people back, to forgive them, to save the city, to preserve her dear family from all harm.

From Thursday 7th April, the bell towers of Lyon, surmounted with the black flag of the insurgents, rang out only the sinister note of the tocsin, stirring up the spirit of revolt, and filling honest citizens with fear. Gangs of furious rioters went through the town, uttering wild cries.

The insurgents tried to hoist the black flag on the church of Fourviere, but it was blown down by the wind and torn by a gust. "Indeed, it seems as if the Blessed Virgin does not want it," they said (using unprintable expressions), "it should not be put up again or she . . . might make us pay for it."

The burial of Fr. Fournel, one of the chaplains of Fourviere, was deferred for four days because of the dispersion of his brother priests. Fr. Rey bravely offered himself to carry out the obsequies.

He was so good at winning over the rioters that a considerable number of them offered to follow, rifle in hand, the modest funeral procession, as far as the cemetery of Loyasse.

However, the bombardment increased. The regular troops directed their powerful artillery from Bellecour on to Fourviere, whilst from Fourviere the insurgents responded angrily and sent their bombs out over the city. Shells fell like rain on all sides.

The holy mount seemed to tremble at the repeated sound of the cannon reverberating in the air and the clamour of impious hordes who profaned its sanctuary and its holy paths.

[109] Our Sister gardener, hearing the whistle of the bullets, and not realising what was happening, for our Mother Foundress made a great effort to hide our danger, exclaimed naively: "The birds are singing in a peculiar way today." Mother St. Ignatius wanted to judge the direction from which the missiles were coming by looking from one of the terraces of the garden. She was hardly out of doors when the sound of a bullet whistled in her ears. She had only just time to throw herself down on the ground to avoid it.

She re-entered the house on her hands and knees, thanking God for having saved her, and she forbade anyone to venture out of doors.

Everyone was praying; but the good Mother preserved an appearance of calm and supported the most fearful persons by her tranquillity and confidence in God.

Saturday had just dawned. We were hoping that on that day which is especially consecrated to the Immaculate Virgin, Protectress of the city of Lyon, she would remember her unhappy children and [e]l them feel the effects of her merciful tenderness; but the hour of deliverance had not yet come! From the first light of the morning, the cannon still rumbled, more terrible than ever; however the sky was heavy with clouds which were not slow in dissolving into thick abundant snow, and they had to stop the firing for a while. Nevertheless, it began again at noon, and lasted until four o'clock in the evening.

On the morning of Sunday, the feast of the Good Shepherd, the General of the troops gave the order to attack the barricade, raised by the insurgents on the slopes of St. Just [110] and of the Antiquaille,

and, when this attempt failed, the officers of the engineering corps looked for another way, because they wanted at all costs to dislodge the rioters from Fourviere.

In the end they penetrated into the property of the SARAH, next door to ours, made a breach in our wall and behold! a whole regiment charging through, and going towards our orphanage which they believed served as a barracks for the insurgents.

The religious and children were in the chapel at that moment, chanting Vespers. An auxiliary Sister, on duty guarding the house, saw the troops break through and ran to warn the Superior who immediately informed Fr. Rey of what was happening.

He was presiding at the Office in surplice and cope; he took off the vestments, ran to meet the military and arrived at the moment when the sappers were breaking down the doors.

"Gentlemen", he cried, "You do not realise that this house belongs to religious who bring up orphans and who have suffered enough from the insurrection." — "They fired on the troops from here", they answered him, "the insurgents are hidden there." "No sirs", replied Fr. Rey, "allow me to show you in, and you will see for yourselves that there is nothing here of what you suppose."

The commanding officer was persuaded; but finding the position most favourable for gaining control over the workers in revolt, he and his men entered the house. In a moment each window was occupied by a group of soldiers.

[III] The hours that followed seemed like centuries to the religious and their children who were confined to the rooms that were least exposed to bullets.

The troops, who were perfectly sheltered, began a well sustained fire against the rebels who found themselves without cover and exposed to all the shots.

At the first discharge, the infuriated workers turned their artillery on the convent. The windows were blown to pieces, the house seemed to be shaken by the repeated discharge of the cannons. But the rioters were unable to hold out against a sharp and well organised attack. They disbanded after a few hours and fled in disorder, taking with them their ominous flag, and carrying their wounded and dead.

Had this attempt of the troops failed, we were assured that it would have been the end of the town, for the military leaders, tired of fighting against an elusive enemy, had decided to entrench themselves in the forts and bombard the city to the bitter end.

The commanding officer, fearing that the insurgents might return to the assault, did not want to leave immediately a position that he had had so much trouble in occupying. He installed the men on the ground and first floors. For almost three weeks the religious and children occupied the other rooms that remained free.

That same day, the supper prepared for the community was served to the troops.

Sentries were posted in the interior of the house, and in the grounds; and the regulation "Who goes there?" sounded every minute in the ears of the religious [112] who were obliged to move around. They ended up by answering it almost as naturally as when they responded to prayers and to the salutations of their companions.

The military leaders could not explain how the Mother House and other buildings dominating the hillside had remained intact, and how it was that the Church and bell-tower of Fourviere had not received a single hit, as the number of missiles fired from Bellecour had been considerable.

"If I had faith in miracles," said one of them, "I would believe that I have seen one. We have fired so much on the Square for the last three days that there should not be a single house standing."

The artillery squad had noticed that the bullets always took a direction opposed to the one in which they were fired. If they fired at the bell-tower, the shells passed above it and fell in the gardens. If they aimed a little lower, they fell into properties situated lower than the Church.

Everybody can still see, near the chapel of St. Philomena, a bullet which crossed the chapel and buried itself in the wall, at a time when about fifteen people were making the Way of the Cross. Nobody was hit!

Our Sovereign Queen covered with her protection those of her children who lived near her holy shrine, which she watched over also. Calm being re-established, the troops left Fourviere after some weeks, and we gave most sincere thanks to God and Mary for having watched



over and preserved us from all harm; for, entirely cut off from the rest of the district for almost a month, we, and also our numerous and attractive orphans, would have been without defence and without help against the insults of the insurgents. But what Heaven takes care of is well guarded! We have truly experienced this and we shall see it again in many other circumstances. How good it is to belong to God!

As we have already said, this good Master had placed near us Fr. Rey who was our visible Providence at this moment of trial. He had shown great reluctance to accept the post of chaplain of our Mother House. "I do not want a regiment of nuns," he objected to his superiors who offered him this position; but as he was not well, and incapable for the time being of filling a more laborious ministry, he submitted and became our chaplain.

He was not slow in conceiving a liking for our work; he liked the enthusiasm, the generosity, the grandeur of the views of our Mother Foundress and her daughters; and he sought, by every means, to encourage and to sustain this spirit of zeal and of devotion to duty. He himself was a dedicated priest and he rendered us outstanding services.

He was a man of incomparable simplicity and humility; his words, in his sermons and instructions, were always persuasive, and were remarkable for the absence of any kind of studied phrase, anything above the level of his audience.

[114] "Fr. Rey preaches back to front," said a child, when she saw the good priest kneeling facing the altar and preaching the sermon to them from this position. The life he led during the seven years that we had the privilege of having him as chaplain was a silent but fruitful lesson in abnegation, in zeal, and in the spirit of sacrifice, for all the religious, and more especially for those of our sisters who served him in the chaplain's quarters.

During the winter, he hardly ever allowed the fire to be lit in his room; and in the evening, he was often seen on his knees, reciting the breviary by the feeble glimmer of some coals which he had put together.

His meals were taken with the strictest frugality. He ate little, and allowed himself only the simplest food. He was preparing himself, by mortification and prayer, for a great work which he was contemplating in the secret of his heart, and that he humbly wished to found one day,

and to present as the fruit of ours!, for, he said later on: "I would never have dreamt of such a foundation, it seems to me, if I had not seen from close at hand, as God permitted that I should see, what these Ladies do for poor little girls! I said to myself: 'Is there no one then who is trying to reform those thousands of little boys, lost by contact with vice and by lack of Christian education, rather than by lack of qualities of heart and soul, boys who remain under the empire of the prince of evil?' "

The pious priest turned this mission of reform over in his mind, and confided it to God with fervent prayers; [115] he recommended it to the Blessed Virgin of Fourviere. Then one day, he left our dear Mother House without saying a word, not having the courage to say his good-byes to his spiritual daughters to whom he was deeply attached, and who, he well knew, were penetrated with the sincere! gratitude, the most lively esteem, and the most profound respect for him. He left them to bring his inspiration to reality.

Our chapel, to the construction of which this excellent priest was so totally dedicated, remains to us as a memorial of his zeal, his charity, and his faith.

Could we forget the memory of such a benefactor, there, in that building, raised and cemented together at the price of so much toil and care? Each stone would cry out at our ingratitude!

We shall never forget him, and we shall teach those who come after us that from this blessed sanctuary a chant of gratitude and fervent prayers should rise to God for the honourable and regretted Fr. Rey! The life of this apostolic man, which was published recently, is full of traits which will make people bless and perpetuate his memory; may we be permitted here to salute fraternally the admirable work that he created<sup>2</sup> when he left our dear Fourviere and which outlasted our beautiful orphanage, which was struck down alas! in the flower of its development and was unable to regain its place on the holy hill. It had to go and be reborn and flourish in the distant regions of India in the East, in England, in Switzerland, etc. God grant that we may see it beside us once more in Fourviere!

<sup>2</sup> The work founded by Fr. Rey, the "Society of St. Joseph", was destined for the education and reform of small boys and abandoned youth, by means of work. They were gathered into "Agricultural Colonies" (cf. GARRAUD. *op. cit.*).

[116] Meanwhile, we wish Fr. Rey's work vitality, success, and a long life! According to the picturesque expression of the worthy Founder: "A certificate of bad conduct is necessary in order to be admitted into this reformatory." But how many degraded children entered it with the worst instincts, and left it worthy of God and society! How many have completely changed into coins of sterling quality from the vile currency of vice and immorality, which is equally rejected by heaven and earth.

[117]

## CHAPTER XV

### OUR GREY SISTERS<sup>1</sup>

Having reached this period of our history, the building of the chapel, let us take a short break. Just as the traveller who descends from the mountains into the valley, stops for a moment, on a beautiful spring day, to quench his thirst with pure fresh water from the stream, and to breathe in better the scent of the meadows dotted with flowers, so let us stop, and enjoy the scents which embalm our journey. The sweet smelling grass and the humble violet have not the brilliance of the rose and the carnation, yet how pleasant to breathe their sweet perfume!

Tiny wonderful creatures, graceful blades of grass which give off your perfume, reveal your secrets to us. Why must you fall under the hand of the mower? And why must the sun burn you and dry you in order to send us the treasures of your perfumes? It is often like this with the virtue of lowly and humble souls? They have to be overtaken by death so that the world may be permitted to perceive all the perfume of virtue they exhale!

[118] So, after paying our debt of gratitude to the memory of Fr. Rey, let us speak a little about those humble sisters who, by their heavy and laborious work, helped him so well in the building of our chapel. They were the religious belonging to the third class — those who were called "Grey Sisters" at that time, because of the colour of their dress.

In particular let us name Sister Saint George, Sister Saint Catherine, Sister Saint Stephen, Sister Saint Maurice, Sister Saint

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is almost literally transcribed from *Notes d'élèves*, pp. 15-28.

Agatha, Sister Saint Laurence who is still alive (1896) and a pious girl called Mariette.<sup>2</sup>

In proportion as the work was rough, so was the constancy of these good Sisters to support it, making all those who saw them at the work, admire them.

To dig the ground, to search in all directions in order to extract the stones and the sand, to transport the materials along a hard, rough slope, and go cheerfully up and down long ladders with a basket of stones or mortar on their head twenty times a day to provide the workmen with what was needed in order to prevent the work of the building from being slowed down or interrupted: such was the task accomplished by these dedicated sisters of the Congregation. Nothing equalled the enthusiasm of these *sisters*, extempore *masons*. The thought that they were helping to build the future residence of Our Lord by their toil and sweat filled them with joy, and nothing seemed to be too difficult when they told themselves: "It is for Jesus, our heavenly Spouse that we are working."

Apart from the example of Fr. Rey, they were also spurred on [119] by that of Mother Saint Andrew, who a few years later would succeed our Mother Foundress. She and Mother Saint John<sup>3</sup> had formed a partnership so that together they could provide the water

<sup>2</sup> Sister St. George, Benoite Denis, daughter of Jean and Jeanette Marie Berthelon, was born in 1800 in Villier (Rhône). She entered the Congregation on the 20th April, 1823, made her profession on the 1st November 1825, and died in Lyon on the 18th November 1837.

Sister Saint Catherine, Marie Martin, daughter of Claude and Anne Fournier, was born in 1811 in La Terrasse (Loire). She entered the Congregation on the 26th August 1832, made her profession on the 13th October 1835 and died in Lyon on the 14th February 1837.

Sister Saint Stephen, Marie Duissou, daughter of Denis and Agathe Travart, was born in 1810 in Saint Julien (Loire). She entered the Congregation on the 5th May 1835, made her profession on the 2nd February 1838 and died in Rodez in March 1876.

Sister St. Maurice, Marie Pocatton, was the daughter of Joseph and Marie Elisabeth Valet. She was born on the 28th November 1797 at Chatenay (Isère). She entered the Congregation on the 5th March 1823, made her profession on the 1st November 1825 and died in Lyon on the 29th September 1845.

Sister St. Laurence, Christine Descroix, cf. Doc. XXVIII, 1, p. 686.

Mariette Chabert had taken the habit with the name of Sister St. Madeleine, but she was not admitted to profession. She remained however, in the house, helping the community by her work until her death which took place on the 18th February 1848.

<sup>3</sup> M. St. John, Josephine Limozin, cf. Doc. XXII, 4, p. 453.

used in the preparation of the mortar. They carried all of it as long as there remained a stone to be cemented.

Sister Saint Laurence tells that some people who knew her, seeing her from the Place de Fourviere, felt sorry for her and said to her: "Poor Christine, what a job you are doing! It is the work of horses not that of young women like you! Do you at least get good pay for such hard work? ..." "Do not worry," she replied with a hearty laugh, "the one in whose service I am engaged has enough to pay me, as well as all the others!"

Work on the building lasted for two years or more.

But just as Fr. Rey was vigilant to keep the work going, so too he was equally attentive to procure the care and rest necessary for the good sisters to preserve their energy and health. At midday on hot days he obliged everyone to go to the dormitory after the meal, to sleep and rest for some hours, for they were up since 4.00 a.m.! They heard low Mass in Fourviere, had breakfast and began work.

Fr. Rey had further requested and obtained from our Reverend Mother, though not without some difficulty, permission to speak while working, "For", he said, "it is work that is too heavy not to try to lighten it with joy and laughter."

Sister St. George, being the eldest, led the group [120]. There was perfect harmony, for each one wanted to do the heaviest work; and if sometimes they appeared to weaken under the heavy loads and the burning rays of the sun, they stopped for a brief rest and amused themselves with light-hearted conversation, and cheerfully went back to work.

"You are really silly to wear yourselves out in this way", a sister postulant whose vocation was still wavering said to one of them. "When the chapel is finished you will be sent on a mission and what good will it do you?" "What do I care", she replied, "if I do not enjoy the results. I shall always have the satisfaction of having worked with all my strength to build God's house."

However great the desire of these generous workers to see the chapel finished, some had higher aspirations! "How good it will be to die, to go and rest in Paradise where we shall love God with all our heart, without being exposed to displease Him even by the slightest fault! To be in Paradise where we shall see Him face to face like the angels and saints!"

Another one said: "I would like to live so as to pray to God in our chapel surrounded by our *little ones* (orphans). There will be an organ and beautiful hymns. How lovely it will be!" — "How childish you are, my poor Christine" (Sr. St. Laurence), went on the first. "Do you not think that the music of Paradise will be as good as yours?"

The holy aspirations of these good souls were fulfilled. Those who wanted only to go to Heaven were soon called there. As for Christine and her other companions, [121] divine Providence granted them to see the chapel finished, and to offer there for many years their humble song of thanksgiving, praise and love (Sister St. Laurence, Christine, is still alive. She is 82 years old in 1895). Speaking of Sister St. Catherine who died in 1837, the Chaplain said: "She is a real saint who will go straight to heaven!" This good soul was inconsolable to see on the one hand Our Lord ready to pour out the riches of his grace on the world, and on the other so few people disposed to ask him for grace and to benefit from it!

Sister St. Margaret<sup>4</sup> was equally one of those privileged souls who live for God alone, and who long to go to Heaven.

Born in the country of poor but virtuous parents, she had received from them what other more fortunate people do not always give their children — the spirit of faith, fear of God and a great confidence in His goodness.

This confidence had been strengthened by two incidents that happened to her father and mother and that we take the liberty of narrating here. The first of these took place during the Napoleonic wars; one of their children, a young conscript, had been forced, as so many others, to take up his pack and follow the glorious Emperor.

Some big battles took place. A good number of soldiers had perished, and they had received no news of their dear son! Was he wounded or dead? [122] They prayed, they wept in their cottage, and there was no news of their absent son. After many days of waiting, and overcome with grief, the unhappy parents decided to make a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Fourviere, consoler of the afflicted.

<sup>4</sup> Sister St. Margaret, Charlotte Dubost, daughter of Claude and Marie Anne Mattet, was born in Teller (Rhône) on the 4th July 1810. She entered the Congregation on the 20th October 1831, made her profession on the 18th June 1835 and died in Lyon on the 12th June 1872.

They went on foot reciting the rosary along the ten leagues of road, and when they arrived at the holy Shrine, they told the Virgin Mother about their sufferings, and begged her with tears to have pity on them and give them back their dear child.

As they were going home, they met a lady on the road clothed in peasant costume with a basket on her arm, who came up to them and said: "You both look very sad. What is the matter?" "Our son is serving as a soldier", the father replied. "We have learnt that a great battle has just taken place and we know nothing about our poor son."

"Have no fear", replied the good villager, "your son is well, you will see him in less than three weeks." The good people listened and looked at her, quite dumbfounded, but before they could say another word, the villager had disappeared.

They were overwhelmed, but they felt their hearts filled with a sweet hope. Persuaded that the Blessed Virgin herself had come to bring them the good news, they continued on their way, blessing and thanking her.

The promise was fulfilled, and at the time indicated they welcomed their dear son home.

He told them that during the fighting, seeing his comrades [123] falling to left and to right, around him, he had recommended himself to Our Lady of Fourviere.

Then the idea occurred to him to stretch out on the ground and pretend to be dead, for he was the only one left standing, all the others having been hit by bullets.

After the fighting, he took advantage of the darkness of the night. He got up and hurried away from the battlefield. He arrived in the open country and had to overcome fatigue and difficulties of all kinds. Above all he sought to avoid being recognised and arrested. Finally he reached the threshold of his father's home, blessing his powerful Protectress.

Here is the second favour: Sister St. Margaret's father was very old, and seeing that his end was very near, he felt a strong desire to see and embrace once more his two daughters, both of whom were religious with us.

He wrote to Mother Foundress to request this last consolation, but it was against the rules. To authorise such a journey would be to nullify right from the start a custom that it was desired to establish.

Mother Foundress refused as kindly as she could, and she urged the good old man to renew this sacrifice which would be blessed and recompensed by God. One morning, when he woke up, the old father said to those of his family who were around him: "Now I shall die happy. During the night I saw my two religious daughters. They told me such nice things that I am touched and quite consoled."

God in His infinite goodness, had sent [124] the old man a wonderful dream which seemed to him to be real, and left him with a deep feeling of happiness.

But let us return to Sister St. Margaret.

From her entrance into the novitiate, she was noted for a great interior spirit, carefully sustained by being attentive to the presence of God, of whom she made a great effort not to lose sight.

Her prayer continued almost without interruption. Everything made her think of God: a blade of grass, an insect, even a worm revealed the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. "O how wonderful you are, my God, to give these little insects the instinct to feed and look for all they need in this way!" she exclaimed.

In the evening, while contemplating the enchanting view offered by the illuminated banks of the River Saone looking like a double row of stars, she exclaimed piously: "My God, I wish that all these brilliant lights were so many hearts of seraphim, loving you as much on earth as these heavenly spirits love you in heaven!"

If semolina soup was served in the refectory, she would offer God as many acts of love as there were small grains in her plate.

She maintained in herself great sentiments of humility, and eagerly sought the occupations that were the lowest and meanest. She loved to consider herself as the donkey of the convent which could never be overloaded, and nothing was too hard for her generosity. During the building of the chapel, the workmen had noticed this fine girl with the [125] modest and recollected demeanour, and with a remarkable correctness of appreciation they referred to her by the name of *Ark of God!*, so true is it that deep sincere piety shows itself without the person being aware of it, and strikes the most indifferent persons, often becoming a fruitful though silent sermon!

Later on this good Sister was given charge of looking after the livestock. This particularly favoured her attraction for a life of abjection, and she fulfilled this employment for more than thirty years, until her last illness.

Sometimes in winter, when she went to the stable, it was snowing. "O God" she said, "You amuse yourself throwing snow at my face. Well / *send you back the flakes* as so many acts of love!" . . .

Endowed with a good memory, it was sufficient for her to read a prayer once to know it by heart. She had learnt the whole series of cards of the Guard of Honour and in moments of difficulty or pain, she recited some of them, and she told one of her Sisters that "This practice helped me much, for I have hardly finished one or two of these cards, when all my sadness and depression have gone."

Emulating the most generous and most mortified among the religious of our fervent community, she joined to her austere virtues the strictest regularity.

Worn out by sickness and infirmities, she was seen still dragging herself to the community exercises, to the great edification of each one. Hearing her [126] speak of the happiness of dying, to be able to love God in his beautiful paradise as much as He deserves to be loved, one of her Sisters admitted to her that the thought of death aroused in herself great terror because of the sins she had committed. "What!" replied Sister St. Margaret, "Our Lord Jesus Christ our good Saviour, . . . did he not do more than was necessary in his Incarnation, his mortal life, his Passion and his death on the Cross to expiate all our sins? Let us have confidence in the mercy of our good Master, and let us apply his merits to ourselves, for they are ours."

After the sudden and unforeseen departure of Fr. Rey, seeing one of her companions who appeared to be very cast down, she said to her: "Sister dear, has Father Rey taken away our God by any chance?" "No", replied the other. "Well then, why so much grief? Let us go to Him, He will console us and help us, you may be sure of that."

Having to stay in the infirmary for a year on account of illness, she edified all by her patience, and spread around her the sweet odour of Jesus Christ who lived in her.

As she was hardly ever able to sleep on account of the pains she endured, she was asked one day what she did during her long hours of sleeplessness. "I pray" she replied simply. "I think sometimes of the

courageous workmen who are labouring on the Place do Fourvière, and are going to raise up a new and beautiful Church for Our Lady, for the good Mother and Protectress of the people of Lyon, and I say to myself: "Perhaps tomorrow and the days that follow they will be very tired, and will take a lot of trouble without even thinking [127] of raising their heart to God to offer Him their work . . . My God, I offer You in advance, in their name, as many acts of love as they move little grains of sand, bricks, and stones during the course of the day."

Finally, the Divine Master whom she had loved so much, and whom she had served with such great fidelity, found her sufficiently purified, and called her to Himself on the 12th May 1872.

She gave up her beautiful soul in peace to her heavenly Spouse, and want to enjoy the happiness of loving Him with an undivided love for all eternity.

It is a pleasure to recall a verse which that lover of humility often sang during recreations:

If the world praises you  
Keep your heart very humble.  
And if it makes a mockery of you  
Do not worry about this.  
The soul which is based  
On humility  
Overcomes the world  
Without difficulty.

I do not want to omit saying in praise of this good Sister that those who were near her have affirmed that they never heard her say a word that wounded charity! She understood the command: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and your neighbour as yourself!"

Before bidding farewell to these humble but precious memories, let us breathe again the sweet aroma from the obscure and much loved tomb [128] of our excellent Sister Saint Agatha<sup>5</sup> whose name alone brings a sweet smile to the lips of those who knew her.

<sup>5</sup> Sister St. Agatha, Jeanne Marie Protay, daughter of Benedict and Marie Brugnion was born in Vaux (Rhône) on the 20th March 1811. She entered the Congregation on the 5th March 1835, made her profession on the 27th October 1837, and died in Rodez (Aveyron) on the 5th December 1885.

Sister Saint Agatha was a simple country girl who had no more pretensions to literature or high learning than her companions. I [er knowledge and her study were limited to loving God with all her heart and her neighbour for love of Him.

Her piety consisted above all in great purity of intention, and she sometimes revealed it with such ingenuity that people could not refrain from being amused.

For example, on arriving at Rodez where she was sent by obedience, *her first greeting* was this: "I have not come here for love of anybody, but because our Reverend Mother sent me."

One day a priest who was preaching the retreat at the convent, asked her, whilst she was serving him at table, for whom she was working. She answered: "Me, working for creatures! I am not such a fool!" The tone of her voice and the gesture proclaimed that the good sister did not think differently from what she said.

Mother Saint Dosithée<sup>6</sup> quoted her to her novices and told them: "I would like you to be like our good Sister Saint Agatha, desirous only of doing God's will and pleasing Him in everything."

A missionary passing through Fourvière, had given a beautiful talk to the community, and Sister Saint Agatha was unable to assist at it because of her employment.

[129] "Poor Sister", one of the Mothers said to her. "I am so sorry that you did not hear that beautiful sermon!" "Why are you having regrets about it, what would I have learnt? Doubtless to do my duty. Well, I have done my duty without moving from here. I have made just as much progress as all of you," she replied.

Sister Saint Agatha was appointed cook. She was outstanding for her love of order and her great attention to perfect cleanliness. She prepared the food for the sick and persons who were indisposed, with exemplary zeal and charity, without allowing her work for the community to suffer. She was generous in everything.

As a result of old age this good Sister became a great sufferer and grew very weak. She was at Rodez at that time. Her Superioress sent for her and said to her: "Your strength is diminishing, you have too much work, I am going to take part of it away from you, so that you may take a little rest. But I shall leave you to look after the order in the chapel because I know how happy you are to look after Our Lord's house."

Sister Saint Agatha knelt down, joined her hands, and with her eyes full of tears said: "Mother, please do not lessen my work. I can still carry it out. When I entered the Congregation, I did not bring a dowry with me, our Mothers received me without anything. I promised them that I would work hard to make up for it, and I would like to die working."

What humility! What generosity!

[130] Some time later, she had a pain in her foot, and was obliged to see the doctor. He found the trouble serious, prescribed remedies and condemned the Sister to stay in bed for two or three days, until his next visit. After the doctor had gone she said to the Superioress: "Mother, please let me get up and work. I shall pray to Our Lady and she will cure me. Then she took her foot in her two hands: "My little one", she said, "You must get better without my staying in bed." She got up, went to pray to Our Lady in the chapel and continued to do her employment. The doctor came back and was informed of what had happened. He looked at the foot and ascertained that it was cured.

To those who tried to persuade her to take care of herself, she replied: "Let me work in this world, for I do not know what I shall do in the next one!" She died in Rodez, on the 5th December 1881, regretted and loved by all.

What must have been the welcome that was given to that simple and upright soul by Him who said: "Happy the pure of heart, for they shall see God!"

<sup>6</sup>M. St. Dosithée, Victoire Delphine Bergonhoux, daughter of Antoine Victor and Claire Guillaume, was born on the 28th March 1821 in Le Puy, and entered the Congregation on the 26th April 1837. She made her profession on the 3rd May 1839 and died in Lyon on the 28th December 1854.

[131]

## CHAPTER XVI

THE CATASTROPHE OF LE PUY<sup>1</sup>

## MOTHER BORGIA CRUSHED BY THE COLLAPSE OF A WALL

It was still the year 1834. The number of boarders in Le Puy was so considerable that the building they occupied near the Church of St-Laurent was inadequate. It was necessary to buy land in order to be able to build, but the owners of the neighbouring properties were not at all in favour of this plan. Some refused absolutely to sell, and others, wanting to profit from the necessity that obliged us to enlarge our buildings, demanded an exorbitant price.

The Superioress of the community, Mother Borgia, spoke to Mgr de Bonald about it and he was of the opinion that we should look for another property. Information was sought, many visits were made, and it was thought that a suitable house had at last been found. It was situated in the district of St. Jean, and had a courtyard, a garden, and very extensive grounds which not only allowed for all the buildings required, but also offered shade, a place for walking, fruit trees, and numerous other advantages.

[132] The choice was made. M. Cavard agreed to sell his house. His Lordship the Bishop approved the purchase, the deed was signed in the presence of the notary. The seller received the first instalment on account and the rest of the payments were arranged by mutual agreement.

Some repairs were begun immediately, and in the course of the year, the personnel of St. Laurent were transferred there.

Everyone was happy, especially the pupils. They were delighted with the large open space which greatly favoured their games during recreation. Then buildings were thought about. There would be beautiful classrooms, large, airy dormitories, big recreation rooms, and, as an indispensable complement, a beautiful and pleasant chapel.

Little by little the garden was transformed. Wide paths were planned and planted with fruit trees and other trees to provide shade. A superb terrace was marked out in front of the house. Numerous flowerbeds were reserved for the pupils who wished to cultivate flowers. A beautiful statue of Our Lady was erected in the middle of an

avenue of cherry trees. She would receive the homage of the pupils and bless their recreations. Everything was beautiful and smiling.

Alas, the enchantment was short lived! The most beautiful sky is sometimes overcast with threatening clouds in a few minutes!

Whilst the boarders were working enthusiastically under the direction of their gifted class mistresses, the beloved Superioress of the house, Mother St. Borgia, was struck down by illness.

[133] The most assiduous care was lavished on her. She was beginning to recover her strength, and to feel new life returning, although for some time she had been very much aware of sad presentiments of her approaching death.

One day when the weather was fine, after holy Mass during which she had received Holy Communion with fervour, she made her way to the garden to say the Little Hours on her own in the open air, as she had been unable to recite them with the community. In order to enjoy the warm rays of the rising sun for a moment, she went towards a boundary wall. Alas! this wall had no foundation, and although the weather was calm, the neighbours had piled stuff against it on their side, and suddenly a cracking sound was heard. The wall fell and our poor Mother was buried under the rubble!!!

Our Sister Gardener, beside herself at the sight, ran to the scene of the accident, calling for help. Neighbours came through the breach in the wall and, terrified by the cries and tears of the Sister, hastened to lift the stones at the place where the convent dog had already begun to scratch to show the victim was there. Everybody, gloomy and silent, hearts heavy with grief worked to remove the stones quickly but carefully . . . Clothes were seen, blood, pieces of flesh . . . The poor Superioress was pulled out, she was no longer alive . . . but a crushed and mutilated corpse! . . . }

What tears! What sobbing! What regret followed this sad and unfortunate accident!

[134] They had lost a mother, a friend, a consoler in suffering, a support in weakness, and in such an unexpected and cruel way!

<sup>2</sup> The last three paragraphs are found in the *Memorial*, pp. 25-26, *ad sensum*. The death certificate, preserved in the Municipal Archives of Le Puy, confirms the date and states the time of the accident. It happened at 10 a.m.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Doc. XV, p. 264 and *Memorial*, pp. 23, 24, *ad sensum* and some phrases *ad litteram*.

The relatives and friends of the house united with the pupils and religious in a shared sorrow . . . The burial was an occasion of general mourning: it was heart-rending!

The accident occurred just before the long holidays. The boarders wanted neither prizes nor crowns. They returned to their families to tell of the sad end of the one they loved and esteemed, who was so attentive to all their needs, and who so well deserved the name of Mother which they gave her.

Mother Borgia, in fact, had known the joys and trials of real motherhood. She had been married and a charming child was born of the union between her and M. Ferrand. She brought her up with the greatest and most affectionate care, and had the consolation of giving her to Our Lord in our Congregation, of which she was one of the most brilliant subjects.

Freed by the premature death of her husband, Mme Ferrand sanctified her widowhood by prayer and good works.

A happy circumstance made her get to know Mile Thevenet; these two souls understood each other and worked together, doing good. From then on, Mme Ferrand shared in the works of our Mother Foundress. With her, she was at first occupied with the poor children that they were trying to keep from occasions of sin by giving them a Christian education and by forming them for honest work which would enable them to make a living. Then she joined the new Congregation as a religious. [135] She received the name of Borgia; she contributed to the inauguration of the orphanage, known by the name of the Providence, and also to that of the boarding school where she placed her beloved only child.

Later she was appointed Superioress of the house of Belleville, where she did all she could to make perfect regularity flourish, drawing hearts more by her example and her goodness than by her counsel and advice.

Obedience finally called her to the house of Le Puy, where she devoted herself with generosity. Under her gentle authority, the house prospered and people were happy.

But God had marked that stage as the last one, and it was from there, as a result of a deplorable accident, that she went to receive her reward in Heaven!

This good Mother left as a heritage to the Congregation, her daughter, Mile Julie Ferrand, whose name in religion was Mme St. Paul;<sup>3</sup> and an orphan cousin that she had adopted, and who was called in religion Mme St. Bruno.<sup>4</sup> They were proud to perpetuate the memory of the holy example and virtues of Mother Borgia.

(It should be noted that Mme Saint Paul never knew the tragic circumstances of her beloved mother's death. The secret was kept inviolably in her regard.)

[136]

## CHAPTER XVII

TWO GREAT TRIALS AVOIDED — THE FAILURE OF THE PROJECT TO UNIT OUR COMMUNITY WITH THE RELIGIOUS OF THE SACRED HEART, AND THE PLANT TO TRANSFER THE HOUSE OF FOURVIERE TO THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS

As we have said, the house of Le Puy was flourishing. The boarders were numerous, their studies were going well and seriously, the programme that had been outlined by our good and learned Father Founder was giving the best results, results moreover that were all the more remarkable because at that time schools for girls were far from being at the level that they attained later. Therefore our pupils were generally noted for their superiority of education and instruction. The community was fervent and regular, and it included excellent class mistresses.

How did it happen that some persons who held posts of confidence in the house could conceive the idea of removing our autonomy and of fusing us with the religious of the Sacred Heart, founded only two years before us!<sup>1</sup> What were their true motives? Were they afraid that we might vegetate, [137] that we might not be able to attract vocations, and that our house might fall after prospering for a little while?

They addressed themselves to a few outstanding subjects, they worked on them, they prepared them, and one day they proposed to the Superioress the fusion of the two Orders.

<sup>3</sup> Julie Ferrand is Mother St. Paul (cf. Doc. III, 1, b, *intr.*, p. 24).  
" M. St. Bruno, Catherine Jubeau (cf. Doc. XI, *intr.*, p. 251).

<sup>1</sup> The Congregation of the Sacred Heart was founded by Fr. Varin and by Madeleine Sophie Barat in 1800 (cf. J. D. CHARRY, *Sainte Madeleine-Sophie*, Casterman, 1965, p. 26). The *Histoire* errs when it says "only two years", in reality it was eighteen. Cf. Doc. XVI, C, 6, pp. 318-320.



One may judge of the astonishment of Mother Borgia at this revelation. She replied simply that she would refer the matter to Mother Foundress.

This latter, not less surprised, called her council and shared with them the distressing proposal which had been passed on to her. What was most painful for our Mothers was that Mgr de Bonald approved of this plan of fusion. What was to be done? They prayed, they consulted enlightened and impartial men in Lyon, they held many meetings, they examined the question from all points of view, and, finally, they agreed unanimously to remain as they were, a distinct Congregation, pursuing the special end for which it was founded, and seeking to maintain and develop its works.

The reply was communicated, but two young and excellent mistresses, faithful to the advances which had been made to them, left us to work under another flag.<sup>2</sup>

God had His plans, we bless them!

But how many difficulties resulted from this refusal! How many vocations which would naturally have come to us, were directed elsewhere!

And whilst the most complete dedication and constant protection of a powerful company favoured the growth of the Institute to which they wanted to unite us, [138] we, abandoned, supported only by our trust in God, had to paddle our own canoe, and fight against the difficulties which continually cropped up.

The defection of two young religious sensibly afflicted Mother Foundress; but rising above these events, sure that God directs all and protects those who abandon themselves to Him, she confided to Him her family which was being tested, and redoubled her concern and devotedness for her daughters and her dear orphans.

At that same time, our Mothers received a visit from a delegation of Military Engineers. The recent troubles in Lyon and the occupation of the plateau of Fourviere, from which the insurgents could have bombarded the town if they had had the necessary ammunition, had

<sup>2</sup> The Archives of the Archbishopric of Le Puy were destroyed by a fire around 1880, therefore it is not possible to find documents that verify this. However, there exists, regarding this matter, in A. A. *Lyon*, a reply given to the Servant of God (cf. Doc. XVI, C, 6, a, p. 320). Also in a letter dated 29th February 1841 from Pauline Jaricot to M. Prevost, Superioress of the Sacred Heart in Ferrandiere, we find confirmation of what is here said of Cardinal de Bonald (cf. Doc. XVI, C, 6, b, pp. 321-324).

called attention still more to the importance of that position for safeguarding the city in a similar predicament.

Therefore, the authorities were considering establishing fortifications and barracks there, to lodge the regular troops, thereby rendering themselves absolute masters of all the approaches to the plateau.

The community who were happy and proud to be living under the protection of their beloved Mother did not relish this plan at all. They prayed to Our Lady of Fourviere not to allow the plan to become a reality. They could not accept the idea of leaving these places so dear, and let us add in passing, so beautiful, so well made for raising the soul to God through the magnificent view which they presented.

In addition, once the Holy Hill was occupied [139] by forts and redoubts guarded by the military, would it be easily accessible to the pilgrims who flocked towards the Holy Sanctuary? Some very advantageous financial offers were made to us, as well as to the neighbouring proprietors; and, as if all had come to an agreement, they refused to give up their property. Deep down they had it at heart to preserve for Fourviere its religious character and the special domain of the Mother of God.

The Corps of Engineers were obliged to renounce their plan.

The joy of the community was great when they heard for certain that the trial which had threatened them would not be imposed. They thanked God, and they seemed to apply themselves more than ever to prove their gratitude for this benefit by greater fervour and regularity.

However, from the time when these proposals of the Engineers were first made, and fearing that the Government would authorise the expropriation, our Mothers began to think about looking for another property where we could be suitably established. They looked around, they sought information, they visited properties, gardens, mansions, etc. — but nothing was like Fourviere, nothing could replace it! They returned, their hearts heavier than ever, and more and more desirous of never abandoning the little Paradise on earth that Heaven had arranged for us.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Doc. XVII, 3, d, p. 350, *Memorial*, pp. 24-25 *ad sensum*, and part *ad litteram*, *Notes detachées*, pp. 7-8 *ad sensum*.

The Military authorities to which the *Histoire* and documents of the times refer, were represented principally by Baron Hubert Rohault de Fleury, who from 1830 was Chief Director

[140] **CHAPTER XVIII**THE DEATH OF MOTHER FOUNDRESS (1836)<sup>1</sup>

For almost nineteen years Mother Foundress had governed her beloved family. The obstacles of all kinds that she had met in the pursuit of her mission had not altered her courage in any way, nor her spirit of faith. But the painful incidents of her youth had seriously affected her robust constitution. Her digestive system was in some way paralysed and she could take only a small amount of food. The little she took made her suffer sharp pains. She had great difficulty in breathing, which she called in her expressive language her *terror*, referring to the heart-breaking scenes of which she had been a witness in 1793! To that trouble was added violent, headaches which, since 1834, had been increasing and left her no respite.

Besides this, what struggles the saintly Mother had to support in order to develop her Congregation and preserve the character Father Coindre had sought to impress on it!<sup>2</sup>

[141] Its administrative form such as he had conceived it, and which is summed up in these words of the Constitutions: "The Congregation of Jesus and Mary *governs itself*" assured, it is true, to Superiors General that liberty of action which is so necessary for the exercise of their office.

But not everyone liked this, and it gave rise more than once to contradictions and storms against Mother Saint Ignatius. She stood firm, not through pride as certain malicious people reproached her with, but in order to maintain the views of our Founder and those of Divine Providence.

Several times, and we have already said something about it, attempts were made to unite our Association, then known by the name of Sacred Hearts, with Congregations founded before ours and enjoying an undisputed reputation.

Those who pushed for this were perfectly disinterested, and of highly commendable character. Evidently they were only considering the greater good, the general good.

What therefore was to be done? Should the Mothers give in or resist? They took refuge in trust in God and in prayer. They begged Our Lord to make known His holy will, and whilst disposing herself to submit generously to it, the energetic Foundress took all human means to divert the storm. She had recourse to the high protection of the Administrator of the Diocese of Lyon, Mgr de Pins, whilst waiting for the approbation of Rome to make her dear Institute safe from all pursuit, by recognising henceforth its existence.

[142] Apart from these difficulties coming from without, there was not always perfect calm within. How many demands, how many annoyances over which the prudence and conciliatory spirit of the worthy Mother could alone get the upper hand!

Sometimes it was the chaplain,<sup>3</sup> who, going beyond the rights of his ministry, authorised acts contrary to the Rule, or to the established customs. At other times, it was certain persons<sup>4</sup> who, having made sacrifices, having made generous gifts, believed themselves injured and offended if they were not granted the privileges they claimed. One can understand how much it must have cost the heart, so good and so humble, of the Foundress, on such thorny occasions, to exercise her rights as Superioress. However she never compromised with her conscience, but her delicacy and deference were such that even when

<sup>3</sup> Direct allusion to Fr. Pousset (Doc. XVIII, I. c).

<sup>4</sup> Although it is not possible to determine all the persons and facts referred to in the *Histoire* nevertheless, it is possible to deduce that the Philippon family, to which M. St. Borromeo belonged (cf. Doc. IV, 2, p. 159 note 69), had probably been the cause of some disagreeable incidents. In fact, M. St. Borromeo, during her illness, was taken to her father's house, where she died after a few days. Another painful event was probably that occasioned at Le Puy from failure to declare the death of a boarder of ten years of age who was the niece of Cardinal de Bonald. On this occasion, the Superioress, M. St. Borgia, had charged a reliable person to declare the death to the Municipality, a declaration which was, through blameworthy negligence, delayed. This gave rise to complaints and displeasure. The fact is attested in a long report in the register of 1830 of the Municipality of Le Puy.

of the Works for the defence of Lyon. He was born in Paris on the 2nd April 1779. He had entered the school for Military Engineers in 1798 and he died in Chateau de Hargot, Montoire (Loire et Cher) on the 16th September 1866 (cf. Paris, Archives of the Ministry for War, *Etat des Services*).

<sup>1</sup> It was 1837.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Doc. XVIII, *inn.*, p. 364; *Memorial*, pp. 26-28, *adsensum*; *Petit Manuscrit*, pp. 12-14 *ad sensum*.

she used her authority to keep things in order, one could only respect her and submit. "She is a capable woman," said people who approached her.

The chaplains who succeeded each other during the life of Mother Saint Ignatius and who each rendered, at the right moment, outstanding services, were: Fr. Rey, Fr. Pousset, Fr. Coindre, brother of the Father Founder.<sup>5</sup>

It was under Fr. Pousset that the last years<sup>6</sup> of the Mother Foundress went by. God who proportions His Cross to the graces He gives and to our fidelity to make them bear fruit, showed, by the trials He arranged for His faithful servant, in this [143] last period of her life, what degree of virtue she had already reached . . .

"When I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw all things to myself," said our Saviour.

Fr. Pousset was, perhaps without wishing it and without knowing it, one of the most efficacious instruments which Heaven used to sanctify our venerable Mother Foundress.

Mother Saint Ignatius recognised and admired his precious qualities as an orator; she appreciated his zeal, his exceptional love of order, of the beauty of Divine Worship and of sacred music. But she could not leave him the right to direct everything, to transform everything as he wished and to set himself up as absolute Superior. This resulted in differences of opinion and of methods and bitter reproaches that Mother Saint Ignatius had to put up with every day, and which cast a shadow especially over her last years.

"She no longer had any respite," says the humble Sister who looked after her room (Sister Saint Bernard who died in December

<sup>5</sup> Between the departure of Fr. Rey and the arrival of Fr. Pousset there was an interval during which Fr. Nicolas des Garets acted as chaplain. We find his signature in the registers of the Congregation on the 18th June and the 13th October 1835; words of great praise for this priest are contained in a letter from the Visitation Sister Marie Josephine de Laroquette to the Servant of God, dated the 13th November 1835, preserved in A. G. Roma.

Nicolas des Garets was born in Saint-Julien-sous-Montmelas (Rhône) on the 6th February 1798. He was appointed Titular Canon of Lyon on the 25th January 1836, and died thereat the age of 74 years, Canon Dean, on the 4th November 1871.

<sup>6</sup> It is a question of one year only (cf. Doc. XVIII, p. 364).

1893), after the installation of Fr. Pousset; and she never let the community see her sufferings and trials. But for myself, who had charge of looking after the chaplain's apartments, I would have had to be deaf and blind not to have understood that something was wrong. 'Fr. Pousset wants to be our Superior' I said to myself; 'Our Mother is sufficient it seems to me!' "M. Pousset is for us, what Napoleon 1st was for France," said the witty Mother Saint Bruno. "He did much good and much harm! May God be blessed for everything!"

[144] But, we repeat, the hour of anguish had come for Mother Saint Ignatius; she could say after the example of her sweet Jesus, "The chalice which My Father gives me, shall I not drink it?"

In the month of October 1836, her headaches became much more severe and continuous.<sup>8</sup>

The complete prostration which followed them, warned our Mother that her end was not far off. She busied herself from then on, going through her papers very seriously, settling accounts and putting everything into perfect order, not to leave confusion for the one who would succeed her. She pursued this work with an energy of soul and an activity which seemed a sad omen to the community, who said: "The eagerness of our Mother to examine everything and to put everything in order makes us afraid!"

She took two regrets with her to the grave: one was not to have assisted at the completion and blessing of her dear chapel, and the other was not to have put the final touches to our Rules and our Constitutions, which she would have liked to have approved by Rome<sup>9</sup> in her own lifetime.

However legitimate these regrets were, she generously made the sacrifice to God, begging Him to accept it as pleasing to Him, to bless her dear family always and to accomplish His Holy Will fully in it.

<sup>7</sup> Sister St. Bernard, Christine Chartoise, daughter of Jacques and Jeanne Seviton, was born on the 3rd March 1808 at Montbrison (Loire). She entered the Congregation on the 11th September 1829, made her profession on the 16th October 1831 and died in Lyon on the 26th December 1893.

<sup>8</sup> Her sister, Elisabeth, in various letters speaks of a grave illness of the Servant of God, in that year, 1836 (cf. Doc. XVI, C. 2. c, p. 315).

<sup>9</sup> The chapel was blessed on the 26th March 1837, a month and a half after the death of the Servant of God (cf. Doc. XXI, 3, a, p. 440). The Pontifical Approbation of the Rules was obtained on the 21st December 1847 (cf. Doc. XIX, *intr.*, p. 371).

Her gratitude to Our Lord who had used her to do a little good, was expressed in acts of profound humility and thanksgiving.

How many times, when she went back over the course of the years, [145] did the touching goodness of the Heavenly Father in her regard pass before her mind as if to distract her from her pain and long hours of inaction and suffering!

Her patience, her peaceful abandonment to Providence, her touching solicitude for her cherished and dearly beloved daughters, never failed.

When she was suffering more than usual, she took a little statue of the Blessed Virgin in her thin hands, the statue before which she had prayed so many times, and, clasping it with fervour, she put it on her head, without saying a word, contenting herself with the prayer of the heart; and she held it there until the pain had subsided a little.

Often she renewed this touching act of confidence; and how it must have touched the Mother of all consolation! Could she fail to answer the prayer of the one who had recourse to her with so much simplicity?

When she thought of that family dear to her heart, her religious, her children who would soon weep over her death, her eyes filled with tears. But very quickly mistress of her feelings, she allowed only the great thoughts of Faith to dominate her mind, and with gentle and serene resignation she said to herself: "The Lord will provide for all. Is it not for the Good Shepherd to provide for his flock?"

"Sister dear," she said to the infirmarian one day with a look and a gesture full of expression, "A Superior is still one in heaven!" She wanted to make her understand by these words that, when she was dead, her religious must not consider themselves complete orphans. They must look higher than this earth and from Heaven, where she soon hoped to be, she would protect them and pray for them.

Fr. Pousset believed that he ought to exhort the dying Sister to fear the judgements of God; "You have received graces enough to convert an entire kingdom" he said to her, in front of the community who were kneeling around her bed, "What have you done with them? You are an obstacle to the progress of your Congregation. What answer will you make to God who will demand an account of everything?"

Our saintly Mother received this admonition with an admirable serenity of countenance, asking God from the bottom of her heart, to pardon her faults, and abandoning herself entirely to His infinite mercy.

However, she admitted after the ceremony that at these words she had almost burst into tears!

She answered the prayers of Extreme Unction and received Holy Viaticum with the greatest devotion.

Her thanksgiving ended, she said: "I have forgotten something." Then she recollected herself for a few moments, and prayed in silence, during which time she seemed to be imploring God with earnestness and fervour. After a minute she said: "I have asked our Divine Master for a great favour for our beloved Congregation. May my request be granted!"<sup>10</sup>

On Sunday, the 29th January, she entered into her agony. She did not come out of it until the following Friday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, when she breathed her last sigh!<sup>11</sup>

During this period the good Mother had only one brief flash of consciousness when she spoke clearly and distinctly these words: "How good God is!"

She said these words with such conviction in her voice and such an [147] expression of heavenly joy on her face as she pronounced them, that the person reporting them, after an interval of fifty years still believes she can hear them and is quite overcome by emotion.

She had been a faithful imitator of the Divine Model during the whole of her religious life and He granted her a last trait of resemblance with Him, that of rendering her soul to God on a Friday at three o'clock.

The funeral cortege was followed by a considerable number of relatives and friends who had joined the long procession of orphans who accompanied it, crying and sobbing for the one they loved and venerated as their second Mother!

<sup>10</sup> Among the interpretations given to these words of the Servant of God as she was dying, the most common is that she asked for the Congregation, that it might continue to exist, and might preserve the spirit she had tried to instil into it.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Memorial* pp. 27-28, almost *ad litteram*: it also gives information about the illness and about the time, which does not figure in the *Hisloire*. "Paralysis declared itself in the whole of the left side ... At eight o'clock in the evening she went into a coma."

The real grief of the children and religious, and their fervent prayers that she would obtain eternal happiness, if she did not already enjoy it, were certainly the most beautiful tributes of gratitude and love that could be offered to that beloved Mother.

The coffin, in which the venerated Mother, the zealous Foundress was laid out, was placed in the chapel that she had had built and that she had wanted so much to see completely finished and blessed before departing from this life. The funeral procession made its way towards Loyasse, where the community had just acquired a plot in perpetuity.<sup>12</sup> Since then a vault was constructed where the mortal remains of the eleven mothers or sisters who had died before Mother Foundress were interred.

It is there, in that vast cemetery, the most beautiful one in Lyon, that the Mother and her too numerous daughters sleep, no longer in the shade of the Cross which was torn out of the burial ground by impious persons, but [148] under the gaze of God and that of their religious family. For from the top of the hill of Fourviere, we can see the thick, dark clumps of shrubs which shelter the graves of our companions. We greet them with affection and respect, whispering a fervent prayer, and saying to ourselves: "Soon we also shall take our place beside them, and together we shall await the solemn moment of the resurrection of the body, and our definitive reunion in Heaven!"<sup>13</sup>

## [149] CHAPTER XIX

### A DAY IN FOURVIERE

After the death of its head, a family greatly loves to gather together around the portrait of the father or mother who is no more!

Little is said at first, and large tears trickle down the face! The gaze is fixed on those dear features, and the portrait seems to come to life and say: "My children, my spirit and my heart are always with you!

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Doc. XX, 8, p. 433.

<sup>13</sup> Many details of these last moments of the Servant of God are not found in any written source, but the authors heard them from at least three contemporaries of the Foundress, who were still alive when the *Histoire* was being prepared; Sr. St. Bernard, the infirmarian; M. St. John, Sr. St. Laurence, who died respectively on the 8th and the 26th December, 1893 and the 10th March 1897.

As in former times, I love you, I listen to you, and from my place within the heart of God where I now dwell, I watch over you and shall obtain many favours for you."

A few words are exchanged, then the conversation becomes more animated, and the more it is prolonged, the more one is under the spell of a mysterious presence which comforts and consoles.

Scattered members of the family of Jesus and Mary, you, who are beyond the seas unite yourselves with our voices. Generous ranks who tread the burning soil of India in the east, like those of you who breathe the pure air of the New World and who multiply your ranks and your works under the blue sky of [150] Canada and that of the United States; you, devout legion of enchanting Spain, who increase constantly and carry our flag to a great number of cities; and you too who have not left France, our cradle, and who inhabit the peaceful mountains of the Vosges, of Velay, of Aveyron; you too, charming flock of Albion who have found your place in the densely populated capital and further north, in Ipswich; finally, you dear little newly-founded family of our sister Switzerland, hasten back to Fourviere, hasten to the old home of our Mother Foundress; let us gather round her venerated portrait of which we must never lose sight; let us study each feature in it as a daughter does; let us penetrate into the depths of her great soul, and let us, in the reflected light of the virtues that she practised, drink a little of those living waters which Heaven had dispensed to her, in order to revive in ourselves the primitive vigour of this Institute of which we are called, let us remember, to perpetuate the name, the glory, and the holy traditions.

The portrait of our Reverend Mother St. Ignatius in front of which we gather in Fourviere is, it seems, a very good likeness. It presents her to us as having a serious even severe expression, an expressive and penetrating look which seems to pierce to the depths of the soul, exploring its smallest recesses and divining its most hidden feelings.

The features are strongly accentuated, but are not irregular in outline, indicating a virile nature, one that is energetic, ardent, and persevering in its undertakings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The portrait is kept in Rome and was executed by Elisabeth Mayet, niece of the Servant of God. In a letter to her sister Emma dated 6th June 1856, confirmed by another dated 8th July

[151] Her height is above the average, her whole exterior bears a mark of distinction. It is difficult to put it into words, but it is simple and dignified at the same time, and she has bequeathed this characteristic to her religious family, and also to numerous pupils whom they have educated.

Let us go back to a gathering of the community sixty years ago. We see Mother Saint Ignatius in the midst of her first companions of *Pierres Plantées* who surround her now in Fourvière. The day is nearly over. It is time for the evening recreation. What gentle gaiety animates the group! What serenity and peace on all faces! They are talking about the attractiveness of Jesus and Mary as the Rule prescribes, but they do so frankly and very naturally without emphasis. To think of God and speak about Him is the same thing, as the flight to the bird or the perfume to the flower. It is the habitual inclination, the natural tendency of those who live together under the same roof. The serious expression on the face of Reverend Mother is transformed into a delightfully charming one, which warms everyone's heart. Her sweet smile makes you feel welcome, you feel at ease and your heart expands.

What natural and friendly openness among all, without however overstepping the limits of mutual respect! What delicacy of manners! What attentiveness and cordial affection! The conversation is sometimes lively and animated, but it is always suitable and interesting.

They know how to listen without interrupting, everyone is free to speak, but with moderation. They give their opinion and show appreciation with that modest freedom that is pleasing, and is so becoming to religious.

There are no little squabbles, no disputes among themselves; that kind of thing is not tolerated in the Angelique. They look out for the wishes of the Superioress so that they can fulfil her desires even before she expresses them in words. In pursuit of religious virtue, they challenge one another joyfully and with sisterly affection. They vie with one another to be the one who is poorest, most humble, most obedient, most mortified.

1856, Elisabeth says "Perhaps I shall begin again on a portrait of Aunt Ignatius, for the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. They need the one I have already made for the 15th July, and if I have to do another one in these few days, I shall have to "swot" as Tonny says" (cf. Doc. XXII, 3, *im.*, p. 451).

All would like to throw themselves whole-heartedly into the practice of these virtues, especially the last;<sup>2</sup> all are jealous to offer their beloved Lord the flower of their youth. Mother Foundress contemplated this thirst for immolation with satisfaction and concern. If she were to quench this pure flame, would it not be working against the Holy Spirit, the source of these holy inspirations, who "blows where He wills"? To feed it on the other hand, without controlling it, would this not be a sin against prudence? Her duty was to safeguard the physical well-being as well as the fervour and spiritual progress of the Sisters. There was plenty of work; the task of teaching, when one added to it the constant attention required for supervising and forming the character of the pupils and of correcting their faults, soon weakened the strongest constitutions. In addition the self-sacrifice imposed by so many duties, was it not enough to satisfy in general this thirst for mortification and penance?

After reflection and prayer, the venerable Foundress, together with the members of her Council, decided that no one should practise corporal penance, apart from what was prescribed by the Rule, without the authorisation or order of the Superioress. The Superioress reserved to herself alone the right to extend or restrain this kind of exercise according to the health, [153] occupation, strength and generosity of each individual. The religious were informed of this decision at a general meeting of the community, and they could only express their approval of the wisdom of this measure.

<sup>2</sup> In A. G. R. a copy of some information sent from India is preserved, undoubtedly to be used in writing the *Histoire*. It is attributed to M. St. Euphrasia, and illustrates the spirit of mortification and penance of the religious of the first generation. For example, the notes say that at the time of the revolution of 1848 in Lyon, the Superioress, fearing an invasion of the Convent, made the religious bring her their instruments of penance, and when they were all collected there were enough to fill a pillow-case. M. St. Marie used to put pieces of wood or small branches of a tree in her bed. A sister who used to serve the ladies of the Pension in Fourvière, asked for and obtained permission to live on the scraps of food that were left over, without anyone knowing this. Her name was not given (cf. also Doc. XXVI, 3, p. 499, the letter of M. St. Pothin). Here are the biographical data of the above-mentioned religious:

M. St. Euphrasia, Helene Dulin, daughter of Joseph and Marie Pourelle, was born in Lyon on the 26th May 1805. She entered the Congregation on the 17th June 1834, and made her profession on the 6th October 1836. She died in Lyon on the 21st April 1861.

M. St. Marie, Clementine Levrat, was the daughter of Jean Francois Nicolas and Marie Michelle Guingard. She was born in Lyon in 1799 and entered the Congregation on the 16th April 1825. She made her profession on the 27th September 1827, and died in Lyon on the 29th March 1865. She was the Assistant General.

On the other hand, this wise Mother believed that she could never insist too much on the most careful observance of the Common Rules which tend, as the text says, to mortify their tastes, their natural inclinations, their will and all their senses.

Following the example of St. Augustine and many other Founders of Orders, she constantly repeated to her daughters: "All these little points, these little observances are unimportant in themselves; the world at large treats them as childish follies and is only too quick to laugh at them. But in the eyes of God, it is a great and beautiful thing to accomplish all these trivial acts faithfully and with perseverance. For doing this, we deserve to hear Our Lord say these beautiful words: 'You have wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, you have wounded my heart with one hair of your head'."

Mother Saint Ignatius herself set an example of the exact observance of the Rules, and she attached great importance to regularity in general.<sup>3</sup>

The transgression of the least point without a legitimate reason would incur reproaches and a penance. If the fault were repeated after only a short interval, or if it were such that it would have a bad influence on others, the Superioress insisted that reparation be made for the bad impression and that one submitted generously to the penances which were imposed.

[154] She recommended in a special way exactitude, charity and self-sacrifice with the children who were confided to us. She used every opportunity to exhort her daughters to be attentive, vigilant and full of zeal in the beautiful task of teaching, and at the same time of forming these young souls whom God had committed to our keeping. "We must be *mothers* to these children, real mothers, as much of their souls as of their bodies."

Then going into detail about the care and perfect selflessness of a true mother, she pointed out all that had to be done, and the way it should be done.

She insisted that we should avoid all partiality and preferences; "The only preferences that I allow you to have," she said, "are for the poorest, the most miserable children, for those who have the most failings, the least good qualities; these children you must really love

very much; pay great attention to them, make a great effort to do I lie m good. Good mothers do this. God who sees all, counts all, and *bleses* all, until the time when He will say to you: 'Whatever you have done li-the least of my little ones, you have done it to me. Come and receivfl your reward'." <sup>4</sup>

So when there was question of relinquishing for a time one of the two works of education, the boarding school or the orphanage, until the building of the chapel was completed, Mother Saint Ignatius did not hesitate to put the orphanage before the boarding school. "There are plenty of establishments for the education of the rich, let us keep our poor children," she said.

[155] And so the boarders were sent home to their families; but not without shedding copious tears. "Please keep us," they said, weeping and joining their hands. "We will be very good, we will do our best not to trouble you; we will be satisfied with a small space, we will not complain about anything."

Some, after crossing the threshold and going a few steps on the Place de Fourviere, came back to their dear mistresses, begging them not to send them away, and were filled with grief when they had to go.

It was a great sacrifice that our Mothers made in favour of the orphans, for the boarding school, which was very well organised, gave the greatest satisfaction, by its good spirit, application, docility, progress and good manners. But it was impossible to keep both establishments on account of lack of space.<sup>5</sup>

Let us return to our good Mother Foundress. She required of all the religious who were working for the education of the children, foresight and perfect exactitude in the accomplishment of their duties. She wanted the method of teaching to be uniform, and the supervision to be very active without being heavy. "Prevent the faults and deviations of the pupils by vigilance, so that you will not have to punish them."

<sup>4</sup> From some letters of the Servant of God which have been preserved, interesting details can be seen which make known her particular interest in the girls of the *Providence*, and the way in which she put what she recommended to others, into practice herself (cf. Doc. XVII, 5, p. 356).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Memorial*, pp. 28, 29, *ad sensum*, which speak of the closure of the boarding school; this is also confirmed by the account books, where the last entry appeared on the 9th January 1834 (*Cash Book*, II, p. 40), and there is no other entry until the 6th February 1838, Ledger, p. 39).

<sup>3</sup> *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 7, *ad sensum*.

"The best leader is not the one who inflicts the most punishments, but the one who has the skill to make others avoid the most faults." She said that this was the surest and most advantageous way of keeping order, of doing good to the children, and of making them happy around one.

[156] Always of even temper, one never saw the Mother Foundress lose the calm and dignity which seemed natural to her. The most difficult occasions did not make her lose this admirable self-control, which her daughters tried to reproduce in themselves. As she was endowed with a quick and intelligent mind and a balanced judgement matured by experience, her conversation was interesting and pleasant.<sup>6</sup>

It was above all in the intimacy of her conversations with individual religious that the beautiful soul of Mme Thevenet revealed itself completely. Nothing equalled the affectionate eagerness with which she welcomed her daughters. It seemed as if it were a relief to her to be able to talk freely, and with a simplicity which called forth confidence and won their affection.

During those times of trial and despondency which everyone has to undergo sometimes during her pilgrimage on earth, each one would go without hesitation and knock on the door of her Mother, knowing that she would find there affectionate consolation, and the courage to mount the steps which lead to the perfect life.<sup>7</sup>

Firm with herself, she was especially so with those whom she saw were potential key figures of the Institute. She strove to make them walk generously in the way of religious perfection. This did not prevent her from being very lenient with weak souls.<sup>8</sup>

\* Cf. *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 8, *ad sensum*, a few sentences *ad litteram*.

<sup>1</sup> Some details of this paragraph are confirmed by a biographical note, now lost, with the same characteristics as the *Petit Manuscrit* (cf. Doc. XXVI, 4), which was still used in Spain in 1947 for compiling a biography of M. St. Ignatius. In this note it is said that the Servant of God never spoke of herself, but that every time one of her daughters showed gratitude for the charity with which she had received her into the Congregation, she interrupted her quickly, saying that everyone could say the same thing. Then she added that it was God who had welcomed us into His house with a love of predilection, and that she herself, with all her infirmities, would not have found a community that would have received her.

<sup>8</sup> This paragraph refers to the energetic formation which the Servant of God gave to M. St. Teresa (cf. *Notes detachées*, p. 2, *ad sensum*, *supra*, p. 495).

She was seen pursuing with lamentations and tears one of her daughters who was trying to hide from her entreaties, and was refusing to listen to her counsel and follow her advice. It was [157] only after I exhausting all her resources of charity that she decided to exclude her from the Society, in which she wanted obedience above everything.<sup>8</sup>

In the parlour she was affable and courteously charming. When she had to admit a postulant, it was usual for her to address her with these words: "Daughter, if you wish to become one of us, remember that you must be ready to bear everything that your sisters may inflict upon you, but never give anyone anything to suffer from yourself. You must make every effort to avoid causing others pain."

Her exhortations often returned to the precept of our Saviour, "We must not do to others what we would not like them to do to us."

What loving condescension and cordial relations the attentive practice of this maxim established between the religious!

So there were never dark suspicions, coldness, or grudges. We loved each other like good sisters and eagerly seized opportunities to prove it mutually.

"At the end of the annual retreat we cordially embraced one another and asked pardon for the pain we had given one another. The past was forgotten and we began again," said a good old Sister who was a contemporary of Mother Saint Ignatius.

Sometimes the venerable Foundress laughed heartily at the false idea that certain young aspirants had of religious life. One thought that [158] nuns never ate. Another, believing that she had to mortify herself continually, came laden with instruments of penance; others thought that all they would have to do was spend the day in prayer. "It is as though they take leave of their senses the minute they step inside a religious house," said Mother St. Ignatius, as she hastened to enlighten them and make them understand that loving service of God neither excludes common sense, nor the use of one's faculties, nor looking after one's health, nor work; but that it submits our actions and intellectual faculties to obedience to the Rules, to established customs,

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 7, *ad litteram*.



and to the will of the Superior, who cannot demand anything that is not according to the laws of God and the Church.

She was rightly suspicious of any marked tendency towards the extraordinary, and did not encourage it. She endeavoured to form her daughters to the simple practice of ordinary duties, carried out as perfectly as possible, with the sole aim of pleasing God. From the beginning, she avoided the danger of false visionaries and those who claimed they were inspired; and she set herself to form active religious who were energetic and knew how to sacrifice themselves and apply themselves conscientiously to their employments and to the common good.

A sure and practised eye directed her in the choice of people for the different duties to be confided to them.

The aptitude, inclinations and character, no less than the degree of fervour of each one, were so wisely and maternally taken into consideration in making her choice, [159] that afterwards one could not sufficiently admire the wisdom and prudence of which the good Mother had given proof.

Far from thinking, as certain people claim, that religious are like window-panes that can be replaced at will, and without inconvenience, she was convinced that certain persons who succeeded perfectly in one place, would be impossible somewhere else; that a person would be a failure in one employment, but a great success in another. She believed that those who had aptitude only for manual work, care of the sick, or housework, could not be forced to transform themselves into teachers of music or art or literature, etc. . . .

The care she took to form Mother Saint Andrew (Mlle Victoire Ramie) for the post of Novice Mistress by sending her to a friendly community, that of the Religious of the Child Jesus, so that she might study there and practise the Rules in the smallest detail, for six months, fully justified her views, and gave the newly formed Congregation a subject eminently capable of forming others, and of responding herself to the hopes that were placed in her.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The full name of the "friendly Community" is "La Nativité de N.S.J.C.," to which the younger sister of the Servant of God had belonged, filling the office of Superioress respectively at Vienne and Grenoble (Isère). These religious have not been able to provide any documents either in confirmation of the fact or in relation to the Servant of God. There seems however, to be no

A young postulant had just received the holy habit. On coming], from the ceremony Mother Saint Ignatius said to her with a kind smile: "You, my dear, will be the portress. You appear to be gentle and polite, but be careful to keep a watch over your heart, and get your Guardian Angel to help you."

This good Sister (Sr. St. Bernard) kept [160] her employment for about sixty years, to the satisfaction of all those who knew her, and who were full of admiration for her tact, her obliging manner, her politeness and her charity. She retained to the last moments of her long life (86 years and 9 months) a prodigious memory, and perfect lucidity. She provided us with a great number of the details that we have given here.

Life was austere for the daughters of Mme Thevenet; the spirit of mortification ruled the house from the very first days, and although, because of the weakness of constitutions, the diet had to be modified later, nevertheless every effort was made to retain some of its primitive severity.

In those days the dishes were very simple, and not very varied, and sometimes one took less.

Soup, stew, ordinary vegetables, some fruit, no wine — such was the food in the *Angelique*.

It was only some years later, that the doctor of the house, the much esteemed M. Berlioz,<sup>11</sup> declared to Mother Foundress that the constitutions of her religious would not withstand this kind of life for long, and that she would have the sorrow of soon seeing them unable, in spite of their good will, to continue the hard work of teaching, if she did not modify their diet.

Mother Saint Ignatius was too wise not to take account of such advice given by a man who was eminently pious and devoted to Religion.

doubt about it. The period when M. St. Andrew stayed in the community of the Nativity may be placed between July 1818 (cf. Doc. IV, 2.28.c.p. 123) and the 10th March 1819, the date on which the Register of Entries indicates her arrival in *Pierres Planiees* (cf. *Petit Manuscrit*, p. 6, *ad litteram*).

<sup>11</sup> The doctor of the community; the name of Jean Louis Berlioz figures in the *Almanach de Lyon*, as a member of the Society of doctors. According to the census of the years 1830-1834, he owned and lived in No. 8 Rue Cleberg, that is to say, very near the community and *Providence* of Fourvière.

Immediately orders were given and rules formulated for the cooks and economies [161], and the community was better cared for in this respect.

However, a certain number of Religious obtained permission not to give up their custom of abstemious poverty and they retained it until their death.

It is told of one of them, Mother Saint Stanislaus,<sup>12</sup> who had reached an advanced age, that while she was still economise the Mother Superior told her to serve pears for the dessert of the community. "But Mother," she replied naively, "there are not any on the point of going bad, they are all good." "So much the better," replied Mother Saint Pothin, "that is when they should be given."

She laughed heartily as she repeated this reply and added: "Ah! Good Mother Saint Stanislaus wants to wait until the fruit is going rotten before serving us with it. Mother Econome, you are too economical, that is not good!"

Inflexible as she showed herself to be regarding fidelity to the Rule, Our Mother Foundress was nevertheless very indulgent towards certain awkward mistakes and involuntary faults of the Novices.

She would not go faster than grace, and would not permit the Novices to be made to suffer for such things.

When someone went to her with a complaint, she took the part of the accused and said sometimes with an expressive gesture of the hand: "Well, well! Rome was not built in a day! Be patient, I will speak to her."

Her daily time-table, as all of the actions of our Mother Foundress, showed a spirit [162] of order and regularity which was outstanding and full of lessons.

After consecrating the first hours of the day to God in fervent prayer, office in choir, and Holy Mass whence she drew her spiritual strength and fresh zeal for doing good, her first visit after breakfast was to the kitchen, where she regulated everything for the day, and made sure of the quality, etc. of the provisions. From there she went to the portery, where she gave recommendations and inspected the work of the portresses who had charge of the linen; then she passed on to the

humble oratory which served as a chapel, and she paid special attention to examining what was used for divine worship.

She would have liked the altar linen, ornaments, in a word everything used for the altar, to be precious and less unworthy of God, who sacrificed Himself for love of us and who makes himself a prisoner of love. To make up for the lack of precious and costly objects, she made sure that everything was kept spotlessly clean.

She rejoiced when she could obtain a beautiful ornament, rich sacred vessels, etc. Mother St. Andrew, who embroidered perfectly in gold thread, had often given her this pleasure. We still possess many of her pieces of work, which unquestionably remain the most beautiful of our ornaments. The little workers of the Providence wove a cope which was admired for a long time.<sup>13</sup>

When the weather permitted, the good Mother passed from the chapel to the garden. She gave her orders, and from there went on to her dear orphans. [163] As we have already said, it was the most pleasant time of the day for her. She saw each workroom, stopped before each child, said a word of encouragement to each one and inquired with maternal solicitude about her needs, in order to provide for them without delay. She did not leave the Providence until nearly eleven o'clock.

Then, when the busy hive of workers had quietened down and were silent, the happy little orphans recited the litanies of Divine Providence in common, and prayed for their good Mother. When she had returned to her room, if she had noticed any child who needed a new dress or something else, she examined the materials kept in reserve, measured them herself and had what was needed cut out under her supervision.

The afternoon was set apart for correspondence and for receiving the religious or other people who had to speak to her.

In this way, the days of her laborious but all too brief career were passed in order and tranquillity. Let us, her daughters, who have gathered for a short while around her portrait and have contemplated with religious and filial affection the cherished features of our Mother,

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Docs. XI. *inn.*, p. 251. and XXIII. *inn.*, p. 454.

<sup>13</sup> Until 1948, when they were destroyed by a fire, these splendid sacred vestments, with two hearts, the first emblem of the Congregation, embroidered in gold, still existed in Lyon.

identify ourselves with this noble Christian woman, this great character, this soul so fundamentally religious and devoted to her task in life; and may our own lives resemble hers! May our last evening be illuminated as hers was by the splendours of Faith, Hope and Charity.

[164]

## CHAPTER XX

MOTHER ST. ANDREW SUCCEEDS MOTHER ST. IGNATIUS  
1837

The sweet hope that our venerated and profoundly regretted Foundress was enjoying the happiness that the Heavenly Spouse reserves for His faithful and much loved spouses, mitigated somewhat the grief of her daughters, and each one made a great effort to reproduce in herself the spirit which had animated her, and to keep the memory of the wise counsels received from her.<sup>1</sup>

It was necessary to provide a successor for her whom we were mourning. We needed a leader, a Superior.

An election was announced, the day was fixed, but we prepared ourselves by fervent prayers, in common and in private. The elections aroused general interest, and everyone understood the seriousness of the occasion. The most profound silence reigned in the house. We prayed as fervently as we could for the light of the Holy Spirit, so that the one chosen by the community would be the one really chosen by God.

The votes fell on Mother St. Andrew, Mile Victoire Ramie; she was therefore named Superioress General;<sup>2</sup> [165] Mother Saint Teresa, who at that time was Superioress of Le Puy, received the post of Assistant General.

Mother St. Andrew had been one of the most devoted collaborators of Mother Saint Ignatius. She was from Lyon and was

born on the 13th May 1796, of a very respectable family of silk merchants.<sup>1</sup>

In 1804, when Pope Pius VII was returning to the Papal States after consecrating Napoleon I in Paris, she had the happiness of being presented to him. Although Victoire was 7½ years old, as she had remained in the country at her nurse's home for a long time, she spoke very bad French. Quite astonished that people knelt down before Pius VII and respectfully kissed his slipper, she exclaimed naively, "Who is this person whose foot must be kissed?" (*Quel est celi-ci, a qui il faut baiser le patron?*)

The Sovereign Pontiff wanted to know what the little girl had said. They translated it for him. He smiled kindly, and passing his consecrated hand over the head of the child, he blessed her. Certainly this blessing bore fruit.

Victoire's education was careful and solidly pious. Within her family she found the example of Christian virtues, and the relationships that she established with some excellent young ladies of her own age greatly contributed to keeping her in the best sentiments.

Having heard about the committee of which Mile Thevenet was President, she asked to be admitted, and was remarkable for her great zeal for the instruction of children.

[166] But, not finding in this kind of work all that her heart, on fire with love of God, desired, she resolved to imitate Mile Thevenet and to join the little community that she was beginning to form.

Fr. Coindre and Mile Thevenet praised God on receiving this young lady, then 23 years old, whom they already appreciated and whose serious qualities gave rise to the greatest hopes.

And as, after some time, they destined her to fill the office of Assistant and Mistress of Novices, they sent her, as we have said above, to the Religious of the Child Jesus at Valence, where the sister of our Mother Foundress was the Superioress, so that she would be formed there in the spirit and the different practices of Religious Life.

<sup>1</sup> The first paragraph is reproduced from the *Memorial*, p. 46. *adsensum* (cf. *supra*, p. 478).

<sup>2</sup> Two sets of Minutes exist for this election, identical in substance but slightly different in form. One is in Register II, and the other in Register VII (A. G.R.), and they confirm all the details which are given here in the *Histoire* (cf. Doc. XXI, 1, p. 435).

<sup>1</sup> The birth certificate confirms the date. The authors of the *Histoire* have copied the biography of M. St. Andrew from an exercise book in which are recounted other biographies of religious, and material doubtless prepared for the compiling of this same *Histoire*. A copy of this biography figures in the *Petit Manuscrit*. pp. 15-25.

Mile Ramie obeyed with simplicity and made an effort during her stay in that estimable community to understand in what the essence of such a vocation consisted.

She assisted at all the community exercises, carrying out all the practices in use, and penetrating herself with the pious lessons that she received. She was edified by the numerous examples of virtue that she saw before her eyes, in short, she was inspired by all that went on around her.

After six months, she returned to Fourviere, and immediately took over the direction of the Novitiate, although she had not yet made her vows.

But could this office be confided to old religious at the beginning?

The Fr. Founder was not at all mistaken in his [167] judgement of Mile Ramie. She showed all her resources of zeal and devotedness in this office. Above all, she preached by example; she was seen to be obedient, exact, mortified, punctual, modest, hardworking, humble, charitable and gentle. Virtue seemed natural to her.

She conquered hearts all the more easily because her appearance was very pleasing. She was small of stature and perfectly proportioned. Her quick dark eye spoke of an ardent soul, but one whose aspirations were completely set on heavenly things. Her smiling expression and her manner which was gentle and affable enchanted all those who approached her.

The novices felt themselves drawn by the charm of her words. She showed virtue to be so beautiful that they found hardly any difficulties. She often repeated these generous words to them: *"A/y children, the love of God is afire which is fed only on the wood of sacrifice and love of the Cross. If one ceases to keep it burning with this fuel, it goes out."*

Therefore she endeavoured not to let them lose any occasion for suffering and overcoming themselves.

Her obedience to Mile Thevenet was perfect. One would have thought she was a young girl with no other motive than the will of her Mother. Her happiness in the service of God was great. But she sighed ardently for the day when she would be permitted to pronounce her vows and to consecrate herself forever to the service of her beloved Saviour and Master.

Sin- had the advantage of being one of the first [168] group making profession, which took place in Monistrol, and she pronounced with indescribable consolation the vows which attached her irrevocably to God at the same time as Mile Thevenet, Mile Planu and her sister.<sup>4</sup>

From that day she endeavoured to become even more fervent, even more generous in the service of her Divine Spouse. She was the first to offer for everything, if there was a distasteful job to be done, that was painful, and humbling she gave herself to it with admirable eagerness.

Employed in turns in different occupations, she always looked on them with the eye of Tal li and performed them wholeheartedly. Above all, the Sacristan's work filled her with consolation, and as she accounted herself unworthy to approach so near to her Divine Saviour, she used to say to the religious who was working with her: "Dear Sister, who are we to have been chosen to have the honour of looking after the maintenance and adornment of this Holy Place? Why should we have the privilege of touching the sacred vessels, and preparing the altar? In past ages, this employment was reserved for confessors of the Faith! Let us pray to the Holy Angels who surround the altar, to lend us their purity and love, and to help us in this high office."

When she was appointed Directress of the boarding school<sup>5</sup> she was so much loved and so well thought of, that she was able to exercise great influence over the pupils, and do them immense good.

The children were happy, the families satisfied, the studies brilliant, moral qualities carefully cultivated; and faults were corrected [169] with such prudence and perseverance, that they were finally eliminated, giving place to solid and precious virtues.

<sup>1</sup> The *Histoire* III saying "at the same time" repeats the mistake made by the authors of the biography of M. St. Andrew. She did not make her vows on the same day as the Servant of God, but afterwards (cf. Doc. XI, 2, p. 253).

In saying "sister" the reference is to Jeanne Pierrette Chipier, that is to M. St. Xavier. It should be noted that they were not sisters although they were considered as such. They were the daughters, respectively, of a widower and a widow, joined by a second marriage. They were good friends even to the point of entering the same Congregation, on the 20th October 1818. M. St. Xavier made her profession with the Servant of God, and M. St. Stanislaus with M. St. Andrew (cf. Doc. XI, I and 2, pp. 252, 253).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Doc. XVI, C, 3, a, p. 306, and also the Account Books in A. G. Roma which prove that she held this office.

The Father Founder was pleased to qualify the boarding school with the title: *Model Boarding School*.

Such was Mother St. Andrew when she had to bow to the will of God and accept the office of Superioress General in 1837.

This new title changed nothing of her love for humility. She was not afraid of lessening her authority by mixing either with the Novices, or with the Auxiliary Sisters in their manual work.

How often she was seen, wearing a large apron, the sleeves of her habit rolled up, washing the tiled floors of the corridors, polishing or sweeping the dormitories, serving in the refectory, etc., etc.

Yet a Superioress was never more respected, better obeyed, or more loved. Her wishes were fulfilled before she had mentioned them, her daughters reckoned themselves happy to have the opportunity to give her pleasure.

This good Mother gave herself heart and soul to her spiritual family. She supported those who were weak, encouraged those who were generous to become even more so, consoled the afflicted, comforted those with bodily infirmities, and tenderly watched, like a kind Providence, over all needs. Such was her Study and occupation every day.

If somebody disturbed her when she was doing serious work, she never showed the slightest impatience. She replied with kindness. If she could not interrupt her work, she promised to see later on the person who needed to speak to her at greater length.

[170] Full of attention for the religious employed with the children, she welcomed them with maternal kindness and interrupted her correspondence, her writing, to receive them, saying to them when they were afraid of being indiscreet and wanted to withdraw: "Stay my daughters; perhaps you will not find it easy to come back, because of your lessons or your supervision. I shall find time to finish my work".

One of the first important undertakings continued by our good Reverend Mother St. Andrew was the drawing up of our Constitutions and Common Rules, begun by our Mother Foundress.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Doc. XIX, 1, p. 312.

She was greatly assisted in this very important work, that it was proposed to submit to Rome for approbation, by Fr. Pousset, our chaplain.<sup>7</sup> He had spent some time in the Novitiate of the Jesuit Fathers; his health, which was too weak, had been an obstacle to his definitive admission, but he had studied the Rules of this celebrated Company seriously enough to give ours a certain cachet which later counted in their favour for complete approbation the first time they were presented to Pius IX.

When the chapel was finished, the rooms which had served for that purpose, and for the sacristy, were free. Mother St. Andrew, who more than anyone else had greatly regretted that the boarders had to be sent away, took advantage of the opportunity to reopen the boarding school.

Some prospectuses were printed and distributed to the public. Many families responded to this appeal, and [171] the little bees came back to the hill of Fourvière, to suck the nectar from the sweetest flowers and prepare the tasty honey which must not only feed them when times were bad, but also provide for their needs throughout life.<sup>8</sup>

[172]

## CHAPTER XXI

### MONSEIGNEUR DE BONALD AT LYON FLOODS OF 1840

Towards the beginning of 1840 we received some very good news. Mgr de Bonald, Bishop of Le Puy, whose paternal protection had always surrounded our Sisters, was promoted to the Archbishopric of Lyon, and was soon to take over his new Diocese.<sup>1</sup>

Mother St. Andrew hastened to address her sincere congratulations to His Lordship, and to ask him to kindly grant our

<sup>7</sup> Doc. XVIII, p. 363 and XIX, 2, p. 373, and *Memorial*, p. 28, *ad sensum*.

<sup>8</sup>The four last paragraphs of the chapter are not found in the biography of M. St. Andrew, which instead continues with information on the foundations and on other events that occurred during her time of Government until her death (cf. Doc. XXI, 4, p. 443).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Doc. XV, *inn.*, p. 263, and *Memorial*, pp. 28-29, *ad sensum*.

Mother House the favour of having him as its immediate Superior, just as in his great kindness, he had deigned to be Superior of the house of Le Puy.

Mgr de Bonald replied in the kindest manner, and when, for the first time after his arrival in Lyon, he went to pay the homage of his respect and love at the feet of Our Lady of Fourviere, and to place his new diocese, his ministry and his person under her protection, he went to the community after celebrating Holy Mass.

He blessed the religious and children, and replying to the address which was read to him by the Chaplain, in the name of the house, he said that in Lyon as in Le Puy, we would depend directly on him; he would be our sole Superior and devoted father; and we could have recourse to him with simplicity and confidence in all circumstances.

After the favour of this visit which realised one of our highest hopes, Mother St. Andrew and her daughters thanked God with all their hearts and made a new effort to redouble their fervour and zeal for His glory.

The Novitiate was flourishing; the number of boarders increased rapidly and they gave every satisfaction. A brilliant student had just left the world to consecrate her youth and her talents to the service of God and the Congregation: Mile Fanny Guerin<sup>2</sup> had entered the Novitiate.

But God was preparing a new trial for the city of Lyon. From the summit of the hill of Fourviere, although it was out of danger itself, its inhabitants could not see the disasters of the city without trembling with grief and redoubling their prayers.

From the 30th October 1840, the Rhone, suddenly swollen by unusually heavy rains and melting snow, had burst its banks, flooded the whole plain of the Brotteaux from the Tete d'Or to La Mouche, and brought down a great number of houses, built for the most part it is true on clay or mud. Fortunately the people who lived in these dwellings, although surprised by such a sudden rush of water, had been able to flee [174] taking with them whatever they had that was not too heavy and was most precious. Some thought only of their children, of

their sick, of their old people. Others, believing that they were safe enough, had taken refuge on the roofs of their houses, surrounded by the flood waters. Seeing their peril increase at each moment, they uttered cries of distress, calling for help, invoking heaven and earth. The wailing mingled with the sound of the waves, the noise of buildings breaking up, the echoes of the cannon giving the alarm, and made up a kind of lugubrious and terrifying concert. Soon night fell, adding to all these horrors! Certainly, dedicated people were not lacking! Soldiers, boatmen, all those who had a little energy and courage, put themselves at the disposal of the unfortunate people. They collected them in boats, set them down in a safe place, lavished their care on them, did all they could for them. But it was only the beginning of the disaster.

The Rhone had scarcely ceased to rise, when the Saone rose in its turn. It is well known that the river remains in spate for a period of nine days!

Mr. Meynis, in his *Grands Souvenirs de Lyon* said that on the 1st November the Saone flooded over the quays of the right bank, and entirely submerged the district of Vaise. The next day, it beat against the houses on the Quay Saint Antoine, reaching the rue Merciere on one side, and the district of Saint Georges on the other. During the night of the 2nd, it rose still more. Serin disappeared under the waves, with its commodity warehouses, and wine warehouses. On the 3rd, it continued to rise. It dragged [175] debris of all kinds along with it, furniture, beds, babies' cradles, crops, uprooted trees, sad proof of the devastation that it was causing on all the surrounding land.

The violence of the current detached numerous boats that were moored to the quay sides; they were hurled against the footbridge of Saint Vincent, and broke it down. The bridge of Serin held back the waters that accumulated against that obstacle for some time. In the end they flowed over it and fell on the opposite side in large cascades. The quay of the arsenal was partly carried away; several houses collapsed at the Quarantaine.

On the 4th, the south wind blew violently. The river rose again by 70 centimetres during the night. Soon its height was such that transverse currents were set up and flowed into the Rhone.

One went towards the rue Basseville, the other towards the Quai de Bon-Rencontre, the third went towards the Eglise de la Charite. There were actually three rivers in the middle of the town. The one that

<sup>2</sup> Marie Franchise Pelagic (Fanny) Guerin, M St. Liguori, was born on the 22nd February 1824 in Privas (Ardeche), entered the Congregation on the 18th March 1840, made her profession on the 14th February 1843 and died at Lyon on the 11th November 1863. She was Superior of the community of Rodez.

followed a course towards Pont-aux-Pierres gouged out a deep channel in which the torrent rushed, four metres deep, and gave rise to serious fears about the strength of the neighbouring houses.

As for the course of the river, it did not stop being the scene of new disasters. The bridge of Feuillée, lifted by the waves, tossed about, lifting itself up on one side, whilst the other side went down and thus formed a kind of submersible embankment that the waves surmounted noisily. The piles of the Pont de Change were badly shaken by the impact of pieces of boats [176] and debris of all kinds which heaped themselves up against them. Long beams of wood were caught there, got entangled, and under the incessant pressure of the current, became in their turn like battering rams destined to break down the old colossus, which resisted because of its heavy bulk.

Opposite the Palais de Justice was a suspension bridge of rare daring and elegance, supported by four columns or slender shafts; it was regarded, and rightly so, as one of our most remarkable monuments. The Saône rose to the level of the road over this light footbridge, made it sway for a while, and finally carried it off.

As it was pulled along, it drew after it the chains to which it was attached; then the columns on which it was supported gave way, they leaned over, groaned, broke, and fell in pieces into the waves which opened and closed as they foamed over them.

During this time, the interior of the city presented the strangest appearance. The streets, with a few exceptions, had been transformed into canals. The Place de Bellecour was nothing but one great lake in the middle of which, as if on a rugged island, arose the statue of Louis XIV on his horse.

The majority of the inhabitants, marooned in their dwellings, could only receive food by way of the roofs of neighbouring houses, or by ladders suspended from ropes. Several doors of alley ways had their landing stage composed of planks and barrels. In place of the trampling of horses, the rumbling of carriages, and the movement to which people were [177] accustomed, one heard only the monotonous sound of oars, and the voices of boatmen who cried out raucously at the entry to each street: "All aboard! All aboard!" In fact, the boat became the only means of communication. Everywhere was flooded. Lyon had become Venice. . . .

Night fell. The gas pipes were broken, darkness enveloped the town over which a frightening silence fell. Alone, at rare intervals, a few late boatmen broke the lugubrious calm, and for a few moments dispelled the darkness by waving their torches, which traced along streaks of fire against the walls of houses, or were reflected in the water which the oars churned up.

Meanwhile, food began to get scarce. As a result of the isolation in which each one was situated, help was lacking to families who had sick members, and the dead remained unburied. Nevertheless, there was not as yet any sign of the end of the flood.

Then a great number of prayers were addressed to Her who is never invoked in vain, to her whom the sailor in the midst of storms calls Star of the Sea and help of the shipwrecked, to Her who is called Queen of the city of Lyon.

Fourvière, which was above the level of the flooded plains, was like a beacon of safety. The eye searched for it with confidence. At the sight of its modest belfry, surmounted by the Cross which was outlined against a grey sky, one felt prayer rise to one's lips and one's heart was comforted.

Wonderful and precious influence of religion! It has infinite [178] charms for those who are faithful to it. Whilst the impious, after exhausting all human means, has nothing left but anger and despair, the heart of the Christian, by thoughts originating in faith, by a look animated by faith, feels its courage restored and its battered spirit rise again.

In the midst of so much misery, the clergy were seen displaying admirable zeal and multiplying their efforts to relieve all the sufferings. Among others a venerable old man, the parish priest of St. Nizier, went about the flooded streets of his parish in a boat, distributing himself to the poor the bread which he had bought at his own expense.

For his part, the worthy Archbishop of Lyon, Mgr de Bonald, who was the first to give the example of self-sacrifice, opened his palace to the unfortunate people. There, for many days, he offered them shelter, consolation and help of all kinds. After that, he called together all the faithful whose houses backed on to the hill, and led them in procession to Fourvière, to beg Mary to intercede for the devastated town.

Others also went there individually to pray for the townspeople and for those who had not been able to follow them on this laborious pilgrimage.

At that time Fourviere offered a remarkable sight.

Whilst everything outside it presented a picture of fearful devastation, while everywhere one's gaze fell on an immensity of waters extending as far as eye could see and the noise of the swollen rivers rose up to the summit of the hill, inside the shrine, on the altar of Mary [179] candles were burning and the Blessed Sacrament was exposed.

Kneeling here and there, and respectfully silent before Him whom all the elements obey, a small number of the faithful recommended the city, their families, themselves and their goods to Him. In the religious silence of the Sanctuary, disturbed only by the muffled roaring of the waves, in this mysterious contrast between agitation and peace, there was something striking which penetrated to the depths of the soul, and after praying, people went down again to their relatives, strengthened and better able to encourage and sustain them.

The level of the Saone rose again a little during the night of the 5th November. At midday the next day it had reached its maximum height, 7 metres, 37 centimetres above the lowest water level.

The river remained at this height for some time, then it began to go down again and after variations of level due to the rain, it left the streets and quaysides little by little. Finally on the 24th November at about eight o'clock in the morning, even though the night had been dry, a magnificent rainbow appeared over Fourviere. It was the end of the flood.

It was possible then to appreciate the sad devastation. One saw on all sides the parapets of the quays overturned, the earth deeply furrowed, vast amounts of merchandise damaged in the shops of which the doors and richly ornamented windows had been smashed in. At Vaise, at Guillotiere, it was even worse. [180] The streets were littered with stones, fragments of walls and furniture; here and there buildings half-destroyed were threatening to fall in ruins; others had completely collapsed; the tremor of an earthquake such as was experienced in Lisbon or Lima, would not perhaps have caused greater

ravage. Forty-five houses had collapsed between the two rivers, two hundred and thirty-nine had collapsed at Vaise, and two hundred and thirty-one at Guillotiere, in all 515. The losses were immense. But Lyon is a city known for its alms-giving. The victims of the flood found efficacious help in the charity of those whom the flood had spared. The other regions of France were touched by the sight of all the harm that had been done and although their united efforts could not dry all the tears, at least they contributed to bring comfort to many of those who were suffering. The kind Archbishop multiplied his assistance and neglected nothing that could help the unhappy families. He even undertook to pay the fees for the education of some orphans.<sup>3</sup>

And so one day Mother Saint Andrew was visited by an ecclesiastic who asked her, on behalf of His eminence, if she would admit a young girl, his protegee, into her boarding school; he would pay the fees and expenses. This proposal was readily accepted. This child was a member of the catechism class in the parish of Vaise. Mgr de Bonald had questioned her and had been struck by the accuracy of her answers. He wanted to reward her. Having learnt, after the catastrophe of the flood, that this young girl had lost everything, His Eminence said, [181] "Well! well! I will be responsible for her. I shall have her educated. If she wants to become a religious I shall pay her dowry. If she prefers to marry, I shall provide her with what she needs." She chose, we believe, this latter course. After studying well in the boarding school where she spent several years, she left, and lost touch with us.<sup>4</sup>

From day to day the boarders became more numerous. The premises which had been allotted to them were insufficient. Moreover, they were too near the orphans of the Providence, and this could give rise to difficulties. They met in the same chapel. They took their recreation in the same playground. They could easily communicate with each other, although this was forbidden. Therefore the Council decided to separate entirely the two categories of pupils.

They began to look round for a property not far away, in order to build a new house for the orphans there. These efforts were fruitless, so they looked in the immediate vicinity, and having examined everything

<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, most of the details of the floods were taken as the *Hisloire* indicates, from D. MEYNES *Les grands souvenirs*, cit., pp. 492-493.

<sup>4</sup>No document has been found relative to this fact.



carefully, decided to allocate for this work the south-west part of our large property, together with an adjoining garden which had been recently acquired. The pretty house in the new garden would be the chaplain's residence.

Work began towards the month of May 1841. The building, with three floors and seventeen casement windows in front, went ahead smoothly. It was finished at the end of 1842, and all the personnel of the Orphanage were installed in it in 1843.

Good Fr. Coindre, brother of our Founder, [182] full of zeal to help children who were deprived of material resources and without protectors, dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the welfare of these young souls who were gathered together in the new House, and he became their chaplain and father.

The rooms vacated by the children of the Providence were repaired, re-decorated, and made ready for the boarders who were very happy to move into them, and were delighted with their new quarters.

Boundary walls were constructed, completely separating the two establishments. Each had its own special personnel, its own chapel, its chaplain, and its garden. A door was made in the wall between the two houses so that the Superior could, when necessary, communicate with the Providence without having to go out into the Place de Fourvière.<sup>5</sup>

[183J]

## CHAPTER XXII

## MISSION TO INDIA

## THE COMMUNITY CHANGES THE NAME SACRED HEARTS TO THAT OF JESUS AND MARY

Whilst our Mothers were busy getting the spacious building put up for their poor orphans, God, who cares for the small and the humble, cast His eyes anew on the Congregation, which was still in its early stages, and had a beautiful new mission offered to it.

On Saturday the 14th July, 1841, a day consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, our sweet Mother, M. Rossat, Vicar General of Gap, came to

<sup>5</sup> For the last six paragraphs of the Chapter cf. *Memorial*, pp. 29-31, *ad sensum*.

propose to our Reverend Mother Saint Andrew that we should accept a mission in the East Indies. On behalf of Mgr Borghi, Bishop of Agra, he put forward very tempting and pressing proposals to her.

He acquainted her with the work of this Mission and handed over to her several letters from the worthy Bishop.'

[184] We give some extracts from them:

*Letter of Mgr Borghi, Bishop of Agra, to M. Rossat, Vicar General of Gap.*<sup>2</sup>

Dear Reverend Father,

I am writing to ask you to find me six European Religious from a Congregation devoted to the education of youth. Here is my plan: The only way of converting India is by means of education. Every other means has been tried and has produced only unsatisfactory results.

Education offers a longer road, but one that is most likely to succeed. There are numerous poor families who would most willingly give us their children if we would feed them and take entire charge of them. A rich Catholic, a General in the army of the King of Marathas, whose capital is Gwalior, has given me a beautiful house with a very large garden, for the purpose of securing a Christian education for a certain number of children.

They would be taken from the age of five or six years. They would not only be instructed in the truths of our holy religion, but would be taught to work, in order to accustom them to an active life and enable them to earn an honest livelihood later on by their work.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Memorial*, p. 31, *ad litteram*, except for a few words, and the minutes of the General Council of the 2nd August, 1841 (cf. A. G. R. Register XXIII. p. 7).

Jean Rossat was born in Lyon on the 5th March 1805. He was a Capuchin and was called in Religion Fr. Maximc. In 1840, having left the Order, he went to the diocese of Gap, where he was Vicar General to his brother M. Louis Rossat (cf. *Ilisloire* Ch. XXV, note 11, p. 679). Later he was made Vicar General, honorary Canon and Treasurer of the Seminary in Verdun (1844) where he died as a result of his charity in looking after those who had cholera, on August 14th, 1854.

Joseph Antoine Borghi, O.F.M. Cap. was born in Leghorn on the 2nd February 1803. He entered the Order in Cortona, in 1822, and was ordained priest in 1831. He was a missionary in Georgia (1834) and afterwards was consecrated at Constantinople, Bishop of Bethsaida and coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of Agra. M. Pcl./oni, whom he succeeded in 1842. Finally, in 1849, he became Bishop of Cortona, where he died on the 31st July 1851. Cf. *Lexicon capuccinum*, Romae, 1951, col. 254; *Diet. Hist. Geogr. Eccl* IX, Col. 1219-1220.

<sup>2</sup> This letter, of which a copy is preserved, is not transcribed in its entirety, as stated in the *Histoire*, and it has undergone some modifications purely of style. It is also found in the *Memorial*, pp. 31-32.

They would also be able to earn some money during the time they were being educated; this would be set aside and handed over to them when they were leaving the establishment. [185] This small sum would defray their initial needs and thus prevent them from returning to their superstitions, if they found themselves destitute.

I beg you therefore, to find me six Religious, and I should like one or two of them to be English or Irish. If this is not possible, please see that one or two know English well and speak it properly.

Everything is ready for their reception. All my hopes of evangelical conquest are founded on these Religious.

All the Vicars Apostolic of India have the same opinion as I have, and say that it is only through education that one can overcome Indian obstinacy. I am enclosing an appeal to French Religious. You may present it, if you think fitting, to the Convents to which you address yourself.

The Mission which I propose has two ends in view, the education of European girls, and the education of native girls.

I am, etc.

J. ANT. *Bishop of Agra*  
19th February 1841.

From the simple explanation in this first letter, it could be seen that the purpose of the worthy Bishop of Agra was absolutely the same as that which had guided our Foundresses. It had the same motives and the same intentions.

Is it not the same spirit as that which dictated these articles of our Constitutions: *The aim of the Congregation is [186] to give a Christian education to young girls, in conformity with the social position of each one.*

*For this reason, they have boarding schools where they bring up young girls whom they educate carefully in literature, and in social, religious and domestic duties. They take into houses called Providences, poor young girls of their choosing to whom they give a Christian education, and teach a trade that will enable them to make an honest livelihood in the world.*

This similarity struck our Mothers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Memorial*, p. 33, the four paragraphs, *ad litteram*.

Here is the letter that Mgr Borghi addressed to the religious to whom his proposal would be presented.<sup>4</sup>

My very dear Sisters,

Being persuaded that zeal for the salvation of souls and the love of our Divine Master burns in your hearts, I come to offer you a grand opportunity of satisfying your holy desires in this respect. I come to request you to make the great sacrifice of parents and of your country and all you hold most dear, to take up your abode in India, with the sole intention of winning souls for God.

This country, my dear Sisters, will be your battle-field, especially destined for your spiritual triumphs.

You alone must be the Missionaries here for people of your own sex. All the means attempted, except that of education, have almost completely failed, and you alone [187] can impart this great benefit to the daughters of India.

Allow me to remind you that millions of souls redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ your Heavenly Spouse, are being lost for all eternity. You, my dear Sisters, can snatch some of these from the infernal dragon! Would not this happiness alone be the most powerful of reasons for hearts that love God like yours? Would all these sacrifices be too dear a price to pay for this?

We expect nothing less from the Religious of France. They are not less remarkable for their zeal than the clergy of that realm. This ensemble of religious zeal merits the title missionary kingdom for France with no less justice than that of most Christian kingdom. Give us, dear Sisters, of your superabundance and we shall be satisfied.

This offer, the communication of these letters, the prospect of doing great good, all this astonished and at the same time moved good Mother Saint Andrew. She said to herself: "How is it possible that God allows our little Congregation to be considered for the foreign missions? What an honour for us to be able to procure the glory of the Divine Master in this way, to tread in the steps of missionaries, and join our efforts, our sacrifices to theirs for the salvation of souls!! But also what a responsibility for a Superior to send religious who are not robust or strong such a distance away, to countries so different from their own, and the majority of them still in the flower of their youth! What opposition will there not be on the part of their families! [188] How many precious subjects will we have to part with? How painful it will be at the moment of separation!"

<sup>4</sup>The letter is reproduced *ad litteram*, cf. *Memorial*, pp. 33-34.

All these reflections and a thousand more came crowding into the mind of Mother Saint Andrew.

However, she called her Council, and made known the propositions. She prescribed a novena to implore the light of the Holy Spirit in order to know the divine will, and she called the Councillors for a second meeting nine days later.

Who can say what feelings excited the religious at this time? To be missionaries, to go and evangelise the pagans, to cross the seas, to run perhaps into great peril, to end one's life after great sacrifices, after a daily martyrdom, perhaps by a real martyrdom, with bloodshed, was this not enough to rouse enthusiasm in generous hearts which were then numerous?

They prayed with great fervour. On the appointed day they deliberated and unanimously accepted the mission of Agra.

Cardinal de Bonald sanctioned the decision of the Council, on the 15th August 1841. He blessed our Mothers and called down on the future mission every possible favour of Heaven.

August 15th, the date of the beautiful feast of the Assumption, was it not a happy omen and, as it were, an assurance of the special protection of our beloved Mother Mary! So from then on, they were constantly busy with preparations for the departure.

After fervent prayers and serious examination, having taken prudent advice, and consulted the attraction and the desires of those who requested the favour of forming part of the first group, M. St. Andrew finally chose the six religious who were destined to go far from their motherland, from the sweet cradle of their religious family, to an idolatrous country, in order to take to it the benefit of Christian education.

The happy ones were: Mother St. Teresa, Mother St. Ambrose, Mother St. Paul, Mme St. Joachim, Mother St. Augustine and Mme St. Vincent de Paul, an English novice.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> All these details related in the *Histoire* are confirmed by the letters from the Vicar General, Jean Rossat, and from M. St. Andrew to Cardinal Franzoni, which are preserved in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, *East Indies*, Vol. 8, pp. 270 and 271; cf. also *Memorial*, pp. 34-35, *adsensum*, M. St. Teresa (cf. Doc. XXII, 3, *intr.*, p. 450); M. St. Ambrose (cf. Chapter III, note 5, p. 546); M. St. Paul (Doc. III, 1, b, *intr.*, p. 24).

M. Rossat was most satisfied with the success of the steps he had taken, with our Mothers. Immediately he informed Mgr Borghi about it and thanked God, for he had failed in many offers made to other communities who had all refused. No sooner had the Bishop of Agra been informed than he wrote to our Reverend Mother.

Agra, 20th November 1841.

Madame,

I thank you with all my heart for the charity you have shown us by responding so promptly to my appeal, and for having hastened to inform me of the good news.

If our Sisters are not already en route, I would ask you, not to encourage them, as they are already on fire with zeal, but to exhort them to fortify themselves first by prayer and the practice of all the religious virtues, and also to study the English language seriously.

I give them all my blessing, and I consider | 190 | them as so many holy angels whom God is sending to our aid in this infidel land.

From this day forward, without withdrawing them from your affection, please permit me, Madame, to adopt them all as my daughters, and I promise, as far as lies in my power, to be a father to them.

I will share with them the bread that God gives me; and as regards spiritual help, of which they enjoy such a great abundance in Lyon, I shall take care that they do not lack it in Agra.

I would like to repeat that they will do much more good here than we can do. They will be the instruments of Providence for the salvation of many.

fj. JOSEPH, Ant., *Bishop of Agra*.

M. St. Joachim, Louise Etienne Creuzot, daughter of Antoine and Bonne Armanet, was born in Lyon in 1820. She entered the Congregation on the 1st February 1840, made her profession on the 18th November 1841, founded some of the houses in India (1842) and in Canada (1855) and died in Lévis (Quebec) on the 12th March 1866.

M. St. Augustine, Marie Martine Mosnier, was the daughter of Jean and Jeanne Mauvchart. She was born in 1802 in Riom (Puy-de-Dôme) and entered the congregation in 1825, made her profession on the 1st May 1828, and died at Mussoorie (India) on the 18th May 1879.

M. St. Vincent de Paul, Mary Anne Emily Howard, was born in Tours (Indre et Loire) in 1821 of English parents, who were Protestants, Thomas and Anne Phillips. She was converted by Mgr Dominic Dufetre (cf. Doc. IV, 2, 40, note 51) then Vicar General of Tours, who made known to her the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, where she entered, in Lyon, on June 12th 1841. While still a novice, she was sent to India, and made her profession on the 23rd April 1843 in Agra. The ceremony was presided over by Mgr Borghi, and was celebrated with great solemnity in the Cathedral. She died in Agra on the 15th April 1844.

From then on there was an atmosphere of zeal and joy in Fourvière. A room was set aside under the name of the "Agra Room". The future missionaries met there every day to study and speak English, and to get together all that would be useful to them for the journey and their future installation.

Meanwhile it was proper that a French priest should be found who would put himself at the head of the group, and devote himself to sharing in their difficulties, as well as giving them all the spiritual help needed during such a long journey.

After much hesitation, Mgr Rossat, Bishop of Gap, at the request of our Mothers and of his brother the Vicar General, consented to give a holy priest of his diocese, Fr. Caffarel, who was asking to follow [191] an inspiration from God, and to sacrifice himself for the salvation of souls.

Mgr Rossat wrote on this subject to our Reverend Mother on the 29th November 1841. Here is his letter:

Madame,

I would be grieved to thwart the designs of God. Besides, I have not the courage to refuse the first request that you have addressed to me in your zeal. Consequently, I yield to your wishes and to the pressing solicitations of Fr. Caffarel.

I cannot hide the fact that I am making a great sacrifice in giving up this priest who is one of the most virtuous and deserving among the clergy of my diocese. But I also realise that it is important to have men like him for the success of such an important mission.

I am very happy to be associated with the good work and enjoy some share in the merits of great and generous souls whose sole desire is obedience and self-sacrifice.

I shall accompany the very dear and interesting group with my prayers and my blessing. I am, etc. . .

Louis, Bishop of Gap<sup>6</sup>

The preparations being almost finished, the date of departure was fixed for the month of February 1842.

But before parting, our Reverend Mother St. Andrew and Mother St. Teresa decided to carry out a plan formed some years previously,

<sup>6</sup> The copies of these letters which the authors have transcribed faithfully are preserved. Some phrases of courtesy are suppressed. However, the *Memorial* reproduces them *ad litteram*.

namely to petition the Holy See [192] for the approbation of our Congregation and of our Constitutions. This was also the opinion of Mgr de Bonald who promised to support our request. But His Lordship added: "As several communities in France bear a name very like yours, and as in general people get confused between you, the Religious of the Sacred Hearts, and the Religious of the *Sacred Heart*, I advise you to present yourselves under another name, to avoid difficulties which the Sacred Congregation could raise on this subject. Choose the name that suits you best and address your petition to me under this new title."

And so our Mothers busied themselves looking for a name which would be just as sweet to the soul as that of *Sacred Hearts*. But it was difficult to find one.

They met, they prayed, they examined names, they proposed them, they discussed them, without being able to decide anything. Nothing pleased them, nothing seemed to be suitable. Finally, one morning, Mother St. Teresa approached our Reverend Mother and said to her: "I believe that I have found a name as beautiful as the first and which will be generally accepted. Let us leave out the words *Sacred Hearts* and keep just *Jesus and Mary*. This idea came to me during the night and I felt very happy about it." "My dear Mother," Mother St. Andrew replied, "I had the same inspiration, and I was going to tell it to you. Well, we shall be the Religious of *Jesus and Mary*!"

The General Chapter approved this choice unanimously. The following is the reply to the petition which was addressed to Mgr de [193] Bonald on this subject:

In view of the decision of the General Chapter of the Religious of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, on the 8th September 1841, asking, with reasons, to change the present title of the Congregation, and to substitute for it the title Congregation of *Jesus and Mary*, if we give our consent;

Considering that in fact several other Congregations in France bear the present name; that it could result in confusion; that this could be prejudicial to the approbation of the Constitutions now pending in Rome, by delaying the same;

Considering that the imminent departure of the religious to found an establishment in Agra renders this measure more urgent;

Having invoked the Holy Name of God, we have decreed and ordered and do decree and order as follows:

In virtue of the right devolving on us by Article 54 of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the *Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*, according to the resolution expressed above and in the interests of the approbation of the same Congregation by the Holy See, this Congregation will henceforth bear the sole title of Congregation of *Jesus and Mary*.

This title will be substituted for the preceding one in the Rules, Constitutions, Ceremonials, Petitions and in general wherever need be.

Given at Lyon on the 4th January 1842.

J. L. MAURICE, Cardinal de Bonald<sup>7</sup>

## [194] CHAPTER XXIII

### DEPARTURE AND LETTERS OF THE RELIGIOUS MISSIONARIES OF INDIA

The time fixed for the departure of our dear Missionaries drew near. We felt the need to lift up our hearts, *Sursum Corda!* The sacrifice of separation had to be made, and this sacrifice, whatever the generosity of both sides, could only be very sad.

However, we armed ourselves with courage. We controlled our feelings, and on the 27th January, after we had prayed fervently, embraced one another and given one another the kiss of peace in all sincerity and not without shedding tears, the six missionaries went to kneel before the altar of the Blessed Virgin in Fourviere, begged her to

<sup>7</sup> This document is preserved in the original, and there is also a copy of it, transcribed in the Register of acts of the General Council; the *Histoire* reproduces it with exactitude except for a mistake made in copying *September* for December (cf. *Memorial*, p. 38, *ad litteram*, apart from a few words).

In a volume entitled: *Prise de Possession Fesch el de Bonald, Nomination de Chanoines et de Cures de lere el 2me classe*, which is preserved in A. D. Lyon, we read: "On the 4th January 1842 we decreed that the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary of Fourviere should, from now on, bear the sole title of *Congregation of Jesus and Mary*. L. J. M. Card, de Bonald, Arch, de Lyon. For His Eminence, Allibert, Can. Sec.

It is noted that the text of the reply of Cardinal de Bonald attributes the initiative of changing the name to the Religious, but the idea, as has been said before in the *Histoire*, came from Cardinal de Bonald to avoid possible inconvenience in the steps to obtain Pontifical Approbation. Therefore on the advice of the Cardinal the Mothers presented the request for this change, which he approved by means of this document, reproduced in the *Histoire*.

take them under her maternal protection, and descended the holy lull which many would never see again, to go towards Marseille.

On January 30th, the following letter addressed by Mother Si. Teresa to Reverend Mother Saint Andrew was received:

[195] Dear Reverend Mother,

We reached Marseille yesterday evening at nightfall; were it not for the snow and the bad weather, we should have arrived in the morning, and I would then have been able to give you news of our travels yesterday. We are all safe and sound, and so are our two Fathers (M. Rossat, Father Maxime, Vicar General of Gap, had accompanied them together with Fr. Caffarel).<sup>1</sup> We are lodged with two communities of the Sisters of St. Joseph. They could not take the six of us in the same house. We were sorry to be separated, but I dare say that this is only the prelude to still greater sacrifices which await us.

I kept Mme Saint Joachim and Mme Saint Vincent de Paul with me. Mother Saint Ambrose, Mother St. Paul and Mother Saint Augustine are together. We do not yet know how they are. They will be brought here by carriage in a few minutes. For ourselves, we are very well satisfied with the kindness and attention of the excellent religious who are giving us hospitality.

Tomorrow, Father Caffarel will say Mass in the Church of Notre Dame de la Garde. We shall go and place ourselves under her protection, receive her Divine Son in Holy Communion, and pray fervently for all that is dear to us in Fourviere. You will be pleased dear Reverend Mother, to learn the result of our last visit to Cardinal de Bonald. He received us with the greatest kindness and, whilst giving us a letter for Mgr Borghi, he charged me to tell him that he would do all that he could for the mission. He gave us [196] fifteen relics which he ordered Fr. Maxime to authenticate.

We did not bring a relic of Saint Clementine with us. When it is possible for you to send us one, you will give us great pleasure by doing so. It seems to me that this good saint should be honoured in our whole Congregation. But it must have the authentication with it, so that we may put it in a place of honour in our Chapel.

We shall have our cabin with six berths as we wished.

<sup>1</sup> Father Maxime (cf. Chapter XXI, note 1, p. 649).

Joseph Caffarel, son of Jean and Catherine Bermond, was born in Vars (Hautes Alpes) on the 10th December 1804. He was ordained priest in Gap on the 22nd December 1827 and was successively curate of Chorge (1828), parish priest of Upaix (1831) curate of Briancon (1833) parish priest of Villard-Saint-Pancrace (1838). In 1842 he left for India as chaplain of the first missionaries of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. He died in Meerut (India) on the 31st October 1848 (cf. Gap, Episcopal Archives).

How many times each hour our hearts are carried in spirit to our beloved Fourviere; and you, dear Reverend Mother, your heart has followed us and you see us in Marseille, near the sea that we can see from our windows, and which is to carry us so far away!

Adieu, dear Reverend Mother. When you receive this letter we shall already be on the boat. Adieu!, Adieu! for God, and Jesus and Mary!

Accept the respectful wishes of all your missionary daughters and the undying affection of your very obedient, respectful and most grateful and deeply attached daughter,

Mother SAINTK THERESE<sup>2</sup>

*Second Letter from the same to the same.*

Marseille, 1st February 1842

We are about to go on board! At five o'clock this evening we shall leave the port. The ship that is taking us away from France is called the *Sesostris*.

[197] The Bishop of Nancy, another Bishop and four or five priests will be with us as far as Alexandria, as well as a lady, her husband, her little daughter and two maids; these are the only women with us on the ship.

We have a cabin or room for the six of us, which is very clean. It has ten berths, but we shall be alone, and we are very pleased about this.

Fr. Caffarel has a cabin to himself, near ours and that of the ship's doctor. We shall put in at several ports before we reach Alexandria. At 6 a.m. on the 3rd we shall reach Leghorn and we shall leave there for Civita Vecchia at midday, where we shall arrive at 6 a.m. on the 4th. We shall leave Civita Vecchia at noon, go on to Naples, where we shall arrive at five or six in the morning.

<sup>2</sup>The letters regarding the first period "I the missions in India were transcribed almost as soon as they arrived. Three series "I OXercise books destined for the communities in France are preserved.

Three copies of this letter are preserved. The *Hisloire* omits only the paragraph containing the greetings for the chaplain and some religious.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Auguste Marie Joseph de Morhin-Janson was born in Paris on the 3rd November 1785. Auditor to the Council of State, he gave up this post to enter the seminary of S. Sulpice (1808) and was ordained priest in 1811 at Chambéry, where he remained for some time as Vicar (vicar and Superior of the Major Seminary). He returned to Paris after collaborating with Rauzan in the formation of the Missions de France, and on the 6th June 1824 he was consecrated Bishop of Nancy, where he arrived on the 1st July. From October 1830 to November 1841 he preached to French Catholics who had emigrated to the United States and Canada. Having returned to Europe, he founded the Society of the Holy Childhood and on the 2nd April 1842 Pope Gregory XVI conferred on him the titles of Domestic Prelate, of Assistant to the Papal Throne and of Roman Count. He died near Marseille on the 11th July 1844 (cf. L. JEROME. *L'episcopal francais*, cit., pp. 386-387).

After stopping for six hours, we shall continue our journey towards the island of Malta where we shall arrive on the 7th February at noon.

There we must change ships and on the 8th at 6 a.m. we shall continue towards Syra, an island of the Archipelago opposite Piræus in Greece. We shall reach there on the 11th at 8 a.m., and depart from there at 1 p.m., to go to Alexandria where we shall arrive on the 14th at 5 a.m. Thence we shall go to Cairo, travelling up the Nile in boats.

They tell us that for fifteen francs we shall be able to have one to ourselves.

From Cairo we shall go in caravans across the desert as far as Suez, where we shall take an English steamer bound for Calcutta.

[198] This, dear Reverend Mother, is the detailed itinerary which you will be pleased to have and which will better enable you to follow our journey in spirit.

I shall take care to write to you from all the stops.

The weather is magnificent here; however, it is nearly as cold as in Lyon. There is frost every morning.

We have been very fortunate in finding some religious here who have given us hospitality and surrounded us with all kinds of care and attention. They sent a carriage to pick up our Sisters, and gave us the pleasure of spending part of the day together. This made us very happy.

Please, dear Reverend Mother, allow me to tell all our dear Mothers, our dear Sisters, our dear Novices and our dear children that their remembrance is deeply graven on our hearts. Please tell my niece, Mme St. Clementine<sup>4</sup> that she has always a special place in my heart.

As for yourself dear Reverend Mother, you know that you have always a place in my affection as well as my most profound respect, and I remain, etc.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>M. St. Clementine, Claudine Grace Motte, daughter of Paul, brother of M. St. Teresa, and of Marie Ann Chabra, was born in Lyon on the 7th November 1811; she entered the Congregation on the 10th May 1838 made her profession on the 29th August 1840 and died on the 7th August 1849.

<sup>5</sup>There are three copies of this letter preserved. It has been reproduced whole and entire, but with some modifications of style.

Mother St. Teresa kept her word and wrote to the Superioress, Mother Mary St. Andrew from Leghorn (3rd Feb. 1842) from Civita Vecchia (4th Feb. 1842), from Malta (8th Feb. 1842), from Alexandria (14th Feb. 1842), and from Suez (26th Feb. 1842). Mother St. Andrew replied on the 25th and M. de Bourville, the French Consul in Cairo wrote to Cardinal de Bonald on the 21st of the same month about the passage of the religious through that city. Cf. *Hisloire*, pp. 199-221; we are omitting the text of this correspondence because it has no information directly concerning the Cause.

[222]

## CHAPTER XXIV

## FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE OF REMIREMONT

Let us leave our dear Missionaries sailing under the protection of God who in His wise plans, sometimes sends trials, but never ceases to guide and protect His own, and let us return to our dear Fourviere.

Reverend Mother Saint Andrew had recovered well from the illness which had attacked her after the departure of her well beloved daughters and which had certainly been brought on by lively and too concentrated emotions.

The letters from the travellers were received with transports of joy, and read with indescribable pleasure. They aroused fervour and kindled in all hearts the fire of self-sacrifice and love of souls.

Doubtless Our Lord wanted to give a sensible sign of His satisfaction at the sacrifice which had just been made by providing the opportunity to found a new house in France.

Mgr Jerphanion,<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Saint-Die, came to Lyon. Our chaplain, Fr. Pousset, who was his former fellow-student and friend, wanted to do the honours [223] of the house, and presented us to His Lordship who was satisfied with this visit, and asked our Mothers to open a boarding school in his diocese.

At that time we had no other branch houses except the Providence and Le Puy. The Vosges and Alsace were poorly provided with educational establishments, and it was decided to agree to the wishes of the Prelate.

So our Reverend Mother St. Andrew and Mother St. Bruno her Assistant, left for Remiremont, a little town near Plombières, designated by Mgr de Jerphanion as our residence.

<sup>1</sup> Jean Marie Joseph Eugene de Jerphanion, son of Gabriel Joseph and Marie Catherine Sophie Giraud, was born in Le Puy on the 8th May, 1796. He was already Secretary of the Prefect of Cher when he decided to enter the Seminary of S. Sulpice. Ordained priest in 1822, he was Vicar General of Bourges for about twelve years. On the 6th September 1835 he was consecrated Bishop of Saint-Die and in 1842 he was appointed Archbishop of Albi, where, having gone there on the 9th March 1843, he started numerous works, and after an illness lasting for five months, he died on the 20th November, 1864. He was buried in the choir of the Church of Our Lady of Dreche. He was an official of the "Legion d'honneur" (cf. PuECH.inZ.*episcopalfrancais*, cit., pp. 27, 560-561).

An old mistress of a boarding school wanted to retire from teaching and relinquish her boarding school.<sup>2</sup> Our Mothers visited her premises, but they seemed too small to them; also, they were situated in the centre of the town, which could not have been appropriate for them.

Fr. Bardot<sup>3</sup> the parish priest, who very much wanted to see us established in his town, proposed a spinning mill which was for sale with the land belonging to it, gardens, meadows, and the possibility of development. In that place they would be both in the country and in the town. The position was suitable, and the property was acquired soon afterwards.

During the time that our Mothers were in Remiremont, Mgr de Jerphanion went there and showed his satisfaction at meeting them. He invited them to go as far as St. Die before returning to Lyon. They accepted gratefully and were extremely pleased by His Lordship's kindness. He kept them for several days at the Bishop's House and also Fr. Pousset, who had accompanied them on their journey. Two months afterwards, our Mothers returned to the Vosges again [224] taking with them Mother Saint Xavier, Mother Saint Dosithee, M. Saint Matthew, M. St. Blandine, a choir Novice, with Sister Saint Louis, an Auxiliary Religious, and Christine who, later took the name of Sister Saint Ame.<sup>4</sup> They left the house on the 3rd May 1843, feast of

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. MARTIN, *Histoire des diocèses de Toulouse, de Nancy et de Saint-Die, III Episcopal de Mgr Jerphanion, 1835-1843*, Nancy 1906, p. 492. "In that same year 1843", wrote the author "at the request of the Bishop of Saint-Die, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, Lyon, agreed to succeed Mademoiselle Paxion and continued to carry on the good work of that devoted mistress for the Christian families of Remiremont."

<sup>3</sup> Claude Francois Bardot was born on the 26th March 1789 in Charmes (Vosges). He was parish priest of Lahaycourt (Canton de Vauvécourt-Meuse), then of Remiremont, from the 6th March 1821 to the 6th December 1869, the date of his death.

<sup>4</sup> M. St. Xavier, Emilie Teyssier, was the daughter of Jean Pierre and Marie Anne Ginhoux; she was born on the 14th April 1812 in Le Puy, and she entered the Congregation on the 18th November 1836. She was professed on the 8th December 1838. Besides the house of Remiremont she founded the first house of the Congregation in England and she died in Simla, Provincial Superioress of India, on the 17th July, 1887.

M. St. Dosithee (cf. Chapter XV note 6, p. 610).

M. St. Matthew, Elisabeth Melchior, daughter of Antoine and Agnes Madeleine Grolt, was born in Wietigheim (Wurtemberg) in 1812. She entered the Congregation on the 8th May 1838, made her profession on the 18th November 1841, and died at Remiremont (Vosges) on the 6th June 1851.

M. St. Blandine, Marie Madeleine Baye, daughter of Jean Andre and Jeanne Marie Bellitrond, was born on the 13th June 1819 in Le Puy. She took the habit in Lyon, 2nd May 1843. She died in Remiremont (Vosges) on 12th April 1847.

the finding of the Holy Cross, a Wednesday, the day especially devoted to honouring St. Joseph in the Congregation. It was therefore under the care of the King of Kings, the protection of Mary and of her holy spouse, that the new foundation was placed from the beginning.

At that time, the railways were only just beginning to be built in France. There was no train at all in the east. They had to settle themselves in a stage-coach which was anything but speedy, in spite of being called a diligence. But, for lack of anything better, they had to be satisfied with it. It was only on the 8th, towards half past seven o'clock in the morning that our Mothers and Sisters arrived in Remiremont. Immediately, Mother Saint Andrew sent Sister Saint Louis, who was appointed commission Sister, to pay their respects to the priest of the parish and announce their arrival. Fr. Bardot was out. Sister St. Louis was simply given the keys of the house destined for the Religious and told that they would inform the parish priest.

The little colony made its way towards the old spinning mill. When they opened the premises they found that it was completely bare. There was not a chair, not a table, not a single piece of furniture, but just the four walls!

They looked at one another and laughed heartily. The severest poverty could not frighten these good Mothers and Sisters. They were real Religious! [225] In default of chairs, they cheerfully sat down on the floor. They were very hungry after the fatigue of the journey. But here was a new problem! They had nothing! However, they managed to procure a little bread, some butter and a few eggs. A table was improvised with some trunks and each one did justice to the modest meal, with greater joy and contentment than guests at a sumptuous feast ever felt.

Sister St. Louis, Francoise l'anchon, daughter of Antoine and Elisabeth Jafuel, was born on the 7th February 1803 in Ancolop (Lozere). She entered the Congregation in 1825, made her profession on the 25th March 1829 and died in 1848 in Remiremont (Vosges).

Sister St. Ame, Christine Descroix, daughter of Jean and Claudine Chabert, was born in Claveisolles (Rhône) in 1812. She entered the Congregation on the 1st June 1838, made her profession on the 23rd May 1847 and died in Remiremont on the 8th April 1874.

Towards the end of the meal, when they were getting ready to say grace, they heard the bell ring at the outer door. It was the parish priest who had come to pay a visit to our Mothers. He was shown into the room next to the improvised refectory, and they all went then to pay him their respects. As this room was equally without chairs, they had to remain standing all through the visit. The parish priest was highly amused at the embarrassment of our Sisters and everybody laughed.

This good priest showed us how happy he was at our arrival. He encouraged us in our work of abnegation and hastened to obtain what was most essential for our needs so that the little community could go to bed. Soon four chairs and three beds arrived for us and we received them as a gift from Divine Providence, and quickly organised our dormitory.

Night prayer was said with fervour and heartfelt thanksgiving. "The Lord", said the Religious to one another, "has led us here as if by His own hand, so what do sacrifices and little trials that await us [226] matter to us. He will always be with us if we are faithful to Him. And these privations, this destitution in which we find ourselves, are they not proof that He will bless us, because He has given us a small share in His Cross?" . . . Our Mothers seemed to be so happy and light-hearted that their joy and gaiety animated the whole little family.

We had taken off our religious costume for the journey. But as one can easily suppose, we did not go to the milliners or to the clothes shops to buy ready-made clothes. The garments that the young professed and the novices had given up, which were more or less fashionable, were used, and eight dresses had been made. They were far from being perfect, and more than once, we began to laugh heartily as we looked at one another. We could not therefore be surprised when some of the townspeople whom we were obliged to receive during the week when we were wearing these secular clothes, let a smile escape at the sight of our improvised clothing.

At last, we were able to put on our religious habit again. It had become more precious to us than ever, and we kissed it with real joy in our hearts as we put it on in the morning.

As our Reverend Mother wanted us to start living our regular life as soon as possible, one of the rooms was chosen as the Community



Room, and although we were only seven choir religious, we began to chant the Office in choir. His Lordship, the Bishop of Saint-Dié had given us [227] the precious authorisation to have the Blessed Sacrament in the house. It was an immense consolation for us, a real treasure! Surely nothing could give greater satisfaction than to have God under the same roof as oneself, to be able to visit Him several times every day and confide sufferings and difficulties to Him.

So we got busy preparing a temporary chapel. The parish priest took a great interest in this, and, moved by the same motives of zeal and economy as our good Fr. Rey, he made himself the foreman. He told us how to whitewash, to varnish, to carpet. He worked himself. His example aroused general enthusiasm, and soon not only was the chapel ready, but the whole house was renovated and transformed.

After about a week, our Reverend Mother and her Assistant had to return to Fourvière, but she was very satisfied to see her little family so well cared for by the parish priest of Remiremont, who was beginning to be regarded as a devoted father, and she admired the good spirit and the joy of her religious.

It had been decided that they would not receive any pupils until towards the end of the month of August. This length of time seemed necessary so that everything would be perfectly organised to receive them. But one family insisted so much with Mother St. Xavier, Superioress of the house, that she could not resist and she accepted, as a boarder, a charming little girl who was confided to her.

Although she was alone for some time, this child seemed to be very happy and content at the convent. A little time-table was made for her. She was given lessons, little tasks. She was usefully occupied [228] as pleasantly as possible, without forgetting recreations. It was noticed that this first pupil had an excellent disposition and a very good spirit, and soon it was obvious that she had made considerable progress.

This encouraged us and it was hoped that this polite child was a sample which gave a general idea of the youth to be educated. Our expectations were realised. How many good subjects, good mothers of families or good religious, have been formed in this happy home!

The admission list was opened and soon twenty-four pupils came to take their place, forming a good nucleus for the boarding school.

They had hardly been installed when our Mothers learnt that Mgr de Jéphanion was leaving the Vosges to go and take up residence in the See of Aïhi to which he had been appointed. This was a real sorrow for all of us! Mgr Gros,<sup>5</sup> who replaced him in the episcopal See of Saint-Dié, did not show himself less favourable to our Sisters.

At that time we were in the course of petitioning Rome for the approbation of our Rules. It was judged necessary in the first place to have the approbation of the Bishops of the dioceses in which we were already established, and Mother Saint Xavier was given the task of requesting that of Mgr Gros.

Mother Saint Xavier went to Saint-Dié. His Lordship received her with extreme kindness, examined the Constitutions of the Congregation and, relying on the evidence of Cardinal de Bonald, he gave his own approbation without delay, on the 6th June 1843. [229] So they had that of the Cardinal, dated the 14th February, that of Mgr Darcimoles,<sup>6</sup> Bishop of Le Puy, dated the 22nd March 1843; they only needed that of Mgr Borghi of Agra, and the much desired approbation of the Holy See.<sup>7</sup>

Mgr Gros was not Bishop of Saint-Dié for very long. He was replaced by Mgr Manglard, who came soon after his arrival to Remiremont. He visited our Sisters and showed them touching marks of kindness and benevolence.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Nicaise Gros, son of Pierre and Remicte Milet, was born in Rheims on the 7th October 1894. Ordained priest on the 16th May 1818, he was curate of Aspais-de-Melun. He was appointed Secretary General of the Archdiocese of Rheims (1821), Titular Canon (1825), Vicar General (1827). He was Administrator of the Archdiocese, when his Archbishop, Mons. Lalil, followed Charles X into exile (1830), until the appointment of Mons. Gousset (1840). In 1843 he was consecrated Bishop of Saint-Dié, and took possession of his See on the 23rd March. After one year he was transferred to Versailles, where he died on the 13th December, 1857, and was buried in the choir of the Cathedral (cf. A. LACHACH in *L'episcopal français*, cit., p. 561).

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Marie Joseph Darcimoles was born in Rueyres (Lot), on the 8th December 1802. Having completed his studies in the seminary of St. Sulpice, Mons. de Cosnac his great uncle. Bishop successively of Meaux and of Sens, took him for his private secretary and made him a member of his council. At Sens, he appointed him Canon (1830) and then Vicar General (1835). He was consecrated Bishop of Le Puy in 1840 and in 1846 he was transferred to Aix. He died at the age of 54 years on the 11th January 1857 (cf. BONNEFOY in *L'episcopal français*, cit., p. 488).

<sup>7</sup> The dates of the approbations correspond exactly with those of the originals preserved in A. G. Roma.

As we have said, at that time the boarding school counted twenty-five children of the best families of the town. There was also a day school, very well organised, which had between thirty and forty pupils.

The parish priest had been appointed Superior of the Community with which he said he was extremely pleased. In return he was respected, treated with affection and loved as a good father. But the needs of his parish sometimes prevented him from procuring the spiritual help needed by his community. Often the religious were even deprived of Holy Mass and consequently of Holy Communion!

The parish priest understood that he must put an end to these disadvantages. He charged one of his curates to say Mass in the little chapel of the community three times a week. Mgr Manglard,<sup>8</sup> seeing the establishment expanding, was quick to appoint a chaplain for it. This was Fr. Steiner,<sup>9</sup> a priest who was highly commendable for his piety and his superior qualities. He was the chaplain of the prisons at the same time. This gave rise to his saying as a joke that he was in charge of two communities of prisoners. One group were [230] imprisoned by force, expiating their crimes; the others were imprisoned of their own accord, for the love of God.

Fr. Steiner devoted himself heart and soul to his new work, and he was concerned not only about the spiritual needs of the Community, but also about their temporal needs. Knowing that they had not great resources, he never wanted to accept a stipend. In spite of his numerous occupations, he offered his services to preach the annual retreat and communicated some of the zeal and the true love of God with which he was animated to everyone.

Such a chaplain was one of the most precious gifts they could have received so they thanked Heaven and Mgr Manglard sincerely for giving him, and were always praying that he would be left with them.

\* Daniel Victor Manglard, was born in Paris on the 11th February 1792. He was ordained priest in 1817 and was administrator of the parish of St. Thomas Acatines, chaplain of the school of St. Cyr, then of the Lycée "Louis-le-Grand". He became parish priest of Saint-Leu-Saint-Giles in 1830 and of St. Eustache in 1836. He was consecrated Bishop of Saint-Dié on the 25th July 1844 in his parish church. He died on the 17th February 1849 and was buried in the Cathedral (cf. A. LACHACHE in *L'épiscopat français*, cit., pp. 561-562).

<sup>9</sup> Philippe Charles François Steiner, son of Valentine and Anne Marie Jeanne Catherine Albert, was born in Saarbrück on the 11th November 1815. He was ordained priest in 1842 and died at Portieux (Vosges) on the 9th March 1891.

In 1848 at the time of the proclamation of the Republic, the whole town of Remiremont was in a state of excitement. Fr. Steiner, whose rooms were near the prison, ran to the Convent to reassure the Religious and children, telling them he was there to defend them in case anyone came to worry them.

Nobody came to the Convent. The Republic was proclaimed in Remiremont without too much disturbance and noise. The parish priest even went so far as to bless the Tree of Liberty as he was requested to, and he was rewarded for this with many thanks and warm praises. This contributed in no small way to maintaining peace in the town.

The work of the Sisters grew daily from strength to strength. They were well liked and it could be foreseen that they would do good, and very much good [231] in those mountainous regions where people's characters are strong, serious and thoughtful, where they like intellectual work, and where they are strongly attached to those who are self-sacrificing.

The future has proved that these expectations were not deceptive.<sup>10</sup>

[232]

## CHAPTER XXV

A WORD ABOUT THE NOVITIATE — OTHER LETTERS FROM THE TRAVELLERS —  
THEIR ARRIVAL IN AGRA

Let us leave the Vosges where our dear Sisters are working and sacrificing themselves and let us return to Fourvière.

The void produced in the ranks by the departure of the Religious who were sent to India and Remiremont, was soon made good, and even more. It seemed that the wind of the missions sent a good number of vocations to us. The Novitiate was flourishing.

Three of our past pupils came to request a place and delight the motherly heart of Reverend Mother St. Andrew and that of Mother Saint Bruno, the Mistress of Novices.

<sup>10</sup> For information on the foundation of Remiremont, cf. *Mémorial. ad sensum*.

The latter did her best to instil in her daughters strong and generous virtue, but she also made them apply themselves to deepening their studies, for in order to teach well, one must have a solid grounding oneself.

Religion held first place in the time-table. [233] Every week a novice, appointed in advance, had to explain the catechism to her companions who represented the pupils, in the presence of the chaplain, the Superioress General and Mother St. Teresa. At the end of the exercise, Fr. Pousset<sup>1</sup> made his observations. He approved or criticised, pointing out the weak parts and the method to follow in order to obtain complete success.

They also gave time to the serious study of foreign languages, especially English; they studied drawing, painting, music, without losing sight of those beautiful virtues so much recommended by Mother St. Teresa: humility, union with God, obedience, prayer, self-denial, self-sacrifice, etc., for, in the depths of their hearts many novices hoped that one day they would be called to be missionaries, and they did all they could to prepare themselves for this.

The letters of our dear travellers continually roused zeal and fervour. They were eagerly awaited, and read with the greatest interest.

More than two months had elapsed since the last news.

During this time, a most surprising communication reached our Mother on the subject of our missionaries.

A pious person of the town said that she had seen a group of six religious, in the sky, wearing our habit, preceded by a big luminous cross, directing their steps towards the East. She heard the words: *They are called to do much good.*

Although we did not attach great importance to this [234] we must admit that it added to our hope that God was blessing this work and that we would reap a harvest in those distant lands.

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Pousset was chaplain of the Mother House only until 1848 (of. Doc. XVIII, p. 365). These details were experienced by the author. Mother Aloysius, who made her novitiate from the 27th April 1842 to the 4th May 1844.

Finally, in the month of July, a large bundle of letters arrived from Mother St. Teresa. It was received with mixed feelings, and many tears were shed.<sup>2</sup>

[243] | *letter from the Ladies of the Committee in the name of the faithful of the Vicariate of Agra, to Mme Saint Andrew, Superioress General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

Agra, 8th May, 1842.

Madame,

In the name of the faithful of the Vicariate of Agra, we the Ladies of the Committee for the upkeep and advancement of the Work of Religious, are writing to pay our respects and to show our gratitude [244] for the signal favour you have just conferred on us and on our children, in sending us six of your Sisters to work among us at God's Work, and to spread the benefits of religious education among our young girls.

We have learnt from our Reverend priests, that your Congregation is one of the most distinguished in the diocese of Lyon, which is very fertile in good institutions of every kind. God is pleased to bless your steps and to pour out on your works in Europe a special grace which makes them fruitful.

Out here, Madame, we have the greatest confidence that the fruits of salvation that your Sisters will gather will be just as abundant. Our Lord, who is always full of kindness, knows well that our spiritual needs are very great. Therefore He will surely bestow his favours in proportion. May our unworthiness not be an obstacle to God's mercy.

Dear Madame, you and your Congregation have already made your own the spiritual children whom your Sisters will bring forth for Christ all over the world. They must be all the more dear to you because of the pain of separation you have endured in order to give them Mothers. Therefore we do not need to recommend them to your prayers, but we cannot allow this occasion to pass without asking you to pray for ourselves and all the faithful of this Apostolic Vicariate.

With sentiments of profound respect and sincere gratitude, we have the honour to be . . . etc.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the text there follow six letters of M. St. Teresa to M. St. Andrew (Aden, 10th May 1842; Aden 11th May 1842 (for the Novices in Fourviere); Bombay 15th June 1842; Calcutta, 7th August 1842; Chandernagor. 5th September 1842; Calcutta, 8th September 1842). These letters tell about the vicissitudes and impressions of the journey; we are omitting them because they do not add any new elements to the Cause. Cf. *Histoire*, pp. 234-243, 245-267.

<sup>3</sup> Three copies of this letter are preserved. The letter is reproduced whole and entire in the *Histoire* except for the end.

[267] *Mother Saint Teresa to Mother Saint Andrew*

15th November 1842.

Dear Reverend Mother,

We are at last with our holy Bishop, seven or eight days distant from Agra. The rest of my letter will tell you how God held us up for nearly three weeks.

I thought that I would only write to you from Agra, but we [268] shall not arrive there until after the post has left, and I would not like to leave you for three months without news. You would be very worried.

I told you in my last letter that we were going to take a steam boat to go up the Ganges as far as Allahabad. It was on this boat that a new trial awaited us, and a splinter of the Cross of our dear Lord, a trial which undoubtedly, in the designs of God, was to precede our work and be the forerunner of the good that He will deign to do through us.

You cannot imagine all the abominable things that wicked men and two shameless young women said among themselves about priests and religious, their so called infamous deeds, etc., etc.

They did not dare to address us directly, but as for our young Irish postulant, they used all kinds of means to pervert her!

The evil-doers did not succeed, but the poor child is ill as a result and I am wondering if her poor health will not oblige us to send her home.

We remained for twenty four days on the boat. You can judge what we have had to put up with from such people, having to be constantly in their company.

Besides these sufferings, which were bad enough for us, I have been ill nearly all the time, as a result of sun-stroke, and this added to the trials of our Sisters.

For the whole voyage they have behaved with [269] such modesty and dignity that these wicked people never dared to speak to them directly without a kind of reserve and respect.

When we arrived in Allahabad, we met a Father there who was sent by Mgr Borghi. He had organised everything for our departure for Agra after two days that were necessary to rest a little, and get our clothes washed. But our trials were not at an end. Mother Saint Joachim contracted a fever and we were obliged to stop.

Her fever was so bad that after a week the poor Sister was at death's door. Three doctors saw her in consultation and they seemed to have no hope of saving her life. Then I had recourse to my usual refuge — I promised the Blessed Virgin that I would ask you to have a Mass said at the shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere if God would preserve this dear Sister.

On 1 prayers were heard. Now she is out of danger, to the great astonishment of the doctors, and we hope that she will be well enough in two or three days to be able to continue the journey in a palanquin in which she will be resting as if she were in bed.

(>ui- good Bishop, who was awaiting us in Cawnpore, a town situated half way between Allahabad and Agra, having learnt of the illness of our dear Sister, would not remain in Cawnpore, and though ill himself, he set off to join us. And one beautiful night, yes, very beautiful! I was watching beside dear Mother Saint Joachim when I heard a cry which echoed in the depths of my soul — It is his Lordship!

12701 I cannot describe the happiness I felt when I received the blessing of this good Father — it is quite impossible!

Dear Reverend Mother, what a worthy Prelate he is! What a kind Father! Do not be uneasy about your daughters. I cannot enumerate all the marks of kindness that he bestows on us every day, all he has done for us, all the interest he shows, all the joy that he expresses to see that we have finally arrived!

How much trouble he has taken to prepare our house! What expense he has undertaken to furnish it!

If you could see him, if you were to hear his touching words: "My dear daughters, how happy I am to be with you at last! Yes, I am your Father, and I shall remain your Father until I die! All I have is yours! How much pleasure I enjoyed in preparing your house! I myself prepared your table in the refectory for your arrival. I had your rooms prepared, and your prie-dieu placed in the Church which adjoins your house. I hope that you will be happy here, and that we shall work together for the glory of God.

I shall see to it that you want for nothing, and I shall myself endure all kinds of privations before you have to suffer, etc., etc. But I count on you my daughters; Oh! How many souls there are to be saved! How great is the harvest!" I would never finish, dear Reverend Mother, if I were to repeat everything to you.

This good Bishop unites in himself holiness and learning. He speaks seven languages. His affability wins all hearts, even those of the [271] Protestants whom he often wins over.

Several have contributed to the expense of furnishing our house.

He protests to us that he is most satisfied with our little colony, but he does not stop there; he will soon write to you for more Sisters.

We shall have three separate establishments in Agra; this separation is probably more strictly necessary here than in France; one for the boarding school, one for the children of soldiers, and the third for poor little Indian girls.

That is not all: his Lordship is on the point of buying a big house at Landour in the Himalayas where the climate is exactly the same as in France. It is a town quite as big as Agra, where a great number of the most distinguished English families reside: Lords, Counts, etc. In the house that the Bishop has in mind there is already a boarding school with thirty young ladies of good social position, but nearly all Protestants. This establishment will be handed over to us. The Bishop wants to put this project into effect in a year, and he only wants to have Jesus and Mary Sisters there!

I hope that God will send you a good number of subjects if it is His will that we should do all that our Bishop desires.

There are several other towns where we could do much good, such as Delhi, which is only 30 leagues (120 km) from Agra.

[272] His Lordship does not count much on the subjects we can recruit here. Those who are born in India unfortunately feel the influence of the country, and there are very few others.

I have received your letter of the month of July. We have learnt with real sadness of the death of our dear Sister St. John Baptist.<sup>4</sup> It is a great loss at the time when we have made two new foundations. May the holy will of God be blessed, however hard it seems. It is always a merciful will.

We are glad to learn that the foundation of Rcmiremont is accomplished. God has His plans for our little Congregation. He wants to use it for the salvation of many souls both in Europe and in India.

It is especially here that we could found numerous establishments if we had enough subjects.

Dear Reverend Mother, please prepare some for us who know English well! Those that you will give us will be replaced I am sure. The more you give, the more God will send you.

I should very much like to reply to all the letters that I have received both from the Novices and the boarders, *or that naughty person who wrote to me on your letter without signing, and who, I believe, is called Mother St. Marie.*<sup>5</sup> But it is impossible, the post is ready to go. All know what I would like to write to them, and what great affection I have for each one.

Please present my respects to [273] the chaplain, to good Fr. Coindre, to M. Montagnac, and to Fr. Benoit whom I thank for their remembrances. Please will you also offer my respects to His Eminence when you speak to him about his daughters in Tibet.

Mgr Borghi has not forgotten the promise that he received from him to interest himself in our poor mission by sending some good missionaries of which our vast diocese is so deprived. There are only twelve priests in it!

<sup>4</sup> M. St. John Baptist, Claire Berard was the daughter of Joseph and Francoise Alberton. She was born in Briançon (Hautes-Alpes) in 1815 and entered the Congregation on the 20th February 1838. She made her profession on the 18th February 1841 and died in Lyon on the 21st July 1842.

<sup>5</sup> For this religious see above (Chapter XIX, Note 2, p. 627).

The district that each one has to look after is as large, at least, as our largest departments in France!

Goodbye Reverend Mother, if God wills, my next letter will tell you many things about Agra, where we are impatiently awaited.

His Lordship reckons that on our arrival we shall have about twenty or twenty-five boarders immediately, and God knows how many soldiers' children and poor little Indians. And we are only six for all that work! God will help us I hope!

The Bishop knows a young lady who is a good musician who will be able to give piano lessons. These are essential in our school.

Fr. Maxime is much mistaken in thinking that life is very backward here . . . Not at all . . . There is probably more refinement and above all more luxury than in Europe.

We shall definitely be obliged to change the colour and material of our habits whilst keeping the same pattern. They will be, like those of the Religious in Calcutta, of white calico.

Goodbye Reverend Mother, etc.<sup>6</sup>

[274] *Letter from Father Caffarel, Chaplain, to Mother Saint Andrew, Superioress General.*

Agra, 20th November, 1842.

Dear Reverend Mother,

I am happy to be able to tell you that your beloved daughters have at last arrived in Agra, on the 12th of this month, after ten months of travelling and suffering!

It was about 10.00 p.m. when we set foot in a beautiful, large house which had been originally intended for our little colony; but in view of its situation which is too public, being opposite the River Jumna, and above all because of its distance from the Archbishop's house and the Cathedral, it was destined for another use. Mgr Borghi had gone ahead to have a little supper prepared, and we shared it with Fr. Francois,<sup>7</sup> and two of his companions.

<sup>6</sup> Three copies exist. One indicates that the letter was written from Allahabad. In the original the date must have been almost illegible, because it differs in each one of the copies. The *Histoire* puts it as 15th November, but it should be the 5th. It was copied whole and entire with the exception of the ending.

<sup>7</sup> The Capuchin, Fr. Francois de Saint-Etienne left for India in 1839. He was killed on the 18th December 1845 while he was hearing the confession of a dying soldier, in the battle of Moodkee, during the war between the English and the Sikhs. Cf. CLEMENT F. DATERZORIO O.F.M. Cap. *Le Mission! dei Minori Cappuccini IV: Indie orientate, II*, Rome, 1935, pp. 339-345.

You can imagine how much this first meeting must have touched the hearts of those who had for so long sighed for this happy moment!

The next day, Saturday, was spent in preparing for the feast on the following day. While we were busy shaking the dust off our souls, of which the dust on our clothes was only an emblem, the faithful illuminated the interior and exterior of the Church, and made it echo with the sound of their voices filled with emotion.

On Sunday, at 6.00 a.m. the Ladies of the Committee came to meet the little colony, [275] and led it, as if in triumph, in beautiful carriages, as far as the avenue which leads to the Church. There we were met by a charming procession which came towards us, presided over by His Lordship who blessed again the little flock which you have sent him.

He solemnly led them into the Church where Pontifical High Mass was celebrated, and a beautiful sermon was preached by the Bishop who, moved to tears, greatly touched the hearts of his listeners who were already excited by the presence of these angels of peace come from so far away without any temporal gain in view, but with the sole aim of working for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

After Mass, these Ladies took possession of their Convent in the midst of a numerous and brilliant procession which never tired of looking at the new spectacle before their eyes.

The house would have been full of visitors all day if the Bishop had not given orders that the house must be emptied, in order to give the new inhabitants time to breathe.

In the evening, there was solemn Vespers, in which the Sisters distinguished themselves by their melodious voices. It was almost nightfall when we came out.

Then we admired the brilliant illuminations all round the exterior of the roof of the Church, on the belfry, the dome, etc.

I did not tell you that during the journey from Allahabad to Agra, we sometimes slept in *Bungalows*, a kind of house the Europeans have had constructed [276] at intervals along the road and in which they can stop for a few hours or even several days; these bungalows have only a ground floor; at other times we rested in magnificent tents put up by English families, Catholics or Protestants, who all showed great sympathy towards our colony of travellers; twice we stayed under the roof of these hospitable families. Others desired to have the same honour, but we were obliged to thank them and continue on our way.

His Lordship was always our worthy and most friendly leader.

The road in general is good, but the rains have caused such deterioration in certain parts that several times we were in danger of overturning, especially when we were travelling until midnight or one or two o'clock in the morning, in order to reach the place where we were to stop.

Mine Saint Joachim, who was travelling in a palanquin, has greatly improved in health. Today she is perfectly well.

The Superioress is a little indisposed, the others are as well as when they left Lyon.

They have profited from the journey to grow in holiness. They were a really charming community when they left the Mother House, but they are still more so today. I do not want to go into detail. It is sufficient to tell you this for your consolation.

[277] Throughout the journey and in every country we traversed, Catholics, Protestants, infidels, all were struck with admiration at the sight of so much self-sacrifice accompanied by such great virtue, above all, by that enlightened piety, always dignified, always courteous, and never rude or indiscreet.

Do not be surprised therefore to learn that a great number of persons wanted to follow them. Today the house would be full of novices if obstacles not depending on their personal wishes had not prevented them from carrying out what they very much wanted to do.

Rejoice then, dear Reverend Mother, that you have given a family to India that does credit to your worthy Congregation.

It would be impossible for me to tell you how much your deardughters love you, how often they speak about you, about their Sisters in Fourviere and Le Puy, about the living and the dead! For their part they are very happy to know that they have not lost any of the affection of the houses they left.

As for myself, I think myself happy to have brought this little flock that you confided to my care, safely to their destination.

I have shared in all their trials and consolations; they have shared in mine, and together we have received signs from God of his special care and protection. He has sometimes brought us to death's door to try us, and, suddenly, when we [278] thought all was lost, he scattered the clouds, calmed the storms, overcame the hunger and sickness and restored us to life.

I send my respectful regards to all your spiritual daughters in France. The bonds that unite us are not broken, since God still wishes me to continue to take care of the little flock in Agra. I shall have another flock too to take care of in the same town. His Lordship wants to confide to me the direction of an establishment for boys which will be the counterpart of that of our Sisters.

May the holy will of God be done and may He bless us all.

I am and always remain, etc.,

Fr. Caffarel\*

*Mother St. Teresa to Reverend Mother Saint Andrew.*

Agra, 20th November 1842

Dear Reverend Mother,

At last we have arrived in our dear Agra and have been here for a week! We have made our solemn entry into the Church and our house of the feast of St. Stanislaus amid honours that filled us with confusion!

The singing of the Pontifical High Mass and the *Deilitt* was accompanied by the military band which you would certainly consider very fine in France.

The whole day long the air resounded with the booming of cannon fired in our honour, as is done for Princes!

We found, in a pond in our garden [279] a miniature fleet that was very well built and flying the Papal and French flags.

Our good Bishop was radiant with joy! Our entry into the Church resembled a triumphal march. Young girls, English and Indian, walked in procession in front of us singing the *hymn Jesu Corona Virginum*, and in the evening, not only the Church and the Bishop's residence, but also the paths "I our garden, were illuminated.

I hope that God will be glorified by all this.

We are going to begin to receive pupils for the boarding school on the 1st of next month.

The house destined for the orphans is not yet completed. However, we hope soon to be able to receive them there. This house is far from being large enough to take the great number of poor children we would like to receive, but we must be patient and wait for God to increase the resources of our worthy Bishop, so that he can enlarge it.

Fr. Caffarel remains our chaplain and we are very happy about this. They do not want me to write a long letter to you today. However, my indisposition is hardly worth mentioning now.

All our Sisters are well except our Irish Sister who has very poor health.

Next month, in giving you our news, I shall send you a long list of commissions. Everything here is ridiculously expensive, and furthermore, it is very difficult to find things at all!

The letter is transcribed whole and entire. Two copies exist.

[280] Please remember to pray for your daughters in India dear Reverend Mother, and prepare some Sisters for us so that the great projects of His Lordship may materialise. He counts on our Congregation alone to do this. Goodbye, etc.

Mie. Sainte Therese<sup>9</sup>

[281] *Mother Saint Teresa to Mother St. Andrew.*

Agra, 2nd January, 1843.

Dear Reverend Mother,

We have not received any news from you for two long months. The time seems so long!

You cannot doubt the happiness that your letters bring to your Indian daughters. Please do not deprive them of this.

[282] At last you do not have to worry about them. The sufferings of the journey are over.

The boarding and day schools are going quite well. At the moment we have a dozen pupils, among whom are three Protestants.

Our dear Mme St. Vincent de Paul teaches the catechism in their presence, taking care to give them work with which they are busy in a mechanical way, and which they often interrupt to listen to the truths taught to their companions. Of their own accord they help the Catholics to make a summary of it.

They find the Protestants very unfair when they speak as they do about our holy Religion and those who follow it, above all the religious, and they judge us much more favourably since they have got to know us.

We have hung miraculous medals on their beds. The Blessed Virgin has shown that this act of confidence in her protection pleased her, for, a little while afterwards, one of those children asked her mother for permission to assist at Mass, and we take her there every day.

Our dear Mme Saint Vincent de Paul does them enormous good. Each day we see more and more that God has given her to us for this work.

We are expecting two other Protestants next week. Their mother not only authorises them to be instructed in the Catholic faith, but has begged us to do it. What happiness if we could win these little persons for God!

<sup>9</sup>This letter is copied whole and entire. There are three copies of it preserved. All the details contained here and many others scattered here and there in the letters from India, published in the *Histoire*, are confirmed in the work of Fr. Clemente da Terzorio cited in note 7, p. 674. The text of the personal letter addressed to the Mother General by M. Saint Vincent de Paul is omitted.

[283] Our pupils are happy to be with us. I hope that, little by little, prejudice will cease, and many families will confide their children to us.

We would have a much greater number of them, if the British Government had not moved its headquarters to Delhi. This obliged the officials to leave Agra. However, several boarders have been promised us and will be coming soon.

After all, it is not only for the Europeans that we have come here, but also for the little Indians.

In a few days, we shall have some of these latter, as many as can be lodged in the house which is being prepared for them. We hope that God will send us help which will permit us to enlarge it so that we may be able to take in there a considerable number of these poor children.

For his part, Fr. Caffarel has charge of the little boys. Eleven arrived at the end of last week. The girls and boys speak only Hindustani. We shall teach them English. Please pray that God will help us.

I am thinking of giving M. Saint Augustine and Mother Assistant charge of our little Indian girls. The latter will show them how to make artificial flowers. This will be an excellent industry for these poor children. I hope to be able to tell you in my next letter that our orphanage is on the way to prosperity! His Lordship has just told me that this week he will give us sixteen children to begin with.

It is time for us to start our work. Thank God our [284] health is good. Now the weather is still spring-like. But this will soon come to an end and give way to great heat. I hope God will help us to endure it.

The Religious in Calcutta are going to found a new house in Bengal. Many of their Irish Sisters have come out to join them. How much our poor mission needs educational establishments! Our good father the Bishop very much wants to make a foundation in the Himalayas where the climate is like that of France! But for that we would need to be more numerous, and it would be necessary for many of our French Sisters to join us. When will that be dear Reverend Mother? When our good Bishop goes to fetch them, next year at the latest, we hope? Yes, God is asking more of your daughters to work for His glory in India.

Although the religious in Calcutta are three times as numerous as we are, the Bishop has just sent his Vicar General to England to look for other Sisters, and also for priests. How deprived our poor mission is! How much good could be done if there were more labourers, but above all, good ones, holy priests, holy religious, very humble and selfless ones.

Please, dear Reverend Mother, will you present my respectful regards to the chaplain, to Fr. Coindre, to Fr. Rey, etc. All our Mothers and Sisters know very well how much we love them. How often we recall our dear Fourviere [285]! the dear Novices, the dear children! and our dear families whom we have left for God alone . . . I would like my dear niece, Saint Clementine, to tell her father, her brother, and all her family how dear to me they are, etc., etc. Mme Saint Joachim will write to her family next month. She asks you to give them news of her. She is fairly well now. Goodbye, dear Reverend Mother. Your daughters in Tibet will always remain your most affectionate and respectful children and especially the one you have given to be a mother to them, who will always be the most respectful and most obedient.

Marie Sainte Therese<sup>10</sup>

[301] *Letter from Mgr Borghi, Bishop of Agra, to Fr. Rossat, Vicar General of Gap.*

28th June 1843

My dear Friend,

I am very touched by the favour that your brother Mgr Rossat" has conferred on me by sending me his portrait.

Mother St. Paul has painted two copies of mine. I am keeping one of them to offer to the Bishop myself, and the other to the members of the Council of Lyon.

Next year, dear friend, you will receive the cases of objects I am collecting for you. At present I am still collecting coins, and a small supply of agates.

Our boarding school has only been open for four or five months and we have already thirty two pupils and seven or eight applications.

The Mother Superior has told me that there will soon be a deluge of children, for a week never passes without new admissions. Knowing that you will soon send me eight thousand francs, I have begun to build a new dormitory eighty-two feet long and twenty-two feet wide.

<sup>10</sup>The copy of this letter is exact. There are two copies in existence. The *Histoire* gives another three letters (Agra, 19th February, 1843; 8th June 1843; and 15th June 1843). The text of these is omitted because they do not contain new information regarding the Cause. Cf. *ibid*, pp. 185-186.

" Louis Rossat was born in Lyon on the 8th December 1789. He was ordained priest on the 9th December 1814, and was successively curate in Meximieux and in Bourg, and Parish Priest of the Primatial church of Lyon. He was consecrated Bishop of Gap (14th February 1841), and was transferred to the diocese of Verdun (17th June 1844), which he enriched with various social and heritable organisations. He gave a new impetus to the work of the Propagation of the Faith, published "Peter's Pence" and re-established the Roman Liturgy. He was a strong defender of the Pope and the Church. He died on December 24th, 1866 in Verdun (cf. P. GUILLAUME, in *La liturgie française*, cit., pp. 677, 678).



On the 4th of this month, Lord Ellenborough,<sup>13</sup> Governor General of India, [302] came to visit our establishment.

The religious, with their thirty-two boarders and their day pupils, all dressed in white, headed by myself and my Coadjutor, received His Excellency in the reception room. When the pupil who was at the piano had finished playing, we paid the usual compliments, and I addressed a few words to him as follows:

"My Lord, allow me to express the sentiments of the most profound gratitude with which I, these Religious Ladies and their Pupils are filled for the honour that Your Excellency has done us by visiting the Convent of Jesus and Mary, Agra. It has pleased Divine Providence to provide me with the necessary means to establish this institution, the need of which was felt for a long time in the northern Provinces of India. Protected by the liberal Government of our beloved Queen Victoria, we hope that our views, with regard to the education of young ladies of this country, will be realised.

The visit of Your Excellency will shed such lustre on this Establishment that, we are sure, it will serve to advance its progress. We are happy to hope that Your Excellency will always continue to accord us your protection.

We respectfully request you to accept this bouquet of artificial flowers as a small token of our gratitude. May God preserve your precious life for many years to come. [303] Such My Lord, are our ardent and sincere wishes."

His Excellency replied with these words: "Monsignor, I am indeed touched by the expression of the sentiments which you, these Ladies and their pupils have for me.

I confess that I would never have expected to find such an establishment in these provinces of India. I congratulate you with all my heart and I wish you the greatest success."

His Excellency then visited the different rooms and admired the elegance, order and cleanliness which reigned everywhere. He also saw the Orphanage and the Church which are very close to the boarding school. And finally, as he left, he expressed once more his great satisfaction.

<sup>13</sup>This was Edward Law, Earl of Ellenborough, born in Great Salkeld, Cumberland in 1790. He died in Southam House near Cheltenham in 1871. He was successively a member of the House of Commons and then the House of Lords, Keeper of the Privy Seal (1828), Administrator (1829) and Governor (1841) of India, where he established peace (1842). Queen Victoria bestowed on him the title of Earl and First Lord. He distinguished himself in his discourses on the question of India and in defending the cause of Poland and Denmark.

This visit, as you may imagine, has given the establishment a shining reputation. It has been reported in different Indian newspapers, and with God's help, I hope for happy results.

The next day, the Governor wrote to me in his own hand, asking me to present to the Sisters on his behalf, an English book which he sent me.

Madame Saint Vincent de Paul has made her vows. The ceremony was very impressive.

One can clearly see that God works miracles in favour of this angelic girl. A little before her profession, she was spitting a lot of blood. The doctor, who was English, told me that he could do nothing for her, I however, the next day, she was absolutely [304] well and able to take up all her ordinary duties as if she had never been ill.

This Religious will be an honour to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. All the others are well and hard-working.

I look forward to the pleasure of seeing<sup>14</sup> you next year, Pray God it will come to pass. Goodbye, etc.<sup>14</sup>

*Mgr Borghi, Bishop of Agra, to  
Mother Saint Andrew, Superioress General,*

18th June 1843.

Very Reverend Mother,

I am afraid that you will be a little annoyed with me for not writing more often. Please forgive me, I shall try to correct this fault in future.

Although I am four hundred miles from my good daughters of Agra, nevertheless, I know that they are keeping well, with the exception of poor Mother Saint Augustine who has been indisposed for two weeks. Believe me. Reverend Mother, the same spirit reigns in the INHIM- of Agra as in that of Fourviere. I admire with astonishment the zeal, courage, and charity of my good daughters. It is a great consolation for me to see that they are happy in their vocation, and that they know how to pull up with the sufferings and privations inseparable from being a missionary, In [305] a word, I am so satisfied that there is nothing more I desire for them.

In seeing that our establishment of Agra is going so well, I have put aside a sum of money that the Council for the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon has given me, to build a new dormitory with 50 beds in the boarding school.

<sup>14</sup>Three copies of this letter are preserved. All bear the date of 22nd April. The ending, I am lining personal news and greetings, is omitted.

This building is nearly finished. It is also my intention to build a little chapel near the house, and an orphanage for Irish children. I hope that God will provide me with the means and inspire the members of the Central Council to make me an extraordinary grant for next year.

On the 7th of this month, I blessed the church at Landour, and I gave it the name of Jesus and Mary.

I hope that these two lovely names will be like a kind of magnet which will attract Religious from Fourviere to come here.

Landour, as you know, is situated at a height of seven thousand feet above sea level. The air is very salubrious and when, on the plains of India the poor people have to suffer unbearable heat, here, on the contrary, we have to keep near the fire.

It would be desirable to have an establishment here for our good Religious. I have already spoken about it and have been offered the purchase of the two English boarding schools. For the large one, I have been asked for 7,500 rupees, and for the other 3,700. But where shall I find that amount of money? (The rupee is worth 2 fr. 50 in [306] our French money). Well, if it is God's will, we shall succeed.

Mme St. Teresa tells me that you want to have my approval of your Constitutions. I make a point of sending it to you, and at the same time, I am letting you know in advance that I have written to Rome to obtain from the Holy See the approval of your Congregation as a Religious Order in the Church.<sup>15</sup>

As it is possible that I shall go to Lyon next year, I beg you to prepare six or eight of your good Religious for Agra. You know what qualities they should have. I recommend to you that they learn English. I myself will accompany them on their journey, which will not take more than three months and a half.

Let these good Religious who prepare themselves fear nothing; they will always be under the protection of Jesus and Mary, and will not have to suffer like the other good Religious of Agra who did not even know where they were going, as a result of their mistake in not taking the steamship from Suez. Assure them that they will find in me a father who will guide them and made them arrive in Agra like *poor princesses* — just *leave it to me*.

Thank you Reverend Mother and all your Congregation for the immense benefit that you have already conferred on this mission which from now on

<sup>15</sup> The original of this letter which Mgr Borghi says he wrote to Rome, is preserved in the archives of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide — *Indie Orientali*. Vol. 9, 1843-1844, p. 332, 3rd June 1843.

you must consider as your own. I recommend myself to your prayers and those of all your Religious in general and individually, etc., etc.<sup>16</sup>

[308] *Mother St. Teresa to Mother Saint Andrew.*

Agra, 21st September 1843.

You did not receive a letter from me last month. God did not want it. He was pleased to send me a fairly serious illness lasting for three weeks. I am now entirely back to normal.

Our worthy Bishop is getting ready to leave for Europe. He will be in Rome for Easter, and will be with you in the month of May or June.

I hope, dear Reverend Mother, that you are preparing [309] a good contingent for us. The harvest is great, but the labourers are very few — Alas!

Recently some poor Catholics offered to build a church in their town, if a priest were sent to them. Our Bishop had the sad task of telling them that, in spite of his desire to grant their request, he had no priest available!

In the whole of the Himalayas, an immense territory, where there are a large number of towns, Landour alone has *one* priest. There is such a lot of good to be done in this country, both among the poor idoiators, and among the rich. People who know that part of India assure us that we could certainly have a boarding school there with numerous pupils, and as many poor Indians as we could take, for the people of that region are not very attached to their castes. The climate is the same as in Europe. The inhabitants seem to have something rather "European" about them, which makes it less difficult to convert them to Catholicism.

We have the consolation of seeing more and more good being done among our pupils. I told you in one of my last letters that half of the boarders were Protestants. Now we can say that we have not a single real Protestant. All come willingly to Mass and to devotions to Our Lady, recite the rosary, and pester us to have crucifixes, medals, and holy pictures. Only one held back, and she remained firm until the feast of the Assumption. That day, doubtless, was the day that the Blessed Virgin was waiting for. She wanted to

<sup>16</sup> There are three copies preserved. The *Histoire* has omitted one paragraph in which Mgr Borghi excused himself for any spelling mistakes he might have made, as his Secretary, M. St. Paul was absent. Some information contained in this letter is confirmed in the *Memorial*, pp. 44-45.

We are omitting the text of a letter from the boarders of Agra to M. St. Andrew (Agra 21st September 1843) cf. *Histoire*, pp. 307-308.

assist at the [310] short instruction we give our pupils, at 10 a.m., as in Fourviere. Of course we spoke of Our good heavenly Mother. I do not know what Our Lady did to our little rebel, but since that day she began to say that she wanted to be a Catholic, and a little while after, that she wanted to be a religious. Since then she has never missed catechism lessons. She is over 16 years of age, is very sensible, and possesses sound judgement. If she becomes a Catholic she will, I believe, make an excellent one.

The Protestants, and especially the Anabaptists do all they can against us, to prevent good from being done. But often their efforts have just the opposite effect. That is what happened lately concerning one of our children who abjured Protestantism. Her mother was severely reproached, and even had to suffer a kind of persecution on the part of her Protestant friends because she gave her daughter permission to become a Catholic. This poor lady was worn out, and, not knowing what reasons could be given against the false belief she wrote from Delhi where she lives, to a good Catholic in Agra, asking him to tell her the answers that she should give. He sent her some books with controversial discussions, telling her to read them carefully, and assuring her that she would find there what she required to silence all those who were tormenting her about the conversion of her daughter.

She followed this advice, and the first fruit of the reading was the knowledge of the truth for herself. She decided to follow the example of her daughter, [311] which gave the dear child great consolation. By the time you read this letter she will have been received into the Church.

It is not only among the pagans, the heretics and the schismatics that there is good to be done, but even among the Catholics, who for the most part are grossly ignorant because of the lack of priests and religious instruction.

A few days ago we received three newly baptised girls. Yes, but they did not even know how to make the sign of the Cross, and had forgotten the Our Father. Three months ago their father had placed them in an Anabaptist boarding school where they never said any prayers. Yet these Anabaptists are considered fanatics, even among Protestants, for the great number of prayers they say.

How happy we are when we receive children of this kind. We are sure that these are souls snatched from the devil.

God took one of our little Indian girls last month. She died of cholera in a few hours.

I think that our Father Founder and Our Mother Foundress as well as all the community of Jesus and Mary in heaven must have given her a great welcome and presented her to Our Lord as the first fruit of our mission.

Cholera has made great ravages in India over the last two months, and it has spared your daughters, Reverend Mother! It was when I was most ill, and

even in danger of death, that the epidemic was [312] at its worst. It was a strange thing that nearly all those who were ill from other diseases caught the cholera and died, and I got better.

It is true that our Sisters and the children prayed much, and that Fr. Caffarel asked Fr. Maxime to offer a novena of Masses in honour of Our Blessed Lady. God restored me to health, may He be blessed. He wants me to go on working. May His holy will be done in all things and everywhere. Doubtless I was not ready. That was why He left me. I shall die some other time.

The terrible scourge has caused great havoc in the military camp. Fr. Francois distinguished himself by his zeal and self-sacrifice. He never left the camp. Day and night he assisted the poor dying men and only left them to bury the dead. On his return, he went back to his men in their agony, and they were very happy to die in his arms. Some of them caught hold of his habit, clutching so tightly that he could not get away from them until they had breathed their last.

The Protestant Ministers who are so well paid by the British Government did not act in this way. They hardly put in two or three appearances in the camp.

God rewarded the dedication of this worthy Fr. Francois. He was preserved from contagion, whilst the doctors, the apothecaries and many of those who only went near the sick men from time to time, were struck down and died.

[313] Fr. Francois is now greatly esteemed among the soldiers who venerate and love him as their father.

Please unite with us in thanking God, and accept the assurances, etc.  
Marie Sainte Therese.<sup>17</sup>

## DOC. XXVIII

TESTIMONIES ON THE REPUTATION OF SANCTITY OF THE SERVANT OF GOD  
DATING FROM THE YEAR 1896 UNTIL THE INSTITUTION OF THE ORDINARY  
PROCESS 1926 — From documents mentioned below.

The publication of *the Histoire* (1896) which contains the first biography of the Servant of God printed in France, also marks the passage from the generation of the Foundress and of the contemporaries of M. St. Ignatius to

<sup>17</sup> In this long letter that the *Histoire* reproduces in summarised form, the less interesting paragraphs are omitted. There are three copies preserved.