

2000

# A Short History of Marianist Spirituality

Lawrence J. Cada

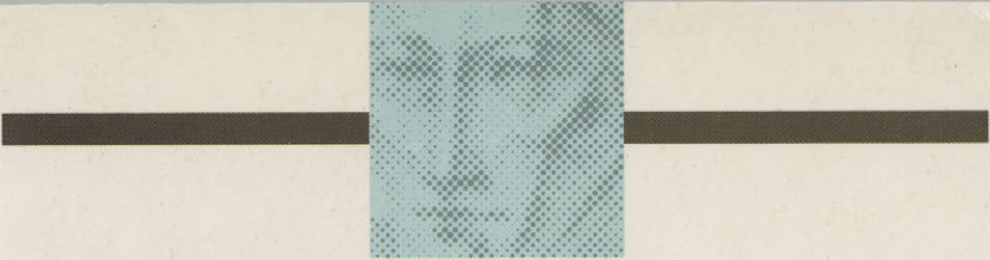
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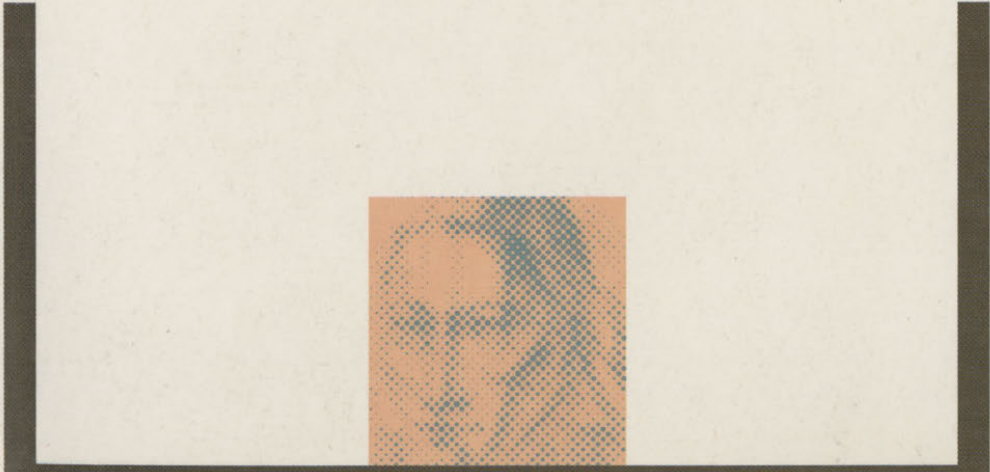
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*A Short History  
of Marianist Spirituality*

LAWRENCE J. CADA



MODERN THEOLOGY & MARIANIST SPIRITUALITY



*This book by L. Cada about the History of Marianist Spirituality opens the Series Modern Theology & Marianist Spirituality. The evolution of our spirituality is presented through it and it shows how such spirituality was born and how it has been responding to the needs and challenges of people and groups for two centuries. While expanding and developing, such spirituality has become better defined. This is also reflected in the book, in which we find the key elements of Marianist Spirituality, its features and main recipients. The book is a result of life and experience. In it we can find many guidelines to initiate ourselves in this spirituality that, as all christian spirituality, is the development of a charismatic nucleus (in this case, the Marianist). As the charisma itself, the spirituality is also a gift from the Spirit, received by a group of the Church for the World. Our spirituality is as much a gift as a task.*

LAWRENCE J. CADA

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of Marianist Spirituality*

*Modern Theology & Marianist Spirituality*

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... It is not just a study  
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LAWRENCE J. CADA

A Short History  
of Marxist Spirituality

Modern Theology & Marxist Spirituality

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## Abbreviations

n.d., No date of publication identified in book or publication.

n.p., No publisher identified in book or publication.

ST, Spanish translation.

### Commentary on SM Rule

ALBANO, *Commentary on the Rule of Life of the Society of Mary*. Dayton: NACMS, 1994.

### Écrits et Paroles 1, 2, and 5

CHAMINADE, *Écrits et Paroles*, vols. 1, 2, 5. Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1994-96.

### ED 1, 2, and 3

CHAMINADE, *Écrits de Direction*, 3 vols. Fribourg: Sém. Marianiste, 1956-64. [Note: ED 1 = MD 1 + MD 2; ED 2 = MD 3; ED 3 = MD 4.]

### ET, English translation

### Jalons 1, 2, 3, and 4

VERRIER, *Jalons d'histoire sur la route de Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade*, 4 vols. Rome: CEMAR, 1977-84. Page numbers refer to the reprint of the French Province.

### Lettres 1, 2, 3, etc.

CHAMINADE, *Lettres de M. Chaminade*, 8 vols. Vols. 1-5 (Nivelles: Havaux, 1930-34); Vols. 6-8 (Rome: AGMAR, 1977-79).

### MD 1, 2, 3, and 4

CHAMINADE, *Marianist Direction*, 4 vols. Vols. 1-3 (Dayton: Marianist Publications, 1966-69); vol. 4 (Dayton: MRC, 1981).

[Note: MD 1 + MD 2 = ED 1; MD 3 = ED 2; MD 4 = ED 3.]

### MO, HAKENEWERTH, *Marianist Origins*. Rome: n.p., 1990.

### MRC, Marianist Resources Commission.

### MW 1, 2, CHAMINADE, *Marian Writings*, 2 vols. Dayton: MRC, 1980

### NACMS, North American Center for Marianist Studies.

### SM Rule, *Rule of Life of the Society of Mary*. Dayton: n.p., 1983.

### Spirit 1, 2, 3, and 4

[KLOBB and LEBON] *The Spirit of Our Foundation*, 4 vols. Vol. 1 (Dayton: St. Mary's Convent, 1911); vols. 2-3 (Dayton: Mount St. John Normal School, 1916-20); vol. 4 (St. Louis: MRC, 1977).

### WMP, CHAMINADE, *Writings on Mental Prayer*. Dayton: MRC, 1979.



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 CHAMINADE, *Œuvres de Chaminade*, 3 vols. Edouard, Sem. Montenotte, 1928-34.  
 [Note: ED 1 = MD 1 + MD 2; ED 2 = MD 3; ED 3 = MD 4.]  
 ET, English translation.  
 JAMES, J. J. and J. VARRIN, *Œuvres de Chaminade*, 4 vols. Rome: CEMAR, 1973-81. Page numbers refer to the reprint of the French Province.  
 LATTRE, J. J. et al.  
 CHAMINADE, *Œuvres de St. Chaminade*, 8 vols. Vols. 1-2 (Nouvelles Œuvres), 1983-86; Vols. 3-8 (Œuvres ADMAR), 1977-80.  
 MD 1, 2, 3, and 4.  
 CHAMINADE, *Œuvres de Chaminade*, 4 vols. Vol. 1-3 (Dayton: Marianist Publications, 1986-89); vol. 4 (Dayton: MRC, 1981).  
 [Note: MD 1 + MD 2 = ED 1; MD 3 = ED 2; MD 4 = ED 3.]  
 MO, HAKENWERTH, *Montenotte Origin*, Rome: n.p., 1990.  
 MRC, Marianist Resource Commission.  
 MW, J. J. CHAMINADE, *Marianist Spirituality*, 2 vols. Dayton: MRC, 1980.  
 NACMS, North American Center for Marianist Studies.  
 SM Rule, *Rule of Life of the Society of Mary*, Dayton: n.p., 1983.  
 SM Rule, 1, 2, 3, and 4.  
 [KILLEN and LARSON, *The Spirit of Our Foundation*, 4 vols. Vol. 1 (Dayton: St. Mary's Convent, 1911); vols. 2-3 (Dayton: Mount St. John Normal School, 1918-20); vol. 4 (St. Louis: MRC, 1977).]  
 WMP, *Chaminade, Writings on Spiritual Prayer*, Dayton: MRC, 1979.

## Introduction

Four years ago we embarked upon the project of studying the Marianist spirit in the light of present-day theology. This spirit was born and has become a tradition during the last two centuries. This tradition encompasses experience and reflection, spirituality and pastoral care. Thus consolidated, a tradition beginning from the seed planted by Father Chaminade and sprouting from the charism received through him, has been developed by many as they have handed it down to each succeeding generation, thus laying out a guiding thread through Marianist history.

The theology of each period of these two centuries has helped to clarify, deepen and enrich our spirit. Those of us who are destined to live in this period following Vatican Council II also wish to compare this spirit systematically with present-day theology, above all, that theology arising from the Council and prolonging its message, the message of a Council that has been a *'veritable prophecy for the life of the Church, as it will continue to be for many years in the third millennium that has only just begun'* (John Paul II, *Osservatore Romano* of 28 February 2000). Thus Marianist thought will be able to fill in any gaps of which it is aware, broaden its horizons and come to realize the wealth it possesses.

Such an effort is necessary. In this way we can provide a better theological foundation for what we believe and put into practice. Undoubtedly, in their formation and study, certain Marianists have had a preference for or ascribed greater importance to either present-day theology or the Marianist spirit. Despite all their efforts, there are few who have succeeded in integrating present-day theology with Marianist thought. This too is advisable in order to deepen the unity and convergence in the manner



of understanding and presenting our spirituality and of mapping out our path of formation in the faith. At first we tended to think that this was impossible. However, we came to see that it was possible to reach this goal. The arrival of the third millennium gives us another reason to work on a re-interpretation, adaptation and enrichment of the legacy received from Father W. J. Chaminade, in order to make it more meaningful for the men and women of today.

Our motivation in this task was threefold: first of all, to reflect on present-day theology, by which we mean the theology born around Vatican Council II that we find in the fundamental documents and in the main theological texts appearing since then. This clarifies the Church's way of working, helps us to read the signs of the times of our day, and motivates us to live the faith and to labor for the mission. Without being acquainted with present-day theology it is difficult to make Marianist spirituality meaningful for people today. Secondly, it allows us to become thoroughly acquainted with our spirit and to situate it within the totality of this theological reflection. We establish contact with the original texts and good commentaries and follow up with study of the implications that theology draws from the thought and actions of Marianists. Finally, we wanted to continue or to start up a dialogue around the interaction between contemporary theology and Marianist thought. In such dialogue we have noted a complementarity, though, with no lack of differences. Basically, the objective is a very ambitious one: to arrive at a Marianist way of thinking that sustains our spirituality, our mission and the formation imparted in the Society.

The recipients of these reflections are the Marianist religious, as well as all of those who live or are desirous of living according to the Marianist spirit. The tone of these publications may make it difficult to understand certain parts of them. In any case we have not chosen to forego, either in form or content, an academic style; and we hope that in spite of everything, they will be accessible to most religious. The preferential beneficiaries of this project are seminarians, religious on sabbatical years and all those undertaking their post-novitiate formation at the present time.



The authors are Marianists. We wish to thank them for the effort they have made to meet the requirements of this project. We know that this has demanded time and effort on their part, coming on top of their usual commitments. Some twenty persons have been involved in the project.

The content of the offerings in this series of publications includes a study of the panorama of the history of theology in the XIX and XX centuries. An historical and descriptive introduction to Marianist spirituality will be given. The following topics will be systematically dealt with: the human person, Jesus Christ, Mary, the Church and consecrated life. All of this will make it possible, in separate volumes, to see the implications to be drawn from these studies for initial and ongoing Formation and concretely for the working out of adequate curriculums, above all for initial formation, to enable assimilation of this Marianist spirit.

Accordingly, 8 publications are planned. Today we are beginning with the first of these: *A Short History of Marianist Spirituality*, by L. Cada, who for many years has been involved in reflection on this subject, above all when he was Director of NACMS. He has put great interest and dedication into this study in addition, of course, to great intelligence, and all of this is reflected in the work we are now publishing. We also wish to thank Father Eduardo Benlloch and Father Theodore Koehler for reading, commenting on and making important suggestions that the author bore in mind before proceeding to the final publication. Our thanks go likewise to the team in charge of this project: Johann Roten, Timothy Phillips and Ignacio Otano (now replaced by Lorenzo Amigo).

We are beginning these publications in the year of Father Chaminade's beatification. Let us ask for his grace and his blessing to ensure that this effort contributes to arousing even greater enthusiasm and interest in what he said and wrote.

JOSÉ MARÍA ARNAIZ  
*Assistant General for Religious Life*



The author is indebted to the many individuals who have assisted in the preparation of this project. We hope that this book will be of some use to the many who are interested in the history of the Negro in the United States. The author is indebted to the many individuals who have assisted in the preparation of this project. We hope that this book will be of some use to the many who are interested in the history of the Negro in the United States.

## Presentación

Hace cuatro años emprendimos el proyecto de estudiar el espíritu marianista a la luz de la teología actual. Este espíritu ha nacido y se ha convertido en tradición en los dos últimos siglos. En esa tradición hay experiencia y reflexión, hay espiritualidad y pastoral. Así se ha consolidado una tradición que comienza con la semilla plantada por el P. Chaminade y que brota del carisma recibido por él, y ha sido desarrollada por muchos cuando la han transmitido a las diferentes generaciones. De tal suerte han puesto un hilo conductor a la historia de los marianistas.

La teología de cada momento de estos dos siglos ha ayudado a clarificar, ahondar y enriquecer nuestro espíritu. Aquellos a quienes nos toca vivir en este período posterior al Vaticano II, también queremos confrontar, de una manera sistemática, este espíritu con la teología actual, sobre todo la que nace del Concilio y prolonga su mensaje. Un Concilio que ha sido «una verdadera profecía para la vida de la Iglesia y continuará siéndolo por muchos años en el tercer milenio apenas iniciado» (Juan Pablo II, *Oss. Rom.*, 28 febrero 2000). De esta manera, el pensamiento marianista llenará lagunas que en él se advierten, ampliará horizontes y tomará conciencia de la riqueza que encierra.

Este esfuerzo es necesario. Con él podemos dar una mejor fundamentación teológica a lo que creemos y vivimos. No hay duda de que, en su formación y estudio, algunos marianistas han dado una gran importancia y preferencia tanto a la teología actual como al espíritu marianista. Son pocos los que, a pesar de que lo han intentado, han sabido integrar teología actual y pensamiento marianista. Éste es, también, conveniente para profundizar en la unidad y convergencia en el modo de entender y



de presentar nuestra espiritualidad, y formular nuestro camino de formación en la fe. De entrada, creímos que quizá fuera imposible. Sin embargo, hemos visto que se podía llegar a la meta. La llegada del tercer milenio nos motiva para trabajar en una reinterpretación, adaptación y enriquecimiento de la herencia recibida del P. Chaminade a fin de hacerla más significativa para los hombres y mujeres de hoy.

La intención que nos ha movido en este trabajo ha sido triple: En primer lugar, reflexionar sobre la teología actual, es decir, la que nace en torno al Vaticano II y encontramos en los documentos fundamentales y en los grandes textos de teología que han visto la luz en los años posteriores. Ella nos aclara el modo de proceder de la Iglesia, nos ayuda a leer los signos de los tiempos de nuestros días, nos motiva para vivir la fe y para la misión. Sin conocer la teología actual es difícil hacer significativa la espiritualidad marianista para el hombre de hoy. En segundo lugar, nos hace bien conocer nuestro espíritu y situarlo en el conjunto de esa reflexión actual. Esto se consigue en contacto con los textos originales y con los buenos comentarios, así como a través del estudio de las implicaciones que la teología trae en el pensamiento y en la acción de los marianistas. Por fin, hemos querido proseguir o iniciar un diálogo en torno a la interacción entre la teología contemporánea y el pensamiento marianista. En ese diálogo se ha advertido complementariedad pero no han faltado divergencias. El objetivo, en el fondo, es muy ambicioso: llegar a un modo de pensar marianista que sustente nuestra espiritualidad, nuestra misión y la formación que se da en la Compañía.

Los destinatarios de estas reflexiones son los religiosos marianistas. Lo son, también, todos cuantos viven o desean vivir según el espíritu marianista. El tono de estas publicaciones puede hacer difícil la comprensión de algunas de sus partes. De todas formas, no se ha querido renunciar, ni en la forma ni el contenido, al estilo académico. Esperamos que, con todo, sea accesible a la mayor parte de los religiosos. Son destinatarios preferenciales de este proyecto los seminaristas, los religiosos en años sabáticos y aquellos que se encuentran haciendo su formación de postnoviciado.



Los autores son marianistas. Les agradecemos el esfuerzo que han hecho para responder a las exigencias de este proyecto. Sabemos que les ha supuesto tiempo y esfuerzo ya que este trabajo se ha unido a sus tareas habituales. Han sido unas 20 las personas implicadas en el proyecto.

El contenido de todo lo que se ofrecerá en esta serie de publicaciones incluye el estudio del panorama de la historia de la teología de los siglos XIX y XX. Se hará una presentación evolutiva y descriptiva de la espiritualidad marianista. Se abordarán, de modo sistemático, los siguientes aspectos: la persona humana, Jesucristo, María, la Iglesia y la Vida consagrada. Todo ello permitirá, en un volumen aparte, ver las implicaciones que este estudio trae para la Formación inicial y permanente y, de modo concreto, para la elaboración de los *curricula* adecuados, sobre todo para la formación inicial, a fin de asimilar este espíritu marianista.

Por lo mismo, se harán ocho publicaciones. Aquí se presenta la primera de ellas: *Una breve historia de la Espiritualidad marianista*. Su autor es Lawrence J. Cada. Por muchos años ha estado implicado en la reflexión sobre este tema, sobre todo desde su responsabilidad como director de Ncmus. Ha puesto en este estudio mucho interés y dedicación, y por supuesto mucha inteligencia. Todo ello se ve reflejado en el trabajo que ahora publicamos. Damos las gracias también a los padres Eduardo Benloch y Theodore Koehler, que leyeron, comentaron e hicieron sugerencias importantes que el autor ha podido tener presentes antes de proceder a la publicación definitiva. Gracias, también, al equipo responsable de este proyecto: Johann Roten, Timothy F. Phillips e Ignacio Otaño, sustituido ahora por Lorenzo Amigo

Comenzamos estas publicaciones en el año de la beatificación del P. Chaminade. Pedimos su ayuda y bendición para que este esfuerzo contribuya a despertar un mayor entusiasmo e interés por lo que él dijo y escribió.

JOSÉ MARÍA ARNAIZ  
Asistente General de Vida religiosa

Los autores son marplatenses. Los antecedentes del estudio son  
para poder hacer responsable a las autoridades de este proyecto.  
damos que las ha sucedido tiempo y esfuerzo ya que este trabajo  
se ha unido a sus tareas habituales. Han sido más de 20 las reuniones  
implicadas en el proyecto.

El contenido de todo lo que se presenta en este libro de mu-  
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teología de los siglos XIX y XX. Se han una presentación esquiva  
y descriptiva de la espiritualidad marplatense de principios de  
modo sistemático las cuestiones esenciales de la doctrina humana. La  
nuestro. Nada de la teología y la vida concreta. Todo ello centrado  
en las voluntades que las implicaciones que este estudio han  
para la formación moral y permanente y de modo concreto para  
la elaboración de los proyectos educativos sobre todo para la for-  
mación inicial a fin de alcanzar una espíritu marplatense.

Por lo mismo se han hecho otras publicaciones. Así se presenta  
la primera de ellas. Una línea intensa de la formación permanente  
su autor es Lavigne. Cada vez que uno está en estado de  
nicho en la reflexión sobre este tema sobre todo desde un cer-  
responsabilidad como dueño de la vida. Ha pasado en este estudio  
grupos interales y de carácter y por supuesto también interseccional.  
Todo ello se va reflejando en el trabajo que estos grupos  
Luz y la vida también a los países de habla hispana y a los  
donde se ha hecho un trabajo constante e intenso. En este trabajo  
particular que el autor ha podido tener presente antes de pro-  
ceder a la publicación definitiva. Gracias también al equipo que  
concede de este proyecto. Juntos, Roger, Timothy, J. Lillina y  
Ignacio. Otro sustituido sobre todo por Lavigne.

Los destinatarios de este libro son los que se dedican a la  
Gobernamos estas publicaciones en el ámbito de la educación  
del I. C. de la Universidad de Buenos Aires y de la Universidad de  
estudios con el fin de despertar un espíritu entusiasta e inter-  
se por el tema de la religión.

Jose María Alvarez  
Asesor General de Vida Religiosa  
encuentran de modo de postmoderno.



## Présentation

Nous nous sommes engagés, il y a quatre ans, dans le projet visant à étudier l'esprit marianiste à la lumière de la théologie actuelle. Cet esprit est né, devenant peu à peu une tradition, lors des deux derniers siècles. Cette tradition est faite d'expérience et de réflexion, de spiritualité et de pastorale. Ainsi consolidée, elle nous vient du grain semé par le P. Chaminade et qui porte le fruit du charisme qu'il reçut; nombreux sont ceux qui l'ont développé lorsqu'il l'ont transmis aux générations successives qui ont, à leur tour, posé un fil conducteur dans l'histoire des marianistes.

La théologie de chaque étape, qui a fait partie de ces deux siècles, nous a aidés à clarifier, à approfondir et à enrichir notre esprit. Nous, qui vivons en ce temps qui suit Vatican II, voulons également confronter d'une manière systématique cet esprit avec la théologie actuelle, notamment celle qui naît du Concile et en prolonge le message. C'est ainsi que la pensée marianiste remplira les lacunes que l'on y perçoit, élargira des horizons et prendra conscience de cette richesse qui lui est propre.

Cet effort est nécessaire. Il nous permettra d'améliorer les fondements théologiques de ce à quoi nous croyons et que nous vivons. Quelques marianistes ont, sans aucun doute, donné leur préférence et une grande importance à la théologie actuelle, d'autres à l'esprit marianiste. Rares sont ceux qui ont su, malgré leurs tentatives, intégrer la théologie actuelle et la pensée marianiste. Il est également favorable pour approfondir l'unité et la convergence dans la manière de comprendre et de présenter



notre spiritualité et de projeter notre chemin de formation dans la foi. Lorsque nous avons commencé, nous avons cru que cela serait probablement impossible. Et pourtant, nous savions que nous pourrions rejoindre notre but. L'arrivée du troisième millénaire nous motive à travailler à une réinterprétation, à l'adaptation et à l'enrichissement de l'héritage que nous avons reçu du P. Chaminade, afin de le rendre plus significatif pour l'homme et la femme d'aujourd'hui.

C'est une triple intention qui nous a appelés à nous engager dans ce travail: En premier lieu, réfléchir à la théologie actuelle, c'est à dire, celle qui naît de Vatican II et que nous trouvons dans les documents fondamentaux et dans les grands textes de théologie qui ont été écrits les années successives. Elle clarifie à nos yeux la manière d'agir de l'Église, nous aide à lire les signes des temps actuels, nous donne une motivation pour vivre la foi et pour nous engager dans la mission. Sans connaître la théologie actuelle, il est difficile de rendre significative la spiritualité marianiste pour l'homme d'aujourd'hui. Deuxièmement, il est bon pour nous que nous connaissions notre esprit pour le placer ensuite dans le contexte d'une réflexion actuelle. Nous pouvons y arriver en consultant les textes originels, les commentaires de qualité, et par l'étude des implications que la théologie apporte dans la pensée et dans l'action des marianistes. Enfin, nous avons voulu continuer à créer un dialogue portant sur l'interaction entre la théologie contemporaine et la pensée marianiste. Une complémentarité a caractérisé ce dialogue, mais les divergences n'ont pas manqué. L'objectif est au fond très ambitieux: arriver à une façon de penser marianiste qui soutienne notre spiritualité, notre mission et la formation donnée dans la Société.

Les destinataires de ces réflexions sont les religieux marianistes, ainsi que tous ceux qui vivent, ou qui souhaitent vivre selon l'esprit marianiste. Le style de ces publications peut rendre difficile la compréhension de certaines de ses parties. L'on

n'a voulu renoncer, ni par la forme ni par le contenu, au style académique; nous espérons qu'il soit compréhensible à la plupart des religieux. Les séminaristes, les religieux en année sabbatique et ceux qui suivent leur formation de post noviciat sont les destinataires préférentiels de ce projet.

Les auteurs de cet ouvrage sont marianistes. Nous les remercions pour l'effort qu'ils ont fait afin de répondre aux exigences de ce projet. Nous savons que cela leur a demandé du temps et des efforts, compte tenu que ce travail s'est ajouté à leurs obligations habituelles. Une vingtaine de personnes ont été engagées dans ce projet.

Le contenu de tout ce qui sera offert dans cette série de publications comprend l'étude du panorama de l'histoire de la théologie des XIX et XX siècles. Une présentation évolutive et descriptive de la spiritualité marianiste en fera partie. Les aspects suivants seront affrontés d'une manière systématique: La personne en tant qu'être humain, Jésus-Christ, Marie, l'Église et la Vie consacrée. Tout cela permettra, dans un volume à part, d'évaluer l'influence de cette étude dans la Formation initiale et permanente et dans l'élaboration des curriculums adéquats, notamment pour la formation initiale, le but étant d'assimiler cet esprit marianiste.

C'est pour cette même raison que 8 publications ont été prévues. Nous commencerons aujourd'hui par la première: *Une brève histoire de la spiritualité marianiste*, dont l'auteur est L. Cada. Il a été engagé pendant de longues années dans la réflexion sur ce thème; l'une des raisons pour cela est son rôle de Directeur du NACMS. Il s'est consacré à cette étude avec grand intérêt et beaucoup de dévouement et d'intelligence. Tout cela transparait dans le travail que nous sommes sur le point de publier. Nous remercions également le P. Eduardo Benlloch et le P. Théodore Koehler qui ont lu, commenté et suggéré un certain nombre d'aspects importants dont l'auteur a tenu compte avant la pu-



blication. Merci également à l'équipe responsable de ce projet: Johann Roten, Timothy Phillips, Ignacio Otaño, remplacé maintenant par Lorenzo Amigo.

Nous commençons à publier ces travaux durant l'année de la béatification du P. Chaminade. Nous demandons sa grâce et sa bénédiction afin que cet effort contribue à éveiller un enthousiasme et un intérêt toujours plus vifs envers ce qu'il dit et ce qu'il écrit.

JOSÉ MARÍA ARNAIZ

*Assistant Général de Vie Religieuse*

## Preface

This paper is one of seven papers on the theme of Marianist Spirituality in the light of current theology which were prepared under the direction of Father José María Arnaiz and the General Administration of the Society of Mary according to the plan announced in the *SM 3 Offices Bulletin* No. 63 (April 1, 1996). The other six authors and their topics are:

Fr. Lorenzo AMIGO, *Marianist Spirituality and Current Theology of Religious Life*.

Fr. Eduardo ARENS, *Marianist Spirituality and Current Christology*.

Bro. Hugh BIHL, *Marianist Spirituality and Current Theological Anthropology*.

Fr. John McGRATH, *History of Theology in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*.

Fr. José Ramón GARCÍA MURGA, *Marianist Spirituality and Current Mariology*.

Fr. Johann ROTEN, *Marianist Spirituality and Current Ecclesiology*.

Each author completed a preliminary version of his paper by the end of 1998, which was then sent to two commentators for review. The two commentators who reviewed my paper on the history of Marianist spirituality were Father Eduardo Benlloch and Father Théodore Koehler.

In April 1999, the authors met in Rome and presented the preliminary versions of all seven papers as well as written critiques of the commentators. Each paper was commented upon by the other authors. Suggestions were made for changes and improvements of each paper in the light of the critiques of the



other authors present at the meeting and the written critiques of the commentators.

I am especially indebted to Father Benlloch and Father Koehler for their excellent reviews of my paper. This final version of my paper has been revised according to their critiques and those of the other authors. I have indicated the main places where I have changed my text or where the commentators or authors have interpretations which differ from mine. One short passage of Father Benlloch's commentary has been added as an appendix to this paper.

LAWRENCE J. CADA

Prague, September 8, 1999

## Opening Considerations About Terminology

### *The Word Marianist*

In this paper, the word *Marianist* – both the adjective and the noun – will refer to everyone in the Marianist Family, not just to members of the Society of Mary or to Marianist religious. Thus, the Marianist spirituality whose history will be traced is the spirituality of both lay Marianists and religious Marianists.

This usage, which has become more common in recent years, is simply the latest phase of an evolution that has been going on steadily since about the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before then, the term *Marianist* was almost never used, neither for religious Marianists nor lay Marianists. Father Chaminade did not use the term. The Constitutions of the Society of Mary and Daughters of Mary composed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century do not use the term. Neither did Father Simler in his biography of the Founder.

During the first half of the present century, use of the term was still rare. Classics such as *The Spirit of Our Foundation* or Father Neubert's *My Ideal* managed to characterize Marianist spirituality quite adequately without ever using the word *Marianist*.<sup>1</sup> However, when the Cause of Father Chaminade was introduced

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, the compilers of *The Spirit of Our Foundation* do use the word in one place when they point out a few of its rare occurrences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Once, in 1837, Father Chaminade was addressed as the Superior General of the Marianists. In 1858, Father Lalanne remarked that members of the Society of Mary could be called Marianists to distinguish them from the Marists. In 1877, an indult that granted a special proper to the Society of Mary used the term. See *Spirit 4*, chapter 2, "The Updating of Monastic Observances", § 14, p. 78.



in 1918, the title of the *positio* included the words *Fundatoris Societatis Mariae, vulgo Marianistarum*. Somewhere in the years between 1915 and 1920, the monumental Spanish encyclopedia *Es-pasa* published the volume in which the Society of Mary and Daughters of Mary were treated and the term *Marianist* was used to refer to members of both congregations.<sup>2</sup> In 1930, Father Gadiou used the term in the subtitle of his short history of the Society and in the middle section of the book, which treats Marianist spirituality.<sup>3</sup> However, these uses of the term were still quite infrequent. This situation started to change around the time of World War II. Magazines and periodicals published in the Society began to change their names to *The Marianist* or *The Marianists*. After the Daughters of Mary restored the vow of stability to their profession of vows in 1947, they gradually began to call themselves Marianist Sisters. When Father Neubert published his biography of Father Schellhorn in 1948, he identified him as a Marianist.<sup>4</sup> The adjective *Marianist* began to be applied to an ever expanding range of Marianist realities: Marianist schools, Marianist education, the Marianist apostolate, Marianist prayer, Marianist Leagues, Marianist documents, and Marianist Studies.<sup>5</sup> By the time the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary undertook the revision of their Constitutions at the time of the Second

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<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Father Benloch for pointing out this early use of the term *Marianist*.

<sup>3</sup> [Louis GADIOU, SM], *La Société de Marie (Marianistes)*, (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1930), part 2, pp. 87-123

<sup>4</sup> Émile NEUBERT, SM, *Le Père Joseph Schellhorn, Marianiste: Un prêtre de Marie, 1865-1935* (Paris: Centre de Documentation scolaire, 1948).

<sup>5</sup> The causes for the emergence and spread of the term *Marianist* are complex and have not yet been fully analyzed by Marianist historians. At times the expansion met with resistance. The new term struck members of the Society in some parts of the United States as an unwelcome neologism being foisted on them by a faction of misguided enthusiasts. In their efforts to advance a dubious agenda, they risked heedlessly supplanting the venerable and revered title *Brother of Mary*.



Vatican Council, use of the term was widespread. The 1967 Constitutions of the Society of Mary used the term frequently. It was used freely in the new texts to characterize Marianist identity, the Marianist charism, and Marianist religious life. At the same time the term was used to identify the Family of Mary or comprehensive Marianist Family made up of all persons and groups in all states of life "who recognize their common bond in the Marianist spirit."<sup>6</sup> Most recently, members of Marianist lay communities have claimed the noun *Marianist* as their own proper name and have begun to call themselves Marianists.<sup>7</sup>

### *Marianist Spirituality Is a Lay Spirituality*

It is often instructive to pay attention to the way changes in terminology signal important shifts in Marianist self-understanding. The short excursus on the term *Marianist* which has just been sketched is a case in point.<sup>8</sup> The ease with which we now call everyone in the Marianist Family a Marianist is one indicator of the belief and conviction that what we all share as Marianists is of the deepest importance – important enough to have its meaning carried by a single name which conveys the profound value we find in our common Marianist identity.

In this light, our identity as Marianists appears to be even more important than our identity as either lay people or reli-

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<sup>6</sup> *SM Rule*, art. 1.1

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the recent report in Spanish, French, and English of the Second International Convocation of Marianist Lay Communities. *II Encuentro Internacional de Comunidades Laicas Marianistas*, 3-10 Agosto 1997, Lliria, Valencia, España.

<sup>8</sup> Some other terms that come to mind are *family spirit*, *filial piety*, *Working Brother*, *education*, *community*, and *Family of Mary*. At times, shifts in usage of terms such as these mark important shifts in Marianist self-understanding. The rise and fall of the term *filial piety* will be examined later in this paper. See pp. 75-83 below.



gious. In actuality, this belief and conviction is not new. Only the terminology is new. Members of Marianist lay communities have begun to call themselves Marianists only recently, but there has always been at least an implicit awareness that deep Marianist identity is not the exclusive possession of members of the Society.

Father Simler chose to publish his famous circular on the characteristic virtues of the Society of Mary on what he called "the Occasion of the First Centenary of Its Origin." The date of the circular was 1894, not 1917. In the opening section of the circular, he pointed out that "the year 1889 inaugurated a series of centenaries" which mark the main events of the French Revolution and its aftermath at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. It is precisely in this period, according to Father Simler, that the Society of Mary "finds several dates indicating the successive phases of its origin. It was, in fact, during the French Revolution that Father Chaminade, obedient to a vocation which originated in a previous epoch, began his apostolic life and the works of zeal of which the Society of Mary was to be the soul, the center, and the crown."<sup>9</sup> Simler's viewpoint parallels the one that will be adopted in this paper.<sup>10</sup> The Marianist spirituality whose history is being traced had its origins some 25 to 30 years before the Society was founded in 1817.

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph SIMLER, SM, "Instruction on the Characteristic Features of the Society of Mary on the Occasion of the First Centenary of Its Origin", *Circular No. 62*, July 10, 1894 (ET. Dayton: St. Mary's Convent, 1895), p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Today, we would take exception to Father Simler's characterizing the Society as the "soul, center, and crown" of the Marianist Family. As Brother García de Vinuesa has pointed out, we have moved beyond such a conception of the Family of Mary. "In fact, not too long ago – in the 1960s and 1970s – the Family of Mary was often represented graphically by concentric circles. In the center, *naturally*, were found the religious of the Society of Mary. Curiously, in such a concept, the Marianist Sisters were not even included. Today, such a falsely hierarchized structure, priest-centered and with little sense of sharing, has been replaced by one that is more integral and democratic, fraternal and equidistant: where all are co-responsible for the whole." Francisco José García de Vinuesa, SM, "The Family of Mary," in *Commentary on SM Rule*, p. 446



This viewpoint presumes that Marianist spirituality is fundamentally a lay spirituality.<sup>11</sup> It grounds the spiritual life of both lay Marianists and religious Marianists. Its central features are founded on the new life engendered in all Christians by Baptism. A Marianist does not need to profess religious vows to live Marianist life fully. The spirituality of the first members of the Bordeaux Sodality, who began gathering in 1800 and made their first acts of consecration in 1801, was Marianist spirituality. These first Marianists were lay people. Many of them had begun their association with Father Chaminade several years earlier, during the Revolution. Germs of the spirituality he shared with them can be

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<sup>11</sup> The two reviewers of my paper and several of the other authors in the Marianist spirituality project disagree with my characterization of Marianist spirituality as a "lay" spirituality. They all agree with the idea I am trying to express (that it is the same Marianist spirituality that is lived by both lay Marianists and religious Marianists), but for various reasons they disagree with the language. Father Koehler holds that what we call Marianist spirituality began with lay people and was transformed by Chaminade under providential circumstances into a new spirituality for religious. Here we have an intuition of the Founder that guided him from Mussidan on. It was not just religious life that was essential for the existence of the Church, but a religious life with a new spirit. Chaminade understood that restoring the former great religious orders was not enough. The Holy spirit was evoking a new Spirit in religious life. The new Spirit involved evidently new structures.

Father Benloch finds the terminology historically inaccurate and anachronistic. The word *lay* was used in Chaminade's time to distinguish the laity from the clergy but not to distinguish lay people from people in religious life. Father Benloch would prefer to say that Marianist spirituality is a fundamentally Christian spirituality, which can be expressed and lived by means of Baptism and Confirmation alone or by means of religious vows as well.

Brother Bihl believes that calling Marianist spirituality a lay spirituality makes it sound as though priests are not important or religious are not important. Father Arnaiz believes that calling Marianist spirituality a lay spirituality leaves one wondering how Marianist religious go about living this "lay" spirituality. Father García Murga doubts that Marianist spirituality is a "lay" spirituality. He thinks the structure of religious life implies a greater involvement in worship and was considered by Chaminade through the vow of stability to be the culmination of our Marianist covenant with Mary.



traced back to his final years in Mussidan. The profession of religious vows does not make any fundamental change in the Marianist spirituality of religious Marianists.

### *Marianist Spirituality Is Adaptive*

The possibility that some Marianists could become religious soon surfaced, of course; but many years passed before this possibility became actual. When it did, the members of the State of religious life in the world and the first members of the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary did not stop being sodalists.<sup>12</sup> These first religious Marianists continued to live the same Marianist spirituality they shared with the lay Marianists who made up the larger part of the membership of the Marianist Family in those early days.

This numerical preponderance of lay Marianists did not last. After the Revolution of 1830, membership in adult sodalities dwindled and the ranks of lay Marianists were reduced to a tiny remnant. On the other hand, religious Marianists were devoting themselves in steadily increasing numbers to Christian education and the burgeoning ministry of teaching. They adapted to the ever changing conditions according to which the French government permitted religious congregations to operate as legal educational associations authorized to conduct schools. Increasing emphasis was placed on the religious identity of Marianist religious, that is, their membership in a government-authorized teaching association. Most new members of the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary became Marianists because they

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<sup>12</sup> It is noteworthy that the membership rolls of the Bordeaux Sodality continue to register payment of dues for all the early members of "the little Society" until the year 1826. The Head of Temporalities paid the dues in a lump sum for all the members of the Society of Mary. Priests and Teaching Brothers paid twice the amount paid by Working Brothers.



wanted to join a religious congregation devoted to teaching. Almost none of them had ever been adult lay Marianists, and very few of them had experienced Marianist spirituality outside the context of religious life or a school conducted by Marianist religious. However, Marianist spirituality showed itself broad, supple, and deep enough to suit this new cohort of Marianists and inspire them in their life and work which was so different from that of the Bordeaux sodalists.

Father Chaminade died in 1850. During the next 100 years Marianist spirituality flourished and spread across the world. It was carried mainly by the successes of the Society of Mary which proved to be one of the accomplished teaching congregations to emerge from 19<sup>th</sup> century France.<sup>13</sup> Marianist spirituality continued to adapt. It was rich and fecund enough to ground the life and work of several thousand Marianist religious teachers and to influence the faith of an even greater number of students of these Marianist educators. By the time the word *Marianist* emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Marianist spirituality had taken root and was thriving on five continents. It had adapted to the varying conditions found in geographically and culturally diverse locales around the world.

Today, we are able to look back on the spread of Marianist spirituality in time and place from its humble beginnings in Bor-

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<sup>13</sup> Brother Bihl commented on the fact that in several places in my paper I say that we in the Society of Mary moved into education, that we were a success in becoming a teaching congregation, and that this success was good. Brother Bihl, on the other hand, suggests that this success was *not* good. Worldly success is not always good from the viewpoint of faith. With our worldly success we became inflated with ourselves and lost the need for faith because we were successful. Perhaps there is a relation of cause and effect, for example, between our increasing success in schools and our gradual discontinuation of using the System of Virtues. Sometimes, worldly success is an obstacle to our faith. Why did we lose Marianist lay communities for so long? If they are essential to our identity, it means we were out of touch with our identity for more than 100 years. Why did we lose our identity for 100 years?



deaux. We can see how it adapted from being a vibrant spirituality for lay people to being a spirituality for religious as well. We can see how it adapted to the apostolic work of education. We can see how it adapted to meet the diverse needs of locales throughout the world. And most recently, we can see how it resumed inspiring the life and work of a growing number of lay Marianists, who once again outnumber religious Marianists.

### *The Word Spirituality*

Another term which has emerged and gone through an evolution during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is *spirituality*. The word refers to the understanding and practice of the spiritual life as it is experienced by a person or group. In current usage, the term extends beyond the strictly Christian context.<sup>14</sup> One can, for example, speak of Hindu spirituality, New Age spirituality, or even the spirituality of the occult. However, in this paper, the term will refer to Christian spirituality.

It is possible, moreover, to distinguish two allied meanings of the word. It can refer to the life and practice of all Christians, as in the title of Pierre Pourrat's *La Spiritualité chrétienne* or Louis Bouyer's *A History of Christian Spirituality*. On the other hand, the term more commonly implies a centering of the spiritual life

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<sup>14</sup> Strictly speaking, the term *spirituality* did not emerge in this century; it re-emerged. The term was used for a short time in 17<sup>th</sup> century France with a meaning which resembles the one in use today. The word was used interchangeably with *devotion* and *piety* to express the personal, affective relationship with God experienced by the original adherents, the *dévots* and *dévotes*, of the profusion of spiritualities that flourished among French aristocrats in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After religious enthusiasm, quietism, and mysticism became the target of ridicule and suspicion in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the word *spirituality* fell out of use and disappeared. It lay dormant for about 200 years. See Philip SHELDRAKE, SJ, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), pp. 34-36.



found in a particular time, place, group, spiritual tradition, or Christian mystery. With this narrower meaning of the word, one can, for example, speak of the baroque spirituality of the Counter-Reformation, the spirituality of the Rhineland mystics, Franciscan spirituality, liturgical or sacramental spirituality, Incarnation-centered spirituality, anthropocentric spirituality, or a host of other spiritualities. In this second sense of the word, a spirituality encompasses and focuses on special aspects of the Gospel which are given emphasis through devotions and practices, kinds of prayer, the approach to one's relationship with Christ, theological and doctrinal understandings, attitudes taken towards people, the human community, and the world — all of which when taken together distinguish this particular way of living and experiencing the Christian life from others. A spirituality is one embodiment of what Christian scriptures call life in the Spirit or the Christ life. It stands to the fullness of Christian life as the personality of an individual stands to the fullness of his or her human life. It is the collective Christian personality of a group of Christians who journey together along a specific Christian way.<sup>15</sup>

When the effective breadth and versatile usefulness of the word *spirituality* is examined today, it is somewhat surprising that its recent history is so brief. Before World War I, the word in its present sense was almost unknown. Father Chaminade and our Marianist forebears never used the word as they passed on to us the precious heritage of Marianist spirituality.

It was only in the years during which Henri Bremond was

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<sup>15</sup> Father Arnaiz makes creative use of the metaphor of a *camino* or way to represent and bring into relief the characteristics of Marianist spirituality. See [José María ARNAIZ, SM,] "Camino marianista de vida cristiana," *Marianist International Review* no. 13.2 (July 1992). Also in Lawrence CADA, SM, editor, *The Promised Woman: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Marianist Spirituality, May 5-13, 1992, Dayton, Ohio, USA*, Monograph Series No. 37 (Dayton: NACMS, March 1995), pp. 565-97. ET. "The Marianist Way of Living the Christian Life," in *ibid.* pp. 535-64.



turning out the successive volumes of his monumental *Histoire littéraire du Sentiment religieux en France* (1916-33) that the word experienced a comeback. Certain Catholic theologians and church historians in France began using the word in respected periodicals such as the *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, founded in 1920, and the prestigious *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, the first volume of which appeared in 1932. Books were written to explain spirituality and thus added to the expansion of the use of the term. Bremond himself uses the term when he marshals his arguments for regarding the followers of Cardinal Bérulle as constituting not just one of the schools of the spiritual life that arose in France, but as *the* French School. According to Bremond, these masters of the spiritual life were not simply a school of theology, but a true school of the interior life, of *haute spiritualité*, who took great care to exploit fully and exclusively the magnificent premises laid out by Cardinal Bérulle.<sup>16</sup>

The term was favored by writers seeking to blaze a new trail in the field of ascetical theology. The regnant doctrine, found in widely used manuals such as Adolph Tanqueray's *The Spiritual Life*, envisioned a fundamental division between the ordinary spiritual life of most Christians and the uncommon spiritual life of the few Christians favored with extraordinary gifts of mystical prayer. Ordinary spiritual life, in this conception, is made up of the way of the commandments and the way of the counsels. Christians in the way of the commandments advance in holiness by observing the commandments and receiving the sacraments. Some ordinary Christians enter the state of perfection, which in-

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<sup>16</sup> Henri BRÉMOND, *Histoire littéraire du Sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 11 vols. (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1916-33), vol. 3, p. 4. "Nevertheless, all remained unswervingly faithful to the original tradition, content to work out the implications of the magnificent premises set forth by Cardinal de Bérulle. Truly a School, not of theology, but of the interior life and the highest spirituality." vol. 3, p.1 of the ET.



cludes religious, who practice the evangelical counsels, and bishops. In contrast to this spiritual life common to most Christians, the unusual spiritual life of those who receive rare extraordinary gifts of mystical prayer is seen as completely exceptional and reserved for very few.

Advocates of the new vision hoped to move beyond this theory of a bifurcated spiritual life by emphasizing the continuity of the Christian life in all its variety and phases. According to writers such as Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, God offers the graces of mystical prayer to everyone. The concept of mysticism should not be limited to exceptional and rare phenomena, but should be regarded as the goal of all Christians.<sup>17</sup> For these writers, the more fluid and comprehensive term *spirituality* encompassed the wider scope, variety, and continuity of the spiritual life of all Christians.<sup>18</sup>

In the decades since the Second Vatican Council there has been a sea change in Catholic theology away from the non-historical syntheses of the past to a greater reflection on human experience as an authentic source of divine revelation. This transformation has moved the study of the spiritual life away from

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<sup>17</sup> SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality and Holiness*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>18</sup> As use of the term expanded, it began to be used as a synonym for *spiritual school* or *spiritual tradition* to designate the most well-known spiritualities. This second sense of the word did not advance as rapidly, because Catholic theology was still dominated by the neo-scholastic approach with its love for unchanging universals and over-arching unities. There was little room for a theological account of the wide variations of the experience of holiness among Christians of various times and climes. Even Bouyer, who advances far beyond the ascetical theology of the manuals, is reluctant to speak of the differences of spiritualities despite the convincing and insightful descriptions he gives of those differences. He carefully contrasts the particular historical circumstances and unique personalities of major figures which lead to the rich diversity of spiritual traditions, but he stresses the essential oneness of Christian spirituality and cautions that "we must be very reserved about speaking of spiritualities in the plural." Quoted by Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, p. 90. See also *ibid.*, p. 47.



the static approach of ascetical theology or spiritual theology to an experience-based and historically-conscious study of Christian spirituality. There is great emphasis on "the historical concreteness of revelation in Jesus and subsequent Christian tradition" as well as "the personal assimilation of salvation in Christ by each person within changing historical, cultural, and social circumstances that demand new approaches to Christian conduct. As a result of these shifts in perspective, the realization has emerged that specific spiritual traditions are initially embodied in people rather than doctrine and grow out of life rather than from abstract ideas."<sup>19</sup>

This paper will take advantage of the cogency and expressive power of both the words *Marianist* and *spirituality* as they are used today. There is an obvious anachronism in transposing these terms to the times of Father Chaminade and the early Marianists. Furthermore, this choice of terminology will, of course, introduce bias into the account. These opening considerations are meant to unpack some of the tacit presuppositions embedded in this biased terminology. Using the terms seems, with these caveats in mind, worth the risk. We know that all history is biased history; and, what is more important, we are convinced that the Marianist spirituality of which we speak is, just as it has been for the generations of Marianists who came before us, our gift from God.

### *The Word We*

I end these opening considerations with a few words of explanation on how I am using the word *we*. Ordinarily, in formal writing, I do not use the word. It seems oddly discordant in the impersonal tone of scholarly studies studded with footnotes. At

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 33



times it can sound pretentious, suggesting the papal *we* or the plural of majesty. At other times the word seems patronizing or presumptuous. I, the writer, presume that you, the reader, agree with me and give me leave to speak for both of us. Even when none of these objections apply, use of the word *we* is ambiguous. Who exactly are these unnamed "we" to whom I am constantly referring?

In this paper, the word *we* refers to present-day Marianists. I assume the stance of one Marianist speaking to other Marianists. I presume that we share the same concern about the future of the Marianist Family, and I have taken the liberty of using the term *we* because I believe we also share a common interest in exploring together the story of our Marianist spirituality. It is not simply a departure from standard writing style. I offer my telling of the story of Marianist spirituality and invite you to listen and, if any of you chooses, to respond with additions and corrections or with your own telling of the story.

As I say in the title, this version of the story is "a short history." It is intended as a rapid survey of the state of the question as it now stands. In our various ways, most of us agree that the Marianist world is passing through a time of change. Old patterns and paradigms are being replaced by new dreams and new visions. But there is still much uncertainty. We need to discern more fully the directions in which Providence is prompting us with the signs of our changing times and with the intuitions that come from being penetrated with Marianist spirituality. One aid in this discernment is a grasp of the history of Marianist spirituality from the vantage point of the present. How do we Marianists of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century see our Marianist past? How do we understand the origins and evolution of Marianist spirituality up to the present? What light does this understanding throw on the ways Marianist spirituality will be embodied in our future? How do we perceive our own role as the present generation of



the Marianist Family responsible for handing on the torch of our charism to those who will come after us?

This paper, then, is not just a scholarly study. I will, of course, point out what appears to me to be the best scholarship to date, but I will also be searching the past of Marianist spirituality for clues to its future. Where are we going? Where is God calling us? Where is Mary leading us? These are questions we all care about. This common care and concern is here conveyed by the expressive power of the word *we*.

## *The Modern Era: Matrix of Marianist Spirituality*

### *Marianist Spirituality Is a Modern Spirituality*

When we look back at our foundation amid the dramatic events of the French Revolution, we add the perspective of two extra centuries to the outlook of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists. We can situate the Revolution at or near the midpoint of the Modern Era, the climax of a vast historical process that had begun some two to three centuries earlier and which finally seems to be drawing to a close in our own day.<sup>1</sup> Historians assure

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<sup>1</sup> For the last 50 years or so, various experts have been suggesting that the Modern Era is now in the process of ending or has already ended. While the Modern Era may, in fact, be winding down, none of these suggestions has persuaded me that the Era is already over. To give just one example, *postmodernism* is the name that is usually given to the theories and thought of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and certain other intellectuals. This label has always struck me as odd, because these thinkers are or were still fully engaged in the philosophical and epistemological questions that have dominated the second half of the Modern Era. What do human beings know, and how can they be certain that what they know is true? Is metaphysics possible? Is any knowledge objective or certain? Or is all truth hopelessly relative, not much more than some kind of rhetorical trick or disguised power play? These thinkers have taken Modern relativism farther than it has ever gone and in brilliant new ways. They are surely post-Nietzschean, post-Existentialist, and perhaps post-Structuralist, but are they really *post-Modern*? They seem still to be very much *in* the Modern Era rather than *after* it.

I believe the question of whether or not we are still in the Modern Era is an important one for Marianists. In this paper I argue that Marianist spirituality is a Modern spirituality that arose within and as a response to the historical and cultural circumstances of the Modern Era. The evolution of Marianist spirituality



us that there are enough unifying historical elements in the five centuries from 1500 to the present that they can be usefully grouped into a single great period in the course of Western civilization, the so-called Modern Era.

This division of history is more than a matter of academic interest for Marianists. Our spirituality is a Modern spirituality,<sup>2</sup> and we can grasp the history of our spirituality better if we grasp the history of Modernity. To back up this claim we will make a rapid review of this period and identify several important aspects

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has paralleled the unfolding of the *problématique* of the Modern Era. If that Era is finished, what does its disappearance portend for a spirituality linked so closely to the dynamics of that Era?

<sup>2</sup> Father Benloch and several of the authors in the Marianist spirituality writing project commented on my claim that Marianist spirituality is a "Modern" spirituality. Father Benloch contends that the degree of importance I ascribe to the Modern Era as an influence on Chaminade is out of proportion to the intense experiences of the Revolution and the time in Saragossa. These experiences had much more influence on the birth of Marianist spirituality than all the theologians, thinkers, and movements I analyze in this section of my paper.

Father Roten pointed out that important historical influences on the formation of Marianist spirituality, such as the Benedictines, pre-date 1500 and the dawn of the Modern Era. He also cautioned that care must be taken to distinguish between Chaminade's theology and the means he uses. His theology was not a modern theology, but his means are modern.

Father Amigo believes it is problematic to say that Chaminade is modern. Only in our time after the Second Vatican Council do we look on the modern as positive. There is a need to specify what challenges of Modernity Chaminade was responding to.

Father Arnaiz asked for a better enumeration of the characteristics of a "Modern" spirituality. How, then, does Marianist spirituality qualify as one of these Modern spiritualities?

Father García-Murga contends that the question of whether Chaminade was Modern or not Modern is an open question. There is a need to prove more fully that he was open to Modernity. What, for example, is Chaminade's position on authority? Where does he stand with authoritarianism and the good use of authority in relation to subjectivity and to freedom and the free will of the subject? Chaminade was not explicitly modern; certainly the post-Tridentine, baroque theologians he read were not very modern.



of Marianist spirituality which are connected to the historical circumstances in which we had our origins and which have characterized our relationship with wider culture down through the course of Marianist history. These connections are pervasive enough and have lasted long enough that the Modern Era can be regarded as a matrix of Marianist spirituality.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Dawn of a New Era*

The turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century has come to be seen as a major turning point in European history. Even the briefest listing of the persons and events which crowd this period recalls the host of new trends and movements which began at that time and proceeded to transform culture as they continued into the following centuries.

Columbus discovered America and launched the Age of Exploration. Spain and the maritime nations were enriched by gold they brought back to Europe, and the imagination of all Europe thrilled at the astonishing reports of new lands across the seas. Renaissance humanism coupled a sense of freedom and new learning with a rediscovery of the beauty and genius of Classical antiquity. It spread from Italy to Spain, France, and the rest of Europe. Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo gave consummate expression to the new outlook in art and architecture as did Orlando di Lasso and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina in music. At the same time the new technology of printing was deluging the

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<sup>3</sup> Several Marianist writers have provided us accounts of France in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries specifically geared to describing the setting in which the Marianist Family arose and to which it was a response. See, for example, Vincent R. VASEY, SM, *Chaminade: Another Portrait*, Chapter 1: "The Climate" (Dayton: MRC, 1987), pp. 1-17. See also Adolf M. WINDISCH, SM, *The Marianist Social System According to the Writings of William Joseph Chaminade: 1761-1850*, Chapter 1: "French Enlightenment and the Eschatology of the Philosophes" and Chapter 2: "Reconstruction and Christian Ideologies" (Fribourg: St. Paul's Press, 1964), pp. 13-57.



continent with books and the ideas they contained. The posthumous publication of the *De revolutionibus orbium* of Nicholas Copernicus provided the tinder needed to ignite the flame of the Scientific Revolution in the hands of Galileo Galilei, of Johannes Kepler, and eventually of Isaac Newton.

### *The Reformation*

However, the most important development of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the biggest shock to the Church in a thousand years was the Reformation. Martin Luther precipitated the Protestant revolt in 1517. From that point it unfolded through successive episodes with an irreversible momentum until the fabric of Western Christendom was irreparably torn apart. By the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, a religious boundary stretched across Europe separating the Protestant countries to the North from the Catholic ones to the South. This boundary has remained virtually unchanged down to our own day, lasting far longer than the brief 40 years of the Iron Curtain.

Back then, the secularizing processes of the second half of the Modern Era had not yet begun. Religion was not yet relegated to the limited sphere of an individual's private belief. It was most public, and it was everyone's business. Today, most of us have difficulty grasping the degree to which religion penetrated every aspect of European life and culture in those days. We have to make an effort to imagine the extent and strength of the Church's former political power and the seriousness with which European rulers of the past took religion. Everyone cared about religion passionately and took sides in the ever widening conflict. Repeatedly and sometimes with devastating barbarity the struggle turned into a matter of life and death in open warfare.

France was plagued by the Wars of Religion through most



of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. When French Catholics finally won the upper hand over French Protestants in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a residue of bitter memories remained which has colored attitudes in the country since then. Protestants were castigated as heretics. They made up only a small minority in the population of the kingdom. If their heresy was not completely vanquished, it was confined to a zone of guarded toleration in the land which had maintained its proud boast of being the "eldest daughter of the Church."

When Father Chaminade and the first Marianists were fashioning their program of action in response to the religious devastation which followed the Revolution, they found it quite natural to invoke the specter of Protestant heresy that still needed to be extirpated. For example, in 1838, when Father Chaminade submitted the Constitutions of the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary to Rome, he wrote as follows in his cover letter to Pope Gregory XVI.

How great has been the sorrow, which I have felt for a very long time already, at the sight of the unbelievable efforts of impiety, and of modern rationalism and *Protestantism*, devoted to plotting the ruin of the beautiful edifice of revelation. To erect a powerful barrier against the torrent of evil, Heaven inspired me to solicit at the beginning of this century the title of Missionary Apostolic. ... Philosophism and *Protestantism* favored in France by the powers that be have taken over public opinion and seized the schools. They have endeavored to spread in all minds, especially in children and youth, this license of thought which is even worse than that of the heart from which it is inseparable (emphasis added).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Lettres 4*, to Gregory XVI, Sept. 16, 1838, no. 1076, pp. 373-76. Also in *MO*, Document no. 5, pp. 37-39. Also in *Spirit 1*, § 38, pp. 49-52.



In this short but significant document where the Founder is explaining to the pope his plan and the circumstances in which he was led by Providence to found the various branches of the Marianist Family, he does not hesitate to adduce Protestantism – not just once, but twice – as a reason he felt called to launch the Marianist Family. He was keenly aware of the historical circumstances of his time, and he identified repeatedly those factors which were signs of the times that called forth and inspired the Marianist project.

### *The Catholic Reformation*

After the Council of Trent (1545-63), the Catholic Church did its best to consolidate and regroup with the various strategies of the Catholic Reformation. New religious orders sprang up, and among them the Jesuits set the pace. They invented a whole new style of religious life geared for militant apostolic service to help the Church triumph in its struggle against Protestant heresy. The Christian Doctrine movement sought to renew the Church by systematic instruction of youth in the simple truths of the faith according to the method of the new catechisms. Books were not the only medium of catechesis. The exuberant new style of baroque art and architecture was enlisted to reinforce the faith of Catholics by overwhelming them with breathtaking visual beauty in their churches, chapels, and shrines.

Training of priests moved into the new seminaries mandated by Trent where candidates received organized intellectual and spiritual formation. Traditional Catholic theology was reformulated to emphasize the teachings of Trent in the systematic manuals and commentaries of post-Reformation and baroque scholasticism. Today, we look back at this activity through the lens of the neo-Thomist revival of the period between the First and Second Vatican Councils and single out Cardinal Cajetan, Fran-



cisco Suarez, and John of St. Thomas as outstanding representatives of post-Reformation and baroque scholasticism.<sup>5</sup> These names did not figure so prominently in the world of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century other authors among baroque scholastic theologians were more popular and widely read.

During the last 40 years, painstaking research by Marianist scholars, especially by Father Armbruster,<sup>6</sup> has provided us with a fairly complete picture of Father Chaminade's sources.<sup>7</sup> We can list most of the theologians and spiritual writers he read, studied, and cited in his lectures, instructions, and retreat conferences; and in very many cases we can give the titles of the books he used. There is no indication that he consulted the baroque scholastics mentioned above. His favorite authors were other figures in the same current of post-Reformation and baroque scholasticism who were better known in his time.

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<sup>5</sup> To these three names we could add Melchor Cano, Gabriel Vázquez, and Juan de Lugo, who are also regarded today among the more famous baroque scholastic theologians. For an analysis of why these six have come to be regarded during the course of the neo-Thomist revival of our century as important representatives of baroque scholasticism, see Gerald A. McCool, SJ, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York: Seabury-Crossroad, 1977), pp. 9, 13, 175, 179-83, 203, 233-34, 243-44, 259.

<sup>6</sup> For summaries of Father Armbruster's extensive research, see the source lists in *MW* 1, pp. 14-20 (pp. 99-105 in the French), in *MD* 3, pp. 199-212 (pp. 239-53 in *ED* 2), and in *Écrits sur la foi*, as well as in the footnote or endnote apparatus of these works. In most of his recent monographs, Father Armbruster discusses these sources further. See, for example, Jean Baptiste ARMBRUSTER, SM, *Devotion to Mary in Chaminade's Life and Thought* (Cupertino, California: Marianist Province of the Pacific, 1998), p. 5-6 and passim. Volumes 2, 3, and 4 of *Écrits et Paroles* will be devoted to a critical edition of the *Notes d'Instruction*. At this writing, in 1999, only volume 2 has appeared, but Father Armbruster's role in the preparation of this volume is evident from the exacting standards of scholarship used in presenting this important record of the Founder's reading and study.

<sup>7</sup> Father Halter surveys the Founder's sources for the writings on prayer in the commentaries and notes of *WMP*.



Chief among these was Jacques Marchant, a Belgian priest (c.1587-1648). Chaminade transcribed entire passages, in Latin, from Marchant's *Hortus pastorum*, a book written for priests, preachers, and catechists alike, in which is found, among other developments, a long commentary on the *Ave Maria* from which the founder borrowed freely. Marchant also provided him with numerous quotations from the Fathers and from even more ancient writers. To these we must add a certain number of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century preachers such as Bishops Jacques Bénigne Bossuet and Jean Louis Fromentières; the Jesuits Vincent Houdry, Louis Bourdaloue, and Timoléon de Montaigu Cheminai; and the Oratorians Jacques Joseph Duguet and Jean Baptiste Massillon.<sup>8</sup>

Even his citations of medieval theologians, such as St. Bernard, or Fathers of the Church, such as St. Augustine, are taken out of the compilations drawn up by these authors of post-Tridentine and baroque scholasticism.

While Father Chaminade was not himself a theologian or a writer, it is clear that he was in possession of an excellent theological education which he kept up throughout his life by further personal study. This background gives a sound and broad-based theological foundation to the main elements of Marianist spirituality he bequeathed to us, such as his doctrine of Mary<sup>9</sup> and his understanding of the nature of faith and its role in Christian life.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ARMBRUSTER, *Devotion to Mary*, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Father Cole's thesis on the Founder's Mariology includes a lengthy investigation of his Marian sources. See William J. COLE, SM, *The Spiritual Maternity of Mary According to the Writings of Father William Joseph Chaminade: A Study of His Spiritual Doctrine*, Part 3: "The Sources of Father Chaminade's Marian Doctrine" (Cincinnati, n.p., 1958), pp. 244-342.

<sup>10</sup> Father Gascón has recently analyzed the Founder's theology of faith and examines a selection of the theologians whom the Founder cites, identifying their place among the writers of post-Tridentine and baroque scholasticism. He ack-



In 17<sup>th</sup> century France, the Catholic renewal in the spirit of the Council of Trent flowered with particular *élan* as the country moved into its so-called *grand siècle*. All the leaders of the French School were involved with implementing the post-Tridentine seminary movement. They saw themselves as transforming the pioneering work of Charles Borromeo in Italy and adapting it to suit the special context of the French Church. In doing so they introduced into France an orientation and loyalty toward Rome and the papacy which complemented that of the Jesuits and went against the prevailing attitudes of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Gallicanism and Jansenism. The latter movements believed for varying reasons in maintaining a certain safe distance and independence from Rome, whereas the new post-Tridentine spirit presaged the Ultramontanism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Father Chaminade's training and early life at the minor seminary in Mussidan puts him squarely into this Rome-oriented stream of French Catholicism.

The Collège of Mussidan was founded within the framework of notions of mission characteristic of the post-Tridentine Church – notions exemplified by the Jesuits and by the patrons of the collège, St. Charles Borromeo and St. Vincent de Paul. Depending heavily on the ability of the Holy See to take a lead in the Counter Reformation, the post-Tridentine Church gave special import and encouragement to missionary groups who would place themselves wholeheartedly at the disposal of the Holy See in the movement of reform. Such groups were particularly favored in France, where Gallicanism and Jansenism resisted the operational primacy of Rome.

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nowledges the pioneering work of Father Armbruster. Antonio GASCÓN, SM, *Defender y proponer la fe en la enseñanza de Guillermo José Chaminade*, Espiritualidad marianista no. 13 (Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones Marianistas, 1998), pp. 72-80. See also Antonio Gascón's article with the same title in *Marianist International Review* no. 17.1-2 (April 1996).



Seminaries were regarded as pivotal in achieving the goals of the Counter Reformation. Already in the thought of 17<sup>th</sup> century Vincentians, we encounter the phrase that Father Chaminade would later make his own: A superior of the Seminary of St. Lazare pointed to the seminary as a *perpetual mission* which served the seminarians and in so doing bore fruit in resulting missions in the countryside and the cities.<sup>11</sup>

From our present-day vantage point, we can look back and see how aspects of Marianist spirituality were being shaped in the mind and heart of the Founder long before our actual foundation in 1800, especially during the 20 years he spent in Mussidan.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Enlightenment*

As the many currents of the Modern Era grew stronger and wider, they mutually influenced one another and gave rise to a whole new philosophical outlook. History has bestowed the title "Father of Modern Philosophy" on René Descartes because he succeeded in giving voice to this new philosophical conscious-

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<sup>11</sup> David A. FLEMING, SM, "Mission", in *Commentary on SM Rule*, p. 832.

<sup>12</sup> Thanks to the excellent research of Father Joseph Verrier, we know a great deal more today about the Mussidan years than was known by our Marianist forebears from their reading of Father Simler's biography of the Founder. A chapter and a half in Simler has been expanded into 6 chapters with more than 500 footnotes in Verrier's *Jalons*. As Father Vasey has pointed out, "the Mussidan epoch of Father Chaminade's life – as dark as it was for a long time – has been catapulted into a new light by the discoveries of Father Verrier on the period." VASEY, *Chaminade*, p. 36. For the results of Father Verrier's prodigious research, see *Jalons 1*, chaps. 2-7, pp. 15-113, and notes, pp. 13-70. See also Joseph SIMLER, SM, *William Joseph Chaminade: Founder of the Marianists* (Dayton: MRC, 1986), pp. 9-27. Father Vasey devotes a chapter to the Mussidan years in *Chaminade*, pp. 36-64. See also Philippe PIERREL, SM, *A Missionary Journey with William Joseph Chaminade, Founder of the Marianists: 1761-1850* (Dayton: MRC, 1986), pp. 2-7.



ness that was taking shape in European thinking. This thinking had been going on implicitly for some time, but he formulated it into an explicit program which was carried on by the Modern philosophers who came after him.

The murky speculations of medieval scholasticism were swept away to make room for the clear and precise ideas of rationalism. The kind of certitude which is possible in mathematics became an ideal and goal which philosophy itself set out to attain. Optimism about the capacities of human reason ran high; and, in France of the 18th century, its so-called *siècle des lumières*, this optimism burst forth into the grand vision of the Enlightenment. True human progress was not just a theoretical possibility. It was actual fact. It was proceeding with a dynamism of its own on all sides, and it would continue inevitably as the light of reason dispelled the darkness of ignorance and superstition.

The vision and dreams of the Enlightenment received their widest dissemination through the forum of the *Encyclopédie*. This multi-volume work was edited and published during a 25-year period in mid-century by the untiring efforts of Denis Diderot and his companions. He solicited articles from the leading luminaries of the movement such as Voltaire, Jean d'Alembert, and many others. Science and technology, astronomy and architecture, mathematics and industry – all were described in a way that aimed at changing the general way of thinking. But it was especially the philosophical thrust of the age, articulated by the so-called *philosophes*, which found its way into the volumes of the *Encyclopédie* and which carried the day among the intelligentsia and opinion leaders of France.

A favorite place for discussion of all these new ideas was the lodges of the Freemasons. Here in the quasi-secrecy of lodge meetings, aspiring members of the emerging middle class could come into limited contact with the nobility and *haute bourgeoisie* in a brotherhood of sorts. The Masonic movement experienced a



new prosperity and prestige in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as more than 700 lodges sprang up across France. The exciting new ideas of the Enlightenment were thus carried from Paris out into the provinces.

### *Christian Beliefs Brought into Doubt*

A central tenet of the vision of the Enlightenment was the steady advance of human progress as the light of reason dispelled the darkness of ignorance and superstition. According to the new thinking, it was Christian religion and especially the Catholic Church which stood accused of being among the main sources of the ignorance and superstition that had to be dispelled. This ascription of blame to Christian religion as a whole was something new and different. It was not the familiar business of one group of Christians accusing other Christians of error and heresy. A new wind was blowing. A dramatic change in the guiding thought of the Modern Era had taken place around the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the two previous centuries, people of both the Reformation and the Catholic Reformation alike had no doubts about the fundamental truth of Christianity, which they based on the bedrock foundation of the bible or magisterial declarations from Rome. On both sides of the religious divide, faith was firm. It was precisely this wall of solid Christian conviction which began to crack and crumble in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. France and parts of the rest of Europe had their first collective crisis of faith.

If we accept the analysis of French historian Paul Hazard, the change took place during the comparatively brief time frame of some 30 years which coincide with the last years of the life and reign of Louis XIV.<sup>13</sup> Despite the fact that he wrote more than 50

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<sup>13</sup> See Paul HAZARD, *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1685-1715* (Paris: Boivin, 1935) and *La Pensée européenne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Boivin, 1946).



years ago, Hazard's masterful evocation of the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is very helpful in understanding this dramatic and decisive transition in Modern thought. It took people by surprise; it had not been foreseen a century earlier, not even by Descartes and the first Modern philosophers. How could it happen that Christian faith and belief would start to fall apart and collapse in Europe, the stronghold of Christendom for more than a thousand years? And how could it have happened with such abruptness that it can be pinpointed to the time span of a single generation at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century?

Disagreements about Christian belief were no longer seen as serious enough to be grounds for war, much less something to die for. Instead, the whole of Christian belief was brought to a new and supposedly higher tribunal of reason and natural philosophical religion, which eschewed all talk of things supernatural. Certitudes of the Ages of Faith vanished; and people strode forward into a vast open expanse which stretched before them, where they felt free to lay out new axes and coordinates with which to orient themselves.

The emergence of this radically new outlook is significant for us looking back from the present day. We know that the 18<sup>th</sup> century is the one in which Father Chaminade was born, and we see in this cultural crisis of faith a development of Providential portent for Marianists.

A century and a half earlier, participants in the spirituality movements of Paris had gathered in the salon of Madame Acarie to listen in hushed awe to her conversations with Francis de Sales, Vincent de Paul, and Pierre de Bérulle. Those days were gone and forgotten. Now, the salons of Madame de Lespinasse and Madame Geoffrin became gathering places of intellectuals and *philosophes* who charmed fashionable French aristocracy with lucid explanations of the new mathematics, enthusiastic discus-



sions of economics and wealth, or devastating refutations of religious beliefs laced with clever wit and sarcastic ridicule. The world had indeed changed, and a new disturbing aspect of Modernity was showing itself for the first time.

The withering attacks on religion had an especially vitriolic edge which signaled deep hatred and antagonism toward the Catholic Church that built up steadily during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. "It soon became clear that the Encyclopedists were not simply gifted writers of whom educated Catholics might approve, though with reservations, but were determined and implacable enemies of the Church who must be tirelessly combatted."<sup>14</sup>

#### *The French Revolution*

As the storm clouds of the Revolution were gathering, Father Chaminade was not cut off from these developments, despite his seeming seclusion in Mussidan far from the ferment of Paris. His oldest brother Jean Baptiste, the former Jesuit, returned to Périgueux after the suppression of the Society of Jesus in France in 1762. At the minor seminary in Mussidan, he had the opportunity to relate his views about the suppression and the changing climate of opinion to his younger brothers Louis and William Joseph.

The three Chaminade brothers were exposed to the anti-religious thinking of the *philosophes*. Louis owned a set of the *Encyclopédie*, which he probably acquired before the Revolution. In fact, the *Encyclopédie* was available in the private libraries of many priests who lived in the vicinity of Périgueux before the Revolution. One list of 40 subscribers to the *Encyclopédie* in Périgord

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<sup>14</sup> Robert R. PALMER, *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 20. Quoted by Windisch, *Marianist Social System*, p. 16.

included 24 pastors of parishes.<sup>15</sup> Périgueux had three Masonic lodges. Father Chaminade's brother François and his brother-in-law Pierre Laulanie were both Freemasons.<sup>16</sup> Louis and William Joseph Chaminade were corresponding members of the *Musée de Paris*, a learned society founded by Freemasons and whose most important members were Freemasons.<sup>17</sup> Louis and William Joseph were also electors for the representatives of the clergy who went to the 1789 Assembly of the Estates General which started the Revolution. At the meetings of the electors in Périgueux, the Chaminade brothers heard ideas and political opinion that reflected the anti-religious thinking of the *philosophes*.<sup>18</sup>

In the spring of 1789, Father Chaminade was 28 years old and reasonably well-informed as the curtain rose on the opening scenes of the Revolution. But no amount of astute premonition could have prepared him or anyone else for what actually happened in the next 10 years. The best and worst sides of Modernity disclosed themselves as events rushed with amazing speed toward the Reign of Terror and its consequences. The same assembly which proclaimed the world's first declaration of human rights also unleashed a campaign of restriction, persecution, and outright de-Christianization on the Church of France the likes of which had never been seen before in Europe. We must look to our own century, to the Spanish Civil War perhaps, or to the anti-religious repression of Communist regimes, for comparable government-sponsored persecution and violence against the Church.

Father Chaminade's whereabouts and activities during the revolutionary period are well known to Marianists. Without re-

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<sup>15</sup> SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. 163. See also *Jalons 1*, chapter 5, p. 58-59, notes 24 and 29, p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> *Jalons 1*, chapter 5, p. 57-58, note 2, p. 41, and notes 14-20, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> *Jalons 1*, chapter 3, p. 31, note 72, p. 25; and chapter 5, p. 58, note 21, p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> *Jalons 1*, chapter 5, pp. 60-66. See also VASEY, *Another Portrait*, pp. 54-56.



peating the full detail of that familiar narrative, we can all recall his departure from Mussidan, his adventures as an underground priest in Bordeaux, his exile in Saragossa, and his return to Bordeaux to found the Sodality in 1800. That crucial decade is the one in which the large matrix of the Modern Era contracted into a crucible within which the first historical manifestation of Marianist spirituality was forged. That decade was for Father Chamigne the time when the blunt and brutal reality of Modernity came crashing into his life. The experience inspired him with the resolve to found the Marianist Family.

He returned to France filled with a sense of mission. For the rest of his life he consistently and repeatedly claimed that God had inspired him to act in response to the times, to the changes that were being wrought in the Church and the world by Modernity. He felt called to launch a series of foundations that would enable Christians to live and believe in this new Modern world – a series of foundations with a mission, a set of appropriate apostolic means and methods, and a spirituality suited to the times. Today we call those foundations the Marianist Family. From the start, Marianist spirituality has been a Modern spirituality.

We now turn our attention to this first manifestation of Marianist spirituality.

## The Dawning of Marianist Spirituality

### *In the Beginning*

In 1800, when Father Chaminade returned to France from exile in Saragossa, he founded the Bordeaux Sodality. This was the start of the Marianist Family and the *début* of Marianist spirituality. Father Lalanne has left us the following description of this auspicious event.

Churches were just beginning to re-open, but they were still devastated and deserted. Christians found themselves so scattered and isolated that, among those who had preserved a spark of faith in this large city, each of them looked on himself or herself as another Tobias going up to the temple and going there alone. From this situation to the foundation of a religious order there stretched an untraversable distance. However, no one knew the power of time and patience better than Father Chaminade. He often compared his way of proceeding to that of a quiet brook. When the brook meets an obstacle, it makes no effort to overcome it. The very obstacle which impedes the brook, makes it grow wider and deeper; soon the brook rises above its normal level, flows over the obstacle, and continues on its course. And so this wise and zealous missionary contented himself with renting a room in the heart of the city, on Rue Saint Siméon, which he transformed into an oratory. Word spread that he said Mass there and preached, too. Some of the faithful began to assemble. He noticed two men in his little congregation, who were still young, and



spoke to them at the end of Mass. On learning that they did not know each other, he invited them to come back and meet with him during the following week to get acquainted and to agree on certain common practices. After the two men accepted this good advice, he encouraged each of them to find a companion and bring him along to the next meeting. This they did. When they were four, it was a simple matter, using the same methods, to increase the number to eight; and in a short time he had twelve young men animated with the holiest of intentions. Starting with this number, which has mystical significance, Father Chaminade initiated a genuine apostolate and obtained such results that the small chapel could no longer hold his congregation.<sup>1</sup>

This wonderful account has become part of Marianist lore.<sup>2</sup> Besides preserving for us the Founder's well-known comparison

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Father Lalanne's article "Société ou Institut de Marie" in the expanded re-edition of Pierre Hippolyte Hélyot's *Dictionnaire des ordres religieux* published in Paris by Migne in 1859. Quoted here with modifications of the English translation from the citation in SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Father Joseph Verrier subjects this text to the historian's exacting scrutiny. He points out that Father Lalanne was notorious for frequent mistakes in historical details. In this instance, he was not an eyewitness to the events he is describing, and he was writing almost 60 years after they occurred. The Founder's first oratory was almost certainly on Rue Arnaud Miqueu, around the corner from the site on Rue Saint Siméon where the Sodality had its second home. We know today that the first twelve sodalists were not complete strangers to one another or to the Founder. Their names have come down to us, and it is certain that Father Chaminade was in contact with at least three of them before he departed for Spain in 1797. He probably knew several others among the first twelve and even more among the next 50 or 60 who joined the young men's section during the year 1801. However, we can agree with Father Verrier that Father Lalanne recounts the founding event with the confident voice of a gifted story teller and that his text, despite its inaccuracy and imaginative embellishment, has the stuff of legend. See *Jalons 2*, chap. 3, pp. 42-43, and notes 10-15, pp. 17-18.

According to Father Stefanelli, it is not possible to reconcile the documentary evidence concerning the location of the Sodality's first oratory. The oratory on Rue Arnaud Miqueu may have opened only after the one on Rue Saint Siméon. See Joseph STEFANELLI, SM, *Mille de Lamourous* (Dayton: NACMS, 1998), pp. 158-60.



of himself to a quiet brook, Father Lalanne's evocation draws our attention to the devastation of faith wrought by the Revolution. Clearly, Marianist beginnings were precipitated by powerful and far-reaching events of history. The text captures the awareness and sense of history that pervaded the world and experience of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists. The text also draws our attention to the basic strategy they adopted to deal with this new historical situation: to support one another in the faith through the formation of faith communities.

We can use this text as a convenient starting point for our description of the first historical manifestation of Marianist spirituality during the years between 1800 and 1850. This section will treat three main themes: in addition to considering the sense of history and the role of faith communities which are pointed out in the above text, we will examine the place of Mary in Marianist spirituality during this seminal important half century. We will not stick to that order strictly in our considerations. The first Marianists tended to speak about all these themes in connection with one another and in connection with the great mysteries of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation and Calvary.

### *The Early Marianists' Sense of History*

Father Chaminade and the first Marianists did not have the same historical perspective which we do at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, they would not have given the word *modern* the specialized meaning it has in our century's history textbooks when they treat "the Modern Era." Unlike the usage we have adopted in this paper when we speak of Marianist spirituality being a Modern Spirituality (with a capital "M"), Father Chaminade used the word simply to mean his time or his century.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In Article 339 of the 1839 Constitutions, for example, he writes, "What con-



But even if the perspective and terminology of the first Marianists is different from ours, they had their own perspective on the same historical reality with a terminology and conceptual frame which we are capable of penetrating and which gives us precious and valuable insights into our Marianist spirituality.

The split between the secular and the sacred which pervades late Modernity and which we accept as an inescapable dimension of our life today had barely begun in Father Chaminade's time. He was aware of adumbrations of this split between the secular and the sacred, but it never was an element of his own life or thought. He did not understand history as secular history or the world as a secular world where one could freely and easily prescind from God and the holy. Faith, God, Christ, Mary, the Scriptures, the Powers of Evil, God's Providence, the Church – all were present explicitly or implicitly whenever he talked about history or his times.

For example, who of us does not readily recall the vivid imagery with which Father Chaminade traces Mary's role in crushing the serpent's head or overcoming heresies down through the centuries and specifically in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

All periods in the Church's history are marked with the struggles and glorious victories of the August Mary. Ever since the Lord put enmity between her and the serpent (Gn 3:15), she has constantly overcome the world and hell. All heresies, the Church tells us, have conceded defeat before the Blessed Virgin; and bit by bit she has reduced them to the silence of oblivion.

In our own day the great prevailing heresy is reli-

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quests *modern* philosophism has made in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The faith is weakened, its flame has been extinguished in a great number of individuals and even in entire social bodies. The principles of religion are forever changing more and more. How little Christian education there is! The rising generation can find so few teachers devoted to forming the mind and heart to Christianity! What remedies are there to oppose so many evils? (emphasis added)"



gious indifference, which spreads by numbing souls in a stupor of selfishness and a mire of passions. The depths of the abyss belch forth huge clouds of black and pestilential smoke (Rv 9:2) that threaten to engulf the whole earth in a murky night, devoid of every good, fraught with every evil, and impenetrable so to say to the life giving rays of the Sun of Justice. And so, the divine torch of faith is growing dim and flickering out in the very heart of Christendom. Virtue is becoming more and more rare and is disappearing, while vices are unleashed with frightful fury. We seem to be nearing that prophesied time of a general defection and an all but universal apostasy (2 Th 2:3-12).

This picture of our times, so sadly accurate, does not by any means discourage us. Mary's power stands undiminished. It is our firm belief that she will overcome this heresy as she did all the others, for she is today, as she always has been, the incomparable Woman, the promised Woman who is to crush the serpent's head. Jesus Christ, by always addressing her with this great name, teaches us that she is the hope, joy, and life of the Church and the terror of hell. To her, therefore, is reserved a mighty victory in our day. Hers will be the glory of saving the faith from the shipwreck with which it is threatened.<sup>4</sup>

It would be a mistake to dismiss the high drama of this and similar passages from the Letter to the Retreat Masters of 1839 as little more than the florid excess of Narcisse Roussel's rhetorical style. The ideas in these paragraphs are thoroughly Chaminadean and Marianist, and their faith-filled historical perspective is a characteristic of the earliest manifestation of Marianist spirituality. The first Marianists repeated these ideas and pondered

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<sup>4</sup> *Lettres 5*, to the Retreat Masters, August 24, 1839, no. 1163, p.73. Also in *MO*, Document 7, p. 47. Also in *MW 2*, 73-74, pp. 33-34.



their implications many times during the pivotal years between 1800 and 1850.

The specific idea of Mary overcoming all heresies is near the center of the early Marianist vision of Mary's mission to which we Marianists still dedicate ourselves today. Following the lead of writers of the Catholic Reformation, Father Chaminade identifies the Woman who has overcome all heresies with the New Eve, the promised Woman of Genesis 3:15 who will crush the serpent's head. These two figures of Mary had not been identified up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of Mary being the New Eve or promised Woman of Genesis was proposed by Saint Irenaeus and the Fathers. On the other hand, the idea of Mary overcoming all heresies comes from the liturgical antiphon "Rejoice, Virgin Mary," which appeared in the 8<sup>th</sup> century but can be traced to patristic interpretations of the Gospel of Luke.<sup>5</sup> Father Chaminade is already writing about Mary overcoming all heresies in his notes before 1809.<sup>6</sup> He repeats this theme many times in his correspondence and conferences, and in 1844 he directed Father Fontaine to write the following in *Our Knowledge of Mary*.

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<sup>5</sup> Like other authors of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Father Chaminade thought the idea of Mary conquering all heresies could be traced to a General Council, usually the 4<sup>th</sup> Council of Chalcedon and once even to the notorious Council of Constance (see MW 2, §§ 321, 477, 811, pp. 111, 184, 318). In fact, the text comes from the 7<sup>th</sup> antiphon in the 3<sup>rd</sup> nocturne of the old common of the Blessed Virgin. Father Armbruster discusses the antiphon in *Devotion to Mary*, and an English translation of the antiphon is found in the notes (pp. 16-17, and notes 32 and 33, pp. 40-41). See also Father Armbruster's longer discussion of the antiphon in *L'État religieux marianiste: Étude et commentaire de la Lettre dy 24 août 1839* (Paris: Marianistes - rue de la Santé, 1989), pp. 117-22 and Document 16, "L'antienne Rejois-toi, Vierge Marie," pp. 361-68. The original Latin text of the antiphon and a French translation are given on p. 361.

<sup>6</sup> Notes on Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the text "Of her was born Jesus" (Mt 1:16), Gray Cahier No. 1, in MW 1, § 37, p. 39.



Indeed, Providence seems to wish to demonstrate in these final times how much Mary means to a Christian, for all benefits and graces are being given at the invocation of her name and in answer to practices of devotion in her honor. ... As queen of heaven and earth she has long held in her hand the scepter of mercy that her Son confided to her, but never has the necessity and power of her mediation appeared more evident; never perhaps has she shown herself so obviously the Woman whom God promised would crush the head of the infernal serpent. Religious indifference may vainly attack her; she will gain the victory as she has already gained it over all heresies.<sup>7</sup>

Just like the Letter to the Retreat Masters of 1839, this paragraph links the idea of Mary's overcoming all heresies to her crushing the serpent's head. In fact, this image of the serpent's head being crushed by Mary's heel traces an even longer, broader trajectory in Father Chaminade's life. It shows up in Mussidan in the thinking of Father Chaminade's fascinating student, Bernard Dariès, who dreamed of founding a Society of Mary modeled on the suppressed Society of Jesus whose members would invite everyone to consecrate themselves to Mary and thus constitute a People of the Blessed Virgin who in these final times would crush more victoriously than ever before the head of the ancient serpent.<sup>8</sup> Like his contemporaries, Father Chaminade followed the Vulgate translation of Genesis 3:15. It was Mary's heel, not the heel of her Son, that crushed the head of the ancient serpent. We all recall the scene of the Founder going to visit the

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<sup>7</sup> *Our Knowledge of Mary*, chapter 1, "Importance and Advantages of Knowing the Blessed Virgin", in *MW 2*, § 435, p. 164.

<sup>8</sup> Dariès died in 1800, too soon to become a Marianist, but his dreams were strikingly similar to those of the first Marianists. See Jean Baptiste ARMBRUSTER, SM, *To Know, to Love, to Serve Mary with William Joseph Chaminade*, MRC Monograph Series Doc. 32 (Dayton, MRC, November 1986), pp. 4-6



novices at Sainte Anne's Novitiate in his extreme old age. "He thrilled at the chant of the Magnificat, and after the office someone would lead him to the foot of the statue of Mary Immaculate at the end of a row of linden trees. There he would place his trembling hand on the foot of the Virgin and on the head of the serpent with an energetic gesture which he thus interpreted one day: 'In spite of all, she has crushed your head and will crush it always!'"<sup>9</sup>

Another aspect of the early Marianist sense of history can be detected in these and similar passages. This has to do with the occasional references to "these final centuries," to "the end times," to the "final victories reserved for Mary" in our times. For example, here is what Father Chaminade wrote to Canon Valentini in 1839.

We believe that to the August Mother of God, who alone, according to the Church itself, has overcome all heresies, a great victory and a splendid triumph have been reserved in our time over the combined efforts of modern philosophism, of the religious indifference which results from it, and of hell itself which has vomited them forth from the depths of the abyss.<sup>10</sup>

Or again, Father Chaminade said the following to Father Lalanne in 1817 about the prospect of founding the Society of Mary.

Let us form a religious association by the profession of the three vows of religion, but as far as possible without a name, without a habit, and without a special civil status. *Nova bella elegit Dominus*. Let us put everything under the protection of Mary Immaculate, to whom her di-

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<sup>9</sup> SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. 532.

<sup>10</sup> *Lettres* 5, pp. 124-25, October 31, 1839, to Canon Salvatore Valentini. Also in MW 2, § 86, p. 41.

vine Son has reserved the final victories over hell: *et ipsa conteret caput tuum*. "Let us be, my son", he said, "let us be, in our humility, the heel of the Woman!"<sup>11</sup>

These references to the "end times" are not for Father Chaminade allusions to the imminent end of the world. They are simply references to his time or his century, in which, according to his reading of Providence, Mary was playing a new and heightened role. It is true that some of his contemporaries sensed portents of the imminent end of the world in these Marian developments. Father Chaminade was not one of them.<sup>12</sup>

### *Religious Indifference*

The generalization that can be made about the historical consciousness of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists is that they had a Marian sense of history or a Marian reading of history. This faith-filled awareness must not be misconstrued as an a-historical or non-historical consciousness. The first Marianists resembled us in that they were just as aware within their historical consciousness of a historical world or of historical reality as we are aware of a historical world or a historical reality within ours. However, that world was not a secular or secularized world. It was a world rife with realities of faith. That world was changing. It was drastically and shockingly different from the historical world of a century earlier. But the world of a century

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<sup>11</sup> SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. 262. *Nova bella elegit Dominus* (The Lord has chosen new wars) Judges 5:8 (Vulgate). *Et ipsa conteret caput tuum* (And she will crush your head) Genesis 3:15 (Vulgate).

<sup>12</sup> See the analysis of Jean Baptiste ARMBRUSTER, "Marie dans les derniers temps chez le Père G.-Joseph Chaminade", in *Marie et la fin des temps*, vol. 3 (approche historico-théologique), *Études mariales: Bulletin de la Société française d'études mariales* 43rd year (Paris: Éditions de l'O.E.I.L., 1987), pp. 67-81. See also Father Armbruster's remarks on the "end times" in *Devotion to Mary*, p. 15.



earlier was not a secular or secularized world, either. The historical world which preceded the Revolution was one in which only the vague whiff of doubts hinted that something new and disturbing was astir in the religious air. The historical world which followed the Revolution was one in which that tiny whiff had enlarged into the great clouds of black and pestilential smoke that were belching forth from the abyss of hell and filling the sky with the murky darkness of evil. A torrent of unbelief had ripped across France, "this unfortunate land," and the faith itself was threatened with shipwreck.

The concrete events and experiences in the lives of the first Marianists to which they gave their Marian and faith-filled interpretation are the same "historical" events we study when we look back today with our secularized sense of history. They had lived through the Revolution personally or they were in direct contact with persons who had. They made the same kinds of efforts we make to grasp the causes of these cataclysmic events and happenings. Just as we find roots of those events in the Enlightenment and the thinking of the philosophes, so did they. In the Bordeaux Sodality, there was a regular program of instructions on current events and the social forces at work in their time. We know, for example, that Pierre Pierre, the commissioner of Napoleon's secret police in Bordeaux, had informers planted at meetings of the Sodality to report on any politically dangerous activities that might be taking place. Here is an example of a report he filed at the end of 1802.

The Sodality dedicated to the cult of Mary under the direction of Chaminade increases each day the number of its members. Frequent lectures take place there, and they exhume in an offensive manner the memories of Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and those they dub *philosophes*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Jalons* 2, chap. 10, p. 196, note 58, p. 62. Also cited in VASEY, *Another Portrait*, p. 102. Also cited in WINDISCH, *Marianist Social System*, p. 61, note 2.



In fact, the analysis of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists of the historical roots of "religious indifference" resembles the analysis we make today, even with our secularized sense of history. This name "religious indifference" was quite commonly used by Catholics of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to refer to the early manifestation of a phenomenon which has grown and developed steadily since then. Some fairly well known figures of that day discussed this phenomenon of religious indifference. Archbishop d'Aviau wrote pastoral letters to his flock about religious indifference. Félicité de Lamennais wrote a book about it. And when Pope Gregory XVI wrote *Mirari vos* to condemn the thinking of de Lamennais' newspaper *L'Avenir* he mentioned religious indifference as one of the root causes of the erroneous thinking. The Pope went so far as calling religious indifference a "heresy" and claimed that Mary will defeat this modern heresy as she has defeated those of the past.<sup>14</sup>

Since then this phenomenon has continued and developed, but its name has changed. During the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it came to be called liberalism and later secularism. It signified the steadily expanding separation of secular aspects of political and cultural reality from its religious or sacred aspects. Amidst the larger premises of the Modern Era, the autonomy of the secular order was being emphasized, promoted, and advocated as an authentic development of human progress. Sometimes this process took a militantly anti-religious turn, and it was in this anti-religious form that Chaminade and the first Marianists usually viewed it as a manifestation of heresy and evil within their faith-filled, Marian sense of history.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Church's predominant and usual response to religious indifference, liberalism, and secularism was one of resistance and hostility. The phenomenon figured

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<sup>14</sup> See the discussion of *Mirari vos* and a comparison of its ideas with those of the Letter to the Retreat Masters of 1839 in Armbruster, *L'État religieux marianiste*, pp. 132-33.



prominently in several "errors of the century" listed in the Syllabus of Errors of Pope Pius IX. When Pope Pius X condemned the Sillon Movement, which advocated republican government based on principles of Christian democracy and the autonomy of the secular order, critics of the Movement accused its adherents of being tainted by Modernism, the heresy of heresies, the heresy which combined the errors of all heresies. This Church resistance to Modernity lasted almost unchanged well into our own century up to the time of the Second Vatican Council. There, for the first time, a break in the prevailing stance of the Church occurred with a clear, official recognition that there might be something good and worthwhile about the Modern Era and the Modern world. In particular, secularism was not characterized as an unmitigated evil. It was a misguided exaggeration of the larger development of secularization and secularizing processes which were at times beneficial and which valued the world as an authentically good reality created by God and given to us as a gift.

When we look back today at the Marianist response to this Modern phenomenon which has gone by the various names of religious indifference, secularism, and secularization, we need to bear in mind that the phenomenon has been going on for several centuries and that from our origins we have been reacting and responding to this fundamentally Modern reality. When the Church finally relented and began to have a cautiously favorable attitude toward the Modern world some 35 years ago, we Marianists seemed ready to go along because we had for a long time anticipated this openness to whatever goodness Modernity might have to offer even while we maintained the vigilance and guarded caution of our foundation period.

#### *Faith and Mary: Remedies for Religious Indifference*

Back at the start of Marianist history, we already seemed to take a more measured and gentle approach in our resistance to the



heresy of religious indifference. With our Marian sense of history, we believed that Providence stood ready to provide a remedy for this new historical development, this new "heresy." It was a remedy that was both old and new. The remedy was faith, a weapon that appeared weak in the eyes of the world. But for God, faith is and always has been strong. This is the message of Father Chaminade's conference on the text *Nova bella elegit Dominus* during the Society of Mary's memorable foundational retreat of 1818.

Perhaps someone will find that the weapon of faith, especially against the world where the enemies of God are so numerous and so powerful, is a rather weak one. Let that person learn that God does not fight like humanity does. The Lord likes to vanquish his enemies by means which, to them, seem most feeble and contemptible, and this when they use against him their most powerful weapons.<sup>15</sup>

And for the first Marianists, the clearest manifestation of this paradoxical strength of faith was the example of the gentle power of Mary, who did not fear the wiles and lies of the ancient serpent, who in her faith was so radically free of sin and the power of sin that she was not deceived or taken in by the beguiling glamor of evil and all its pomps. By uniting themselves to her mission as she faced the ancient enemy, the first Marianists sensed they were somehow giving themselves to an effort that had mysterious but concrete possibilities of being accomplished

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<sup>15</sup> Father Lalanne's notes to the 11<sup>th</sup> instruction of the Retreat of 1818. *WMP*, § 222, pp. 210-211. Also in *Spirit 1*, § 243, pp. 324-25. Also in *Jalons 4*, chapter 10, pp. 225-26. Also in William Joseph CHAMINADE, *Notes de retraites*, vol. 1 (Fribourg: Séminaire Marianiste, 1964), pp. 70-71. Also in *Écrits et paroles 5*, document 24, pp. 466-67. Father Joseph Verrier devotes chapters 9 and 10 of *Jalons 4* (pp. 195-237) to the Retreat of 1818. Five documents of *Écrits et paroles 5* (documents 24-28, pp. 439-500) are devoted to the Retreat.



even in the unprecedented historical circumstances that threatened the faith in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This mission of Mary had moreover the potential of drawing unexpected good consequences from the unpromising and seemingly evil historical circumstances.

If it is true that we must believe all the truths of faith with our hearts, even those which are most terrifying, with what deep and tender affection ought we to believe those truths that give us the Mother of Jesus Christ as our Mother, she who engendered us while she engendered Jesus Christ, because the life she gave her adorable Son was a life that exercised the greatest influence. ... All these mysteries of love were not accomplished in Mary without her active participation. They took place in her only after she had pronounced the Fiat that brought happiness to heaven and earth. It was her admirable faith that effectively disposed her to receive all the favors of the Most High. "Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Lk 1:45).

How wonderful was the faith of the August Mary! She put faith in the mysteries revealed to her, and these mysteries were accomplished in her, and they were accomplished only because she believed. *Credidisti, perficientur*. Faith, accomplishment. What a lesson for us! These same mysteries are announced to us. They will be accomplished if we have faith; they will be accomplished, so to speak, in proportion to our faith. Our faith will make them substantial realities. This seems to be what St. Paul wishes to teach us when he says that faith is the substance of things to be hoped for (see Hb 11:1).<sup>16</sup>

The first Marianists, perceiving reality with this sort of Marian historical sense, felt called to join their efforts to those of Mary

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<sup>16</sup> MW 2, §§ 634-35, pp. 250-51.



in the accomplishment of her mission in the thick of the historical circumstances of their time. They were caught up into the spirit of Mary, that interior spirit that tapped into her mysteriously powerful yet gentle strength.

Although all religious orders have a common spirit, yet each order has a spirit of its own. This spirit results from divine inspiration, and it has been adapted to the circumstances and needs of each century. What serious reflections come to mind here concerning the Institute of Mary!

We are thoroughly convinced that God himself is responsible for the establishment the Institute of Mary. But if we reflect on the time of the foundation and on the objective he wants the Institute to aim at, we will become aware of its vast scope. Just look at the world; what awful darkness, what horrible depravity, what disheartening indifference to salvation! In past centuries, corruption had found its way only into the heart, but today both heart and mind are infected. A sick mind is incomparably more dangerous and incurable than a sick heart. It is in this situation, along with the generations that will succeed it, from ungodliness and irreverence, that God founds the Institute of Mary, that he gives it the spirit it needs, the interior spirit. God calls us not only to personal sanctification, but to revive the faith in France, in Europe, in the whole world, to preserve the present generation from error. What a noble, vast undertaking! What a holy and generous project! It is most appealing to the soul that seeks the glory of God and the salvation of humanity. And God has chosen us from among many others.

The spirit of the children of Mary is an interior spirit. In this community, the religious make of their souls temples of God. There each of them ... is constantly conscious of the presence of God, and converses gently and familiarly with him, because God has taken up his abode within each of them. Each of their hearts is a sanctuary



dedicated to Mary, a chapel from which fervent prayers rise to her. ... The spirit of the Institute is the spirit of Mary; this explains everything! It is essential therefore that we acquire the interior spirit. ...

The mother of God is the model of all religious virtues; her servants will find in her the source of that interior spirit which should characterize them. Let us put into practice the order she gave the servants of the bridegroom at Cana, "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5).<sup>17</sup>

It was in this setting and with this Marian, faith-filled sense of history that the first Marianists dedicated themselves to two programs or strategies of practical action to respond to what they perceived as new historical circumstances. Both programs or strategies were bound up with the particularities of these historical circumstances, with what we can call today the *problématique* of the Modern Era. The two programs were 1) forming faith communities in the movement of launching the Bordeaux Sodality and the original Marianist lay communities and 2) combatting the harmful and abetting the helpful in the new historical reality by joining the new movement of education and teaching. We will here examine the first strategy of forming faith communities. In the next section of this paper, we will turn to the second strategy of education and teaching.

### *Forming Faith Communities and Being Transformed into Christ*

The "heresy" of religious indifference was a different kind of heresy, and the means of overcoming it was also different. In days of old, the Church often fought heresy with force and vio-

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<sup>17</sup> Retreat of 1821, 18<sup>th</sup> meditation. MW 2, §§ 763-66, 777, pp. 304-5, 307. Also in MO, document 4, pp. 33-35. Also in *Spirit 1*, § 179, pp. 234-35. Also in CHAMINADE, *Notes de retraites*, vol. 1, pp. 175-77. Also in SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. 277.



lence. It sometimes happened that crusades were launched and wars were fought to kill heretics or to round them up and turn them over to civil authorities so they could be burned at the stake. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Church was hardly in a position to resort to these old methods, even if it had wanted to. The Church's political power had been drastically reduced in Europe, and throughout the century the remnant of that political power kept being whittled away further to almost nothing by the end of the century. Gone were the days when the Church could kill its enemies.

From the start, the program of the Bordeaux Sodality was a different sort of thing. It was built on the paradoxical awareness that gentleness is stronger than violence and force – that gentleness is not weakness. When Father Chaminade spoke of the Sodality to Adele, he pointed out that these new communities operated with a totally new dynamic, the dynamic of the contagion of goodness.<sup>18</sup> Goodness has such beauty, he pointed out, that it is attractive and draws people. Virtue, he claimed, is contagious. This was the powerful strength that was at work in the new way of resisting "heresy." This was the way of Mary.

And what, one can ask, was so powerfully "beautiful" about these Sodality communities? Once, in 1806, Father Chaminade, attempted to answer this question in a talk he gave to the married men's section of the Bordeaux Sodality.<sup>19</sup> He recalled the Old

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<sup>18</sup> "The Marian Sodality... of today is a Sodality of those who are guided. The former was a schooling in virtues, so to say, while today's is the rapid communication of virtue by the *contagion*, if we may use the term, of example" (emphasis added). *Lettres 1*, Chaminade to de Trenquelléon. March 19, 1817, no. 89, p. 156.

<sup>19</sup> Father Chaminade's 1806 allocution to the *Pères de famille* consists of a series of comments on passages from the story of Balaam (chapters 23 and 24 of Numbers) and additional remarks on the nature of sodalities which compare the People of Israel with the entire organization of the Bordeaux Sodality. The full text of the allocution is found in *Écrits et paroles 1*, document 57, pp. 148-63.



Testament story of the prophet Balaam, called to pronounce a curse on the tents of Israel. When Balaam stood on the hillside and looked out across the encampment of the tents of Israel, his breath was taken away by the beauty of the sight. "How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob! How lovely your dwellings, Israel! ... A hero rises from your stock, he reigns over countless people" (Nb 24:5,7). Not only did Balaam not curse Israel, but he blessed it for its beauty and foresaw that out of Israel was going to come one who was most beautiful indeed. Out of Israel was going to come the Messiah, Jesus Christ. This, said Father Chaminade, is the reason the Sodality communities were beautiful. Mary was forming their members into her children, which meant they were being formed into the mystical body of Christ, who is indeed beautiful and attractive.

This was a wholly different dynamic, paradoxically different from the one that had at times operated in the Church's old ways of overcoming "heresy." It was the gentle but powerful way of Mary. These convictions were not mere spiritual poetry. By the time Father Chaminade reached the time of putting into words the deepest realities of Marianist spirituality that animated the first Marianist religious in the Constitutions of 1839, he focused on the fundamental truth that Christ associated Mary in all his mysteries and found this spiritual truth to lie at the heart of our devotion to Mary.

It is a revealed truth that Jesus Christ was born of Mary (Mt 1:16). It ought not to be a matter of little importance to a Director that the Holy Spirit has revealed this truth. All of us have been conceived in Mary; all of us must be born of Mary and formed by Mary to a resemblance with Jesus Christ, that each one of us may be another Jesus, Son of Mary, along with Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Manual of Direction", Document K in Cahier D, MD 3, § 420, p. 145. Also in MW 2, § 678, p. 263. Also in *Spirit* 2, § 893, p. 472.



Mary was the first to be conceived in Jesus Christ according to the Spirit, as Jesus Christ himself was conceived according to nature in her virginal womb. Mary, that is, was formed interiorly to resemble Jesus Christ, her adorable Son, and was from then on associated in all his mysteries both in their exterior and interior aspects.<sup>21</sup>

In the final text of the Constitutions, he went on to proclaim that

The profession which the Society makes of being devoted to Mary, as its name indicates, does not detract from this truth: *Maria de qua natus est Jesus*.<sup>22</sup> Nursed and reared by her, he did not separate himself from her during his entire mortal life; he was subject to her, and he associated her in all his labors, in all his sorrows, and in all his mysteries. Devotion to Mary is, therefore, the most salient point of the imitation of Jesus Christ, and in devoting itself to the imitation of this divine Model, under the beloved name of Mary, the Society intends to have each of its members reared by her, just as Jesus was

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<sup>21</sup> "Principles of Direction", Document L in Cahier D, MD 3, § 467, p. 156. Also in MW 2, § 681, pp. 263-64. These lines come from three paragraphs which Father Chaminade inserts into a longer passage he was copying or paraphrasing from chapter 1 of Father Olier's *Introduction à la vie et aux vertus chrétiennes*. It is a typical example of a practice of the Founder that Father Cole and Father Vasey have pointed out. Even though Father Chaminade held up Father Olier as a master of the spiritual life whose doctrine we Marianists were to follow and accept as our own, when it came to explaining Mary's role in the spiritual life, Father Olier never seems to have satisfied Father Chaminade. There are multiple instances where the Founder makes precisely the kind of insertion of his own Chaminadean ideas into a text of Olier as is the case with the above quotation. These insertions are almost always about Mary. This practice is all the more striking when we reflect on Father Olier's place in the French School as a prominent advocate of devotion to Mary. See Cole, *Spiritual Maternity*, pp. 322-23. See also Vasey, *Another Portrait*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>22</sup> "Mary, of whom was born Jesus" (Mt 1:16).



reared in her care after having been formed in her virginal womb.<sup>23</sup>

The imitation of Christ – the transformation of each Marianist into another Christ, into Jesus Christ, Son of Mary – lies at the heart of Marianist spirituality in its earliest historical manifestation during the years between 1800 and 1850.

The life and experience of the first Marianists during this 50-year period are of prime importance for us today. They play a paradigmatic role analogous to the one played for the whole Church by the Jerusalem community and the early Christian communities of the second half of the first century. At that time the apostles were still alive and proclaimed the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. The precious writings of the New Testament convey the first historical manifestation of Christian spirituality in the life and experience of the first Christians. Down through the Christian centuries, that experience has played and continues to play an emblematic role for the Church.

So, too, does the experience of the first Marianists hold up the new paradigm of living the Gospel communicated to them by Father Chaminade while he was still alive. This paradigm shows us Marianist spirituality as they experienced it. They heard Father Chaminade say that the Lord had chosen new wars, and they felt called to join Mary in her mission and to be transformed by her into Christ, her Son.

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<sup>23</sup> Article 5, Constitutions of 1839. MW 2, § 576, p. 225. Father Armbruster points out that this article gives evidence of the development of the Founder's thought in the "impassioned search" he made "for ways to harmonize an old ideal in his life, the imitation of Jesus Christ, with a more recent discovery, the imitation above all of *Jesus, Son of Mary*." The progression of this discovery can be traced by comparing this article with the same article of the 1829 draft of the Constitutions, which calls devotion to Mary *one of the most salient points* of the imitation of Christ. In the final version these words become *the most salient point*. See ARMBRUSTER, *Devotion to Mary*, pp. 31-32, note 73.

## *Development of Marianist Spirituality After 1850*

### *A Word on Sources*

When we turn from an examination of the foundation period of Marianist spirituality (1800-50) to the study of its subsequent history and development (after 1850), we are immediately struck by the sharp drop in the number of works that have been produced by Marianist writers about the latter period. Many shelves and tiers of shelves in Marianist libraries are filled to overflowing with histories and analyses of the spirituality of the foundation period, but one single shelf would suffice to hold all the books and monographs that have been written to date on the history of Marianist spirituality after 1850. Most of these works are histories of our characteristic Marianist devotion to Mary over the years, or they are histories of Marian or Mariological studies by Marianists. None of them treats the broad history and development of Marianist spirituality as it has been conceived in the paper. Even this paper can be considered no more than a preliminary attempt to survey the terrain and cast a few *jalons*, as the French say, to mark out paths for possible future research. Marianist history, in general, is still an incomplete and underdeveloped area of research and study. When we narrow the focus to the history of Marianist spirituality, the number of sources reduces to a handful.

In view of this peculiar situation, I will start this examination of the history of Marianist spirituality after 1850 with a brief discussion of these few sources and an assessment of the current



state of the literature. One of the best sources is the 25 pages Father Neubert devotes to the topic in his book *Our Gift from God*.<sup>1</sup> He was writing at a time when the phrase *filial piety* was still regnant in the Society of Mary as the special name we Marianists gave to our characteristic devotion to Mary. As a result he starts his history with explanations of how it came to be that Father Chaminade and the Marianists of the foundation period never used the term. He is gentle with Father Simler in recounting some of his blunders and fumbling attempts to "improve" the vow of stability. This fits Father Neubert's casting Father Simler as one of the main heroes of his account and fully deserving of the title "Second Founder."

There are two short histories of our Marianist Marian devotion after 1850 which treat the same events Father Neubert covered in the chapter of *Our Gift from God* cited above. One is *Sketches on the Original Meaning and the Changes in Our Vow of Stability* by Father Paul Verrier, and the other is the *History of Our Apostolic Devotion to Mary* by Father John G. Leies.<sup>2</sup> Both were published by the Apostle of Mary Documentary Series in Dayton around the end of World War II, while it was under the guidance of Father Ferree. Father Paul Verrier is more blunt than Father Neubert in his assessment of Father Simler's near loss of the vow of stability. I have never seen the French original of Father Paul Verrier's sketches on the history of our vow of stability. As far as I know it was never published in the French original. A notation on the title page of the translation indicates that the original manuscript was written in Sion in 1925 and in

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<sup>1</sup> Emil NEUBERT, SM, *Our Gift from God*, Chapter 15: "History of Our Marian Heritage" (St. Louis: n.p., 1962), pp. 104-28.

<sup>2</sup> Paul VERRIER, SM, *Sketches on the Original Meaning and the Changes in Our Vow of Stability* (Dayton: Apostle of Mary Documentary Series, November 1949).

John G. LEIES, SM, *History of Our Apostolic Devotion to Mary* (Dayton: Apostle of Mary Documentary Series, vol. 1, no. 5, document 4405, May 1944).



Strasbourg in 1937. I do not know if private copies were widely circulated or what reception they received. Father Paul Verrier knew Father Simler personally, as well as all the other leading figures of the great revival of Marianist spirituality at the turn of the century (Klobb, Lebon, Cousin, Schellhorn, et al.). Perhaps for these reasons he did not feel constrained to gloss over Father Simler's mistakes.

This tone of frankness is also found in the short monograph of Father John G. Leies. He wrote it during the years of World War II, probably while he served as novice master of the St. Louis Province. He does not treat the near disappearance of the vow of stability, but he characterizes the generalates of Father Caillet and Father Chevaux as a time of obscurity for our devotedness to Mary. According to Father Leies, this obscurity was only partially lifted by Father Simler's instructions on filial piety, which did not encompass the full breadth and depth of the Founder's doctrine. For Father Leies, the hero who dispelled the darkness was Father Klobb, who in the last five years of his life succeeded in re-igniting the flame of our true apostolic devotedness to Mary.

Both of these monographs are worth reading because of the unequivocally positive estimate they give to our Marianist apostolic devotedness to Mary and the clear conviction they convey that this precious treasure has been successfully transmitted to us by our Marianist forebears, despite some precarious times in our history when it was obscured or almost lost.

Two studies I found useful in preparing this paper treat the history of Marian thought and Mariology among Marianists after 1850. One is the 1965 monograph of Bruno Ferrero.<sup>3</sup> The other is a work still in progress being written by Emilio Cárdenas in

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<sup>3</sup> Bruno FERRERO, SM, "Evoluzione del pensiero mariano nella storia della Società di Maria", *Quaderni Marianisti*, No. 23 (Marianisti: Provincia Italiana, 1965).



Poland.<sup>4</sup> Indirectly, both of these studies throw light on the evolution of Marianist spirituality since 1850.

Despite its brevity, this enumeration fairly well exhausts the list of main sources.<sup>5</sup> After these works, it is necessary to go to general Marianist histories or to biographies of individual Marianists to fill in the picture of the history of Marianist spirituality after 1850. There is still no definitive general history of the Marianists or of the Society of Mary. Father Délas' expansion of the popular histories of Father Lebon and Father Gadiou is useful as a stopgap.<sup>6</sup> His history of the Constitutions of the Society of Mary is also useful.<sup>7</sup> To these histories can be added the regional Marianist histories that have appeared in recent years. Finally, the various biographies and biographical sketches of key persons in the history of Marianist spirituality contain further information.

With this assessment of sources and current state of the literature for the history of Marianist spirituality after 1850, we can turn to a rapid review of that history.

### *The Transformation of the Society into a Teaching Congregation*

When we look in on the Marianist world in 1850 immediately after the death of Father Chaminade, we find Father Caillet at the helm of leadership in the Society. He had been in the office

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<sup>4</sup> Emilio CÁRDENAS, SM, *150 Años de estudio de la mariología de Guillermo José Chaminade (1850)*, unfinished manuscript, Czestochowa (Poland), January 1998.

<sup>5</sup> There are most likely other sources of which I am not aware. I did not have the opportunity of making a systematic survey of Spanish and Italian Marianist documents. For example, I did not know about Bruno Ferrero's monograph until Emilio Cárdenas pointed it out to me.

<sup>6</sup> Louis GADIOU, SM, and Jean Claude DÉLAS, SM, *Marianistes en mission permanente* (Paris: Marianistes, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> Jean Claude DÉLAS, SM, *Histoire des Constitutions de la Société de Marie*. (Fribourg: Études marianistes, 1964).



of Superior General since the Society's General Chapter of 1845. The Daughters of Mary were still in communion with the Society, but communications were beginning to get strained and the administrative links between the two congregations of Marianist religious broke down during Father Caillet's term.

For all intents and purposes, Marianist lay communities had passed out of existence. Marianist sodalities had been outlawed by the Revolution of 1830, and they were never revived as such. Their place was taken by Marian confraternities, where a remnant of the first lay Marianists continued their experience of Marianist spirituality as they grew older. However, adult Marianist lay communities in the classic form in which they had emerged in the early part of the century were a thing of the past.

The centers of vibrant Marianist spirituality were now the many communities of the Society, which year by year was expanding and improving its identity and competence as a prospering teaching congregation in the burgeoning arena of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Catholic education. There was a certain unease surrounding the Founder's last years that lingered among the rank and file of the Society's members. Many questions about his removal from the office of Superior General, his tense disagreements with Father Caillet, and the strange actions of some of the Society's leaders went unanswered. The new general superiors did their best to maintain a discreet silence about many matters. They were no doubt secretly relieved that Father Roussel had decided not only to withdraw from the Society after his unsuccessful efforts to become Superior General but also to repent at Our Lady of Victories, to apologize for the harm he had done, and to turn over a new leaf by joining the ranks of the diocesan priests in his home diocese.

On the other hand, Father Lalanne was alive and well in Paris, where he was still working off the financial debts of Layrac, and where his Marianist identity was as firm, expansive, and con-



tagious as ever. He was still in the forefront of those seeking to blaze new trails for Christian education and Catholic schools. He never saw his role in contributing to the Founder's troubles during the last years as reason to question his loyalty to Father Chaminade or doubt his total commitment to the Marianist vision. In 1852, he headed the small group of Marianist religious who took charge of Institution Sainte Marie on Rue Bonaparte in Paris. With this move he saw the Society of Mary establishing a beachhead in the capital and expanding its efforts to serve Mary's mission in a way that was entirely fitting and appropriate. We can gauge his understanding of what this expansion signified for Marianist spirituality by quoting from the address he delivered to introduce himself and the Marianists as the replacements of Father Leboucher after their arrival to take charge of the administration of the school.

When you bring your children to the threshold of this house which bears such a blessed name, you know very well, you mothers especially that are so luckily inspired in the education of the young, you know very well into whose hands your cherished charges are deposited. ... The first piece of news I wish to announce is that an important change has taken place in the faculty of this institution. ... We [the Marianists], as successors of this good man [Father Leboucher] are to continue the undertaking begun under such favorable auspices and conducted with so much propriety. And now, what shall I say about ourselves?

... I may say, it is by reason of a religious principle that we devote ourselves to the care of youth; not only have we embraced the profession of teaching from the earliest years of manhood, but we know we serve the God in whom we believe, by instructing children to know and love Him, who alone is able to render them happy if they remain faithful. Yes, Gentlemen, to teach children, and the youngest by way of preference, to



know and love God is the humble profession of the *Brothers of Mary*, and I am able to announce this statement without vanity or taint of human respect, solely because it ought to be mentioned.

Indeed, all of you are aware what Catholicity stands for when symbolized under the sacred name of Mary, especially such as have had the happiness of obtaining the principles of truth from Christian teachers. The name of Mary! It betokens the tenderness of a mother raised to the degree of a supernatural virtue. The name of Mary! It stands for the purity of innocence, safeguarded by the force of special grace from God. The name of Mary! It is the zeal of Divine Charity in alliance with patience in labor, and generosity in sacrifice. The name of Mary! It is the contentment and joy of the heart in the simplicity and seclusion of the most humble ministry. Happy are those who have comprehended and believed all that this pious name signifies in wise counsel and good example; happy are they of whom I am the representative, who have adopted it long ago and placed it as a seal on their institutions and undertakings. ... It is their pleasure, above all, to take in full justice the name of Brothers under the maternal tutelage of Mary.<sup>8</sup>

He goes on to point out that the religious life has not stunted the thoughts and feelings of these Marianist teachers and caused them to look on the world with contempt, as was alleged at that time by those hostile to allowing religious to be teachers. "We categorically deny the imputation of indifference towards all human knowledge. Though we are not men of the world, we are not for all that, men of another age or men of another country; our lives are not hidden, they are not relegated to the deserts, nor passed within the narrow limits of a cell. To act on the world we are persuaded that we must know it, and hence our life is

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<sup>8</sup> Jean Baptiste LALANNE, SM, Awards Distribution Ceremony Address, Institution Sainte Marie, Rue Bonaparte, Paris, 1852, in *Spirit* 3, § 394, pp. 567-68.



mingled with all the movements that influence the trend of the epoch, and call for a new order of requirements."<sup>9</sup>

In this address of Father Lalanne, we notice some shifts of emphasis from the language used by Marianists some 20 or 25 years earlier. In his repeated invocation of the name of Mary, he doesn't mention her mission of vanquishing the heresy of religious indifference or her crushing the head of the ancient serpent with her heel. His images are more gentle. They suggest the nurturing care and tenderness of a mother, the happiness and joy of the heart of a group of men who have embraced the profession of teaching from their earliest years of manhood and done so under the maternal tutelage of Mary. Furthermore, these Brothers of Mary have a positive stance toward the world and the secular order. They "categorically deny" being so totally separated from the world by their religious profession that they are indifferent to human knowledge. Instead they want to "act on the world," know it, and lead lives mingled with all the movements and trends of the times that call for "a new order of requirements."

These shifts in language signal the gradual modulation of the experience of Marianist spirituality that accompanied the transformation of the Society of Mary into a teaching congregation. This transformation meant participation in the vast new movement for universal education, one of the most prominent manifestations of Modernity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Becoming a teaching congregation thus entailed a certain détente in the militant resistance to the Modern world and the heresy of religious indifference which had characterized Marianists during the foundation period. Transformation into a teaching congregation was a process that had begun before the Founder died. He advocated and directed the Society's entry into the school world. The 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 569.



century was the epoch in which the populations of Europe and the Americas moved from being almost entirely illiterate to being almost entirely literate. The dream of human progress attached to learning, and the school was the social invention that was being perfected to accomplish this Modern advance. Like many other religious in France, the early Marianists saw in this new movement of universal schooling a tremendous tool that could be used to evangelize masses of people and recover the ground that had been lost to the de-Christianization that issued from the Revolution.

During the 1820s, the ministry of teaching existed side-by-side with the ministry of Marianist religious directing sodalities. Father Chaminade could still write that one of the circumstances that led to the birth of the Institute of Mary was the need for a director of the Sodality not subject to death. This "director" who would never die could not be an individual person, but a *society* of persons "devoting itself to this work for God's sake, accomplishing it in the maturity of life, after having been trained thereto by holy obedience, and transmitting the same spirit and the same methods to their successors."<sup>10</sup> The Society of Mary and the Daughters of Mary were meant to be the "director" of Marianist sodalities who would never die. During the 1820s, the total number of Marianist religious was still relatively small. About 30 members of the men's section of the Sodality joined the nascent "little Society," and from among them came the early Marianist religious who gave Father Chaminade the greatest assistance in directing the Sodality. However, these 30 odd Marianist religious who had belonged to the Sodality also included the most important early Marianist teachers and educators. Father Lalanne was chief among them. By the time he delivered the above address to the parents of the students of Institution Sainte Marie

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<sup>10</sup> "Answers to Objections That Are Ordinarily Made Against Sodalities" (1824), in *Spirit* 3, § 212, p. 240. Also in *Écrits et Paroles* 1, § 154.23, p. 665.



on Rue Bonaparte in Paris he had already spent 35 years as a Marianist religious devoted to the ministry of schools and teaching. His most brilliant and successful years as the first Marianist director of Collège Stanislas were still ahead of him. There is good reason for his being regarded as one of the most important Marianist educators in the history of the Society.

The official documents of the Society of Mary and Daughters of Mary that were written by Father Chaminade or drafted under his guidance made it clear that Marianist religious were committed to education. The Civil Statutes of 1825 issued by the French government authorized the Society as an educational association that was legally permitted to conduct schools. The Constitutions of 1839 attempted to sanction and establish the educational character of the Society by giving the word *education* a special meaning peculiar to the Society. In the Society, the Constitutions stated, the word signified not just teaching and the conduct of schools; instead its meaning was expanded to include all the means of implanting and developing the faith of Christians from the cradle to the grave.<sup>11</sup> Education thus encompassed both those works in which Marianist religious were actually engaged as well as those in which they might engage in the future. Any evangelizing work of the Church was one to which the Society could devote itself. The range of works in which members of the Society engage was in principle and potentially universal, and in the Society all these works were to be called works of education. This inflated meaning of the word *education* was also prescribed in the Simler Constitutions of 1891.<sup>12</sup> Despite these prescriptions

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<sup>11</sup> SM Constitutions of 1839, Article 251. "Title 2: Christian Education. Under this title are included all the means by which religion can be inculcated into the minds and hearts of men and by which they can be trained from earliest infancy to the most advanced age in the fervent and faithful profession of a true Christian life. These means fulfill the second object of our little Society."

<sup>12</sup> SM Constitutions of 1891, Article 261. "The term education comprises all



of the Constitutions, most Marianists continued to use the word *education* in its ordinary meaning referring to teaching, instruction, and learning in schools. However, when they wanted to emphasize the profound importance of being Marianist educators, they could on occasion invoke the seemingly tautologous aphorism of the Constitutions "The Society of Mary teaches only in order to educate!"<sup>13</sup>

During the years between 1830 and 1850, while Marianist Sodalities were slowly declining, the number of Marianist schools and the number of Marianist religious teaching in them kept growing. By 1850 there were almost 500 members in the Society of Mary, and virtually all of them were involved in the apostolate of schools. Few of these members had directly experienced the origins of the Society in the Bordeaux Sodality. Within this numerous, youthful assemblage of Marianist educators, there were still a few remaining from the 30 odd members who had joined the Society from the Sodality.<sup>14</sup> Those who had not left the Society and who were still alive could occasionally recount anec-

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the means which enable us to sow, cultivate, strengthen, and render fruitful the Christian Spirit in souls, in order to lead them to a sincere and open profession of true Christianity."

<sup>13</sup> SM Constitutions of 1891, Article 272. "The Society of Mary teaches only in order to educate; therefore, the Brothers receive and instruct children in order to make them good and fervent Christians."

Father Lackner has investigated the understanding of the fundamental distinction between instruction and education among early members of the Society in his study of the founding vision of Marianist education. See Joseph H. LACKNER, SM, *William Joseph Chaminade, His Apostolic Intent and His Engagement with Schools, Instruction, and Education: An Historical Portrait* (Dayton: NACMS Monograph Series, Document No. 42, 1999), pp. 31-36.

<sup>14</sup> According to my study of early members of the SM, there were 470 members in 1850, 511 in 1851, 550 in 1852, 609 in 1853, and 669 in 1854. During this five-year period their average age was just above 30. There were only 11 members who had belonged to the Bordeaux Sodality in their youth. Lawrence J. CADA, SM, *Early Members of the Society of Mary* (Dayton: NACMS Monograph Series, Document No. 40, 1999), pp. 550-51.



dotes to their youthful fellow-Brothers about the former days of the Sodality when Father Chaminade was in his prime. But in the years after 1850, everyone's main energies were directed towards developing the Society into a competent and successful teaching congregation.

An important and telling illustration of these efforts is the *Marianist Manual of Christian Pedagogy*, which was published in two volumes in the years 1856 and 1857. This work was written by Father Fontaine and gathered together the accumulated wisdom of the various Methods of Teaching drawn up during the previous 30 years by a generation of Marianist religious.<sup>15</sup> Many of them had also written textbooks for classroom use, but they returned over and over to revising and improving the successive Methods of Teaching in order to establish the guidelines for quality education in the Marianist tradition. They were convinced that the Marianist spirit enhanced Marianist schools and Marianist teaching with a set of characteristics that distinguished Marianist education from education in general. When the Manual appeared in the 1850s, it met with a very positive reception and was praised for the accuracy with which it articulated the principles and practice of Marianist pedagogy.

This work, due to the indefatigable zeal of Father Fontaine, the Second Assistant, by far surpassed the modest attempts of the preceding epoch in its breadth of view

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<sup>15</sup> The Manual was published in Bordeaux by Gounouilhou et Lafargue in 1856-57. During the 1880s various portions of the two volumes were translated into English under the direction of Brother Kim and reproduced in a primitive form of spirit duplication for use in the formation programs of the American Province. A free translation of the first volume was published by the American Province under the title *Manual of Christian Pedagogy for the Use of the Brothers of Mary* in 1899. An abridged version of this translation, which removed all explicit references to the Society of Mary, was published by the American Province in 1910 as a general manual of pedagogy for use in Catholic schools throughout the United States.



and wealth of material. It no longer represented a simple method, or still less, an ordinary set of regulations, but a real treatise on pedagogy.<sup>16</sup>

It was especially the first volume devoted to the principles of Marianist pedagogy which received the most praise. This volume was used in the formation of Marianist religious for decades and complemented the principles of Marianist education contained in the 1839 Constitutions and all the revisions of the Constitutions made between 1865 and 1891.<sup>17</sup>

One recommendation of the Manual which is singled out as especially characteristic of the pedagogical method advocated in the Society is the advice to link the mind and the heart in good education. Father Fontaine was writing before the neo-Thomist revival of the 1890s. He therefore finds no difficulty in claiming that the soul has not two, but three faculties: intellect, heart, and will.

*Education of the Intellect.* Man is created after the image and likeness of God. As in God there is a trinity of persons, so in the human soul there is a trinity, which like the Trinity of Heaven, coalesces into a mysterious unity. God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the soul is Intellect, Heart, and Will. The soul, therefore, has three distinct faculties.<sup>18</sup>

A good teacher must become skilled in the art of linking the first two of these faculties in order to develop the first, that is, to develop the intellect or mind of the student.

<sup>16</sup> *Spirit* 3, § 257, pp. 328-29.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Kauffman makes a lengthy analysis of the *Manual*, pointing out its elaborate treatment of positive human capacities and contrasting it to the corresponding manual of the Christian Brothers. See Christopher J. KAUFFMAN, *Education and Transformation: Marianist Ministries in America Since 1849* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), pp. 123-29.

<sup>18</sup> [Jean Baptiste FONTAINE,] *Manual of Christian Pedagogy for the Use of the Brothers of Mary* (Dayton: Nazareth, 1899), p. 25.



The way to the pupil's mind lies through his heart; unless the teacher gain the heart, he will never control the mind. A disliked teacher will talk in vain to an unsympathetic class.

The heart of the pupil is not taken by storm, as a fortress, nor by cutting off supplies, as cities are reduced. The human heart surrenders to kindness only. Fear will close the portals of the heart, confidence alone will open them. Let the religious teacher conquer the youthful heart by kindness and rule it by love.<sup>19</sup>

This piece of advice recalls Father Chaminade's distinction between faith of the mind and faith of the heart. Once, when he was writing to Father Lalanne, he pointed out that faith of the mind and submission of the mind to what we believe is a gift of God, and quite a great gift, but it is not the whole of faith. It is faith of the heart which leads to justification. "The submission of the mind is already a great favor of God, but it is only a preparation for the submission of the heart; and the heart will submit only for love. At least that is the way I see it, and it seems to me dangerous not to see it like this in practice."<sup>20</sup>

The recommendations of the Manual are quite concrete, detailed, and practical. Such, for example, is the advice never to resort to corporal punishment or corporal discipline, the avoidance of which was also singled out as a characteristic of Marianist pedagogy.

Do not inflict injurious punishments, such as kneeling for a long time, remaining in an uncomfortable position, fasting, etc. Pinching, slapping the face or the head, pulling the nose, ears, or hair, beating with the fist, kicking, are indignities to which no child should be subjected.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> *Lettres* 3, Chaminade to Lalanne, Jan. 23, 1833, no. 661, p. 227. Quoted in SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. 309.



Such brutal treatment is not only incompatible with the character of a religious teacher, but it is also cowardly, unmanly, and amenable to criminal law.<sup>21</sup>

A careful reading of the Manual discloses many traces of Marianist thought and sentiment which reflect or recall features of Marianist spirituality which are explicitly stated elsewhere and which have been handed down to us by our Marianist forebears.

It is clear that the years between 1850 and 1875, which coincide more or less with the generalates of Father Caillet and Father Chevaux in the Society of Mary, are a period in which the tone of Marianist spirituality and the imagery and language with which it was expressed and experienced were changing. It was a time of forgetting many aspects of Marianist life that had once been crucially important, such as Marianist lay communities and the militant, apostolic sense of history with which the first Marianists consecrated themselves to Mary's mission with enthusiastic and determined zeal. Father Neubert calls it a period of "Partial Eclipse of Our Marian Doctrine."<sup>22</sup> To understand and evaluate this judgment, we need to examine later developments in Marianist spirituality which transpired during the generalate of Father Simler.

However, the cutting edge of the development of Marianist spirituality during the years between 1850 and 1875 is most explicit in the emerging identity of the Society of Mary as a teaching congregation that measured up to the standards of excellence that were then taking shape in the Catholic schools movement of 19<sup>th</sup> century France. Marianist devotion to Mary became more mellow, and Marianist attitudes toward the Modern became a bit more open.

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<sup>21</sup> [FONTAINE,] *Manual*, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, pp. 106-11.



### *The Simler Years*

Father Simler, the "Second Founder," succeeded Father Chevaux as Superior General of the Society in 1876. He died in office 29 years later in 1905. His generalate is one of the most important in the history of the Society for many reasons.<sup>23</sup> One of those reasons and the one which concerns us in this paper is the profound impact his leadership had on the development of Marianist spirituality. Broadly speaking, there are two parts or phases to his influence on Marianist spirituality. First, he raised into high consciousness the understanding and awareness of our special Marianist devotion to Mary by giving it the name *filial piety*, which he successfully introduced into the text of the 1891 Constitutions of the Society in the crucial articles which delineate and explain the core of Marianist Marian spirit and devotion. Second, he rehabilitated the reputation of Father Chaminade by publishing the biography of the Founder, which was a revelation to the Marianist world. Marianists saw once again the full breadth of Father Chaminade's vision of the Marianist mission, and a thrilled amazement over this wonderful recovery swept through the Marianist world during first years of the present century. From 1901, the year Simler published his biography of the Founder, this recovery of the Chaminadean sense of the Marianist spirit has continued and grown right down to our own day.

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<sup>23</sup> The definitive history of Father Simler's generalate has not yet been written. However, there are good, partial accounts in Brother Cousin's biography, in the popular histories of Father Lebon, Father Gadiou, and Father Délas, and in an array of other sources such as biographies of other Marianists, accounts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion of the Society, histories of the Constitutions, and the histories of our Marian devotion by Emile Neubert, Paul Verrier, and John G. Leies which we have cited in this paper. Recently, these sources have been significantly augmented by the publication of Father Simler's private journal. See [Louis COUSIN, SM], *Joseph Simler, Fourth Superior General of the Society of Mary* (Dayton: St. Mary's Convent, 1913). See also Joseph SIMLER, SM, *Journal intime et notes*, edited by Ambrogio ALBANO, SM (Rome: AGMAR Collection "La Gerbe", 1996).



We know that Father Simler had an especially fervent devotion to Mary before he became Superior General. It was probably during his novitiate in the years 1853-55 that he discovered St. Louis Grignion de Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary*. The book made a deep impression on him. He shared his discovery with his close friend Louis de Lagarde, and together they came to see that the devotion to Mary that characterized the Society of Mary which they were entering bore a strong resemblance to that of Grignion de Montfort.<sup>24</sup> The two friends shared many more experiences that would have far-reaching effects, including the discovery of Father Chaminade's manuscripts during their forced confinement in the Society's Paris headquarters during the siege of the city in 1870-71 at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. Here is Father Simler's own account of this significant occurrence.

During the long siege of Paris of 1870-71, we were while away the hours of our confinement by rummaging through the archives of the Society of Mary when our attention was arrested by documents concerning Father Chaminade, the Founder of the Society. What a revelation this reading proved to be! It dawned upon us that Father Chaminade was more of an unknown than we had realized, not only in those regions where he had exercised his apostolate, but even in the religious families he founded and which continue to live his spirit and to function under his guidance.

We were aware that Father Chaminade constantly recommended to his disciples the truly Christian maxim he himself practiced, "Love to be unknown and to be esteemed as nothing." This love for the hidden life explains how he was able to live without attracting public attention and to die without creating a stir. But did it justify the silence that has since shrouded the person and

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<sup>24</sup> NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, p. 112.



the works of this ardent apostle? Could that prolonged silence and that apparent oblivion find any justification today? Were these not rather regrettable, especially in the institutes of which he was the Founder? When Divine Providence allowed us to stumble on those documents, so well hidden in their cartons, was it not inviting us to make them public so that Father Chaminade might appear to us as the man he was and as he reveals himself in his letters and in the deeds making up his life's work?<sup>25</sup>

No doubt Father Simler found in these valuable manuscripts much about the Founder's description of our Marianist devotion to Mary. The manuscripts definitely made him dream of a biography of the Founder, that would one day be written by himself or someone else. In fact, he and his secretary Father Klobb were the authors who were going to write that biography, which was published 30 years later.

With these experiences as part of his background, Father Simler was elected Superior General at the General Chapter of 1876. Among other things, he is known to members of the Society as the Good Father who wrote a great number of long, tedious circular letters. In most libraries of Marianist documents the 94 Simler circulars are bound into three thick volumes. Quite a few of these circulars are more than 100 pages long and constitute minor treatises on the topics they treat. We will examine two of these long circulars which play a key role in the development of Marianist spirituality: the "Instruction on Piety" (Circular No. 10, June 28, 1878); and the "Instruction on the Characteristic Features of the Society of Mary" (Circular No. 62, July 10, 1894). It is in the circular on Piety<sup>26</sup> that Father Simler started the work of establishing the special Marianist meaning of the term *filial piety*.

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<sup>25</sup> SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. XXV.

<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the ET of this circular that is most readily available to



## Filial Piety

Father Chaminade and the Marianists of the foundation period never used the term *filial piety* in the specialized sense that Father Simler was going to give it. Neither did Marianists in the first years after the Founder's death. For example, Father Fontaine's widely read *Manual of Christian Pedagogy* devotes a section to filial piety in the chapter on the role of love in Christian education. But here the term simply means the great respect and tender love which pupils have for their parents. Of all natural sentiments, it is "the first and most deeply engraven on the heart. Education, therefore, has not to implant it, but merely to strengthen and perfect it." However, Father Fontaine does not go beyond this ordinary and commonly understood meaning of the term.<sup>27</sup>

Father Caillet used the phrase *filial piety to Mary* once in a circular as a synonym for *devotion to Mary*. At the end of Father Caillet's generalate, in 1867, Brother Girardet, the respected and saintly director of the novitiate at Ebersmunster, published *L'art de devenir meilleur*, a book of meditations for the use of novices and young Marianist religious.<sup>28</sup> In this book, he repeatedly used the expression "devotion or filial piety towards the Blessed Vir-

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English-speaking Marianists is the abridged version published in 1881 by the American Province under the title *Filial Piety in Christian Life* and intended as a spiritual reading book for "the public in general." The abridgement deleted all references to the Society of Mary including the section entitled "Spirit of Piety in the Society of Mary," in which Father Simler explains why the vow of stability is for Marianist religious the vow of filial piety toward Mary. This paper will cite the complete ET of 1952. See Joseph SIMLER, SM, "Instruction on Piety," *Circular No. 10*, June 28, 1878, 2 parts (Dayton: Apostle of Mary Documentary Series, March 1952).

<sup>27</sup> [FONTAINE], *Manual*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>28</sup> [FRANÇOIS GIRARDET, SM], *The Secret of Becoming Better or a Series of Meditations on the Principal Truths and Virtues of the Christian and Religious Life* (Dayton: St. Mary's Institute, 1885), *passim*.



gin" or simply "filial piety towards the Blessed Virgin" to refer to the attitude Marianists have toward Mary. Similarly, while Father Chevaux was Superior General, he directed the composition of a collection of particular examens for young Marianists which included one on devotion to Mary or "fidelity in practicing and propagating devotion, that is, filial piety towards the Blessed Virgin Mary." These few scattered uses of the term during the generalates of Father Caillet and Father Chevaux were hints of what was to come, but they were not yet versions of the full blown formula "the most faithful imitation and reproduction of the filial piety of Jesus toward Mary, his mother," which Father Simler was going to canonize and use to name the first and most prominent characteristic feature of the Marianists.<sup>29</sup>

Father Simler broke new ground with the "Instruction on Piety," the first of his long circulars. Here for the first time he gave the term *filial piety* its new specialized Marianist meaning. The circular treats piety on a grand canvas. Here, in Father Simler's own words, is the plan of the circular.

Our subject is immense. It comprises the study of piety in man, that is the history of this natural tendency which God has placed in us: its successive transformations under the guidance of the will which makes it a virtue, under the action of divine grace which makes it a supernatural virtue, under the movement of the Holy Spirit, which raises it to the dignity of a Gift. Then rising still higher we shall study piety in the most Holy Trinity, and in the person and works of Christ our Savior.<sup>30</sup>

Father Simler starts with a consideration of piety in the natural order, which first appears as the sentiment of reciprocal affection and love which unites members of a family among

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<sup>29</sup> NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, pp. 106-7.

<sup>30</sup> SIMLER, "Instruction on Piety", part 1, pp. 1- 2.



themselves and as the acts which this sentiment inspires. The piety of children toward their parents is the filial piety of which Father Fontaine spoke in the *Manual*. Domestic families are the type of all the other families to which human beings belong: households, communities, larger associations, civic societies, nations, and the worldwide family of humankind. All these manifestations of family form the basis in nature on which grace can build and raise piety to the level of supernatural virtue.

From a consideration of piety in the supernatural order, Father Simler moves to piety in God, that is, divine piety in the Most Holy Trinity. "The love of the Father for the Son, the love of the Son for the Father, the love of the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost, all the Father does for the Son, all the Son does for the Father, all that the Father and Son work in the Holy Ghost; all this may and should be designated by the name of piety, for it is a question of relations, inspirations, operations, bonds of love between persons of the same family."<sup>31</sup> The love of the Son for the Father and all the Son does for the Father constitute divine filial piety. With these considerations Father Simler approaches with awe his treatment of the Incarnation, the great mystery of divine piety and the first invention of divine filial piety. "The Incarnation is the great mystery of piety because it is the great act, the pious invention of the Son for the honor and glory of his Father. ... This inexpressible mystery is the masterly invention of the pious Jesus, for it is the work of his very heart."<sup>32</sup>

In Christ, human filial piety becomes divine, and divine filial piety becomes human. And since Mary is inextricably involved in the Incarnation, she is the second invention of the filial piety of the Son for his Father. She is the masterpiece of divine piety. The divine filial piety of Christ toward his Father extends to his

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<sup>31</sup> *IBID.*, part 1, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> *IBID.*, part 1, pp.17, 19.



filial piety toward his Mother. This filial piety of the Christ, the Son of God, for his Father, is the model and exemplar for all created filial piety, including his filial piety for Mary. It is also the model for our own filial piety toward Mary. When we love Mary, when we manifest our filial piety toward her, we are gathered up into the mystery of the Incarnation, into participating in the mystery of Christ's filial piety toward Mary. By the mysterious grace of exemplary participation, we reproduce the filial piety of Christ, the divine Son, for Mary, his mother.<sup>33</sup>

Having thus explored natural piety, supernatural piety, divine piety, and the filial piety of Christ for Mary, Father Simler turns to an examination of the spirit of piety in the Society of Mary. He first recalls the explanation of the vow of stability found in the Constitutions of the Society. "By the vow of stability the professed intends to constitute himself permanently and irrevocably in the state of a servant of Mary. It is properly a devotedness to the Blessed Virgin with the pious design of propagating her knowledge and perpetuating her love and cult as much as possible through oneself and through others in whatever circumstances of life he may be." In view of all that has been said about piety and the filial piety of Christ toward Mary, Father Simler asks, "Do you not understand, my dear children, that the vow of stability thus understood is, so to speak, the vow of filial piety towards Mary?"<sup>34</sup>

He recalls that in some religious orders or congregations the Church authorizes the profession of a fourth vow.

Those institutes that have requested and obtained a fourth vow have generally wished to make known in this way what distinguishes them from all other institutes, and what constitutes their proper physiognomy in

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<sup>33</sup> *IBID.*, part 1, pp. 20-24.

<sup>34</sup> *IBID.*, part 2, p. 37.



the great religious family, or at least what is most striking in their physiognomy. For the Society of Mary, the vow of stability indicates precisely what will be found habitual and dominant in the Society and essentially characteristic of each religious.

What is this striking trait? Is it necessary to mention it? It so dominates everything that it is in evidence everywhere. ... All for Mary, all by Mary, all with Mary, always and everywhere Mary. ... By the vow of stability, however, we go beyond what simple Christians and the religious of other institutes do.

We consecrate to Mary and we give to her all that we have and all that we are: our persons, our works, our time, and our life. ... To give all to Mary, to expect all from Mary, and to show by our actions that this is our constant disposition, the habitual and reasoned disposition of our soul, this is our special and striking characteristic. ... To propagate the knowledge of Mary, to perpetuate her love and her cult, this is our supreme ambition. Such is the true meaning of our vow of stability. ... Our vow of stability is then, I repeat, a vow of filial piety towards Mary.<sup>35</sup>

With the spiritual and theological analysis of this first of his long circulars, "The Instruction on Piety," Father Simler was convinced he had penetrated to the sublime secrets of Marianist devotion to Mary and that he had demonstrated that it coincides with filial piety to Mary. The words *filial piety to Mary* emerged as a succinct phrase that could be used as a fitting and theologically accurate name for the characteristic Marianist devotion to Mary. As the newly elected Superior General, he was now responsible for continuing the process of getting the Constitutions of the Society approved by Rome, and he saw no reason why the characteristic of filial piety should not be mentioned explicitly in the text of the Constitutions. The General Chapter of 1876 had

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<sup>35</sup> *IBID.*, part 2, pp. 37-38.



given his administration the mandate of completing the revision of the text and submitting it to Rome. Father Simler took advantage of this opportunity and introduced the new term into several key articles.

The new version of Article 3 stated, "the professed members of the Society of Mary, as a characteristic feature, endeavor to reproduce in themselves with visible complacency the filial piety of the Divine Model to Mary, his most holy mother." This article was complemented by Article 293, near the end of Book 1, which repeated the idea of Article 3 and amplified it with further considerations that had been derived in the circular on Piety.

All pious institutes propose to themselves the same perfection, but not all of them have the same special vocation. "Everyone hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, another after that" (1 Co 7:7). That which may be considered the gift of God for the Society of Mary, that which constitutes its physiognomy and forms its distinctive feature is a truly filial piety towards the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This article would later inspire Father Neubert when he chose the title of his book *Our Gift from God*.

The article which contains the most oft-quoted passage in the Simler Constitutions is Article 6.

On account of the second object of the Society, zeal for the salvation of souls is a disposition which should animate all its members; on the other hand filial piety toward Mary constitutes and expresses, in consequence of a manifest and primordial intention always carefully maintained in the Society, the proper physiognomy and distinguishing mark of the members of the Society. But let it be remarked that these two qualities are among the most characteristic features of the Divine Model; the Society has then, in reality, but one object in view, namely,



*the most faithful imitation of Jesus Christ, Son of God, become Son of Mary, for the salvation of mankind* (emphasis added).

After the 1891 Constitutions were approved, the last line of this article became the most popular statement of the Marianist ideal that was used and quoted in the Society. If a member of the Society were asked what filial piety actually is, he would most often reply "the most faithful imitation of Jesus Christ, Son of God, become Son of Mary, for the salvation of mankind."

For some reason Father Simler did not insert the formula "the vow of stability is the vow of filial piety towards Mary" from his circular on Piety into the revised text of the Constitutions. However, he concluded Book 1 with an idyllic description of the typical member of the Society as a man who, "after the example of Jesus and under the inspiration of filial piety to Mary, journeys onward, occupying himself with the affairs of his Heavenly Father, laboring for the glory of his Mother, and doing good to his fellow-Brothers."<sup>36</sup>

With the approval of the Constitutions by Rome in 1891, *filial piety* rapidly became established as the standard term used in the Society to refer to its characteristic devotion Mary. This usage lasted about 75 years until work began on the latest revision of the Constitutions of the Society. The General Chapter of 1961 began the process. It culminated 22 years later when the 1981 Chapter accepted the text of the Rule of Life that received Vatican approval in 1983. No formal decision was made to abandon the term *filial piety*. However, it does not occur in the 1983 Rule. During the 1960s, Marianists simply and quietly stopped using the term by a seemingly unspoken consensus.<sup>37</sup> It might be interesting for Marianist historians to investigate whether there is

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<sup>36</sup> SM Constitutions of 1891, Article 305.

<sup>37</sup> The interim SM Constitutions of 1967 use the term in two brief mentions (Articles 5 and 95) and in the chapter on the characteristic virtues which was



any record of discussions or informal deliberations that took place in favor of discontinuing the use of the term.

The long process of obtaining Vatican approval of the 1891 Constitutions was not without its difficulties. The biggest problem Father Simler faced was the near loss of the vow of stability. He obtained the agreement of the General Chapter of 1881 to establish a "Class of Veterans" in the Society selected from the members older than 35 who were perpetually professed for at least 10 years and who alone would make the vow of stability. The text of the Constitutions was revised to this effect and submitted to the Vatican. The Vatican, in the *Animadversions* of 1882, rejected this change and directed that the vow of stability be dropped altogether. This outcome came as an unwelcome and distressing surprise to Father Simler and his advisors. They realized they were partially to blame for the crisis because they had tried to tamper with the vow of stability.<sup>38</sup> After an appeal and negotiations, the Vatican agreed to allow the Society to retain the practice that had been in place since 1865, that is, restricting the vow to perpetually professed members.<sup>39</sup> Yet another revision of the Constitutions was drawn up and submitted in 1885. It is this text which finally received canonical approval on July 10, 1891.<sup>40</sup>

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retained unchanged and provisionally from the Simler Constitutions of 1891. However, a new terminology centered on the word *community* shifted these isolated uses of *filial piety* to the sidelines.

<sup>38</sup> Father Paul Verrier makes the following remark when he recounts this development. "It would be interesting to re-read the minutes of the meetings of the Council of the General Administration at the place where Rome's decision had been communicated and commented upon. They must have been stupefied at first, and imagine what emotion they felt at the thought that the vow of stability was about to disappear completely." Paul VERRIER, *Sketches*, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> Besides the account of this episode in the short history by Paul Verrier referred to above, there is a detailed account in Father Délas' *Histoire des Constitutions*. See also NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, pp. 114-19.

<sup>40</sup> Jean Claude DÉLAS, SM, "Rule of Life," in *Commentary on SM Rule*, pp. 1058-61



Three years later, when Father Simler published his "Instruction on the Characteristic Features of the Society of Mary", he identified signal filial piety towards Mary as "the first and principal distinctive feature of the Society."<sup>41</sup> In the 16 years since 1878, when he had published the circular on Piety, many things had happened under Father Simler's leadership. There were successes and failures amid the steady growth and expansion of the Society. One of the clear accomplishments was the solid establishment of filial piety to Mary to a position of preeminence in the Society, both the conscious living and experience of this Marianist devotion to Mary and the use of the term *filial piety* to name it and speak about it. Even though we no longer use the term, we know the reality which has been handed on to us as one of the core dimensions of Marianist spirituality.

#### *Rehabilitation and Rediscovery of Father Chaminade*

From our vantage point today, the most important contribution of Father Simler to the development of Marianist spirituality did not occur until the final years of his generalate. With the final approval of the Constitutions accomplished, he at last had enough time to turn his attention to his dream of writing a biography of the Founder. In the winter of 1870-71, when he had perused the manuscripts in the archives for the first time, Father Simler had concluded that Father Chaminade was "an unknown" in the Marianist world. Two decades later, in 1891, this situation had hardly changed. In the spring of that year, Father Simler had made a small step to rectify this situation by publishing the "Historical Notice of the Society of Mary" (Circular No. 55, March 12, 1891), which included facts and information about the Founder's life and works that had been previously unknown

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<sup>41</sup> SIMLER, "Instruction on Characteristic Features," pp. 34-67.



to many members of the Society. However, the bulk of the work on the Founder's biography was still ahead of him.

The biography obliged him thoroughly to study the original documents buried in the archives of the Society, as well as many obscure facts in the history of the Church in France, from 1780 to 1850. The undertaking was too vast for any one man, especially one who had to govern an extensive religious society. But Providence supplied a precious aid in the person of his secretary, Father Charles Klobb, who had mastered the classics as well as history and theology, and who was a thoroughly Marian and apostolic religious.<sup>42</sup>

The professional historical standards and level of scholarship of the biography turned out to be of a different and totally higher order of magnitude than that of the "Historical Notice of the Society of Mary." This superiority was due to the talents and competence of Father Klobb. He became Father Simler's secretary in 1895 and in that capacity co-authored the Founder's biography. In 1899, Father Simler confided the work he had done on the biography to Father Klobb

... and directed him to study and coordinate what he had collected and to continue and to complete the work of research. Thus Father Klobb undertook a series of travels in the footsteps of Father Chaminade assembling a vast amount of documentary material. Father Simler wished to write a simple book without the many references imposed by modern historical method, but Father Klobb objected and insisted on rigorous documentation. He won his point, and Father Simler, not having a taste for such meticulous writing, turned the project over to Father Klobb. By the spring of 1901 the basic text was

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<sup>42</sup> NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, p. 123.



completed, and in the fall of the same year the book, put in final form by Father Simler, was published.<sup>43</sup>

The book came out just two short years before the Associations Law of the French government was going to close down a significant portion of Marianist schools in France, drive the General Administration into exile in Belgium, cause the new Marianist seminary to be moved from Antony to Fribourg, force the relocation of many members of the Society, and precipitate the withdrawal from the Society of many others. It was a true restructuring.

Despite all this turmoil, the book was in circulation and began to have its transforming effect on the Marianists of that day. If they did not read the book themselves because it was so long and scholarly or because it was written in French, they heard about it from other Marianists. Marianist schools and Marianist buildings across the world began to be named "Chaminade," pictures and portraits of the Founder began to be reproduced and distributed, and statues of him began to be erected in Marianist courtyards and on Marianist properties. Episodes from the Founder's life were recounted in talks and conferences to Marianist religious and repeated to pupils and students in Marianist schools. Marianist religious heard the story of the Bordeaux Sodality and the Association of Adele. They pointed out the similarity of this former work with adults to efforts being made by a handful of Marianist religious of that day to work directly with adult lay Catholics in the Sillon Movement.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Thomas A. STANLEY, SM, *The Mystical Body of Christ According to the Writings of Father William Joseph Chaminade* (Fribourg: St. Paul's Press, 1952), p. 15, footnote 38.

<sup>44</sup> Brother Cousin's account of the Sillon Movement in his biography of Father Simler, published a few months after his death in 1905, illustrates this point. When he was writing, the Church had not yet condemned the Movement. Brother Cousin makes the following comments on Father Simler's dealing with



An even larger effect was produced by the conferences and retreats of Father Klobb in which he exposed and explained the thought and vision of Father Chaminade as he had discovered it in his research for the biography.

In 1904 Father Klobb preached the annual retreat at the Marianist Seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. He chose as sole theme of his conferences, the apostolate. Speaking on the apostolate in the Society of Mary, he explained Father Chaminade's ideas about the apostolic mission of Mary, about the foundation of the Society of Mary in order to supply her with an army of soldiers, about our participation in the mission of the Immaculate Virgin and the boundless confidence which this participating should give us. All this was a revelation to the seminarians, none of whom had heard such views before.

The following year, Father Klobb was called to preach a retreat to the superiors of the Society at Fayt-Manage, Belgium. The retreatants comprised the members of the general and provincial administration as well as directors of several important communities. He spoke on the

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this new apostolate. "In order, in the words of our Founder, 'to extend its action over man during his whole life, taking charge of him from his most tender age, and leaving him only to deliver him into the hands of God' (SM Constitutions, art. 281), to widen the sphere of its apostolate wherever possible, the Society of Mary found it fitting to take upon itself what in our days is called 'social work' (*oeuvres sociales*). This work corresponds to that of Father Chaminade's Sodalities, and occupies a rank constantly gaining importance in the Christian regeneration of staid old European societies as well as the more recent organizations of the New World. This enterprise of a social apostolate presupposed some experimenting; it required special abilities that could not be implanted by administrative measures, but which would crop up and develop in the course of the work. Consequently Father Simler gave no orders regarding them. Perceiving in the Society special vocations for this line of work he encouraged their efforts and initiative." Brother Cousin's mention of "special vocations" in the last sentence is an oblique reference to himself, as well as Father Leber and others. See [COUSIN], *Simler*, pp. 161-68; the cited passage is on p. 163. In the original French text, the *Sillon* is treated on pp. 158-66 and the cited passage is on pp. 160-61



Founder's teaching about the Society, its spirit and apostolate. There was the same astonishment and enthusiasm as in the seminary. Father Francis Kieffer, then director of Villa St. Jean, Fribourg, said, "It was as if a poor family just learned that it had fallen heir to an immense fortune." A decision was taken to multigraph a summary of the conferences for all the retreat-masters of that year.<sup>45</sup>

Father Neubert, who wrote the above lines, was one of the seminarians in 1904. This citation is thus, in part, an eyewitness account, written 50 years after the fact. No doubt, the seminarians' retreat of 1904 is the start of the decisive influence and impact he always claimed Father Klobb had on him.<sup>46</sup> News of the seminarians' retreat must have cheered Father Simler in his last days, and the positive reception given to the biography he had dreamed of for so many years and which had been so brilliantly realized with the able assistance of Father Klobb must have been a consolation in the face of the troubles inflicted on the Society by the French government. He died on February 4, 1905.

### *Emergence of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Marianist Spirituality*

Two months after Father Simler died Father Klobb preached the Easter retreat to the superiors of the Society in Fayt and as-

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<sup>45</sup> NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, pp. 124-25.

<sup>46</sup> "Un événement encore plus important pour la carrière du jeune prêtre fut la découverte de l'héritage spirituel de G.-J. Chaminade, fondateur de la Société de Marie. En 1904, le P. Klobb, alors secrétaire du P. Simler, supérieur général, lui révéla la pensée du fondateur sur la nature originale de la Société de Marie... Dans une lettre à un confrère américain (15 mars 1960), à la fin de sa carrière, Neubert écrivait que, depuis qu'il en eut connaissance, 'cette idée a été constamment reprise dans toute ma prédication mariale et mes écrits.'" Théodore Koehler, "Neubert (Émile)", in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 11, col. 151. The American Marianist was Brother Gerald Jarc. The idea that Father Neubert returned to all his life was Mary's apostolic mission.



tonished them with the vision of the Father Chaminade. The success of the retreat prompted the decision to publish more writings which would communicate the Founder's dynamic vision to the Marianist world. Besides distributing copies of the retreat notes,<sup>47</sup> plans were made for two new publications in addition to the biography of Father Chaminade, which had already come out: first, an expansion of Father Klobb's *Les Enseignements du Fondateur par rapport à la Société et à son esprit*; and, second, the letters of Father Chaminade.

The first work was a manuscript "contained in two large notebooks which Father Klobb carried about with him and from which he gave numerous conferences and retreats in many houses of the Society."<sup>48</sup> He had been working on the expansion for some time and continued this work after he was elected Head of Instruction at the General Chapter held in August 1905 in Rèves, Belgium. Unfortunately, his early death in 1906 interrupted this work. Father Lebon took over the task, which issued in the publication of the *Spirit of Our Foundation* during the years between 1910 and 1916. Father Lebon also completed Father Klobb's work on organizing the letters of Father Chaminade, the first 5 volumes of which were published during the years between 1930 and 1934.

These publications put a huge array of the Founder's writings at the disposal of Marianists throughout the world. Members of the Society began to study and meditate upon the founding vision and inspiration in ways that had not been possible before that time. All this activity led to a development of Marianist spirituality which was far more directly in touch with the thought

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<sup>47</sup> These retreat notes have been published recently by AGMAR. Charles KLOBB, SM, *L'Esprit de la Société: Retraite de Fayt, Semaine de Pâques 1905* (Rome: AGMAR Collection "La Gerbe", No. 9, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> STANLEY, *Mystical Body*, p. 16, footnote 38.



of Father Chaminade than anything that had taken place in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The rediscovery of the Letter to the Retreat Masters of 1839 illustrates the change that was taking place. In 1839, handwritten copies of the Letter were sent to the three retreat masters and to each community of the Society and the Daughters of Mary. Some of these copies were read by the religious. Father Fridblatt, for example, wrote an enthusiastic letter to the Founder after he had seen copies at Courtefontaine and Saint Remy. But after the end of that year, there is little evidence that the copies of the Letter were read, even after it was published in 1863 in Father Caillet's *Recueil*, the collection of his own circulars up to that date and some of Father Chaminade's. Father Caillet and Father Chevaux never cited the Letter in any of their circulars or official documents. Neither did Father Simler before 1891. That year he published the "Historical Notice of the Society of Mary," in which he quoted at length from the Letter. Three years later, in his "Instruction on the Characteristic Features," he quoted even longer passages. Thus, it was only after a silence of 52 years, from 1839 to 1891, that the Letter emerges from obscurity.<sup>49</sup> From that time forward, however, there has been a complete turnaround, which was caused by the rediscovery of Father Chaminade at the turn of the century and the publication of Marianist documents since then.

Today the Letter is regarded as the most important single piece of writing that comes down to us from Father Chaminade and his best explanation of the Marianist vision of Mary's mission and the participation of Marianists in that mission. Father Klobb said that the text of the Letter should be engraved in letters of gold on the walls of the Society's houses of formation.<sup>50</sup> Father

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<sup>49</sup> NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, pp. 110, 121.

<sup>50</sup> J. VERRIER, "Marianist Stability," in *Commentary on SM Rule*, p. 752.



Neubert called it the most beautiful of the Founder's writings.<sup>51</sup> The Letter has been published and republished in numerous editions and translations. Recently, Father Armbruster's marvelous commentary on the Letter has provided us with more than 400 pages of meticulous textual analysis. Today, after the Letter has held its eminent status for so long, it hardly seems possible that there was a time when a half century went by during which it had virtually disappeared from Marianist consciousness.

By itself, the publication of the biography of the Founder, of the *Spirit*, and of the letters was not the sole cause of the development of Marianist consciousness and spirituality in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Certain Marianists were especially influential in fostering this development. In Europe, Father Schellhorn was one of the foremost of these propagators of the Marianist spirit and Marianist spirituality. He was a close personal friend of Father Klobb, who was three years older than Father Schellhorn. Their friendship began in 1891 in Rome where they were seminarians and continued in Cannes after 1894. Father Schellhorn learned first-hand and directly from his friend about the exciting discoveries of the Founder's vision.

In 1903, at the suggestion of Father Klobb, Father Schellhorn was named novice master of the newly reorganized novitiate in Belgium. There for the next 32 years, he formed a whole generation of French, Belgian, and Swiss members of the Society. He used the Marianist documents that were being published to instill a strong and deep awareness of the vision of Father Chaminade and the Marianist devotion to Mary. To these documents he added books that he composed for the use of the novices: the *Catechism of the Interior Life*, the *Catechism of the Religious State*, and the *Little Treatise on Mariology*. He died in 1935 after succumbing, like his good friend Father Klobb, to the ravages of tuberculosis.

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<sup>51</sup> NEUBERT, *Our Gift from God*, p. 110.



During these same years after World War I, there was a movement among opinion leaders of the Society to restore whatever may have been lost of the original role and meaning of the vow of stability by Father Simler's near loss of the vow in the 1880s. Prominent among them were Father Paul Verrier, Brother Cousin, Father Lebon, Father Schellhorn, and the young Father Neubert. They had the full backing of the General Administration.

When the Constitutions were being modified to conform to the new Code of Canon Law, these promoters of a renewed vow of stability successfully introduced a revised version of Article 55 into the Simler Constitutions of 1891. Article 54 of the 1891 Constitutions stated, "In adding the vow of stability to the three ordinary vows, the professed intends expressly to manifest his determination to fulfill this obligation to the Society (the obligation to persevere in it and never refuse it his cooperation)." The old version of Article 55 then went on to state, "In the second place, he intends to constitute himself permanently and irrevocably in the state of servant of Mary, to whom the Society is especially consecrated." The new 1922 version of Article 55 stated, "*Above all, he intends to constitute himself permanently and irrevocably in the state of a servant of Mary, of her to whom the Society is especially consecrated. The vow is, in reality, a consecration to the Blessed Virgin, with the pious design of making her known and of perpetuating love and devotion to her.*" The words in italics were the changes and additions. The advocates of this new version of Article 55 hailed it as a great victory which regained whatever ground had been lost 30 years earlier by the imprudent efforts of Father Simler to change the vow. Amid the euphoria, they urged all the members of the Society to penetrate themselves with the newly recovered spirit of the vow of stability, which they characterized as a vow of consecration to Mary, as the new text of Article 55 stated.



Many years later, Father Joseph Verrier, nephew of Father Paul Verrier and Marianist historian of the first rank, looked back on the efforts of his uncle and the other promoters of a renewed vow of stability with a critical eye. He contended that their work was marked by exaggerations and confusions which introduced uncertainties and diverse interpretations that led to many Marianists being misled and steered off course. Even worse, he believed that there is risk of the exaggerations and confusions continuing to steer us off course and mislead us because they have been enshrined in texts and documents we have come to regard as family treasures.<sup>52</sup> Here, in his own words, are the conclusions he draws in a long memorandum he wrote in 1984, but never published.

What emerges from this discussion? For lack of understanding the thought of our Founder, for lack of distinguishing the ascetical and moral plane from the juridical and canonical plane, also for the lack of taking into account the evolution which has taken place in Church legislation on the subject of congregations with simple vows, there has been too much insistence on the importance of the vow of stability in the Society of Mary and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary to the detriment of the nature of the two societies.

In contemplating the flying buttresses, the cathedral was neglected. In looking at the anchor, the ocean liner was forgotten. The tree has hidden the forest.

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<sup>52</sup> "Cette remarque est essentielle. En a-t-on suffisamment tenu compte jusqu'ici? Il ne semble pas. Autrement, aurions-nous au sujet de notre voeu de stabilité tant d'incertitudes? tant d'interprétations diverses, qui déroutent ou égarent et risquent malheureusement de dérouter ou d'égarer encore à l'avenir, étant regardées et classées comme documents de famille?" Joseph VERRIER, SM, "Notre Don de Dieu," p. 1. This document is a typewritten manuscript of 55 pages completed in Rome on January 10, 1984. I am indebted to Father Eduardo Benlloch, who called it to my attention and gave me a copy of his copy, which has in turn been placed in the NACMS research library.



Independently of any vow of stability, the members of the Society of Mary and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate are consecrated to Mary by the very fact of their religious profession.

In effect, every religious profession, besides the promise made to God to live in poverty, chastity, and obedience to Superiors of a religious society recognized and juridically designated by the Church, also includes an implicit contract by which the professed expresses his or her will to be incorporated in this religious society, while on its side this society accepts him or her with the title of member.

Since the Society of Mary and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate are officially and constitutionally religious societies consecrated to Mary and as it were "the property of Mary," it is obvious that each and every one of their members is *ipso facto* consecrated to Mary by the effective and real hold which Mary has over each of them through the intermediary of the Superiors of these societies.

This consecration is complete. The vow of stability adds nothing. What it does is make the consecration more firm, more irrevocable, more steadfast, in a word, more solid in the eyes of conscience and the world.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> J. VERRIER, "Notre Don de Dieu," p. 48. "Que ressort-il de ce débat? Faute de comprendre exactement la pensée de notre Fondateur, faute de distinguer le plan ascétique et moral du plan juridique et canonique, faute aussi de tenir compte de l'évolution survenue dans la législation de l'Église au sujet des congrégations à voeux simples, on a trop insisté, au dam de la nature de la Société de Marie et de l'Institut des Filles de Marie, sur l'importance du voeu de stabilité dans ces deux sociétés.

"En contemplant l'arc-boutant, on a négligé la cathédrale; en voyant l'ancre, on a oublié le paquebot; l'arbre a caché la forêt.

"Indépendamment de tout voeu de stabilité, les membres de la Société de Marie et ceux de l'Institut de Filles de Marie Immaculée sont consacrés à Marie par le fait même de leur profession religieuse.

"Toute profession religieuse, en effet, outre la promesse faite à Dieu de vivre dans la pauvreté, la chasteté et l'obéissance aux Supérieurs d'une société reli-



These views of Father Joseph Verrier are found in gentler and more muted form in his article "Marianist Stability" in the *Commentary on the SM Rule of Life*. But in the lengthy memorandum of 1984 he systematically opposes the position of the promoters of a renewed vow of stability. The monograph "recounts the insistent and tenacious consultations at the Vatican and with theologians which Father Paul Marie Verrier made in order to justify his explanation of the vow of stability as the expression of a direct consecration to the most Blessed Virgin. The answers were always clear, denying absolutely this explanation. The author also reproduces a series of letters exchanged among Marianists of the period with respect to this polemic: Father Joseph Verrier himself, Father Resch, Father Hoffer, and Father Neubert."<sup>54</sup> This controversy has receded into the background in recent years. Very few persons knew about Father Joseph Verrier's disagreement with his uncle, and not many consider it an important matter to insist that the vow of stability is an indirect rather than a direct act of consecration.

Another great apostle of the Founder's apostolic and Marian vision was Father Neubert. As was mentioned already, he, too, was strongly influenced by Father Klobb. In 1907, he was sent to the American Province to help with the formation of new mem-

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gieuse reconnue par l'Église et juridiquement désignée, comporte un contrat implicite par lequel le profès exprime sa volonté d'être incorporé dans cette société religieuse, tandis que, de son côté, cette société l'agrée à titre de membre.

"Puisque la Société de Marie et l'Institut des Filles de Marie Immaculée sont officiellement et constitutionnellement des sociétés religieuses consacrées à Marie et comme 'la propriété de Marie,' il est obvie que tous et chacun de leurs membres sont *ipso facto* consacrés à Marie par l'emprise effective et réelle que Marie a sur tous et chacun d'eux par intermédiaire des Supérieurs de ces Sociétés.

"Cette consécration est complète. Le voeu de stabilité n'y ajoute rien. Ce qu'il a de propre, c'est de la rendre plus ferme, plus irrévocable, plus inébranable, plus solide en un mot aux yeux de la conscience et du monde."

<sup>54</sup> Comments of Father Benloch sent to L. Cada in March 1999. See Appendix of this paper for the context of these comments.



bers of the Society. He became the first novice master of the St. Louis Province when it was formed in 1908, and later spent several years at Mount St. John in Dayton, where he helped in the novitiate and scholasticate. When he arrived from Europe, he brought with him the manuscripts for the *Spirit of Our Fondation* along with an expansive and contagious enthusiasm for Marianist spirituality and the Marianist vision. During his 14 years in the United States, he was for American Marianists their most direct connection with the great rediscovery of Father Chaminade that was unfolding on the other side of the Atlantic. When he returned to Europe in 1921, he left behind his "Interior Life Book" which was used for many years in the novitiates of the American provinces.

In Europe, he was made superior of the seminary in Fribourg, a post he held until 1949. After that, he continued living at the seminary until his retirement in 1962. During his 40-year sojourn in Fribourg, he continued his promotion of the Marianist vision with seminarians from all the provinces of the Society. He concentrated especially on the Marian thought of Father Chaminade and became a respected mariologist in his own right. His most important contribution to the spread of Marianist spirituality was his miniature masterpiece *My Ideal*.

The publication of Marianist documents continued unabated down through the century right up to the present. The introduction of Father Chaminade's cause of beatification gave added stimulus to this outpouring of publications. When the objections of the devil's advocate brought the cause to a standstill in 1936, members of the Society turned to studying the documents to understand the Founder and to re-examine and confirm the evidence for his holiness.

These were the years of syntheses. Father Neubert wrote a *Synthesis of Our Characteristic Traits* in 1940. Father Ferree wrote two syntheses – the first synthesis, which appeared in several



editions between the years 1942 and 1954 with various titles, such as *A Program of Studies in Marianist Documents*; and the second synthesis, which also appeared in several editions and revisions starting in 1961 and also had various titles, such as *Texts of Capital Importance in a Synthesis of Father Chaminade's Thought*. Father Ferree was the first major interpreter of Father Chaminade in the history of the Society who was not French. During and after World War II, he was superior of Mount St. John, the house of formation in Dayton that served all the American provinces of that time. During his years in that position and for a long time thereafter, he inspired a whole generation of young American members of the Society to dedicate themselves to studying "the documents," where they could learn directly the breadth and depth of our Founder's apostolic genius. Marianist studies flourished and Marianist publications multiplied. Father Ferree's impact on young American Marianists at mid-century can be compared to Father Klobb's impact on young European Marianists at the turn of the century.

The Fribourg seminary also became a center of Marianist studies and Marianist publications in the years between World War II and Vatican II. A series of dissertations were published which treated various themes in the writings of Father Chaminade. Provisional editions of the *Notes d'Instruction* and the *Notes de Retraites* were published. Father Armbruster started work on the first set of *Écrits* volumes, the ones on direction. These were followed by the *Écrits Marials* and the *Écrits d'Oraison*. These publications carried further the wave that had been set in motion by Father Simler's biography in 1901.

The active pursuit of the cause of Father Chaminade was again taken up in 1968, when Father Vasey became postulator. He answered the 1936 objections of the devil's advocate and successfully argued the case in favor of the heroicity of virtues of Father Chaminade. The Founder was declared Venerable in 1973.

Today, in 1999, it appears we are on the eve of Father Chaminate's being declared Blessed.

The steady stream of Marianist publications during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is only one current in the development of Marianist spirituality that has taken place. The Marianist spirituality of this century has been a blending and confluence of many other currents as well, such as the ones that will be suggested in the final section of this paper to Marianist historians and writers as possible areas for future research and study. When the results of this research become available, it will be possible to write a suitably comprehensive history of Marianist spirituality of this century. In the meanwhile, this short history of Marianist spirituality can serve as a provisional tool and springboard for further work.

Perhaps the hardest part of writing the history of Marianist spirituality is entering deeply enough into the minds and hearts of our Marianist forebears to grasp the zeal and love that inspired them to give themselves to the Marianist vision and the Marianist dream. This paper has done no more than catch a few fleeting glimpses into their minds and hearts, but those glimpses seem vivid enough for us to pick up the excitement and adventure of their experience of Marianist life and for us to intuit our own relationship with them in the common Marianist spirituality we share with them.



## *Possible Paths for Future Study*

There are many gaps in this short history. In this concluding section I want to present a sampling of areas that merit further research for future inclusion in a more complete history of Marianist spirituality.

*The Spirituality of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Marianist Educators.* The years from World War I to the Second Vatican Council, roughly from 1920 to 1960, can be viewed as the summit of apostolic success by Marianist men and women religious in the networks of prosperous Catholic schools they conducted around the world. During those years Marianist religious led an active life that was divided between time spent in the school and time spent in the convent or faculty residence. Their spiritual life was nurtured by an apostolic zeal for the work of education being done with the students and by a rich round of prayers, spiritual exercises, practices, spiritual direction, spiritual reading almost all of which was carried on in the calm of the convent or faculty residence.<sup>1</sup> No

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Kauffman devotes several chapters of his history of the Society of Mary in North America to the years from 1920 to 1960, in which he describes the spirituality of American Marianist brothers and priests during the heyday of American Marianist schools. He treats this division of Marianist religious life between the school and the faculty residence. He sees the tension as sometimes almost contradictory or antagonistic. The attitude towards students and teaching in the school is world-accepting and world-embracing. The attitude in the faculty residence, on the other hand, is mistrustful and suspicious of the world; it is world-excluding and world-rejecting. He illustrates all these attitudes with copious direct quotations from original documents. He also advances a thesis that for American Marianists (that is, American members of the Society of Mary) the



one has yet examined the various components of this Marianist spirituality of Marianist religious during that era of greatest apostolic success in the schools to describe how its various components fit together. When those Marianists prayed or made meditation, what images and themes were the stuff of their prayer? When they prayed for their students or for one another, what spiritual sentiments filled their hearts? How did they experience their relationships with God, with Christ, with Mary? It would take much careful work by various historians in the different countries where Marianist religious flourished in those years to reconstruct this phase of the history of the Marianist spirituality of Marianist religious.

*Marianist Vocal Prayers.* This example suggests another. No one has yet made a systematic study of Marianist vocal prayers and their history. There are isolated articles scattered in Marianist periodicals such as the old *Apôtre de Marie* or the current *Marianist International Review* which tell the story of individual prayers such as the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception or the Three O'Clock Prayer. Father Armbruster, for example, wrote an article on the origins and evolution of the Three O'Clock Prayer;<sup>2</sup> and Father Lebon, among other authors, wrote various articles about Marianist prayers and devotions in the old *Apôtre de Marie*, of which he was the editor for many years. Other references are scattered in the appendixes and footnotes of Marianist documents on topics such as the various Acts of Consecration that have been used by Marianists over the years. Until the post-Vatican II shift to praying the Liturgy of the Hours, Marianist religious in the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary used

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world-accepting and world-embracing spirituality of the school was far stronger and overcame the world-rejecting spirituality of the faculty residence.

See KAUFFMAN, *Education and Transformation*, chapters 6 and 7, pp. 163-236.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Baptiste ARMBRUSTER, SM, "La prière de trois heures: histoire et propositions", *Marianist International Review* no. 3 (April 1985), pp. 19-31.



special Marianist prayer books or formularies for their daily common recitation of prayers. These formularies went through many editions and revisions during the 150 years after 1816 and 1817. No one has yet made a systematic historical survey of these Marianist formularies. The history of Marianist vocal prayers fits into the history of Marianist devotions and spiritual practices, which, in turn, is an important component or theme in the history of Marianist spirituality.

*National Embodiments of Marianist Spirituality.* To give another example, the 1980s saw the publication of a spate of books and monographs in Spanish on the history of the Society in Spain to mark the Marianist centenary celebrations. Few people in the English-speaking Marianist world know the breadth, quantity, and quality of these publications. Even the beatification of our Spanish martyrs did not change this situation very much among English-speaking Marianists. The complex history of the Society in Spain recounted in these works includes many portrayals of the spirituality of Marianist religious and their students during the 100 years of Marianist presence. To my knowledge, no one has yet made a survey of these historical works and extracted a description and analysis of Spanish Marianist spirituality and its evolution across those 100 years. In a similar vein, no one has analyzed the evolution of Marianist spirituality among other nationalities. How, for example, have Italian Marianist spirituality or French Marianist spirituality or Austrian Marianist spirituality evolved in the course of Marianist history? When such histories of the various national Marianist spiritualities are written, it will be possible to make comparative studies of these national Marianist spiritualities. How, for example, has (North) American Marianist spirituality differed from Spanish Marianist spirituality? Has the American ethos colored Marianist spirituality in ways that can be distinguished from the ways the Spanish ethos has?



*System of Virtues.* A minor but important theme in Marianist spirituality is the System of Virtues. There has been a revival of sorts of the System of Virtues in some parts of the Marianist world during the last 40 years that dates at least as far back as the publication of the volumes of the *Écrits de Direction*. This revival is the most recent phase of the history of the System of Virtues. That history has not yet been systematically studied and a complete survey of that history is yet to be written. However, the broad outlines of that history can be gleaned from various sources.

It seems clear that the pattern of the history of the System of Virtues resembles and parallels the pattern of the history of the awareness of Father Chaminade among Marianists. During the foundation period, when Father Chaminade was alive and Marianists knew him directly and personally, the System of Virtues emerged at the time of the founding of the two religious congregations. It was well known and widely used by the Marianist religious of that epoch. They had direct, personal experience of the System through practices such as daily particular examen. Large portions of the *Grand Institut* are devoted to an exposition of the System. David Monier and Jean Baptiste Lalanne wrote their manuals of the System under Father Chaminade's guidance. In the early retreats of the Society, there were always daily conferences on various portions of the System.

Where did the System of Virtues come from? It appears to be an original invention of the Founder; he does not seem to have copied it from another source. Some students of the System speculate that certain spiritual writers may be singled out as remote sources or influences that suggested aspects of the System to the Founder. Father Robert E. Hughes (of the Pacific Province) has asked if Lorenzo Scupoli was perhaps a remote source or influence for the System. Germán Doig, one of the founders of the *Sodalitium Christianae Vitae* in Peru, has asked if Louis of Granada



was a remote source or influence.<sup>3</sup> As late as the 1830s and 1840s Father Chaminade was putting finishing touches on the System. In the so-called *Premier Jet*<sup>4</sup> he introduced the text of 2 Peter 1:5-8 as the scriptural basis of the System, and he continued to write outlines and partial drafts of a large Manual of Direction which, if it had been completed, was supposed to have included a section on the System.

After 1850, awareness of the Founder receded in the consciousness of Marianists, and similarly the System of Virtues fell into desuetude. The documents collected in the last volume of *Écrits de Direction* trace the gradual dilution and disappearance of awareness of the System of Virtues among Marianists. During the revival of awareness of the Founder after his biography was published in 1901, Marianists were also re-acquainted with the System of Virtues in various sections of the *Spirit of Our Foundation* and other published works. However, this revived awareness of the System was more theoretical than practical; it was not a return to the active use of the System of the foundation period.

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw limited, sporadic, and partial rediscovery of the System. This rediscovery was concurrent with the rediscovery and growing awareness of Father Chaminade and his vision. Many Marianist novices were told about the Five Silences without necessarily learning that they were part of the System.<sup>5</sup> Father Ferree gave a conference on the

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<sup>3</sup> Germán DOIG KLINGE, *Dos maestros espirituales: Guillermo José Chaminade y fray Luis de Granada* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> Document V, §§ 1230-1243, pp. 365-70, in *ED 1* (Document 12, pp. 97-100, in *MD 2*, with historical introduction on pp. 366-70 of *MD 4*.) Also in *MO*, Document 14, pp. 97-100. Also in *Spirit 4*, Chapter 3, "The Formation of Candidates," § 85, pp. 213-16. Father Armbruster calls this document "the best and most complete summary left by the Founder" of the System of Virtues.

<sup>5</sup> Father Neubert's very popular "Interior Life Book," which he composed during his sojourn in the United States, was used for many years in American Marianist novitiates. It contains a very good introductory explanation of the Five



System while he was a seminarian in Fribourg, which was committed to writing and widely circulated among American Marianist religious.<sup>6</sup> Brother Greiner and Father Clemens wrote pamphlets on the System that were used by many American members of the Society in the years after World War II. During those years there was also renewal of interest in the System in the Fribourg seminary, which led to Father Armbruster editing and publishing the successive volumes of the *Écrits de Direction*. Since then the most prominent promoter of the System has probably been Father Hakenewerth, whose many books are used by both lay Marianists and religious Marianists. There is even a token reference<sup>7</sup> to the System in the 1983 Rule of Life of the Society. This short review of the history of the System of Virtues gives only a few highlights. A systematic and well-researched account has yet to be written

*Rebirth of Marianist Lay Communities.* To give yet another example of an unexplored area of the history of Marianist spirituality, no one has yet written a history of the rebirth of adult Marianist lay communities after World War II in the various countries and the evolution of Marianist spirituality that accompanied that growth. Father Benloch has provided us with a very

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Silences, which are identified as Father Chaminade's theory of silence and the first of the preparation virtues. However, the other preparation virtues are not identified, and neither is the System of Virtues as a whole. See [Émile NEUBERT, SM], *A Study of the Interior Life According to the Spirit of the Society of Mary* (Kirkwood, Mo.: Maryhurst Press, 1959), §§ 360-75, pp. 114-20.

<sup>6</sup> The conference was given in 1936. It comments on the following passage from a letter of the Founder to the novices of the Daughters of Mary in Agen: "In the Institute the virtues of preparation are those that formed great saints elsewhere; the virtues of purification are suggested to the predestined; and the third order of virtues, those of consummation, are the virtues of Jesus Christ and of Mary." See *Lettres 1*, January 10, 1822, no. 186a, p. 316. Also in *ED 1*, p. xlv, and in *MD 4*, p. 374.

<sup>7</sup> *SM Rule*, art. 4.17. See also Serge Hospital, SM, "The System of Virtues," in *Commentary on SM Rule*, pp. 1145-72.



good preliminary account and survey of the recent *eclosión* of Marianist lay communities in his book *El mensaje Chaminade hoy*.<sup>8</sup> He reproduces the chart of all Marianist lay communities in the world which was part of Father Hakenewerth's report to the SM General Chapter of 1986. At that time there were more than 300 groups with a total of about 6,500 members. Today, in 1999, the numbers are larger. To write the comprehensive history of the rebirth of Marianist lay communities throughout the world, it will be necessary to write the regional histories of the development in various countries. Brother García de Vinuesa's thesis includes an account of the start of CEMI in Spain, but does not give its subsequent history.<sup>9</sup> Recent articles<sup>10</sup> in the *Marianist International Review* treat the growth of Marianist lay communities in France,<sup>11</sup> Chile,<sup>12</sup> the Province of Saragossa,<sup>13</sup> and the Province of Madrid.<sup>14</sup> More regional histories need to be written to round out the full picture and prepare for a comprehensive history of the rebirth of Marianist lay communities since World War II. Perhaps these histories will be written by lay Marianists, which would surely

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<sup>8</sup> Eduardo BENLLOCH, SM, *El mensaje Chaminade hoy* (Madrid: Ediciones SM, 1987), chapter 5, pp. 121-42.

<sup>9</sup> Francisco José GARCÍA DE VINUESA ZABALA, SM, *Relations of the Society of Mary with the Sodality-State*, MRC Monograph Series, Doc. 21 (Dayton, MRC, January 1977), chapter 3, pp. 121-64.

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to Father Benloch for calling my attention to these articles.

<sup>11</sup> Marie Laure JEAN, "Les fraternités marianistes de la Province de France (Retour aux sources et nouvelles moissons)," *Marianist International Review*, No. 1 (March 1984), pp. 52-70.

<sup>12</sup> Alvaro LAPETRA, SM, and Francisco García de Vinuesa, SM, "Movimiento marianista en Chile," *Marianist International Review*, No. 2 (October 1984), pp. 60-75.

<sup>13</sup> Mariano ZUAZO, SM, "Orígenes y formación de las Fraternidades marianistas de la Provincia de Zaragoza," *Marianist International Review*, No. 6 (October 1896), pp. 36-43.

<sup>14</sup> Ignacio ZABALA, SM, "Nuestra colaboración con las fraternidades marianistas en la Provincia de Madrid," *Marianist International Review*, No. 9 (April 1988), pp. 18-30.



enrich the perspectives and widen the range of insights that would be contributed to the history of Marianist spirituality.

*Spirituality of Marianist Religious After Vatican II.* Another area yet to be studied is the tremendous shift in Marianist spirituality among Marianist men and women religious since the Second Vatican Council. This is the period in which new Rules of Life were adopted. Large scale changes inspired by the Council transformed the life of Marianist religious of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s into a totally new reality. This is also the period in which there has been a steady decrease in numbers among Marianist religious. Membership figures of the Marianist religious congregations are now less than half of what they were 30 years ago and the majority of today's members are old people. The Society of Mary and Daughters of Mary are no longer the successful, efficient teaching congregations they used to be before Vatican II. What has made up the spirituality of Marianist religious during these last 30 years of momentous change? What themes and images fill their prayer life? What spirituality of apostolic zeal do they have amid the withdrawal and retrenchment from the success and effectiveness of the past? How do they experience their relationships with God, with Christ, with Mary?

*History of Formation of Marianist Religious.* At the meeting of the authors of the Marianist spirituality writing project, Father Amigo pointed out that another area of future research that will shed light on the history of Marianist spirituality is a history of formation in the Society of Mary and Daughters of Mary. Such a history will clarify how our spirituality was taught and practiced. Who, for example, were the outstanding Masters or Mistresses of Novices, and what did they emphasize in the teaching and direction they provided? What textbooks, manuals, and other documents have been used in the formation of Marianist religious? Who wrote them and what sort of portrayal of Marianist spirituality did they contain?



*Mary in Recent Marianist Spirituality.* A crucially important aspect of the post-Vatican II shift in Marianist spirituality concerns our devotion to Mary. No one has yet undertaken a systematic study of what changes occurred and how they transpired. Nevertheless, it is possible to propose some impressions that could serve as hypotheses for verification by good historical research. It appears that devotion to Mary has remained strong among Marianists during the 30 odd years since Vatican II. However, it also seems to have changed in tone. The language and theological conceptual framework within which it is expressed seems more focused on Mary as the first disciple and a model of Christian life and faith. At the same time there seems to be a greater use of the explicit ideas and language of Father Chaminade in texts such as the acts of the Society's General Chapter of 1971 and in the new Rules of Life of the Society and the Daughters of Mary. Despite this trend, there also seems to be less emphasis on Mary's spiritual maternity. Marianist thought on Mary seems to rely more on solid scripture scholarship. Unlike the tendency among progressive Catholics right after Vatican II to downplay Mary in Catholic spirituality, Marianists continued to give her a central prominence in Marianist spirituality. And unlike the more recent tendency among traditional Catholics to find great inspiration in reported Marian apparitions, most Marianists seem to maintain a respectful but neutral stance on the subject of Marian apparitions and private revelations.

*Marianist Spirituality Beyond Europe and North America.* This short history of Marianist spirituality has concentrated on Europe and North America, a concentration that is one more inadequacy of this paper. A full telling of the history will have to cover the development of Marianist spirituality in Japan, in Latin America, in Korea, in French-speaking and English-speaking Africa, and in India. The Marianist historians who undertake this work will no doubt be natives of the countries and continents about which they write.

*The French School of Spirituality.* This paper has not treated the important ways in which Marianist spirituality lies within the broad stream of the French School of Spirituality. This is due to the fact that I was told to leave aside this theme in my paper because it would be treated by one of the other authors in the Marianist spirituality writing project. In fact, due to certain misunderstandings, this did not happen. Therefore, it must be acknowledged at the end of this paper, that one of its serious lacunae is the absence of an account of the way the French School contributed to the development of Marianist spirituality. A future comprehensive history of Marianist spirituality will have to include such an account.

\* \* \*

This quick survey of possible topics for future research and study indicates subjects that will figure in a history of Marianist spirituality that is more adequate and more complete than the preliminary effort presented in this paper. We look forward to the day when these possibilities will be realized.





## Appendix: Critique of Father Benlloch

The first version of this paper was submitted for review to two readers: Father Théodore Koehler and Father Eduardo Benlloch. Father Benlloch submitted his comments in March 1999. His critique of the section entitled "Development of Marianist Spirituality after 1850" includes the following passage in which he summarizes his own theory of two traditions in Marianist spirituality which account for the rise and fall of "filial piety" as well as the changes which have taken place from Father Simler's time to our own day. The original Spanish text of Father Benlloch is followed by my translation.

Me parece que he vivido el último esplendor triunfal de la llamada *piEDAD filial* y en el creciente abandono de esa misma expresión y su contenido, al mismo tiempo que se iba recuperando una tradición espiritual más directamente inspirada en el P. Chaminade.

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Yo he llegado a la conclusión de que han existido dos tradiciones espirituales en la historia de la espiritualidad marianista, que sucintamente explico así.

1. Una relectura de Chaminade que empieza con Simler y pasa por E. Neubert y Paul-Marie Verrier. Según esta tradición, *nuestro don de Dios es el voto de estabilidad*.

Tienden a hacer del voto de estabilidad una consagración directa a la Santísima Virgen. La *piEDAD filial* para ellos es más bien



una actitud personal con una cierta carga de sentimentalismo. Quedan bastante obscurecidas y relegadas las dimensiones comunitaria y misionera de nuestra alianza con María. Es curioso ver cómo en el famoso Capítulo XXX de las Constituciones de 1891 no se habla para nada de la misión ni de que el hijo de María es esencialmente misionero.

El escrito del P. Joseph Verrier citado más arriba nos cuenta la insistencia y las consultas tenaces al Vaticano y a teólogos que hizo el P. Paul-Marie Verrier para justificar su explicación del *voto de estabilidad* como la expresión de una consagración directa a la Santísima Virgen. Las respuestas fueron siempre claras negando tajantemente esta explicación. También reproduce una serie de cartas que se cruzaron entre marianistas de aquella época con respecto a esa polémica: el mismo P. Joseph Verrier, el P. Resch, el P. Hoffer, el P. Neubert.

El exponente más claro y más divulgado de esta postura es el libro del P. E. Neubert *Mon idéal, Jésus Fils de Marie*.

2. Hay otra tradición que va quedando en la obscuridad desde 1850, olvidada o relegada por la creciente extensión e inflación de la *piedad filial*. Esta tradición se empieza a recuperar, cada vez con más fuerza, a partir de los años cincuenta del siglo XX, debido a una serie de causas, entre las que podemos citar:

— El creciente interés por los escritos del P. Chaminade mismo. En Friburgo se empiezan a publicar y a divulgar. Se olvida *L'esprit de notre fondation* y se empiezan a sacar *Les écrits de direction, Les écrits marials, Les écrits d'oraison, Les notes d'instruction...*

— Varios seminaristas hacen tesis doctorales sobre los escritos del P. Chaminade mismo. Creo que es de justicia hablar de la tesis del P. Thomas Stanley, SM, *The mystical Body of Christ, according to the writings of Father William Joseph Chaminade* (1952), casi tan importante por su contenido sobre el cuerpo místico como por la descripción e intento de clasificación de los escritos del P. Chaminade.



— El mismo P. Joseph Verrier guía, con su enseñanza y con sus escritos, a un conocimiento directo del P. Chaminade.

— Yo mismo he sido testigo de los intentos de justificación teológica y canónica de la llamada *piedad filial* y del *voto de estabilidad como consagración directa a María*. Estos intentos se saldaron siempre en fracasos. No se pudo encontrar ninguna fundamentación teológica ni canónica. Todo esto dio como resultado un creciente interés por destacar los aspectos comunitarios y misioneros de nuestra alianza con María.

— El Capítulo General de 1966-67 y, sobre todo el de 1971, apoyan una clara recuperación de la lectura más auténtica y directa del pensamiento y de la espiritualidad del P. Chaminade.

— Creo que el exponente más claro de esta otra tradición es la *Regla de Vida* de 1983 (Véase especialmente *Nuestros orígenes, los aa. 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, el capítulo V...*)

La postura del P. Joseph Verrier es clara: *nuestro don de Dios es la naturaleza mariana de la Compañía de María*.

El voto de estabilidad no es por sí mismo mariano. Tiene carácter mariano al vincular con la Compañía de María. Indirectamente es, por lo tanto, una consagración a María porque nos vincula a una congregación religiosa, que es esencialmente mariana.

En esta tradición se destaca fuertemente el carácter comunitario de nuestra consagración a María, *nuestra Madre* (y no mi Madre). También se pone de manifiesto la dimensión radicalmente misionera de nuestra alianza con María.

Creo sinceramente que esta tradición nos vincula mucho más al *carisma fundacional* del P. Chaminade. Por otra parte, es muy fácil aplicarla hoy a toda la *Familia Marianista*. María nos escoge a todos los marianistas (seglares y religiosos) para hacernos su *Familia* y colaborar con ella en su misión. Pero si nuestro don de Dios es el voto de estabilidad, ¿qué pasa con los marianistas seglares? Hay que reconocer que en la época de la *piedad filial* no existía *Familia Marianista*, como hoy la conocemos. A medida que



iban surgiendo las comunidades laicas marianistas se iba robusteciendo más y más esta otra tradición.

\* \* \*

It seems to me that I lived through the final triumphal splendor of so-called *filial piety* and in the growing abandonment of this same expression and its contents, at the same time that there has been a recovery of a spiritual tradition more directly inspired by Father Chaminade.

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I have come to the conclusion that there have existed two spiritual traditions in the history of Marianist spirituality, which I explain succinctly as follows:

1. A new reading of Chaminade which begins with Simler and passes through E. Neubert and Paul Marie Verrier. According to this tradition, *our gift from God is the vow of stability.*

They tried to make the vow of stability into a direct consecration to the most Blessed Virgin. According to them *filial piety* is much more of a personal attitude with a definite stress on sentimentality. The communitarian and missionary dimensions of our alliance with Mary remain for the most part in obscurity and side-lined. It is curious to see how in the famous Chapter 30 of the Constitutions of 1891, nothing is said about the mission nor about the son of Mary being essentially missionary.

The writing of Father Joseph Verrier cited above recounts the insistent and tenacious consultations at the Vatican and with theologians which Father Paul Marie Verrier made in order to justify his explanation of the vow of stability as the expression of a direct consecration to the most Blessed Virgin. The answers were always clear, denying absolutely this explanation. The au-

thor also reproduces a series of letters exchanged among Mari-  
anists of this period with respect to this polemic: Father Joseph  
Verrier himself, Father Resch, Father Hoffer, and Father Neubert.

The clearest and most widespread example of this position is  
Father Neubert's book *Mon idéal, Jésus Fils de Marie*.

2. There is another tradition which remained in obscurity  
after 1850, forgotten and set aside by the growing extension and  
inflation of *filial piety*. Beginning in the 1950s, this tradition begins  
to recover, each time with more force, due to a series of causes  
among which it is possible to cite:

— The growing interest in the writings of Father Chaminade  
himself. These began to be published and distributed in Fribourg.  
The *Spirit of Our Foundation* is forgotten, and *Les écrits de direction*,  
*Les écrits marials*, *Les écrits d'oraison*, *Les notes d'instruction*, ... begin  
to come out.

— Various seminarians write doctoral theses on the writings  
of Father Chaminade himself. I believe we can say with justice  
that the thesis of Father Thomas Stanley, SM, *The Mystical Body  
of Christ According to the Writings of Father William Joseph Chaminade*  
(1952), is almost as important for its content about the Mystical  
Body as it is for the description and attempt to classify the writ-  
ings of Father Chaminade.

— Father Joseph Verrier himself, by his teaching and by his  
writings, guides us to a direct knowledge of Father Chaminade.

— I myself have witnessed the attempts to give a theological  
and canonical justification to so-called *filial piety* and the vow of  
stability as a direct consecration to Mary. These attempts have  
always ended in disaster. There was no theological or canonical  
foundation to be found. All of this resulted in a growing interest  
to stress the communitarian and missionary aspects of our alli-  
ance with Mary.

— The General Chapters of 1966-67 and, above all, of 1971



support a clear recovery of a more authentic and direct reading of the thought and spirituality of Father Chaminade.

— I believe that the clearest example of this other tradition is the Rule of Life of 1983 (See especially "Our Origins," articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, and chapter 5.)

The position of Father Joseph Verrier is clear: *our gift from God is the Marian nature of the Society of Mary.*

The vow of stability is not by itself Marian. It takes on a Marian character by its link with the Society of Mary. It is, therefore, indirectly a consecration to Mary because it links us to a religious congregation which is essentially Marian.

This tradition stresses strongly the communitarian character of our consecration to Mary, *our Mother* (and not my Mother). It also is able to show the radically missionary dimension of our alliance with Mary.

I believe sincerely that this tradition links us much more to the *founding charism* of Father Chaminade. On the other hand it is much easier to apply to the whole Marianist Family today. Mary chooses all of us Marianists (secular and religious) to make us her Family and to collaborate with her in her mission. But if our gift from God is the vow of stability, what happens with secular Marianists? It must be remembered that in the time of *filial piety* the Marianist Family as we now know it did not exist. To the extent that Marianist lay communities have been emerging this other tradition has been getting stronger and stronger.

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