

**ACHIEVEMENT
FROM THE
DEPTHS**

A CRITICAL HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF
MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT (1789-1840)

by

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

Marcellin Champagnat, the founder of the present-day Marist Brothers of the Schools, was born on 20th May 1789 in the hamlet of Le Rozey in the commune of Marlhès in South-eastern France. It is coincidental that the year of the birth of this man, who was to revolutionize some important aspects of education in France, was also the year of the outbreak of possibly the most influential of the world's revolutions. The French Revolution became anti-religious, (1) yet the education in Christian principles of France's youth was the goal of Marcellin's life-work.

We shall follow Marcellin's life throughout his youth and during his most difficult years of study prior to his ordination as a priest in the Catholic Church, stressing the experiences he judged to be of most value. He had already decided, before his ordination to the priesthood, to found a congregation of teaching Brothers who would take on the task of educating the largely neglected country children of France. During the first few months of his first appointment as curate to the parish of Lavalla,(2) he was so

1. At the very beginning, the Revolution was not irreligious and this is the reason why so many priests of the lower clergy were in favour of it: in fact, many of them even joined the Third Estate. As one of the nobility said, "Ce sont ces foutus curés qui ont fait la Révolution". (It's the bloody priests who have brought about the Revolution.) It was chiefly the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" decree, forcing priests to swear allegiance to the national secular government rather than to the Pope at Rome, that created more and more problems and aroused suspicion of the sincerity of the priests: soon leading to persecution of the Catholic Church.

2. Today, this town is spelt La Valla (two words), but in the life-time of Marcellin Champagnat it was one word - Lavalla. It seems that the change to two words came at the time of the Second Empire under Napoleon III. Br. Jean-Baptiste in his Vie de Marcellin-Joseph-Benoît Champagnat spelt it La Valla, for which he was criticised by some of the old Brothers. Since this thesis is dealing with Marcellin Champagnat's life-time, the spelling of that period - Lavalla - will be used herein. The complete name of Lavalla before the Revolution was Le Thoil Saint Andéol de La Valla. Le Thoil was the old castle not far from Maisonette, that is below Le Bessat. Saint Andéol was the church dedicated to that martyr (of Catholic Church); and as there was another Saint Andéol, "La Valla" was added to differentiate both. Of course, La Valla is the patois word for "vallée", and the valley was that of the Gier river.

shocked by certain experiences that he set himself, with the utmost haste, to found his group of teaching Brothers. He succeeded in doing this on 2nd January 1817, less than six months after his ordination. Although the French Revolutionary Government had decreed compulsory education, (3) in fact - no doubt largely resulting from the long years of warfare - education in 1816 was significantly worse than it had been before the Revolution.(4)

The career of Marcellin Champagnat during the 1820s and 1830s was full of drama. There was opposition from so many people, including authorities in both the government and the church, that it took a man of great determination, courage, faith and hope to achieve even a fraction of what this remarkable Marcellin Champagnat accomplished. The fact that he not only erected the substantial building for the society's headquarters near Saint-Chamond but, before he died in 1840, had opened 48 schools (5) and had 278 Brothers in his Institute (6) very strongly suggests that he had a charisma that few people possess. He had begun his seminary training as an uneducated sixteen-year-old from a poor family. Briefly, his humble beginning plus his emergence as victor after extreme trials and the opposition of some very powerful people have led this author to title this survey Achievement from the Depths. We know that after his death, in spite of the increasing government opposition to religious teaching in the schools of France, particularly from 1880 (7) and culminating in the expulsion order for religious congregations in 1903, (8) the Institute that he had founded had, by 1966, a total of

3. The universal right to education was proclaimed in 1791; whilst in 1793 a decree establishing education for all children was passed, but early in 1794 a further decree postponed the implementation of free, compulsory and secular education mainly because of the mounting domestic and foreign problems.

4. P. Zind, Les Nouvelles Congrégations de Frères Enseignants en France de 1800 à 1830, Lyons, 1969, p. 76.

5. Along with 86 other requests. ("Lettres de M. Champagnat", FMS Archives, Rome, C - Circ. I. p. 306-308; SII.199: janvier 1840 - Lettre au Ministre.)

6. "Résumé, 1840", FMS Archives, Rome.

7. Decree of Jules Ferry, 29th March 1880. A more detailed analysis of this government opposition is given below in Appendix 'A'.

8. For which Justin Emiles Combes was largely responsible. (New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, New York, 1967, p. 18.)

9,752 professed Brothers and had become one of the ten largest religious congregations (9) in the Roman Catholic Church. (10)

Since Marcellin Champagnat's life and work was closely interwoven with the Catholic Church and since his life was lived during and in the immediate aftermath of the anti-religious French Revolution, it is important

9. Order, Congregation, Institute, Society have never settled down to being clearly-marked technical terms - at least in the Catholic Church. The first two come nearest to such a status. Only after the Council of Trent was a differentiation made between these two words. An Order is a grouping of religious men or women in the Catholic Church whose members, or some of whose members, take SOLEMN VOWS. There have been no such ORDERS since Trent. In a Congregation, the members take SIMPLE VOWS. The Marist Brothers are one of the many congregations founded since Trent. Institute is a term often used by Marist Brothers as an alternative to the world Congregation. It is not a technical term. It means literally something which has been "instituted", established, founded or decided on.

In the Marist Family, the word SOCIETY originally meant the totality of Priests, Brothers and Sisters. That was the meaning the Founders gave to it, Jean Claude Colin in particular. In more recent times it is used to refer to the Congregation of MARIST (S.M.) Priests and lay-Brothers. The Jesuits have used it since the re-establishment of their Order after the official "abolition" by Rome. "Society" is again not strictly speaking a technical term with restricted meaning.

In practice there is little difference between SOLEMN VOWS and SIMPLE VOWS. Solemn vows are by nature PERPETUAL. Simple vows can be temporary, the Church even insisting that they be made as temporary commitments for at least three years before being made for life. Dispensation from solemn vows is relatively rare, and when granted, it must always come from the highest authority in the Church, the Pope. If marriage were contracted by one in undispensed solemn vows, it would be invalid in the eyes of the Church. In the case of a person in undispensed simple vows, it is valid, but of course unlawful in the eyes of the Church.

10. Bulletin de l'Institut des Frères Maristes des Ecoles, Vol. XXIX, No. 211, July 1970, p.112.

In 1981 the Institute had 6,677 members in the world. (FMS, No. 48, October 1981, p. 720). The number of students in Marist Brothers' Schools throughout the approximately 70 countries where the Institute operates today is around 500,000.

FMS administration, though centred in Rome, is largely carried out locally in the 43 Provinces and 9 Vice-Provinces. The Institute's largest Province happens to be the Sydney Province in Australia which conducts 37 schools, has five further establishments and contains 440 Brothers. Along with the Melbourne Province of 182 members and the New Zealand Province of 227 members, these three provinces comprise about 10% of the Institute's world membership. This Sydney Province, in addition to conducting schools in N.S.W., also has schools in Queensland and the A.C.T. and missions in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

to understand the so-called Gallicanism of the French Catholic Church. Gallicanism could be simply defined as an ecclesiastical doctrine that advocated restriction of papal power. It was opposed to Ultramontanism, (11) which placed strong emphasis on centralization in the Church (i.e. Papal authority).

Gallicanism is said to have had its first roots in early French nationalism, especially at the time of Charlemagne's empire in the 8th and 9th centuries. It came to conscious flower in the 14th century. (12) Philip IV, the Fair, struggled with the Pope, Philip wanting political independence. Many French theologians, such as the Dominican Jean Quidort (died 1306) supported Philip. Later, two Sorbonne (13) theologians, Jean de Gerson and Pierre d'Ailly, were conspicuous in their advancement of Gallicanism during the next century and a half. (14) The Council of Constance (1414-18) issued a decree SACROSANCTA saying that the Pope was subject to any decision of a Church Council. However, this was done in its early sessions when only one, John XXIII, of the three pope-claimants currently trying to govern the Church during its Great Schism (1378-1417), had acknowledged the Council. It is regarded by Catholic theologians as a true general council only after a second 'schismatic' pope, Gregory XII, joined it with his adherents in 1415. The Holy See never approved of the decrees of the council as a whole, and specifically reprobated those on the supremacy of the council. (15) The next general council, the Council of Basel (1431-37) renewed the SACROSANCTA decree but the then Pope, Eugenius IV, refused to include it amongst the conciliar decrees.

11. "Over the mountains" - the term commonly used to express the universal authority of the Pope. The mountains here referred to those in south-east France.

12. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 9, London, 1971, p. 1100.

13. The Sorbonne has become recognized, since its foundation in 1257 by Robert de Sorbon as the first endowed College of the University of Paris, as synonymous with the Faculty of Theology, with its professors the arbitrators of orthodoxy. (New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 13, pp.440-441.)

14. Enc. Britt., Vol. 9, p. 1100

15. Ibid, Vol. 6, pp. 382, 383.

Nevertheless, Charles VII of France took advantage of it and an assembly of French clergy at Bourges, 1438, supported him. (16) The popes from then on opposed the so-called "Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges" but nothing was achieved until the Concordat of 1516 which, however, conceded the French king's right to nominate bishops. (17) At the Council of Trent (1543-63), where the French bishops attended under the king's instruction to defend Gallicanism, it was found impossible to treat the matter definitively. However, the best expression of theological Gallicanism was found in the Four Articles of an assembly of the French clergy in 1682. This assembly had been called by Louis XIV to pronounce against the Pope and to uphold the "liberties of the Gallican Church" against ultramontane pretensions. Bossuet drew up the Four Articles, affirming the independence of the temporal power in regard to the Church, the superiority of universal councils over the Holy See, the unchangeable character of the liberties of the Gallican Church and, finally, the need for the Pope's judgements to be first approved by the total Church. (18) Though these articles were condemned at Rome by Alexander VIII in 1690 and revoked in France by Louis XIV in 1693, they remained the typical expression of the strongly Gallican Church of France. As Cobban has put it, the church in 18th Century France was a body reduced to subservience to the Crown by the Concordat of Francis I (1516) and kept in obedience by the Gallican liberties. (19) By 1788 the nobility and the Church hierarchy had come so close together that they could form a united body too strong for the Crown to challenge, but also too weak themselves when challenged by the Third Estate, hitherto never regarded by them as a force with a claim to power.

Finally, it should be added that not all members of the French Catholic Church were Gallican. For instance, the Jesuits were strongly Ultramontane, (20) but the seminaries were Gallican during the Napoleonic period, whilst after 1815 Gallicanism remained strong in the French clergy even into the 1830s. Thereafter, Ultramontanism gradually asserted itself and the Vatican Council of 1870 overcame Gallicanism by its proclamation of Papal Infallibility. (21).

16. Ibid.

17. New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, New York, 1967, p. 10.

18. L. Romier, A History of France, London, MacMillan, 1964, pp.261-262.

19. A. Cobban, A History of Modern France, 3rd Edition, Middlesex, Penguin, 1963, Vol. 1, p. 261.

20. Enc. Brit., Vol. 9, p. 1101

21. Ibid, p. 1101

Some of the events to be related in the following discourse on the life of Marcellin Champagnat are impossible to understand without at least some knowledge of the Gallicanism in the French Catholic Church. For instance, it was an important factor influencing the large number of clergy who took the prescribed oath (22) during the Revolution years. In the diocese of Lyons, the area in which Marcellin Champagnat lived most of his life, the clergy were strongly Gallican, especially when ruled by Fesch, Courbon and Bochard in the early nineteenth century. The advent of Bishop de Pins in the 1820s heralded change. (23) Concurrently, a true devotion to the Papacy was emerging. French theology was stagnant whilst the advancing Roman theology came to be studied. For instance, the Revised Catechism was anti-Gallican and pro-Rome. Fr. Bochard V.G., a fiery Gallican, tried to stir up a following by both his utterances and writings. (24) Other leaders in Lyons did not support him. He was denounced to Rome, escaping condemnation by the assistance afforded by Bishop Devie of Belley Diocese. He died in 1834.

Marcellin Champagnat, along with Fr. Colin (founder of the Marist Fathers), left Gallicanism to embrace Ultramontanism. Of course, the question arises as to whether they were ever really Gallican. Pope John Paul II visited France in 1980, the first voluntary visit of a Pope since that of Pius VII in 1805 (25) who said on his return to Rome, "*I travelled through*

22. "Seven bishops only took that oath (Civil Constitution of the Clergy) and of these, four were holding Sees; so that out of 83 Sees, 80 became vacant. The electoral bodies of the Départements took it on themselves to replace them....The replacement of parish priests was more difficult, for 55% of them refused the oath, and in the North, the Centre, the West and in Alsace, the proportion of those taking the oath was considerably less (precise statistics are still not available)". (Catholicisme - hier - aujourd'hui - Demain, Vol. 3, Paris, 1952, p. 122). When curates are added, it seems that a majority of priests took the oath - some say as many as 70% - but many who took it very soon retracted.

23. Bishop de Pins arrived in Lyons in January 1824. It should be remembered that in the Catholic Church in France, the title of "Monsignor" is given to those who, in English-speaking countries, are called "Bishops".

24. Courbon mocked Bochard's Gallicanism by calling it "Gallicanage" - an ultra-Gallicanism.

25. Pope Pius VII was again in France as a prisoner of Napoleon 1812-14.

France amidst a people on their knees". He was referring to the loyalty and respect with which he was met. There was certainly a strong swing away from Gallicanism after the Revolution and the Concordat of 1801. I have seen First Communion cards of this time with the promise made by the young "to adhere to the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church..." Many Catholic families, particularly in rural areas of France, were attached to the Papacy, a centre of faith for them against the Revolution and Napoleon's idea of a national church. The rough treatment received by the two Popes Pius was abhorrent to them. (26) The major Seminary at Lyons under the Sulpicians was very Ultramontane: one reason for their removal by Napoleon in 1810. (27)

Adherence to Rome and all that it implied was a major plank in the Marist foundations. Fr. Colin's letter to Rome in 1822 to gain approval for the Marist Society (28) was remarkable. However, Gallicanism was official policy and those teaching at the seminaries would be expected to hold that line. (29) Father Cholleton, Professor (of Moral Theology) at St. Irenaeus' Major Seminary in Champagnat's time, was a Gallican before he joined the Marists. In one book written of the Marist Fathers we read:

"After the imitation of Mary, came for the Marists, attachment to the Holy See . . . to the Catholic, Roman Church . . . The Apostolic See is the sure rampart against all errors and all schisms . . . The Founder expressed himself strongly on this point . . . He added that the Mother House would be established as soon as . . . " (30)

26. After the Bull of Excommunication, 10th June 1809, Napoleon struck out at the Church: 10th July dissolved the Council of Bishops and imprisoned three of them. On 10th October he issued a decree suppressing the Society of St. Sulpice, which was strongly Ultramontane, without appeal. In November and December the Sulpicians withdrew from the Seminary at Lyons. Cardinal Fesch (Napoleon's uncle) had to implement the decrees and, of course, find replacements. It was Bochard (a future bitter opponent of Marcellin Champagnat), who as Vicar-General (V.G.) was responsible for seminaries and religious orders in the diocese and tried to set the St. Irenaeus students against the Sulpiciens for their anti-Gallican stand.

In 1798 the French had sent a punitive expedition to Rome and, after expelling Pope Pius VI, later took him back to France as captive. He died there, as a prisoner, in 1799.

27. After this expulsion they never returned to this seminary.

28. S. Hosie, *Anonymous Apostle*, New York, 1967, p. 68.

29. G. Michel, *Lecture at St. Chamond*, 4th January 1978.

30. "A Religious of the Society", *Le Très Révérend Père Colin*, Lyons, 1900, pp. 456, 457.

Br. Jean-Baptiste gave a similar picture of Fr. Champagnat in this regard. (31) Both he and Fr. Colin were very far removed from anything political, whether in State or Church. (32).

There was yet another unorthodox feature existing inside the Gallican French Catholic Church at this time and that was Jansenism. This doctrine had first appeared in the 16th Century when conflicts arose amongst theologians on the matter of reconciling divine grace and human freedom. The Jesuits were advocating a more optimistic outlook than the old Augustinian and Thomist theories that viewed somewhat pessimistically the possibilities of human nature wounded by original sin. (33) In 1640, the Fleming Cornelius Otto Jansen produced his huge folio volume, Augustinus, claiming to set out the real thought of St. Augustine. Many bishops and priests supported this Jansenism, but others, largely led by Jesuits, considered Jansen's theories purely personal ones - not Augustinian, and declared them heretical. In 1653, Innocent X's Papal Bull, Cum Occasione, condemned Jansen's theories. Many Jansenists disagreed with the Pope's statement that Jansen's theories were not those of Augustine and so, in France, Jansenism supported Gallicanism. The piety that developed from Jansenism was Rigorist. For such people human nature was corrupt and valid forgiveness from God was difficult to obtain. Jesus Christ was looked upon as a severe and inscrutable Redeemer. They opposed the humanist spirit of the time. (34) The seminaries attended by Marcellin Champagnat were Gallican, Jansenist and Rigorist. (35) All of this would have a bearing on his future life as we shall discover in this thesis.

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31. Br. Jean-Baptiste, Vie de Joseph-Benoît-Marcellin Champagnat, Lyons, 1856, p. 139.
32. That is that they at no times made any attempt to alter the actual method of government - yet at times, especially with regards to Champagnat, attempts were made to change the opinions of those in authority.
33. New Catholic Encyclopedia, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967, Volume 7, p. 820.
34. Ibid, p. 825. Le Manuel Séminariste, published in 1789 by Louis Bailly, could not spare a paragraph in eight volumes for the Sacrament of Confirmation, "but engaged in endless wordy debates with Protestants (and others) . The most wicked enemy of all, the seminary professors thundered, was human reason." (S. Hosie, op. cit., p. 31).
35. At Lyons 'Rigorism' remained a force till 1832 when Gousset brought in the teaching of St. Alphonsus. (G. Michel, loc. cit.) Both Gallicans and Jansenists were numerous. In 1852 the seminary text on moral theology by Bailly that had been used in the seminaries attended by Marcellin Champagnat was put on the Index (of "Forbidden Books") by Rome, "donec corrigatur" (until it be corrected). (Michel, loc. cit.).

One thing more must be mentioned. During the time of Marcellin's training for the priesthood a movement had begun amongst some fellow-seminarians to found, after their ordination to the priesthood, a religious society dedicated to the honouring of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to work under her spiritual protection. Jean-Claude Courveille, on 15th August 1812, conceived the idea of a "Society of Mary" and soon managed to attract around him a seminarian group interested in this project. Marcellin joined the group, but from the first he insisted on its also having a group of Brothers engaged in teaching country children. Later they conceived the idea of a large religious congregation of sisters, brothers and priests united under one "Superior-General". Rome, with the spectre of Gallicanism influencing its thinking, would never agree and hence three self-governing bodies sprang up. Jean-Claude Colin gained approval from Rome and founded the Marist Fathers (Society of Mary) in 1836 - a congregation of priests and lay-brothers. (36) Jeanne Marie Chavoin had formed the Marist Sisters in 1824 (but not recognized by Rome until 1884). Marcellin founded his Marist Brothers in 1817, with recognition from Rome coming eventually in 1863. (37)

Since, at least until 1836, Marcellin's aim was to join, in a loose federation as it were, his Brothers and Colin's priests, there will be frequent references in this thesis to other priests caught up in the Marist ideal, since both they and Marcellin felt themselves to be aiming at a similar goal and they became involved, very often, with his work. In the 1980s, the separate religious congregations of Marist Fathers, Marist Brothers, Marist Sisters and the Marist Missionary Sisters (founded 1845 at Saint-Brieuc in France) (38) are linked by their similar ideals but are all quite separate and self-governing. Only one of these Marist founders has, as yet, gained Church recognition for his extraordinarily good and influential life - Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marist Brothers of the Schools (the official title approved by the Church in 1863), who was Beatified at Rome in 1955.

36. J. Coste & G. Lessard, Origines Maristes, Rome, 1960, Vol.1, p. 21.

37. However, it was approbation for 5 years only, until certain items in the Constitutions were changed - such as length of time in authority and decentralised government. Since the then French superiors of the F.M.S. were not disposed to alter things, final approbation was not gained until 1903 when, after the institute's expulsion from France, there was a strong move to come into line with Rome, and final approbation was obtained.

38. Plus the Marist Third Order (founded by St. Pierre Julien Eymard) which is attached to the Marist Fathers.

CHAPTER TWOTHE CHAMPAGNAT FAMILY: MARCELLIN'S EARLY YEARS

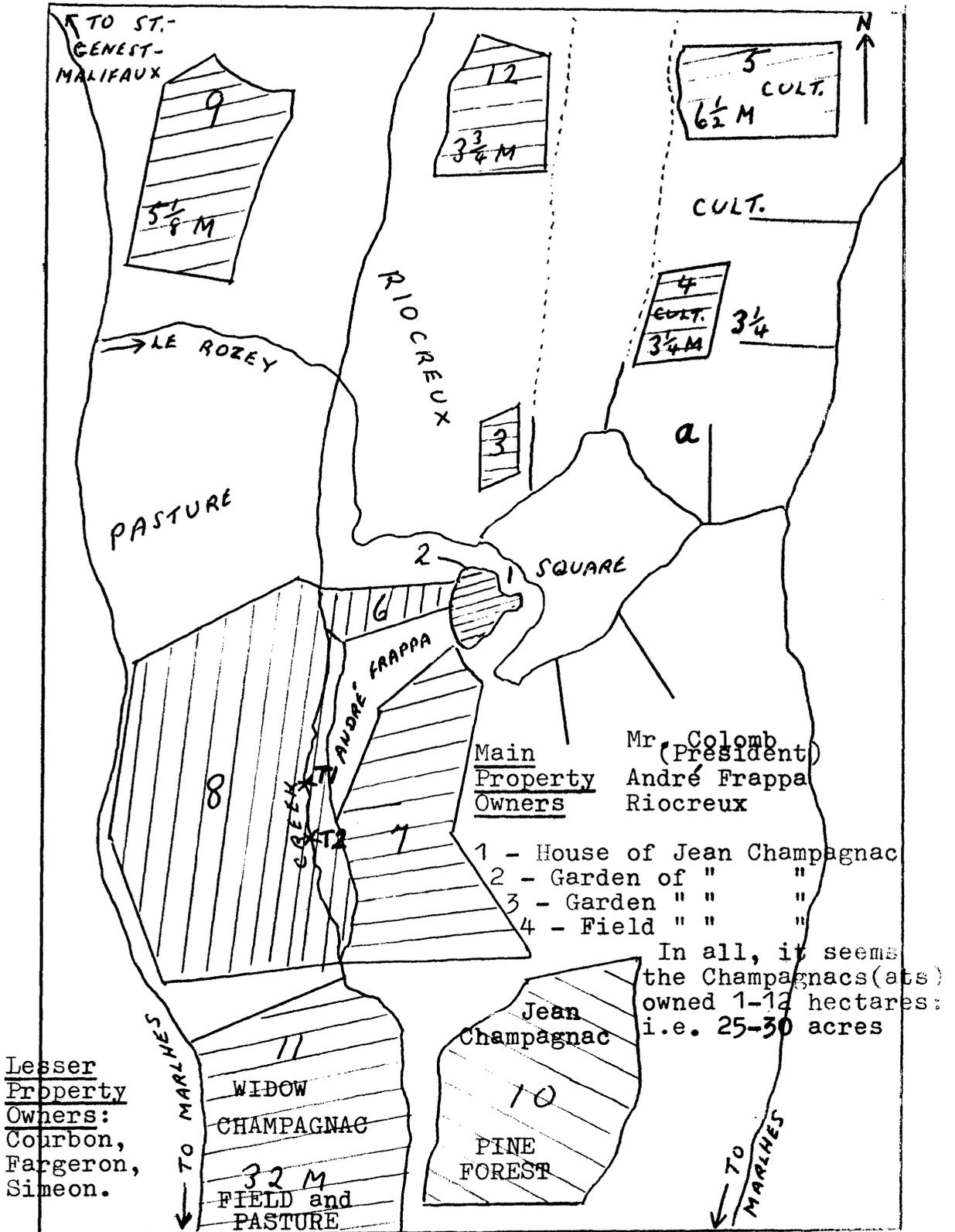
Marcellin Joseph Benedict Champagnat (1) was born on 20th May 1789 in the hamlet of Le Rozey in the Province of Forez and the Parish of Marlihes. Marlihes in south-east France was a village on the Mt. Pilat Plateau in the Province of Forez. (2) Marlihes then had a population of 2,700. It was sited in high, well-timbered, mountainous country 75 km. S.S-W. of Lyons and about 545 km. south of Paris. (3) Its inhabitants lived in several hamlets - Le Rozey, La Faurie, Le Coin and others. They were rural people since Marlihes' livelihood depended mainly on cattle, potatoes and timber. (4) The town itself had nothing special about it. From the north, from the heights of Mt. Pilat, violent winds blew and at times brought snow. Late frosts and winds from the south could do great damage to young grain-crops. Life in rural Marlihes was at the mercy of the elements.

1. He was baptised Marcelin (one L) Josph Benoit Champagnat. (J.Coste & G. Lessard, Origines Maristes, Rome, 1960, Vol. 1, p. 127). Br. Jean-Baptiste had obviously erred when, in 1856, he printed "Joseph-Benoit-Marcellin Champagnat" in his book. The spelling (two Ls) will be used in this thesis since that is how he spelt his own name later in life.

2. On 22nd December 1789 the National Assembly decreed that "departements" would replace "provinces". Thus the former Forez, Beaujolais and Lyonnais were united in the département Rhône-et-Loire, its chief city being Lyons. After the 1793 Lyons' revolt against the Convention, this département was cut in two and Marlihes was incorporated in the Département de la Loire, with its chief city Feurs (where the guillotine functioned). In 1795 Montbrison became its capital city; St. Etienne did not gain this title until fifty years later. Napoleon set up Prefects and Sub-Prefects (heads of départements and arrondissements respectively) on 17th February 1800 ("22 pluviöse an 8"). During the working years of Father Champagnat, Montbrison was "préfecture" and St. Etienne "sous-préfecture". In 1789 Marlihes was in the electorate of St. Etienne and in the "bailliage" (sub-district) of Bourg-Argental.

3. Marlihes is due south of St. Etienne. Lyons to St. Etienne is 58 km. and it is 17 kms. to Marlihes from there. Marlihes is actually S.S-E. of Paris. (The journey from Paris to Lyons then took six days by stagecoach: though the "malle-post" - mail-coach, could do it in two days and nights with more frequent changing of horses). In 1836 Champagnat did the trip in three days and nights. ("Lettres de M. Champagnat", FMS Archives, Rome, A - AFM 112/1; SI.108, 28th August 1836). The cross on the spire of Marlihes' church is 1,000 m. above sea level (i.e. 3,280 ft.) Marlihes in general is 3,000 - 3,200 ft. in elevation, being at the southern end of the Pilat range.

4. Pine and fir trees mainly. Many people were skilful in making wooden articles: sabots, spoons, buckets, furniture, carts.



LE ROZEY - 1752

Shaded areas are properties owned by Champagnats.

1752 was year of marriage of J-Bt Champagnac to Marie-Anne Ducros: this Champagnac (Marcellin's grandfather) was first of that name to live in Le Rozey. The parcels of land are probably her marriage dowry.

T1 = 2nd Champagnat house. (It seems that Jean-Pierre Ch. lived here). T2 = location of the grainmill.

M = 1/10th hectare.

This map is part of a larger map found in Courbon archives. Colomb, Frappa and Riocreux owned much of the surrounding land.

Virtually the whole population was Catholic. The Church figured largely in their lives, with Sundays and feast-days marking their calendar and much of their social life. (5)

The original branch of the Champagnat family came from further west in the centre of Velay, from the parish of St.-Victor-Malescours, in Haute-Loire. The family dates back to 1580. Through the ages past no one bearing this name had shed on his generation any rays of human glory, but it seems the lineage as a whole was made up of families strongly attached to the soil and, possibly, characterised by their Catholic faith and hard work. (6) Their part of France, mountainous in character, was largely preserved from wars and invasions. For the most part life flowed probably in continued tranquillity and we shall find reflection of this tradition in Marcellin Champagnat's temperament.

The family name appears indeeds drawn up by a notary at the beginning of the 17th Century as "Champagnac" then later as "Champagniac" and "Champagniat". (7) Finally, in the 19th Century it is "Champagnat". Jean-Baptiste Champagnat I married Louise Crouzet of La Faurie, Marlhès, in 1716; Jean-Baptiste Champagnat II married Marie-Anne Ducros at Le Rozey in 1752; Jean-Baptiste III, the father of Marcellin, married Marie-Thérèse Chirat, who was ten years his elder, in the Marlhès church in 1775. The Chirat family dates back to 1562. As with the Champagnat family, it has been said that the words "...*utter integrity...sterling faith...love of work...*" seem to have characterised its members. (8) This Jean-Baptiste had a twin sister, Marie-Madeleine, who married Charles Chirat; an elder sister, Louise, who became a Sister of St. Joseph (Sr. Thérèse); an elder

5. P. Zind, "Sur les Traces de Marcellin Champagnat", Voyages et Missions, No. 105, Lyons, May 1970, p. 3. Zind also noted that, being at the mercy of the elements, many of the people perhaps felt a need to try and seek help from their God.

6. Br. A. Balko in a lecture given at St. Chamond, December 1978. He also said, "They were outstanding for their religious faith and their love of work".

7. P. Zind, loc. cit. It is of interest to note that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin's father, always spelt his name "Champagniat". (Br. G. Michel, "Did Fr. Champagnat speak in Patois to the People of Lavalla", FMS, No. 34, Rome, 1979, p. 461).

8. Bulletin de l' Institut, Vols. XXII & XXIII and June 1976.

brother Claude and a younger sister Catherine. (9)

Marcellin was the ninth child born to Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Thérèse. The first child, Marie-Anne, was born in 1775. She later married a farmer at St. Sauveur, Benoît Arnaud, (10) who had once been a seminarian. Their son, Philip, was to be of great help to Marcellin in later life and will appear later in this thesis. Two grandchildren, sons of their daughter Eugénie who had married Augustin Seux, (11) became members of Marcellin's Institute of Marist Brothers, their names being Brothers Tharsice and Théonas. The former left for the Pacific in 1878 and died on the Isle of Pines, New Caledonia, in 1890. The latter, born in 1840, spent 46 years in the Institute and died at Neuville on 3rd March 1902, aged 62. (12)

The second Champagnat child was Jean-Barthélemy who took over the farm after the death of his father in 1804. However, he seems to have found the farm a bit too difficult to manage and so disposed of some property to other landholders in the district. (13) Jean-Barthélemy had married Marie Clermondon. Two of their sons became Marist Brothers. One, François-Régis, became Brother Régis. Apparently he remained at the Hermitage for some years after his novitiate before going out teaching. He became Director of Tarentaise. Born 26th July 1826, he received the Habit in 1839 and died at the Hermitage in November 1885. (14) His brother, Jean-Baptiste Champagnat,

9. Marcellin grew up with two aunts who had been driven from their convents during the French Revolution, one was his aunt Louise, the other was his grandaunt Jeanne (A Sister of St. Joseph known as Sr. Catherine, who died in 1798).

10. He also held public office in St. Sauveur, could read and write French and Latin and, it seems, at times helped others to learn these languages.

11. Thus they were really second-nephews of Marcellin Champagnat. The French regard this as a close relationship.

12. Neuville-sur-Saône is some 30 kms due north of Lyons. Fr. Champagnat began the school there, under Br. Jean-Baptiste, in 1826. In 1982 it was still a Marist Brothers' school, though there were then very few Brothers there. The first outdoor statue of Fr. Champagnat was erected at Neuville in 1902.

13. It was to a Barrallon that Bathélemy and Jean-Pierre Champagnat sold the house, barns and some of their land in 1811. (Copy of deed of sale is in FMS Archives, Rome). After Jean-Barthélemy died in 1838, it seems that Courbon obtained the remainder of the Champagnat land since none of the Champagnat boys survived. In an old map of Le Rozey, dated 1730, Courbon is mentioned as "Noble Lord Courbon, Royal Councillor, Special Lieutenant". Following page 16 is a photostat of part of the Minutes of the Marlihes Council, 13th June 1791, where there is the signature of Courbon, Mayor. Also is the signature of Barrallon.

14. He was 46 years a Brother: the "48 years" given on p.568 of Bulletin de l'Institut des Frères Maristes des Ecoles, June 1976, is clearly an error.

See Vol XIII of Circulaires, p. 316

became Brother Théodoret. Born in 1820, he received the Habit in May 1834, but left the Institute soon after making his first profession. Brother Avit, who was often rather sharp in his judgments of others, said he lacked the moral fibre to resist the bad influence of an uncle who enticed him away, allegedly to help his mother. There is no special mention of him in Father Marcellin Champagnat's letter to the mother in 1838 after the death of Jean-Barthélemy. (15)

The third child, Anne-Marie, married a Lachal and bore three children. Jean-Baptiste, the fourth child, died on 8th August 1803, aged 22 years. The fifth child, Marguerite-Rose, died young. The sixth child, also called Marguerite-Rose, married Guillaume Cheynet, a blacksmith and farmer of Marlihes, in 1813. One son, known as Brother Straton, joined the Institute of the Marist Brothers but soon departed. Br. Avit unkindly referred to him as "*the little know-all who left us*". (16) His mother died in 1829. Anne-Marie, the seventh Champagnat child, also died young. The eighth, born in 1787, was Jean-Pierre who would later be cared for with real brotherly love by Marcellin. He married Marie Ravel, had nine children and inherited the family mill. He and four of their children were all buried at the Hermitage. (17) One of their daughters entered a convent. (18) The tenth and last child, Joseph Benoît, died young. The names of Joseph and Benedict had not appeared in the family before this time. They may have become popular after the death in Rome of Joseph Benedict Labre in 1783. (19)

15. "Letters de M. Champagnat", FMS Archives, Rome, A - AFM 113/13; S:11/26.

16. "Le trop petit savant qui nous a quittés", Br. Avit, Annales de l'Institut, FMS Archives, Rome, 1884, p. 12.

17. Jean-Pierre was at the Hermitage only two weeks before he died. The four children died soon after; all were young, one of them being a girl, Marie.

18. She entered the Marist Sisters; but also died very young, being with the Sisters at Bon Repos, Belley, for only 9 months.

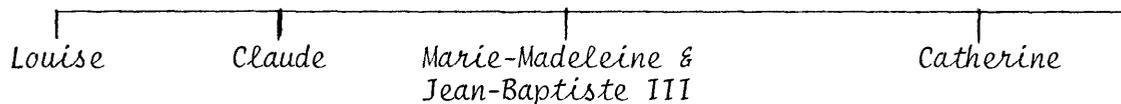
19. Joseph Benedict Labre, born 1748 at Amettes, France, became known as "the beggar of Rome" and lived his life in great poverty there till his death in 1783. He was regarded by many people as a real "saint". The Catholic Church later gave him saintly recognition by the Pope canonising him in 1883. (New Catholic Encyclopedia, New York, 1967, Vol. 8, p. 302). He was so well known in France because he was regarded as the pilgrim saint following the Forty Hours devotion all up and down France (and Italy).

Marcellin was baptised the day after birth, this day happening to be Ascension Thursday in the Catholic Church's calendar for 1789. His baptismal entry is today exhibited in a glass case near his statue in the church at Marlhès. (20) Father Alliot, the Parish Priest, officiated. Marcellin Chirat, his maternal uncle, stood for godfather whilst Margaret Chatelard, his cousin by marriage, was the godmother. (21) Ducros, a cousin who signed as witness, would soon be a nuisance to Jean-Baptiste Champagnat. Frappa, another witness who signed, was the husband of Catherine Champagnat (so Marcellin's uncle).

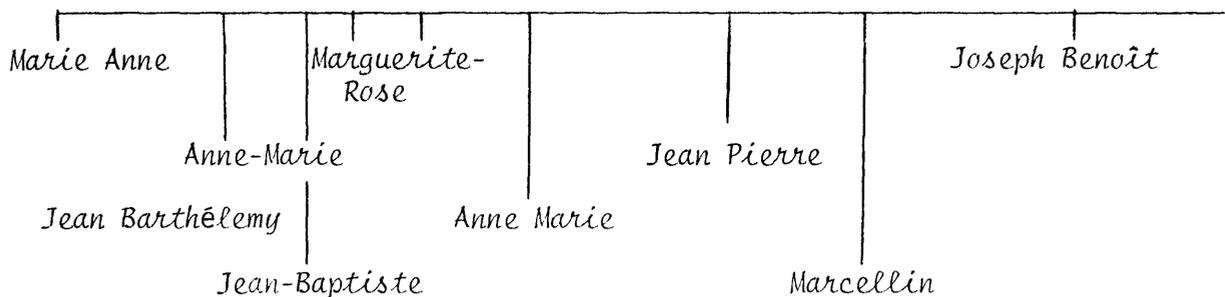
CHAMPAGNAT FAMILY

1716: Jean-Baptiste Champagnat I marries Louis Crouzet

1752: Jean-Baptiste Champagnat II marries Marie-Ann Ducros at Le Rozey



1775: Jean-Baptiste Champagnat III marries Marie-Thérèse Chirat



20. The Birth Certificate on display has been enlarged. It is on the left as you enter the church. There is also his seminary Latin grammar and two examples of his handwriting. Baptised on Ascension Thursday, the day after he was born, he later on associated that feast with his baptism, even though the date varied year by year. A photo-copy of this display at Marlhès is in Bulletin of FMS, January, 1965, p. 471.

21. F. Jean-Baptiste, Vie de Joseph-Benoît-Marcellin Champagnat, Lyons, 1856, p. 1.



The Champagnat family home at Le Rozey, where Marcellin Champagnat lived until he entered the seminary at Verrières. The present-day occupants are not related to the Champagnats.

Note the blue sign on wall at left, which is more clearly shown in photo below.



The sign reads, "Here was born, 20th May 1789, Joseph Benoît Marcellin Champagnat, Marist Father, Founder of the Little Brothers of Mary. Died at Our Lady of the Hermitage, near St. Chamond, 6th June 1840.

Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin's father, was officially known as a "cultivateur", a term applied in those days to the better-off peasant proprietors. (22) People in this category were to exercise the strongest revolutionary influence in rural France. (23) Hence it is not surprising to discover that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat supported the Revolution that got under way in France in 1789. Marcellin's parents had their own farm which they worked, with help; whilst they were also licensed to sell cloth and lace. (24) As their family grew it seems that the farm assumed greater importance and they milled grain in a small shed built near their other house on a running creek whose water provided the power for turning the mill. (25) The eldest son would often do ploughing on other farms to help support the family. Jean-Baptiste stood at approximately 5ft.6in.,(168cms.) (26) had auburn hair, grey eyes and a high forehead. We also learn that his nose was large, but the mouth average. For his time and country status he was a well-educated man, with a good command of the French language. We do not know where he received his education. His handwriting (27) is very legible, regular and flowing and practically free of errors. He could speak

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22. Because of differences in local patois, the meaning of such words as "cultivateur", "ménager" (the former being a richer person in Picardy, but the latter was richer in Provence) and "laboureur" (often, in those days, a big, well-off farmer) varied in France. (G. Duby & A. Wallon, (eds.), Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol. 3, Editions du Seuil, 1975, pp.96, 97).
23. Cobban tells of the leadership of "laboureurs" in the Revolution years. (A. Cobban, A History of Modern France, 3rd. ed., Vol. 1, Middlesex, 1963, p. 155.)
24. The levels of agricultural production in Marlihes were so low that each family needed income beyond that provided by agriculture. (J.R.Lehning, The Peasants of Marlihes, Uni. of North Caroline Press, published in U.K. by MacMillan Ltd., 1980, p.40)
25. Brother Avit wrote that they also had a mill in the creek away from the house. This has since disappeared (except for some rusty iron units of a water-wheel, etc.) but old photographs exist showing its remains. It was situated near the second Champagnat house (see Plan) 300 metres away in the valley and on the creek.
26. His height was documented at 5 ft. 2 ins. ("5p.2p.") but it must be remembered that the old French foot was about 32.5 cms., whilst the English foot is 30.48 cms. He thus stood at about 168 cms. Although the metric measurement was decreed in the 1790's many people kept to the older system; so that in 1812 Napoleon made both methods lawful.
27. An example of his handwriting may be seen in the photostat following page 16.

in public and handle men. (28) The criticism that he lacked character is based on the assumption that he allowed himself to be manipulated by his cousin, Ducros, and commissioner Trilland, both fiery Jacobins; but these actions could also be interpreted differently. (29)

Marcellin's first ten years coincided with the first ten years of the French Revolution. Since his father assumed leadership roles in Marlies during this period, it is incumbent upon us to examine Jean-Baptiste's life in some detail. In so doing, we will gain a better understanding of the forces that influenced young Marcellin. In 1789 the National Assembly confiscated church property and bishops lost their control over education. While the nationalising of church lands aroused little opposition, the imposition of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, by a law of July 1790, gained a very different reception. (30) All the Clergy were to swear an oath of allegiance to the State, thus renouncing their allegiance to the Pope at Rome. Before examining the events this occasioned at Marlies, let us observe some earlier events there. Marlies, as mentioned above, had a population that was virtually 100% Catholic. Jean-Baptiste, the "cultivateur", was a leader in church activities and in 1789 was Director of the Penitents of the Blessed Sacrament. On 17th June 1789 the Third Estate proclaimed itself the National Assembly. The Bastille fell on 14th July and many chateaux were pillaged around this time. "A sudden infectious 'Great Fear' seized the peasants who armed themselves to fight a peril they felt but could not see". (31) In the sudden and unexpected political and social change it was the office-bearers of the religious associations, who had already taken the lead in drawing up lists of grievances, who were called upon to assume administrative control and local responsibilities. Thus, it is not surprising that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat soon gained the position of Town Clerk, being officially installed in June

28. P. Zind, op. cit., p. 3.

29. Frère Avit, who wrote of his weak character in his Annales de l'Institut, (Archives, FMS, Rome, 1884) is often excessively critical of people.

30. Cobban, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 173.

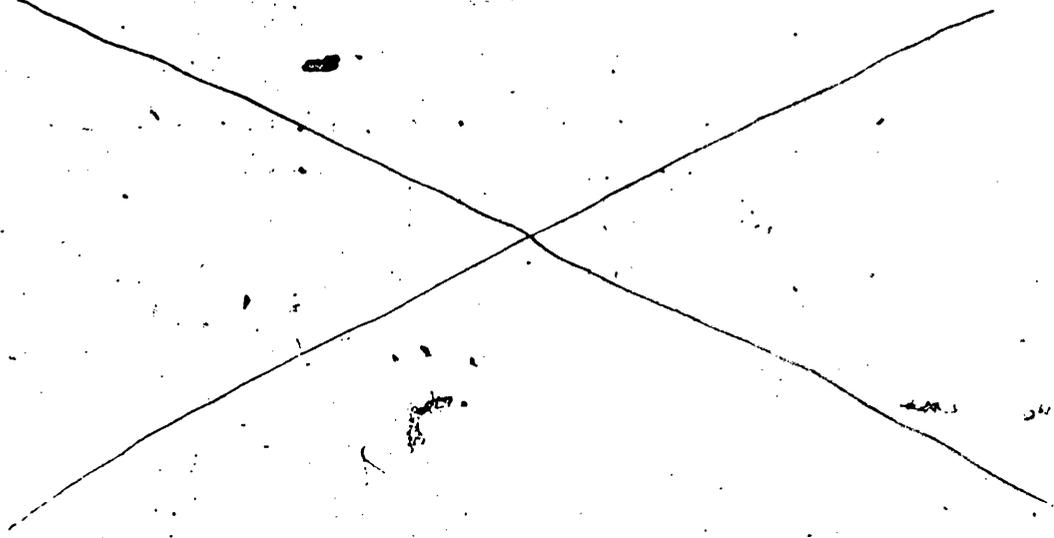
31. Cobban, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 157.

Jean Peyraud De Lallier, aîné Guichard, Le
 Richier, Jean B^t Gerys De maleoigues, Jean
 planchet De Richier, Jean Barralon De marthes
 & Jean Deryeron De Joubert notables Esprités
 De La Deliberation Du veuze Du présent veuz
 tenue pour La composition De La municipalité
 De La part De marthes, pour se conformer
 aux Lettres patentes Du Roy & à l'Instruction
 Conservee Les municipalités De Cette Sa
 14^e fevrier 1790, ont contrainc pour secretaire
 greffier J^r Jean B^t Champagnon Lequel a
 present apres que Lecture Lui a été faite
 Desdites Lettres patentes & Instruction a cepté
 De nouveaux Lad, chargez & par nomination Na
 pretée Le serment requis & ont signé eux mes
 tout fut faire

~~Courbon~~ reboud pp^r

Champagnon

Antanton chirat rousillon
 Langeron Dupoyet gerys
 Dubrin planchet Peyraud Guichard



The photocopy on the previous page has been taken from a sheet of the Marlhès Council files of 13th June 1791. The Marlhès Council files for the years 1789 and 1790 have disappeared. After 2nd June 1791 (until January 1795) all the files are in the handwriting of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat. His fine style and masterly signature imply that he was probably a well-educated person for those times.

This file sheet reads in part:

" (names of those present)
notables inscribed - concerning the deliberations of the 13th of this month held for the regulation of the municipality of the parish of Marlhès, so as to render it conformable to the letter patent of the King and to the instruction concerning municipalities of the 14th February 1790, have retained as Town Clerk Mr. Jean-Baptiste Champagnat who, being present after the reading was made of the letter patent and the instructions were taken concerning the new laws, accepted the nomination and has taken the required oath, and all who could do so have signed.

Courbon (Mayor) J-B. Champagnat
(and signatures of several others)."

NOTES:

- * "Sieur" has been used for "Monsieur"
- * J-B. Champagnat has been retained as "Secrétaire-Greffier", which seems best translated as "Town Clerk".

1791. (32)

Pope Pius VI had denounced the Civil Constitution of the Clergy oath by a decree in March 1791. Priests who had taken the oath were suspended by the Pope; thus the French Revolutionary government was causing a schism in the French Catholic Church. Perhaps in retaliation, the National Assembly ordered priests to read out from the pulpit a document telling the citizens to assemble and elect parish priests to replace those who would not take the oath of allegiance to the new government. Father Alliot, Parish Priest of Marthes, refused to do so. Jean-Baptiste Champagnat tried to apply pressure, but Alliot still refused and so, at the next Sunday's Mass, Jean-Baptiste Champagnat himself stood up and read the document to the assembled people. (33) It is, perhaps, appropriate to mention here that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat was then considered to be a Jacobin. (34) The Jacobin Club, as we know, was soon to have its members controlling the national government and ushering in its most extreme phases, including the "Terror". It was composed mainly of middle-class people who opposed both the rich and the propertyless. (35) This Club came to usurp the powers of local government in many parts of France. (36)

32. "One year after the Feast of the Federation" (held in most cities on the anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille - "Mouvement national issu des provinces, en 1789, et tendant à l'unité nationale française....Fête de la Fédération" - Petit Robert, p. 766) he accepted the position of Secretary-Registrar - on 2nd June 1791. He kept this position for some years: thus we read on more than one occasion in the files of the Marthes Municipal Council, "We have retained Sieur Jean-Bte Champagniat for Secretary-Registrar..." He was officially termed "Greffier Municipal" - which is best translated by "Town Clerk". Note that "Sieur" is short for Monsieur. (Marthes Municipal Council Files: 14th December 1789, Nos. 96 and 96B and June 1791 page 116)

33. Marthes Municipal Council files - see sheet in Appendix to this thesis.

34. Although he was not an actual member of the "Jacobin Club" (whose members used to meet in an old Jacobin convent (formerly of the Dominicans who lived in St.Jacques suburb of Paris), when the Jacobins had ousted the Girondins from power and then led the Revolution during the year preceding Robespierre's fall, it became customary to refer to all the civic leaders in each city or village (mayors, commissaires, secretaries, etc.) as "Jacobins". However, as we have a private document indicating that he participated in the war against Lyons (Lyons having rebelled in favour of the Girondins persecuted by the Jacobins), it seems valid to refer to him as a Jacobin.

35. Cobban, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 178.

36. "It was through the Jacobin Club that the more advanced revolutionaries were gradually able to impose their rule on France". (Cobban, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.178).

It must not be thought that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat was now repudiating his old church because the deeply inlaid Gallicanism of the French church was no doubt a factor influencing the large number of clergy who eventually took this oath. Lamourette, the bishop of Lyons, had already taken the oath and he himself asked all his priests to read out this government document. Again, although Father Alliot had already taken the oath to the Civil Constitution, (37) we have a document indicating that he considered the whole thing to be of little value. (38) On 14th July 1791, the second anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille, Jean-Baptiste Champagnat put himself more definitely at the head of the revolutionary movement at Marlies when he took the title of Colonel of the National Guard. In this capacity he mounted a public rostrum and proclaimed in a passionate speech, *"Our rights were unknown, we have discovered them; the new Constitution is written, now we must support it"*. (39) The regiment of the National Guard of which Champagnat was Colonel was supplied with twelve rifles. They were to set about bringing order into the country as brigands were causing trouble. The old prison was reopened for the same purpose. On 20th November Champagnat was ordered to check all weights and measures. (40) He was now the most important revolutionary leader in the town. (41).

37. Three times he took this oath: the first time, undated, was at end of 1790 or early 1791; again, with his curate, on 12th October 1792 (after the September Massacres) and a third time under the Directory.

38. Several priests, rightly or wrongly, later said that they had taken the oath with limitations - in addition to Alliot, other such priests were Gaumont in Lavalla and Dervieux of St. Ennemond.

39. Marlies Municipal Council Files, Sheet 2 for this day.

40. Marlies Municipal Council Files, 20th November 1791, Sheet 8.

The weights and measures issue was one of the most widely mentioned "complaints" sent in from all over the country. The multiplicity of the weights used, their abuse - the sellers and buyers were easily cheated and there was no standard to go by; men tinkered with their scales...it was a very live issue and in moving towards a standard in this respect, the Revolution did help the people. This sheet states, line 5: "You are all well aware that every day we receive complaints concerning weights and measures..." so they decide to buy a well-adjusted balance from St. Etienne and to compel all those concerned to bring in their scales to have them checked and adjusted..."

41. The story of events in Marlies (population 2,700) is written day by day in the register of deliberations of the town council from 2nd June 1791, when the Revolution took an anti-royal, anti-clerical turn (the King fled on 20th June 1791), in the splendid handwriting of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat who had become Secretary to the Mayor.

The next year would be more confusing. On 20th April 1792 war was declared against Austria. Very few men wanted to join the army; speeches could not induce them, and so it was necessary "to choose four volunteers" (i.e. from Marlies) for the Army of the Midi. (42) They must have been persuaded or given something to drink, for they accepted; but when there was question next of establishing a Reserve Force composed of one-tenth of the citizens, no one was in favour: "there would be time to see about it later on".

The suspension of the King (10th August 1792) made matters worse, but Jean-Baptiste continued his rise to power for he was elected in the first ballot as Elector (Deputy) for the district of St. Etienne for the National Convention. (43). The second ballot assigned to him as assistant, Antoine Linossier, constitutional priest of Jonzieux. This priest will later play an important role in Marcellin's training for the priesthood. Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Colonel of the National Guard, in his uniform of white trousers and waistcoat with a blue frockcoat, exercised at this time of general insecurity the most important function in the town of Marlies.

On 18th August 1792 a law was passed suppressing all religious orders. However, the De La Salle Brothers (44) were allowed to continue the teaching of academic subjects in their schools provided, of course, they first took the civil oath. (45) One such former De La Salle Brother, Marcellin Favier,

42. The army of the south of France.

43. Marlies Municipal Council files, 26th August 1792, Sheets 23 and 23B. It describes the election of Jean Bte Champagniat and Jean Claude Jabrin as Electors..."these two men...received more than half the votes: Mr. Champagniat having received a greater number than Jabrin".

44. This congregation of teaching Brothers was then, and is still today, known as "The Brothers of the Christian Schools". In U.S.A. they are called "Christian Brothers"; in Australia "De La Salle Brothers". Since this thesis is being written in Australia the author will continue to refer to them as "De La Salle Brothers".

45. The Government Report on 18th August stated, "The Committee still believes it is possible to reckon as a useful institution the De La Salle Brothers, entrusted in several cities with teaching how to read, write, do arithmetic and manage the elements of commerce. They have done this with success, and have founded also in various cities many boarding schools whilst enjoying the full confidence of the people; but this Association, formed under the auspices of the Jesuits, has always had some of their fanaticism and intolerance. It cannot be preserved as a corporation". Earlier this year, on 6th April, Bishop Le Coz had taken up their defence, stating, "I believe that the Congregation which exercises at present the duties of public instruction, cannot be suppressed without causing great harm to society". Against this, the opposition declared that the Brothers instilled into children's minds "the poison of the aristocracy and/or religious frenzy". (P. Zind, "Sur les Traces de Marcellin Champagnat", *Voyages et Missions*, No.110, Lyons, May 1971, p.8.) It must be observed, however, that such Brothers could continue to teach, under the Revolution, only as lay-teachers.

took the civil oath on 6th April 1793 before the municipal council at Marlihes where the Magistrate was now Jean-Baptiste Champagnat who had added this position to the posts he already held. Earlier, on 12th October 1792, shortly after the September Massacres, the parish priest of Marlihes and his curate had taken the oath: events were moving rapidly.

Although the Revolution had, up till now, been generally accepted by the rural people of France, the year 1793 witnessed wide-scale revolts. The King had been executed in January. The growing war commitments led in March to a mass levy of men, this to include 300,000 from the Département of Loire. (46) It was this event more so than the King's death, that most clearly indicated at Marlihes as elsewhere, the turning point of the Revolution. Civil War occurred in La Vendée and in June there were revolts in Lyons. The Lyons revolts were not suppressed until October, and on 27th September Jean-Baptiste Champagnat was ordered to fix seals on the houses of suspects in the Marlihes area. (47) A short time later Commissioner Benoît Pignon signed this statement: "*Since citizen Champagnat does not give to orders addressed to him all the attention necessary, we add to the above-mentioned Champagnat the aforesaid Ducros who will work co-jointly with him...for the advancement of public welfare*". (48) Ducros was ordered in the same decree to arrest and take to the prisons of St. Etienne "*all the Bêates and devout women, and all the refractory priests he can find*". One final sentence lessened the danger somewhat. Did Champagnat himself suggest it? "*The aforesaid Ducros and Champagnat are jointly and severally responsible for any arbitrary decisions that exceed their powers*". (49).

46. E. Brossard, Notes sur l'Histoire du Département de la Loire pendant la Révolution Française (1789-99), St. Etienne, 1913, p. 154.

47. This decree from "The Council of St. Etienne was conveyed to Marlihes Municipal Council by Commissioner Beraud". (Marlihes Municipal Council files, 27th September 1793, sheet 35b).

48. Marlihes Municipal Council files, Sheet 35b.

49. This decree was from Commissioner Benoît Pignon at Lyons. The last sentence allowed both Ducros and Champagnat when together, or to each of them individually when alone, to use their own judgment in matters that were not already covered by a decree. This decree was taken to Marlihes on 8th October. Of course, all such decrees were inspired by Paris. Lyons, in May 1793, had tried to stand up to Paris and its decrees but was finally and cruelly crushed by October 1793. Pignon there and Javogues in St. Chamond were ruthless in their exactions and treatment of people. Both these, also Ducros, were put to death by the succeeding regime. "There was great opposition to these decrees by the people of Marlihes, Jonzieux and many other mountain districts". (P. Zind, V & M, No. 110, May 1971, p.9)

Young Marcellin was only four years old and would not yet understand what was happening, but the revolution was to continue for several more years. Jean-Baptiste Champagnat had given shelter to two religious Sisters closely related to him, one being his sister Louise and the other his aunt Jeanne. Since he also had a very pious wife, traditional religious activities were continued by at least some members of his household. It seems that secret night Masses were not held in the Champagnat house, (50) but in some other house in Marlies, or perhaps at Jonzieux because one such "hiding-place" in Jonzieux is now known. It is likely that Jean-Baptiste's wife, the two Religious Sisters and the Children attended without hindrance. (51) France was now experiencing the so-called "Terror". Traditional religious services were forbidden in accordance with the new Republican Calendar and, on every tenth day, a civic ceremony was to be conducted. In Marlies it was often Jean-Baptiste Champagnat who conducted these civic services, doing so in the old Catholic Church which was now known as "The Temple of the Goddess of Reason".

On 12th November 1793 Jean-Baptiste Champagnat and Ducros transported to Arméville, (52) the former St. Etienne, two church bells, (53) one of 5cwt., the other of 2cwt. 16 lbs. (54) for their metal to be used in making

50. Br. G. Michel, in a letter to the author, wrote: "I don't think that Mass could be celebrated in the house, it would have been the greatest possible danger and it's impossible to think of that sort of heroism in J-B. Champagnat".

51. Jonzieux is only about 5 km. from Marlies.

52. Saints' names and feasts were banned in official administration. Thus St.-Chamond became Vallée Rousseau. In St.-Etienne "la rue Notre-Dame became rue des Jacobins; la rue des prêtres became rue Voltaire; la rue Saint-François became rue Rousseau; la rue Saint-Jean became rue des Sans-Culottes". Such name changes began in October 1793. (S. Bossakiewicz, Histoire Générale:Chronologique, Administrative, Biographique et Episodique de Saint-Etienne, St. Etienne, 1905, p. 208).

53. All church bells and any other church metals in this area had to be taken to Arméville by November 1793 for making into arms. The Marlies files mention re the bells, "...except the one with the clock which is of indispensable necessity, the Commune believing it absolutely essential not to deprive themselves of it..." (Marlies Municipal Council files, sheet 39).

54. It seems that the term cwt. here was the QUINTAL (Oxford Dictionary gives Quintal). A Quintal = 100 kilograms = 220 lbs. So 5 cwt. would be about half a ton (of 2,240 lbs.) It is of interest to note that Fr. Champagnat was still using pounds (weight) at the Hermitage in 1826-7 when he was buying pigs. (He paid 44c/lb for two pigs weighing 660 livres). Of course, it was not until 1840 that the use of the metric system, and no other, became legally compulsory. However, in spite of this, many French people, even in 1983, were still measuring in "livres".

weapons for France's warring armies. Again, on 17th November, Jean-Baptiste officially presided at "the burning of the feudal deeds of citizen Courbon (55) of St.-Genest-Malifaux".

On 1st April 1794 the citizens of Marlihes, male and female, had been reminded by their Town Clerk to wear tricolour cockades, to remove all exterior signs of religion, to settle the poor in the homes of the rich, to read the laws each "Decadi" (56) at 10.00am. in the Temple of Reason and to be very exact in observing these Tenth Days. (57 When Jean-Baptiste

55. Courbon, as mentioned, above, was the local lord. Event described in Marlihes Municipal Council files, sheet 54.

56. On 5th October 1793 the Convention adopted a new "Republican Calendar", by which Year I commenced on 22nd September 1792 and the "Rest day" would no longer be each Sunday (7th day) but each Tenth Day (Decadi). This new calendar was little used outside administrative spheres and in 1805 it was decided, under Napoleon, that France would revert to the Gregorian Calendar on 1st January 1806.

57. On 22nd April 1794 it was decided to punish those who worked on these Tenth Days with fines and imprisonment. So that all might know the new order of things it was suggested that a noticeboard be erected. The Suggestion was defeated: "the greater number of people in the commune are so uncouth that they still do not know they are now living under a republican government". There were some who could not read; others would understand the message in the opposite sense... The Council decided to instruct each family in turn by word of mouth. (P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 110, p. 9) The next day, 23rd April 1794, it was decided that the citizens of Marlihes be disarmed in part. They had to return their fine uniforms of National Guard and their swords, under a penalty of 300 francs and of being suspected. A return payment would be given them when they handed these back: not the same sum which they had had to pay for their uniform and sword but something less. There was great fear at this time of rebellion against the government; any unusual act could lead to suspicion; and any absence from the Commune gave rise to suspicion. We have the case of Courbon, for example, who had a son in military school at Tournon and went to see him; he had to give in writing an explanation of his absence. There was fear that some people were helping the Lyons rebels; and if you were away, it was thought that you may have been taking supplies to Lyons... It was October 1793 when the Lyons rebellion was finally extinguished, but fear lingered on well after that time. Although Zind has written that it seems J-B. Champagnat was not in the National Guard during the Terror (*V & M*, No. 111, 1971, p.8) there is a private document dated 6th November 1793 (in Armeville) that lists the fathers of Marlihes who have marched against the rebels at Lyons - and J-B. Champagnat's name is on that list; what is more he led the group - perhaps as a "Commissioner", since it seems he was no longer a "colonel". This document mentions that they were paid 3 francs a day for the wife, plus one franc each day for each son or daughter. So J-B. Champagnat: 1 femme, 8 enfants during 13 days.

Champagnat led the service on the following 18th May he publicly drew attention to the beauty of the crops, attributing to the "Supreme Being" all the credit and glory. The next 10th day had not come before a freeze, while a heavy fall of snow on 24th May completely destroyed the crops. It was said that the Marthes citizens began to swear and curse against such an indiscreet preacher (58).

Guyardin, an apostate priest and Deputy to the Convention (59) came to Le Puy on 26th April 1794 and vigorously enforced the anti-religious decrees: suppressing crosses, churches, bells, vestments, reliquaries, statues, etc. (60) Thus there took place in the public square, Martouret,

58. Avit wrote that he invoked the "Goddess of Reason". However, our only reference is what Avit wrote. He gave the day but not the year. It is possible that he is quoting the oral remembrance of someone, who may have spoken of "Déesse Raison" which was connected with atheism and/or Supreme Being which was connected with déism. It is useful to note that the Jacobins were generally more religious than the Girondins, even though they were more to the Left. In the last year before Robespierre's fall, among the Jacobins there were some who wanted to destroy anything religious (e.g. Fouché, Chomette, etc.) and invent the cult of "Déesse Raison" - which was at the peak of impiety. However, others such as Robespierre, St.-Just, and Couthon courageously struggled against that impiety and invented the cult of the Supreme Being. We cannot be certain whether Robespierre was a profound believer like Rousseau for example, or if he acted through respect for those he regarded as being more humble, but anyway he sent to the guillotine such atheists as Danton, Comette and Hébert because he considered that their impiety was a danger for the Republic - discouraging neighbouring nations (the Belgians, the Swiss, the various Italian units, etc.) of becoming allied to the French armies only on account of the reputation of the French, because the princes of these nations could easily say that the churches were closed, the statues had been replaced by beautiful living women - even naked women: which would have been an exaggeration, but nevertheless such could be told everywhere. So Robespierre insisted on the Catholic religion being allowed - of course, with only Constitutional Clergy; whilst for non-Catholics he offered the cult of the Supreme Being since such could join together all believers. So Champagnat could do what many others were doing: that is, invoke the Supreme Being or perhaps Nature, but it is unlikely that he invoked the Goddess of Reason.

Frère Avit mentions the event in his Abrégé des Annales, p.26.

59. He had voted for the death of the King and his execution within 24 hours.

60. During the "Terror" the Tribunals at Lyons and Feurs sent to their death (mostly by the guillotine) 123 priests, 40 religious and many lay people because of their religious activities that were at variance with the ideas of the new order. (C. Monternot, Yves-Alexandre de Marbeuf, L'église de Lyon Pendant la Révolution, Lyons, 1911, p.271.) Monternot was an Abbé, whilst de Marbeuf was Ministre de la Feuille des Bénéfices Archevêque de Lyon.

of Le Puy, the burning of the statue of "Our Lady". This "Black Virgin", one of the most ancient statues then existing in France, had been for ages the object of special veneration by the faithful. It was 8th June, the Sunday of Pentecost, about 5 p.m. that the statue was taken. The burning was a public ceremony, with Guyardin, council officers, soldiers, cannon-firing, etc. The event shocked a large number of Catholics. (61) Although not specifically mentioned in the documents, it seems that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat may have been present because of his standing in the St. Etienne district. It is said that this burning at Le Puy hardened the people's resistance to the new order, (62) and no doubt contributed to the amazing events during the 1796 Jubilee celebrations at Le Puy (to be mentioned below). "The Terror" lasted 14 months: 31st May 1793 till 27th July 1794. Its worst effects in Marlihes were during June/July 1794, to be now described.

There was a shortage of many things. On 5th May 1794 the municipal council asked for "*old clothes and rags, rope and cordage, both good and bad; pigs, horses, mules...*" Two weeks later there was a council complaint of want of eagerness on the people's part. (63) The spring of 1794 began in almost famine conditions. To avert its horrors the commissioner of the district made a census of grain supplies and Marlihes was ordered to contribute 528 cwt. to those in want. However, the thirty-five families so taxed were not prepared to comply, and when in July the new harvest stood ready for cutting in the fields, they refused to cut it. Reapers had to be hired and the sheaves carted all the way to Armeville. J-B. Champagnat, who had just finished his functions as Town Clerk, was still Magistrate. He had the difficult case of dealing with those Marlihes labourers who had refused to go and cut the requisitioned crop of grain. Minaire declared that he did not want to abandon his sick wife and six children; Padel had a wife who

61. For Roman Catholics, Marlihes was then in the Le Puy Diocese; remaining so until Napoleon's Concordat. However, in government administration, Marlihes had been transferred to the Rhône-et-Loire diocese in 1791. This, of course, applied to the "Constitutional Church" (with priests who had taken the oath). After the civil war that erupted in Lyons had been crushed, this diocese was split in two: Rhône and Loire. It is significant that when Alliot took his third oath in 1795 he named himself (in Marlihes) as being of the diocese of Le Puy.

62. Fifty years later took place the erection of the huge metal statue of "Our Lady of France" on the highest rock in the Le Puy area. It was proclaimed a national event.

63. P. Zind, V & M, No. 110, p. 10.

could not be left alone in their isolated place; Suzat was under contract to work for widow Carrot; Bonche's mother was old and sick; Riocreux had small children and a pregnant wife... At J-B. Champagnat's urging, the Municipal Council then offered the money for doing the job. Only seven accepted, but they soon demanded more money. The matter was not settled. The official report said, "*There will be very little oats, ...the ears had gone to seed, ...the hail had done a lot of damage*". Grain had to be bought elsewhere and at a high price. (64) Likewise Marlihes' butter and cheese disappeared as if by magic, to the great astonishment of the commissioners sent to check supplies. As mentioned above, the Marlihes citizens had recently been disarmed. (65)

The fall of Robespierre on 27th July 1794 began a reaction against the Convention. J-B. Champagnat sensed danger and the need to protect himself, though he was magistrate and a municipal councillor at Marlihes. He went to the town hall with the old mayor, Tardy, and together they drew up (August 1794) "a certificate to prove their citizenship". (66) It was a wise precaution and was to prove very useful. Earlier, the Municipal Council of Marlihes had taken a resolution to "*make such search and investigation of houses and to arrest everyone suspected of or guilty of nocturnal gatherings devoted to extravagant zeal for their religion*". The magistrate at this time was still Jean-Baptiste Champagnat. (67).

64. Marlihes Municipal Council files, sheets 62 - 75.

65. The National Guard had been reconstituted in Marlihes in April 1794 (Year III), but Champagnat does not appear in the list in the Council register. (P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 111, 1971, p. 8).

66. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 111, 1971, p. 8).

67. J-B. Champagnat was anxious to clear himself of any association with the cult of religious fanaticism that sprang up at the time of the Revolution and was concentrated in this area of France in the sect of the Beguines. The Beguines had held a mass rally at the "Col de la République" (halfway between Marlihes and Tarentaise). In the autumn of 1794 the Beguines "tried to found the 'New Jerusalem'". Some time afterwards the Municipality of Marlihes took the resolve "to search out...guilty of nocturnal assembly for fanatical purposes..." (P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 111, September 1971, pp.8-9). In Br. Jean-Baptiste's *VIE* he wrote that some people in the post-1817 years accused Father Champagnat, during the early stages of his foundation at Lavalla, of founding a sect of Béguines and that this was perhaps the worst charge to make against him as they were well known for their depravity. (*Vie*, Vol. 1, p.132). However, I think it should be stated here that the Béguines, from a moral point of view, were and still are respectable people. In Champagnat's time, because of some regrettable events when they started, to be a Béguine was usually regarded as being excited and with little intelligence. Today, however, they are regarded as respectable people. They form, for instance, part of a small town near the Hermitage, St.-Jean-Bonnefonds.



Today, the central square at Marlies. The steps on left lead to the Catholic Church. The large building on right of photo is the Council Chambers, wherein Jean-Baptiste worked during the Revolution. The Marist Brothers' school at Marlies, today, is situated on the right of the



A photo taken at Marlies (November 1981) of the author (left) and the Director of the Marist Brothers' School at Marlies, Br. Marcel Arnaud, a collateral descendant of the Champagnat family.

The revolutionary wars had turned the country into an arsenal. On 11th October 1794 a communiqué was issued to the citizens to "*see to the washing of ashes and the burning of heath, broom and ferns*" to extract saltpetre for use by the army. On the following Tenth Day the report from Marlihes read, "*There are in the area very little broom, (68) very few ferns and no heath; ferns and yellow broom are used by the poorer people to make baskets and for bedding; at times when straw is in short supply, even better-off people use these plants for their animals. The rougher type of broom is used for fires, the poorer people not having any wood, which is also short in this commune.*" Having no saltpetre, Marlihes was told to supply soldiers. Eventually, thirty-one unenthusiastic lads were gathered, but they all deserted en route to Arméville. The National Guard was sent to track them down in the forest, but had no success. (69)

The Directory assumed power in France in October 1795. However, in January 1795 the Marlihes Municipal Council had been changed. J-B. Champagnat was replaced as magistrate by Pierre Colomb and was again omitted from the National Guard. Freedom of worship was re-established and the new government began accusing former leaders, with both Ducros and Champagnat being arrested. "*Ducros could not accept the new administration*", was one comment, and it was said that he had taken people's land, that of those who had failed to meet his stern demand for supplies. He was well-known for his ruthless methods. He was imprisoned at Arméville where he was killed, later that year, in an anti-Jacobin riot. (70)

Jean-Baptiste, it seems, was indicted before the Revolutionary Tribunal at Feurs. (71) No doubt the main charge against him was that of being a local leader carrying out the decrees of the Jacobin government, especially

68. The text refers to "broom brushes"; in Sydney we used to call this plant "Spanish broom".

69. Marlihes Municipal Council files for 12th October 1794.

70. At this time it was safer to have been a royalist. It was a band of royalist sympathisers, calling themselves "Compagnons de Jésus, who attacked the prison at Arméville. They were seeking revenge on Jacobins for the murders of 1792-93-94 which had been attributed to the Jacobins.

71. P. Zind, V & M, No. 111, September 1971, p. 8.

that of Robespierre. (72) However, proceedings against him ceased when this court was dissolved by a Decree of 31st May 1795. Having been chief officer of the former regime in the small town of Marlihes he would have been lucky to escape accusation.

One incident of royalist reaction occurred in Marlihes at this time when the Chausse brothers cut down the tree of liberty. No one would offer any information against the culprits. There was also trouble with the National Guard since the Marlihes Council report indicates that neither captain nor trooper of any of the three companies answered the call to duty on 27th September. (73) The passing of a Decree of Religious Liberty in February 1795 allowed some churches to reopen. Priests who had not taken the oath appeared more or less openly in the area of Marlihes. Six of them held regular meetings in the Chausse family barn. (74) The forests around Marlihes were havens for deserters and defaulters from the army. Efforts to find them led the police to question the parents, from whom they were invariably given the reply, "*They are at the war*". (75)

Fairly early in 1796 there was a tremendous celebration of a "Jubilee" at Le Puy. From ancient times a Jubilee was proclaimed each time the feast of the Annunciation (76) fell on Good Friday. Since the cathedral at Le Puy was in the hands of the constitutional clergy, Catholics were prohibited from going there; nevertheless a huge crowd gathered at Le Puy

72. This would be in contrast to the usual charges brought by the Jacobins against their prisoners, such as: being a royalist sympathiser, not joining in enough with the patriotic feasts, failing to submit to the new government, failing to attend "worship" or working on the Decadi, taking part in insurrection of any kind...(D. Rops, L'Eglise des Révolutions, Fayard, Paris, 1965, p.105).

73. P. Zind, V & M, No. 112, January 1972, p. 21.

74. Among them was Abbé Rouchon who would endeavour in 1819 to found a congregation of teaching Brothers at Valbenoîte.

75. P. Zind, V & M, No. 112, January 1972, p. 21.

It was very difficult to control the conscripts because, in this region, many young men between 16 and 30 were living away from their families, working, especially as lumberjacks, in various parts of France, and even as far as Spain.

76. The Catholic Church's feast of the "Annunciation" (Angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she would become the Mother of God) used to be celebrated on 25th March.

to celebrate this Jubilee. (77) The Sodalities seem to have sent a group and as J-B. Champagnat had been President of the White Penitents at Marthes, some researchers think that he may have taken a small group of men there: especially since, in 1796, he held no government office. However, since he had appeared too much in favour of the revolutionary ideas, it is almost certain that he had not maintained his contact with this sodality. Perhaps Marcellin, now seven years of age, was taken there by his mother and aunts and possibly this was the occasion when he is said to have asked his mother (according to Br. Jean-Baptiste), "*Mother, what is the revolution? Is it a man or a beast?*" (78) However, it must be pointed out that the Revolution was now more favourable to religion.

The Directory, which ruled France from October 1795 till November 1799, struggled with internal political, financial, social and religious difficulties in addition to foreign war. Politically, the Directory was opposed from the Right and the Left. (79) The collapse of paper-money and consolidated revenue rendered the financial position precarious. Widespread anarchy, brigandage, the economic crisis, plus starvation were serious social problems (80) whilst in religion, after a short period of tolerance, persecution was renewed. (81) It is said that people, weary of the intrigues and corruption, let things slide: they lived in terrible poverty, whilst company managers and businessmen made a show of extravagant luxury. (82)

77. Pope Pius VI had made it easy for all faithful Catholics to gain the Jubilee Indulgence by announcing that, instead of having to go to the Cathedral, the conditions for the indulgence would be satisfied by performing works of piety in keeping with your actual condition...in all churches and oratories...even in private homes...and an extension of time was granted - this being "during the octave of Sts. Peter and Paul". He encouraged Catholics to attend Masses and sermons preached where possible by the priests who could be contacted. Often it was at night and in barns and woods that these functions were held. (P. Tavernier, Le Diocèse du Puy Pendant La Révolution, Le Puy, 1938, pp. 213 ff.) Père de Rachat wrote to Bishop de Galard on 13th April and said that, "This Jubilee produced marvellous effects". (Ibid, p.215) "Les Chrétiens, ont tous voulu gagner l'indulgence, et, dans tous ses lieux prévus pour cela, à partir du 25 mars, de partout on voyait accourir les foules. Le concours y a été immense".

78. Br. Jean-Baptiste, op. cit., p. 5.

79. Lyons was the main royalist centre where malcontents, deserters from the army and 'refractory' clergy could find a safe refuge. (N. Hampson, A Social History of the French Revolution, London, 1963, p. 236.)

80. N. Hampson, The First European Revolution 1776-1815, London, 1969, p. 122).

81. P. Zind, V & M, No. 113, March 1972, p. 8.

82. A. Cobban, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 264, 265.

Jean-Baptiste Champagnat had been driven into the wings of the political scene by force of circumstances, but a return to power of the Jacobins in September 1797 (83) soon led to his recall to office. He hesitated for a month or so before agreeing to go into office again. In November he received the following appointment from the Directory: "President of the Municipal Administration of the Canton of Marlies". In a declaration written in his own hand and signed, he questioned his fitness: "...my knowledge being too confused to fulfil its functions". (84) "However", he continues, "anxious to obey the orders of the government, I accept the offered position and swear hatred to royalty and anarchy, and fidelity to the Constitution of the Year III". His acceptance is dated 11th February, 1798.

Just as he had been pushed about under the Convention by his cousin Ducros, so now he suffered the same fate under the Directory from Trilland, a "very zealous" revolutionary and the new "Commissioner of the Executive Directory for the Municipal Administration of the Canton of Marlies".

83. On 4th September 1797 three former Jacobins - Barras, Rawbell and Larevelliere-Lepeaux drove out the five Directors and found themselves, through fear of a return of the monarchy, forced to follow the political methods of former Jacobins and Montagnards, i.e. the hard core of the anti-church, anti-monarchy revolutionaries. Daniel Rops says, "It was the Church that was immediately to pay the price" and he goes on to describe the attacks on priests: "A new period of persecution began, very unevenly exercised, and in some cases a dead letter; execution was now out of favour, but a new punishment - transportation...232 French and 30 Belgian priests were sent to Guiana...Of the 256 who reached South America the death rate was one in two - frightful conditions of all kinds - others were left on the islands of Re and Oleron, with all manner of common criminals..." Public churches were closed. Some religious communities that had just re-assembled were dispersed..."The black gang" attacked abbeys, cathedrals; convent chapels were turned into dance halls. Two new forms of religion were publicised - for the upper class, a kind of Theophilanthropy, and for people generally a renewal of the ten-day worship". (D. Rops, op. cit., pp. 115 ff.) A better known name for this "goulag" (severely restricted prisons) is "les Pontons de Rochefort" - Rochefort being the harbour and a "ponton" was an old boat (a hulk), where a number of priests spent one or two years. Many people strongly resisted and hid the church bells, vessels, and priests as far as possible. It should be noted that the word "Jacobin" here is used to indicate that this present group was anti-church, etc. but there was no actual Jacobin Party operating now.

84. P. Zind, V & M, No. 113, March 1972, p. 8.

Trilland proved to be a real tyrant for Marthes, and J-B. Champagnat was said to be only his man of straw. (85) In France generally, things were going from bad to worse financially and politically. Meanwhile royalist counter-revolutionary action had set up a reign of "counter-terror" in the south, whilst in western and southern areas royalists, Catholics, deserters from the army and common brigands murdered officials of the Republic and were plunging the country into a state of civil war. (86) On 1st March 1798 came a formal order from Trilland to J-B. Champagnat, *"The Administration, considering that you could not exercise sufficient zeal in carrying out the law regarding young army recruits and refractory priests, has decreed that the police will proceed with the Commissioner to search the houses in the whole extent of the canton"*. (87)

A week later Trilland ordered the erection of Trees of Liberty as required by law. He granted five days grace, after which he would take "Measures against the municipal administration". As a result, J-B. Champagnat had planted in the public squares of Marthes and Jonzieux two trees of liberty. On the day itself, 15th March, he presided at the ceremony with a good number of citizens. Two trees were planted at the same time: first, as a temporary measure, a pine without roots, 78 ft. high, bearing the liberty bonnet in three colours; then in the real meaning of a tree, a sycamore with its roots. All this was done with cries of *"Long live the Republic!"*, with patriotic songs and drum-beating, "making the whole of Marthes resound!". (88)

Thereafter, civic festivals were to go on regularly around these trees: on 20th March J-B. Champagnat had the feast of "Old Age" celebrated. At 11.00 a.m. an imposing array of citizens gathered around the tree of liberty, the old people in front, preceded by the four young men they had chosen. Patriotic dances followed a reading of the proclamation of the Directory, *"all being carried out in the best order"*. (89) Festivals followed

85. Ibid.

86. Hampson, *A Social History of the French Revolution*, p. 122.

87. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 113, p. 8.

88. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 113, p. 8.

89. Ibid, p. 9.

one another at close intervals, as if to compensate for the terrors and distress of the previous era. The fall of the monarchy was celebrated on 10th August with much merriment, procession, speeches, patriotic songs and dances, games and shouts of "*Long live the Republic*". Authorities and officials retired to the temple to take the oath, Champagnat reading it out a few words at a time and the others repeating them after him. Trilland proclaimed, "*Citizens, today is the anniversary of the foundation of the Republic...A true republican does not take an oath in vain. I swear it by the shades of Regulus, Brutus, William Tell, Voltaire and Rousseau...*" (90) On 21st January 1799 J-B. Champagnat again took part in a ceremony marked with revolutionary pomp: patriotic songs, entertainment, reading of a letter from the Minister, invocation of the Supreme Being, denunciation of perjurers. It was Champagnat who made the assembly repeat phrase by phrase the oath of hatred to royalty. It is true that Trilland was present and took the discourse: "*The blood of Brutus flows in our veins...; liberty is the sacred fire confided to us...*" Marcellin was then ten years old and preparing for his First Communion in the Catholic Church. Since his father presided at civic functions, it is almost certain that Marcellin would have been present at the greater number of these festivals. Marcellin's later counter-revolutionary life implies that these festivals failed to impress him, at least in the long run.

The year 1799 brought many military reverses and France was threatened with invasion. The massacre of the French plenipotentiaries in April (91) called for a "Funeral Festival" at Marlihes, celebrated "with that doleful character and grief with which every republican ought to feel; their grief could be seen in their faces, with alarming shouts they called for vengeance, cursing the horrible Hapsburg House of Austria, declaring themselves ready to march in defence of their country..." (92) However, patriotic enthusiasm

90. "Trilland had not forgotten the classics he was taught by the Oratorians at Tournon!" (Br. G. Michel, Lecture at Saint-Chamond, January, 1979).

91. The French plenipotentiaries were killed at Rastatt (now in Germany) on 28th April 1799 at the gates of the city by the Austrians who hoped to seize documents containing arrangements between France and Prussia. The massacre stirred up public opinion against Austria. Two were killed - Bonnier and Roberjot, whilst Jean Derby was grievously wounded. It was to have been a meeting of French plenipotentiaries and the Prussian king.

92. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 114, June 1972, p. 6.

and good intentions faded to nothing when the municipality ended the "revolutionary requiem" by posting up the names of those men conscripted from the town. (93) There was, once again, no response to the call for arms.

The fanatically loyal Trilland announced, *"The Commissioner of the Directory, angered because after so many invitations and requisitions made to the municipal administration of this town, there has been absolutely no success in recruiting conscripts and deserters for the armies of the Republic, ... considering that these cowards have been led into error by fanaticism, requires the execution of the provisions of Article I of the Decree"*. (94) In vain would Trilland and Champagnat multiply patriotic festivals "with that enthusiasm which characterises true republicans, swear fidelity and attachment to the Republic and death to tyrants". Not only at Marthes but over large parts of the countryside of France, law and order had broken down. (95) On 22nd March 1800, "robed in his stole of office..." President Champagnat solemnly invited *"the conscripts... to hasten their departure to go and gather the fruits of peace"*, and renewed the same appeal next day with the same negative result. Aroused to fury by these evasions, Trilland on 28th April 1800 accused the councillors and president of Marthes of negligence and hypocrisy. Since he considered their faintheartedness had reached its peak, he himself officially drew up the list of unmarrieds destined for the army. (96)

93. Conscription had been introduced by the Directory in September 1798. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 3, p. 733).

94. This was the "Decree 14th Prairial" (3rd June 1799) on conscription: brought out especially since many people were not adhering to the conscription law of September 1798. It said that such citizens were cowards and were a bad influence.

95. There had been much opposition to the "Window Tax" of 24th November 1798. Decrees in June 1799, in addition to laying stress on the conscription issue, their purpose was also to requisition supplies and raise forced loans. The rich were the victims of the forced loans. Hostages were taken in many places where any uprising was feared. The country was financially in trouble and foreign troops were invading France. Troops were stationed in France to prevent popular risings. Sièyes was the main one in favour of doing away with what little voting power the people had struggled to obtain. Napoleon entered the scene in October, but even so the enemies (owing to their poor co-ordination) had already been restrained. These three or four years of the Directory were not without gain for France, even with her external trade ruined and industry weak. A large number of good administrative measures had been prepared by intelligent teams to remake the country's economy, and Napoleon had a good deal going ahead when he took charge. (*Hampson, The First European Revolution 1776-1815*), p. 122.

96. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 114, p. 7

However, in November of 1799, France had acquired a new master in the First Consul, Bonaparte, who proclaimed a new constitution on 13th December of that year. By the following April new prefectures were set up. J-B. Champagnat lost his title of Town President, whilst Marlies lost its rank as the chief town of the district, this position passing to St.-Genest-Malifaux. The new municipal councillors took office five months later: Champagnat was not amongst them. He signed the official register on 30th September 1800 for the last time and retired to his family. (97) Marcellin was then eleven years old.

J-B. Champagnat had returned home to stay. In February 1804 his daughter, Anne-Marie, was married in the Marlies church to Jean Lachal. Jean-Baptiste himself was to die the following June, tradition being that he died in bed, probably of a heart attack. (98) How are we to evaluate his life's work? It seems that he was always a Catholic. Pierre Zind says of him that he was, "*Swearing all the oaths to the Revolution and believing in none of them*". (99) It is significant that Fr. Alliot, Parish Priest of Marlies, told a priestly vocation recruiter in 1803 that the only home where such a vocation might be found would be in the Champagnat family.(100) Possibly the only serious reference against him was the remark of the Parish Priest Fr. Granottier at the time when evidence was being taken for Marcellin's beatification in the Catholic Church. Father Granottier approved and signed several of the testimonies

97. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 114, p. 7.

98. Inventory of the Furniture, Chattels and Documents of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Deceased, made on 7th November 1804: At 7 a.m. on the above morning, Marie-Therese Chirat...appeared at the office of Jean Reboud, Notary Public, in Marlies; she has care of the young children living at Le Rozey; Mr. Benoît Arnaud, teacher at St.-Sauveur, has been appointed Trustee...Mr. Reboud arrived at Le Rozey at 9 a.m....prepared the following inventory...NOTE: The grandmother, J-B. Champagnat's mother, Marie-Anne Ducros, had a room in the house; her goods were not listed. (She died on 11th March 1806). HOUSE: Kitchen utensils...cloth-loom and accessories. TOOLS:...6 carts...4 ploughs. STABLE: 4 bullocks; 6 cows; 1 heifer (1,000 francs). (See Appendix for more details).

99. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 111, September 1971, p. 8.

100. Br. Jean-Baptiste, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

given by his parishioners, but to the one from Mr. Jacques Peyron (7th March 1886) which ended, "...he performed no action which would prove that he was imbued with republican ideas and he died in very good dispositions", (101) Fr. Granottier added by way of footnote, " I the undersigned certify that J. Peyron is in perfect possession of all his intellectual faculties and is worthy of all confidence; nevertheless his opinion of the conduct and republican convictions of the man are quite personal. That conduct and those convictions are generally judged in a very severe manner and quite rightly. The proofs may be found in the registers of the municipal council of that period and may be consulted by anyone. 29th March 1886, Granottier P.P.". (102)

Granottier had to form his judgment after reading the registers in the Marlies Municipal Council files and these certainly indicate his direct participation in the Revolution. From a look at the registers and the very fine handwriting, one concludes that he was a man very sure of himself. What is more, he did not retire from public life after the Terror. Two years after the Terror he was put aside, but the fact that he was chosen again in late 1797, when the Revolution had come back with an anti-theism even worse than that of 1793-4, proves that he had strong revolutionary convictions.

However, it is also worth noting that he had not used his position to increase the family fortune. He was not poor; but it is clear enough that his wife first, and then his two sons, Jean Pierre and Jean-Barthélemy, had to borrow money to meet the debts that remained after J-B. Champagnat's death. (103) It is also worth noting that, in spite of about fifteen decrees ordering him to capture conscripts not at the war and Roman Catholic priests, he never found any. It would appear that he had taken care to render these decrees inapplicable to the people of Marlies. That could explain the testimony of Peyron who, when young, greatly admired Marcellin Champagnat and may have known the family.

101. "...Pour le père Champagnat, cousin du fameux Ducros, il a eu la faiblesse de se rendre à ses opinions; mais il n'a fait aucun acte qui put prouver qu'il fût convaincu de procédés des républicains; il est mort dans de très bonnes dispositions". (Positio Super Virtutibus, Lyons, 1903, p. 72).

102. Positio Super Virtutibus, Lyons, 1903, p. 73.

103. It seems that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat's savings would have been ruined by the collapse in value of the assignat; its value had been 100 for 1 assignat in 1789, it fell to 68 at the end of 1791, to 18 at the beginning of 1795, and to 1 in November 1795.

I think we can dismiss Br. Avit's opinion of J-B. Champagnat as being "*weak in character*" since this same person wrote many contrary things about him in the same paragraph of his Annales. (104) We know that J-B. Champagnat wrote reports, organised and presided at the revolutionary feasts, and also delivered the speeches so that St. Etienne officials would think that all was well in Marllhes. At times, of course, they doubted and put him to the test; but there was no one killed at, or taken from Marllhes; the church was not burnt or sold and it seems J-B. Champagnat knew where the two priests were hiding, but his official remark was always "*no refractory priests can be found*". He must have been both prudent and clever to hold to such a course when, on changes of party in power, heads rolled easily. He kept his home, family and land and was so highly esteemed that he was asked to resume office at the end of 1797, and whilst he hesitated for a month or so, they waited. It was probably from his father's prudent and skilful handling of affairs over several years of change and complexity that Marcellin learned to be diplomatic with people and became intent on doing what was best for others.

104. Br. Avit, op. cit., p. 13. "Jn-Bte Champagnat avait une grande réputation, un jugement incomplet, un caractère faible et une instruction assez avancée pour son temps. Il était très estimé de ses concitoyens qui acceptaient facilement ses décisions dans tous leurs différents. Habile expert, il était appelé dans les partages et arrangeait si bien toutes choses que dame chicane n'y trouvait pas son compte. A ce noble emploi, il joignait celui de marchand, de cultivateur, et, lorsque le temps était favourable, il exploitait un de ces petits moulins que, dans le pays on appelait: 'Ecoute s'il pleut: ce qui veut dire que la route et la meule étaient souvent en repos, faute d'eau". "J-B. Champagnat had a great reputation, a faulty judgment, was not of strong character and had an education advanced enough for his time. He was very well thought of by his fellow citizens who easily accepted his decisions in all their differences. A skilled expert, he was called in to settle their differences and arranged everything so well that Lady Trickery got nothing out of it. To this noble employment he joined that of merchant, farmer, and - when the weather was favourable, he made use of one of those small mills that are called in the region: 'Listen if it is raining': meaning that the water wheel and the millstones were often still for lack of water".

Yes, it is true that J-B. Champagnat preached in the profaned church at Marthes and extolled the new order; that he took a cartload of church ornaments, vestments, etc. to St. Etienne for public burning, that he prevailed on Father Alliot and Father Laurent to sign the oath...took several public offices, etc. Yet he continually protected his people from severe demands issuing from St. Etienne, seeing that not one of his people was taken or killed, and even produced a list of "*two hundred poor of my district*" for whom he thought the new order should be doing something. (105)

From the religious point of view, because of his disavowal of his old faith and public proclamations of the new ideas, he was obviously at fault in the minds of loyal Roman Catholics. Yet many things in the French Catholic Church needed changing, and perhaps he was now acting as he thought best for the future lives of his people. His son, Marcellin, will attempt to bring in changes from within the Church and will never publicly disavow it. One characteristic of father and son shone strongly in both men, their total dedication to assisting those people with whom they were in contact; even though, in both cases, it would mean taking extraordinary actions which would meet with much opposition. Perhaps, in a sense, many aspects of the new liberalism being thrust upon the world by the French revolutionaries, was gaining ready reception in the hearts of both father and son. No doubtful transaction by J-B. Champagnat has yet been discovered, yet he lived at a time when there were real possibilities for such with the "Biens Nationaux" (the confiscation of the goods and property of émigrés and the church and selling them at a profit) and his cousin Ducros sold several important properties. (106).

Thus it seems that Marcellin Champagnat spent his youth in a remarkable family milieu that could be of immense formative value to him. By no means destitute, the hard-working Champagnat family was obviously very prominent in the district of Marthes where J-B. Champagnat had been for so many years the foremost revolutionary leader. Then, particularly after his

105. Archives Départementales (LOIRE), St. Etienne, L. 514.
(L - liasse, a bundle, a file of documents, papers).

106. There certainly were purchases of national goods made by J-B. Champagnat, but such was not forbidden.

father's retirement from political life in 1800,(107) Marcellin would follow him to the fields, the mill and to the workbench. Marcellin learned to bake bread, to work with wood, to build in stone and to roof a shed - in short, all the work required in the mill and on the farm and all this, as we shall see later, was to prove most valuable to him in his future years. Furthermore, the father gave to each of his sons a sum of money and from it they had to produce more by trade so that each would have a fund with which to go out into life. Later on, Marcellin would buy land, build and manage a large house on it. He would be the one to supervise, encourage and teach his Brothers; he would give them the example of manual work right from the beginning.(108) As Father Coste would later say, "*Marcellin Champagnat will always have this sign about him of finding the right tool for the right job, of finding the right stone for a building and putting it in its own particular place in that building. This will be seen even in his spirituality. Of all the Marist founders, he will be the one with the best Christological approach*". (109)

Marcellin's birth certificate (110) has the word "honnête" to describe the families concerned. Unfortunately, in previous articles in English concerning Marcellin Champagnat, it has been written that this word signified the families as having a rigorous and irreproachable observance of the duties of justice and morality. Such, however, is a complete error. This word on such as marriage, birth or death certificates implied only a social condition - having nothing to do with honesty, morality, etc. It just says that you belong neither to the nobility, nor to common people. You belong to the bourgeoisie, more correctly the small bourgeoisie, for instance merchants.(111)

107. It was on 29th September 1800 that Champagnat signed a final document of the Register of Deliberations; but now that Napoleon was in power, there was an end to regular municipal council meetings; instead of two or three meetings a week, there would now be perhaps two or three a year.

108. Fr. Jean Coste, from his Lecture at Hunters Hill, N.S.W., December 1972.

109. Ibid.

110. J. Coste & G. Lessard, Origines Maristes (1786-1836), Vol.1, Rome, 1960, Document 3.

111. In letter to author, 1981, from Frère Gabriel Michel.

We may well ask how Marcellin regarded his father, for he lived the first eleven years of his life in an atmosphere of continual uncertainty, hearing brutal announcements, yet knowing quite well that their execution was far less drastic. (112) According to Frère Jean-Baptiste, Marcellin made his First Communion in 1800, (113) beginning his preparation for this event during the persecution of the Directory, a persecution no less violent than that of the Terror for the Catholic Church. (114) Marcellin's schooling was not insisted upon; it seems his father was too busy with other things. It is obvious that his father must have made an indelible impression on young Marcellin, which will become obvious as we trace his future life. Perhaps he also envied the education of his father, who had a small personal library in their home. (115) The father obviously instilled great confidence into young Marcellin; Jean-Baptiste being a man who was very sure of himself and, as Br. Gabriel Michel has said, "...who already has been accustomed to being listened to and obeyed, and who has ambition; 'an activist' ". (116)

After the father's death, Jean-Barthélemy, the eldest son, took charge of the farm. We know from the "Inventory of the Furniture, Chattels and Documents of Jean-Baptiste, deceased", made on 7th November 1804 and still available for inspection in the office records of the Solicitor, Mr. Robin, at St.-Genest-Malifaux, (117) that Jean-Baptiste had four bullocks, six cows and one heifer in his stable. If Jean-Barthélemy took the bullocks out to plough for neighbours, he would have earned good money: and

112. Fr. Coste, Lecture at Hunters Hill, December 1972.

113. Br. Jean-Baptiste, op. cit., p. 5. However, Frère Gabriel Michel thinks he made it in 1801 because the rule was more 12 or 13; but when one sees that he allowed Br. François to make it at 10, we may think that there could have been an exception for him too.

114. Br. Gabriel Michel, Lecture at St. Chamond, December 1978.

115. One of Jean-Baptiste's personal books, Histoire des Plantes de l'Europe, just on a thousand pages, may still be seen at the Hermitage. Its language is not simple and it seems that nobody but a well-educated man would bother to keep it in a personal library.

116. Above lecture by Br. Gabriel Michel.

117. A copy (somewhat shortened) may be seen in the Appendix to this thesis.

there is little doubt that this was his practice. (118)

Marcellin had been formed by his mother in solid christian faith and piety, whilst his aunt, a Sister of the Congregation of St. Joseph, probably contributed a deeper spiritual formation and may have provided the initial attraction to the priestly vocation and to an apostolate of christian teaching. Marcellin's mother, as we shall see later, will be of tremendous help to him during his frustrating early years of study for the priesthood. By 1810, the year of her death, Marcellin had seemingly survived his most crucial and difficult years.

118. Jean-Barthélemy ran into debt later. Marcellin later wrote to his widow, "if he has not made you rich, he has left the example of a life well-lived..." It is important to note that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat's sons inherited debts on their father's death; debts that Jean-Baptiste had kept to himself. (Information from Br. Gabriel Michel who has done some deep research into the Champagnat family).

CHAPTER THREEMARCELLIN'S EARLY TRAINING FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

Monsignor Joseph Fesch, uncle of the First Consul Napoleon, took possession of his immense Diocese, Rhône, Loire and Ain, on 2nd January 1803. A fortnight later he was made a Cardinal of the Catholic Church. His main anxiety was the grave shortage of priests following the tumultuous years of the Revolution: martyrdom, schism, old age and apostasy having caused heavy losses in the ranks of the clergy. Indeed, for the years 1790 to 1815 the total number of priests ordained equalled about one year's ordinations before the Revolution. (1) In 1803 there were only 933 priests in France under the age of 40. Fesch determined to develop the minor seminaries which the "Missioner-priests" (2) had secretly formed. In 1803 some 150 lads were studying at Saint-Jodard, almost a hundred at Roche in the Forez, and another group at Meximieux, northeast of Lyons.

1. P. Zind, "Sur les Traces de Marcellin Champagnat", Voyages et Missions, No. 117, April, 1973, p. 6.

2. Some priests stayed in hiding in France during the Revolution. As soon as conditions permitted in the area where they were - this varied, some places were safe enough for the priests to emerge in August 1798, and in December 1799 came the decrees from Napoleon - priests began to travel through the villages and hamlets preaching, confessing, baptising, living from a suitcase or better where they could. These were the "missioners"; no chance immediately of resuming their former life in the presbytery, etc. Gradually things became organised; Lyons seems to have been the first diocese to divide the region into districts and to see that there were a few missioners for each. Soon they provided a central house for these men where they could rest, become acquainted with the new procedures, learn of the "constitutional priests", etc. Gradually the affairs became more settled when the priests could again be housed in the old presbytery - knocked about or used for sundry purposes for ten years...and there gather a few boys to prepare them for the seminary whenever that would be possible. Courageous men, and we have the stories of several of them. Some priests continued in this teaching well after the opening of the minor seminaries. In Tarentaise, Father Préher carried on such work well into the 1830's and 40's. He began there in 1816 and Fr. Champagnat was later (in 1821) to send him Brother Laurence to help supervise his boys. Such were known as "Clerical Schools".

L'Argentière minor seminary was begun in 1804 by Father Recorbet (later V.G.), but 1805 was its first real year under the Fathers of the Faith (mostly former Jesuits) with Fr. Cabarat as Superior 1805-07. At the end of 1807 these Fathers were forced to withdraw and the seminary was again directed by Father Recorbet and the diocesan priests. (3) Fesch opened two more seminaries: Verrières in 1804 and Alix in 1807. (4) To fill them he exhorted the professors from the major and minor seminaries to use some of their vacation period for the purpose of recruiting vocations.

So it happened that in the summer of 1803 two ecclesiastics arrived at the presbytery of Marlihes. It is possible that the two men were the Sulpician J-J. Cartal and Antoine Linossier. The actual recruiter for this area was Cartal, a professor at the St. Irenaeus major seminary; he was originally from the Le Puy area and spoke the local patois of Marlihes. (5) Linossier, who possibly came with the recruiter to show him the way, (6) was a native of St.-Genest-Malifaux, held a degree in civil and canon law and was the former constitutional

3. It was then that Father Barou came to this staff - he who in November 1809 would take charge of Verrières. He knew Marcellin very well and was ever his friend and supporter as Vicar General (chosen by Archbishop de Pins in January 1824). He died in 1855.

4. "... l'Argentière, Verrières, Alix ... are there to prove it (that Fesch was a great benefactor of the diocese) ... it was I and my money that bought them." (Hélène Colombani, Le Cardinal Fesch, Paris, 1979, p. 204.)

5. He was a remarkable man and, strange to say, died in 1840 (same year in which Marcellin was to die.)

6. Opinion of the French scholar Father Coste, during a conversation with the author in Rome 1982.

priest of Jonzieux. (7) He would certainly have been well-known at Marlihes. The visitors asked the parish priest if he knew of any likely candidates for the seminary. *"I'm afraid there are none at the moment"*, replied Fr. Alliot; then, after a moment's reflection, *"You could perhaps try the Champagnat household; there are three lads there who seem to be fairly reserved types; but I've never heard it said that any of them intended to study"*. (8)

7. Since Linossier was to have, so it seemed, considerable influence on the life of Marcellin Champagnat in later years, particularly during his years of studying at the seminary, some knowledge of his background would be helpful. Unfortunately, there are differences of opinion concerning his life during the French Revolution years. J-M. Chausse in his Vie de M. l'Abbé Jean-Louis Duplay, (1887), Vol. 1, p.34, wrote: "Before the excesses of the Revolution, Fr. Linossier, schismatic parish priest at Jonzieux, examined his conscience and, recognizing his errors, sincerely retracted them. His return (to the Church) was so complete that he became well-known for his good and generous life. One can say that from his retraction of the civil oath he led a good life that was never connected with any act of persecution against Catholics." Then p.35: "He resigned as schismatic parish priest of Jonzieux 29th December 1792. Fr. Linossier remained a close friend of Fr. Peyrard who had helped him return to his line of duty. After the Revolution, he at times went back to Jonzieux to visit Fr. Peyrard. Fr. Duplay, who had been a student at Verrières, has often related that, since 1792, this priest had lived a most edifying life." Yet in an anonymous document of five pages in the archives of the Hermitage (St. Chamond), titled Jonzieux et ses environs, it is written: "There is no longer any trace of Linossier at Jonzieux where he has been totally forgotten". It then goes on to say that in September 1793, Linossier had gone with Ducros to ask Javogues (at that time besieging Lyons) for help in getting food to Jonzieux. This implies that he was on the side of the Jacobins (as was Jean-Baptiste Champagnat). When this author questioned the French scholar Br. Gabriel Michel on this, he received the following reply: "There was something not very clear, otherwise Chausse would not have said, 'Il ne s'était associé à aucun acte de persécution contre les catholiques'." ('He was not involved in any act of persecution against Catholics'.) Yet this supposes that he had some political activity and was more or less allied with Ducros; there is difficulty in interpreting his actions". NOTES: (a) J-L. Duplay was born at Jonzieux on 21st January 1788 and was baptised by Linossier on 22nd January 1788. (b) Fr. Peyrard, curate at Jonzieux, had succeeded Fr. Pradier, who had refused to take the revolutionary oath, on 7th May 1792. Linossier, who had been curate under Pradier, became constitutional parish priest at Jonzieux on 24th July 1791. (c) After Bonaparte proclaimed the Concordat on 18th April 1802, many constitutional priests were readmitted to the Catholic Church, as Napoleon had wanted. One of these was Napoleon's uncle, Fesch, who was named a Cardinal and took over the huge diocese of Lyons 2nd January 1803. If Chausse is correct, Linossier, having never been "defrocked" nor having married (but having remained a priest without carrying out priestly functions) would probably have had no difficulty in gaining readmittance to the Catholic Church. We do know he became a professor at Verrières seminary 11th June 1806.

8. Br. Jean-Baptiste, Vie de Joseph-Benoît-Marcellin Champagnat, Lyons, 1856, Vol. 1, p. 10.

At the Champagnat house, when the proposal to train for the priesthood was presented to the three sons, it was only Marcellin who showed interest. (9) The one great drawback was that Marcellin was almost illiterate. Before beginning Latin he would have to read and write French. His father thought this to be too great an obstacle and repeatedly questioned the lad on his intentions. (10) Yet it seems that Marcellin's mind was made up: he thought only of becoming a priest.

Marcellin was now fourteen years old. For just one day, in 1799, he had attended a local school being conducted by Mr. Barthélémy Moine at Marllhes. (11) Incensed at the attitude of the teacher who, in Marcellin's judgment, had unjustly struck a blow to the ear of a fellow-student, Marcellin told his parents that he would never set foot in that school again. (12) Father, mother and aunt all tried to reason with him but their efforts were in vain: Marcellin's first day at this school would also be his last. Yet in 1803 his decision to enter the priesthood caused him to go to St.-Sauveur, there to do some study under his brother-in-law Benoît Arnaud, who had married Marcellin's sister, Marianne, in 1799. Formerly, Arnaud had been a seminarian. (13)

9. Br. Jean-Baptiste, op, cit., p. 11.

10. P. Zind, "L'élève rebelle", V & M, No. 115, October 1971, p. 8.

11. At the end of the Directory, in 1799, there is in the Register of Deliberations an "état des comptes" that shows clearly that there was no schoolmaster at Marllhes paid by the community. (There is an item: "Indemnité accordée aux instituteurs des écoles primaires": and they have written as an answer ": point"). So it seems that the brutal teacher was one of those called "Brianconnais" who were schoolmasters by profession during the winter, selling their services to the families who wanted to use them to have their sons and daughters taught reading and writing. The above incident certainly occurred because Marcellin later wrote about it when he was attempting to gain legal authorisation for his group of Marist Brothers.

12. Br. Jean-Baptiste, op. cit., p. 6.

13. The former school at St.-Sauveur had affiliation with the old Benedictine monastery there that dated back to the 11th Century, passing in turn to the Jesuits and the Oratorians. The Revolution engulfed everything, except the house of the teacher Arnaud which later on would become the property of the university. (P.Zind, V & M, No. 115, p. 9).

However, Marcellin made little progress in his studies whilst staying with his brother-in-law. Actually, Benoît Arnaud was, at St.-Sauveur, more or less the equivalent of what Jean-Baptiste Champagnat had been at Marlies. He was obviously the sort of man with a certain culture to whom many people had recourse for many things. (14) In all the official registers he is never called a schoolmaster. Perhaps, at most, teaching was a very occasional profession for him. It seems likely that Arnaud treated Marcellin as much as a worker in the house as a pupil. Marcellin spent about two years with him - part of 1803, 1804 and part of 1805, yet his progress was negligible. In fact, Arnaud then decided to tell Marcellin to forget about studying and to do something else, adding: "*Sooner or later, and the sooner the better, you will give it up, and you will regret having caused so much expense, for having wasted your time and perhaps ruined your health*". (15) However, this failed to shake Marcellin's determination. He later tells us that he prayed harder, receiving Holy Communion each month and invoking the intercession of St. John Francis Regis, whilst he continued to help Benoît with the liturgical singing at Sunday Masses.

Finally, Benoît brought him back to his mother, declaring that he could not agree with Marcellin's going to the seminary. "*Your boy is obstinate in his desire to study, but you would be wrong in allowing him to do so; he has too few talents to succeed*". (16) Yet the more the obstacles piled up in his path, the more determined Marcellin became in his vocation. He increased his devotions, became more thoughtful (17) and more detached from day to day activities. The mother, seeing her son's determination, suggested a pilgrimage to La Louvesc, in the conviction that they would find help at the shrine of St. John Francis Regis. For this Pilgrimage they set out on foot, covering

14. He was nearly the age of J-B. Champagnat and he had married the daughter of the latter. As there was no official catholic marriage in this year of 1799 and J-B. Champagnat was the President of the municipality, it was he who pronounced "in the name of the law" that they were united by marriage. Benoît was 40 and Marie-Anne 24.

15. P.Zind, *V & M*, No. 118, July 1973, p.7.

It seems to us now that if Benoît had been intelligent and careful he would have succeeded in understanding that Marcellin was a little more gifted than he thought.

16. P.Zind, *V & M*, No. 118, p.7.

17. "Recollected" would be a more familiar word to those with seminary or novitiate training.

the 40 kms from Marlhès to La Louvesc and the return trip in three days. (18) When they returned, Marcellin declared to the other members of his family that he had made up his mind to go to the seminary. He was sure it was God's Will for him to do so.

Marcellin's two or three winters at St.-Sauveur probably had a much greater effect in confirming him in his vocation than has hitherto been thought. Apparently he got on very well with the young curate, Father Soutrenon. Father Jean-Baptiste Soutrenon, a native of St.-Sauveur, was ordained in 1790. It was as curate in Isère that he was captured, imprisoned, carted to Paris, to Lyons, to Bordeaux and then assigned to the hulks of Rochefort. Tall in stature, with auburn hair and broad forehead, jovial in humour, he lived poorly and was very friendly and attentive to the needs of other people. Hundreds of stories are told of him: he did not fear to speak patois to his people, (19) to help them in the fields, to instruct the children and it is said that he was most resourceful in his teaching. He played the flute and his charity was proverbial. Marcellin would have often met this young priest and since Marcellin's mother was a native of St.-Sauveur, he would have probably accompanied him when the priest visited Marcellin's

18. Some earlier writers have mentioned three days for the time to get there; but groups of schoolboys have set out from Marlhès on, say, Monday after lunch and have returned for lunch two days later - on Wednesday. Young Champagnat would not have taken longer. The road today from Marlhès, through Riotord, St.-Julien, St.-Bonnet to La Louvesc is 38½ kms. There are two other roads that could be taken before Riotord and these are each about 5 kms longer. The road is fairly straight so that walking away from the road would not shorten the distance: what is more, the area off the road is very hilly country. To leave the road means descending ravines and Marcellin's mother, who was just over 60 years of age, would not have been able to take them.

19. The Revolution and then Napoleon wanted all Frenchmen to speak the one language, that of Paris; as a means of unifying the nation and doing away with old divisions of Provinces - Dauphiny, etc. Also it was regarded as rustic and anti-social to speak patois: clergy, teachers and all in public life were especially obliged. In small country places this took longer and the ordinary folk continued in their patois; thus it was for their benefit, despite the regulations and danger of being reported, that caused Fr. Soutrenon to speak so that these people could understand him. There was an old rule in the Institute of the Marist Brothers which stated that the Brothers must not speak patois among themselves nor with the children.

relatives in this area. (20) It is likely that he would have served at his Masses at various times and may have also been present when the priest was instructing children. Br. Jean-Baptiste in his 1856 VIE remarked that Marcellin's vocation was revealed to him "*in a quite providential manner*" ("tout providentiel"), but failed to give emphasis to any particular event.

There has appeared nothing in writing on the relationship between Marcellin and Fr. Soutrenon. However, knowing that Marcellin's determination to enter the seminary was so strong after his return from St.-Sauveur and that after Marcellin's ordination and his founding of the Marist Brothers he set up one of his first schools at St.-Sauveur where Fr. Soutrenon was then Parish Priest, leads one to believe that this relationship that commenced at St.-Sauveur in 1803 may have been a most important link in Marcellin's passage to the seminary. (21)

Marcellin was to attend the minor seminary at Verrières, both Marthes and Verrières now being in the Diocese of Lyons. It is of interest to note that at about this time Pope Pius VII was journeying through France on his return to Rome after his abortive attempt to crown the new Emperor Napoleon at Paris in December 1804. In April 1805 he spent three days at Lyons, visiting Fourvière on 19th April to restore to public worship the re-consecrated sanctuary of Our Lady. He declared, "*The devotion of the people of Lyons is irrepressible...I traversed France in the midst of people on their knees...*"(22)

20. Father Jean-Marie Roux, Parish Priest of St.-Denis-sur-Coise, when aged 73, said: "I knew Father Champagnat in my childhood. My maternal grandmother was the sister of the Servant of God. He used to come from time to time to our family". (Br. Avit, Annales de l'Institut, 1884, FMS Archives, Rome, p. 9: "Marie, one of his (Jean-Baptiste Champagnat) sisters, was married to a man Chirat of St.-Sauveur".)

21. Marcellin would no doubt have also been with this priest when, on his seminary vacations, he visited his relatives in the St.-Sauveur area. The new church at St.-Sauveur, built in 1903, honours Father Champagnat with his statue on the facade bearing the word "Blessed" added to his name - this being 52 years before he was "Beatified" by the Catholic Church. The Marist Brothers have maintained a school at St.-Sauveur from 1820 to the present day. (1983)

22. P. Zind, V & M, No. 115, p. 7

Verrières owed its existence to the zealous Father Pierre Pêrier, born in 1765, austere but good and generous of heart. He took the Oath, retracted, became a "missioner", was arrested and imprisoned.(23) Antoinette Montet used her ingenuity to save him from death. (24) After the Concordat he was curate at Firminy, where in 1803 he had assembled a group of boys to prepare them for the priesthood. Transferred to Verrières, 40 kms to the northeast in Forez, he took his pupils with him, probably in October 1804. Then he housed the boys in the presbytery, a big old house, damaged and falling apart, and also in a nearby barn. In both buildings the windows had no glass and storms flooded the rooms. (25) When Marcellin arrived from Marlihes with his mother in late October 1805, there were between 80 and 100 pupils. (26)

"For dormitory", wrote one of the pupils, Duplay, "we had a loft under the tiles, reached by a ladder; the ill-fitting windows were covered with paper only; you froze in winter and baked in summer". As there was not room for everyone, some were housed with neighbours. There was no dining room: the pupils lined up to be served in the kitchen with their portion of stew, a piece of bacon or some potatoes. Rye bread was eaten and was portioned out. The fee was 120 francs: that is, ten months at 12 francs per month. (27) At recreation times the pupils went to the woods to gather dry wood for the kitchen, or at times to farmers to ask for straw to block up the holes made by wind and rain in the old roofing. In good weather on Tuesday

23. Linsolas, a Vicar General of Bishop de Barbeuf in exile, had organised the diocese in "missions": every missionary taking charge of a certain number of parishes where he had a hiding-place, catechists, etc....so as to maintain for loyal Catholics a Roman Catholic Church against the Constitutional one. (Archives de l'archevêché de Lyon, reg. pers. 1 et reg. délib.)

24. P. Zind, V & M, No. 119, October, 1973, p. 6.

25. P. Zind, V & M, No. 119, October, 1973, p. 6.

26. Ibid, p. 6.

27. To gain some idea of the prices, the reader may be interested to know that around this time in the silk-weaving industry (important in the Lyons area) - with the goods being produced, mainly, with the looms in private houses, the ribbon makers (such was, for example the profession of Marcellin's aunts) could earn ONE franc per day if they were diligent workers.

and Thursday afternoons, the strongest worked with the farmers in the fields, bringing back hay and grain. Clothes were made of the thick material used in the country and were warm and suitable. The professional staff was inadequate. Father P erier was parish priest as well as director of the seminary. He taught there along with a lay-teacher, Mr. Reynaud, who had come from Millery the year before. A third was added in November 1805, Jean-Baptiste Nobis, a tonsured cleric aged 26 from Charlieu, who had completed three years of theology. (28)

Marcellin was 16½ years old and tall in stature. His mother-tongue, which he probably used at least when talking to such as the local peasants, (29) was a variant of the provençal dialect. (30) As Fr. P erier considered Marcellin too weak in French, which he neither read nor wrote well, he placed him in a kind of transition class called "Beginners' Class", in the charge of Mr. Reynaud. Really, to Marcellin, it meant starting all over

28. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 119, p. 7.

29. Since Marcellin's father knew and wrote French very well and, being a Jacobin, probably desired that all should know this language, perhaps he insisted at times on French being spoken inside the Champagnat house. In the "Century of the Lights" - "si cle des lumi res" (1800s) - nearly all dynamic French people were interested in speaking good French, especially with so many contacts with officials coming from various areas of the country.

30. Br. Gabriel Michel, of France, wrote the following answer to an inquiry this author had made concerning the patois of Marthes and Le Rozey. "My region, that is the region of St.-Etienne and the greater part of the d partement of La Loire speaks franco-provençal, but Marthes speaks a provençal dialect. The best proof is that St. Francis Regis, who was a popular preacher, could be understood in Marthes and in St.-Sauveur, but he could not have been in St.-Etienne. There were two great dialect groups in France: OC and OIL (the word "oui" was said: "OC" in the south, but "OIL" in the north). Between the two there was a third group (more or less the region of Lyons - St. Etienne and as far as Savoy and Switzerland) which had other characteristics, called franco-provençal. The capital of Haute-Loire is Le Puy, and one could say that there were (in the middle ages) two capitals of Languedoc: one in the south - Toulouse, another in the north - Le Puy. In fact Le Puy was more the capital of a smaller Province: Le Velay, but it was also possible to refer to Languedoc as a whole, consisting of what became eight d partements: Hte. Carsune (Toulouse), Auole (Carcassonne), Tarn (Albi), H rault (B ziers), Caret (N mes), Ard che (Privas) and Hte. Loire (Le Puy)..... During the revolutionary times there would have been much more stress on everyone learning French, as far as possible. There were none of the present-day reactions with their renewed study of the dialects". (Letter to author from Br. G. Michel).

In this area of France there were then about as many varieties of patois as there were of hamlets. (M.P. Gardette, "Carte Linguistic du Forez", *Bulletin de la Diana*, Tome XXVIII, No. 5, Montbrison, 1943, p. 259).

again. Physically he was among the biggest in the class, but intellectually he seemed the weakest of that group of youngsters. Our records from Verrières for the academic year 1805-6 and the next one are very sketchy. Personally, I would follow P. Zind who says that Marcellin was put into the Beginners' Class for term One - November to Easter; and then into Class Eight for the second half of this initial academic year, where it seems some elementary Latin was taught. (31)

His study results were so mediocre that at the end of that academic year (July/August 1806) Fr. Périer told both Marcellin and his mother that he was not fitted for the priesthood and must not return to the seminary. Three witnesses have made depositions telling of Marcellin's unsatisfactory first year at Verrières. Julienne Epalle wrote:

"After a year of study, the superior of the minor seminary found that the boy had not enough talent to continue; this afflicted Marcellin very much, but his mother restored his courage, saying, 'We will go...' Indeed the superiors received him back; in that year he passed two classes." (32)

Brother Marie-Abraham has written in similar vein, (33) whilst Father Granottier (who gave and collected other evidence from the people of Marlihes) is mentioned as having said, *"After a year of fruitless study, the young man wept because it was considered useless to make another attempt: but his mother consoled him. 'Do not cry' she said to him, 'let us go at once to La Louvese'. The pilgrimage accomplished, she begged Fr. Alliot, Parish Priest of Marlihes, to write to Verrières. We know that the efforts of Marcellin were crowned*

31. P. Zind, Les Nouvelles Congrégations de Frères Enseignants en France de 1800 à 1830, Lyons, 1969, p. 112.

32. Positio I Super Virtutibus, Lyons, 1903, pp. 72, 73. Julienne was born in 1800 and lived at Le Rozey and so was a lass of 6-16 years when Marcellin was a seminarian. She attended his Catechisms and reading lessons. She married and lived to be a very old woman. Father Granottier approved of her evidence. (Br. Owen Kavanagh).

33. Ibid, pp. 53, 54. Note that in:- Positio I Super Virtutibus, Num IV - De Ortu, Patria, Parentibus: a witness gave his or her evidence at the one session, but this evidence was printed in the section of Marcellin's life to which it referred; hence many witnesses appear in a dozen places in this book as they could tell something of his youth, his parish work, his Brothers...

We know that the people who said Marcellin did two classes in one year failed to realise, apparently, that at Verrières it was the normal thing for students to pass two classes in one year. This would be done irrespective of academic ability. Details are given later in this thesis.

that year with success at Verrières since he did two classes instead of one"(34) Naturally, this dismissal must have come as a severe blow to young Marcellin. After the effort he had put in to get to Verrières he needed great faith and willpower to get himself through this crisis. What happened? Mother and son made another pilgrimage to La Louvesc to obtain help from St. John Francis Regis; then Fr. Alliot interceded with the seminary people on Marcellin's behalf. He probably had no need to write to Verrières since Vicar-General Courbon, a personal friend of Alliot, was at nearby St.-Genest-Malifaux; Linossier (who had just entered Verrières as a highly qualified staff member) was at neighbouring Jonzieux; whilst Cartal, professor of Sacred Scripture at the major seminary of St. Irenaeus, was also in the Marlihes area at that time on holidays. As a result, the superior at Verrières allowed Marcellin to be readmitted.

When he commenced his second year in November 1806 he was advanced to Year Seven simply because it was a rule at Verrières that all students, after a year's seminary study, must enter Year Seven. Classes resumed in November of that year and Marcellin found himself in a larger class; but the only improvements in the buildings were those effected by the students themselves. A new teacher, Chomarez, came onto the staff. He introduced Lhomond's Latin Grammar and endeavoured to improve the discipline. (35) Marcellin, in spite of his weakness in grammar, asked to begin Latin and his request was granted. His new class consisted of thirty boys. Linossier, 46 years of age, had previously been the constitutional priest - mentioned above, of Jonzieux. (36) Since Fr. Périer was neither an organiser nor a man of initiative, whilst his discipline was unsatisfactory, it fell to Linossier to take on the thankless task of general supervision and, in spite of lameness, he courageously supervised the large study-hall.

34. Positio I Super Virtutibus, p. 51.

35. P. Zind, V & M, No. 119, October 1973, p. 7.

36. He had declined the offer of a Rhetoric class at the College of Lyons, offered to him by the University at a salary of 3,000 francs. (J. M. Chausse, "Vie de M. l'Abbé Jean-Louis Duplay", in Notes, Souvenirs et Monographies sur le Diocèse de Lyon, Vol. 1, St. Etienne, 1887, p. 104.

Fr. Bedoin, Parish Priest at Lavalla 1824-64, asserted in 1860 that some old men at Marlhès remembered Marcellin Champagnat's pranks during his early seminary years. Marcellin's liking for camaraderie had obviously led him into the company of the "bande joyeuse", (37) whose members occasionally frequented taverns as part of their recreation. These people were not so keen on books but liked sports and the cabaret: it seems that they were often late for lessons and occasionally missed some completely. (38) True, but several of these seminarians, including Marcellin, were ready to apply their abundant energy to good purposes: as one historian of the period has written:

"During their free time they worked to improve the house; rotted floorboards were cut away, and new ones joined in; cracks and holes in the walls were stoned up and plastered over; paper and later glass covered the missing window-panes. These mountain lads were used to hard work; they hurried about their work laughing, and my word their health was good and their constitution robust". (39)

We must remember that it is quite natural for a person with real energy and a yearning for companionship to burst into some noisy manifestations during the period of youth. (40)

37. "Happy gang"

38. Fr. Etienne Bedoin wrote several pages following the publication, in 1856, of Br. Jean-Baptiste's Vie de Joseph-Benoît-Marcellin Champagnat. The comment mentioned above appears on page 2 of this Critique de la Vie du P. Champagnat, 1860. He generally quoted part of a sentence from the Vie and adds a comment, critical of the writer's attitude and accuracy, and caustic at times. In some instances he is himself incorrect. It seems to have been circulated among a very limited number of the priest-friends of Fr. Bedoin. It was a long time before the Brothers themselves managed to get a look at it. There is a typed copy of it at the Hermitage - a note on which says "incomplete" - covering six quarto pages in French. Br. Owen Kavanagh wrote the following for the author of this thesis: "We don't place great emphasis on this comment against Marcellin - it seems to be the only one such comment there is - as we have a different way of looking at the Verrières situation". (1980) This author has a photostat of the copy in the Marist Brothers' Archives at Rome and, although not complete, after a long discussion with another researcher, Br. Balko, it seems that the missing section would not have contained anything very derogatory of Marcellin.

39. Br. Ignace Thery, Vie du Bienheureux Marcellin Champagnat, Genval (Belgium), 1956, p. 22.

40. Other renowned Catholic people, such as St. John Bosco, are also known to have belonged to such a group in their youth.

However, changes in Marcellin's conduct soon became apparent. For one thing, one of his friends, Denys Duplay (41) died suddenly on 2nd September 1807, this being during the vacation period after the end of Marcellin's second academic year. It is also possible that Fr. Linossier, still in charge of general supervision, had had some words to Marcellin concerning his conduct. (42).

Fr. Bedoin also spoke in 1860 of the "solid and lasting" conversion of young Marcellin after Duplay's death. Unfortunately we do not have any documents detailing Marcellin's first resolutions at this time. However, the obvious goodwill in his behaviour and study induced the seminary team to make Marcellin Champagnat begin the secondary course in 1807, in spite of the fact that his study, although improving, was still recorded as weak. (43) How then, might one ask, is he recorded as now succeeding in passing two classes in one year? The answer is to be found in the registers of the minor seminary of l'Argentière which show that during the years 1804-5-6 some classes were joined together; consequently the Fourth and Second Forms were easily passed over. Now we know that l'Argentière had to be a model

41. Duplay, aged 22, from Jonzieux near Marthes.

42. Bedoin, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Bedoin speaks of Marcellin's "conversion" to have happened "suddenly" after Duplay's death and also that Fr. Linossier had lectured Marcellin about his conduct. However, we know that Linossier was not at all the reprimanding type of person; what is more, he taught the higher classes, not Marcellin's. We must doubt the words "sudden conversion" since we would need a much fuller dossier on Marcellin's 7 to 8 years at Verrières before accepting Bedoin's comment at face value.

43. A category in which it was to remain, even in his last year at Verrières, 1812-13.

for the other seminaries. (44) This is why we notice that most of Marcellin's schoolmates had jumped a class during their seminary studies. The case of Etienne Déclas, one of the first Marist Fathers, is most meaningful: he passed directly from the Second Class to Philosophy notwithstanding a reputation as a very slow learner. (45).

We find in the report of an inspection at Verrières in 1808 the following expressions:

*"Class Third, called Humanities, (Second)
Class Fourth, called Third."*

The classes were not very regular at Verrières which was only in its first years of existence. The boys were distributed at best in groups according to their degree of knowledge on arrival. Most were backward and quite old. Cardinal Fesch recommended indulgence by the teachers, telling them that it was better to plough the Lord's fields with asses

44. When enquiring for evidence on this in France today, Br. Juan-Maria (who lives at the Hermitage) agreed that l'Argentière was to be the model. He mentioned that the book written by André Leistenschneider, L'Argentière (Emmanuel Vitte, Lyons, 1905) always quotes what was done at l'Argentière whenever it is a matter of regulations, timetables, courses, etc. - since it was regarded as the model. Fr. Coste wrote, "From 1814-18 l'Argentière functioned as an annexe to the Major Seminary, with classes in Philosophy, Mathematics and one section of Theology". (Coste & Lessard, Origines Maristes, Vol. 1, p. 190). In a letter from Fr. Bochard, V.G. to Cardinal Fesch in Rome, 24th June 1815: "... l'Argentière Minor Seminary to the Fathers of the Faith". (Also called "Paccanaristes", some of whom had formerly been Jesuits). "Father Cabarat was appointed Superior". As such, he was required to visit and report on the other seminaries; his adverse report on Verrières led to the replacement of Fr. Périer by Fr. Barou. Fr. Cabarat left after 1807 and his place was taken (as inspector) by Fr. Bochard F.B. (J-M. Chausse, Vie de l'Abbé Jean-Louis Duplay, St. Etienne, 1887, p. 108).

45. Br. A. Balko, Lecture at St.-Chamond, January 1979.

than to let them lie fallow. (46)

It is obvious, however, that Marcellin's resolution taken after Duplay's death and the possible counselling from Linossier had produced a firm resolve to attend to his duty. His request to begin Latin revealed the importance he was attaching to his study and enabled him, it seems, to make his first real progress. We can see in his later sermon manuscripts that he had a liking for Latin - few mistakes appear in his numerous quotations. (47) During the school year 1807-08 Marcellin was in the Sixth Class which had 28 pupils from 10-23 years of age. Marcellin was nineteen. The teacher was a twenty-year old seminarian, Simon Breuil. (48) The report for the Sixth Class, in which the average age was fifteen years, appears as follows:

<u>Capacités:</u>	7 Beaucoup	9 Assez	10 Médiocre	1 Peu
<u>Ability:</u>	very good	fair	poor	weak
	<u>Marcellin received Assez (fair)</u>			
<u>Conduite:</u>	6 Très bonne	11 Bonne	2 Assez Bonne	4 Médiocre
<u>Conduct:</u>	very good	good	fair	poor
	1 Volage	2 Suspects	2 Moeurs Douteuses	
	fickle	suspect	doubtful morals	
	<u>Marcellin received Médiocre (poor)</u>			

46. Mgr. Lyonnet, Le Cardinal Fesch, Vol. 2, Paris, 1841, p. 394. Exemption from military service was also an important reason for hurrying the advancement of older candidates, especially before "Third Class". Registers show that Marcellin jumped again the Fourth Class, as also did Jean-Claude Colin (founder of the Marist Fathers).

"Such urgent and numerous requests (for priests) did not allow the Cardinal to wait until the young aspirants had finished their studies... On only one point was he adamant, their piety; as for their instruction, he was satisfied if they had 'sufficient knowledge', that is that they could resolve ordinary cases (of conscience) and seek counsel in extraordinary ones... The day will come when ... four years in the Major Seminary.... Meantime we must come to the help of abandoned parishes". (Mgr. Lyonnet, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 394).

47. Br. A. Balko, Lecture at St.-Chamond, January 1979.

48. He was not yet tonsured, hence was still undecided about the priesthood.

For "Ability" Marcellin was among the lower 11 out of 27; for "work" he was in the middle group of 5 students; for "Conduct" there were 19 above him with a better mark.

Father Coste comments:

"Placed among the average pupils as far as ability and work were concerned, Marcellin was however not highly regarded by his masters for his conduct. We will see that in his Philosophy year, for which there are notes preserved, things will be different". (49)

We have further relevant information on the 1807-8 school year at Verrières: with Fr. Périer there were seven teachers for seven classes, plus five servants. The teaching staff was made up of:

Fr. Périer, arrived November 1804	Director
Fr. Linossier (46), arrived June 1806	Third Class
J-B. Nobis (29), tonsured (28), arrived Nov. 1805	Fourth Class
Mr. Chomaraz (32), arrived November 1806	Fifth Class
Mr. Simon Breuil (20), arrived August 1807	Sixth Class
Mr. C. Crépu (29), arrived November 1807	Seventh Class
Mr. Bachelard (37), arrived November 1807	Eighth Class
Mr. Chapuy (21), arrived April 1808	Beginners' Class (50)

It was also noted that C. Crépu, the teacher of 7th Class, had passed two years of theology, was of good character, very pious and a capable teacher. Simon Breuil, Marcellin's teacher, was taking his first class and was considered mediocre in ability. Fr. Bochart, in charge of seminaries, wrote in his report on the professional staff at Verrières:

"These teachers, Mr. Crépu excepted, have not in general the standard and manner of living that would give evidence of pious and zealous hearts. It seems that several go to Communion only rarely; there is not between them and their superiors sufficient understanding and harmony". (51)

49. J. Coste & G. Lessard, *Origines Maristes*, (1786-1836), Vol. 1, Rome, 1960, p. 140 (footnote). "Marcellin était donc peu apprécié de ses maîtres par sa conduite". (Ibid).

50. Coste & Lessard, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 145.

51. P. Zind, *V & M*, No. 119, October 1973, p. 7.

Fr. Cabarat, after his visit in May 1808 reported:

"The village of Verrières is a port of call much frequented; there are several taverns; this demands a more strict supervision of the students". (52)

This circumstance is referred to in the evidence at the Process of Beatification of Marcellin Champagnat showing the fidelity of Marcellin to his resolution.

"A religious Sister, a native of Marlhes, often related having seen the Servant of God in company with other seminarians of Marlhes, coming out from the Church services; they would invite him at times to take some refreshment with them, but he always found some good reason for returning at once to his family".(53)

In November 1808 Marcellin entered the large class of 43 students of combined Fifth and Fourth Classes. The inspection of 1808 resulted in a change of superior: with the arrival of Fr. Barou (54) in 1809

52. Coste & Lessard, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 140.

53. Prima Positio - Super Virtutibus, Vatican, Rome, 1910. Information, Life, Virtues in general, Faith, Charity, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, Chastity; Death and Favours granted after that to the faithful. All this so far is in Latin, pages 1-114. Then follow the List of Witnesses and their evidence recorded under the above headings - 650 pages; then the objections from the Devil's Advocate - in Latin, 47 pages (these are large pages) and Response, 142 pages from the Promoter of the Faith - also in Latin with much heavy type to make his points... It is the same matter as that written in the Lyons books, but ready in one volume for those in Rome responsible for the scrutiny. In short, it is a bound book containing the evidence for the heroicity of the virtues of Marcellin Champagnat.

54. Fr. Barou was appointed Superior of Verrières in August. He was also P.P. (as was Fr. Périer before him). He began the new school year at All Saints (Verrières) and remained there as Superior for ten years (hence in very close contact with Marcellin and several other Marist aspirants). Then he was P.P. at Montbrison, 1819 (the Préfecture was there in those days); was appointed V.G. in January 1824 by Mgr. de Pins immediately after his arrival in Lyons. Always a friend and supporter of Father Champagnat (does this say something of his seminary years?) Before Verrières he had been a professor at L'Argentière for a year. It was Father Barou who had the difficult task of "removing" the terrible Jansenist leader, Father Jacquemont, from St. Médard in 1804, though he was ordained only the previous year. He would have been just the type of man and priest to appeal to Marcellin and raise him to new heights of endeavour; so it is not surprising to read the resolutions of Marcellin to be taken in his later seminary years. Other new teachers came to Verrières about this time and the whole place seemed to bound ahead. Fr. Barou died in 1855.

conditions of life and study improved. Marcellin was now given the position of Monitor. This position enabled him to study later at night. We are told that his health suffered but his studies advanced.(55) It is of interest to read that the position of monitor (or prefect) was merited by several years of exemplary behaviour: "*the oldest and most earnest students (some of them were 25 and even older) would cooperate as assistants of the teachers; they were trusted with watching over dormitories and studyrooms*". (56) It was during this period that Marcellin is recorded as having influenced by his good counselling a talented fellow-student who had decided to leave the seminary. This young fellow was induced to ignore a particular companion who had been upsetting him, to pray and to continue his studies. It seems he did so with happy success.(57)

It is also recorded that Marcellin gave great support to Fr. Linossier who was in charge of the liturgy at the seminary. This priest, it seems, gave excellent homilies on each Sunday's Epistle and Gospel. He prescribed spiritual reading in common from serious books and took care to question the boys on the matter read. For Marcellin, the religious exercises were a special attraction. While it was acknowledged that he was weak in his studies, his piety told strongly in his favour. His devotion to St. John Francis Regis led him and many of his companions to make the La Louvesc pilgrimage each summer. It has been said that the ceremonies of the liturgical year, performed with special attention at Verrières, well before the reforms of Dom Guéranger at Solesmas, filled the affectionate heart of Marcellin with an emotion it was difficult to conceal. (58).

As mentioned above, the adverse inspection report of 1808 on the Verrières seminary had led to its being entrusted to Fr. Jean-Joseph Barou, whilst Fr. Périer was appointed Parish Priest of Millery. Fr. Barou had taught for one year at L'Argentière after a brief term as Parish Priest of St. Médard. He was to remain ten years in charge of Verrières, then P.P. of Montbrison in 1819 and in 1824 was appointed Vicar-General. (59) Barou brought in many reforms, enabling Verrières to reach

55. Br. Jean-Baptiste, op. cit., p. 15.

56. A. Leistenschneider, op. cit., p.97.

57. Br. Jean-Baptiste, op. cit., p. 18.

58. P. Zind, V & M, No. 121, April 1974, p. 5.

59. Archives de l'archevêché de Lyon, reg. pers. 1 et reg. délib.

an acceptable standard for a seminary. (60) Living conditions improved from the donation by Antoinette Montet of the "Château de Soleillant". The cost of board rose from 12 to 15 francs a month. It is of interest to note that all this coincided with a worsening relationship between Napoleon and the Pope. In 1809, after Pope Pius VII had excommunicated the Emperor because of his invasion and capture of Rome, Napoleon had him arrested, brought to Savoy and finally imprisoned at Savona.

It seems that the arrival of Barou and the changes he inaugurated were having a positive effect on young Marcellin. In the oldest document we have containing Marcellin's own handwriting and signature, (61) he has listed his resolutions. He wrote:

"O my Lord and my God, I promise you to no more offend you, to make acts of faith, of hope and of others similar every time I think of them, never to return to the tavern without necessity, to avoid bad company; and in a word, to do nothing that might be contrary, to give good example, to lead the others to practise virtue as much as I will be able; to instruct the others in your divine precepts, to teach catechism to the poor also as well as to the rich. Grant, my Divine Saviour, that I may fulfil faithfully all the resolutions I take".(62)

60. Coste & Lessard, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 145.

61. Although generally given in earlier printed references as 1812, I choose the period 1809-1810 - the academic year after Barou's arrival at Verrières. The original is in the FMS Archives at Rome. Marcellin had kept a small notebook during his seminary years in which he had placed his resolutions. He wrote the following on page 5. He had written no date. Later, on pages 6, 7 and 8 he wrote further resolutions, and also included a date (19th January 1812). It is the opinion of such men as Brs. A. Balko and G. Michel that the resolutions on pages 6, 7 and 8 were written in an advanced style and reveal greater maturity of mind. Michel wrote for this author, "Truly the page 5 gives the impression of being anterior to the others in the sense that the expressions used are more general....(those) on pages 6, 7 and 8 represent an interior life that is stronger and a self-knowledge that is more profound. In page 5 there is above all the reference to the cabaret which represents this first moment of conversion around 1809-10..." Unfortunately, a few years ago, someone working in the FMS Archives, seeing the date on page 7 as 19/1/12 wrote that date (in a handwriting very different from Marcellin's) on the top of page 5.

62. Since the original document was difficult to decipher, the author used the transcription in Coste & Lessard, op.cit., Vol. 1, p.154. Dr. J. Kidman verified the correctness of the transcription.

1 Copie page 107 13/11
 Ô Mon seigneur et mon Dieu,
 Je vous promets de ne plus vous offenser
 de faire des actes de foi des pœuvres
 et autres semblables toutes les fois
 que je pourrai de ne jamais retourner
 au cabaret sans nécessité de faire
 les mauvaises compagnies; et de ne point
 de messein faire qui font contre votre
 service mais au contraire de donner
 de bons exemples de guider les autres
 à pratiquer la vertu autant qu'il
 sera en moi; d'instruire les autres
 de vos divers préceptes, de prouver le
 catéchisme aux pauvres aux riches
 qu'ils soient riches ou pauvres
 de vous servir, que je reconnoisse
 toute la fidélité avec laquelle
 je vous aime et vous adore.

Above may be seen a photostat of the oldest document we have in Champagnat's handwriting. It was not dated, but was probably written in his seminary manual during the 1809-10 scholastic year. It consisted of some early resolutions he made. (Translation is given in accompanying pages).

The wording of these resolutions shows a personal effort; the composition may be clumsy, but the elements are there - God, avoidance of evil. His will is to remove from his life any offenses against God; the tavern and light-headed companions are especially mentioned. He feels responsibility towards his vocation, stressing his obligation to give good example and to teach the catechism. Perhaps the death of his mother in February of 1810 would have acted as a further spur to keep his resolutions.

Later this year, 1810, Marcellin moved into the Second Class, Humanities - of 24 students. It is to be noted that Jean-Claude Courveille, who would be closely linked with Marcellin in later years, then entered Verrières seminary. He entered Fifth Class (lower than Second), even though he was two years older than Marcellin. He had been at Le Puy seminary and had also been taught by his uncle, the Parish Priest of Apinac. (63)

By 1811 the need for more conscripts in the army led Napoleon's government to decree that only one minor seminary was to be situated in each Département. (64) Verrières, virtually hidden away in a mountainous area, was secretly maintained by the Lyons clergy. Marcellin, in August, went into the Rhetoric Class. He was still struggling with his natural lively temperament and abundant energy. The feast of St. Marcellin was held on 18th January each year. Marcellin, the day after he had wildly celebrated this feast in the tavern at Verrières, wrote:

"I acknowledge, Lord, that I did not know myself yet: that I still have very great defects, but I hope that, having given me the grace to know them, you will give me the grace to conquer them by combatting them courageously: this is what I ask of you from the deepest self-abasement of my heart. Divine Heart of Jesus, it is principally to you that I address my prayer, you who, by your profound humility, have fought against and conquered human pride; give me, I entreat you, this virtue and

63. When a small boy, smallpox had left him nearly blind. There was no cure at hand and so no means of achieving his desire to become a priest. His mother took him to Our Lady of Le Puy and there, in 1809, at the age of 22, it was alleged that he was cured when he anointed his eyes with oil from a sanctuary lamp. In 1810 he consecrated himself to Our Lady for whatever work she might wish. In November of that year he entered Verrières but remained there only a few months before returning to his uncle for further study in order to catch up on lost time. His uncle was Fr. Matthew Beigneux, Parish Priest of Apinac. (Coste & Lessard, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 14).

64. Coste & Lessard, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 128.

overthrow in me the throne of pride, not only because it is insufferable to men, but because it offends your holiness.

Holy Virgin, St. Louis Gonzaga, it is to you principally that I address myself; ask for me, although I am your unworthy servant, of that adorable Heart of Jesus, the grace to know myself, and that, knowing myself, I may fight and conquer my self-love and my pride. (65) I take today, this 19th January 1812, (66) the resolution to combat it, and every time it will have the advantage over me, I will do the penance which I impose on myself. I will speak without distinction to all my fellow students, whatever repugnance I may feel; since from this moment, I recognize that it is nothing but pride that is opposed to my doing so. Why do I despise them? Is it because of my talent? I am the last in my class. (67) Is it because of my virtues? I am a vain and haughty person. Is it because of the beauty of my body? It is God who made It: still it is badly enough put together. In short, I am nothing but a little dust". (68)

65. One must beware of taking too seriously some of Marcellin's remarks in these Resolutions. He was writing the traditional seminarians' language of spirituality of that time, particularly that of the French school which stressed the misery of man without God, in order better to exalt the grandeur of man with God. One main concern of the time was to snatch souls from the devil by inspiring them with a horror of evil and a fear of eternal damnation. Blessed Eugène de Mazenod, Founder of the Oblates, made these Resolutions in his seminary years 1804-08: "I must deeply humiliate myself in view of the iniquities which should have closed the sanctuary gates to me forever...extreme sorrow for having been so frightfully ungrateful to God. I shall review all the excesses of my life...after realising that I have betrayed, sold, abandoned, crucified the Just One who snatched me from the clutches of the demon, from the jaws of hell..." Then in the 1811 retreat prior to ordination, he wrote: "...miserable sinner that I am...my past iniquities...I vowed myself to the devil and his wicked works - the horrible execrable mortal sin into which I plunged myself for so long a time...I outraged your love by an uninterrupted repetition of wicked acts...outraged by this miserable worm, this mass of rotteness..." (and so on for pages and pages). (Jean Leflon, Eugène de Mazenod - Bishop of Marseilles, Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Fordham University Press, New York, 1961, Vol. 1, p. 262).

66. Which happened to be a Monday that year.

67. Coste & Lessard, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 156

68. Ibid, Document 17, pp. 154-156.

The next academic year, November 1812 to August 1813, would be Marcellin's last year at the minor seminary at Verrières. Maintained as the only minor seminary in Lyons Diocese, Verrières, hidden away in the Forez mountains, was to receive and regroup the Philosophy students from all the closed seminaries. Verrières is reached through an opening in the mountains sinisterly named, "Pass of Dead Man's Cross". (69) The Forez mountains are heavily timbered and rugged, but the Verrières valley is a beautiful landscape of green woodlands and clean French peasant farms. Even by modern standards the College of Verrières at its best period, 1826-1900, was a proud institution. In Champagnat's day the increased enrolment of 1812-13 led to an extension of the college to a former château on a neighbouring ridge. The crumbling château buildings today house the cows and hay of two dairy-farmers whose children now play in the ruins of the once-great halls.

Because of Napoleon's policy of closing many minor seminaries, there were added to the numbers at Verrières some of the better students of the Humanities Class and even some from Third Class. Cardinal Fesch had decided to keep Verrières going because it was in a remote area, and if he were challenged he was prepared to say that it was an annexe to the St. Irenaeus major seminary. (70) So, in November 1812, 248 seminarians at Verrières were divided as follows: 16 in Mathematics, 232 in Philosophy (102 in First, 130 in Second). Marcellin's friend, Fr. Linossier, had

69. "Le Col de la Croix de l'Homme Mort": 1,163 m. in height.

70. Bulletin de la Diana, Montbrison, 1980, No. 6, p. 296.

left Verrières for St. Jean. (71) Fr. Barou remained, with Fr. Antoine Merle as Director, Fr. Louis Rossat as supervisor, and Professors Grange and Chazelles. (72) We are fortunate to have extant Marcellin's reports for this particular year. He was then in Logic Class, 1st Division, where Philosophy was the dominant study. His report said:

	<u>ETUDE</u>	<u>SCIENCE</u>	<u>CONDUITE</u>	<u>CARACTERE</u>
	(study)	(knowledge)	(conduct)	(character)
1st. Semester	Beaucoup (works hard)	Faible, Médiocre (weak, poor)	Très bonne (very good)	Bon (good)
2nd. Semester	Beaucoup	Faible	Très bonne	Bon (73)

71. St. Jean is the cathedral of St. Jean in Lyons, the Archbishop's cathedral. Attached to it was a clerical school (a minor seminary, no doubt); when Abbé Linossier left Verrières he became Regent of Rhetoric there in 1811. His special work was to train the future priests in preaching ("Sacred Eloquence" of that period). He was well versed in the Scriptures and in the Fathers, knew the French literature and had a good command of the spoken word. (J-M. Chausse, Vie de Jean-Louis Duplay, St. Etienne, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 203). We have Fr. Colin trying to preach in this way (and knew he was getting nowhere - perhaps he was not good enough?) until the day when he went out and spoke to the people man to man - and they loved it. We seem to get the same impression of Father Champagnat, even though we have some of his sermons which of course, he copied from the books of sermons available at that time. Whether he used these or not is another matter; but many witnesses say he preached well: "there was something for everyone", and Br. Jean-Baptiste, (Vie, p. 305) says that Fr. Champagnat, in an address to the Brothers before one of the annual retreats, said, "...I have heard one of you ask if the Father, who is to give the retreat, preaches well...If you rely for the success of the retreat on the talents of the preacher...you will make no retreat at all...for in this more than anything else, we must say: Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam". (Ps. CXXVI, 1.)

Today this old cathedral still stands, near the river, and restoration work has recently been carried out on one section of it.

72. P. Zind, V & M, No. 123, January 1975, p. 10

73. Coste & Lessard, op. vit., Vol. 1, Document 22, p. 161.

Marcellin was in the first division of Logic since he had completed the year of Rhetoric. Jean-Claude Colin, later to found the Marist Fathers, had a good academic record but was not in 2nd Division because he had skipped the Rhetoric Class. Napoleon's Russian Campaign and the more urgent need for new army recruits, having led to the suppression of minor seminaries, caused several students to come from Third Class to the Logic Class. This Logic Class totalled 248.

From a study of Marcellin's academic marks, it is obvious that he had not improved scholastically since Sixth Class. However, his other marks indicate well enough that there was considerable improvement in general attitude and this had not escaped the notice of his teachers. Fr. Coste remarked that a slight improvement was noted in the 2nd Semester by the omission of the word "médiocre" from the report. (74). Despite the tavern affair his conduct was still judged as very good. (75).

By August 1813 Marcellin had completed his studies at the Minor Seminary at Verrières and was preparing to move into the Major Seminary, St. Irenaeus, at Lyons. His eight years at Verrières had obviously been difficult for Marcellin, but his confidence in God allied to his natural 'toughness', had enabled him to keep going. He was now about to enter an era in his life when devotion to Our Lady would appear to him as something of utmost importance; something that would be his mainspring for the rest of his life and which he was able to manifest to others by the congregation of teaching Brothers that he was to found.

74. Ibid, p. 162.

75. Marcellin wrote in his resolutions, "...the tavern without necessity"; for he had to go there at times to meet farmers and others who could lend or give him material, tools, to effect repairs - ladder, straw, timber, tiles, etc. - whatever was needed. Over the glass of wine he would learn where to get things and when. This would have been more frequent, probably, in the early year or two. This repair work afforded scope for Marcellin's talent and energy and he would have had no trouble, it seems, to co-opt others of his "band" - perhaps at times having to miss a lesson or to arrive late.