

CHEVALIER AND FAMILY

[INSTALLATION OF THE RELIGIOUS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART, ISSOUDUN Annales de NDSC, 1874](#)
[TO THE MEMORY OF FATHER CHEVALIER Mother Marie Louise Hartzler FDNSC 1907](#)
[FATHER JULES CHEVALIER Henri Vermin MSC 1957](#)
[THE SPIRITUALITY OF FATHER FOUNDER: E. J. Cuskelly MSC 1959](#)
[FIDELITY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUNDER: J. Bertolini MSC 1965](#)
[FATHER CHEVALIER: THE MAN OF AN IDEA AND OF A WORK J. Bertolini, MSC 1969](#)
[JULES CHEVALIER: TALKS TO MSC AND FDNSC NOVICES Sister M. Venard, FDNSC 1972](#)
[CHARISM OF FR JULES CHEVALIER: J. Van Kerckhoven MSC 1974](#)
[OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART: PART SHE PLAYS IN CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WORLD J.F.McMahon 1974](#)
[JULES CHEVALIER, MAN WITH A MISSION E. J. Cuskelly MSC 1975](#)
[EVANGELIZATION THROUGH COMPASSION Dennis Murphy M.S.C.](#)
[FATHER FOUNDER'S CONCEPT OF HER ROLE IN OUR FDNSC VOCATION Sister M. Bernard, FDNSC 1975](#)
[HIS PERSONAL CALL, AND PERSONAL RESPONSE J. Savage, MSC 1976](#)
[THE MISSIONARY CHARISM OF JULES CHEVALIER IN RELATION TO THE LAITY Dennis J Murphy MSC 1993](#)
[FATHER JULES CHEVALIER: WHO WAS HE? Gene Tostain MSC 1995](#)
[FATHER CHEVALIER AND HIS TIMES Fr Jean Tostain MSC 1999](#)
[FAMILY OF JULES CHEVALIER: LAY ASSOCIATES Klaus Sanders, msc 2000](#)
[THE HEART OF THE WORD INCARNATE Fr. Dennis Murphy 2002](#)
[SPIRITUALITY OF JULES CHEVALIER: John Franzmann MSC 2005](#)
[COMPASSION: THE DRIVING FORCE IN THE LIFE OF JULES CHEVALIER Fr Dennis Murphy MSC 2006](#)
[LAY MISSIONARIES OF THE CHEVALIER FAMILY IN THE CHURCH OF TODAY Norma Salgado, lmsc 2009](#)

INSTALLATION OF THE RELIGIOUS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART OF ISSOUDUN

From *Annales de Notre-Dame du Sacre-Coeur*, September, 1874

For many years, souls devoted to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart have been asking earnestly the grace to give themselves to her service in a Congregation which would be her own.

This holy desire has just been accomplished.

The first religious of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart have inaugurated their newly-formed community at Issoudun, in the shadow of her Basilica, on the 30th August of this year.

They bear the title Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The house occupied previously by the ladies of the Third Order of the Sacred Heart is now theirs. They will devote themselves to works of piety, education of girls, and will set aside a part of their building for ladies coming on pilgrimage and those who would wish to spend some days of retreat at the feet of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The Archbishop of Bourges, in approving this foundation, very kindly blessed the first twenty religious and their religious habit.

We ask the fervent prayers of the Association for this important work.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus bless this new family, lead it Himself in His own spirit, and make it ever more worthy of the beautiful title of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.*

*Note: Those who wish for information concerning admission into the community of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, or concerning enrolment in the boarding school for girls soon to be opened, may apply directly to Mother Françoise Lefevre, Superior of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Place du Sacre-Coeur, 10. Issoudun.

2. THE CONGREGATION OF THE RELIGIOUS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART, ISSOUDUN

Fr. Jouet, from *Annales de Notre-Dame du Sacre-Coeur*, October, 1874

Translation of article which appeared in the French Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, October 1874. The issue for September, 1874, had already announced the foundation of the Congregation on August 30, 1874. The purpose of the following article was to give details of the new foundation. Though it bears the initials of Father Victor Jouet, M.S.C., official documentation exists (cf. *The Designs of His Heart*, p. 99) to prove that Father Chevalier acknowledged it as the expression of his thought.

I. ITS ORIGIN

The origin of the new Congregation goes back to the very beginning of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

From the very first time that Mary was given the name Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it was impossible to forbid oneself the thought that the Queen of the Sacred Heart of Jesus would soon form for herself a court of honour which, in union with her and under her protection, would be consecrated entirely to the service of the Adorable Heart of Jesus. "After her shall virgins be led to the King," Ps. 44

How many there were who, right from that time expressed the desire for this foundation and envied the happiness of those who would be chosen by Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to be offered in the temple of the Heart of Jesus, 'Adducentur in laetitia et exultatione in templum regis.' Ps. 44

This happy presentiment has now been realised. During several years. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has herself been preparing the members of her new-family, and it was on August 31, feast of St. Rose of Lima, that she brought them together from different points around her altar. (Mistake in the date - perhaps a mis-print. See article in September Annals which gives August 30 as the correct date of the foundation). No feast could better have been associated with the birth of a Congregation. For is not St. Rose of Lima the model of a true Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart?

'Henceforth', said the Blessed Virgin to Rose, 'you will be called daughter of Holy Mary.'

'Rose of my Heart,' had added the Divine Master, 'be my bride.' (Breviary).

These words seemed to echo in the Basilica when the new religious, clothed in the colours of the Virgin, received in her sanctuary, never to lay it aside again, the insignia of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart inscribed with the motto: MAY THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS BE EVERYWHERE LOVED!

II. ITS END

The end of the new institute is to devote itself to the Heart of Our Lord Jesus through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for the sanctification of priests. To devote itself to the Sacred Heart. That says everything. It signifies the perpetual worship of honour and reparation which the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart wish to give Him, and the measure of the love which they want to have for Him. The Heart of Jesus is to be their all, in everything, everywhere and always to an increasing degree. Such is the fundamental end in view of which their holy rules have been written. To devote itself to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This is the best means and one which the Sisters wish ceaselessly to use.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The Archbishop of Bourges, in the special address which he delivered to them on the day of the pilgrimage, said: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - see in her your Superior, your protector, your model. Look at her and reproduce her faithfully in your whole way of life. She is Virgin, she is Mother, she is Queen. Be virgins by your virtues, mothers by your works, queens by your prayer so efficacious with the Heart of Jesus. All in union with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - without her nothing.

For the sanctification of priests: Our Lord one day asked Margaret Mary Alacoque, the apostle of His Divine Heart, to make Him an entire donation of all that she would do or suffer so that He might dispose of it in favour of those whom He willed. She generously consented, and her Divine Spouse several times showed her how He made use of her offering in favour of priests and religious in order to lead them to an exemplary and wholly angelic life.

Following her example, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will offer entirely to the Heart of Jesus, through the hands of Mary, their activity, prayer, penance and merits in order that priests who are the chosen instruments of God for the sanctification of His people may themselves be holy, reproducing in themselves all the virtues of this Divine Heart, and receiving from Him all the graces of which they have need.

III. ITS WORKS

1. Daily perpetual adoration of the Heart of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist
This will be their work of predilection. Ceaselessly, throughout the whole day, replacing one another, there will be one or more of them in adoration, in order to respond to the reproach which the Sacred Heart of Jesus one day made to Blessed Margaret Mary: "I have an ardent desire to be honoured by men in the Blessed Sacrament and I find almost no one who will make any effort to satisfy this desire." Always this adoration will be made in union with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - the first and most perfect adorer of the Heart of Jesus.
2. The education of girls
Education is of the first importance in promoting the glory of the Sacred Heart since it holds the key to the social regeneration of the world. Thus the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, as so many other teaching Congregations, will interest themselves very particularly in the education of youth and will spare nothing in order to put their boarding schools on a par with the best educational establishments.* They will provide for the girls confided to their care a solid Christian education, developing their minds in all useful branches of knowledge and forming their hearts to a sense of duty and to the practice of virtue.
In celebrated centres of pilgrimage, e.g. that of our Lady of Montserrat in Spain, there is to be found beside the venerated sanctuary a religious house where children whom a Christian mother has consecrated to Mary and who have been the object of her special grace, are educated, All will be happy to see the boarding school of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart fill with privileged children who owe to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart their birth, a cure, or a particular grace, and who have been vowed to the colours of the Virgin.
3. Works of zeal and piety which Providence will present and which will be in keeping with their rule will also be undertaken by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In particular, a part of their house will be put at the disposition of women coming on pilgrimage, or who desire to spend a few days in retreat close to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

*Footnote: A circular letter has just been addressed to families in Issoudun anxious to confide their children to the Daughters of O.L.S.H. It announces the opening of the boarding school at Easter, This delay is necessary' in order to complete the material organization of the house. A detailed prospectus giving the programme of studies and the conditions for admission will be sent to anyone on application to Mother Françoise Lefevre, Superior of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, 10 Place du Sacre-Coeur, Issoudun (Indre).

IV. ITS RESOURCES

Its resources are the concern of the maternal tenderness of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who commenced this work and who will finish it. U is for this good Mother herself to inspire in pious souls the practical help which, by their prayers and their generosity, they can give to this young Congregation. Saint Teresa relates:

One day, a very well-endowed gentleman told me that, if I wished to make a foundation (a convent of Our Lady of Mount Carmel), he would gladly give me a house which he possessed and to which was attached a large vineyard and a fine garden ... I gratefully accepted. Not very long afterwards the young man died and the Divine Master said to me: "My daughter, the soul of this young man was in very great danger. However, in consideration of the service which he rendered to my Mother in donating this house for the establishment of a monastery of her order, I showed mercy to him. Nevertheless, he will not leave purgatory until the first Mass has been said in the new convent." With as little delay as possible, the first Mass was said. At the moment of Communion, this gentleman appeared to me, his face resplendent and radiant with joy. He thanked me for what I had done to deliver him from Purgatory and I saw him enter heaven.

What a great thing it is to render a service of no matter what kind to the Blessed Virgin. Who can express how pleasing it is to Our Lord. Such being the case, what special graces the Sacred Heart will bestow upon those persons who will help this foundation belonging to His Mother. And with what still greater graces will He not penetrate those who will give themselves entirely and forever to be Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart?

V.J. (Victor Jouet) Miss. du S.C. (Translated from the French Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Issoudun, September. 1874.)

TO THE MEMORY OF FATHER CHEVALIER

Maire LOUISE HARTZER 1907

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved for ever!

THUIN, October, 1907. My dear children.

The Heart of Jesus has just asked of us a sacrifice which, nevertheless, we have long foreseen and dreaded. On October 21st, He called to Himself our good and beloved Father Founder, and the next day a telegram announced to us the sad news.

For a long time his health had been causing us grave anxiety, and the sorrows he had latterly experienced, in particular his brutal expulsion from the old presbytery, caused him to break up completely. At eighty-three such shocks kill. Even had things been at their best, we realised that we must soon lose him. Everything indicated this to us. Even so, the blow has fallen heavily and has filled our hearts with the deepest grief. He was so good, so saintly, so paternal and so full of concern on our behalf, this venerated Father.

As for him, who has laboured so untiringly for the glory of the Heart of Jesus and of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, who has suffered so deeply and in so many ways, he has certainly merited an eternal recompense and, doubtless, "Jesus and Mary have already crowned their faithful servant, their indefatigable apostle. But as for ourselves, his children, we would have loved to keep him with us, to have had his life prolonged. However, the hour of separation had come.

Nevertheless, this parting will be only for a time. Soon, too, we will find ourselves in Heaven with this good Father and rejoice with him in his triumph. Whilst awaiting the dawn of this happy day, he will surely watch over us with the same solicitude as of old and we will have in him a powerful intercessor with Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Let us pray for him, as is our duty, but at the same time let us ask him to watch over our dear Congregation, to guard it, to sanctify it and to communicate to it his own spirit which is the spirit of the Heart of Jesus.

Our beloved Father has left us his counsels, his memory, his example. Let us use them all to our sanctification and so that one day in Heaven we may be his crown. As he was, let us be humble, very humble: like him. Let us be good, affable towards everyone and all things to all. So as to win all to Jesus Christ. Let us be generous in sacrifice and unceasingly forgetful of self in favour of others. As our good Father, let us have a passion for the Heart of Jesus, a passion for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and a passion for souls, and thus, imitating his example, we shall reach our goal of eternal happiness.

In the next letter you will receive details of the obsequies of our venerated Father at which Mother Stanislaus and Mother Valeric assisted, since I could not make the trip at this season. The ceremonies were in every way worthy of him, and all Issoudun seemed impregnated with regret and respect. How well the Good Master disposes all things. Monsieur de Bonneval, to whom the Basilica now belongs, had a short time before obtained permission to transfer to the crypt the venerated remains of Rev. Father Vandel and likewise to prepare there a place for our good Father. And so he entered in triumph into his dear Basilica by the wide-open main doors. After lying for a day and a night in the chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, he now rests in the crypt under that same chapel, the chapel of her whom he so much loved and to whom he brought such great glory. Before his death he knew that he would repose there and this gave him much happiness.

Never may any one of us forget all that our good and beloved Father has done for us, and with what tender solicitude he watched over our cradle. He it was who brought us forth to religious life; he it was who laboured and suffered for our growth and extension. Let us be everlastingly mindful of this and hand down his memory to those of our Sisters who will not have had the happiness of having seen and known him. Let us teach them to love and venerate him as we ourselves have done.

In return he will most certainly help us to advance in perfection and to become true children of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

In asking him to bless you one and all as he used to do of old. I ask you to recommend to him all my intentions. I embrace you very maternally,

(Signed) Sister Marie Louise.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!

ISSOUDUN,
March, 1924.
Dear Sisters.

On the 15th March, the 100th birthday of our venerated Father Founder, we had a very intimate family feast. There, in the crypt of the Basilica around his tomb, his family were gathered together and if before us we had only his marble bust, we seemed to feel his soul hovering above our heads and his heart still beating in order to rekindle ours.

Without doubt, a more skilful hand than mine will give you a description of this feast and you will read it. Here I simply want to respond to your desire for some more intimate details about our Father Founder. You did not know him and you are eager to hear more about him in order to penetrate into his spirit and teachings. You are right. To call to mind his name is to relive a whole past of memories around the cradle of our Congregation which, under the inspiration from on High, he formed to be the living crown of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart . . . How beautiful he wanted this crown to be for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart! . . . He seized every opportunity to instruct the first Sisters who, being the foundation stones, needed to be specially solid to support the whole edifice.

We can still see him with his kind smile, arriving among his children and explaining to them the Constitutions of their new-born Society. No one could reproduce his paternal accent when he said: "Do you know what the distinctive stamp of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is? It is humility, simplicity, interior spirit, charity . . ." These accents were so penetrating that we were impregnated with them. His favourite motto was often on his lips and he strongly recommended us to say it each time that we met one another. If the feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart or St. Joseph was near, his heart could not allow such an opportunity to pass without reviving our fervour."

But it was especially at our ceremonies of Clothing and Profession that it was lovely to see him, and more so during the last years of his life. His stature and his fine face, encircled by his head of white hair, gave him a patriarchal look which, at the same time, attracted and was impressive. He was happy to see a new group placing themselves under the protection of Our Lady and his soul was filled with gratitude.

His apostolic spirit set us on fire for the far-away missions; but he always had as well some encouraging words for the Sisters who could not yet set out for Oceania. I seem to hear him saying, with his knowing, mischievous smile, to one or other whose heart was full at the thought that she was not chosen for the next departure: "Do not be distressed; your turn will come; I will take you to New Guinea." He was always all things to all and gained all hearts to lift them gently to the Heart of Jesus.

If he was lavish with his counsels to the Sisters, you can guess that he was not less so to the one who was working with him at our religious formation. With his penetration of spirit, his sure judgment, his spirit of faith, he gave to our venerated Mother Marie Louise clear and practical directions.

The future of our Congregation preoccupied him greatly, especially when the winds of persecution forced us to seek a refuge in another country. It was a slow agony for him to see his Daughters, in small groups, go far away from Issoudun. This suffering was more cruel for him than the physical sufferings he had to support for some years.

Obliged to cede to the violence of the turmoil, he had to consent to the departure of the Novitiate and the Generalate. This cut him to the heart and this sad trial, added to so many others, overtaking him at the age of 82, dealt him his death blow. However, right to the end, he had the consolation of being cared for by one or other of us, guardians of the cradle in spite of the storm. In these last months of his life, so filled with sorrows, a ray of joy lit up his face, saddened by so many sufferings, when on Sundays, the little group of Sisters who remained at Issoudun came to visit and gather round him like a well-loved father whose time is limited. Then we spoke of those exiled, of the beautiful days of the past, of the tempest let loose, and in spite of all, of the hope of the future.

Two of his Daughters were with him during his last moments. Feeling himself going, he made a sign to them to come closer, and always good, forgetful of self, he said to them: "Dear children, I am going to leave you soon; tell your Mother and Sisters who are in exile that I will not forget them when I am close to the good God. I bless you and also the whole Congregation."

Some minutes later, he was united for ever with the Heart of Jesus who had been the passion of his whole life. What a welcome he must have received from this divine Heart and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart whose tireless apostle he had been.

Sr. Marie X., F.D.N.S.C., One of the elderly Sisters of the family.

FATHER JULES CHEVALIER FOUNDER OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART
Study of His Life and Works (1824 - 1869)

REV. FATHER VERMIN, M.S.C.

Translated by REV. FATHER J. TIERNEY, M.S.C.,

Rome

General HOUSE Via Asmara 11 1957

This study of the life and works of Father Jules Chevalier ends at 1869. Father Vermin died in 1965 without having been able to complete it.

LETTER OF VERY REV. FATHER CHEVALIER TO HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL DOM. FERRATA (CARDINAL PROTECTOR)

Issoudun, 21st June, 1905

"...Since I founded our small Congregation 50 years ago, with the help and inspiration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the spirit of the approved Constitutions, the Society has grown and progressed, forming a large number of model Religious, Apostles who are spending themselves, and giving even their life-blood for the countries which they are evangelising."

J. Chevalier, M.S.C.

LETTER OF VERY REV. FATHER PATRICK McCABE, M.S.C. SUPERIOR GENERAL

The publication of this work had been intended for 1954, the Centenary of the Foundation of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, but owing to unforeseen circumstances this was not possible. This year, however, 1957, affords us an opportune and appropriate occasion to present the facts which the book recalls, for it is the 50th anniversary of the death of Father Chevalier - 21st October, 1907. Moreover, it is the 100th anniversary of the publication of the title; "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" and the origin of that devotion. It is also the 75th anniversary of the foundation by Father Chevalier of the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

In appointing Rev. Father Vermin to write the life of our Venerated Father Founder, our foremost intention was to entrust him with the fundamental task of reassembling and collating the documents, and then of presenting us with an authentic, historical study of our Founder's life.

When this preliminary and basic work would be completed, and all the facts clearly established, then other biographies could be written in the various languages.

Father Vermin has applied himself to the work with great zeal, and has done it very well. As a result, the true picture and personality of our Founder will appear more vividly, and we will all be able to appreciate his greatness the better.

I say "his greatness" - for I wonder if the greatness - the grandeur - of our Father Founder has been appreciated as it ought, and that even by us, his children. Truly a man of God, animated by an intense love of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, he founded two religious Congregations: the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. During the early days of the history of the Society he was responsible for the building of the Basilica and Monastery at Issoudun, lasting monuments to his memory. At the invitation of the Holy Sec, with his Order hardly yet established, he sent his missionaries out to Oceania to found there the now flourishing missions of Papua and New Britain.

While these great works were being achieved he governed his Congregation wisely, guiding it through the dark years of persecution and expulsion; he wrote his monumental works on the Sacred Heart, and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; he devoted himself, and with notable success, to having the world consecrated to the Sacred Heart; and, above all, he lived always a truly religious and sacerdotal life, which remains for each one of us a model and an inspiration. Surely these are the marks of true greatness.

Father Vermin has succeeded in giving us a true portrait of our Father Founder. We are all grateful to him, and may each of us profit from it.

Patrick McCabe, M.S.C. Superior General.

PREFACE

CHAPTER I

RICHELIEU

- (i) ***RICHELIEU - The Town***
- (ii) ***THE CHEVALIER FAMILY***
- (iii) ***THE FIRST SIXTEEN YEARS.***

CHAPTER II **SAINT GAULTIER - THE JUNIOR SEMINARY**

CHAPTER III **BOURGES THE MAJOR SEMINARY**

History of the Town and Province of Bourges

The Ecclesiastical History of the Bourges Diocese.

JULES AT THE SEMINARY HIS STUDIES. SPIRITUAL FORMATION.

CHAPTER IV **CONVERSION AND SPIRITUAL INITIATION**

Some Principles of the Spiritual Life.

Spiritual History of the Vocation of Jules Chevalier.

WAS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF JULES CHEVALIER TOO HARSH AND RIGOROUS?

CHAPTER V **THE CALL.**

The Devotion of Jules Chevalier to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

CHAPTER VI **EARLY MINISTRY,**

First Appointments

ISSOUDUN - ITS LIFE AND CHARACTERISTICS

THE CHURCH IN ISSOUDUN

CHAPTER VII **THE FOUNDATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART**

CHAPTER VIII **THE FIRST COMMUNITY**

CHAPTER IX **DOUBTS AND DIFFICULTIES**

CHAPTER X **THE MISSION AND ANXIETIES OF A FOUNDER**

The Particular Mission of Father Chevalier

Father Piperon's Ideas on the End and Object of the Society.

VICTORY IN SIGHT

CHAPTER XI **TRANSFER OF THE PARISH AND COMPLETION OF THE CHURCH**

Appeal for Funds:

The Parish of Issoudun handed over to the Missionaries.

Father Maugenest rejoins the Society, and is appointed Parish Priest.

Priest of St Cyr.

New Archbishop of Bourges, Friend of the Society.

Father Piperon's Journeys to collect Funds.

The Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The Church is Completed.

CHAPTER XII

THE ASSOCIATION OF SECULAR PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

PART I *The Association an Annex of the Early Society*

PART II CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE JESUITS

PART III DIFFERENCE OF OPINION between FATHER FOUNDER AND VAUGIRARD

CHAPTER XIII

THE ASSOCIATION OF SECULAR PRIESTS

PART I *Early History of the Association Movement in France. Influence of Father Le Beurrier, Sulpician*

PART II *The Assembly in Paris*

PART III *The Assembly at Issoudun*

PART IV *The proposed Plan for the Association.*

PART V *Father Jouet's Mission of Inquiry to Issoudun*

Part VI *Trials of Father Jouet. Tribute to his work.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE CLERICAL SCHOOLS OF THE SACRED HEART

PART I *Father Vandel and his Work for Country Parishes.*

Part II *Father Vandel in Contact with Father Chevalier.*

PART III *The Meeting of Father Vandel with Father Chevalier: Father Vandel Joins the Society.*

PART IV *Origin and Early History of the Apostolic School*

PART V *The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart take Charge of The Clerical Schools of Rimont and Tourmus.*

CHAPTER XV

THE ASSOCIATION OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

PART I *Origin of the Devotion. The First Statue.*

PART II *L'Abbe de Champgrand Visits Issoudun.*

Acquisition of the Property by Father Chevalier.

PART III *Father Founder's Statutes for the Confraternity Based on those of Our Lady of Victories in Paris.*

PART IV *The Retreat House for Women Associates*

Extraordinary Help of Mlle. Marchand.

PART V *The Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, The Annals: The Remarkable Growth of the Association.*

PART VI *Extensions to the Monastery.*

Our Lady's New Chapel

Part VII *Father Chevalier visits Rome with the Archbishop*

Part VIII *Opposition from Marseilles and Orleans*

PART IX *Father Chevalier Received in Private Audience by the Pope*

PART X *The Confraternity Erected into an Archconfraternity.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE THIRD ORDER, AND THE CONSTITUTIONS.

PART I *General Idea of a Third Order. The Third Order of the Sacred Heart.*

PART II *Influence of Mlle de Montagnac on the History of the Third Order.*

PART III *Difficulties with Father Ramiere*

Part IV *The Third Order in Naples Under the Leadership of Mlle. Volpicelli .*

PART V *Father Ramiere's Objections Specified.*

PART VI *Father Chevalier's Object and Spirit in his Foundation*

PART VII *The Spirit of the Apostolate of Prayer*

PART VIII *Statistics of the Society at the End of 1868. Final Approbation.*

CHAPTER XVII

AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS - 1669

PART I *The Crowning of the Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.*

PART II *Father Chevalier is summoned to Rome.*

Part III *The Novitiate*

Part IV *The General Council, and the Canonical Vows.*

CHAPTER XVIII

SPIRITUAL TRENDS. THE SPIRITUAL AFFINITIES

PART I *The Work of Founders: a Result of Character and Unity of Purpose.*

PART II *Father Chevalier's fidelity to his Mission.*

Influence of St. Ignatius

His loyalty to the holy see.

Part III *Affinities with the Spirit of the Society of Jesus*

PART IV *Main Features of the Spirituality of Father Chevalier.*

Part V *Some General Ideas on the Nature of Devotion.*

CHAPTER XIX

SPIRITUAL TRENDS: THE SACRED HEART

Part I: *The Object of the Devotion*

Part II: *The Sacred Heart, the Heart of the Sovereign Priest.*

Part III: *The Theory and the Practice of the Devotion.*

CHAPTER XX

SPIRITUAL TRENDS: OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

Part I: *Preliminary Influences Leading to the Inspiration of the Title*

Part II: *The Meaning of the Devotion. Mary's Power the Result of the Divine Maternity.*

PREFACE

To date there exists only one written work on the life of the Venerated Father Jules Chevalier, Founder of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - that composed by one of his first companions, Father Charles Piperon. In the letter of approbation dated 12th April, 1912 this work is called "a short, pious and interesting memoir", and the letter expresses the hope that "the complete and detailed life will soon appear." Father Piperon himself gave his book the title of "a simple biographical memoir" - "Notice biographique".

It is understandable then that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at their General Chapter in 1947 should express the desire that a more complete and studied biography be published. With this in view Very Rev. Dr. Patrick McCabe, the Superior General, entrusted the author of this book with the task of writing a strictly historical biography of our Venerated Founder. This necessarily required an account of the origin and early

stages of the Congregation, since the life of Father Chevalier is naturally inseparable from the history of the first fifty years of the Society he founded.

In order to acquaint himself with the material for this double task, the author undertook the preliminary research-work. It was necessary to collate all the available documents, and by closely examining and studying them to arrive at definite conclusions. These investigations led little by little to the discovery of documents from which emerged new facts and conclusions. The result of these studies has been presented in more or less logical order, in different chapters, some dealing with the subsequent discoveries, some in the nature of summaries of the data; others in the form of notes, which are important. Certain points abound in detail, and perhaps may seem superfluous, while others lack sufficient documentation, and have to be treated with greater precision.

If, in spite of these difficulties, the author has consented to the publishing of this book, it is in response to the often-expressed desire of his confreres that he do so and it is to them that he would now like respectfully to dedicate this first volume of the work. It is also with the intention of rendering service to so many dear friends who wish to know more fully "the marvelous history" of the Congregation and its Venerated Founder.

These first studies deal with the Life and Works of Very Rev. Father Chevalier until 1869. They were without doubt the most important years, even if the most difficult.

The central figure, of course is the Founder. Father Piperon, whom we shall quote frequently in the book, wrote in the *Issoudun Annales* (1897 - p.34-7) "All the thoughts of the Rev. Father, all his activities had as their end the foundation of the Society. His Congregation, yet so small and weak, occupied the first place in his affections. He was ceaselessly studying the means of strengthening and developing it. Father Chevalier lived, and wished to live only for his Congregation; he worked solely for it. Sure proof this that the Voice heard in his innermost heart was the Voice of Jesus. He awaited with unwavering confidence the realisation of his hope."

At the beginning of this work the author would like to thank all those who helped him in his effort. He is not able to mention them all, but would like to thank especially Rev. Father Jos China and Rev. Father Jos Dontenwill for their unsparing devotion in translating the Dutch text into French.

Henri Vermin, M.S.C.

CHAPTER I RICHELIEU

(i) RICHELIEU - The Town

"What a delightful place this Richelieu is!" So wrote the poet La Fontaine to his wife. Having seen the Loire district he enthused about its beauty and charm, but he added; "I had only one fault to find with it, and that was that having seen it, I imagined there was nothing more of interest and curiosity to see. Richelieu has certainly made me change that idea."⁽¹⁾

Without sharing the admiration of the poet, we must admit that Richelieu is a remarkable little town from more than one point of view. There is something abnormal in its very location and set-up. One wonders why people ever decided to build a town in such a place, away from any main highway or navigable stream, on a very inhospitable tract of land. Artificiality seems to be its keynote. Its history, its civic life, its traditions would seem to provide a link between La Touraine where it is situated, and the neighbouring countryside, the ancient French provinces of Anjou and Poitou. Both districts have the same climate, the same features, the same type of soil.

This Central Plain of France abounds in picturesque sites and historic mansions. In spite of the different types of architecture, of location, of style, there is a similarity of character throughout the countryside depicting its historical and romantic past. However, Richelieu itself retains its own individuality and distinctiveness, and it is precisely the interesting history of the place which explains this.

At the time when Cardinal Richelieu became Prime Minister, the estate, which has borne his name through the years, was a simple freehold. When in 1631 the domain was raised to the rank of a Duchy, the new Duke, the Cardinal Minister of the King, decided to mark the honour by erecting a monument worthy of the occasion. He would build a "grand chateau" and a town, which would make the efforts of past generations pale into insignificance. In order to efface the memory of a time when his plans of future greatness were no more than dreams, he demolished his old ancestral mansion and the farms surrounding it, dismantled the neighbouring villages to destroy their importance, and then here on this historic plain, where, we might say, the past history of France converges, he built a palace and a town, which were to be the expression of his own personal genius, and a symbol of the new era which his elevation inaugurated.⁽³⁾

The result was a building of pre-Baroque style, of enormous dimensions, and "of a magnificence and grandeur worthy of the man who built it".⁽⁴⁾ On three sides of the palace there were vast gardens, and to the left the town which was to house the courtiers and servants of the palace. The names of those who lived there are inscribed in the "Design of Richelieu's Town" preserved in the National Library.⁽⁵⁾

(Notes Jacques Lemercier, famous as the architect of the Chapel of the Sorbonne in Paris drew up the plans for the building, and his brother Pierre carried out the work.)

The town itself formed a rectangle - approximately half a mile long by a quarter of a mile wide. Four parallel streets ran along its length, the principal of which was La Grande Rue. This opened up at both ends near the gates of the town to form Community Centres. Precisely in the middle - for in Richelieu everything was drawn up in straight lines and squares - this street was intersected by another called La Rue Transversale. The rectangle was then divided into four blocks of equal dimensions, along whose streets stood the rigid little tenements, each joined to the other in perfect alignment, giving the impression that the blocks were just the one big building.

Nothing distinguished one house from another. If you saw one, you saw the lot. Each consisted of one storey, built over a cellar; each had its gabled roof with three little garret windows; all were built on the same level, to the same height and width; each made from the same number of stones and bricks; each boasting the same number of windows. Since they were all joined together they presented but the one facade, and even the guttering was as long as the street itself.

As the poet expressed it:

"On a fait tous les logis
D'une pareille symetrie."⁽⁶⁾

The best way of finding one's way home was to count the doors, especially at night. It must have been a town which lent itself to some amusing episodes, especially after a banquet at the palace or a night at the hostelry.

Over the years this rigid uniformity has changed somewhat owing to the mood of the times and the necessities of commercial life, but it has not made the place look any more picturesque or attractive. One gets the impression that an attempt has been made to brighten up an old monument by a few modern touches.

All around the town there is the drab spectacle of sameness and monotony. If you look out any door you get the same view as you would by looking out the door opposite. If you look down the street your view is invariably blocked by the walls which surround the town. Restricted to this little world, Richelieu is still stamped by the seal imprinted on it by the Cardinal, its Founder. Even the few buildings which have later been built around the original setting - built for the most part by stones from the palace - have followed along the lines of the first plan.

It is true then to say that Richelieu is indeed a remarkable little town, remarkable for its originality and abnormal character in a region where history has expressed itself in such a spiritual and lively manner. One would have thought that it would have captured a little of the vibrant spirit of the bigger neighbouring towns, but there in the midst of progress Richelieu, so depressing in its geometrical framework, has remained like an inanimate statue, a picture without charm or poetry.

The grand dream of the Cardinal vanished with himself. After his death the courtiers sold their houses, some of which had never been quite completed, and made off to seek their livelihood in other places. The heir of the Cardinal, his grand-nephew, went off to Paris and took with him all the works of art that had adorned the palace. From then on the empty chateau lost all its interest, became as a body without a soul, and the ravages of time did the rest, assisted by the neighbours, who helped themselves to its stones.

Today nothing remains of the once beautiful palace. After the Cardinal's death most of the people whose only livelihood was in the employ of the chateau, went in search of a new life elsewhere. In 1663 we once again find La Fontaine visiting the place, but this time he is not so enthusiastic. Seeing the nature of the ghost-town with its lack of activity and its empty houses, he wrote:

"La plupart sont inhabitee,
Je ne vis personne en la rue;
Il m'en deplut; j'aime aux cites
Un peu de bruit et de cohue."⁽⁷⁾

(Most (houses) are uninhabited
I saw no one in the streets.
It made me sad. In the streets of towns
I like a little noise and rush of crowds.)

Now an entire village was for sale. One by one the local families departed, but gradually other people from the various regions of France and even from foreign countries arrived to take their place. With them they brought new ideas and customs. Several merchants opened shops in the old patrician homes.

In 1830 the town had again a population of about 2,500. It had become the main town of the regional canton and mainly a market place for fruit, wine and farming products. It had its own refineries and distilleries. With the progress of time it could boast of a railway station, several tileries and brick-kilns, a preserving plant whose high chimney only accentuated the old fashioned nature of the town and countryside.

(ii) THE CHEVALIER FAMILY

According to a tradition, Louis XIV knighted a soldier who was conspicuous for his courage. This man is known to us only by his name of "Chevalier" i.e. a knight, who distinguished himself amongst his comrades. This military title became the family name and was handed down to his descendants. We find this family in the town of Richelieu, where one, John Charles, had come to establish himself. He was the eldest of four children, and his family origin and background destined him to take up an academic career. However, when his mother died the family circumstances forced him to seek work as a tradesman to gain a living, and he became a baker.

At the age of 28 he married, on the 22nd January, 1811, in the parochial church of Notre Dame, Louise Orly, a dressmaker, who was 10 years younger than himself.⁽⁸⁾ Their home stood on the corner of Loudun Road and Cygne Street, a small cross street which ran from the church to the walls opposite the granary. In 1904 this house was still in its primitive state, but has since been entirely renovated.⁽⁹⁾

The early days of married life were very happy. There was great joy at the birth of the first child, Charles and then came a baby daughter, Louise to bring them further happiness. Business was flourishing and continued so for several years. After a time, however, unforeseen difficulties, weariness and sickness threatened to disturb the peace of the home. On the 15th March 1824 a third child was born. He was baptised the next day by the Parish Priest, Father M. J. Picard, and was given the name of Jules Jean. A cousin, Pierre Hilaire Orly was God-father, and his aunt, Adelaide Baudrin, wife of the merchant, Onesimo Chevalier, was God-mother.

When Father Chevalier became a person of note certain interested people made much of the unhappy circumstances of the family during his infancy to spread a pious story that all his later work was attributable to Our Lady of Richelieu, whose miraculous statue is honoured in the local church.⁽¹⁰⁾ The story, written under the title of "Our Lady of the Rosary of Richelieu" by an anonymous writer, paints a rather black picture of the parents and the family background, and would have us believe that Jules even from his earliest days was taken under a special celestial protection by Our Lady of Richelieu.

Father Píperon inserted this story in his manuscript of 1899, but in his Notice Biographique of 1912, he greatly modified the judgment that had been passed on Father Chevalier's mother, stating that the evidence he had received in the meantime was not in accord with the original impression. This Notice Biographique, supplemented by studies we have consulted allows us to give the following reliable picture of the Chevalier-Orly family.

The father, Jean-Charles Chevalier, had been forced, rather against his wishes, to go to work at a trade he did not like, to tide him over a difficult period. Brought up in a rather easy-going milieu, he was not really adapted to the world of commerce, and had no love for his work as a baker.

However, all went well during the early years. After the birth of the children, Charles and Louise, the father reasoned that having sacrificed his own personal ambitions of independence, he should also give up the hope he had cherished of assuring his children a better future. Then came difficult times when many reverses and disappointments made him lose heart. He argued that he had always been an honest man, and now his sense of justice was outraged. He felt the spirit of revolt stirring in his soul. Brought up in the troubled days of the aftermath of the Revolution, he had not the necessary background to seek help and consolation from his religion. Adversity discouraged him, and naturally his wife and children were the first to suffer.

In these unhappy conditions the birth of Jules after 13 years of married life did not exactly enchant him. The shattered hopes, the miserable state of his household, his own hasty temperament may serve to explain the "scene of the market place", which has received a deal of prominence in the story of Jules' early life.

One day, so the story goes, peeved at the fact that his wife was late in returning to prepare the evening meal he left the house and, finding her in the market place, publicly abused her even making threats as to what he would do with the child, Jules. Almost out of her mind with worry she carried the baby to the church, and placed him before the statue of Our Blessed Lady, asking Her to take care of him, for it seemed impossible to do so at home. From that moment Our Lady is supposed to have taken him into her special care. Even if one gives credence to this story, "the scene" loses much of its dramatic effect when we consider the circumstances. After all, it was the climax of a domestic upset, the result of a sudden burst of anger rather than the expression of husband and wife's usual relationship.

Charles Chevalier was not a brutal man by nature. We have plenty of evidence to show that he was not. For instance, when he applied to Monsieur Juste for the position of caretaker to the Vatan Woodlands, his fellow-citizens gave him very good references, stating that he was honest and trust-worthy. The Benedictine Sisters, who owned the Woodlands, received such favourable recommendations that they did not hesitate to take him into their service. When he was leaving the district, the Municipality of Richelieu assured him of a good position should he return.

There has been a tendency to emphasise his lack of religion. He did not receive a strict religious training during his youth, and as a consequence his Christian life was not all it might have been. He was one of those - and there are plenty about today - of whom we could say: "He is a good Catholic, but not practical". We have the testimony of Father Chevalier himself that it was a great consolation to him to see his father receive the last Sacraments when he died at the age of 65 years.⁽¹²⁾ We must remember there is a big difference between being a careless Catholic and being an anti-clerical, or, as the saying goes, "a hater of priests."

The relationship between the Chevalier family and the clergy was quite normal and good both at Richelieu and Vatan. We also know that the father did not oppose the vocation of his son and that he allowed him to become an altar boy and a member of the pious Sodalities. When young Jules spoke of the sermons and the ceremonies of the Church he raised no objection, and he always interested himself in his religious and secular education. When he joined the service of Monsieur Juste the agreement which he signed contained the clause that he would not stand in the way of his son entering the seminary. All this is proof of the fact that he was a man certainly not hostile to religion.

As regards the mother - she appears in an entirely different light. Louise Orly, born in 1793, was the youngest of a family of thirteen children, eleven brothers and one sister, who was 20 years older than herself. Louise was brought up by a maternal aunt, Agnes Taffoneau. For supernatural motives this aunt did not marry. She interested herself mainly in charitable works, which made her a suspect to the agents of the Revolution. She was brought before the Tribunal, but was released, and retired to her property called "La Belle Cave", about an hour's journey from Richelieu. She often sheltered people, particularly nobles and priests, who were being hunted by the Revolutionaries. For this she used the near-by caves, where the Catholics often came secretly to assist at Mass.

While living with her aunt, little Louise received a very good grounding in her religion, but owing to the distance from the school, her education was mostly neglected, and it always remained at an elementary stage. It is true that during the unsettled period of French history many people did not even learn to read or write.⁽¹³⁾

In his "Notice Biographique" Father Piperon writes: "After her marriage Louise Orly was known and esteemed by the people of Richelieu, who praised her for her courage, her "savoir-faire" and her good temper. Referring to the incident of the market place and the church, he remarks: "As regards the scene it was no more than an impulsive act, a sudden burst of irritation. As a matter of fact, having soon calmed down and ashamed of this act of despair, she returned straight away to the church"..⁽¹⁴⁾ We permit ourselves to think that the whole incident has been made too much of.

As regards his actual consecration to Our Blessed Lady Father Chevalier himself writes; "A short time after my baptism, my mother carried me to the church and consecrated me to the Most Holy Virgin and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Often in her old age she would recall this touching scene which she with heart and imagination used to describe to me in almost poetic language."

These lines of Father Chevalier clearly show us that this Consecration had a special significance, and involuntarily we think of the scene of the market plane. It is difficult to believe, as some would have us do, that this was an abandonment of the child. That would hardly inspire the words "touching" and "poetry", and it would be no reason "to recall it often with heart and imagination".

In his poems "Songs to the Sacred Heart of Jesus" we again find Father Chevalier using the expressions "sweet memory" and "touching scene" when recalling his early Consecration to the Sacred Heart and Our Blessed Lady:

(translation in prose) :

Heart of Jesus, I was still very young;
When my feeble voice learnt to call Your Name.
Hardly had my reason dawned,
When I knew how to bless and love You.
In these first raptures my good and tender mother
Would say to me; "My child may the Heart of Jesus
Be always your support, your treasure and your light
If you wish to take your place amongst the elect."

Then often she would love to take me to the temple
Before Thy wonderful and ravishing image;
"Join your hands, my child, pray, adore and contemplate.
It is the Heart of thy God. Do you see how beautiful He is?"

Then see on this side; behold the Virgin Mary!
Oh, how sweet the memory! From your first breath
I have ever placed you under her blessed protection
Praying her to open to you the Heart of her Son."

In recalling this touching scene I feel
My heart moved with joy and happiness.
For then I discover there in a joyful way
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

(iii) THE FIRST SIXTEEN YEARS.

It was in this setting then - in the ordinary milieu of social and family life that Jules Chevalier spent the first sixteen years of his life. From the outset he was no different from any other baby. He liked being made a fuss of; he knew how to play up; he knew how to scream just for the sake of it; he loved to get his little hands on anything within reach. When his mother took him to church he readily seized the adorned statue of Our Lady. When the prayers were too long for his liking, or when the statue was out of reach, he knew how to express his displeasure in no uncertain terms. In other eventualities, and for reasons which would baffle a specialist, his tears and crying would often exasperate his parents already weary with cares of their own.

When his mother went out to sell some bread or goods to get a little money for the household, she would carry him with her in a basket. She would deposit him at the corner of La Grande Rue and the Market Square under the statue of Our Lady, who even today affords Her protection to the passers-by. She usually took him with her wherever she went, and this gave her the opportunity of getting to know his young character well and of correcting when necessary, his little whims and fancies.

And so, like Benjamin, he was his mother's favourite. She discovered in him all kinds of qualities - "qualities which I didn't know I had", he once remarked, but she did not spoil him. He tells the story himself of an incident which happened when he was about four or five years old: He had gone with his mother to the markets, and while she was busy doing some shopping, the attention of the small Jules was attracted by some nice-looking apples on a stall. The temptation of Eve in Paradise. While the two women were busy with their bartering, he quickly slipped one of the apples into his pocket. On returning home things went wrong. He had just taken a quick, sly bite of the apple, when his mother caught him in the

act. She made him disgorge the mouthful of the object of his larceny, but that was not sufficient. She led the culprit, whimpering and sobbing, along the street back to the fruiterer, made her apologies, asked pardon and then handed back the apple - 'bite out' and all -. The punishment was effective, and, as the priest later avowed: "The lesson was never forgotten".⁽¹⁵⁾

This wise and sensible mother could not understand parents who would give in to every whim and fancy of their children and thought them intelligent when they tried to be funny. She attached great importance to the early training of the children. Not content with fostering their piety and virtue from their earliest age, she was firm and relentless in correcting their faults, their disobedience, their greed, their untruths. In spite of their excuses and tears, if they deserved punishment they received it.

It is not surprising that Jules more than once came up against this repressive justice of his mother, "My nature was lively and bubbling over", he said himself, "my character ardent and impetuous". In that he resembled his father. But from his mother he inherited the traits of courage, energy and tenacity in the time of trial, proof of which he gave on many occasions later on in life. He resembled her also in another way. His mother had a keen sense of humour, and was quick to see the ridiculous or comic side of a situation, to appreciate a good joke or a 'bon-mot'. Jules was certainly like her in this respect and he retained his sense of humour to his old age. He used to amuse himself now and then by composing, under an assumed name, some harmless epigrams on his fellow-priests, and his eyes would sparkle if he had the occasion to crack a joke or tease a friend.

As a young boy Jules, with his alert spirit, took a keen interest in the ceremonies of the church, and he reenacted at home what he saw and heard there. His mother, a pious woman herself, encouraged this taste in him for holy things. When the Lazarist Fathers had come at the invitation of the Cardinal, to look after the parish, they introduced the custom of evening prayers in common in the church, and practically every evening M^{me}. Chevalier took Jules along with her. He often spoke of these visits to the church: "If ever I became restless or distracted in the middle of the religious exercises one stern look or gesture sufficed to bring me to my senses."

At the age of six Jules went to the school, situated at the other end of the town. Each morning he made off with his books and note-paper in a little basket, and his neatly-wrapped lunch. He did not return home till the evening. This greater freedom gave him more scope to exercise his natural tendency for fun and pranks and was an outlet for his boyish energy. Opportunities were certainly not lacking. During the first few months he managed to get tangled up under a moving vehicle and had the horse not got the excellent idea of pulling up short, there would have been no occasion to go ahead with this story. One winter's day he went skating on the frozen waters of the little stream that flows just outside the walls of the town. The ice was too thin, and he plunged headlong into the cold bath. Luckily he was able to drag himself through the broken ice to the bank. To make matters worse, when he returned home, finding that his parents had gone out, he decided to dry his wet boots by throwing them in the fire-place amongst the warm ashes. At this inopportune juncture his parents happened to return, and he received a good whipping, "which", he said, "I remembered for a long time." The severe attack of pleurisy which he suffered in his ninth year was mainly caused as he tells us himself, by not looking after his health, "by imprudence and carelessness".⁽¹⁹⁾

Anyone acquainted with Richelieu knows that it takes a deal of initiative and skill to find ways and means of getting up to mischief or playing pranks. From a child's point of view, it would seem that the Cardinal must have had this in mind when he approved the plans for its layout. Nothing could happen which would escape the vigilant eyes of the city-fathers, the teachers, or the parents. How were the young folk, with their dreams of romance and adventure, to find a suitable playground in a place like this? Richelieu with its stolid old rectangles, with never a portico or a colonnade, without any interesting by-ways, lanes, or adventuresome twisting roads offered little scope for their youthful energy and imagination. Woe to him who would take the risk of ringing a door-bell or would throw stones at the neighbours. Or if one preferred less war-like games, such as "Hide and Seek" there was little opportunity for an escape or a hide-out.

The two town squares were more promising, but even there prospects were not always the brightest. In the Place des Religieuses one had to cope with the dignified scrutiny of monks, nuns and students, and in the Market Square, there were too many people about. The buildings there - really fine specimens of 17th century carpentry - with their massive beams, pillars and niches, offered a ready-made stage for any youthful drama, but the merchants were not over-keen on mixing business with pleasure, particularly since they suspected that the boys might have hands which were too enterprising. The presence of the Watchman, and the all-seeing eyes of the four Evangelists looking down on them from the near-by church had a dampening effect on their youthful activities. In these restricted limits young Jules' pranks did not usually go beyond strolling among the shoppers and giving a playful tug to a goose or duck tucked under the arm of a proud owner, and then making himself scarce amidst the protecting clamour of the birds and the irate victim.

One incident of those early days he used often to recall in later days. Many of the basements in Richelieu were used as workshops especially by the weavers. The fan-lights were on street-level, and several had greased paper as a substitute for glass-panes. During working hours they were usually left open, and became tempting targets for a gentle kick from the school-boys returning from school - which naturally the weavers did not greatly appreciate. One disgruntled old fellow who was known to have a nasty temper became the object of special attention from Jules and his class-mates. He used to hurl abuse at them in his deep husky voice, threatening all kinds of dire punishments if he caught them. One afternoon he was waiting for them, and, as they drew near, he bounded out, heavy cudgel in hand, and chased them down the street. He frightened the life out of them, and later on, in a council of war, they decided to avenge their hurt pride by playing a trick on him. From some hollow reeds they made what was known as a "canne piphonere", a kind of long syringe, which they filled with some ox-blood from one of the gutters coming from the abattoirs. Then at twilight they made their way to the house of their victim who was working behind the closed paper-fanlight by the light of an oil lamp. Very quietly they pierced a small hole in the greased paper and pushed the end of the syringe through. As one of the villains in the piece fired his pop-gun, Jules squirted the blood over the poor fellow, who jumped to his feet in a panic. As he saw the blood dripping from his face he naturally thought someone had shot and wounded him. He began to scream for help, and his wife and the neighbours came running in. After a minute search for any wound, they realised a practical joke had been played on him and began to laugh. He naturally did not quite share their amusement. Whether or not Father Chevalier in later life regretted this youthful exploit, he still thought it humorous enough to write up as a comic-sketch for a concert in the Apostolic School under the title of "The Crime of St.-Ouen-les-Chevres". He called 'the hero' Claude, - the name of his first curate.⁽²¹⁾

The best playground was just outside the walls, only a few minutes from Jules' home. This offered more chances for childish adventure as it did not conform to the rigid design of the town itself but had grown up around the little stream Amable. Those who could not find accommodation in the village had built homes from stones from the Chateau, out here, where they had filled in the little inlets of the river, allowing just the main water-way to flow through. Besides, the gardens there were a welcome change from the prosaic rigidity of the town.

The dismantlement of the Chateau was one of the big events of Jules' time in Richelieu. During the Revolution it had been declared National Property, and administrators had come to sell up all they could. The townspeople adorned their back yards and houses with its spoils, for instance, the working-man in the Grande Rue who proudly displayed four marble busts in front of his house. Other works of art had a more ignoble fate. The heads of Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu himself were used as counterweights on the weigh-bridge till the time they were rescued and given more worthy haven. Louis' head was eventually donated to the Western Museum at Poitiers, and that of the Cardinal was offered to Pope Gregory XVI in 1840. To this day the market place glories in the gift of Joseph Boutron, the gentleman who eventually bought the ruins of the Chateau. This was a marble statue of the river-god Fleuve, holding an urn in his hand. Young Jules would probably have been more interested in the little cock-robin, Fontaine, which was part of the statuary.

Jules would surely have known this Monsieur Joseph Boutron. In 1807, this Parisian had bought what remained of the Chateau for 153,700 francs, and decided to capitalise on it by selling the stones. He entrusted the stone yard to his niece, M^{me}. Jeanne Chapuis, a sharp and

relentless old business woman, who immediately put up the price of everything. To help amateurs in their choice of buying, she displayed the goods in the fields round about, statues, busts, marble slabs, rubble, beams, joists, each tabbed with its weight and price, until she had even the foundations up for sale. A visitor to the place in 1843, Bosseboeuf, wrote of the old lady; "Fleet of foot and watchful of eye - she is like an insect feeding off an old corpse. She would sell you a paving stone at two francs a yard and a piece of rock at four sous a foot. She boasted that her prices were the best around the country."⁽²²⁾ By the time Jules was to leave Richelieu in 1843 practically nothing remained of the once glorious old Chateau, and today on the historic sight there are but the open fields and a few rose gardens. However, the memory of those happy boy-hood days, when he spent many an hour with his friends playing around the dying mansion, remained fresh in his mind to his last days.

During this period of his life, in spite of all the boyish pranks and harmless mischievousness, there was already evidence of the deep spiritual nature of his character. One of his companions who knew him well in those days later referred to him as a deeply interior boy, noted for his piety and modesty. It would seem that Our Lady already had this future priest and champion of Her Blessed Name under her special protection. He was often seen in the church visiting the Blessed Sacrament, and kneeling before the statue of Our Lady, his young heart and mind centred on the Object of his ardent love - the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The following story, simple and perhaps unimportant in itself, would indicate that even at an early age Jules was a serious-minded boy, particularly with matters concerning his religion. We cannot vouch for the authenticity of the incident, but it was narrated to Rev. Fr. Bertin in 1904 by a Religious Sister of the Order of St. Vincent, a contemporary of Jules, and independently confirmed by an old lady in a conversation with Rev. Father Rigault. Father Piperon saw fit to mention it on Father Rigault's testimony in "Notre Dame du Rosaire"⁽²³⁾. However, Octavie Poirier, a trustworthy witness, and daughter of another contemporary of Jules, makes no mention of it in the memoirs she gathered herself from the old-timers around Richelieu, and Father Heriault, close friend and confidant of Father Founder during the last thirty-two years of his life does not record it.

The story goes that during the days when the family was feeling the dire effects of poverty and hardship there was often very little food in the home. Even on Sundays the main meal would consist of potatoes and beans. Meat was seldom seen on the table, and on the rare occasions when the parents could obtain some, or a kind neighbour gave them some, the mother would not hesitate to use it, even on a Friday. This was in no disregard for the law of abstinence, as the mother was a good Catholic, and probably had permission from the Parish Priest at any rate. However, young Jules, then no more than six years of age, was not so sure of the theological propriety of this. Although his school was not conducted by Religious, the lay teachers there were anxious to give the children a good Christian education, and so he had already heard of the Law of Abstinence on Fridays. On this particular day - a Friday - there happened to be a small piece of pork in the home - and little else. The poor mother wondering what to give the child for his school-lunch, cut up a few pork sandwiches. When Jules protested, his mother explained that there was nothing else to give him. He said nothing, but at an opportune moment, while his mother's back was turned, he quietly slid the pork from the bread back into the frying-pan. His mother had noticed the performance, but pretended she had not seen it. As he triumphantly made off to school she remarked to her next door neighbour; "See my little scamp. He will surely be Pope some day."

When at the age of nine he suffered a serious attack of pleurisy, we have another proof of his sincerity. Thinking he was in danger of death, he asked his parents to send for a priest, which they immediately did. With the profound conviction that he was nothing else than a wretched sinner, a sentiment which characterised his later spiritual life, he feared for his salvation. He wrote years later in reference to this sickness: "If God had seen fit to take me with all my faults which I could have avoided, I fear now for my salvation."⁽²⁴⁾ His parents, particularly his mother, did their best to tide him over these difficult years of his boyhood. His mother consecrated him to the Sacred Heart and to Our Blessed Lady, taught him to pray with attention, curbed any wayward tendencies he showed and fostered in him the spirit of devotion and piety. "My character," he wrote, "was ardent and impetuous, and exposed me to great dangers." She paid particular attention to the type of companions with whom he associated and guarded him from any loose talk or suspect stories by prudently giving a turn to the conversation.

According to the custom of those times he did not make his first Holy Communion till he was comparatively old, on Trinity Sunday, 29th Mary, 1936. Usually reserved about his personal spiritual experiences, he wrote in later life of this great day: "My heart was overflowing with love and joy." He would surely have renewed his baptismal vows and his consecration to the Mother of God on this happy occasion.

Three years later, on the 22nd of May, 1939, he received the Sacrament of Confirmation from the hands of the Archbishop of the diocese, Mgr. Louis Augustin, Archbishop of Tours.⁽²⁶⁾

Naturally, the parish church featured very intimately in the spiritual formation of this future Apostle of the Sacred Heart. Only a few moments walk from where he lived in La Rue Cygne, he spent many hours there as an altar-boy and in his frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament. The church, designed by Pierre Lemercier, (who was buried there on 8th November, 1638)⁽²⁷⁾ followed the style of his brother's work at La Sorbonne, even if a poor reproduction.

The exterior is somewhat spoilt by the squat facade which extends over five bays, and the low pointed roof which seems out of perspective with the rest of the building. However, the stern exterior is not in keeping with the devotional nature of the interior. The church is well-lit from high Roman windows, and small roof-lights. Two lines of doric-style pillars separate the three naves, and the ceiling, walls and architraves are well ornamented in stucco by garlands, little coronettes, palms, stars etc. The high altar, fashioned in baroque marble is well-built, as is the choir. Copper altar rails separate the altar from the body of the church. At the head of the two side naves there are two smaller altars, which originally supported two wooden statues; one, the miraculous statue of Our Blessed Lady, and on the other side a statue of St. Joseph. In 1825, at the time of a mission in the church, these statues were given a more prominent place on the sanctuary, surmounted on marble bases. Later on in 1866 the Statue of Our Lady was placed in a more conspicuous place just inside the entrance to the church in front of the baptistry and against the first pillar on the left.

According to the pamphlet Notre Dame du Rosaire, we can be sure that the incident of the abandonment of Jules to Our Lady took place after the statue had been removed from its original position in February 1925 when he would not as yet have been one year old. Also during this mission, two large pictures, about nine feet high were placed on the side altars in place of the statues, one of Our Lady holding in her hands Rosary beads and the Scapular, and the other one of the Sacred Heart. It would have been before this picture "magnificent and ravishing", as he wrote in his poem, that he was consecrated to the Sacred Heart.

The parish priest, Father Picard, who had baptised Jules, took occasion of the mission of 1825 to reawaken in the parish the spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart, and as he grew up, young Jules learnt to know and love the various practices of this devotion. The Confraternity of the Sacred Heart had already been established, and every First Friday, Mass was celebrated before the picture of the Sacred Heart. Every three months on the first Friday, there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in honour of the Sacred Heart, and every evening during the Month of June, special devotions were held in His Honour.

All this was a testimony to the apostolic zeal and energy of the parochial clergy in Richelieu at the beginning of the last century. During the sad days of the Revolution the church had been sacked and desecrated by the wild maurauders, and was left in ruins. The goddess Reason had taken possession, and the four Evangelists on the facade had been given the names of Rousseau, Voltaire, Marat and Duchesne. For a time after this profanation the church was not used, but after the Concordat the town authorities decided to hasten ahead with the necessary repairs, and it had been completely restored by Jules' time.

During these days of his early childhood, Jules was already showing signs of his future vocation as a priest. Owing to his prodigious memory and flair for imitation - traits he showed all through his life - he used to return from the church and give a fair rendition of the sermon he had heard at Mass. Mounting a chair as pulpit, and imitating the tone and gestures of the preacher, he would re-enact the oratorical effort before his parents and sometimes his neighbours. Sometimes they must have smiled as the young preacher, seeing himself already a priest, did not hesitate to put in a few ideas of his own, particularly if he thought the audience needed it. However, his good mother put a time limit to his efforts and dispersed the congregation when she thought they had had enough. They often went away discussing the points he had given them.⁽²⁸⁾

One day during catechism class the curate's tonsure caught his imagination. Seeing that he was going to be a priest one day, he decided that it would not be out of place if he had a tonsure himself. With the willing cooperation of his companions he managed to secure a beautiful, outsize one. Hardly had it been cut, than he began to regret the deed, fearing the consequences when he returned home. For a while he tried to cover his head, so the parents would not notice, but he was soon found out. The father thought it was a good joke and laughed heartily, but the mother did not share his amusement. She said it showed a lack of respect for the clergy and she severely dressed him down.

Next day he returned to the catechism class, very conscious of the bald patch. He sat in his usual place, trying to look inconspicuous and hoping the priest would not notice him. But the other pupils had different ideas, and their sniggering soon gave the game away. The priest gave a loud laugh, which the class took up, and then even Jules saw the funny side of it. Forty years later the Abbe Moriet, Dean of la Chapelle-sur-Loire, still remembered the incident, and related it to the Community at Issoudun, where he had come on a pilgrimage with his parishioners.⁽²⁹⁾

Meanwhile Jules had come to the end of his primary schooling. We have no particular records of how he got on in his studies and exams, but the fact that he was allowed to become an altar and choir boy on account of his notable piety would indicate that at least he was of average intelligence and acumen.⁽³⁰⁾ When later he sought references for his admission to the Seminary at Tours, the local clergy gave him an excellent one.

Although he was now only thirteen years of age, the ardent desire of becoming a priest seemed to pervade his every thought and action, and he asked his parents if he could go to the Seminary at Tours where already one of his cousins and several of his former school-mates were studying.⁽³¹⁾ In spite of her own fervent wish of one day seeing him one of God's priests, his mother had to explain to him that in their present poor circumstances the expense involved was beyond them. She advised him to seek a trade for the time being, and to put his vocation in the hands of Almighty God, who would certainly later on provide the means of joining the Seminary, if he wanted Jules as one of his priests. Disappointed and sad that he could not immediately fulfil his ambitions he remarked: "I will take a trade, but as soon as I have earned enough money, I will go and knock on the door of some Monastery and will ask them to take me in." His mother told his father and some of her friends about his comment, and sometimes they jokingly asked him when he was going to knock on "that Monastery's door."

He was indifferent as to what trade he should take up, and his parents did not wish to influence him in his choice. He eventually became an apprentice to a bootmaker, who was a friend of the family.

A noticeable change was developing in his character these days. He seemed to lose interest in the old boyish games and pranks, and spent more time studying and furthering his knowledge where he could. In spite of his companions' efforts to get him to join them, he preferred to keep to himself and became very serious minded. Possibly he realised that his vivacious temperament might prove a danger to his vocation, if he joined wholeheartedly in their amusements. When one of the priests founded a youth club, The Association of Perseverance, he readily joined it as a safeguard to his future hopes and plans of joining the priesthood.

About this period of his life he fell victim to a severe illness, a kind of croup and influenza which was raging in the district. The doctor feared for his life, and he received the Last Sacraments. Hardly able to breathe, he lost consciousness. His parents were inconsolable, but, thank God, the crisis passed, and soon he was on the road to recovery.⁽³⁴⁾

The remarkable change in his character did not escape the notice of his neighbours, and even made them appreciate his qualities the more. They had always liked him for his gentleness, and his polite and obliging manners. His love of the poor and his willingness to help them was one of his outstanding characteristics. He had no money, but made his spare time available to them free of charge. He would often give the good lady who looked after the church a hand, and did not spare himself in doing odd jobs around the presbytery. The priests often held him up as a model to the youth of the community in this regard.⁽³⁵⁾ The wife of his employer was not slow to avail herself of his good dispositions, and soon he found himself spending more time doing domestic chores for her than in learning his trade. She made it too much of a good thing, and he eventually realised that he would hardly have enough money this way to pay his way to the Seminary. So one day he thought he would try to get another position in the bootmaking trade with a Monsieur Poirier, who had a flourishing business in La Grande Rue. He knocked on his door and the following conversation took place:

"Monsieur Poirier, would you like to have me as your apprentice?"

"Look here, young man. I'm not the one to pick fights with my friends. You are working for Monsieur B..... . Why do you want to leave him?"

"Well I was simply not learning the trade there. Madame seemed to think I was working for her and not her husband." He then went on to explain what she expected him to do around the house - even to the extent of preparing her bath and cleaning up afterwards. Monsieur Poirier feigned indifference, and Jules was on the verge of tears.

"So you don't wish to take me on as your-apprentice?" As he was about to leave, M. Poirier enquired:

"Did your boss send you here?"

"No, but he told me to clear out."

"Why would he have said that to you?"

"Because I told him I was not satisfied, and wished to come and work for you. He then roared at me, and told me I was nothing more than a lout, and I could get out. So here I am, and won't you take me on, please? Please, Monsieur Poirier?"

"One moment. Has your boss really dismissed you? I would not like people to say I stole his apprentice. Go home and tell your father to settle the matter finally with Monsieur B., and then you can both come and see me."

"Then you will take me on?"

"That will depend on your father."

Jules ran off home as quickly as he could, and within an hour returned with his father.

"Well, M. Poirier," said the father, "my son here wants a job with you. Do you want him?"

M. Poirier replied that he really did not need another apprentice, but he would take him on, as the lad seemed so anxious to work. Having come to an agreement with Jules' father, Monsieur Poirier gave his instructions to the new apprentice:

"Young man, the main thing for you to do here is to work. You won't have to work outside the shop. I don't want any trouble. Have you got a leather apron? Good, well put it on. There is your place at that bench, and I will teach you the trade myself. I will expect you to be obedient, and to listen to what I have to tell you."

Jules applied himself very diligently to his new work, and was delighted when his employer told him he was satisfied with him. After a couple of months, when he had grown used to his new surroundings, he could not but help noticing that Madame Poirier was often in minor difficulty with some household chore, such as carrying a bucket of water up the stair-way, or gathering some fire-wood. During his lunch-hour his

natural gentlemanly instinct often prompted him to give her a hand, which in spite of early protestations, she eventually accepted. This did not escape the notice of the other boys who probably thought he was trying to win her favouritism. The following incident shows that Jules was not exactly a "softy".

One of the fellows seemed keen to pick a fight with him. He frequently annoyed him by brandishing a duster in his face. For a while Jules took it in good part, but one day one of his companions said to him "Why don't you give him a good hiding?" The next time the smart lad tried to make a nuisance of himself, Jules said to him; "Look here, old chap, if I were to raise a finger to you, you would think you were being murdered."

Nothing daunted, the young man replied: "Come on then, put them up and I will show you how." With that he gave Jules a resounding slap in the face. He met more than his match, and immediately got a solid punch on the nose. As he saw the blood streaming down his face, the now not-so-brave aggressor yelled out; "Quick, he has killed me."

All this being against Jules' usually peaceful nature he was rather upset, and fearing M. Poirier's reaction, he made off home. Thinking that he had seriously injured the lad, he was very worried till Madame Poirier came looking for him to assure him that the only damage done was a bruised nose, which the fellow richly deserved. Later on the young man tried to patch up the quarrel by inviting Jules to have a glass of beer with him in one of the near-by taverns, but Jules replied that he was not accustomed to going into taverns, and perhaps the young fellow would be better advised in giving the money to his mother.⁽³⁶⁾

One more incident, perhaps trivial in itself, throws a light on Jules' character. At his sister's wedding-party, he was asked to have a dance with a young girl. Being shy, and not used to dancing, he tried to get out of it by remarking that he would probably tread on the poor girl's toes. His protests were in vain, and he was forced to comply. To the disappointment of the gathering, but to his own immense relief, no sooner had the music started up, than the strings of the violin snapped and in the consequent confusion, he was able to make his escape.⁽³⁷⁾

In 1838 Rev. Father Redon, the Superior of the Lazarist Fathers in Tours came to Richelieu to preach a mission and a retreat.⁽³⁸⁾ Seeing an opportunity here to strengthen the spirit of his vocation, Jules followed the exercises with attention and devotion. His piety did not escape the notice of a Mlle. Elise Gillet, a prominent parishoner, who was president of several of the pious Sodalities. She judged what was going on in Jules' mind and heart, and one day remarked to his mother:

"I have been watching your boy during the mission, and am convinced that God wishes him to become a priest. What do you think yourself?"

"I am well aware of what he wants to be," replied Madame Chevalier, "but you realise our financial position and understand that we could not see our way clear to pay his expenses."

"Yes, I know that," Mlle. Gillet rejoined, "but I have friends, and we could see to it."

Jules was overjoyed at this good news, and applied himself with greater zest to his studies. Someone had given him a Latin grammar, and a brother of Mlle. Gillet, who had finished his secondary studies helped him with the rudiments of the language.⁽³⁹⁾ He kept on working for M. Poirier, but by early rising and late retiring, and giving up his Sundays, he made time for study.

Abbe Hauduit, the Superior of the Junior Seminary at Tours finally agreed to accept Jules free of charge. Jules was delighted and with the help of his parents made all the preparations for his departure. Then came bitter disappointment, and the plans fell through. The bishop, on visitation had just found that the Junior Seminary was heavily in debt. Abbe Mauduit was replaced and his successor given strict instructions not to admit any students who could not pay their way. We can imagine his feelings of sorrow and frustration.

So Jules continued at his trade as a boot-maker, but did not miss any chances of furthering his education. Little by little the secret that he intended to join the priesthood became known to the other apprentices, and they began to tease him. His Latin grammar, which he kept in one of the drawers of his bench was stolen, and they would often ask him how the "budding priest is keeping." Jules took it all in good part, and at least succeeded in getting his grammar back.

Even little Octavie Poirier, the daughter of his employer, joined in the bantering, and imitating the boys used to ask him how the would-be priest was getting on. He would reply: "Have patience, my little one, and one day you will see me a priest all right. All things come to those who wait." On one occasion when she tried his patience too much, he sharply rebuked her and told her to "Keep quiet!" She showed her resentment by promptly giving him a smack with a stick. Madame Poirier severely admonished the child, and was about to punish her, when Jules intervened and remarked: "She is only a child and besides, she hasn't done any damage. You won't do it again, will you, Octavie?" And Octavie, who tells this story herself, solemnly promised she would not call him "a would-be priest" again.⁽⁴⁰⁾

The Abbe Bourbon - the new parish priest of Richelieu was a real paternal friend to Jules. It was he who had made the arrangements with the authorities at Tours for the boy's admission to the seminary. Like Jules, he was bitter disappointed when the plans fell through, but continued to give him every encouragement. He had observed his protegee's piety over the years, and realised that Jules had a vocation. Practically every morning after Jules had served his Mass the two of them would make a thanksgiving together in the Sacristy, and then the priest would take him over to the presbytery for breakfast. (Note: The presbytery formed part of the old Lazarist Monastery of former days. It was a large spacious building part of which had been converted into homes for the people. The front portion was well preserved and well-lit by large windows, but the rest was poorly built, consisting of clay-walls, small windows, roughly hewn beams, and rather shabby rooms built over the cloister around the inner court yard.)

After breakfast Jules would run across the Square and down the Rue Grande so as not to be late for work. M. Poirier, although he did not say much was very pleased to observe his piety and devotion to his church, particularly because it went hand in hand with progress in his work.⁽⁴⁰⁾ That Jules became quite proficient in his trade is evident from the following incident. One evening a visitor to Richelieu came into the shop and asked M. Poirier if he could make a pair of boots for him by the following evening. The bootmaker, in spite of the customer's pleas of urgency, told him this was hardly possible. Hearing the conversation, Jules offered to do the job himself; and to the great satisfaction of M. Poirier and the client, the boots, made to measure, were ready on time.

Meanwhile his companions did not slacken their efforts to make him less serious-minded, and to get him back into their games and amusements. To then he had become somewhat of a stranger - a crank pursuing an impossible dream to which he had sacrificed his friends, and his "joie de vivre". At sixteen years of age, they argued, he was far too serious and matured, but to all their reasonings, protestations and banter, he quietly offered an adamant will and a determined perseverance.⁽⁴²⁾

Truth to tell, he was now quite a different person from the boisterous and impulsive lad we have already depicted. From a frolicsome mischievous child, even ready to take his revenge when his plans went awry, he had now become a sober, reflective young man. At heart he had always been a serious child, but now all his external actions and interests were affected by the firm conviction that God meant him to be a priest.

We must not forget the part that Grace was playing in this transformation. God had destined him for a special vocation - as subsequent history was to show, and these were days of special preparation. This supernatural influence explained the apparent change in his outlook and character, as in spite of all the obstacles and difficulties, he was firmly convinced that God was calling him to the priesthood. This conviction afforded him strength of soul and consolation in time of trial. The earlier imitations of the priest saying Mass and preaching his sermon had given place to an interior thoughtful attitude - prelude to the reality of his own future Masses and sermons. He realised that a vocation to the priesthood is a tremendous, God-given grace, which requires many sacrifices, and is not to be taken lightly.

This clear vision of his future encouraged him over the dark days from his thirteenth to his sixteenth year when it seemed almost impossible to find ways and means of fulfilling his hopes, and when even his good mother, who had consecrated him to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady, thought his dream would never be realised. Even the priests could give him little hope that he would ever get to the Seminary. Father Bourbon continued to advise and console him, but could offer no solution to the difficulties. The people of Richelieu, some sympathetic, some sarcastic, awaited the outcome with a deal of curiosity. Fillet made an attempt to help, but little financial assistance was forthcoming from her friends, and she was powerless to do much herself.

But Jules never lost faith and confidence in the Sacred Heart and Our Blessed Mother, praying daily before the Tabernacle that they one day would lead him to the Altar. In his "Notes Intimes", which he wrote in 1902, (and did not intend for publication) Father Chevalier mentions that his keen desire to be a priest and to give his life to Our Lord, went back to 1838, when he received his first Holy Communion, and made the retreat given by Father Redon⁽⁴³⁾ The missionary had impressed him by a sermon on Apostolic Vocations, and from then on he determined to be a priest. He writes; "I said to myself, deep down in my heart: "What a glorious calling it is to be a missionary? How happy I would be if God were to give me the grace to be one some day."⁽⁴⁴⁾

This sturdy faith was his support over the difficult period when there seemed little hope of achieving his ambition. His resignation to God's will, his naturally sensible disposition guarded him from any sentiments of bitterness or revolt. Of a natural, affable disposition he could hold no grudge against anyone even those who had been unkind to him. He took a special interest in the sick and the poor, and tried to help them where he could. Octavie Poiriei was able in later years to write this of him: "He was so good that he loved doing charitable acts for people, and if he had any spare time in the evening it was spent with some poor sick person. He seemed to gain this spiritual strength from his frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament."⁽⁴⁵⁾

As mentioned before his whole life centred around the church, his attendance at daily Mass, his participation in all the devotions and ceremonies and his friendship with the priests. He had free access to the presbytery, where he learnt to know the priestly life better, observing the rule of life of the priests, and learning to appreciate their spirit of self-sacrifice. In spite of all the religious indifference and atheism which were rife during this first half of the 19th century, Jules imbibed from these good priests some of their own zeal and devotion for the Cause of Christ. At a time when the world offered a young man so many attractions and pleasures he never wavered in his desire to serve God.

We must not think that he was entirely free from faults or was already a saint. He had his hasty impulsive temperament to contend with, and would have been subject to the ordinary temptations of youth, but the remarkable thing is that in spite of this temperament, in spite of the poverty-stricken nature of his home, in spite of the efforts of his companions to make him one of themselves, he grew in solid virtue during these delicate years between thirteen and seventeen, and had already put the stamp of a future priest and apostle on his youthful personality.

The long-awaited solution to his difficulties of entering the Seminary came unexpectedly in 1841. A certain Monsieur Juste, who was an administrator in the Forestry Department happened to book in at the Hotel du Faison in Richelieu. He himself lived in Brain-sur-Allones in the Maine-Loire district. It soon became news in the town that he was the brother of the Vicar General of Rouen.

One of the maids at the hotel happened to hear M. Juste remark over the dinner table that he was looking for a reliable caretaker for the forest near Vatan, which was owned by the Benedictines of Paris. This young lady happened to be a friend of the Chevaliers and knew that Jules' father had long since been tired of his work as a baker, and was anxious to find a more remunerative occupation and one more to his taste. After dinner she took it on herself to mention this to M. Juste giving M. Chevalier a high recommendation. She told him there was one difficulty: "He has a wife, and a boy who wants to be a priest."

"That doesn't matter" he replied, "as long as the man is suitable. Can he read and write, as that is necessary." She assured him he could.

The outcome was an interview with Jules' father, who made a good impression on his future employer. After discussing terms and arrangements a contract was drawn up and signed.

"I believe you have a son who wishes to be a priest. If you wish I will help him to enter the Seminary and be responsible for him."⁽⁴⁶⁾

And so, in March, 1841, when Jules was 17 years of age, the Chevalier family left Richelieu. They sold up their household effects and went off to Vatan in the Le Berry district. In December that year Monsieur Chevalier had his name inscribed in the Register of the Forestry Administration as official, mounted Caretaker of the forest of Vatan.⁽⁴⁷⁾

For Jules, Le Berry was an entirely new environment - quite different from La Touraine in its history, its outlook, its culture and its population. The agreement signed between M. Juste and his father now gave him the longed-for opportunity of realising his ambition of becoming a priest. He took Le Berry to his heart, this country which was to become his life-long field of apostolate, in a manner that he little dreamed of at present. Richelieu, with all its memories, was the stage on which had been played the drama of his childhood and youth; Le Berry was to be the theatre of his future life and activities.

It is difficult to say exactly what influence Richelieu had made on his young personality, but this we know that it was there in the very precincts of the parish church that his soul was inundated with his great love of the Blessed Eucharist, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Blessed Lady, and prepared in for his special vocation and the great work he was destined to perform in the Church.

CHAPTER II SAINT GAULTIER - THE JUNIOR SEMINARY

Vatan is a small country town in the Berry district situated in a large fertile plain about 21 miles north of Issoudun. In 1841 it had a population of about 3,000. The church there, built by the Templars, dates back to the year 1005, A.D.. It is crowded in between a row of squat houses and a large building called La Perrine. The structure is of wood standing on a stone basement. Some of the buttresses and a fine 11th Century tower recall the importance of the town in those days. Four miles from the town is La Buisson, the caretaker's cottage where the Chevaliers came to live.

The parish of Vatan is in the Deanery of Issoudun. The parish priest at that time was a Father Darnault. Father Chevalier wrote of him: "He was a man of great piety and faith, zealous and courageous, with a noble, generous character. During his long and laborious ministry he was never appreciated as his merits deserved."

On arriving at Vatan the Chevalier family called at the presbytery to pay their respects to the parish priest, who received them with kindness and interest. Monsieur Juste had already told him of Jules' intention and his own willingness, to help him. The Dean gave him every encouragement and asked his curate, Father Poldevese, to tutor him in his Latin studies. Every day Jules made the four miles journey from La Buisson to the presbytery to present his homework and carry on his lessons. He made such rapid progress that Father Darnault arranged for his admission to the Junior Seminary at Saint Gaultier. Actually the diocese had two seminaries - the one at Saint Gaultier in the ancient Priory of the Augustinians, and the other at Bourges.⁽¹⁾

Before leaving for the Seminary, Jules returned to Richelieu for a few days to say 'good-bye' to his old friends, especially the Poiriei family. His parting words to Monsieur Poirier have been recorded: "I am making my departure and taking the first step. I am not unaware of the difficulties that lie in my path, and even the heart-breaks, but I am putting my confidence in God, and the Blessed Virgin. I trust Providence will see me through. I expect all from the Good God and His Holy Mother."⁽²⁾

And so at the beginning of the month of October, 1841, he enters the seminary at Saint-Gaultier, in the diocese of Bourges. In this same month of October another young man - Charles Piperon - joined the Major Seminary of the diocese in the town of Bourges itself. Neither knew

the other or had the faintest idea of the designs Providence had in store for them. In later life their lot was to be thrown together, and Charles Piperon was to be an intimate friend of Jules Chevalier especially in the early days of the history of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Jules was now seventeen and a half years of age, and he entered the Junior Seminary full of joy and enthusiasm. The reality of Seminary life and the difficulties he encountered were sorely to test this enthusiasm. Father Piperon writes: "These initial stages of his training were extremely trying. He endured some heart-breaking hours."⁽³⁾ Father Chevalier himself in recalling these early days of hardship has written: "I remember most of the priests but especially one, whom I shall not name, to whom I owe my perseverance. I bless his memory."⁽⁴⁾ He was obviously referring to Monsignor Avee, the Rector of the Seminary, who had been a real friend to him.

The classes at the Junior Seminary commenced with 8th grade, but owing to his age and the fact that he had already begun his studies Jules was elevated to 6th grade. Even then he found himself amongst younger boys - of about 14 and 15 years of age - and here he struck his first big difficulty. He himself did not mind being amongst them, but boys of that age, whether Seminarians or not, can be thoughtless and rather cruel, and they seemed to resent the presence of this "old chap" in their class. This attitude came as a shock to Jules as he had expected a more mature outlook in a Seminary, even though the boys were comparatively young. At Richelieu he had kept to himself a lot, but now he thought he should mix more with his class-mates since they were striving for the same ideal - the priesthood. However, the boys, with exceptions of course, seemed to think he was too serious for them, and he really could not enter wholeheartedly into their boyish conversation, or take part in their games. He was too big, too old, too strong for them, they argued, while he, on his part, must often have thought that their main object in life was "catching birds". Coming up against this unexpected thoughtless, these petty jealousies and acts of unkindness, Jules was rather disillusioned and felt his position keenly. They little dreamed of the difficulties he had experienced and the sacrifices he had made in order to enter the Seminary. They did not hesitate to ridicule him when he made mistakes, or to make him a victim of their practical jokes. They did not realise that he was trying desperately to come down to their level and be one of them. "Boys at that age," he later remarked, "are rather heartless."

This was hardly in keeping with the dream he had entertained at Richelieu of what a training school for the priesthood would be. Was his vision of the future sublimity and glory of the life only a mirage? A Seminary, he thought should be a place of happiness and joy with a true religious spirit, but was he finding it here? The ideal was somewhat shattered by the reality, and the coveted horizons of the priesthood seemed ever more distant. He could still see them, but for the next eleven years it would be like struggling through a dark and almost impenetrable forest to reach them.

Apart from this positive difficulty with his class-mates, he naturally found other things hard during these first few months. The monotony and routine of student life did not come easily to him after the type of life he had led at Richelieu with its variety of work at the bootmaker's shop, his visits to the presbytery, his visits to the sick and the company of his father and mother. Here it was, day by day, the same old building, the same routine of bells and classes, the same faces.

Also, he did not find his studies over easy. His early schooling had been somewhat short and interrupted, and now he had to struggle with the minutiae of syntax and grammar, and to contend with the pitfalls of mathematics. He could only progress step by step, word by word, rule by rule. What seemed good enough at Richelieu was only routine work here. There he had thought that a priest's education was mainly concerned with learning Latin but he now realised there was much more to it than that.

We can appreciate, then, the obstacles and difficulties that this young man of seventeen encountered during his early training. Often disheartened, he wondered if he should go ahead, but his firm spirit of faith and piety, and his habit of prayer stood to him. Father Piperon, as mentioned before, had written that Jules had found this period very trying, but he also added "Happily, he was endowed with an energetic and determined character. Assured that God meant him to be a priest, he battled on, and responded to the calling."⁽⁵⁾

Fortunately, he had a good and wise friend in the Superior of the College, Father Claude Francois Avee. Born in 1789 at Issoudun this good priest had done his studies at Bourges, and after his ordination had been appointed to the teaching staff at Saint-Gaultier, where he later succeeded the Abbe Godin as Superior. He had an affable manner and was well liked by the students. Father Chevalier has written of him in his "Religious History of Issoudun": "Having gained the co-operation of the staff and the confidence of the students he endeavoured to introduce an atmosphere of home into the Seminary. He strove to bring a spirit of piety, discipline and study into the College. His goodness, his approachable nature, his 'savoir-faire' made him popular, and the students were anxious not to cause him any trouble. Should a boy show signs of dissipation, or manifest a bad spirit, he would call him aside, reason with him, and ask him to do better. If he found someone depressed, weary, or discouraged he would have a quiet talk with him, putting before him the ideal of his vocation. He frequently came to recreation with them, and often remarked: 'It is in their games and sport that they reveal their characters, and you are able to study them the better'. If a student were sick, he spared nothing to get him the best attention, and did everything himself to make him comfortable and restored his health. On the rare occasions when a death occurred he was inconsolable, and even shed tears for the dead boy."⁽⁶⁾

It was only in later years that Father Chevalier saw these early trials in their right perspective, and realised they were a God-given grace to test the worth of his vocation and the special mission, which unbeknown to himself in those days, Our Lord was to entrust to him. It was this realisation that gave him such an appreciation of Father Avee for tiding him over the difficult period. We must not think that all these early days in the Seminary were days of complete unhappiness and misery, as apart from the encouragement given him by Father Avee and the priests, he knew full well that he had only to correspond with grace to achieve his heartfelt desire, and the means were here before him. We venture to say they were mainly days of happiness. As a matter of fact, it is chiefly from Father Piperon that we learn about these early hardships, and not from himself. Most people experience difficulties in new surroundings and Seminarians are certainly no exception.

The following quotation from his "Notes Intimes" clearly indicates that he regarded the first few weeks at Saint-Gaultier as the crisis in his vocation. "The Devil tried his best to give me a distaste for this kind of life to which I was not accustomed. Hardly had a fortnight passed than I wanted to return home. Every day I asked Father Avee if I could go, but, being the prudent and wise priest that he was, he told me to wait till after the retreat, which was to be given by a Jesuit Father. 'Be patient and pray,' he said to me, 'and you will win through'. After the retreat, all my fears disappeared, and peace and joy filled my heart. Hell had been conquered." A typical case of homesickness and despondency. He even thought that the Seminary at Tours might be more suitable for him. He had a cousin and several friends there, and he thought their company would be a help. However in the light of subsequent history and his own particular mission in life as Founder of two Religious Congregations it was obvious that Divine Providence intended him to be precisely here at Saint-Gaultier in the diocese of Bourges, where the future field of his Apostolate lay. By becoming a member of the clergy of this diocese he was destined to be stationed at Issoudun which played such an intimate and important part in his life and mission. This is why in his "Notes" written in 1902 after he had founded the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart he remarks that this homesickness was a temptation of the Devil trying to destroy his vocation. It was not that he lost his desire to be a priest, but that the early obstacles at Saint-Gaultier discouraged him and made him want to return home. He could not see himself enduring these difficulties over several years.⁽⁷⁾

But Saint-Gaultier was where God wished him to be, and the Province of Berry, which he learnt to love was to be the field of his activities. We might say that he not only found a new country, but a new soul within himself. After the retreat he became his old bright self again, and his relations with the other students improved considerably. He became more used to his surroundings, and began to take a keen interest in the history and the affairs of the diocese. In every Seminary one finds a certain union, and common interest amongst students who are to be ordained

for a particular diocese. They speak about their home-towns, their parishes and the different modes of life each place and so the students learn the general nature of the diocese. Several of the students came from around the Issoudun district and Jules was always glad to hear of the place, even though in those days he little dreamt that he would ever be posted there. He would often hear them speak of the town's past history, particularly of the glorious resistance to the New Republic and its brutalities, which earned the inhabitants of Issoudun the name of "the Macchabees". The Superior, Father Avee, was also a native of Issoudun, and spoke of its religious history lamenting the fact that the parish had now declined and presented a great field for mission work. "It is the poorest parish in the diocese," he used to say.

And so gradually Jules became more mature in his outlook and more at home in this new life. It was as if the words in the Book of Genesis were being applied to him; "Leave your country, your people, the house of your father and go into a strange land that I will show you."⁽¹⁰⁾ Although he was no less serious in his outlook, the tension had gone, and his natural vivacity happiness returned to him. He made more allowances for the boyish nature of many of his companions, and again joined them in their games and sport. Even some of his own boyish impulsiveness began to show itself, as the following incident shows:

One fine Thursday, about the middle of his first Winter in Saint-Gaultier, probably early in 1842, the students went for a walk along the Route d'Argent in the direction of Conives, a small hamlet about five miles from the Seminary. After passing the Chateau de Ligondes there is a smaller branch road which leads to a fairly high and steep cliff, the top of which is covered in snow during winter months. On climbing the path to the summit one is rewarded with a magnificent panorama of the near-by river and the distant Thenay forest. However, no matter how beautiful the scenery may be many young people regard a cliff as a challenge to their climbing ability. Having gone to the top by the path and admired the view, Jules tempted two of the other students to make a direct descent with him over the boulders and through the thickets. All went well for a while, but about 40 feet from the bottom they began to slip and slide in the snow. His two companions were able to cling to some branches but in snatching at them, they bumped into Jules who lost his balance and went tumbling down the hill-side, finishing up in a thicket at the bottom. When the other students reached him he was unconscious. In their panic they thought he was dead. They carried him to the near-by Chateau, and did not realise that on the way his consciousness partly returned, although he could not move or open his eyes. All he could do was faintly hear what they were saying. He could hear them repeatedly saying that he was dead and he recalls thinking at the time: "Well, if I am dead, why hasn't my soul been already judged by God? I began pitying and asking for Divine Mercy."

In the Chateau, he showed no sign of reviving, and candles were lit around the bed, while the Rosary and De Profundis were recited. Meanwhile, some of the students had hurried back to the Seminary to break the sad news to the Superior and the Community. Father Avee immediately despatched the house-doctor to the Chateau, while he assembled the Community in the Chapel waiting to receive the corpse. A few minutes after the doctor arrived at the Chateau, Jules regained consciousness, opened his eyes, and asked where he was. A few of the students almost died of fright themselves. The doctor gave him a thorough examination and announced that except for some rather severe bruises to his head and body he was all right. With his clothes in tatters, Jules was carefully placed in the doctor's carriage and taken back to the Seminary. It was now about 9 o'clock at night.

Hearing the carriage approaching, Father Avee and the Community came out to meet it. We can imagine their great shock when Jules sat up and remarked: "But Father, I am not dead." The old priest, who had actually been crying when he had announced the news in the chapel was upset for several days; Jules was placed in the Infirmary, but recovered quickly enough to take his place in the class-room on the following Monday morning, adorned with a number of bruises and scars.⁽¹²⁾

This close call to death left a longer impression on Jules' soul that it did on his body. Even ten years later Father Piperon tells us, he used to speak of it with emotion.

(Note: Father Piperon has wrongly dated the accident at the end of Father Chevalier's Juniorate, so it would have been about 15 years later in 1855 the year the Founder first mentioned the title "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to his confreres - that this conversation between the two priests took place. Later on we will see that one of the reasons which inspired Father Chevalier to call Our Lady by that title was gratitude for preserving his during the fall down the cliff).⁽¹³⁾

We have it not only from Father Piperon, but also from his teachers and contemporaries at St.-Gaultier that Jules did become very pensive and solemn after the accident. In his "Memoir of the Origin of the Society" Father Piperon has this to say:

"Until then he had been a good scholar devoted to his work, a pious seminarian, regular in his religious exercises, but showing at times faults of temperament from which even the best of seminarists are not exempt. Henceforth he became more serious, faith guiding his every action. His recollection was more pronounced. His teachers and fellow students have said that the interior man in him seemed to be entirely renewed, 'he became a model to us all'. He had seen death so close."⁽¹⁴⁾ We may state from these definite testimonies of his contemporaries that his life at Saint-Gaultier was spiritually divided into two periods, the one before his accident full of doubts and difficulties: and that afterwards when he concentrated on striving for perfection. He had already made such an impression on his Superiors that even though, in spite of the formal agreement, no fees were paid for his education after two years they never hesitated to keep him at the Seminary.⁽¹⁵⁾

When he was recalling these days towards the end of his life he was not quite as enthusiastic about his virtue as his class-mates had been. "I should have been confirmed in grace after such a miraculous protection from death been an edification to my fellow students, but that was not the case. I did try to keep the rule and be a good student, but I am afraid my lively heart had lost nothing of its impulsiveness." To prove his contention he quoted an incident which happened shortly after the accident: "One day during this same year I was in the chapel making a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament as we usually did after classes, after dinner and before recreation. I was on my knees when two students came in and knelt behind me. They seemed to like teasing new-comers, and one of them pulled my hair and gave me a gentle push in the back. This was repeated at least three times. Instead of getting up and leaving the chapel, which I probably should have done, I turned around and gave him a resounding slap on the jaw. He evidently did not forget it, as he never tried it again."⁽¹⁶⁾

At the end of his first year the authorities saw fit to put him in 4th class, thus missing the 5th grade. Some have expressed the opinion that this was at the risk of neglecting certain subjects, although he was already proficient in Latin⁽¹⁷⁾. However, Octavie Poirier, who always seems well informed on the details of these days, has stated that he passed from 4th Grade having completed the regular course of studies.⁽¹⁸⁾ Personally this was a help to him as he found himself amongst students more or less of his own age.

One story of this period is amusing enough to narrate. He had been put in charge of supervising the Junior dormitory. One very cold winter's night he was awakened by a noise at the foot of his bed. He opened his eyes, and saw what he thought was a ghost holding a candle, which was casting weird shadows around the dormitory. Although very scared, he was conscious of his duty, and quietly got out of bed, making a grab at the candle. It happened to be the Rector, Father Avee who had decided, on account of the freezing night, to do the rounds and see if all his charges were well covered.⁽¹⁹⁾

Jules reached 2nd class in the due course of events. He was then old enough for military service, but his father had put his name into a ballot for exemption, and he was lucky enough to draw a favourable number. As he was going on holidays to his family, the Superior permitted him to wear a soutane.

His family had returned to Richelieu, as Monsieur Juste had retired and the new man in charge had taken care of the Vatan forests himself. Jules father was offered a good position in his old home town as Rural Guard and beadle.⁽²⁰⁾ When the people of Richelieu saw Jules in his

soutane they concluded he had already entered the Major Seminary. This no doubt gave rise to the rumour that he went through the Junior Seminary in four years.

One day during his holidays he was chatting with a group of his old friends, when one of them said; "Now that you are free from military service, you ought to leave the Seminary and get a good position in civil life. You would do well." Jules replied: "Sorry, but I am determined to be a priest, I am not interested in what the world has to offer me." The tone of his reply cut short the conversation.⁽²¹⁾

During these holidays the family were reunited for the first time in many years. His married brother who lived in Paris and his married sister who lived in Tours returned to Richelieu for a few weeks. They naturally had plenty to discuss, and in the course of one conversation they suggested to Jules that now that he seemed assured of becoming a priest, he should interest himself in the welfare of their children. Many priests, they told him had helped their families and secured good positions for their nephews and nieces. But Jules thought this was a rather mercenary outlook on his vocation and hastened to remark. "If you are counting on me to do the same thing I am afraid you will be sadly disappointed. If I become a priest, I will be working in the service of God, and not that of my family. It will be to win souls for Jesus Christ, and not to enrich my family."⁽²²⁾

After the holidays, Jules returned to Saint-Gaultier for his last year in the Junior Seminary. He went into Rhetoric Class. In his "Notes" Father Chevalier refers to a great grace he received during this final year, namely that of breaking off a particular friendship he had formed with one of the students. He does not tell us when this friendship began, but we can gather from the "Notes" that it dated from his early days at the Seminary, when he was home-sick and finding things difficult. Writing some sixty years later about this inordinate affection he gives us the impression that it was something serious. However, in all his writings Father Chevalier had the habit of introducing moral reflections amongst the facts he was recording, and this often unduly emphasised the gravity of a situation. We cannot be sure that in this case it was not anything that went wrong that was worrying him, but what could have gone wrong. "O God", he writes, "how I thank You, in the light of my numerous faults, for opening my eyes, and stopping me on the brink of disaster."⁽²³⁾ He regarded the forfeiting of this friendship as the condition God required of him for greater holiness of life and union with Our Lord. This renunciation, which we often find even in the life of great mystics, was to him the necessary means of his personal sanctification and the fulfillment of the special work God had in store for him. To place this friendship in its right perspective we may consider the following points:

A strong friendship in student's life is not necessarily a harmful one. On the contrary healthy friendships can often be a source of mutual help and encouragement. The testimony of his confreres that Jules was always most particular about the Rule, and that he was regarded as a model amongst them, surely indicates that they did not regard this friendship of several years standing as anything abnormal. Also, if Father Depigny is correct in giving the name of this friend, we are doubly reassured that it was just a strong mutual understanding and affection. The friend followed Jules to the Major Seminary twelve months after his own entry, and continued to call him by his Christian name.⁽²⁴⁾

The following extracts from his "Notes" puts the whole matter in its right perspective:

"There was never anything bad in our relations with one another. Our conversation usually was on pious subjects, on our studies, on the best ways of being good students and later on, good priests".⁽²⁵⁾ "I had, unhappily, formed too great a natural affection for him. He was always in my thoughts, and this became a big distraction for me. Even during my prayers and in the Chapel I would be thinking of him. I sought his company at recreation, and was always delighted when in his presence." Looking back after all the year's he continued; "My Last two years were spent in tepidity and dissipation. I waited with impatience my entry to the Major Seminary."⁽²⁶⁾

Father Piperon merely states: "In Rhetoric he received a great grace which was the means of lifting him up to a state of higher perfection."⁽²⁷⁾

Some time later Jules left Saint-Gaultier for good. After his holidays at Richelieu, he entered the Major Seminary at Bourges. This was a decisive step in his life. He was to be incardinated into this diocese, to spend his life there as a priest, and as yet unbeknown to himself, to become the Founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

CHAPTER III.

BOURGES THE MAJOR SEMINARY

History of the Town and Province of Bourges

Bourges was the capital of the ancient Province of Berry, which was divided into Upper and Lower Berry. Vatan and Saint-Gaultier where we have been following Jules' early life were in Lower Berry, while Bourges, a richer and more developed country, was in the Upper part. In 1790 "The Constitution" gave the name of "L'Indre" to Lower Berry and "Cher" to the Upper division, but the inhabitants of the Berry territory regard themselves as one people, and the Church has respected this sentiment in the light of their common history, and has made the boundaries of the old Province in the main those of the Archdiocese. Bourges is the seat of the Archbishopric with its several Suffragantries.

At Saint-Gaultier Jules had already heard many of the stories concerning the glorious past of Bourges and its environs. Fifty years later he incorporated several of them in his "Religious History of Issoudun".⁽¹⁾ Originally the "Berry-ites" were known as Bituriges - a name which itself proves the antiquity of the district. They tell us that in the Chaldaic and Armenian languages "Bit" meant "Son of" and the rest of the word refers to "Ogyges" - the founder of the city who was a grand-son of Japhet. Without being too sure of it Father Chevalier seems to give credence to the legend.⁽²⁾ According to an ancient historian, whom he calls the Abbe Monveron, the Bourges area was known to the Cimbres as "Avvoeric", which meant "the kingdom of the Ancients" or "The most ancient of the Kingdoms". This accounts for the Latin names. "Avaricum" for the town, and "Avara" for the river that flows near-by. (Now called L'Yevre). An historian called Chameau in 1562 claimed that the town dates back to the year 134 after the Deluge, which even when he made his calculations would give it the respectable old age of 3,733 years.

Father Chevalier does not mention these figures. He is on surer ground when he quotes Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars. He learnt there that the Celts had settled in this region to apply themselves to agriculture and breeding of live-stock. Their strongholds on the heights were no longer sufficient, so they migrated to the plain, where they built their fortifications. (Actually some of the masonry used around Bourges was similar in type to that used 1000 years before the time of Our Lord). Bourges itself would have been the main political centre of this region of France, even though it may not have reached the solid municipal unity of the Averni who, under the leadership of Vercingetorix, put up such a magnificent fight against Caesar.

In the story of the Gallic Wars, Bourges earns the striking tribute from Caesar that it was the most beautiful town of the region - "pulcherrimam prope totius Galliae urbem". It was the custom of the people in the smaller hamlets to burn their crops and even their houses before the approach of the all-conquering Caesar - "the policy of the burnt earth." When it came to Bourges' turn, the people begged the National Assembly to let them defend their beloved town. Apart from its narrow entrance there were streams and marshes on all sides, and this gave them hope of success. However Caesar had no trouble in taking the town and reducing it to ashes.⁽³⁾

Father Chevalier notes that many historians state that Issoudun was one of the 200 villages burnt during Caesar's campaign. The survivors of Bourges and the neighbouring towns left their burnt ruins and went off to found a new place to live, called Biturgale, which is now actually the town of "Bordeaux"⁽⁴⁾ The Bourges people of today like to remind the Bordeaux-ians of this fact.

The Ecclesiastical History of the Bourges Diocese.

In his historical notes it is obvious that Father Chevalier was more interested in the history of Christianity in his adopted country than in its secular history. "Christianity", he said, "changed the whole nature of the country." (5) In a series of articles in the magazine "Semaine Religieuse du Diocese de Bourges", and later included in the brochure "Apostolicity of the Principal Churches of France?" he has written at length on the glories of the early history of the diocese. He was inclined to agree with the many authors who followed Faillon's manuscript, published in the 8th or 9th century, that Saint Ursin, the first Bishop of Bourges, was not a disciple of the seven bishops sent from Rome to France in the time of the Emperor Decius, but of a person who had witnessed the life and Passion of Our Lord, possibly the Nathaniel of the Gospels. This would confirm also the tradition that the church in Issoudun itself went back to almost Apostolic times, as Saint Ursin is supposed "to have built two churches there". (6) However, as he stated he was quite prepared to leave these details of the obscure origin to the competent authorities. (8)

In Bourges then during the days of his training he recalled the glorious and venerable history of the centuries as he gazed upon its monuments and ruins. Here in this picturesque setting on the slopes of the rocky Sancerrois, whence flow La Langis and La Moulan, where the waters of the Yevrette and Yevre meet to make their way to the Cher, Jules would have often contemplated the splendour of the past.

The town in those days had a population of some 22,000 people from about 5,500 homes. Today Bourges is modern enough with its Canal du Berry, its good roads and railways connecting it with the other towns of France, but in Jules' time the mark of antiquity was visible everywhere. Spread over a large area the houses, most with gardens and court-yards, were often separated by areas of cultivation and the numerous boulevards followed the contours of the old fortifications, some of which had as many as 80 towers. A few of these still stand today. Around the town the lime soil is fertile enough, and there are plenty of farms and gardens.

Early in the 3rd Century the Senator Leocadius donated a house and some land to Bishop Ursin for the use of the Christians. On this site three successive Cathedrals have stood in their grandeur over the centuries. The last - the Cathedral of St. Etienne - was commenced towards the end of the 12th Century, and was one of the most beautiful Gothic structures of that period in France. On the summit of a hill it dominated the town with its inspiring towers and flying buttresses. Its high arched vault, its numerous stained-glass windows, its sixty columns, its four side-naves, each with its own impressive entrance made it truly a majestic and imposing building. The front steps led to a wide terrace over which was a facade "eloquent in shadows" - an imitation of Notre Dame de Laon. The five frontal porticos were richly adorned with statues, the central one with the striking figure of Christ and the tympan of the Last Judgment. Today some of the statues have deteriorated somewhat; others have entirely disappeared, but what remains gives us an idea of the original value of the work.

It is a Cathedral in the full sense that the Middle Ages attached to the meaning of the word - namely - the expression of the pride of the people in their Faith, a living Faith shown over the centuries, as also an expression of their efforts and sacrifices in building it. Begun in 1180, it was eventually consecrated in 1324. In the 15th Century the Northern Tower had to be reconstructed, as it developed some flaws, and was causing concern. The last of the stained-glass windows were put in in the 17th century, while the oldest of them, which have been described as "red and blue checker-work which give the appearance of a mosaic" belong to the 13th century. Those which represent the adoration of the Magi came from the school of Chartres where "the gentle creators of dreams installed their furnaces." (8)

Gillet has written of these Cathedrals of France; "One must see them steeped in the history of the towns which they have made and which they are still carrying through the sort of life like great dream-ships. They have been the monuments of the cities. The people of other days did not regard them merely as places of empty ceremonies; their houses grew up around them as though they were the family host. The Cathedral is one of the immortal features of the life of France - of a people of Faith."

Jules' heart must have been filled with emotion and sadness every time he visited the Cathedral and saw this past splendour spent and shattered. It had always been such an intimate part of the life of the town, but now in the spiritual sense it interested only a small portion of the people.

What then had happened to this Faith? The Cathedral with its delapidated desertion, and broken statues clearly gave the answers, as did every other aspect of Religion. The churches, pillaged, damaged, ruined, occupied by the civil powers, were testimony to the decadence of society. Jules beheld it with his own eyes; he heard his teachers and class-mates speaking of it; he noticed it in the decline in priestly vocations; he read about it in the reviews, papers and books widely distributed in his time. He read the complaints about the irreligious state of France in the Catholic magazines. Father Dufliche Desgenettes summed it up thus: "Impiety of the masses, stupid indifference of the majority, a few faithful souls, but sparse and rare. Materialism openly and brazenly professed; the Religion of Jesus Christ rejected; His Divine Sacraments - our one resource on earth - despised and abandoned; the days consecrated to Our Lord without sanctification, profaned by monstrous and criminal debaucheries; the corruption of morals even among youth and children, and to complete this hideous picture - suicide taken as a matter of course. That is the deplorable state of our France at present." (9) Behold then what remained of the great spirit of Faith that built the Cathedrals".

But Jules was also able during these days of his scholasticate to study and admire the evidence and relics of another France - the glorious memory of the old Royal race of Saint Louis with its battles - but also with its loyalty to the Church. The first great royal event which Bourges witnessed was the Coronation of Louis XI in the ancient Cathedral. The town also played an important role in the Hundred Years' War against England, in the Great Western Schism, and in the Civil War between the Armagnacs and Bourguignen. John of France, the tutor of Charles VI and Charles VII lived there, and was often called "John of Bourges". When Charles VII was Dauphin he fled to Bourges with the help of Tanneguy du Chatel at the time when John the Fearless took Paris. There, as Regent till the death of his father, he set up the Government of France, and Bourges housed the Royal family for many years. It was there that Louis XI, his son, was born. Later Louis was to set up a University in his native town. In the garden of the ancient Seminary, which was used as a barracks in Jules Chevalier's time, there can still be seen the remains of the Tower where Louis XI, then Duke of Orleans was interned. Two other names well known in French history are associated with Bourges. The first is that of Saint Joan of France, daughter of Louis XI who founded there the Sisters of the Annunciation, and the other, that of Jacques Coeur, the famous paymaster of Charles VII, whose coat of arms can still be seen on many of the neighbouring monuments, and who brought a prosperity to Bourges previously unknown.

During the Wars of Religion, Bourges was captured by Montgomery. It has known its own St. Bartholemew's Day. After its capture it paid homage to Henry IV, but became entirely Royalist again under Louis XIV.

JULES AT THE SEMINARY. HIS STUDIES. SPIRITUAL FORMATION.

In this historic milieu, so rich in memories of Church and Royalty, Jules commenced his studies of Philosophy and Theology.

Since the year 1822, the Seminary was situated in La Rue des Arenes, what used to be the old Ursuline Convent. It was a very large building whose plan Father Chevalier more or less followed when building the Monastery at Issoudun. In 1907, by virtue of the 'Law of Separation' it was confiscated by the Government. Ironically enough it then became the 'Palais de Justice'. The small Oratory of the garden, where Jules celebrated his First Mass has been pulled down, and the gardens have become part of the City Park. In this old building Jules Chevalier did his major studies from October 1846 to mid June 1851.

During the fifties of the previous century the Church had decided to reorganise methodically the life of the French Seminaries, a thing she could not do before on account of the Revolution and its aftermath. This reform coincided, as far as the diocese of Bourges was concerned, with the arrival of two prominent men, who were to have a great influence in the formation and work of Jules Chevalier. On 24th April, 1842, Mgr. Jacques, Marie Antoine Celesti Villefranche Du Pont was transferred from Avignon to Bourges as Archbishop and in August of the same year the Superior of the Major Seminary at Avignon, the Sulpician priest, Francois Theophile Ruel rejoined his Archbishop in order to replace his confrere, Father Renaudet, as Superior of the Seminary. This change had been brought about as a consequence of a rather solid difference of opinion

between M. Renaudet and the Archbishop on matters liturgical. The Archbishop, Sardinian by birth, Roman by training and coming from a region where the Roman liturgy had been in use for centuries, was firmly determined, in accordance with the wishes of the Holy Father, to introduce the Roman spirit and liturgy into his new diocese.(10) On the other hand, Father Renaudet, born in Bourges itself, and having taught there in both the Junior and Major Seminaries, was strictly partisan in outlook and favoured the local liturgy. For many years he had worked at the codification of the local Ceremonial and had just brought out a new edition of "Les Offices Notes"(11) Since he still was not prepared to accept the Archbishop's views, he was recalled by the Superior of the Sulpicians, and Father Ruel, who had got on well with the Archbishop at Avignon, was sent to take his place. Father Ruel was then 37 years of age. He was not altogether unknown at Bourges, as he had taught Moral Theology there before becoming Superior of the Major Seminary at Avignon.(12) If it was left to the Archbishop to introduce the Roman spirit and liturgy into the diocese, it was the function of Father Ruel to inspire the Seminarists with new zeal and enthusiasm. We are told in the official history of the Seminary: "He applied himself wholeheartedly to awakening in the house a greater ardour for study and for a more tender piety."(13)

Father Ruel strove to direct this piety and spirituality along the lines of the Sulpician tradition, while taking into account the opinions of the other professors and the nature of the Seminary of which he was in charge. And, as we will see later on some of the professors did not wholly approve of Jules and his "Ultra-Montaine" ideas, and he struck a certain amount of trouble with them. However, Divine providence had brought Father Ruel to Bourges and happily he was to become the Spiritual Director of Jules, and finally to be the guide and protector of his vocation - a protection which had the approval of the Bishop.

The first big change introduced by Father Ruel was to lengthen the course of studies from four to five years. That was in 1844, two years before Jules arrived at the College. He also insisted that besides Philosophy and Theology, a course in the Sciences must be included in the curriculum, being aware of the changing nature of the times.

Anyone who examines closely the unfavourable opinion about the intellectual state of the French Seminaries of this period must admit that it has mainly been formed on the remarks of a few contemporaries and not on a scientific investigation. There is plenty of evidence in books and biographies of the time to contradict this opinion, and we have only to consider the great number of gifted and zealous priests that the Seminaries of the time did produce to refute the accusation that they were of low intellectual standard. Certain aspects of Seminary life of that period have often been discussed such as the intrinsic value of the various methods of studies, the influence of a scientific course in the future ministry of a priest, the reason for the apostasy of the masses etc. and these discussions may have confused the question in point. On the other hand, all the propaganda for 'higher clerical studies' and the Utopian ideals set forth only obscure the issue. Chanoine Cristani in reviewing the period has written; "The picture that is painted of the students wasting their time on this study and that is nearer caricature than fact.... As to being able to refute Kant and Hegel it is only a joke to ask it of them.(14) In endeavouring to answer the question whether the Seminarists of the time did receive a proper training for their future ministry we can only judge by the results, taking into consideration the nature of the period and the average intellectual standard of the people amongst whom they were to work"

Happily we possess enough documents on the studies of Father Chevalier to form a serious opinion on his philosophical and theological courses and his ability to deal with them. The Notes which he made during his Scholasticate are fortunately available to us, and even if they are incomplete, they still cover more than 400 pages (some 14,600 lines) of small, carefully ruled writing. And in the light of future discussions on his ability, it is interesting to find these resumes of the systems not only of Lamennais, Bautain and Hermes, but of Kant himself.(15) These Notes afford us the opportunity of a comparison between the methods of study in those days and our own. Nowadays each subject is treated as fully as possible in class by the various professors, but in Jules time, mainly owing to the shortage of staff, the students themselves had to cover some subjects by making written analyses out of class and then presenting them to the professors. This personal study seems to have applied at Bourges particularly to Sacred Scripture and Church History. This was not only done during the term, but set-work was given the students to be completed during the holidays - "Holiday Home Work". In his Notes Father Chevalier has indicated what work he did during the vacations. In order to gain an independent and unbiased opinion of the Notes we thought it would be interesting to give them to a present day student of theology. This student has done very well in his own exams and is considered by his professors to have good judgment and talent. He was given a double task - that of making a catalogue of the various theological matters mentioned, and that of noting what attracted his attention in them. When that was done he was asked to make a general criticism of the Notes. He was quite unaware of any reason for making this request. Here is what he says regarding the matter and the system of teaching:

"What struck me most of all was that the questions were treated in a more profound and detailed way than I would have imagined. This was very evident in spite of the fact that the matter is mainly contained in resumes and notes. This is a pity! One is struck by the different mentality brought to the study of Philosophy from that of Theology. The French Idealism and Subjectivism seems to pervade the whole atmosphere of the Philosophy. All is seen from within, from the spirit. The names of the philosophers quoted and explained speak for themselves: Plato, Descartes, Leibnitz etc. On the other hand the approach to the study of Theology is much the same as that of our own, today.

Many of the annotations to the philosophical Notes are quite modern, and would certainly interest any student today. Numerous authors of the various periods are dealt with and summarily refuted, including the "thinkers" of the period. However, the order is always quite logical, and there is a laudable economy of words. The tract on Ethics is much more in the traditional style than the rest.

With Theology the method of study is much the same as our own. We have the accepted classical Tracts with their subdivisions and their arguments, which are brief, well set out and "in forma". Perhaps some of the arguments from Scripture and Tradition seem a little superficial and the exegesis not scientific enough, although it is obvious the students knew their Bible. A happy surprise is to find so many side notes on the history of the various outstanding problems. Noticeable also is the emphasis put on the Tracts De Religione and De Ecclesia, especially on the subject of the Internal Structure of the Church."

Father Chevalier writes: "I did my Philosophy in Descartes of whose genius the professor never tired of talking, and my Theology in Bailly, who we were told, "was a practical author, and sure in his opinions." God gave me the grace not to share these sentiments. The Cartesian theory seemed to be false and dangerous. I challenged it in class in spite of the respect due to the professor. As regards the theories of Bailly, the Arch-Gallican, especially on the Constitution of the Church, the General Councils, the Papacy etc., I instinctively held them in horror. The discussions often became ardent and heated. I was regarded as an "Ultra-Montaine", but I was not the only one. Nearly all the students were against the author and the teacher.(16)

The same position held in the other Seminaries. Doubtless the students at Bourges were encouraged in their rebellion against Bailly as a text book by the knowledge that their Archbishop was openly Roman in his sympathies, and that even before he became a Cardinal in 1847, he had introduced the Roman Liturgy into his diocese, and was endeavouring to educate his clergy to think with Rome.(18) The good judgment of Jules and his colleagues was vindicated when in 1852 the Manual of Bailly was put on the Index "donec corrigatur".

Strange enough, although Jules vigorously opposed the anti-Roman doctrine of Bailly in the Dogmatic Theology classes, he did not protest against his rigorous moral teachings, a clear proof of his own rigorous outlook and attitude at this period of his life.(18) Later on, of course, Jules Chevalier reacted against this severe and tense outlook, so foreign to the type of spirituality which was to become his own. But during these early years of his scholasticate it seemed to accord with his own state of soul. Father Piperon has written of this period; "The life of Abbe Chevalier was very severe."(19)

What then were the intellectual capabilities of Jules Chevalier during the course of his superior studies? In an article in the *Analecta* of the Society, 1929, there are two statements the truth of which is at least debatable. To a question put by Mlle. Marchant, Father Maugenest is reported

to have replied; "I know that at the beginning of his studies it was doubted if Jules Chevalier was intelligent enough to be a priest", but he added: "Whether the Directors of the Seminary shared that doubt, or whether they hesitated to receive him I do not know." Whatever may be admitted about any early doubts they certainly could not apply to the later stages of his scholasticate.(20) There was no hesitation in giving him his Sub-Diaconate on 8th April, 1850 and he left the Seminary soon after in June, 1851. The second statement clearly refers to the years of his Philosophy: "He had great difficulty in applying himself to his Philosophy, and his friends more endowed with intelligence than himself used to try during recreation to teach him what was given in class."(21)

The two statements obviously refer to the first two years, but Father Piperon himself makes very light of any difficulties of this period, and immediately goes on to say: "In any case, if there were doubts, they were quickly dispelled. Very soon Jules Chevalier was regarded amongst the good "scholars." The opinion of Father Piperon, who had not enthused about Jules' intellectual capabilities at Saint-Gaultier, perhaps unreasonably so, is a better guide to the true position, and his evidence is reliable and first-hand.(22) In commenting on the discussion he wrote in 1912: "Virtue alone is not sufficient for the priest. Science and learning are also necessary. Without these qualifications his sublime ministry could become an occasion of ruin, not only to himself, but to others. Firmly convinced of this double need Father Chevalier applied himself to his studies with the same zeal and ardour as he did to acquiring the virtues of his holy calling. If for a start the professors did not find in him any outstanding or brilliant intellectual promise, and even if they did doubt for a while if he would get through, the doubts were soon dispelled. He was soon regarded as amongst the good scholars. His relentless application soon enabled him to overcome his inner difficulties and to catch up on the time lost by his late entry to the Seminary. He was now revealing the intelligence which perforce had been too long latent.(23, 24) Here then, we have just an average student, but one who was achieving good results by his zeal and hard work. He was endowed with a clear and practical judgment, a strong will which no difficulty could shake.(25) To quote Father Piperon again: "Others have been gifted with .. more active and fertile brain, but rare are the men who did so much work as Jules Chevalier."(26)

Rev. Father Pasquier, who had been a professor at Bourges since 1875, the Superior since 1894 till the expulsion of the Sulpicians, remembered one of the brief reports on Jules in the Seminary register: "Excellent in piety, average in intelligence."(27)

The young seminarist whose opinion we sought on Father Chevalier's scholastic notes has added to his previous remarks: "They must have worked hard at Bourges especially Jules Chevalier, who was most faithful in taking his notes and making his resumes. He did this always with clarity and precision, even if one does not find any brilliant personal comments there. It is obvious that he clearly understood what had been taught in class and he was able to summarise briefly what he had heard and read. One would say that he had a predilection for the grand fundamental truths, and his special gift was: clarity.

To sum up then: From the above evidence presented by those who have studied the question quite independently and from different angles, we can definitely say that as a seminarist, Jules Chevalier was a sincere and hardworking student, who got very good results without having any exceptional intellectual gifts.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

In any seminary, of course, the main training is in things spiritual, and so the Rule and the spiritual exercises form the framework of each day. On this point Father Piperon has written: "The life in a seminary is necessarily regular. Each hour is occupied from the time of rising to time of retiring. All goes according to Rule, and the Rule does not change. The week begins by carrying on the occupations with which the last one finished. The prayers the studies, the joyful recreations fill up each day. "Days of work and weariness," the cynic might say. Rather, "days of fruitful work and virtue" the good seminarist and priest will reply. What true priest does not recall with nostalgic happiness the cherished memories of his Seminary days?(28)

The Sulpician Society has always fostered in its Seminaries a good and friendly relationship between the professors and the students, and it is justly proud of having preserved the spirit and ideal of its Founder in this respect. This amicable spirit certainly held during Father Chevalier's years at Bourges. The Rule of the Bourges Seminary was old, older even than the book which contained it. It was titled: "Regulations of the Major-Seminary of Bourges, 1829". The sub-title read: "General Statutes for the Seminaries of St. Sulpice, drawn up at the Grand-Seminary of Bourges" (25) The Rule was probably formulated by M. Olier, and definitely re-edited by his second successor, M. Ironson (1676-1700).

Levesque has an interesting observation to make on the spirit and the observance of the Rule at Bourges: "The method of obtaining fidelity to the Rule in this Seminary was different from that in the seminaries of St. Charles, where they relied on continual, and often mistrusting, supervision. Here the onus was put mainly on the conscience of the seminarist, his response to friendliness and confidence, his reaction to a paternal discipline, which expected a more spontaneous obedience. Moreover, the community life between the professors and students was closer than in the other seminaries in Paris, There the teaching staff, while living in the same house, made their exercise apart from the students, leaving one of the priests on supervision. At Saint Sulpice priests and students followed the same rule, made their spiritual exercises together, their prayers, their particular examen, their divine Office. Even the recreations were taken together as far as possible. Thus the day was regulated under the common rule, and all were expected to keep it. This common life, this close contact, this mutual example had the observance more by individual conscience than by duress."(30) But, after all, the rule is only the exterior safeguard of the spiritual life - the foundation on which the ascetical life is built.

Ruel, the Superior of the Seminary, was very conscious of this fact, and just as he had lifted the standard of the studies, so he endeavoured to inculcate a strong yet tender piety into the life of his charges. For the rest, he was content to let the work of the Holy Spirit take effect in their lives. This good and wise Superior believed in respecting the difference in personality in each of his students, and this is why he encouraged any sensible initiative, not only in matters of study, but also in their spiritual activities. For instance, when in 1846 a group of students asked permission to form a literary and discussion club - this would have been a short time before Jules arrived - it was readily given, and he even encouraged them to discuss the then delicate topics of the Roman Rite, the supreme authority of the Sovereign Pontiff etc.. (31) Whether these discussions had anything to do with the opposition to the professor in class, we do not know. Jules himself was allowed to form a 'Spiritual Group' called "The Small Society of Seminarists of Good Will", which had a larger membership and a longer life than the literary club.

We cannot stress too much the influence of Father Ruel on the life of our Father Founder. His appointment to Bourges as Superior and Rector was really a great blessing for Jules. He encouraged him in his studies and his spirit of piety; he kept assuring him that he had a priestly vocation, and that Our Lord wanted him; he became, we might say, the protector of that vocation, and all this in an atmosphere of confidence and esteem. Their friendship lasted long after Seminary days, and for Father Ruel, Father Chevalier always remained "Jules".(32) Not only did he help him over difficulties during these days of his training, but after ordination he assisted him, even financially at times especially when Jules was about to "launch out into the deep" with his new foundation. Father Ruel followed every step of this venture with interest and benevolence. Though he had no idea during the days of training of the plans of Divine Providence for Jules, we can say it was mainly Father Ruel who had fostered in the future Founder that particular spirit and type of spirituality which was to characterise him and his followers later on. By his broadness of outlook, and by his respect for the action of the Holy Ghost in individual souls, he had allowed Jules to develop completely, freely and harmoniously.

Another outstanding Sulpician who had a profound influence on Jules was Rev. Father Gabriel, Etienne, Joseph Mollevant.(33) This priest seems to have been one of the notable personalities in ecclesiastical circles during this period. For years the Sulpician Novice Master, he was much in demand for missions and retreats; he was the confidant of Bishops, Religious Superiors, and especially Directors of Seminaries. In spite of what

appeared to be an unconcerned and detached manner, his extraordinary personality made a deep impression on all who met him. Father de Ravignan, S. J. wrote of him to his mother on 5th May, 1822; "This Father Mollevaut is a man of God - as unconcerned and detached as I would like my own soul to be. When Father Frayssinous told me in Paris to go and see him, he said: "Whatever he tells you about your future vocation, you will be as peaceful as if God Himself had told you".(34) Father de Ravignan all through his life had a deep and tender veneration for this priest who after the retreat simply said to him: "You are going to be a Jesuit."(35) Another testimony from Achille Valroger indicates that Father Mollevaut was not just the severe unbending type of holy person, but kind and understanding - "He insisted on my taking plenty of rest whenever I was sick."(36) The Abbe Bernard tells us that when he was appointed Vicar General of Cambrai he sought advice from Father Mollevaut, who had always been his confidant and director(37) and this is what he told him; "Always speak simply, warmly and practically - like St. Ligouri, whom you ought to learn off by heart. Never forget Mary. Keep the customary and popular devotions. I am convinced of the truth of the words of St. Vincent de Paul that all the calamities in the world happen because of bad priests. The only way to reform the world is to give it good priests."(38)

As Superior of the Novitiate House "La Solitude", and as Superior at Saint Sulpice, he was entirely dedicated to the formation of future priests. His great desire was to restore the ancient rule and the customs of Saint Sulpice of which he himself was a good example. He became a specialist in Seminary life, and his advice was sought not only by the Directors of other Seminaries, but by the bishops themselves. During holiday time they used to gather around him and listen to his lectures. His devotion to Our Blessed Lady was outstanding. During his many missions in the various parishes he inspired many a boy to become a missionary.

A brief biographical note on this remarkable priest would not be out of place. He certainly crowded plenty of experience into his years. Born on 10th March 1774 at Nancy, he grew up desiring to be a priest and to follow in the foot-steps of his uncle and god-father, the parish priest of St. Vincent. However, his father, afraid of the disturbed state of the Church in those revolutionary days, would not give his consent, and they went to Paris, where he was appointed to the Court of Appeal. He became Secretary to Serbonelli a high dignitary of the Republic at Milan and was enrolled in the army in 1795. During these years he became careless about the practice of his Faith. After the year 1800 he began studying seriously, and became a professor of Classical languages at Nancy, and later at Metz. Gradually he returned to the practice of his religion and in the epidemic of 1813 he heroically spent his time looking after the sick. The desire to be a priest returned and he gained admission to Saint Sulpice the following year. He was ordained a priest on 31st May 1817 and immediately became professor of Moral Theology. In 1838 he became Novice Master and began his great work in the formation of the clergy. At the age of 72 his years were beginning to tell, and he resigned his professorship of Sacred Scripture. It was owing to this resignation that the Seminary of Bourges was able to obtain him for the annual retreat in mid-October 1846. This would have been his last retreat, for he retired to Issy immediately after it, and died there on 4th February, 1854.

It was during this retreat that Jules met him and listened to his inspiring conferences. He made a lasting impression on this young seminarian commencing his first year scholasticate, and, as we will see, Jules regarded it as one of the great graces of his spiritual formation.

One of the directors of the Seminary wrote of this retreat: "The Venerable Father was enthusiastically received by the students, who had heard of his reputation as a saintly and practical preacher. They used to gather around him during their recreations, reluctant to let him out of sight or hearing. Although he used to talk in an unaffected and almost casual manner, he brought about a real change in the house, and inspired a more ardent devotion to Our Blessed Lady. As a souvenir of the retreat he donated a beautiful statue of Her to the Seminary."(39)

Jules himself wrote of the retreat: "His words, simple, yet full of fire and faith, made a profound impression on my soul. The preacher recommended to me three principal virtues - fidelity to the Rule, mortification and humility. I made every effort to practise them during my five years in the Seminary, but alas, how many shortcomings, how many imperfections!"(40) Was not this the very doctrine of Father Olier himself being preached now, years later by Father Mollevaut? Humility, modesty, charity, mortification, fidelity to the rule. The retreat-master had said: ease and peace with yourself is not to strive after beings; to prefer not to be sought after, humoured or even consoled."(41)

But this retreat was for Jules not just a revision of the fundamental principles. It brought about a decisive change in his life. "I came away from that retreat" he said "converted, and most desirous of being an exemplary seminarist."(42) As a matter of fact it was an experience which was very significant in his spiritual life and which had a definite bearing on his future vocation. It was the beginning of that "new life" of which he was dreaming at the end of his days at Saint Gaultier, the fountain from which sprang the Divine Grace that was to prepare him for his special situation of Founder of a new Congregation in the Church.

CHAPTER IV CONVERSION AND SPIRITUAL INITIATION

Some Principles of the Spiritual Life.

God invites every man to cooperate effectively with Him in the plan of salvation and to achieve this end by "reuniting all things in Christ", in whom resides the plenitude of Divinity. He is the Embodiment of all Power and Dominion. Likewise Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His Body, that which "embraces all in all", and no man can belong to this Body unless he be united to Christ, the Head. It is from Christ that this Body receives its life - a life of faith and charity - each member, like cells of the human body, depending on and helping the others in their various functions.

This union with Christ is a life of Faith and Love, energised by the action of the Holy Spirit, whom He promised to send us and through whom we are "grafted" on Him. Christ dwells by Faith in our hearts, which become "rooted and grounded in charity" in proportion to the extent that we put on "the new man", a creature of justice and true sanctity.(1) The fundamental law governing this union of the soul with Christ has been formulated by Our Lord Himself: "He who would save his life must lose it; he who will lose his life for My Sake and the sake of the Gospel, shall save it."(2) Christ Himself has given us the example by His own obedience. Being the perfect Son that He was He has shown us by His sufferings what it is to obey, and now He will save all those who will obey Him.(3) Only those who are willing to obey Him really love Him, and consequently are loved by the Father; "If anyone loves Me He will keep My Word, and My Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him."(4) The proof of our love, then, is precisely in this obedience, in the fulfilling of our particular vocation in life in the faithful accomplishment of all those duties incumbent on us as members of the Mystical Body of Christ. The work of the Holy Ghost in our souls is to lead us to this orderly life of love, to take our part in the orderly functioning of the Mystical Body. Since the very Person of the Holy Spirit is the Love of the Father and the Son, He will direct our every action and shape "our heart in the love of God and the patience of Christ."(5)

This love, being of its nature diffusive, will seek its expression in winning other souls to Christ. The obligation of taking a keen and active part in the apostolate is a logical consequence of our union with Christ, and of our membership of His Mystical Body, the Church. The Holy Ghost uses every soul, according to its gifts and the degree of sanctity it has reached, in furthering the cause of this apostolate. The injunction of St. John applies to every Christian: "Love one another as Christ has loved you."(6)

The Holy Ghost calls everyone of us without exception to take part in the apostolate - in the spreading of the Faith - by praying for one another, and by giving good example in living a good Christian life in the spirit of charity. But he calls some souls to a more particular and special apostolate. When the will is more closely united with the Will of God and when a person's human activities are ordered to the harmonious functioning of the Mystical Body, Christ will come to that soul in a special way. He will visit it in the place and circumstances of its own particular vocation. To the contemplative He will come in the silence and recollection of prayer; to the missionary He will come in the trials of many difficult hours - hours of weariness, hours of worry about organisation, hours of wondering how to win the people to God. Each soul, no matter where it is placed, no matter what its task, must aim in the spirit of pure charity towards that union with Christ for which Our Lord Himself prayed and which for us is perfection - "God in us, and we in God".

Our Lord accepted the Divine Plan of Redemption in its entirety. He did not seek to change or restrict it. He did not pray to His Father to take us out of the world, but to guard us from evil. He did not tell His Apostles to avoid the people, but rather to go out seeking them, to go out to all the nations. To those who would share in His redemptive Priesthood, He would give His graces and His own strength making them partakers of the Divine Nature, sharers in His own Dignity as Son of God. He knew that their mission would involve risks and dangers. The Gospels are full of warnings to this effect, and the Apostles themselves often repeated them. No one is immune from these dangers, as they are inherent in our weak fallen nature, and are a necessary consequence of free-will. As long as we live on the face of the earth, we will live by Faith, and not by the certitude of the clear vision of God which will be our joyful lot in Heaven.(6) Even when our actions are prompted by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we still have to contend with the infirmity of our human nature, our earthly attachments, our battle against the world, the flesh and the devil. The Saints themselves were certainly no exception in experiencing trials and dangers. St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila have written at length on the temptations and tribulations that assail the Contemplative. They all experienced their own particular "dark night of the soul." And naturally the missionary out in the world will have to "fight the good fight" in a hundred and one ways. However God's help will never be failing to the one who remains faithfully at his post; he will receive his own particular grace of state, and he will be rewarded by the grace of a more intense love of God and his neighbour.

The history of every vocation is different. God Himself determines the locale, the circumstances and the type of work we shall do for Him and for the Cause of the Gospel. The time and the manner of the call depend on the limitless bounty of God. It is He who enlightens the intellect; He who founds us in charity; He Who bestows and strengthens the two necessary virtues of faith and love. He may call one person to the apostolate by leading him through contemplation to such an intense love that it illumines his faith as the theologian says "connaturaliter," and clearly indicates the path God wishes him to follow. Another He may lead step by step, or by a sudden inspiration, to an understanding and realisation of his particular mission, granting at all times the grace of complete confidence in God's help and encouragement.

AS faith works through charity and as the ultimate object of all Christian preaching and endeavour is to promote the love of God in souls through a good conscience and a lively faith, Christ Our Lord will not fail to grant greater graces of charity along with the development and expansion of the missionary's work. As the trials, the difficulties the doubts arise, God's grace will be there to meet them. The price Our Lord demands of course is fidelity and devotion to the work in hand.

Spiritual History of the Vocation of Jules Chevalier.

There is no doubt that Divine Providence had chosen Jules Chevalier to fulfil a very special apostolic mission - a complement and completion of his own priestly vocation. Looking back over his life we can clearly see the wonderful design of Providence in his life and the various spiritual milestones of his career. Early in his childhood, there was the firm conviction that one day he would be a priest - the preparatory grace, we might say. This conviction already was inspiring his dreams of the future and influencing his every boyhood action - his prayers, his sacrifices, even his games. He had a keen sense of faith, and responded to the graces God gave him which raised his youth to a supernatural level. The Holy Ghost was already planting the seeds of his vocation in his soul, but as yet there is nothing to distinguish him from any other good Catholic boy, especially from one who thinks he has a vocation. He was leading a pious life of faith and charity - much the same as any boy is taught to do by a pious mother.

During this period there are no extraordinary sign of the future apostolate or the special vocation. We could perhaps interpret his impersonation: the priest saying Mass and his repetition of the sermon at home, when he was only ten years old, as an apostolic tendency in his make-up. The impression that the missionary, Father Redon made on his young mind also indicates that his thoughts and desires were towards the Church. What is extraordinary is the strong will and tenacity he showed once he had made up his mind to be a priest. In spite of opposition, and even mockery, he was resolute in his determination to surmount all obstacles in his path to the priesthood even though he had no idea how he would be able to achieve his ambition. During that long period of difficulty at Richelieu he shunned anything that might make him waver in his resolution, and faithfully lived each day as it came, even though each day seemed to take him further away from his goal. His ideal impregnated his every thought and action, and he never lost confidence.

His devotion to the needy and the sick also reveals the future apostle. This sense of practical charity would flow from his quiet confidence that one day he was to be a priest. It was a result of his firm faith his spirit of sacrifice, and above all, of his ardent love of Jesus and Mary. He was grateful to God for this spirit of faith and confidence which he knew was sustaining him. The ever recurring difficulties only strengthened his will, and purified his motives, making him rely on the assistance of Divine Providence and not on human help.

On admission to a Seminary the vocation of a young man takes definite shape and form. He considers the priesthood as a logical consequence of this admission. He is now occupied by the duties and routine of each day, and is content to let the difficulties of his future life look after themselves. In his early days at Saint-Gaultier Jules' difficulties were not directly concerned with his vocation, but rather with the trials of adjustment to the new life amongst the younger boys, with his temperament, studies etc. . Apart from the brief temporary bout of homesickness, his whole conduct bore the mark of certitude about the ultimate outcome of his vocation. It would have been strange if this young man who had relied so completely on Divine Providence to get him to the Seminary looked no further than that.

The incident of his fall down the cliff on the banks of the Grouse was definitely a milestone in his spiritual development. He had come very close to death and the serious thoughts that had passed through his mind in his semi-conscious state left a lasting impression on him. In those dread moments when he was powerless to move and when his companions thought, he was dead, there flashed before his mind a clear vision of the brevity of life, of our complete dependence on God who holds our lives in His hands, and of the futility of serving anyone but Him. His emotions were so violent and deep during the subsequent days that ten years later Father Piperon remarked; "That accident brought this young man face to face with the great problem of life and death and clearly showed him the vanity of earthly things and the necessity of serving God alone."(9)

It was because it gave him such a clear and lasting realisation of these fundamental truths that the accident is important in the story of his life. He was granted the grace of a clear concept of his total dependence on God, and the necessity of giving himself entirely to His service. In those brief moments, when he could hear his companions saying he was already dead, his soul cried out to God to forgive him his sins and to have mercy on him. He promised that if he was restored to life he would serve God with all his strength and will, more wholeheartedly than he had ever done before.(10) In granting his prayer Almighty God bound him to his promise during the rest of his life. Even if this were not the real conversion in his spiritual life - it was a turning point to a more earnest and serious service of God in which he directed his energetic character and strong will to a deeper application to prayer. (11)

When he was a boy at Richelieu Jules considered the priesthood mainly as life of devotion spent for the service of souls. This idea attracted him, and he admired it greatly when he saw it in operation by such priests as Father Redon, the missionary. What reasons would explain this attraction and admiration, it is difficult to say. Doubtless a combination of natural and supernatural motives. However after his accident he was given the grace to see the priesthood in a new light. It was not only the serving of souls, but principally it was the serving of God. He could see that it was only by serving God, the Lord and Master, the sole Dispenser of Life and Death, and making this the main object of the priesthood, that the service of souls could be effective.

Until this time we might say that for Jules God had been considered in his meditations and prayers as the Supreme Reality, the Great Creator of Heaven and earth, the Eternal Judge. Now, with the coming to the end of his training at Saint-Gaultier, we notice that he is beginning to realise more clearly and vividly the Personal Nature of the Godhead, and to be very conscious of the fact that there are three Persons in God. With

this consciousness came the re-orientation of his devotion and spiritual life, making Christ, the God Man the centre and main object of his love and attention. He was beginning to understand, as it were, the "Mystery of Christ", the Redeemer, and the necessity of our incorporation with Him. He could see that the basis of all true spirituality for the Christian is a personal union with Christ, and that any hindrance to that union must be conquered and put aside.

His answer to his relatives during the holiday at Richelieu when they suggested he should help them financially after he became a priest, is significant. "If I become a priest," he had said, "it will be to serve God, and not my family. It will be to gain souls for Jesus Christ and not to enrich my family."(12) He still regarded the priesthood as the service of God but God is seen now in the Person of Jesus Christ and the apostolate consists not so much in bringing Christ to souls, but in bringing souls to Christ. It was this new realisation of the necessity of complete union with Christ as the basis of all true holiness that made him uneasy about his friendship with his fellow-student at Saint-Gaultier. He began to look upon this too natural attraction as a hindrance to his union with Christ. His friend was coming between him and Christ. Even he went to the chapel to pray he would find himself thinking of his companion instead of Our Lord, and it was becoming a source of tepidity and dissipation to him. He knew he had to make a choice, an important decision. "At the end of my year of Rhetoric", he said, "I was impatiently awaiting my entry to the Major Seminary in order to begin a new life."(13)

It was, then, at the beginning of his Scholasticate at Bourges during the retreat given by Father Mollevant that he made his act of complete abandonment to Christ and the offering of himself entirely to Him and His service. Having made the offering, he began to receive an insight, even if as yet a faint one, of his special vocation in the Mystical Body of Christ. It is this act of abandonment, and the deep imprint Christ had now made on his soul that Jules Chevalier calls his conversion.(14)

A conversion, according to Penido(15) is a personal psychological reaction resulting from coming face to face with Eternity. The soul considers the Eternal realities and one's conduct is affected accordingly. Conversion for the religious soul, according to Father Lallement, is the passing beyond the stage of merely serving God, to the higher stage of devoting oneself entirely to His service in a state of perfection. This seems to have been Jules' desire and ambition from now on. Father Piperon has written: "The episode of the natural friendship at the end of Rhetoric was the means chosen by the Divine Mercy to lift him to a higher state of perfection." Father Lallement continues: "To take this step we must renounce once and for all our own will, depend from now on only on the good pleasure of God and put ourselves entirely in His hands."(16)

Saudreau remarks that seminarists often make this decision, but it is a question of perseverance. "The soul must be truly faithful, recollected and resigned. It must apply itself courageously to humility and mortification and accept of the trials that Providence will send it."(17) This evolution of the soul postulates a new attitude. It is not just a question of developing this or that virtue but of an abandonment of the whole person to God. The soul is raised to a new supernatural level. It consists principally in the choice between God and man; in the decision to lose one's life in order to find that of Christ, and to accept all the hardships that the sacrifice will entail.

After God had asked him for the sacrifice of this natural friendship, which was a source of tepidity and distraction to him (18) - innocent though the friendship was in itself - Jules conceived a new idea of the spiritual life and his priesthood. He saw there the opportunity of offering himself entirely to God, and accepted the invitation of Our Lord to raise himself to a higher state of perfection.(19) He made his choice. His resolution at the end of Rhetoric to begin a new life when he came to Bourges was now put into effect, and had become a reality. "I put my whole energy" he said, "during the five years of my Scholasticate, into trying to put into practice the resolutions of the retreat."(20)

Father Piperon sums up his life at this stage as a life of deep faith, of abnegation, of penance and of prayer.(21) It was indeed a real conversion, a turning of the heart to God."(22) God granted him a clear vision of the path he was to tread in order to accomplish his resolution. Father Mollevant during the retreat had indicated the way: "Fidelity to the rule, mortification and humility." We will see that Jules made these three virtues the means of making his act of abandonment to Our Lord, and made them the weapons with which he attacked his faults and passions - preparing his soul for the free action of the Holy Spirit within him.(23) He was "losing his life in order to gain Christ."

The object of the Sulpician formation is "to unite oneself with Our Lord and to enter into the dispositions of His Heart."(24) According to this concept the divine life of the souls consists in the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity brought about by our participation in the life of Jesus Christ, Who dwells in our soul through faith. (Ephes. 3:17)(25) It is a participation in the glorified Life of the Risen Christ, and by it we are made "partakers of the divine Nature" and "temples of the Holy Ghost." In the measure that Christ lives in us, and in the measure that our thoughts, our desires and our will are conformed to His, we achieve this interior union with Him. We can say with St. Paul; "For me to live is Christ" and "It is not I that live, but Christ lives in me."(26) It was in order to give us this new supernatural life and to show us the way to Eternal Life, that the Word was made Flesh. The life of the God-Man on earth was the supreme example of the way "to live our human lives. His life was a life of abasement, humiliation and abnegation - even unto His death of propitiation on the Cross. Only certain privileged souls are asked to bear severe external sufferings in imitation of our Crucified Master, but every ardent follower of Christ must at least bear them interiorly. These external pains and sufferings are like sacraments of the internal virtues which ought to operate in our souls. Father Olier has said: "What Our Lord suffered exteriorly, we should do interiorly."(27)

The understanding and practice of this union with Christ will come only from meditation on His life and death, but since our nature is vitiated by sin and we are proud, selfish and even rebellious, we must subdue and discipline our wills. If we are to understand, this "sensus Christi" we must mortify our wills and senses. Father Olier used to repeat again and again: "We must rid ourselves of the old man." (He used to say it so vehemently at times that the old gardener at St. Sulpice thought he was referring to him!) He used to stress the fact that mortification and humility were the two powerful weapons with which to attack the enemies of true holiness - self love and pride. Mortification is "the virtue by which a Christian subdues the flesh and its inclinations by privations and sufferings", but this by itself is not enough.(28) Humility is its necessary complement, as it purifies the intentions and gives mortification a meaning. True humility makes a man mortify himself interiorly.(29) Each one of us has to renounce that "old man" within us inherited from Adam himself.(30) Mortification and humility will make us indifferent to our own personal satisfaction and comfort, and will pave the way for a more perfect union with Christ.

During the first three years of his scholasticate, from October 1846 to April 1850, Jules Chevalier applied himself diligently to the practice of the interior virtues - faith, recollection and prayer. He realised that to persevere in fervour and piety he must constantly practise mortification, penance and humility.

Father Piperon has given us an intimate study of him during this period: "Who will ever know of the personal penances and holy acts of self-denial that he quietly practised? Some of us at times tried to take him unawares in his acts of penance, but no one ever succeeded. However, it was common knowledge amongst us that he wore a hair-cloth shirt, and that he frequently took the discipline." The senior students used to point him out to the newcomers as the model seminarist. And a model he was. He was always the first to arrive at the Community exercises, always most particular about keeping the silence, an assiduous worker, recollected and grave in his deportment, reserved yet simple and friendly in his conversation, gentle and charitable to all, severe on himself."

"It was difficult to find even the slightest fault in him. His fellow students admired his exemplary fidelity to the rule, his spirit of silence, his zeal for study and his habit of prayer. They saw in him the model seminarist, the virtuous cleric striving to reproduce in himself the virtues of Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest. The Superiors and teachers liked him, thought a lot of him for the good example he showed and the high standard he set amongst the other students. The less fervent amongst them were encouraged to better efforts."

"During his five years at the Seminary he was never known to have lit a fire in his room, even though the climate in winter was bitterly cold. One particular year he shared a common study room with one of his cousins, who was also a seminarist at Bourges. In spite of the inviting

fire-place, Jules chose to study in his cell even on the coldest nights. He doubtless regarded this as an opportunity for penance."

"His spirit of poverty was extraordinary, and even became a matter of comment. His soutane was always neat and clean, but carried many stitches and patches obviously the work of his own hands. It would seem that he took Our Lord's injunction to the Apostles literally: "Do not have two tunics." His boots became legendary for their shape and old age, and were often the object of friendly raillery from the students. His spirit of charity was no less conspicuous, not only to his fellow students, but even to outsiders. The following incident is a typical example: A poor man, a bootmaker by trade, sick and worried with the cares of a big family used to come to the Seminary each day to clean the toilets. Apart from the meagre wage he earned, he was given what food might have been left over from the meal of the previous evening and he mended any shoes or boots that the students gave him. Jules felt sorry for him, and went out of his way to get him what trade he could and even to collect a few alms amongst the students for him. He did more. For a long time he did part of his work in order to spare him fatigue. When the rising bell sounded in the morning he discreetly made his way to the post which he had assigned himself where he accomplished his disagreeable but charitable task. We would never have known of this practical act of humility had not one of his confreres happened one morning to surprise him in the very act."

"Another trait in his character worthy of comment was the ease with which he could turn a conversation along pious and spiritual lines in a natural and unobjectionable manner, and the facility he had for getting the students to discuss serious subjects."

Father Píperon concludes his character sketch thus: "Right to the end of his Seminary days he was a model for his regularity, his zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, for his poverty, his simplicity and his affability. His keen faith sustained him in the faithful observance of all the rules and exercises of Seminary life." (31)

Father Píperon was perfectly aware of the extraordinary nature of Jules Chevalier, and in order to forestall any doubts that his future biographers might have, he wrote these telling lines; "I knew Jules Chevalier very well in the years we spent together in the Seminary: I honestly believe that I have not painted his character in over-glowing colours. Our fellow-students, if they ever read these lines, will be able to bear me out."(32)

In spite of the general esteem in which Jules was held in the Seminary he did meet with some quite formidable opposition from a certain group in the College, who did not approve of his consistently serious outlook and his unbending demeanour. We are not referring to the good-hearted banter he received about his clothes, boots etc., or the prankish efforts of some of the students to catch him practising his penances, but rather to a positive opposition - almost amounting to hostility - which a group comprising, as Father Píperon says, "a good number of the students" showed him. Father Píperon admits that at this stage of his training "his life did take on a severe form." The students maintained he was far too aloof, and many of them objected to his founding of the "Little Society of Knights of the Sacred Heart", which, they said, only interrupted the smooth running of College life. Father Píperon remarks that his critics were comprised, mainly of the "less generous, less fervent type whose characters were as yet undeveloped." He was criticised for his taciturnity during recreation unless the subject of conversation on pious lines, and for not taking part in any light-hearted or amusing talk. Even those who did not criticise him openly, seemed anxious for a time to avoid his company, as they thought he was over-doing his determined effort to be always recollected. Any influence for good which he might have had on them seemed nullified by his excessive seriousness.(33) Even those who belonged to his "Society of the Sacred Heart" were not always in accord with him.

And so the word "rigourism" began to be associated with his name. After his ordination to sub-diaconate this state of antipathy seems to have vanished as Father Píperon remarks that "a marked change was apparent in him; he became the life of his Association, and had a great influence on all his fellow-students." (34) Father Píperon in retrospect asks the pertinent question: Can we honestly say that this period of his life at Bourges was one of rigourism? Rígorism? No. A forcible restraint, a tense and even violent effort to conquer and subdue his impetuous nature, yes.

Actually Jules Chevalier never subscribed to the theory that strain and tenseness is a necessary concomitant of holiness. On the contrary his real nature - as the subsequent years proved - was just the opposite. He did not at any time consider that his own serious demeanour was the ideal, nor did he expect it of other people, but he was striving quite earnestly to mortify himself in order to draw closer to Our Lord. Father Píperon himself admits that in Jules' inexperienced state as a zealous seminarist his manner was perhaps exaggerated at times, and his seriousness was excessive. But he went on to say that, even if this were so, it was an innocent exaggeration and a harmless excess, occasioned by his anxiety to please Our Lord. His purity of intention was never in doubt. Being the experienced Novice Master that he was, Father Píperon adds: "Every sincere beginner in the way of perfection commits these excusable exaggerations in the quest of Christian virtue."(35)

The spiritual writer, Saudreau, has a pertinent passage on this very point; "Most spiritual books," he writes, "tell us that we must never give in to the inclinations of nature; that we must in all things follow the impulses of grace. It is precisely on this point that young ardent souls need firm and sure direction. All their acts of piety are stamped with the mark of earnestness. In their anxiety to practise recollection they often do violence to themselves; in their desire to live in the presence of God they become deadly serious, and spend many hours in anguish of heart and tenseness of soul, instead of enjoying a relaxed and pleasant recollection. In the initial stage of a devout life, when the soul has made the firm resolution of spending itself in the service of God, we expect to find sudden and even violent outbursts of first fervour. These generous emotions should not be repressed, but firmly directed. While stressing the beauty and sublimity of the virtue the novice is trying to acquire he must be advised to seek it in peace and patience.

Anything that is violent does not last. He must be warned, against precipitation, anxiety and over-eagerness.(36) We can admit this was the case with Jules Chevalier. In his singleness of purpose in trying to reach a stage of perfection he was perhaps "a sign of contradiction." His one aim was to live a deep interior life, and to prepare himself for a fruitful apostolate but his efforts often appeared to some of the other students as sanctimonious. However it was by these trials that his spiritual progress was going on apace.

Knowing his sensitive nature, we can be sure that he felt the situation keenly, and it must have caused him many heart-burning hours. In an unfinished sermon which he wrote in his third year Scholasticate, in 1849, we gain an intimate insight into his reaction to the opposition of the students to which even if he does not say so, he was obviously referring. We can admire his Christian spirit of forgiveness: "Everyone regards a person who would wilt under an injury as a weak and timid soul. Although it is painful to our corrupt nature, it is heroic to forgive sincerely affronts and offences. No matter how difficult it is, God has a right to expect it of us; indeed He has commanded us to do so, and He has certainly given the example Himself. You may tell the person who offended you that you have forgiven him, even that you love him, but perhaps this is only to avoid further trouble, and fearing that his company may re-awaken angry thoughts, you decide to keep out of his way. What kind of forgiveness and love is this that the mere presence of the one you pretend to love only inflames you with hateful and angry thoughts? You say you love your brother, and yet you try to avoid his presence. 'That is blindness'. This is not in the spirit of Our Lord's command. The trouble is you are seeing only the man and not God in him. Even if it is hard to love your enemies you must see God in them. "Suscipe ilium sicut Me." Our Lord does not say "I wish you to forgive him," but rather "I wish you to forgive Me. I am the Father of all men; you are my children; you are all in my heart. If a person offends you, he is offending Me; if you forgive him, you are forgiving Me. 'Quod fecisti uno de minoribus his, mihi fecisti'. I was the man I commanded you to love, and you have hated Me. I commanded you to forgive, but you have not forgiven Me." Would you persecute your brother who is covered with the blood of your God? Would you strike the one who is held in the arms of Jesus? Jesus loves him, and holds him in His heart. Pierce him and you pierce the Heart of Jesus where he is held." (37)

Conversion is a personal relationship entered into with the other world.

In the Catholic view, the "other world" has a precise and positive meaning. However, it also includes such a rich series of values, each related to the other, that contact with the "other world" presents many aspects and hence is shown in various ways. In the main they consist of a more direct and personal relationship with the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, with Christ or His Blessed Mother. In Father Chevalier, this relationship became manifest, by a more intimate, personal friendship with the Person of Christ. The development of his vocation makes it clear that he had the desire to be an apostle even before he realized the preponderant part that Christ has in the work of the apostolate. This desire was the work of the Holy Spirit and in responding to it he drew nearer to Christ. His yearning for the apostolic life and his friendship with Christ were so linked that as he grew in the knowledge of Christ so also he developed his love of the missionary ideal, which became the inspiration and motive force of his spiritual growth. Well does Guibert exclaim: "With what wisdom does divine Providence guide men!"

The important stage begins with his "conversion" when he entered into a close union with Christ - a union which in the Divine economy of salvation has its origin in faith. To know Christ is to accept a mystery. The mystery takes first place. Jesus Christ is His own proof, because of His mystery, which is at the same time light. This is what St. Augustine makes clear in commenting on the text of the Gospel. "The light came into the world and the darkness did not comprehend it." One does not illuminate the light, but it gives witness by dissipating the darkness. We must believe Him on His word. We must follow Him without hesitation or evasions. What He asks and dearly loves is that state of surrender of the soul which obscurely recognises in Him his God. Jesus Christ is absolute truth who becomes accessible to our eyes only by purifying them, and united to our intelligence only by transforming it. "We enter into the Truth", and the Bible says, that is to say "it does not come to us unless we surrender to it."(58)

Father Piperon shows us the form which this contact with Christ took, while pointing out at the same time its importance in the conversion of Jules. "Under the influence of grace, with which his soul was filled, he saw the priesthood in an entirely new light. He understood more clearly the sublime virtues which it demanded and he resolved to acquire them, even at the cost of great sacrifices. We can easily understand what must have been the progress of such a generous soul who never wavered in carrying out his perfect resolutions."(39)

"From the beginning of his clerical life Father Chevalier had the highest idea of the priestly dignity. He repeated often to himself and to us, his young fellow students that the priest should be another Christ. It is necessary then that he shows forth in his life the great virtues of which Christ has left us such sublime examples. Like Christ, he should be meek and humble of heart; like Him, the priest should love poverty, practice penance, be sympathetic to the weak, be helpful to sinners and bring back the lost sheep on his shoulders to the divine fold. Like his Divine Model, the priest should be ready to suffer all things for the salvation of souls. Neither trials nor sufferings nor persecutions nor the fear of death itself should deter the priest in his service of God. This was the ideal of our young seminarist; this was the ideal that he wished to put into practice by God's grace during the years of his priestly formation. He recalled unceasingly St. Paul's exhortation to the first Christians: "let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the origin and crown of all faith, who to win his prize of blessedness endured the cross and made light of its shame, Jesus, who now sits on the right of God's throne." (Heb: XII:2) He also wished to fix his eyes on the Author and Perfection of our faith, whose Sacred Heart has loved us beyond all measure and delivered Himself without counting the cost for the salvation of souls."(40)

The thing that strikes one in this interior development is the general design of this plan of the Holy Spirit, which is the unifying principle in this life. The new insight which decisively attracted him corresponds to the ideal which drew him from the time of his childhood and which urged him on still in the same direction: the priesthood seen under the aspect of the apostolate. There is continuity here. The conversion brought about by the greater comprehension of the truth resulted in a deepening of the old ideal, and the new attitude by which the conversion is manifested is a more internal putting into practice of this long cherished ideal. Thus we must pause a moment to consider this new element, in order the better to understand Father Piperon's description.

The aspect under which the Holy Spirit manifested the Person of Christ to Father Chevalier is that Sulpician Spirituality. The purpose for which Christ came on earth was to "establish the Kingdom and the religion of His Father" and in addition to "bring reverence and love.... the two things which make up religion."(41)

Man, who became a sinner in Adam and by his own personal falls, has lost this divine religion. "Our Lord desired to repair this disorder and to reestablish on earth the worship and the religion of His Father. That is what appeared on earth like a new "religious" who is not content to be devoted to God, His Father, in His own behalf, but who wishes to spread abroad his religion and to multiply it in the hearts of all men." (42); Thus the greatest and most ardent desire of the Heart of the Son of God was to glorify continually His Father and to be in perpetual communion with Him, loving Him, thanking Him, beseeching Him and adoring Him unceasingly.(43) Our Lord has asked this grace for us and has merited and obtained it by His life and death, becoming thus the way we must follow in order to return to the reverence and the love of the religion of His Father. After His death Christ has continued by every device of His love to obtain for men this religion towards God, and has given them his very spirit, which is that of God living in Him, to implant in them the sentiments of His Soul, so that spreading abroad in this way His holy religion, He, with all Christians may become one - as it were - one "religious" dedicated to God. While reigning in Heaven, He lives in the heart and in the pen of the evangelists, in the heart and on the lips of the apostles to proclaim everywhere the Kingdom of God, to procure the adoration which His Holy Name deserves and to win for Him perfectly obedient followers and adorers who will reverence Him in spirit and truth."(44)

Our vocation as Christians then, consists of receiving the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of the living God in order to produce in us the sentiments of the Soul of Christ and to form in union with Him and with all Christians, as it were, "one religious", dedicated to God. It means living interiorly as Jesus Christ the perfect Religious lived. "He pours Himself out on us; He penetrates our being; He takes possession of our soul and fills it with interior dispositions of His own religious Spirit so that His Soul and ours are one." (45) "It is precisely the state of the "risen" life to which we are called in "imitation of Christ, who wishes that we also should be interiorly risen and conformed in Him. This is why He says that He has communicated to men the glory that the Father had given Him. This glory is the risen state - which He possesses in the Host: That they may be one as We are one: I in them and They in Me. I am in them, having the same effect as You, Our Father, who art in Me, have in Me. I vivify them as You vivify Me. I perfect them as Thou hast perfected Me."(46)

"There is no salvation except in Jesus Christ", said Father Chevalier. "In Him we live and move and have our being. He is a blazing fire; He divinizes us; He is All. Our real life is only in union with Him. The practical consequence of this is imitation is to be Christ-like. In the practice of the virtues, Father Chevalier looked beyond the virtue itself. His inspiration was the thought that each act of virtue and each virtue was something of Our Lord Himself which is made part of me...we do separate the acts and the virtues from the Person of Christ, and this implicitly in the final analysis that the practice of the virtues of Jesus means union with Jesus."(47)

Father Piperon and Father Chevalier are able to consider perfection only as union with Jesus. That is the sum total of their doctrine on perfection. The degrees of perfection for them are measured by our growth in this union. All the rest is but the preparation, the putting off the "old man", the freeing of the soul to permit the action of the Holy Spirit so that we may become one with Christ through the influence of His graces: "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me." (Gal.II.20) This work of Christ in souls is achieved in the Church. "After the generation of the Word and the mission of the Holy Spirit, nothing is dearer to the Father than His Church which He forms each day by means of the Word, in the Blessed Sacrament and by the offering of the Holy Spirit, through whose gifts Jesus Christ is formed in the hearts of the faithful."(48)

"In order to spread His holy religion towards God and to multiply it in our souls, our Divine Lord comes to us and delivers Himself into the hands of His priests as a victim of praise to communicate to us His spirit of Victim; to associate us with His praises and communicate to us interiorly the sentiment of His religion." Over and above the interior exercises of this religion which are common to all, there are others regarding

the special worship and the external public functions. Above all, the supreme tribute we must render to God - that is, the offering of sacrifice. This Sacrifice is the sum total all religion. It is at the same time its epitome and its final perfection; the priest who alone is chosen to offer this public Sacrifice in the church is the one who is the perfect religious man, whose life is a compendium of all religious perfection. This Sacrifice infinitely surpasses all the states of penance and mortification, of love and praise that can be found in the Religious Orders."(50) And Christ is the High Priest of this Sacrifice.

In itself, the title of High Priest expresses only the offering of the Sacrifice. But when one considers the full meaning of the phrase, the expression Jesus Christ, High Priest, presents a more complex idea. In fact "Jesus was the Priest of His Sacrifice and the Victim of His Priesthood; in Him Priest and Victim are one." Nor is this title to be limited to one happening, for example the Sacrifice of the Cross or that of the Mass. "The State of Victim sums up the whole life of Christ on earth and in heaven," and the priesthood flows from this state of Victim. Consequently the author continues "His life was but one unique sacrifice whose different parts are made up of the different mysteries, and it is really by the Incarnation that the Word became Man and at the same time, Priest. The work of Christ the Priest is to glorify the Father by sacrificing Himself for the salvation of souls."(51) The title of High Priest is the sacerdotal expression of the same reality as the title of Religious common to all the faithful, that is to say, the Word incarnate in the concrete reality of His life and history. And that "in the highest and most exalted quality and grandeur that the Son of God has acquired in our nature by the Incarnation."

The task of the Priest is to reproduce Christ, to give the Holy Spirit to the Church and to sanctify the faithful; to give the Eternal Father while giving Christ Jesus in Communion to the Church.(52) "For," remarks M. Olier, "the function of the priest is twofold. The one relates to God, whose glory he must procure; the other relates to the neighbour, for whose salvation he must labour."(53) They must continue the embassy of Christ, whose preoccupation was to teach the unlettered people and the little children the first principles of religion. Hence, the priests preach and make known His secrets, they have the honour to be bearers of the words of Jesus, whom God has sent to His Church, as the unique Society with which He desires to have official relations. The priests then become the protecting walls which beat back the waves of the sea; the ramparts of the world and the Church against the malignity of the demons and the rage of hell. They are the "torchbearers of the Church bearing the light of faith to illumine the world."(54)

What grandeur there is in this priestly office: "It is the greatest of all, surpassing all others. This office of Sanctifier of souls, of offering, of blessing, of Sacrificing God to God. It means having the salvation of the whole universe in one's hands; the sanctification of every creature, the praise of the whole world, the good works of all the Saints, all the prayer of Paradise at one's disposal." (55) In a word, it is the continuation of the work of Christ, the High Priest as described in the epistle to the Hebrews.

The priest thus becomes, as it were, a 'Sacrament' of Jesus Christ; a 'Religious' of God the Father, and as such renders his homage to God. By means of this office he is able to accomplish what would be otherwise wanting in his religion. He becomes a mediator between God and men, who pays to God the tribute of His Church and distributes to this same Church the gifts of God. In a word, this office of the priest is a summary and epitome of all his religion."(56)

"The priest is in the church like another Christ."(57) "The priest should bear Christ within himself, sanctifying souls and he should be so filled with grace that in the Church he is as Jesus Christ Himself of whom it is said: (1 Cor. 15.45) "He was made into a quickening spirit."(58) "They are chosen by Our Lord to be the living expression in the Church of His Spirit and His Heart, and to do this they must reproduce Him exteriorly in their lives."(59)

The dominant idea of these texts and the great significance of this concept is that the priest of himself is nothing and represents nothing, but he becomes all by his union with Him, Who is in the full sense of the words, God, Mediator, Spouse of the Church, Servant of all in order to save them, Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

Father Chevalier has thus expressed this idea of the priesthood; "O Priest, who are you: You are not of yourself, because you are from nothing. You are not for yourself, because you are a mediator between God and man. You do not belong to yourself, since you are the Spouse of the Church. You do not live for yourself, since you are the servant of all; you are not even yourself, since you are God. What are you, O priest? You are nothing - and All."(60)

It follows that the priest must be transformed into Christ, living in Him, vivifying the Church through Him. By his attitude and by his interior sentiments he should be "Jesus Christ Himself... mingling with us, filling us; with His perfections and His substance, penetrating us with Himself entirely, by expressing in us His divine qualities, so that by this union and intimate penetration by His Substance, He and we become one." (61) "The very depth of their soul should be transformed, into Jesus Christ, living in the, and vivifying the Church through them."(62) Because "God wishes to be in us as in the risen Christ...transforming us entirely into Him by the power of His Grace."(63) This vision of the incorporation of the priest in Christ, and consequently of his absolute dependence on Christ, for his power, his apostolate and his sanctification gives to the thought of Father Chevalier a direction in which the sovereignty of the Priesthood of Christ sheds its light on everything. He thus discovers a new dependance. Without doubt, the priesthood remains what he believed it to be; a grace from God, given to lead souls to Christ. But the apostolate appears now to be a continuation and extension of the activity of Christ Himself, and the Priesthood a grace of intimate and continuous union with Him, from whom follows all priesthood and all apostolate. A union so intimate that the Holy Spirit wishes to transform the priest into the risen Christ, Who lives in him and makes him a vivifying force in the Church. But for that it is necessary for him to lose his own life in "fidelity to the rule, mortification and humility," (64) in order to live the life of Christ by a unifying imitation of His virtues, above all as a priest. The divine response to these efforts was the elevation of Jules to a greater perfection. Strongly fortified interiorly by the Holy Spirit, Christ came to dwell in his heart by a deeper faith and his charity was more intense. Parallel with this growth, God gave him conformably to the richness of the glory received by his soul, an understanding of the mystery of Christ which was expressed, with some initial hesitation, first of all in the desire of the missions, then in the idea of founding a Community of apostles. Then when he will have seen in the Sacred Heart the love of Christ, which surpasses all understanding (65) His mission will become very clear to him in the "beautiful dream" of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

To complete the summary of Sulpician spirituality which influenced the concept of Father Chevalier it is necessary to say a few words of devotion to the Eucharist and to Our Blessed Lady. Father Olier considers it the special task of the priest to honour the God-Man "as He is in the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, and to renew by this means the sentiments of His Divine Life in the hearts of men." The centre of sacerdotal formation, according to him is the Holy Eucharist. The risen Christ has become really near to us in this Sacrament, where He takes up a state that is so suited to the priest that every seminarist beginning his seminary life should say to God: "I enter into a state where I make profession of imitating Your Son, the Victim dedicated and consecrated to Your adorable Majesty and destined to die." (67)

We will speak later of Father Chevalier's devotion to Our Lady during his seminary days. As an example and to sum up his ideas we will quote the conclusion of a sermon for Pentecost, which must date from his earlier years when his attention was attracted towards the Cross rather than to the Sacred Heart. Implicitly he returns to Father Olier as the source of his Marian doctrine; "Spirit of strength and light, of wisdom and counsel, You have perhaps in your immutable designs destined me to continue the work of these generous apostles. Of myself I am but ignorance, darkness and corruption. Come, I implore you, and enkindle in my heart the sacred fire of your love. Consume what there is that is worldly or too human in my soul. Make all my thoughts, my desires and my actions to be only for my divine Saviour, all my glory and my knowledge only for Jesus Crucified. Ah, my God, what use would it be for me to have all the knowledge in the world if I did not know You the Truth and the Life? But where shall I gain this knowledge? In persevering prayer like the Apostles, at the feet of my Redeemer, nailed to the cross. As you have taught us:

qui appropinquant pedibus eius, accipient doctriam eius; "Those who kneel at His feet, will share in His teaching." It is there that all the saints have gained this knowledge. I see one of Your faithful servants; about to render his soul into the hands of God, asking that his book be brought to him. Those who are caring for him, men whose hearts are occupied with earthly cares, look for the book in vain. Meanwhile, eternity approaches and again he asks for his book. "But what book is it you want?" they ask him. "My Crucifix" he replies, and he dies with his lips pressed to the Figure of his beloved Master.

O Virgin Mother of my God, can I forget you on this solemn festival when you received all the gifts of the Holy Spirit to distribute them to the priests of the New Law as has been so sublimely stated by one of your faithful servants. Adorn my heart with your ineffable favours. Engrave there in characters that will not fade, the love of the Cross. I ask of You favours which I am confident You will obtain for me to love Your Son without reserve and to make Him loved and to love You, Mother, as he deserves to be loved and to spread the glory of Your name. Amen"

CHAPTER V THE CALL

The Devotion of Jules Chevalier to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Jules Chevalier received the Tonsure on 29th May, 1847. The same year his father fell seriously ill and during the August holidays of the following year he died fortified by the Sacraments. "This was a great consolation to me," wrote Jules. Only a few days after his father's death, his mother, worn out by the long nursing of her husband, collapsed and was in danger of death. However, thanks to the numerous prayers offered for her, she recovered.

Jules returned to Bourges at the beginning of October, 1843 to continue his theological studies. Even at this early stage he suspected that God had great designs in his regard. But what? At the beginning of 1849 he formed a desire to go to the Foreign Missions after his ordination. "After reading the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," he writes, "I felt a strong urge to give my life to the Missions. I was prepared to make any sacrifice to bring the light of the Gospel to the infidels. I went to my spiritual director, Father Ruel, and told him of my wish, but he was not enthusiastic about it. He told me the diocese was short of priests, and to put the idea out of my mind at least for the time being. I submitted to his decision, and decided to await the designs of Providence."(2)

It was in this year, 1849 that the three future priests who were to form the nucleus of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart found themselves together at the Bourges Seminary - Jules Chevalier, Charles Pipéron, and Sébastien Maugéne.

Sébastien Maugéne, who had studied the Humanities at Chezal-Benoit, was just beginning his philosophy and Charles Pipéron, who had completed his studies at the Junior Seminary at Bourges, arrived four months later to join him. Charles had stayed at home for these four months, as he was worried by scruples about his vocation. He arrived at Bourges on 1st January, 1849.

Jules received his Minor Orders on 4th February, 1849.(3)

Encouraged by Father Ruel, he began to show a great interest in the welfare of the diocese where his apostolate lay, and he was appalled by the religious indifference of the age. A sermon, which he wrote at this time on "Religious Indifference" deplores the lack of faith and religion amongst the majority of people, the collapse of morality and the licentiousness of society. Faith and prayer are the only antidotes. Another sermon "Mundum gaudebit" which he wrote about this time shows his distress at the spirit of rationalism and materialism which was eating out the Spiritual heart of France.

It was the realisation of the sad state of religion in France at the time no doubt the aftermath of the Revolution - that turned Jules' thoughts away from the Foreign Missions to concentrate on a plan, which was taking shape in his mind, of founding a Congregation of Missionaries for the Home Missions. In a manuscript written in 1859 - five years after he had founded his Congregation is important; "Our little Society", he wrote, "is not the work of man, but of God. It was born in the Sacred Heart of Jesus under the powerful protection of Mary. May I say that it is only with a sense of repugnance that I trace its history here. I am doing so only under obedience, and for the glory of God."

"Ten years ago, while I was still in the Seminary, reflecting on the sad state of Society in this century, I conceived the idea or rather God inspired the thought in me, to found a Community of Missionary-Priests to help cure the disease. I told Father Ruel, my Spiritual Director about the project. He replied that it was only a "Utopian dream" - an hallucination and the child of a too-lively imagination. Feeling rather foolish, I resolved to think no more about it. However, in spite of myself, the plan kept recurring to my mind, and as each month passed the concept grew clearer and stronger. It was as if a voice kept saying to me: "You will succeed one day. God is in favour of this work." I intended confiding my plan to a fellow-seminarist, who I thought would be the one to encourage and help me. However I became timid about it and did not mention it to him." Although Father Chevalier does not mention his name, this seminarist was none other than Père Maugéne.

"Already I was thinking of a suitable place where I might found this new Society, and suddenly Issoudun with its 14,000 souls and its three priests came to my mind." (5)

When we consider this Manuscript of 1859 we cannot help but notice that Father Chevalier wrote of these early inspirations, and how they came about, with a deal of reluctance. He used the strong term - "with repugnance" - as though the subject were too intimate to discuss openly, and told us that he did so only "under obedience." This reluctance stayed with him till his death. When telling us of his desire to go to the foreign missions he discusses the subject quite openly and naturally, but on the subject of these early promptings and inspirations he speaks only of the last phase, the time when, as we shall see, his plan was completed by the devotion to the Sacred Heart. And because in this latter regard the biography of Saint Margaret Mary had a decisive influence on him, he connects it with the reading of this book. Although he wrote voluminously on the Sacred Heart throughout his life, he regarded this period as something very intimate and sacred, and not to be discussed.

When he had told Father Ruel of his desire to go to the missions, his Spiritual Director had discouraged him, but he had said he would think about it, and advised Jules to postpone his decision. On the contrary when Jules mentioned his idea of founding a Congregation of Missionaries, Father Ruel had emphatically told him it was the idea of a visionary, and to put it out of his head immediately. He stressed the fact that it was an impracticable idea.

These days would have been days of trial and indecision for Jules Chevalier. With his deep sense of obedience he did not wish to go against the opinion of Father Ruel, yet he was convinced that God had a special work for him to do. This conflict in his soul would account for his timidity about the whole project. Father Pipéron has already given us a description of his usually decisive and practical character, which would preclude any tendency to self-delusion or visionary flights of fancy. "He was a relentless worker; a solid character. He was endowed with a sound and practical judgment and a strong will which no difficulty could deter. Having made a decision, he resolutely carried it out, and if the obstacles seemed insurmountable for the time being he patiently awaited more favourable circumstances to achieve his object."(6)

It would seem then that this timidity and indecision was out of character with this usually certain and practical young man. After his interview with Father Ruel, why should he feel ashamed of himself, and resolve not even to think of the project again? And why should this same timidity deter him from mentioning his plans to the other young seminarist who he thought, would encourage him? Why should this realistic and practical young student believe that a voice was telling him to proceed with his plan? And yet, try as he might, he could not banish his "dream" from his mind, and in spite of his resolution not to think of it, it was forever in his thoughts.

The only possible explanation of this uncertainty, and his consequent unwillingness to discuss or write about it - even in later life - was the manner in which the whole plan evolved. Like all good works in the Church it was the work of the Holy Ghost, and Jules was to be the instrument of that same Holy Spirit in founding a new Congregation. He had no desire to oppose the advice of his spiritual director, but in his prayers and meditations he was daily becoming more convinced that he had a special work to do. "Suddenly," he tells us, "the good God inspired

the thought in my soul to found a Community of Missionary priests to fight the religious indifference of the times." "But where?" I asked, and the answer came promptly: "At Issoudun."

This inspiration was, as it were, a complete up-surge of his whole soul. It subjected his practical intelligence to its impulse; took complete possession of his will; and became almost an obsession which forcibly dominated his mind. It puzzled the prudent and observant Father Ruel, who was used to Jules' practicality, and he could only remark - rather bluntly - "It's an illusion."

Even when Father Chevalier and Father Maugenest found themselves together as curates at Issoudun, it was with difficulty and diffidence that he confided his plan to his fellow priest. Even when the "illusion" had become a reality, he was still loathe to go into intimate detail - even with the co-founder - about what went on in his soul during these Seminary days when his "dream" was taking shape.

We can understand the attitude of Father Ruel, the Rector of the College, and Jules' spiritual director. We have stated previously that when Jules eventually did found the Congregation Father Ruel followed its progress with sympathy and interest, but at this stage it was his duty to treat the proposal with caution and even distrust. After all, Jules was only a student beginning his theology, and his plan of founding a Congregation seemed rather grandiose and ambitious. That his discouragement was not absolute is evident from the fact that he did not forbid Jules to discuss it, even publicly with the other students.

Father Piperon writes: "Often he spoke to us of Issoudun, the most un-Catholic and irreligious parish of the diocese. He had in mind the establishment of a Society of Missionaries to work for the spiritual rejuvenation of town and its environs. With his closer friends he used to discuss the proper details of this foundation.(7) He used to speak with conviction as if the Congregation were already established. He did not take him very seriously and regarded the subject as merely an imaginative topic of conversation during recreation. To our smiles of incredulity he would reply: 'Very well, you will see one day. What I am telling you is the truth.'"(8)

Father Ruel had encouraged Jules' devotion to the Sacred Heart, and willingly gave his permission for the founding of the little association in College, "The Knights of the Sacred Heart", but he definitely opposed at this stage Jules' larger scheme for a future foundation of Missionary-priests. He told him to reserve his energy for his work in the diocese later on.(9) His opposition to the plan can be put under three headings: Firstly, he disliked and discouraged the idea that Jules was acting under any special divine inspiration: secondly, he doubted the possibility and practicality of a foundation of this nature; and thirdly he disapproved of the universality - the wide field of operation - of the proposed foundation. After long talks with Father Ruel Jules decided to try and forget his plans, and he no longer discussed it with his fellow students. Father Piperon tells us that at the time he himself had no idea of the intimate thoughts that were going through Jules' mind.

While this drama was being enacted in the mind of Jules, the tract "de Incarnatione" came up for study. The professor supplemented the tract with a treatise on Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Jules was so impressed by it that he copied it out entirely. (10) The manuscript has been preserved. It consists of a clear exposition of the devotion in the rather archaic language of the time, with the answers to the objections proposed. It concludes with a Note and explanation of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.(11) "This doctrine went straight to my heart," he wrote, "and seemed to penetrate my very being. I tasted new delights."

His confessor gave him about this time the "Life of Blessed Margaret by Mgr. Languet, and it made a profound impression on him.(12) "This book," he wrote, "gave me the ardent desire to become an apostle of Devotion to the Sacred Heart - a devotion which Our Lord Himself had given to the world, and which He desired to be spread everywhere."(13) As subsequent history was to prove, this spreading of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was to be his life's work - and a special work indeed. Devotion to the Sacred Heart, of course, was not something new to him. We have seen that he practised it as a boy at Richelieu, where special devotions were held in the church before the large painting of the Sacred Heart. His good mother had taught him the devotion at an early age and she had consecrated him to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At Saint Gaultier the Feast of the Sacred Heart - introduced to the diocese with its proper Mass and Office by Cardinal de Villele - was solemnly celebrated each year with a procession during which the students sang the hymn "Ave Admirabile".(14) At Bourges also the Feast was celebrated with solemnity, and the Superior frequently made the subject of his conferences the Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Jules Chevalier then, had understood and practised this devotion in its general outlines since childhood, but it was now after studying its theology in class and reading Mgr. Languet's book on Blessed Margaret Mary, that the devotion took on a special significance for him. Besides gaining a deeper intellectual appreciation of the Devotion, it now captured his heart. "It seemed to penetrate my very being. I tasted new delights." His predominant wish from now on was to be an Apostle of this Sacred Heart, and to spend himself in spreading the devotion. He regarded this all through his life as special grace and a particular spiritual experience which was to determine the nature of his apostolate. The richness of the Devotion and its efficacy as a powerful means of sanctification were now to be the main subjects of his preaching and priestly activity. He was indeed now a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. The students themselves from this juncture could not help but notice the "exuberance of his soul" in the fervent and familiar way he would speak of the Sacred Heart, and his zeal imparted itself to their own souls.

It was not that his ideas of the apostolate were radically changed, or his previous spiritual convictions altered, but a new grace and light were given him as to the method he would employ in this Apostolate. He would reach the hearts of men by preaching the Love and Mercy of the Heart of Jesus. His basic idea of the apostolate remained the same. It was more than just a human enterprise. It was a life in itself - effective only by union with Christ, for it is Christ who saves. A human effort, certainly, but a supernatural and redemptive effort. The apostle must be a man totally dedicated to his cause under God's guidance,(15) and this cause is to make known and loved Jesus, our Saviour. That is why Father Piperon describes Jules Chevalier as a young Seminarist who had ever before him Jesus - the Author and Finisher of Faith, Whose Sacred Heart loves us beyond measure. His ideal was to become a true disciple of Christ, to become a worthy priest and apostle, with Jesus living in his soul, so that he could impart that life to others. This conception of his apostolate now linked with his ardent Devotion to the Sacred Heart determined the form of his special vocation.

The spirit of Love of the Sacred Heart which he was to impart to his new Congregation after 1854, and which was to become the dominant characteristic of the Society, was already fore-shadowed in the little association he formed in the Seminary called "Knights of the Sacred Heart and of Mary." (Fittingly enough the French title was "Chevaliers du Sacre Coeur et de Marie") To quote Father Piperon again; "Under the vigilant supervision of the Superiors, and with their permission Jules established and directed - even though he took the lowest place in it - the "Society of Knights of the Sacred Heart and of Mary."

This group had Father Ruel's wholehearted approval and blessing. He ever obtained an indulgence from the Cardinal for the members - to be gained by visiting the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel of the Garden - a subsidiary chapel in the grounds of the College, where, incidentally, Jules was to offer his first Mass.

The forming of this group amongst the students contradicts the charge that Jules was too much of a hermit, who did not welcome the company of his fellow-students. On the contrary, as Father Piperon testifies, they looked up to him and admired the ease with which he could talk on spiritual topics.(18)

One who referred to Jules' activity in his little Society as an apprenticeship for the future religious life in his new Congregation writes: "The end of the Association was the exercise of the clerical virtues and priestly zeal by mutual help and by theological and spiritual discussions." The members, of this fraternal union used to meet once or twice a month - either out in the grounds or in one of the recreation rooms according to the season. A cordial and frank friendship sprang up amongst them. They took it in turns to speak in an informal way on various subjects of interest, and methods of improving their spiritual lives. Without having any superiority complex any student was invited to point out any external faults in his companions, and suggest ways of improvement. Although the theological and spiritual topics were discussed seriously, a general

gaiety pervaded the meetings. If a student who did not belong to the Association, should happen to come along, he was given a warm welcome, and the business in hand was postponed while the object and constitutions were explained to him.(19)

One of the chief practices of the Association was to make special visits to the Blessed Sacrament during recreation and on walk-days. With permission they used to take it in turns to make five-minute visits to the Chapel of the Garden during recreation periods, and on walk-afternoons they would visit the country house which belonged to the Seminary. Here the Blessed Sacrament was reserved and the visits would be for a quarter of an hour. Special acts of reparation were made to the Sacred Heart, and special intentions prayed for. It was to these visits that the Cardinal granted the special Indulgence on the usual conditions.(20)

"It was in the establishment of this small Society," continues Father Piperon "That Jules began his active apostolate for the Sacred Heart. With St. Paul he could say: 'Caritas Christi me urget' - 'The love of Christ is my motive.' More than once, when the opportunity arose during recreation or during our walks, we listened intently to him exposing his intimate ideas on Devotion and speaking of the ineffable treasures of love and mercy of the Sacred Heart. His own ardent sentiments communicated themselves to us, and we could feel our hearts beating with his. Happy and tender moments, which passed all too quickly. After sixty years their memory comes back vividly to me with it the regret that I did not profit more therefrom."(22)

Jules' practice of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart had a marked influence on his external manner and conduct. In October of 1849, he was commencing his fourth year at Bourges and his second in Theology. In April 8th of the following year, 1850, he was ordained a Sub-deacon. Until then, as we have seen before, he had been criticised for being too aloof and serious. "From the day of his ordination to sub-diaconate" states Father Piperon, "a marked change came over him." Until then, stiff in his bearing, inclined to be taciturn and too serious, he now began to reveal his real nature. With the grace of Orders he seemed to be sure of himself; he became affable, approachable and jovial. This pleasant manner was manifest till the end of his seminary days, and as a consequence he had a greater influence on the students. It was noticeable also that the numbers of Knights of the Sacred Heart increased. As Father Piperon remarks; "They were now quite numerous."(24)

The tension of manner which had followed his "conversion" had been a worry both to himself and his spiritual director, and it had been the cause of misunderstanding with the students. Now all this was a thing of the past. "When a soul is master of itself in firm resolution," writes Father Saudreau, "it avoids all precipitation, anxiety and restless activity."(25) This grace came to Jules with his sub-diaconate. He was just as strict as ever with himself, but his external demeanour was more relaxed and flexible.

"Today after fifty years" writes Father Piperon, "we find him always affable, complaisant and friendly to all who approach him. He has made himself "all things to all men" in order to gain them for Christ. This is the secret of his influence on so many people no matter to which country they belong. No one goes away from him without a word of consolation and good wishes."(26)

Having resolved that his future work would be mainly concerned with the spreading of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, Jules made it the object of his meditations. He endeavoured to acquaint himself with every aspect of the doctrine and imbued his soul with its spirit. We must remember that this evolution in his spiritual life was taking place during the period when he was struggling with the idea of founding a Society of Missionary-priests, and it was only natural that the two great desires - that of spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart and that of founding a Society should become fused as the one ideal. He realised that Devotion to the Sacred Heart was a powerful means of sanctification, and offered great scope as an efficacious means of apostolate. He would spread this devotion through his future Congregation.

What part can a particular devotion play in the sanctification of our souls - in our spiritual progress? All through his training, his spiritual masters had impressed on him the necessity of having an intimate knowledge and love of the Interior Life of Jesus, and now in his devotion to the Heart of Jesus he had before him a real personal Object of love and adoration. He wrote in his "School of the Sacred Heart": "The end of this devotion is to offer love and adoration to the human Heart of flesh of Our Lord - the symbol of His infinite love for men. By uniting our own hearts with His, we will burn with the fire of divine love, and be one in spirit with Him in all things."

The devotion to the Sacred Heart then was not just an aid to Jules' spiritual life; it informed that life, became, as it were, its very essence. It epitomised all his previous ideals and convictions - His desire for union with Christ; his desire for personal sanctification; his desire to heal the spiritual wounds of the people. The treasures of Love and Mercy that were to be found in the Heart of Jesus were the answers to the spiritual needs of the masses. Union with that Sacred Heart brings us life, salvation and grace - the joy and peace of mutual friendship. Father Olier had written: "Union with Christ is our vocation, our perfection. In and by the love of His Heart we are able to imitate His virtues and make ourselves like unto Him. By this means it is possible for us to put into practise his divine injunction: "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." Never abandon this divine love, it will attract you as it did Mary Magdalen. On thing is necessary, He told her. That was to love Him. Unite yourselves to the sentiments and dispositions of Jesus, which repose in His loving Heart. Your meeting-place with your Lover will be in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar where He will favour you with the abundance of His love - as a Spouse to his beloved."(27) In union with Jesus, Love is the bond.(28) Live in this love, for it is the nourishment of the soul, which Jesus Himself has prepared."(29) Find Him also in your daily exercises which are the rendezvous of lovers.(30) The love of Sacred Heart is your life."

The devotion of Jules Chevalier to the Sacred Heart was not based on merely pious sentiment, but was strictly in accord with the approved theology of the Devotion and the official proclamations of the Church. The professor had dealt with the subject historically and canonically in class. In Jules' Notes we find the following: "The French bishops, meeting in Council in 1769, pointed out the three-fold end of this Devotion, as revealed by Our Lord Himself to Blessed Margaret Mary Alcoque. They are the same ends or objects of the Devotion approved by "Pope Clement XIII in the decree which extended the Feast of the Sacred Heart to Poland. This three-fold end was:

- (1) To remind the faithful of the Infinite Love of Christ for them, and to stir up love for Him in their own hearts;
- (2) To procure for them an abundant share in the fruits of Redemption;
- (3) To make reparation to the Divine Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament - especially during the Octave of Corpus Christi - for the injuries inflicted on Him by mankind.

The professor had told them; "It is useful and salutary to honour this Divine Heart in a special manner, especially in those days of religious indifference, when men need to be drawn to Christ by an external and sensible devotion, which will touch their hearts. The direct and ordinary effect of this Devotion is an increase of grace, of piety and of perfection in the soul and at the same time it is an excellent means of worshipping the adorable person of the Lord made Flesh and His human Heart so full of love and mercy. All the Feasts in honour of Our Lord have as their material object the Person of the God-Man. The formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is the eminent Divine and Human Love of Christ symbolised by His Human Material Heart. Its true and real foundation is in the Hypostatic Union of the Lord with the human Heart of Christ - united in the immense love of Our Lord for men.

In teaching this doctrine the professor was only reiterating the truths taught in the diocese of Bourges - at least over the previous twenty-five years. On 1st March, 1825 a special Votive Mass and Office in honour of the Sacred Heart had been authorised for use in the diocese of Bourges by the Council of the Vicars Capitular - the See being vacant at the time. The official document bears the signature - "Cassot-Vicar Capitular." In the Introit of the Mass we capture immediately the spirit of the Feast: "Venite exultemus Domino diem festum celebrantes in honorem Amantissimi Cordis Jesu Christi, in quo sunt omnes thesauri caritatis et misericordiae Dei, Cujus amore et passione salvati sumus. Ipsi laus, Ipsi gloria, Ipsi imperium cordium in aeternum." In the Gradual we are invited to seek refuge in the Heart of Jesus, "as the doves find shelter in the recesses of the rocks." "Ad hoc enim vulneratum est Cor Jesu ut in Illo habitare possimus." The Sequence exalts the splendours of the Heart

of Christ - the Victim of love, the joy and consolation of men, the glory of the Blessed Trinity. For the Son of God has united Himself to this Heart, the Holy Spirit finds His repose there; the Father His happiness.

The mandate of 18th Mary, 1834 by Archbishop Guillaume-Aubin de Villele making the feast obligatory for the diocese contains doctrine very similar to Father Chevalier's writings, proof no doubt that he had studied it carefully. Several passages are worthy of quoting:

After tracing the history of the devotion in certain parts of the diocese where it had reawakened the faith of the people, the Archbishop gives the reasons why he was extending the Feast to the whole diocese: "In the midst of the tragic atmosphere of irreligion in which we live, when we are witnessing the decline of Faith and the growth of sacrilegious impiety and licentiousness which is affecting all classes of society, even our youth; in this Godless age when we see the Lord and His Christ attacked on all sides, we look for a powerful and salutary remedy, an antidote to the poison of false doctrines and immoral customs of the age. This "human wisdom", which does not look beyond the things of this earth, and which is distorted by pride and the unbridled reign of the passions, has seduced the people by offering them hopes that can never be fulfilled and happiness that can never be found. This moral scourge which is afflicting France today is much more formidable than the recent plague which ravaged the city of Marseilles. It is with supreme confidence then in the Adorable Heart of Jesus, Who has entrusted to us the care of His flock that we consecrate our diocese and our own person to this same loving Heart - asking Him for protection from this general contagion. Let us make our home in this Heart, there to find refuge from the Vengeance of God. It is from the Heart of Jesus, burning with the flames of love and mercy, that the world receives its light, and our souls their warmth and ardour. It was in this Sanctuary of Love and Mercy that all the divine plans of our Redemption were conceived. It is in this haven of peace and happiness that we can find a sure refuge from the wiles of the enemy, and enjoy the precious consolation and joy of our union with God."

"The Devotion to the Sacred Heart is as old as Christianity itself, since it is the devotion to the Person of the Incarnate Lord - to which this Divine Heart is hypostatically united. The object of the Feast is to bring before our minds the Infinite Love of God for men. It behoves us therefore to celebrate it with dignity, and to unite ourselves intimately with the Heart of Christ, according to the exhortation of the Apostle "Let that mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."

The new Office expresses the same sentiments: The richness of the Heart of Jesus, which is the Salvation of the World, and the necessity of our union with Our Blessed Lord. The beautiful prayer, the "Ave Admirabile Cor Jesu", was incorporated in the Office and Father Chevalier adopted it in the official prayers of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.(31) The invitatory begins: "Jesum Christum qui dilexit nos, venite adoremus." The lessons are taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, the theme of which is the Love of God for us through the gift of His Son, and our incorporation with Him. "That Christ may dwell by Faith in your hearts, that being rooted and grounded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the Saints what is the breadth and the length the height and the depth; to know also the love of Christ which surpasseth all knowledge that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God." (Ephes. III, 17-19)

To revert to the book of Bishop Languet on the Life of Blessed Margaret Mary which had such a profound influence on Jules. This was really the only work to that time on the life of the Saint and the Devotion to the Sacred Heart as revealed to her. (The better known "Life and Works" published by the Sisters of Paray-le-Monial was not printed till 1867.)

Jules tells us that after reading the book he determined to become an apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. The main part of the work is a history of the Revelations and extracts from the writings of the Saint. The Preface is a treatise by Bishop Languet himself called "The object and end of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart." After dealing scientifically with the miracles and their authenticity the author treats of the history of the devotion and gives his own personal reflections.

"Devotion to the Sacred Heart is devotion to the whole person of Christ and Love is the principle. When we honour His Heart we are honouring His whole Personality, just as when we offer our hearts to Him we are offering our whole being."

After mentioning various Saints who had particular devotion to this or that aspect of Our Lord's Personality, he continues: "Is it astonishing that a soul dedicated to a life of contemplation, as was the religious of whom I write, should have penetrated to the very Heart of Jesus - seeing there the source of all His merits, all His virtues, His entire Will and His sentiments. She was not the first of the Saints who were noted for their devotion to the lovable qualities of the Human Christ; others well before her had been caught up in the fire of this divine love - which after all, is the consolation of the Saints. But Margaret Mary has called our attention in a special way to this Sacred Heart of Jesus, as the fount of all His desires, His affections. His feelings, that Heart which beats in Heaven for the glory of God, and which beat on earth for the souls of men whom He made His brothers, for whom He was born at Bethlehem and for whom He died on Calvary. The infinite love of Jesus Christ for His Eternal Father and his tender love for us his creatures is the object of this devotion of which I write. From our point of view the end of the devotion is to return this love and to dedicate our lives to it. He has loved us beyond measure. Let us in return love Him with our whole heart, our whole mind and with all our strength."

"Happy is the soul who has found the way to the Heart of Christ, and so opens that way to others. 'He who loves fulfills the Law', says the Gospel, and in the love of the Sacred Heart we have the admirable means of complying with the precept, and achieving our salvation. Plenitudo legis, dilectio.(32)

For Jules Chevalier then this love of and devotion to the Sacred Heart permeated all his religious thought and activity. The Sacred Heart to him is the Incarnate Word of God, the High Priest of the New Law, the Redeemer, the Friend of mankind. In this Heart were all the treasures of Love and Mercy. As Father Piperon saw it, the synthesis of all devotions to Our Lord was the Devotion to His Sacred Heart; "He was constantly thinking of the Author and Finisher of Faith, Jesus the High Priest, whose Heart has loved us beyond measure and has consumed Himself for our salvation."(33)

We might ask ourselves why Almighty God chose this particular period of Jules' life - when he was still an inexperienced student - to introduce him so intimately to the devotion to the Sacred Heart and to convince him that he was to be its apostle in a special way. Would it not have been better to wait till he was a fully-developed man, an ordained and experienced priest?

The Holy Spirit does nothing by chance, and these years in the Seminary were years of preparation for his special mission. The Hand of Providence is clearly evident in the course of subsequent events, the action of the Holy Spirit obvious in every step from now on. Gold is tried by fire; Jules' vocation was tried by his own special trials and difficulties during these Seminary days at Bourges. God directed and prepared him gradually. He gently arranged the circumstances one by one, which enabled Jules eventually to fulfil his heart's desire, his "beau reve". These days of preparation in the Seminary were days of grace and encouragement. He told us, says Father Piperon, of his future plans. "When I am a priest, I intend to ask some of my zealous confreres to join me in forming a Society to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart."(34) "I already had in my mind two of my fellow-students who seemed to me admirably suited for my plan, but fearing they might ridicule the idea at this stage, I kept my 'beau reve' to myself. I confided it to no one except the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His Immaculate Mother."(35)

The original idea of founding a Society of Missionary-priests was conceived as a counter to the appalling religious and spiritual state of the nation. The priests would work to cure this social disease. As the idea developed in his mind we notice there is a greater tendency to emphasise the positive nature of the apostolic work: the personal sanctification of the future members, who would preach not so much on the evils of the time, as on the infinite Love and Mercy of the Heart of Christ. The remedy would be stressed more than the disease. The loving Heart of Christ would be presented to the people as the solution to their religious indifference and hostility. Devotion to the Sacred Heart would be the badge, the pledge, the insignia of the Society, the members of which would be devoted exclusively to the task of spreading this devotion.(36)

In his memories, when writing of this period of formation, Father Chevalier merely mentions the main idea of his future plan, i.e. to found a Society of Missionary priests who would work for the spiritual reformation of the people. At the time of writing, the Society was already well known and he did not go into detail about motives. However, we can be sure that his first concern would have been not only to found a Society of priests, but a Society of "pious and zealous" priests - as he mentioned to his confreres, priests, moreover, who would be willing to make Devotion to the Sacred Heart the main work of the Society. It was to be a Society with a special aim and purpose. Intensely preoccupied, at the time with the work of his own personal sanctification, he was convinced that the priest before he could be a true apostle of Christ, must himself be a holy and sincere disciple of Our Lord. He would form such a group of priests into a new Congregation, and love of the Sacred Heart would be the spirit and strength of that Society.

Anticipating our story a little, Father Píperon tells us that this spirit informed and permeated the little Congregation from the very beginning at Issoudun. The Founder and his first Confrere had only one desire - one ambition - to live as perfectly as possible the life of Christ Himself, the life of the Supreme Priest and to reproduce in themselves the sentiments of His Divine Heart. How could one love the Heart of the Crucified Christ, unless one was completely in love with and dedicated to the God-Man Himself. How could one impart this love to others unless he were deeply steeped in it himself?

Some have been inclined to think that the really effective intention of founding' a Society with the particular object of honouring and working for the Sacred Heart came to Jules after Seminary days, but we can find no evidence either in events or his writings to support this view. From the time of his ordination to his appointment to Issoudun the project seems to have been slumbering. It was only when he was appointed to Issoudun and found himself with his fellow-curate, Father Maugeness, that he felt convinced that the hand of Providence was directing him to the fulfilment of his "beau reve". Here he was at the very town that had played such a prominent part in his dream, and with the very companion of former days to whom before all others he wished to confide his plans.(37) Father Píperon asks the question: did Jules have a clear idea when he came to Issoudun of God's designs regarding his Foundation and of the spirit which would pervade it? We are sure he did. The motives, born of the convictions of student days, leave no doubt in our mind,

Reviewing the history of the project to this juncture - for as yet still just a project - we can state that Jules was firmly convinced of the desirability of a Society of Missionaries dedicated to the cause of the Heart, and that God wished him to be the Founder of this Society. But we must realise that to undertake such a stupendous project and put it into effect, he still had to make the important and final decision himself. Would he go ahead with the idea? Knowing the difficulties and the inevitable heart-breaks that would be involved, it would have been easy to forget the whole plan, and leave it just as a beautiful dream. It was only natural that he would have misgivings on the success of the plan, and doubts as to his own qualifications to implement it. We cannot say that to date he had received much encouragement. Father Ruel, his Director, had told him it was a "utopian ideal" and an "illusion". His reaction to this was to feel discomfited and to try to forget the whole thing. The students had been inclined to laugh at the idea. Although he had decided to be an apostle of the Sacred Heart, was it to be as the Founder of a Religious Congregation? Nothing he had read in the Life of Blessed Margaret Mary, in the revelations of Our Lord to her, or in his own ardent desire to spread the devotion contained a clear or definite invitation to him to found a Congregation. He was troubled by the conflict between the promptings of his heart and the advice of his spiritual director. He submitted to this advice, and ceased speaking of the plan to his confreres, and entrusted his secret to the Heart of Jesus and His Immaculate Mother. He became timid about mentioning it even to Sebastien Maugeness who, he thought, would be an admirable recruit.

However, little by little, he became certain of God's design in his regard, and the more he meditated on the Sacred Heart, on the richness of the Devotion, the more he became convinced that God wished him - Jules Chevalier, with his limitations and weaknesses - to be the Founder of a new Congregation in Church. He made his decision, and awaited with trust and confidence the moment when God would show him how to realise his plan.

Providence had already brought him into contact with the two persons who were to eventually help him to achieve his "dream", although none of them knew it at the time. In the Seminary, Sebastien Maugeness had attracted his attention as an ideal helper, although, as we have seen, he became faint-hearted about confiding in him. He later wrote of him: "Sebastien Maugeness was zealous, good, pious, sure of himself, and devoted. He had an extraordinary memory, and was no mean orator. His speech was simple, and often eloquent. You would never hear him say anything bombastic or common-place. He seemed to speak more to the heart than the mind. He had a flair for detail, and never failed to impress an audience."(39)

Charles Píperon, who was regarded by Jules as a likely candidate for his new Congregation was a different character. He did not have the eloquence or the exterior appearance of Father Maugeness, and at the beginning of his Major Seminary days, he was even doubtful about his vocation - a doubt which delayed his entry by a few months. However, Jules regarded this sincere and holy young man as his "second candidate". The following conversation reported by Father Píperon himself, was a prophecy of things to come.

"One day at one of the meetings of the Association of the Sacred Heart one of the students (it was himself, Charles Píperon) remarked rather naively that he did not feel greatly attracted by the ordinary ministry and that he would prefer to live and die as a religious. Jules Chevalier regarded him with a serious and searching look, and said; 'My dear friend, guard your vocation carefully. It is a precious gift of God to you.' " Father Píperon continues; "Were those words and that significant look a prediction of the future?" Jules never mentioned the incident again, and Charles Píperon soon forgot about it.

"However", says Father Píperon, "after five years when, in the ways of Divine Mercy, that student was to become one of the first companions of the Founder in the new Society, he recalled the words and the look and he never forgot them."(40)

After Jules Chevalier's ordination as a sub-deacon, both Sebastien Maugeness and Charles Píperon left the Seminary. In August Sebastien left for the novitiate of St. Sulpice as he wished to join that Order, and Charles in the following January was granted leave of absence on account of sickness. Thus Jules found himself alone with his dream of the future, till his ordination to the Priesthood on 14th June, 1851.

"I celebrated my First Mass", he wrote in his Memoirs, "in the little Chapel of the Garden dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. At the sacred moment of the Consecration the grandeur of the Mystery and the thought of my own unworthiness penetrated me so deeply that I broke into tears. I needed the encouragement of the priest who was assisting me to complete the Holy Sacrifice. O unforgettable day! Why did I not die at the foot of the Altar after my Mass? How many faults would I not have avoided. At that happy hour Heaven was mine, while today on account of my sins I tremble for my salvation. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have pity on me. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, protect me."(41)

All through his life Father Chevalier was to build his interior, spiritual life on the firm foundations laid during these important days of the Seminary. Till his death he persevered along the lines of the resolutions he took as a Seminarist at Bourges. The particular form of his spirituality and the nature of his devotion in these important days of training characterised his priestly and religious life to the end. Father Píperon has given formal testimony of that, and the Founder's writings bear it out.

At the end of his life, looking back over the distant past, he would tell how God's grace directed him, and how he regarded his first retreat at Bourges as the date of his conversion. He allowed his soul, according to the counsel given by Father Lallement, to be directed by the Holy Spirit. It was a life of self-renunciation, a daily struggle against sin, imperfections and distractions. It was a life of obedience, recollection and prayer, always striving for greater union with Our Lord. Jules had no other interests, no other desires, than those which were to lead him to God and the Altar. He developed a calm and patient nature awaiting the fulfilment of God's will. Ever before him was the Person of Jesus, the High Priest. He sought to make himself "another Christ", to be the Shepherd of souls as He was, and to be prepared to endure hardships even death itself for His

sake. His great desire was to lose himself in the very Heart of Christ, that Heart which has loved us beyond measure. Charity was his conspicuous virtue even in the days when his manner seemed aloof and the students found him difficult. He was kind on all occasions not only to his confreres, but to the poor and sick, and his desire to go to the missions was prompted by his sympathy and pity for the poor people who knew not Christ.

After his sub-deaconate this charity blossomed forth into an affable, smiling manner which won all hearts to him, and distinguished him right through his life. His love of the Church and his affection for the Holy See made him the true Catholic in thought and deed. In all his sentiments and devotions he made sure he was acting in accordance with the teaching of the Church, especially in his love and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

As stated originally the Sulpician training is evident in all his spirituality: the principles of Father Olier, the lectures of Father Mollevaut, the advice of Father Ruel. The fundamental principle of this spirituality is the union of one's will with the Will of God through the love of his Divine Son. "Enter into union with Him through love" was Father Olier's dictum. "Live by love since it is the nourishment of the soul. Where can the soul gain its strength in the practice of virtue; where can it gain strength to carry the Cross except in the love of Jesus." For Jules this love became his life, his ardent passion. He strove so ardently for this union of love with his Divine Master that, as Father Piperon testifies, the students found it hard to find even the slightest fault in his conduct. It was only natural that this love should find its expression in his ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart. He had established in the Seminary his little Sodality "Knights of the Sacred Heart and of Mary" not only for mutual help in the quest of virtue, but mainly to honour those two Sacred Hearts. He had asked Our Lady for just two graces - to love Her, and to love unreservedly Her Divine Son. And God rewarded him with many graces in return - his conversion, his singleness of purpose in seeking holiness, his repugnance to sin, his spirit of trust and confidence, and finally his effective desire to found the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

This analysis of the various stages of his Vocation at least helps us to understand better his strong character and to appreciate the difficult road that he had to traverse. It likewise reveals the courageous nature of the man who had still to face many a trial in the realisation of his dream, the founding of the Society, the fulfilment of his special mission in the Church.

Jules Chevalier left the Seminary three days after his ordination, and was immediately appointed as Curate to the parish of Yvey-le-Pre, at the other end of the diocese. He had hoped it would be Issoudun, but in God's design - not yet. In the not so far distant future Issoudun was to be his home, the field of his labours, the cradle of his beloved Congregation. No wonder he never wanted to leave Issoudun.

CHAPTER VI EARLY MINISTRY,

First Appointments

The parish of Ivey-le-Pre is in the northern part of the diocese of Bourges, hidden away in the Sancerrois Mountains, with the river "La Petite Sauldre" flowing peacefully by. It is a very old town, boasting in the mid-fifties of the last century, of a population of about 2500. It belonged to the shire of La Chapelle d'Angillon, and ecclesiastically, to the deanery of Sancorre. The steel industry mainly supported its inhabitants.

"The parish priest of this good Christian parish," wrote Father Chevalier, "was a holy, prudent and zealous man. He was a great help to me in these early days of my priestly ministry." Father Piperon has noted that these early days at his first parish were difficult, as Father Chevalier contracted a severe cyst on the knee, and had to spend the first two weeks in bed.

In his Memoirs Father Chevalier recalls two interesting old characters that he met during his short stay of seven months at Ivey-le-Pre. The first was an old retired Oratorian, almost a hundred years old, Father Delpoux by name. He had lived through the terrible days of the Revolution and was now staying at the home of a Monsieur de Montreuil, whose teacher he had been.

"I used to visit the old man often," recalls Father Chevalier, "and found him an entertaining old character. He used to boast of the fact that he had seen Voltaire.

"Were you in Paris when he died?" I used to ask.

"Oh yes, of course."

"Do you know how he died?"

That was the invitation to tell once again the story of the last moment of the dying philosopher - a story, he said, that he had from the very lips of the woman who attended him.

The other old gentleman, Monsieur Chedeau, was a former doctor almost as old as Father Delpoux. He was a dyed-in-the-wool Jansenist. 'Every time I tried to get him to go to Confession he would reply: 'Not now, later on. God expects you to go to Confession only when you are dying.' I was pleased to hear after I left the parish that he did receive the last Sacraments before his death."(1)

According to the diocesan Register, Father Chevalier left Ivey-le-Pre on 21st January, 1852 for Chatillon-sur-Indre at the other end of the diocese in the Touraine district, his native territory. The little town of about 3500 people was situated on a hill to the left side of the River Indre. On the summit of the hill stand the picturesque ruins of an old XIth Century chateau with its two imposing towers. The church which must be at least a century older, with its remarkable sculpturing is not without its beauty. A fine public square which commands a panoramic view of the neighbourhood, and an attractive promenade around the village add to the charm of the place. The main industry of the town was the fabrication of textile material. The Parish Priest was the Abbe Legay, a priest trained in the post-Revolution period after the seminaries had been reopened. Owing to the scarcity of priests he had, right from the outset, been overburdened with work, and now, even though only 57 years of age, he was worn out and asked the bishop for a curate. When he left the parish in 1855, he was appointed as one of the Canons of the Bourges Cathedral.

Father Chevalier applied himself with great zeal and devotion to his parochial duties. Father Piperon has written; "Even today after 46 years, the young curate is still remembered in Chatillon."(2) On account of the sickness of the parish priest, most of the work fell on his shoulders. "I was enthusiastic about my work," he later wrote, "concentrating mainly on the sick, the poor and the children." Some of the well-to-do parishioners came to his aid in his endeavour to help the poor. He mentions by name Madame la Comtesse de Bryas and Madame de Chauderoy. Later on these good people also helped him generously when he was founding the young Congregation at Issoudun.

"When I arrived at Chatillon," he writes, "I noticed that the church was deserted during the day, although the population was Christian and quite good. The good God inspired in me the thought of forming a Guard of Honour to the Blessed Sacrament. I submitted the plan to the parish priest, and got his ready approbation. I arranged with the parishioners to have half-hour watches throughout the day from 9 o'clock in the morning till six at night, so that there would always be someone there to adore Our Lord in the Sacrament of His Love. At the time of writing," he adds, "I am told that this custom is still in vogue. May God be praised."(3)

It is here probably that we find the origin of the idea which he cherished right from the beginning of founding a Congregation of religious women parallel to the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of which he dreamed.(4)

In order to persevere in his piety, and to increase his priestly zeal he decided while he was here in Chatillon, to become a Member of the Third Order of St. Dominic. Father Meunier, the parish priest of Orsennes received him in the name of Pere Lacordaire, the Provincial of the Dominicans. The Provincial granted him the power to give the habit of the Third Order to other people whom he judged worthy. In transmitting to him this faculty, Pere Lacordaire traced for him in his own handwriting the rules which should guide him in his choice of postulants. In his own letter of admission (13th October, 1853) he was given the Third-Order name of Dominic.

The salary of curates in those impoverished times was a mere pittance. We have found a few references on the back of a notebook regarding his finances: "My salary," the note says, "is 400 francs. I give 300 francs from this to the Parish Priest for board and keep and let him

have my Masses on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. In January (1853) the Parish Priest told me the salary would be raised to 800 francs, so I gave him all my Mass intentions," Half of this was paid in silver, and the rest would come from Mass stipends. The final arrangement was that he would be paid 800 francs in silver, and Mass intentions would go to the Parish priest.

During Father Chevalier's second year at Chatillon he was surprised to receive a letter from the Archbishop transferring him to Aubigny-sur-Nere. The leave-taking was not without its regrets as the people had become fond him, and he of them. "At Chatillon," he wrote in later life, "I was very happy, I was trying to do God's Will and the will of my Superiors. I had no desire to go elsewhere."(6) His successor was a Father Tamisier, who later on was to go to Issoudun as curate.

Aubigny was not quite as big as Chatillon and not as picturesque. It had a beautiful promenade lined with large fir-trees. There were few traces of its past history left, except a very old church, and a curious old Gothic home with some notable sculpturing. The fire which raised the town in 1512 left very little else. We might say it was even an ugly looking town with badly built dwellings. The river Nero and the main highway from Paris to Bourges ran through it, and the two inns "Lion d'Or" and "Le Boeuf" were sufficient to accommodate any visitors.

However, from the religious point of view the town had an excellent name, and was regarded as one of the best of the small parishes of the Cher district, if not of the diocese. The new curate found plenty of scope there for his priestly zeal. Practically all the parish duties were his responsibility and he showed himself equal to the position. "He very quickly won the esteem and affection of the people."(7) The parish priest was a very old man, Abbe Louis Quentin. Father Chevalier wrote of him: "He was a Sainly old man - and spent his life and himself in the service of souls." He was born on 10th February, 1790, and had been looking after the parish of Aubigny since 1820. He directed it with as much success as zeal. He was a talented priest with a deeply apostolic faith. He had founded several pious associations in the parish and they were all flourishing. However, he contracted an incurable disease which confined him to his room, and having as curate another sick priest, he asked His Eminence Cardinal du Pont, Archbishop of Bourges, to send him a young and energetic priest who could care for the parish.

"I do not know," wrote Father Chevalier, "why or how the choice fell on me, but I was transferred to Aubigny on 14th October, 1855"

This date was the date of his nomination, as he mentions elsewhere that he arrived at Aubigny on 20th October, 1853(10) and the parish register gives the date of his installation as Saturday, the 22nd October. The sick curate was probably Father Louis Gogin, who stayed on in the parish, but could do little external work. In his Notes Father Chevalier writes: "I did my best to carry on the good work that had already been done, for girls and boys, of Christian Mothers and of the men were all well attended. Every Sunday and major Feast day about 150 young men with their the patronage of Saint Liguori, used to meet after Vespers. We used to go together to make a visit to the various Calvaries which line the roadways of the neighbourhood. We would then return to the church where I would deliver a short sermon and give Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. He held on the Feasts of Corpus Christi, the Assumption, Rogation days, and during the Month of May. The Feast of the Sacred Heart was celebrated with special ceremonies. It was edifying and encouraging to see the very large crowds.(9) The first sermon he preached to the select band of men who called themselves the Liguorians was on the first Sunday of Advent, 27th November, 1853. The sermon has been preserved. After expanding the text of St. Paul's Epistle in the Mass of the days "Let us abandon the works of darkness," he congratulates the men on their piety and initiative. "When I came to this parish" he says "the news that there was a group of men who had placed themselves under the special protection of a Saint in order to increase their faith and piety, filled me with inexpressible joy."(10)

He particularly cherished the memory of one very saintly old man in Aubigny, Monsieur Leclerc. His charity was outstanding and his home seemed to be a haven for the poor. His only son - saintly like himself - had distinguished himself in the intellectual milieu in Paris by his lecturing and writings. He numbered amongst his close friends such men as Louis Veuillot, and Montalembert. Just before Father Chevalier had come to Aubigny this remarkable young man had taken ill and had returned to his father's home to recuperate. He was a model in virtue to the townsfolk, and each day he would spend several hours in the church. He took a special interest in the poor, and was referred to by them as "the saint." "Unfortunately," says Father Chevalier, he died just before I arrived at Aubigny, but his name was on every tongue. The whole town came out for his funeral, and the townsfolk eagerly sought fragments of anything that had belonged to him to keep as relics. His father had a special funeral chapel built over his tomb, and every day the old man would go to the cemetery to recite the prayers for the dead, followed by the Magnificat and the Te Deum to thank God for having given him such a noble son. I used often go with him and join with him in the prayers."

In another extract from his Memoirs Father Chevalier has given us a touching account of the last hours of his parish priest, Father Queritin: "The health of my dear and revered Parish Priest was declining day by day. Fearing he was close to death, he asked me to give him the Last Sacraments. Many of the parishioners were present at the anointing, and even then, weak though he was, he could not resist the opportunity of commenting on the five senses of the body, publicly confessing that he had offended God by these gifts and asking pardon for his sins. He expressed sorrow for any neglect of his parochial duties. Tears were in his eyes and the parishioners could not hide their grief. Towards evening he called me close to him and gave me this advice. 'My dear Abbe, I am about to go to God, and I would like you, a priest, to profit by the mistakes I made during my priesthood. Looking back I can see that I spent too much time looking after the people who didn't need my attention as much as other poor souls who did. I have been inclined to give my time to looking after the devout and the pious - especially the women, instead of getting out amongst the men and youth, seeking the lost sheep. It is easy for priests to spend their time the more comfortable way, by busying themselves with the devout, especially the devout women. This way they delude themselves that they are really busy - haven't a moment to spare - while the main work of their apostolate of their apostolate is being neglected. My son, avoid that pitfall. Prefer to get out among the children, the poor, the ignorant and the lowly. Don't go hankering after the rich and the worldly smart-set'. I knelt down beside his bed; he stretched out his feeble hand and gave me his blessing, a few hours later he breathed his last."(12)

Several of Father Chevalier's sermons which he wrote whilst at Aubigny are still in existence. There is the one already referred to which he preached to the Liguorians; there are two on Our Blessed Lady, and the other four are practical instructions on "False Devotion"; "The dangers of the Carnival", "The necessity of penance," and "Dangers of false opinions."

The Abbe Quentin died on the 15th August, 1854, and Father Chevalier looked after the parish till the 1st October when the new parish priest Pere Larbaletrier was installed. The main reason of his presence in Aubigny no longer applied, and Father Chevalier expected a new appointment in the near future.

Although, as we have said, the cherished plan of founding his Society may have been slumbering during these first few years after Ordination, it was certainly not dead. "My project of founding the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was forever before my mind," he wrote, "and for some reason, Issoudun always seemed associated with it. Perhaps the fact that it had 15,000 souls with only the one parish and three priests influenced my thoughts. Here was ready-made field of apostolate, as the place was regarded as the most backward in the diocese on account of its spirit of irreligion and indifference. I really thought I would be appointed priest in charge of some small independent parish, as the diocese was short of priests." It was not rare to see young priests even after two or three years put in charge of some small parish or chaplaincy. Father Piperon for example, on account of his shy nature and diffidence about parish work, went straight into a chaplaincy at Bourges after Ordination.

The expected letter from the Archbishop was not long in coming. Before opening it he fell on his knees and made an act of resignation to God's Will. "Dear Lord", he prayed, "I happily accept in advance Your Divine Will, whatever place to which I am posted." "I slowly opened the letter and before I could read the first few lines I could see the word - Issoudun - underlined. Yes, I had been appointed to the town I had dreamed of so much - Issoudun. I hastily looked up the Ordo to see what priests were there. Imagine my surprise when found that my fellow-curate there was to be none other than Sebastian Maugeest the former student of college days to whom I thought of confiding my plan."

"And so I set out for Issoudun. I arrived there on Saturday, 14th October 1854 - just twelve months after my arrival in Aubigny. I was received with great charity and cordiality." (13)

(Note: It seems that 14th October was the date of his appointment, not the date of his arrival, as the parish register states he arrived at Issoudun on Friday, 20th October and took up duties the following day.)

This was the fourth time that he found himself in the Province of Lower Berry. Previously he had been at Vatan, Saint Gaultier and Chatillon. He was to remain in this country till his death in 1907. Issoudun was now to be the cradle of his great achievement - the founding of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - the Society whose members were destined to spread the Gospel not only in the Province of Berry, but throughout the entire world.

Issoudun is situated at the junction of two of the three regions which comprise the Province of Lower Berry - "La Boischant" and "La Campagne". "Two countries," says the Tourist-Guide of 1838, with a deal of exaggeration, "where things are different. A different climate, different customs, different occupations." (15) Boischant occupies seven tenths of the Province including a third of the Shire of Issoudun. This area is mainly made up of small farms, separated by hedges, ditches and occasional woodlands. The other two-thirds of the Shire belongs to La Campagne, and consists of large farms and holdings. The smallest division, one-tenth of the Province, is La Brenne, an inhospitable tract of land, mainly made up of swamps, which have no natural drainage and over which there seems to hang a perpetual fog. It is a territory unhealthy both for man and beast. Jules Chevalier knew it well, as it was just across the border from Saint-Gaultier.

The whole area is in the Loire basin in the southern part of the great Western Plain of Europe. In Summer, the maximum temperature is usually between 80° and 96°, and in Winter it goes as low and lower than freezing point. The prevailing winds are those from the South West and North East - with the occasional dreaded "galerae" from the North West, which plays havoc with the crops. The land is mainly flat except for some hilly country in the western division where Chatillon is situated. The soil is Jurassic over a sub-stratum of limestone and the lower reaches are rich in iron and minerals. The iron is of excellent quality, and good mica, flint and lithographic stone are found there. There are also good quantities of black granite, quartz, pottery clay, and marble with red and white veins which polishes very well. In the secondary industries there are large textile factories, tanneries and tile-works". In 1850 there were 559 primary and secondary establishments throughout the district, employing some 3000 men, 1000 women and 450 children. The annual income for the district was estimated at 18,470,000 francs.

Agriculture was the principal industry. The workable land was planted with wheat, oats, rye, barley, vegetables and potatoes. 40,496 acres were planted with vines, and the State had a forest of 215,050 acres planted with oaks, elms, ash and chestnut, trees. The livestock, estimated at nearly 1,100,000 head, often had to be turned out for pasture on the waste-land, which accounted for their generally poor condition. There was a great number of sheep, and horses and donkeys were bred for export. The grape-growing industry was not without its particular difficulties owing mainly to the inexperience of the growers and the many diseases to which the vine is susceptible. The vines were brought from Bordelais, and the wine matured more quickly than at Bordeaux owing to the high content of tannin. However, it was considered as of mediocre quality and had a poor market in Paris. In their anxiety to get a quick return for their labours, the growers were inclined to harvest the grapes too early, and the method of storing was primitive and unhygienic. They were following methods which were at least 200 years old and were not beyond adding a little water to the wine. The nature of the work is of itself laborious and painstaking, and many of the growers looked elsewhere for a living. (16) Every year on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption the growers used to place a ripe grape in the hand of the statue of Our Blessed Lady asking for her protection for their crops. Stanislaus Martin tells us: "The vine-growers of Issoudun will recall for a long time the fact that they were not permitted in 1860 to place the grape in the hands of the statue. That year the crop failed.

Another popular custom in Issoudun was the celebration of the Harvest Festival at the end of October each year. This was an ancient tradition handed-down from the times when the trade was flourishing, and the probity the vine-growers beyond suspicion. (17) The same author, Stanislaus Martin has written; "How we looked forward each year when we were children to this wonderful Festival. A thousand happy voices would make the slopes of the vineyards resound with their laughter and joy."

Another event eagerly awaited each year was the opening of the hunting season. The near-by forests sheltered quite a variety of game - wild boar; roe-deer and many species of fur and feathered game. The opening day in August was celebrated by merry-making. The populace with the gun and pistol made off to the forests, but unfortunately the occasion was often marred by accidents.

The agricultural pursuits of the district were worked mainly on the share farming system. The owner of the land accepted as rent part of the proceeds. He provided the initial capital, and stock, whereas the farmer contributed his labour, what implements he could, and the help of his family. The contracts were usually drawn up for a period of three years and the proportionate share arranged according to the nature, size and locality of the farms. This system of share farming was not something new, but dated back well before the Revolution. It had its advantages both to the owner and the farmer, but it was not without its draw-backs. Bailly de Merlieux - an authority on the subject at that time - after speaking of the advantages of mutual cooperation in the system mentions two main obstacles; "The estates generally are too large, and the activities of the farmer too general. It results in the neglect of some sections of the property. The ideal area for a successful farm seems to be about 150 acres, which a farmer and his family can work effectively. The second difficulty is that the system seems to kill any laudable ambition in small farmers to better his condition. He is content to earn his modest livelihood, supply his few needs for his family, visit the fairs and markets to do little buying and selling (he had ample scope as there were some 337 fairs markets in 155 communes) and generally to lead a dull, unpretentious life year in and year out. Unlike the farmers of the North, they do not seem to have ambition of living comfortably, to own their own properties, or to provide higher education for their children." (18)

The population of the whole Province at this time was 271,938. Apart from public buildings, administrative offices, church property etc., there were 54,900 separate properties, and 56,792 buildings. There was a definite house shortage, and it was not uncommon to have two or more families living on the block of land. The number of men in the district seemed to outnumber the women rather considerably.

The Municipality of Issoudun was divided into 1,011,469 lots, belonging to 96,744 owners who paid 1,868,089 francs per annum in land tax. The gross amount of taxation, personal, property registration and postal duties etc. yielded the Municipality 6,215,817 francs per annum. Generally, the houses were not of a very high standard, but outside the towns the countryside was not unattractive with the variety of fruit trees and particularly the chestnut trees which seemed to grow everywhere. "Most of the farm-houses were shaded by large elms, whose leaves were useful for feeding the cattle. After pruning the sap of these elms would harden into knotty elbows, which could be used in cabinet making. Most of the houses also had their own little cluster of vine the sap of which was supposed to be endowed with special medicinal qualities, particularly for the curing of skin and eye complaints. The dry branches made ideal fire-wood for the roasting of the chestnuts." (20)

In Issoudun itself the majority of houses were poverty-stricken dwelling by modern standards, slums of the worst type. Exteriorly they were most unattractive, many of them joined together as though helping one another to stand up. The roofs were so low you had no difficulty in putting your hand up to touch the guttering. Some had large slabs of tile to replace the thatch, but mainly they were in a state of delapidation. The interior consisted of a couple of rooms, and in most, the living room, bed room and kitchen were all one and the same. It was not unusual to see three or four beds, perhaps a baby's cot, a chest-of-drawers, a wardrobe, a dining table, a wash tub, all in the same room. The floor was of earth, and the friendly pigs seemed welcome any time they wished to stroll in. The writer, L. Bignon wrote in 1865: "When one thinks of this crowded existence, of this communal bed-room for all members of the family, one wonders if it were possible to outrage decency and morality more." Usually the master had his bed in the place of honour next to the fire place.

As houses in France were taxed according to the number of doors and windows they possessed, it was usual to have only one entrance, and a small fan-light instead of windows. Consequently the wretched dwellings were badly lit and poorly ventilated. Even in the neighbouring countryside, where fresh air was plentiful, the same conditions attained, and the interior of the houses were dark, dank dungeons rather than suitable living abodes.

It is a shameful fact that in France even as late as 1880 over a quarter of a million dwellings had only one door; over four million houses, occupied by 14 million people - i.e. one-fifth of the whole population of France - had no more than two windows - all this in an endeavour to avoid paying extra tax. It is recorded that in the year 1857 the Municipality of Issoudun collected 182,998 francs from the taxes on windows and doors in the area.

We must keep this in mind when we consider that in the first small monastery that he built, Father Chevalier himself lived in a room without windows, the only light coming through a pane of glass in the door which opened out into the passage-way. It is understandable that in these shockingly unhygienic conditions sickness and disease were rife amongst the people. Epidemics and plagues were not uncommon, resulting in a high death rate throughout the Province - higher than anywhere else in France. Lack of proper sanitation, insufficient medical care, careless preparation and conservation of food all contributed to this lamentable state of affairs. One severe epidemic was traced back to a germ in the flour, caused by an insect known as the wheat moth, or grain butterfly. The moth hid itself amongst the grain in the storage barns causing an infection which spread quickly; then in June it attacked the growing plant in the field leaving its larvae to affect the crop. The resulting epidemic took the form of a painful throat infection almost like cancer. Wincing did not sufficiently separate the good from the bad grain, and careless preparation with suspect water, plus the humidity of the climate did the rest. From the years 1833 to 1852 the population of the Berry province declined by 25%. Actually 28% in Issoudun and 34.5% in Bourges.(21)

The inhabitants of the Province of Berry were regarded by the rest of France as not being too bright intellectually, but they had a native shrewdness, especially in business matters, which often confounded their critics. The average 'Berry-ite' was usually a taciturn type, serious and shy of the company of strangers. He was a child of the country and preferred to remain in his restricted rural domain. He was regarded as being slow of mind and speech and his interests were confined to a very small circle. His gaiety was not on the surface. He laughed silently.(22)

On account of the long years of revolutionary upheaval, education had naturally suffered, and in Father Chevalier's time the Municipality was rated in the Educational Statistics by the unflattering mark of 79th in the whole of France. Perhaps it gained some consolation from the fact that the neighbouring Province of Cher was 84th. There were only 200 primary schools throughout the whole Province with an attendance of 15,000 pupils, and the over-all estimate of those who could read or write among the populace was only 17%. Monsieur de la Tramblain was hardly complimentary when he wrote in 1862; "Berry has the unenviable reputation of being one of the most ignorant provinces of the whole Republic, one which hardly deserves our attention. It enjoys the lowly social position it deserves. It lost its self-government centuries ago. Now that it has been divided into Municipalities there may be some hope for it. That is an event of great importance for it."(23)

The religious glory of this part of France was a thing of the past. We have already spoken of the ancient splendour and glory of the Faith which was planted there as far back as the early days of Christianity, but the cruel hand of the Revolution had fallen heavily on this people and their religion, when Father Chevalier arrived in 1854 there was a general spirit of apathy and religious indifference amongst the populace. There had been a brief religious revival after the Revolution, but in 1830 the followers of Voltaire gained the upper hand and the people relapsed into their former indifference. Father Chevalier wrote in his "Religious History of Issoudun": "Piety had grown cold, and a distressing indifference pervaded the whole neighbourhood of Issoudun."(24) From the ecclesiastical point of view, the Municipality formed the Archdeanery of Indre, comprising 26 parishes in which there were 152 churches and chapels of ease, and six curacies.

The author, Louis Raynal in his History of Berry, edited in 1845, has perhaps given us the best picture of the Province and its people: "We must remember that the people of the Berry district are sedentary. The desire to travel, to better themselves, to seek their fortune elsewhere is quite a foreign thought to them. They are slaves to the soil where they were born. And this applies not only to the humble peasants, but to all classes of society. There are admittedly different characteristics amongst them according to the different localities, but it is not difficult to recognise in them similar qualities and manners - even similar faults - which reveal their common origin. Gay and casual in the land of the vineyards; indefatigable workers, as hard as the iron they were handling, in the mineral country; sickly and without mental or physical energy in the Sologne and Brenne regions; with a shrewdness and a native common sense which was difficult to fault. If the people of the towns and villages of Berry did not approve of innovations, or ever dare to attempt them, at least their lack of initiative kept them out of mischief. Anyone who attempted anything new was regarded with thorough distrust, and their fear of making mistakes made them follow the less dangerous practice of walking up and down the broken footpath gossiping and criticising - a habit hardly conducive to progress. They preferred to play safe and just be prudent, reserved, orderly and economic."

However, such a judgment is hardly fair, for underneath this exterior indolence and dullness of intellect there were latent qualities of worth which came to the fore, when put to the test. Open up a new horizon to them, school them in the ways of the world, and they could develop quickly into useful and resourceful citizens. Marshal de Belle-Isle is reported to have said that he was always glad to have soldiers who came from Berry. Their only fault, he said, was that they were inclined to get home-sick. The Jesuits recorded that they had many sterling vocations from the Berry district, but that they always worked better when not in their native-country.

Perhaps the greatest character of which Berry can boast is the famous preacher - Bourdaloue. The people of the Province are rightly proud of him, as his genius was the expression of all that is good and excellent in the local spirit. By study and research he became an eminent scholar, logical in his argumentation, brilliant in his exposition and eloquent in his preaching without having recourse to dramatic outbursts, or poetic flights of fancy. His style both in preaching and writing was marked by its simplicity, its sureness and its common sense. He made an impact not only on the people of his own time, but has done so on scholars and laymen ever since.(25)

This then was the country where Father Jules Chevalier was to work and with the help of its people, achieve his life's work, the founding of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He himself, as the people often noticed, was not "Berrichen" in character. On the contrary, he had a quick and enterprising nature, which seized opportunities as they came along. For him the idea passed quickly to its realisation if it was a good one. He did not waste much time in weighing up the pros and cons of a venture once he was convinced it was feasible. The easy-going parishioners at first looked with surprise and misgiving on this energetic young curate who seemed to walk over obstacles as though they did not exist, but he quickly won them by his sincerity, and in spite of his different ways and disregard for minor conventions, they soon regarded him as one of themselves. And indeed he was to become one of them and Issoudun was forever to be his adopted home. Wherever he travelled in future years, he tells us he was homesick till again he saw the White Tower of Issoudun.

Although Issoudun fitted in, generally, to the pattern of the Berry district, it still had its own characteristics - due to its history and location. We have already spoken of its ancient origin. In Roman times the population built their town on the verdant banks of the Cher tributary - "La Theols", a pretty stream which takes its source in the Bommier Hills some twenty miles away. In these early wartime days the inhabitants grouped themselves at the foot of the Castle on the hill. It is from this fact that the town gets its name; In the Celtic language "Is" means "below", and "dunum" is the word for hill. Issoudun then was known as "the town beneath the hill." Even today remnants may be seen of the ancient wall that surrounded the town and of the two large fortifications, one built for the protection of the aristocracy the other for the plebians. The lower part of the town with its narrow untidy streets has kept in the main its medieval character, but the upper part, rebuilt in the 18th-century, is comparatively more up to date. In the middle of the last century it was described as "a nice-looking, well-built and spacious town". Today with the

development of its suburbs it is a typical country French town. Glimpses of its vanished glory are seen in the White Tower which stands sentinel over the town, and the old belfry over the ancient Bastille. In 1883 some excavations at the foot of the Tower revealed vestiges of an early Christian Church, which the historian, Peremeé, placed in the 4th or 5th century. Father Chevalier was inclined to think that it went back to the first century when Christianity was brought to the region.(26)

In his *Histoire Religieuse d'Issoudun*, Father Chevalier quotes the rather uncomplimentary opinion of Peremeé regarding the townfolk of Issoudun, qualifying it here and there with his own impressions. Peremeé wrote some time before Father Chevalier arrived there. "Issoudun", he wrote "is an agricultural centre, and the trade and professional activity deal with things of the country. The town comes to life only on market days or days of the fair. On the other days of the week, it seems to fall into a profound sleep, and hardly shows any sign of life. The stranger crossing the street becomes scared of the sound of his own footsteps in this dead city. If you wish to find any activity at all you have to go out into the suburbs. There you meet the different types - the average cross-section of the Community - half urban, half rustic. There you meet the farmers, the gardeners and above all, the vine-growers who are easily distinguishable by their arrogant bearing; there you see the peasant with his countryfied look, proud and cunning individuals always bitter and discontented, constantly irritated by the "up-starts" - the name coined for the bourgeoisie, the town traders and anyone who wore a dress coat. The peasants blamed them for the high price of bread and the low prices they got for their wine." Father Chevalier here remarks: "They were irritated and bitter only with those who looked down on them and regarded them as their inferiors. They were more noisy than malicious. They objected to the many taxes, direct and indirect, put upon their grape-growing industry, a financial arrangement they could not understand or tolerate."

That they could be stirred to action can be seen from the following extract from Peremeé: "The Revolution of July 1830 which overthrew Charles X and put Louis Phillippe on the throne had its reaction in Issoudun. The wine growers, who formed two-thirds of the population, took the opportunity to stage their own revolution. As a protest against the heavy taxes they stormed the offices of the agents, tore up the registers and threw them into the street to the cheers of the populace. Rioting broke out all over the town and the streets were lined with frenzied zealots threatening to put to death anyone who would not join their revolt.(27) Armed troops were sent to quell the disturbance, but the rioters erected barricades, and a pitched battle ensued.(28)

Referring to this incident, Peremeé continues: "In spite of this show of rebellion these people are at heart a peaceful race - with a natural sense of probity (and Father Chevalier adds "of justice") inherited from their fathers. Crime and delinquency are rare compared with other parts of France. Statistics show that there are fewer criminal cases brought before the Courts in this province than anywhere else in France."

One of the main defects, and hindrances to progress was the very conscious class-distinction amongst the people of Issoudun. There was the upper class which asserted its imaginary superiority and the lower class which suffered from an inferiority complex - a phenomenon not unusual in country towns and suburbia all over the world. Father Chevalier notes that it was very rare to see any marriages between members of the two classes, as they shared neither the same ideas nor the same customs. The so-called upper-class possessed the same fundamental characteristics as the lower class - even had the same faults, though perhaps modified somewhat by better education. They preserved the old bourgeois tradition of their ancestors, were critical and intolerant, sometimes even malicious, cold and caustic. Even their jokes were at times loaded with bitterness. On the credit side, they were usually honest and sincere, well-mannered and reserved. They had the reputation of being hospitable, but as Peremeé, himself a native of Issoudun, remarks "They were more friendly to strangers than to their fellow citizens." Father Chevalier confirms this by saying: "Even with strangers they were very reserved, especially at first, not offering much help and leaving the newcomer to himself till he tired himself out." Being a stranger himself, Father Chevalier could talk from experience.

"The native of Issoudun," continues Peremeé, seems to have been brought up on the milk of discouragement inherited from his forebears, and accepted the decline and decay of his town as a matter of course. Nevertheless it was always his first love. No matter how far he journeyed away from it, no matter for what reason he left it, his chief desire was to return and to die there.

This bitter rivalry between the two classes, this exaggerated class distinction, was a real drawback to the progress of the town, and the cause much unhappiness in a district which offered great possibilities of development and prosperity. Even when members of either class happened to meet in other localities, when most people are glad to see their townfolk, there was this awkward barrier between them. They seemed further apart than serfs from the masters. The bourgeoisie seemed ever conscious of their ancient stock and regarded all others as strangers, newcomers or interlopers. Just where the line of demarcation began and ended it was difficult to say. No one of either class was willing to recognise anyone superior to himself, and the salient trait of each class was a lofty personal independence. The man in the suburb or from the country held his head just as high as the man in the town, and the lowliest citizen was equally as proud as the highest.

"One class," explains Peremeé, "was inclined to think too much of the past, whilst the other did not think of it enough." Father Chevalier has added: "In recent times the ultra-radicalism and uncompromising opposition of the masses have forced the nobles and the old-stock bourgeoisie to leave the place, so much so that this ancient town, once so vibrant and active, resembles a dead city without commerce or spirit. What is left, moreover, is tainted by easy-living and vanity."

Peremeé concludes his summary by expressing the hope that the new national revival of enlightened thinking, and the improvements in modern amenities, such as the coming of the railway to the town would usher in a happier era of wealth and progress.

Father Chevalier likewise concludes: "Let us hope that better days are in store for Issoudun. Above all, let us hope that the people will return to the Faith of their ancestors."(29)

The town left much the same impression in 1873 on Madame Hello who has painted this unflattering picture: "Sheltering in the shadows of its old high towers, the town has the appearance of a parasitic growth. The people potter around on their little momentary tasks and errands, without any desire to look back over the past, or forward to the future. Here no one wants to remember, or even to hope. In this cold, dead town the many ruins are the monuments to the neglect and indifference of an unambitious people - it is a veritable tomb - dark and frightening."(30)

THE CHURCH IN ISSOUDUN

Although Father Chevalier had estimated the population of Issoudun as some 15,000 inhabitants, the official figure was closer to 12,000. The whole town comprised but the one parish with only the one church - the Church of St. Cyr. The several ancient churches which adorned the town from the time of the Middle Ages were all destroyed during the Revolution. Taken over and sold by the Republic according to the Decree of Appropriation of 17th August, 1792, they were desecrated and demolished. St. Cyr was badly damaged, but its structure was allowed to stand, and it was used as a hall for National celebrations. The two towers, one a beautiful Romanesque structure supporting a steeple, and the smaller one over the facade were both demolished in 1793. A band of revolutionary soldiers passing through Issoudun threatened to sack and burn the town, if these symbols of superstition were not pulled down. The Council agreed, and a carpenter and stone-mason made the handsome sum of 1200 francs in effecting the destruction and selling the material. The bells were thrown from the tower onto the pavement below and smashed to pieces, the heaviest, dating back to 1603 was kept and used as the town tocsin till the church was restored. An altar to the Goddess, Reason, was erected in place of the Mass altar, and the church was used for profane purposes - celebrations, a second-hand clothes market and even as a wheat-barn. The Church furniture, sacred images and even relics were sold at paltry prices. Only a few were saved.(31) After the Concordat of 1802, the church was restored to the ecclesiastical authorities except for the choir which the Commune kept as token possession. This eventually was handed over after a court judgment.

The first Parish Priest after the restoration was Abbe Yvernault, appointed by His Grace Isidore de Mercy, archbishop of Bourges. Assisted by a curate, he had to look after not only Issoudun but several of the neighbouring parishes. His successor was the Abbe Mauderon who was given a second curate. On 6th December, 1829, Abbe Guillaume Crozat took charge as Parish Priest, and was able to concentrate on the parish of Issoudun itself, as other priests were available to look after the adjacent parishes. Father Crozat was still the parish priest when Jules Chevalier was appointed there twenty-five years later.

Father Crozat came from a small hamlet called Charmensac in the Margeride Mountains at the extreme of the Cantal Shire, in the diocese of Saint-Flour. Only seven families lived in the small village which was attached to the parish of Chaliers, until the closer town of Loubaresse was erected a parish about the year 1800. The Crozat family was reported to have had the best farm in the district, but rather too original methods of agriculture, such as growing oats for bread making, led to disaster and they eventually left the village. Guillaume Crozat studied for the priesthood in the diocese of Saint -Fleur, but a few years after ordination transferred to the diocese of Bourges, which, we are told, was short of at least 150 priests, whereas his own diocese was fairly well staffed. Several of his class-mates were already stationed in Bourges, and no doubt, they enticed him to come and join them. On the 27th of September, 1822 he was put in charge of the district of Saint-Gaultier, and on 1st July, 1825 he became archpriest of Chatre. In 1829 he took over the parish of Issoudun, where he laboured till he died on 9th January, 1864.

In spite of our searching enquiries into the early life of Father Crozat, there seems to be quite a deal of conflicting evidence as to dates and identity arising from the confusing fact that in the Crozat family there were two brothers by the name of Guillaume – one 'Guillaume Bertrand' and the other just plain 'Guillaume.' According to the story handed down to the later generation, Father Crozat had been married before becoming a priest in 1817. His father, so the story goes, was anxious to avoid having him conscripted for military service, and insisted on his getting married. He is supposed to have had a daughter, who died young, and two sons, one of whom was called Pierre. The name of Pierre Crozat is entered in the register of births at Chaliers, and several people knew a Pierre Crozat at Issoudun and earlier at Chaliers. The wife died several years after the marriage, and Guillaume Crozat entered the Seminary and was eventually ordained a priest. The inscription on his tomb and also the register at Bourges give the date of his birth as 4th March, 1787. In our early enquiries we discovered in the registers of the Bishopric of Saint-Flour, with the help of Father le Chan, the name of a Jean Crozat, who was ordained a priest on 20th May 1814. We thought at first this was possibly the future parish priest of Issoudun, but Monseigneur Jacques Magne, the Superior of the Major Seminary later found in the old archives of the College the following record; "Guillaume Bertrand Crozat, of the parish of Chaliers was ordained priest on 20th December, 1817. Talents quite good; conduct very good." At the same time Monsieur Doumergue, mayor of Chaliers, discovered in the local register that a Guillaume Crozat, son of Pierre Crosat and Marguerite Cathelat, was born on 4th March, 1787, and that at the age of nineteen and a half he married Jeanne Brun on 16th September, 1805. On 8th July 1809 a son, Peter was born to them. As this date of Guillaume's birth corresponded with that on the tomb, we thought we had the data we were seeking, and that the story of the marriage was well authenticated. However the Abbe Pelegry, parish priest of Chaulhac (Lozere) and priest in charge of Chaliers discovered, as late as 1950, other evidence which calls the fact of the marriage into doubt. He discovered that the Guillaume Crozat born on 4th March, 1787, who married Jeanne Brun on 16th September, 1806, had a younger brother Guillaume Bertrand, who was undoubtedly the one ordained in 1817. The date of the birth of this younger brother is in terms of the new calendar drawn up by the 1st Republic "the 26th Pluiose of the 6th year of the Republic." As this date corresponds with our 14th February, 1798, Guillaume Bertrand would have been eleven years younger than his brother. It would seem safe then to conclude that the Abbe Crozat had never been married. One could object that if we take 1798 as the year of his birth, he would be only twenty when he was ordained, but we must remember that in those times, when there was such an acute scarcity of priests, it was not unusual to find seminarists being ordained at an early age. The report that his talents were "quite good" would confirm this possibility.

It remains to explain why Guillaume Bertrand took the name of his elder brother, and used the dates of his birth-certificate even till the time of his death. The fear of conscription could not have been the reason, as the Concordat exempted seminarians from military service, and when Napoleon abdicated at Fontainebleau on 4th April, 1814, the young man would have been only sixteen years of age, and fourteen at the beginning of the Russian campaign. Even if this was the reason there was no point in continuing the deception after 1814. Let us hope that Father Mourgues, M.S.C., a fellow-countryman of Guillaume Crozat will be able to unravel the mystery in his further researches, and be able to find some new evidence which may alter the dates.(32)

Happily, his contemporaries have left us more definite evidence on the character and personality of Father Crosat. Father Chevalier has given us the following pen-picture of him; "He was a venerable and kind old man, a worthy priest held in high esteem in his parish and throughout the diocese, and possessed qualities which were greatly appreciated by his superiors, who availed themselves of his experience and good counsel. He was pious, friendly, charitable and discerning, and was always dignified in his bearing. He had the reputation of being a good theologian and a distinguished casuist. His favourite authors were Gousset, Bourdaloue and Berthier.

In his later years his health failed, and he was able to take little part in the work of the parish, leaving it to his curate. He spent most of his praying, especially reciting the rosary, to which he had great devotion. Any time you met him he would have his rosary beads in his hand and often he would hide himself in some remote corner of the church, or even the Confessional and pray by the hour. With St. Paul he desired only one thing - to make Our Lord known and loved. He was always interested in the work of his curates, and rejoiced at any success that came their way. He was truly a humble man, had simple tastes, and always seemed to be in a good humour. His presbytery, his heart and his purse were open to everyone - even if some abused his generosity. One winter's night he heard a noise down in the cellar under the house. In spite of his age and his natural timidity, he lit a candle and quietly made his way down the stairs. There he found two of his well-known parishioners helping themselves to the wine-cask. "My friends," he said in his gentle voices "what are you doing there? You know if you had asked me for some wine, I would have given it to you. Take what you have already drawn, and be good and go home."(33)

Madame Hello has written of his disappointments in his apostolic work, and has suggested that he was really too gentle and timid for an ungodly parish like Issoudun. "His apostolic zeal" she wrote, "was foiled in this most pagan of all the towns of France. In vain did he distribute his goods to the poor; in vain did he preach the Word of God, in vain did he give then good example through the years by an austere life, and his unstinting charity. The good seed he tried to sow fell upon the rocks and was carried away by the birds of the air. He prudently kept on good terms with the local authorities and the bourgeoisie, and this policy brought results in troublesome times when his curates had to work amongst a hostile and unbelieving populace. This flock, so deaf to the voice of the shepherd, entirely immersed in the things of this world and the baser things of life, needed a strong, energetic, enterprising and fearless pastor, and Father Grozat, in spite of his virtues, was really too gentle, too timid, too shy to deal with it."(34)

Madame Hello, in this last remark has probably hit on the reason why the ecclesiastical authorities appointed Jules Chevalier, who had already earned the reputation of being an active and enterprising young priest, to the parish of Issoudun.

We must remember that when Father Crozat came to Issoudun in 1830 his task was not an easy one. Monsieur Kremp has written in his "History of the Town of Issoudun", "The moral upheaval after the Revolution was profound. Perhaps here more than any other part of France there was a complete break from the ideas and beliefs of former days."(35) Father Piperon has candidly admitted that one of the main causes of the loss of faith was the defection of many of the clergy themselves. "Grave scandals" he wrote, "caused the loss of faith in this once religious town. Several priests, and alas even Religious, contracted sacriligious marriages, and their numerous offspring, as though accursed for the sins of their fathers, gave up all practice of faith and religion." Father Crozat was able to reconcile some of those unfortunate priests to the Faith before they died repentant deaths, but the memory of those depressing defections hung over the parish like an evil spell, paralysing all efforts of faith and

piety.(36) Father Delailler, the Parish Priest of Lazenay, about 16 Miles north of Issoudun, also wrote in 1848 of the lamentable lack of zeal of many of the clergy: "The three priests of Issoudun," he wrote "didn't seem to be very busy in those days."(37)

After 1830 when Father Crozat arrived, the followers of Voltaire had taken charge throughout the Province and had relentlessly thrust their rationalistic philosophy on the minds of the people. His was a delicate and arduous task endeavouring to counter these false doctrines with the truth of the Church, and to impart any sentiments of Christian humility to the minds so proud. It is a tribute to his character that in spite of the wholesale spirit of irreligion around him on all sides, he did lead many souls back to their Faith by his sincerity, kindness and good example. He put the interests of his people before his own, and became the first amongst the poor of the parish.(38)

One of the first casualties of the Revolution were the Christian schools and Father Crozat made it his first duty to try to bring home Christian doctrine to the children and the youth of the parish. The Ursuline Nuns, who had conducted a school at the lower end of the town had been evicted by the Revolutionaries and their property confiscated. The Sisters of the Visitation who had a boarding-school at the top end of the town met with the same fate. The Brothers of Christian Doctrine who had a school since 1741 in the old hermitage of Pont Saint-Denis for the education of boys were likewise driven from the town.

Father Crozat with the help of his curate, Father Malleron, succeeded in establishing a new school on the 11th May, 1830 conducted by the Sisters of Charity from Bourges. These good nuns quickly won the confidence of the people, especially the mothers of the children, who told their husbands: "Look after these good Sisters, and do not disturb them. They are here in the interests of our children, and you must defend them if necessary." Hardly had the Sisters settled in their new convent than the angry revolt of the vine growers broke out in July. Father Crozat feared for their safety and advised them to pack up and return to Bourges. He even ordered a carriage to take them back. However the curate, Father Malleron, was more optimistic, and dressed as a layman, he went out amongst the crowd to learn what plans they had in mind regarding the Sisters. We can imagine the fright the Sisters got when at midnight, while the revolt was at its height, the door bell rang loudly. They expected the worst, but it was only Father Malleron with the good news: "All is well. The mob is on your side."

In time the school progressed, and thanks to the help of various benefactors the nuns were able to build an establishment for 300 pupils. Encouraged by this success Father Malleron enticed the Brothers of St. Joseph of the Cross from Mans "to open a school for boys in September, 1834, but they remained only two years. Cardinal DuPont, the Archbishop of the diocese then, persuaded the Brothers of Christian Doctrine to return to their old post, and they took possession of the old and battered buildings again on 5th October, 1836, aided financially by Madame du Quesne and other benefactors. They became so popular that the Municipality in 1851 granted them an annual subsidy after the death of several of their benefactors.(39)

The children were now receiving regular religious instruction. "Formerly", wrote Father Piperon, "the instruction of the little ones was sadly neglected. Several of them received about a fortnight's instruction before their First Holy Communion, but after that were left to themselves. The church was deserted; the Sacraments neglected." (40) However the picture was not completely black; in spite of the general indifference and lack of faith there were a few hundred faithful souls from all classes of Society, who had never lost their love of God and His Church. Through the Mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His Immaculate Mother this small band had stood firm in the midst of the moral desolation and spiritual wreckage all around them. Faithful to their Mass, their Sacraments, prayers and religious practices, they were as a beacon of light to the poor shipwrecked souls about them, illuminating the way back to God and happiness. One of the newly-arrived nuns, Sister Scholastica, writing to her Mother Superior General remarked; "The people are kindly disposed towards us, but alas, most of them are far from God and their Faith. However, what is surprising and encouraging is to see several of them at Mass each morning of the week, and receiving Holy Communion three or four times a week."

Father Crozat himself tells the story of the good example given by one of the parishioners. Some time before Father Chevalier had introduced the Mass for Men in 1857, and at a time when men were conspicuous by their absence in the Church, a new commander came to Issoudun in charge of the local garrison. He was a devout Christian and fearless in the public practice of his Faith. The first time he came to confession - about Easter time - Father Crozat, knowing his public position and the general hostility to the Faith of most of the people, asked him what time he would like to receive Holy Communion. "I will go with the others at the Mass tomorrow," he replied.

"But that may not be wise for a person in your position," the priest suggested. "It may cause you grave inconvenience." "Grave inconvenience. What do you mean, Father?" came the response. "I am a soldier, and hope I am not a coward. I am a Christian and have nothing to hide. I will be at Communion in the Church in the morning."

He kept his word, and his presence at the Altar Rails did not go unnoticed. Soon the news spread throughout the town, and it is an indication of the bitter hostility to religion of a section of the community that later on that day there was a demonstration outside his home, and the windows were pelted and smashed, as a gesture against this 'pious foolhardiness'.(41) However that did not deter the brave commander, and he continued to openly profess and practise his faith. Referring to him Father Piperon has written: "For a long time he was the only man who had publicly fulfilled all his Easter duties. He attended Mass every Sunday and the major feast-days. He often told me of this early opposition, and Father Crozat confirmed it.(42)

Madame Hello tells of another incident, simple yet pathetic. "One day Father Crozat on going into the church, saw a woman on her knees before the Blessed Sacrament. Approaching her he asked: "Madame, do you live in Issoudun?" "No," she replied, "I am a visitor just passing through, and I always visit the church in any town I pass through to pray to Almighty God." "Pray, my dear lady, pray," the old priest muttered, and went away almost in tears.

Madame Hello continues: "The priest had to take every precaution to protect his reputation against a malicious and gossiping community. Whenever he visited the Sisters of Charity he did so in biretta and rochet to safeguard his name against their evil tongues - a gesture which in itself was an expression of his own opinion of their low standard of intelligence and morality."(43)

Abbe Delailler tells us that Father Crosat's original presbytery was a small house on the southern side of the church of St. Cyr. The two curates lived separately in the town, and later when they did come to live with the parish-priest, they continued the practice of having most of their meals with friends or in the cafes of the town - a custom which did not greatly please the old priest. Another custom, frowned upon by Father Crozat, was that of allowing visitors - especially women - into the rooms of the curates. When Father Chevalier arrived he put an end to this practice, and some of the pious old ladies thought he was a little narrow-minded.(44)

Eventually a new place of abode was acquired for the clergy - an old house in Berthier Street, built at the end of the XVth or beginning of the XVIth century according to the style of that period. According to Peremeé it was about the only old house left in Issoudun worthy of mention."

The advent of the two new curates, Maugenest and Chevalier in 1854 ushered in a new era for the church in Issoudun. Sebastien Emile Maugenest arrived on the 10th January and Jules Chevalier was to follow him the same year on 20th October. Sebastien Maugenest was born on 5th December, 1829 at Culan. He did his primary and secondary studies at Chezal-Benoit, where his family lived.

In October, 1848 he entered the Major Seminary at Bourges, but left in August 1850 to join the Novitiate of the Sulpicians. He had been keen to become a member of that Order, but before his ordination, his confessor advised him to re-enter the diocese of Bourges, as he considered that was his real vocation. He was ordained at Saint-Sulpice on the 17th December, 1853 - the Saturday of the Christmas Quarter-Tense, and his first appointment was to Issoudun.(46) Father Chevalier wrote of him: "In the Seminary he was known and appreciated for his zeal, his piety and his gift of eloquence. As regards his character he was always energetic and ardent; had a good judgment even if a lively imagination. He kept

himself versed in current topics and opinions, and was not beyond changing his mind and convictions on various subjects.(47) He was a gifted priest, and was consumed by the desire to use his talents for the good of souls and the Church."(48)

When Father Chevalier arrived on 20th October (or the 21st, may be) he was given a cordial reception by both Father Crozat and Father Maugenest, and soon made himself at home. Soon after his arrival he happened to be passing the cottage of a good parishioner called Monsieur Voisin. The good man was leaning against the door post leading onto the street when he noticed the strange priest go by. He called out to his wife: "Come here, this is worth seeing. I hope it is not the new curate we have been promised, as his clothes are very shabby and we will have to deck him out from head to foot." The next day Father Chevalier called on them, as they had a son a priest, a classmate of his in the Seminary. They became good friends.

The three priests wasted no time in having a conference re the allocation of work and boundaries. Father Crozat was now very feeble and the two curates agreed to share the work. Father Chevalier would care among other things for the Hospice for the Dying and his confrere would look after the public hospital. They also decided on a few innovations and the correction of a few abuses - notably to receive all visitors in the parlour and not in their rooms. As mentioned before some of the old-timers did not approve of this new priest introducing his new-fangled ideas into the parish. Besides, they said, he looked untidy with his big crop of hair and his shabby clothes. Father Chevalier tells a humorous story about one old lady who decided to teach him a lesson. "One day" he said, "I went to my Confessional and found a parcel on the seat addressed in my name. I opened it, wondering what it could contain. Inside was a brush, a comb and a tin of boot-polish. I enjoyed the joke."

On one occasion, several years later, when the name of Jules Chevalier was becoming well known throughout the diocese on account of the new Society he had founded and the Basilica he had built there was a large gathering at Issoudun for a religious demonstration of faith, attended by the Cardinal and several bishops. A visiting priest amongst the congregation, looking up at the official platform asked one of the parishioners; "Could you tell me which one is Father Chevalier?" The parishioner pointed in the opposite direction to a lone figure in cassock standing on the steps of the Basilica watching the proceedings from afar.

"There he is over there," he said.

"But surely," remarked the priest, "that cannot be the host to all the important prelates. He looks like a country curate, and from a not very civilised part of the country at that."

The time was to come when even members of the Royal Family were to visit him and to be impressed by his personality, as indeed were all who came to visit him. Even the ladies of the town were soon won over to him in spite of the present of the brush and comb.

Father Sadouet, M.S.C. in his "Personal Recollections" has written of Father Chevalier in these early days at Issoudun: "He inspired confidence in those who met him. In appearance he was a man of average height, well proportioned, of a straight carriage and possessed of a large crop of hair. He had a pleasant countenance, and used to speak in a friendly, if rather slow manner. His modesty, his zeal, his devotion to duty, his affable piety and his prudence were soon noted by the people, and his Confessional was besieged by numerous penitents. He won the affection and esteem of his venerable parish priest, whose faith and humility he admired, as also of his confrere Father Maugenest, whose talents and piety still appealed to him as an admirable prospective help in the design he cherished in the secret of his heart.(50).

CHAPTER VII THE FOUNDATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

One of the priests associated with the foundation of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, even if indirectly, was the Abbe Gasnier. This outstanding Sulpician priest had been Professor of Moral Theology when Jules Chevalier was at the Major Seminary. He was a Diocesan Consultor, and later on, it was on his advice that the Cardinal Archbishop appointed both Sebastien Maugenest and Jules Chevalier to Issoudun.

Pierre Gasnier was born at Angers on 26th November, 1793. After his theological studies were completed he entered the Sulpician Novitiate, "La Solitude", on the 11th October, 1817 and later became a member of the Order. From October 1818 to July 1822 he was Professor of Sacred Scripture and Latin at Autun. During these years he contracted a severe throat infection which left him in poor health throughout his life. In April, 1823, he was transferred to the Major Seminary at Bourges, where he became in turn Director of Studies, and Superior. On his death, 7th March, 1875, the Archbishop paid him a striking tribute in a circular letter to the clergy. "Father Gasnier spent first years of his teaching between life and death, but his sufferings, at times very intense, did not prevent him from fulfilling his duties with regularity and courage. Faithful to the traditions of Saint-Sulpice, exact and methodical in all he did, tolerant and charitable to others, endowed with a remarkable spirit of discernment, humble and modest, he inspired confidence in all who met him. He was loved and esteemed by all. His clear judgment, his disinterestedness in worldly affairs, his unpretentious simplicity, his affable manner, and above all his great knowledge of the clergy, made him an invaluable asset on my Episcopal Council."(2)

Father Gasnier became Superior of the Seminary in September 1851 after the departure of Father Redon.(3) As mentioned above, he was Professor of Moral Theology when Father Chevalier was a student. We do not know for sure, but it was most probable, particularly since he was Charles Piperon's spiritual director, that he would have heard of Jules' desire to found a Society of Missionary priests. Considering that the general terms of the plan had been discussed openly by the students, Father Gasnier most likely had heard of it, but he would not have known of Jules' more specific intention of founding a Society of Religious priests with the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Other dioceses had mission-houses of secular priests, and this is probably what Father Gasnier had in mind. Whether it was in consequence of Father Chevalier's plan or independent of it, it is certain that about 1853-54 Father Gasnier cherished the idea of having a mission-house established in the irreligious town of Issoudun - not only for its own spiritual welfare, but for that of the whole province of Berry.

This is undoubtedly why, as a Diocesan Consultor, he suggested in 1864 the appointment of both Father Maugenest and Father Chevalier, as he knew they were two young active priests, and would win the confidence of the prudent Father Crozat, the parish priest. After his ordination Father Maugenest had been appointed to the Cathedral staff at Bourges, but was suddenly transferred to Issoudun. A new parish priest had just been appointed to Aubigny after the death of the previous pastor, and this made Father Chevalier available for Issoudun. As we have seen before, the appointment came as a surprise to him, not knowing that Father Gasnier had anything to do with it.

With his coming to Issoudun all the memories and desires of his Seminary plan reawakened with a fresh ardour in the heart of Jules Chevalier. Was not this act of Providence the first step in the realisation of his cherished dream? As yet uncertain and anxious, he would await the further designs of God. Was it not also providential that his colleague here should be none other than Sebastien Maugenest - his former confrere of Seminary days with whom he wanted to share his plans? Was this not a further confirmation that the Sacred Heart wished him to go ahead?

But what would be Father Maugenest's reaction now if he put the project before him? Their relations with one another were good, but in spite of the close daily contact, Father Maugenest had never once referred to their discussions of Seminary days. Had he forgotten all about it, and would he regard it all as but the fanciful dream of a pious, inexperienced student? When they had discussed the plan in College it was merely with the view of establishing in the diocese a house of missionaries who would use the Devotion to the Sacred Heart as a means towards the conversion of the lapsed laity. Now it would be necessary to tell his fellow priest that his desire was to found a religious Congregation of Missionary priests whose spirit and life would be the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the latter devotion being its means of apostolate. What would be the reaction of Sebastien Maugenest to that?

Being able to stand this state of indecision and uncertainty no longer, he decided to approach Father Maugenest and open his heart to him, telling him candidly of his plans and desires. "After studying Father Maugenest closely," he writes, "I decided the time had come to confide in

him. That was towards the end of November, 1854.(5) Elsewhere he wrote: "A month after my arrival in Issoudun I approached him, and commenced: "Two plagues are the scourge of this unhappy century - indifference and selfishness. We need an efficacious remedy. That remedy is to give the Sacred Heart - the Heart of love and charity - to the people. His adorable Heart is entirely devoted to men, but they do not return His love. They ignore the treasures to be found there. I think the only answer is to have a Congregation of priests who will work to make the Sacred Heart known and loved. They will be called Missionaries of the Sacred Heart."(6)

Father Maugenest's reaction was a surprise. Not only was he enthusiastic and ready to co-operate, but he assured Father Chevalier that ever since their discussions in the Seminary, even before he had thought of becoming a Sulpician, he had shared the same idea and cherished the sane desire.

"I also," he said, "have been dreaming of such a plan for a long time. I am with you. Let us begin immediately.(7) I have been trying to make up my mind for a long time, and now you have made it up for me. I wish to devote myself to the cause with you.(8)"

Filled with emotion the two priests embraced each other, knelt down thanked God for directing them, begging His help and grace in their future project. "O my God" later wrote Father Chevalier, "How wonderful are Your ways. How you dispose all things strongly yet sweetly."(9)

Indeed Father Maugenest was so anxious to put the plan into effect without delay that Father Chevalier had to curb his enthusiasm somewhat, pointing out the many difficulties to be surmounted and the graces to be obtained. After all they were only two humble curates, quite inexperienced and without any money or worldly goods. If God wished this work in honour of the Sacred Heart to succeed, they agreed, then He would show them the way to overcome the difficulties. At present the main thing was to know if it was according to His will,(10) The first thing they decided to do was to acquaint their parish priest of their intention and ask his advice. If he were favourably inclined to the project, he would be very useful in presenting it to the ecclesiastical authorities as he was held in high esteem in the diocese.

Another important decision and one which was to have very far-reaching and significant results in the founding of the Congregation was to make a Novena to Our Blessed Lady to finish on the 8th December, 1854 - the day the Church was to define the Immaculate Conception as an Article of Faith.

"Since we were very poor," wrote Father Chevalier, "and had no means wherewith to launch our project, and realising that the important date of the definition of the Immaculate Conception was approaching, we decided to make Novena to Our Immaculate Mother to obtain from Her Divine Son some definite, visible sign that our plan was according to His Divine Will, and to grant us means of accomplishing our project."

"We went to Father Crozat and informed him of our intentions. Whilst he was reflecting on what he had heard, we looked to the statue of the Immaculate Conception on his desk, whispering a prayer to our good Mother to inspire him. After a few moments he turned to us and said with conviction: 'My children! not only do I approve of your plan, but I will help you any way I can to establish a house of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun. If you found it, I will happily say my 'Nunc Dimittis'".(11)

Little time was left to make preparations for the Novena. The small altar in Father Chevalier's room was specially decorated (12) and Father Maugenest, who according to Father Piperon was "hardly an artist", displayed his keen, and lively imagination by painting a scene which portrayed the motif of the Novena.(13) Father Piperon, who had seen the original, describes the painting thus: "Two priests were kneeling before an image of the Sacred Heart from which rays of light were shining on them." The painting was placed on a pedestal which supported a statue of the Immaculate Conception. Two candles were placed on a small table one on each side of the statue, and every day the two priests knelt there to recite earnestly the prayers of the Novena.

Father Maugenest in 1908 recalling the historic Novena wrote; "All the details of this homely little altar given by Father Piperon are exact." The Museum of the Issoudun Basilica has a replica of the tableau, which, however, does not reproduce all the details of the original. Father Piperon records elsewhere: "Ten years later, after he had become parish priest of Issoudun, Father Maugenest retouched the painting, inserting the Basilica, partly built, in the back-ground.(14)

The description given by Father Chevalier corresponds with the painting as we know it: "The painting," he writes, "represents the future Community, born of the Heart of Jesus, as from its natural source, at the prayer of Mary. Thick clouds seem to screen the Heart of Jesus, but the powerful hand of the Immaculate Virgin is dispersing them. The saintly old parish priest, Father Crozat, is pictured in the background with arms extended towards Heaven, saying his "Nunc Dimittis." Above all are two angels holding between them a scroll on which was written; "O Immaculate Heart of Mary, save us and establish the Priests of the Sacred Heart."(15)

Anyone who has seen the painting will recall what Madams Ernest Hello humorously wrote of it: "The colours, the drawing, the subjects and the laws of perspective atrociously outraged, show that if Our Blessed Lady granted their requests, it was certainly not from Her love of art." (16)

The object of the Novena is expressed in these words by Father Chevalier: "If we are granted our request, we will take the title of "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart." Our specific mission will be to render to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Seat of all Wisdom, Love and Mercy, the special devotion of adoration homage and reparation, to spread everywhere this devotion and to make known to man the treasures of sanctification which it contains. Also as a special end of the Society, we will endeavour to make Mary, our Mother, loved and honoured by every means possible and in a special manner."(16) Without being unmindful then, of the many difficulties that lay in their path the two priests began their Novena on the 30th November, 1854. They poured out, their hearts in sincere prayer to the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate for the success of their project. They pleaded that the Congregation they had in mind would be realised, and they asked for a special sign that it was in accordance with God's Will.(18) "Every day we recited the prayers of the Novena in common and made our other exercises of piety together."(19) They did not know what was before them, but they devoutly besought the Sacred Heart and the maternal Heart of Mary in a spirit of faith and confidence to point out the way.(20)

The great day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception arrived - a great day in the history of the Church when the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception was infallibly defined by the Holy Father in Rome - 8th December, 1854. In Issoudun the occasion was marked by the Celebration of High Mass, sung by Father Chevalier himself. The intention in the Mass was that of the Novena - the foundation of the Society and the granting of a definite sign.(21) The three priests considered this Mass as the final prayer of the Novena, and for this reason the little altar with its painting was solemnly carried by two acolytes and placed on the Sanctuary just before the Offertory, (Mademoiselle Marchard, in her story of the foundation does not mention this event, but that is not surprising, as being ignorant of the Novena at the time, she would have thought, as did the other parishioners, that it was some special ceremony connected with the Proclamation of the Dogma. The writing on the scroll was so small that only the servers and the sacristan would have been able to read it, and it would mean little to them.)

The placing of the Statue on the Sanctuary was a sign of their unshakable confidence that Mary Immaculate would hear their prayers. "We were all visibly moved," Father Chevalier recalled. "The ceremony made a profound impression on us. Father Crozat actually wept with emotion."(23)

After the Mass the sacristan came to Father Chevalier and told him that Monsieur Petit, one of the few fervent parishioners, wished to see him urgently.(24) Father Chevalier took the good man across to the presbytery after he had made his thanksgiving. From Father Chevalier's own notes and other documents written on this prompt and important sequel to the Novena, are able to reconstruct the scene thus:

No sooner had Father Chevalier closed the door than Monsieur Petit handed him a letter saying: "I have good news for you Father. Read this." The letter was from a Monsieur Philippe de Bengy addressed to Monsieur Petit, asking him to do him the favour, since he was unable to come himself, of informing Father Chevalier about an important matter of which he had just been apprised. It was to the effect that a certain

person, who wished to remain anonymous for the time being, but in whom he had complete confidence, wished to donate 20,000 francs towards the establishment of some good work to benefit the souls of the people of the Berry district. Monsieur de Bengy went on to say that the kind benefactor did not have precise and exclusive ideas as to the nature of the proposed work, but he had gained the impression that he favoured the idea of the money being spent on a House of Missionaries.

"A House of Missionaries," repeated Father Chevalier, deeply moved and astonished. "But that is precisely what we have been dreaming about. We have just made a Novena for that very intention. The little altar we put on the Sanctuary was for that purpose - to remind the Immaculate Virgin on this great day that we needed Her help. My friend, you are a messenger from Heaven. Our Lady has answered us through you."

"What a beautiful response from Heaven," replied Monsieur Petit. "It is indeed miraculous that the benefactor should have the same intention in mind as yourself. I must go and tell Monsieur de Bengy immediately."

"But are you sure we can count on this money?" asked Father Chevalier.

"Without any doubt. Monsieur de Bengy is certain of it. The money is yours, if you can find use for it in establishing some good work for the good souls. The only condition the donor requires is that it has the approval of the Cardinal."

"We are deeply grateful," replied the stunned priest. "Please convey our thanks to our generous benefactor and Monsieur de Bengy. Tell them the wish will be carried out. Assure them that our prayers will never cease for them and that God will reward this very kind benefactor."(26)

Many years later in 1908, Father Maugenest recorded his impressions of this historic day: "After High Mass," he wrote, "I went into the side-chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary to make my thanksgiving, and add some prayers to our Novena. I felt supremely confident that the Immaculate Mother of God was going to hear our prayers. Acting on a sudden impulse of this confidence, I almost ran to the presbytery and burst into Father Chevalier's room, crying! "I have just come from Our Lady's Chapel and am sure She is going to work a miracle for us."

"You are right. She has already worked the miracle," he replied, throwing his arms around my neck. "I have just had a visit from Monsieur Petit who assured me that a stranger, who doesn't want to be known for the time being, wishes to give us 20,000 francs to establish a missionary work here in Issoudun. In the excess of my joy and gratitude to the Blessed Virgin, in my complete confidence in Father Chevalier's work, I didn't even stay to ask if the money was already donated or merely promised, but went off to thank the Mother of God, convinced that She had indeed worked a miracle for us - that she had directly inspired this unknown benefactor to place this money in our hands for the achievement of our desires."(27)

"We spent the rest of the day in prayers of thanksgiving", wrote Father Chevalier. Together we poured out our sentiments of gratitude to our powerful Protectress. O Mary, O good Mother, May you be ever blessed! What a happy day for us! The day when Holy Mother the Church has proclaimed your Immaculate Conception will be the day of the Conception of the new Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, for today there has begun for it the mystery of life."(28)

This is the reason why the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, by an unbroken tradition regard the 8th December, 1854 as the date of their Foundation.(29)

When the two curates informed Father Crozat of the gift and the purpose for which it was given, he shared their happiness and hopes, but not their assurance. Being a man of experience in diocesan affairs, he wondered what the Cardinal would think of the scheme, and whether he would readily give his consent. "Father Chevalier and Father Maugenest were anxious to make overtures to His Eminence immediately. After such a definite sign from Our Lady, they argued, he could hardly refuse his approval. Was not the Will of God already clearly expressed? The Cardinal could hardly go against the Will of God. But the wise and saintly old priest advised them not to be in such a hurry. After all not even the general outlines of the project had yet been defined, and he urged them to wait and give the whole matter further consideration before presenting it to the authorities. He himself wanted time to reflect on the whole project before he would dare put it to His Eminence and ask his approval.(30)

After careful deliberation the good parish priest consented during the month of January, to write a letter to His Eminence the Cardinal, putting the project before him and asking him to grant permission to the two young priests to begin their work. He told him of the remarkable answer to the Novena they had made, and stating that he himself wholeheartedly approved of the plan, he begged His Eminence's authorisation.

Father Chevalier made an appointment with the Cardinal, and took the letter to him personally. Whether the Cardinal was already conversant with Father Gasnier's idea of the desirability of a mission-house in the Province of Berry we do not know, but after carefully reading the letter he said to the hopeful young priest:

"I am deeply touched with all you have put before me and am disposed to give my permission, but what are you going to live on? It is all very well to have a mission house, but where are you going to get the finance to sustain you?"

"Your Eminence," replied Father Chevalier, "We will at least have the stipends for our Masses and sermons, and will have to rely on Divine Providence for the rest."

"Divine Providence - that is all right," rejoined the Cardinal, "but you must not tempt Divine Providence. I am afraid I will be able to authorise your plans, only when you are assured of an adequate and definite revenue. However, if God wills your work, He will see to it that you will not want the necessary help. Pray to the Blessed Virgin that She will complete the work She has so admirably begun."

Father Chevalier in relating the interview remarked: "The Cardinal's language was that of prudence and of faith."(32) Certainly the problem that the Cardinal had stressed was not a simple one. The two curates possessed neither money nor worldly goods. The mere pittance they received as salary was hardly enough to cover their personal needs, but such was their enthusiasm that money seemed a secondary consideration at this stage, while he can appreciate their optimistic enthusiasm, lack of finance was in reality the main obstacle to their venture in this early period and soon began to realise it. Where could they look in this un-Christian parish for support? And where could they look outside the parish, as, after all, they were still two comparatively unknown curates with little influence and few acquaintances?(33)

They decided then that they would make a second Novena. The parish church was a regional centre of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of whose headquarters was in the church of Our Lady of Victories in Paris.(34) The feast of the Archconfraternity was kept on the Sunday before Septuagesima (35) In this year - 1855 - the Sunday fell on the 28th January. They decided to finish the Novena on this day, and in Father Chevalier's words: "In order to solicit Our Lady's interest in our work, we decided to make a pact with Her.(36)

We have two versions of this contract both from the hand of Father Chevalier - the first in his MANUSCRIPT written in 1859, and the second in his COMMENCEMENTS. This second version seems to be but a recasting of the first. We doubt that the first was the original text, and believe that the original was lost before 1859.(37)

On 21st April, 1908 Father Maugenest wrote: "We wrote a contract with Our Lady only for the second novena. I do not recall the literal text of the terms of the pact, but I am certain that the main clause was a promise made to Mary Immaculate that, if She would help us, we would consider Her the Foundress of the Society and that we would work in a very special way to spread Devotion to Her amongst men. The theme was that we would honour the Sacred Heart of Jesus revealing Itself to the world, in order to save it through the intercession of Mary Immaculate."

Father Chevalier would have been relying on his memory in handing down the terms of the pact to us. He was anxious to keep these promises before the minds of the future members of his Congregation. What is important for us is not the particular form in which the contract was expressed, or the literal wording but the profound significance of the promises. The wording of both texts is substantially the same but as a matter of interest we will place them side by side and compare the variations and additions. Perhaps it will help us to remember better the central idea of the pact and the nature of the promises:

MANUSCRIPT 1859

Contract made between the most Holy Virgin and two priests of the S.C.

Sacred pledges taken by us at the feet of our good Mother, and placed in Her Immaculate Heart, with limitless confidence If the Holy Virgin, our great Queen our one Refuge and our sole Protection, triumphs over all the difficulties which Hell raises against us, and establishes our proposed work this year, For the salvation of souls and the glory of Her most dear Son, we undertake on our own behalf these following engagements - not only for ourselves but for those who will work in the same Company.

ARTICLE I

The priests entrusted with the task of continuing the work of Saint Ursin, first Apostle of Berry, will take the Name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

ARTICLE II

They will have quite a special love and a singular piety for the Adorable Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary; they will work with all their strength to make these two Hearts everywhere loved.

(Not in 1859 Text)

ARTICLE III

They will never preach without saying a few words about Jesus and Mary.

They will not hear even one confession without proposing these two Names -

those two Hearts

to the invocation and love of the penitent.

ARTICLE IV

The principal picture in their Chapel will represent the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Adorable Heart of Jesus saving poor sinners.

ARTICLE V There will be in the Chapel

(1) A statue of the Sacred Heart (of Jesus 9

(2) A statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

(3) A banner on which the picture will perpetuate the memory of the great favour received.

ARTICLE VI

The patronal Feast of the Congregation will be that of the Sacred Heart.

The special feasts of the Order will be those of the Immaculate Conception, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Saint Ursin, Saint Solange and Saint Dominic.

The feasts of the Most Holy Virgin will be celebrated with very special solemnity.

ARTICLE VII

The priests of the Sacred Heart in their solitude will imitate by preference the hidden and interior life of Mary in the Temple and in the House of Nazareth.

ARTICLE VIII

In their apostolic life they will imitate Her great Mercy, and following Her example, they will seek no more beautiful title than that of "Refuge of Sinners."

COMMENCEMENTS

between Mary of the Sacred Heart.

A sacred engagement with confidence Most Holy Virgin our one hope.

(These words do not appear in this Text) who will form part of the same Society.

The priests who will form part of our little Congregation will take the title of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and will engage themselves to fulfill all that the title signifies.

"They will have quite a special devotion to the work of making the Adorable Heart of Jesus loved and glorified by the priests and the faithful and making reparation for the outrages which It receives. In thanksgiving to Mary they will regard Her as their Foundress and Sovereign; they will associate Her in all their works, and make Her loved in a special way. Her Immaculate Heart will be the object ex their piety.

In so far possible they will preach,

...as also they will try not to hear any confession without proposing these two Hearts to the invocation etc..

...the Adorable Heart of Jesus revealing Itself to the World for its salvation through the intercession of Mary

(2) Another one of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. [

(3) An "ex-voto" which will perpetl

..will be the Feast of the Sacred

The secondary feasts will be those of

St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist St. Ursin the first apostle of Berry

...the hidden life of Mary.

...Her zeal for the salvation of souls, and Her great Mercy towards sinners.

When we compare the two documents we find they are substantially the same. Here and there greater emphasis may be put on a particular point, or the arrangement slightly altered, but there is no change of any importance. That confirms our opinion that the Manuscript of 1859 was a copy from memory and not the original, otherwise in his COMMENCEMENTS Father Chevalier would have been content to give us the original contract as it was written.

When we recall that right from the beginning the principal end of the Society was Devotion to the Sacred Heart, we can see that Father Maugenest's recollection of the general details of the contract were correct. He clearly states the special place that Devotion to Our Blessed Mother was to take in new Society. The founders both used the same expression - "in a very special manner" when speaking of this devotion. This

intention, then, of giving special honour to the Mother of God as an end of the Society existed right from the beginning and was not just an afterthought by Father Chevalier in order to link the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart with the very foundation of the Congregation.

One last observation: The correction to Article I shows that Father Chevalier did not regard the Apostolate of the district of Berry as an exclusive obligation on the founders or their successors. In the text this is inferred as only one of the works of the new Congregation. They did not engage themselves precisely to the apostolate of Berry, but expressed their proposal to continue the work of St. Ursin as one of their works. The contract does not express this exclusive obligation, although it was the main thought in the mind of the Abbe de Champgrand when he donated the house at Issoudun - as we shall see later in this chapter. This undoubtedly was one of the reasons besides many others, why Father Chevalier never wished to leave the parish of Issoudun. He would have felt obliged to stay there on account of the gift made to the two curates.

Side by side then with Devotion to the Sacred Heart which was the primary end of the Society would be this Devotion to Mary "in a very special manner". They would regard Her as the Foundress of the Society, and would work to spread Devotion to Her. This was the pact made with Her not only for themselves but for all the future members of the Congregation. Speaking of Father Chevalier's devotion to Mary, Father Piperon writes: "He did not regard this mission as merely his own, but it was his dearest wish to see all his confreres full of zeal in propagating devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He used often to impress on us that it was one of the principal ends of the Society, and a powerful means of glorifying the Heart of Jesus and making It loved. He said to me one day: 'When Father Maugenest and I promised to take the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and to honour the Holy Virgin in a special way, if our requests were granted, our thoughts were not of ourselves only, but we undertook to pledge our Congregation formally to the achievement of its twofold end. If we are Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, as our name and motto indicate, we must also be apostles devoted to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. That is our vocation.'"(38)

In accordance with this aim they promised to place in their chapel the statues and the "ex voto" lamps. The corrections to Article III - "in so far as possible" and "they will try" explain their intentions on these points.

"Each day of the Novena the written pact was placed on the Altar while they offered up the Adorable Victim. On the day of the feast when the novena ended, their prayers were more ardent and the promises renewed."(39) AS on the 8th December a special ceremony was enacted during the High Mass. The pact was solemnly brought to the Sanctuary by two acolytes and offered to Our Lady "through the hands of the priest."(40)

During these weeks the parish priest, Father Crozat had been busy looking for help and resources for his curates' plan. On the day of the feast - 28th January - at the end of the Novena he informed them that a generous benefactress, an anonymous lady - inspired by grace had promised to grant an annual revenue of 1000 francs to the two curates for their livelihood (41) as long as they had need of it.(42) The secret of the identity of the benefactress was well guarded. Father Piperon wrote: "Never to my knowledge was the name mentioned. He wondered if Father Chevalier even knew who it was(43) but he certainly did later on since after the death of the lady he published the name in the *Analecta* of the Society in 1900. It was the Viscountess du Quesne. We do not know how long she paid the subsidy.

"On hearing the news" wrote Father Chevalier, "our joy knew no bounds. Mary, it is to you, after Your Divine Son, that we owe our Society and its glory. It is yours. In that is our strength and our security."(44)

This gift has always been regarded as Our Lady's answer to the Novena. "The response of Mary was not long in forthcoming," wrote Father Piperon, and Father Chevalier agreed.(45) The intention of the novena was to resolve the difficulty of finance, which had been raised by the Cardinal. How were they going to live? His Eminence had considered the uncertain revenue of their ministry quite insufficient, but now this obstacle had been obviated. The approbation of the authorities was still to be obtained, and we can be sure that apart from the financial aid they sought, the main intention of the novena was ultimately to have their plan approved by the Church. Father Maugenest recalls: "The intention was to obtain from our Sovereign Queen the necessary means of livelihood, but this only that we could obtain the authorisation of our plan." After mentioning the opposition, he continues; "This approbation ultimately obtained by the result of our second novena was, to my mind, a greater miracle than the gift of 20,000 francs after the first."

Father Chevalier also thought the same way: "From then on" he wrote in his Manuscript of 1859, "Hell was conquered, the obstacles were surmounted; and besides the generous gift of 20,000 francs to purchase the house in which we now live, a kind benefactress offered us 1000 francs a year."(47) The Abbe Rigault informs us that he learnt from Father Chevalier that the promised 20,000 francs was received only after the second novena, after a lot of difficulties had been straightened out.(48)

Two of the three people concerned in this Novena had quite a different intention which Father Maugenest never suspected. It is question here of the project of a certain Abbe de Champgrand who was to play an important part in the development of the affair. It concerned certain new difficulties arising from conditions which the donor stipulated.

Edward, Ferdinand Marie de Champgrand was born at Jussy-Champagne, near Bourges, on the 18th August, 1813. He was educated by the Jesuits first at their college in Billom (Puy-de-Dome) and then at Fribourg in Switzerland. 12th October, 1831 he commenced his Seminary studies at Issy and later went to Saint Sulpice. He joined the Sulpicians and after his ordination on 20th May 1837 he was appointed to the Major Seminary of Bordeaux where in turn he was Professor of Dogmatic Theology (1837-40), Bursar (1841-44); Professor of Moral Theology (1844-49) and of Sacred Scripture (1849-60). (49)

Knowing that he came from a wealthy family, Father Gasnier had appealed to him to ask his relatives to help finance a plan he had in mind for the spiritual welfare of the people of Berry - the native country of Abbe de Champgrand and the region where his family had their properties. This plan concerned the formation of a Community of Missionaries to evangelise the people of Berry. The idea appealed to the Abbe and in a letter to Father Gasnier he wrote: "It is an eminently practical idea, and you have done well to interest me in it personally. I had at heart much the same idea - the necessity of a Community of Missionaries to evangelise above all the poor people of the fields who in most of our district of Berry are very backward in religious knowledge.

Whether Abbe de Champgrand at this stage wished to urge the immediate accomplishment of the project, or was merely seeking further details or again whether he thought it preferable to leave the initiative to the clergy of Issoudun we do not know, but after Father Chevalier's arrival in the parish had spoken of the plan to his brother-in-law Monsieur Philippe de Bengy who resided in Issoudun.(51) He had instructed him to approach the two curates without mentioning his name, and inform them that if they wished to undertake a work for the good of the souls of the Berry district, for example to establish a mission-house, he would donate the sum of 20,000 francs towards the cause. He would have known of the character of the two priests and of their good intentions, and the condition that he stipulated namely - the permission of Cardinal - would assure that the work would be under the authority of Bourge; and that Father Gasnier would take the matter in hand himself, and give them good advice personally.

We must state that right from the beginning Abbe de Champgrand found himself in a false position. He did not realise that the scope of the plan in the mind of the two curates was wider than that of his own. When he received their reply through Monsieur de Bengy he envisaged the foundation of a mission house staffed by diocesan priests for the good of the Berry province, and did not know of their further intentions which they meant to submit to the Cardinal.

In the conference with Monsieur Petit the main topic had been the foundation of a mission-house for Berry with the permission of the Cardinal. Without any intention of deception or suppression of facts Father Chevalier in his elation and enthusiasm did not mention anything about the intention of founding a religious Congregation in honour of the Sacred Heart. In reference to the difficulties that later arose, Father Piperon has written: "In the effusion of his gratitude the good Father forgot to make known just in what way this generous gift of 20,000 francs was the fulfillment of his prayers and the assurance that his plan was in accordance with the will of God. Had he not now the means of purchasing some

little corner of the earth for his longed-for mission house which would shelter his future missionaries? Was not this the answer of the Immaculate Virgin bidding him to proceed with the foundation of his Religious Society?(52)

During the conversation concerning the gift there was nothing in the mind of Monsieur Petit except the foundation of a mission-house for Berry, whereas in the mind of Father Chevalier the main thought was that now the sign prayed for in the Novena had been granted, the sign asked of God regarding the foundation of the Congregation. Its realisation now depended only on the approval of the Cardinal, in accordance with the condition laid down by the donor.

The first interview with the Cardinal, as we have seen, left the two priests full of hope, and in conformity with his wish, they had obtained the financial security of at least 1000 francs per annum. Now His Eminence could hardly refuse their request.

Soon the rumour was noised abroad that the two curates of Issoudun had in mind not only a mission-house, but the foundation of a religious Congregation, letters of both Father Maugenest and Father Rigault show that this intention was known even before the end of the second novena. The Abbe de Champgrand heard of it, no doubt from Monsieur de Bengy. He was profoundly upset by the news. This was not the purpose for which he had promised the money. His intention had been to finance the purchase of a mission house for diocesan priests, not to establish a new Religious Institute. He did not wish that any price. It was an eventuality he had not dreamed of when offering his help.

Monsieur de Bengy who could see complications ahead, prudently withdrew, but the Abbe de Champgrand, in spite of his desire to remain anonymous, decided to make his mind clear on the subject. It was thus that Father Crozat and Father Chevalier learnt his name. The Abbe summarily threatened to withdraw his offer of 20,000 francs, unless the idea of a Religious Congregation be dropped and the money used exclusively for a mission-house for Berry. Even then the imperturbable Jules Chevalier did not seem to take the threat very seriously. Such was his confidence that he thought that if the Cardinal would now give his permission, all could be arranged happily. After all, Madame du Quesne had promised the annual sustenance; the important thing was to see the Cardinal immediately and obtain his authorisation.

So the determined curate from Issoudun set off once again for Bourges to interview Cardinal du Pont. The Cardinal received him cordially and listened attentively to what Father Jules told him. "His Eminence was profoundly impressed by my story," he later wrote. "He said to me: 'The hand of God is there, I can see that. I will submit the whole matter to my Council, and will let you know their decision.'"

Alas, all the members of the Council without exception were opposed to project.

"What are the reasons for your refusal?" His Eminence asked them.

"They are only a couple of inexperienced curates without money or standing!" replied one. "We must save them from becoming the joke of the Diocese."

Another proposed; "This foundation of Missionaries is not only adventuresome, but compromising to the diocese. If it does not succeed, as seems probable, all the responsibility will fall back on the Diocesan authorities. We will be blamed for taking the matter so lightly, and will have to bear the odium ourselves."

And so on. Three times during the Council the project was brought up and three times it was unanimously rejected.

"Gentlemen," His Eminence finally said; "This matter seems to me a grave one. We will decide nothing further today. I ask you to think seriously about it and we will discuss it again at a future date." And so the meeting broke up.(53)

The main objection of the Council was to the fact that the project of the two curates was to found a new Religious Congregation. They did not object to a new mission-house in Issoudun, for the apostolate in Berry, but to the plan of a new Religious Society. Even Father Gasnier was one of the objectors. This did not seem to him the solution he was looking for to revive the Faith in the Berry Province, and the scheme of the two young priests could easily impede his own plan of inaugurating a mission house in the area. He admitted later that in the early stages of the foundation he took no active part in assuring its success.(54) We can appreciate his position for as Superior St. Sulpice he held an important place on the Diocesan Council, and wanted to be sure of his ground.

After the Council was over he sought out Father Chevalier and tried to convince him that the project was not feasible. Father Chevalier wrote; "He said to me: My dear friend, drop the idea of your religious Congregation. You will never have it passed by the Council. They attacked it vehemently for over half an hour. I think it is dead and buried'."

"Did the Cardinal give his final decision?" asked Father Chevalier.

"No," came the reply, "he postponed his decision to a later date, but you can be sure the Council will not give in, and His Eminence never goes against their advice. You had better consider the matter finished."

"But not so fast, Father Superior, Our Lady has not yet given Her final word. We will pray to Her."

"Good, you may do that by all means, but if you win through She will have worked a first-class miracle."

"We are counting on Her. She is already too much in this work to abandon us now. I have confidence in your prayers, Father, and I know you will join them to ours."

"Very willingly," replied Father Gasnier. "From my own personal point of view I would be very happy to see your Congregation happily established."(55)

Was this last reply merely politeness on the part of the good priest or was he beginning to be affected by such faith and such perseverance? Was he beginning to understand that in conjunction with these convinced men his own plan would be realised only by the foundation of which they dreamed? Was he becoming aware that behind their zeal and enthusiasm was a Force with which he had not reckoned? These young priests were convinced they had received a Sign from Heaven, and believed they were not free to ignore it. This, thought Father Gasnier, was the only explanation of this firm resolution of Jules Chevalier in the face of such opposition. And in fact this was the truth. His determination was a result of the events of December 8th, the culmination of a long quest for heavenly assurance. All this he surely would have told Father Gasnier in their conversation and quoted to him the Cardinal's words "The hand of God is in this."

Father Chevalier returned to Issoudun with the discouraging news of the Council's decision. Later, in summing up the unfavourable attitude he encountered at Bourges he wrote: "They received me much like a dog in a game of skittles,"(55) He postponed the letter which he promised to write to the Abbe de Champgrand. If the Cardinal was not to give his approval, the letter would be superfluous.

"Only one thing now was left to them - recourse to the Immaculate Mother of God. They prayed to her with renewed fervour. In his COMMENCEMENTS Father Chevalier recalls the spirit of hope and trust with which they approached the Mother of God during this difficult period. Already the spirit of the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is evident in their prayers. "We turned again to Her Who is the Hope of the hopeless, and against all human foresight we obtained the approval of authority. O Mary, may you ever be blessed! You are indeed the Foundress of our Society. How can we ever thank you enough. What title can we give you to exalt your power and goodness in the work of the Sacred Heart?"(56)

Some have maintained that the prayers offered by the two priests after the refusal of the Council took the form of a third novena, but there is no evidence of that. There is no record in the writings of Fathers Chevalier, Maugenest and Piperon that such was the case, and Father Maugenest has noted that the necessary approbation came after the second novena.

Meanwhile the opposition of Abbe de Champgrand had grown stronger, and he refused to donate the 20,000 francs under the existing circumstances. He remarked that he had no intention of financing an adventure. He went further and made another condition: that the proposed mission-house be confided to care of an already established Religious Order. This would assure the stability of the work, and not leave it to the hazy and nebulous concept of two young inexperienced priests. In a letter to Father Gasnier he candidly stated his views:

"When I heard that the two curates intended to form a new religious Congregation and were going to call themselves Missionaries of the Sacred Heart I was dismayed. I did not wish to see at Issoudun the head-house of a new religious Congregation. Such a thought was a thousand miles from my mind when I offered the money. On the contrary I groan to see Institutes springing up on all sides. They were not known to our predecessors and many of them have failed to prove their utility. The name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart which these young men wish to assume dismays me. They should attach themselves to one of the approved Orders which would imply their name. If these men are animated by the Spirit of God, which I believe they are, they will be doing themselves a good turn if they join some established Institute which will be able to nourish them. If this does not appeal to them I believe they are not instruments which Providence can use. (non de semine virorum illorum per quos salus facta est Israel!) I am glad to think, Father Superior, that you are in accord with my views, and hope you will be able to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion."

Father Crozat wrote the Abbe several letters explaining the intentions of the two curates, but they were to no avail. The reminder that the only condition he had required - the approval of the Cardinal - had been met, brought no result.

From the Abbe's point of view, these two young curates were prepared to use deceitfully for their own purposes the money he had promised for the establishment of a mission-house in Issoudun with a view to the apostolate of the abandoned people of the Berry country-side. Who could have foreseen that they would take it into their heads to initiate still another of these new Congregations which were nothing but a scandal to him. Under these circumstances he did not feel bound to his promise. The project of the curates was entirely different from the one he had in mind when he offered the money. It was idle to state that the only question was the establishing of a mission-house. The nature of the mission house should have been made clear. Besides, his condition, the approval of the Cardinal - had not yet been definitely fulfilled.

But while the Abbe de Champgrand was relying on the support of Father Gasnier, we can see that this good priest was already beginning to qualify his opposition and modify his unfavourable views. After his interview with Father Chevalier he was convinced that the two young priests believed in the Divine inspiration of their project, the possibility of which he was not free to dismiss himself. He had confidence in the judgment of Father Crozat, who had written to him explaining the whole plan and expressing the opinion that it was feasible. Father Gasnier had forwarded the letter to Abbe de Champgrand explaining that he himself was inclined to take a more favourable view of the enterprise and reserve his judgment for the time being.

Abbe de Champgrand replied on 24th March, 1855; "I am returning to you the project of Abbe Crozat. I have studied it carefully, as I did your own letter. I have written to Monsieur de Bengy concerning the matter asking for certain details, and am awaiting his reply." The tone of the letter would suggest that the Abbe felt his position was weakening somewhat. He was not as uncompromising as before.

It is a pity that we do not know the exact contents of Father Crozat's project. The reaction of the Abbe de Champgrand to it indicates that it merited serious consideration. Did the venerable parish priest propose the compromise which Abbe Champgrand eventually accepted? It is certain that he carried the attack into the enemy's camp. He stated plainly that a promise had been made, and that it ought to be honoured. He also pointed out that 20,000 francs would not be enough to buy a house such as the Abbe de Champgrand had in mind. At least 25,000 would be required. As regards the stability of the project, which the Abbe was doubting, he simply pointed out that this was guaranteed by the fact that the members would engage themselves by vows. But Abbe de Champgrand would not admit the three points mentioned by Father Crozat. He continued in his letter to Father Gasnier: "It may be just as well to make two observations before a final decision can be given, which I cannot do at present. Firstly, my promise was not made just for any project at all, and it is a mere supposition to think I would increase it to 25,000 francs. Secondly, I still have doubts on the stability of the work, if it remains in the hands of these missionaries, even though they might be bound by vows."

Meanwhile the Issoudun clergy anxiously awaited further news from Bourges. What would the final decision of the Cardinal be? His Eminence eventually called his Council together, and the subject was brought up again. The proposal met with the same opposition - this time stronger if anything. After the discussion the Cardinal rose to speak: "Gentlemen," he said, "I have reflected on this matter; I have prayed about it. As you know, it is not my custom to go against your decisions. This time, however, I am going to do so, as I believe I would be going against the Designs of Providence if I agreed with you. I promised these two priests that if they could show me another sign of the Will of God regarding their resources, I would approve their plan. This sign they have shown me, and I am going to keep my promise. From today I am authorising the two curates at Issoudun to unite and commence their work. From today I ask you to nominate two priests to replace them."

This historic approval was granted on Monday 4th June, 1855, and Father Chevalier and his companions heard of it the following day.

"The next day," wrote Father Chevalier, "we received a letter from His Eminence announcing his decision." The first curate named was a young priest ordained only the preceding Saturday - Father Joseph Lelot. His nomination is dated 4th June. The other curate was Father Antoine Tamisier, who had succeeded Jules at Chatillon. His nomination was dated 5th June.

Father V. Chastre, the archivist at Bourges, informs us that there is a record in the diocesan register under the date of 10th June. "The Rev. Jules Chevalier has been authorised to take the title of Missionary of the Sacred Heart", and has been relieved of his duties as curate at Issoudun." Regarding Father Maugenest the record merely states he was permitted to bear the title "in 1855."(60)

The time had come - with the definite approval of the Cardinal assured - for Abbe de Champgrand to make a decision. The condition stipulated on 8th December of the previous year had been fulfilled - the Cardinal had granted approbation. The Abbe realised that the Cardinal knew of his promise and naturally it put him in a delicate position before the prelate. He had before him, at least during the life-time of the Cardinal, the alternative of abandoning the idea of a mission-house at Issoudun as he had conceived it, or accepting the new Religious Congregation, which he considered a dead-weight and a risk to the diocese. Reluctantly he finally decided to support the new Society. "I must yield at least exteriorly", he lamented on the 3rd April, 1856. But he attached a condition. The condition, which may have been that suggested by Father Crosat in his letter, was that he would buy a house for no more than 20,000 francs in his own name, and then after a time, if the Congregation prospered, and was a help to the Berry district, he would donate the property to it. This actually happened seven years later in 1863.

Reviewing then the history of the foundation we can see that the 8th of December, 1854 was the important date. In spite of the consequent conflict of opinion re ways and means, the sign had been given from Heaven on that day. The "dream" of student days had become a reality; the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had been founded.

The project had been achieved by a combination of the spiritual and the material. Father Chevalier had been convinced that the Sacred Heart and His Immaculate Mother had a special work for him to do. With the help of Father Maugenest he had prayed for this, worked for it and fought for it. The two priests had faith and confidence, but how to accomplish their plan had been another matter. From the material point of view we might say that humanly speaking the project was in the hands of Abbe de Champgrand. Without knowing it, and even without wishing it, he was the instrument of Divine Grace. He had been difficult, but nevertheless, his offer had been taken by the Founder as the required sign from Heaven, and had initiated the practical steps towards the establishment of the Society. We can see how Almighty God uses human elements even unwilling ones at times, for the accomplishment of his works.(61)

Looking back over the succession of events, we can clearly see that the two similar yet independent projects - that of Father Gasnier and the Abbe Champgrand on the one hand, and that of Father Chevalier on the other, were brought together by Divine Providence on the historic date of 8th December, 1854. This surely was a result of the novena made by the two curates. In spite of the conflict of opinions and the cross-purposes, the final agreement and collaboration of the two parties confirmed the grace received on the 8th December. Was it not a miraculous event?

"A miracle," says Professor Dondeyne, "as a religious phenomenon is the coming together of extraordinary and astonishing facts, which in the religious context in which they happen, are a sensible and certain sign that God is with his Saints.....Miracles appear in the religious history of mankind as the sensible response of God to the faith of man - a visible manifestation of Divine Providence."(62) The great event of the morning of the 8th December, 1854 was for Jules Chevalier this visible manifestation of Divine Providence in response to his ardent prayers. And this Divine response was for him, as Founder, the confirmation of his mission and the Divine approval of the Society he had established.

CHAPTER VIII THE FIRST COMMUNITY

Convinced that the foundation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was in accord with the plans of Divine Providence, and in spite of the difficulties raised by the Abbe de Champgrand, the clergy of Issoudun went in search of a suitable dwelling to house the first members of the Congregation. Their search began in the early months of 1855. We have already seen that the Abbe had written a letter on 24th March, 1855 stating he would definitely not go beyond 20,000 francs.(1)

Wishing to avoid public comment, the priests enlisted the services of their next door neighbour, Monsieur Voisin, who was a good Catholic with a brother and a son in the priesthood. Being an expert carpenter he knew the building trade well, which was a big help. Without putting him in complete charge of negotiations, the priests instructed him to look for a suitable dwelling, which he would purchase in his own name, not revealing the identity of the real buyers till the last moment.(2)

Although willing to co-operate Monsieur Voisin was rather embarrassed, as he had just purchased a nice cottage, where he hoped to retire, and he knew the village tongues would start to wag at this new purchase. Several places were examined, but most were unsuitable to their purpose. One was too dear; another in the wrong locality; another too small, and so on. Eventually an abandoned villa at one end of the Place de Vouet caught their interest as it offered possibilities.(3) After an inspection at nightfall, the priests decided to buy it. The agent, Monsieur Petit was rather astonished when Monsieur Voisin approached him and said he wanted to buy the place. He had just sold him a house, and naturally wondered what was behind this latest move. However, he was only too willing to do business, as the villa had not been occupied for about five years, and was in a bad state of disrepair.(4) Just when the sale was about to be finalised, an unexpected rival-purchaser appeared on the scene, and was prepared to pay a higher price than the priests could afford. It was just what he wanted, he said, and the price was right, but he would have to consult his wife before finalising the deal. The good lady arrived and was pleased with what she saw. Just as she was about to leave she noticed a grave-yard about 300 yards away, and asked "What is that, over there?" "Oh, that is a cemetery" the agent replied. "Oh dear, this house would be too mournful. I could never live near a cemetery" she replied, much to the relief of the missionaries.

Time was passing and still there was no decision from Abbe de Champgrand. If the Congregation was to be established in suitable quarters before the end of the year, it would have to be before Trinity Sunday. The diocese was short of priests and the only hope of getting replacements was after the Ordination which took place on the Saturday before the Feast of the Blessed Trinity.

However, the Cardinal resolved that difficulty by appointing two priests immediately after his decision to authorise the Congregation. The parishioners began to suspect that something was going on at the Presbytery, but they did not know what. When the nomination of the two new priests was announced, the local paper, "Le Droit Commun" commented that whilst awaiting the execution of projects yet to be disclosed, four curates were attached to the parish. Everyone was convinced that the district was far too big for two curates to administer and that hence in future four priests would help the parish priest in his responsibilities. The two new priests were Father Tamisier, recent curate at Chatillon, and Father Lelot, recently ordained. The supposition was far from being true for until Abbe Champgrand gave his consent, from June 10th on Fathers Chevalier and Maugenest found themselves on the street.

They decided they would return to their home-towns and live with their people until they could take possession of a house in Issoudun. And so Father Chevalier went off to Richelieu, and Father Maugenest to Chezal-Benoit. Jules' homecoming was not a very happy event, as his aged mother had expected him to be taking charge of a parish and had intended to spend her last days with him. He had written to her telling her that his days as a curate in Issoudun were over, and she had inferred from this that he was now to be a parish priest. She had been looking forward to this for some time, so she could go and live with him.

"I arrived at Richelieu," he writes, "my heart full of emotion, apprehensive of my mother's reaction to my future plans. After our warm greetings, she asked me what was the name of my new parish. I evaded the question by speaking of other subjects, but the next day she plied me with questions again: "Was the parish far from Issoudun? Was it a nice place? Were the people there good Christians? Did I like the change?" etc.. I decided to tell her of my plans.

"Mother, I am staying on at Issoudun, not as parish priest but as a missionary. "A Missionary!" she repeated. The word seemed to stun her. Seeing all her dreams shattered, she began to cry and actually fell into a faint. For a moment I thought she was dead. My heart ached for her, and I felt very miserable because of the pain I was causing her. When she came to, she continued to cry, and begged me to change my mind. I asked God for help and tried to calm her. For the next eight days I had to withstand a veritable onslaught from the members of my family, but, knowing I was acting according to the Will of God, I remained steadfast in my resolution, not without a lot of mental anguish. I was torn between my love for my dear mother with the desire to help her, and the call of God to fulfill my mission. The words of Our Divine Master kept recurring to me: 'He who loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.' They were eight days of martyrdom. Gradually the spirit of faith and good sense reconciled my mother to my decision, and she began to see my motives. She knew when she was to say goodbye to me it would probably be forever in this life, and I must say when the actual parting came, she was heroic."

"Before returning to Issoudun, I went to Poitiers to make a retreat, conducted by the Jesuit Fathers, in order to renew my religious and priestly ideals, I wrote out my resolutions, and placed them on the tomb of Saint Radegonde."(9)

The sojourn in Richelieu and the retreat at Poitiers would have occupied the second half of the month of June, and it would have been early in July when the two priests met again in Issoudun to prepare to enter their new home. The actual deed of sale was signed in Paris before a Monsieur Dufour on the 1st September in the presence of Mme. Prudence Josephine Mayet-Bernard who owned the property. In the meantime the assurance of the Abbe de Champgrand had been obtained, and a provisional deed of sale drawn up, which enabled the priests to take possession in July. Father Chevalier tells us: "On our return to Issoudun, we immediately set about making the necessary adjustments and repairs. They were anxious to have the place in good shape for the official opening on 9th September.

The property was situated in the suburb of Croix-Rouge, adjacent to the Place de Vouet now known as the Place du Sacre-Coeur - in the northern part of the town. The property, which is on the northern part of the Square, was divided into three parts; a small vineyard to the east running parallel to the Rue des Champs d'Amour; a garden to the west, surrounded by a wall about six feet high, and in the centre the buildings which consisted of the dwelling itself and a large long lumber room, with a courtyard between the two. The buildings were about 25 yards in length, and connected on the street side by a wall similar to that surrounding the garden. A door and gate in this wall led into the courtyard. At the far ends were the wells and the wood-pile.

The two missionaries put themselves to the work of improvement and repair with zest, without being too fastidious. The dwelling was of one storey, and was divided into four main apartments. Nearest the street was the parlour – a large room about 20 feet square with a glass door opening towards the Place de Vouet, another onto the courtyard and a window overlooking the garden, then in order along the length of the building, came the bed-room, the dining room, small stair way leading to the attic, and the kitchen with built-in cupboards etc.. A passage way ran

half-way along the left wall of the building turning right towards the garden. The main alterations which the Fathers decided to make were to divide the old large bedroom into two small living rooms or cells, to extend the passage way along to the front parlour, and to put two beds in the attic for future use.

The wall, built to extend the passage way, unfortunately shut off the light and sun from the two cells. One had a window facing the garden, but the one in which Father Chevalier unselfishly chose to live had no natural light at all. It was decided to put a pane of glass in the upper portion of the door, but even then the only light entering the room was from the passage-way. He occupied this pokey little room for several years until his health began to fail, when his confreres got his permission, not without difficulty, to put a door in the wall leading out onto a bay facing the garden.(12)

Mlle. Marchand records that during these days of preparation and renovation Father Mangenest's Mother used to come over from Chezal-Benoit to give a hand and keep the house in order. The good lady used to catch the coach back home at four o'clock in the morning.(14)

It was decided to turn the old lumber rooms on the opposite side of the courtyard into a chapel. This was an elongated building similar to the main house, much in the shape of a barn, but in three separate sections, whose roofs fortunately were of the same height - about nine feet.(15)

The conversion of this building into a chapel was made as Father Piperon tells us, "under the direction of the ingenious Founder,"(16) and the supervision of Monsieur Voisin. Actually it is hard to find anything "ingenious" about the construction, but Father Piperon was probably thinking of the fact that the transformation was made with the very meagre resources at Father Chevalier's command.

Finance actually was the big problem. The 20,000 francs of the Abbe de Champgrand barely covered the cost of the property, and he had refused the extra 5000 francs. Monsieur Voisin had put aside a small sum of money for his daughter's marriage, and offered to lend this, but that would have been only for a short time.(17) This lack of money explains why the original house lacked many ordinary amenities, and could hardly boast of the bare necessities.

The interior walls were knocked out of the building and a vaulted ceiling replaced the flat one. Two sacristies were built, one on each side of the main altar, which itself consisted of a simple table painted white and supported by wooden pedestals. In front of the sacristies were two side altars - that of Our Lady on the Epistle side and St. Joseph on the Gospel side, and a wooden Communion rail ran from wall to wall in front of the Sanctuary. Two confessionals were built, one on either side of the main entrance over which was a round rose-glass window, and chairs were used for the seating.(18) The tabernacle was just a plain wooden structure (19) and above was a small throne, where the Blessed Sacrament might be exposed. Mlle. Marchand had tried to make the altar and throne a little more attractive by decorating them with artificial flowers (roses and jasmine), and later Madame Du Quesne donated a more elaborate throne of carved wood.(20) The Chapel was lighted by eight windows, the glass of which was frosted in various colours which gave a devotional tone to the sanctuary.(21) After Father Piperon arrived in 1856, he made his own "stained glass" windows by pasting various types of coloured paper in various designs on the glass. "As this was a rather long process," wrote Mlle. Marchand, "he enlisted the help of my father, and the two of them worked at their 'stained glass' in the little workshop in the attic.(22)

The Chapel, which according to Father Piperon was able to hold comfortably from five to six hundred people, was finished by September.(23) The Abbe Dalailler recalls: "I have seen this old barn transformed into the Chapel of the Sacred Heart by means of white and red paint, by camouflage of the old walls and their supports, and the adornment of poor altars." Father Chevalier himself remembers with humble simplicity: "This improvised chapel had the privilege of extreme poverty and lowly appearance." However, Father Piperon affectionately recalls: "In spite of its poverty and complete lack of style (elsewhere he referred to it as "barn" architecture) the chapel was not without its charm with its quaint murals and dainty paintings and its consoling atmosphere of piety. It invited prayer, and the good, if few, worshippers were proud of their little church.(25)

While the work of renovation was going on the priests said their daily Masses in the Chapel, and heard the Confessions of the faithful. On the 9th September the official blessing and opening took place. In the absence of the Cardinal, who was sick, the Vicar-General, the Abbe Caillaud performed the ceremony and preached.(26) A large crowd, gathered, and all the neighbouring clergy was in attendance. A prominent figure amongst them was Abbe Crozat, beaming with joy.

During his discourse the Vicar General said he was officially delegated by the Cardinal to confer the name of "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart" on the now Congregation. He said that it was no mere coincidence that this joyful day happened to be the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, the loving Mother who had so carefully guarded and guided her infant Congregation. It was just nine months since the Conception of the Society on the 8th December, and this could well be called the day of its birth.

"Father Founder," says Father Piperon, "used often remind us of this fact, and he wished that each year the 9th September be celebrated with extra solemnity in order to thank the Mother of God for Her protection. On this day he would tell us, the Church gave us the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. On the first anniversary of this Feast a great flock of birds of all species invaded the courtyard and precincts of the chapel at dawn, flying around and vying with one another in their warbling and twitter. Father Chevalier remarked on seeing them. "They have come to sing the praises of the sweet name of Mary. Let us bless Her with them." Several years in succession the birds came on this happy feast, and Father Piperon has fittingly written: "We loved to join with these gracious musicians in their songs of praise of the Queen of Heaven and earth."

Father Chevalier had another important and very significant reason for remembering and celebrating the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, and one which Father Piperon did not suspect. It was on this day - the day of the official recognition of the Society that he first thought of the title - "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

Here is the text in which Father Chevalier gives to this day its complete significance. On Sunday, 9th September, 1855, on the Feast of the HOLY NAME OF MARY, the Missionaries were installed with the authority of His Eminence, Cardinal Du Pont, Archbishop of Bourges, and given the name of MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS. That same day, wishing to show their love and gratitude to Mary, they gave her in their thought the NAME OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART. A wonderful coincidence that only Heaven could arrange." (29) By "they" Father Founder meant "I", as he did not reveal the thought to his confreres till later on. Father Piperon adds the note: "In underlining the titles and writing them in capital letters Father Chevalier draws attention to the fact that there had been not one but two changes of names on that feast of the Holy Name of Mary; The missionaries became Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and Mary became Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: the former officially, the latter in thought. Almighty God inspired this new title in the heart of Jules Chevalier while he was praying in the chapel, which had just been blessed. Did not he himself say, "The devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had for its cradle the chapel of the Missionaries the Sacred Heart."(30)

In their pact with Our Lady on 19th January, 1955, the two founders had promised to put three images in their chapel. Father Maugenest had painted two pictures for the side-altars, one representing as promised, the Immaculate Heart of Mary; the other a painting of St. Joseph. When Father Piperon arrived, those pictures had been replaced by statues.(31) The third and principal picture, according to Article IV of the promise was to be a representation of "the adorable Heart of Jesus revealing Itself to the world in order to save it by the intercession of Mary Immaculate."(32) Accordingly over the main altar was hung an oil painting measuring 2.5ft. x 2 ft. which symbolised all those concepts.

Father Chevalier always regarded this picture as a precious souvenir of the early days of the Congregation, and when the new church was built, he kept it in his own room. At the time of the expulsion shortly before his death his main concern was for the preservation of this painting. It can now be seen in the Museum at Issoudun. In his book on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Father Founder describes it thus: "I have here before my eyes another picture - not without its artistic merit. It dates back to the 18th century, and perhaps further. In the upper part of the picture the Sacred

Heart shines in glory, Its brilliant light illuminating the whole sky. Near by is the Blessed Virgin Mary, shrouded in splendour, pointing out the Heart of Her Divine Son to the Angels, the Saints and the Patriarchs, who are contemplating It in admiration while adoring and blessing It. From the Wound in the Sacred Heart a stream of light flows directly to Mary, and from Her it is diffused on a group of five people representing the various Continents of the world. This group occupies the lower portion of the painting. The garb of each of the five persons indicates the country he comes from - Europe, Asia, America., Africa and Oceania. All are in an attitude of prayer and supplication, beseeching the Mother of God to bestow on them the light of grace and strength that they need."(33)

During the ceremony of the official installation and bestowal of their new title the two missionaries were kneeling together before the altar in their humble chapel. Their thoughts went back over the years and the marvel of their vocation - back to their seminary days when all this had been but "a dream", back to the days of trial and disappointment, of hope and waiting, back particularly to the almost unbelievable events of the past six months. Preeminently amongst the days stood out the historic 8th December with the miraculous answer to their Novena. At each period of reverse and disappointment when it would seem the plan must fail, Mary seemed to intervene to overcome the particular obstacle and to give them new hope. She was their powerful Mediatrix with the Divine Heart of Her Son. They had made their pact with Her, and full of confidence they knew that in spite of all difficulties they would one day be Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and they would honour their Heavenly Queen in a special way. Graces had poured abundantly from Her Immaculate Heart, and now here they were on this happy day being officially recognised by the Church and bearing the longed-for name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Gratitude and love filled the hearts of these first two members of the new Congregation.

Their eyes turned to the picture above the altar. There before them was the symbolism of their mission - to bring to souls the glory of the Heart of Jesus through the all-powerful Heart of Mary, His Mother. While looking with love and tenderness on this picture of Mary pointing to the Heart of Her Son there came to Father Chevalier as if by illumination, the title "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." This name, unheard-of till now, filled the soul of the valiant missionary with a holy joy. A vivid light seemed to reveal the power and charm of this new name and title, the profound and glorious significance for his Heavenly Mother. He immediately knew that the august Mother of God wished to be honoured under this blessed name, and that by dedicating himself and his new Congregation to spreading devotion to Her under this title he would be fulfilling his promise to make Her known and loved "in a special manner."(34) Enriched by this grace, and now officially recognised by the Cardinal the two Missionaries commenced their new life, or, as Father Piperon has put it, "they began the Novitiate of this new kind of life, which would not conclude till the 25th December in the following year."

They both tried to model their lives on that of Jesus during His days at Nazareth and during His public ministry. Their one ambition was to reproduce in their life that of Jesus Christ, King of the poor, their one ambition to devote themselves as did He to the salvation of their brethren. Their first concern, accordingly, was to draw up a rule of life for themselves in accord with their new kind of life. They wished to become missionaries and apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They had promised this to Mary Who in accepting them had accepted their promise. Now the apostolate requires two essentials: holiness and knowledge. If either of those qualities was missing then the apostle was not fully-equipped, and the fruits of his sacred ministry would be impaired, if not wholly lost. Father Chevalier and his confrere sincerely wished to become apostles after the Heart of Christ, and to live only for His glory and the salvation of souls. From the very first day their motto was: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be Everywhere loved."

How could they make the Heart of the Crucified Christ loved by men if they did not burn with that love themselves? How could they teach the Infinite Perfection of His love and mercy, if they did not study it and become imbued with It? It was necessary then, that they carefully draw up a Rule of Life, which would foster this love and school them in the sacred sciences.

The two words - in large characters - which best describe their life in these days are Poverty and Privation. Their chapel was poor, their dwelling was primitive, their furniture was shabby. In each cell was a wooden cross, a little table, two chairs, a book-shelf and a bed (and as Father Piperon, who had slept therein, wryly remarked "And what a bed!")(35) "Nazareth itself", writes Father Piperon, "could not have been poorer, but the poverty did not frighten them. They loved and desired it, convinced that the foundations of true religious life must be built on poverty such as Jesus, the Divine Model, taught and practised. It was the firm rock on which the edifice was built strong enough to withstand the furious blasts of the tempest. The missionaries accepted it with joy and even gratitude. The poverty of Bethlehem, the destitution of the Stable was theirs at Issoudun, and afforded them the opportunity of modelling themselves more closely on Jesus, the King of the poor.(36) Despite the joy with which the missionaries embraced poverty and the lack of necessities, despite their desire to imitate Christ, and despite the arguments which Father Piperon himself put forth on the value of poverty in the apostolic and religious life, it was circumstances rather than the spirit of their foundation which forced them to practise it to such a degree during these first years. The self-same Father Piperon recognises that their intent was to practise an asceticism influenced by the Sulpician tradition and the rule that they had known at the Seminary. "Both of them," he says, "were trained for the priesthood by the disciples of Father Olier, and had a true esteem and affection for the traditions of the Seminary. They thought they could not do better than to base their own Statutes on those of the Seminary adapting and altering them where necessary, according to the nature of their work.

An example of the prudence of the young Founder in drawing up the Rule for his Congregation is shown in the rules referring to penance and mortification. Although he himself had long been accustomed to the practice of even rigorous penances, and although his own temperament shunned anything soft or indulgent, he clearly stated in the rule that any acts of corporal penance were left to the free will of the individual member.(37) In these privations of the first days of monastic life, Father Chevalier again revealed the qualities that Father Piperon had attributed to him in the Seminary: "a robust sanctity and a firm will which even the greatest of difficulties could not shake.(38)

The Founder himself wrote: "The beginnings were certainly hard. Housed as it were, in a stable like Our Lord Himself, we had practically nothing. Our school was that of privation. We had to do without even the most essential household items."(39) They had no money to pay a housekeeper, and had to look after the place and do the cooking themselves. "For a long time" wrote Father Chevalier, "we did our own cooking, and God knows how poor it was." Mlle. Marchant tells a story. "One Sunday morning after the 9 o'clock Mass, the gate into the courtyard happened to be open and I could not resist having a peep inside. There was Father Chevalier at the far end of the yard, in a white apron beside a small wall which separates the courtyard from the garden. He was busy cleaning cabbages. I have often seen them sweeping the snow from the court-yard," she continues, "as they could not afford to employ servants. On one occasion I saw Father Chevalier holding the frying-pan while Father Maugenest was stirring up an omelette. They both seemed to be enjoying the fun."(40) Father Chevalier tells the following story against himself: "One day it was my turn to prepare the meal. I decided to make an omelette. Endeavouring to imitate the experts, I tried turning it over by throwing it in the air, but it ended up in the ashes. I washed and cleaned it as best as possible, and we ate it - but what a flavour!"

"During these early days which we often refer to as the 'Golden Age' we not only did the cooking but gathered and chopped our own wood, swept out the house, kept the chapel in order, and worked in the garden during recreation time. Every morning we swept and dusted the chapel before opening it to the faithful, who were beginning to come in increasing numbers." (41)

Mlle. Marchant introduces us to Etienne, the first servant employed by the priests. This was a young lad from the country who had more good will than skill, and the culinary art was not one of his outstanding acquirements. One day during Lent the priests had to go to the chapel to preach and hear confessions. Before they went, they instructed Etienne to prepare some spinach for the evening meal. They told him it was growing in the garden. When they returned and sat down for the meal Etienne proudly brought in a plate full of thorns off the gooseberry bush cooked in butter. "We began to laugh", says Father Chevalier, "even though we did not wish to embarrass poor Etienne. Needless to say the meal

didn't last very long." The story went the rounds of the town, and Etienne was somewhat abashed. The priests took it in good part, but didn't like losing their butter, as they were very poor.(42)

As we have said, in drawing up the Rule, Father Chevalier followed the general horarium of the Seminary where possible. The main points were: Rise 4.30 a.m. followed by an hour of prayer and meditation. Then Mass and Thanksgiving. After the breakfast the priests were free for study or sundry duties till 11.45 a.m. when they met for Particular Examen. Dinner at Noon. Then recreation till 1.30 p.m. In the afternoon they said their Rosary and Office, made their Spiritual Reading and Visit to the Blessed Sacrament. On Feast Days there were certain modifications on account of extra work in preaching.(43) "Recreation," records Father Piperon, "was taken in common and no one could be absent without permission or serious reason. This hour of relaxation was considered important not only from the point of view of physical health, but for the interchange of intellectual and spiritual ideas, The joyous and care-free atmosphere helped to renew their forces and prepared them for the tasks ahead. Piety, too, was nourished by the exercise of the virtues one practised there."(44)

Following this Rule and relying on the grace of God the Missionaries counted on completing their Novitiate in the spirit of silence, study and prayer. There were no special services in their chapel and they were too little known to be called on to preach Missions. But scarcely a month after their installation an event happened which disturbed their peace and solitude and drew upon them the attention of the town. One Wednesday morning there was great consternation when the priests opened up the chapel about 5 a.m. They found that during the night the wall on the far side of the chapel had collapsed near the statue of St. Joseph. The weight of the roof had proved too much for the slender props put in during the renovations. In the darkness they could not immediately estimate the extent of the damage, but they could see a big hole facing the street outside and the roof leaning dangerously over it. The poor Founder immediately feared for the rest of his chapel and wondered where he would find the money for this new expense.(45) When the dawn broke they inspected the damage more closely, and happily, inside the church, except for a thick layer of dust and some broken plaster from the ceiling, little harm had been done. The haste with which the barn had been transformed into the chapel, and the lack of finance were the reasons for this set-back. Where the partitions had been knocked out, the roof was held by pillars, some of which were badly placed, and the walls took a good deal of the weight. Monsieur Voisin had expressed his concern at the time, but lack of money gave him little alternative.(46)

Three years later when announcing to his flock that a new church was to be built, Father Chevalier said: "Do not be astonished, as you know the walls here were not made to support the weight they are carrying at present. Also the right-hand-side wall is badly out of alignment and leans over rather dangerously, under the great weight of the roof. The ominous chinks in the wall are not reassuring." Father Piperon has written that from the beginning there were some iron stanchions put outside in support of the walls, but these were probably put there after the accident, as they are not shown in the original sketches.(47)

As soon as possible after daylight Monsieur Voisin was on the scene with several of his workman, and they got to work on repairing the damage. Father Chevalier put the task of collecting the necessary money in the hands of St. Joseph, their powerful Protector: "Saint Joseph," he said, "the damage is on your side of the chapel and so it is up to you to find the money for the repairs." And St. Joseph did not fail them. No sooner had the word gone around the town than curious groups gathered to see what had happened. Feeling sorry for the struggling missionaries many of the sight-seers made donations and Father Chevalier was happy to state the "expenses have been more than covered."

With the money left over it was decided to erect a bell-tower. But a belfry without a bell is only an empty shell, so a rich citizen, called Monsieur Daussigny, decided to donate a suitable bell. According to the local paper the bell (not "bells" as the journal stated) was blessed with due ceremony on the 11th November, the Feast of the Dedication, by the Abbe Crozat. The chapel was packed for the occasion, and the congregation was very interest in the blessing read from the Roman Ritual, an imposing ceremony, which the faithful rarely see. Father Maugenest preached the occasional sermon, and impressed everyone by his eloquence and sincerity. A further ceremony was held in the evening for the ringing of the bell. The blessing is referred to as the "Baptism of the Bell," and the donor and his daughter-in-law who was the wife of the Mayor of Issoudun were named the two sponsors. In the spirit of the Feast, when gifts are made, they donated two very acceptable presents; Monsieur Daussigny giving a silver monstrance and his daughter-in-law a beautiful white-silk cope. After describing the two ceremonies, the local paper, "Le Droit Commun," next day added a happy touch: "If we may be permitted to introduce a light note to the serious ceremonies, we noticed that as soon as the altar boys appeared outside the church they were showered with lollies and sweets. We can conclude that the little fellows did their part well."(48)

Father Piperon was always enthusiastic about this little blue-slate bell tower which gave a certain tone and quaint charm to the chapel. "The little tower" he wrote "seemed quite proud of itself standing above the roofs of the neighbouring houses. It was the envy of many a poor parish church in the district. It stood out as a little monument in the Place de Vouet overlooking the poor and small houses around about it. These typical little French houses still abound in the lower quarters of the town, and the tourist still finds a few of them - interesting relics of a past age - in the precincts of the Basilica. The townsfolk became quite fond of this quaint little chapel and, as if to excuse them, Father Piperon remarked that "they had no great knowledge of the architecture of religious monuments." Perhaps the charm it held for them was on account of its homely warmth and devotion compared with the parish church of St. Cyr, which had never recovered from the havoc of the Revolution. Peremeé has written this rather devastating description of it: "It is but the mutilated corpse of what was once a healthy and noble body - a perfect example of decayed elegance. What they call the parish church is merely a patched up shell of a hall, ungainly, without any symmetry, not pretending to be anything but what it is. It has no bell-tower, no approaches, has no exterior appearance, is surrounded by shops and houses which hide and bury it to such an extent that from any distance at all it is hard to distinguish it as a church."(49)

The people began attending Mass and the various devotions in the chapel in increasing numbers. The ceremonies were enhanced by the gift of an organ donated by one of Father Maugenest's brothers, who had come to Issoudun to practise as a doctor. "The priests were delighted with this happy progress. They realised there was so much good they could do in their beloved parish, which for so long had been languishing in religious indifference."(50)

During this first year 1855 there were many calls on the two missionary priests for sermons and missions in the neighbouring parishes. In spite of their desire to live a secluded life of prayer and recollection during this year of what they termed their Novitiate they could hardly avoid the public ministry owing to the great shortage of priests. The Cardinal had freed them for missions and could hardly do without their aid for a whole long year. The Abbe de Champgrand, who, of course, owned all the property was anxious to see the two priests out amongst the people. He still regarded the work as his own foundation, and would never have agreed with the idea of a year's Novitiate. He was impatient to see them aggregated to an already existing Institute, and have his money put to use for the good of souls around the Berry district. Even Father Crozat looked on the new Congregation as being founded chiefly for the spiritual good of the town of Issoudun. The main idea of the diocesan-priests was to use these two active missionaries for the local apostolate and that as soon as possible. If the two priests had any illusions on this matter they were to be dispelled at the end of 1855.

Issoudun had two hospitals: the main General Hospitals and the Hospice for the Incurables. The founders of these two hospitals had stipulated that certain number of Masses be offered each year and in perpetuity for themselves and their relatives after their deaths. The Revolution had taken over all church institutions, and naturally the Masses were not said. Even after the Restoration when the hospitals were handed back to ecclesiastical administration, no one assumed the obligation of offering the Masses. In 1855 the administrators appealed to Rome through the Cardinal to know what their obligations were. On account of the now meagre financial resources of the Administration of the two Institutes, the Holy See replied that a daily Mass throughout the year would suffice, and for that purpose the authorities put aside a sum of 1200

francs to cover each year. The condition was that the priest who would say the Masses would become the chaplain, and look after both hospitals. The proposition made on the 12th August, 1855 met with the approval of both the civic and ecclesiastical authorities.

In December of that year, 1855 another young priest wished to join the newly formed Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Father Antoine Morel. He had been a class-mate of the founders at Bourges and a member of the Association of the Sacred Heart there. Father Piberon tells us, "He was a talented and virtuous priest and high hopes were held of him."⁽⁵²⁾ Born on 2nd June, 1828 at Charenton in the Cher district, he had been ordained on 8th October, 1852, one year after Father Chevalier, and had been appointed the parish of Levroux as curate. On the 1st of June of the following year he was appointed to the church of Saint Bonit in Bourges itself. When he applied to the Cardinal for permission to join the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Issoudun, His Eminence saw here the solution of providing a chaplain for the hospitals. He granted him permission to join the Congregation on the condition that he would do the chaplaincy work. The founders were not enthusiastic about the arrangement but had no option other than comply with the Cardinal's wishes. Accordingly Father Morel's name was submitted to the hospital administration in December, 1855, and he took up duties on 2nd January, 1856.⁽⁵²⁾ A little time later he was to impress all who heard him when he preached on the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, on 20th January.

Early in 1856 the Abbe Crozat came forward with a proposition, which was received with mixed feelings by the Founders. He suggested that since the town of Issoudun was big enough for at least two parishes, the area around the Sacred Heart chapel should be erected into a new parish under the care of the Missionaries. He realised there would be difficulties, not the least of which was the fact that the chapel and the property still belonged to the Abbe Champgrand. In a letter to Father Gasnier dated 3rd April, 1856, the Abbe Champgrand had written: "I note with pleasure that Abbe Crozat and his Council have realised the necessity of creating a second parish in Issoudun, and I sincerely hope the municipal authorities will share this conviction. If the Mayor obtains a favourable vote and His Eminence authorises the plan, I am sure that after a short time a church can be built and an adequate staff provided. Now that the Government is no longer embarrassed with heavy war debts, it is more willing to grant permission for new parishes. I am perfectly in accord with the Abbe Crozat, but I do not agree with the idea of handing the parish over to these new Missionaries. I will oppose that with all my power, as I would consider it the ruination of our work. We have always had the intention of establishing at Issoudun a group of auxiliary priests who would work for the Province of Indre and even for the whole diocese. We realised that to fulfill this purpose there were needed men vowed to the religious life, interior, learned men who after periods of the apostolic life always more or less dissipating, would restrengthen their virtue in solitude and the exercises of a common life. Now it is proposed to implicate these men in the active life of parochial ministry; to spend their time, so necessary for study, in the administration of baptisms, marriages, burials, etc.: to expose them to contact with the world at the risk of losing the spirit of their vocation. These are the reasons why I oppose the idea. The venerable Cure of Issoudun is a worthy priest, but I suspect he is allowing himself to be influenced in this matter by his natural affection for his parish. He is looking on it from the local aspect only. For myself I can take a more disinterested outlook, and consider the wider end of the foundation we have in mind. I believe we would be killing the work in its infancy if we accepted Abbe Crozat's project of handing the parish over to the care of the Missionaries. That is why I am vigorously opposing it. I received a letter some time ago from the young missionaries. I was pleased with the spirit it showed, and I think they have begun well, but one must look to the future when a new institution is established. I have maintained right from the beginning that this religious house should be entrusted to the care of some established Order. I have been forced to give in exteriorly in order not to crush their project entirely, but I still adhere to my convictions, and what has already taken place does not change them. The more they wish to give the Missionaries secular work, the more I wish to see them 'regularised.' "

On 20th April he further wrote: "We have fundamentally the same ideas

(1) The necessity of a group of priests to evangelise the people of the Berry countryside who are so backward in their religious knowledge and practice.

(2) The necessity of the division of Issoudun into two parishes, which to me has been a matter of urgency for a long time. The only point where we seem to disagree is on the nature of the union of these two projects. I believe they should be kept separate, and that the new parish should be staffed independently of the Missionaries. I do not agree with the idea of transforming their chapel into a parish church, or giving them parochial duties to perform. As regards the necessity of keeping the two works separate, I do not think it is even debatable. It is quite possible to have a second parish in Issoudun staffed with secular clergy, while leaving the Missionaries their independence, both as regards their chapel and as regards themselves. If the Cardinal wishes it, I believe this is the best solution. We have only to consider what has taken place here. Monseigneur Donnet has built new churches and several chapels of ease, and during the last year he created a new parish at Bordeaux staffed by a parish priest and two curates. This church - St. Ferdinand's - will be the fourteenth church in the parish. The needs of Issoudun seem even more obvious. The Government itself must see that. Besides, the numbers who are daily going to the chapel of the Missionaries, and the good they are doing among the people make it clear that a new parish is needed. Sooner or later, and I hope it will be very soon, the municipal Council will surely agree with the Mayor and cast a favourable vote on the generous and unselfish plans of Father Crozat. By this means, the two works will operate side by side without friction or confusion, each functioning freely in its own sphere

"These, then, my honoured Father Superior are my humble ideas on the matter. I have given you my views on the "regularisation" of the Missionaries. I still hope to see the Congregation succeed, but I think it will do so only in association with an established Order. Our work for the people of Berry should be kept separate to the work for Issoudun." Yours etc.

According to the Concordat of 1801 the erection of parishes and the nomination of parish priests had to be approved by the Government, who agreed to share the expenses. As we have seen the Abbe' Champgrand was keen to get approval and financial help from the Government for the new parish, but the local Municipal Council was not inclined to agree with the Mayor and the parish priest on the matter. They considered that the Missionaries with their chapel could meet the requirements. However, Abbe Champgrand who owned both chapel and property strenuously opposed this.

In the meantime the small community suffered another set back. It became more and more evident that the health and strength of the first recruit Father Morel - was not able to stand up to the life of the Congregation. "His health," according to Father Piberon, "did not match his other qualities, and he was not able to accommodate himself to the difficulties of the beginning. After several months of generous efforts, he decided that he could not stand up to the rigours of poverty and the hardships of the Rule."⁽⁵⁴⁾ This meant now that the hospitals would be without a chaplain.

Happily, another recruit was to take his place - the Abbe Charles Piberon, who was to play such an important and invaluable part in the early foundations. Father Piberon had been chaplain to the Hospice for Incurables and also to the Prison at Bourges, and as we saw in his Seminary days, he always had leanings towards the religious life. He had confided to Father Chevalier when they were both students that he wished "to live and die as a religious." Although the work he had been doing up till now was favourable to his spiritual progress he felt he was "being drawn by the eddy circling above the gulf." What would happen to him with his "deplorable nature" when he was given other types of ministry with greater freedom? "I am heading for shipwreck; I am lost," he argued. In religious life doing always with Jesus the Will of the Heavenly Father and not his own, nothing could hinder him sanctifying himself as the silent monks at Sept-Fons were doing.⁽⁵⁵⁾ He made a retreat with the Trappists at Sept-Fons and decided on 12th August 1855 that he would join his two former confreres and seek admission to the Congregation.

On 4th May, 1856, Cardinal du Pont visited Issoudun to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. After dinner His Eminence paid a visit to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He was taken first to the Chapel where a large congregation had assembled to hear him speak. He delivered a short but touching sermon. He spoke with emotion about the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the work they were doing, and would do in the future for Issoudun and the diocese. He then blessed the priests and the people. A visit was then made to the house which, he

remarked, "was poor but suitable."(56) The "Droit Common" reported: "His Eminence was very satisfied with the healthy out-lay of the buildings, and impressed by the simple yet elegant decoration of the chapel which was in good taste.(57) Before departing the Cardinal spoke words of encouragement to the priests, and showed them signs of deep affection."

The exchange of Father Morel for Father Piperon was approved by the authorities, Father Morel going as parish priest to Saint Denis-de-Paulin, and Father Piperon taking up duties as chaplain to the hospitals. The local paper records his appointment in its issue of 7th June, 1856.(58) Here is Father Piperon's humble appraisal of himself at the time he joined the Society:

"On Trinity Sunday 1856, after Father Morel had departed, another young priest came to take his place. The newcomer did not possess the same qualities as his predecessor, but he at least enjoyed good health and had plenty of good will which did not balk at difficulties. In His Infinite Mercy the Heart of Jesus had deigned to choose this postulant in spite of his obvious and miserable shortcomings, to use him as it were, as a rough un-hewn stone in the foundations of the new building which He wished to consecrate to His Glory. May He be forever blessed for it!"(59)

It would seem now that on account of the opposition of the Abbe to the Missionaries doing parochial work, and the lack of enthusiasm of the Municipal Council, the parish was destined not to be divided. It has remained the one parish even to the present day. The Abbe Crozat was naturally disappointed and he feared that the new foundation in which he had collaborate would drift further and further away from any parochial interests. He wished the people of Issoudun to realise that, although not officially committed to the local apostolate, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were very much a part of the parish. To emphasise this idea he decided to have a joint procession, on a large scale, in honour of the Feast of the Assumption. The

parishioners of St. Cyr and those who attended the Sacred Heart Chapel would join in a huge demonstration of Faith in honour of Our Blessed Lady. The ceremony was described by the "Droit Cotnmun" thus: "This year the Feast of the Assumption marked for Issoudun the occasion of a remarkable demonstration of religious faith. Scenes of extraordinary enthusiasm were witnessed and those who participated will long have happy memories of the splendid solemnities. It cemented, if one can use the word, the alliance between the old church of St. Cyr and the new Chapel of the Sacred Heart. This imposing ceremony in honour of the double Feast (it was also the feast of Saint Napoleon, the patron saint of Napoleon III) has surpassed in splendour and majesty anything seen to date in this district. The church and civil authorities cooperated in the procession's smooth and dignified progress through the streets of the city. Leaving the Church of St. Cyr at five o'clock in the evening, the procession of the Blessed Sacrament was led by a band of soldiers from the Garrison. It proceeded down the La Grand Rue to the Stone Cross, where on a near-by rockery, an altar had been erected, beautifully but simply decorated. After the first Benediction the Blessed Sacrament was then carried along the Champ Elysees and La rue des Trois Places to the Place de Vouet where a large crowd had gathered. Outside the residence of the Missionaries a striking Altar of Repose had been erected in a spacious amphitheatre, on either side of the Altar standing two Adoring Angels. Father Piperon, the chaplain to the hospital, gave the Benediction to the vast crowd kneeling in the Square. The procession then moved on down the Rue de Vouet, to the Croix Rouge, where again Benediction was given: then along La Rue de Rome to the Place du Marche where from a large Altar built in a conical shell the final Benediction was given. The procession re-entered the church of St. Cyr at 8 o'clock."(60)

Father Depigny pays tribute to Father Piperon by remarking: "He gave on this memorable occasion the first proof of his ability as an organiser of processions, and his cleverness and taste in erecting altars." On other occasions the Droit Commun has made references to the participation of the Missionaries in parochial ceremonies, and mentions particularly that they had a large share in preparing the children for their first Holy Communion in 1857(61) However, in spite of Father Crozat's wishes, the Missionaries confined themselves to giving missions, and participated in parochial activities only when necessary. No mention is found in the Rules of either 1855 or 1857 of parochial ministry. It was at a later date as we shall see, that this type of work was introduced into the works of the Society.

The book of Rules at this early stage mentions only the following works "which the Society may undertake."

(1) Retreats. Any priest or lay person may be admitted to make a retreat eight or fifteen days - or more or less if requested. One of the Missionaries will conduct the retreat, if so required. If they wish they may take their meals in private. The fee for the retreat is left to their own generosity.
(2) Conferences of the Sacred Heart, (a) The Missionaries will conduct Conferences of the Sacred Heart for the youth and for men similar to those of Saint Francis Xavier, etc. (b) Conferences for soldiers (c) Conferences for Apprentices. The Rule of 1855 also adds (d) Conferences for Women (e) for Workmen (f) for Domestic, but these last three are not mentioned in the Rule of 1857 and are included under the general term, "etc."

The Rules state: A special procedure will be drawn up for each of these Conferences.

(3) Education of Youth.

(4) Affiliation or the Third Order for priests. This was worded in 1857: "Affiliation for priests only." (We will return to this subject later on.)

But it would be a mistake to think that because as mention is made here of giving missions they were undertaken only under pressure from M. de Champgrand. They were covered by the privilege of a special clause added to the Rule, and in fact the conducting of home missions was considered as an essential activity of the Society. The second part of the Manuscript of 1855 has as its title; "Relations of the Missionaries with the people during Missions." Then under separate headings the following aspects are dealt with:

(1) Means of succeeding in the Missions;

(2) Relationship with the Parish priests;

(3) Exercises of the Mission;

(4) The Morning Instruction;

(5) The sermons;

(6) The Confessions;

(7) Stipends;

(8) Requests for Missions -all of which occupies some nine pages of the Manuscript.

There are another 68 pages on the "Rule of the Priests of the Sacred Heart during Missions." Of the 123 pages of the Manuscript 77 are on the home Missions, 27 of which are extracts from Father Augry, S.J. - "Notes on the Missions, especially those in the country." In a letter of introduction to his work, dated at Laval, 15th December, 1839, Father Augry stated that he wrote the 'Notes' at the request of his confreres mainly from his own wide experience.(62)

After a time the Missionaries gained a reputation for their preaching and were highly thought of by the parish-priests for their zeal and virtue. Father Piperon has summarised their individual styles thus:

"Father Maugenest was outstanding as a Christian orator. His tall slim bearing, his modest yet assured manner, his obvious humility and sincerity won him the confidence of his listeners; his powerful voice, his facile and elegant diction, his lively, imaginative style, his clear and solid exposition made him a preacher well above the ordinary. Added to those qualities were an ardent zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, a keen faith which relied wholly on grace for the success of his work, and a trusting spirit of prayer. In short he possessed the masterly qualities of an apostle, and he dearly loved his vocation.

If Father Chevalier lacked the oratorical brilliance of his younger confrere, he was, none the less, a forceful and effective Missioner. What was lacking in literary flourish was amply compensated for by his evangelical simplicity and power to grip his audience, which became one with himself. He was gifted with a strong clear voice which was pleasant to listen to, and had a commanding appearance. In the ardour of his zeal he could paint in vivid colours the terrible effects of divine justice, the hideousness and black ingratitude of sin, the beauty of grace and virtue, and above all the infinite Mercy of the Heart of Christ and the sublime excellence of the Mother of God. Several times I heard him preach, and he was

indeed eloquent. Fifty years have passed since then, and the memory is still vivid in mind. He had a profound respect for the word of the Gospel. He exhorted all his subjects to treat it worthily and prepare it with care. He certainly gave us the example himself. So as never to be unprepared he had formed the habit even from Seminary days of preparing sermons on various subjects which could be used in the ministry. Any spare moments he had you would find him at his desk continuing his sermon writing, working out new plans, expressing old and new ideas in new form and language. Even the sermons which happily have been left to us fill five big volumes, where thousands of ideas are expressed. We do not say they are all perfect works, ready for printing - many of them are in the form of notes and plans - but they are a testimony to the enormous amount of work that he put into sermon-writing. I have consulted them often, and have found them precious documents from which I have borrowed many an idea.(63)

The most important activity in the ministry of the Missionaries was naturally that which took place in their chapel. The people grew used to the regular exercises of piety - the Holy Mass, the Confessions - the Devotions, and they continued to come along in ever-growing numbers. "The Divine Heart of Jesus blessed our efforts," they wrote, and it was a real reawakening of the Faith in Issoudun."(64)

The great sorrow of Father Chevalier was not to see men in his chapel.(65) His main concern was how to attack this religious indifference of the men. His fervent and apostolic soul longed to bring these men back to God and their faith. Was not this the advice that the dying parish-priest at Aubigny had given him - to go out amongst the people and win them for Christ? He often spoke of his desire with his confreres and discussed plans with them. To regain the men for the Church it was necessary to organise them, to group them, to give them special instruction according to their needs. With this in mind he decided to put on a special Mass on Sundays for the men of the parish, to be followed by special talks. Several parishes already had special lectures

for men, for example, the Conferences to Men at Notre Dame in Paris, the various branches of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the "7 o'clock Mass at Marseilles when the sermon was always addressed to the men.(66) He would reserve a Mass on Sundays for the men of the parish and try to make personal, individual contact with them. And so, in the Autumn of 1856, the three priests went out amongst those who lived in the vicinity of the Chapel asking the men individually if they would come to this special Mass. About thirty attended on the first Sunday, which the priests considered quite good, considering the irreligious state of the town. "They were mainly workmen and orchardists," says Father Piperon, "who followed the ceremonies with devotion and recollection. After Mass, Father Chevalier spoke a few words of gratitude and encouragement, and the priests met the men before they left for home."(67)

The thirty good men had to run the gauntlet of scorn and derision as they left the church-grounds. Such an unusual sight as thirty strong men coming away from "church" excited the curiosity of the near-by populace. On practically every doorstep, little groups of men and women gathered and poked fun at the "Mass-goers." Their sneering looks and remarks were aimed at discouraging the men but they had the opposite effect. They only strengthened their resolution and devotion. "That day," remarks Father Piperon, "human respect was conquered and the work amongst the men solidly begun. If today (he wrote this in 1912) there is a healthy nucleus of practical men in our parish, in spite of the sad times and the many obstacles, it is due to the zeal and perseverance of Father Chevalier and his fellow-priests." (68)

Gradually the numbers increased. By the following Easter over two hundred men were attending the evening lectures, and on Easter morn over fifty men of this new group knelt at the Altar Rails to receive the Bread of life. It was the first public Holy Communion of men witnessed in Issoudun since the beginning of the century.(69)

Mlle. Marchant has made reference to this apostolate to the Men. "Every Sunday," she writes, "there was a Mass at 9 o'clock and in the evening a special Benediction at 8 o'clock specially for the men. When my father would return home after the Devotions my mother and I would immediately ask: 'Were there many men there?' 'Yes, there must have been about 300' 'would come the answer." Everyone was delighted with the success of the venture. Soon the 9 o'clock Mass was packed to the doors, and the priests led the men in the singing of hymns. Father Maugenes's brother played the organ, and Father Maugenes himself sang the antiphons, and the choir took up the verses. One I remember very well, which expressed the following sentiments:

"Deliver us from bondage -
Give us back the Faith of our Fathers
Preserve it in us forever
So we all will see Thy Face in Heaven."

The year's Novitiate was drawing to a close, and Fathers Chevalier and Maugenes decided to reconsecrate their lives to the service of the Sacred Heart. "Towards the end of Advent," wrote Father Piperon, "Fathers Chevalier and Maugenes decided to finish their year's Novitiate on Christmas Day by taking the three private vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience - and a fourth of Stability in their Vocation. Since they were not yet canonically authorised to take public vows, they resolved to make the ceremony a private yet solemn occasion.

(The reference of the Abbe de Champgrand as far back as March of that year to "these men who are bound by vows" obviously meant "who hope to be bound by vows.")

Describing the important event, Father Founder has written: "In order to gain greater merit, and to give more stability to our work, we decided to bind ourselves by the Vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Stability. We chose, in order to give ourselves without reserve to the Heart of Jesus, the day when He gave Himself to us. We made a retreat in preparation for this important occasion." At midnight on the Feast, after they had celebrated the Sacred Mysteries, the community of three priests, with the doors of the Chapel closed, knelt before Our Divine Redeemer in the Crib. In the deep recollection of night, Fathers Chevalier and Maugenes prostrated before the Infant Jesus to make their consecration. (Father Piperon who had not completed his twelve months Novitiate, was to make his vows later). In the presence of Mary, His Mother, and St. Joseph, His foster-father, they took the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience and the vow of Stability in their holy vocation.

Father Piperon completes the story: "The only witness on earth of that generous oblation on that solemn night was their young confrere who had been sharing their labours for the past six months. But the Angels of God, the Angels of the Nativity were there presenting to God these two victims who were offering to Him their entire lives to make Him loved." Father Chevalier always recalled that sacred night with deep emotion: "Oh night a million times blessed! Oh Night of unutterable delight! Your memory will never be effaced from my heart. Oh Heart of Jesus, so good and so merciful. We felt that our sacrifice was pleasing to You and that You were pouring into the hearts of Your two young apostles unspeakable graces."(72)

Until now Father Chevalier by reason of his seniority and his position as Founder of the Congregation had been regarded as the Superior of the small community, but it had been more or less in an informal way. The occasion was probably taken of this Christmas day when they made their vows to regularise the position and Father Chevalier was officially declared the Superior with Father Maugenes as Assistant. He himself had suggested that they ask Father Crozat, whom they regarded as their "father and protector" to be their Superior, but he refused making his old age an excuse.(73)

For a long time now the Chapel had been too small to accommodate the ever increasing numbers who were attending Mass. Mlle. Marchant, recalling the situation tells us "This did not apply only to special occasions. If the Mass for men was overcrowded, you can imagine the position for the other Masses on Sundays." Father Piperon says: "I can remember on more than one occasion the old chapel being filled with tightly packed rows of men."(74) Two years later when Father Chevalier was making his appeal for a new church he took as his text: "Adhuc dicent filii sterilitatis tuae; Angustus est mihi locus, fac spatium mihi ut habitem." (Sons born to thee in the days of thy barrenness shall cry out:

'Here all is confined. Give me room to live.' (Is. 49:20) He compared the former Issoudun with Jerusalem, which "had seen its temple deserted" and its religious ceremonies ignored, but those days of sadness were over. "It is now imperative," he pointed out, "to build a bigger and more fitting church to cope with this happy religious revival. Some people think we are rich, but, I am afraid, poverty and want are our lot and we need your help. Sunday after Sunday," the preacher continued, "we see many of the faithful not able to gain entrance to the church - exposed to the wind, the cold, the rain, the snow, and in Summer the severe heat. Those inside the church could hardly be called comfortable on account of the distracting overcrowding, and the low roof is hardly conducive to good ventilation. The chapel is in a sad state of old age and disrepair, and is on the point of falling down."

We suspect this last remark was a pardonable piece of rhetorical exaggeration, as when a few weeks later the Cardinal, acting on an unfavourable report, ordered the Chapel to be closed, Father Chevalier put up a spirited defence of its safety. He informed his Eminence that "we have secured the walls as best we can, and the architect at Issoudun has assured us that the building is good for at least another ten years."(75) A certificate to this effect was officially submitted to the Cardinal in November, 1858. In fact the main reason for the necessity of a new church was not the dangerous state of the old one but the fact that it was far too small. Some of the chronicles have unnecessarily exaggerated the delapidated state of the old chapel.

From the first months of 1857 serious thought had been given to plans a future church - one which would not only serve the needs of the present till but those of the future also. It is not surprising to read in Father Piperon notes that it was the main topic of conversation at recreations - even before the Cardinal precipitously closed the old chapel. "First amongst our cherished ambitions," he wrote, "was that of a new church. The present chapel was too poor and too small. It would have been useless trying to renovate it, as the unsteady walls would not support any weight. Often during the good season when we had recreation out-of-doors Father Chevalier would sit in the shade of the linden-trees near the wall and trace plans and schemes in the sand. His idea was to build not just an ordinary church but a Basilica and he gave his imagination free rein, as he sketched, rubbed-out and resketched in the obliging sand. He would say to us half seriously, half jokingly: In a few years that will be our beautiful new church. The people will come from far and wide to visit it."(79) Teasingly I would say to him: "When I see it, I will call it a miracle and you a prophet."

"All right, you will see," he would reply. And the dream was to come true. The Basilica - the monument to our beloved Father Founder is there for all to see.(76)

Father Maugenest also recalls those recreations under the linden-trees when the conversation was on another plan very dear to the heart of the Founder - the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. "In those days," he writes, "when I belonged to the small community, Father Chevalier would sit in his favourite place under the linden-trees and tell us of his desire of presenting Our Blessed Lady to the Catholic World under the title of "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." I still remember the prophetic confidence with which he would speak about the spreading of this devotion in the near future, and of the numerous pilgrims, seeking the protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Hope of the Hopeless, who would come to Issoudun, as to Lourdes and Paray-le-Monial. He revealed these thoughts to us in the first years of the Foundation at the same time that he was still drawing up the Constitutions.

Although as we have seen, Father Chevalier had the inspiration of giving to Our Lady the title "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" on the day of installation 9th September, 1855, he did not speak of it publicly or even to his confreres for some time till he was sure it was theologically acceptable and not in conflict with Catholic teaching. Just when he began to speak of the title publicly is difficult to say, but this last statement of Father Maugenest indicates that it was definitely before December, 1857 as Father Maugenest left for Bourges in that month. Father Piperon wrote in 1865: "It was in 1857 that the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, was named "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." Elsewhere he stated it was "either at the end of May or beginning of June" that the Founder began talking openly of his plans in respect to the Devotion.(78 and 79)

The unexpected closing of the chapel by the Cardinal had at least the good effect of hastening the plans for the new church and making everybody realise its necessity. "It produced good results" wrote Father Piperon. "Until now the plans had been mainly those in the sand, but the time had arrived for action." Now that definite steps were being taken for the construction of the church, Father Chevalier felt obliged to confide in his confreres concerning his plans for spreading devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He had in mind particularly the Consecration of a special altar in the new church in Her honour. A year and a half had passed since the day of the installation when the name had first occurred to him, and, although he had not spoken of it, it was always in his mind. Before manifesting "his secret", he wished to study all the theological aspects, "as the title in harmony with the teachings of the Church? Could he find any justification for it in the writings of the Doctors of the Church? That was his main concern.(80) Convinced of the validity of the title - so illuminating and profound did these simple words "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" appear to him - he kept meditating on it with love and gratitude always seeking the principles on which rested the Power of the Mother of God: over the Heart of Her Divine Son. If we are able, he argued, to call Mary "Our Lady", because she is our sovereign Queen, would not Jesus Himself admit her sovereignty over His Heart Her incomparable and "sublime dignity as Mother gave Her rights and power over the Heart of Her Son. Assuredly these rights and this power, in the absolute sense belonged to God, the Creator alone, and the humble Virgin, even though His Mother was subject to Him. She could never be His equal, as She was servant and creature, and as such had no rights over Him. But, as His Mother did She not have power over Him by privilege and condescension. A son, and particularly a Son who is all-powerful, can confer powers and rights on a Mother He loves so well. If the teachings of the Saints and the Fathers is true that no grace comes to man except through the maternal hands of Mary, then the treasures of His Sacred Heart are no exception. What power She has when She pleads with the Heart of Her Son for mercy on us Her children also. Surely we can go to Her knowing our prayers will be heard.

These reflections and many others convinced Father Chevalier that it was by spreading devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that he would fulfil his promise of honouring the Mother of God "in a special way". He was convinced moreover, that this was in accordance with the Will of Divine Providence. It remained then to formulate this doctrine in appropriate terms to teach the faithful the part that Mary plays in the manifestations of the Sacred Heart of Her Son and the ineffable power which She has over It. To Father Chevalier, the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was the putting into practice of the motto "Ad Jesum per Mariam"(81)

All the Feasts of Our Lady were celebrated with special ceremony and devotion. Mass was said on these days at Her altar, and the people were encouraged to attend and receive Holy Communion. They were being taught that the best and most profitable way of celebrating a Feast Day was to receive Our Divine Lord. Devotions were held in the evening, when a sermon would be preached followed by Benediction.

These practices however, were not considered by Father Chevalier as the fulfillment of his promise to the Mother of God. The new title under which the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart would henceforth render homage to the Virgin, blessed over all, would be Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.(82)

The time had come when he was to confide his innermost thoughts and desires to his confreres concerning "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" and the part She was to play in the future history of the Congregation.(83) Father Piperon has told the story in his "Le Pouvoir du N.D. du Sacre Coeur." One warm afternoon "about the end of May or the beginning of June" the community went out into the garden as usual to take their recreation. They sat down in the shade of the four big linden-trees whose green leaves formed a natural vault over their heads. Close by standing on the wall at the end of the courtyard was a small statue of Our Blessed Lady. Besides the three members of the Community, i.e. the two Founders and the novice, Father Piperon, there were some visiting priests there from St. Cyr's or the neighbouring parishes, which would suggest it was a Feast Day. It could have been the Ascension, 21st May, Pentecost Sunday, 31st May, or the Feast of Corpus Christi, the 11th June as they fell in that year. The conversation was bright and lively, the main topic being the new church. Suddenly Father Chevalier, who had seemed to be lost in

his own thoughts for a few moments, asked: "Under what title will we place the altar of the Blessed Virgin in our new church?" Several proposals were made according to the particular devotion of the various priests. One suggested "The Immaculate Heart of Mary;" another "Our Lady of Victories;" another "Our Lady of the Rosary" and so on.

"No," replied Father Chevalier seriously, "we are going to have "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

This blessed title was then pronounced for the first time and naturally it caused a deal of surprise.

"Excellent" remarked Father Piperon. "That will signify Our Lady invoked in the church of the Sacred Heart."

"Not that, my dear friend," replied Father Founder. "This title, 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart' encloses a profound significance. It reveals to us the maternal power that Mary has over the Heart of Her Divine Son, and tells us that we must go to Him through Her."

"But that is a novelty," came the objection.

"Not as much as you think. Let me explain my ideas to you, and you can judge if they are reasonable or not.."

He then spoke of his plans and desires with obvious feeling. He recalled how Mary had been responsible for all the graces received by the young Congregation, how She had guided it step by step, and surmounted every obstacle. "We owe all to Her," he said. "We have promised to honour Her in a special way and this title "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" is our answer. It will be a perpetual thanksgiving to the Mother of God for all Her favours, and will be the fulfillment of our vow to Her.

"But is it theological?" asked Father Piperon.

"Assuredly""replied Father Chevalier. "First of all, in using this title we are thanking and glorifying Almighty God Himself for having chosen Mary, before all creatures, to conceive in Her virginal womb and from Her own very substance, the Adorable Heart of Jesus. Then, we are honouring in a special way the sentiments of love, of humble submission, of filial respect which Jesus nurtured in His Heart for His Holy Mother. We are recognising by this special title the ineffable power which Our Loving Saviour gave to His Mother over His own Heart. We are beseeching this compassionate Mother to lead us Herself to the Heart of Her Son, to reveal to us the mysteries of Love and Mercy which It contains, to open to us the treasures of Grace of which It is the Source, and to distribute them personally to all those who call upon Her and invoke Her powerful intercession. All that is contained in this loving and gracious invocation: "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us."

Father Piperon, with a fresh insistence sought to weaken the argument, "That's all very well, but it is still something new. Don't you think you may be going too far? It seems to me to smack a little of heresy."

A strong word, certainly, let fall in the heat of the discussion, but in view of the circumstances not to be taken too seriously.

"It will not be difficult," replied Father Chevalier confidently, "to justify what I have just said by the teachings of the Fathers and the theologians their writings on the greatness and power of Mary. What is more, I am sure the Mother of God Herself, wishes to be invoked and honoured under this title in our future sanctuary. We will dedicate this Altar to Her under the title 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.' By Her and with Her we will glorify the Heart of Jesus, Whose love and mercy we have vowed to preach. It will be a means of fulfilling our motto 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved', will go to Jesus through Mary 'Ad Jesum per Mariam'."

And so the first members of the Congregation and their priest-friends heard from the lips of the Founder the first exposition of the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. As the recreation came to an end the priests discussed what they had heard with a lively interest. By way of a parting joke Father Chevalier turned to Father Piperon and said; "And you, who put up all the objections and were so hard to convince, you can write, by way a penance, in big and beautiful letters around the base of Our Lady's statue: 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us'." The young priest did so with joy. It was the first external act of homage rendered to the Mother of God under Her new title.(85)

The rest of the year 1857 passed without further incident. The members of the small Congregation went about their tranquil community life and apostolic duties until the month of December, when Father Maugenest, whose renown as an orator had spread abroad, was invited by the parish priest of "Saint Pierre" in Bourges to preach the Advent sermons in his church.

'It was an honour for the preacher and the young Community, but, unfortunately, it was the beginning of a profound crisis for Father Chevalier.'

CHAPTER IX DOUBTS AND DIFFICULTIES

While Father Maugenest was preaching the Advent sermons in Saint Pierre, Bourges, the Cardinal happened to be looking for a new administrator for the Cathedral. He had nominated Father Gaby, and had obtained the necessary ratification from the Government, but Father Gaby, a shy and reserved priest, had adamantly refused to accept the position. Father Maugenest, whose excellence as a preacher was the topic of the moment, came to his mind as an admirable choice. He sent for him and informed him of his intention of appointing him as Archpriest of the Cathedral. Father Maugenest was dumbfounded. He begged His Eminence to reconsider his decision in view of the newly-established work at Issoudun. In spite of his protestations, his pleading and even his tears, the Cardinal, already embarrassed by Father Gaby's refusal, demanded his obedience. "I am your Archbishop," he said, "and, as such, your religious Superior. I want you to go to Paris, make a retreat at the Seminary, and come back ready to do my will." To make matters worse, the Cardinal forbade him to mention the appointment to anyone - not even to Father Chevalier, until he returned from the retreat. His letter, written from Saint Sulpice to Father Chevalier was in the circumstances "rather obscure", but the latter, who had already heard of the "Gaby incident" rightly judged what had taken place.(1)

The news shocked and saddened Father Chevalier. After supper he took Father Piperon into his room and broke down completely.

"Whatever is the matter?" asked his confrere.

"Our little community is about to be broken up. We are about to be separated

"Separated, Why?"

"His Eminence has just nominated Father Maugenest Administrator of the Cathedral. It looks certain that he does not wish us to continue with our missionary work. We ourselves will probably be appointed to parish work again."

"Nothing of the sort. If the Cardinal wishes to disband our small Congregation, we will go elsewhere. I can assure you that even if you do not wish to try elsewhere, I myself have no intention of going back to a parish. I will seek admission to some other Order or Congregation. I will go to the ends of the earth before accepting work in a parish. However, we will find out first exactly what the Cardinal has in mind before making any decisions.

For the rest of the evening the two priests discussed ways and means by which they could carry on their work and save their young Society. Writing of this sad night in his Life of Father Chevalier, Father Piperon humbly remarks: "We can easily understand the grief and mental anguish of the dear Founder. Of his two confreres he was losing the one who was so highly endowed intellectually, and from whom he was hoping so much. He was left now with only one companion who had so very little to offer. The future looked black indeed."(2)

In his humble contempt of himself, Father Piperon has not brought out the magnitude of the problem which faced Father Chevalier. He has regarded the matter only from the subjective view point of his own person. Father Chevalier saw something very different in the appointment of Father Maugenest, as we shall see.

It was decided that the best thing to do was for Father Chevalier to take the coach next day for Bourges and seek an interview with the Cardinal, begging him to change his mind and leave Father Maugenest with the young Society. The visit brought no result in spite of Father Founder's heartfelt pleadings. "His Eminence" he wrote, "let me talk and I pointed out that without Father Maugenest the very existence of the Society was threatened. To this the Cardinal replied with the reasoning of Gamaliel: 'Either your work is from God, and I believe after all the graces you have received that it is, or it is the work of man. If it is from God then the transfer of Father Maugenest will ultimately not affect it. If it

is just the work of man then his presence won't save it.' I made my act of submission" he continues, "retraced my steps to Issoudun, broken-hearted. Dear Father Piberon was anxiously awaiting me. He also was deeply grieved when I told him the outcome of the interview. After discussing our plans, we decided that the best thing we could do in order to gain our right perspective and some spiritual consolation was to make a retreat with the Trappist Fathers at Fongembault."(3)

Father Maugenest took up his duties as Canon and Archpriest of the Cathedral on the 11th January, 1858. The Issoudun newspaper "Le Droit Commun" paid him a warm tribute:

"While the town of Issoudun keenly regrets the loss of this worthy and virtuous Missionary of the Sacred Heart, who has just had the honour of being appointed as Administrator to the Cathedral, the diocese as a whole will rejoice at the Cardinal's wise choice. Father Maugenest possesses all the qualities necessary for such a high and important office. In renouncing the kind of life to which he had vowed himself when founding, in collaboration with a virtuous colleague the modest Community of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun he is acting only in a spirit of self-sacrifice and obedience. In the voice of his Superiors he has heard the Voice of God, The people of Issoudun are deeply grateful to the good priest for the many acts of charity and devotion he has shown over a difficult and trying period. If his voice is no longer to be heard in our pulpit here at Issoudun, his virtues and his good deeds will remain in our memories and hearts for a long time. Every class of society in our town will mention his name with gratitude and affection."(4)

However, if the loss of Father Maugenest was to be felt in Issoudun it was grievously more so in the small community of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. There were left now only two members, and Father Chevalier and Father Piberon had been relying so much on the talents of their gifted companion to help them in these difficult early days of the Society.

The two priests returned from their retreat determined to carry on, as they were convinced their work was in accordance with the Will of God. Kneeling together before the Tabernacle they renewed their resolutions of continuing their work for the Sacred Heart and enduring any trials and sorrows in the course of establishing the Society. Father Piberon wrote very humbly: "What a change had come about in our community. The tree, as yet so young and tender, had only three branches. Two were vigorous and healthy, promising abundant fruit, the third was weak and frail, not giving much promise. And then a cruel, unforeseen storm raged and tore away the limb which promised most fruit."(5)

The newspaper "L'Echo des Marches" announced in its number dated 27th January, 1858 that the Rev. Father Pierre-Maria Mallet was joining the Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. (Father Piberon dates his entry as about the time of Trinity Sunday). Unfortunately Father Mallet showed little sign of entering into the spirit of religious life, and his entry proved more of an embarrassment than an acquisition.

The Abbe Mallet was born on the 17th January, 1831 at Montigny in the Cher district, and after his ordination on the 16th May, 1856 had been appointed as curate at Issoudun. Small of stature, he was energetic, eloquent and well-meaning enough, but his conduct at times, to say the least was singular and original. Even his habit of smoking, which in these days was something unusual, became a matter of comment. It is not surprising that he did not stay very long in the Congregation. On the 15th October he was appointed to the parish of Luant, and some time later joined the Trappists, but again he did not persevere and rejoined the diocese - this time in the parish of Transault - on 22nd February, 1873. He died there in 1892.(6)

When it became obvious that Father Mallet was not fitted for the life and that he showed little inclination to keep the Rule, Father Chevalier had to ask him to withdraw. Smarting under this rebuff he sought an interview with the Cardinal and did not hesitate to speak disparagingly of his former confrere. He made a special point of attacking the unsafe condition of the chapel, where, he said, one's life was in constant peril, where it was impossible to Celebrate Mass or say one's Office without expecting the place to fall down at any moment, and where a serious accident to the faithful could easily take place. He spoke so vehemently and convincingly on the subject that the Cardinal became worried and decided to take prompt action. In spite of his usual prudence and the affection he had always shown for Father Chevalier and the new Congregation, and without consulting the priests or sending a delegate to investigate, he ordered "that within twenty four hours the chapel be closed as a place of worship. This was on the 9th October, 1850.

"Satan," wrote Father Chevalier, "was evidently not happy at the good for souls being done in our chapel, and wished to destroy it. The Heart of Jesus however, wanted a more worthy sanctuary and the designs of human wisdom were thwarted."(7) The Cardinal's order came as a great shock not only to the priests but to the parishioners as well. Deeply upset, and not knowing as yet why the Cardinal had acted so peremptorily, Father Chevalier hastened to Bourges to find out what it was all about. He was able to answer, to the satisfaction of His Eminence, the charges made by Father Mallet, but the Cardinal insisted that any necessary repairs to the Chapel must be carried out immediately, and a Certificate of Safety obtained from a qualified architect .

Four days later this certificate was forwarded to His Eminence, who then authorised the re-opening of the Chapel. In the meantime, the priests had been saying their daily Mass at St. Cyr's, while a few alterations were made to Chapel. The cost of the repairs was not very high, although heavy enough for the small community with its limited resources.

Actually the temporary closing of the Chapel turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as it called attention in emphatic terms to the urgent need for a new church. It was decided there and then to initiate plans for a new edifice, which would be a more worthy abode for the Divine Majesty.(8) The first big difficulty that presented itself was the selection of a suitable site in the limited space available. Father Chevalier wished to build a large rectangular church facing the Place de Vouet on the land where the old chapel stood. As the dimensions would be much larger than those of the chapel, the question was where to look for the extra space. By using the courtyard in order to avoid the angle on which the chapel was built, there would arise difficulty of shutting out the light from the presbytery and making the place too cramped. The most reasonable solution - and the one which was ultimately adopted - was to buy some land on the western side of the chapel. The small Ruelle de Vouet - a cul de sac about twelve yards long which ran along the top side of the Chapel was public property and not for sale, but the lower portion was the private property of Madame Julienne Dansard, wife of Pierre Champiolat. If this land could be bought the new church could be built farther to the west and sufficient space left between it and the presbytery.

Two-major problems would have to be solved before any progress could be made. The first was where the money was to come from and the second was the necessary co-operation of the Abbe de Champgrand, who still owned all the property the Missionaries were using. Just what negotiations took place with the Abbe or whether he showed any enthusiasm or not we do not know. However an agreement with the Champiolat family must have been reached before March 1859, as the foundations of the church were laid at that time. It was not till the 14th March, 1860 that the official deeds were signed between Madame Julienne Dansard and the Abbe de Champgrand before Monsieur Binet, the resident notary at Issoudun. The Abbe met the expenses of the transaction.(9)

While negotiations were progressing favourably regarding the land deal, the Missionaries were endeavouring with the help of influential friends to obtain a subsidy from the Government. Their efforts, however, were not successful. Father Chevalier wrote to Madame des Mesloizes, one of the helpers, on 3rd May, 1859: "I am very grateful for the efforts you have made on our behalf. The Minister of Religion has replied that there are no funds available for our chapel, as we are not recognised officially by the State. The Empress, to whom Monsieur Touragin referred our petitions, has replied through her secretary that the matter has been placed in the hands of the Minister of Religion. This is tantamount to a refusal, as we already know the intentions of the Minister. However," concludes Father Chevalier, "if men fail us, Almighty God for Whom we are working will surely be on our side. We will go ahead with our work and refuse to be discouraged."

It was certainly not a matter of encouragement to be trying to build a church without money, and this in a town like Issoudun where three-quarters of the population were indifferent to religion and quite unused to making any sacrifices in the cause of the Church. The only

confidence Father Chevalier had was in the Providence of God on which he had always relied. What were his plans to be? First of all, he resolved to place the work in the hands of the Immaculate Mother of God, the Protectress of his Congregation. Then he would wait patiently, letting the plan mature in his mind, examining the means of achieving his object, and not pushing the work further than the resources he would have in hand allowed. Prudence demanded this.(11)

In a sermon of which we have previously spoken Father Chevalier outlined the position to his congregation. The present chapel was too small and shabby. It should have been replaced long ago, but lack of funds had prevented this. "Many people," he said, "think we are wealthy, but how wrong they are. Our position is really difficult and even precarious. We receive neither subsidy nor salary from the State, the Diocese, or the town. We are left entirely to our own resources, and have no income except what we receive from our Mass stipends or a few gifts from charity. We appeal then to your generosity. We promise, with the approval of the Cardinal to offer a Mass every First Friday of the month for our benefactors and their parents both living and dead, and to inscribe their names on an Honour-Roll."

The next day a poor working woman, whose only means of livelihood was her needle, approached Father Chevalier and handed him a small, neatly-wrapped packet. He opened it and there gleaming before his eyes were five gold pieces of twenty francs each. By self-sacrifice and frugal living she had saved 100 francs, and although it was all the money she had, she was prepared to give it to the priests. "Yesterday," she said, "when I heard your sermon I promised the Sacred Heart of Jesus that I would bring these gold pieces to you. Take them. It delights my heart to be able to give them to you."

Father Chevalier was deeply moved by this act of generosity, but knowing the impecunious state of the donor, he took one piece from the packet and handed back the other four. "My child," he said, "you will need these yourself for the future."

"No, Father," she replied, "I promised them all to the Sacred Heart. I can't keep any back now."

"But say if you lose your work. Say if you become sick."

"Father," she answered spiritedly, "this money doesn't belong to me any longer. It belongs to God. I have given it to him, and I won't take one iota of it back. What the future holds for me is in God's hands, and I place my trust in Him."

Considering himself rich indeed with this 100 francs so nobly given in the cause of the Sacred Heart, Father Chevalier decided to take the first step, and he had the holy audacity to ask Monsieur Farlier, the diocesan architect to draw up a plan.(12)

He had dreamed of a plan in the form of a heart, but this was deemed impracticable at the time. Monsieur Farlier duly presented his plan "with the one nave leading to the chancel set in a semi-circular apse. On either side was a semi-circular chapel, the one on the right the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and on the left that of St. Joseph. The facade was as it is today, except that it has been somewhat embellished."(13)

In the meantime Father Chevalier had launched his appeal in Issoudun, but it was not well received in many quarters. Mlle. Marchand has recorded: "Father Chevalier approached several persons and asked them to accompany him on his canvas for funds, but they all refused for various reasons of their own. He asked me to try to get my father interested. At first he refused saying that although he would like to help, it would cause embarrassment to his friends if they visited their homes to ask for money. When I told the good priest this, he replied: "We will cause no inconvenience; we will simply stay in the hall." After my mother and I had further pleaded with him, he consented to go on the rounds with Father Chevalier. Next morning they set out together and continued the appeal each day till all the likely homes been visited; Father Chevalier seemed pleased enough with the response."

However, Father Chevalier's comments in his private Notes show that at best he got a mixed reception. "How many doors were shut in my face! What humiliating refusals I received! What insults were hurled at me! Soon it was evident that the money raised in Issoudun and the few donations received from friends outside the town were quite inadequate for the proposed church. Apart from his desire to use the old chapel as long as he could before it would be dismantled, the lack of finance was responsible for his decision to build only the top portion of the church for the time being. The architect was not keen on this, but submitted to his will, at the same time seeing to it that the general plan was not interfered with.(15)

On 26th March, 1859 the work was begun and the foundations of the chancel, side chapels and the first three bays of the nave were sunk to a depth of 20 feet.(16) On 3rd May, Father Chevalier wrote; "We hope to have the solemn blessing of the foundation stone towards the end of the month or the beginning of June. If the Cardinal is able to come for the ceremony about that date will create a good impression and be a big help. If not, I hope to get Fatehr Caillaud, who has always shown a great interest in our work, to perform the ceremony."(17)

The Cardinal died on 27th May, and Father Caillaud, who was one of the Vicars Capitular of the diocese, came to Issoudun for the laying of the foundation stone. The stone itself was a large one occupying the base of the pillar - at floor level - on the right hand side of the sanctuary. Inside it was placed a glass tube which contained the details of the ceremony written on parchment together with some small coins and medals dated for that year. The following poem composed by Father Chevalier was embedded under the stone:

"Malheur, malheur a qui detruira cette Eglise,
Et s'il veut echapper au bras vengeur de Dieu,
Il faut que par ses soins elle se reconstruise,
Grande, majestueuse, et sur le meme lieu."(19)

"Woe to him who destroys this church,
If he wishes to escape the Vengeful Arm of God,
Let him see to it that it is rebuilt,
Grand, majestic and on this very site."

The ceremony took place on 6th June, the Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi. It was held in conjunction with the annual Procession of the Blessed Eucharist from the church of St. Cyr. After Vespers the procession left the church led by the worthy and venerable Father Crozat. A great crowd of people lined the route of the procession which led to the Place de Vouet where already a vast assembly had gathered. The crowd was estimated in the vicinity of 6000 and the marching of the fire-brigade and town-band added a spectacular touch to the proceedings. All the notable personages of the district were in attendance, the Sub-Prefect, the Mayor, the Chief Justice, the Imperial Prosecutor and most of the aldermen. Father Caillaud preached the occasional discourse taking as his text: "Super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam," and the ceremony concluded about half past six.(20)

Judging by the glowing newspaper reports, and the presence of such a large crowd, we might think that the people of Issoudun were sympathetic and helpful to the Missionaries, but, unfortunately, such was not the case. On the contrary they had to contend with quite an amount of opposition. In a letter written on 27th June - the day after the ceremony - Father Chevalier wrote: "The crowd was immense, and our triumph was complete." The word "triumph" would indicate that there were certainly obstacles to be overcome. After enumerating a number of the notable people present, he continues "What do you think of this change of face? What kind of men are they? When it was a question of helping in the noble work they became angry or, at least, were not at all interested. Now that it looks like succeeding, they begin to praise it and want to have a hand in directing it. Poor human nature!"

After the function Father Chevalier invited some of the gentlemen who had helped voluntarily to a small social gathering, but the general opposition to his plans was to last for some time yet. Any hope he had of signing the peace was disillusioned. When the opposition reached its peak in 1861, Father Maugeness was to write to Father Crozat in a letter dated 5th July, of "that state of affairs that has now lasted four years." He

refers in the letter to a group "of young people who spend about a year in the parish" stirring up this opposition. We naturally think of Father Mallet and his followers. The young curate had entered the Congregation in January, 1858, and before the end of the year had been responsible for closing down the chapel. Father Chevalier himself has written: "An over-excited young priest who spent a short time in Issoudun went to Bourges with some false stories."

In fact there were many spiteful stories - not only about the Chapel - being circulated at the time by idle gossipers who wished the young Congregation no good. This is obviously what Father Maugenest was referring to in his letter to Father Crozat. In the light of this opposition we can readily understand why Father Chevalier found it difficult to get anyone to go around with him to make the appeal for funds and why even such a good man as Monsieur Marchand hesitated for fear of hurting the susceptibilities of his friends. It explains the reason for the humiliating refusals, the insulting remarks etc. It also throws light on his remark that the Cardinal's presence at the laying of the foundation stone "would make a good impression", on his use of the word "triumph" when the people turned out in force for the ceremony, and his reference to "change of face" when so many notables attended.

Madame Hello has recalled this opposition in what we might call a piece of fanciful writing were it not based on fact. She assumes the role of a young man called Jean Lander who calls on an imaginary aunt living in Issoudun.

"My poor aunt seemed very upset about the advent of the Sacred Heart priests to the parish. She would stay awake at night thinking of that small campanile and that the bell that Madame Dausigny had donated would disturb her dreams. She protested in the name of Saint Cyr, and she for one would never abandon St. Cyr, dear old St. Cyr! She said she would make such a fuss about it that the Sacre Coeur would never take the parishioners away from St. Cyr's.

"But aren't you taking sides?" I asked her.

"Of course," she answered quickly. "There's no middle course - it's either St. Cyr or the Sacre Coeur, and through thick and thin I'm for St. Cyr. Never will I abandon dear old St. Cyr, our old church, for this new chapel.

"But, aunt," I interposed, "it appears that many graces are being obtained at the Sacred Heart and I have heard it said that not many people prayed in your town till the Sacred Heart church appeared."

My aunt's eyes blazed. "Now, my nephew, whatever do you mean by that? Whom do you think you're talking to? So nobody prays in St. Cyr's, eh? Haven't I been in the parish myself for the past 40 years?"

"But aunt," I said with a smile, "are you sure you have always been so devoted?"

"Of course I have," she replied. "The trouble is that since the people started going to the Sacre Coeur, my old love for St. Cyr's has been awakened as has that of many other people. When I saw Sacre Coeur being built I thought that poor old St. Cyr's would be abandoned, and become a home for the birds only, so off I went to St. Cyr's and many of the faithful are going also. The bells are ringing out with new vigour."

"But aren't you being hard on the people who go to Sacre Coeur?" I ventured.

"You are a shrewd little devil, my nephew. Yes, perhaps I am. But I am an 'old-timer', in love with the past, and I am head-strong and easily aroused. If you stay here long enough I will make you that way too. I am rounding up all the good back-sliders, those who haven't put a foot inside the church since they were babies, and there are plenty of them. I declare I'll have them singing hymns in no time. I am determined to avenge St. Cyr's. You mark words. Only wise people go to St. Cyr's; the fools go to the Sacre Coeur. Just fancy sensible people going and cramming themselves into that old barn in preference to St. Cyr's, dear old St. Cyr's. St. Cyr's is the pride of our town. I made my first Holy Communion there. The old-timers will always be faithful to St. Cyr's and the Missionaries can do what they like, but they won't stop us from going to the old church. It will be packed on Sundays, Feast Days and even at Vespers and Benediction."

Then to make her story good, Madame Hello makes her imaginary character Jean Landur, remark: "This much was quite clear. The keen rivalry between St. Cyr's and the Sacre Coeur would ultimately result in the Glory of God and the salvation of souls. People started going to St. Cyr out of stubbornness and rebellion, but thereby regained their love of religion, and once love was there, they didn't mind going to the Sacre Coeur. This was proven to me that very evening as my aunt came along with me to - the Sacre Coeur."(21)

However, the reconciliation was not as virtuous and complete as Madame Hello would imply. There was still an active opposition to the Missionaries particularly after the implicit rebuke to Father Mallet when the chapel was reopened. He actually had done them a good turn - even if unwillingly - in hastening the construction of the new church. The opposition was to become even violent later on at the time of the transfer of the parish, and when Father Crozat himself saw fit to take part in it, it became an open scandal as we shall see. In retrospect we can see that one of the main reasons for the confusion and opposition would have been what Father Maugenest termed "the irregular state of affairs" in Issoudun. To understand what he meant by this "irregularity" it is necessary to recall briefly the history of the foundation in its relationship to the parish.

Although, as we have seen, Father Crozat gave the two young curates every help and encouragement in their desire to found the Society, his interest was mainly in the welfare of the parish of Issoudun itself, and only vaguely in the home missions. His heart and soul were in Issoudun in spite of its religious tepidity, and he could see the advantage of having a Community of priests in the parish to continue the work to which he had devoted so many years. We recall his strenuous efforts to have the Sacre Coeur made into a parish, and when the Abbe de Champgrand had frustrated this plan, he had endeavoured to incorporate the Mission chapel as a subsidiary to St. Cyr. Had not the Droit Commun emphasised this fact in its report of the procession on the Feast of the Assumption which, the paper said, was organised "to cement by a solemn consecration the union between the church of St. Cyr and that of the Sacred Heart." We remember also the Abbe de Champgrand's remark. "The parish priest of Issoudun is a worthy priest, but I suspect that in these circumstances he has, doubtless, let himself be influenced by too natural an affection for his parish."

When the ceremony of laying the foundation stone had taken place, Father Crozat led the procession of the parishioners of St. Cyr as a gesture of goodwill and encouragement to the young Missionaries. He had in mind the good of the parish of Issoudun and hoped that after his death these missionaries would take it over. In 1872 Father Chevalier wrote: "Father Crozat wished to have us permanently stationed here to assist him and to carry on the ministry in his beloved Issoudun. He helped us by his knowledge, his advice, his experience and influence. I can say this in all truthfulness - without him the work of the Sacre Coeur would not have come into existence. The many and seemingly insurmountable difficulties that eventuated would never have been overcome. When this man of God learned that Issoudun was to become our permanent abode, his joy was complete, and he looked on our presence as an opportunity of reviving the Christian life of the town. He sincerely hoped that the diocesan authorities would entrust the care of this large and important parish to us after his death. He used to say that he wanted the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to succeed him. We were the comfort of his old age and his dear friends. He regarded himself as one of us, and used to say: 'We are three Missionaries.'(22)

We will deal in a later chapter with the misunderstanding about Father Crozat's retirement, and the details of the transfer of the parish when the relations between the venerable parish priest and the Missionaries became strained, and Father Crozat went over to the ranks of the opposition. The point we are establishing here is that the transfer was not "engineered" by the Missionaries themselves. On the contrary the end for which the Society had been founded had a much larger scope than just the evangelisation of the town of Issoudun.

In this connection Father Maugenest, in his capacity as Archpriest of Bourges, wrote to Father Crozat in 1861: "It was you who founded the Congregation. It will model itself on you, and will remain after you are to carry on the traditions of your zeal and holiness. This you know yourself and it is the reason why you first provoked the irregular state of affairs which now confronts the religious administration of Issoudun."

The "irregular state of affairs" was precisely this that on account of the union and alliance between the parish of St. Cyr and the Sacre Coeur which Father Crozat had desired and established, the older the parish priest grew, the more the effective ministry of the parish fell into the hands of one-time curate, Father Chevalier. Hence the people looked more to the Sacre Coeur than to St. Cyr's. "Father Chevalier" continued Father Maugenest, "has only the good of the parish at heart, and he has done a lot of good. In his activities he is only acting in your stead. That is the natural state of affairs as they stand, and he is doing only what you did ten years ago. He will probably remain on as parish priest of Issoudun."

Cardinal Du Pont had been content to let things go their own way in Issoudun. In many respects this parish had been a difficult problem for him. Perhaps, he thought, this plan of Father Crozat with all his years of experience was the best solution. At least there would be a regular and permanent community and a guarantee of sufficient personnel to carry out ministerial duties. This was also Father Maugenest's opinion. In the letter to Father Crozat from which we have quoted above, he states: "It would appear certain to me that at some future moment the Community of the Sacred Heart will take charge of the parish and be its salvation. Will it have enough missionaries to carry the Gospel to other fields? This I do know, but I have good reason to believe that it will be dedicated to the work in Issoudun and will be its salvation. That is to say it will complete the good work you have begun."(25)

In the midst of all the opposition and difficulties Father Chevalier's health began to fail. The first symptoms of an illness which came to a head in 1865 began to appear; a general exhaustion brought on by too much work and excessive privation. He contracted granular laryngitis, which played havoc with his general condition.(26) In January, 1860 we find the first mention of his sickness in a letter he wrote to Madame des Mesloizes. The fever, he tells her, has abated; he has not so many headaches and the rheumatism is clearing up.(27) And again on April 5th he assures her: "There is no need for anxiety. My main sickness has passed. I am now going to have a good rest. Part of his so-called "rest" was to organise a series of Lenten lectures for the men of the parish. Each Sunday evening he preached to them at 7 o'clock, and the response was excellent. "The crowd of men," he wrote, "was large and enthusiastic. This unexpected gathering is encouraging and significant."(28) However these lectures, added to his worries of church construction, finance, misunderstanding etc., proved too much for him and he was forced to take a rest which, according to Father Piperon, was "more painful to him than the most exhausting work.(29)

The whole set of circumstances and difficulties during the years 1858-1860 actually reduced Father Chevalier to a state of nervous exhaustion and mental depression. Father Piperon speaks of its acuteness in his second manuscript:

"How could this young priest, as yet unknown, without finance or influence of any sort bring this enterprise to a successful conclusion? Had he not tempted Providence? Was he not running headlong into a catastrophe which would spell death to his newly born work and instead of saving souls prove a stumbling-block to them? These were the thoughts which haunted him day and night, and in spite of an inner voice which kept saying to him "Have confidence he could not rid himself of the tormenting anxiety, which kept him awake through the long hours of the night. His health, normally robust, began to fail under the strain and more than once I came upon him in a fit of sadness and melancholy, despite his valiant efforts to hide what was passing through his mind. He had recourse then to prayer. He turned to Mary the Patroness of difficult causes, and begged Her to sustain him and to plead with the Merciful Heart of Jesus not to abandon him."(30)

Father Piperon has not gone into the causes of this physical and psychological breakdown, but it may help us to understand the situation better if we pause for a moment to consider what led up to this state of affairs. Father Piperon refers to "lack of money" as a contributing cause but it is clear that this was only one reason and a comparatively minor one, for what he calls Father Chevalier's "overwhelming apprehensions". A more serious reason was the fear of failure in what he had started, and the possible scandal to the people if the work was closed down. This possibility saddened and sickened him.

Naturally building of a church involves a great deal of financial worry, but knowing Father Chevalier as we do, and remembering all the obstacles which his determined spirit had overcome and the innumerable graces he had received, we can be sure that this was far from being the main cause of the collapse of his health. Father Piperon has been loud in his praise of the prudence shown by him in not rushing the work, and the reference to the "pious audacity" in asking for a plan is proof of this. At no time was the financial situation wholly desperate, and when the first part of the church was completed, it was opened free of debt. Father Chevalier's record of the receipts and expenses confirms this also. The money did not come in all at once, or at the last moment, but gradually as the work progressed. Mlle. Marchand has noted that sometimes "the plan was altered to effect various improvements as the money came in.(31) The only disturbing aspect, perhaps, was that the work dragged on at times, but even this was not a very serious consideration, as the old chapel was still in use. Without minimising then, the fact that finance was a worry, it was certainly not the basic cause of Father Chevalier's distress and depression.

His despondency and fears, which resulted in his sickness must be attributed to other factors. The first was the unexpected and undeserved opposition to his work, in which he saw a grave danger to the good of souls in the parish. When Father Crozat himself later joined in this opposition, he was saddened beyond measure, and regarded it as a scandal to the people. This opposition threatened the effectiveness of the work in the parish, but, as such, it did not constitute a danger to the future of the Congregation he had founded. After all they still had the goodwill and approbation of the ecclesiastical authorities in Bourges, and that was the main thing that mattered. What then was the chief cause of his worries and fears, of this danger which seemed ever to be haunting him?

It was surely the fear for the future of his beloved Congregation and the frustration of the object for which he had founded it, namely the work of the missions. The beginning of the crisis for him had been the loss of Father Maugenest. We remember his words when he broke the news to Father Piperon; "We are going to be separated. I can see that His Eminence is longer interested in our work as Missionaries, and soon will recall us for parish work." For him the object of the Society was missionary activity.

As we have seen, he misjudged the intentions of the Cardinal in this matter, but had he himself not put the Congregation in this very danger by involving it too deeply in the parochial life of Issoudun? The building of the church itself and the many ministerial activities of the two Missionaries constituted the very danger that he feared - namely that he would be nominated parish priest, and that the work of the Congregation would be restricted to Issoudun. He knew that the Cardinal wished him eventually to take over the parish, and at this time Father Crozat wished it himself.

Father Piperon tells us that the main motive of the pilgrimages which Father Chevalier made was to seek advice and spiritual consolation after the loss of Father Maugenest. Speaking of the journey to Paray-le-Monial he writes: "Downcast at the departure of Father Maugenest, Father Chevalier wanted to console himself by a pilgrimage to the tomb of Blessed Margaret Mary." His visits to La Salette and Ars were both prompted by the desire to "heal this wound in his heart." It was not so much that he was losing a friend, for Father Maugenest always remained his dear friend, and, after all was only 25 miles away, but that he was losing such a valuable member of his young Congregation on whom he relied so much, particularly for the home-mission work. Father Maugenest himself has recorded: "At that time I was seldom at home on account of my preaching."(33) That had been the work allotted to him, while Father Chevalier cared mainly for the parish, and Father Piperon, the hospitals. With the loss of this gifted preacher, Father Chevalier could see the end of the Home-missions, which he considered an integral part of the Society's work.

When at the beginning of 1860 it seemed most probable that he would be nominated the parish priest of St. Cyr he was far from enthusiastic about the idea. The fact that he kept making alterations to the plan of the new church, thus delaying its completion, and that he spent some of the money in renovating the monastery shows where his real interest lay. By this time he had sought advice at both Paray-le-Monial and Ars, and he was convinced that his concept of the Society was the right one. On April 5th of that year he wrote: "It is most probable that Father Crozat will shortly tender his resignation. I know that he spoke about this to Father Lamblin, the Vicar General who passed through Issoudun six

weeks ago. The Vicar General told him that the Cardinal would not put any obstacles in his way. Father has not mentioned the matter to me, but I know of his approach to the Vicar General and also what the authorities think on the subject. All he wishes now is to retire to Madame du Quesne's Estate and be chaplain there. What will become of all this I do not know. It is in the hands of Providence. We must pray about it. God can change men's ideas if He wishes."

Father Crozat did change his mind, and with a sense of relief Father Chevalier wrote ten days later; "I have great pleasure in telling you that the parish priest has changed his mind. He no longer wishes to be chaplain, but remain on as parish priest of Issoudun. God grant that he stays in this frame of mind."(34)

To summarise then, we can see, mainly from the testimony of Father Piperon, that the causes of the breakdown in health of Father Chevalier were the accumulation of financial worries, the opposition of a section of the people and clergy, and chiefly his fear for the future of his beloved Society.

At the height of his troubles Father Chevalier decided to go on a number of pilgrimages and seek advice from experienced and saintly people as to what he should do in the future. The fact that those journeys were suggested and financed by sympathetic friends is proof of God's loving care for those who sincerely strive to do His Holy will.

Now that the foundation stone had been laid and the construction of the church was well under way, Father Chevalier entrusted the care of the parish to his sole confrere, Father Piperon, during his absence. In spite of objections by the architect, it was decided not to hurry the building and to use the old chapel as long as possible. In the next thirteen months he was to make three pilgrimages. He wrote to the Marchioness des Mesloizes telling her that on his first journey he would be away from Issoudun from July 1st to the 15th.

The first pilgrimage was made possible through the generosity of one of the Canons of the Bourges Cathedral, the Abbe Guay d'Aubilly. "This priest," wrote Father Chevalier "was a dear friend of mine, and had always shown great interest in our work." Father Piperon refers to him as "a saintly priest who spent all his money on charitable works, and for a long time had been the Director of the Sodality of the Holy Childhood in the diocese."(36) In 1859 he proposed to Father Chevalier that they both go together to the Shrine of Our Lady of Puy, then on to La Louvesc, La Salette, to la Grande Chartreuse and finally to Ars. "I accepted all the more willingly," wrote the Father Founder "since he offered to pay all the expenses."

"From Notre Dame de France," he wrote in the report of the journey, "we went to the tomb of St. Francis Regis, and made a retreat there under the direction of the Jesuit Fathers." From there we made the journey to La Salette passing through Grenoble. The road across the Holy Mountain, once the town of Corps was left behind, was considered difficult and even dangerous, but 'we' managed to cross without mishap. A few weeks previously pious and well-to-do merchant from Marseilles, following the same track, had fallen with his horse to the bottom of the gorge. While he lay injured and waiting for help, he promised Our Lady that, if his life was saved, he would donate a marble statue of Herself to the sanctuary of Her Shrine. He was rescued and after his recovery he kept his promise. The statue which adorned the Church today is his gift."

"We visited the place of the apparition and whilst there ardently recommended our young Congregation to Our Lady of La Salette. We then made our way back to Grenoble. My companion had more time than I, as I had to be back in Issoudun by the 15th, so I decided to forego the visit to Grande Chartreuse in order to make my pilgrimage to Ars where I hoped to see the saintly Cure and ask his advice if possible.

I arrived in Ars on the morning of July 14th. My main concern was to know if it would be possible to obtain an interview with the Cure. The first news I received was not encouraging as some of the townspeople told me he was ill, and had not even been visiting the church for some days past. I decided to call at the mission-house where he lived and make further enquiries. I chose the wrong hour to call, as it was half-past twelve and the Fathers were still at lunch. I rang the door bell, and waited. There was no response. I had the temerity to ring it a second time and that more loudly. I could hear footsteps coming quickly down the passage-way, and the door was flung open abruptly. A priest asked me what I wanted in a rather angry tone of voice. I enquired if it would be possible to see the Cure.

"No," he replied irritably, "All we get here are importunate priests asking the same thing. The Cure is not receiving visitors."

He then closed the door.

I was bitterly disappointed and began to make my way to the church with my head bowed and tears coming to my eyes. Hardly had I gone a few yards when I heard a voice calling after me. "Father, Father - just a minute!" I turned, to see the same priest who had just closed the door on me. Father Toccanier was his name.

"Father" he said, "I must apologise for my bad manners; we are so much disturbed every minute of the day that I could not control my annoyance. Come in, and I will try to get the Cure for you within the next quarter of an hour. He is slightly improved this morning."

"I had waited a short time when the door opened and the holy Cure came in, a surplice across his arm. His face was pale, his figure gaunt; his eyes were sunken in their sockets yet keen and full of life; his head was bowed and his body stooped from his many penances and macerations. I thought I was seeing a vision from another world. He bade me sit down, and asked me where I was from and what I had come to ask him. After introducing myself, I told him all about our small Congregation and my hopes for it. He listened intently as I told him it was completely dedicated to the Sacred Heart and to Our Blessed Lady. He gave me great encouragement telling me to have confidence. He told me my trials, which I would feel keenly, had only just begun. The powers of Hell he said, would do everything to try and destroy the work, as its object was the salvation of souls and the Glory of God. He warned me that the agents of Hell would raise such fury against the work that at times I would think it must fail. However the Heart of Jesus and the Mother of God would intervene to the confusion of its enemies. Strengthened by his, words I asked him if he would make a Novena for the Congregation. He willingly agreed, and told me he would commence it on July 16th.

Commending myself to his prayers I took my leave, and immediately returned to Issoudun. A short time after my return, we learnt of the death of the saintly Cure. He is surely our protector in Heaven."(37)

In his "Annals of the Society" Father Chevalier again makes reference to his historic interview. "During a visit of over a quarter of an hour I told him of our little Society of the Sacred Heart and of the end it proposed to itself, I asked him what he thought of it and if God would bless it. The man of God replied; 'This is the work of works. Heaven will bless it without a doubt, but only after many trials. Have courage and confidence.'"

"When will you arrive back in Issoudun?" he asked me.

'On July 16th, Father,' I replied.

'Very well, then; we will begin our Novena on that day. You and your confrere unite your intention to mine, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus will protect you.'

The saintly priest would hardly have had time to finish the Novena - to which we attached great importance - for he died a few days later."(38)

"During the winter of the same year," writes Father Chevalier, "I felt the need of praying at the tomb of Blessed Margaret Mary, and asking her for the success of our little Congregation whose object was the spreading of Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and so must be dear to her heart. The good Sisters of the Visitation received me with great kindness, and showed me over the places hallowed by the Saint. The sight of these holy places, so intimately associated with the appearance of Our Lord, so redolent of the Devotion to His Divine Heart and His marvelous revelations, made an impression on me, which I find difficult to describe. My first Mass was said at the altar where Jesus had appeared to the Saint showing her His Sacred Heart and saying: 'Behold this Heart which has loved men so much.' The second Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the Garden, where the Adorable Heart of Jesus had revealed many of the secrets of His Love. As I knelt at the tomb of the saint, I made her the

confidante of our sorrows our trials and our hopes. I begged her since Our Lord had constituted her the heiress of the treasures of His Heart for time and eternity, to obtain from Him all the graces we needed. I stayed there a long time conversing with her."(40)

"As an offering I placed a heart of gilded wood, which I had obtained at Moulins, on the tombstone, I had enclosed in it a list of all my intentions for the present and the future. I placed myself and all who are mine under the protection of this great lover of the Sacred Heart. Before I left, the Mother Superior gave me, at my request, some cuttings from the famous hazel-nut tree where Our Lord had appeared to the Saint. On my return I planted them in our garden, and today they form a large retreat where we have placed a tableau representing Our Lord appearing to Blessed Margaret Mary.

"Our Basilica," Father Chevalier continues, "has the privilege of having the first altar, after that of Paray-le-Monial to be dedicated to the Saint after her beatification. By a special indult from Rome we celebrate her feast-day with all solemnity and recite her Office. The beautiful stained-glass window in her chapel represents the exchange Our Lord made of His Heart for hers, and on a scroll are the words: "I make you for time and for eternity the heiress of all the treasures of My Heart."(41)

Father Chevalier's great devotion to St. Margaret Mary, in whose honor he made the pilgrimage four years before her beatification, flows from its intimate connection with Devotion to the Sacred Heart. This devotion was greatly strengthened by his visit to her Shrine at Paray-lo-Monial. Usually reticent about his innermost spiritual sentiments, Father Chevalier does enlarge on his spiritual reactions during the pilgrimage, but Father Piperon has written: "What took place in the soul of this Apostle of the Sacred Heart during these sacred days we do not know, as the humble missionary has never expressed himself publicly on the subject, at least to my knowledge. But I know that the fervent pilgrim passed long hours at the tomb and in the convent chapel that he prayed unceasingly and urgently to the humble virgin of Paray to obtain for him and his developing Congregation a more intimate and profound knowledge of the Heart of Jesus, and a more burning zeal to make that Heart known and loved throughout the world. He recommended his work to her in a special manner - that work as yet so frail and tender that the least hurt could destroy it. A few years later when I myself had the privilege of visiting the privileged Sanctuary, I found that the nuns still remembered our venerated Father, so greatly impressed had they been by his deep piety, his fervour and the simplicity of his humility. They expressed their admiration of his virtue and the knowledge he showed of the real spirit of Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Father Piperon gives us the happy news of his recovery to health and beneficial result of his visit to Paray-le-Monial. "Whatever it was that happened to him, Father Chevalier came back a new man. Instead of his former anxiety and worry, he showed a completely calm submission to the Will of Sacred Heart of Jesus, and he seemed confident of the success of his future work. His conversation and his conferences on the Sacred Heart clearly show that at Paray he had imbibed the true spirit of the Sacred Heart, which he endeavoured to infuse into us. For this reason we must look upon his pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Blessed Margaret Mary as a remarkable epoch, an important phase in the life of our venerated Father."(42)

The following August, Father Chevalier made the third of his pilgrimages, again at the suggestion of a friend. "While the work on the church was proceeding," he tells us, "Father Urban who was Parish Priest of Oudinville (this should read "Doudinville - Seine Inf.) - a friend who had always taken interest in our work, came to Issoudun and suggested that I make a trip to Rome offering to pay all my expenses. I was delighted with the opportunity of going to the Holy City and kneeling at the feet of the Holy Father to ask his blessing on our newly-born work."(43)

Before making arrangements for the journey there were the celebrations in honour of the Feast of the Sacred Heart to be organised. The triduum was preached by the Father Damourette, and was attended by large congregations. On the evening of the feast - 16th June - the special sermon was preached by Father Moulinet, the parish priest of Notre Dame de Chateauroux.

On June 18th Father Chevalier again went to Fontgombault to make a retreat in preparation for his pilgrimage. At the end of August the two priests began their journey and called at Lyons, Geneva, Chambéry, Turin, Milan and Genoa. On the 27th August they embarked from Genoa arriving at Livourne next morning about 7 o'clock. As travelling companions they had about 40 Garibaldians who asked if the Palace at Avignon was being got ready for the Pope whom they said they were going to expel in three or four weeks time!

Disappointment awaited them at Livourne, where they learnt there were no boats to Civitta Vecchia until the following Friday, and this was only Tuesday. They decided to fill in the time by visiting the two near-by towns of Pisa and Florence. Returning to Livourne on the Thursday, Father Chevalier remarks that they were beset by a great number of beggars during the night they slept there. Next morning the boat left at 5 o'clock for Civitta Vecchia, where they arrived the following morning - Saturday - at 10 o'clock. At 4 p.m. they boarded the train for Rome, and arrived in the Eternal City at 7 o'clock that evening - 1st September. It had been a pleasant trip, without sea-sickness, but they were unfortunate to arrive in Rome during a heat-wave, when many people, especially visitors, were stricken down by fever. Happily the two pilgrims were spared. (45)

They stayed at the Monastery of St. Bridget with the Holy Cross Fathers during their days in Rome. After the Fathers had given them a warm welcome, they lost no time in looking up Monsignor la Croix, a Protonotary to whom they had a letter of introduction from the Archbishop of Bourges. He received them graciously, as did also Cardinal Villecount, one-time bishop of La Rochelle, who suggested ways and means of obtaining the various favours they sought. Another helpful friend was Archbishop Charles Amable, Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, Lauraguais, a member of the Roman Rota.(46) Father Chevalier also had a letter of introduction from Archbishop Menjaud to Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The letter has fortunately been preserved. It is dated Paris, August 17th, 1860. It reads as follows:

Your Eminence,

Father Chevalier of the diocese of Bourges, who will have the honour of presenting this letter to you is one of my most devout and zealous priests. Though still young, he has already rendered great service in the cause of religion, and if God deigns to favour the exceptionally holy work he has begun, and in which we take a great interest, he will do even greater things in the future.

This is the reason why I ask your Eminence a special favour - that of seeking for Father Chevalier the title of Apostolic Missionary, which will be a fitting reward for the work this worthy priest has done, and a powerful encouragement for his followers.....

By a special decree of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Father Chevalier received this title and for a number of years signed himself Apostolic Missionary of the Sacred Heart. He was anxious in Rome to obtain various relics for himself and for others, but in this he was not as successful as he had hoped. He wrote in a letter on September "Relics are in such demand that hardly anyone gets what he wishes. I will not be able to bring back those I have obtained as it takes 15 days for to be prepared."(47)

The great occasion arrived for his audience with the Holy Father. The appointed day was a Sunday, and, fittingly, it was the Feast of the Holy of Mary. "It was the 5th anniversary of our installation and the beginning of our religious life" he writes in his Notes.(48) "What a holy coincidence. The Vicar of Jesus Christ, by his fruitful blessing, consecrated all the memories of those five years. Admitted into the presence of the Holy Father, that grand and immortal Pontiff, Pius IX, we prostrated ourselves respectfully, full of joy and admiration. I presented a letter to His Holiness which Archbishop Menjaud had given me. The Holy Father read it, then said to me: 'This is very good, my child. I see who you are. So you are striving to establish a Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. What a beautiful work! The only hope for the world and the Church is in the Heart of Jesus. Only He can cure all our ills. Increase and multiply. Preach everywhere the salutary devotion to the Heart of the Divine Master. Before I die I hope to give canonical approbation to your Congregation.'"

In the Annals of the Society, Father Chevalier speaks of the audience more detail. He tells us that the Holy Father let him speak at length on work of the Sacred Heart, on its special end, and the ways and means he had in mind for achieving its success. He pointed out that its end was

the glorification of the Heart of Jesus by all possible means, the sanctification of the souls of the priests and the people by this precious devotion, the offering of the Heart of Jesus to the world as the remedy for its ills and a means of Reparation for the outrages suffered by that same Sacred Heart. It would present a means of perfection for his missionaries by the living of a truly religious life. The means of obtaining this end would be by preaching, education of youth, the spiritual direction of souls, the exercises of the sacred ministry, priestly and lay Associations and the spreading of devotion to Our Blessed Lady.

Pius IX replied: "This work seems to me to provide the answer to our present-day needs and I sincerely hope it succeeds. I give it my blessing with all my heart, and I should like all priests to share in it. Increase and multiply. Develop it as quickly as you can, and I will be happy to give you the canonical approbation you need."

"Holy Father", I then said to him. "We have a motto which seems to echo the sentiments you have just expressed. Perhaps it may sound a little ambitious. If your Holiness approves of it, I humbly ask you to grant 100 days indulgence for its invocation. It would be a pledge of blessing and prosperity for us. Here it is:

The Holy Father read the words: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved.'

'Excellent,' he said, 'I willingly grant the indulgence you ask.' He then took his pen and wrote his signature together with the words 'Pro Gratia'. Our highest hopes had been fulfilled, and after kneeling for his fatherly blessing, we made our departure, with joy in our hearts." We can claim that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart possess the first invocation in honour of the Sacred Heart to be enriched by an indulgence. It is recorded in the official "Preces et pia opera indulgentiis ditatae."(49)

When Father Piperon spoke of the "crisis" through which Father Chevalier was passing he told us that he had recourse to prayer in order that Mary would come to his aid, that the Sacred Heart would not abandon him. The result of the pilgrimages proves he was right. We must remember also that apart from seeking spiritual consolation, he was also looking for practical advice and the assurance of certainty. He wanted to be certain of the future, to be able to dispel his doubts and fears, to ask saintly and experienced people what he should do. St. Jean Baptiste Vianney had repeated what the inner voice had been telling him: "Have Confidence." One day you will succeed," He had told him to expect difficulties, even great ones. "The powers of Hell will do everything to destroy this work." But the Sacred Heart and His Blessed Mother would protect the Society. And so he goes to Paray-le-Monial to find the "heiress of the treasures of the Sacred Heart". It had been while reading her life that his vocation had defined itself and this journey now marks, as Father Piperon says, "an important milestone in his life. He there gained a greater confidence and a deeper insight into the true spirit of the Sacred Heart which he endeavoured to infuse into us."

The doubts and anxieties, listed by Father Piperon, now appear in a new light. Financial cares and local opposition now fade into the back-ground as relatively unimportant. Henceforth the paramount thought is the Congregation, its character and its object. The one Person that really mattered was the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His main desire in going to Rome was to seek approbation from the Holy Father for his Congregation, even though at the time he had only one companion. Later on, when one day thinking of his temerity in asking the Holy Father personally for an indulgence without going through the regular procedure, he remarked to Father Piperon: "You know, Father, we were a couple of simpletons asking straight-out for an indulgence for our invocation – "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved."(50)

If we wish to know if God's blessing is on any particular work we look to its origins and motives. These are its credentials. The valuable Manuscript of 1859 which is the only source of information we have on the intimate spiritual experiences of Father Chevalier during the period of his "crisis" is above all an exposition of the various hopes and trials of his vocation as a Founder. It was written "under obedience of authority," most probably that of Archbishop Menjaud. In it we find his act of faith - his unwavering belief - in the divine origin of the Society. The very first lines are: "Our small Society is not the work of man but of God. It was born in the Sacred Heart of Jesus under the powerful protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." He expresses the same sentiments as an introduction to His first Book of Rules written in 1855. In the document he makes three main points. He recalls, firstly, the various early stages and extraordinary graces of his vocation.

Secondly he dwells on the obligation incumbent on him after His promise and agreement with Our Lady, the text of which he quotes in full. (Two of the pages which comprise the document are on this subject.) And finally, he tells of the installation and approval of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. All this, he concludes, was an answer to their prayers for Divine protection of their work.

The fact that he recorded these impressions, "with", as he said, "a certain distaste, and only under obedience, for the glory of God" throws the various stages of his vocation into bold relief. In the analysis of his vocation we must remember that the primary intention throughout all his life and activity was to found a Congregation of Missionaries - and that in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was for that intention that he had asked "the special sign" from God. "The good God inspired me," he wrote, to found a community of Missionary Priests who would work to heal the sickness which was afflicting our century." He had proposed the plan to Father Maugeness in these words: Two evils are destroying our unhappy century – indifference and selfishness. We need an effective remedy to cure these diseases. That remedy is to be found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is all Love and Goodness. This adorable Heart, so devoted to us, is ignored by mankind. Men do not realise the treasures It contains. We need priests who will work to make these treasures known. They will be called Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

This then was his main desire and object, the completion of his vocation, the fulfilment of his life's ambition. God wished and blessed the work, Church approved it by the installation of the 9th September, 1855, despite the opposition it had encountered in its early stages - an opposition which had made Father Chevalier fear for its future.

If we look at the picture as painted in the three documents, the writings of Father Piperon, the account of the journeys and the Manuscript of 1859, the following features stand out: After the installation but before January of 1858, Father Chevalier doubts if his work can proceed. First there was the loss of Father Maugeness, and the consequent cessation of the home missions, which he thought would spell ruin to the future of the Congregation. There was the fear that the Cardinal would appoint himself and Father Piperon to parish work though actually the Cardinal approved the work, but would not give up Father Maugeness. Added to this were the worries that accrued from the building of the church and the opposition he encountered. There was the constant fear that he would be appointed as parish priest of St. Cyr and their work restricted to Issoudun alone. All this made him doubt what was the Will of God in his regard. On the one hand he was convinced his project was inspired by God, and that its development had been accompanied by special graces. He was formally committed by his promise, and the ecclesiastical approval seemed to indicate it was God's Will. On the other hand the work the Missionaries were doing in Issoudun had been greatly blessed in awakening the faith of many of the people; the Archbishop seemed to wish them to work there, and the very fact that he had become so involved in building a church there would indicate this was the field of their apostolate. Had he not tempted Providence by undertaking this work? Or was God merely testing his fidelity to his promise and his original plans?

He was quite prepared to do God's will as long as he knew what it was. And so he made his pilgrimages to find out. He returned happy and convinced that God wanted him to found the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. At Ars he received the advice of a Saint that God willed his Congregation and that he must expect all manner of difficulties and opposition - even from Hell itself. In the end the Sacred Heart and Our Lady would see to it that he succeeded. At Paray-le-Monial he received a deeper understanding of the Sacred Heart. He was given the grace of a clear concept of the nature and character of the Society he was endeavouring to found. Finally, he had received the comforting reassurance from the lips of the Holy Father, the Vicar of Christ himself, that God wished him to go ahead with his original plan.

The above analysis shows the chain of the divers elements which constituted the crisis which beset Father Chevalier, and their relative importance, but it does not explain them. Precise information is too often lacking, and the general nature of Father Piperon's writings leave many questions unanswered. Two of these questions are - Why did Father Chevalier see such a danger to his Congregation in the existing state of affairs

at Issoudun, and what effect did it have on his own life and that of the Society. We can perhaps gain light on the subject by studying the reaction after 1860, and considering more fully what were the character and substance of his mission, and the means which he believed he must take to realise them.

CHAPTER X THE MISSION AND ANXIETIES OF A FOUNDER

Founders, - The Instruments of God's Grace.

A Religious Institute is a stable social organism in the Church, whose particular form of Christian life is determined by the special nature of the work it carries out. The foundation of such an Institute is an instrumental participation in the activity of Christ Himself, Who as Head of the Mystical Body "fulfills all in all."(1) (Ephs.1/23) The establishment of any new form of religious life in the Church is attributable to Christ, Who illumines the mind of the Founder, and translates His Will into action.(2) Pope Pius VI wrote of the Founders of the various Orders and Congregations: "They established their societies only under divine inspiration,(3) and Pope Pius XI, similarly: "It is certain that these excellent men, in founding their Institutes, were obeying the inspiration of God."(4) Four days before this statement Pope Plus XI in referring to Father Chevalier himself had said: "He seems to have made his decision only after receiving a sign from God."(5)

Consequently, the foundation of a Religious Congregation is not an ordinary work dependant on the will of man, who is free to undertake it on such as building a monument, establishing a business or any other work of human ingenuity. Whoever would think so is ignoring the fundamental truth of our holy religion. The Founder receives his mission from God, Who speaks to him as He did to Moses: "Think upon it, and do it as thou hast been shown." (Exod. 24/40) On the Founder's fidelity in corresponding to the lights given by the Holy Spirit, will depend the success or the failure of his enterprise.(6) By reason of its origin, its significance and its object, the mission of a Founder is a holy and sanctifying work, whether it is accompanied by miracles and revelations or not.

Without fidelity to God's direction the work of any Founder must come to nought. The nature of his mission demands this, for God has ordained not only the special place and function of the Founder in His Mystical Body, but also those of the members of his Institute with all the graces that will be granted to them. This fidelity is but the co-operation in the work of the Holy Spirit, who directs and guides the Church.

But the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Love, Who builds with love and consequently His work in the Church is a work of Love. The collaboration must be of the same nature as the principal activity. The instrument must be adapted to the mode of activity of the Worker. He will be a perfect instrument in God's hands only when he himself is matured in and animated solely by love. Fidelity in love is what God asks of us for the fulfilment of any mission which He entrusts to us. God can fructify all human activity and utilise it for His Own ends. He orients towards the realisation of His designs physical causes and at times even the devices of the Devil himself.

If the work is done without love, the human instrument achieves nothing, except the punishment of God for refusing to give his co-operation.(7) The Mission of a Founder is also regulated by the general law in the plan of salvation - namely that he sanctify himself in the particular place and work that God has allotted him, and that he achieve this by his love of God. The perfect accomplishment of the mission is then the great proof of love which God exacts of those to whom He has confided it. At the same time a divine apostolic mission carries with it grave responsibilities, the neglect of which can plunge the soul into the abyss of perdition; whereas a loving and humble fidelity can transport the soul to unfathomable depths of close intimacy and familiarity with God. The charism, by this fidelity, leads to transforming union with Him.(8) Like all apostolic activity, this mission calls for that spiritual effort, which purifies love, and sets its seal on fidelity. Charism for the good of the Church and souls, this mission is also the way of sanctification for the soul who receives it. The founder remains the man who must suffer in his purification, in his progress towards God, and he shares the sorrowful lot of the apostle whose fidelity in love God purifies by the very work to which He calls him and which the apostle himself undertakes precisely in an upsurge of love and fidelity towards God. Such is the foundation of the Christian idea that the works of God are blessed in trial, suffering and tears. But every charisma carries with it graces for him whom God has chosen as His collaborator. God is love also for His faithful servant.

In order to comprehend the difficulties which beset any Founder it is important to bear in mind this double aspect of his mission. The difference between the various Founders, as between the difference in the obstacles they encountered, arises not only from their individual characters and temperaments; but from the particular nature of their mission. The same variety which characterises the omnipotence and bounty of God in the distribution of His graces reflects itself in the calling of the various Founders. The call can, for example, include the entry of the Founder into the new Institute, as it can demand only that he provide the material conditions for its success. Again, spiritual paternity alone shows a great variety. In its plenitude this grace signifies for the Founder that he organise the community, give it its end, its direction, the character of its activities, lay down the spirituality which will inspire it in all things and in all its members and lead thorn to fecundity and sanctity.

God is able to entrust this multiple charge to the Founder alone, or to arrange that others share it with him, either at the same time or in successive stages. To one He may give a sudden inspiration, confirmed and illumined by certain signs. To another he may reveal His plans slowly and step by step. Of one Founder He may demand immediate action; of another the patient awaiting of favourable circumstances; in one He may inspire just the general idea of His plan to be developed into definite and specific form as time goes on; in another He may inspire immediately the complete concept, at least in its general outlines.

God displays a veritable richness of variation and combination in giving to each foundation its particular character, to each Founder his distinct personality, and to each Institute, its historical and sociological rhythm. This last aspect accentuates the different modes of action of the various Founders. He who has only the initial general concept of his ideal in mind must limit his activity until he communicates his plan to sympathetic collaborators, and common research and the grace of God will determine the form it is to take in due time. During the period of development the Founder awaits calmly and patiently the moment when it will come to fruition. That is all God expects of his fidelity for the time being - to wait patiently to maintain the ideal in all its purity. It will be different with the Founder who has clearly in mind from the beginning a determined plan. The edifice is already designed in its main features, and all he has to do now is to realise as exactly as possible the plan which has been presented. With him it is not a question of waiting and feeling his way in determining his plan, its object and its operation; it is more a question of knowing, what to accept and what to reject in its fulfilment. Here it is not a matter of patient waiting and hesitant experimentation, for he already knows the Will of God, but a matter of arriving at common agreement with his advisors as to the best method of giving his plan tangible expression. Here the way is clearly indicated by God to the Founder, and he must show it and it alone those who will come to him, exacting resolutely that they give to their life in a meritorious obedience, that form which he will specify and which will not be the outcome of investigation and mutual experience. He stands thus, more, or less isolated in the midst of his disciples before a task which demands the entire personality and which he alone can accomplish. Being entirely bound by God, his fidelity will consist in following with firmness and perseverance the directives received from Him.

The anxieties of a Founder will follow from the particular manner in which he receives his mission. God may make him aware of his task by a direct illumination or by a less striking grace. The nature and the value the mission is not affected, but naturally a special inspiration from God carries with it a certitude which influences the mental and spiritual faculties of the one who receives it.

We have seen that Father Chevalier, in spite of all his efforts, could not put the thought out of his mind that God was inspiring his desire to found a Congregation. Objectively and from the point of view of the onlooker an unbroken series of sensible signs give a greater guarantee that the work is from God than an extraordinary grace. In this latter case there is greater possibility of illusion, and it is only normal and logical to doubt it. Thus it was that Father Ruel refused to accept as coming from God the communication which Father Chevalier made to him.

Whatever the nature of the heavenly communication, it is always received in a human manner, and interpreted according to the human faculties of the one who receives it. Grace and the personal reaction work together, so that we might ask where grace concludes and human effort begins. It is easy for us in the light of subsequent history to see that the various circumstances in the initial stages were the work of God, but we must remember that often for the Founder who could not foresee the future, they were matters of perplexity and exacting research. He was responsible for the work, and it was not always clear what were the intentions of Divine Providence.

As long as the Founder has complete confidence in his mission and sees clearly the task ahead of him, he will possess enough strength within himself not to give in before obstacles and difficulties, and not to bow to the wishes of those who would have him deviate from his original project. Relying wholly on God he uses the favourable circumstances and avoids those, even though they seem feasible, which could impede his plan. But when a serious doubt concerning the vocation, or the interpretation of the mission arises, a crisis follows such as happened in the case of Father Chevalier when he wondered "if God would bless his work." For the certitude that he is accomplishing a mission willed by God is the sole strength of a Founder, a strength which enables him to meet all difficulties. This certitude is the sole foundation of his role, of his right and his duty to proceed, his sole title to the graces needed to accomplish his mission.

The Particular Mission of Father Chevalier

The Vocation of Father Chevalier presented various aspects which lend themselves to the danger of too personal an interpretation, and thereby obscure the God-given nature of his work. If the solution of the financial troubles which conditioned the foundation was due rather to prayer than to personal relationships, it involved by that very fact obligations towards persons each of whom desired the realisation of his own particular views in the work to be founded. The Abbe de Champgrand, for instance, without whose initial help the work would not have begun, became very difficult, and wished the activities of the missionaries to be limited to the Province of Berry. He entertained a violent antipathy to the devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the foundation of a new religious Institute, and became the suspicious custodian of his property, interfering in the affairs and designs of the missionaries themselves. Abbe Crozat also had his own ideas. He favoured a Religious Institute but one which would confine its interests to the parish of Issoudun.

There was furthermore Father Chevalier's strong, personal attachment to the Congregation itself. If he does not expressly speak in any of his writings of any obligation to become a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, it is because the matter went without saying, and as its Founder, he took on himself the task of governing his Society over a period of almost fifty years.

We have seen that after what he calls his conversion during student days all his conduct and ideals were shaped with this end in view - to establish his beloved Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The awareness of his vocation sprang from his spiritual belief that this was what God wanted him to do. For him, the founding of the Congregation was the realisation of his ideal, the full flowering of all his personal experience and activity.

In considering this fact we might ask: Where did the action of God finish, and his own human and personal effort and influence begin? But that does not explain why the doubts arose in his mind after the installation, or why the certitude he had enjoyed up to this juncture now gave way to fear and misgiving. Nor does it indicate to what precise points in the program the doubts and uncertainties were connected. It was not that he doubted his vocation as a Founder. All through the difficult period he kept his firm conviction, that God was calling him for this particular work. His constant preoccupation was how best to achieve it. The vehemence of the crisis and questions which Father Chevalier was putting to himself, did they not spring from the fact that he discovered an opposition in principle, till then unsuspected between his project and the reality. Let us never forget that the solution of the problem will effect in him a total change in his apostolic conduct and that the consultation with the holy Cure of Ars and the words of Pius IX concerned only the end of the Society, its organisation and its opportuneness. The crisis appears then as a doubt regarding the content of his mission. His main fear was that in the situation as it was developing! Issoudun he would not be able to fulfill his mission as he had understood it. Yet since it was God Himself Who had allowed this situation to arise, and since He had even blessed it Father Chevalier began to distrust his own manner of acting, and the interpretation he had given to the message of the Lord.

For the time being the situation had resolved itself in a loss of the mission-work and the concentration of their activity on Issoudun alone. If we admit that Father Chevalier's project was limited merely to the spiritual regeneration of Issoudun or to the idea of establishing an association of priests who would use the devotion to the Sacred Heart as a means of reclaim an indifferent and even hostile people to the practice of their Faith, are not at the crux of his problem.⁽¹⁰⁾ There was no real opposition to the spreading of this devotion in Issoudun. Even the Abbe de Champgrand had resigned himself on the subject and if there had been any positive opposition Father Maugonest would surely have mentioned it in his letters to Abbe Crozat. Nor was it a question as to how to spread this devotion in the town. During this period in France throughout the various dioceses there were associations of priests who, while restricting their activity to their parishes, practised the devotion to the Sacred Heart and preached it as a powerful means of salvation. And if it were simply a question of holding to the missions, this would not have been a great source of anxiety as he knew that the work could be resumed at a later date after more recruits joined the Society. Why then this very special interest in the question of the missions? Could it not be that they were only a symbol, the sole manner of expressing at the moment a wider and more fundamental concept of the plan God had in mind for him?

A closer study of what he considered this mission to be will help us understand the reason for his cares and doubts. We have seen that the genesis of his special vocation was his desire to bring the Gospel to the infidels in foreign lands. After the Abbe Ruel's opposition to his plan, he was inspired by the idea of founding a Congregation of Missionaries who would work to heal the moral sickness of the age. This decision included a total submission to the Will of the Supreme Priest, an entire detachment from earthly things and consequently, whether consciously or not, a greater and wider scope of action. He gave up the idea of a regular ministry in a particular parish for the ideal of a more general apostolate. He did not intend his Congregation to work only in a particular area but to combat the moral disease of the age wherever it was to be found. Then came the idea of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, not just as a matter of form or a minor detail, but the determining and decisive factor which would concentrate around itself all other forces and ideas, so as to mould them to itself, to direct and perfect them. Thus the devotion to the Sacred Heart, by becoming the end of the Society, but enlarged the field of apostolate, limited only by the opportunity which it offered of making known the treasures of love and mercy which the Heart of Jesus contained. And, as Father Piperon has remarked, since this was the ideal which inspired the Founder in all he did, it is necessarily, the inspiring force in his Congregation.⁽¹¹⁾ In the light of this concept all the works of the Society are but means to its end - namely the spreading far and wide of the Spirit of the Sacred Heart amongst men.

To obtain this end, the objective of the Founder must be to protect the universality of his concept and to gather priests around him whom he will train for this special task by a total dedication of their person and their apostolate to the Sacred Heart - a devotedness which will express itself in the forms of the institute: a religious Congregation of Missionaries and apostles.

The proposed exclusive concentration of the Missionaries' sacerdotal activity on Issoudun alone, carried with it the same danger as Father Chevalier encountered during his seminary days, when Father Ruel told him to confine his zeal and interest to the spiritual regeneration of that town. In the 1859 Manuscript the Founder shows his anxiety at the possibility of the work of the Society being limited to Issoudun, and mentions that a group of "secular priests of the Sacred Heart" would suffice for that. To his mind this situation would imperil the nature and function of the Society as he willed it. (Incidentally the Archbishop de la Tour d'Auvergne was in agreement with him as a letter to the Fathers of Vaugirard, 1862, shows.) His ardent wish was that his Institute would be "a true Religious Order approved by the Holy See."

We may ask here what precise meaning did Father Chevalier, in his writings dealing with the early days of the Society, give this term "Religious Order". In those days it was necessary to be very careful and prudent in the use of the words: "Religious", "Order" "Congregation with Simple Vows" etc. The foundation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was established according the correct canonical procedure and we must keep this in mind in case of error on the matter.

After the French Revolution several new Institutes had sprung into being to meet the needs of the time.(12) In order to justify their right of existence they relied, as was the custom, on the decrees dealing with the foundation of new Institutes, dating as far back as the Lateran Council (1215) and the Council of Lyons (1273). However, they came into conflict as regards their juridical status with the decisions of Pope Pius V who in 1566 and 1568 had decreed that the members of all Religious Institutes must take solemn vows, otherwise the particular Institute would be dissolved.(13) On account of the large number of Institutes of this kind existing during the last century, the situation became more and more abnormal, as the Roman Curia would not give them pontifical approbation unless they embraced the Religious State.(14) The Institutes were so varied in form, and the opinions and terminology of the canonists so diverse that it was difficult to classify the Religious State into categories.(15) When in 1850 the Synod of Bordeaux wished to make these decisions obligatory on any Institute striving for evangelical perfection, declared that the law applied to those Institutes which considered themselves as Religious, and were called such by the people.(16)

In spite of this evolution in public opinion, the Roman Curia maintained the juridical term "Regular" for all those in the Religious State. (17) Thus in canonical legislation all those Institutes which were not "Regular" were considered as "Secular" Institutes, i.e. non-Religious Institutes. This group comprised all those foundations which differed from the old Orders only by reason of the fact that they did not have solemn vows, right down to pious associations whose members did not take vows at all, wear a religious habit, nor lead a community life.(18) We have every reason then to be careful in explaining the terms used in documents of that time. Thus "a Religious Congregation with Simple Vows" is a juridical conception incorporated into Code of Canon Law, and is considered as a subdivision of the Religious state (Canons 807,808). In the last century such Congregations were approved by laudatory Decrees, and in the approbation of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart the Society was referred to as "an Institute or a Congregation with Simple Vows under the government of a Superior General,' without any reference to its canonical religious state.

In the *Analecta* of the Society in 1929 (p.277) Father Depigny, M.S.C. quotes from some brochures written after 1861 to prove that Father Chevalier passed through a period of indecision before he finally decided that his Society would be a religious Congregation with Simple Vows. However the author could have had in mind only the nature the of the vows, as the form of "Religious Congregation" is expressly mentioned in the brochures. If our suppositions are correct he was following an opinion current about the year 1900 and held by some young members of the Society, but Father Piperon was able to quote the evidence of Father Chevalier himself and his confreres of the early years – "of us his first subjects" - to contradict this viewpoint.(19) "From the beginning," wrote Father Piperon in 1912, "Father Chevalier conceived his Congregation as we know it today, a Society with simple religious vows the various works set down in the Constitutions. His confreres of the early years have never had the slightest doubt on this subject. He himself affirms in his Notes that that was his idea of the Congregation and it was also that of his first confrere." In his Manuscript, Father Piperon has written; "One might wonder if Father Chevalier had had the intention from the beginning of forming a Religious Congregation with vows according to the canonical requirements; if he had conceived his Institute such as it is today. The answer is 'Yes,' definitely yes. Such was his intention from the beginning. We, his first subjects, often heard him explaining it thus and exhorting us to make ourselves worthy of this 'great privilege,' a favour of which he always spoke with emotion and a saintly rapture."(20)

Father Chevalier then definitely conceived his Congregation as "a religious Society with simple vows" as early as the year 1855. What of his intentions before that? There is no definite reference in any of the writings, but we have already seen that there are convincing proofs that this was his intention, at least according to the essential features, as far back as his Seminary days. If the taking of vows was included in his original project they could not, of course, be taken immediately. We can appreciate the reason given by Father Piperon knowing the canonical difficulties involved. "If the Father Founder", he writes, "did not expect the members to take vows from the beginning, it was because he had no power to impose them since at that time we did not have any approved Constitutions. He himself had taken private vows, and he advised us to do likewise." Speaking of himself, Father Piperon says that he did not make his religious profession until much later, in 1869, "when the Constitutions were approved by Rome." Elsewhere he wrote; "Before that time the members were not able to contract the responsibilities which religious vows entail."(22)

Until such time as Rome officially approved the Society the members could take only private vows. The reply which the Sacred Congregation gave in 1890 regarding the Constitutions of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary would not apply with the same precision to the early Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The reply stated: "These vows are not private in the sense that they could be considered purely and simply as vows of devotion such as any member of the faithful could make in a particular case. By virtue of these vows there are certain obligations to the Society, and so as is stated elsewhere, dispensation from these is reserved to the Holy See.(23)

What Father Chevalier understood by the name of "Religious" we are able to glean from certain pamphlets written about 1865. "One may ask" he writes, "if the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are a recognised, regular, religious Congregation." We reply that they are, for they have all the necessary approbations - the approval of the Archbishop of the diocese and the encouragement of the Holy Father himself" (which as we have seen was given in 1860).(24)

On the subject of the Third Order which he founded he writes: "This Association is not a Religious Society, properly so called, where one is able to attain perfection by renouncing the world, for the members are not taken from those who leave the world, in order to lead a more perfect life."(25) Also he refers to the affiliated priests who do not belong to the Issoudun community as "secular priests", and of his own community he writes: "We study the manuals and the treatises which concern the religious life and its obligations. We try our best to observe the holy vows and the regular discipline."(26)

Father Piperon continues: "Such was the life of the newly-born community in the early days before the Constitutions were officially approved. It was the embryonic period if we may speak that way and the gestation took over ten years. "In these days no vow or special promise was strictly binding on the subject. It remained for each to oblige himself by private vows if he so desired or to remain free. The only conditions were that he submit himself to the exact observance of the Rule and that he obey the Superior. Nevertheless, a truly religious spirit reigned in the young community. The first members practised the virtues of their holy state "with a generous fervour, becoming that of even the best regulated Institute. They had only one desire - one ambition: to live as perfectly as possible the life of Jesus, the Supreme Priest, and to reproduce in themselves the sentiments of the Divine Heart of their Master."(27)

Religious life, then, for the early members of the Congregation meant the imitation of the example of Jesus, the Sovereign Priest, in the exercise of the virtue and the practice of the evangelical counsels, and that by living in a community with ecclesiastical approbation, an embryonic state until such time as the Congregation received approbation from Rome, and the vows became obligatory in the canonical sense.

The first Rules of the Congregation

Fortunately we have a very valuable document which provides us with first hand evidence of the progress of the Society in these early days. It is the "Regles des Missionnaires du Sacre Coeur" and there are three editions, dated 1855, 1857, and 1862. The first edition was called "Essai Provisoire,"(ES) the second "Regles"(R) and the third composed during a course of correspondence with the Jesuit Fathers at Vaugirard in

1862 was named "Abrege des Regles." By comparing the three editions and the corrections and additions to the two, we are able to follow the evolution of the various details, and to notice the underlying persistence of the essential characteristics. The main features are:

"The Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart is established for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls by preaching, instruction and the various functions of the apostolic ministry." (Ab.1) It is therefore a clerical Institute since it exercises the sacred ministry which is reserved to clerics and consequently the majority of its members will be priests.(Can.488) The name "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart" is strictly reserved to the priests and to those who are studying for the priesthood. Members of the laity "who will present themselves" as lay-brothers will not be called "Missionaries", but "Brothers of the Sacred Heart." A special Novitiate is provided for "Missionary Novices" and another for the "Lay-Brother Novices," each with its own Master of Novices. The distinction and the two-fold name is maintained in the three editions. (ES. 11,12,14,15 R. 11,19,23,27. Ab. 6, IV) The two groups will form the one community, and the lay-brothers will be put to the same tests and training and undertake the same obligations as the Missionaries, and as far as possible will follow the same rule. (ES. 13,14. R.27 Ab.6) As no special habit is required for the Brothers they will wear civilian clothes, but the Missionary-Novices will each be provided with two soutanes and cinctures, etc. (R.21) The main distinction between the two groups will be in their various occupations. The Missionaries will consecrate themselves to the sacerdotal ministry, as will also the Missionary-Novices where permissible. These will live with the Professed members, whose rule they will follow.(Es. 11, R.8 24) The Brothers will look after the material and domestic duties of the house. Should any extern come to make a retreat a brother will look after his room, and a priest will conduct the exercises. (Es.25, R.51) If a 'Missionary-Novice in special circumstances have charge of the Brothers, he will direct them in the interior management of the house, but always with gentleness, kindness and charity. (R.P. 22,24. Es. 11.)

The following quotations from the "Regles" in their three editions clearly indicate the apostolic character of the work which Father Chevalier was establishing. "Since the Missionaries are dedicating their lives to the ministry of preaching, it is necessary that they enjoy good health, study sacred eloquence, have an ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and be worthy, capable ministers of the work entrusted to them." (Es.11; R.9; Ab.4) The "Essai Provisoire" states that "for a beginning only priest or deacon novices who have finished their theological studies will be admitted."(Es.11)

The Novices shall apply themselves seriously to the study of Sacred Scripture, Theology, the Fathers of the Church, the ecclesiastical sciences, and the Lives of the Saints. Without this knowledge the Missionary's efforts will be weak and futile, his advice without avail, and his spiritual direction fruitless. Every day, or at least several times a week, a conference of approximately one hour shall be given on special subjects. The Master of Novices shall instruct his charges on the general principles of sacred eloquence - an exercise which must be considered as very important." (R.p 22.)

"Likewise the Novice Master will direct and instruct the intellectual talents of each of his subjects, giving prominence to a taste for study and work, and a love for the ecclesiastical sciences. He will urge them, above all, to a pious and effective study of the Sacred Scriptures, and teach them to read the Lives of the Saints in the same spirit that prompted their writing. He will put particular emphasis on the immortal Epistles of St. Paul, the model of preachers. His writings, with their doctrine and spirit, should be the manual of all our Missionaries." (R. p 14)

Before being admitted as a member of the Society, i.e., as the Rules say, "making one's profession," the Novice will be examined by the Council on dogmatic and moral theology, the ecclesiastical sciences and other necessary knowledge. (R.25; Ab.5) The nature and extent of the examination will be determined by the period for which the vows are to be taken, i.e. for one year, for five years or perpetually. (Es.16; R.30) The Rules also proscribe that studies be continued after professions "Every day each of the professed must spend one half hour in the study of Sacred Scripture, one hour in the study of theology and a similar time in studying ecclesiastical history, canon law or liturgy. If on any occasion they should be engaged on a more pressing duty, they will be permitted to shorten or omit these, studies, but, as it is easy to delude oneself in these matters, they will ask permission of the Superior. Any spare time should be spent in the preparation of "sermons, instructions "etc. (Es.18;R,36,37; Ab.3) Every Tuesday at 6 p.m. there will be a Conference. On the first Tuesday of the month there will be a discussion on Moral Theology; on the second, the spiritual life; the third the ecclesiastical sciences, and on the fourth homiletics. (ES,20: R.40;Ab.11) The Rules also state that on the second, third and fourth Friday of each month there will be a spiritual conference on the practice of religious and sacerdotal virtue. Each Missionary will take his turn in giving the conference when there are sufficient members at home, i.e. four at least. The Superior will advise the lecturer of his turn some days in advance and specify the subject of the discourse. They will deliver their instruction in an edifying, pious and simple manner. (R.39)

As we have seen the Missionaries called themselves "Religious," because, having been approved by the bishop they were living the religious life. The Rules themselves indicate the character of the Institute, as we see by those already quoted. Theirs was a life founded on the uses and customs of the established Religious Orders, but adapted to the character and end of their particular Society.

In the "Essai Provisoire" it is clearly stated that the proper living of the religious life must be the first consideration of each member. The Novices must form themselves in the spirit and ways of true religious, and while applying themselves diligently to study they must not forget that the main work of the Novitiate is the work of sanctification of their souls. (ES.11) With St. Paul, the only glory they will seek is the "knowledge of Christ, and Him crucified." Following the example of the Saints, they will learn more at the foot of the Cross than from their books.

In the Rules we find many thoughts which Father Chevalier had already expressed in a sermon to his colleagues while at the Seminary; "The members will apply themselves assiduously to all their spiritual exercises. They make their main delight, and consider as their most precious moments, the time set apart for their prayers, their conversation with God. Destined to become priests and apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, they will love to practice His gentleness, humility, charity, His obedience, and His spirit of poverty. Although the Novices have not as yet contracted any lasting obligations, they will submit themselves in virtue of the Rule, to all that the vows prescribe for the Professed. They will be prepared to obey - even blindly - the will of their superiors, and to accept any hardships asked of them in their training in the ways of perfection. Regarding interior mortification as the foundation of true and solid piety, they will strive earnestly to acquire this virtue. They will practise any corporal mortifications which the Rule prescribes or counsels, but will not undertake any others except with the permission of Superior or their spiritual director.(R. 22-23) United amongst themselves by the bonds of charity, penetrated by a religious respect for authority, having a cordial deference in their relationship with the professed, the Novices will avoid the spirit of criticism, of dissension, of defiance and insubordination which is so ruinous to the welfare of any community."(R-24)

The life of the Professed is a continuation of the life learnt in the Novitiate. Three times a month they will study together the virtues of the religious and sacerdotal life, having as their guide the rule, and religious discipline prescribed by the vows. They will practise interior mortification which is death to the senses, to the instincts of nature, and to all self-seeking.(Bs.23) This perpetual crucifying of the Will, of our human tastes, caprices and inclinations should be one of the main virtues of a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

He will also keep a constant watch on his affections, his thoughts, on the very powers of his soul. He will deny himself all that would tend to flatter his self-love and his pride. Likewise he will moderate any natural impulsiveness, which brooks no delay in what he wants, or what he wants to avoid. He should be cheerful and kind in speech, which will be a reflection of his inner thoughts and spirit. If he should harbour a natural antipathy towards anyone let him seek out his company and be particularly kind and attentive to him.

Let him beware of undue sentimentality and softness which pamper to the senses, and let him wage constant warfare on his apathy, his dislikes, his over-vivaciousness, his fits of anger, his sadness and his weariness. In such moods Nature seeks to satisfy itself. Let him not be anxious to speak about his ills and his crosses, and to seek consolation from Jesus Himself rather than from creatures. If he has a special

attachment to any person or thing, let him renounce it, the more perfectly to be united with God. The good religious should not always be talking about himself, his deeds, his accomplishments, his family or anything that redounds to his own praise.

If he should be humiliated, hurt in his pride, ignored or even misunderstood let him not complain, but try to bear his cross with joy. Should he be the victim of calumny, unjust judgment or false accusation, he should not strive to defend himself, unless the common good, charity or obedience demand it. He should not let others see the troubles and trials that may be going on in his own soul, and, calm and resigned in his trials, he should force himself to appear happy and content. He will obey without murmuring and resentment the orders of his Superior, even though they may be repugnant to his own judgment and will. Without showing his feelings, let him make the sacrifice willingly, offering up "his trials his reverses, his annoyance and his suffering to the Will of God.

In a word, the Missionary of the Sacred Heart should regard himself as a living host, prepared to offer himself always on the altar of mortification, as a victim of the adorable Heart of Jesus." (R. 56-57)

Those who are admitted to the community life are divided into two classes; those who have made a simple profession without vows, and those who have taken vows. All are Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The order of precedence is determined by the date of entry to the Congregation. This is included in the Rules only for the sake of good order. (Es.16; R.44) With a view to the future it was also stated that only those professed with vows could take part in voting, and only those with final vows could be nominated for a position of authority in the Community. (ES. 4 ,5,6,11; R.4, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17; Ab.9)

A formula for the taking of the Vows is in existence, but not one for the profession without vows. The vows take a more prominent part in the re-edition of the Rules. In the original 1855 edition they are placed in an appendix, but in the 1857 copy, they form the matter of the first chapter. Before taking those vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience it was necessary to have the approbation of the Council, and, as we have seen to pass an examination. This would indicate that the vows were made to the Congregation, which in turn would prove that the Congregation had been approved by the Pope.

The members could take the Vows for one year only after they had spent at least two years in the community, for five year after a sojourn of three years, and final vows after a period of eight years, (in the third edition the 'Abrege", this is stated as "ten years"). Two years after final vows (the Abrege says "at the same time") the vow of Stability was taken. (Es.15,49; R. 19,35; Ab. 5,5) Dispensation from the vows was reserved to the Bishop but according to the "Essai Provisoire," dispensation from the Vow of Stability was reserved to the Holy See. The Brothers also could, take vows, but a sojourn of ten years in the community was necessary before they were admitted to perpetual vows. (Es.15; R.29)

From the beginning, then, the Vows formed a most important part in Father Chevalier's plan for his Society. This method - to use a phrase of Monsieur Vailhe in his "Life of Father d'Alzon" was "to assure the strength of the Congregation by the creation of a kind of aristocracy... recruited with care...with a special view to the future of the Institute."(30) This method was used by other Founders of new Congregations. For example, Father d'Alzoi arranged that the members of his Congregation take simple vows, but wished that a certain number at least, after ten years, would take solemn vows. Father Chevalier at no time contemplated the members of his Congregation taking solemn vows or reciting the Divine Office in choir, as did Father d'Alzon, who wished to model his Institute, as closely as possible, on the ancient Orders.(31)

Father Chevalier did not have in mind any juridical similarity between his Institute and the old Orders of the Church, - but looked to the vows and the common life as the basis of his plan. As these two elements were the essence of the religious life they were necessary in his Institute. Thus private vows, which he and Father Maugeness took at Christmas in 1856, were in Father Piperon's words "a first step and a preparation for the religious life." (32)

The special significance of the Vows as the determining factor in the Congregation resulted in some stipulations concerning the associate Secular priests, who were actually not following the Community life. In 1855 the "Essai Provisoire" stated in their regard; "They will follow the rules of the missionaries as a basis for their lives. They will pursue the same end, but they will not take vows." (Es.27) However, in 1857 this was worded "They will take vows if they so desire." (P.52)

The object, of course, which dominated all the Rules is the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. However we note, rather with surprise, that even making allowances for the embryonic nature of the Rules, there is comparatively little reference in them to the Sacred Heart. In the ascetical considerations and in the Rules themselves there are, for example, more prayers and exercises of devotion in honour of Our Lady than of the Sacred Heart. However, in general, the two devotions go hand in hand and the prayers - and exercises are directed to both the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In the portion dealing with the interior life of the members, again surprising we find hardly any references to the supremacy of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, where naturally we would expect to find them. There is no separate chapter on the spirit of the Society, but in the Conclusion we find it admirably expressed; "The greatest charity, the most perfect union shall always reign amongst the members of the little community of the Sacred Heart. The virtues of gentleness, humility, obedience, the spirit of poverty, zeal, sacrifice and devotedness shall be their characteristics."

"All for Jesus - Nothing for self.

All things for Heaven - Nothing for earth." (Es.27; 11.120)

Happily these Rules states "Each member should strive to practise the virtues of the Heart of Jesus, particularly His gentleness and His humility. (Es.17; R.44-) The Master of Novices shall teach his charges to love and practise in a special way the virtues of obedience and humility, which ought to be the outstanding virtues of the Society, for they are those of the Heart of Jesus Himself." (R.12)

"The Novices will strive to make themselves worthy children of the Heart of Jesus, and destined, as they are, to become priests and apostles of the Heart of Jesus, they will love to practise His gentleness, humility, charity, obedience and spirit of poverty." (Es.11; R.23)

The only text which goes further than the simple enumeration of virtues is one which is added to an injunction in "Essai Provisoire" (P.47) "Infinitely holy, perfectly pure, the Heart of Jesus wishes His priests to be pure of heart, irreproachable in chastity. The virginity of Mary gave the adorable Heart of Jesus to the world. The purity of Saint John allowed him to repose on the breast of the Divine Master and to know all the treasures of Its love and mercy. Called, as was the Apostle of Love, to make known the grandeur and beauty of the Heart of Jesus; destined as Mary was to give that Heart to the world, the Missionary of the Sacred Heart will be pure like Saint John, pure like Mary, pure like the Heart of Jesus Himself." This text is not inserted in the "Regies", where we find repeated the original text of the "Essai"; "The Missionary of the Sacred Heart, of that Heart so pure and holy, will carefully shun anything that could blemish the beauty of a virtue which should shine in his soul with special brilliance." (R.34) As regards the other vows the first two manuscripts merely mention that the members "should follow the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, their Leader and their Model." (Es. 45,58; R.31,35) The "Abrege" omits this text altogether.

Reference to the Sacred Heart is made at the conclusion of the text on interior mortification, and when speaking of exterior mortification the Rules advise: "Let no meal pass without making some small act of sacrifice in honour of the sorrowful Heart of Jesus." (R.57-58) These texts occur only in the "Regle's", which also is the only manuscript which stresses the importance of the devotion to the Sacred Heart in the interior life; "The Missionaries will have a tender devotion to the Adorable Heart of Jesus. Let them not forget that He is the source of all graces, the fount of light and love, the abyss of all mercy. They will have recourse to Him in all their sorrows, temptations, their weariness and their difficulties," (p53) None of these texts are retained in the third edition - the Abrege, which, however, in speaking of the end of the Society, remarks: "The Society aims principally to make known all the treasures of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and the grandeur and richness of the Immaculate Heart of His august mother. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart will profess a tender and special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Who is the Head of the Society; to the most holy Heart of Mary and to St. Joseph. (p.1). The special character of the Society is mentioned only when the end or object of

the Institute is spoken of, especially in the "Regles". The "Essai provisoire" gives just the brief definition: "The end of the Society is to make known to men all the treasures of Love and Mercy, which the Heart of Jesus contains and to entice them to surrender themselves entirely to Him."

After insisting on the obligation of practising devotion to the Sacred Heart, the "Regles" continue: "They will accomplish no work of their sacred ministry, and undertake no task without entrusting it to the powerful protection of the Sacred Heart. They will strive to spread the devotion everywhere, and to inflame the hearts of men with the fire of this Divine Love. In order to do this they will propose it to their listeners in all their sermons and to their penitents in confession." We remember this was the promise made in the pact in 1855: "They will make the faithful realise that this Divine Heart is the Source of their Salvation, of their graces, and of the Sacraments they receive. They will speak often of the treasures which this Heart contains, and of Its immense Love for mankind, (R.53-54 Es.40) In this regard the "Essai" continues: "They will make known the Sacred Heart in all their exhortations. They will receive sinners with the charity of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary." (Bs.34)

As this devotion is presented, above all, from the angle of the apostolate we find several texts in the Rule regarding the missions: "One of the ceremonies during the missions will be the Consecration to the Sacred Heart and the act of Reparation for the outrages committed against Him." (Es. 16,85; R.90) "Every day some words of invitation will be addressed to poor sinners, who are so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." (Es.10; R.106) "The Missionary should inspire a great devotion to the Sacred Heart, the inexhaustible source of all grace, in the hearts of the faithful, entice them to place themselves in His care, and every day, morning and night, to say the invocation 'Sacred Heart of Jesus, have pity on me.' (Es,112, R.III) This, according to Saint Margaret Mary is an infallible means of perseverance."

The apostolic point of view is again stressed in Rules for the Association of Secular Priests: "To give to the Heart of Jesus adorers and victims is the object of this affiliation." (R.53) Both the "Essai" and the Regles present the same object to these priests as to the Missionaries: "They will strive to make known to their parishioners the richness of the Heart of Jesus."(Es.27; R.52)

The formula of the Vows summarises the Spirit of the Society: "In the Name of the Most Holy and Adorable Trinity - the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; in the name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Whom I now consecrate myself, in honour of Mary of all the Angels and Saints of Heaven, I make the vows. in the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred

Heart of Jesus, established to procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls, to make known all the treasures of love and mercy of the Divine Heart of Jesus, as also the grandeur and richness of the Immaculate Heart of His August Mother and I promise to keep faithfully these vows for a period of. . . .etc. (Es.52;R.30)"(33)

Father Chevalier expressed the apostolic nature of the Society in the invocation he chose as its motto: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be forever praised, loved and adored," which he changed soon after to: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved." (Es.I; R.I) This latter form of the invocation must already have been in use when Father Piperon arrived in May-June, 1855, for he tells us that "this was the motto right from the earliest days."

In the early chapter of the "Essai", which refers only briefly to the end of the Society, it is stated that "Rules are necessary to succeed in this sublime enterprise." This is replaced in the "Regles" by a text remarkable from many points of view; "The Sacred Heart of Jesus, the only Source of Light, of Truth and of Life, is not sufficiently known in the world. However, His Love has saved the world, His Blood has purified it, His Grace has changed it, and His Tenderness has preserved it."

"To make known the splendours and the treasures of Mercy of the Heart of Jesus, to spread everywhere the sacred fire of His love, to save souls which are so dear to Him, to combat the selfishness and indifference which outrage His love - that is the end of our Society, the object of our work."

"To make themselves worthy of this sublime mission, it is necessary that the members of the Society strive to become apostles and saints. It is necessary that they have complete command of their passions and inclinations, that they keep a firm heel on the enemy they wish to conquer in others. We have indeed retired from the world into a solitude, which is dear to the Heart of our Divine Saviour, into a fortress where that Heart is King and Master - 'Urbs fortitudinis nostrae Sion. (Is.26/1) However, this retreat, holy as it may be, is not a sufficient guarantee against our human weakness. The angels fell in Heaven, Adam turned away from God in the terrestrial Paradise; Judas sinned in the Cenacle itself, and even in the sanctuary of prayer a religious is able to sin, to fall, to be lost."

"Even in the solitude of monastic life it is possible for a religious to be followed by the love of riches and the spirit of the world, to be attracted by earthly pleasures, troubled by his own inconstancy, persecuted by the fury of the enemy he is fighting. He must take shelter behind the rampart, which rail protect him - "Salvator ponetur in ea murus. (Is.26/1) And what will be this rampart? The Vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Stability. They will be the defence against the spirit of the world, of concupiscence, false liberty and fickleness. They will make him impervious to the blandishments of the world and the insidious attacks of the enemy."

"But the vows themselves, a disastrous contract when they are badly kept, need a safeguard also in the form of constant fidelity to the Rules of the Institute. By the Rules, Poverty is safeguarded as they determine even the smallest details relative to the receiving, possessing and using of worldly goods, submitting all to authority, and putting the will of Superiors in place of one's own liberty and rights. Chastity is safeguarded, because the Rules impose a constantly occupied life, a temperate mode of living apart from the world and its dangers, a protecting submission to Authority. Likewise the Rules protect the Vow of Obedience, as they imply a complete submission of the will, a curtailment of liberty, a shield against pride, source of so many evils, and a guarantee of humility by submitting to Authority all our projects and achievements. By keeping the Rules, Stability is assured, as they guard the Religious against idle dreams, and grant him an inward peace and happiness, a grace and hope of salvation which he knows he will not obtain elsewhere.

"Without the safeguard of the Rules faithfully observed, what will be of the religious with all his natural weakness and the clangors that surround him on all sides? He will certainly be confounded. 'Qui spernit modica paulatim decidet.' The devil, no longer hindered, will launch against his soul every murderous attack, and grievously wound him. 'Adversarius vester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit quaerens quem devoret - Qui dissipat sepem mordebit cum coluber.' (Eccl.8) What will happen to the Community itself where the Rule is not kept? It must surely perish. History has proved that a religious Society can survive only by the faithful observance of its Rule, which is its bulwark. "Ego dedi te hodie in columnam ferream et in murum aeneum.' (Jer. 8/18) When these bulwarks are broken, the fortress soon crumbles and topples in ruins."

"Guilty, then, is the religious who would violate the Rules under the specious pretext that he is not committing sin when he infringes them on the points contrary to the vows. Why? Because he is thereby depriving God of His glory - depriving the Sacred Heart of being loved, and hindering souls from being saved, because he is compromising the future of his Congregation, scandalising his confreres and exposing himself to the loss of his vocation."

"Since these are important considerations, let us guard the Rules scrupulously, not from fear of reprimand or giving offence - we can leave fear to slaves, - not from the culpable desire of winning the esteem of Superiors, but simply from love of the adorable Heart of Jesus. This is the sacred bond which should attach us to our Rules as a safe means of salvation. Let us cherish these Rules which protect all the moments of our daily life, both those of our intimate religious life and those of our contact with the world. They are the barque which will carry us, without fear of shipwreck, over the perilous seas till we reach the haven of Heaven."

One can easily follow the main thoughts of Father Chevalier in these ideals which he has handed down to us: The Son of God, made man, the Source of all Light, Truth and Living has in His love bestowed every treasure of His Sacred Heart on us. His Love has saved and preserved the world, the souls of men so dear to Him. This saving Love, symbolised in His Sacred Heart is not sufficiently known and loved. It has not attained Its object. The end of the Society, then, is to make known these treasures by preaching the devotion to the Sacred Heart thereby

combatting the evils of selfishness and indifference. The members of his Society must be apostles and saints who have overcome the enemy by the faithful practice of their vows, safeguarded by observance of their rules. This is possible only when it is motivated by love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The text emphasises the idea that the Sacred Heart is the Foundation of the apostolic life, of the religious life and of one's own personal sanctification. The love of the Sacred Heart for us is the salutary grace in our lives, and our love for Him the condition of our salvation. Despite this central idea the text needs a little interpretation and explanation as it would seem to imply a certain conflict between the apostolic and monastic ideals of the Society. It is not that Father Chevalier does not explain the harmony between being an apostle and a saint as the common end of the Missionaries. We know that he drew up the rules for priests formed according to the Sulpician method of spirituality (as already explained in Chapter V) and that they are to be understood from this point of view. However

difficulty lies in the passage dealing with the religious life compared with that of the apostolic life of which it is the consequence. The religious life is so prominently put before us as a safeguard from worldly dangers that we are justified in asking ourselves: "Are we to turn away from the active apostolate and find refuge in the solitude of the monastery in order to arrive without danger of shipwreck on the shores of Eternity?"

It is true that the Sacred Heart is placed before us as the foundation of our spirituality, but the two allusions merely say that he who breaks the rules "impedes the Sacred Heart from being loved," and that the rule ought to be kept through love of the Sacred Heart." What is lacking in the text is an expression of the bond between the apostolic life and the religious life, The final impression is that Father Chevalier describes two kinds of life consecrated to the Sacred Heart - one apostolic, the other monastic. In the first the Love of the Sacred Heart is an incentive to apostolic work; in the second it would be a reason for staying in the monastery to sanctify one's own soul.

However, we know from many other sources the mentality of Father Founder on the subject, and that his idea was that the apostolic and "religious life go hand in hand in achieving the aims of the Society. Father Piperon has told us that in the Community at Issoudun "their one desire was to reproduce the life of Jesus Christ at Nazareth and in His ministry their one ambition, as his was, to devote themselves to the salvation of their brothers. They wished, moreover, to become apostles according to the Heart of Jesus, and to live only for His glory and the salvation of souls - to live as perfectly as possible the same life as Jesus, the Supreme Priest, and to model themselves on His Sacred Heart." In his brochures Father Chevalier was himself to write soon afterwards: "The salutary influence of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart is to conform the interior life of the priest to that of Jesus Christ, to aid him to sanctify himself and his brethren. Perfection for him will consist in practising always the precept of St. Paul: "Let that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." This Divine Heart will be the union between their exterior and their interior lives, the strongest and most gentle bond between themselves and other souls. Thanks to this blessed devotion they will be able to enjoy the happiness of which the author of the Imitation wrote: 'He to whom all things are simple, who sees and seeks all things in unity, will know stability of heart and enjoy a lasting peace.' One, indeed, could not find a stronger and mere vibrant bond than with the Heart of Jesus, who every day unites the hearts of his priests with His Own, making them one with Him and in Him."

In this Introduction to the Rules we find no development of the theme of perfection in relation to the virtues of the Sacred Heart. For example in the following text, which would have offered an opportunity, there is no reference to the imitation of these virtues, which he developed in the Rules themselves when treating of the vows; "The virtue most dear to the priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is charity, because it is the characteristic virtue of Him whom they have taken as their model. From the beginning, this devotion has always been the soul of Christian piety, for it has been the expansion of love." Nor is there reference to the great value and importance that Father Chevalier attached to the vows, of the emotion he showed when he used to speak of these and to present them to his companions "as a great favour to be merited." This is surprising by contrast to his often repeated references in other places to the part the vows were to play in the Society, e.g. "Those who wish to practise this dedication to the Sacred Heart in all its perfection, and under all the forms involved, will be able to enter more intimately into the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart by pronouncing the three vows of Religion. "It is certain" he said in his brochures "that a vow in itself has a greater excellence than a simple act of good will. God loves sacrifice, as it is part of all worship, and the grace it gives draws hearts to a more perfect immolation of the will and affections. This immolation is expressed in the vow of obedience, the vow of poverty and the vow of chastity. The Society the Sacred Heart accepts and makes itself responsible for the souls drawn to this perfection, of the Christian life.

In the light of these texts how poor the sketch of Religious Life appears as it is given in the Introduction to the Rules, and how isolated it is in the grand synthesis which Father Chevalier taught and tried to realise. If perhaps we are tempted to think that the brief nature of the Introduction, and its emphasis on the monastic rule were a result of the period of doubt and hesitation, we must remember that it is only an isolated text in the midst all the others which precede, accompany and follow it. We look elsewhere, then, for an explanation of the anomaly, and the following extract from Father Piperon's writings would help to explain it. Speaking of the first two Missionaries of the Sacred Heart he says: "Both formed for the sacerdotal life by the disciples of Father Olier, they had preserved a profound esteem and real affection for the traditions of the Seminary. They thought they could do better than continue in their solitude to practise the Rule to which they had become accustomed, adapting it where necessary to their new kind of life; modifying it when experience and the direction of the Holy Ghost demanded it.(34) Consequently, at first they drew up a tentative rule, resembling as closely possible that of the Major Seminary."(35) This was the Rule in the text we have quoted. It was not "the Constitutions," nor even a complete formula, which he did not draw up till later on, but a mode of life based on that of the Seminary, and for the purpose of directing them in their new Seminary - the Novitiate where they would learn to become Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Father Tronson, author of the final edition of the Rules which Father Olier gave to the Seminary, had stressed their importance. Father Chevalier's Rules were but an adaptation of Father Tronson's ideas, expressed in the 1st and 2nd Conferences in his "Manual for Seminarists," and in his tract on "Obedience and Submission to the Rule." The prime consideration according to Father Tronson, was not the apostolate, but the formation and value of religious solitude in the Seminary. He speaks only of "our perfection, while we are here in the house." "Here," he says, "we have only one thing to do - to perform "all our exercises well - to strive for our advancement, our perfection. We are here in a place of retreat, separated from the world, in a community where we are obliged to live under a rule."

In the whole of Father Chevalier's exposition of the Rules there are only two points not in Father Tronson's edition, namely the Vows and the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In introducing the Vows he makes the necessary modifications to the life of the Seminary, and changes where necessary the application of the verse from Isais 26/1 used by Father Tronson. The "Rampart of the commandments and the law" is changed to "the rampart of the vows," and he stresses all Father Tronson's ideas on the importance of the vows as the "rampart," it is the rule which he emphasises at the end without further expanding the intrinsic value of the vows. They are mentioned mainly as "a means of defence." When Father Tronson speaks of God fortifying "our souls" with the safeguard of the Rules, for Father Chevalier it is the fortifying of "our solitude". Although he repeats what Father Tronson says: "It is not the holy places which sanctify men, and it is not enough just to live in a holy house, still the vows and the rules remain the "ramparts of solitude." The Rules, he says, are "the bulwarks of the fortress." The other assertions about the effects of violating the rules, e.g. the picture of shipwreck on the sea studded with reefs" etc. are taken from Father Tronson. (36)

The conclusion from all this is that this passage from the "Introduction" concerning the religious life is but a collection of ideas and quotations from Father Tronson, written for people and circumstances quite different from those Father Chevalier had in mind. Impressed by the image of the fortress and its ramparts and convinced that the conclusions of Father Tronson concerning the violation of the rules were exact, Father Chevalier adapted them for application in his own Community, without occupying himself too much with their logic or the context in which they were written. His main idea was to impress on his subjects the necessity of keeping the Rule: "He who breaks the Rule injures himself, deprives God of His glory, hinders the Sacred Heart from being loved, and souls from being saved, compromises the future of the Society, scandalises his brethren, and exposes himself to the loss of his vocation. Let us observe the Rules, then, through love of the Adorable Heart of Jesus." The rest is

but a literary introduction. Although it does not reflect the complete concept of Father Chevalier regarding his Congregation it reflects well the ideal of the one companion who stayed with him during these years.

Father Piperon's Ideas on the End and Object of the Society

Father Charles Piperon did not join the community at Issoudun precisely in view of the Apostolate, nor even of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Nowhere in the spiritual exercises of his early years do we meet the name of the Sacred Heart. We could even believe that he came to Issoudun for want of something better: because of the unwillingness of the Archbishop or his spiritual director to allow him to take notice of his natural fear of parish work and the apostolate. We know that during his Seminary days he had spoken with Jules Chevalier on this subject and had told him that his desire was to sanctify himself in silence and retirement, as did the Trappists at Sept-Fons, "for what will become of me" he had said, "when the ministry gives greater freedom to my deplorable nature?" He himself gave the reply: "I will be ship-wrecked; I will be lost."(37) The introduction to the Rules should have suited him, for, as we have seen, they promised that safety "from shipwreck on a sea strewn with reefs, and a safe arrival, full of life, on the shores of Eternity."

We recall the difference of outlook on the matter of the apostolate in the conversation he had with Father Chevalier after Father Maugenest had been recalled. Father Chevalier had said; "Soon our turn will come to be appointed to charge of a parish," insinuating that, although he did not wish it way, he was, nevertheless, prepared to carry on the apostolate elsewhere. Father Piperon, however, had other ideas: "If the Cardinal disbands our community, we will go elsewhere. If you do not wish to come, I know quite well what I will do. I will not join the parochial clergy. I will look for a Congregation which will accept me. I will go to the ends of the earth rather than work in a parish." What is primarily in his mind is the religious life under any form at all, and as yet no signs of the apostolate of the Sacred Heart. Later Father Piperon was to prepare his novices for this very apostolate but at present he was a long way from the sentiments he expressed later in a beautiful meditation - "Our special end as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart." Even in 1873 he was still opposed to parish work, and was thinking of joining La Chartreuse. Father Chevalier wrote to him: "As regards your idea about La Chartreuse, I will not repeat here what I have already told you on the subject. I pray God that you will get rid of this temptation."(38)

Of his two confreres Father Piperon wrote; "Both consumed by the same zeal for souls, both animated by an ardent desire of sacerdotal perfection, they seemed destined to perform the same works and live the common life." (39) Compared with them he considered himself more of an obstacle than, a help, and a force of little value to them. Undoubtedly, an expression of deep humility of which he had a generous endowment but rather a strong and exaggerated enunciation of the situation, and one in which we might suspect a tinge of romanticism, did we not realise that underneath, he had his own firm and divergent opinion about the nature and end of the Congregation. This difference of opinion between himself and Father Chevalier was in fact a source of difficulty, and one which must have caused in the latter some doubts as to what exactly was the Will of God. However, when he was certain that his project was according to God's Will, he relentlessly pursued his plan and declared, that "those who desire to find in devotion to the Sacred Heart only a help to live as holy priests will content themselves by joining the Association of Priests of the Sacred Heart and not the Congregation itself."

It was then that Father Piperon, tormented by doubt, wondered if his vocation was in the Institute. With the departure of Father Maugenest, Father Chevalier had lost the confrere who saw eye to eye with him regarding the purpose of the Society, and Father Piperon's different ideas on the subject would certainly have played their part in his doubts and his crisis. He was by himself now in defending and maintaining his plan for the Society such as he had conceived it right from the very beginning.

The Congregation, as he saw it would be an Institute entirely devoted to the Sacred Heart, with the complete dedication of its members to an apostolate which would be the "raison d'être" of their existence - devoted in all their interior life, even to the immolation of the vows, to the cause of the Divine Heart, Whose love would be their inspiration. In that Heart they would find their unity and their power, for His love is the soul of Christian piety and apostolic endeavour.

This ideal naturally, opened up a vast field of activity, while the specific end remained the same. Father Piperon tells us that Father Chevalier's aims and ambitions extended far and wide. "Often during recreation the conversation turned to the foreign missions. We admired the zeal of the Apostles, their sufferings, their sacrifices, their heroic exploits. We were envious of those called to this sublime apostolate. Every time the conversation was on these lines, Father Founder would enthusiastically tell us in burning words of his desire of seeing the future Missionaries of the Sacred Heart charged with one of the distant and perilous foreign fields, and he would express the hope that he would have the grace of finishing his days that way himself."(40)

Among the functions of the pastoral ministry" he wrote, "there is a special one for the priests of the Sacred Heart, as it was for the Divine Heart Himself, to look after the people who are the most needy and most neglected in the world."(41) There were two other special works for his future Society which were dear to his heart, the home missions, and the affiliation of secular priests with the Congregation, of which we will speak more fully later on. Of the home missions he wrote in one of the brochures:

"These missions, with their practical sanctifying exercises, offer the most favourable opportunities for spreading devotion to the Divine Heart.(42)

Regarding the Association of secular priests let us recall his words to Father Maugenest; "It would be necessary for a beginning to have the help of priests in making known this Adorable Heart." Other numerous texts which we have already quoted show how he appreciated the importance of this movement and how it coincided perfectly with his idea of the priesthood.

VICTORY IN SIGHT

Now that we have closely studied the ideas of Father Chevalier and the historical foundation of the Society we are able to get a clearer concept of the difficulties and cares that beset him, and to see how he conquered them. Convinced that their special vocation was calling them to a life completely consecrated to the Sacred Heart in order to bring the love of Jesus to as many people as possible and to make them love Him in return, Father Chevalier and Father Maugenest had founded the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart., These two intrepid priests formed the nucleus of the grand movement whose ideals were aptly expressed in their motto; "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved." Living a common life together, and having taken their vows, their aim was to procure the Glory of God and the salvation of souls by preaching the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They began successfully throughout the Province of Berry by their preaching to the people, and interesting the clergy in their work.

Although this interest was real and sympathetic amongst the priests the applications to join the Institute were at first not very numerous. This, amongst other things, could be attributed to the fact that they were not very well known outside their own province of Berry, and to a lack of knowledge amongst the clergy of what the vows entailed. However the Founders were anxious to attract priests of good-will to their ranks, even though they would not be bound by the vows, which as yet had no canonical status because not yet approved by the Holy See. They hoped that by close association with community life these priests would lose any fear they had of the vows, and eventually join the Society. But even under these conditions, the Congregation gained very few recruits during the first few years. Father Piperon was the only one who persevered, and we might say that he did so at this early juncture mainly from personal reasons. One disappointment succeeded another. First of all Father Maugenest was recalled by the Cardinal and that meant the end of the home-missions. They had looked to this form their apostolate to interest priests outside Issoudun in their work and thereby spread devotion to the Sacred Heart. Then there was the fear that, being a community of only two, any day now they might be put back to parish work and the Society be dissolved. As we have seen they misread the Cardinal's intention on this point, as he was

keen to maintain the Society even though he had taken Father Maugenest from it. Father Chevalier had resigned himself but he could see the dream of his beloved Society gradually fading, and the whole disappointing situation was aggravated by the fact that the one colleague left to him had other ideas about the end and object of the Congregation.

Blessed Peter Julian Eymard, Founder of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, had the same heart-breaking experience when two of his first companions deserted him, leaving him alone with Father de Cuers. He also went to seek advice and encouragement from the saintly Cure of Ars.

As though these troubles were not enough, the Cardinal had closed the chapel, forcing the Founder to precipitate the building of the new church, which in itself presented plenty of worry, and to bind himself more closely to parish work. The opposition he met in various quarters, of which we have previously treated, and the imminent possibility of having to take Father Crozat's place further contributed to make the picture a black one indeed.

Under these conditions it is little wonder that few priests wished to join such an Institute, especially as already Issoudun did not have a very good name as a parish amongst the clergy. It looked as though the Community there would merely be a body of priests looking after the needs of the parish. But in spite of all his difficulties, Father Chevalier remained firmly convinced that God was calling him to promote Devotion to the Sacred Heart throughout the entire world, and to found a Society with this end in view. How was this conviction to be reconciled with the present situation? Had he not failed in his mission by becoming too deeply involved in the parish of Issoudun itself? Had he not tempted Providence by directing the Will of God to just the ministry of Issoudun, and by building this new church, had he not ruined for all time the work of his newly-born Society?

It is true that this state of affairs had been imposed on him by the Cardinal, who had taken away Father Maugenest, closed the chapel, and encouraged Father Crozat in his efforts to restrict the work of the Missionaries to the parish. On the other hand was not this the will of authority? And the obvious blessing of God on their ministry in the parish - was it not an indication that this is what God wanted them to do? Perhaps after all he had wrongly interpreted his mission, and should now change or limit its object'.

Father Chevalier prayed earnestly about it. He sought the help of God, and the Saints. La Salette, Paray and Ars brought him light and certitude, blessed the work and invited him to continue, and to direct everything openly and simply towards the end as he had envisaged it, and towards the end of the Institute as he had always seen it. He must now leave the future in the hands of Providence in all confidence and humility. "The Reverend Father" wrote Father Piperon, "returned from Rome full of confidence in the success of his mission. Pius IX had blessed and encouraged him. From now on he would go ahead with complete assurance in spite of all difficulties. Were not the blessings and encouragement of the Holy Father those of Jesus Himself? Henceforth no difficulty, no obstacle would break his determined resolution."(43)

From all these trials Father Chevalier emerged the man as the Society was to know him for the rest of his life: unshakable before all and everyone in defence of the end and distinctive character of the Institute because he was its Founder and such was his duty. As Father Piperon remarked: "At Paray he had become imbued with the very Spirit of the Sacred Heart, which he strove to impart to us. This pilgrimage was a remarkable event, an important phase in the life of the venerated Father." The "crisis" then, resolved itself for Father Chevalier personally in a more complete abandonment to God Whose ways are not clear but Whom he follows in spite of all. The Will of God dominates him still more completely - he obeys it always more blindly. This is the victory of his fidelity to his mission which God was asking of him - his purification which had given him a greater certitude and a greater love.

It was to be the beginning of a new era, an era of a surer and more energetic activity in the development of the Society. Before turning his attention to the building of the second part of the church he will now renovate and enlarge the Monastery. We shall then see God offering him the means of establishing the association of Secular Priests and of founding the Third Order of Lay People. God will use circumstances in such a way that soon there will be presented the practical and efficacious means of developing immediately a world-wide activity in honour of the Sacred Heart; the Arch-confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Father Maugenest is to return, as parish priest of Issoudun, and be the means of binding the parish to the Congregation - a union in which Father Chevalier will then see great opportunities for the growth of his work. God is to send him worthy collaborators, who will found the Apostolic School thus assuring the Society future priests. The Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will come into being to spread the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart throughout the world, for the greater glory of the Sacred Heart. Lastly, God will place an Archbishop in the See of Bourges who will devote himself to the Congregation and its works as a paternal friend.

Thus the "crisis" of the early days, borne with humility and prayerful supplication, was to be a source of grace, of greater abandonment to the Will of God, of certitude and growth in love. Also, by the grace of God, it will be of fundamental significance for the Congregation.

CHAPTER XI TRANSFER OF THE PARISH AND COMPLETION OF THE CHURCH

Appeal for Funds:

Father Chevalier returned from Rome, reassured, confident, and ready face the future with courage. He had told the Holy Father what he believed to be the Will of God in his regard, and had received the Pontiff's blessing. On 1st December, 1862, he wrote to Father le Blanc S.J. "Two years ago, 20th September, I knelt at the feet of His Holiness, and spoke to him of our work, such as Almighty God had inspired it, Pius IX lifted his eyes towards Heaven and seemed happy in spite of all his cares." The rest of his letter is a resume of the designs he had in mind for the Society, emphasising the main points. The end of the Society is the honouring of the Sacred Heart by all possible means, and the sanctification of souls and of the clergy by this so precious means; it is the application to a sick society of the means which It offers to cure it; it is reparation for the outrages inflicted upon that Heart; it is the perfection of its missionaries by the exercises of a regular and essentially religious life. The means of spreading the Devotion will be by preaching, the conducting of missions, the education of youth, the direction of souls, the work of the sacred ministry, sacerdotal and lay associations, and the spreading of devotion to Mary etc.(1)

The main work confronting Father Chevalier on his return was the completion of the first part of the Church. He records in his Notes; "We put all our energy into the finishing of our beloved Church of the Sacred Heart."(2) Worried how to finance the building, he decided to seek the help of benefactors by distributing pictures of the Sacred Heart, and stating the needs of the newly-born Society. He remembered having read in the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary that Our Lord had asked her to distribute images of His Sacred Heart, and that she had done so as an effective means of spreading the Devotion. This he thought, could also be a way of propagating the Devotion and, at the same time, gathering some very necessary finance for the very worthy cause of the completion of the church. He resolved to have printed a large number of pictures of the Sacred Heart, and to distribute them far and wider. A small offering would be asked in exchange, but he hoped as the Society became known, it would result in more benefactors becoming interested in the work. Even though he felt that it was the Sacred Heart who had inspired the idea he let it ripen in prayer and reflection, and asked the Community to do likewise. His first difficulty was that, knowing little about religious art himself, he would have to seek expert advice on the design and type of picture, which would have to be both liturgical and artistic.

Providence provided the answer. In the Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris, there was a priest, Father Boitoux, a well known connoisseur of religious art, who was in contact with the right people in the engraving and printing business. He was a very charitable priest, who had the reputation of helping any needy cause. In spite of his many daily duties he was never known to turn anyone away. Father Chevalier decided to seek his help, and duly called on him. Father Boitoux showed great interest in the newly founded Congregation, and he became a staunch friend. Not only did he promise to take in hand the present venture, but over the next ten years was to prove himself a real benefactor of the Society. On the occasion of the pilgrimage to the new Shrine at Issoudun on the 8th September, 1873, he visited the Monastery and Church for the first time, and

was visibly affected as he knelt before the altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to the construction of which he had contributed so many valuable ideas. He was greatly impressed by the devotion of the numerous pilgrims, and for over two hours helped in the distribution of Holy Communion. It was estimated that on that memorable day, over 11,000 pilgrims approached the Holy Table.(3)

Father Boiteux himself designed the engraving for the new picture, and took on the responsibility of having the copies printed.(4) The idea of distributing those pictures of the Sacred Heart had occurred to Father Chevalier after his visit to Paray-le-Monial, and they were put into circulation shortly before his visit to Rome. We find the first reference to the plan dated 5th April, 1860. He mentions that the pictures had not yet arrived at Issoudun, as the printer was sick, but that he expected them at the end of the week. Ten days later he wrote that he was taking some of them to Bourges, as that day Madame Chauvenau-Lagarde was bringing a few thousand copies from Paris. By 18th February, 1861 the copies of the first impression had all been distributed, and Father Chevalier impatiently awaited the next printing. On 6th April he was able to present a balance sheet, which shewed that he had received 18,350 francs as a result of the appeal, and that he expected more as many of the letters had not yet been answered. Several impressions were made, and we have been able to find a copy on which was mentioned an indulgence granted by the Pope, on 20th September, 1860 for the recitation of the invocation; "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved." On the 31st July, 1862 Father Chevalier mentions that he has just received some new pictures.(5) One copy in Italian states the object of the offering, and adds that an indulgence of 40 days has been granted by the Archbishop of Bourges for the invocation: "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us."

The picture represents the bust of Our Lord, "holding His Heart in His left hand, and pointing to it with His right hand. Underneath is the text: "Behold this Heart which has loved mankind so much. My child, give me thy heart." On the reverse side of the card is a statement of the benefits which are conferred on the donor: participation in a Special Mass each first Friday, and in the prayers and good works of the Missionaries. The names of the benefactors will be inscribed in a special register, and will be placed in a vermeil-coloured "heart" in the new chapel. After 1861 pictures of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were also printed and distributed.

Sometimes a little booklet containing "Hymns to the Sacred Heart" was posted with the pictures, as we learn from a letter written to Father Le Blanc on 26th December, 1865. From the time he had conducted missions in the country areas, Father Chevalier felt the need of such a collection of hymns in honour of the Sacred Heart to meet in a simple way the requirements of the people. He considered it an excellent method of preaching the devotion to the country folk. Not being able to find anything of that nature available, he decided to compile the booklet himself - a modest little edition of some twenty-five to thirty pages comprising the more popular hymns, which people could easily understand and sing with enthusiasm. Such was the origin of the "Collection of Hymns to the Sacred Heart" which he published in an enlarged edition some years later, and which was to become very popular, running through many editions.(6) The hymns were not exactly literary gems to stir the enthusiasm of poets and artists. Their aim was more elevated than that - namely to teach the young and the simple folk the devotion to the Sacred Heart with all its richness. It became a very "useful little manual and was in the Christian sense of the word, a good work.(7) Besides being a means of propagating devotion to the Sacred Heart and securing finance for the new church, the appeal served two other useful purposes. It helped to make the young Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart known beyond the confines of the Berry district, and it prepared the way for the spreading of the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.(8)

The appeal actually succeeded beyond all expectation as the small pictures of the Sacred Heart became very popular and were in much demand, not only throughout France itself, but even in the neighbouring countries. The same Divine Providence which feeds the mighty rivers from the little streams; and the latter in their turn, from the little drops of rain lifted from the vast reservoirs of the oceans - all with the purpose of nourishing the earth, that same Providence was attentive to the needs of the humble Founder and supplied the means for the accomplishment of his designs.(9) He himself was amply rewarded because he trusted in the words of Our Lord to Saint Margaret Mary that he would bless the homes where an image of His Sacred Heart would be honoured, and that He would bless in a special way all those who spread Devotion to His Sacred Heart.(10) Since he firmly believed that all graces come to us through the intercession of Mary, he attributed the success to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Father Piperon agreed with this sentiment for he has written "What mysterious power was responsible for drawing these resources to a small town hardly known half a century ago to the rest of the world? Let us state simply that it was not the influence of Father Chevalier, for he was completely unknown outside the local district. We have to look elsewhere for the explanation. This power was none other than that of the Immaculate Mother God, the Protectress of our young Society, Who wished this new church to be a centre of devotion to the Heart of Her Son, and to teach us that She is the Ineffable Treasurer of this Divine Heart. In Her maternal hands, Father Chevalier was but the instrument chosen to effect Her merciful designs. Of this he himself was profoundly convinced. He would severely have reprimanded us if we had attributed to him any influence which he did not possess. As a matter of fact he was extremely sensitive on the point. We can bear witness to the fact that never either in public or in private conversation did we once hear him say anything of a self-laudatory or complacent nature about the works he was directing. He certainly loved these works. They were his great passion: the object of his every thought and care. For their success he spent himself daily without measure and would willingly have died for them. However, he rarely spoke of them, and if he did it was to thank the Heart of Jesus and His Blessed Mother for the graces received and to urge us to do likewise. Whenever it was necessary to refer to the work in addressing the faithful, he did it so delicately and with such humility that a stranger would not have guessed that he himself was the originator of this work. One day during a large gathering of members of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, he was describing the progress of this work and recounting the innumerable favours which Our Lady confers on those who invoke Her under this blessed title. We could feel the fire and sincerity of his words, but not once did he indicate by word or gesture that he was the instrument which God was using in this marvellous work. His powerful words focused the attention of the listeners on God and His Mother, and the orator himself was utterly forgotten. Coming away from the gathering, I remarked to one of my confreres; 'If Father Chevalier had been speaking of achievements accomplished a century ago or in a distant country would he have spoken otherwise?'

'No', he replied, 'he spoke of the whole enterprise as though he himself had been an utter stranger to its origin.'"

"Many other people noticed the same trait in his character - a complete aversion to talking about himself in any boasting manner. In all my dealings with him I can never remember once finding him at fault in this matter. He shunned any praise of himself. In private conversation he attributed any personal success to the Author of all Good, and adroitly changed to another topic. If the eulogy was public he could hardly hide his embarrassment, and after the gathering would deplore the incident. On one occasion he had invited a talented and zealous religious to conduct a novena in the church. He was impressed by the soundness and simplicity of the preacher, but on the last day the latter fell from grace in the eyes of the Founder, when he publicly spoke of the zeal and energy of Father Chevalier and the great work he was doing. Hardly had we left the church than he turned to me and said; 'He must have lost his head. I will never get him again to preach in the church. The pulpit should not be used for that kind of talk.'"

"However, we must say that as the years went by he became less drastic in his reactions, but he always showed a distaste for human praise.(11) Father Chevalier was firmly convinced that the promising success of his work was due entirely to grace, obtained through the intercession of the Mother of God. This conviction followed from the astonishing, even miraculous circumstances in which the Society was born. The brief period of doubt, when he wondered if he were "tempting Providence" had passed and now this calm conviction permeated all he did. He based this conviction on faith more than any intrinsic evidence that the work would succeed. He had clearly in his mind now what he wanted to do, but how to translate the theory into practice was his present concern. How was he, tied to Issoudun and with only one companion to obtain enough priests and Brothers to spread his Congregation throughout the world? His faith in the validity of his mission, confirmed by his pilgrimages, was

his strength, and he calmly placed his confidence in the Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Virgin Mary who had always conferred so many blessings on his Congregation. He had before him a twofold task: to organise his Institute in its initial stages and to organise the apostolate which was to be its special work. Convinced that everything in his work was the fruit of Divine grace which comes to us through the channel of ecclesiastical authority and circumstances, he had come to doubt the end of the Institute. This was on account of the apostolate in which he had become involved, and through the medium of which he saw no possibility of attaining this sublime general end. Thanks, however, to the supernatural light received through saints living and dead, and to the approbation given by the highest authority in the Church, had now arrived, at the certitude that his projects were in conformity with the Divine Will.

Nevertheless, this certitude was not modifying the situation in which found himself involved, and the only thing left for him to do was to trust blindly in Jesus and Mary to give the solution and bring his ideal to the fulness of fruition. The crisis had had the good result - that he now knew himself to be on the right way and that Jesus and Mary would guide and bless him.

We must not think that Father Chevalier, no matter how strong his conviction about his mission, was content just to pray and calmly await developments, leaving all the work to God. He understood only too well the necessity of human collaboration in the plan, of salvation. In his apostolic work he appreciated the words of St. Paul: "To fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body which is the Church, where I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God." (Col. 7/21)

He was by nature a person of extraordinary energy, a fact which the following tribute from Father Piperon bears out: "He was in every sense of the word a worker. If someone had told me that, like St. Alphonsus Liguori, he had taken a vow never to waste a moment in useless occupations I would willingly have believed it. I never at any time saw him idle for a moment. His energy was far above the ordinary. It is no exaggeration to say that during his long life he crowded into one day the work it would have taken four of his subjects to do. This is the reason why he initiated the many important works left as a legacy to his disciples."(12)

The Parish of Issoudun handed over to the Missionaries.

Father Maugenest rejoins the Society, and is appointed Parish Priest of St. Cyr.

In later chapters we will speak more of Father Chevalier's co-operation with grace, and the energy he put into his activities after 1860. For the moment all his attention and energy were needed to deal with the rather painful situation that had developed in the parish. Before speaking of this we must remember that France was at this period in a state of political turmoil, which probably had its minor repercussions in Issoudun. After the Orsini incident on 14th January, 1858, the Emperor Napoleon III gradually changed his attitude towards the Papal States. By various intrigues he tried to preserve his prestige with the French Catholics, while at the same time endeavouring to win favour with the Italian Revolutionaries. After the Convention of Plombieres war broke out between the Piedmontese and Austria. The Austrians were defeated and in the ensuing Treaty of Villafranca and the Peace Treaty of Zurich, the Revolutionaries had their own way and the Pope was deprived of the Romagna and other possessions. Pope Pius IX vigorously protested in September, 1859 and the French bishops supported him more or less openly, condemning the intrigues and the politics of the Emperor. The Vicomte de la Gueronniere wrote his pamphlet "The Pope and the Congress," but this only added fuel to the fire, and bitterness reached its zenith in 1860. In a letter to the Pope, Napoleon suggested that he consider the situation as a "fait accompli", to which the Holy Father replied by the Encyclical "Nulli Certi", which excommunicated all the usurpers of the Papal possessions. The Government suppressed Louis Veuillot's paper "L'Univers", but "Le Monde" appeared to take its place. In the following summer the Organisation of the Zouaves Pontificaux was formed. Many French soldiers joined it and offerings poured in from all over the country for Peter's Pence. Garibaldi, however, captured Sicily; Cavour seized more of the Papal possessions, and the Zouaves were defeated at Castelfidardo, their General, Lamoriciere, surrendering at Ancone in September 1860. In February, 1861 the Vicomte took up the attack again in a second pamphlet "France, Rome and Italy." The French Bishops reacted violently at times in their Pastoral letters, for example, Bishop Pie's admonition to Napoleon: "Wash your hands, O Pilate."

In the midst of all this political upheaval a new Archbishop was appointed to Bourges. Cardinal du Pont had died, and was succeeded by His Grace, Alexandre, Basile-Alexis Menjaud. Born on 1st June, 1791, he was consecrated bishop in 1839 as Coadjutor to Archbishop de Forbin-Janson of Nancy. When the Archbishop went as a missionary to the United States, as "an exile" rumour had it, Bishop Menjaud administered the diocese until his appointment at the age of 68 to the Archdiocese of Bourges on 26th September, 1859. During the short time of his occupancy of the See, Archbishop Menjaud showed great interest in the newly-founded Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and proved himself a staunch friend.(13) He was in favour of following the policy of his predecessor in handing over the parish of Issoudun to the Missionaries. He was anxious to hurry the transfer on account of the disturbed political situation, as such a move needed the Imperial sanction, and it was becoming more difficult to obtain approval for a Religious Society, which as yet had not been officially recognised by the Government to undertake such work. We remember that Father Maugenest had written to Father Crozat about the latter's proposed resignation, and the transfer of the parish; "The time is pressing and that which can be done now might be impossible later on."

The occasion of the move made by the Archbishop must have resulted from the letter that Father Chevalier wrote on the 5th April, 1860, which we have already quoted. Father Crozat had already intimated to the Vicar General, when he passed through Issoudun, that he wished to resign as parish priest, and that dignity had told him that the Archbishop would not be opposed to it. The fact that the Archpriest had not officially reported the matter to Father Chevalier, who must have heard of it only later on, seems to indicate that this was the reason why the relationship between Father Crozat and the Missionaries became strained and that the parish priest joined the ranks of the opposition. This is confirmed by a letter written on 15th April saying that Father Crozat had decided not to resign, and on 17th June, Father Chevalier wrote; "The parish priest has suddenly recovered from his fatigue."(14)

In the meantime, the Archbishop had come to Issoudun for the Confirmations on 29th April. From the events which followed we naturally wonder if His Grace insisted on the resignation of Father Crozat and informed him that Father Chevalier was to be his successor. In any case from this time on the attitude of the old parish priest changed, and he became hostile and even offensive to the Missionaries, as Father Maugenest's letters testify. The supposition that Father Chevalier had been involved in the matter by the Archbishop himself, even though he did not wish to take over the parish can be deduced from a letter written on 8th April, 1861, wherein he announced his intention of calling on both the Archbishop and Father de Champgrand. The fact that the latter was opposed to the Missionaries taking care of the parish, and that he still held all the deeds of the property would explain the reason for the two-fold visit.

The root of the trouble with Father Crozat was that he had come to believe that Father Chevalier was manoeuvring to hasten his departure, and to take over charge of the parish himself. The situation came to a head on 30th May, at the residence of Madame du Quesne in a violent outburst by the parish priest. The Archbishop had been invited by Madame du Quesne to visit her property which had belonged at one time to the Visitation Order. She had built a private chapel there, and also a small convent for the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, where three of the Sisters had taken up residence on 15th November, 1859 in order to look after the poor of the neighbourhood. In the chapel was a family vault where her husband, Vice-Admiral du Quesne was buried. The good lady had invited the Archbishop to bless the chapel and Father Maugenest to preach the occasional discourse. Amongst the guests were the clergy of Issoudun and the Missionaries. Father Crozat took the occasion, probably at the dinner table to launch an attack on Father Chevalier and the Missionaries. It was so violent that Father Maugenest was shocked and later wrote to the old priest: "What you said by your open reproaches, your curates said by their coldness. Everyone noticed it. It was a blur on an otherwise happy day. All the families which love you and have been coming to you over the past 20 or 30 years are grieved by the incident."

Father Crozat had hoped, as we are told, to spend the last years of his life as chaplain here to the du Quesne Chapel, and probably what raised his ire was some chance remark by the Archbishop or one of the guests to this effect. The two victims of the attack - Fathers Chevalier and Píperon never mentioned the incident, but Father Píperon has written of the gesture of friendship by the Archbishop after the dinner. His Grace said to them while walking in the grounds: "Come let us sit down. I have good news for you". When we had taken our places by his side, he continued. "You see, my children, I want to tell you of something good. I have done perhaps the best thing I have done in my life. I have got myself a coadjutor who is going to succeed me. He will be very good to you. He is young, very intelligent and burning with zeal. For myself, I no longer enjoy good health and have little energy left. I am afraid I will not be with you much longer, but my Coadjutor, Monseigneur le Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne will do what now I am unable to do." And the old man quite happy to be able to give us this news, continued to tell us of the eminent qualities of his successor."(15)

The building of the first part of the new church had advanced sufficiently to ask the Archbishop about its solemn blessing. Considering the strained atmosphere in the parish the Archbishop decided that he would not preside himself, but would appoint one of the Vicars General to perform the ceremony. The local paper makes only a brief reference to it. "The blessing of the Church of the Sacred Heart will take place on Friday, 7th June. It will be given by one of the Vicars General of the diocese."(16) Father Píperon, who had described at length the laying of the foundation stone by enumerating the notable people present etc. was content just to note: "The Abbe Lamblin, the Vicar General of Bourges, was sent by Archbishop Menjaud to bless the first part of the new church, and open it for religious purposes. The ceremony was a solemn one. The collection procured sufficient money to cover the expense of the stained-glass window for the back of the sanctuary - a window portraying the scene of Our Lord appearing to Saint Margaret Mary. Father Chevalier also makes but brief mention of the occasion: "In the month of April, 1859, the work on the first section of the church was begun and on 15th June, 1860 (this should read 7th June, 1861) the Missionaries were able to take possession of this part, consisting of the Sanctuary and the first three bays of the nave."(17)

The complete plan provided for six bays, with a tower and a gallery over the vestibule. At the sides of the sanctuary there were to be two altars, one in honour of Our Blessed Lady and the other of St. Joseph. The three windows of the apse were to be of stained glass, whereas those of the nave were to be of plain white glass. The stained-glass windows of the two side chapels were donated by two well-to-do families, that in Our Lady's chapel by the Mesloizes of Linetiere, and that of St. Joseph by the la Chatre du Breuil family. The image of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart featured in stained glass in Her chapel was the first representation as conceived by Father Chevalier. When the present shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was built this original window was inserted as an inset in the much larger window at the back of the chapel. The window from St. Joseph's altar was placed later in the small chapel to the left of the side nave, as one enters Our Lady's Shrine. The original altar of Our Lady was also removed to the lower nave before the altar of Saint Margaret Mary, and is now called the altar of St. Anne. The main stained-glass window which was purchased with the proceeds of the collection of June 7th, 1861 bears the Coat of Arms of the town of Issoudun.(18)

Although Archbishop Menjaud was anxious to entrust the care of the parish to the Missionaries, he thought it wiser in view of the difficulty with Father Crozat, to leave the transfer to his successor. However, the difficulty seems to have solved itself before the end of the year. Just how this came about we do not know but Father Maugenest in his capacity as parish priest of the Cathedral parish would have played an important part in its solution. The regrettable incident at the du Quesne residence made him decide to intervene in the conflict. We have only two letters of Father Maugenest on the subject. The first was a reply to a letter of Father Crozat's which we do not possess, and which Father Maugenest says "came to console and reassure him." It is dated 14th June, 1861 and reads:

"My dear and venerated Father,

It appears certain to me that at any time now the Community of the Sacred Heart will take over the parish of Issoudun, and will be the means of saving it. Whether the Community will have missionaries to evangelise other parts I do not know, but I have every reason to believe that it will have enough for the work and the salvation of Issoudun - that is to say to complete the good work that you have commenced.

It was you who founded this Community. After you have gone it will imitate you, and continue the traditions of zeal and holiness which you have established there. This is what you hoped yourself, and it is really you are responsible for the irregular situation in which the religious administration of Issoudun finds itself. This present situation is a necessary transition to a state of immense good. There are some inconveniences involved, one will say. No, there are not any inconveniences ultimately, because there is not a soul less to be saved. The present state of affairs is only temporary. If anything is wrong, it is this: Your curates hear few confessions, and not many people come to hear their sermons. It would be a pity to lose, hinder or discredit this work, to deprive a town, which you love and of which you are really the father, where you are revered and can never be forgotten, of its salvation and conversion, just to satisfy the selfish wishes of two young people who will at any rate, spend only a year in the parish.

Here is the whole reason of the opposition, and if you, the founder of the work, and the one who should be its main support, now condemn and renounce before the people of Issoudun, it is only because of the jealousy of these young men. You have a soul which is too lofty for such sentiments. You have been wrong to allow yourself to be influenced by them. What you have said your open reproaches, your curates have said by their coldness. Everyone noticed it. It was a blur on an otherwise happy day. All the families which love you, and have been coming to you over the past 20 or 30 years were upset and concerned about the incident.

With your influence, you would have soon destroyed the work you have built up, by going on in that manner. I can assure you that you have caused me great sorrow, and that I am wondering how a man as wise and holy as yourself could have allowed yourself to become a supporter of such a wrong cause. I would be profoundly upset if I thought you were still able to think and speak against the welfare and salvation of your dear children, and so destroy your work with your own hands.

Your letter has consoled and reassured me. I certainly needed it. It has consoled and edified me as much as your conduct hurt me. You know well, my dear venerated Father, that I have a great love for you. Perhaps you will accuse me of being flattering. No, I am only speaking the truth. You are too great of soul not to recognise the truth; too good not to pardon me for what I am saying to you.

Here is what I really think: For more than 30 years you have worked for the salvation of Issoudun. If your present attitude and conduct bear results, you will destroy the work you have done. It is a sad way to prepare yourself to appear before God, and all because you are too kind. Father Chevalier wishes only to do good, and he works hard. What you did ten years ago, he is doing now. He will probably remain on as parish priest of Issoudun. Will you continue to support his enemies and diminish his influence? That would be most regrettable. You have only to follow your own judgment, your piety, your heart, and you will think as I do, as authority does, as do all the families which you have now hurt and made sad. You will then not subscribe to ideas prompted only by jealousy. You must, my good and venerated Father, before you say your next Mass, promise God that you will never again say anything against a work which the good God is blessing, and which will be a consolation to you after the flatterers are gone and which will pray for you when the others have forgotten you.

You must pardon me for writing thus, but my candour is permitted by your virtue. The good God often uses children and sinners to speak to great Saints I ask your pardon and your prayers.

Yours sincerely - Maugenest; Archpriest."

A short time after this letter was written the Archbishop sent Father Maugenest to discuss the whole matter with Father Crozat. The letter which he wrote the next day, 5th July, makes reference to a new plan by which the Archbishop hoped to solve the problem of Issoudun.

My dear Father,

What I have foreseen has now happened. Authority will never demand your resignation. It is not able to do so on account of your position which it respects, nor does it wish to do so on account of the high personal regard in which you are held. However, the time is pressing, and what can be done now, may be impossible later on. I have made my sacrifice, but it is worthless without your own, on which it depends. I have made a fruitless journey, which I undertook in the hope of presenting a solution to the state of affairs which has now been going on for four years, and which a word from you could have changed. I have done my duty. I leave all the responsibility to you now, if your refusal delays the accomplishment of the project.

I have given much thought to that which you told me yesterday. I have found no sound reason in your motives for your refusal to resign. If you say 'I have awaited the successor whom I wanted. He has now arrived, and I am resigning,' everyone will applaud your decision. If, on the other hand, you say; 'The Archbishop has demanded my resignation', everyone will believe that authority has judged you incapable of continuing your ministry, and this surely will be a dreadful humiliation for you. I have written my last word on the matter. I have done my duty. I expect now that your faith and conscience will prompt you to do likewise, and enable me to realise this project, whose circumstances Providence has designed, and which now calls for a settlement.

Accept, my dear and venerated Father, my affectionate regards.

Your humble servant,
Maugenest - Archpriest."

To sum up - the circumstances demanded a prompt decision and Father Maugenest was insisting on it. But Father Crozat was peeved at the insistence of the Archbishop and his attitude to Father Chevalier, who had been suggested in the first letter as his successor, was so bitter that it seemed he wanted nothing to do with him. On his part, Father Chevalier did not want this appointment, as he did not consider it to be in the interests of the Society. At this juncture, someone had suggested a means of palliating Father Crozat's sensitiveness and overcoming his opposition. Father Maugenest visited him to gain his consent. The Archbishop would not ask for his resignation, in fact he could not do so as his nomination had been approved by the Government. However, by discarding the nomination of Father Chevalier, whom Father Crozat did not now want and proposing another successor who would be acceptable to the old priest, his departure would be a free and willing act. And Father Maugenest's words: "I have made my sacrifice", it is evident that he himself was the proposed successor to the parish priest. What could be more honourable and fitting for the Archpriest of Issoudun to have as successor the Parish Priest of the Cathedral and the Archpriest of Bourges, whose talents were known and appreciated by the whole town?

Without referring to the circumstances leading up to this proposal, and without mentioning himself, Father Chevalier speaks of the final result: "Ever since his nomination, Father Maugenest was desirous of returning to his little cell in our Monastery of the Sacred Heart, where he had spent so many happy days. He had never been able to accustom himself to living far away from this work, which was his own, and into which he had put his whole heart and soul. It seemed to him that during the celebration of his Masses and during his prayers, he could hear the Voice of God urging him to return to share our pains and weariness, our joys and our sorrows. At least twenty times had he asked Cardinal du Pont to let him return, but always in vain. Finally, Archbishop Menjaud, understanding the ardent longings of his soul, agreed to let him return to us. On hearing the good news, we ran to the Chapel to thank the Divine Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

"The Archbishop took the opportunity of this happy occasion to grant to our work, which was dear to his heart a great mark of esteem and sympathy. The Venerable Father Crozat, who had played such a big part in the foundation of our Society now wished as a last sacrifice, to prove his desire for its prosperity. Weighed down by age and long service the saintly old man decided to resign and hand over the care of the parish to our Society. Archbishop Menjaud, who had hoped for this for a long time, willingly gave his consent, and his Coadjutor, Monseigneur de la Tour d'Auvergne approved of the transfer and later, as successor to the See, officially gave it his approbation.

Now the question arose - who amongst us would be best to direct in the name of the Society, this important parish? The choice fell on Father Maugenest as being the most experienced although it was against his wish, and it was only through obedience that our beloved confrere, whilst remaining a religious, consented to this second appointment."(19)

Father Crozat, who had at first objected to this proposal, finally agreed. On 29th July, Father Chevalier was able to write: "Father Maugenest, Parish Priest of the Cathedral has come back to us. Father Crozat has resigned in our favour, and Father Maugenest will be Parish Priest in the name of the Society.(20) It is with a divided heart that he returns to Issoudun. Wishing to live as member of the Sacred Heart Congregation, he nevertheless consented to make the sacrifice of his monastic and missionary life in the interests of peace and that of the Society.

These changes took place in the course of the month of September. On 17th Father Maugenest took up his duties as parish priest, and lived at the presbytery with the two curates who did not belong to the Congregation. Father Crozat went to live at the home of Mdme du Quesne, where he was able to offer Mass during his last years, when his health permitted. He died on 8th January, 1864 and was buried near the family tomb in the crypt of the chapel of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, who were attached to the chateau.(22)

Needless to say the 'opposition' in the town took advantage of the emotional reaction to Father Crozat's resignation to stir up further animosity towards the Missionaries. When it became known that Father Chevalier had collected 40,000 francs for the new church they exploited the political situation and spread the rumour that he had actually gathered 100,000 francs, and had sent 3,000 to the Pope - a story as Father Chevalier put it which must have come from the mouth of a malevolent simpleton."(23) It was a severe setback to opponents of the Missionaries to see Father Crozat submit to the wishes of Archbishop and to ascertain that Father Maugenest had not only established peace with the Missionaries, but was working in close collaboration with them. They turned their attacks on him and accused him of being more interested in the work of the new Congregation than he was in his own church. After a few years Father Maugenest himself, being sensitive to their accusations and insinuations was to resign quietly in order to avoid further friction. For the time being a spirit of co-operation and religious peace reigned in the parish to the great satisfaction of the Archbishop and his Coadjutor who was gradually taking over the administration of the Archdiocese.

Father Chevalier took advantage of this period of calm, in the summer of 1861 to make some necessary additions to the little monastery. If they were to receive new members, they must have somewhere to put them, and at present there were no more than four cells. It was decided that the new extensions would provide at least twelve cells. Father Piperon writes: "The house in which we lived from the beginning was too small, and Father Chevalier decided to add another storey, which could be used for the cells. While the renovations were being effected we had no alternative accommodation, and so for a few months we often had to sleep in roofless rooms exposed to the vagaries of the weather. Now and then a storm flooded our cells, but when the building was completed we felt that at last we had a monastery. With the help of our imagination we looked upon the building as an important monument. We thanked the Sacred Heart for providing us with the necessary funds for these first additions. From then on, we were able to accommodate any subjects who might wish to join us in our work."(24)

New Archbishop of Bourges, Friend of the Society

From the time of their foundation, the Missionaries had enjoyed the friendship and sympathy of the two Archbishops of Bourges - Cardinal du Pont and Monseigneur Menjaud. The latter had already assured then that his successor, Monsigneur le Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, was also kindly disposed to the Founder and his work. Archbishop Menjaud died on 10th December, 1861.

Being Coadjutor to Monseigneur Menjaud and having worked with him for several months, Archbishop de la Tour d'Auvergne had already had dealings with the Missionaries, and Father Chevalier had met him previously in Rome. Although he realised that the new Archbishop was favourably inclined to the Congregation, Father Chevalier was rather anxious about the immediate success of his own building fund, when he learnt from his architect, Monsieur Tarlier, that His Grace was going to launch an appeal for the restoration of the Chapel of St. Celestine in Bourges. He wrote to his very good benefactors Monsieur De Linetiere and Monsieur des Meleizes that it would be advisable to hasten the appeal, and that a word to the Archbishop from them might not be out of place. However, he need not have had any fears, as the Archbishop was to prove himself the staunch supporter and protector of the Society.

Monseigneur le Prince Charles-Amable de la Tour d'Auvergne Lauraguais was born on 6th December, 1826, at Moulins (Allier). He began his studies at Arras, where his grand-uncle, Cardinal de la Tour d'Auvergne was Archbishop, and then went to the Stanislaus College in Paris, and later to the Junior Seminary of Saint Nicholas, at that time directed by the Abbe Dupanloup, later Bishop of Orleans. In 1843, when he had finished his humanities, he received the tonsure at the Seminary of Issy, where he completed his philosophical studies and then proceeded to the Major Seminary of St. Sulpice for his theology. After his ordination on 12th August, by his uncle in the Arras Cathedral, he was immediately named a Vicar-General. He had been an honorary Canon there since his sub-diaconate.

Monseigneur Parisis, who succeeded the Cardinal on his death in 1851 did not hesitate to retain the young priest as his Vicar General, as he had shown his ability and zeal by his preaching, his catechetical instructions, his work amongst the soldiers and his retreats to religious communities. In 1855 he was called to Rome as the French representative on the Roman Rota. There he made an intensive study of Canon Law, Ecclesiastical History and Sacred Archeology. He was a keen judge of men and events, and soon became a well known figure in Rome. His years in the eternal city gave him a strong attachment to the Chair of St. Peter and a filial veneration for Pope Pius. Honoured by the Consistory of July 22nd 1861 as the Titular Bishop of Colos, he was raised to the dignity of the episcopate on 1st August in the church of Saint Louis des Francais in Rome by the hands of Cardinal Villecourt, assisted by Bishops Spaccapietro and Gianelli, the latter a future Cardinal.

One of the Archbishop's first tasks after the death of Monseigneur Menjaud was to make the Roman Rite obligatory throughout the Archdiocese and to unify the Liturgical Music. He then established a permanent fund for Peter's Pence, and a fund for the seminaries. He showed his concern for the aged and sick priests by establishing a special Home for them. Besides instituting the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament where convenient, he organised retreats and ecclesiastical conferences for the clergy. He authorized the building of spacious and fitting chapels for the two Junior Seminaries, and acquired for the diocese the ancient Abbey of the Benedictines at Chezal-Benoit. A Council of Diocesan Consultors for Building Plans was given the task of examining and approving the construction and repairing of churches and presbyteries throughout the Archdiocese, and a special council for the fostering of Studies - particularly history and archeology, was set up in the cathedral parish. The Archbishop encouraged the faithful to make pilgrimages to the various shrines, and often led them himself, taking advantage of the occasion to preach to the pilgrims and instruct them in their faith.

He was a theologian of no mean repute, and wrote extensively particularly on the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility. He devoted much of his time and talent to his work: "The Catholic Tradition of Papal Infallibility" or "The Definition of the Vatican Council confirmed by Scripture, Fathers and History," a thesis much appreciated by contemporary theologians. Unfortunately a large part of this work, together with many other documents was lost in the disastrous fire which gutted the Archbishop's residence in 1871.

He showed the same zeal in the administration of his diocese. During the eighteen years of his administration he made four general visitations of the parishes and called four General Synods. Over fifty churches were consecrated by him during that period. Devoted body and soul to Catholic progress throughout the Archdiocese, he was known for his generosity and personal interest in any deserving cause, especially those for the amelioration of conditions for the working class. His charity seemed to know no limit, particularly in regard to any unfortunate who was suffering hardship.

Tall in stature, handsome in appearance with a ready and amiable smile he soon dispelled any timidity in those who approached him by the friendliness of his welcome. Always dignified in bearing, his paternal and sympathetic manner soon put people at ease, and the affability of his conversation made him universally popular. His piety was evident by the ease with which he could speak of holy and sacred subjects, and his demeanour on the altar bespoke reverence and love.(26)

Thus do his contemporaries describe this great prelate in his majesty and simplicity, in his piety and religious zeal, and fortunate indeed were the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in being able to call him a close and sympathetic friend. It was not without reason that Monseigneur Duquesneay in preaching the panegyric at his Requiem turned to them and said: "Religious of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun, you would have cause to reprimand me, if not with reproaches at least with sorrow, if I did not here call on you as witness. Tell us - was there anything more that he could have done for you that he did not do?"(27) It was really with his assent and encouragement that Father Chevalier was able to develop the many great activities of which we will speak in later chapters, and to give to the Society the form which he considered was in conformity with God's will.

For the time being his apostolic zeal and energy were restricted to parish of Issoudun, where he was busy helping the new parish priest. One of their first duties was to see that the Feast of Saint Vincent, the Martyr, 22nd January (1862) was celebrated with due ceremony, as he was the Patron Saint of the Vine-growers, who comprised a large proportion of the local population. According to tradition, King Childebert, after his victory in Spain, brought back to Paris some relics of the saintly deacon, and placed them in the Abbey of Saint Germain des Pres, which he had built himself. From there the devotion to the Saint had spread throughout France, and those in the grape industry entrusted their crops to his safe-keeping. The pictures of the Saint represent him with a pruning knife, and holding in his hand a bunch of grapes and some vine branches. Some imaginative people tried to associate the origin of the cult with the fact that the Saint's name commenced with "Vin" (Wine), while others, with more reason, maintained it was from a text in an old Missal, printed in Constance in 1504, where it is not on his feast day (22nd January):

"Vincenti Festo, si Sol radiat, memor esto:

Tunc magnum fac vas, quia vitis dabit tibi uvas"

which may be translated:

"If the Sun shines on the feast of St. Vincent,

Prepare the big casks, for the vine is going to bear grapes."

Father Chevalier, who wrote a small pamphlet on the Saint for the occasion, emphasises the fact that as a Deacon, the Saint's function at Mass was to pour the wine into the chalice.(28) In spite of their Saint, the vine-growers of Issoudun were hardly "pillars of the church". Some cynics had even said they worshipped the Sun. As they formed a large percentage of the population, Father Chevalier readily acquiesced when a deputation approached him asking for a High Mass and special celebrations for St. Vincent's Feast that year (1861). In a letter to Madame des Mesloizes he gives the following amusing account of his conversation with them:

"We want a deacon and a sub-deacon, a special sermon, and the organ put at our disposal"

"And what would you want the organ for?" I asked.

"To play our special song."

"Have you got a copy of the song with you?"

"Yes, here it is."

I could hardly look at it quickly enough, as I feared the worst. Sure enough, it contained some rather suspicious morality, and was in deplorable taste.

"My friends," I said to them, "the organ will play the tune of your song, if you allow me to put new words to it. I will distribute copies free to all the vine-growers."

"My suggestion was accepted with enthusiasm, and they went away happy. I had 2,500 copies printed and distributed amongst them, and for the four days before the Feast the new song was practised with great gusto. On the day of the Feast a large crowd gathered at St. Cyr's. Father Maugenest preached a special sermon which pleased them greatly, and on this day at least these usually difficult people were beside themselves with joy. They rated Father Maugenest and your humble servant as amongst the really great poets."(29)

Father Piperon's Journeys to collect Funds.

To facilitate the appeal for the second part of the church it was decided that the priests would make a concerted effort. On 26th March, 1862, Father Chevalier wrote that except for four or five days, he would remain at home in Issoudun for the year, and that Fathers Maugenest and Piperon would be responsible for the appeal outside the parish. Father Maugenest, who had a natural distaste for appeals of any description, agreed only with reluctance to take part in it. "I have been asking him for a long time," writes Father Chevalier, "after giving him the necessary ideas, to draw up a circular letter to be presented for approval to the Archbishop. He told me yesterday that I was asking him something beyond his powers and that he was incapable of composing the circular, that he had neither ideas nor taste for it." This is why Father Chevalier asked Monsieur de Linitiere if he would undertake the task - to compose a circular in suitable terms which he felt he was unable to do himself.

It was proposed to make the appeal throughout the Province of Berry and the suffragan dioceses amongst the clergy and the faithful. After all, had not the Province, since the time of Archbishop de Villele been consecrated to the Sacred Heart and there was no monument to commemorate the fact. Indeed, since the Council of Clermont, the whole ecclesiastical province had been consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Would it not be an excellent idea in memory of that fact to build a Sanctuary dedicated to the Sacred Heart in the metropolitan diocese?(30)

Father Maugenest considered himself incapable, not only of drawing up the circular, but also of going abroad to make the appeal, and the travelling was left to Father Piperon, who used to refer to himself during these days as the "Father Collector". In 1862 he journeyed through the Alps country and the Rhone Valley, that is to say, Lyons, Grenoble, Gap, Digne, Frejus and Marseilles with their neighbouring smaller towns. The following year he canvassed throughout new territory across the Nièvre, l'Allier, le Puy de Dome, le Cantal, la Haute-Loire, la Correz, la Dordogne and La Gironde. Father Chevalier wished him to visit also la Touraine, l'Anjou and Brittany, which he did during the holidays of 1863. The proposed visit to the other dioceses of France was postponed for the time being, and eventually called off, on account of various difficulties, much to the delight of Father Piperon who found the work arduous and distasteful. Apart from the fact that each journey lasted some three months, many of his visits were fruitless and he often met with humiliating refusals and even insults. However, generally speaking, the appeal was successful. Not only was the necessary money collected for the new church, but it was a means of making the young Congregation known, of winning many sympathisers and benefactors, and of preparing the way for the spreading of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.(31)

Father Piperon's journeys served the practical purpose of spreading the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. We possess two of the sermons he used during these tours. After speaking of the "object of the appeal, he then explained the main features of the Devotion, emphasising the points already familiar to us through the teaching of Father Chevalier - the Sacred Heart is the Source of all graces, and the Devotion is the antidote to the social disease of religious indifference and selfishness. Even to some of the parish priests the Devotion, in those days was not well known, and in some places Father Piperon's subject was often received with a deal of misgiving and apprehension, as the following incident indicates.

In the course of the appeal in 1863 the Archbishop of Moulins, Mgr. De Dreux Breze suggested that he pay a visit to the parish of Notre Dane at Montlucon, where the Cure, the Archpriest, Antoine Guillaumet had successfully established a special Mass for the men. He received a friendly welcome from the good parish priest, who invited him to preach to the men at their Mass the following day, which was a Sunday. When Father Piperon told him he would be preaching on the Sacred Heart, the priest replied:

"Oh, no, Father. You had better keep that subject for a High Mass or some similar occasion. The men who will be at this Mass are not theologians, religious or devotees. They are just simple folk who wish to fulfill their ordinary duties and no more. It would be inadvisable to teach them such practices which, after all, are works of supererogation. If we overdo it, they might abandon everything." The surprised Father Piperon replied: "I am sorry, Father, at a time when I am your guest, and you have received me so kindly, to have to disagree with you. Before I left the Community at Issoudun I promised that I would not preach unless it was on the subject of the Sacred Heart. I am afraid that under these conditions your own approach and eloquence will suit the men better tomorrow than my own. However, if you insist that I do preach, then I'm afraid the sermon will be on the Sacred Heart. The next morning, just before Mass was to commence, the Archpriest came to me and said: 'Father, go ahead and preach. I submit to your judgment.' The attention and interest with which the large congregation of men listened to the sermon, convinced him more than ever that you do not have to be a theologian, a religious or a devotee to understand and appreciate the doctrine of Devotion to the Sacred Heart. The simple folk, the little children, the humble parishioners all have the necessary aptitude to profit from the graces of Our Lord - promised to those who honour the Sacred Heart. After Mass the zealous priest was humble and good enough to thank me, adding; 'If I had known the manner in which you were going to explain this important doctrine, I would have raised no objection.'"

This manner of presentation used by Father Piperon has its importance for us, as he had learnt it from Father Chevalier himself. The idea hold the Archpriest Guillaumet and many others that Devotion to the Sacred Heart is only for the select few, and that the ordinary simple and humble person incapable of appreciating it, is fundamentally wrong. This opinion, which prevailed for too long, deprived many a humble parishioner of the benefits promised by Our Lord to those who love and honour His Sacred Heart. After all, is not the language of the heart the most simple and the most readily understood by the ordinary people? Any Christian who is living a life of faith, no matter how simple or ignorant he may be, can be deeply moved by hearing of the profound mysteries of the Passion and Death of Our Lord. Can he not appreciate the simple yet eloquent sermon in the mere expression: "See how the Heart of Jesus has loved you. See what He has suffered for you?" If there is left in his soul but the slightest vestige of noble sentiment will he not cry out with St. John, the Apostle of true love; "I must love the Heart of Jesus, because He has first loved me." Such an act of faith and love from a grateful heart is an act of homage to the Heart of Our Saviour. Father Piperon concludes: "Father Chevalier never admitted that there was any class of society to which the Devotion to the Sacred Heart could not be preached with profit. All need the graces of that Heart; all ought to love Him. We must not neglect to teach it to everyone. This was his ambition - to spread Devotion by every possible means."(32)

The Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Side by side with the spreading of Devotion to the Sacred Heart was the making known of the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Father Piperon tells us that already the pictures of Our Lady under that title had been distributed far and wide, and that he always carried a supply on his travels.

We have already spoken of the origin of the title, how Father Chevalier thought of it on the 9th September, 1855, on the occasion of the installation of the Missionaries, how he meditated and studied it in the silence of his heart and how in 1857 he revealed it to an intimate circle of friends, his companions and some fellow-priests. We recall that Father Piperon had questioned the theological soundness of the title on which subject he wrote: "Father Chevalier did not make just the one reference to it. It became the subject of our conversations every day during

recreation after lunch for many weeks. We put up as many objections as possible, but he answered them easily. We could see that he had studied the subject deeply. Sometimes the conversation became animated as we argued the matter, and this would continue till the bell went for prayers. The following day we would take up the subject where we left off. Needless to say, Father Founder won through, and answered all our difficulties to our satisfaction.

Many enquiries came in after the distribution of the pictures, which bore invocations "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us." The people wanted to ask about the origin, nature, and means of spreading the devotion. "Who is Our Lady of the Sacred Heart? What is the best way of practicing Devotion to Her? Is there a Shrine in Her honour in France? Are there any Associations of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart?"

These, and many other questions poured in, and the correspondents seemed delighted that under this one invocation both the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and His Blessed Mother were being honoured. Such was the interest shown that it was decided to write a small pamphlet explaining the meaning of the title. I was entrusted with the task, and put in writing the origin and meaning of the devotion, as it was explained to us by Father Founder during the course of our discussions and arguments. To answer all the letters was impossible for the time being, so we decided to have the pamphlet printed for distribution. An important incident in the spreading of the devotion occurred when Father Piperon met the Rev. Father Ramiere in 1862. Father Piperon describes it thus: "The 'Father Collector' visited the town of Puy and called at the Maison de Vals, where the Rev. Father Ramiere lived. This good priest was the Director of the Apostleship of Prayer and the editor of the Messenger of the Sacred Heart'. I told him about the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and he became very interested. I gave him one of the small pictures, which he received with obvious joy.

'Have you any written matter on the Devotion?' he asked.

'Nothing yet has been printed, but I have with me here several pages written on the subject.' Opening my bag, I gave him the modest pages. He read them with interest, and said to me:

'Let me publish those in the Messenger. The people will appreciate them.'

'That would be rather impossible, Father,' I replied. 'They really don't belong to me. I would have to get permission from my Superior. If you wish, you could write to him.' He took me at my word, and duly wrote to Father Chevalier."

Tradition has it that Father Chevalier was willing to let Father Ramiere print the matter, but Father Piperon vigorously protested, saying that the publication on Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart should come from Father Chevalier himself and not from outside sources. Let us continue Father Piperon's narrative.

"Father Chevalier accepted my point of view, and hastened to compose a small work on the subject himself, setting out the origin and meaning of the Devotion. It was a concise summary of all the circumstances leading up to the use of the title, and the interpretation that should be put on it.

This was Father Chevalier's first published work, and was entitled:

"Our Lady of the Sacred Heart"

By Rev. Fr. Chevalier

Missionary Apostolic of the Sacred Heart.

He submitted it to the Archbishop of Bourges for approbation, which was readily given in November, 1862. Six months later it was sent to Father Ramiere, who had been asking for it for a long time, and it appeared in the May edition of the messenger in 1863, which carried at the same time to all its subscribers the picture of our Mother.(34)

Another important contact which Father Piperon made, and which helped considerably in making Our Lady of the Sacred Heart better known, was with Monseigneur Guibert, Archbishop of Tours, later to be transferred to the See of Paris. Fr Piperon had come to Tours to preach a Novena in honour of Our Lady of La Salette, and when he called on the Archbishop he gave him a copy of the recent publication on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. After studying it carefully, the Archbishop gave it his approbation in very laudatory terms and was enthusiastic about it. He was the first bishop after Monseigneur de la Tour d'Auvergne, to set the seal of high authority on the new devotion, and thereby helped to spread the love and knowledge of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.(33) Encouraged by the approval of this learned and highly-regarded Archbishop, the Missionaries sent the brochure to other prelates of the Church to acquaint them with Our Lady's new title.

The Church is Completed.

As a result of the various appeals throughout the whole of France it was possible, immediately after the additions to the Monastery were finished, to undertake the building of the second part of the church. Father Piperon records: At the end of 1863 the main work on the church was finished. In order to make it available to the faithful as soon as possible, the final touches were hurried through."(36)

The Moniteur de l'Indre, in its copy of June 30th, 1864, notes; "The Archdiocese of Bourges now has in the town of Issoudun a fitting monument commemorating the fact of its two-fold consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The dedication of this precious Sanctuary will take place on 2nd July next at 7 o'clock in the morning. At 4 p.m. there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The occasional sermon will be preached by one of the outstanding dignitaries of France, Monseigneur Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans."

Father Piperon continues; "There were very few churches throughout France dedicated to the Sacred Heart. His Grace, the Archbishop wished to make the function a solemn one, as he regarded our church as the diocesan Shrine commemorating the fact that the ecclesiastical province of Bourges was consecrated to the Sacred Heart. His Grace had invited all the provincial bishops to the ceremony, but only one was able to attend, His Lordship, Bishop Fruchaud of Limoges. The others sent their apologies on account of previous commitments. However, on the Saturday when the church was officially consecrated, the Archbishop, who had always shown great interest in our work was assisted by several prelates from other parts of France. Archbishop Guibert, the archbishop of Tours, performed the actual ceremony of the Consecration. Also in attendance were the Archbishop of Smyrna, Monseigneur Scappapietro - a Lazarist, then in France collecting for his mission, Monseigneur Fruchaud, Bishop of Limoges, Monseigneur Dabert, Bishop of Periguoux, who was a native of the Berry district, and the mitred Abbot of Fontgombault, the Most Rev. Father Dosithee. Besides these dignitaries there were also present about 150 priests from the various dioceses.

A large crowd assembled in glorious sunshine in front of the church, which itself was packed to the doors. It seemed as though the whole town and the neighbouring countryside had turned out for the occasion, and Issoudun had never seen such an impressive gathering before. The parishioners had erected six or seven triumphal arches each gaily and tastefully decorated. Even the newly-formed Society of Vine-growers had its own special arch. The neighbouring square and the nearby streets carried their festoons, and garlands of flowers hung from the trees.

At eight o'clock the Archbishop of Tours began the Consecration ceremony, and at half past nine the procession to the church of St. Cyr set forth. The procession was both impressive and spectacular. Troops from the local garrison formed a guard of honour and the fire-brigade band supplied the appropriate music for the singing of the hymns and psalms. The faithful lined the route of the procession, which was led by 30 students from the Major Seminary at Bourges and the clergy dressed in surplices walking in pairs. Following then were 16 priests wearing golden-coloured copes; then the Canons and finally the six bishops in their mitres carrying their crosiers and blessed the people as they proceeded.

At the church of St. Cyr the ministers were entrusted with the sacred relics which were to be placed in the magnificent newly-consecrated altar of the new church. While the procession made its way back to the church of Sacred Heart 100 men, each holding a lighted candle, formed a guard of honour around the sacred reliquary. When the final ceremonies of the consecration of the High altar were completed, His Lordship Bishop Limoges sang the Pontifical High Mass, the 130 priests present forming the choir. As the church was not big enough to

accommodate the large crowd present, another Mass was offered at the same time on a raised altar outside, the celebrant being the Most Rev. Abbot de Fontgombault. After the Gospel, Father Ramiere delivered an eloquent sermon befitting the occasion.

At four o'clock in the afternoon again a large crowd assembled for the solemn Benediction, and once again the preacher was Father Ramiere. Each of the bishops imparted his blessing from the steps of the church to the vast crowd which literally covered the Vouet Square.

The collecting of funds for the occasion had been put in the hands of Madeline Dufour and Monsieur de Verneuil, Madame Dausigny and Monsieur le Commandant Lucconi, Madame des Mesleizes and Monsieur le President Fougere, Madame Rousseau and Monsieur Chaveau - all good benefactors. They were able to hand Father Chevalier 1200 francs.

In the evening after the Angelus, Bishop Limoges blessed the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which stands in front of the Church. On the Sunday, Bishop Perigueux celebrated Mass in the church of St. Cyr. Archbishop Scappapietro presided, and preached on his mission in Smyrna. As a result of his appeal, the collection amounted to 800 francs.

Naturally, the Monastery was too small, in spite of its additions, for, the official reception, so a big marquee was erected in the grounds, where some 120 guests were entertained to dinner. Madame la Vicomtesse du Quesne was the official hostess, and received the guests. The civic Council of the city of Bourges sent its representative for the occasion.(38)

From that time onwards the lovers of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Sacred Heart have come as pilgrims to Issoudun from all parts of France and the neighbouring countries

CHAPTER XII THE ASSOCIATION of SECULAR PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART PART I

The Association an Annex of the Early Society

The organisation of Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart was a result of the initial uncertainty and indecision of Father Chevalier as to the best way of establishing the Society. We have already spoken of these difficulties in Chapter X. The brochures written at the end of 1862, apart from the matter dealing with the Third Order of the Laity, treat with this Association of Secular Priests.

We have already refuted the opinion of those who concluded from these brochures that at first the Founder had only a vague and general idea of the nature of the Society he wished to found, and that it was only after 1860 that the project took definite form in his mind.

The testimony of his contemporaries, as Father Piperon has stressed, and the documents of the period clearly show that from the beginning his intention, in fact his cherished and definite ideal, was to found not just an Association of priests to preach devotion to the Sacred Heart as a means of combating the religious apathy of the age, but to establish a canonically-formed Religious Congregation whose members would live the common life, and take the vows of religion.

His ardent wish was to found an Institute whose main aim and purpose would be to love and honour the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to spread that devotion throughout the world - a Congregation whose members would live a life of consecration and dedication by means of their religious vows and the exercises of the interior life, which would be the fount of their unity and strength.

Father Chevalier envisaged the Society as an Institute exclusively dedicated to the Glory of God and the Heart of Christ. The wording of the early Rules clearly indicates this, as does the formula of the vows.

Vows are taken "in the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, which is established to procure the Glory of God and to save souls by making known all the treasures of love and mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." (ES. 52, R. 30).

As the basis of his plan the Founder regarded as paramount the twofold object: the reawakening of a Christian life and spirit in society, which had grown so irreligious, and the achievement of this by the spreading of devotion to the Sacred Heart. The nature of this devotion, as his writings tell us, lies in the participation in the life-giving fruits of the redemptive love of Christ.

And as the communication of these graces is essentially the work of priests, Father Chevalier's main concern was to recruit priest-subjects for his Congregation. It was to be a widespread mission, and his desire was enlist the services of as many apostles as possible. To quote his own words:

"The Heart of Jesus wishes to preserve the love of the good and to convert the hearts of sinners. He wishes that all men be saved, and for this He needs helpers. He needs Missionaries of His Sacred Heart, and looks for them particularly in men whose vocation calls them to the religious life. He seeks them also amongst the secular priests who are working amongst the people of the world, and who, by this very contact, may be exposed to special dangers. It is certain that in these unsettled times there are new and previously unheard-of dangers threatening the Faith and the Church. In a time of war soldiers and sentinels are needed, and the defences must be strengthened."(1) The enemies use every modern device of warfare to achieve their aims and are united in their efforts to destroy the Church. We priests - religious and secular - must also unite to safe guard the Church. Our unity will be also a means of safeguarding ourselves, especially in these days when so many priests in France are forced to live in isolation, which is a danger threatening their effectiveness and paralysing their activity.

The theory and ideal of this union resides in an association with the Congregation in its interior spirit, an attachment to the Society in the service of the Sacred Heart, from whose sanctity it takes its life and meaning - a dedication of all the forces and powers of one's body and soul, even to the complete immolation of the will, one's earthly goods, one's affections, such as is achieved by the taking of the vows.(2)

However, all priests who wish to join this Association need not necessarily take vows. There are many souls who are disposed to a life of piety and Christian perfection but are rather frightened at the thought of taking vows, while still remaining in the world.

Notwithstanding, the needs of the time make their affiliation with an organised Religious Society desirable. Would it not be a pity to deprive these souls of the precious resources of religious life, and to deprive the Congregation of their help and spiritual merits, merely because they do not wish or dare to tie themselves by vows?(3)

Others who do not wish to live alone yet are unable for various reasons join a community can still be a help to the Society, and the Sacred Heart can enlist them in the ranks of His new army.

In the Society there is room for all degrees of vocation and virtue, for the Heart of Jesus is the Divine Model of all perfection. Surely if His Infinite Goodness accepts even the least homage from weak souls, His infinite Sanctity can inspire the actions of the stronger and more perfect, his latter class will be those who consecrate themselves by the vows, and they will form the nucleus of the Society, which receives and claims them as souls drawn to the perfection of Christian life. However, it is not only in a religious house that the action of grace can operate. It can also be affective out in the world. 'The Spirit breatheth where He wills.'"(4)

Thus were formed the various groups in the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. From the beginning, the Institute recognised as members the Missionaries and Brothers who, with or without vows, lived in the community at Issoudun. But side by side with these was the group of secular priests who, with or without vows, was affiliated to the Society in the nature of a Third Order.

In studying this Association of Secular Priests who, in the beginning, at least, were considered as "affiliated" and not "direct" members, we are dealing precisely with the organisation of the Institute as such but more with the associated works by means of which the object of the Society could be achieved, namely the Apostolate of the Sacred Heart. Such were the two groups, distinct, although intimately linked together, over which Father Chevalier found himself in charge. His was now a twofold task.

According to their objects, we must divide the work of the two groups those directly concerned with the apostolate and those concerned with auxiliary activities. The first kind of work is that performed by Missionaries as such, whereas the second is performed by associates in a

helping capacity. For example, a mission to the infidels is essentially the work of a missionary, whereas an association of catechists on the same mission is an auxiliary organisation.

Thus for Father Chevalier the education of youth is a field of apostolic activity, but the Association of Secular Priests is an auxiliary work of the Society, although in general terms the two are referred to by him as "Works of the Society." Naturally, the association of priests is more intimately connected with the end of the Society than the youth they would be educating.

The wording of the Rules on the matter was as follows: "The Community can affiliate with itself secular priests. The Council will judge the advisability of their admission. They may take vows, if they so wish. They will follow the Rule of the Missionaries on the fundamental points. They will participate in all the advantages and privileges of the Missionaries themselves. For they are pursuing the same end and are endeavouring to make known to all their parishioners the richness of the Heart of Jesus,"(R. 52-53)]

The original organisation of the Missionaries had already been transformed before the appearance of the brochures with which we are dealing now, and these minor changes were independent of the development of the Association of Secular priests. At the beginning the status of member or just simple associate was determined by the residence of the subject. Anyone who actually lived in the Community at Issoudun was a member, but a priest who continued to live in his own parish was an associate, but not a member of the Institute. However, in 1861 the situation was changed, mainly because of the position of Father Maugenes. This good priest had now returned as a member of the Congregation, but as parish priest of St. Cyr's he was living at the presbytery with his two curates. From this fact emerged the idea that the membership of the Society need not be restricted to just those who resided in the Community at Issoudun. The Society could operate from other houses also. From then on it was accepted that one could be a true Missionary of the Sacred Heart without necessarily living in the original house at Issoudun.

This new concept, in its turn, presented difficulties regarding the taking of the vows and the authority of the Superior. It is not surprising that at times certain confusion would arise as to matters which concerned the authority of religious superiors, and those relating to diocesan authority. There did occur, as a matter of fact, many doubts and changes on this point over a fairly long period of time. The Missionaries, now with or without vows, could be established in parishes, just as the affiliated secular priests - whether bound by vows or not.

We can easily appreciate that, in these circumstances, there was the danger of the two groups regarding themselves as identical, and so it was necessary to find a new basis on which the distinction might be defined. What would be the criterion of this distinction? What would be the status of the associated priests in comparison with that of the Missionaries?

The brochures published by Father Chevalier and the correspondence on the subject show that it was not easy to find a solution, and hence the indecision and uncertainty of the Founder for the time being. AS we have said before, it would be a false conclusion to deduct from these doubts and hesitations that it was only now that Father Chevalier was forming a clear concept of the nature of his Society. The evidence of his contemporaries and the previous written documents give the lie to that. Would Father Chevalier during this period have incorporated the secular priests into his Society, even if only for the time being, in order to tide him over his period of indecision?

The solution to this problem depends on the answer to two other questions. Firstly, were the secular priests considered as true members of the Institute or as merely associate members, and, secondly, did this incorporation exclude the idea of a religious congregation, canonically formed, embracing vows and the common life?"

To which we might add a subsidiary question: Was this incorporation, which admitted members without vows to take their place beside the professed, merely a transitional step towards a definite form, or was it essentially a modification of the original definite plan?

In order to gain a clearer idea of the situation, we must recall again that during the last century there were many variations of interpretation as to what constituted a religious. On the precise point, with which we are occupied at present, Canon Law did not make any exact or constant ruling. There were periods when the common life, and the exclusion of people living in the world were required before a religious Institute could be recognized as such. These institutes were composed of the two usual classes - Fathers and Brothers, or, for the Nuns - choir Sisters and lay Sisters, known in those days as Sisters of the Community or Sisters of the House.(5)

But "there were other periods when these conditions did not seem to be required. The question was officially put to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, when the Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Montlucon were approved as a Congregation with simple vows on the 11th May, 1838.

The reply was that only the two traditional classes were to be considered as religious, and that the so-called externs were not able to be considered as part of the Institute, but merely as a separate affiliated association. The "Ecclesia Christi" confirmed this declaration, and added a general condition, namely, that if the extern members continued to constitute an essential part of the community, the Institute could not be recognized as a religious Congregation. And so as the association of externs was no longer a constituent part of their institute, the Constitutions of the Oblates of Montlucon were approved on the 23rd April, 1894, "although the organisation of the associations for external members had not yet undergone the trials of experience."(6).

But some little time later, as Gambari notes, the Sacred Congregation was not adverse to a closer link between the religious congregations and their associated externs.(7)

Thus it was that in 1909 the same Oblates received permission to admit their externs to vows. In 1911 the Statutes for the Extern Sisters of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Naples were approved by the Sacred Congregation. These statutes stated that the extern sisters are members of the Institute with the same title as the intern sisters and are able to be admitted to vows.

Gambari notes in conclusion: "Until about the last ten years of the 19th century there was no distinction made in the approbation of Societies which were living the common life and had their distinctive habits, and the various other societies. The procedure and the reasons given were the same for the recognition and approbation of both." And he gives examples of this until the year 1880. It is only between 1888 and 1905 that the Church began making definite requirements in the matter.

If Father Piperon describes the original plan such as Father Chevalier had always wished it, i.e., as a canonically-formed Religious Congregation, it does not necessarily follow that all the members were expected to take vows and live in the community. In the period of which he is speaking, according to the common opinion an Institute remained a Religious Congregation, even when some of its members remained out in the world, such as our own Secular Priests, provided that the nucleus, i.e., the intern members satisfied the obligations of the vows and lived the common life.

But Father Piperon definitely excluded this interpretation when he replied affirmatively to the question: "Did Father Chevalier originally conceive his Institute as it is constituted to-day?" For in 1900, when he wrote on this matter, all the members of the Society were bound by vows and lived in canonically-erected communities, according to the idea expressed in 1861, from the time of Father Maugenes's appointment as parish priest of Issoudun. The Secular Priests then were a kind of annex or, to use the expression in the first Rules, "a special Work."

We will see in what measure the brochures confirm this judgment. The point must be stressed in view of the contention later made by some of the young members that Father Chevalier was hazy about his original plan. It is necessary to state that those who lived during the early years of the Society - "we his first subjects," as Father Piperon says, and those he quotes in evidence of his contention - had no doubts that Father Founder always had in mind one and the same project. None of them had any difficulties concerning the content of the brochures. They all knew them, and some of them had helped in their composition. They did not find in them any of the doubts and difficulties that the younger members wished to find later on. Moreover, they, if anyone, knew the authentic sense of the brochures - their meaning which we must study thoroughly.

The fact that the first Rules of 1855 already quote as "a work" of the Society the Association of Secular Priests clearly shows that the idea dates from the beginning of the Congregation.

Father Piperon has written: "From the beginning the Rev. Father had the thought of affiliating with his work all the secular priests who wished to live a more regular life in their parochial or professional duties."

In his Biographical Notice of Father Founder he expressed the idea even more clearly: "All his life Father Chevalier professed a profound respect and a lively affection for his confreres in the priesthood. All those who lived close to him knew with what warm cordiality he received them. The loneliness in which most of the parochial priests were forced to live frightened him. He always opened his house to them as he did his heart. He wished to extend to all of them the benefits of religious life in keeping with the needs of their parochial ministry. From this desire was born the Work of Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart, which began, we are able to say, almost at the same time as the Congregation itself."(9).

Father Chevalier himself speaks thus of its origin: "The Association of Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was born with the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, which, as the Constitutions state (1877), made it one of its principal works.(10).

That it was always a cherished idea in the mind of the Founder is proved from the text in the Rules of 1857, from the Abrege of 1862 and from the pact that it was one of the main items he mentioned to the Holy Father, Pope Pius IX in 1860. On that occasion His Holiness had expressed the wish that as many priests as possible would join the Association.

We are not able to say at what precise time the Association came into being. It began, it seems, as just a personal contact with several secular priests who were interested in the work of the new Society. "The Association," to quote Father Chevalier's own words, "was born spontaneously from the relationship of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart with many of the parochial clergy."(11).

In 1890 he wrote: "Its existence goes back some thirty years," which would put the date of its origin as 1860. In a petition to the Holy See, dated 19th June, 1874, it is stated: "The Association has now been in existence 16 years," which takes us back to 1858.(12).

In the History of the Society, which he wrote in 1901, Father Chevalier after speaking of the enlargement of the Monastery in 1861, goes on: "Several of the secular priests became acquainted with our work and asked to be affiliated with it, while still remaining in their parishes, in order to gain the advantages of a Rule appropriate to their life and a safeguard against the moral isolation of their position."(13).

From correspondence with the Jesuit Fathers at Vaugirard, which began in 1862, we can conclude with certainty that there was an affiliated group as early as 1860 after the encouragement given by Pope Pius IX, but that it was not definitely organised till 1862. We find the first mention of it in a letter to Father Le Blanc, S.J., dated 1st December. 1862:

My dear Rev. Father,

Father Piperon has handed me your letter so full of affection and attachment. Thank you for all the interest you are taking in our work. The Divine Heart will bless you for it. You are probably the instrument He wishes to use in order to consolidate it. Deo Gratias!

I have always believed that the good God had merciful designs concerning our small Monastery, and the unexpected suggestions you have now make me sure of it. Our origin had nothing merely human about it, and regarding the success of the mission which you seem to see developing for it, permit me, dear Rev. Father, to speak to you with an open heart and tell you the secret of its foundation.

For a long time the thought of spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart preoccupied us. We were desirous that this Heart, the Source of all Graces and so rich in mercy, should have Missionaries. In 1854, nine days before the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, we turned to Blessed Virgin and asked Her, as one of the first fruits of Her illustrious prerogative, to adorn the Church with a Society of Priests consecrated to the Heart of Her Divine Son.

On the 8th December, we miraculously received the assurance that a generous person was putting at our disposal the necessary sum to commence our work. We entrusted the Immaculate Mother of God with the task of obtaining all the necessary approbations from His Eminence, Cardinal du Pont.

From then on Hell itself let loose all its violence against the small mustard seed. Humanly speaking, it should have been uprooted a hundred times by the savage storms that lashed it on all sides. But no! Planted and nurtured by the Heart of Jesus Himself, it withstood the rage of the tempest.

Two years ago, on the 20th September, I knelt at the feet of the Holy Father and told him of this work for the Sacred Heart, such as God had inspired it. Pius IX, lifted his eyes to Heaven and appeared happy in spite of all his cares. He told me that the Heart of Jesus would be the salvation of the world and the Church, that our Congregation was a pressing need of the times, that he wished all the priests to be associated with it, and that we must do all in our power to propagate it. He then gave the work his blessing, adding that he would be happy to recognise and approve it canonically.

Would you be able, dear Rev. Father, to help us by your support to grant to the afflicted heart of our beloved Pontiff this sweet consolation. His Grace, Archbishop de la Tour d'Auvergne of Bourges, is very devoted to our work, and has placed us in charge of the parish of Issoudun. The parish priest is and always will be a member of our Society. The house which we occupy is well set up and in excellent condition. Our establishment, being in a railway town and in the heart of France, offers great possibilities.

Now, dear Father, regarding the priests who have become associated with us, we are very glad to be united with them as their thoughts and desires conform to our own. I see in this union, as you do yourself, the designs of Divine Providence. Several priests from the diocese of Lyons, having heard of our work for the Sacred Heart, now wish to join us. Three of them have come to see us and at the present moment are seeking the permission of their Archbishop.

I see in all these events which are taking shape the stones placed in position by the Divine Architect in the new edifice of the Sacred Heart. Let us hope that soon we will all form, as it were, one monument.

If you wish, I will send you a copy of our Rules which at present are only in a provisional state. You can tell me, for the good of our work, what you think of them.

Once again, dear Father, accept my sincere thanks and the expression of my profound respect.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

JULES CHEVALIER,

Apostolic Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

The letter allows us to reconstruct the first stages. Father Piperon has been in touch with Father Le Blanc, S. J.. As Paris is not listed as one of the places where he made his appeal, he probably met the Jesuit on one of his visits to Father Boiteux, the designer of the picture of the Sacred Heart.

In a letter written on 26th December, 1862, by Father Piperon, he tells Father Le Blanc what has taken place at Issoudun. The Jesuit has spoken of the work to other priests who have shown great interest, being animated by the same ideals. As these priests have suggested an affiliation with the work, Father Le Blanc wrote to inform Father Piperon of the fact, and Father Chevalier was keen on the suggestion.

The priests referred to in the letter are probably those stationed in Paris and its environs, as in a letter of 3rd November, 1863, Father Chevalier mentions "the Priests of Paris and elsewhere of whom you have spoken, and who cherish the same ideals as our own." But the important

thing is to find out what the Founder and the priest-associates had in mind concerning the nature of the union. Did these priests wish to join the Issoudun community or merely to form an affiliated Association of secular priests? Was there any idea of forming a new institute or a Federation?

Father Chevalier had mentioned that he regarded the various offers to join the Association as "stones in the new edifice of the Sacred Heart," but we seem to hear echoes of this from other sources as well.

The Founder regarded the movement as a means of consolidating the work at Issoudun and sought approbation of it from the Holy See as an association of the Society. That he meant Issoudun to be the centre of movement is apparent from his letter to Father Le Blanc, in which he referred to the origin of the Society, the suitability of the Monastery headquarters, the advantage of the central position of the town, etc. The fact that the Holy Father had given his blessing to the work and that the Archbishop had entrusted the parish to the care of the Missionaries enabled the Founder to proceed with confidence.

PART II CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE JESUITS

We learn from a letter of 26th December, 1862, that Father Chevalier had made a trip to Vaugiraud to discuss the whole matter with the Jesuit Fathers, especially Father Le Blanc, S.J. He probably went more than once, as he mentions in the letter a season travelling ticket, which the Fathers had given him and which he was now returning.

The Jesuits themselves wished to help Father Chevalier in his work with the secular priests, but at this stage seem a little afraid of premature publicity. A correspondence between Father Le Blanc and his Provincial, Father Fessard, is interesting, and throws some light on the nature of the association. In a letter to his Superior, Father Le Blanc poses the question: "Tell me if I have understood correctly your intentions on the subject of these unions and associations of priests."

In his reply Father Fessard gives his approval for the movement while advising prudence and discretion. He tells Father Le Blanc to advise Father de Ponlevoy that he wishes him to take charge of such a congregation, to draw up an instruction for these small congregations of priests similar to that of Father Boyer including the additions drawn from Father de Clarivere. He suggests that it would be a good idea to establish at the house on the Rue de Sevres a monthly day of retreat for priests who wish to make it. This would explain to interested observers Jesuit connections with several secular priests.

What interests us mainly is that Father Le Blanc sought permission of his Provincial to send Father Chevalier any pertinent matter on the subject, including the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, the ordinances of Superiors General, etc., and likewise asked permission to examine and modify the Rules submitted by the Missionaries of Issoudun. The main object was to clarify rules - firstly those relating to the Community, secondly those for priests who took vows but remained in their presbyteries, and thirdly for the associate priests who did not take any vows.

The priests with vows, although still living in their own presbyteries, formed a group distinct from those without vows and were considered as "agreges" (associates). In the light of future difficulties it is important to remember that the vows were the important factors.

The work, which formed the main book of reference on the subject, was the "Specimen" composed by Father Picot de Clorivere in 1790. Father Chevalier wrote on 8th January, 1863: "The more we study this work of the Sacred Heart as treated in the precious documents of Father de Clorivere, the more we realise how opportune it is at the present moment. It is a veritable need of our century. It is able to do an immense amount of good amongst the clergy and in the church."

In the general archives of the Society we have found a copy of this entitled "Abridged Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus," with the underlined text from St. John (17/15) "I do not ask that you take them out the world, but that you preserve them from evil." It is a literal transcription of the original with a few inserted modifications, e.g., the duration of the vows, the choice of Superiors, the reception of members from other dioceses, etc. These modifications were necessary to conform to the mind of Pope Pius VII who gave verbal approbation to the movement on 19th January, 1801. The "Specimen" played an important part in the new project. Its rules seem to have been the guiding factors to the priests of Paris who wished to join the Association.

According to the introduction to the book, the plan of Father de Clorivere was to form a religious Society to cope with the calamitous circumstances of the post-Revolution period. Now that the ancient Orders, which in olden times awakened and nourished the piety of the people, were violently attacked by the godless spirit of the age, it was necessary to found such a "valuable and useful organisation, even without the knowledge of the people and against their wishes.

"It is desirable to establish amongst ourselves a Society which has as its end the Glory of God and the Good of Religion, whose members, united in Jesus Christ by a common spiritual bond, but having no uniform habit, no common monasteries or churches, no earthly goods or riches, will go forth amongst the people, independently of each other, as did the first preachers of the Gospel, and as do the missionaries of today amongst the infidels.(14)

Father Terrien, S.J., refers to this as "the fundamental idea, the specific and distinctive character of the Institute revealed to Father de Clorivere - an idea which would preserve and perpetuate the practice of the Evangelical Counsels amongst the people, even unbeknown to themselves."

"To this end," Father Terrien tells us, "one of the experiments was to apply to the Holy See for permission to re-establish the Society of Jesus, giving it a new form appropriate to the conditions of the age." Father de Clorivere further expands: "An institute under another form, under another with a different rule, but having the same spirit and working for the same end."(15) "The establishment of the new Society and the re-establishment of the old are not incompatible. The two are able to help one another mutually, while keeping their separate forms and spirit." (16)

We find the reflection of these ideas in the correspondence that took place between Vaugirard and Issoudun. The Specimen had stated that the members of the new Institute would recognise St. Ignatius of Loyola as Father and Founder, seeing that it came into being through the Society he had founded. Its members would follow, even if from afar, the maxims and spirit of his Society if the Institute was approved by the Supreme Pontiff. If they were not able to be honoured by the same name as the first Society of Jesus, they could call themselves "The Society of the Heart of Jesus."(17).

Referring to his own Association of Secular Priests, Father Chevalier wrote to the Jesuits on 28th December, 1862:

"This Society, a daughter of your own, would be its reflection, its expansion. It would regard the great St. Ignatius as its own Founder, would be united with yours by the most intimate and sacred bonds, its glory and strength being to enrich itself with your light and experience. This Society of the Heart of Jesus, sustained by yours and depending on it, embracing all ranks of the clergy throughout the countryside, will resist the powers of Hell and render great service to the Church and to our own Congregation. Its motto will be: "Ad Majorem Dei et Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu gloriam."

Ten days later on the 8th January, he wrote in the name of Archbishop de la Tour d'Auvergne: "His Grace is relying on you to a large extent to help in the formation of this work. After what I told him, he thinks, as we do, that it should draw its pith and life from your Constitutions and organisation, imbibe your spirit and benefit from the sacred bonds which ought to unite us - in a word, that the Society should be a daughter of your own. It will be an expansion of the work of the Society of Jesus, which Blessed Margaret Mary said would spread by its ministry the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

We note in this letter that Father Chevalier is using the expression, "this new Society," and that he is stressing the fact that it will be a means of spreading Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Father de Clorivere had stated in the Specimen: "There is a marked difference between those who live apart from the world and those who remain out in the world, be they clerics or lay-people."(18) This explains why Father le Blanc was anxious that special rules be drawn up for those in community life, and for the priests who took vows but remained in their presbyteries, and who, according to Father de Clorivere, are members of the Institute, because of these vows."

In reference to Issoudun and the diocese of Bourges let us stress again some points from the Specimen. The word "residences," for example, is not used, but "colleges," meaning particular areas or groups.(19) The members remain attached to their dioceses, and are allowed to leave only with the consent of their bishops.(20) We see in this a prelude to the modern secular institutes.(21)

Regarding the vows, which were the main topic of discussion in the correspondence between Issoudun and Vaugirard, the Specimen states: "For many grave reasons we are convinced that it is advisable that those who wish to consecrate themselves to God in this Society should bind themselves by the three essential vows of Religion. It is the only means of making the Society a Religious Body, and thus repairing, in some small measure, the great loss the Catholic Church has sustained in the suppression of so many of her Religious Orders.

If the Professed members are priests, and if, in the judgment of their Superiors, they are distinguished by their learning and virtue they may add a fourth vow to the other three, by which they will bind themselves more directly to the Holy See, and promise to go anywhere the Supreme Pontiff may send them at a moment's notice. The Superiors can be selected only from amongst the professed priest members.

Those who, after two years' probation, do not wish to take the vows through fear or any other motive, may still remain attached to the Society as helpers. They will be considered as "auxiliary members" of the Society, provided they have the firm resolution of remaining permanently with it, and are acceptable to the Superiors."(22)

Father Chevalier clearly stated that, as far as he and the Archbishop were concerned, the new Society should be directly associated with the Society of Jesuit priests. "It should be a daughter of your own. It will draw its life from your Constitutions."

On the 26th December he wrote: "It is necessary to keep in mind that these Constitutions are those of a true Religious Order approved by the Holy See. While awaiting this approbation, which apparently will be readily given, it will be immediately under the jurisdiction of the Bishops.

With it, as with yourselves, it will be necessary, in the interests of the Institute, to have a central house to be, as it were, the soul of this large body, the hearth from which life and warmth will radiate to its members, a home ever open to the dispersed children, whether they live in community or not, whether they have vows or have simply made promises.

There the Religious life may be openly lived, if the laws of the State permit it. If the storm of persecution breaks out afresh, the life may be lived in spirit and in silence, and those priests who live separately out in the world can hide their affiliation if it is to the greater good of the Church. The countryside is blessed with all types of ministry are able to procure the glory of God and the Sacred Heart and to effect the salvation of souls.

His Grace, the Archbishop, is wholeheartedly behind this work which, in view of the present state of affairs, is just as urgent as in the time of Father de Clorivere. He believes that the time is opportune to begin the work, and is anxious that we do so immediately while the conditions are favourable. His Grace is sure that the Holy Father will view this new Society with a lively satisfaction, seeing that it meets the needs of our time.

Several priests from the Berry province and elsewhere are anxiously waiting to join us. My confreres at Issoudun were delighted with what I told them of my visit to Paris. They have read with much interest the plan of Father de Clorivere."

On 8th January followed the communication: "His Grace wishes that we be definitely organised, and that all the rules will be drawn up before the date of the Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary who, like himself I am sure, will wish to see the work begun. He has told me that this happy occasion would be an admirable time to have the Society recognised and approved by Holy Father."

One last question Father Chevalier put to Father le Blanc in the letter of 26th December: "Would you, as Father de Clorivere did in his time, think it advisable to extend the benefits of this Society to lay people living in the world, who desire and would be able to take part in it while still remaining in their own particular sphere where Providence has placed them? I myself think it would be a great advantage. It would complement our work. I know several people who would be very happy to join the Company."

These first stages show that the work was fundamentally based on the plan of Father de Clorivere but with certain adjustments to meet the exigencies of Issoudun. The religious character, first of all, was maintained, as the Specimen required, by the taking of the vows. A central house and branch communities were deemed necessary. A general organisation including lay-people was desirable, and the Institute would not be limited to any particular area, embracing the clergy of all ranks, no matter where they might be.

The same day that Father Chevalier sent his second letter, 8th January, he received a reply from Father Le Blanc to his first of 26th December. After telling Father Chevalier that he had not as yet found time to distribute the pictures he had sent him, and doubting if the appeal would be successful in Paris, he came to the subject of the letter:

"We have been busy on the matter, but it will take some time to finalise things. I have shown your plan to one of our priests, who has been in charge of that type of work, and we intend to discuss it further at length. I will keep you posted of our decisions, and you may deem it advisable to come to Vaugirard, where you know you are always welcome. We would like to see Father Maugeest also.

We have the greatest respect for the wishes of the Archbishop of Bourges, and we agree with him that we should take advantage of the present favourable circumstances.

Yes, we think the Society should include lay-people but naturally here we must act with care and prudence. Except for those who merit this favour by their proved virtue, it would be better to wait till the Society of priests is properly organised before admitting the laity. This, of course, does not apply, to lay-brothers. After much experience we realise that discretion is the key-note to success, and we will be pleased to inform you on the details of this experience.

The most urgent need at present is to draw up a plan which may be presented to Rome for approbation. We will follow, as closely as possible, the ideas of Father de Clorivere. All that I have read in the works and correspondence of this religious reveal him as a true man of God, full of wisdom and ripe experience. Our Father Provincial has carefully noted all you have written, and is very interested in your work.

Our Company, as you know, does not have a Third Order. Thus we would not be able to form with yours any ties involving direction. However, we are willing to maintain useful contact with it - "ad majorem Dei et Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu Gloriam."

Here then, dear and respected Father, is the work we propose to you. You will be able to judge in all simplicity if it is acceptable to you, and your worthy Archbishop will tell you what he thinks of it. I suggest that the Latin translation of your motto be worded: "Ametur ubique terrarum Cor Jesu Sacratissimum!" Father Rector and Father Bienville wish to be remembered to you."

The Father Bienville mentioned here is probably the priest who, at the direction of the Provincial, drew up the project for Father Chevalier.

We have a letter written to Father Chevalier by a Jesuit priest dated 10th January, 1863. The signature has faded except for the letter "s" before the name and "S.J." after it. The address has also faded and only the date is legible at the top. From the postscript it is clear that the author is not Father Le Blanc, as it reads: "I have shown your letter to Father Le Blanc and hope he sends you the documents you request."

The letter indicates that the writer has been in contact with Issoudun and has been consulted on the subject of the Association. He urges all possible speed in commencing the foundation, but stresses the fact that it must be based on a solid plan, with a clear idea of the end and the

general means involved. He does not always agree with the wishes of Father Chevalier, whose reaction we will see later on. The most important part of the letter is as follows:

"The end of the Society can be found in the words of Our Lord to His faithful servant, Blessed Margaret Mary: "Quicumque meum Cor coluerit et late colendum procuraverit. . . .," where He promises to priests the grace to touch even the most hardened hearts.

In general the end of your Society is the same as any other, namely the Glory of God, but in particular it is the Glory of God procured by the conversion of sinners even the most hardened. The principal means of achieving this is by Devotion to the Sacred Heart and the spreading of the devotion as far as possible. All your activity should be directed to this end. These are my views. It is for you to judge if they are helpful.

Having established the definite end of the Society, what are its works? The general answer is obvious: Any work that has as its object the conversion of sinners, but in particular the conducting of missions, not on the home-front but amongst the infidels and the heretics; the apostolate of preaching, especially with special sermons during Advent, Lent, the month of Our Lady, etc., special lectures to workers; retreats to Religious engaged in charitable works, direction of students in the Seminaries, etc.

What now of the Constitution of the Society and its Association? We must keep in mind the two essential points:

- (1) That the Society must form one solid body, constituted on definite rules and centrally organised.
- (2) That it be not restricted to just the Issoudun area, but extend as far as possible.

In effect, the Society will be composed of two classes of Religious: those living in community and those remaining at their posts out in the world. The first will be the professed, both priests and Brothers, who are considered as the "corps d'elite" or the main section of the Society. The second are the priests or lay-folk living in the world but who have taken the vows of religion - called the Associates. The "agreges" or the affiliated helpers are priests or lay people remaining in the world, who do not take any vows but merely make a promise. The distinction then is fundamentally based on the vows. The Associates are considered as Religious and are obliged by the Constitutions and Rules, saving the right of their bishops over them. However, since they are living in the world, they will have greater freedom in the matter of poverty. Since the vows are, as it were, the touchstone, all those in affiliation with the Society before the first vows are considered as "agreges."

In the Community there will be no distinction regarding rank amongst the different grades. No particular place is reserved in the chapel, the refectory or other places where the Community meets, except for the Superior. However, for the sake of order, the priests will be in one section, the non-priests next to them, then the novices and lay Brothers. In the Novitiate the priest-novices take precedence over the others. The professed members living in Community must regard themselves as exclusively dedicated to the Society, consecrated by their vows to a life of poverty and obedience, wholly occupied in the works of the Congregation. They alone have the "active and passive" voice in the government of the Society and it is only from their ranks that the Superior General and his assistants and the Superiors of provinces may be chosen. The associates may hold any other positions.

The agreges will be the pious helpers, priests or lay-people who will work for the same end as yourselves, be advised by your counsels and participate in all the graces, prayers and privileges of the Society - forming, as it were, a Third Order.

For admission to the Society, those who wish to join the Community and take vows, besides possessing good health in body and mind, must be persons of good character and reputation. They will spend at least fifteen days as postulants, and during that time make a retreat, examine the Constitutions, and make a thorough examination of their state of soul.

Regarding the associates, they should spend at least one year on probation and reside for at least ten days in one of the Communities of the Society during which they will make a retreat of eight full days before pronouncing their first vows. If it is more convenient, they will be permitted to make this retreat in one of the Jesuit communities and take their vows there. Each year the professed will make a retreat and the associates who are about to take their final vows will make a retreat of fifteen days, or even thirty days where possible. If, in particular cases, they cannot make the fifteen days then at least eight days is necessary. The agreges or aspirants who wish to become associates may make the long retreat in the Novitiate if they so desire.

After being accepted, when the time of probation is over, the novice may take simple vows, but should wait eight years before taking final vows in the case of associates, and ten years in the case of the first-class members. Members may pass from one class to the other, and the Society has the right and duty to transfer to the association those who are not fitted for life in the community. By this means the interests of both the members and the Society are safeguarded. The Novitiate is of two years' duration, but may be repeated for another two years.

In the interim between the taking of simple and final vows, those who are priests may be employed in the ordinary works of the Society, and those not in sacred Orders will occupy themselves in the study of philosophy and theology. They may be employed as professors or supervisors in the Junior Seminary. A second Novitiate of at least three months is advised for all priests before taking their final vows. A Superior General will be elected from amongst the finally professed. As the Society grows it will be divided into Provinces with a certain number of houses, as necessity demands.

Besides the Novitiate there will be a house of studies and a mission house for diocesan missionaries. The Superiors will be named by the Superior General or the Provincial with his consent. Those in charge of parishes will be named by the bishop, but the Society may elect a Superior of the Community in which the parish-priest lives. Finally, besides the Constitutions it will be necessary to draw up statutes for the various classes, rules for the community, rules for the priests, students, preachers and those for priests living outside the community.

The letter concludes; "Our Father Provincial has instructed one of our priests to draw up a list of Constitutions which may help you. I will endeavour to see him soon and compare notes with him. I have written, somewhat at length, the above suggestions as I promised you. No doubt, you will see fit to alter them here and there. I would do so myself when putting them in final definite form. At least you have my general ideas on the subject, and I hope they may be useful to you later on."

We have quoted almost entirely the contents of the above letter, not only because of the immediate influence it had on Father Chevalier - although there were many suggestions with which he did not agree - but because later on he used it to answer objections by various members on certain rules and aspects.

In a letter dated 12th January, Father Le Blanc, after stating that he was enclosing 100 francs for the pictures of the Sacred Heart, gives his own opinion on various aspects of the proposed Rule. He makes the following points:

"I think it will be better for you to adopt the Rules of the Society founded by Rev. Father de Clorivere, and to modify some of your own.

The venerable Father insisted on a morning meditation of at least one hour." The Abrege of the Rules submitted by Father Chevalier had stated: "The members will go to the Chapel at a quarter past five and will say their prayers in common and make their meditation till 6 o'clock."

"Whereas your rules say that the members shall make an annual retreat of several days,' Father de Clorivere made it more definite for his Company of Jesus by stipulating a retreat of eight or ten days.

A Novitiate of two years was required, and after one year the novices could, with permission, take the religious vows of devotion."

"Father de Clorivere required that the members of his Company take annual vows till they reach the age of thirty, and after that perpetual-vows, provided they had been members for at least five years."

"We presume the Holy See will permit the taking of perpetual vows even though Pope Pius VII seemed unwilling in 1801 to grant such permission. If permission for perpetual vows is not granted, then we can ask that they be taken for five year periods. It is also advisable to take the extra vow of stability."

In Father Chevalier's Abrege the period of the Novitiate was "one entire year," and the vows were to be taken for one year, then five years, followed by perpetual vows. Final vows could be taken only after a sojourn of seven years in the Community.

Father Le Blanc continues: "It is very desirable to have as many lay-Brothers as possible. Also virtuous lay people living in the world may be affiliated, and even take vows under certain conditions. The administration of the Society will be carried out by the priests only." This last group is not mentioned in Father Chevalier's Abrege. Regarding affiliated priests without vows, Father de Clorivere had admitted them also, while stressing the need for care and prudence in the matter. The letter concludes:

"We are going to add some supplements to the Latin text of the Specimen so wisely composed by Father de Clorivere. This will take some time, but I shall forward it to you on its completion. It seems to me that it should prove the basis of your Constitutions - all the more since it has the sanction of experience.

We must say there are certain differences of opinion in the letter written by the unknown author, probably Father Bienville, and that of Father Le Blanc. The matter becomes even more complicated when Father Le Blanc writes another letter on January 22nd, changing his own opinion on certain matters, especially on the point of admission of the secular clergy. He now thinks that the organisation of secular priests and lay-people should be postponed to a future date. "You yourselves," he writes, "are not yet sufficiently organised to worry about outsiders." For the present you should not engage yourself with lay-people - even the very good ones - except to keep spiritual contact with them so that later on they may become true members of your Society. Father de Clorivere did admit them "positis ponendis." He also changed his mind about taking the vow of stability. He now regards it as superfluous for those with perpetual vows, but mentions that in the Company of Jesus the scholastics, who have not yet taken definite vows, are advised to take this vow of stability.

It is obvious that this letter is a reply to one from Issoudun which, unfortunately, has been lost. Father Le Blanc expresses the need for drawing up complete and definite constitutions. We are suggesting (when I say "we" I refer to Father Provincial, Father Bertrand, a former Superior our missions in Madura with whom I have had frequent conferences, and, finally, myself) that you draw up a summary (a kind of formula) which can be presented to the Holy Father for approval as was done with our own Company of Jesus. Little by little the Constitutions take definite form, and after trial and experience are formulated by a General Chapter. We ourselves are busy drawing up such a plan, which may help you. You can examine it carefully and change it where you think necessary. You can submit it to Grace the Archbishop and discuss it with him. You are fortunate in having a bishop who takes such a keen interest in your newly-founded Society. We are anxious to help you and, if you think it would be an advantage, one of our Fathers could go and spend several days with you at Issoudun in order to explain more fully to the Fathers the various aspects of the plan."

Father Le Blanc promised to send within a week a copy of the Jesuit Constitutions and the "Thesaurus Societatis Jesu;" he mentions that Father de Clorivere had written much about the Society he had founded and those he had directed. "However, I do not say that you must follow him in all matters, as the Spirit of God works differently in different cases, and you must follow your own way. The Venerable Father, nevertheless, understood religious life very well, even for people living in this age."

These last words would seem to indicate that the Fathers of Vaugirard realised that Father Chevalier was not going to follow all the directions they gave him, and that he had ideas of his own - a fact which caused some voices to be raised to doubt the practicality of the correspondence and the consultation. Father Chevalier, for example, stressed the fact that the emphasis must be placed on devotion to the Sacred Heart, to which Father Le Blanc replied: "Yes, by all means, keep your desire to honour the Sacred Heart and to make reparation to It. On the First Fridays the act of reparation could be publicly read at Benediction and even a procession of the Blessed Sacrament held inside the church. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart a solemn procession could be held in the precincts of the church, and the various communities. That has been the custom in our Colleges since 1828. Permission from the bishop is necessary."

Father Le Blanc then goes on to speak of a number of secular priests from Orleans who wish to become affiliated members of the Society - a subject with which we will deal more fully in the next chapter.

"I know," he wrote, "that there has been a meeting of these priests in Paris, and, if it is convenient, you could send me a copy of the minutes. My own opinion is that it would be better not to admit them all in a body, but advise each one to weigh up before God the pros and cons of the project, and to keep them informed of what you are doing.

While you are in the process of organising the nucleus of your Congregation it would be better not to have the care of outsiders on your hands. The chief concern at present is to organise the priests with vows, who live in community or in their parishes. We must not be unaware of the danger that some priests who may be called by God to take vows, may content themselves with merely retraining amongst the affiliated members. On the other hand, if you should find some priests who would be better suited in the lower category, you could advise them what is best for the good of their souls. I therefore suggest that you do not hasten arrangements.

The association with the Orleans clergy had its own and special bearing on the early history of the Society. The correspondence between the Founder and the Jesuits from this point onwards makes frequent reference to it, as it was this organisation which had such a marked bearing on the association of secular priests with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Father Chevalier's letter of January 28th expresses agreement with several of the points raised by Father Le Blanc, e.g., the necessity of not hastening the project especially in organising the lay associates.

"We submit entirely to your advice and your experience," he wrote. "You understand our work very well - the needs of the time and the desires of the Heart of Jesus."

He goes on to say that he will not hasten the union with Orleans, but that he is going to meet these Reverend gentlemen on the following Tuesday. He will send Father Le Blanc a report of the previous meeting held with them in Paris, but we will not quote it here, as it is rather long, and several of the subjects treated are of little importance. He agrees that the vow of stability is superfluous for those who have made perpetual profession, but suggests that it be replaced by a vow of readiness to put oneself at the service of the Holy Father.

Emphasising the fact that the important thing for the future of the Society is the organisation of priests with vows, and to have a definite plan for the Society, he remarks: "Our work for the Sacred Heart owes much to you, my dear Father. Our Society will indeed be a child of your own. How wonderful are the ways of God!"

The letter concludes with some news. "On the coming Feast of the Blessed Trinity we are expecting two or three more priests to join up here at Issoudun. When they do so I will ask your Father Provincial to supply a preacher for the retreat. In the meantime you might join us in making a Novena to start on January 29th for the success of our work. All the Convents of the Visitation have promised to unite with us."

Issoudun then was quite prepared to follow the advice from Vaugirard. On one point, however, Father Founder considered it his duty to throw greater emphasis. It was the fourth point of the letter to which Father Le Blanc made only brief reference - namely the Spreading of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the necessity of making Reparation to that same Sacred Heart. "One of the ends of our Society," he wrote, "is to spread Devotion to the Sacred Heart and to make Reparation to the Divine Heart. With this end we have in our chapel every first Friday of each month special devotions which the faithful attend. These spiritual exercises are most edifying, we endeavour to make the pious souls who attend Adorers and Victims of the Sacred Heart. Reparation through the Heart of Jesus is also one of the needs of our century, as so many sins and outrages are committed against Heart of God. To do so, moreover, is to respond to the desire of the Heart of Jesus Himself."

It would seem that Father Chevalier made the journey to Orleans on the 27th January, 1863, as a result of which, another plan was discussed and negotiations began with Vaugirard. However, before speaking of this, let us look at the "Plan for the Society of Missionaries of the

Sacred Heart" presented to Father Chevalier by the Jesuits in April of the same year. The Plan reads:

(1) End of the Society. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Jesus desire to form a Society which will help them to devote themselves more efficaciously to the greater glory of God, their own sanctification, the salvation of souls and the good of the Church.

(2) Added to this general end, which is common to all Religious Orders, is the special end of working with all the powers their minds and bodies to attain evangelical perfection themselves, and to cause it to flourish in others, even outside the cloister, and especially among the secular clergy. The name which they have the honour of bearing will remind them that they have engaged themselves to honour the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to propagate these precious devotions everywhere in order to spread amongst men the graces of which they are the source. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart will regard themselves as specially dedicated to the Church of Rome, the Mother of all Churches. The word and decisions of the Holy Father will always be sacred for them.

(3) The Matter and Form of the Society: The Society, similar to other Religious Congregations in things pertaining to the interior life, differs from them, however, in the exterior life in so far as its members have nothing to distinguish them from other secular priests in the matter of dress or mode of dwelling, although they are exhorted, where possible, to live together. They will have the same general rule as regards domestic upkeep and food, the distribution of time and work, each remaining subject to the authority of the Ordinary, and doing the work assigned to by his religious Superiors.

(4) Bonds of the Society. The Vows. Being deprived to a large extent of the exterior means of unity and common life which other Religious Orders enjoy, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart will realise the necessity of cultivating every interior and spiritual means for their sanctification. They will ardently embrace the three vows of religion, firstly, "because they are the most powerful bond of union with Jesus Christ. Secondly, because they are the essential conditions of any religious body. Thirdly, they are the most efficacious means of striving for perfection and achieving the end of the Society, as they are likewise its protection against the inconstancy and weakness of human nature. Fourthly, the vows offer us the way of life lived by Jesus Himself and the opportunity of living like the Apostles who abandoned all to follow their Master, fifthly, they provide us with the necessary weapons to combat the spirit of the world, and offer a safe rampart against the attacks and seductions of an environment in which priests are forced to live.

(5) While embracing the vows as its constitutive principle, the Society is not able to give to these vows the same extension nor exterior practice as that given by other Religious Orders, particularly in regard to the vows of Poverty and Obedience. It is evident that man obliged to live a separate life out in the world, and who have to look after their own livelihood are not able to practise Poverty as strictly as those living in community. The same with Obedience. Those living out in parishes, who have not ready access to their Superiors, and whose position often calls for immediate decisions, would not be expected to practise Obedience in the same manner as those living in community life. However, it goes without saying that the religious, while accommodating himself to the particular circumstances, must always observe the essentials of the vows.

There then follows an exposition of the practice of the three vows.

On the subject of this part of the plan Father Chevalier replies to the author (who is not Father Le Blanc) on the 20th April:

"I have received your plan of Association. We studied it with great interest. Thank you very much indeed. It expresses perfectly the end we have in mind. You have pointed out a clear way of reconciling the practice of the vows of poverty and obedience with the various duties of the subjects. It is a formidable problem that you smoothed out."

However, Father Chevalier was not in complete accord with the last part of the Plan which dealt with the Organisation and Government of the Society. Here is the text of the passage: "All members in a Province or a diocese will be governed by a Superior General elected by a General Chapter with an absolute majority of votes. This latter will be aided by four Assistants likewise elected by the General Chapter. The members who are in a town or canton will be subject to the local Superior who will be nominated by the Superior General and his consultors. In each Province a Novice Master will be appointed, and in each town or district where there are members a Confessor will be appointed by the local Superior.

If new houses are established in other dioceses where there are sufficient members and associates a new province should be created.

While being united in the closest bonds of charity, new provinces, at least in the beginning, should remain independent in administration. It is better in these matters to leave the future in the hands of God and to trust in His Providence. If later on the work is to develop more extensively there will be time then to deal with the eventualities as they take place. God's works are not organised a priori but develop gradually and imperceptibly. Trying to hurry them would present the danger of substituting our own ideas for those of Divine Wisdom. When God's Will become sufficiently manifest, we can go ahead, aided by experience and the disposition of things, to examine with more assurance what is the best method of organisation.

The monastic institutions approved by the Church are many and various, but from the point of view with which we are concerned here they can be divided into two general classes. The ancient orders such as those of St. Benedict and St. Augustine are not so centralised in administration, leaving to the various provinces and houses a greater deal of liberty, spontaneity and autonomy, whereas the more recent Societies, such as that of St. Ignatius, are more centrally organized at the cost of a certain amount of particular liberty. Both forms have their advantages and drawbacks. It is the law of things human.

The best form for any particular religious Society is that which best conforms to its nature and helps it to achieve the end for which it was instituted. Following this rule, we consider that the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart is composed of members who are not able, on account of their diocesan ties, to devote themselves exclusively to the regular life, and since their principal object is to exercise a salutary influence on the secular clergy, they conform by their nature more to the first class mentioned above than to the second, and this for reasons obvious in themselves.

PART III DIFFERENCE OF OPINION between FATHER FOUNDER AND VAUGIRARD

But it was with this idea that Father Founder did not agree. This plan would seem to contradict and destroy his fundamental idea of founding a religious society with all the true characteristics of religious life and organised in such a way that it would help Associate-secular priests who wished to be Apostles of the Sacred Heart, as the members themselves, and to participate as much as possible in the living of the religious life. The plan was based on a misunderstanding of what was the intention and mission of Father Chevalier. The author evidently thought the Founder's wish was to found only a Congregation of secular priests who would take vows and work indirectly in the cause of the Sacred Heart through their sacred ministry.

Father Le Blanc had understood Father Founder's mind and intentions better as we find amongst his notes the following extract: "In a general plan we should strive, according to good sense, to level out the path, and solve the difficulties concerning principles. The rules, the details, should be left to the wisdom of the Founders, acting under the watchful eye of God. The foundation of a new Order presupposes the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the special inspiration of Almighty God. Who have a right to expect this assistance if not Founders of religious Orders?"(23)

Father Chevalier, consequently, felt himself bound to express his disagreement with this latter part of the Plan submitted to him by the Fathers of Vaugirard. He wrote in the letter, part of which we have already quoted: "You will permit me, dear Rev. Father, to speak with simplicity. We were hoping that the plan would be more embracing, or rather we were wanting more than just a plan. I have made known to our worthy friend, Father Le Blanc, what was in our mind, and was hoping he would have communicated it to you." We are agreed that the new Society ought to have:

(1) The same interior organisation as that of St. Ignatius with the same Constitutions. We were hoping you would give us, with this end in view, positive and detailed rules:

- (a) for the general constitutional administration of the Society
- (b) for those members living in community, for we realise the urgent necessity of them.
- (c) for those remaining out in the world.
- (d) for affiliated members without vows, i.e., for a Third Order.

(2) Definite terms regarding the conditions of entry, the nature and duration of the Novitiate, the different kinds of vows -perpetual, temporary, vow of stability.

(3) The Society, at some time in the near or distant future, must be submitted for approbation to Rome and the Holy Father. The Constitutions must be drawn up with this end in view.

(4) There must be unity of outlook, of interests and of administration. A Mother House is necessary on which the others will depend whilst allowing a certain amount of latitude and respecting the rights of their Lordships, the Bishops, over their subjects. This is the way that His Grace of Bourges and my confreres interpret the new Society.

The various small diocesan associations form, as it were, a confederation but at present the members who belong to them feel they are not sufficiently united by solid bonds. Although they are all working for the same end, carry the same name and are united by close bonds of charity, each group is autonomous and lives its own particular life. We feel there is an imperative need for one united body - for one united society, in order that the work prove solid and lasting.

To delay achieving this would be to expose the work to extinction. Each group would have its own particular spirit, its own preconceived ideas, its prejudices and its internal divisions.

Admittedly, to seek to unite these units into one body will present great difficulties, but if these obstacles are not surmounted, they will remain purely diocesan associations, and experience proves that as such they would have no future. Sooner or later they disappear on account of internal strife more or less scandalous.

Moreover, if they remain purely diocesan associations they naturally remain completely in the hands of diocesan authority which becomes the soul and pivot of the organisation. Whilst one bishop may be favourably inclined and have a good understanding of such religious institutions, another may not be so favourable and may be even hostile. One bishop who is friendly may be succeeded by another not so friendly who might seek to change, modify or abolish the Constitutions. You can surely see a grave danger in such possibilities.

On the contrary, if the Association is established on a solid basis, on approved constitutions, and becomes a general and uniform organisation, we build, as it were, while safeguarding the rights of the Ordinaries, a central health from which will radiate life and warmth to the members. Such a unity of action will have great advantages. After the approval of the Holy See the rules will be fixed and permanent, and there will be nothing to fear from the intervention or caprices of human beings. While building a rampart for the society in the various dioceses, it does not mean that the rule in particular cases could not be adjusted to local customs and the needs of the locality."

"I see an essential difference between the independent monastic houses, of which you speak, and the diocesan associations. The first have a common rule approved by Rome which no one can change. They have a cloister which protects them from worldly dangers, and a safeguard of common life for all the members. They are not directly subject to episcopal authority. Their occupations are a safeguard against dissipation as their mode of life is more severe and the discipline more stringent. If later on when the work is established, the spirit well formed and the Constitutions observed, there should be need to separate the various diocesan houses, then that can be effected.

We think also, my dear Father, that for the good of the work it will be necessary to have independent novitiates, as your Society has. The bishops would be more inclined to permit young men to enter if this is so, especially if we undertake to educate them. These Novitiates themselves could be centres for the priests interested in the work, and a means of gaining more vocations in the various dioceses. The Congregation would then have need of certain common houses, which would belong to itself or to associate members.

If you think these observations, which are also those of the Archbishop of Bourges, are worthwhile, I still ask you, my dear Father, to draw up for us a new Plan in detail with specific constitutions.

Seeing that the work is important and could be of great value to the Church, could you yourself come and preach the retreat which we hold each year preparatory to the Feast of the Sacred Heart for our good people here in Issoudun?

We are well known now in the diocese of Bourges, and His Grace and the clergy are favourably inclined to us and our work. Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne has expressed the desire that priests out on the ministry unite with us and has put no obstacle in their way if they wish to do so.

His attitude is so favourable to us that he has entrusted the parish, which now comprises 14,000 souls, to our care, and the parish priest is a member of our Society."

Father Chevalier's reply to the submitted Plan was evidently not received with enthusiasm at Vaugirard. In reply to a letter which has been lost Father Founder wrote on 9th June, 1863:

"My dear Rev. Father,

We have only one desire in the matter we have been discussing - to accomplish the Holy and Adorable Will of God. 'Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.' To wish to substitute our ideas for those of God would be foolish. May the Heart of Jesus guard us from such a stupidity'.

The moment you regard the new plan more suitable to our purpose and more likely to succeed we will willingly adopt it. We are too small, too weak, too ignorant to insist on our own ideas. For us, who in the matter of experience are still children, the surest way is to follow the advice of experienced and virtuous men to whom God has communicated His Wisdom and Designs."

This reply would suggest that the author of the submitted plan had not been altogether enthusiastic at the changes and reservations made by Father Chevalier. Moreover, from further remarks of Father Le Blanc we can gather that there was not complete unanimity on the subject at Vaugirard itself.

On 22nd April, Father Le Blanc notes that he must write to Father Chevalier to stress once again the necessity of approbation from Rome, the necessity of central control from a Mother-house on which the others would be dependant, and the necessity of perfect union between the houses. The Jesuits themselves had learnt all this from experience.

We have already quoted Father Le Blanc's conviction that the drawing up of rules for any religious society should be left to its Founder, who is directed by God, and he now goes on to say:

"It is true that the Constitutions of the Company of Jesus could form a basis for the new Society, but their complete application is neither wise nor even possible. If a religious constitution is to last it must be perfect and appropriate to the nature and end of the Society for which it is drawn up. It must also take into consideration the position of the personnel it deals with.

Our Constitutions in the Company of Jesus presuppose a central administration and the necessary dependence of all members on it, but with this new Association this is impossible. The priests are subject to the bishops and dependant on them for appointment and faculties. This

would naturally lead to multiple cross-purposes and interior confusion, which in turn would have its exterior consequences - clash of personalities, distrust, mild persecutions and even scandals - all of which would only be defeating the end for which the Association was founded, namely, the sanctification of the secular clergy by the gentle influence of devotion to the Sacred Heart."

The same day he wrote the following note;

"Observations approved by our Very Rev. Father Provincial:

I fear our own Company may be gravely compromised if we busy ourselves further with this new movement.

It will probably produce no real or solid good.

The Rev. Father recommends that we now disassociate ourselves from the movement.

It is necessary either to halt the whole movement, if they are willing (it is already a little late for that!) or to disengage ourselves from it."

Looking back, we can see that the exchange of opinions underwent many variations since that day - December 25th - when the Jesuit Provincial, consulted by Father Le Blanc on the subject of examining and modifying the 'rule of Issoudun,' had replied: "Examine and modify? Yes, but do not impose. Merely propose."

On the 15th April, Father Le Blanc noted his uneasiness re the development of the affair: "I dread the extension and the consequent publicity arising from the movement. Third Orders are all very well in the large and well-established orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic. Third Orders are satellites of religious bodies. This one is going to take too much building up. We can see the difficulties encountered by Third Orders of religious orders for women. There are Confraternities of the Sacred Heart, a religious Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and one of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary."

"A religious Congregation of women in the world should be completely independent of that of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, different regarding its position, its nature and even its end."

This then was the beginning of the end of the 'Vaugirard period.'

The correspondence with Father Le Blanc continued till July, 1865, and the good priest followed the progress of the Society with help and interest. We will see that in August, 1863, Rev. Father Bertrand, S.J., defended the idea of again submitting a plan to Issoudun. Perhaps he was the author of the original. We will see that Rev. Father Bienville, S.J., whose name is mentioned often in the correspondence will be sent from Bourges to lend his assistance.

Certain friction is to arise between Rev. Father Vandel, M.S.C., the Founder of the "Oeuvre des Campagnes," and the Jesuits in Paris, which, however, did not affect the friendly relationship between the two Societies, as is proved from the fact that the Jesuits always came to Issoudun to preach on the occasion of the big feasts. Officially, however, there is no further contact with the Jesuits in Paris. The role of adviser was taken over by one of their confreres from Toulouse, Rev. Father H. Ramiere, S.J., whom we shall meet frequently in future pages.

Actually, the ideas put forward by Vaugirard were not, in the main, in concord with those of Father Founder. Father Chevalier had founded the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as a Society of priests who would consecrate themselves entirely to the Sacred Heart. Christ had shown him His Heart, asking him to make It known and loved throughout the world as a means of saving souls. The Apostolate of the Sacred Heart was then the end and object of the foundation.

To achieve this he sought the help of the secular clergy, desiring at the same time to offer them a means of sanctification and total dedication most agreeable to the Sacred Heart. He offered them a life of immolation by the taking of vows, which would sustain them in the difficult circumstances in which they lived. Thus was the origin of the Association of Secular priests of the Sacred Heart.

In the first analysis of the end of this movement given by Vaugirard the accent was put more on the conversion of sinners than on the positive devotion to the Sacred Heart. We have seen that Father Chevalier disagreed with this. He had no quarrel with the formula of the Plan of 1863 which stated that "the special end is to work with all their efforts to cause evangelical perfection to flourish outside the Cloister, above all amongst the secular clergy."

This was quite in harmony with Devotion to the Sacred Heart, but it was on the point of organisation that the difference of opinion occurred. Vaugirard wanted an organisation whose principal end would be the helping of secular clergy in leading a life of holiness, of perfection.

This to Father Chevalier was a secondary end, and it would not suffice to form a Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as he envisaged it. While wholly desirous of helping his fellow-priests out in the world, his main object was to found a Society of Missionaries. That is what the Congregation meant for him.

If his reply to the author of the plan seems but a refutation of the fact that a less rigid and more supple organisation was needed for the secular clergy, the real difference of opinion lay in the fact that the Society must primarily be a Congregation in honour of the Sacred Heart.

Had the Founder not written on the very evening before he received the plan? (9th April);

"I beg of you to make the Institute while offering the common life to the clergy, essentially one devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose destiny is to propagate that devotion everywhere. This is the important thing. The Sacred Heart of Jesus needs Apostles and Victims."

And referring to the many requests to found a Third Order of lay-people he added: "Does not this general longing of hearts for the Heart of the Master prove that the reign of the Sacred Heart has begun? Fiat! Fiat!"

After the difference with Vaugirard we appreciate the fact that the help and advice of Father Ramiere was to be a great consolation to Father Chevalier, as this good priest saw and judged all in the light of Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In this respect he was closer to Father Chevalier than the Fathers of Vaugirard.

If Father Chevalier remained resolute in the midst of all his troubles, in the pursuit of the end for which he founded the Society, he remained equally faithful in caring for its other essential needs - the Vows, and the establishment of a community which would be the centre of his Institute. He hoped to establish such a house in each diocese of France.

When we hear him speak of a "New Institute" which ought to be founded we must look elsewhere for his motives. He is willing to accept the exterior organisation of Father de Clorivere in so far as it fits in with the essential conditions of devotion to the Sacred Heart. He told Father le Blanc that he was anxious to get into contact with the Society of Jesus, for, according to Saint Margaret Mary, that Society had been entrusted with the mission of spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart. This new Institute would be the union of the different small groups of priests whose common ideal and object would help to bring the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This aim and spirit of his life-work which he did not quite share in common with the Fathers of Vaugirard he was to share perfectly with Mgr. Lebeurier, the President of the Priests of Orleans. This contact and its consequences will form the matter for our next chapter, even though, chronologically, some of the events may overlap those with which we have just treated.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ASSOCIATION OF SECULAR PRIESTS

PART 1 Early History of the Association Movement in France.

Influence of Father Le Beurrier, Sulpician

Victor Emmanuel Le Beurrier according to the baptismal register was born on the 6th May 1832 at La Grange, a hamlet in the district of Villedieu (Manche) and was baptised the following day.

After preparatory studies in a private school in his home town, he entered the Junior Seminary at Munneville-sur-Mer in the diocese of Coutances in 1843, and at the age of seventeen was admitted to the Major Seminary.

In 1846 this Seminary had been entrusted to the care of the Sulpicians by Archbishop Robion. Amongst the new professors was Father Gaduel, later to become Titular Canon of Orleans, and Vicar General to Archbishop Dupanloup. He was destined to play an important part in the movement of the Association.

Father Gaduel, a native of Marseilles had been greatly influenced in his early life by L'Abbe Jean Joseph Allemand founder of many of the benevolent societies there. Through him he had become acquainted with an Association of the Sacred Heart to which the Abbe Allemand attributed his vocation.(1)

From then on Father Gaduel had a twofold ambition: To make known in the ministry the methods which had succeeded so well with the youth in Marseilles, and to popularise the idea of associations amongst the secular clergy. His ideas on this subject were a result of his interest in the Association of the Sacred Heart which had been established in Marseilles as far back as pre-Revolution days.

Since the attempts to restore it brought Issoudun and Marseilles into mutual discussions on the matter, it is fitting that we examine the character of the Association more closely.(2)

L'Abbe Brunello,, who wrote the Life of Father Jean Joseph Allemand, recalls the devastating plague which ravaged Marseilles in the early part of the 18th century. Although it ceased with the consecration of the city to the Sacred Heart by Mgr. de Belzunce, the inhabitants did not give up their worldly ways.

Love of money was the besetting sin and Marseilles was notorious for its wild speculation on the stock-exchange. Jansenism was rife, even amongst many of the clergy - both secular and religious - who were often in open rebellion against their bishops. Philosophical thinking was too liberal and independent, which led to a lack of true Christian spirit in the community.

Added to these abuses was the dire fact that the plague had claimed as victims as many as 250 priests and religious in Marseilles and its environs, leaving a tragic void in the members of the apostolate.

This is why Father Brunello refers to the foundation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart as the second good effect of the consecration of Marseilles to the Sacred Heart.(3)

As far back as 1729, Father Denis Truillard had established a small society of Secular Priests to live in community, whose main work was to conduct missions and interest themselves in the sanctification of the young people by giving them retreats and encouraging them to join sodalities.(4) Father Truillard enlisted the help of several priests, especially Father Dandrade, in his project and they called themselves Priests of the Sacred Heart. To the people they became known as the Priest of the Good Shepherd after the name of the Church which the bishop had given them.

Although the church bore the title of the "Good Shepherd," it was actually one of the first in France consecrated to the Sacred Heart.

In their Rules which were drawn up in July 1747 it is stated: "The end of the Congregation of Priests of the Sacred Heart, while performing the various functions of the ministry, to present the Divine Heart with a certain number of faithful adorers who will make reparation for the outrages inflicted on that Heart especially by renegade or careless priests themselves.

With this end in view the priests of the said Congregation will endeavour:

(1) To awaken the virtue of piety in the youth of Marseilles.

(2) To form good ecclesiastics for the service of the diocese.

(3) To work for the salvation of souls by preaching the word of God by the administration of the Sacrament of Penance, and by other suitable means which Providence may present.

They will choose preferably those works which are difficult, obscure and neglected as being those most agreeable to the Sacred Heart, while at the same time the most necessary.

As such a holy work requires saintly men, the priests of the Congregation will strive ceaselessly to be humble, gentle, obedient, lovers of poverty, penitent, mortified, detached from the world and their relatives, full of zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, ready to sacrifice their possessions, their talents their leisure, their person - even their lives for the love of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the service of the Church and the sanctification of the neighbour.

They will find in the Sacred Heart the most accomplished Model of all the virtues and the most inspiring motive to practise these virtues.

In their interior life they will use the ordinary means proper to the priestly and religious life, but will have a particular devotion to the Sacred Heart, which will sanctify the other means, and inspire them to spread the devotion to other souls.

These priests were not bound by the vows of poverty and obedience. After the Revolution the Society was reconstructed by Father Dandrade and two other members who had survived the persecution.

In their petition to Bishop de Beausset-Roquefort they expressed the wish of forming amongst ourselves an association of twenty four priests who, without any obligations except those of charity and zeal, without necessarily having to live together or forfeiting the right to possess things in common, without prejudice to any work which Your Lordship entrusts to us may yet be authorised to carry on the work of the former Priests of the Sacred Heart, who for 50 years laboured so zealously and successfully in their Apostolic Ministry.

Father Gaduel notes the characteristics of these earlier priests struck him the most. They did not take vows, but voluntarily embraced a state in which they strove for perfection in virtue, and the perfect fulfilment of all their ecclesiastical duties. They obliged themselves to live only for God and the welfare of souls in keeping with the true idea of the priesthood and in conformity with the spirit of Our Lord and the Apostles.

The main idea of both Father Truillard and Dandrake had been to offer members of the secular clergy a means of living a more perfect sacerdotal and religious life. In this they were following the ideas and ideals already expressed by Cardinal de Berulle and Father Olier in Paris and the Venerable Holzhauser in Germany. Like the Apostles themselves the Priests of the Sacred Heart decided at first to limit their number to twelve, but they began receiving associates who wished to join them, admitting them one by one to the ranks of the chosen twelve as soon as death claimed one of their numbers. All the members were entirely subject to the bishop, accepting his jurisdiction and obeying but the one Superior." (6).

These were the ideas imprinted in the mind of Father Gaduel when he came as professor to Coutances. Several of the students desirous of founding an association in the seminary similar to that founded by Jules Chevalier at Bourges approached Father Gaduel to seek his help and advice. He encouraged them to proceed with their plan, to enlarge its scope and to take away with them from the seminary an idea of true sacerdotal union.

When Victor Le Beurier arrived as a student at Coutances in 1849 Father Gaduel had just left the College, but the newcomer was promptly enrolled in the association which the good priest had so firmly established.

After his three years' theology and still too young to be ordained, being only twenty years of age, Victor was sent to St. Sulpice to take the Higher Course. Although he confessed later on that he found these higher studies trying, his sojourn at the Sulpician College was the occasion of his giving thought to joining the Society of Jesus. Having become a professor at the new college of Saint Lo, while he was preparing for Major Orders the problem of his vocation became more acute. The company of Jesus held a fascination for him which lasted all his life. The Jesuit type of apostolic ministry regulated by a strict rule, and its spirituality so practical yet rigorous, seemed to correspond to the needs of his own soul.

He confided his hopes and state of soul to his superiors, but Bishop Eobion replied:

"Join the Jesuits? Never! A Franciscan, a Dominican, a Carmelite - anything you like, but not a Jesuit! Their philosophy is too liberal!

After deliberating whether he would become a Jesuit, a Sulpician or a foreign Missionary, he wrote: "It was decided that I would become a Sulpician for I found in that Society a certain liberty of action with which I could reconcile certain ideas which were dear to me."

The Sulpicians gained permission from Mgr. Eobiou that the newly ordained, Father Le Beurier, would be reattached to the Major Seminary at Coutances as assistant professor of Philosophy, which would serve as a period of probation before his admittance to St. Sulpice.

Before entering the Novitiate at La Solitude Father Le Beurier took the opportunity of his period of teaching to make a profound study of the basic ideas which were to form his life's work. The ideas of Father Gaduel had matured in his mind and he realised it was little use proposing ideals of piety and priestly union to students unless the means of achieving them were made practical, when they went out into the ministry.

He realised that the big danger for priests out in the world, most of them living alone in isolated presbyteries, would be their lack of communication with one another. Consequently it was necessary to offer them, under one form or another, some means of a common life.

This had been Father Gaduel's main concern as it had been that of the Venerable Holzhauser in Germany in the 17th Century. They both wished to offer secular priests living apart in the world the same help and means of perfection that the common life gave to Regulars. Father Gaduel had developed these ideas in a series of articles in the magazine "L'ami de la Religion" in 1851 and 1853.

In February 1858 Father Le Beurier informed Father Gaduel that he had in mind the foundation of a community of Regular Clerics in the diocese of Coutances. Encouraged by Father Gaduel he explained his plan to the seminarists in one of his lessons. It was favourably received by the students, and a certain number of priests showed their interest and co-operation.

A discussion with Father Yvetot, who as diocesan missionary was affiliated with the Eudist Fathers, convinced him that the function of a missionary would procure many advantages for the association and he persuaded him to join forces with the Coutances group.

On the occasion of the diocesan retreat, those interested in the movement held several meetings. The proposition of Father Le Beurier to put all revenues at the disposal of the Community, as was done in the Holzhauser Institute met with a deal of opposition but it was eventually adopted and remained a rule of the Association of Coutances over a period of ten years.

Father Le Beurier entered the Novitiate at La Solitude on 7th Oct., 1858. During his Novitiate the project took on a more definite form in Coutances, and its progress presented personal difficulties to Father Le Beurier as to where his interest and activities should lie.

The work of Saint Sulpician was primarily one concerned with seminaries and the training of students. "I will have plenty of trouble," he wrote February, 1859, "confining myself to work in seminaries." This was in view of his interest in the association of the secular priests. After several conversations with the Superior General at La Solitude it was agreed that he would leave all decisions in the hands of the Superior General. He eventually became a Sulpician, and during the holidays after his profession he had several meetings with his priest friends in Coutances when they exchanged views on the ideals and object of the union. The main question to be decided was whether they were to become Regular priests or to remain Secular; whether they were to adopt the practice of poverty in matters connected with ecclesiastical salaries or merely to live according to the spirit of religious vows.

After his holiday, Father Beurier, instead of returning to Coutances, was appointed to the seminary at Orleans - perhaps on account of all the activity and discussion concerning the proposed Association. On arrival, one of his visits was to the Vicar General, Father Gaduel, who encouraged him to plant the seed of the Association as he had done so fruitfully in Coutances. With the permission of the Superior, he founded an Association amongst the seminarists similar to the one in Coutances, as an experiment in the common life.

"At my request and to help my plans," notes Father Le Beurier, "Father Gaduel wrote the life on the servant of God, Bartholomew Holzhauser. The book appeared in November, 1861, with an enthusiastic preface by the bishop, Mgr. Dupanloup, and bore the title, "Secular Clerics Living in Community." The bishop had the preface read publicly in the seminary and received wide publicity, letters were received from outside the Diocese, and Father le Beurier was asked to answer them. Coutances and Chartres showed special interest.

In Coutances Father Yvetot became head of the movement, and a set of rules was drawn up for the Institute of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In 1861, sufficient money was raised and plans drawn up for the house "for pilgrimage of Notre Dame-sur-Vire, where Father Yvetot and two other Members took up their abode on the 19th November. At Chartres the Movement had begun as early as 1853 under the keen direction of Father Ychard, later to become the Rector of the Junior Seminary there. He and his fellow-priests kept in close contact with Father Le Beurier and adopted the rules of the Organization in Orleans.

PART II The Assembly in Paris

As there were now associations in Grenoble, Avignon, Moulins and Blois, the priests decided to hold a General Assembly in Paris at the Foreign Mission House on the 26th and 27th of August, 1862.

Later that year Father Yvetot, one of the delegates, went to Rome for the canonisation of the Martyrs of Japan, and was granted an audience with Pope Pius IX. He explained to His Holiness the project in the minds of his confreres concerning a form of common life for the secular clergy and informed Him of the main resolution of the Paris conference - namely that "a certain number of secular priests from various dioceses in France were anxious to avail themselves of a method of religious life in the exercise of their sacred ministry."

The Holy Father replied: "This seems to me an excellent idea. I even command you to go ahead with it, and I give my blessing to the priests of this Association of the Sacred Heart." This title was the one adopted by the priests as the most fitting.(8)

In preparation for this first General Assembly Father le Beurier had gone to Bourges to make a retreat - from the 2nd to the 10th of July. Had he at that time heard of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun? Most probably he had as Father Le Blanc's letter of 22nd January, 1865, refers to the already established contact between Issoudun and Orleans on the subject of associated priests, although it is certain that Issoudun was not represented at the General Assembly of the previous August.

The dioceses represented at this General Assembly were Orleans, Chartres, Blois, Moulins, Coutances, Avignon and Grenoble - the personnel comprising eleven delegates. The matter dealt with at the first session concerned the nature of the association and the advisability of taking vows. A long discussion ensued on whether the obligation of obedience should go as far as taking a vow as a necessary bond of association in view of all the difficulties involved. It was decided that the decision on this point be adjourned for the time being.

The matter and scope of poverty was discussed at the second session, special reference being made to the different circumstances of the various groups involved.

The official decision stated: "The Assembly has unanimously declared that any ecclesiastical goods and assets should be commonly shared - a system preferable to any other and more in keeping with the end of the association. Each member present has declared his willingness to do this, but in the dioceses where the association has already been established, and is working under different conditions, the difficulties are appreciated. Let those who have already been following the proposed system continue to do so, and the others strive to conform to it as fast as possible."

The third session, held on the 27th August, discussed the question of the vows "ex professo." The President, Father Le Beurier continued the discussion of the evening before by maintaining that the vows were a powerful link amongst the associates and a guarantee of perseverance, whilst admitting that, for some members who lived alone by nature of their duties, they could become a source of embarrassment of conscience. He also pointed out that these members who could not live in community could possibly not have the same good influence on their confreres as before; that the bishops might have reason to fear for their authority over the priests; that it was difficult in a meeting of this nature to determine

the matter and object of the vows; and, finally, that the thought of so vigorous an obligation could alienate many priests from the desire of joining the association.

Having weighed all these considerations, the President asked the delegates to express their minds on the advisability of taking vows. Opinions were divided.

The representatives from Coutances, Orleans and Avignon, who had already pronounced them in their own associations voted "Yes," whilst others argued that they preferred to follow the example of the Apostles, who did not take vows, but were still men of great obedience and poverty.

Others maintained that, in view of all the difficulties involved, it would be better to postpone any definite decision on the matter, which proposal was adopted by the Assembly.

Father Le Beurier then proposed that a General President be elected, who could convoke an assembly when necessary, and who would inform the Superiors every three months of the progress of the Associations in the various dioceses. Apart from this function, the President would have no authority over his confreres. He was to be "the link of communication" between the various associations, and his recommendations would be purely directive. Finally, it was decided to limit the official reports of the General President to the diocesan superiors to an annual conference and, if necessary, an immediate conference.

It had been unanimously agreed that the general Constitutions would be those of the Venerable Holzhauser modified according to circumstances by Father Gaduel. These would express the spirit of the Association and be placed at the head of the Rules.

During the 4th session, some members argued that the Association was taking on too pretentious a form, that the idea of religious life was being stressed too much since it was to be an Association of Secular priests whose purpose was to emphasise the brotherhood of the clergy of the various dioceses and to offer them a common rule for their mutual aid and sanctification in their priestly work.(9).

In all it was a period of tension, even opposition and conflict, while the research for the proper form of the Association went on - a situation which did not lend itself to the harmonious and effective establishment of the project. The Assembly warned its members to exercise great prudence and circumspection in propagating the movement, and the meeting dissolved without any definite decisions being arrived at.

PART III The Assembly at Issoudun

In order to understand better the events that follow, especially in reference to the association of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart with the movement, it is necessary to keep in mind that the only contact Father Chevalier had with the federation to this time was through Father le Beurier and the members of his association at Orleans. In the course of the discussions between Father Chevalier and these priests the relationship had been kept on a purely personal basis.

For example, there was the matter of the annual retreat, which had been considered inadvisable at the General Assembly because of the difficulties of an interdiocesan liaison. In spite of this decision Father Le Beurier and his followers at Orleans seemed anxious to organise such a retreat at Issoudun the following year. The fact that the Archbishop of Bourges was completely behind the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and had officially recognised them in his diocese would have given weight to his decision.

Also it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Father Le Beurier's attraction to the religious life would have given rise to mutual sympathies between Orleans and Issoudun.

We recall that this worthy priest's vocation was dominated by "a profound attraction to the religious life which inspired him to leave the world and seek a life of perfection." When he resolved to interest himself in the work of the secular clergy he still maintained his desire and ambition. We remember that from the beginning he strongly advocated that members of the Association should possess things in common and live a common life in preference to being united by a simple more link.

Even before the Assembly he had proposed to Father Yvetot that Coutances should adopt the rules of Orleans - that which eventually did take place when Father Petetot, restorer of the Congregation of the Oratory in France took an interest in the movement.

At the Assembly, Orleans, Coutances and Avignon members were the ones in favour of taking vows and living a common life. These ideas remained dear to Father Le Beurier all through his life, even after he had to abandon them later on owing to the pressure of circumstances.

The association in the diocese of Coutances, at the request of Bishop Bravaid, eventually was transformed into a diocesan congregation with vows of religion, having as its particular end - teaching and preaching.

It was in these circumstances and in this frame of mind that Father Le Beurier entered into relationship with Issoudun at the beginning of 1863.

Replying to a letter from Issoudun on the 22nd January, Father Le Blanc S.J., advises against the fusion of the two works for the time being. The Association founded by Father Holzhauser, on which the work in Orleans was based, admitted affiliated priests with vows, and Father Le Blanc was of the opinion that Issoudun was not yet ready for this.

Six days later, Father Chevalier replied: "I appreciate your point of view. We will not press for the fusion at present. When I go to Orleans next Tuesday I will discuss the matter with the Fathers there, and on my return will acquaint you with what takes place.... The principal concern will be whether the organisation of priests should take vows."

However, the visit to Orleans was to produce results different from those foreseen in this letter. Father Founder was to find out that the taking of vows by the Associates was also the main ideal of Father Le Beurier.

On the 8th February, he sent the following report of his interview to Father Le Blanc:

"I made my journey to Orleans. I had a long conversation with the Archbishop, Mgr. Dupanloup, who is enchanted with our work. He told me on more than one occasion that it was a work answering an urgent need of the times; that we must strive fervently to achieve it; and that God would certainly bless it. He informed me, as I have already told you, that several of the priests of the diocese intend joining it."

"If your Society of the Sacred Heart," His Grace added, "is founded on solid and extensive lines, it will be a great help to the Episcopate and the welfare of the Church. Go ahead courageously! You can count on my personal help and interest."

"I also met the President of the Sacred Heart Society and an influential priest interested in the movement. We had a long talk, on the work, its organisation, its objects, etc. We agreed that to put it on a solid basis and to make it useful to the Church, the salvation of souls and the glory of the Sacred Heart, it would be necessary to draw up a serious and stable constitution which would provide for the taking of religious vows, such as is practised in your own Institute, likewise it was agreed that those who wished to make only promises could be accepted as affiliated members."

"The main difficulties would be concerned with the following problems:

(1) To what extent would the Vows of Obedience and Poverty oblige the members of the Association who are living outside Communities? What are their duties, their obligations, their rules?

(2) What is the best policy of reconciliation between the rights of the Ordinaries and those of the Religious Superiors over their subjects? On this point we would appreciate your advice based on the experience of your own Society.

(3) Where there might be opposition of members and non-members of the Association every effort should be made to have the members live together even in twos. They should not live alone except where necessary, and in this case the separated subject ought to keep in contact frequently with the Superior and visit his confreres often.

(4) Should all the ecclesiastical revenue be put back into the parish work or should a part of it, say one-fifth, be used by the Society?

(5) In the case of "Pastors inamovibles" who may wish to join, would it be better for them to forego their titles, as Father Maugeness did in Issoudun, so that the bishops and superiors could direct them more easily?

Father Chevalier continued: "I also saw Father Gaduel. This holy priest was inclined to favour purely diocesan associations whose members would not take vows, and would not have to rely on Superiors outside their dioceses. However, after several explanations based on experience and reason, he now accepts the fact that such an organisation would have no future, being built on shifting sand, and he has come around to our point of view."

"After, talks with these good priests we decided that during the next holidays the clergy of the various dioceses who wished to join the movement should meet at Issoudun - perhaps forty in number, - to make a retreat given by one of your Fathers, to be chosen by Rev. Fr. Fessard, the Provincial. There, in recollection and with the help of grace and the Holy Spirit, we will examine the Constitutions which you have drawn up for us; we will hold the elections and the Society will be definitely founded. This retreat will commence on the Monday following the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

"You, see then, my dear Father, that the designs of Providence in this work are manifesting themselves more and more, I believe that we are now approaching the solemn moment when we can establish it on a firm and lasting basis. 'Fiat, fiat ad majorem Dei et Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu gloriam'"

And so at Orleans Father Chevalier found support for his ideas that Vaugirard had regarded as premature and with this help he insisted on his point of view. Evidently, Father Le Blanc did not write after this for some time as we find Father Chevalier asking him, in a letter of April the 9th, if he were ill.

The correspondence continued with Orleans.

"I have received quite recently a letter from the President of the Priests of the Sacred Heart," he wrote to the Jesuits. "He tells me that these priests on account of their ministerial duties, will be able to stay in Issoudun only four or five days. The retreat will begin on the evening of the 17th August and finish on the evening of the 21st. I will be very grateful, my dear Father, if you can send us the Rules you are drawing up as soon as possible. We are very anxious to study them."

Since he had already notified Orleans of this Plan we can presume the "We" referred to himself and Father Le Beurier, who had already expressed his interest in the Company of Jesus. Can we likewise suppose that the Founder was expressing Father Le Beurier's sentiments when he insisted that the work be dedicated to the Sacred Heart?

We have already spoken in the last chapter of Father Chevalier's reaction to the Plan proposed by the Jesuits. There is no doubt that the priests of Orleans reacted the same way. The Plan was not accepted when the priests discussed it at the Assembly in Issoudun in the month of August.

Issoudun had now joined the federation centred in Orleans. In May Father Le Beurier wrote to his former Superior in La Solitude, Father Caval:

"The reunion of the Associated Priests of the Sacred Heart of which I have sent you an account has had very happy results. Under the encouragement and impulse given by this reunion all the diocesan Associations have organised themselves on a firm basis."

"In order to continue an enterprise so visibly blessed by God and so full of possibilities a new General Assembly will take place at Issoudun in August at the Monastery of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, who are now part of our confederation. Their central location is an ideal place for a meeting."

In the same letter Father Le Beurier speaks of his own doubts of conscience as to where his vocation lies in the future:

"That which you have foreseen Rev. Father Superior, has come about. I am asking myself at the present moment whether it is not God's Will that I leave Saint Sulpice in order to give myself entirely to this grand work of organising the Associations of Secular Priests, which after all is a continuation and complement of the work of the Seminaries, and so one not far distant from the ideas and practice of our early Fathers."

Father Caval replied advising patience, while resigning himself to the probable separation. However, the Sulpician Superiors took a hand in the matter and requested Father Le Beurier to abstain from taking any part in the Assemblies or in the government of the Association.

This unexpected turn of events evidently affected the number of priests who ultimately attended the assembly and retreat in Issoudun. In February Father Chevalier had written that he expected "about forty" to attend. In June he reduced the number to "about thirty," but Father Piperon has gone on record as stating: "About ten priests from the various dioceses came to make the retreat and to discuss the basis on which the union might be founded."

At the reunion itself the absence of Father Le Beurier had rather a dampening effect on the proceedings. He himself had previously written to his Superior: "Several members of the Association, the most serious and devoted of them, are convinced that if I am not at the General Assembly, the reunion will be more harmful than useful, and that the newly-formed bonds of union will be broken. They have mentioned the serious issues involved, have begged me to be present, and have appealed to my conscience."

Father Yehard was to add after the conference: "All the members who were able to keep the rendez-vous were anxious to proceed with the movement, but unfortunately, we no longer had our president of last year with his keen and constructive ideas."

As the Archives of the 'Apostolic Union' have disappeared, we have to content ourselves with a few extracts from Father Olichon's notes regarding the format and subject-matter of the Assembly, which we will quote in the next few pages. "The meeting," he wrote, "was convoked at Issoudun with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who at the time seemed to be the centre of attraction."

The ideas of Father Le Beurier and Father Chevalier were certainly in accord on the matter of the Association, and Father Piperon has recorded:

"At this time the life and works of the Blessed Holzhauser were being read with interest, and his success with the similar movement in Germany inspired the French clergy to imitate his methods. Father Founder got in contact with the principal directors of the work, and towards the end of August, 1865, he was able to bring together in Issoudun a number of them to hold a kind of congress, his main thought being to establish a union of priests under the patronage of the Sacred Heart. This ardent love for the Sacred Heart made him desirous of making the Association a means of spiritual profit to all."

Again in his first manuscript Father Piperon expands this idea further: "His main thought had been to reunite all the associations already founded into one, all consecrated to the Sacred Heart and united with the Congregation by a common rule."

According to Father Olichon, eight dioceses were represented at Assembly, whose presidents in turn represented 123 members.

Father Piperon recalls: "There were present priests from Orleans, Chartres, Blois, Moulins, a professor from Grenoble, and the exercises were conducted by Rev. Father Bertrand, S.J., then the Director of the Major Seminary at Blois, and later Founder of the Mission in Madura. This priest also acted as chairman for the meeting."

On 3rd November Father Chevalier was to write: "Our dear work remains at much the same point as when Father Bertrand left it."

This was only to be expected as there had been certain divergencies of opinion at the meeting. The promoters of the association, Fathers Le Beurier and Chevalier, were prepared to make the Jesuit plan from Vaugirard the basis of the discussions and Father Bertrand naturally followed this line of thought from the beginning. Father Olichon contented himself by remarking: "The various delegates were consulted regarding the ideas and tendencies of their individual groups."

Father Píperon, who had been present at the meeting, has recorded: "At this humble congress many projects were discussed and many obscure points elucidated, but no complete basis for the union was decided on. It was agreed that a simple yet large federation be formed with each group keeping its autonomy, under the bond of fraternity in the Sacred Heart of Jesus."⁽¹⁰⁾

When Father Chevalier informed Father Le Blanc of the meagre results of the conference, he remarked: "The outcome of the conference did not effect a complete union, but strengthened the bonds of association. The priests accepted a common rule which I submitted to them. That was all we were able to do for the moment, with the main question undecided, namely whether the members should take vows or not. My own conviction is that if they do not take vows, the movement will come to nought."

We have recorded that Father Le Beurier was in accord with him on this point but the Council could not agree on the matter. Were the priests to become regular or remain seculars? Should they adopt the common life as religious, or should there be nothing of that nature?

On another point which Father Chevalier regarded as fundamental, namely the emphasis on Devotion to the Sacred Heart, a compromise was reached. "It was agreed," wrote Father Olichon, "that all the Association should strive for a two-fold end: The sanctification of the clergy, and the practising and spreading of Devotion to the Sacred Heart."

It was desirable that all the Associates should recite a common prayer - the official prayer to the Sacred Heart with the added ejaculation: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved."

We note again the two tendencies of the movement, "the one stressing the sanctification of the clergy, the other putting the accent on Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

They went hand in hand, in varying degrees towards the achieving of the two-fold end of the Association.

The basis of unification remained undetermined. The special character of the work was that of "a kind of confederation which left each group with its autonomy but united them all in matters not affecting their independence". As a matter of fact the grand dream of establishing the one organisation for all was fast disappearing.

Father Chevalier himself was quite prepared to amalgamate his Institute with this new Society, provided it maintained the same characteristics as those which his vocation as Founder had imparted to his own work.

First of all, it must be a Society dedicated to the Sacred Heart, whose members would lead the religious life and take vows while at the same time being open to secular priests who desired in certain ways to participate in its advantages.

Now that the organisation had become a federation of many diverse plans and tendencies Father Chevalier realized that his first duty was to concern himself with his own Institute and its development. However, his experience with the sacerdotal associations had convinced him, in spite of Father Le Blanc's advice, that he should interest himself in the associated sacerdotal movement even before it became an organisation of priests with vows.

To this effect he wrote to Father Le Blanc on 3rd November: "My many duties have prevented me from working on the composition of a general rule for the associates. I hope to do so soon and will let you know, the result. The Archbishop in Bourges is very favourably inclined, and wishes as we do, that if it is God's Will, the work of Father Clariviere regarding the 'associates without vows' should be revived."

We recall that Father Le Blanc had previously written: "To draw up rules is the function of Founders," and Father Chevalier put himself to the task anew, keeping in mind the resolutions made at the Issoudun Assembly.

Father Píperon has noted: "If a definite union was not effected the assembly was far from being sterile, as it furnished the Founder with the data from which he was able to draw up a more solid rule for the secular priests of the Sacred Heart, which had now been in existence for several years."

"The Annals of the Priests of the Sacred Heart," - several copies of which are still extant -, commenced their fifth year of publication in 1867. Whether the magazine was brought out by the Issoudun Associates only or by the collaboration of all the groups we cannot be sure, but, in any case, we know that in 1867 the editorship was in the hands of Father Chevalier, Father Ychard - who, according to a letter written 26th August 1864 was already affiliated with the work at Issoudun - and Father Devaux, whose name we find inscribed in the register of the "Secular Priests of Issoudun." The copies of the following year - 1868 - tell us that the administration of the publication was in the hands of Father Chevalier and Father de Grenoble, also inscribed in the register, while the editor was Father Pigelot of Bourges, whose name also appears on the other publications from Issoudun.⁽¹¹⁾

These names show us that already amongst the individuals obliged to make a choice between the different trends of the movement, several affiliated themselves with Issoudun.

Immediately after the Assembly Father Chevalier had written to Father le Blanc: "Two dioceses wish to join with us by taking vows and making one body."

In fact only the diocese of Moulins eventually did so. The first names subscribed in the aforesaid register were priests of this diocese and in the period before 1869 they comprised most of the members. The first name is that of Abbe Guyot, a delegate to the Assembly in Paris and later in Issoudun.

Father Píperon tells us that one of the happy results of the meeting at Issoudun was the affiliation of this good parish priest of St. Paul de Montluçon, who from that time became one of us, whilst remaining attached to his parish."

The "Register of the Professed" from 1869 to 1895 contained in Father Píperon's handwriting a brief note on the first six entrants. Concerning Father Guyot he notes: "He joined us on the 15th Jan., 1864, and on the 16th Jan. the following year took his first vows at the feet of Father Chevalier."

One might conclude from this extract that Father Guyot's association with the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was much the same as Father Maugenes's but the fact that he is named at the head of the list of priests of the Sacred Heart, i.e. the associates makes us doubt it.

This list comprises names of Associate Priests who were not considered Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from the very first days of their contact with Issoudun; to mention a few, Fathers Druin, Jouet, Gonon, Chape, Pion.

We gain the impression that not sufficient emphasis was put on the distinction between the two classes,⁽¹²⁾ which was to lead to a deal of confusion later on.

In the recruiting of members for the two categories Issoudun had been greatly helped by the Jesuit Fathers, particularly by Father Bienville. In August of 1864 he had been transferred to Bourges.

Father Guyot had made a retreat under the direction of Father Bienville before making his decision. This was in accord with the wish of Father Chevalier, who had written to Father Le Blanc: "We are resolved to accept only those priests who make the Spiritual Exercises under Father Bienville or one of your priests. Several of your Fathers are well acquainted with the work, and take a great interest in it."⁽¹³⁾

The recruiting of Missionaries went on side by side with that of the Secular Priests.

Before the 1863 Assembly, Father A. Mousseaux from the diocese of Bourges entered on the 15th June, immediately after his ordination, followed a little later on by a fellow-seminarian Father Ferragu, who, however, stayed only two months. He was replaced in December by Father L. M. Bazire, from the diocese of Caen, who had been for a time with the Trappists.

It is difficult to follow the development of the Association of Secular Priests on account of the incomplete nature of the register. For example, Father Ychard, of whom we have already spoken, is not even mentioned. There is a note to the effect that Father Chevalier, in September 1864, was waiting to receive "two priests who seriously wish to join us, whilst remaining at their posts." Father Le Blanc at this time

had already introduced to the Founder Father Vandel, who was to play a prominent part in the early days of the Society and of whom we will speak later on in more detail.

There was plenty of work to be done, and in a letter to Father Le Blanc, Father Chevalier regrets the fact that there were all too few priests to do it. "It is necessary," he wrote, "that two or three more priests join our house. At the present moment we have only three. If you know any good ecclesiastics who would like to come and live our community life with us, we would be very grateful to have them."

Father Le Blanc sent him a few addresses, but in a reply, the Founder said he would "wait a little while before writing to these good priests."

A month later he wrote that he had received some "precious sympathetic" responses, and in the following December he wrote: "The work is beginning to grow, - slowly and carefully, it is true - but at last we are making some conquests. From Caen we have two new priests who have taken up the work with enthusiasm. One holy priest from Marseilles has become very interested and wishes to spread the movement in his diocese. We have just made two new recruits in Moulins."

The information concerning the development of the work in these parts ceases with the last letter we possess of the Founder to Father Le Blanc - dated 15th July 1865. The letter reads: "The work is functioning in five or six dioceses. The priests who belong to it are very edifying. The Archbishop of Marseilles is very keen on it, and is its patron. Before his sickness His Grace sent us two of his best priests to study our rules and join the movement. Since then three other priests have joined them."

The Archbishop of Moulins is delighted with the idea, and wishes to propagate it in his diocese. He has conveyed to me through the Archbishop of Bourges, who has always been devoted to it, the wish to see me with a view to extending it in his diocese.

Also Archbishop du Puy, whom I have seen quite recently, is very keen and wishes to speak to several of his priests about it.

"The fact that the Abbe Vandel is joining us will make it easier to attract missionary priests to our work."

We might note here that it was in this letter that the Founder mentioned two priests, Father Jouet of Marseilles and Father Vandel, who were to play an important part in the future history of the Society.

PART IV The proposed Plan for the Association.

This growth of the movement made it necessary to draw up an exposition of the aims and methods of the work for the priests. This was done in the first brochure - printed in 1864. It was called:

"Plan of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, established at Issoudun (Indre) encouraged and blessed by Our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX, and approved by His Grace, the Archbishop of Bourges. To the greater Glory of God and the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

On the 26th September, 1864, Father Chevalier wrote to Father Le Blanc: "I am sending you the printed Plan of our Society. The Rule for the Associates is in the process of being printed at this moment."

Last Wednesday I had the happiness of having a long talk with Father Gautrelet on our beloved work for the Sacred Heart. He is most enthusiastic about it, and his approval of the Plan and the general organisation is a great encouragement to us.

'There will be plenty of difficulties,' he told us, 'but the combination of the two classes, such as I now understand it, will offer the means of solving these, and will be a guarantee of its success.(13)'

In December Father Chevalier wrote that the Plan was only provisional, and he would willingly accept suggestions which, if good, could be incorporated in a revised edition. Vaugirard persisted in maintaining its own point of view, which we gather from their observations made on the Plan, e.g., on the moral theology concerning dispensations from the vows reserved to the Holy See; on the revenues collected by the Superiors; on the matter constituting mortal sin by infringement of poverty; on the vows themselves.

In the Plan Father Chevalier, while profiting from the experience of the past few years, and adapting himself to the situation as it had developed, maintained the original fundamental principles of the Society.

The beginning of the Plan stressed the opportune nature of the work, and the necessity of Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

In the Introduction Father Chevalier puts a question to the Secular Clergy: "In this association what part are you to play, and to whom do you owe obedience?" Answering it himself he writes: "We, of course, are Secular Priests and we owe obedience to our bishops."

Then followed a passage which was to cause considerable comment: "For this Association, offering as it does a powerful means of perfection will halt the emigration of the better type of priests, whose presence in their diocese is so necessary to reanimate the piety of their confreres and reawaken the feeble faith of the people."

Father Ramiere commented on this idea on the occasion of the affiliation of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Montlucon in the month of December, by remarking: "I can well understand the fears manifested by the priests who are not connected with the Association, and who now judge the sentiments of its members by an unfortunate phrase used by Father Chevalier in his first set of Rules. The good Father stated that one of the advantages of his work would be to retain in their dioceses those priests whose desire of religious perfection would lead to their entering religious institutes."

The expression, which I do not recall very well, is actually more regrettable than the idea itself. I do not doubt for a moment that the intentions of Father Chevalier are perfectly in order, and I only wish that he be able to organize his work without delay, and to infuse his own spirit into the young priests who join him.(14)

The General End of the Plan states that it is "to offer to priests and the faithful, who have the desire of perfection a powerful means of sanctification."

This is elaborated in the following points:

- (a) To introduce a common and religious life amongst the Secular Clergy.
- (b) To offer this means of sanctification to the laity, particularly the discharged soldiers.
- (c) To achieve this by the practice of the evangelical virtues.

The Special End, as stated in the Plan, is that:

- (a) The members should spread Devotion to the Sacred Heart by all possible means.
- (b) They should make reparation to the Sacred Heart for the insults He receives by leading good lives, and offering to Him for this intention all their acts of religion, their good works, their labours, their mortifications, their sufferings and their trials."

The Institute recognised three groups of members - Religious, Associates and Tertiaries.

The Plan deals only briefly with the last two classes, leaving that to several other publications. It concerns itself mainly with the first group - the Religious.

It speaks of them as the "Corps d'Elite" of the Society which embraces both the Priests and the Lay-Brothers, whether living in community or doing their particular work out in the world.

They will be known as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or Religious of the Sacred Heart.

They will take the vows of Obedience, Chastity, Poverty and Stability. These vows will be taken annually for five years and then in perpetuity. However, no one is obliged to take final vows.

The Superiors of the Society will be chosen from those who have pronounced their final vows.

The Plan also indicated in what measure the vows would oblige those living in community and those living out in the world.

The position brought about by the return of Father Maugenest had thrown the emphasis on the fact that it was the taking of the vows and not the fact of living in community which was the important thing - that which constituted the Missionary of the Sacred Heart. Once the subject had taken his final vows he became a member of the Society, in contradistinction to the affiliated members who are simply referred to in the Plan as "those who do not take vows."

It is interesting to note in the early records that Father Piperon took his first vows "in the course of the year 1864," and the early Register tells us that Father Guyot was professed on the 16th January, 1866, Father Durin the same year and Father Georgelin on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, 1866.

PART V Father Jouet's Mission of Inquiry to Issoudun

At the end of 1864, the year that the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was established, an event of great importance took place - an event which was to have a marked influence on the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and consequently on the Society itself.

We have already spoken of the origin and history of the Priests of the Sacred Heart or, as they were more frequently called, Priests of the Good Shepherd.

We recall that they were founded by Father Truillard of Marseilles and re-established after the Revolution by Archbishop Charles-Fortune de Mazenod by a decree issued on 3rd May, 1825. They flourished for a time in Marseilles thanks to the interest and agency of Fathers Allemand and Gaduel. However, six years after he had issued the decree of restoration, the Archbishop seemed to see in the Institute a threat to his authority as spiritual head of the diocese, and he ordered its dissolution on 9th August, 1831.

The Archbishop was succeeded by his nephew, Mgr. Charles Joseph Eugene Mazenod, who stated that he was willing to retract the decree of suppression issued by his uncle; but, although attempts were made to restore the Institute, the work remained mainly ineffective and dormant.

This was the state of affairs when Patrick Francis Cruice was consecrated bishop of Marseilles on the 25th August, 1861. Born in Ireland, the future Archbishop had come to France at an early age, and was duly ordained a priest in Paris by Archbishop Affre. He became the Director of the Ecole des Carmes in Paris, and, on account of his outstanding piety and talents, was nominated in 1861 as the Bishop of Marseilles.

One of his first cares on taking charge of the diocese was to look to the welfare of Catholic education, and he decided to found the College of St. Louis which he opened in October, 1864, appointing Father Victor Jouet in charge.

When the bishop had been in Paris in charge of the Ecole des Cannes there was a community of auxiliary priests who devoted themselves to special works of the Sacred ministry, and often helped their student confreres.(15) Their good work made the new bishop of Marseilles anxious to re-establish in his own diocese the former Society of Priests of the Sacred Heart, and this, in turn, was to bring him in touch with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun. A letter which we have, dated 21st August, 1864, indicates that the Bishop had been in touch with several families closely connected with the Missionaries of Issoudun, e.g., The Countesne du Quesne and Madame de Verneuil.

However the first personal contact that he had with the Society seems to go back to the previous year - 1863 - when the first brochure on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been sent to him.

If his coat of arms bore the inscription: "O Cross, Worthy and Good: Cross - powerful against the evils of this world," the Bishop had likewise inherited from his mother a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This devotion bore the seal of the Cross, and these two loves naturally gave him a tender filial devotion to the Mother of God.

For him the Cross was his standard, the Sacred Heart his Model, and Mary his guide.(16)

We can appreciate his reaction to the receipt of the brochure on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart by his letter to Father Chevalier, dated 16th October, 1853:

"I am most grateful to you for sending me the little pamphlet on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. You have there a very useful and holy thought. The devotion to Mary must always be united to the devotion to the Heart Her Divine Son. It is Mary who teaches us how to love Her adorable Son. It is She who nurtures and causes that Love to grow in our souls." "Crescamus in illo."

If I had to make one suggestion it would be that the title be: "Our Lady of the Children of the Sacred Heart" instead of "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

From then on it appears that the good Bishop kept in close contact with Issoudun. A letter of 21st August, 1864, tells us that he was only too willing to have his name inscribed in the Register of Associates, and that he regretted that he was not able at the moment to accept the kind invitation and that of Madame the Comtesse du Quesne, to visit Issoudun. "My commitments keep me in Marseilles for the time being, but I will be happy to pay you a visit later on."

On the subject of the Association he wrote:

"It would take too long to tell you all I think of your pious Association. We will have a talk about it later. It seems to me that your inspiration has come down from the Cross itself. It was during the Passion, during those hours of agony that the Heart of the Son and that of the Mother were tenderly united and suffered together. It was then that the Heart of Mary acquired a sovereign dominion over the Heart of Jesus. That is why these two devotions are inseparable. Pray that they will grow more and more throughout my diocese; that they will obtain for me the conversion of sinners."

Perhaps already now in August the saintly Bishop had in mind the project he was to put into effect in December of sending Father Jouet to Issoudun to study more intimately the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The visit of Father Jouet to Issoudun at the request of his Bishop was officially to study the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. We have spoken of the Bishop's desire to re-establish the Society of Priests of the Sacred Heart in his diocese, and his contact with Issoudun, particularly in reference to the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It was desirable then, since he could not go himself, to send a priest to study the format and methods of the Issoudun Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Let us quote at length Father Piperon's account of the visit: "Mgr. Cruice wished to re-establish in his diocese the Priests of the Sacred Heart, who in the past had done such good work. He had become acquainted with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and their work, and he hoped by studying their methods to find a way of achieving his object. Consequently he appointed Father Jouet - a young priest and a professor at the College of the Sacred Heart in Marseilles - to visit us.

Father Jouet duly arrived in Issoudun on the day after Christmas, 1864, at the early hour of 4 o'clock in the morning, when the temperature was almost at freezing point. He had come in light clothing, not expecting to find Issoudun so cold.

On his reaching the house, we hastened to put him in the best room - called "Bishop's Room" - and to prepare a fire for him. In this room, there was a statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. On seeing it, he showed great interest and enquired what it was.

'It is a statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart,' we told him.

'And who is Our Lady of the Sacred Heart?' he asked.

'We Missionaries of the Sacred Heart honour Our Lady under that title' we replied, 'and we have an Association in Her honour.'

'How long has this Association been in existence?'

'We established it in April of this year, and already it has a membership of 200,000.'

'Have you an Altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart here?' he further enquired.

'Yes, there is one over in the Church,' we told him.

'Are you able to offer Mass there?'

'Yes, certainly.'

'Well, could I offer my Mass there straight away?'

'You had better wait a while till we stir the fire up for you. After you have warmed up a little, you can come over to the church and offer your Mass. In the meantime we will prepare the Altar.'

'I would really prefer to say Mass straight-away,' the good priest replied.

We left the room for a few moments to get some more wood for the fire, and on returning found Father Jouet on his knees before the statue of Our Blessed Lady, praying with obvious fervour. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had already captured his soul. He was consecrating himself to Her without reserve. Henceforth he used always love to call himself, making a pun his own name: "I am the toy (jouet) of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." He insisted on saying his Mass without further delay: "I really am not very cold," he said. "Take me across to the church, and to the altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, where I will offer my Mass." We prepared the altar for him, and I will never forget the fervour with which he offered up the Holy Sacrifice, the emotion with which he pronounced each word of the liturgy, the tone of supplication in his voice.

Several years later, on recalling this first visit to Issoudun, he confided to me that that first glimpse of the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been a moment of great grace in his life. "Hardly had I beheld the blessed image of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in that room than a vivid interior light shone in my soul. I understood that from now on I must devote myself to Her service, and that I belonged unreservedly to Her; Mary, my good Mother, wished it so."

"I clearly saw that it was in the Congregation and with the particular object of spreading this devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, of explaining the relationship between the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, that I must now devote my life. That is why on that day I asked you so many questions concerning the Devotion, and why I could talk of nothing else."(17)

He himself has written of the moving and deep sentiments evoked in his soul by the recitation of the beautiful prayer to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - the Memorare: "How we love this Prayer so full of charms! Since the happy day when our lips first pronounced you, you have never ceased to be our beautiful song of triumph. Morning and night you have carried from our hearts to the throne of Mary our sentiments of filial love and confidence, and ever have you obtained from our Sovereign Queen the innumerable graces of which we have such need."(18)

"Father Jouet," continues Father Piperon, "stayed only a few days with us, but before he departed, the important decision was made to publish a magazine called 'The Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.' He was so enthusiastic on his return to Marseilles that Mgr. Cruice entrusted him with the mission 'of employing every means,' - to use his own words - 'of spreading far and wide the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.'" And he adds: "This was one of the last inflections of the Bishop's episcopate," as soon the saintly prelate was to die.(19)

A student who passed through the hands of Father Jouet's class in College, one Leo Taxil, has paid a tribute to his former professor's piety and his devotion - to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In his "Memoirs of Youth," he writes: "It was indeed a good year passed in Father Jouet's class -1866-67. My professor was always burning with a veritable religious zeal. He had brought back with him from Issoudun a new devotion - that of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He was almost obsessed with the desire of founding a new religious Order. (This, no doubt, is an allusion to the association of Priests of the Sacred Heart.) He had the temperament of an apostle convinced of a special and irresistible vocation.

When he spoke of his plans in this regard his soul simply overflowed. Forgetting his role as teacher, he became enraptured with his subject as one transfigured, and spoke with real eloquence.

Father Jouet paid me the honour of making me his auxiliary in the College, and used to call me his first disciple. We students formed a small confraternity amongst ourselves with the permission of the Superior, Father Magnan. We used to call ourselves 'La Petite Oeuvre.' Each member pledged himself to spread devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

One of our aims also was to help the Missionaries of Issoudun financially, as it was there that the devotion, to which Father Jouet dedicated his life, originated.

And indeed Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had in Father Jouet a real apostle, ardent and devoted. Besides his work for the "Annals" of which he was to become the editor, he compiled a booklet called "Thirty Considerations on the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

He wrote the first volume in barely two months in what little spare time he had in between his ordinary duties. This appeared in April of 1865, and went through several editions in the following years. Later he revised and abbreviated the work and it became known as "The Month of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

On returning to Marseilles, Father Jouet went immediately to the Bishop to give an account of his visit to Issoudun, but unfortunately during his absence the health of the prelate had deteriorated rapidly and he hardly recognised his emissary. He was on the point of death from a tumour on the brain, and survived only a few days.

Consequently the mission of Father Jouet to Issoudun was destined not to achieve the object for which it was intended - the end which the Bishop had in mind."(22)

It is typical of Father Piperon in his charity, to restrict himself to the immediate reason for the failure of the mission; but in reality it was not so much the death of Mgr. Cruice which defeated the purpose of the consultations with Issoudun so much as the opposition of his successors Mgr. Place.

He was not only opposed to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, but even to the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which was now widespread in the diocese of Marseilles.

So quickly had the devotion spread that soon after the enthronement the first statue in the parish of Chateau-Gombert by Father Guiol, the Vicar General, over one thousand statues were reproduced in Marseille for distribution in the various parishes and the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was proving very popular with the people.

Meanwhile developments had been taking place in the diocese of Orleans regarding the Association of Priests.

We recall that Father Le Beurier had been obliged by his Superiors to withdraw from the movement in 1863, at the time when it was proposed to make Issoudun a centre for the Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart.

After that set-back Archbishop Dupanloup pursued his own idea of establishing a diocesan association. He was in close relationship with a Father Petetot who had just introduced the Oratorians to France. The bishop suggested a combination, which in concept was not lacking in grandeur. He offered the Oratorians of Paris the parish of Clery in his diocese, and solicited the help of Father Le Beurier in establishing the diocesan Oratory there. The result was that Father Le Beurier left the Sulpicians and joined the Oratorians.

Father Gaduel drew up a rule for the Society which admitted two types of members: Oratorians under the authority of the Superior General and Oratorians subject to the Bishop.

The latter class were not to form a religious order nor take vows. They need not even make any engagement re stability, as they would be free to leave at any time.

After two years' trial it was obvious that this was far too Utopian an idea, and was working only in one direction. Whilst the diocese was enjoying the administration of the Oratorians, the Oratory was not receiving any of the diocesan priests.

Then there was the conflict of authority which led to confusion. The plan was doomed to failure, and the Oratorians eventually returned to Paris, leaving only the diocesan association in Orleans.

Returning to Marseilles we find the struggle to establish the movement still going on.

Father Gaduel in his panegyric at the Requiem of Father Allemand made a striking appeal for its revival. "The Priests of the Sacred Heart," he said, "lived in the person of Father Allemand. And may I express, My Lord, the hope that the day is not far distant when some holy priests of this diocese - children perhaps of Father Allemand - under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and by the attraction of the loving Heart of Jesus, will re-establish in Marseilles the Association of Priests of the Sacred Heart."(24)

It is probable that already the new bishop, Mgr. Place, had been won over to this idea, as several years later, he seemed to indicate this in a letter to the author of "The History of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Marseilles."(25)

This history tells us that Mgr. Place officially re-established the former association by a decree, dated the 16th July, 1869. This, incidentally, was just four months after the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had received official approbation as a Society from Rome, dated the 8th March, 1869.

Part VI: Trials of Father Jouet. Tribute to his work.

We can appreciate the difficulties that Father Jouet encountered after the installation of Mgr. Place as Bishop of Marseilles.

He had gone to Issoudun at the wish of Bishop Cruice to study the work of the new Missionaries in the hope of finding ways and means of establishing the Association of Secular Priests in Marseilles. He had returned full of enthusiasm for the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He had consecrated himself to Her and was convinced that the spreading of that devotion was now to be his vocation.

To day there is an "ex-voto" before Our Lady's Altar in Issoudun Basilica written by himself:

"A traveller, one day learnt here your glorious title, O Sovereign Queen of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I fell down at the feet of your ravishing image, and I rose your Missionary for life. In one second what grace! O My Mother what a vocation!

28th Dec., 1864.

Victor Jouet, Missionary of the Sacred Heart."

But Mgr. Place was determined not to allow Father Jouet to become a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. To quote Father Piperon:

"Mgr. Place absolutely opposed the departure of the good Father, who for six years came to spend the Christmas and the long vacation with us at the feet of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

"The young community adopted him as one of its own. He acted always as one of the most devout children of the Congregation."(26)

In spite of this close attachment to the Community, Father Jouet's name is inscribed in the Register of the Secular Priests, as in fact he did not take canonical vows according to the decree of approbation, but made private vows on the 26th Sept., 1869.

Father Chevalier does not refer to any profession of Father Jouet, and Father Jouet, in a letter dated 20th Sept., 1870, to Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne, thanks the prelate for this help in his appeal to the Holy See for permission to join the Society.

In the letter he continues: "Mgr. Place has granted me twelve months' leave in order to restore my health which has been very indifferent for some time, and is at the moment very weak."

"Elsewhere Father Piperon speaks of this poor health of Father Jouet, and mentions that the leave of absence was extended for another year, during which time (1872) he accompanied Father Chevalier to Rome, where he had the consolation of obtaining permission from the Holy Father himself to live in the community at Issoudun.

This authorisation seems to have been only temporary and provisional as appears from a letter from the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, on the occasion when Father Jouet, on account of the opposition that had grown up against him in the Congregation, was thinking of seeking annulment of what vows had taken.(27)

The authorisation of the Pope and the long leave granted by the bishop were the consequences of the conflict between Mgr. Place and Father Jouet concerning devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and in particular in connection with the bishop's opposition to the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which Father Jouet was editing.

There is no doubt that Father Victor Jouet was one of the most remarkable figures that Father Chevalier gathered around him in the early days of the Society. We will see later on his intense activity and the important role he played in these early days.

We may be surprised that Father Piperon gives such scant space to Father Jouet in his Biographical Notice on Father Chevalier, but in other documents he has written about him extensively, especially in some printed matter which has recently been rediscovered. In this text Father Piperon speaks at length on the worth and merits of Father Jouet, and defends him against those who attacked him during the years of crisis in the Congregation.

It has been said that, by referring to Father Jouet only briefly in his Notice, Father Piperon was following the advice of the old adage; "It is better to be charitable than to tell all the facts." However those who knew Father Piperon would know that that was not his policy. Let us say that he deemed it at least imprudent to make an energetic justification of Father Jouet just after the death of Father Chevalier, when the echoes of dissension had not yet faded away.

What is more surprising is that the edition of title Notice brought out in 1912 did not reprint a eulogistic reference to Father Jouet by Father Piperon in the Annals of 1908.

This reference had read: "Father Victor Jouet, a name well-known and greatly appreciated by the first readers of the Annals, was a priest of gifted intelligence and rare virtue. His generous soul never faltered before difficulties, no matter how insurmountable they seemed. "Let the trials and difficulties come," he used to say, as he set him himself to any work obedience gave him to do.

His favourite maxim was always: "All for the Heart of Jesus, and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."(28)

We can appreciate the piety and devotion of this good priest by the sentiments he expressed in the preface of the first number of the Annals:

"Two years ago the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was hardly known. Today it is on everyone's lips. The title has been a delightful surprise for the faithful. The French Episcopate has surrounded it with a halo of glory, has explained its deep meaning and its sublime dignity. Pope Pius IX, in blessing it, has opened treasures of grace to the Church.

In that short time the little spark has grown to a mighty flame. The breath of God Himself has spread it through the world with unbelievable rapidity. It has resulted in the most unexpected conversions, the most signal favours, the most extraordinary happenings.

We have kept the secret of these marvelous graces to ourselves long enough. To remain silent any longer would be an ingratitude to Mary and Her Divine Son.

Our Divine Master, the King of all souls, has Himself revealed this secret to the world. We now know that the Virgin of virgins exercises a royal dominion of love over the Heart of the King Himself.

It is an honour to publish the works of God, and in the light of this new title of the Mother of God, we will study God's designs in her regard, the prerogatives that are Hers, Her incomparable virtues, the influence She exercises around Her - in a word, all that She is and all that She has.

Holy Scripture and the writings of the Fathers of the Church will be our guide in the theological treatment of this august title.

In this consoling and gentle light, we will study also the Heart of Jesus, and Mary Herself will teach us the true devotion to this most Sacred Heart. She will instruct us; will be our Model; will walk along with us and give us Her powerful help."(29)

But more of the Devotion later on. Its origin, its development, the letters of thanks, the requests - all will have their place in later chapters.

CHAPTER: XIV

THE CLERICAL SCHOOLS OF THE SACRED HEART

PART 1 Father Vandel and his Work for Country Parishes.

Jean-Marie Vandel was born on the 22nd November, 1808, at Nernier, a village on the River Lemane in the Savoy district. As there was no teacher in the small town, Jean received his first reading lessons from a seminarist, the future Abbe Pavre, who spent much of his holiday time instructing the young boy. When it became apparent that he had a possible vocation to the priesthood, he was sent to the Clerical School at Hermance where he was able to attend regular classes.

The parish priest of Nernier had taken an interest in the young lad had tried to teach him the elements of Latin, but what with his parish duties and the fact that he already had two more advanced students on his hands, the good priest made little headway with Jean-Marie who, in those days, preferred playing games to studying. He was not inclined to take his studies seriously and the parish priest gave up hope for him. However, the young seminarist, Favre, persevered with him and, after his ordination, was instrumental in getting the boy into the College at Thonon where he had been appointed a professor.

Jean-Marie remained at Thonon for eight years and eventually was admitted to the Major Seminary. Sickness, however, forced him to leave after a few months and he returned home. Here he again, rather unexpectedly, came into contact with Father Favre who, on account of sickness, had been granted leave from the College at Melan where he had recently been teaching. Together the two of them opened a small school in Nernier, but it was not to be of long duration as Father Favre's health gradually deteriorated.

Jean-Marie himself, having improved somewhat in health, sought a position more in keeping with his character and ambitions and, at the beginning of the scholastic year of 1834 was appointed as a supervisor at the Jesuit College of Chambéry, and later at Fribourg with the same Society. During this period he kept up his studies in theology and was eventually ordained a priest at Fribourg on the 6th June, 1846. By this time he was nearly 33 years of age. He remained at the College for some time and was appointed Administrator there in December, 1848. Later he was appointed Parish Priest of Nyon (Canton de Vaud), a town on the shores of the Lake of Geneva.

Nyon was a parish which, according to the census books numbered 992 Catholics including those in the outlying district.

After a sickness of five months and several relapses, Father Vandel felt that the work was too much for him and decided to offer his resignation to the bishop. In his Notes of Retreat he wrote: "I have expressed my wish to His Lordship that he relieve me from the responsibility of the parish, which is really beyond me and leaves me little time for study or the affairs of my own salvation. I have asked for a smaller parish with the sincere intention of looking after the interests of my own soul and giving myself an opportunity for study." The bishop, who knew him well and appreciated all the good work which his zeal had accomplished, would not consent to give him an inferior post or relieve him indefinitely from parish duties. However, knowing that he was in a precarious state of health, he granted him leave of absence which he could take in the diocese or anywhere he chose.

Until he joined the Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1866, Father Vandel took an annual holiday because of his indifferent health, thus gaining an intimate knowledge of the conditions with which the country priests throughout France had to contend. This made him aware of the growing danger of Protestantism throughout the countryside, and he decided to dedicate himself, even from afar, to the conversion of the Province of Vaud. It made him likewise appreciate the difficulties of priests living by themselves in isolated parishes and the dangers which beset them - a valuable experience in light of his future work.

His diverse occupations brought him into contact with many people in various walks of life. His energetic apostolate and his public defence of the faith in Nyon had made him known throughout France. Several well-known families invited him to stay with them during his vacation periods. For instance, we find recorded that, on the 20th November, 1856, he set out for Fleury in the diocese of Meaux, to stay at the home of the Comtesse de la Rochejaquelin who had a great regard for his piety and learning. Unable to remain inactive for any length of time, he fulfilled the duties of chaplain at the home of the Comtesse and helped the parish priest by giving instructions in the local schools. Then the Comtesse applied to the Bishop of Poitiers, Mgr. Pie, for faculties for the visiting priest. His lordship replied: "Please inform the good parish priest of Nyon that I grant him full faculties to preach and hear confessions whilst he is in my diocese. You can never invite too many priests such as he to come amongst us. Encourage them to spread God's blessings amongst the people while they are with us."

Since the doctor had ordered him to keep out in the open air as much as he could, Father Vandel, anxious to do as much good as he was able during his holiday, moved around through the various parishes. He was saddened by the widespread religious indifference and ignorance that he encountered, but what dismayed him most was the disappointment and discouragement of the country clergy who felt they were fighting a losing battle against the materialism of the age. With almost one voice they would say: "There is nothing we can do!" However Father Vandel did not give up hope so easily and continued to make contact with the people wherever he could. His efforts were not without result and proved to him that personal contact with the laity was necessary. He had discovered, as Father Chevalier had done before his ordination to the diaconate, that, in order to do good amongst the people, one must win their confidence personally and must make oneself liked by them - advice which Father Chevalier himself had received from an old parish priest and which he put into practice all his life. He regarded it as the fundamental secret of a successful apostolate - individual contact with the parishioners, the conquest of souls one by one, "coeur a coeur."

From this experience of the conditions prevailing in the country parishes and the urgent need of re-awakening a spirit of faith amongst the people there, the idea of the Oeuvre des Campagnes or Mission to the Country people slowly developed - an idea always associated with the name of Father Vandel.

When he returned to Paris, Father Vandel discussed the pitiable conditions of religion that he found throughout the countryside with a zealous friend, Mlle. de Pomaret. This good woman told him that, by a coincidence, a person who was but a simple domestic had some time previously given her 1,000 francs to send to the parish priest of a poor country parish where she had just spent several weeks. During her stay there she herself had been instrumental in bringing a few people back to the Faith, but she realised that a missionary could do much more than she could. Father Vandel made it his business to meet this young girl (by name Marie Boussin) and promised to devote herself to the work which he had in mind. On her part, Mlle. de Pomaret solicited the interest of three influential lay people.

A meeting was arranged at the home of the Comtesse de la Rochejaquelin and a committee was formed to go into the scheme thoroughly. The Committee comprised Father Vandel, the Vicomte de Melun and Messieurs Baudon, de Kegorlay and de Lambel.

The next meeting was convened at the home of the Vicomte de Melun on the 3rd April, 1857, when a definite programme of procedure was drawn up, and Monsieur le Comte de Lambel was elected President. Several days later, it was decided, on the suggestion of Father Vandel, to set up a Bureau with an appointed Director who would look after current business and put into effect decisions made by the Council.

In order to make the work and its object known to the clergy and the laity, Father Vandel published a brief pamphlet on the subject and later on made a resume of its contents in a still shorter brochure called "A Note on the Origin of the Oeuvre des Campagnes." In this latter publication, Father Vandel stressed the fact that he regarded the Lay-Apostolate as the special duty of the more well-to-do and better educated classes amongst the Catholics. He urged the members to seek the assistance of associates amongst families which were in comfortable financial

circumstances; but, in order not to interfere with the work of the Propagation of the Faith, an annual subscription of only 12 francs from each member and associate would be asked. The following proposals were put forward at the meeting and unanimously agreed on:

1. A bookshop would be opened where Catholic literature, prayer books and objects of piety could be obtained,
2. A charity clothing depot would be set up where poor people could obtain clothing, the lack of which they often used as an excuse for not going to Mass or meetings.
3. The members of the Work would financially help poor parish priests in the upkeep of their curates. Many parishes were without assistant priests because of lack of finance.
4. The priests would be asked to form a group which would devote itself to the work of the Country Mission, thus complementing the efforts made by the lay members.
5. A crusade of "good works" would be inaugurated in the parishes, preceded by a crusade of prayer.

The Oeuvre des Campagnes prospered in spite of all the difficulties and of its critics.

To seek further enlightenment in his work, Father Vandel paid a visit to the saintly Cure d'Ars. The Cure encouraged him to go ahead, assuring him that the work would succeed. "He told me," wrote Father Vandel, "that the best means of obtaining results was to multiply our small works of piety and charity at the church and away from the church, amongst the poor, the children, the sick - in fact with everyone we meet. His main advice was to elicit the help of a body of priests who would be willing to form themselves into a Congregation whose object would be to re-awaken a spirit of faith throughout the countryside."

After his visit to the holy Cure, Father Vandel's primary and all-absorbing aim was to establish this company of auxiliary priests. Already he had formed in his mind a rule of life for them. However, in spite of encouragement from many priests to whom he mentioned his scheme, he found it most difficult to find recruits.

The Superior of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales did not hesitate to express his fears for the success of the venture. "Having had the task of evangelising the country parishes with my Missionaries for the past two years," he told Father Vandel, "we have had very little success. The auxiliary priest, no doubt, will be able to sow the seeds of the faith here and there; he will be able to harvest a few grains of Christian life by teaching the people to pray and distributing pious objects amongst them, but the difficulty will be to gather these grains into the one bundle and conserve them."

Father Dupont of Tours introduced Father Vandel to Father Diot, the Superior of the Fathers of Our Lady of Hope whose work also included missions to the country people. Father Diot offered to help, and informed Father Vandel that his Society was about to open a Novitiate in Boulig where any of his recruits would be welcome. However, the project of the Novitiate was not proceeded with and the relationship between the two missions remained merely one of good will.

There was not complete agreement amongst the members of the Council concerning the plan of auxiliary priests and the allocation of funds in their regard. Father Carriere wrote on this point: "In the mind of the Founder the end to be obtained was the re-awakening of a spirit of Faith in the country parishes by a ministry adapted to the circumstances and needs of the time. It was necessary in order to achieve this to form a group of auxiliary priests, a body of special workers which Father Vandel hoped to found, unite and form. With this object in view he was prepared to use most of the funds collected by the Council. The formation of a group of workers would assure a plentiful harvest. However, several of the members did agree with this point of view. Seeing that the workers amongst the clergy were not forthcoming, they wished to use the resources in hand for more general purposes."

These words of Father Carriere make it clear that Father Vandel's idea was to bring together a group of priests to carry out his scheme. He was looking for priests, not just young men who desired to be priests, and hoped to prepare and form them for the specific work of evangelising the country parishes. His only intention was the welfare of the Faith in these outlying areas, and he realised that only a group of priests with the same idea could help him conduct missions and help parish priests, even temporarily, in their difficulties. His ideal was to bring a body of priests together who, under the title of Auxiliaries, would live together in community and undertake the humble and meritorious work of the country mission. It was with these ideas and ideals uppermost in his mind that he decided to go and put his problems to Father Chevalier.

In the meantime, while he was experiencing difficulty in recruiting auxiliary priests, Father Vandel had inaugurated what he called the Association of Missionary Parish Priests. This was a group of priests who would remain in their parishes but who promised to meet together three times a year for a common conference, to exchange ideas and give an account of their results of the methods agreed on in their Council. They had agreed, in their first meeting on 24th September, 1861, under the presidency of Father Vandel, to invite, at least once a year, one of their confreres to preach a series of sermons or conduct similar spiritual exercises in their parishes. They also promised to make themselves available for such work if called upon by their fellow priests.

Besides his work amongst the clergy, Father Vandel endeavoured to instruct and enlighten the laity by opening libraries in the various parishes and establishing schools where he could. The difficulty in this latter project was to obtain teachers; so, with this end in view, the School for Country Teachers was founded and suitable candidates who offered their services were trained and their upkeep guaranteed.

All these various activities brought Father Vandel into contact with people in all walks of life, both lay and ecclesiastical. In particular, he had many dealings with the Jesuit Fathers, some of whom approved of his ideas and some who did not. Father Le Blanc was a keen supporter and helped him, particularly in the founding of the School for Teachers.

Part II Father Vandel in Contact with Father Chevalier.

It was really through Father Le Blanc, S.J., that Father Vandel was brought into contact with Father Chevalier. It came about in this way: Father Le Blanc had sent Father Chevalier a copy of Father Vandel's book, "l'Oeuvre des Campagnes." Father Chevalier wrote a letter of thanks, stating: "I am very grateful indeed for the precious book you have been kind enough to send me. I was really not aware of its existence. I have read it through and it seems to me to be very useful and practical." The perusal of this book was the origin of the many communications and interviews between Father Chevalier and Father Vandel.

On 28th August, Father Chevalier wrote to Father Le Blanc: "Yesterday, I wrote to Father Vandel at the address you gave me. Judging by his book, he is a man of great worth. If it be the Will of the good God that he join us, we will readily and joyfully appoint him in charge of our mission work. Every day we ask the Divine Heart of Jesus to send us a man of His Own choice to take over this work. The more we progress, the more we realise, in view of the necessity of this work, our inadequacy and the weakness of our resources. Pray for us and for me in particular. I firmly believe that one of the ends of our Society coincides completely with that proposed by Father Vandel. It will be easy for him to accept our plans. I will await his reply before writing to the devout ecclesiastics whose names you gave me."

On the 6th September, Father Chevalier again wrote to Father Le Blanc: "Father Vandel has replied to my letter in a very friendly and co-operative manner. He hopes to come to Issoudun soon to discuss the whole matter with us. I believe that his union with us is indeed a precious conquest. Let us pray it will prove so."

Before this correspondence began, Father Vandel had often heard Father Chevalier spoken of by Mlle. de Larochere, a strong supporter of the work Issoudun.(2)

A further letter to Father Le Blanc from Father Chevalier on December reads: "Father Vandel appears to be animated by a very good spirit. I believe he will fit perfectly into our work for the Sacred Heart here. We would willingly make him our Superior. When you see him you

might sound out his opinion on this matter."

Father Chevalier was most desirous of having the Parish-Priest-Missionary Group unite their forces with the Missionaries of the Sacred with Father Vandel as Superior, for, in spite of all his energy and activity, his own health was failing and he felt he could not keep up with his work. Father Piperon wrote of him at this time: "The health of Rev. Father Chevalier, until now quite robust, was not equal to his many labours. A chronic state of laryngitis left him very weak and even threatened to lead him to the grave." This was a sore trial to a man of his energetic temperament which did not know *how* to rest or relax.

Would he have to leave his life work unfinished? There was no one around him at the time who could adequately replace him. Had he not pres to take on more than he could achieve? Perhaps his trust in Divine Providence had been nothing more than an illusion. Without him the work: fail. These indeed were for him agonising possibilities to contemplate: only for him but for his confreres and friends alike. This poor state of health was to continue for two years. It was imperative that he take a long holiday, at least that he spend the Winter months in the Midlands.⁽³⁾ We are able to follow the course of his sickness by letters, that, he wrote in 1865 when he thought he should "wind up his affairs."

On the 30th July of that year he wrote to Montlucon; "Next Wednesday morning I am going away for ten days. I am going to have a quiet rest with my dear old mother at Richelieu." From there he wrote to Madame des Mesloizes on 10th August that his health had somewhat improved: "I am hoping to be completely cured in time. I am following the wise advice given me. I intend prolonging my holiday another eight days but will be leaving Richelieu to-day to travel around the Tours district in the interest of our young Society."

Eight days later he wrote: "The journey that I have just made has done me a lot of good. My health seems to be much better." Part of this recovery was made at Montlucon as a guest of Mlle. de Montaignac who, however, was not enjoying good health herself. On his return he wrote to her: "Thanks very much for your kindness. My health is much better and I hope you will soon be able to say the same of your own. Take care of yourself. If the doctor advises you to take a holiday in the Midlands during the Winter, obey him implicitly."

Another letter written to Mlle. de Montaignac on the 5th October reveals his deeply spiritual views on the question of suffering:

"You are a child of trial and suffering. Thank God for it. It is the lot of every soul which reposes on the Heart of Jesus and consecrates itself to His Love. At the last Supper, St. John, in the ecstasy of his love, could see nothing but peace, quietude and happiness in the days before him. There was not a cloud in the heaven of his life. But soon he was to recline on the Breast of his Saviour and learn the secrets of His Sacred Heart. Then all changed. Within hours he was to witness the Agony in the Garden, the scene at the Praetorium, the Scourging, the Cross, Calvary and Death.

You are really a privileged soul. May you always be happy in your sufferings. Am I able to pity you? No, but I do wish you well. You will discover that Our Divine Master is good and will give you back your health when you need it." Father Chevalier concluded the letter by saying that he hoped to arrive at Montlucon again on the 27th, between one and two o'clock, if all went well.

However, he was to suffer another relapse on 1st October he wrote: My health continues to be difficult. The bronchitis which I contracted at Mont-Dore will not leave me "." On the 23rd we find him writing from Chateau de Beauvais, near Clion: "I do not know if it is the weather or my general run-down condition, but my health does not seem to improve. In reproach myself, I am staying here in the country till next Friday." He was following the advice that he had already given to Mlle. De Montaignac: "You must look after yourself, health is a treasure given to us by God and we have to account for it to Him just like everything else."

Again he wrote two days later: "There has been a slight improvement in my health, and I think rest is the only thing that will cure me. Everyone here is advising me to stay a few days longer so as to avoid the extreme fatigue of the Confessions in Issoudun on the Eve of the Feast of All Saints.

On the following day there was a further relapse and he recorded: "The improvement I felt yesterday seems to have disappeared. Last night I did not sleep at all owing to a state of fever and severe coughing. However, I am following my usual routine. I believe that, if I am going to get well, I must observe an almost absolute silence. This is my main resolution, even if it means not hearing Confessions for several months, if necessary. I believe that, besides the laryngitis, I have severe congestion on the chest."

In December there was a marked improvement: "I believe that your good prayers have brought about a better state of health. I am feeling really much better. I am soon going to start hearing Confessions again – something I have been unable to do in past months."

However, those around him did not share his sentiments of optimism and on the 11th January he wrote: "My health has improved a little but, in spite of that, the doctor has told me I must not stay in Issoudun. Next Monday I am setting out for Hyeres under the protection of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. How long I will stay there I do not know. Not long, I hope! This journey does not appeal to me at all. I would not go if obedience did not oblige me."

The visit to Hyeres brought results, as Father Chevalier was able to write: "The climate here at Hyeres always does me good. The doctor now suggests that I go on to Amelie-les-Bains, which I hope to do at the end the month or the beginning of March. My health is not really bad at the moment, but I cannot afford to be over-confident lest I be deceiving myself.

On 15th March we read in another letter to Mlle. de Montaignac: "I know you yourself have been carrying your Cross. My own health is far from the best. A fresh cold is on me and gives me severe fits of coughing. I have been forced to interrupt my visits to the Baths and so will have to postpone my return to Issoudun till the end of April. I will not be able to make the proposed visit to you till some time in May."

He continued to be handicapped by indifferent health during the following years. On the 3rd January, 1867, almost two years after his initial breakdown, we again find him writing from Amelie-les-Bains: "I hope to be leaving soon as I have followed the treatment and the doctor thinks it is sufficient for the time being.!!

On 12th April he again wrote to his sick friend in Montlucon: "It see that Our Lord wishes me to get well, so I will try to visit Montlucon after Easter. In the meantime, you can inform me about the state of the various groups of the Third Order there, and I hope to be able occupy myself more seriously and actively in this most important work."

On the 17th September it was necessary for him to return once again to Amelie-les-Bains for further treatment, and it was not till 1869 that he was able to resume full duties at Issoudun.

Father Chevalier's intense activity over the years had taken its toll. The worry of building the church and the monastery, the organising of the Association of Secular Priests, the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the Third Order, apart from all the cares of founding the Society itself, made inroads into his usually robust constitution. Father Piperon was not exaggerating when he wrote that his sickness nearly lead him to the grave and caused deep concern to his confreres and friends.

In the critical situation in which the Founder and his Congregation now found themselves, the appearance of Father Vandel on the Issoudun scene seemed to be an act of Providence. But actually the designs of Providence turned out to be quite different from those anticipated. Father Vandel was destined not to take the place of Father Chevalier as Superior.

PART III The Meeting of Father Vandel with Father Chevalier: Father Vandel Joins the Society

Actually, the first meeting of Father Chevalier with Father Vandel was not at Issoudun as intended but at a thermal-bathing pool near Conte-Dore mere they met quite accidentally. In a letter to Father Le Blanc on 16th July, 1865 written soon after his breakdown in health, Father Chevalier stated: "I am at Monte-Dore, endeavouring to get over a severe bout of laryngitis. Last week, Divine Providence brought Father Vandel and myself together by chance in this locality. For a long time I have been anxious to meet this pious and well-respected priest, whom you

yourself appreciate so much, in order to exchange views with him on our dear work of the Sacred Heart, for I was convinced that our ideas and sentiments would have much in common.

For four days we were able to meet together and discuss our plans and ambitions. His ideas are ours and ours are his. The main result of our talks was that since we are both working for the same end, and since union is strength, we should unite our forces in order that this admirable work may triumph. We agreed, on some minor modifications to the Plan of our young Society. He will, no doubt, inform you of these as he tells me he is going to see you soon.

Father Vandel is indeed a man of God and is a very valuable asset to our work. His knowledge and advice will be a great help to us. I have only one desire, and that is to appoint him in charge of the work which I know he will direct with wisdom and prudence. By uniting himself with us, he will be able to draw his Missionary Parish Priests to our work. Although his usual residence will be at Issoudun, he will be able to carry on his mission to the country parishes and go to Paris as often as necessary."

Such was the fact of the union of these two zealous priests in all its simplicity. There was a common outlook on the ends they were pursuing and a desire to unite forces, with some minor modifications made to the Plan of the Society, permitting the admission of the Missionary Parish Priests and changing some of the Rules pertaining to the Association of Secular Priests, we might legitimately ask: "Were they going too far? Were they aiming too high?"

When Father Piperon, who was an intimate friend of Father Vandel, describes this period of the early days of the Society, he stresses the harmony of outlook and ideals between the two priests, in spite of their difference in age. Father Chevalier, at this time, was 41 years of age, in very bad health and in a state of exhaustion on account of his sickness. Father Vandel was 57 and to quote Father Piperon, "was a grand and fine man, more worn out by his excessive activities than by his age."

Father Piperon continues: "The two priests were often condemned to a state of worrying inactivity, more difficult to bear than their sickness itself. Both of them - men of great zeal and virtue - could not conceive life of a priest as anything else but a life of devotion to human souls the glory of God. These two outstanding priests seemed to complement one another. A cordial and pious friendship grew up between them rapidly, their hearts not on fire with the same flame? Did they not both have the same ambition: to make the Heart of Jesus loved and to win souls for Him? We can easily understand what would have been the main topic of their conversations.

After these first meetings, Father Vandel journeyed to Paris where he had several appointments to keep. All he had seen and learnt at Issoudun had impressed him very much. He had celebrated Holy Mass at the Shrine of Pilgrimage; had prayed long and with great fervour before the image of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. What was passing through the mind and soul of this pilgrim? continues Father Piperon. "That was his own secret, but obvious emotion and burning words revealed his thoughts in spite of himself. When leaving us, he bade us au revoir with such affection and sympathy that he left no doubt as to what his future intentions were. We said amongst ourselves: 'When we see him again it will not be as a pilgrim; when we see him again at the feet of the Madonna it will be at his consecration to the service of the Sacred Heart; he will return to become a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.'"(5)

Father Chevalier must surely have known of these intentions when he previously had written to Father Le Blanc: "Although living at Issoudun, he will be able to carry on his work for the Country-Mission and visit Paris when necessary."

Several months later, Father Ramiere heard of these meetings between the two priests, and he wrote to Father Vandel on 9th October, 1865, "I have learnt that you met Father Chevalier at Monte-Dore and so have come in contact with another work, apart from the Apostolate of Prayer, which is equally dear to me, although I have had only indirect dealings with it: namely, the Association of Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart.

Your experience would have already made you aware of the lonely isolation of many of the country priests and the danger it is to the clergy, especially the young priests. You will appreciate, on the other hand, the necessity for these priests, whether it be from the point of view of their own sanctification or the efficacy of their ministry, to seek the companionship of their priest confreres. You did very well in your book to stress several of the advantages of such a union.

The Association of priests of the Sacred Heart has, as its object, the establishing and stabilising of a union of this nature under a fixed form and constitution. This work at present is far from being properly organised, and Father Chevalier has asked me to remodel its constitution. Before undertaking this task, I want to avail myself of all the knowledge and experience of priests who have been occupied in similar movements. No one better than yourself, my dear Father, is able to help me in this regard. I would be deeply indebted to you if you could help me, and I am sure you will be performing a very useful work for the glory of God if you give me your ideas on the subject. Father Chevalier most likely has already given you a Copy of the existing rules; if not, I will be pleased to do so myself."

In the course of the following months, Father Vandel felt himself more and more attracted to Issoudun, Here is what Father Piperon has recorded of this period: "Six months went by after Father Vandel's visit to Issoudun. During this time he reflected deeply on the decision he was about to make; he prayed ardently about it and sought advice from holy priests who he (thought could best help him. Finally, at the end of January, 1866, he made formal application to Father Chevalier to be admitted to the Society of [Missionaries of the Sacred Heart."

Actually, Father Chevalier was at Hyeres receiving further medical treatment and using the curative thermal waters of the spring there when he received Father Vandel's letter. His health was still very indifferent. We have a letter that he wrote from Hyeres on this visit to Madame des Mesloizes, sending her at the same time a copy of the pamphlet, "The Power of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," which he praised highly. In the letter, he told her that he "was feeling well, but the doctor was of the opinion. that he should make another visit to Amelie-les-Bains, which he hoped to do at the beginning of next month."(6)

It was from Hyeres that Father Chevalier answered Father Vandel's letter of application. Knowing that Father Vandel himself was not enjoying good health, he invited him to come to Hyeres and spend a few days with him. "We will receive you here with great joy," he wrote, "as you have been sent to us by Our Lord Himself. Since you are run down yourself, the climate and the waters here will do you a lot of good, and we will be able to talk about the future and our problems at our leisure. Make sure you come now and I will be awaiting you."

Father Vandel decided to accept the invitation, but he first spent a few days with the small community at Issoudun. He attended all the spiritual exercises, worked with the confreres and took part in the recreations. "Here everything and everybody *are* very edifying," he wrote. "There is no better place to pray with devotion than in the holy and magnificent church of the Sacred Heart."

Writing of the Novitiate during this visit to Issoudun, he recorded: "The Novitiate which is before me does not frighten me, as I have been able to observe since coming to the community here that all the tasks are proportioned to the strength and resources of each member. Besides, I have been able to notice the good spirit in the community and now know the kind of life that is lived here. I have found a life which is to my liking, which will help to restore my health and which will be most useful to me in my future work for the Country-Mission."

This genuine appreciation of an eminent witness, such as Father Vandel, is a tribute to the good spirit that prevailed in Issoudun in the early days of the Society and also to the capable administration of Father Chevalier, in whose hands the government of the young Society rested. He found that the ideas and spirit of the community were in conformity with his own, as Father Chevalier had assured him they would be, and here at last was a way of life most suited to himself and his work.

On the last point he wrote: "I am convinced that the house of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun will be the headquarters we are looking for. That is why I am anxious to join forces with Father Chevalier. We will work together to achieve our objects with the help and blessing of Almighty God."

Although now his life was to be that of a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, his aim was to continue his apostolate amongst the people of the country parishes, and he hoped his membership in the Society would facilitate its accomplishment. All that Father Chevalier had told him the previous year gave him hope that this would be so. Issoudun, he hoped, would provide what the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and the Fathers of Our Lady of Hope had been unable to offer - a centre for the auxiliary priests and Missionary-Parish-Priests.

After his brief stay at Issoudun, Father Vandel continued his journey to Amelie-les-Bains where, at the beginning of March, he met his friend, Father Chevalier who had arrived there from Hyeres. The two priests were able to discuss their plans at length, and Father Vandel occupied himself in drawing up rules for his School for Teachers and working out ways and means for their livelihood. He kept up his correspondence with Father Le Blanc on this subject, seeking advice as to the best means of procedure.

During his conversations with Father Chevalier, Father Vandel became more and more convinced of his vocation. "What happiness! What grace! What Mercy, if I am to become a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. I can only do so with the help of Mary and St. Joseph. I will beg them to assist me every day of my Novitiate."(7)

Both Father Chevalier and Father Vandel wrote to Father Ramiere concerning the Rules for Secular Priests which he was drawing up. They were anxious to study the modifications he was making in order that the Missionary Parish Priests could become affiliated or join the Society. Father Ramiere replied to Father Vandel on the 15th March: "I have just received your letter with that of Father Chevalier. The good Father will permit me to address the reply to you. May the Heart of Our Lord continue to bless the happy thought with which He has inspired you of joining the young Society. I have no doubt that, in spite of your sickness, in fact because of it, you will render eminent service to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. God has given you talents of which perhaps you would have been completely unaware if you had continued on in your ordinary work and I am sure these talents will produce no less fruits than your most successful missions. In a letter I had some time ago from the holy bishop of Beauvais to whom I had spoken of your sickness, the Prelate remarked: 'It could well be a blessed sickness that will enable Father Vandel to do even more than he did on the missions.'

You will still be able to continue your work for the Country Mission, and besides you will have the Annals of the Priests of the Sacred Heart at your disposal, in which you will be able to treat of practical matters concerning the object of that important work.

With your co-operation the Annals can be the medium of the continuation of your excellent book, and the articles you write will be read with great interest by all those conversant with the movement. I am expecting much from these works dedicated, as they will be, to the Divine Heart of Jesus.

I am sending you a rough draught of the Rules and ask you to tell Father Chevalier that as yet it is only a provisional document and not to be printed. Copies can be sent around to capable priests asking for suggestions regarding its modification and completion. Whatever comes of my poor efforts in the matter the union itself is a grand idea and noble work.

I am going to pray to the good St. Joseph with all my heart to grant you and Father Chevalier, together with our good friend - Mlle. de Montaignac - the necessary health to glorify the Heart of Jesus."

PART IV Origin and Early History of the Apostolic School

The activities of Father Jean Vandel, however, were to follow quite a different line from that anticipated by Father Ramiere. Father Jules Vandel, in recording his memories of his uncle, tells us of the origin of the new interest which was to occupy much of Father Vandel's time - "La Petite Oeuvre" - the Apostolic School.

It was Palm Sunday, falling that year (1866) on the 25th March. Father Chevalier and Father Vandel had left Amelie-les-Bains at an early hour to offer their Masses in the church at Arles-sur-Tech, besides which stood the tomb of the Saints Abdon and Sennon, whose bodies had been brought there centuries before. The tomb stood on an elevated piece of ground close to a protecting back wall. Although there were no springs or water pipes in the vicinity of the tomb, at times water flowed from it from an unknown source, and the water was regarded as miraculous.

Arriving before the church had been opened, the two pilgrims sat down on the threshold of the church, and it was there in the course of their conversation that the idea of the Apostolic School was conceived. The general lines of the project were written down on a page of a note book the priests placed on the altar while they offered up their Masses. Here is Father Piperon's rendition of what led up to the idea of founding an Apostolic School: "Father Vandel was explaining to Father Chevalier, with obvious feeling, how he had proposed to the Council that a gift of one sou per year should be asked from as many people of good will as could be contacted, and how the Council had rejected this proposal as impracticable and insufficient. 'I am completely downcast,' he added, 'as this small subscription multiplied hundreds of times would have assured the necessary money for the work and would have guaranteed its future.'

We can readily understand - before continuing with Father Piperon's narrative - that the Committee of Direction would regard the gift of a soul per year as quite inadequate as the work was faced with not inconsiderable expense, which could be met only by gifts and subscriptions. The quota at first had been fixed at twelve francs a year and later Father Vandel suggested reducing it to one franc per year. This would indicate that there had been little response to the original appeal for twelve francs - a plan which, to succeed, would have needed extensive propaganda and an army of zealous supporters. To the mind of the Central Committee the idea of a "sou a year" only aggravated the difficulties and would have required a campaign amongst a different milieu from the first. The Bureau naturally wondered how this new group could be contacted and whether the results would compensate for the effort put into the appeal. They, therefore, deemed the scheme unacceptable.

The local Assembly, on the other hand, had previously accepted it, as Father Vandel later testified: "In a meeting held at the Bishop's House in Blois, on the occasion of a conference between the members of the Mission, Parish Priests and the committee of the work for the country parishes, I proposed the idea of a sou per year. The proposition was well received" but when I wished to have it adopted by the central body in Paris, Father Hubin opposed my idea and it was voted out."

It was only in his discussions with Father Chevalier that the idea came to life again and had a bearing on the foundation of the Apostolic School. "On entering the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart," wrote Father Vandel, "I proposed the idea to Father Chevalier who received it with enthusiasm. 'An excellent idea,' he said. 'We will use it to finance and maintain an Apostolic School which will become a nursery for vocations to our humble Society.'" (8)

Whence came this idea of an Apostolic School and Father Founder's rather audacious scheme of financing it on gifts of "a sou a year?" When Father Piperon wrote of the origin of the "La Petite Oeuvre," he commenced by mentioning the many cares which weighed down the spirit of Father Chevalier at this time - cares and troubles we have dealt with in preceding chapter,!

Resuming the narrative, we again quote Father Piperon: "The Very Rev. Father Chevalier was quite engrossed in these ideas, lived, and wished to live, only for his Congregation. Convinced that the voice he heard in the depths of his heart was the voice of Jesus, he waited with an unshakeable confidence the fulfilment of his hopes."

Rev. Father de Ponlevoy, S.J., no doubt still influenced by the Vaugirard ideas, wrote of the Congregation about this time: "This Society will always be the 'pusillus grex.' This is what it ought to be and what suffices for it. It is the leaven which will ferment the masses by its example and impact."

However, Father Chevalier had other ideas. He was thinking of his motto: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!" This is why he was worried about a successor when his health was failing, and about the number of members which at present were all too few. This also was the reason why he was happy to have with him Father Vandel in whom he saw a solution to the first problem and even to the second, as he felt

sure the good priest could bring some of the Missionary Parish Priests into the Society. While these thoughts were uppermost in his mind, he listened to Father Vandel speaking of the scheme - "a sou a year."

"Father Chevalier," continues Father Piperon, "listened in silence, reflecting on the proposed means of finance. Suddenly, as if moved by a clear inspiration, he remarked: "Your idea is fruitful. God always uses small means to accomplish big things. If you think it is feasible, we will use your idea of a sou a year to found an Apostolic School." A prompt and spontaneous reply which shows what was Father Chevalier's abiding thought - the welfare of his beloved Congregation. It revealed the mind and spirit of a holy Founder. His Congregation, as yet so small and feeble, occupied the first place in his affections. It was constantly in his thoughts and he was forever studying ways and means of strengthening and developing it. His keen intelligence made him realise the enormous possibilities of an Apostolic School, and Father Vandel's "sou a year" scheme appealed to him as a means of financing it.

Father Piperon leaves no doubt that the idea of establishing an Apostolic School came from the Founder himself. He writes: "Thus the Sacred Heart of Jesus gave to the pious Founder the idea of an Apostolic School and presented him with the means of making it succeed. If the plan still remained to be implemented and completed through the years, 'La Petite Oeuvre,' so called from the beginning, continued in the form and ideals originally conceived by Father Chevalier. It was the fruit of his own mind - the result of his own work."(9) Father Piperon has laid emphasis on the fact that Father Chevalier was the founder of the Apostolic School precisely to correct an opinion expressed in the Annals in 1907 by Father Lanctin, one of the first pupils in 1867 and later to be Director of the School for many years.

Father Lanctin was a native of Issoudun and, at the time when Father Chevalier and Father Vandel were discussing their projects at Amelie-les-Bains, he would have been eleven years old. He used to serve the Mass of Rev. Father Mousseau who had succeeded Father Piperon as chaplain to the Hostel and Prison in Issoudun. Father Mousseau often visited the Lanctin family and it was, doubtless, through him that young Arthur was admitted to the newly-formed Apostolic School.

In 1907 Father Lanctin wrote in the Annals that Father Mousseau attributed the founding of the school to Father Vandel. Influenced, no doubt, by his affection and sympathy for Father Vandel, who certainly organised the early stages of the school and had more direct contact with the students than anyone else, Father Lanctin concluded that Father Vandel's meetings with the Councils in Blois and Paris was to raise funds for the upkeep of "an apostolic work." He quotes Father Vandel as proposing to Council "a very simple means of obtaining funds with a view to obtaining ecclesiastical vocations. No one would have refused it, and this sou, multiplied hundreds of times, would be able - at least I was hoping so - to give priests and apostles to the Church." However, neither Father Vandel nor Father Piperon has mentioned anywhere that the funds were to be collected for that particular end.

We do not find in Father Carriere's biography of Father Vandel any reference to the fact that he was thinking of founding a school for future priests. The only thing that Father Carriere writes on the subject is: "The founder of the Oeuvre des Campagnes was always hopeful of bringing together, under the title of 'Auxiliaries,' a number of devout priests who would live in community and help him in his humble yet meritorious mission. However, seeing that this venture did not produce any durable result, he began to understand that it was not the Will of Providence."(11) This is why he founded the Association of Missionary Parish Priests and was looking for a Centre where existing Societies could meet - an effort which failed until he met Father Chevalier who interested himself in the movement. Father Vandel then had nothing more in mind than to found an Association of Auxiliary Priests living in community, along much the same lines as the priests at Issoudun. At that time he was not contemplating - nor was Father Chevalier - the establishment of a School for future priests.

In those days in France the only provision made for the training of future priests in their early studies were the ordinary local colleges, and in some places, with the authorisation of the Government, Junior Seminaries. Certain parish priests used often gather around themselves groups of likely candidates and teach them the elements of Latin and the secular science, but this was fraught with many difficulties as we will see later on in the case of Elmont and Tournus. Actually, the first idea of a special institution for the training of young boys who wished to be priests is not attributable to either Father Chevalier or Father Vandel. Father Piperon explicitly attributes to Father Chevalier the initiative in founding our Apostolic School for the training of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart; but he does not tell us how or why this idea came to him at that particular time. To answer these questions it is necessary to go back not to Amelie-les-Bains but to Avignon.

A Jesuit priest, called Father Alberie de Foresta, who was keenly interested in the foreign missions, maintained that the system of education in the schools of France cost the Church many priestly vocations. The atmosphere of irreligion in the high schools, added to the exorbitant charges which made it impossible for many parents to give their children a secondary education were not favourable to the fostering of vocations to the priesthood.

He had a plan of offsetting these difficulties and encouraging vocations for the foreign missions by establishing in the various dioceses "The Work of Apostolic Schools." To finance the scheme, Father de Foresta obtained donations of 1,000 francs each from a group of people whom he called "Founders," enlisted the help of subscribers who promised to give 100 francs annually, and launched an appeal for associates who would give at least 2 francs. These last donors, following the system inaugurated by Mlle. Marie Pauline Jaricot for the Propagation of the Faith, were grouped into ten sections, each group comprising ten subscribers.

With the help of Religious Superiors and the success of the appeal for funds, Father de Foresta was able to open his school with twelve students in October, 1865, at Avignon - six months before Father Chevalier and Father Vandel met at Amelie-les-Bains. Actually, Father de Foresta did not build a new school but enrolled the students as a distinct group in the Jesuit College at Avignon where they followed the usual course of studies. At the beginning of 1866, Father de Foresta enlarged the scope of his propaganda by issuing a leaflet on the work, the text of which was printed in the Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

In the course of his travels, and on account of his frequent meetings with the Jesuits at Avignon concerning the Association of Secular Priests and the Third Order, Father Chevalier would certainly have heard of this work of Father de Foresta, for he modelled his own Apostolic School at Issoudun on the Avignon plan.

For Father Foresta the idea offered a solution to the problem. The young aspirants to the priesthood followed the ordinary course of College studies but lived in a separate residence with their own Director - a system admirably suited to the accomplishment of their ideals. The intention of Father de Foresta was to establish several Apostolic Schools in various dioceses, all financed by the same Association, but each keeping its independence and autonomy. At the end of their studies the students would be free to choose their own vocation, i.e., to join a Religious Society, work as a secular priest or go to the foreign missions. Father de Foresta naturally hoped that many would choose this latter field of activity.

Father Chevalier, of course, intended his Apostolic School to be a nursery for vocations to his own Congregation, a work as yet limited to France alone. The question of finance had been the big stumbling block, now Father Vandel had presented his idea of "a sou a year," and in this Father Chevalier saw a solution. Actually, the idea of "a sou a year" was not original. The Propagation of the Faith had already borrowed the idea from an Anglican sect called the Anabaptists who were canvassing for a "sou a week." Father Vandel's scheme of a "sou a year" seemed to be far too inadequate but at least it had this advantage that it distinguished it the appeal of Father de Foresta for his Apostolic Schools.

To further underline this distinction, so that people would know that the Issoudun School was for the recruitment of future Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Father Piperon insisted that from the beginning it be called La Petite Oeuvre du Sacre Coeur.

Why "of the Sacred Heart?" Father Piperon explains: "Because it is the cradle of the young Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart; because it is founded to develop and perpetuate this Congregation; because this Petite Oeuvre, like its mother - the Society itself - has been

founded to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere. The Congregation completes the formation of its members; the Apostolic School prepares then. A student of the Apostolic School, then, is to the Congregation what a bud is in the ultimate producing of the fruit. Finally, the Apostolic School has for its patron the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and especially the Child Jesus, Who at the age of twelve astonished the Doctors by the wisdom of His answers. He is their Model."

Such were the beginnings of the Apostolic School. As we have mentioned before, the project was placed on the altar during the Holy Mass of the two Founders on Palm Sunday, 25th March, 1866, which was also the usual date for the Feast of the Annunciation. That is why Father Vandel wrote: "The Apostolic School had for its cradle an altar, and it was born on the day that the Infant Jesus took Flesh in the womb of Mary, His Mother." Naturally, the patronal feast of the Apostolic School has always been the Feast of the Annunciation.

Father Vandel, writing on the 12th June, 1872, has added another interesting little item: "It seems to me that this Petite Oeuvre, on the very day of its birth, received its baptism on Spanish soil. Sometime after our Mass we made a pilgrimage across the border, in honour of our projected work, to the church in Jonquiera, the nearest parish to French territory just a few miles from Arles-sur-Tech. Just as it is customary to offer presents on a baptismal day, we distributed in the precincts of the church quite a lot of medals of Our Blessed Lady to a large gathering of children who flocked around us. It was the first act of the apostolate of the Apostolic School of the Sacred Heart." The thermal season of healing waters had come to an end. Father Chevalier returned to the community at Issoudun, and Father Vandel was not long in following him.

It was without doubt a sign of the unshakeable confidence that Father Chevalier had in the protection of Our Blessed Lady that he undertook this work on the flimsy prospect of the "sou per year" scheme. But there were reasons to justify this confidence.

His many journeys in search of his health had given him many valuable contacts with influential people who were to help him in the future. His tireless efforts to establish the Association of secular priest, and the third Order had won him many sympathisers. His personal experience in financing the building of the church and monastery, and the result of his distribution of small holy cards at 20 cents a copy, had taught him the value of little gifts and small donations. The Annals, which first appeared in the year - 1856 - also presented a means of advertisement and income. In the next Chapter we will speak of the popularity of the many religious publications which appeared about this time.

But, above all, the ever-increasing members in the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was the main reason for Father Founder's confidence. The Association was now flourishing. At the time of the inception of the Apostolic School, it numbered almost 300,000 members. By September it was to grow to 600,000, by December to 800,000, and in 1857 over 1,000,000 names were inscribed in the register. It was owing to this healthy state of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that the project of the Apostolic School was able to be launched and take definite form.

Father Chevalier was able to count on a legion of zealous workers who devoted themselves to all the Issoudun undertakings. Moreover, the number of pilgrims to Our Lady's shrine, who also left their small donations was increasing every day.

Taking into account the worthy nature of the appeal, and in spite of the small donation asked, it is estimated that if only half the 800,000 members enrolled on 1st January, 1867, gave a sou each, the sum of 20,000 francs would have been collected for the year. Some, of course, would, have been more generous, thus making up in some way for the non-contributors. This calculation seems to have been exact enough.

Commencing with twelve students, the number grew to 27 by the end of the scholastic year. Estimating the upkeep of each student as 500 francs per annum, this would amount to 13,500 francs for all, which, still left an inadequate sum for building and furniture expenses. It is certain that the expenditure and the upkeep of the students exhausted the funds in hand right from the commencement. The Bulletin of November, 1867 - the School opened in October - expressly states: "The present resources prevent us from going further." The Bulletin also adds, "It was without design or foresight on our part that the first students numbered twelve, the same number as Our Lord's Apostles."

At the end of 1867, two months after its foundation, four more had been added to the original twelve and two more were expected. Many more students had already applied for admission, but lack of finance and space limited the number to 18 for the time being.

The Bulletin further informs us in December: "More than 100 boys have been recommended to us, but we will have to make a choice amongst these proportionate to the funds in hand. At present we have 18 with us."

However, God was to bless the work, and by March, 1868, the number of candidates totalled 150. The finances improved proportionately, as we read in the records: "Several more students are to be received after Easter, and another group will be admitted in October at the beginning of the new term."(12).

Father Piperon has noted: "On his return from Amelie-les-Bains, Father Chevalier, in spite of all his duties and business, did not forget the Apostolic School. However, he was not able to cope with all the implications of this important foundation himself. Neither his indifferent health nor the stress of other engagements permitted this. Fortunately, the Heart of Jesus had just sent him an outstanding subject in the person of Father Jean Marie Vandel, whose vast experience, rare qualities and deep piety made him a valuable member of the Society."

Father Chevalier believed that he could not entrust this beloved work into better hands. From then on he relied entirely on Father Vandel. Appointed Director-General of this work, the latter devoted himself unreservedly to organising and making a success of it. He dedicated to it all his labours, his writings, his preaching, his time - in fact his whole heart. In spite of his health - always doubtful to say the least - one would have thought that he had regained all the energy of his early priesthood.

Father Vandel organised the new work entrusted to him along much the same lines as he had organised the Oeuvre des Campagnes. At the head was the Council, that is, the General administration of the Society. Then, came the Executive Committee with a Bureau-Director and Father Vandel as President, which explains his title of Director-General of the work. This Committee was made up of a body of zealous supporters who looked after the propaganda, the raising of funds and the maintenance of the School. It drew up the annual budget which was submitted to the Head Council for approbation.

The Head Council decided on the number of students to be admitted and the suitability of each as a worthy candidate. Father Chevalier, as President, signed the report card of each student at the end of each term.

The Director of the Bureau, acting on behalf of the Executive Committee, had the right of directing the use of the funds and of supervising the appeal work in the parishes, schools, libraries, etc. He also had the right to visit the School in order to assess its material needs, its installations, etc.

The effective direction of the School, i.e., in matters of spirituality and studies, was in the hands of the Superior, subject to the Director-General who, by delegation, carried out the ordinances of the Council.

These various titles of those directing the Apostolic School later on led to a deal of confusion amongst those who were not acquainted with the work in its initial stages. For example, Father H. Peeters, who entered the Apostolic School in 1873, after Father Vandel had given up active teaching, has written: "The title of Director of the Apostolic School seemed to signify something quite different from what we understood it to mean. To us the Director meant the priest who was directly in charge of us, and Father Vandel was certainly not that. For one thing, he did not even live at Chesal-Benoit and so was not its Director in fact. We looked upon the Superior there as the Director. Father Vandel used to visit us from time to time at Chezal-Benoit to give us a spiritual lecture or a lesson on some subject in our studies. Sometimes, if a student needed serious correction or wanted spiritual direction, we could see him in his room; but these appearances, often separated by long intervals, hardly justified his being called 'Director,' as we understood it."(13).

It is perhaps worthy of note that the first donation that came in under the sou a year scheme was a postage stamp worth four sous from the territory of St. Francis de Sales. The Fathers regarded this blue stamp as the symbol of a new era. "Soon," wrote Father Piperon, "enough sous

came in to adopt several students."

The main problem occupying the mind of the Founder (Father Chevalier) and his collaborators was where to establish the new School. We have already said that the intention was to follow the plan of Father de Foresta, i.e., to form a distinct community of students attached to some already-established college, where the students could attend the ordinary classes, but live their own separate life under proper direction. But where to find the College which would accept students under these conditions was the difficulty. When Father Chevalier was contemplating and explaining his plan at Airelie-des-Bain he was counting on the help of his bishop, Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne - and not without reason.

About 17 miles from Issoudun, in a wooded part of the country, stood the ancient Benedictine Abbey of Chezal-Benoit, which had been confiscated by the revolutionaries. The "Echo des Marches" on the 8th April, 1860, had published the news that "the judgment on the property at Chezal-Benoit will be given in the court at Saint-Amald on the 29th of this month, and the price of purchase will be 60,000 francs. The newspaper added: "It is rumoured that Mgr Menjaud will buy the property in the name of the diocese." It was not till two years later that the "Echo" was able to announce on 26th March that the Government decree has approved the acquisition of Chezal-Benoit by the Diocesan authorities."

The Archbishop established there one of the first independent Colleges made possible by the new Falloux law. The Founder and first Director, Father Dubouchat who was replaced on his death by Father Chaumereau in 1861.

Father Chevalier had hopes of attaching his Apostolic School to this newly-formed College and put his plans before the Archbishop. Quite near the College - in fact, in its grounds - was a cottage owned by the diocese; which would house at least twelve students. After hearing Father Chevalier's plans, the Archbishop graciously put the building at the disposal of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The cottage consisted of two separate apartments together with a spacious barn, and was euphemistically referred in the Annals of Issoudun, 1867, as a house of studies. In the following year, it was necessary to construct a new building from which emerged the real Apostolic School. The Archbishop asked, in compensation for the grant of the cottage, that the Missionaries supply some professors to teach in the College.

So, in 1868, we find in the Ordo of the diocese that there were four Missionary priests teaching in the college - referred to as the "Institutio diocesana," and two in the "Petite Oeuvre," known as the "Gymnasium Speciale." The following year, the number grew to seven, and in October, 1869, the Missionaries took over the direction of the College, with Father Marie as the Superior. The Apostolic School remained a separate entity with two or three priests looking after the students.

Tradition has it that the Apostolic School officially began on the 2nd October, 1867, the Feast of the Guardian Angels. Father Piperon expressly states: "On the 2nd October, 1867, Rev. Father Vandel personally conducted the twelve students and their professors to their new quarters which had recently been slightly renovated but which could boast of only poor furniture."(14)

However, in his brochure written in 1874, Father Vandel indicates that the twelve students arrived at Issoudun on that date and not at Chezal-Benoit. "The first students," he wrote, "arrived at Issoudun on the 2nd October, on the Feast of the Guardian Angels. They numbered twelve."(15)

Father Carriere repeats this information in his book, and adds: "A few days later, the place having been already determined, Father Vandel himself presided at their installation."

Much as we dislike upsetting a venerable tradition, we are forced to conclude that these authors were stating what was intended to take place and not what actually happened. The Annals of the Petite Oeuvre, telling of "the arrival of the first students at Issoudun in 1867, records the following interesting details:

"The students of the Apostolic School were expected to arrive at Issoudun on the 2nd October, 1867, on the Feast of the Guardian Angels, but, by that date, the house was not yet prepared to receive them, and the arrival of several of them was postponed to the 7th or 8th of the month. However, it was not possible to contact all of them by letter, and on the night of the 1st October three students were received at the House of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The first student to arrive was Jacques Tesserant who came from the district of La Charente. The second was Ignace Grom from the Lower-Rhine, and the third, Jean-Marie Bufferne from the province of Loire. The next day, the 2nd, two more arrived: Luciani Christophe from La Corse, who, on his way had been quarantined for four days in the Lasaret near Marseilles; and a student called Charles Moulin from the Indre district. There were also two from the town of Issoudun itself: Arthur Lanctin and Louis Quicler.

The Chronicle goes on to tell us how these first students occupied their time during these first few days, and informs us that three more arrived on the evening of the 7th October: two from Montlucon - Jean Lagelin and Antoine Durin - and one from Puy de Dome: Jean Pailloncy. Then there is a break in the records of the Chronicle till the 26th December, when we are informed that there are ten students in the School, five of whom had arrived on the 2nd October and two others living with their families in Issoudun.

There is actually a deal of confusion in these registers of the personnel of the early Apostolic School. Both Father Piperon and Father Barral mention a Joseph Eyraud of Paris who arrived on the 2nd, Virgile Roux from the town of Napoleon (Vendee), who came on the 5th, and Pierre Grand whose home-town is not noted. At the head of the list they place Lucien Catin, but this is explained by Father Barral's note that this student had already been with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart for several months before the Apostolic School was founded, and Father Piperon records the date of his entry as 2nd April, 1867.

The rather incomplete register of Father Trevoux further complicates matters by telling us that Jean Gauthier arrived on the 7th October, whereas both Father Piperon and Father Barral make the date of his entry the 20th December, "a few days before Christmas." There is also mention of a Monsieur Cramaille - aged 24 - who had come to Issoudun on 15th December, 1856, and who followed the classes at Chezal-Benoit and helped with the supervision of the younger pupils.

Regarding Lucien Catin, Father Vandel has recorded: "The first of the students, and one of the best subjects, decided, after spending several months with us, that he was called to the Society of Jesus."(16) Father Piperon puts the date of his departure as the 15th October, whereas Father Barral notes it as "fifteen days after the foundation of the Apostolic School."

The Bulletin of November, 1867, records: "The students began their studies on the 11th October, the number being twelve. The installation at Chezal-Benoit would have taken place on the 10th, and the number twelve would be referring only to those students who presented themselves during the month of October."

If the details of the inauguration and organisation of the Apostolic School fell mainly on the shoulders of Father Vandel, Father Chevalier followed every move with keen interest, and helped where he could. For him it was a "labour of love." Father Arthur Lanctin has written on this point; "While Father Vandel turned the gifts of his agile mind to the institution, Father Chevalier was combatting the many difficulties from without, difficulties which for well nigh half a century had and were to confront his work. It was only his invincible energy, his consummate prudence, his patience and, above all, his keen spirit of faith which enabled him to triumph over the many obstacles which the powers of hell and the spirit of the world put in his path in the hope of destroying his pious designs."

After mentioning in particular several of the Founder's efforts in establishing the school, Father Lanctin continued: "It is easy to conclude, after what we have seen, that the Apostolic School owes not only its "birth" to Father Chevalier, but its life, its growth and its prosperity. It was not merely in a general way that the Founder interested himself in the work and devoted himself to its progress. He took part in every small detail of its development, particularly after the death of Father Vandel."(17)

We have seen that, in spite of his work for the Apostolic School, Father Vandel was pressed by the interested parties - people such as Father Ramiere - to continue his mission to the country parishes; but this was to involve difficulties. "When I returned to Paris," he wrote, "I

announced to the General Council at the home of Monsieur de Larribel that I had joined the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. On hearing the news, Father Hubin immediately stated that he would withdraw from the movement, unless I collaborated in the work. I assured them that I had no intention of dissociating myself entirely from the mission and that my new life would not completely prevent me from offering it my services. In spite of this assurance, Father Hubin resigned his charge and was replaced by Father Eazin.

Although most of his days were occupied by his duties with the Apostolic School, Father Vandel did not forget his cherished work, the Oeuvre des Campagnes which he was now happy to see flourishing and successful. Not only did he contribute an article to each bulletin, but he often journeyed far and wide lecturing on the movement when his duties and strength permitted him. He was assisted in these efforts by his confreres at Issoudun.

At the end of December, 1876, he attended, the General Reunion of the Movement at the Jesuit Monastery in Poitiers. Archbishop Pie and Father Chevalier himself both spoke at this convention, but the main address was given by Father Vandel, who again recalled the end and object of the work, its opportune nature, its progress and the means of making it succeed. He concluded by stating his confidence in the salvation of France and emphasising the fact that that confidence was based on the support and protection of Mary, the Mother of God. Four months later, Father Vandel was found dead in his room at the Monastery.(18)

PART V The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart take Charge of The Clerical Schools of Rimont and Tournus.

Chezal-Benoit then was the accomplishment of the plan dreamed of and drawn up at Amelie les Bains, but it was not the first clerical school looked after by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

We have already mentioned that, after the Revolution in France, several parish priests gathered together young prospective students for the priesthood in their presbyteries in order to give them some elementary education and spiritual training. This was to give them a better chance of gaining admission to the few Junior Seminaries that did exist at the time.

In 1842, a Father Bordeaux, who owned some property in the small village of Rimont, then attached to the parish of Fley, decided to build a church there. In 1864, the priest in charge of this church in Rimont was a young man called Father Gonon. He made his presbytery available to four young students who wished to become priests, and did his best to instruct them. By 1866, the number had grown to sixteen, and the "presbytery school" came under the notice of the education authorities. The inspector threatened to close it down as Father Gonon had not the necessary diploma to set himself up as a teacher. Father Bordeaux was a close relation of the Dubois family, and this had brought him into contact with Father Vandel. Madame Dubois herself had already established in Rimont a course of instructions for those wishing to obtain diplomas for teaching, especially for young girls who wished to dedicate themselves to the Oeuvre des Campagnes. Father Vandel had highly praised the work of this devoted Catholic in one of his articles in 1866.

Father Gonon, who had met Father Vandel through this work, saw here a practical solution to his difficulties. Perhaps the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, which Father Vandel had recently joined, would be able to help him. The outcome of negotiations with the Congregation was that Father Georgelin, who was a Bachelor of Arts and so had the necessary diploma, would take charge of the school for the next scholastic year, 1866-1867. The bishop of the diocese of Autun, Mgr. Frederic de Marguerey, wrote an encouraging letter to Father Georgelin on the 7th January, 1867:

"My dear Father,

I hope you are about to place the first stone in a work which God will bless. One day, I trust, this diocese of the Sacred Heart will have a House of Missionaries who will establish new works which will infuse a new life amongst us. If trials are not wanting in the devoted efforts of Founders, God's blessings will follow in due time."

On the 6th January, Father Chevalier had written to Montlucon: "Our good Father Georgelin has gone to the diocese of Autun where he hopes "to found a small community of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. I recommend this work to your prayers."

Father Lephilbert, later to become Director in the Junior Seminary in the diocese, wrote: "Father Georgelin came to Rimont accompanied by a Lay-brother. The Superiors of the Congregation did not like sending members alone, but the requirements of Rimont at the moment did not call for more members."

However, the school at Rimont was not to last. At the end of the scholastic year, Father Georgelin returned to Issoudun, and Father Gonon transferred to Tournus, where he told his students to assemble for the beginning of the next school year in October, 1867. The spiritual requirements of Rimont were looked after by priests of the neighbouring parish for the time being, but in 1861 the diocese again established a clerical college there, which to-day is the Junior Seminary.

The idea of transferring the school from Rimont to Tournus was to have the one educational centre for two large localities. Father Chaumont, parish priest of the church of St. Philibert in Tournus, had himself established a "presbytery school" there in 1867 under the title of "Choir School of the Church of St. Philibert of Tournus." By this means, which was also tried later in Issoudun, the parish priest, doubtless, was hoping to avoid the attention of the education authorities. However, he did not succeed, as Father Petit, who was in charge of the studies, did not possess a teaching diploma and was soon visited by an inspector who insisted on a qualified tutor. The result was an urgent appeal once again to Father Georgelin to come and take over the directorship. This demanded some re-shuffling of staff at Chezal-Benoit as Father Georgelin had been appointed professor of rhetoric there. Suitable arrangements were made, however, and, in due course, Father Georgelin was named Director of the School at Tournus.

It seems that some considerable time passed before Father Georgelin's appointment was finalised, as we find the parish priest, Father Chaumont, anxiously writing to the Vicar General on 25th September: "I thank you for the approval given to our little school. I pray that God will bless it and that, one day, it will bring forth abundant fruit for the diocese. We are assured now of having a qualified teacher with the necessary diploma, but this good priest of Issoudun seems to be committed to so many other obligations that we will probably not be able to start before the Feast of All Saints. Do not forget your promise to come and see us."

The Bishop of Autun wrote to Father Georgelin on 28th September:

"My dear Father,

I foresee you going to Tournus with the confidence that the Heart of the Divine Master will bless this work and give us good priests for our diocese. I grant you all the faculties given to missionaries while you await the official notification."

Father Georgelin arrived at Tournus at the beginning of October, well before the Feast of All Saints, as Father Chaumont was able to write on the 16th October: "Father Georgelin has arrived. He is an excellent religious, learned, pious and of a gentle disposition. Fathers Petit and Gonon have proved their worth, but they are not able to cope with forty students."(19)

The following further details concerning the school at Tournus are on record and are of interest; Firstly, a letter of Father Vandel to Father J Chaumont: "I received a nice little letter from one of your pupils. Would you be kind enough to give him the enclosed reply. The three clerical schools, that of the Sacred Heart at Tournus, the Apostolic School at Avignon, and our own Petite Oeuvre at Chezal-Benoit, are kin institutions. For my part, I am happy and grateful that your dear students at Tournus wish to correspond with our group at Chezal-Benoit. I believe that this mutual communication will be beneficial to both of us. I sincerely thank you and the students for your kind wishes and sentiments in our regard."

A letter also of the chief Education Inspector addressed to Father Georgelin on 9th March, 1869, throws some light on the set-up and various divisions of the College. The inspector mentions the following classes amongst the students: the boarders, the part-time boarders, the free external and the externs under supervision. The following classes regarding the studies are also mentioned: the primary class of special instruction, the year of classical instruction, comprising 7th and 8th classes, the years of grammar - 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th classes, and the top class - that of Rhetoric and Philosophy. The inspector was also enquiring about the number who followed the classes regularly, the number who were admitted free, and what was the usual fee for the various classes.

There are also extant two circulars, one issued at the foundation of the school, and the other after three years, both setting out the end for which the school was established and its connection with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun.

The title of the first circular reads: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be Everywhere loved'. The Clerical School of the Sacred Heart for Ecclesiastical Vocations - with the approbation of His Lordship, the Bishop of Autun - at Tournus (Saone and Loire)." The approbation bears the date of 6th September, 1868.

The second circular runs as follows: "The Clerical School of the Sacred Heart, founded three years ago by Father Chaumont, parish priest of St. Philibert (Tournus) assisted by several of the priests of the diocese of Autun, is conducted by the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun (Indre) and now numbers forty students.. The benefactors may participate in the following spiritual advantages:

- (a) A special remembrance in two Masses each week in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
- (b) Each day the litany of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is offered for the intentions of the benefactors.
- (c) The general prayers of the community always include these intentions.

To become a benefactor of the work, a small donation of ten cents per year suffices."

It would seem that the establishment of a house by the Missionaries the Sacred Heart in the diocese of Autun coincided with the taking the school. The first circular mentions the fact that the priests of Philibert of Tournus are now all Missionaries of the Sacred Heart," second circular modifies this by stating, "The priests of St. Philibert affiliated with the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart." This seeming contradiction is explained by the fact that the second circular is published after the Decretum Laudis had been received from Rome. This decree had made the vows obligatory for the members of the Society properly so-called, but not for the affiliated secular priests.

We find references to this affiliation in the scant correspondence available dealing with this period. For example, Father Chevalier wrote to Father Georgelin on the 3rd January, 1869: "Thanks for your good wishes and the interesting details you sent to me. I am certainly very satisfied with our little Society in Tournus. I am praying that Our Lord will bless it and more." And then, referring to the admission of some unnamed priest as a novice, "I certainly intend to accept our new confrere as a Novice. Tell him how pleased I am concerning his resolution." The letter continues,

Tell our venerable parish priest that Father Malabat will be at Tournus to open the mission on Quinquagesima Sunday. My sincere good wishes to Fathers Chaumont, Gonon, Petit and Guillemin."

We might ask, "Were these priests novices of the Society or merely affiliated priests?" Father Georgelin's position as Superior was clear from the following letter of 16th April, 1869: "The upkeep of the house at Tournus - food, clothing, travelling expenses - is your responsibility. The Mass intentions you receive will be for our house here in Issoudun. Any financial gifts you receive, provided they are of a small nature, you may use for the needs of the community."

On the 22nd November of that year Father Founder wrote from Rome: "I am not forgetting my well-beloved confreres of Tournus. I hope to see you all on my return journey. I will willingly receive the vows of those who wish to make them. You could have a word with Father Chaumont, the parish priest, on this matter."

Sickness and travel difficulties, however, prevented Father Chevalier from calling at Tournus on his return journey. "I will come," he wrote on 12th December, "as soon as I am able. I realise that the time of retreat: an admirable time for the reception of the vows, and so I willingly give approval to our cherished and well-beloved confreres."

Meantime, Father Vandell had visited Tournus and on his return was able to write on 3rd April, 1870: "The last time I had the happiness of being at Tournus, I noticed that Our Divine Lord was blessing all our fraternal relationships. For my own part, I will always be glad and thankful to co-operate in the welfare of the community there whenever obedience permits me."

In spite of his wish to return, Father Vandell fell sick and he had to content himself with a letter: "This note will have to compensate for the visit which Father Superior suggested I should make some weeks ago. However, what is deferred can be accomplished later on. Father Superior believes that it is good and useful that we brothers should visit one another from time to time, as the Apostles themselves did."

The small Society at Tournus continued to prosper until the outbreak of the war of 1870-1871, when it was forced to close its doors. Father Georgelin tried to find quarters elsewhere, but when the war had finished, the general situation of the Society had changed greatly. The military upheaval had wrought its havoc, and the ranks of the members had thinned out, according to the nature of the vows or promises they had made. Circumstances did not permit Father Georgelin to return to Tournus, although the Ordo of the diocese of Autun mentions him as Director of the School there until December, 1873.

In spite of the departure of the Missionaries from Tournus, the relationship between the Society and the authorities of Autun remained cordial, as the following letter to Father Georgelin from Father Chaumont shows. With this letter we will conclude this part of the Society's history. The letter reads:

"Tournus. 5th July, 1876. Cor Jesu semper et ubique ametur"

Dear Rev. Father,

I thank you for your kind remembrance and the good wishes, you extend to me in my declining years. I am particularly grateful for the latter, as all I wish now is to die a good death and go to Heaven.

I return these good wishes in your own regard, my dear Father, and I firmly believe that your saintly life lived for the greater part in a spirit of perfect obedience and generosity will be rewarded in Heaven. I sincerely hope that before you go to God you will have the happiness of seeing your Congregation develop, and that Father Chevalier before he dies will have the joy of seeing his beloved disciples extending their vigorous work throughout France. This will be a fitting recompense for all the work entrusted to him by the Mother of God to whom he has devoted himself with such zeal, and whose glory he has extolled by the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - a name now inscribed in the liturgy of the Church and productive of so many marvellous happenings.

Our little school continues to progress, if not by a great number of students - at present we have 29 - at least by the spirit of piety and earnest study which, according to all reports, their predecessors have carried with them into the Major Seminary. The school has already given seven priests to the Church - students whom you helped to form, my good Director, amongst whom you will be pleased to hear are Ducret and Jacob.

The diocese has a great need of the recruits which the various teachers send to us. The Junior Seminary unfortunately supplies too few of them, and in the first year of theology there are at present only eleven. The ordination of young priests is not filling the gaps made by deaths of the older clergy. At the moment there are 35 parishes where priests could be placed. We are going through a period of sad and pitiable trials, the greatest of which is the loss of faith of so many people, situation, aided by the diffusion of a bad and hostile press, is growing more serious from day to day. Another two or three years of this sad political regime, and the Faith will have disappeared from our beloved France whose history has been so Christian.

Let us pray and beseech St. Peter that he will obtain for us strength, courage and a staunch faith.
Give my kind regards to Father Chevalier and all the Fathers and ask them to pray for me•
Yours in Our Divine lord, Chaumont,
Parish Priest of St. Philibert."

CHAPTER XV THE ASSOCIATION OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

PART 1 Origin of the Devotion. The First Statue.

In previous chapters we have spoken of the origin of the title, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, emanating, as it were, from the very soul of Father Chevalier as he knelt in prayer before an image of Our Lord's Heart on 9th September, 1855. We recall his conversation with an intimate group of fellow-priests in 1857, when he told them of his inspiration regarding the new title, and the effect the devotion had on them all in the early days of the Society, particularly during the difficult period of the construction of the new church.

However, 1857 did not yet mark the beginning of the propagation, on a large scale, of what was to become a world-wide devotion to the Mother of God under her new title. In the second number of the *Annals of Issoudun* we find the significant comment: "Lowly and hidden in the beginning, this devotion will remain unknown to the world for several years, but its heavenly charms are already enchanting the hearts of the privileged few to whom it was first revealed."(1) If the plan of "Father Chevalier to consecrate the Marian altar of the new church under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart provided the occasion for the conversation of 1857, the execution of this project was the incentive to his making known and spreading the new title.

This brings us to the year 1861. On 7th June, that year, the first image of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart appeared in the church in the form of a stained-glass window built over the altar in Our Lady's chapel.(2) It was a gift from the faithful Des Mesloizes family, whose members were already conversant with the meaning and significance of the new title. The window was constructed by the firm of Lobin, in Tours, and the design was willingly approved by His Grace, Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne. Father Chevalier has recorded that the kindly bishop not only approved the design but granted an indulgence of forty days for each invocation of that thousand times blessed name - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."(3)

It would appear here that, in recalling the dates, Father Founder was in error. Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne was not nominated as Co-adjutor of Bourges until 22nd July, 1861, and did not take over the administration of the diocese until 10th December. This would, indicate that the approbation was given by Mgr. Menjaud. As to which bishop granted the first indulgence for the invocation there could be some doubt, as we do not find any mention of it on the first pictures, but we are inclined to think it would have been Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne at a date later than the installation of the stained-glass window. A remark by Father Piperon that Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne had granted an indulgence "within the confines of his own diocese" would seem to confirm this.(4) We cannot find any exact date of the granting of this indulgence, but it must have been after the 10th December.

Apart from the reason just given, we recall the fact that it was in summer of 1861 that, after having distributed the pictures of the Sacred Heart for his appeal for the new church, Father Chevalier turned his attention to the printing of the pictures of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

This was during the period when he had just enlarged the Monastery and was busy with the completion of the church. Father Piperon quotes him as saying at this time: "The Sacred Heart has played His part. It is now the turn of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to finish the work."(5) The earlier reference to the thoughts which guided Father Founder in the first representation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart came from the pen of Father Piperon in 1865. "Two thoughts were uppermost in his mind," he wrote:

(1) "The picture would represent the august Mother of God, the Dispensatrix of all heavenly treasures; Mary, continuing to give Jesus to the world as the Queen reigning over His Sacred Heart and with Him all the treasures of grace which that Heart contains."(6)

(2) "Our Lord would be represented offering to all men His Sacred Heart, and inviting all souls, particularly the feeble, weary or guilty, to come and find in that Heart all the ineffable treasures of love and mercy which It contains." (Eph. III, 8; Heb. III, 16)

"The question was how to associate in the picture these two concepts and how to express their relationship to the faithful."

"It was decided that Our Lady, Mary Immaculate, would be standing with her arms extended, and her eyes modestly cast downwards - Mary, such as she appeared to a humble Daughter of Charity in 1834. Before her would be standing the Child Jesus, one hand pointing to His Sacred Heart illumined by flames of love, encircled by a crown of thorns and surmounted by a cross. His eyes, bespeaking love and kindness, would look straight into the eyes of the faithful, those He would save, and seem to be saying, as He said to St. Margaret Mary: 'Behold this Heart which has loved man so much - this Heart which contains in Itself all the graces for the salvation of the world. Come joyfully, fearlessly, and draw from My Heart all the salutary graces you need.' With the other hand, He would point over His shoulder to His Mother, as much as to say: 'If you wish to obtain these graces with assurance, go to Mary, My Mother. She alone is Its Treasurer. She alone has the key. I have given her power over My Heart.'"

After each part of his text Father Piperon develops the meaning:

(1) Mary Immaculate. "Does not the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart owe its very existence to her? Was it not on the feast and during the octave of the Immaculate Conception that this work was definitely conceived and the initial obstacles overcome? Was it not to Our Lady, the spotless Virgin, that Pope Pius IX entrusted the defence of the Church in those troublesome times on the occasion of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception?

As motive of our faith and of our gratitude, Mary Immaculate will be in this blessed sanctuary a perpetual testimony of our submission to the definition of our revered Pontiff and an everlasting memorial of the gifts she has bestowed upon us.

And was it not her incomparable purity that gave her such dominion over the Heart of her Son, the Heart of her God? No wonder the Church applies to her in the liturgy the words of the Canticle of Canticles; 'Thou art all fair, my beloved'. There is no stain in thee.' (Cant. IV, 7). 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart!' (Cant. IV, 9)

The picture represents Our Lady standing, slightly inclined forward, with her arms extended to those praying to her, showing her maternal care for her children who call on her for help. Modesty and virtue adorn her beautiful countenance while she lovingly looks down on the Divine Child, her Child, Who is standing before her. In this attitude she seems to be presenting Him to the devout faithful who come seeking her aid. She is telling them that any power she has comes from His adorable Heart, the Source of all Graces.

Prostrate before her altar, we beg this Mother of Mercy to turn her eyes of compassion to us; and Mary lowers them towards Jesus, and Jesus looks down towards us."

(2) Why is Jesus Represented as a Child? "Naturally, to indicate in a very sensible way His dependence on her as His Mother and her maternal influence over Him. 'He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them' (Luke 11, 51). We know from Sacred Scripture that this was the happy relationship between the Son and Mother throughout the whole thirty years of His life, but for the purpose of the representation it was fitting to present Our Lord at the age when a mother's influence is most noticeable on a child; when, as it were, the glory of the authority and power which God has given motherhood shines the brightest.

If we can speak thus, how better convey the overall concept and emphasise the humble deference of Jesus towards His august Mother in a practical, living and human way than to portray the characteristics of childhood?

And not the least appealing aspect of the representation of Jesus as a Child is that it draws us more closely to Him, as every soul who has meditated on the mysterious charms of the Divine Childhood has experienced.

In this way, too, we are shown in a most consoling manner the humanity and benignity of our God, Who became one of us for our salvation (Titus 111, 4), revealing to us His Sacred Heart, in order to draw more intimately to Himself and to bestow on us His abundant graces.1

Towards the end of his life, after the Roman decisions had framed sentiments in more theological terminology, Father Piperon was to sum up the thoughts of Father Chevalier:

"In composing the design of the stained-glass window, Father Chevalier intended to indicate in one striking picture the ineffable power which has over the Heart of her Son. He requested the artist to depict Our Lady the Immaculate Virgin, with her arms extended towards us and her eyes looking down modestly towards her Child and, through Him, looking at us. She was to be Our lady of the Immaculate Conception, such as she appeared to Sister Laboure, a Daughter of St. Vincent de Paul, in 1834.

The picture was to be a token of love and gratitude to the Immaculate Mother who had so mercifully heard his pleading prayer on the historic. 8th December, 1854.

Our Lord would be represented as a child at the age of twelve, standing before His Mother, one hand pointing to His Heart and the other to her, much as to say: 'If you wish to obtain grace from My Heart, go to My Mother for she is Its Treasurer and can dispense Its graces at her will.' The Child was represented at the age of twelve, because the evangelist, St. Luke, narrating the finding of Our-Lord amongst the doctors in the temple, remarked in striking simplicity: 'He went down to Nazareth and was subject them.' 'No better means than this image could convey the great intercessory power that Mary has over the Heart of her Divine Son.'"(8)

We can be definite that it was in the 1860-1861 period that Father Chevalier made public the new title, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, as he mentioned in his correspondence with Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne on the 22nd. March, 1864, when seeking an indulgence for the invocation of the title and permission to establish the Archconfraternity: "It is now three years since the august Mother of God was first invoked in our church of the Sacred Heart under the beautiful title, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." (9)

The pictures were received enthusiastically. According to Father Piperon, "thousands, or more exactly, hundreds of thousands of them were distributed far and wide" - but, of course, we do not know the exact number. The great demand for them resulted in the first brochure of 1862 being published, explaining the fundamental ideas of the title and the devotion.

The rapid spreading of the devotion was greatly helped by the appearance of this brochure, printed by the Messenger of the Sacred Heart in May, 1863, as well as by the favourable attitude of several bishops who joined Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne in their approbation. The June issue of the Messenger refers to the 10th Edition of the brochure. In November of the same year, Father Piperon's book, "The Power of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," went into its 13th Edition. By 1866, Father Deidier's treatise, "The Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," had gone through fifteen printings. From 1865 to 1866, at least twenty-five French bishops had given their approbation to the practice and propaganda of the devotion in their dioceses.

Father Piperon has aptly summed up the reasons for the popularity and rapid growth of the devotion to Our Blessed Lady under her new title: "An appreciation of its meaning, aided by a lively faith and a tender love for the Sacred Heart and an ardent desire for the glory of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, was a sure guarantee that a devotion, so consoling, so fruitful and so glorious, would be welcomed everywhere with great joy. The Heart of Jesus could not but bless it."

Indeed, the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, contributing, as it did, to a greater knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus and a more lively confidence in the Mother of God, could not, by its very nature, remain restricted to a small group of devotees. Offering such graces to the faithful, it was destined not to remain local but must become universal. To quote from the "The Power, of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" of Father Piperon:

"If Mary alone possesses the key to the treasures of grace which the Sacred Heart contains; if it is established that, without her, we cannot receive these graces - and who can doubt that? - is it not necessary then to proclaim these glorious prerogatives of our Mother? All her children must learn that by paying tribute to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart they are gaining more ready access to the Heart of her Son." (11)

PART II L'Abbe de Champgrand Visits Issoudun. Acquisition of the Property by Father Chevalier.

The success of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at this period touched even the heart of the Abbe de Champgrand, who still owned the property and the house at Issoudun. He began to realise that a re-awakening of the faith amongst the people of the Berry Province could be achieved by means other than merely conducting missions in the parishes - which had been his original idea in lending his financial aid. On the 17th February, 1855 Father Chevalier wrote to his old friend and benefactor, Mme. Des Mesloizes.

"The Abbe de Champgrand has been with us since Sunday last. I cannot find words to express how pleased he is with us and our progress. He was really enthusiastic. Everything impressed him: the chapel, the house and especially the piety and devotion of the people. He preached at the Reunion we held yesterday, and he actually cried during his sermon while expressing the joy which filled his soul at what he saw. No eulogy could have been more complete, and he predicted a great future for the Society. He told the congregation that, whilst praying in the chapel, he experienced a feeling of happiness that one would expect only in Heaven. "I thought, as I prayed there for the first time," he said, "that for a moment I was Mount Thabor and could say with St. Peter in his ecstasy, 'Lord, it is for us to be here.'"(12)

The Missionaries still depended, however, on the goodwill of the Abbe Champgrand regarding the acquisition of the property, and this at a time when the newly-formed Association of Secular Priests called for greater freedom of action. Father Founder, in letters to M. de Linetiere dated 12th and 18th May, made references to "our dealings concerning the future of the property here." In the first letter the reference may have concerned a difficulty with the local authorities regarding a raffle on behalf of church funds, but there is no doubt that the letter of 18th May referred to the acquisition of the property, as Father Chevalier stated: "I am waiting impatiently for the return of Monsieur de Linetiere to learn of the discussion with the Abbe Champgrand. I believe that 1863 will put an end to all our worries. One way and another, conditions seem very favourable."

Father Chevalier had every reason to consider the conditions favourable, as on 25th August he was able to write: "The Abbe Champgrand could not have been more generous. He has offered to sell me the property for 15,000 francs. I signed the deeds with the solicitor today. Now I fear there may be some trouble with the Registrar at a later date because the price may seem not high enough. Let us hope that may not be so."(13)

Father Founder need not have had his fears, as the deed of sale, drawn up by the solicitor, Monsieur Brinet, and signed by the Abbe Champgrand, settled the price at 15,000 francs - "to the profit of Jules John Chevalier, auxiliary priest, living at Issoudun," and it further declared that, taking into consideration previous acquisitions of property in 1855 and 1860, the final sum, with interest paid to the 11th August, 1863, would be but the 15,000 francs. The Book of Accounts, dated 29th August, 1863, informs us that Monsieur Brinet, the solicitor, received 1,000 francs for his work in the transfer.

A letter from Father Chevalier to Father le Blanc, S.J., 21st August, made no reference to the dealings with the Abbe de Champgrand, but in a later letter, on 3rd November, he happily remarked: "I can tell you that, now our property in Issoudun is in our own hands."

PART III Father Founder's Statutes for the Confraternity Based on those of Our Lady of Victories in Paris.

While the work of the Society was expanding and being stabilised, letters kept coming in from the pious devotees of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, asking to be amongst the first enrolled in the Confraternity of Our lady of the Sacred Heart. Father Chevalier's brochures, to which

most of the bishops of France had given their approbation, following the lead of Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne, were received with interest and enthusiasm.(14)

For the time being," however, one difficulty remained: one to be solved very soon for the simple reason that, as yet, the Confraternity did not officially exist. "Many of the pious faithful," wrote Father Piperon, "presumed it had already been established, and sent in their names, asking to be amongst the first enrolled."

In another passage, Father Piperon states that it was owing to the insistent requests of these devout people that the Confraternity was eventually founded. To quote his words: "It was in response to your supplications, my dear people from the various countries, that the Confraternity was established. Your hearts, full of filial confidence, in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart from the time she became known to you, understood that her power over the Sacred Heart of her Son should not remain merely the object of isolated, private devotion but should be recognised in an Association of Prayer to which you could entrust all your dearest intentions."(15) "It has been our conviction," continued Father Piperon, "that the Immaculate Virgin herself urged these good souls to invoke her under this new title which she had inspired into the heart of our Founder and which stressed her powerful influence over the Heart of her Divine Son as His Mother."(16)

The initial step in the actual founding of the Confraternity seems to have come from the Archbishop himself. Father Chevalier was able to write on the 22nd March of the following year: "Having assured himself that the entire Episcopate approved of Our Lady's new title, His Grace gave us the official approbation to establish the Association of Prayer in her honour."

Father Piperon has recorded the sequence of events as follows: "His Grace the Archbishop of Bourges saw the finger of God in all the requests to Issoudun by the numerous people interested in Our Lady's new title who sought the founding of a Confraternity to honour her name." Father Chevalier had sent him a list of the names in November, 1863, and Archbishop immediately gave his sanction to go ahead with the movement.

The construction of the second part of the church was now almost completed, and it was time to discuss arrangements with the Archbishop regarding the consecration. His Grace replied that he would come to Issoudun in April, and instructed Father Chevalier to draw up the Statutes for the Association. Strange to say, Father Chevalier, contrary to his custom - and for what reason I do not know - did not turn his attention the matter for some two months. The year 1863 had come to a close before he began drawing up the Statutes.(18) With his keen and ardent nature, usually so prompt to obey even the slightest wishes of authority, he surprised us by saying, when we urged him to begin the work, 'There is really no hurry!.'

One day, however, about the middle of January, as though coming out a deep sleep, he remarked, 'What is the Archbishop going to think of my tardiness in following out his wishes?' He applied himself immediately to the task, and in less than a week the Statutes were on the Archbishop's desk waiting for approval. On the 29th January, the Feast of St. Francis Sales, the Archbishop officially approved the constitutions, and the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was established. It was not by accident but by design that the feast of St. Francis de Sales was chosen. The Archbishop stated in his official letter that he had chosen the feast day of St. Francis de Sales for the inauguration in order to place under special protection a work so devoted to the glory of the Heart of Jesus and that of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. After all, was not St. Francis de Sales the spiritual father of Blessed Margaret Mary, the apostle of the devotion to the Sacred Heart?"(19) And Father Piperon continues: "Was not the feast of St. Francis de Sales, the Founder of the Visitation Order, a beautiful day to commence an Association whose whole object was to emphasise and honour the power which Mary holds over the Heart of her Son? Was it not on the day of the Visitation that Our Lady began the glorious apostolate which she has continued through the centuries, by bringing to the house of Elizabeth the special "blessings of which she is the dispensatrix, communicating to the Precursor of the Messiah anticipated graces of Salvation? Was it not through the Visitation Order that Our Lord chose to Show the richness of His Heart?"(20)

Father Piperon tells us in his Notice that, even after the approbation from Bourges had been "gratefully received and carefully filed, Father Chevalier did not refer to it very much. February and March went by as though he had forgotten it."(21)

Father Piperon admits he did not understand the attitude of delay, but concludes by expressing a possible explanation: "In all this there was a special action of Divine Providence. Was it not fitting, for the greater glory of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, that the inauguration of the Association be marked by due solemnity?"(22) Later, in 1903, when again referring to Father Chevalier's delay in launching the movement, he remarks: "Father Chevalier was merely waiting for a favourable occasion."

Perhaps the real explanation is to be found in the multiplicity of Father Founder's other duties and activities, already almost superhuman, he must not forget that this was the period when he was engaged in founding the Association of the Secular Priests, in building the church and seeking the means to finance it. These activities naturally meant more travelling than usual. Also the widespread interest in the new devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had increased the daily mail to voluminous proportions and he had only Father Piperon and Father Mousseaux to help him. The idea of the Third Order was also being developed, and his cares were not lessened by Father le Blanc's warning from Vaugirard: "I doubt the wisdom of the extension." Humanly speaking, here were enough reasons why he should not be anxious to rush into other commitments with their added worries.

However, the Archbishop was keen to have the Association established, and as he was soon to visit Issoudun for Confirmation, Father Chevalier decided to make this visit the occasion of its official erection. "His Grace," writes Father Piperon, "arrived during the afternoon of the 5th April. That evening he graciously consented to preside at the first meeting of the Association and to promulgate its statutes."(24)

The main question was now how to let the people know of the improvised ceremony which, as yet, had received no publicity; only a small intimate group knew of the project; only a handful knew of the intended ceremony of the following day. The schoolchildren were the answer. They became messengers of peace, carrying the good news throughout the entire parish.

The Sacrament of Confirmation was conferred on the 6th April, and the announcement made of the ceremony to take place that evening. Crowds, flocked to the church, which proved too small to hold the congregation which overflowed into the spacious grounds in front. One would have thought that all the people in Issoudun had come out for the ceremony. From his episcopal throne, the Archbishop read the Statutes of the Association, and officially proclaimed its erection in the Church of the Sacred Heart. The ceremony concluded with solemn Benediction. Father Chevalier had announced that there would be a meeting of the executive next morning at half past eight. When the meeting began, the Archbishop asked that the register be brought to him so that he could inscribe his name as the first member. After signing his name, he said: "I wish to be followed by hundreds of thousands of associates to counter-balance the hundreds of thousands of readers of the pernicious 'Siecle'" - one of the most harmful and infamous newspapers of the time.(25)

The preacher of the occasional sermon at the ceremony of inauguration was His Grace, Archbishop Armand de Charbonnel. He was indeed a remarkable character with an interesting history: After working as a missionary in America, he was appointed in 1850 Bishop of Toronto, Canada; but, after years, he sought permission to hand over the administration of the diocese to his co-adjutor, Mgr. Lynch, so that he might become a Capuchin. He returned to France and the Holy See named him Titular Bishop of Sozopolis. In 1880 the Canadian Episcopate requested the Holy See to grant him the title Archbishop, and he became Titular Archbishop of Sozopolis.

With truly Franciscan simplicity the Archbishop went around France giving missions and retreats. His episcopal ring had cost him the lowly sum of 40 sous, and for a crozier he simply used his walking-stick. Once, when he had forgotten to bring his stick to some ceremony or other, he simply used a small branch of a tree which he refused to have camouflaged with coloured paper. "Why complicate matters?" he remarked. (26)

On this occasion he happened to arrive at Issoudun at the same time as the Archbishop of Bourges. "He arrived unannounced and unannounced, and asked the Fathers to give him accommodation for a few days in order to have a rest after his recent apostolic labours. He had always shown a keen interest in the newly-formed Society, and, on several previous occasions, had come to Issoudun to exchange ideas with the young founder."(27) Father Chevalier invited him to preach the occasional discourse and to be the first to pronounce publicly the praises of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart after the establishment of the Association. His ardent and sincere words, some perhaps a little original, were keenly listened to and greatly appreciated.

Thursday, 7th April, 1864, then, is in the records as the date of the first meeting of the Association. Most of the fervent people in the parish attended. In an informal talk Archbishop de Charbonnel explained, in his usual animated manner, what constituted the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

"He was most enthusiastic when we showed him the numerous letters we had received telling us of favours granted by Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, asking for prayers under the invocation of her name and seeking further information about the devotion. Before he left us, he gave us this advice: 'Preserve these early records as precious documents. Enter them in a register right from the beginning. Mary wishes to be honoured in a special way here in Issoudun. Your Association will eventually spread throughout the whole world. Later on, you would grievously regret it, if you allow the documents to go astray.' We followed his advice to the letter, and we thank Mary for having inspired him to give it to us."(28)

Shortly after the establishment of the Association, probably in the course of the same month, the first edition of the Notice sur l'Association was published. This was reprinted in abbreviated form in the May edition of the Messenger.(29) The same number of the Messenger announced that His Grace had erected the Association in Issoudun and had already applied to the Holy See to establish it as an Archconfraternity. We possess a letter written by Father Piperon to the Archbishop regarding this project. The letter is dated 22nd March, 1864, which is obviously an error, as he mentions the fact that the Archbishop has already erected the Association, which actually he did on the 6th April. Inadvertently, Father Piperon must have dated the letter 22nd, March instead of 22nd April.

After recalling the fact that the devotion has now been known for three years and that His Grace has founded the Association, the letter goes, on: "Your Grace, seeing all the good which this admirable work is accomplishing and considering its undreamed of expansion, I beg you to seek from the Holy Father, who has the inestimable privilege of making fruitful all that he blesses, the following favours:

(1) The recognition of the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which we are giving to Mary Immaculate, the Mother of God. With this in mind, I am sending you the little work in which we explain and point out the validity of this glorious name, together with a copy of the Notice which contains the approbations of their Excellencies, the Bishops, praying you to place them at the feet of the Holy Father.

(2) The erection into an Archconfraternity of the Association which has been founded in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and the granting of the power to its Director, the Superior of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, to amalgamate with this Archconfraternity all the other associations which have the same name and the same end."

Then there follows a list of feasts and occasions when either plenary or partial indulgences can be gained. The letter continues:

"As the object of this Association is to go to the Heart of Jesus through Our lady of the Sacred Heart, we have established in our chapel the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Its end is;

(1) to render to the Sacred Heart a special worship of love, adoration and reparation.

(2) to beg His all-powerful protection over the Church, the august person of the Supreme Pontiff, over France and, indeed, over the whole world.

(3) to beseech the preservation of the just and the conversion of sinners.

(4) to call down His blessing on the Associates and the members of their families.

"Knowing that we are Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and that our church is consecrated to that Heart, numerous people have written to us, not only from France but from the entire world, asking to have their names inscribed in the register and begging us to solicit the Heart of Jesus, so rich in mercy, to grant them the graces they need.

In order to foster the piety of the faithful towards the Divine Heart of Jesus and to encourage them to enter their names in His Confraternity, we accordingly dare to ask Your Grace to solicit the Holy Father to erect our Association as an Archconfraternity and grant us the faculties to amalgamate all the other Associations which have the same name and object." The letter concludes with a list of proposed indulgences for approbation.

We do not know the exact requests which the Archbishop presented to or whether the Messenger was right in saying that His Grace asked that the Association be raised to the rank of an Archconfraternity. However, when the Archbishop came to consecrate the church on the 2nd July, he brought with him a brief from Pope Pius IX, dated 7th June, in which the Holy Father stated that he had learnt "that at Issoudun there is a pious Confraternity of the faithful - canonically erected or which will be soon - under the title of Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, known as 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.' Desiring to see this Confraternity grow from day to day, we now accord Then follows a list of the indulgences granted.

On the 7th April, when entering his name in the register, the Archbishop had expressed the wish of seeing his name followed by 100,000 more. On 2nd July, the day of the consecration of the church, the Fathers were able to show him over 50,000 inscribed names.

As we described in a previous chapter, a large concourse of the faithful gathered for the consecration of the church, not only from the diocese of Bourges but from all the neighbouring provinces. This gathering was really the beginning of the many future pilgrimages to Issoudun. (31)

The influx of pilgrims to the new shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart made it necessary to have a more fitting and ornate statue in her honour. "After all," said Father Piperon, "people could not be expected to go on praying before only a stained-glass window."

The first statue - now kept in the crypt of the Basilica - was a small one. It was constructed by the firm of Raffle, Rue Bonaparte, Paris. An item in the book of accounts, dated 12th August, tells us that the statue cost 200 francs. It represents Our lady and the Child Jesus without their crowns and is merely a reproduction of the original Lobin design. In the catalogue issued by the firm of Raffle, in January, 1867, we find the following interesting note:

"The extraordinary expansion of the veneration of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart throughout France and the foreign countries obliges us to reproduce this statue in various dimensions and various materials." Then follows a list of the various sizes and the materials used. The advertisement added the warning to the faithful not to confuse the statue with several poor imitations which were being offered for sale and which did not conform with the original. Father Deidier seems to have made reference to these the previous year.(32)

Soon, as a matter of course, there were enrolment leaflets and medals with the image of the Sacred Heart on one side and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart on the other.

At the end of 1864, there were more than 100,000 Associates enrolled - an extraordinary fact when we consider that as yet Issoudun and the young Congregation were not extensively known and that there were only three priests there to deal with the work. Moreover, the statutes which Father Chevalier had drawn up presented no new salient features and were based on the statutes of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, whose centre was the Church of Our Lady of Victories, Paris.

When we study the two sets of statutes, we find there is a marked similarity of ideas and vocabulary between them, drawn up in an identical number of articles. Father Chevalier eliminated Article 6 of the Parisian copy as it referred to local conditions, but made two articles of

another one to achieve the same number. This similarity, consequently, throws greater emphasis on what modifications were made and brings out more clearly the specific difference between the two Archconfraternities. This is more clearly defined in the preliminary articles, which precede the statutes properly speaking, than in the actual statutes themselves.(34)

The two Archconfraternities are based on their own specific Marian devotion. To appreciate this the better and to avoid confusion, it is well to recall the remark of Father Vermeerch: 'The specific object of any devotion is not necessarily the object of all the actions associated with it, either in its preparation or as a result of its fruits. In other words, the statutes present us with various aspects under which a devotion, well defined in itself, may be practised in our lives. They allow for a certain number of actions which do not directly touch the object of the devotion but which are in harmony with it and ought to be carried out in its spirit.'(35)

The Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, whose main object was to honour Our Lady because of her Immaculate Heart, prayed, as a special object, for the conversion of sinners through the prayers and protection of Mary.

The Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart practised its devotion by entrusting to Our Lady all the difficult and seemingly hopeless causes both in the spiritual and in the temporal orders. These were called the special objects of the Archconfraternities, as distinct from the general, i.e., honouring Our Lady under her separate titles.

The two Associations get their particular character and spirit from object of their prayers, and in this lies their difference. The elder of two Associations enlarged the scope of its special object in 1839 under pressure of circumstances. The Abbe Desgenettes wrote on the point: "We to refuse to include in our Sunday public recommendations any mention of prayers for the sick and afflicted, as was often requested; but this restriction did not suit Our Lady. The Mother of Mercy wished that her all-powerful influence be exercised in favour of all who had need of it. From then on we asked graces for all those who wanted and had need of them."(36)

The wording in the decrees of erection also bring out the different character and spirit of the two Archconfraternities. When approving the Parisian Association, the Archbishop of Paris stated that the Arch-confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary "wished to give a new witness of our devotion to the most holy Virgin, to propagate more and more her cult and to offer the faithful a new means of manifesting their piety towards and love for the august Mother of God."

The Archbishop of Bourges, in approving the Issoudun Association, wrote: "This work is, above all, a movement to procure the glory of God, to foster devotion to the Sacred Heart and to increase the number of the servants of Mary."

Article 7 in both sets of statutes deals with the various objects and spirit of the two Associations. The following extracts bring out more plainly the specific difference between the two devotions:

The Parisian statutes urge their members to adore with Mary "the Most Holy Trinity and the Divine Heart of Jesus." The Issoudun statutes omit any reference to the Blessed Trinity and merely state "to adore with Mary the Divine Heart of Jesus."

Again, Paris states: "The Associates will remember that it is above all by purity of heart that they will merit the protection of the pure Heart of Mary. They will procure this purity of heart by good works and frequent Confession and Holy Communion, especially on the feast days of the Association." Following the same general idea, Issoudun states: "In order to merit the protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Associates will remember that they must take every care to avoid anything that could sadden the Heart of Jesus, and they will strive at all times to unite themselves with Him. Consequently, they are invited to go often to Confession and Holy Communion, especially on the feasts of the Association."

Father Desgenettes remarked on the Parisian statutes: "Article 7 expresses the whole spirit of the Archconfraternity," and the same can be said of that of Issoudun.

Both articles emphasise "the all-powerful intercession and the merits of Mary" - the one stressing "Her Mercy," and the other "Her power over the Heart of Her Son."

To quote the Paris statutes again: "The end of our Association is to honour by acts of veneration, homage and prayer the Immaculate Heart of the Holy Virgin, the Mother of Jesus Christ - the Son of God Who became incarnate for love of us, Who died on the Cross for the remission of sin, and our salvation, that admirable Heart, which was the Source of the life-blood which nourished the Body of Jesus Christ, and consequently of His own Sacred Heart, which poured out Its Blood for us; - that Heart so burning with love for God, so full of tenderness and compassion for all mankind.

The Associates will offer the homage of religious veneration to the Heart of the Mother of their Divine Saviour, - a tender and filial piety as to the Heart of the best of mothers, - a love and limitless confidence in return for all the blessings and graces which Her love and power with God have obtained for them in every moment of their lives.

"In uniting all their acts of religion, their good works and their prayers to the precious merits of the Heart of Mary, they will endeavour to render with Her and through Her to the Divine Heart of Jesus, and the Adorable Trinity, all the tributes of adoration love, obedience and fidelity, which they have a right to expect of us."

This is why Article 2 also stresses: "The end of the Association is to obtain from the Divine Mercy, through the protection and prayers of Mary, the conversion of all sinners."

Now to quote the Issoudun statutes: "The general end of this Association is:

(1) To thank God for having chosen Mary, before all creatures, to form from Her most pure substance, the Adorable Heart of Jesus.

(2) To honour most particularly the sentiments of love, obedience and respect which Jesus nourished in His own Heart for His most holy Mother.

(3) To recognise and glorify under one title which embraces all the others, the infinite Power which He has given Her over His Heart, -as St. Bernard has said: *Ab omnipotentio Filio, omnipotens Mater est.*

(4) To beg this most Holy Virgin to lead us Herself to the Sacred Heart of Her Son, to make It known and loved, to open the treasures of Love and Mercy, which It contains, and to make us draw more abundantly from this Source of all graces.

(5) To make reparation, through Her and with Her, for the outrages inflicted on the Sacred Heart and to console Him, in His sadness and bitter disappointment by leading a pious and edifying life."

Then follows the important phrase: "The special end of the Archconfraternity is to entrust to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart the success of all difficult, extreme, and seemingly hopeless causes, both in the spiritual and temporal orders."

We can note then the differences in the objectives of the two Associations :

The words in the Parisian statutes, "to adore the most Holy Trinity and the Sacred Heart," are replaced in the Issoudun counterpart by the express "to thank God" for having chosen Mary to be his Mother, and to honour the sentiments which Jesus nourished in His Heart for His Mother.

Whereas their Association honours the Heart of Mary as the principle of the life-blood, which nourished the Body of Jesus, ours honours by a special title the infinite Power which Jesus gave Mary over His Heart by virtue of Her Maternity, which was the reason for His filial sentiments towards Her.

We do not honour this power particularly in one or other of its aspects, but in its Source, which is the Heart of the Divine Son. This is a gratuitous gift of God, apart from the merits of Our Lady Herself. The value of the devotion depends entirely on the extent of this power which Jesus has given Mary over His Heart and the richness which that Heart contains.

The Associates are invited, while recognising the merits of Mary, and uniting their own merits to those of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in union with those of the Sacred Heart, to go to Her not so much because of Her Mercy but because of Her powerful intercession with Her divine Son, as His Mother.

The emphasis of the devotion is precisely on the fact that as His Mother Mary has this extraordinary intercessory power over the Heart of Her Son. It was not by chance that in 1867, when a plenary indulgence was granted for the second patronal feastday it was the Feast of the Divine Maternity.(38)

The preliminary articles of Paris indicate the cult of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the object of their Association and they add that the grace which they primarily seek is the conversion of sinners. Issoudun indicates a special supplication, which Father Chevalier formulates by saying: "It is to beg the Blessed Virgin to lead us Herself to the Heart of Her Divine Son."

The Sacred Heart is not only the Source of Mary's powerful intercession, but is the whole object to which She must lead us. That after all is but a summary of the meaning of the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. We remember what Father Chevalier told his confreres in 1857: "This invocation has a profound meaning. It implies that Mary in virtue of Her Divine Maternity possesses a great power over the Heart of Her Son and that we should go to this Divine Heart through Her."(39)(40)

We have said that the strict definition of a devotion determines its specific object but also that that object comprises a number of ideas, which justify its choice, and clarify its significance. Its life flourishes from these ideas expressed in actions which are in harmony with the devotion, preparatory to it, or as a consequence of it.

The two Archconfraternities with which we are dealing are a good example of this. Each, while seeking the glory of the Mother of God, emphasises different aspects of devotion to Her, and it is in this difference that we find the separate specific ends of the Associations.

We may draw the parallel of the liturgical Feasts of the year, from the Annunciation to the Ascension. They all have, as their basis, the dogma of the Incarnation, but each Feast has its own significance.

So with the two Archconfraternities. One glorifies Our Blessed Mother through Her Immaculate Purity with the object of bringing sinners back to God; the other glorifies Her because of the ineffable Power which She possesses over the Heart of Her Son, precisely because She is His Mother, and therefore all causes, even the seemingly hopeless, are confidently put in Her maternal hands.

Father Deidier, capturing the spirit of the devotion, aptly writes: "To entrust to Mary the success of difficult and hopeless causes is something which naturally flows from the title - "Our Lady of The Sacred Heart." Where can this power be shown better than on those occasions, when all hope seems to be lost? Miracles of mercy such as one has never dreamed of, are worked by the Sacred Heart. His main wish for the people of the world is the remission of their sins and their final perseverance. Is not that in itself a difficult and seemingly hopeless cause? And is it not precisely for that that the Heart of Jesus is ever open to sinners?"

And Father Piperon re-echoes these sentiments: "When we invoke Mary in the most difficult causes, do we not show an unlimited confidence in Her Power and Goodness? Would She be able to refuse us if we call upon the most august of Her prerogatives, the first which flows from Her title of "Mother of God" - Her sovereign Power over the Heart of Her Divine Son?"

To help achieve their objectives the two Associations have their own proper Feasts, and express their ideas in certain prayers, which aid the Associates. From the beginning Issoudun made its patronal Feast the 31st May, the introduction to the month of the Sacred Heart. We find this date not only in the Statutes but in the letter of April 22nd, 1864, of Father Piperon, and in the May edition of the Messenger of the Sacred Heart of that year, although the Feast as yet was not able to be celebrated as the Indult from Rome had not yet been received.

The Annals of the Society incidentally has a note to this effect: "It would be wrong to attribute this Feast and the date of its celebration to Father Jouet" who did not have any relations with the Society until the 26th December, 1864.(42) Likewise we cannot regard Father Jouet as the author of the various prayers.

Regarding these prayers - the Memorare of Paris began: "Remember, O Most pious Virgin Mary," and that of Issoudun - "Remember, O Our Lady of Sacred Heart;" The only invocation made obligatory for the members was: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us," to be recited twice daily, in place of the two "Ave Maria's" for the Parisien Associates. Also in place of the invocation: "Mary, refuge of Sinners, pray for us" Issoudun composed the following short prayers, adapted to the devotion:

"We have recourse to Thee, as our Refuge, O Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Deign to hear our prayers, which we make to you in our present needs, and deliver us in times of peril, O Mother of the Heart of Jesus."

Soon other prayers to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart appeared. In the Notice on the Association there was printed a Litany to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and in Father Piperon's *Peurvoir*, a Novena in Her honour. The Catholic paper of the Bourges diocese - "La Semaine" suggested various methods of reciting the Rosary in honour of Her name.

In other centres apart from Issoudun, the new devotion inspired prayers and pictures in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. For example, the firm of Casterman in Tournai, printed a prayer to her on one of their holy cards. As no picture appeared we can only presume that the author could not procure the printing plate.(44)

PART IV The Retreat House for Women Associates Extraordinary Help of Mlle. Marchand.

To help spread the devotion and to gain new Associates, Father Chevalier enlisted the help of several good lay-people, as we learn from his letter to Father Le Blanc 26th August, 1864. The best known of these was the zealous Mlle. Marchand. She herself has recorded in her M/s the different occupations entrusted to her, the many journeys she made on behalf of the work, the various projects she launched to hasten the propaganda and gain resources for the Missionaries.

For example she wrote: "Father Chevalier has had the idea of opening a retreat house for women, who come to Issoudun, on pilgrimage. He has been able to obtain the Pouroy house in the Place de Vouet. He has asked me if I would be able to look after it, until such time as he can get a group of nuns to do so."

We must remember that at this time, at Montlucon, the Oblates of the Sacred Heart - then a Third Order - were endeavouring to form themselves into a Religious Institute, as we shall see. They were eventually to take over the work.

To continue her records:

"I accepted Father Chevalier's offer, and stayed there for three years. He was able to get for me a domestic help. Eventually a group of religious came to replace me. During these three years I used to speak to all about work of the Missionaries, and particularly about the Apostolic School.

Each would give me some small offering which I would take to Father Chevalier the next day together with the fees for accommodation. Sometimes the Religious numbered from 1,200 to 1,500 and many came to the house for meals. The fee for each person was 5 francs a day.

Sometimes we had our troubles. Father Chevalier would say to me: "Tomorrow there will be between 120 and 130 here for lunch." I would make the necessary preparations only to find, when they arrived, that they had dined at Chateauroux on the way.

Othertimes the opposite would happen. We would take it for granted that the pilgrims would dine at Chateauroux, but find, on their arrival, that they were expecting lunch at our place. Then I would hastily have to contact all the grocers in Issoudun to get enough eggs to make omelettes for them.

I was very happy to meet all the good, pious and edifying pilgrims, but I must confess I was more happy when the religious took over from me, I never let a pilgrimage depart without making my little request for a small offering for the Missionaries. We had a good photo of the exterior of the Basilica, which I used to sell for a small price.

When I returned to my own home, I kept in contact with many of these good people, writing to them to obtain new Associates, and asking for some small contribution to the work of the Missionaries."

And we can gratefully say that her efforts were not without success.

PART V The Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, The Annals The Remarkable Growth of the Association.

The Pontifical brief which approved of the Archconfraternity - 18th June, 1864, - also stated that a plenary indulgence could be gained on the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which would be celebrated on the 31st May each year.

As with the celebration of major feasts in other places of pilgrimage, where each has its own atmosphere and characteristic, this special feast was a day of joy and happiness in Issoudun.

"La Semaine", the Catholic paper of the Berry Province, tells us that first official celebration of the Feast took place on the 31st May, 1865. It was fitting that this Feast be celebrated in honour of Mary, and that the faithful be given the opportunity of giving free and public expression to their gratitude to Her who had shown them so much evidence of Her Power over the Heart of Her Son.

And so, thanks to the benevolence of His Grace the Archbishop of Bourges, and thanks, above all, to the Pontifical approbation, the Feast was able to be celebrated with due ceremony for the first time.

"La Semaine" goes on to tell us that Masses were offered continuously from 5 a.m. till the Solemn High Mass at 10 o'clock, and of the large number of the faithful who went to Holy Communion. It also describes the external festivities associated with the Feast. The Annals bear witness to the fact that each year the Feast was celebrated with ever-growing solemnity and fervor.

These Annals were a welcome and much-needed addition to what scant literature there existed concerning the Society and the Arch-Confraternity. There were the two brochures of Father Chevalier, the "Pouvoir de Notre Dame du Sacre-Coeur" of Father Piperon, and the "Thirty-Two Considerations" of Father Jouet. These works were popular and met with equal success. Father Chevalier's first brochure went through fifteen editions, and the second twelve. Father Piperon's little book was reprinted five times, and Father Jouet's six. The Annals, which was first printed (1866) with a deal of apprehension, soon rose from 3,000 copies to 4,000, and this number was doubled in the second year.

In the meantime, a friend of Father Jouet, the able writer from Marseilles, Father Deidier, brought out his own "Study of the Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart". This propaganda soon found its echoes in other countries and these works were translated into the various tongues. Several new works appeared in diverse places, for example, the "Visits to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and St. Joseph" edited by Goemaere in Brussels in 1867, a booklet which became very popular.

The 50,000 Associates of 2nd July, 1864, grew to 100,000 by the end of the year. By December, 1865, there were 200,000 and by 5th July the following year there were 300,000, followed by a rapid growth to 600,000 by September. The million mark was reached in May, 1867, and on the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in 1868 there were over 2,000,000 enrolled. The number of recommended intentions rose proportionately - 8,000 in 1865 to 1,719,906 by the Feast day in 1868. The testimonies of thanks sent in rose during the same period from 1,500 to 17,300. Naturally, this increase of devotees to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had its repercussions at Issoudun, where in the Church of the Sacred Heart, was enthroned Her Statue in a humble side-altar.

PART VI Extensions to the Monastery Our Lady's New Chapel

The activities of Father Chevalier during the years 1868 and 1869 were mainly concerned with obtaining the Pontifical approbation of the Institute of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and the spreading of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. On the material side he was busy in enlarging the Monastery, and building a more adequate and fitting Chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

"Our first dwelling," wrote Father Piperon, "was notoriously inadequate," and regarding the chapel he remarked: "Who could foresee that the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart would spread so rapidly, or envisage so many pilgrims coming to Issoudun? But how modest was our humble little chapel, how poor and confined! When we first dedicated this narrow little side chapel to Our Lady, we were far from anticipating such a prodigious development of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. If our venerated Founder could have foreseen the future when he drew up the first plans of the Church of the Sacred Heart, he would not have hesitated to build on a much grander scale, more in keeping with the needs of an important place of pilgrimage."

As it was, Father Founder had remarked in a conversation with some of his fellow-priests: "A time will come when you will see vast numbers of pilgrims gathered here from all parts of France and elsewhere." When they jokingly referred to him as "a prophet", he added: "You will see it yourself with your own eyes, and you will bless the Sacred Heart for it." However, the fact remained that the church itself was hardly a fitting edifice for vast pilgrimages, and the poor little chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was so small and confined that when the pilgrims arrived, they could hardly believe that this was the privileged sanctuary where they had come to pray.(47) It was obvious then that Father Chevalier and his Missionaries must build again

The question of land was a big problem. There was still enough property belonging to the Missionaries on which to build a new Monastery, but after that there would be very little left for any new church building. Fortunately there was a large piece of ploughed land skirting the north side of the Monastery - about one and a quarter acres in area - belonging to the Pirot family. Father Chevalier was able to purchase this on the 10th May, 1865 for 7,000 francs, the deed of sale being drawn, up before his solicitor, M. Brinet. It was decided to build the new Monastery on this site at an angle perpendicular to the church. This building still forms the Northern wing of the present Monastery, for which plans were contemplated as far back as that era.

Monsieur Papet was engaged for the building, and undertook to have completed by the following October all the rooms on the ground floor, and the first and second storeys. Monsieur Coulon, the main carpenter, put in a staircase of 69 steps, and at the rear of the building another of 14 step leading to the kitchen.

On the 1st Feb., 1866, Father Chevalier wrote: "It appears that is a rumour about, that our new building will cost 80,000 francs. I am afraid 40,000 will have to be the maximum. You understand that we are not out of debt regarding the church."(49)

The first appeal for funds for the new chapel in honour of Our Lady the Sacred Heart appeared in the Annals of January, 1867. The intention had been to commence building in March, as the work had been placed under the patronage of St. Joseph, before whose altar a light was kept perpetually burning. But April arrived, and even then the work had not commenced, because of the prolonged inclement weather. However, towards the end of April the foundations were laid, and the chapel was completed by December of the same year. It was opened for public worship on the 11th April, the following year, on the day that Pope Pius IX celebrated his sacerdotal Golden Jubilee in St. Peter's in Rome.

Regarding the building, the Church was hardly finished when modifications were made. The two walls separating the side chapels were taken down, making two smaller lateral naves. The two chapels of Our Lady and St. Joseph were removed to the back of the main altar, and at the request of Archbishop, the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was constructed "in style and material" better than the Church itself. It occupied a space, led to by a colonnade of stone pillars, a little less than the width of main nave. Under the chapel was built a crypt, where the original statue

of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart stands today, with the bodies of Father Chevalier, Father Piperon, Father Vandel, and the two successors of Father Chevalier as General of the Society, lying at Her feet.

In the same copy of the Annals in 1867, in which Father Chevalier announced that the foundations of the new chapel were laid, he also made known the fact that several generous benefactors, as a token of gratitude to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, had sent him some diamonds and other precious jewels, expressing the wish that a diadem be made to adorn Our Lady's statue. "Perhaps," they said, "when you visit Rome, you might be able to get the Holy Father to bless it, and seek his permission for a solemn enthronement."

Father Chevalier heartily agreed with the idea and launched an appeal amongst a group of Our Lady's devotees to make the diadem a worthy one. "As I am going to Rome soon to offer the Holy Father the contributions for the Holy See sent in through the Annals, my joy would be complete if this diadem could be blessed by the immortal Pius IX."

Part VII Father Chevalier visits Rome with the Archbishop

On the 11th June, 1867, Father Chevalier set out for Rome in the company of his Archbishop. They arrived there the following Saturday. The occasion of this journey was a result of an invitation from His Holiness to the bishops of the entire world to visit Rome if possible for the June celebrations in honour of the 18th centenary of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, when several beatifications and canonisations were to take place.

On the Monday after their arrival, which happened to be the anniversary of the Pope's election, they saw His Holiness in a general audience in the Sistine Chapel. Several days later, the Archbishop was received in private audience by the Pope, and he took the opportunity of presenting Father Chevalier. The arrangements for this presentation were made at the last minute and, taken unawares, Father Chevalier found himself before the Holy Father without his papers of petition or the contributions he had brought from Issoudun. This meant he had to seek a second audience, which proved rather difficult. "Ten times," he wrote, "we tried to arrange this audience, and ten times we had no success."

However, an interview with Mgr. Mercurelli, the Pope's private secretary, brought results. His first comments were not very encouraging, but eventually he relented. "I am afraid the circumstances are not very favourable. You see, the Holy Father is so very busy. I have here before me over 200 petitions from various bishops to put before His Holiness. If I had a spare six weeks I might succeed. You have given me only a few days. To tell you the truth, it is just impossible." Father Chevalier's reply was typical: "Precisely because it seems impossible, I have confidence. The matter is now in the hands of Our Lady." The Monsignor with a smile replied "You will certainly need her help. Come back and see me to-morrow, but, in the meantime, don't be too hopeful."

Father Chevalier deliberately waited two days before returning, knowing that no particular time had been made for an appointment and choosing this particular day for his mission - 28th June, the feast of the Sacred Heart. The Monseigneur received him graciously and remarked, "You certainly have a good advocate." He handed him the papers of petition, signed by the Holy Father, dated 26th June, the day of his interview with the secretary.

The Holy Father had granted the apostolic benediction to all the members of the Congregation and the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; had authorised that the main altar of the Issoudun Basilica be a privileged altar three times a week for the priests of the Institute; had granted an indulgence of 100 days for the recitation of the following invocations: "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us." "Sacred Heart of Jesus, have pity on us." "Heart of Mary, pray for us."

The very kind and true friend of the early Society, Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne, the Archbishop of Bourges, took the opportunity of his pastoral visitation to Issoudun, on 8th August, publicly to inform the people of their new privileges. On the following day His Grace blessed the new tower on the church and spoke very feelingly of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in his diocese. "Yes, we love this work of the Sacred Heart," he said, "and any time an opportunity comes my way of showing appreciation for it, I will gladly avail myself of it. This is why I have stayed with you to-day for this solemn function."

In the article in which Father Chevalier published the favours received from Rome, he put special stress on the fact that the Archbishop had personally requested "the well-beloved Pius IX" to approve the Archconfraternity. "The Sovereign Pontiff," he wrote, "will soon send us the official document, and we will hasten to publicise it."

The ceremony of the crowning of Our Lady's statue had to be delayed as the completion of the chapel took longer than anticipated. At one stage Father Chevalier, in a letter to Mme. des Mesloizes, mentioned that "it might take the best part of two years." Also he had not been able to present the diadem to the Holy Father to be blessed for the simple reason that it had not been finished. However, the Pope had given his blessing to a provisional diadem.

In the meantime, the impatiently-awaited, document from Rome was not forthcoming. This delay, no doubt, was the reason why a certain opposition to the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart developed in various quarters during the next few years, and there are serious reasons to doubt if the actual submissions made to the Holy See were the same as originally drafted.

We recall that the first request was sent to Bourges on 22nd April, 1854, asking that the Association be raised to the rank of an Archconfraternity and seeking a number of indulgences. In its May edition the Messenger was able to announce that the Archbishop had already made the petition to Rome, Was this news premature or had the request been refused? In any case, the Brief of June 7th granted simply the approbation of the Association without making it an Archconfraternity, and granted a list of indulgences, but not so many as had been requested.

It was argued in certain quarters that the request for the Archconfraternity was too premature, but this objection loses much of its weight when we compare it with similar cases. For example, the Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Our Lady of Victories, Paris, was raised to the rank of Archconfraternity in 1838, barely a year after its foundation, and it was granted for the entire world, even though the request had been made for France only. The same applies to the Confraternity of Our Lady of Hope founded in Saint-Brieuc on the 25th March, 1848. This Association was elevated to the rank of Archconfraternity after only a few months: on 8th August of the same year. We are inclined to think that the delay in ranking the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart as an Archconfraternity was on account of the novelty of the new title and the necessity of making sure of its theological soundness. This novelty, naturally, met with a deal of opposition as it had to be treated with caution and prudence. We cannot say for certain whether the Archbishop himself was ultimately responsible for the delay or whether it was attributable to the authorities in Rome.

Father Georgelin's "Ephemerides" of the Society throw some light on the history of these various petitions. He tells us that Father Chevalier instructed him: "Seeing that we have now 150,000 Associates, draw up a petition that the Association be made an Archconfraternity. You can ask it on account of the indulgences already accorded."

Father Georgelin drew up the petition in Latin which was addressed to the Holy Father. He quotes the same number of Associates, which allows us to date the request as the middle of 1865, a year after the first petition had been sent to Bourges. The letter finishes by begging the Holy Father to grant the Indulgences which will be sought from the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences. Two other extracts from Father Georgelin's writings contain a detailed list of the requested indulgences and a list of the privileges of the Association.

That nothing came of these early requests in 1865 is indicated by the fact that we find them repeated two years later - June 7th, 1867 - in a further petition to the Holy Father to have the Association elevated to an Archconfraternity. The text is practically the same as that of 1865, with a few omissions.

It is necessary to recall here that it was only four days after this petition was sent to Rome that Father Chevalier and the Archbishop set out for the Holy City - the 11th June, 1867. The records tell us that it was not this document that the Holy Father signed but one from Issoudun

dated 19th June. It was sent directly to the Pope and not through the Congregation of Indulgences, and His Holiness signed it on the 26th June. The Annals, in referring to this petition, simply remarked that "the Archbishop himself forwarded the request, and the reply was being anxiously awaited." We might conclude from this that His Grace, after consulting some of his old friends in Rome, decided to deal directly with the Holy Father on the matter which he regarded as one of importance.

The number of indulgences and privileges requested - already submitted to the Sacred Congregation - were reduced, but the fact that the Archbishop himself asked for the erection of the Archconfraternity was expected to bring results. However, there was no immediate response from Rome.

Part VIII Opposition from Marseilles and Orleans

As a matter of fact, the atmosphere in Rome at the time regarding the new devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was far from favourable, and this resulted from opposition in certain quarters in France itself.

On July 18th, 1868, Mgr. Bartolini, the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, had seen fit to write to the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, informing it that the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in France was making public the fact that it would soon be raised to the rank of an Archconfraternity and that the Archbishop of Marseilles had regarded it as his duty to warn the Holy See about the manner in which this devotion was being presented, especially in the magazine, the Annals, and that the manner of its presentation contained a certain danger for the faithful. "This is why," wrote Mgr. Bartolini, "the Holy Father has instructed me to advise the responsible authorities to refuse for the time being all requests.

We do not know the date when the protest came in from Marseilles, but the only reference to an anticipated erection of the Association into an Archconfraternity appeared in the August edition of the Annals in 1867, and we know that in the following months Bourges and Issoudun were waiting in vain for the pontifical approbation. As the Archbishop of Marseilles is the only opponent mentioned in Mgr. Bartolini's letter, we presume that he would have sent his protest to Rome shortly after the article appeared in the Annals in August, 1867, thus frustrating the efforts of the Archbishop of Bourges.

So, in spite of the visit of Father Chevalier and the Archbishop to Rome in 1867, the difficulties connected with the Coronation of Our Lady's statue and the erection of the Archconfraternity remained unsolved.

It was in the October Annals of 1868 that we find the first public reference to Father Chevalier's next proposed trip to Rome. "We will soon retrace our steps to the Holy City," he wrote.

Besides taking with him the offerings for the Holy See received through the Annals, he announced that he would take a small bronze statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart modelled on the beautiful marble statue that was at present being constructed in Paris for the new chapel in Issoudun. "I will place the generous alms of the Associates in the pedestal of the statue before presenting it to the Holy Father," he wrote.

The statue being prepared for Our Lady's chapel in Issoudun was designed and constructed from Carrara marble by Monsieur Blanchard, with the firm of Daniel handling the business arrangements.

The Paris firm of Chertier was constructing the diadem for Our Lady, also the imperial crown which was to be placed on the head of the Infant Jesus. "These two crowns will be finished in December and they will be placed on the heads of Our Lady and the Infant Jesus with due solemnity on a fitting feast day"- according to the report in the Annals.(50.) During these months the Annals did not make any reference to the deferred erection of the Archconfraternity.

Following the opposition to the Archconfraternity, Bourges, and Issoudun decided to change their tactics. From the beginning, they had acted in all simplicity in their efforts to spread the devotion, but now they realised they would have to act with greater circumspection. On 18th October, 1868, two documents were drawn up - one giving an account of the origin, meaning and present state of the Association, and the other a renewed petition for the authorisation of the Archconfraternity and the crowning of Our Lady's statue.

The Archbishop gave his approval to the documents on 8th November, and they were then sent around to a number of bishops, asking for their opinions - and approbation. This was the method employed in 1863 when the first brochure had been sent to their Lordships for their opinion on the devotion and it met with the same success. Indeed, it was a remarkable fact that many of them, not only put their signatures to the documents but gave detailed reasons for their personal approbation. They, doubtless, had heard of the opposition to the movement, and were determined to state clearly their own position.

Two dioceses, however, were not so co-operative: Orleans and Marseilles, following their previous attitude to the Association of Secular Priests.

Mgr. Dupauloup, who in 1863, had reacted favourably to the brochure on the new devotion and had encouraged Father Chevalier in the founding of the Institute, while making certain reservations about the Secular Priests' Association, now does not seem so enthusiastic.

"Rev. Father Superior," he wrote, "I have heard that you are bringing out a new revue of piety. Would you have the goodness to forward me all the numbers which have already appeared. You can count on my profound and religious interest." However, that was all we were to hear from Orleans and the matter seems to have been dropped there.(51)

The opposition of Mgr. Place, of Marseilles, was more serious. After having stated that he could not give a testimonial in favour of the Congregation, for which he had also been asked, on the grounds that he did so only for Institutes established in his own diocese, he added: What is more, I cannot ignore the fact that I have been often troubled to find in your Annals new doctrines and sentiments which should not have appeared there," In this letter, dated, 11th November, he made no reference to the protest he had sent to Rome which Mgr. Bartolini had placed before the Sacred Congregations on the previous 18th July.

PART IX Father Chevalier Received in Private Audience by the Pope

Encouraged by the co-operation of the majority of the bishops, Father Chevalier set out for Rome at the beginning of February, 1869. His approach to the Holy Father was to take on quite a different character from that of 1867. On his previous visit, he had but briefly been presented to His Holiness by his Archbishop and had been able to obtain the Pope's signature to his petition through the mediation of Mgr. Mercurelli. This time, however, eight days after his arrival, he was able, owing to the letters of recommendation from the Archbishop, to obtain a private audience with the Pope. It was quite a long audience.

In the Annals, as in his letters, Father Chevalier speaks of the "incomparable kindness" with which the Supreme Pontiff received him. Kneeling at his feet, he presented the Holy Father with the bronze statuette, about one foot eight inches in height. His Holiness showed great interest in it and listened attentively to the Founder's explanation of its meaning. Father Chevalier then presented 5,000 francs to the Holy Father as Peter's Pence, money which had been collected through the Annals for this purpose.

The Sovereign Pontiff asked him many questions, particularly about the shrine where Our Lady of the Sacred Heart would be honoured, and he then imparted his blessing to Issoudun, the members of the Society and the Associates. Father Chevalier then presented the two crowns for the statue, asking for a special blessing and the privilege of crowning it in the name of the Holy Father himself.

The Pope replied: "It is with pleasure that I bless your statue, and I grant you the favour you ask. You can go to His Eminence, Cardinal Clarelli, and tell him that I have asked that he draw up a Brief granting permission to have the statue crowned in my name. I delegate your illustrious and pious Archbishop to perform the ceremony. The Holy Father then took Father Chevalier by the hand and said to him: "Get up from

your knees and give me more details of your work. How many Associates have you now?" "Your Holiness, we have now over two million members, and the Confraternity is only four years old." "That is most extraordinary," replied the Pope.

He then presented a bound volume of the copies of the Annals, together with a new edition of the work, "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." Both received special blessings. Turning over the pages, the Pope came across the Brief which he had signed in 1864 approving of the Confraternity. He remarked with a smile. "I see you are already acquainted with this Pius IX'." After further conversation regarding the Confraternity, Father Chevalier made bold to ask His Holiness to become a member. "With pleasure," the Pope replied, "but what do I have to do?" "Merely express your wish to have your name inscribed and promise to recite twice daily, 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us.' "

"That will be easy," said His Holiness, and taking a picture of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, he autographed it in Latin which reads: "Pope Pius IX, who wishes to love the Blessed Virgin Mary." The holy card is preserved at Issoudun as one of its most precious possessions, together with the pen with which the saintly Pope signed the various privileges.

PART X The Confraternity Erected into an Archconfraternity.

The interview with the Holy Father concluded after Father Chevalier presented the letter from Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne, officially asking that the Confraternity "be raised to the rank of Archconfraternity. The result was that the Holy Father granted this favour, at first for the diocese of Bourges only, and then after a short time for the whole of France. Eventually he authorised its extension to the entire world.

In a letter written to the community at Issoudun the following day, Father Chevalier, strangely enough, made no reference to the erection of the Archconfraternity; but he did say that the Pope read the Memorare to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart with great interest and immediately granted an indulgence of 100 days for its recitation, to be restricted for the time being to the diocese of Bourges. Father Chevalier said in his letter that the Holy Father asked many questions about the meaning of the title and said he was delighted with it.

In his letter to the Archbishop he had much to say about the Archconfraternity, and in his reply His Grace said he was very pleased "to hear the good news from Rome," and, referring to its restriction to the diocese of Bourges, he remarked: "For the time being, that is sufficient."

Recalling the letter of protest presented to the authorities by Mgr. Bartolini, we can appreciate the significance of the Archbishop's remark, which indicated that he realised the temporary restriction was in deference to the opinions of the Archbishops of Marseilles and Orleans. It was apparent that the Holy Father was on the side of Bourges, but restricted the Archconfraternity to that diocese for the time being to avoid difficulties. This, no doubt, explains also why the list of requested indulgences was not eventually sent to the Sacred Congregation and why Father Chevalier kept repeating in his letters of this time the phrase, "for the time being." Likewise, it explains why the Brief - dated 5th March, 1869 - authorising the Archconfraternity in the diocese of Bourges was not published in the Annals, except for the mention of the 100 days' indulgence granted for the recitation of the Memorare, whilst full prominence was given in the April edition to the authorisation of the Crowning of Our Lady's statue.

We have mentioned that the 1869 visit of Father Chevalier to Rome attended by much more ceremony than that of 1867. Apart from the privilege of the private audience with the Holy Father, he was introduced to many of the Cardinals and Bishops attached to the Vatican staff, who all showed interest in his work and admired particularly the two diadems for the new statue. He mentioned meeting Cardinal Antonelli, Archbishops de Merode, Pacca and Ricci, the Head of the Swiss Guards - General Kartzler - who presented him to the noble guards and he proudly told the priests in Issoudun that he had been able to enrol all the Bishops at the Vatican in the Confraternity and had to go back to the Vatican to deliver the admission leaflets. "Send me," he wrote, "twelve large copies of the picture of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

The devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was, of course, already well known in Rome. Mgr. Pagliari, Bishop of Anagni was already an ardent devotee and had published a brochure on the devotion printed by the Civiltà Catholica, and he issued a pastoral letter on the occasion of the canonical erection of the Association in his diocese.

Shortly after his arrival in the Holy City, Father Chevalier had a brochure printed in Italian, explaining the nature of the Association, and before he left he was able to inscribe over two thousand new Associates and establish four centres to carry on the good work. The first of these was established at the Vatican itself under the direction of Father Philippe Pirri, Secretary of Archbishop Ricci. The other three were placed under the direction of well-known personalities:.. Signor Mercurelli, Signor Antonelli and Signora Carlotta Antonelli.

During this same sojourn in Rome, Father Chevalier had the honour of admitting the Princess Marie Pie of Naples as an Associate, and she presented him with a precious brooch, asking that the jewels in it be inserted in Our Lady's diadem. She visited Issoudun several times during the ensuing years and interested all her family in the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. They became valuable protectors of the work in Italy.(52).

A final note about the Memorare before concluding this chapter:

We have already mentioned that the Pope had granted an indulgence of 100 days for its recitation in the diocese of Bourges. Before doing this, the Holy Father had carefully examined the wording of the prayer prior to giving his approval. As there had been different forms of the well-known prayer in circulation, the Annals published the official text approved by the Pope - as we have it to-day.(53).

CHAPTER XVI THE THIRD ORDER, AND THE CONSTITUTIONS.

PART I General Idea of a Third Order, The Third Order of the Sacred Heart.

When Father Chevalier had asked Father Le Blanc's opinion regarding the advisability of a Third Order to be associated with the Society similar to that previously founded by their own priest, Father de Clorivere, the Jesuit had at first thought it would be a good idea, then began to doubt it, and finally advised against it, and finally advised against it, at least for the time being."

Their experience with the complexity of such an organisation had made the Jesuits of Vaugirard rather cautious in the matter.

However on the 9th April, 1863, Father Chevalier had written to Father Le Blanc: "I am receiving letters from far and wide asking me if we have a Third Order of the Sacred Heart for people out in the world, as the Dominicans and Francisans have."

"In order to accommodate the wishes of these devout souls I have drawn up a provisional plan of Rules, of which I am sending you a copy."

Many people, particularly young women of all classes of society - many of them amongst the well to do type have written asking if we have an Institute for women devoted to the work of the Sacred Heart, founded on the same lives as our own Congregation "of men". And he added: "As we both know this thought has now been in our minds for almost ten years."

These two projects will now claim our attention in this chapter. They came to fruition about the same time as the movement of the Associated Secular Priests.

It was not unusual in the last century to find Religions Institutes having a Third Order. The rules governing these Third Orders were to all practical purposes, as definite and strict as those of the Institutes themselves.

There were in existence as Father Le Blanc notes, numerous ecclesiastical documents approving and encouraging these Third Order as a means of spiritual perfection for the laity, especially those attached to the more ancient Orders of the Church.

Even in more recent times we find Pope Pius IX, on 8th Sept., 1850, signing a Brief delegating Cardinal de Bonald Archbishop of Lynos, to erect a "Third Order of May," attached to the Society of Mary of the Venerable Father Colin.

On the following 5th Dec., the Cardinal published a decree, which "Consequent upon the Apostolic Brief, which has invested us with the necessary faculties to specify and design the spiritual privileges requested by the Third Order of Mary, and granted by the holy See, we now declare the aforesaid Third Order established organised and canonically erected, as from next Sunday, the 8th Dec."

Canon Mulsant had a pertinent remark to make here. "In juridical language the Third Order were attached only to those Orders whose members took solemn vows but as solemn vows have disappeared in France since the Revolution the term "Orders" now embraces all Religious Institutes, and the word "Third Order" covers a larger field than originally.

For example he described the "Third Order of Mary" as "a vast association in which secular priests and faithful souls in the world, undertook to live according to the Marist ideal, in imitation of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin and to exercise an apostolate on Her behalf amongst their families and friends."(1)

Father Chevalier had the same idea, but directed towards the Sacred Heart.

This is why the Association of Secular Clergy which in the first rules were referred to as a Third Order, and the Third Order of lay-people formed a group apart, distinct for example from the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

They formed a definite auxiliary organism with their own constitution.

Father Chevalier had sent a plan to Father Le Blanc stating the end and object of the Third Order:

(1) It will enable its members to work more efficaciously for their spiritual perfection by using the powerful means of sanctification which the Heart of Jesus offers them.

(2) They will render special worship to the Sacred Heart, and strive to spread the devotion everywhere.

(3) They will make reparation for the outrages inflicted on the Sacred Heart, by leading pious and edifying lives and offering for this intention all their pains and difficulties, their privations and sorrows, their works and their merits."

These objects, after all, were those of the Society itself.

In 1865 Father Chevalier wrote his brochure: "General Idea of the Third Order of the Sacred Heart," which was approved by the Archbishop.

The motto of the Association was "Ad majorem Dei et Sacratissimi Cordis Gloriam."

In the introduction he stressed the spiritual sickness of the age, and pointed out that its cure lay in the love and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

He emphasised the fact that the Third Order was neither a Confraternity, a Congregation or a Religious Society, properly so called.

It was a group of men and women leading good Christian lives out in the world, who by their interior dispositions, imitated those who had left the world in order to live a more perfect life.

The organisation would have priests as directors, general, diocesan and local, and for the women members Superioresses would also be appointed, assisted by a Council.

PART II Influence of Mlle de Montaignac on the History of the Third Order.

At the time that Father Chevalier was founding his Third Order his other cherished idea, that of establishing a feminine organisation corresponding to that of his own Missionaries was about to be realised even though at the time it was not through his own initiative.

We must go back a few years to trace the origin of the movement.

Since the troublous times of the 1843 Revolution there resided in Moutlucon a certain Mlle Louise Therese de Montaignac de Chauvance.(2) She had been born on May 14th, 1820 at Havre-de-Grace, and had been brought up by an aunt Mme de Raffin who did not have any children of her own. This devout woman had given Louise-Therese a great love of the Sacred Heart.

Mme de Raffin had always had the desire of founding an Association of women, who would devote their lives to the Sacred Heart. She was convinced that France could be saved only by devotion to the Sacred Heart, and she wished to found a Congregation whose object would be to adore the Sacred Heart in the most Blessed Sacrament by lives of immolation and reparation.

However, as not all are called to the same degree of perfection and all cannot undertake the same type of work, she thought of establishing an institute, which would embrace a variety of works, - much the same idea as Father Chevalier entertained later on.

She had first thought of calling her work - "The Association for the Propagation of Devotion to the Sacred Heart." Then thinking this might sound too ambitious she was content with the title - "The Institute of St. Joseph."

Before her death (4th December, 1845) she confided all these ideas, hopes and plans to her niece, asking her, if possible, to achieve them.

In 1848 Louise-Therese settled in Montlucon, and gave herself over to the apostolate under the direction of Father Guilhomet, the Parish Priest. She became a real apostle of devotion to the Sacred Heart, took a special interest in helping the poorer churches and from her own money established the Orphanage of the Sacred Heart where she took up her residence with a few other spiritually-minded people. She now hoped to realise in a practical way the wishes of her devout aunt, i.e., to establish a congregation of women dedicated to the work of the Sacred Heart. She enquired at first, about the possibility of union with already-existing associations, but did not find what she wanted. In 1859 she placed herself under the spiritual direction of Father Gautrelet, S.J, in whom she hoped to find, to quote her biography, "the priest sent by Providence, who with the help of Divine authority would allay all her fears, if she obeyed his directions." The biography also remarked: "From now on she was hoping to use the grace of this spiritual direction, not only in regard to the thoughts that were occupying her mind regarding her proposed foundation, but particularly for her own personal sanctification. She wished only to be the instrument of the Sacred Heart, to whose service she had vowed her life, in the meantime she had joined the "Zealous Followers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, founded by Father Rosin, S.J., but she did not see any possibility here of accomplishing the mission her aunt had entrusted to her.

Father Gautrelet had learnt from his dirigeé all about this mission, but said he would, naturally, have to act cautiously in the matter. However, according to the biography, Mlle. de Montaignac "always found some means of bringing him back to the subject, and keeping him interested in it."

"Wishing to find," again to quote the biography, "a vigorous trunk on which to graft the proposed foundation," she wrote to Mother Barat, who at the time was contemplating a Third Order for her Institute. Because of the many difficulties involved, there was no immediate response, and from 1861 to 1864, Mlle. de Montaignac stayed with the nuns in the Convent in Bellecroix, whilst awaiting a definite reply. A letter from Mother Barat in 1864, informed Louise-Therese that the fusion of the two foundations was not feasible.

In 1861, Father Gautrelet had been transferred to Algiers, but, before leaving, he had recommended Louise-Therese to consult Father Ramiere, S.J., who was in charge of the Apostolate of Prayer in Bellecroix. Father Ramiere, a priest devoted, above all, to the Sacred Heart, was doubtful about the wisdom of the fusion, always difficult in practice of associations founded to promote the glory of the Sacred Heart, and said he preferred to await the action of the Holy Ghost for separate foundations.

Regarding your active and positive relationship with the new congregation, my advice is to go along happily, act as God directs your heart in the measure of His grace and then wait until you see the way more clearly."

We have seen that Father Chevalier had been in touch with Father Gautrelet in September, 1864, and the latter had stated that, in spite of all the difficulties involved, he regarded the project as offering the best means and guarantee of success to Mlle. de Montaignac's plans. On the 5th

of the month Father Gautrelet wrote to Louise-Therese:

"There still remains a certain amount of uncertainty concerning the fusion with Issoudun. We must have patience, wait and pray. The moment of God will come. I fear that Father Chevalier may not go ahead with the scheme. The work is indeed a complicated one. It would appear to me difficult, even impossible, to realise it as he conceives it.

It is not so much Religious Communities that are needed as good people in the world, having a religious spirit and going about their daily lives in a spirit of Faith. I fear that if one aims too high in a work of the nature of yours, one would ruin an idea excellent in itself, and sacrifice what can be done. Let us proceed, consequently, in a quiet way, and wait the outcome of events. "

Then on 12th January Father Gautrelet in a more hopeful mood, went on to encourage her: "Let us go ahead here as the good God would wish. There is, after all, something providential in the set-up of circumstances which finds a new Congregation coming into existence at a time when you are looking for a support and complement of your own work. Our Lord seems to be saying to you: 'There I am.'

Again, on the 1st February: "I bless God and I am now happy. It seems to me that at last the dream of your heart is partly realised. Without doubt you were hoping for something greater and better. That will come soon, but it seems to me the work has taken a great step forward. Whatever may be the future of the work the present circumstances tide us over the delay which we were not able to foresee. No doubt, later on, there will be misgivings, difficulties and many details to be straightened out in the fusion of your Third Order with the Congregation, but the essential facts are assured."

It was obvious that Father Gautrelet was becoming more and more sympathetic with the idea of the Third Order, for on the 3rd March he wrote: "I regard the Third Order as now launched. It will be able to withstand any storm. Thank God for the way things have turned out, and for solving the difficulties which our human weakness was not able to do. Follow the way which is now open to you. God invites you to do so. Thank Him with confidence. The future now begins to shape itself. The light has broken through. There will, no doubt, be some shadows and clouds, but at present the sun is shining brightly."

In the meantime Mlle. de Montaignac had been in contact with Father Chevalier, mainly by reason of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and he himself had already heard of the proposed foundation at Montlucon: his good friend there, L'Abbe Guyot, parish priest of the Church of St. Paul.

It was actually from the presbytery of St. Paul that Father Chevalier had written to Louise-Therese, praising her for her devotion to the Sacred Heart and Our Blessed Lady, and telling her of the success of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, of which she was to become a zealous member.

After receiving the negative reply from Mother Barat, Mlle. de Montaignac consulted Father Ramiere, who saw a possible solution of the difficulty. The Associates of Montlucon, he wrote, should join forces with those of Third Order of Issoudun.

However at first this project did not appeal very greatly to Louise-Therese, who wrote to her old spiritual director, Father Gautrelet, about matter. The priest was in favour of the idea and replied; "I think God wills this work. This enterprise is for His glory. Something will come of it. It is the seed of something fruitful, which will blossom in the future. For the moment you do not fancy joining the Third Order; you do not see and you do not feel that God wills this work." Louise-Therese decided to follow the advice of her former director, and wrote accordingly to him.

In his reply, dated 11th July 1864, the priest remarked: "I received your letter of the 6th inst., and am replying immediately. The problem, after what you have told me, seems to have solved itself. Deo Gratias! We can perhaps say now - 'Why didn't we think of it before?' It is true that the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart is only newly founded, but it has its roots in the Heart of the Divine Master, its youth will be vigor and it will quickly outgrow its infancy. The circumstances of the Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary, still so fresh in the mind, drawing the hearts of the faithful to the devotion to the Sacred Heart, will favour the execution and development of your project. Once again we can say May God be blessed! Let us allow Him to do the work. He has commenced it; He will see it through. I do not think you should hesitate, because of the fears you have expressed. When God raises up a new Congregation, when He inspires its members; when His Holy Spirit and Heart are in the work, what is there to fear?"

On 23rd July he again wrote; "Let us rely on the sweet and amiable Providence of Jesus. He will solve the difficulties. Go ahead without worrying too much about the future. The future is in the hands of God, as we are ourselves.

"Consecrate yourself to God firmly. The future and the grace of God will later on put a special seal on your work."

Mlle. de Montaignac decided not to make any decision before consulting her Bishop. His Lordship, after hearing the facts, replied that he would leave her free to undertake what seemed good to her. He had already read the bouchures from Issoudun, and was impressed with the Constitutions remarking, at the same time, that any modification which would be necessary would be made according to the conditions of the time.

The Vicar General, Father Gilbert, was not enthusiastic about the enterprise but having heard the opinion of the Bishop, he wrote kindly: "I see that His Lordship is satisfied, and realises you are happy to have settled the issue. I submit my judgment to his. You must now go ahead courageously, and not be looking for new ideas, which are not in accordance with the work nor necessary to it."

Father Gautrelet was now happy. "What you told me on July 13th," he wrote, "has given me great consolation. Deo Gratias. A nucleus has been formed. You now have with you six Sisters, united in the Heart of Our Lord."

These, undoubtedly, were the "Novices" referred to in a letter of Father Chevalier to Father Guyot, dated June 2nd - in which he authorised him to receive them as he would not be able to make the journey to Montlucon himself.

As soon as the union between Issoudun and Montlucon was definitely decided on, a summary idea of the Third Order was presented to all the branches interested, first of all to the Associates at Montlucon itself, then to Moulins Le Puy and Chambéry.

It was well received and in the words of Father Chevalier: "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart gave Her blessing to these early beginnings."

In spite of his indifferent health at this time, Father Chevalier visited all these centres during the ensuing months, and kept in constant touch with Father Ramiere about the progress of the movement.

He made new contacts, organised new groups, especially the one in Issoudun, from which he sent candidates to Montlucon to live the community life.

We must keep in mind that the Third Order was not a Religious Society, strictly speaking, and that the members had no obligation of living in community. However it was stated in the brochure "General Idea of the Third Order" that it was desirable that those, who were free to do so, should live together as a family, and unite their efforts and resources in furthering the cause. The majority of the Associates, of course were not living in community, but they were exhorted to "pledge themselves seriously to Our Blessed Lord."

Realising that many members of the Third Order were not in the position to give themselves entirely to the work, the brochure expressedly used the phrase "only those who are independent enough to consecrate themselves exclusively to the work", and it mentions as exceptions - "married women, young girls, and widows, who have not absolutely renounced the idea of re-marrying."

Mlle. de Montaignac was chosen as the Superior-General of the Third Order, and Father Chevalier as the Director. She made her solemn promises the 1st September 1865. To these promises she signed herself - "Louise-Therese of the Heart of Jesus." Father Gautrelet wrote to her later: "Keep that title. It is very beautiful, and recalls many things." The title was applied to all the members of the Third Order after that, and fittingly so, as it denoted the sincere and ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Regarding the group at Issoudun Father Chevalier wrote on the 11th Jan, 1866, to Mlle de Montaignac: "We have just received some new members. They were delighted. One of them will be writing to you soon. We were very pleased to have your good parish priest of St. Paul with us. I have told him that if I die before he does, the Third Order is in his hands."

On the 25th Aug. 1866 the Bishop of Moulins, Mgr. de Dreux-Breze, gave official approbation to the Third Order in his diocese.

The document read: "Peter Simon de Breux-Breze, by the Grace of God and the Apostolic See, Bishop of Moulins.

To our beloved daughter Louise de Montaignac health and salvation in Him, Who loves us, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

You have explained to Us that in the church of the Priests of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun, in the diocese of Bourges, there exists a Third Order, dedicated to the Cause of the same Most Sacred Heart, which you now wish to have established in our diocese, according to its laws and constitutions, approved by His Lordship, the Bishop of Bourges.

AS nothing is dearer to our heart than the spreading of devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the recommendation of His Virtutes of Humility and Meekness to the faithful, We willingly approve this Third Order in our diocese.

Given at Nercence, 25th Aug. 1866, Feast of St. Louis the King."

PART III Difficulties with Father Ramiere

In spite of all the respect due to Father Ramiere, to his help and his advice, it would appear that the priests at Issoudun felt that he was inclined to interfere rather too much in the shaping of the Society.

For example, Father Piperon was advising Father Chevalier to compose a brochure on the work instead of writing articles in Father Ramiere's Messenger and in the dealings between Fathers Chevalier and Vandel, both priests were careful not to let him take part in their plans, in spite of his wish to do so.

It was the common opinion at Issoudun that Father Ramiere's ideas on the formation and form of the Society did not concur with those of the Founder and his confreres.

Although this reserve kept him from directing the affairs of the Society at Issoudun, he had more influence at Montlucon regarding the Third Order in his role as spiritual director of Mlle de Montaignac.

It was he who had suggested the amalgamation with Issoudun, after Mother Barat's refusal of a union with her Congregation, and perhaps in the light of Father Chevalier's ready co-operation regarding the Third Order, he had presumed to think that the latter would be amenable to ideas concerning the conduct of the Society itself.

In any case it is on record that he gave Montlucon to understand that he "had been asked to draw up the Constitutions for this new Congregation"(5) He had probably gained this impression from correspondence with Father Chevalier two years previously in 1864, after the latter had written a brochure, to which he raised several objections.(4)

On the 5th March 1865 he said that he had drawn up "a rough sketch of the Rules for the Priests of the Sacred Heart." But Father Chevalier had already in 1864, drawn up Rules for the Associate Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart, and had clearly stated that these were not to be confused with the Rules for the society itself. It would appear that on this point Father Ramiere was in error thinking that the Association of Secular Priests and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart formed the one integral Society.

On the 3rd March, 1866, he had written to Montlucon "I have just drawn up the Rules for the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I am very happy about them. Would you be kind enough to give me Father Chevalier's present address, so that I may forward him a copy."

As we will see later on, Father Chevalier was not quite as happy about them, as was Father Ramiere, and from 1866 onwards there were definite differences of opinion between Issoudun and Montlucon.

Father Ramiere was to find out that Father Chevalier was not as docile as he had thought and began to realise that he was mistaken in the extent of the work commissioned to him.

In any case from now on he occupied himself actively with the affairs of the Third Order and consequently of Montlucon as Father Blanc had written to Father Chevalier when the latter had made contact with Vaugirard the Society of Jesus could not affiliate to itself any Third Order. Father Ramiere therefore submitted the matter to his Superior General and after receiving a reply, he wrote to Mlle de Montaignac: "In reference to the part I can take with regard to the Third Order I am to restrict myself to individual spiritual direction, either in the Confessional or by letter but the official and external administration must be left to the Fathers at Issoudun."

Later on he was to write on 19th October: "When I see you I will explain to you how Father General has taken a more favourable view of the extent of activities with the Third Order."

The first inkling of Father Ramiere's change of attitude to Issoudun was found in a letter of Father Gautrelet written to Mlle. de Montaignac on 24th June 1866. The two priests had been corresponding with one another, and Fr Gautrelet wrote: "Father Ramiere with his zealous followers, together with his Messenger of the Sacred Heart will serve your cause better than any means has there a powerful means of propagation. He will sow the seed; you will reap the harvest with him."

On 14th January 1867 Father Ramiere wrote of objections he had heard to the union with Issoudun. For example, "In Lyons," he said, "it was being asked - 'Why join with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, whom nobody has heard of?'" A priest of the Lyons diocese, Father Monnet, was asking the question publicly.

Father Ramiere explained to them that as yet the rules of the union with Issoudun were only sketchily drawn up, and that if a more important and solid centre could have been found, they would have adopted it. "For the rest," he said, "the Society of Priests of the Sacred Heart was not so much a trunk on which the Third Order was grafted, as another branch of the same tree. They are two sister-works, which must grow together."

Father Ramiere had gone to Germany and had spoken of the Secular Priests in connection with the Apostolate of Prayer Movement. He wrote back that priests had heard of this Association of Secular Priests, but the general opinion, was that it should not be dependent on Issoudun, especially for the German Priests.

"Bishop Mermillod" continued Father Ramiere, "with whom I had many talks on the subject, is of the opinion, that this dependence on Issoudun, if given too much prominence could hinder the propagation of the movement."

"It appears evident to me," writes Father Ramiere, "that if the work had preserved the form that I originally gave it, i.e., an apostolate of the Heart crowning the work of the Apostolate of Prayer, we would not have encountered the difficulties that confront us now."

"Let us pray that we will know the way Divine Providence wishes us to follow in the future."

In another letter to Mlle. de Montaignac Father Ramiere wrote: "Father Superior has sent me a copy of some recent decisions of the Sacred Congregation, one of which is the disapproval of any congregation of women being dependant on a Community of men. If, as a consequence of this decision, you must sever your relationship with Issoudun, except, of course, in regard the spiritual union of devotion to the Sacred Heart, you would lose many benefits on the one hand; but, on the other, it would remove the principal obstacle, which alienates many of our priests from the work. In this case it would be necessary to abandon the name Third Order. I think that the Apostles of the Heart of Jesus would be a good substitute. Let me know what you think of that."

On 1st August he returned again to this last point: "Is it really God's will that this work should remain a Third Order and, at that, a Third Order of the Priests of the Sacred Heart? You have no need to tell me of the great care, which must be taken in examining this question.

I have spoken to Bishop Chaillot on the matter. He keeps himself au courant with all matters concerning religious congregations. He has already printed in his *Analecta* the Roman decision disapproving of congregations of women being dependant on those of men concerning matters of administration. Consequently, he could see here an obstacle to the approbation of the Rules by Rome, unless it was stressed that the affiliation was merely a spiritual one based on the common devotion of members to the Sacred Heart.

By this means the name, Third Order, might conceivably be preserved. A Third Order of the Sacred Heart would signify an association of lay people with the religious Congregations of men and women, instituted for that end, but without any administrative dependence on them. In a letter I am about to write to Father Chevalier I will inform him of what Bishop Chaillot had to say on the Subject."

In another letter, written on 8th September, Father Ramiere again expressed his opposition to the dependence of the Third Order on Issoudun. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that at a time like this, when everyone, from the Holy Father himself, to the pious faithful, are complaining that too many Religious Congregations are growing up in the Church seeking the same end by the same means, you should seek your own autonomy."

It is not surprising to find it on record that the Chronicle of Montlucon noted the fact that Father Ramiere's letters were becoming a little "troublesome." However a letter from him, received by Mlle. de Montaignac 18th December did much to clarify the position. It read: "I feel obliged to make myself more clear than I have appeared to do in preceding letters. The idea that I am anxious to cause any disruption between the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Third Order is very far from my mind. I respect the authority and opinion of the bishops, who have given their approval to the two Societies. I still desire in all sincerity, to see a happy result from this union, of which, I am happy to think, I was the first instigator. What appears to me to be ultimately impossible is to maintain a dependence on the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, canonically speaking. Advice, which I have welcomed on the matter and my own reflections have led me to the following convictions:

(1) Primarily, that this dependence is contrary to the decisions of the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

(2) That it will eventually be a source of embarrassment to the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. If the Congregation founded by Father Chevalier is to progress, he will have plenty to do without looking after a Congregation of women, The government of a Society of this nature calls for all the attention of a Founder in its early stages, without outside complications. Consequently, I think either of two things will have to happen:

(a) Either Father Chevalier will have to declare his plans regarding the acceptance of complications involved to the detriment of his other works. Or -

(b) He will hand over his responsibility to the Superioress General of the movement.

(3) The dependence on Issoudun must create grave inconveniences to the Third Order itself from the mere fact that it will not be able to live entirely its own life. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are as yet too small in numbers to be of much assistance outside their own domain. "Our own priests of the Jesuit Order, and those of other ranks, would be, more or less, disinclined to offer suggestions on matters concerning a new establishment, when it is in the hands of another Society. Do not put this down to jealousy, but to a perfectly legitimate reserve about interfering in matters concerning other Congregations.

Father Gautrelet, in a letter, dated 13th November, assured me that he is entirely in agreement with me in my attitude. Perhaps you will tell me that the help of our Society is no longer necessary in your work, and I readily recognise that.

However, the thoughts which I am expressing to you are those of men most devoted to your work, and who have been the means of originating and propagating it. There is no need for me, I think, to remind you of the part our priests have played, since the days of Father Varin, in its Foundation. Although our help may no longer seem necessary to you, it can still be very useful and consequently you should avail yourself of it."

Mlle. de Montaignac referred the whole matter to Father Cautrelet, who replied on the 18th February 1868: "You mention the projects of Father Ramiere and his ideas about your association with the priests of the Sacred Heart. It is certain that if Rome makes the separation an essential condition of the approbation of your work, then the sooner the break is made the better. At the present moment, being somewhat removed from the scene of activity, I could not give you definite advice as to what to do - whether to make the break, or merely to proceed quietly until events shape themselves. In general, I can say, as I have mentioned to you before, that in dealing with an Institution which is just commencing, it is better to wait till it has settled down, and then time, experience and grace will present the ways and means of the best method of procedure in the future. Father Ramiere continued to advise Mlle. de Montaignac that independence of Issoudun would be the best course, which is rather surprising in view of the fact that, in all good faith, Father Chevalier was in touch with him about its organisation and entrusting its future to his hands.

The first General Assembly of the Third Order took place at Montlucon on the 16th June 1868, and we find Father Ramiere working for its welfare with Father Guyot, who, as the director of the movement in the diocese of Moulins, was acting in the name of Father Chevalier. On the fifth and final session of the Assembly, held on the 20th June, the following resolutions were agreed on:

(1) Our main and immediate object is the spreading of devotion to the Sacred Heart by every means in our power, within the bounds of prudence.

(2) To foster Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart so intimately associated with that to the Heart of Her Divine Son.

(3) To receive Holy Communion in a spirit of reparation for the many insults which Our Lord has to suffer, especially in the Sacrament of His love.

(4) To recommend to members to take an ardent and active interest in the Apostolate of Prayer, so necessary at this present moment in France.

(5) To make known the good work already done by the faithful members of the Third Order in the cause of the Sacred Heart, and to endeavour to establish branches in places where as yet it does not exist.

Part IV. The Third Order in Naples Under the Leadership of Mlle. Volpicelli.

While these discussions were going on, Father Chevalier's main concern was with the approbation of the Society from Rome and, as we have already recorded, he set out for the Holy City at the beginning of 1869 with this object in view.

On his return journey he spent three days in Naples at the request of the zealous members of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Besides wishing to make his acquaintance these ladies were anxious to consult him on matters concerning the Third Order. Father Ramiere had visited Naples in 1867, and had interested them in joining the work of the Third Order in Montlucon. One of the most interested was a Mlle. Volpicelli. A letter from her to Mlle. Louise Therese de Montaignac, written on 14th November was to this effect: "My dear Mademoiselle,

Last June Father Ramiere honoured me with a visit on his return trip from Rome, and asked me to join the Third Order of the Sacred Heart. He gave me a copy of the Rules, and also left me your address. I have not replied sooner, because I have prayed earnestly to Almighty God to direct me in the matter and now I would like to have precise and detailed information regarding the various centres from which the Third Order is operating.

Since last May I have been living with a very good friend of mine, just outside the noise of the city, and we have dedicated our little private chapel to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. We are hoping that other devotees of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will join us as members of the

Third Order, if it is God's will."

After further correspondence a letter from Mlle. Volpicelli to Mlle. Louise Therese written in December showed enthusiasm:

"I am praying to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that we may be admitted to the Third Order. Your friendly letter of the 25th greatly encouraged me. When it arrived we had just finished our prayer of reparation before the Crib of the Infant Jesus, which we had lovingly built for Christmas Night. We had offered the Sacred Heart, through our Queen and Mother, our entire lives, and we have already commenced our duties.

I know several good people who wish to join the Association, but at present the foundation group numbers only five. I have no other wish than to obey your directions, but you will have to pray for me, my dear Mother, for if it were left to myself, I am so weak I could upset the plans of God!

I am relying on the all-powerful protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and have my eyes fixed on the Cross, the Crown of Thorns and the Wounds of Jesus."

Mlle. Volpicelli would have wished to visit Montlucon, but, like Mlle. de Montaignac, she was a sick woman, and consequently the desired meeting did not eventuate. She wrote to her friend: "I trust your health will improve through the intercession of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

The small chapel at Naples soon became the centre of Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in that city. Father Chevalier sent Mlle. Volpicelli and her little group of Associates the necessary paper of affiliation & expressed his gratification at their love for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Mlle. Volpicelli assured him: "We Neapolitans are greatly attracted by this devotion to the Holy Virgin, and we see in it a very efficacious means of spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart."(5)

Father Ramiere's presentation of difficulties regarding the rules and nature of the Institute, which had confused both Mlle. de Montaignac and Mlle. Volpicelli prompted Father Chevalier to pay a visit to Montlucon and Naples.

In a letter to Mlle. de Montaignac, written on 4th January, 1868, Father Ramiere had stated that Mlle. Volpicelli was finding difficulties concerning the dependence on, and union with Issoudun.

"This difficulty could be obviated," he wrote, "if Father Chevalier would adapt the rules according to the suggestions I have made. We could then hope for the approbation of the Cardinal of Naples, which would go a long way in gaining the approval of Rome, through Cardinal Riario Sforza. If you have the occasion to write to Father Chevalier you could inform him of these impressions of mine.

We might suggest that this indirect method of corresponding with Father Chevalier was, to say the least, rather strange. A letter from Father Chevalier to Mlle. de Montaignac, dated 8th February informs her of his proposed visit:

"My dear Sister in Our Lord,

May the Grace of God be always with you! I hope to arrive in Montlucon next Monday accompanied by Rev. Father Vandel. We will have a good talk about all the matters that concern us. The modifications of which Father Ramiere speaks are really only those of details. I have written to Mlle. Volpicelli. She did not give me her complete address. Naples is a big-city, and without the exact number and street, I can only trust in Providence that she will receive it.

a Barnataite Father and that, according to Father Ramiere, there was no longer any necessity to deal with Issoudun regarding the establishment of an Association, as the approbation of the Ordinary was sufficient. That, of course, would entail a complete separation, and the name 'Third. Order' would have no significance. It would destroy its very, life and soul. Since the Third Order was approved by His Grace of Bourges in its present form, no radical change would have any validity without his permission. In the meantime, my dear Sister? until matter is settled, accept the assurance of my good wishes."

When the group of Our Lady's devotees in Naples, led by Mlle. Volpicelli learnt that Father Chevalier was about to make the trip to Rome to seek official approbation of the Society, the members wrote to him asking him to; break his journey at Naples, and give them some lectures on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart,

We must keep in mind, that the principal reason for his journey to Rome was precisely to have the Society canonically approved in the form in which he conceived it and that matters dealing with the Archconfraternity and the Third Order were of secondary importance, in spite of all the suggestions and advice from Father Ramiere. Father Chevalier spent three days with the group in Naples, and was later able to write in the Annals: "His Eminence Cardinal Sforza, the Archbishop of Naples, received me graciously; and assured us all of his keen interest in the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which he said was very dear to him. He expressed the wish that it would day by day expand throughout his diocese." The fundamental question concerning the relationship between Montlucon and Issoudun was left in obedience.

PART V. Father Ramiere's Objections Specified.

Some of the Society of the Sacred Heart were opposed to it.

(3) The third group of objections concerned the nature and character which the Third Order should assume. Father Ramiere objected to the fact that vows were optional and stressed the fact that as yet the rules were merely in a formative state, leaving much to be desired.

The main objection of course, was to the dependence of the work of Mlle. de Montaignac and her followers on Father Chevalier and his Missionaries. Father Ramiere did not hide the fact that he was bitterly opposed to it, and, as we will see in the second volume of this work, this opposition eventually led to a rupture between Montlucon and Issoudun each of which in time disengaged itself from the influence of Father Ramiere.

Mlle. de la Bruyere, who has recorded the history of these days in her work, "La Pieuse Union," has written: "We understand that in the beginning the Jesuits interested themselves in our work in an advisory capacity in much the same way as they had done with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, whose spiritual life was based mainly on the Exercises of St. Ignatius. When the priests of Issoudun gained their complete independence, it became a question of deciding what works to continue with or what to abandon, and this inevitably led to a conflict of opinions between certain Jesuits and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Leaving aside the question of exactly what influence the Society of Jesus had in fashioning the spirit of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - we have already given enough data on this point for the reader to form his own opinion, - we must state that Mlle. de la Bruyere, in her Chronicle, attributes to the Jesuit Society many ideas which were merely personal to Father Ramiere and his friends.

This is borne out by the fact that the Jesuit Fathers at Vaugirard, when they learnt that Father Chevalier was following a different path from their own encouraged him to go ahead and gave him every assistance.

Father Le Blanc wrote at the time: "The foundation of a new Order presupposes the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the social intervention of God, who has a greater right to hope for and expect this assistance than the Founders themselves."

Father Gautrelet had the same idea when he interested himself in the foundation of Mlle. de Montaignac's Society. His biographer, Father Burnichon, wrote of him: "Father Gautrelet, in his humility, was always loathe to trust himself or his ideas forward in matters concerning the foundation, and he quotes the saintly priest as saying: 'You know there are always two convictions in my mind. Firstly I know that God will bless the work and secondly I know that I am in the dark as to how it will be done. I have not the grace of enlightenment myself, but I have confidence in the good work, which this chosen soul has been called to do. I do not see in what way I can be useful as I have been given no special lights or graces, necessary in any religious foundation.'"

Father Burnichon adds: "What inspired the saintly Father to use the humble language was not so much his accustomed diffidence in his own judgment, as his complete trust in the guidance of the Holy Ghost in such important matters. He realised the duty that a prudent director of souls has in giving advice, but he likewise realised that Founders - of religious movements, if blessed by God, are given special lights and graces and in these he did not wish to interfere.

Convinced that Mlle. de Montaignac was the instrument chosen by God for the establishment of the "Pieuse Union," he felt the obligation of allowing her to follow her own plans, whilst not hesitating to give advice and make suggestions."(7)

On the other hand, Father Ramiere in all sincerity, thought that his mission was to direct both Father Chevalier and Mlle. de Montaignac along the paths they should follow. He even went so far as to disregard the decisions of Mgr. de Dreux Breze, the Bishop of Moulins, who had approved the Union. (Montlucon was in his diocese).

In Father Ramiere's own words we have expressed the Bishop's reaction to his efforts: "The bishop has told me rather strongly that I am not to interfere in the movement, and to keep away from it as much as possible."

Father Ramiere eventually was to break, not only with Issoudun, but with Montlucon, when he realised they were taking little notice of his advice. He retired reluctantly.

Father Gautrelet, on the contrary, gave his blessing to the plans of Mlle. de Montaignac, as he said he "saw there the designs of God."

On the 1st July, 1882, Father Ramiere wrote: Mlle. de Montaignac's letter is undoubtedly very tactfully worded, and without worrying over what it implies, i.e., that I am not needed, I must accept what she expresses as the Will of Our Lord. I no longer regard myself as the instrument of God in the matter, since I have had the misfortune of finding myself in disagreement with her, and so I humbly and sincerely accept the situation."

Previously, on 5th June, he had written to a member of the Third Order that he was convinced that he had received special lights from God concerning this work, and that he could not, consequently, advise otherwise than he had done.

If these extracts show us that Father Ramiere was always acting in good faith, we can only regret that he did not collaborate with the two Founders, and was so stubborn in his opposition to the fusion between Issoudun and Montlucon.

However, God's ways are not our ways and perhaps the unhappy complications and friction between the years 1864 and 1875 only served to give each Institute a deeper understanding of its particular nature, and to facilitate their individual expansion.

The friction is all the more regrettable when we consider that the three main persons involved (Father Chevalier, Mlle. de Montaignac and Father Ramiere) were all motivated by the same ideal, and following the same spirituality - devotion to the Sacred Heart. They were convinced that in the Sacred Heart was to be found all the love of the Redeemer, and that the salvation of mankind was to be achieved through the merits and treasures of that Sacred Heart. They were likewise convinced that there should be an energetic co-operation between all those who had the happiness of knowing the devotion to the Sacred Heart. They realised that, in order to propagate this devotion, they themselves must be deeply imbued with its spirit.

To quote from the copy of Father Ramiere's Messenger of the Sacred Heart of 1863: "In order to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart for the regeneration of society, it is necessary that the devotion must penetrate the very depth of the souls of those who have adopted it. They must form their lives and souls in the very image of the Sacred Heart, and become the docile instruments through which He can show his love for mankind. (8)

And so we find these three, zealous devotees of the Sacred Heart striving for the common end - the glory of the Heart of Jesus - but gradually being convinced, by force of circumstances, that God was directing them along different paths, each according to a spirit and ideal peculiar to the group concerned. This action of the Holy Spirit was to determine the particular character and vocation of each, and it was only by preserving this characteristic spirit that harmony between their works was possible.

To appreciate more fully the difficulties associated with the beginnings, we must consider the situation and circumstances in which each of the three persons concerned found themselves, when their individual mission became known to them.

PART VI Father Chevalier's Object and Spirit in his Foundation

Father Chevalier was, at the time, a secular-priest, Mlle. de Montaignac a person living in the world, and Father Ramiere had been a religious for many years.

The ideal of both Father Chevalier and Mlle. de Montaignac was to found institutes entirely devoted to the Sacred Heart, Father Chevalier in 1854 and Mlle. de Montaignac in 1843.

Father Ramiere came in contact with them in 1861 whilst engaged in re-organising the Apostolate of Prayer in order to make it into an association of the Sacred Heart.

Father Chevalier and Mlle. de Montaignac were each launching new movements, and seeking souls inspired with the same ideals as themselves, whereas Father Ramiere, with his Apostolate of Prayer, was dealing with an association already formed and attached to the Society of Jesus. He soon had a group of fellow Jesuit priests around him, who shared his ideals and helped him in his work.

This group naturally had a tradition, and it, no doubt, was the reason why in the early stages Mlle. de Montaignac made the remark, when she was trying to decide where to look for direction: "The spreading of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart has been especially entrusted to the Company of Jesus."

Since the Apostleship of Prayer was already attached to the Jesuit Order, its members formed a compact group, finding in the Society of Jesus help and support.

What the one possessed was lacking to the two others, as much from the individual, as the social viewpoint, and this had its effect on their ideas and aspirations, both for themselves personally and as regards their organisation. That is why the two founders sought the aid of the Jesuits and tried to associate themselves with the work of Father Ramiere, prompted by the desire to work together on the closest possible union for the glory of the sacred Heart. However, for the very reason that Father Ramiere did belong to an already existing and organised Institute, he was limited in his scope and activity regarding the spreading of the Devotion.

Profoundly and intensely as the devotion to the Sacred Heart has become incorporated in the Society of Jesus, and even though this ideal is in accord with the special character of the Order, the end of this Institute is neither entirely nor essentially vowed to the spirituality and the propagation of the cult of the Sacred Heart. The Society of Jesus is not an Institute of the Sacred Heart and its members are not held by the Constitutions or the Vows to conform their spirituality and their activities to this ideal, even though the latter may in different degrees attract and inspire many of its members. The cult of the Sacred Heart remains a simple devotion in their Order, a means of apostolate and, for many, a deepening of their own particular spirit.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart, important though it be in the eyes of members of the Society of Jesus, is but one of the works of the Institute. It does not inform it. It is not the Institute itself, its essence, the end of its apostolate nor the basis of its spirit, of its interior and spiritual life, of its organisation. Moreover it is one of the works of the Order. It is subject to certain restrictions, as is stressed elsewhere in the correspondence between Vaugirard and Issoudun and between Father Ramiere and Montlucon. Finally Father Ramiere's project consisted solely in re-organising an existing work whose spirit and internal structure he had to retain.

The two Founders, on the other hand, were not restricted by any of these limitations, and were at liberty to act in any way they thought would be profitable to the realisation of their ideal in its plenitude. Both plans were to mature and expand in distinctly different ways as it subsequently turned out.

Often we have seen in the history of the Church that God has used the individual personality of a particular Founder to cope with the needs of the age in local circumstances. Father Ramiere, for example, looked upon devotion to the Sacred Heart from the point of view of the Society of Jesus in which he had been educated and formed. To him, naturally, the Society and its apostolate came first, and devotion to the Sacred Heart was but one of many means of exercising this apostolate. The other two commenced where Father Ramiere left off. For them Devotion to the Sacred Heart was to be the essential spirit, and chief work, of their Societies. Fundamentally, they were to be Institutes dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and their ideal was to spread devotion to this most Sacred Heart. Looking back, we may say that this is the reason, in the Providence of God, why Father Chevalier himself did not become a Jesuit in spite of his close personal contact with their Society. He was convinced that he had a mission to fulfil, whose object was to honour the Sacred Heart as the very essence of its life, and not merely as one of its works. For both Father Chevalier and Mlle. de Montaignac the Devotion to the Sacred Heart was to be the ideal and end of their Institutes, which were to be organised from this point of view.

In the early stages Father Chevalier had looked to the Jesuits, as a stable, well-organised Society for help, "but he had always made it clear was to be the end and object of his own mission, as his correspondence with Vaugirard clearly indicates. He had written: "The Institute will be essentially devoted to the cause of the Sacred Heart and its propagation."

Although he had written to Father Le Blanc that his Institute would be "A daughter of your own" he made it clear that this was in reference to works which concerned devotion to the Sacred Heart.

At no time did he consider merging his Institute with that of the Jesuits, but he wished to be united with them in the Sacred Heart, just as Father Clorivere's Society of the Sacred Heart had been in former days.

The ideal of both Father Chevalier and Mlle de Montaignac was, then, to establish a new Institute whose members would be entirely devoted to the glorification of the Heart of Jesus. These members would be formed in this spirit, and their spirituality shaped along its lines, no matter in what field of the apostolate their activities lay.

As we have seen many times before, Father Chevalier was convinced that devotion to the Sacred Heart was the remedy for the religious indifference and social evils of the age, and his Missionaries were instructed to work for this end and no matter where they were, to labour for the establishment of the reign of the Sacred Heart in the souls of men. This was to be their apostolate. By their prayers, their work, their preaching they must ever be striving to awaken in the hearts of men a spirit of love for and reparation to the Sacred Heart. This must not be presented merely as a simple devotion one amongst many - but as the vital and essential form of their spirituality, the motif and soul of their interior and exterior life. They will find in that Heart," he wrote, "all the necessary means of sanctifying themselves, and then the ability to share that sanctification with others."

A universal Institute dedicated to the Sacred Heart presents the Heart of Our Lord to its members as the end and model of perfection, and offers them the means of canonical perfection by a life of imitation of the virtues of the Sacred Heart. It was love that prompted Our Saviour to consecrate Himself entirely to the Will of His Father by His Life of Purity and Poverty. "Behold, I come to do Thy Will, O Lord." (Heb X. 7)

In the Love of His Heart, Christ invites each one of us to follow Him, and His infinite sanctity provokes the most perfect aspirations in our souls. This is the reason why the Institute was to find its most perfect and full expression in the canonical religious life. "However," - and here we quote Father Chevalier's words from the Plan of the Association of the Priests of the Sacred Heart - "the Sacred Heart is the model of all perfection, and He wishes to reign in the hearts of all men. His Missionaries must establish this reign in the souls of people of goodwill according to the dispositions of each." This is why we find in association with the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart the Secular Priests, and the laity who wished to consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart, each following the perfection proper to his state of life.

And to quote again from the Plan of Association: "Besides the motive of personal sanctification, the Church has need of Apostles to spread the Devotion and so this new religious organisation in honour of the Sacred Heart has been formed."

Father Chevalier had expressed all these ideas several times in his brochures from 1864 onwards, but in 1869, when he was seeking recognition of the Society from Rome, he drew up the more precise Formula Institute. After having remarked that numerous religious priests and lay-people wished to form an organisation to honour the Sacred Heart more perfectly, the text read: "In order to afford this salutary devotion towards the Heart of Jesus the necessary means of widespread propaganda, whether it be amongst the laity or the clergy, it was deemed fitting to establish a Religious Society, whose object would be to make better known and loved the Sacred Heart of our Saviour. Its members have been given the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, because their glorious mission is to honour the Sacred Heart, to manifest the treasures and graces which It contains, and to make reparation for the outrages inflicted on it by mankind. Of the Society just cited we have given the first formula, adding to this a short resume of the other two associations, i.e., that of the Secular Priests to that of the laity whereby the Religious Society, properly so-called, attains its principal end." The second part deals with the Association of Secular Clergy. It states: "Since the devotion to the Sacred Heart affords the secular clergy as well as the religious, the means of sanctification, both of themselves and their neighbour, there is annexed to the Society an Association of Secular priests who are dedicated to and fight for the same cause but with different weapons.

Thus, the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart really consists of two societies, namely the principal and regular Society, whose members live in community and a secondary society of secular priests who live out in the world, These priests are intimately united with the regular Society by their common love of the Sacred Heart, and they aim to reach a state of perfection in their particular walk of life by this intimate union of hearts.

Part III of the Formula deals with the Third Order. It commences by stressing the fact that devotion to the Sacred Heart is a salutary means of sanctification and salvation for the laity also. It points out that the name, Third Order, is to be interpreted in the analogous sense, and not in the strictly canonical sense.

Behind all this organisation of the various associations was the obvious desire of Father Chevalier to honour and glorify the Sacred Heart by every means possible. It explains his close affinity with the Jesuits, especially with Father Ramiere and his Apostles of Prayer.

But the Apostolate of Prayer was not exactly what Father Chevalier was seeking. His ideas were more comprehensive regarding what he wished to establish, although Father Ramiere's movement was one of the means he could use.

PART VII The Spirit of the Apostolate of Prayer

The Apostolate of Prayer really originated through the desire of the Jesuit Scholastics, who were waiting with "veritable impatience" to set out for the Missions, Father Gautrelet showed them how they could be Apostles "immediately and for the rest of their lives" by a life of prayer, united to that of Our Lord praying and immolated in the Tabernacle.(15) We can say, then, that the Apostolate of Prayer was mainly for souls who could not take an active part in missionary endeavour, those preparing for the priesthood, and lay-people out in the world. The first essential for its members was to make a daily offering of all their thoughts words and deeds in union with Our Blessed Lord.(16) The movement also embraced those souls who by their daily circumstances, had little opportunity for apostolic work, and the many who were of good will, but weak and hesitant in their spirituality.

It was pointed out that the Apostolate of Prayer was more a "movement of the spirit" than a "special practice." (17) It was to be a spiritual nourishment, and enticement to do good when the occasion presented itself". More especially, it was a movement to awaken in Christian souls the necessity of honouring the Sacred Heart by a life of Prayer, good works, and suffering. Prayer divorced from good works, is not very fruitful, just as good works without the spirit of prayer are suspect, to say the least. (18) This is why Father Ramiere always emphasised that the members must be motivated by a true spirit of religious zeal in both their prayers and their actions. Zeal is the principle, the soul, and the fruit of the movement. (19) Father Parra, who wrote the life of Father Ramiere, remarks that it was mainly a movement for zealous people out in the world - a form of lay-apostolate. (20) The object was not merely one for the individual sanctity of the members, but envisaged the united aggregate of prayers and good works of a League of zealous Christians to be offered to God and the Sacred Heart for the good of the Church. The only condition was the sincere morning offering of each day, as cited in Article two. (21)

Good and useful as this holy movement was, Father Chevalier was looking for something more extensive, and already he had his own Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Father Ramiere understood this, as his letter of 22nd November, 1868, to Mlle. de Montaignac indicates: "Since the Fathers of Issoudun have established their Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it would be indiscreet of me to ask you for as active a co-operation as has been proposed to you by them. Father Ramiere had ideas of making his Association a kind of Mother Institution to the other, and one which would, as it were, supervise them. Defending himself against those who maintained he was changing the character of the movement, he wrote: "A work is only altered when one modifies or destroys its principles; it is perfected when those principles are developed." (22) Since incorporation in Christ was the principle of the Apostolate of Prayer and as Father Ramiere himself remarked "devotion to Christ is summarised in devotion to His Sacred Heart", the Association was destined to become a League of the Sacred Heart. (23)

We can understand that not everyone in those days, when devotion to the Sacred Heart was still considered by many as a novelty, agreed with this synthesis of Father Ramiere. Even the devout advocates of devotion to the Sacred Heart were not always in agreement with the form under which Father Ramiere wished to propagate the devotion. Father Chevalier and Mlle. de Montaignac, for example, did not agree that all the Association's confraternities and Third Orders should adopt the direction of the Apostolate of Prayer.

Father Parra tells us that Father Ramiere was convinced that the "era of the Sacred Heart had arrived," and that he expanded his ideas with an eagerness and confidence for which he was often reproached. Father Ramiere himself informed Mlle. de Montaignac that he had received special lights on the subject.

Father Gautrelet had divided the members into groups of twelve after the methods used by the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. Father Ramiere looked to these groups for the success of the movement. He used to refer to them as "those whose business it is to propagate the devotion; and who will find in the Apostolate the fulfilment of their pious aspirations. By uniting their forces, they increase their strength. Father Ramiere argued that it was better for the members of the various associations, who were the most active for doing good in their various localities, to be united in the one organisation, thus avoiding the cross-purposes which often occurred amongst societies striving for the same end. Naturally, this idea was not received favourably by the leaders of the various associations, who were accustomed to meet each month to receive directions from the diocesan and general Councils of the Apostolate. They regarded Father Ramiere's intention as presuming too much authority. His attitude to both Issoudun and Moutlucon was that they were superfluous associations, if they did not accept the form he had given the Apostolate of Prayer, or refuse to become instruments in his League.

This is why he remarked that Montlucon "could not be grafted on to Issoudun, but must remain a different branch even if from the same trunk."

Knowing that the priests of Issoudun were seeking approval of their Institute as a Religious Congregation with vows, a General Council and set rules, he was not anxious that Montlucon should be dependent on it.

He had thought as he wrote in the Messenger of 1863 that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were merely to be Priests of the Sacred Heart, without vows or a form of community life. The only thing necessary, he argued, was that priests should be motivated by a common love of the Sacred Heart, which would be their link, and offer them the means of obtaining their objects. "How happy I would be," he wrote, "if the Apostolate of Prayer and the Messenger of the Sacred Heart could combine to present to the souls of people in the world, to priests and laity a unified way of honouring the Sacred Heart." (27)

He was anxious that Montlucon would resolve itself into a kind of superior association, under the direction of the Apostolate of Prayer, much the same as diocesan unions of priests were constituted. He realised that some form of religious and community life was necessary as a basis and centre for the Movement, but did not favour the members wearing a religious habit after the custom of Mlle. Volpicelli's followers. (28) Mlle. de Bruyere sums up the situation by remarking that between Montlucon and Father Ramiere there was discord not only concerning points of detail, but on the essential constitution. (29)

At the time when Father Ramiere was writing to Mlle. de Montaignac dissuading her from union with Issoudun, Father Chevalier had already presented his "Formula Institute" to Rome, recommending that members of the Third Order should not take vows, or engage themselves in works beyond the scope of their state in life.

After Father Vandel came into the story and after the foundation of the Apostolic School, Father Piperon wrote: "During the ensuing years two great projects were uppermost in the Founder's mind - the completion of the church, and the composition of the Constitutions.

Until this time we really had no set Constitutions. We lived according to the Rules of the early days of the Society. The Novitiate existed in rather an elementary state. It consisted more in spending time in Community Life than in following an orderly set of Rules with regular exercises.

The time had come to give the Society a definite Constitution, and to establish a regular and canonical Novitiate.

Father Chevalier worked long hours in drawing up the Constitutions in order to give his Congregation the form and spirit he desired." (30)

We have already spoken of the part that Father Ramiere played in drawing up the rules for the Association of Secular Priests and the later contribution that Father Vandel made, but it was not till the first half of the year 1866 that the complete "Formula Instituti" was presented to the Archbishop of Bourges.

Here again Father Ramiere was in disagreement. On August 19th he wrote to Montlucon: "I am not happy about the result of the Archbishop's examination of the plan for the three Societies of the Sacred Heart before it has been approved by the Holy See. The few words which Father Chevalier has written to me on the subject led me to believe that the examiners would make the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart similar to the 101 associations established in the various dioceses. I consider that the Plan for the Third Order is too complicated, and that the Rules for the sacerdotal association will cause difficulties with the bishops. If you take away the two chief fields of activity from the Society, what is there to distinguish it from other associations? Father Chevalier said he would answer these objections, when he furnished me with this information, but I have heard nothing from him since."

A month later, on the 17th September, he wrote in happier terms: "Father Chevalier has informed me that the examiners appointed by the Archbishop have approved of the whole Plan of the Society with its three branches, let us hope and pray that this triple plan will now be approved by Rome. Such an approval would be the assurance of the success of the work."

Ever since his visit to Rome, in 1867, in company with the Archbishop, Father Chevalier's main concern was with the approbation of the Society. Four days before he left on this visit Father Georgelin had presented him with a tentative project which, however, mentioned only the

Missionaries themselves, and the associated Secular Clergy. The position of the Third Order had become so confused that Father Georgelin omitted it in his proposal for approbation. He was aware of the fact that already, at the beginning of 1868, efforts had been made to have it approved in Rome.

The following letter of Father Ramiere concerning the date of the first General Reunion of the Third Order at Montlucon is of interest: "During June, Father Chevalier will probably be in Rome. Would it not be better to await his return with definite information from the Holy See regarding the future of the Third Order before we hold the Reunion? We will then be able to draw up a definite constitution, which needless to say, is indispensable to the work."

PART VIII Statistics of the Society at End of 1868. Final Approbation.

In order that the Institute would be more readily approved in Rome, it was decided to open a Novitiate at Montlucon, with Father Guyot as Novice Master. He was already the Director General of the Third Order, and Parish Priest of St. Paul, in that portion of the town across the River Cher. Mlle. de Montaignac wrote to the members of the Third Order at the time: "I ask you to pray for our Superiors and that the Novitiate here in Montlucon will be blessed. I have no need to stress the importance of this newly-born work. You know that Father Chevalier is about to set out for Rome to seek the official approbation of the Society. Our good wishes go with him."

While Father Chevalier was preparing for his journey to Rome, a suitable site was purchased and the building begun for the Novitiate. It was situated in la Rue Victor Hugo about five minutes' walk from the church, and about half an hour from Mlle. de Montaignac's quarters. In the ledger of the Apostolic School there is an entry for 40,000 francs for the building and furnishing of the new building.(32) Before going to Rome, Father Chevalier and his Missionaries sought the goodwill of many bishops in whose dioceses they had at times worked giving missions or propagating devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The happy result was that on the 25th December the day the Archbishop of Bourges gave his Nihil Obstat to the request, no fewer than twenty five bishops had promised their support. A few days later they were able to add the words "and still more have answered favourably."(33)

In the official request to be presented to the Holy See it was stressed that the foundation of the new Institute was to counteract the spirit of irreligion and indifferentism with which France was afflicted, by teaching the people the devotion to the Sacred Heart such as He had revealed Himself to Saint Margaret Mary. How could the people learn of the treasures of Mercy of this Sacred Heart except by the preaching of Missionaries?

"It is, therefore, necessary to send missionaries who will preach the Heart of Jesus, and will reveal to the generations to come the superabundant riches of His grace and goodness towards us. That is why there have been founded Missionaries of this Divine Heart. It is important that priests be formed for this special vocation in order to make known its efficacy and to apply it to the world."

After recalling the early support given the Society by His Eminence, Cardinal du Pont, and stressing the ardent support of his present successor, the document proceeds: "The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart wish to bind themselves with the three simple vows of religion. Not only will they give themselves wholeheartedly to the pursuit of apostolic works, but, if it pleases His Holiness, they will pledge themselves as a sacred duty, and for the edification of the world, to give the example of a more austere life of religious perfection.

Then the document gives the present situation of the Institute. There were five houses, the Mother House being at Issoudun, where there were fifteen priests and three Lay-Brothers'.

In Montlucon there was the Novice Master with ten Novices. At the Apostolic School in Chezal-Benoit nine priests were engaged in teaching one hundred and twenty students, and at the Clerical School in the same town other priests (the number is not noted) are engaged in training boys in the rudiments of science and languages, especially Latin, with a view to assuring future recruits for the Society (36)

The fifth house was at Tournus, where six priests were engaged in the general Catholic education of youth.

It was added that there were associations and affiliations in the dioceses of Bourges, Moulins and Autun under the direction of Issoudun.

Finally, it was stated that numerous secular priests were associated with the Society in spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The financial resources of the Institute was put down as 500,000 francs.

And so at the beginning of February 1869 Father Chevalier set out for Rome with the Constitutions of the Society, the vital document in which was contained all the aspirations of his apostolic spirit the fruit of his long meditations his hopes for the future.(37)

On February 13th he wrote: "I have been in Rome eight days. To-day I was able to present our petition to the Sacred Congregation. Everything points to a favourable reception and to the final approbation of our young Society. Pray that it will be so. Later to-day I am due to meet the Holy Father."

We have already given an account of this audience with His Holiness Pope Pius IX and the consequent happy results for the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Writing to Issoudun Father Chevalier told his confreres that the Holy Father "listened with interest to the history of our small Society.

He has assured me that he will gladly approve of it, as soon as he receives the report from the Sacred Congregation. Last Friday I handed the document to the authorities, and they gave me every hope of a favourable outcome. The result appears certain, but it will take some time to be finalised, and I will not be able to wait for the decision. I hope to be back in Issoudun in 15 days' time."

In order to hasten the procedure Mgr. de La Tour d'Auvergne wrote a personal letter to the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation.

The kindly Archbishop wrote to Father Chevalier on the 20th February telling him that he was sending his secretary, Father Droun, to Rome with the letter, by the next coach.

On March 3rd. Mlle. de Montaignac wrote to Mdme. de Battet : "We have excellent news from Father Chevalier. He has told me of the good reception he got from the consultors of the Sacred Congregation, who are examining the Constitutions."

Actually the approval was given before Father Chevalier left Rome. A note to Father Georgelin brought the good news: "I have left Rome. I am carrying with me the document of approval of our Congregation. The Sacred Congregation expressed its pleasure and satisfaction with the Constitutions - and the spirit which animates them. How we must thank God for His mercy. I hope to be in Issoudun on the 19th March."

The Decree, given on March 8th, stated that in the audience granted on March 5th to the Secretary of the Congregation of Religious, His Holiness had praised and encouraged the Society "amplissimis verbis." Permission was given to organise and develop the Society, but the Constitutions were to be carefully studied, on account of some remarks made about them in certain quarters, and they would be approved at a future date, with modifications if necessary.

His Grace of Bourges was immediately notified of the Decree and also of certain observations. The relevant letters were published in the *Analecta Juris Pontifici*, 1869.

The observations of the Sacred Congregation concerned the following points:

- (1) The authorization of the Holy See regarding the erection of new Novitiates and Provinces as the Society grew.
 - (2) The approbation by the Holy See of resolutions passed by the General Chapter.
 - (3) Authorisation for the Bishops to confide the direction of the Seminary to other Institutes.
 - (4) The transmission of parishes to missionaries, a thing considered risky.
 - (5) The prohibition against sending letters to ecclesiastical authorities without the permission of the Superior.
- The "manifestatio conscientiae" was to be limited to exterior violations of the Rules and Constitutions.

The letter to the Archbishop stated that these constitutions, modified according to the above could be presented anew for approbation after a given period of experimentation.

Many of the items contained in the official Decree are of interest:

First of all there was a certain amount of consternation when the 'historical' part of the Decree erroneously referred to the Society as that of "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," but this was proved to be but an error by the copyist, who elsewhere writes the correct title "Missionari del S. Cuore di Gesu nella Diocesi de Bourges in Francia." The "Semaine" of Bourges - the Catholic weekly paper - corrected the error in its translation of the official text.

The important thing was that the approbation was given to "This pious Congregation, as an Institute whose members take simple vows, and are under the direction of a Superior General." The decree does not specifically mention the three divisions of the Society, but it stresses the fact that the approbation according to the terms of the Formula is granted to the Congregation in its capacity as a "Regular Society."

After the publication of the decree, Montlucon naturally wished to know if the Third Order had been approved. On the 24th July, Father Ramiere wrote to Mlle. de Montaignac: "The Brief accorded the Institute praises the Constitutions, which has special articles on the Association of Secular Priests (the second Order) and of the Association of Lay-people (the Third Order) so we can take that as a general approbation. Later on, when our rules are properly defined, we will be able to seek special approbation and favours for the Third Order, but at present it is too soon and not necessary. Undue haste would not be the right thing at the moment."

Mlle. de Montaignac's circular to her followers, dated August 1st, leaves no doubt of her affiliation and loyalty to Issoudun: "You have read in the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart the details of Father Chevalier's journey to Rome. The happy success of his interviews with the Holy Father and the Sacred Congregation will be for you, I am sure, a source of special gratitude. The Brief accorded the Institute of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, to which we are affiliated, is a precious approbation in itself of our Third Order, as it is specifically mentioned in the Constitutions as a branch of the Society, a complement of the Congregation."

In effect, although the two affiliations were not specifically, mentioned in the Decree of Approval, the fact that the "Formula Instituti" was accepted and approved meant that the "annexes" (the "adnexa et adjuncta," to quote the Latin text) were also approved.

In concluding this chapter, we quote from a letter of Mlle. de Montaignac dated 31st August, 1869, in which she tells us of the blessing of the Novitiate in Montlucon:

"August the 16th was one of those solemn days we will never forget. His Grace the Archbishop of Bourges deigned to come and bless the Novitiate of our Associates at Montlucon. The Bishop of Moulins and Rev. Father Chevalier were also present. It was a simple but beautiful ceremony which impressed those privileged to witness it.(39). That evening, the two Bishops visited our Orphanage and Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne gave the little children a special blessing."

Mlle. de Montaignac was busy during these months in preparing for her journey to Issoudun to be present at the solemn ceremony of the Crowning of the Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Since June she had written to her friends asking them to attend. "The ceremonies of the coronation," she wrote, "must bring you to Issoudun. It will be magnificent."

CHAPTER XVII AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS – 1669

PART I The Crowning of the Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

With his usual energy, disregard of weariness, and counting as nothing any sacrifice he could make for the glory of Mary, Our Mother, Father Chevalier, on his return to Issoudun, immediately began preparations for the ceremony of the Crowning of the Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.(1) The ceremony was to take place on the fitting date of 8th September. There was much to be organised - the decoration of the streets, the advertisements and propaganda, the arrangements with the Police and Railways and the invitations to the many important people concerned. To accommodate these latter and the large number of pilgrims expected it was necessary to call on the hospitality of the towns-people, as the hotels and guesthouses would not be able to cope with such a crowd. We can read of all the details of preparation in the Annals of 1869.

The day was one without compare for Issoudun. After a week of inclement weather, the sun appeared in all its splendour, with not a cloud in the sky. The town was gaily decorated with garlands of ferns and flowers. Each street and square had its Arch of Triumph, every house displayed its banner in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Fifteen members of the hierarchy attended at the invitation of the venerable Archbishop of Bourges, together with other notable ecclesiastics and over 700 priests from all parts of France. The civic and military authorities were well represented, and the number of pilgrims was estimated at several thousands.(3)

According to the local paper, the "Echo" "the Railway Station has been a hive of activity now for eight days, and Issoudun has never seen so many people before. All the town, it would seem has taken part in the ceremony."

In order to prepare the minds and souls of the pilgrims for the solemn occasion, Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne had himself written an exposition and defence of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The immediate preparation consisted of a special Triduum, during which priests from various Orders and parishes heard Confessions and distributed Holy Communion. On the Feast-day itself the Masses began at midnight, and continued till noon. At 1 a.m. Mgr. of Bourges blessed Our Lady's Chapel and consecrated the Altar while Mgr. of Autun consecrated the high-Altar in the Basilica. The Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by the Archbishop and the Bishop of Poitiers. Mgr. Pie, preached the occasional discourse.

For the large crowd of pilgrims who could not gain admittance to the Basilica, an altar had been erected on a temporary platform in front of the church. Here the Bishop of Puy celebrated Mass and addressed the gathering. The military band supplied the sacred music for the occasion. In the afternoon a solemn procession, some two miles in length, took place through the main streets of the town. On its return to the Basilica Mgr. Lebreton, the Bishop of Tulle and one of the outstanding orators of his time, preached the occasional sermon.

Then approached the solemn moment of the ceremony - the Crowning of the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne in a final allocution explained the significance of the coronation and exhorted the people to have a lively devotion to the Mother of God. Finally, on this memorable day the whole town was illuminated with brilliant lights during the hours of the night.

In a letter to her friend, Mme. Tresca, Mlle de Montaignac gave her impression of the festivities: "I have been enraptured with this pilgrimage to Issoudun. The ceremony was indeed a splendid one. I was very impressed with the devotion of the Missionaries to all that pertained to the glory of God and the Blessed Virgin."

"Our work is similar to theirs and by accomplishing it we are fulfilling the Will of God and His designs for the expansion of the devotion to the Sacred Heart."

During the three weeks that Mlle de Montaignac spent in Issoudun it was decided that the Third Order would open a Retreat-House in that town, close to the Basilica. (We will treat more fully with this venture in the second volume of this work.)

PART II Father Chevalier is summoned to Rome.

At the height of these festivities whilst "every heart was filled with a lively and holy joy," Father Chevalier himself was plunged in a deep sadness and worry. When the final preparations had just been completed and when the bells in the tower of the Basilica were ringing out their

joyful invitation to the solemn High Mass, Father Founder had received a profound shock. The Archbishop, who was staying with the Missionaries, had called him to his room and read him a letter from the Holy Office in Rome, which a postman had just delivered.

"You have been summoned to Rome," the prelate told him, "and you must take with you all the articles which have been written and printed on the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

Father Chevalier, who had not expected anything of this nature, was dumbfounded.

"Your Grace," he cried in his distress, "What has happened? Why this call to the Holy Office on this day of all days, and at this hour? What am I going to do?" "My dear Father," the Archbishop, no less saddened than the Founder, replied: "First of all, you must not give way to despair. Read the letter, put it in a safe place and tomorrow we will consider what we have to do."

Then Father Chevalier remarked that he felt obliged to call a halt to the ceremonies and conclude the pilgrimage there and then, the wise Archbishop continued: "You will obey the Holy See and resolve to follow its instructions. The rest concerns me alone at this hour. We will carry out the programme of festivities as you have arranged them. Nothing shall hinder the ceremonies, as we have received no instruction to the contrary. In the meantime go about your work as if nothing has happened today, and, above all, be master of yourself. You can console yourself in handing over all responsibility to me."

Father Piperon has recorded that he had occasion to go to Father Chevalier's room soon after this interview, and found him in tears. "Whatever is the matter with you," I asked anxiously. "What has caused all this?" He handed me the letter. "Read this, he said." "He then confided the reason of his sorrow and fears to me, and for a while was overcome. However the sharing of his worries seemed to calm him somewhat, and after an effort he became his old self again." "For the rest of the day he went about his duties attending the ceremonies, meeting the guests and pilgrims as though nothing had happened."

"The Archbishop himself also showed no sign of his grief and anxiety and the day was one of joy for the numerous participants, who little dreamt of the heavy hearts of the two main persons concerned." "God had so willed that His servant should not completely exult in the triumph of Mary, his Mother. He had mixed some gall in the sweet cup of joy and happiness on that memorable day. But is not suffering the lot of generous souls - the bread by which the Sacred Heart nourishes them?"

"It was a day of triumph for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, but a day of anguish and sorrow for Her apostle. In this way our well-beloved Mother made sure there would be nothing of human pride and glory in the heart of Her son and servant and She was preparing him for the work ahead."

All that had been written and printed on the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was immediately sent to Rome. At the same time the Archbishop sent a copy of his authorisation in which he established the legitimacy of the new devotion and he publicised the ceremony of the Crowning of the Statue. In Rome the matter was studied with great care. The examinations, (of which we will speak more fully later on) did not result in any sentence. To quote Father Piperon's words in the Annals of 1908 "No proof was established against the orthodoxy of the title. Its denunciation was rejected. Was not this an approbation of the doctrine of the devotion, even though an indirect one, and an encouragement to go on propagating it with a new assurance and a more ardent zeal? We can say then that the ceremony of the Crowning was an important milestone in the history of the devotion, an outstanding event in its extraordinary development.(4)

We can well understand why the Archbishop wrote in his letter of thanks on 10th September: "From now on, the 8th September will remain a memorable date in the history of our beloved Berry - an imperishable and blessed which will live forever in our souls. From now on, Issoudun is a town inseparably associated with the glory of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

Part III The Novitiate

Four days after the ceremony at Issoudun, on Sunday the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, Father Guyot opened the new Novitiate at Montlucon. The Reverend Father, who was the parish priest of Saint Paul's in the town, was the first 'canonical' Novice Master.

It would seem that the parish of Saint Paul, which was an industrial area, would not be very suitable for a Novitiate - hardly a place for recollection! No one knew this better than Father Guyot, but the scarcity of personnel and accommodation in those days of the Society made the choice necessary.

A few years after the Year of 1870, the circumstances changed considerably and the Novitiate was removed to the small town of Saint-Gerand-le-Puy, to the old 'chateau' of the same name, where it remained till the expulsions of 1880. However, Montlucon had served the purpose of giving the Novices a canonical, religious training according to the Constitutions.(5)

Part IV The General Council, and the Canonical Vows.

On the 12th September Father Ramiere wrote to Mlle. de Montaignac telling her that Father Chevalier had invited him to give the Missionaries their annual retreat during the coming week. This retreat had special significance for the young Society, as, according to the decree of approbation, a General Council was to be held at its completion, when the Superior General and his Consultors were to be elected. Also there was to a profession of vows according to Canon Law.

We have an account of the procedure and resolutions of the Council, probably from the hand of the newly-appointed Secretary General, Father Bazire, and certainly not from that of Father Chevalier, as was generally supposed. The retreat commenced on the evening of the 19th September, and the citation tells us that the following priests were present: Fathers Chevalier (Superior), Piperon, Vandel, Mousseaux, Bazire, Georgelin, Malabat, Vigerat, Albert, Maria, Moreau and Hamel. Also present was the Abbe Guillemin, one of the directors of the school at Tournus.

On the 26th September, the eve of the closure of the retreat, the election of the Superior General and the Consultors was held. Father Ramiere presided over the proceedings. Those who voted in the election were Father Chevalier, Piperon, Vandel, Mousseaux, Bazire, Georgelin and Malabat, Father Guyot the Parish priest of Montlucon, Father Durin, parish priest of Nocq, Father Miniot, sub-director of the Apostolic School, Fathers Pion and Ledoux, although absent, all recorded their vote by mail.

Father Chevalier was unanimously elected as Superior General, and the Consultors were Fathers Piperon, Vandel, Guyot and Bazire. Father Chevalier appointed Father Piperon as first Assistant and Father Vandel as second. Father was also appointed as General Bursar, and Father Vandel as Minister with the power of giving permissions formerly reserved to Father Chevalier. In a marginal note we are told that Fathers Piperon and Vandel were unanimously elected as 1st and 2nd Consultors, and that Father Guyot (spelt in the text as Guillot) received ten votes and Father Bazire eleven.

We still have, fortunately, as a precious souvenir, the scrap of paper on which Father Chevalier recorded his vote - preserved, no doubt by Father Georgelin who has jotted down some annotations on it. It read: J.M.J. I nominate as Superior General of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart the Reverend Charles Piperon, M.S.C. and for Consultors Reverend Father's Guyot, M.S.C., Bazire M.S.C., Miniot, M.S.C., and Jules Chevalier, M.S.C." There were, then, 13 retreatants of which seven, who were finally professed, cast their votes. There were five who were not at the retreat, but sent their votes by mail, making twelve votes in all. Father Piperon, when composing the "Register of Professed" some years later remarks that Father Jouet was present at the first General Chapter on the 26th February, 1869, and that he took his vows with the other members of the Society on 28th September that year, but since Father Jouet's name is not mentioned in Father Bazire's account of the retreat and Council (which would have been strange for such a notable personality) we conclude that here Father Piperon's memory was a little astray.

Father Chevalier and his confreres took the opportunity of the retreat, following closely on the important ceremony of the Crowning of Our Lady's Statue, to take, or renew, their vows which from, now on were obligatory if one wished to be a member of the Society. The Actes of Father Bazire also give an account of this ceremony: "On the Sunday morning of the retreat Father Ramiere celebrated Mass at 5 a.m. in the presence of the Community. After Holy Communion, the Fathers took the perpetual vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Stability in the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart according to the Constitutions approved by the Holy Father in the Decree of 8th March, 1869. Here is the formula used: "....." Unfortunately all we have in the document is a blank space, obviously intended for the formula, which, however, was never inserted.

The Actes continue: "The following priests took their perpetual vows the order mentioned: Father; Chevalier, Piperon, Vandel, Mousseaux, Bazire, Georgelin and Albert, Father, Guyot and Ledoux pronounced their vows on the 20th October at the Novitiate in Montlucon in the presence of Father Chevalier, the Superior General."

The absence of a few names from the list perhaps needs some explanation.

First of all, that of Father Jouet, but we have already dealt with his case in Chapter XIII.

Father Miniot had to remain at Chezal-Benoit to look after the students, and so did not make the retreat. Father Piperon has noted that he took his vows on the 26th September, but whether he came to Issoudun for the ceremony, or pronounced his vows separately, as did Father Guyot and Ledoux, we do not know.

Father Malabat, who is mentioned as making the retreat did not take any vows. It would seem that, much to Father Chevalier's sorrow, he left the Society at this junction.

Father Depigny in one of his Articles in the Annals mentions him as one of those who were professed on the 28th September, (?) but his name is definitely not on the official list of those professed.

The following letter of Father Ramiere to Mlle de Montaignac, 3rd October, confirms this, and would suggest Father Malabat was asked to leave. "It is difficult for me to tell you by letter all about the retreat at Issoudun, more so since you would have heard it all by word of mouth from Father Guyot at this stage. But I can certainly assure you of my sentiments of consolation after the experience. The Heart of Jesus and His gentle Mother have blessed the work.

I had misgivings on two points at the beginning of the Exercises, namely, certain doubts about the interior organisation of the Society, and concern about the bad effect produced by the illusions of one of its members. However, the results were beyond all we could have hoped for."

The Actes tell us that Father Malabat took part in the elections, so he must have stayed on till the end of the retreat, but he certainly did not take the vows.

One last remark about the dates mentioned concerning which there is a certain confusion. The Actes tell us that the retreat commenced on the 19th September, and the election took place on the 26th, which was a Sunday. We are told also that this was "on the eve of the closure of the retreat" which was the 28th. Father Piperon states this as the correct date in his Register, and being Our Lady's Feast Day that would be normal.(8) The Actes record the vows as being taken on the Monday, so we conclude that was on the Saturday, the 25th, as Father Georgelin has noted.

On that day then, the 27th September, seven Fathers - (perhaps eight, if Father Miniot is included) took their vows at Issoudun and two at Montlucon, according to Father Piperon's testimony. However the Actes put the date for these latter two as the 20th October.

Others in the Society were to take their vows at a later date, while some remained on for the time being as auxiliary members. Since the vows now were of obligation for full membership of the Society, several priests left the Congregation. And so by 1869, the first phase in the life of the Society, that of its infancy, if we can speak thus, was completed. It was now, fourteen years and several months since Father Chevalier and his first confrere took possession of the humble house in Issoudun.

If the origin of the Congregation, such as Father Chevalier had conceived it, dates back to the memorable 8th December 1854, its organisation, such as he left it at his death, began during the last week of September 1869. From that date, the young Congregation possessed its own complete, canonical organisation. Under the protection of Holy Mother, the Church, which had adopted the Society, it was now to develop along the normal lines of a Religious Congregation, in spite of all the difficulties and trials which the future held for it. (9)

CHAPTER XVIII

SPIRITUAL TRENDS.

THE SPIRITUAL AFFINITIES

PART I The Work of Founder a Result of Character and Unity of Purpose,

The origin of Father Chevalier's vocation, and its realisation throughout its many vicissitudes have been the object of the preceding chapters.

But the exterior events do not always form the principal part in the history of a foundation, and the most stirring happenings are not always the most important in the story of its growth.

In order to gain a proper estimate and understanding of a founder it is necessary to appreciate the unity of purpose and the fidelity, which characterised his life and activity in the pursuit of his object.

The history of a creative spirit manifests itself, above all, in the work it has accomplished. That work is the expression of its genius.

The pursuit of a worthy and clearly perceived object, the practical judgment in choosing the means to accomplish it; the unswerving will in putting these means into action, - such are the usual and permanent characteristics of the lives of men who have achieved great things over the centuries.

The manner and accomplishments of these heroes whether in religion or out in the world, are valued by the historian in the measure in which they made themselves one with their work; in the measure of their dedication to the solution of its essential problems. (1)

That Father Chevalier was convinced of this truth is shown by the exordiums he used in his sermons on great saints such as St. Ignatius, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Alphonsus.

Preaching on the feast day of St. Alphonsus he began: "In speaking to you today of a man whose name is on everyone's lips and in all our hearts, we naturally ask: 'What did he do? What did he achieve?'

In answering that question, wherein lies the mystery of the destiny of any hero, we are accustomed to look to the man's personality for signs of genius, to his actions for signs of a great heart and a great character.

All these wonderful traits can be found and admired in the Saint whose feast we celebrate today.

St. Alphonsus was a man of genius, for he knew how to create admirable works sealed with the mark of durability!

St. Alphonsus was a man of great heart, a man capable of profound love for his fellow-men. Likewise he was a man of strong character, possessing an outstanding firmness of purpose, yet an eminent virtue of patience. Like all men of strong personality, he always acted with vigour tempered by a persevering calmness. Of such a man we can say 'Fecit mirabilia in vita sua.'

The work of these great souls does not end with their human lives. I find in the tomb of St. Alphonsus, as I do in that of Christ Himself, the germs of fecundity, which from time to time springs to life in the future ages their achievements more glorious in the eyes of posterity."(2)

In the course of events we have discerned this spiritual destiny in the case of Father Chevalier, and we can see that, as time went on, he gradually gained a clear awareness of the important role of his spiritual mission. Having gradually become master of his own soul he was given that spirit of wisdom which in turn gave him the vital force to lead those who wished to follow him. This work was ultimately blessed as is always the case of a man who tends towards God "in fide et in speculo."

In this we find the crowning of his work, - his value to the Church, as a Founder.

In these following chapters entitled "Spiritual Trends" we hope to treat of the particular form of spirituality which characterised the Founder's work - at least in its fundamental ideas.

PART II Father Chevalier's Fidelity to his Mission. Influence of St. Ignatius His Loyalty to the Holy See,

In 1868 Father Chevalier submitted his "Formula Institute Missionariorum Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu" to the Holy See and the Decree of Approval was granted on 8th March, 1689.

In the Formula he had set out the conclusions he had arrived at after the various successes and failures of the early years.

The text of the document, especially in the Introduction - "De Opportunitate Instituti," and the sections on the "End and the Spirit of the Society" clearly indicate that the establishment of the project had been the ardent desire of Father Chevalier ever since his Seminary days, and that he regarded it as his life's work. This was the words of the text: "To establish a Society of priests and religious exclusively devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose mission would be to make known to souls the treasures of Love and Mercy which this Heart contains."

In establishing this work he was answering the fundamental question which every Christian must put to himself: "What does God expect me to do, and in what field of activity does he wish me to lose my life, so that I can find that of Christ?"

No one can say that Father Chevalier did not respond faithfully to the promptings of the Divine Will, nor accept the responsibility of his special mission and function in the Mystical Body of Christ.

The words of Dom Marmion apply to all those called to the religious life. "The Reason of our Vocation," he wrote, "is the desire Our Lord has to be served and glorified according to the spirit of the Order or Society we belong to."

If this is true for the ordinary subject, it is all the more so for a Founder whose duty it is to form the spirit of a particular Institute.

He, above all, must be faithful in his collaboration with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who alone can assure this true constancy by the love He infuses in human souls. The same author notes elsewhere: "Fidelity in all things is the delicate flower of love." (3)

We have had ample evidence in the preceding chapters that Father Chevalier acted always under the conviction of the necessity of this fidelity in his duties as a priest and a Founder.

This fidelity to the ideal and spirit of the Society, as he wished to found it, explains also why he did not adopt such otherwise valuable religious practices as Solemn Vows, recitation of the Office in Choir, strict enclosure etc.. We recall that he used to make his retreats with the Trappists, and how his confrere, Father Piperon had the nostalgic longing to join the contemplative life.

It was not just oversight or force of circumstances which led him not to adopt these practices of the strict Contemplative Orders.

His ideal was clear, - to found a Religious Institute whose members would lead the community life and take the simple vows of religion. He defended and maintained this ideal with tenacity, even in times when its observance did not seem feasible in the form he wished it.

Even at the risk of losing certain members of his early Congregation, he insisted on these two essential points, and inserted them as the important feature of the Formula.

We can repeat here Father Piperon's eulogy of his strong character: "He was endowed with practical and good judgment and a firm will, which no difficulty could shake. When, after serious reflection, he had made up his mind on a point, he carried it through in spite of any obstacle, which he always seemed to surmount or adjust. If for the time being the obstacle appeared insurmountable, he would patiently await more favourable circumstances, and when the right moment arrived he would take up the project again with renewed energy."(4)

He realised that these practices of the stricter Orders did not conform to the ideal of the Institute he wished to found, and he was convinced that this ideal had been received from God, - the ideal of a priestly and apostolic community of Religious, dedicated to the cause of the Sacred Heart.

In the abandonment of his own will to the Will of God, Father Chevalier was not precisely aiming to place his Society in any particular theoretical rank of religious life, nor was he influenced by the many speculative theories as to whether the contemplative or the active apostolic life constituted the higher form of spirituality. He was content to be led along as God directed him, and to give his Institute and its spirit to the men to whom God would give the vocation to follow him. He expected of them the same spirit of fidelity to the life as he himself showed to the directions of the Holy Ghost.

Fidelity is the touchstone of a Founder and his disciples, and Father Chevalier and his work were blessed with this spirit of fidelity. Of course, after an Institute has been definitely established it is naturally possible to place it in one or other of the categories of religious and apostolic life. This was actually and formally done by the Chapter of 1897 in its Directorium Generale. Basing its decision on the "End of the Society" as worded in the Decree of Approval the Council stated that the Congregation was a perfect form of religious life combining both the contemplative and active forms, aiming at the same time to praise God by prayer and meditation, and to work for the salvation of souls.(5)

It is clear that if the opinion of St. Thomas regarding the combined form of religious, i.e. the contemplative and the active, restricts it to "the pulpit and the pen," then it does not apply to the life of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, for theirs embraces all the apostolic works of the Church, as did the life of the Apostles themselves.

However, it is permissible to ask if this interpretation does not read too much into the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, and by so doing is missing the essential point. For, after all, the perfection of Christian life is to be found fundamentally in charity. Modern commentators on the works of St. Thomas have agreed that the mind of the Doctor was that Apostolic grace and charity transcend the apparent antimony of the contemplative and active lives harmonising them in their mutual object.(6)

For the Founders of Societies which are a combination of the contemplative and the active apostolate, the adage applies "contemplari et contemplata alii tradere." Contemplation and action complement one another, uniting their forces in a life of faith and charity in the ideal of perfection, so aptly presented by St. Paul in the Third Chapter of Epistle to the Ephesians.

These sentiments are expressed by Father Chevalier himself in his Plan of Association of Priests. "The ministers of the Church," he wrote, will find the most simple and surest means of sanctifying themselves and others in intimately uniting themselves to the Diving Heart of Jesus, in sharing His sentiments, in co-operating with His merciful designs - in a word, in becoming priests of the Sacred Heart."(7)

In preceding chapters we have often spoken of the Founder's view on what constituted perfection, especially as shown in his correspondent with the Jesuits at Vaugirard.

It is not surprising to find many of these views based on those of the great St. Ignatius himself. Father Galliard in speaking of the Founder of the Jesuits and the times in which he lived has written: "In the new impetus given to religious life as a reaction to the worldly spirit of the Renaissance and the major heresies, it was left to St. Ignatius and his followers to harmonise the contemplative and active forms of religious community life, and make them compatible with the many diverse obligations of the priesthood. He turned his attention to such practical problems as the time to be given each day to prayer, to the time of meditation particularly, and to the form these spiritual exercises should take, to the greatest spiritual benefit of the members of the Society."

These of course, were details which every Founder considered most important, as, for example St. Vincent de Paul in his injunctions to his Daughters of Charity.(8) He warned these religious that they must not try to imitate the rules of the Carmelites who were less active, but must adhere to their own rules and practices.(9)

We recall that Father Chevalier himself, when drawing up the Rules and Constitutions, had emphasised the necessity of meditation and had stipulated the time to be given to it each day. He likewise ordered that the Exercises of St. Ignatius be followed in the annual retreats, and that the thirty days' retreat would be made by the novices. Father Nadal, one of St. Ignatius' biographers, summed up the apostolic ideal and end of the Jesuit order as follows : "To work for the salvation of souls, because Christ has loved them and died for them, and to achieve this work under complete obedience to the Visible Head of the Church."

As we have seen many times in the past pages. Father Chevalier had the deepest sense of obedience to the Holy See, and never acted without the concurrence of ecclesiastical authority. In his Formula Institute, he insisted that his followers should do the same: "The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart will always show the most profound respect, the most complete devotion, and the most perfect obedience to the Supreme Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ, the Pilot of the barque of the Church, outside which there is no salvation. They will exercise the greatest care never to estrange themselves in their words, in their writings, in public or in private from the authority of the Supreme Pontiff and his decrees."(10)

Part III Affinities with the Spirit of the Society of Jesus

Eucharist, and when Father Nadal identifies contemplation with the illuminative way, such as it appears in the Second and Third weeks of the Spiritual Exercises, we can place at the side of this affirmation the words of Father Koppert M.S.C. who made a special study of the spirituality of Father Chevalier.

"The method of meditation and contemplation approved by Father Chevalier was to let each member take the life of Our Lord and study it minutely in the method he found most favourable. He who is looking for an approved method could not do better than follow that of St. Ignatius as set out in the Second and Third weeks of the 'Exercises.' The result sought is an intimate knowledge of Christ so that we may love Him more and follow Him more faithfully."

There are still extant many notes on the meditation made by Father Chevalier during the period from 6th December, 1869, to 2nd May, 1870, and they prove that he followed this method. We quote from his meditation on the Adoration of the Shepherds as an example:

"When I find myself in the presence of such an inspiring spectacle I can hear again the song of the Angels - 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo' - Glory be to Him, because He has sent us a Redeemer.

I keep repeating these words to myself, and offering my prayer of thanks: 'O Divine Heart of Jesus, make me know Thee more and more that I may love Thee more and more. Give me purity of heart, and courage to overcome my laziness of spirit. O Divine Heart of Jesus, grant me a lively faith that I may love only you.' And elsewhere he notes: "If God in His Infinite Goodness has created me from nothing, it is only because of His love for me. By glorifying Him and returning love for love, I will gain the crown of glory in eternity."

And again he expresses the wish to live only in the love of the Sacred Heart: "Jesus Himself was the first Missionary of His own Sacred Heart. He was the first to make known to men His infinite love for them. He begged His Heavenly Father to have pity on all men, especially those who remained indifferent to His teachings.

Everywhere and at all times Our Lord was engaged in the work of His mission. I then must employ all my time following His example by instructing those who are not living in His truth." He then prays for the spirit of prayer and charity, so that he may know and love the Sacred Heart more: "I desire, Dear Jesus, one thing only - Your love. That will suffice for me."

And so there developed in the soul of Father Chevalier the realisation of what was to be the "specific note," the "special grace" of the Society he had founded. To use the term of Father Nadal in his reference to St. Ignatius and his Society "in actione contemplativus" (contemplative in action).

It was to be a life of practical faith expressing itself in apostolic action motivated by the forces of contemplation, - in other words a combination of the two forms of human life the necessity of which has always been demanded in the tradition of the apostolate.

When Father de Guibert in his work "Mystique Ignatienne" sought to define the 'characteristic spirit' of St. Ignatius he quoted Mgr. Saudreau who had distinguished into three categories the various souls to whom God had granted His infused graces - namely the 'Seraphic,' 'Cherubic,' and 'Angelic.' In this arbitrary distinction the author refers to the graces of the will as the 'seraphic' class, to those of the intelligence as 'cherubic' and those of the memory and imagination as 'angelic.'

After having remarked that the distinction between the 'seraphic' and the 'cherubic' forms of contemplation are 'ancient and classic' de Guibert says there are three corresponding types of families of contemplation which go to make up Catholic Mysticism.

Since the Society founded by St. Ignatius is primarily an active Society we can say that it does not belong to the 'cherubic' class or in other words it belongs to what Don. Chautard calls the "mysticism of action." (13)-(14)

The foundation of the life of an apostle "in actione contemplativus" is Union with God. Prayer and religious activity have no meaning, life or unity without this union with God. It is the bond of the apostle with God in prayer as well as in action. It gives meaning and unity to his life from the fact that, whilst being engaged in temporal things he is yet above them: whilst being engrossed in worldly preoccupations he does not lose his peace of soul; whilst being confronted with all manner of difficulties, he is never discouraged; whilst living in the world, he is not of the world. Even in moments of emergency he is able by his love to solicit the help of God who is above all emergency. Even in moments of anguish when souls escape his apostolic efforts, he leaves them to God whom no soul escapes. Above all that is taking place around him in terms of time, he lives in the immutable and peaceful terms of eternity, for his heart is fixed in God."(15)

This union with God will find its own character according to the aspect under which God and Christ are approached, but also according to the particular school of spirituality in which the soul has been trained. "In a minor way" says Mgr. Saudreau, "human souls can adore as the angels do. They are all filled with admiration of the Divine Attributes, but with the Seraphim love is the dominant feature, whereas light and understanding is that of the Cherubim.(16) And so we find this distinction also in human spirituality.

The spirituality of St. Ignatius, was not so much of the 'Seraphic' or 'Cherubic' type but of the 'Angelic.' Not that the grace of love or of intelligence was lacking, but the emphasis is more on the note of "Service," If the spirituality of the Jesuits, in its many varieties, centred as it is in the service of God and Christ, is something real and concrete; it is because it is one of "execution" more than "speculation." This is not merely a reaction to the spirit of humanism of the 16th century, but a result of the particular form of mysticism which God ordained that the Saint should follow. It fits in with his temperament, his inclinations and the needs of his time - proof again of the wise Providence with which God directs the souls of men.

Let us now compare the mission and spiritual outlook of Father Chevalier with that of St. Ignatius. The Founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had the same desire as the saintly Founder of the Jesuits to combat the moral and social ills of the particular period in which he lived, "of an age when," to quote his own words, - "the salvation of souls was in tragic peril."

Here, like St. Ignatius, he was prepared to depart from the ancient form of monasticism to found a society which would be a combination of the contemplative and the active way of life - "la vie superieure" to use Father Nadal's expression. His Society was not founded only to offset the moral evils of the age but to correct the many theological errors which were having their repercussions on the lives of the faithful themselves. It was precisely in these two campaigns that the value of the work consisted - a concept in conformity with the evangelical idea itself. The means were to be a life with the vows of religion, and an asceticism in harmony with them, a striving for perfection in co-operation with grace.

The text of the "Formula Institute" in the section, "de opportunitate institute," clearly sets out the role that devotion to the Sacred Heart is to play in combating the evils of the period and emphasis is put on what we might call the "apostolic virtues."

But if Father Chevalier's spiritual outlook, like that of St. Ignatius is not of the 'Cherubic' school, there are, nevertheless, characteristic differences between the two.

"The dominant characteristic of the grace which St. Ignatius received was the desire to serve God and Christ, and this service was not so much a consequence of infused love as the central point of all the graces he received.

With Father Chevalier, we can say that his service was the direct consequence of love, which was the incentive of all his activity.

If St. Ignatius belongs to the 'Angelic' school, Father Chevalier may be stated as being of the 'seraphic' group, i.e., of those who received graces pertaining to the will. Motivated by the grace of love, they strive to do good with ardour and strength of purpose. The 'seraphic' souls strive primarily to prove to God their love, and are ever seeking means of pleasing Him. "What can I do for God? What work can I undertake for His Glory?" are the questions they are constantly asking themselves. Their work is achieved more by the impulse of love than by the light of the intellect, and we might say that primarily they are more anxious to suffer and work for God than to contemplate the mysteries of His Being.(19)

"Father Chevalier's whole life," wrote Father Piperon in his Notice, was summarised in his efforts to achieve the spirit of his Society as expressed in its motto: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere Loved'. All he did was for the love of Jesus. That was the sublime ideal which inspired all his work, and kept alive, even to his last hours on earth, the fervour of his early days. His mission was to make known and loved the Adorable Heart of Christ. Following the example of their Founder, may his disciples have only this same desire and may it be the 'sole motive of their activities'. Let them immolate themselves without reserve so that the Heart of Jesus may be everywhere and always loved and glorified." (20)

We recall the Founder's words, when he was a seminarian on the occasion of the professor's treating the doctrine of the Love of the Pierced Heart: "This doctrine went straight to my heart and the more it took possession of me, the more I felt its new charms."

As we have seen, from this ardent love came his mission for the foundation of his Society. Again we remember his remark to Father Maugenest that the remedy for the social and moral evils of the times was in devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Symbol of all Love and Charity.

That is why his Institute became a Society of priests exclusively devoted to the Sacred Heart, in order to sanctify themselves and their brothers.

According to Mgr. Saudrean, the souls in the seraphic category are accorded spiritual lights and graces as well as the cherubic group but once they have received them they put them into action.

This activity, while not being the essence of their spirituality, gives it definite form and purpose, and becomes a prayer in itself. They wish to love God, to serve Him with a firm will, and even in times of spiritual dryness and weariness they press on to their object.

God blesses their collaboration with His grace, for the worth of any soul is measured by its fidelity and not by the faculties granted it.

If the seraphic soul does not obey the promptings of the will enticing it to sacrifice, then the light of intelligence is denied it.

On the other hand the soul which is constantly faithful is given further grace, and is a supple instrument in the hands of God in His divine plan of apostolate. Their activity is rewarded with outstanding success(21)

"These souls," continues Mgr. Saudrean, "are always seeking means of proving their love for God, but the end is more in mind than the means. These latter are but the steps by which they mount to God. Anything that appeals to them as causing joy to the Heart of God becomes the object of their zeal, and for this very reason they achieve greatness in their undertakings. And is it not for the same reason that these souls seem always restless till they have found new means of expressing their love for God, seizing every propitious opportunity to put this love to good effect?

This is why on occasions Father Chevalier himself rather scared the Jesuits of Vaugirard with his tendency to undertake works without minutely calculating the possibilities and the resources.

An example of this was when, after losing Father Maugenest and during the crisis of the ensuing months, he pushed ahead with his project, energised by his ardent love of the Sacred Heart and confiding in the Providence of God, even though often times he could not see the ultimate result.

During this period of groping as we have shown in previous chapters, the dominant characteristic of the Founder was his complete confidence resulting from his love of the Sacred Heart.

We can deduce from his own writings and those of Father Piperon that the special lights, which he received, were those mainly pertaining to his Congregation. It became clear in his mind that it was to be an apostolic union of priests, living in community professing the vows of religion, and totally devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The concept of his Society was more strongly confirmed after his visit to Paray-le-Monial, and he pursued its realisation with all the strength of his soul. Although it was fundamentally the work of God, the details of its practical realisation were left to his own judgment.

As we have seen, he based the Rules of the Society on those of the Seminary where he was educated and when it was necessary to form them into regular Constitutions he consulted the Jesuit Fathers of Vaugirard, Paris. Although he freely followed their advice and counsel in most matters, he did not hesitate to disagree with them on points which he considered were not in harmony with his fundamental plan.

In the beginning when the form of his Society was taking shape he was inclined to copy the ways of the Society of Jesus, although the Jesuits warned him that this was not possible in many matters.

From the many set-backs, obstacles and disappointments there gradually emerged the conviction that God wished him to be the main author of the work himself, and looking back we can see how, even unconsciously, he was guided to the point where he could draw up clearly the "Formula Institute." During this process we can see a soul powerfully led by love, but not always having a clear vision of the road ahead.

It was in one such moment of uncertainty that he thought he should hand over the government of his newly-born Society to the experienced Father Vandel.

It is a characteristic of the seraphic group of souls that its members concentrate on the end they are striving to achieve more than the details of the means towards this end. The situation, circumstances, even the desires and characters of their collaborators, are of secondary importance in the pursuit of their object.

Mgr. Saudrean points out that there is always the danger that such a soul unless it has good judgment, may become too stubborn and headstrong, and consequently the action of God on such a one is to make him or her more supple and humble.(22)

This could well be the explanation of the many upsets and temporary failures in the projects of Father Chevalier particularly after the year 1870. He himself was the first to admit it: "Whenever I decided to take a certain line of action, God guided me in a different direction. Anything I undertook by myself seemed to fail. Any success I had was due entirely to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady."

However, such was the ardour of his love that it always inspired him to push forward and to combat each difficulty as he met it. It was a love that assured fidelity and perseverance, and it was precisely in these virtues he revealed the worth of his soul. God rewarded his offering and his sacrifices by blessing his Institute, and he lived to see the realisation of the ideal, which inspired all his activity and for which he had battled so strenuously.

His uncertainty in the early stages as to the exact form he wished to give the Society, added to his natural tenacity of spirit in pursuing an ideal explains why he tentatively looked to the Society of Jesus as a model on which to found his Institute.

God had infused the spirit of love into his heart from which emerged the ideal of founding a Society whose object would be the spreading of love. This would be the form of his apostolate.

The constitution of the Society of Jesus as an active, organised and approved Institute appealed to him as the model on which he could base the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

His close contact with the Jesuits began at the time he was launching the movements of the Association of Secular Priests, and the Third Order and the favourable reception given to him by Father Le Blanc would have encouraged him to follow the Jesuit methods.

The Fathers of Vaugirard, however, saw difficulties in the proposal because the characters of the two Institutes were not identical and mode of life quite different.

The Jesuit idea of the service of Our Lord being in the nature of a soldier to his King is formally, different, and postulates a different type of life from that of an Institute based on the spirit of mutual love between Redeemer and Redeemed - in a friendship of brotherly love.

Father Chevalier hoped to unite the two ideals. He envisaged an ideal which would keep intact the spirit of his mission and yet follow the organisation of the Society of Jesus.

Even when, after the examination of the various schemes presented by the Jesuits, it was obvious that this combination was not feasible, he still tried to maintain it where possible, but he was to find that it would lead into many difficulties.

The conflict between the exigencies of the spirit of his Society and a regime hardly compatible with it led later on to dissatisfaction and strife especially during the crisis that the Society faced in the nineties of the last century, with which we will deal in later pages.

We find an echo of this divergence in the "Formula Institute," which was to persist in the Constitutions till the promulgation of the "Directorium Commune" of 1897. These documents of the early Society clearly express that the Congregation was wholly devoted to the Sacred Heart and its spirit was one of love, but the Sacred Heart is referred to as its "military sign," its "standard." "The very name Missionaries of the Sacred Heart," says the text, "indicates under what flag its members will fight and with what spirit they will be animated." This military language disappears in the text which follows immediately: "Those who take this glorious and sweet name will find in it an incentive to practise the virtues of the Divine Heart and to propagate its devotion, with an ever-increasing ardour. They will not consider themselves worthy of so beautiful a title until they are earnestly striving to live the life of this same Sacred Heart."(23) We notice again the contrast in the two following texts: "Obedience will render the Society truly invincible, as a well-disciplined army drawn up for battle," and "This commendable virtue (Obedience) vivified by Charity, will make the members of the Institute as children of the same mother in one household. It will make them true children of the Sacred Heart, who, although He was God and the King of Kings, subjected Himself to those He lived with in a spirit of admirable humility, and He became obedient under death, even the death of the Cross."(24)

Because his Society was one based on love rather than service, Father Chevalier always emphasised the importance of obedience, if its mission were to be accomplished. While other Institutes gained their object by a rapid organization in keeping with their particular spirit, his Society must gain its strength by its fidelity to the spirit of love. "Those who enter our Society" he said, "can afford to see themselves surpassed by their brothers in knowledge, mortification and poverty, but when it is a matter of obedience and mutual charity, they must not allow anyone to surpass them.(25) The motive for practising these virtues will be the example of Christ who became obedient even unto death."

The analogies and expressions from discipline and army life are not the best suited to indicate an obedience through love, certainly not the relationship between mother and children. They were finally considered as being alien to the spirit of the Congregation, and were revised after the "Directorium Commune" of 1897 when a new wording of the Constitutions was drawn up. The expression "signum militare" was dropped, and the Fathers of the Chapter substituted the "propia nota," the main clause of which read - "that the whole life of the members should be distinguished and informed by a sincere and ever-fervent love of the Divine Incarnate Heart - a love which would be the specific mark, - the "signaculum," of their sanctity, and their inspiration to imitate the virtues of that Sacred Heart."(26) And the "Directorium Commune" adds: "This love will imbue them with the effective charity of Christ towards their fellow-men and especially, with a spirit of great mercy to the 'lost sheep' whom they will not hesitate, following the example of Our Lord, to carry back to the fold on their shoulders."

In the revision of the Constitutions the Chapter developed this idea the Apostolate, and changed the more elaborate wording of the "Formula Institute" regarding the general end of the Society to the simple statement that the members are working "directly and essentially for the two fold end of the glory of God and the good of souls."

The Fathers of the Chapter agreed that Obedience through the motive of Supernatural Charity was more desirable than that from military discipline. Right order and discipline were, of course, necessary in any Institute, but the members must always be mindful of the example of Our Lord, Who was obedient even unto death.(27)

Just as Christ showed Himself respectful to all lawfully constituted authority, so His Missionaries will subject themselves to the Superiors through love of Him.

From the beginning Father Chevalier had emphasised this necessary virtue. "The Master of Novices," he wrote, "will strive to make his subject love, cherish and practise the virtues of obedience and humility which must be the main virtues of the Congregation, because they were those of the Heart of Jesus." He had clearly incorporated this injunction in the Early Constitutions and the Formula."

As important as it is to know the theory of the part that love, knowledge and service play in the religious life, it is still more necessary to keep constantly before one's mind the object of this love, knowledge and service.

PART IV Main Features of the Spirituality of Father Chevalier.

We have no need to stress the fact all Father Chevalier's spirituality was informed by his ardent love of the Sacred Heart - a result achieved in his life by a continuous and progressive experience.

We would be misunderstanding this spirituality and distorting the historical reality if we thought this experience was a sudden awareness of the mystery of the Sacred Heart and not the result of a gradual growth in knowledge and holiness accompanied by its many trials and disappointments.

We recall that the origin of his vocation centred around his desire to be a missionary, and apostle, even before he fully understood the part Christ must occupy in any missionary endeavour.

This desire was granted him by the Holy Spirit, and it was fostered by the influence of his contact with the Sulpicians, from whom he learnt to fashion his concept of Christ and His virtues, the basis of his love of and devotion for the Sacred Heart. To live interiorly, as Christ Himself lived, was his ideal to reproduce in Himself the dispositions and sentiments of Christ as revealed in the mystery of His Sacred Heart,

He understood that the redemptive work of Christ was entrusted to His Church, and that nothing was dearer to the Heart of God, after His love for the Word made Flesh and the Holy Spirit, than the Church on earth. From this understanding came his own love and devotion to the church, and his true sense of "Religion," which inspired all his activity and spiritual devotions. For him the expression "The hearts of the faithful" immediately evoked the sentiments of love and respect.

His spiritual directors had, early in his life, shown Him the way to God through the virtues of the Sacred Humanity of Christ, especially in suffering and interior dispositions which were to be the key-points of his spirituality. He strove for union with Christ, who reigns in our hearts through Faith and Charity, Who nourishes us with the Blessed Eucharist, and invites us to make an offering of our lives for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Christ was presented to him not as at any particular moment of His life, but as the complete Christ of History, the Son of God made man, Who through the various stages, of His life gave us the perfect example of service, and Who now from Heaven continues His mission by every means that love can conceive. From Heaven He inspires men to union with God through union with Himself.

This deep sense of religion was the reason why he was so conscious - or what he often referred to as the "evil of modern times" and of his conviction that its remedy was to be found in the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

"Protestantism," he wrote, "has created in Europe a spirit of independence and revolt, and the holiest power there is in the world, the Catholic Church, which speaks in the name of God is ignored."

Then there was the pernicious influence of Jansenism, which undermined the authority of the Church, and made the practice of religion, especially the reception of the Sacraments, almost impossible.

To quote his words again. "The work of Hell does not stop there. Protestantism and Jansenism have led to Rationalism which attempts to replace the worship of God by the idolatry of materialism and the senses.

Under the name of philosophy, reason has dared to attack and deny the very fundamental doctrines of religion, such as the Divinity of Christ and the Existence of God."(29)

Convinced that Christ is our Life, and that we attain salvation only through our incorporation with Him, Father Chevalier was preaching as early as his Seminary days on the words "In Him we live, move and have our being." "Christ," he wrote, "is a consuming fire. He makes us sharers of His Divinity."

To separate ourselves from Him is to deform our manhood, which is the masterpiece of His Creation. It is precisely in this separation of the souls of men from their Creator that the evils of modern times consist, with its concomitant spirit of selfishness and lowering of Christian morals.

In the Sulpician form of spirituality the perfection of the priesthood is put before priests and the laity in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest. Father Chevalier was deeply imbued with a profound love and respect for Christ's Priesthood, and his ideal was to imitate the High Priest in His love, His sacrifice and His zeal for souls. He was conscious of the intimate union which must exist between one's personal sanctification and the success of the apostolate.

We have ample testimony of this as far back as his Seminary days, as Father Piperon has recorded in his writing. During the years of the 1860's he composed a prayer to be recited in common by the priests of the Society and the Associated priests which read: "O Jesus, Saviour and Sanctifier of Souls, guard Thy priests from a spirit of complacency, especially us who have the privilege of being Missionaries of Thy Adorable Heart. Pray your Heavenly Father that He preserve us in your love and sanctify us in Truth so that we may glorify you and manifest your virtues to the world. Since we are your Apostles ask Him to Preserve us from evil, and keep us close to you in the bonds of charity. As you are one with the Father, so may we all be one in Your Divine Heart and Sentiments, consecrated to you now and in eternity. Amen."(30)

One might object that the spirituality of Father Olier places too much accent on the indignity of man before the Divine Majesty resulting in a negative and pessimistic effect. However, the general trend of his writings reveals a positive and affective devotion to Christ and the Blessed Eucharist. He presents God to us as an accessible Father, who is ever ready to approach and receive us, (31) and Whom we can love with friendship and holy familiarity. (32)

Father Pottier, S.J. in his treatise on the spiritual influences of those times has naively remarked that "owing to a pious equivocation, the disciples of Father Olier were able to say 'Love is adoration and adoration is love' and he wonders if this is in keeping with strict theological definition. Be this as it may, we find Father Chevalier with his Sulpician training putting the accent more on the theological virtue of charity than on the moral virtue of religion in all his spiritual outlook and activity. Had not Father Olier instructed him: "Live by love, since it is the nourishment of the soul. Unite yourself to the dispositions of the holy and Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Whom I desire to see you hidden and consumed?"(33, 34)

Another aspect of the spirituality of Father Chevalier was his deep devotion to the Passion and Death of Our Lord. He realised that the end and the crowning work of the Sacrifice of Christ was His Death on the Cross. The expression, "Christ crucified," occurs time and time again in his writings and sermons, as far back as Seminary days. In the Rules he associated the expression with that of the Sacred Heart, uniting the two in his explanation of the function of the Sovereign Priest.

On the 15th August, 1900 he wrote to his Missionaries: "We have despoiled ourselves of earthly things in order to put on Christ Crucified. We have been called to religious life in a Society wholly devoted to the Sacred Heart."(35) He repeatedly emphasised that the Crucified Sovereign Priest was the model of all priests on earth, and in his discourse on the Sacred Heart and the Precious Blood he often used the expression "our brothers covered with the Blood of our God."

Closely associated with his love for the Sacred Heart was his deep devotion to the Blessed Eucharist, evident from his earliest years. The theme of his sermons and instructions on this point was that anyone who wished to take part in the religion of Our Lord must live with the hidden Christ in the Tabernacle, where He is constantly interceding for us with His Heavenly Father, where He is perpetually offering Himself in Sacrifice, Praise and Adoration, and where He is nourishing His Church. This holy Sacrament is the bond which unites us with Christ and makes us one with the Father through Him.

Through the Blessed Sacrament we participate in the life of Christ, and there learn to unite our own lives to His through the grace of deeper understanding and imitation of His virtues. There He teaches us respect for and devotion to His Father; there He teaches us a more appreciative love of our neighbour; there we learn His own virtue of humility and gain the strength to fight against sin and the spirit of the world.

"Jesus Christ is in the Blessed Sacrament," he wrote, "because of the great love He has for His Father and His infinite love of mankind. He does not shun the sinner, but patiently and silently waits for him, anxious to communicate His love and favours to him, unmindful of past ingratitude. That is why He gives Himself entirely to each soul seeking Him, not content with having died for all mankind on Calvary, but anxious to pour forth His Precious Blood for each soul individually. His love for the human race is expressed in His personal love for each individual soul. This great love of Christ for human souls must be the abiding disposition of all His priests, who should at all times be ready to spend themselves for the salvation of souls and the reign of Christ on earth."(36)

For Father Chevalier the centre of his devotion to the Sacred Heart was the Blessed Eucharist. There he found His Incarnate God His Sovereign Priest, and his inspiration to imitate the virtues of the Sacred Heart particularly that of Charity.

"Being true disciples of Him who professed to be meek and humble of Heart the members of our Society shall practise the virtues of humility and self-abnegation, together with a spirit of gentleness and charity towards the neighbour. Following the example of the Good Shepherd, they will lead the sheep by kindness and love."

During his Seminary days Father Chevalier took a practical interest in the devotion to the Interior Life of Jesus and Mary. The object of this devotion was to make the students conscious of the interior lives of Jesus and His Mother, and so imitate their spirit of prayer and recollection.

In his manuscript entitled "Catechism of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart," he explains by question and answer what he understands by this devotion and by devotion in general.

Part V Some General Ideas on the nature of Devotion

A devotion, according to the Decree of the Beatification of St. Margaret Mary, is "a pious practice in the exercise of the virtue of Religion."

"Religion," wrote Father Chevalier, "is the supernatural virtue by which man renders to God, to the Three Persons of the Trinity, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Angels and Saints, the honour which is due to them." Consequently the worship or the honour

rendered is in proportion to the dignity, the sanctity and the perfection of the Person concerned."

The basis on which any devotion rests is the virtue of religion, practised in the ideal of its perfection, and expressing itself in the honouring of certain holy persons and objects.

By reason of its nature, a devotion is a special cult, whose scope and limits are decided by its object and adapted by the Church to the manner and needs of the time. It is exercised by frequent acts of piety and religion, which are works of supererogation and therefore not obligatory. (38)(39)

Father Chevalier concludes: "Devotions are optional and we are free to embrace them or disregard them at will. However, their object is to procure the glory of God by the honouring of holy persons and things and to sanctify souls by inspiring them to undertake practices and good works in keeping with the spirit of the particular devotion.

The practices form the nature of the devotion, but we must remember they are merely the means to the end, namely the sanctification of the soul and a more perfect Christian Life. Devotion is distinguished from religion, strictly speaking, by the character of its practices and by its object. Religion is comprehensive, and embraces all that pertains to worship - persons and things, etc., - whereas devotion is singular and embraces but the one object. This is its characteristic: to choose the one object of veneration. Devotion is the complement of religion in so far as it selects some particular object of veneration to be honoured in a specific and explicit manner, and in this sense it goes further than the general virtue of religion in so far as it specializes in a particular cult. It gives formal and explicit honour to the object of its affection and veneration.(40)

It is important to remember that the main features in the religious life of Father Chevalier were his two great loves and devotions - the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He himself had listed in various categories the Persons who could become the object of devotion. First are the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity, then the Mother of God, the Angels and the Saints. Since Jesus Christ is both God and Man He is able to be honoured in a two-fold devotion. If one wishes to honour His Divinity it will be under the devotion to the Incarnate Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; and if His Humanity, under the devotion to the aspect of the life of Our Lord or His Blessed Mother - for example, to some particular period or event in their lives, to some particular mystery, title or virtue - the real objects of the devotion, of course, are the Persons honoured.

Father Vermeersch has written, "We honour Jesus Christ in a special way because He has shown such love. Love, then, constitutes the formal object of devotion to the Sacred Heart."(42) Father Chevalier also has written: "The formal object of devotion to the Sacred Heart is love - the love which Christ has for man; or, in other words, it is the person of Our Lord honoured in His love for men. Elsewhere he has written when speaking of the general principles of devotion: "The object of any devotion is the Person honoured under the aspect of the particular devotion concerned. This devotion depends on the material object, which presents in some sensible form the spiritual significance and formal object. There should be an obvious relationship between the material and formal objects of any devotion in keeping with the dignity of the person honoured, and free from any danger of idolatry or heresy

Symbolism, of course, plays an important role in the expressions of devotion, the natural and rational symbols representing the spiritual ideas involved. For example, the heart is not merely an organ of flesh but symbolises love, and, in the case of the Sacred Heart, the infinite love of God for man. The symbol becomes the material object including the formal object, or that which is symbolised, which, taken separately, represents the aspect under which the person is honoured. Thus we have distinct realities which are honoured together in the one symbolism.

"The material object," wrote Father Chevalier, "may be honoured apart from the formal aspect, as long as it is not regarded as an end in itself. It is really the means by which the Person is honoured.

All devotions then have a material object - at least all those which the Church allows us to practise publicly. All others are in the nature of private devotions, which flow from the piety of the heart, and can even be expressed exteriorly, provided they do not conflict with faith or morals and have due respect for the Saints."(44)

These general ideas of Father Chevalier on devotion will help us to gain a deeper understanding of his two great devotions, and enable us to estimate them more precisely in their true value.

CHAPTER XIX SPIRITUAL TRENDS: THE SACRED HEART

Part I The Object of the Devotion

Father Chevalier had adapted his devotion to the Sacred Heart along the lines of a special devotion and in the form in which he understood and described it. His interpretation of the devotion was in keeping with the teaching of the majority of the spiritual authors.

Father Vermeersch has written: "The special object of this devotion is the Heart of Jesus, with the Love it symbolises."(1) And Father Chevalier: "Devotion to the Sacred Heart has as its object the offering of a special worship to the Heart of Flesh of Our Lord and to the Love of which that Heart is the Source, the Life and the Symbol." He adds: "This devotion to the Heart of Our Lord and the Love it symbolises is distinct from the essential duties of religion which we owe Our Lord. Unlike these obligations it is not in itself a necessary form of worship."(2) Our religion obliges us to revere God as our Lord and Creator and Christ as our Redeemer, whereas devotion to the Sacred Heart in itself is not a matter of obligation. With Father Veermersch Father Chevalier taught that the material or exterior object of devotion to the Sacred Heart is the actual Heart of Flesh of Our Saviour.

We have seen in the last chapter that the formal object is the Love that filled the Heart of Christ for men or in other words we honour the human Heart of Christ burning with love for mankind. Again, Father Chevalier is in accord with Father Veermersch in affirming that the Heart of Our Lord and the Love which it symbolises form the one object of veneration. "Otherwise," concludes Fr. Veermersch with Father Terrien "there would be two devotions to the Sacred Heart."(3)

Our authors are equally in agreement on the various problems presented by the devotion. According to Father Chevalier, the love that is honoured is the "free activity of His Humanity" or more precisely in the words of the text already quoted: "the love for men by which this Heart is animated." "In presenting His physical Heart to us as the material object of the devotion, Our Lord has thereby shown us what is to be the spiritual object, as the Heart is the symbol of love."

In their expositions of the cult both Fathers Chevalier and Veermersch stress the fact that we are dealing with the living Heart of Christ, and both agree as to what is the final end of the devotion.

Father Chevalier writes to the point: "In our devotion to this Sacred Heart, so full of love for God and men, our own hearts, in their turn, are consumed by the fire of this love and so are able to conform themselves in all things to the perfect spirit of the love of God."(4)

We are surprised to find Fr. Veermersch, in the first editions of his work, making the following reference to Father Chevalier's interpretation of the devotion: "With Fr. Chevalier, the Founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart," he wrote, "the scope of the devotion is limitless. He finds the Heart of Jesus in the Word through Whom all things were made, and consequently the beginning of the devotion would go back as far as the creation of the world."(5)

Fr. Veermersch uses the expression, "the field of the devotion," but from the title of the chapter and the context it is apparent he is referring to the object of the devotion. Confusing the two notions, Fr. Veermersch forgets that the Sacred Heart, Who dominates the "field" of the devotion, is understood to have a wider significance than the mere object of the devotion. Whence then arises this difference of opinion?

Fr. Chevalier stresses the fact that God inaugurates a devotion as a spiritual experience, ordinarily by "inspiration, revelation or a series of events by which He reveals His Will in a definite manner to those He has chosen to propagate it." It is born and developed in the souls of its originators, and gives them the grace to propagate it. Handed on to others, it gradually loses its initial personal characteristics, but acquires others peculiar to the needs of the souls who embrace it. To quote the words of Bainvel: "Little by little it tends to disengage itself from its limited personal origin and to take shape as a distinct devotion with its own practices and prayers. It is now no longer a private subjective, personal relationship between Jesus and the soul of its originator but a wider and more objective devotion of the many. So to speak, it passes from the realm of mysticism to that of Christian asceticism. In other words, from its first growth in individual souls it blossoms into full flower by becoming a general movement, expanding gradually from soul to soul. It takes on the character of a social organisation.(6)

The devotion, then, is freed from, its original personal circumstances and the unique experiences of its originators and takes on a social form, or in modern terminology, it becomes an institution with its own objective content, structure and formula, less rich and intimate perhaps than in its early life, but more conducive to the fulfilment of God's designs in its regard. "For God," writes Father Chevalier, "permits the establishment of a devotion as a new proof of His Bounty and Love for men, adapted to the circumstances and needs of the time, and as a means of procuring His Glory and the sanctification of men."

A devotion should acquire a social form, free of individual influences, its formula and definition comprehensible to all and not just a speculative study for sublime minds.

A propos of this point Fr. Veermeersch laments: "What a mistake it is to read more into a devotion than its object warrants; to disperse its forces, which must eventually weaken it; to enshroud it with a vagueness which can have no influence on the soul. Let us keep our devotions exact, simple and free from all subtlety, so that they remain within the reach of all, and continue to stir the sensitive emotions of the soul. Any haziness of concept which seeks to give a devotion a grand appearance only serves to destroy it. A devotion should preserve intact the properties of a popular movement, destined not merely for the intellectually elite, but for the faithful generally."(7)

It is this social form that the Church recognises and approves as a means to a deeper spiritual life. At first she studies the official reports to make sure it is in keeping with sound Catholic doctrine, and then awaits the numerous requests for its ratification, in the meanwhile examining all the evidence, especially the experiences of adherents, to establish its validity and usefulness. We find the formulation and development of the devotion in the official decrees of the Church, wherein she gives us an exact definition of its object and enumerates the happy effects for the good of souls.

As Father Chevalier realised the importance of precise definition and formulation in the matter of a devotion as a means of sanctifying souls, he was always particular in his choice of terms in his instructions and sermons on the Sacred Heart. But anyone who wishes to expose a devotion as a means of sanctification should present it in an attractive and convincing manner, making clear what is the object, the character and means of that devotion and emphasising its importance.

In his pamphlets and later in his books, Father Chevalier faithfully followed this ideal in what Father Delaporte in his treatise on the Sacred Heart calls "a quasi-visionary style."(8) It was to the devotion that the Founder practised in his personal life that the Society and its spirit owe their existence.

Part II: The Sacred Heart, the Heart of the Sovereign Priest.

The comparison of this life of the Founder and the devotion which inspired and influenced it present certain problems which, however, are solved by the study of the ideal.

We have spoken of the effect produced by a devotion in a soul already favouring a certain type of spirituality, and we have dealt with the main traits of the spirituality of Father Chevalier. He had always before him, as his ideal, the entire Christ, Who has given us the example of the perfect religious. He strove to imitate Christ in all things, particularly in the sentiments of his inner life. He wished to live with Him and to die with Him. All his priestly activity was actuated by his ideal of Christ as the Sovereign Priest, and the Saviour of mankind, an ideal which produced in his soul an intimate love of Our Lord as Priest. He realised that, if he wished to be a living force in the Church, this ideal must nourish his whole life and soul. Since Christ is wholly present in the Blessed Eucharist, it was there that he found his strength, his faith and his love.

The devotion of the Founder to the Sacred Heart added a more intimate meaning to his devotion to Christ the Priest, because it concentrated everything around the personal love of the Redeemer for each one of us, a love that endured to the end. He wrote: "Religion permeated by this devotion is illuminated by an incomparable brilliance. It is like a sun casting its most fiery and purest light on the whole personality of Our Lord."

What little had been written on devotion to the Sacred Heart up to this time stressed the fact that its foundation was the hypostatic union of the Word with the material Heart of Our Lord with its immense love for men.

In his pastoral letter Mgr. Villele had written: "The devotion to the Sacred Heart is as old as Christianity itself, since it is associated with the devotion to the Incarnate Word to which it is hypostatically united. We ought then to unite our own hearts intimately with that of Jesus, and follow the exhortation of St. Paul to make our sentiments those of Christ Himself."(9)

Mgr. Languet teaches the same doctrine in his treatise on the revelations of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary emphasising the fact that the Sacred Heart represents the entire Christ and that love is the principle of all spirituality! "To honour the Sacred Heart," he writes, "is to honour the whole Christ. When we ourselves speak of offering our hearts to Him and consecrating our love to His, we are referring to the offering of our whole being. Happy is the soul who has found the way to the Heart of his Master and has opened it to others. Happy he who has taught others to meditate on this tender and compassionate love that Jesus has for each one of us, and to love Him in return." "Love is the fulfilment of the law, and so he who has found the most effective means of awakening and fostering love for God in his heart has at the same time found the most efficacious means of serving God. 'Plenitudo legis, dilectio.'"(10)

To quote Fr. Chevalier himself: "From the beginning this devotion has been the soul of Christian piety, for it is nothing but the expansion of charity."(11) This idea is expressed by the Founder even in his earliest writings which, though often treating of devotion in general, clearly state that devotion to the Sacred Heart is an expression of God's love for us and ours for Him. He often expressed his views to Father Maugenest on the social ills of the time and always remarked that their remedy was in the Heart of Jesus, which was Love and Charity. "This Heart," he says, "is entirely dedicated to our welfare, yet it is not loved by men and they are ignorant of the treasures it contains. He incorporated the well-known expression - "treasures of love and mercy which It contains" - in the Rules of the Society.

All that he understood concerning the interior life of Jesus he summarised under the one word, "Love". The interior life of the Sovereign Priest meant for him the Love in the Heart of the Redeemer. He had been taught that Christ became the Sovereign Priest in the Incarnation and so we find him preaching at Christmas on the Sacred Heart - "to whose glory I am consecrated."

"Everyone knows that the Mystery of the Incarnation, which we have just commemorated, is the result of God's love for man. 'Sic Deus dilexit mundum.' This immense unlimited love is enclosed in a Heart which is ready to give us all the treasure of Heaven itself. This is the great fact which we celebrate at Christmas. O ever memorable day when man could place his head on the breast of God in the form of a little child and hear His Heartbeats and feel its pulsations!

It was in the stable at Bethlehem at the foot of the Crib that the first adorers of Jesus gathered - the first disciples of that devotion to His Sacred Heart which must save the world."(12)

We have already encountered this same idea in the Founder's meditations on Christmas. Christ became the Sovereign Priest at the time of His birth and we find the element of sacrifice in all the mysteries of His life. In fact His life on earth was one unique Sacrifice. "The gospels are but the record of the compassion, mercy and love of the Heart of Jesus."(13)

Father Chevalier from his early days had been taught to regard the Blessed Eucharist as the inspiration to imitate the life of love and sacrifice of Our Lord. It was the living memorial of all the mysteries of Christ. In the Blessed Eucharist he found all the mysteries of the Redemption, the basis of all our hopes, the Heart of Our Lord. "In this Heart," he wrote, "are found all the motives of our Charity."(14) This Divine Heart, which daily unites Itself with each of His priests, will be for them "the Way, the Truth and the Life. This Heart is the Centre of all their acts of Faith and Love. It is the living Model of all their virtue, the Source of all their graces." "Their perfection, unity, stability and peace will be found only by the reproduction of the sentiments of this Heart in their own."(15)

"The climax of the oblation made by the Sovereign Priest was the Sacrifice of the Cross. It was in this Divine Heart that the great work of our salvation was accomplished, that the eternal alliance between God and man was effected, that the kiss of peace eternally sealed the bond between Justice and Mercy. Was it not in this Sacred Heart, as in a living Sanctuary, that the Sacraments, which give us life and salvation, were prepared, and from which they drew their virtue, their strength and their efficacy? Was it not in this Heart, as on a living Altar, that the Divine Saviour immolated Himself for the glory of His Father, and now daily offers Himself for us, and offers the sacrifices due to the Most High - the sacrifice of praise to honour His Majesty; the sacrifice of propitiation to expiate our sins, the sacrifice of thanksgiving in recognition of His favours, and the sacrifice of supplication to beg new graces day by day? Is it not from this Heart, as from an inexhaustible Source, that there daily flows a stream of grace, a stream of living waters that will flow on to life everlasting?" (16)

In his sermon on the Passion, Father Chevalier exclaimed: "The Passion of Our Saviour was the final gift from His Sacred Heart. Not only was the Heart of Jesus the principle of life in His Being, but It was the Fount from which flowed His Precious Blood for the salvation of souls. His Sacred Heart had prepared and formed this Blood which was to moisten the soil in the Garden of Gethsemane, which was to stain the cruel whips, which was to flow in the pretorium; this Blood which flowed from His Sacred Heart, Feet and Hands as He lay on the Cross. Was not this Your Blood, O Sacred Heart of Jesus? Was it not You Who washed the very sins of the world with it; Who poured it forth to save me? No wonder then that I should love You, that I should adore You! Your sacred Blood has fallen on me, has covered me, has inundated my very soul. It has penetrated, vivified and purified my being. O who will ever extol enough the excellence of this Sacred Heart, Whose Blood has been the price of the world's redemption?" (17)

Thus Father Chevalier found the Heart of the Sovereign Priest in all the mysteries of His divine life till His supreme sacrifice on the Cross, and he found these mysteries perpetuated in the Blessed Eucharist, the Sacrament of His infinite love. In his treatise on the "Qualities of the Heart of Jesus," he wrote:

"This is the Heart of a God - the Heart of a King, a Father, a Brother and a Friend. He desires that the sweetest and most intimate intercourse be established between His Heart and ours. He wishes us to become the confidants of all His secrets, thoughts and sentiments; that we speak with Him, heart to heart, about all that concerns and interests us. He had us in His Heart and thoughts throughout all the days of His mortal life. On the tree of the Cross He brought us forth to a new life of grace in the labour of incomprehensible suffering. Aware of our troubles, He nourishes us by His Own Being in the Blessed Eucharist."(18)

"In Jesus we find the dearest of friends, the purest, most loving and devoted of hearts that ever existed. St. John the Apostle who saw Him, heard Him, spoke with Him, shared His secrets and lay on His Breast, tells us in simple language: 'He was full of Grace and Truth,' - a constant subject, surely, for our meditations!"(19)

"Having been promised by God since the beginning of time for the redemption of the world, Jesus Christ must be the Centre around which all revolves. His Heart, which is the epitome of His whole Being, is the divine Light towards which the Prophets and the Patriarchs instinctively looked. He is the end of all things, the fulfilment of the Law, the Messiah so often prefigured and symbolised in the Old Testament. All that was written, spoken and accomplished by the chosen people of God had either direct or indirect reference to Jesus Christ and so to His Sacred Heart. That is why St. Margaret Mary remarked, 'The Heart of Jesus is the abyss of all power and love.'"(20)

In all his writings on the qualities of the Sacred Heart the emphasis is always placed on the Divinity of Our Lord. "We have only to study the Sacred Heart to know it is the Heart of a God Who wishes to be united to humanity by the bonds of love." (21)

In the Rules he had incorporated the phrase: "Heart of Jesus, only Source of Light, Truth and Life." For Father Chevalier to accept with faith and love the mystery of the Sacred Heart and its redemptive love was to understand better the "Length and the breadth, the height and the depth" of the mystery of Christ Himself and the part His Love plays in the trans-formation and sanctification of men. At a later date Father Chevalier was to develop in his writings the relationship of the God of Love and of the Blessed Trinity with the souls of men, but at this stage he concentrated principally on the Person of Our Lord.

Further to the quotations we have already given we came across the following idea in a sermon of the Founder on the terrestrial paradise: "The Sacred Heart is the home of the Blessed Trinity which we are permitted to enter by our baptism."(22)

In a letter to Fr. Ramiere he expresses himself as follows: "I welcome with happiness the opportunity of telling you how pleased I am with the publication of the Messenger of the Sacred Heart. You realise what has always been in my mind. You do well to make of the Sacred Heart the centre of the teachings of the Old as well as the New Testament, the pivot around which revolves all our Catholicism, the shining Light of the Church, the Soul of our souls, the source of our Love, the cradle of our holy religion, the origin of the Sacraments, the pledge of our reconciliation, as it is also the salvation of the world, the remedy of our evils and the armoury of Christians. That is how I understand devotion to the Sacred Heart. It embraces all; it answers everything. You appreciate, my dear Father, the relationship which exists between our work and yours. You see also, if our Society succeeds what its mission will be."

Three years later he again wrote to Father Ramiere: "I have read with great satisfaction your article in last March's edition of the Messenger entitled 'The Heart of Jesus, the life of men through the Incarnation.'

"Indeed without this adorable Heart and its mysterious influence there is nothing but death - the death of the soul, the intelligence and the heart. In spite of the fact that it is made up of various components, humanity is of the same blood and the same body - 'Unum corpus, multi sumus!'"

"The Heart which gives life to the members of this great body is the Heart of Jesus. He alone unites us and makes us one with God. The moment we separate ourselves from Him we separate ourselves from our brethren, and with the loss of the divine life we lose the true sentiment of human fraternity."

"This divine Heart is the centre around which all human hearts gravitate. It is the indissoluble bond which joins Heaven and earth, so long parted; it is the sacred bridge thrown over the fathomless abyss which separates the Divinity from humanity. It is the support of morality, its centre of gravity its light, its hope, its salvation. It is the Soul of souls, the Heart of hearts, the Life of lives."(23)

Such is the Heart in which Father Chevalier had placed all his faith, the object of his love and zeal - the Heart which he offered to all as their ideal. This Heart was for him the living compendium of the whole person of the Redeemer, the God with us, whose love embraced and expressed everything.

This was the Heart he presented to his companions in his Seminary days and to which they made reparation in the Blessed Eucharist. They implored this Divine Heart to save the Church and the world.

It was to this Heart that he dreamed of consecrating the priests of his Institute; a body of priests wholly dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the work of making known to men the treasures of love and mercy which it contains.

How often did he mention to Father Maugeness that he was firmly convinced that devotion to the Sacred Heart was the answer to the social ills of the time - a conviction which led to the establishment of the pact of 1855, wherein they pledged themselves to serve the Sacred Heart with a very special love and piety, for the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls.

In their chapel they erected a picture representing Our Lord as the Saviour of sinners. In the formula of their vows they consecrated themselves to this Sacred Heart, the Source of the Light, the Truth and the Way, and promised to make public the grandeur and treasures which it contained. Their ardent wish was to bring as many adorers and victims of love as possible to Our Blessed Lord.

Since this Heart is the Centre of all, being the Heart of the God-made-man, Fr. Chevalier could give no better advice to his priests than to unite themselves intimately to the Sacred Heart, to make His sentiments their own and to become the docile instruments of His mysterious designs.

He impressed on his priests that the Sacred Heart must inform not only their interior life but their external activities and that each day of their lives they must unite their own hearts with His in the bond of love. The Sacred Heart must be the object of their study, their faith and all their activity. In Him they will find their strength and the graces necessary for themselves and others. The Heart of Jesus will be their living Model. From the Sacred Heart the Founder confidently expected disciples and missionaries to whom he would impart his own spirit of love.

The following prayer composed by Father Chevalier is found in the Rules for the Associates: "O adorable Heart of Jesus, ineffable Source of all grace, how can we ever thank You enough for all the benefits Your divine Bounty has conferred on us? Your love has given us life and rescued us from our sins. It has showered us with your favours and sustained us in our weakness. O Divine Heart, have mercy on us always.

We consecrate to You all the powers of our soul and body. We offer You all the thoughts of our mind, all the movements of our heart. We wish henceforth to reflect in ourselves the example of Your virtues. We seek refuge in Your sacred Wounds and beg You to be our strength and support. Protect us against the enemies of our salvation and the wiles of Satan. Amen."

In the 'Formula' which he drew up for the Society, Father Chevalier puts all his confidence for the future of the Church in the Sacred Heart and enumerates the favours already granted. He urges his priests to have as their supreme ideal the honouring and imitation of the Heart of the Sovereign Priest, Jesus Christ. He urges them to be, above all, true Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. "Those who bear such a glorious and consoling name will find it a stimulus to ceaseless emulation and practice of the virtues of the Divine Heart and an incentive to spread the knowledge and love of It with unflinching ardour. They will deem themselves unworthy of such a grand title unless they come to live the same life as that of the Sacred Heart." They will vow themselves to the Sacred Heart in the spirit of perfect immolation.

Father Chevalier sets down as "the second end of the Society" the personal sanctification of the members. "Availing themselves of all the means which the religious life offers, and taking as their model the Heart of Jesus on Whose powerful protection they will rely, the Missionaries will unite their efforts to progress daily in the virtues which that Sacred Heart has taught them."

He adds that the third end of the Society - directly connected with the two preceding - is to work for the salvation of souls by teaching them devotion to the Sacred Heart, thus making known to them the treasures which It contains. By means of his own personal sanctification and his apostolate the Missionary of the Sacred Heart will thus fulfil the first end of the Society, namely, to honour and glorify the Sacred Heart of Jesus with a deep veneration and love, particularly in the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, and so to offer reparation to that Heart for the many insults and injuries inflicted on it."(25)

His favourite expression - "to live each moment of my life in Your love and to consume myself in Your service" - is a fitting ideal for priests whose hearts are moved to follow this impulse of the Spirit of God in His Church and whose special vocation is to serve the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This Sacred Heart is not merely an historic souvenir of the past nor a reminiscence of a period of the Kingdom of God on earth, recalling the life, passion and death of the Saviour. No, this Heart is a living reality and an effective cause of grace giving life to souls to-day. This Heart has a history indeed, but here we are not concerned with the past but with the living present. We are concerned with the living Heart of the God-made-Man Who at the present moment is giving supernatural life to men, enriching their activity, lifting them up, directing and judging them. It is a Heart which at the present moment is claiming the love and reparation of men and appealing to souls which in reality belong to His Kingdom. Gratitude should be the characteristic of our devotion - gratitude not only for what He has given us in the past but for what He is doing for us at the present moment, applying to our souls and to the Church the salutary graces which He won for us by His Passion and Death. The Heart of Jesus is the Heart of the Redeemer still wishing to save the modern world in all the circumstances of its present life.

It was in this light that Father Chevalier regarded the Sacred Heart. His response was a love of reparation, a living and unifying response which expressed itself in intimate converse with the Sacred Heart, making his life and ideals one with His. In the light of this love he based his apostolate and founded his Society.

This congregation was the social realisation of what was privately his one desire and ambition, namely, to live as perfectly as possible the very life of Jesus, the Sovereign Priest, and to reproduce in himself the sentiments of the divine Heart - to become an apostle after the Heart of Christ and a Missionary of that Heart for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

As Father Piperon has written in his "Notice" - "In founding his Congregation, Father Chevalier had but one ideal: to form apostles consumed with the desire of making known the ineffable treasures of love and mercy which the Sacred Heart contained and to imbue them with the spirit of zeal for winning souls for Him Who has loved them so much, and thus to spend themselves without reserve for His cause.(27)

The whole attitude and conduct of Father Chevalier and his Congregation was based on the love of Christ, the Redeemer. His motto was: "All for the love of Jesus!" In the course of the spiritual experience wherein he discovered the richness of the Heart of Jesus, he gained the conviction that spreading the devotion to the Sacred Heart was to be the means of sharing these treasures with other souls. Accordingly he established what Father Veermeersch refers to as "the domain of the Sacred Heart." His object was to offer "a special cult to the Heart of Flesh of Our Lord and to honour the Love of which that Heart is the seat, the organ and the symbol."(20)

Part III: The Theory and the Practice of the Devotion.

In comparing the popular conception of the Sacred Heart with the theological definition of the devotion, the question - one which occurs often in modern literature on the Sacred Heart - arises: "How are we to explain the seeming anomaly or disproportion between the definition and the practice, the theory and the reality?"(29)

We are surprised, for example, that Bainvel in his work on the Sacred Heart does not attempt to explain the difference between the devotion as treated in the theological tracts and that in the majority of the spiritual books. It is, above all, regrettable that only too often the distinction in the question is avoided by the spiritual writers in spite of the warning of Cardinal Billot. To underline this distinction, we prefer to pose the question in the following terms: "How explain this disproportion between the definition or theory of the devotion and the practice of it in a devout life?"

The disproportion is usually found amongst the authors in three ways: the substitution of the whole Person of Christ for the Heart of Flesh; uniting the human love of Christ with His Divine Love, and placing God the Father together with mankind as the object of the charity of Christ. We can perhaps add a fourth point: the transition in the soul of the devotee from practices of the cult to a state of charity.

The answers to those queries depend on the way the various authors view, more or less logically, the distinction in question. Those who consider the formulation and the life as one and the same thing argue about the meaning of the definition, whereas those for whom the formula and the life are two distinct ideas, seek to determine wherein lies the dynamic force of the formulated means.

The first justifiably fear that the formula restricts the life too much and seek a more elastic definition - one more adapted to the various modifications of the devotion. But as the terms of the definition do not in themselves allow this extension of meaning they look for a common entity between the formula and the practice to justify a given course of action. Thus Bainvel says: "A devotion specifies itself by its object, but, in itself, it is a combination of ideas, sentiments and practices in keeping with its object." However, Veermersch protests to this by stating: "The proper object of a devotion must not be confused with the object of all the acts associated with it, either as a preparation or a result."(30) Father de Galliffet has defined the devotion precisely as well as speaking of the vital flowering of grace in the soul of the one practising it.

He has this further to say: "As in the practice of any other devotion, the devotee should follow the promptings of his own mind and inner spirit rather than scrupulously try to follow the formulas found in books."(31)

Those who logically maintain the distinction between the formula of the definition and the practice which flows from its application have no reason to fear too much rigidity or even paralysis in expressing their devotion. The activity of a soul led by the grace of the Holy Spirit need not be reduced to the terms of a formula but should be allowed reasonable scope for its vital energy. The definition of a devotion does not include all the incidental consequences and ramifications of its practice, just as the definition of a particular rock or stone does not include all the usages to which it can be put, the particular monuments it will form, the technique of the architects, sculptors, builders, etc.

The main problem is in examining what are the best means of producing the legitimate effects of the devotion. It will suffice to study the proper character and motive-force of the devotion such as is found in its definition or, in other words, to study its proximate and final ends.

Father Chevalier had summed up all these general aspects in a statement we have already quoted. "The devotion to the Sacred Heart has for its end the rendering of a particular worship to the Heart of Flesh of Our Lord and to the love of which this Heart is the symbol, so that, as a consequence, our own hearts, in union with the Sacred Heart, so filled with love for God and men, may be inflamed with this Divine fire and conform their lives with this perfect spirit of the love of God."

The object then is to achieve by worship of Our Lord's Heart and love an intimate contact with the Sacred Heart and so discover the full measure of His Love. The ultimate object sought is that, by the grace of this contact with the Sacred Heart, divine charity will inflame our hearts and that we will live lives in conformity with God's perfect love.

The devotion is then in practice a special cult, as the quotations of the preceding chapter have made clear. On this point, Father Chevalier has written: "Devotion to the Sacred Heart is the full flowering of our religion; it is religion made perfect. Religion made complete by this devotion glows with an incomparable brilliance."(32)

It can be reasonably understood that the formation of Father Chevalier, for whom Christ was the perfect Religious, was inseparably associated with his devotion to the Sacred Heart and the fact that it occupied such a prominent place in his life. His devotion to the Sacred Heart as a cult dated back to his very first experiences in spirituality, and as time went on became firmly based on the official ecclesiastical documents, the revelations to St. Margaret Mary, and the copious literature written on the devotion.

Cardinal Billot has remarked: "One is accustomed to hearing that what is first and foremost proper to the cult is charity, love, and the imitation of the virtues and intimate sentiments of Christ; but, as St. Thomas teaches, there are also definite acts which inform the devotion, are necessary to it and which should be nourished and sustained by it."(33)

Veermersch likewise remarks: "We honour the Heart of Jesus in order to honour His love the better. These honours paid to His love constitute the proximate end of the devotion."(34) He thus places the accent on love, but we note that he does not say that the love itself is the proximate end of the devotion but the "honours paid to that love." The devotion is by its very essence a cult, an adoration.

In rendering the Sacred Heart and His love a particular worship, and manifesting this worship by frequent, elevated acts, not of themselves obligatory, we are fulfilling the proximate end of the devotion and, as Father Chevalier says, we are offering the Heart of Flesh of Our Lord a particular cult. The devotion produces in those who practise it a state of fervent adoration which establishes between Our Lord and the soul a religious contact in a more generous service. The final end consists in a relationship full of love which leads to a life of dedication, a conformity in all things with the perfect spirit of the love of God. But here we begin to deal with the devotion in the life of the soul, and the first problem is the point of departure of the cult from an obligatory act of religion to a free act of love.

In his later writings, Father Chevalier dealt with this question, but at first he considered it as of purely theoretical interest. He did elaborate on the subject only after he had written that devotion to the Sacred Heart was "religion envisaged on its most intimate point."(35) Possibly owing to his own particular religious formation he had not given much weight to the difficulty. This would be in keeping with Fr. Pottier's remark that for the followers of Father Olier "Adoration is Love, and Love is Adoration" - something he considered as a pious equivocation. The quoted extracts show clearly that Father Chevalier regarded Love as the end of the devotion, and this not merely as "an affective love of admiration," but also as an effective love leading to imitation - a love of friendship blossoming into devotion and holy familiarity."(36)

A. Lemonnier remarks concerning the transition of religion to charity in the economy of salvation: "It is something which is easily understandable when we consider that the virtue of religion is the highest moral or supernatural virtue by which we serve God, and that charity is the queen of the theological virtues, which leads us to the intimacy of divine friendship and holy familiarity with God. The three vows of religion present a systematic and professional exercise of the virtue of religion and provide a life par excellence that leads to the perfection of charity and its works. These vows are themselves signal acts of the virtue of religion, and, as a devotion, are the ideal means of attaining greater love."(37)

The vows should become an expression of the charity that must rule and integrate the religious life. That is why Father Chevalier regarded the religious life as a superior form of exercising devotion to the Sacred Heart. By means of the devotion he dreamt of leading as many souls as possible to a state of adoration and love. This veneration and charity would naturally find expression in diverse ways, and the imitation of the Sacred Heart in varying degrees.

"The Heart of Jesus," he wrote, "is the divine Type of all perfection. It is responsive to the homage of even the weakest of souls and prompts the aspirations of the more perfect by Its infinite Holiness. God loves the sacrifices of men because He is worthy of their homage. Grace attracts hearts to a more perfect immolation of the will, the faculties and the affections.

The vows, then, of themselves constitute a more perfect cult, because they surpass the ordinary practices of devotion, as pleasing as they are to the Sacred Heart."(38) The Missionary of the Sacred Heart offers this sacrifice and cult in a total consecration of his life to the Sacred Heart, fulfilling the end of the devotion itself. To requote the Founder's words: "So that in union with the Sacred Heart, so full of love, our own hearts in their turn should be enkindled by this Divine Fire and act in conformity with the perfect spirit of God's love."

The general end of religion is to lead souls to a state of love of God. In order that this love can be proposed as the special end of a given devotion, there must be in that devotion a particular and precise relationship between the object of veneration and the ideal pursued by the practice of the devotion. Cardinal Billot notes in this regard: "Although the diversity of attributes in the venerated object may not specify the particular devotion by itself, it nevertheless determines the conduct of the devotee and creates the harmony between his actions and the object of his adoration and veneration."(39)

The practice of the devotion must be in conformity with the object of the cult. Thus Father Chevalier writes: "Religion completed by this devotion shines forth with incomparable lustre. It is like a sun whose streams of ardent, pure light illumines the whole person of Our Lord."

But here we are face to face with the problem already mentioned: "How do we place the emphasis of the devotion on the whole personality of Our Lord and His Love when, strictly speaking, the object of the devotion is the Heart of Flesh of our Saviour and the love It symbolises?"

Bainvel offers the following explanation: "The affective life of Our Lord is not wholly confined to the sentiment of love. It is a love diversified according to the condition of its objects. The heart is above all the emblem of love, but the real, living Heart is not that alone. Our whole life, all our intimate and profound sentiments, flow from the heart. Our moral and affective life are intimately united. In popular language, the moral and affective life of any man is referred to as 'matters of the heart.' When we practise the devotion it is not only a worship of our interior life but of our whole personality. When we speak of the 'heart' then, it is under this general aspect, in what the grammarians call 'synecdoche,' the part used for the whole. Not that one always speaks of the heart as representing the whole person, but here it is valid to do so when referring to the affective and moral life, the character and the principle of conduct."(40)

For Father Chevalier, as for Father Bainvel, the Sacred Heart in its totality represented the whole person of Christ under the aspects of the affections, especially that of Love. Understood thus, the devotion is not just an extension of the cult of the Heart of Flesh, which is its proper object, but embraces the Person of Our Lord as its composite end. The worship of the Heart of Flesh may be compared to a canal by which the honours and the veneration is carried to the Person of Our Lord. Any devotion is ultimately directed to a person, and the veneration of material objects is valid only because these objects represent persons. St. Thomas has referred to the veneration of these proper objects of devotion as a 'manuductio,' i.e., they lead us, as it were, by the hand to the love and worship of the person, the divinity. They are a help to us in our weakness. (41).

When one is free to choose a visible object for veneration, one naturally chooses that which best fits in with or symbolises the person venerated. For example, the hand would symbolise the person's blessing or his generosity, etc., whereas the heart would symbolise his love. The visible object stands for the invisible one. In Fr. Chevalier's own words: "The material object expresses in a sensible manner the spiritual object of the devotion. Consequently, the spirit of the devotion is that which flows naturally from its object, and the formal object is the particular aspect under which the person is honoured and venerated. The formal object of devotion to the Sacred Heart is the love or charity for men with which Our Lord's Heart is animated or, in other words, it is Christ honoured in His Love for men."

All these quoted texts clearly indicate that for Father Chevalier every aspect of the devotion must be studied in reference to the Person of Our Lord even if they appear indirect and remote. The devotion is merely a means of arriving at a conscious veneration of Our Lord, a 'manuductio,' a guide to His Sacred Heart. This becomes clear whenever Fr. Chevalier speaks of the power of the devotion.

The efficacy of a devotion depends in the first instance on the manner in which it moves God to distribute His graces. In his writings, although not explicitly treating the point, he suggests this as an excellent reason for practising devotion to the Sacred Heart. "Devotions," he writes, "sanctify souls because they penetrate them, forcefully and abundantly, with their particular spirit and prompt them to practise the pious actions proper to them."

Since the proper spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart is love, Father Chevalier tells us that the purpose of the devotion is to inflame our hearts with love which will result from contact with Our Lord and to live in conformity with the true spirit of charity. The use of the phrase - "This Heart full of love for God and for men" - obviously refers to the whole Christ and not just the "Heart of Flesh." This intimate union between the object and the end, between the Heart and the Person, is clearly treated by Father Chevalier when he speaks separately of the various elements of the devotion.

All his formation had centred around Christ Risen and Christ the Sovereign Priest, vivifying the Church and souls. Thus he taught us to look upon the Heart of Our Lord not merely as a symbol but as the Living Heart of the Living Christ, not in an abstract manner but as the Heart of the Person we honour and adore. "We must envisage it," he wrote, "as living in the Body of which It was the principle of life. We must not separate it from the humanity of Our Lord of which It is part, nor from His Divinity to which it is hypostatically united. Although not forming part of the Divine Nature of Our Lord, It nevertheless belongs to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word Incarnate. It is truly His Heart since in Our Lord there is but the one Person, possessing at the same time both the Divinity and the Humanity. Consequently, the material Heart of Our Lord was united to the Person of the Word, a union more intimate than that of any other part of the body, as the Heart is the seat of love. It is by this love that the hypostatic union of the Divine Word with the Humanity of Christ is most intimately effected. This physical Heart as a result has become the Temple of the Divinity, Sanctuary of the Divine Love. "In quo habitat plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter," in the words of St. Paul. (42)

Father Chevalier has noted that, although the representation of the Heart alone is legitimate, he regarded the best image as that representing the whole Person of Our Lord showing His Heart in His open Breast or presenting It in His hands. The heart is the living organ of the living person in both its proper and its applied roles, but just as the real heart is more than the symbol, so the love of Christ surpasses the element directly symbolised.

We have seen that love, the direct object of the devotion, is limited under a twofold aspect. The formal object is the love by which this Heart is animated for men, or, in other words, 'Our Lord in His love for men.' "The principle which loves in the Heart of Our Lord," writes Fr. Chevalier, "is the activity of His Humanity. This activity with the aid of incomparable graces produces His love from the time of the Incarnation itself." In another statement: "His love should not be considered apart from the person of the Incarnate Word, for although it flows from the Sacred Humanity of Our Lord it is, none the less, the love of the Incarnate Word."

To understand better the love of the Heart of Jesus, it is necessary to study it in its source or origin. There is first the human love of Our Lord which is a consequence of His Human Nature, and secondly this human love, elevated and deified by the Hypostatic Union. The love, which He possessed in virtue of His human nature had its beginnings in a principle anterior to His birth, as it was the love of the Saviour of mankind. This principle was God Himself Who created, formed and placed it in existence in creating the humanity of Christ. The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity had concurred in this creation as all the operations "ad extra" are common to the Three. The divine and human love in Our Lord are integrated through the Incarnation. The divine love does not absorb the human love, nor is the human love lost or annihilated in the divine love. Once the Incarnation was accomplished the two loves still remained distinct. The Word preserved the Divine Love in the Divine Nature, and the human, that of His Heart, in His Humanity. In this way the Word Incarnate lives a twofold life of love - Divine and Human.

But in the Incarnation the Divine love of the Word is united with the love of the human heart by the closest bonds imaginable. By its union with the Divine this love is elevated, made great and most beautiful in the highest possible degree. Any comparison we use can only give a weak idea of its real beauty and magnificence. The Heart of Jesus has become the adorable abode in which resides corporally the fulness of divinity. It is in this Heart that is found the perfect love of the Word for the only really lovable Being, God, and consequently for the love of His creatures - mankind.

The love of the Heart of Jesus follows the love of God. God has loved men with a love of predilection - a truth evident from Sacred Scripture. As to the exact way in which God loves His creatures to whom He has given free will, we have to remain in ignorance. This is in the realm of the secret mysteries of the Godhead. Sacred Scripture, which is the Word of God, does not explain the process. All it says is "God is love." "God has loved us."

As a consequence of the unity of the two loves, the Heart of Our Lord loves God principally and sovereignly for what He is in His Nature - the Triune God. He loves all the creatures of God because they are an expression of the infinite perfection of God, and He loves them in

the measure that God loves them Himself. In loving the perfection of His creatures, God is loving Himself, and His first love is for the creatures to whom He has given intelligence and free will, because they are capable of giving Him free and intelligent homage.

In his Catechism Father Chevalier has written: "All the movements of the Heart of Jesus are in conformity with those of the love of God. That is also true of the love of preference with which God loves men. Nothing is more certain. All that we are going to say will bear evidence to this fact. By this love of preference He gave them the fullness of His love. - In finem dilexit."(43)

In his Catechism Father Chevalier's main desire was to impress souls with the power of the devotion to the Sacred Heart and to entice them to practise it. "The devotion," he often repeated, "is to render a particular cult to the Heart of Flesh of Our Lord by which He loves men so much." This love is the human love of Christ, a love made Divine by the union of the two Natures in Our Lord. The mystery of the Incarnation was itself a result of the love of God, and so the love in the Heart of Christ was the love of the Blessed Trinity itself.

By means of questions and answers in his Catechism, Father Chevalier wished to stress this union of the two loves in the person of Our Lord, whilst being careful to make clear their formal distinction. He kept intact the significance, the structure and the substance of the devotion, while pointing out always that it was a means, an instrument, a "manuductio," to a more perfect loving of the loving Christ. He stressed the marvellous beauty of the human love of Christ exalted by the Incarnation. His human love, which leads to the divine, remains real and living in the triumphant Person of Christ.

Father Chevalier was unacquainted with many of the objections made against the representation of the Sacred Heart. He considered the best was that representing the whole Person of Our Lord with His Heart revealed. He accepted the image of the Heart by Itself as representing a living and glorious Heart symbolising love.

St. Margaret Mary had seen this Heart in the brilliance of its perfection, represented as seeking the love of mankind. We find Fr. Chevalier, in his sermon on the feast of St. John, referring to "the symbolic accessories of the principal symbol." The instruments of the Passion surrounding the Heart were reminders that His sufferings for mankind were all because of love. The flames signify the intensity of this love; the crown of thorns reminds us that His sufferings had been caused by the sins of men; the wound; His love pouring itself out on the souls of men; the enveloping light, the symbol of His grace and truth.(44)

For the Founder the end of the devotion was that, from contact with the loving Heart of Christ, our own hearts would be fired by love and so live in conformity with the perfect love of God. He wrote: "The Divine Love of the Incarnate Word is not the 'immediate' object of the devotion but what we might call the 'mediate' (an expression, no doubt, that Fr. Chevalier borrowed from some of the theological books of the time)."

The immediate object is the human Heart of Our Lord. The human love honoured in the devotion, having its origin and source in God and united to Him by the closest and most intimate links, naturally tends to the cult of God Himself, and so while honouring the Human Heart of Our Lord we are honouring God Himself. This is not merely an extension of the devotion but a necessary part of it. By virtue of the hypostatic union, the divine Love is really the Source of the Human love and directs it in its activity, so the Heart is legitimately the symbol of both the divine and the human love.

In maintaining the devotion in its proper and precise sense, limited yet retaining its dynamic power, Fr. Chevalier presented it as "the remedy for the ills of the age." In face of those modern social evils which he believed were leading the world of his time to perdition; in face of the denial of God and His authority over earthly things; in face of the spirit of egotism, indifferentism and immorality, he presented the Heart of Jesus - God with us - as the symbol of the love which had sacrificed all for us and which was awaiting our love in return.

CHAPTER XX SPIRITUAL TRENDS: OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

Part 1: Preliminary Influences Leading to the Inspiration of the Title

Devotion to the Sacred Heart was already an established fact, recognised and approved, when Father Chevalier became acquainted with it. The discovery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, however, was a personal spiritual experience.

At the Seminary, during his growth in spirituality, Father Chevalier was well aware of the religious value of devotion to the Sacred Heart, and he built the structure of his spirituality around this devotion, studying carefully the various elements which composed it. "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," on the contrary, was a title which sprang into being suddenly from his spiritual life when it was already well formed along its essential lines,

Although this name conjured up many beautiful meanings, it was for Fr. Chevalier, first and foremost, a summary of all he gratefully understood concerning the Blessed Virgin. He insisted that, under this title, in the one expression and central idea, could be found all the beauties which the Faith taught him about Mary. It became a devotion, under the influence of that Faith, which brought to souls all the truths concerning Our Lady, grouped and unified under one heading - and this for their own sanctification. In his first brochure on the subject he remarked that it was a "name which love and faith gave to Mary."

The origin, then, of the devotion could hardly be associated with the words of Scripture: "In the beginning God created Heaven and earth," although after studying the title carefully even this might be permitted. Father Chevalier wrote to Bishop Boyer in July, 1895: "The devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, I must say, is not the result of a special revelation or supernatural intervention; it is a logical deduction from the fact of the divine Maternity."(1)

It found its origin in the ever-growing devotion to the Mother of God which was developing more richly in the life of the Church under the influence of the Holy Spirit. A brief study of this evolution and the events which led up to it will help to explain the full flowering of the title.

In the chapters in which we dealt with the childhood and youth of Father Chevalier, we have told the story of his first associations with the Mother of God and his early love of and devotion to her. There was the incident before the miraculous statue in the church at Richelieu when his mother had consecrated him to Mary; and we recall how the tableau of Our Lady of Victories, with its rosary and scapular, had captured his young imagination; how, during his vacation from St. Gaultier, he had joined the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Mary in the village church. Later he was to establish this Confraternity at Aubigny where, as a young priest, he preached on the beauty and power of the Mother of God, and we remember the second novena he made for the success of his new foundation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart which was concluded with due ceremony on Our Lady's feast day.

At Bourges with his fellow-seminarians he formed the Guard of Honour around the altar of the Mother of God with the purpose of honouring "the Immaculate Virgin and asking her intercession for the graces of which the Church has such need."

During his seminary training he became intimately acquainted with the Marian devotion of Father Olier, the devotion to the interior lives of Jesus and Mary. This led him to the ardent devotion he had for the Sacred Heart of Mary as was proved by the novena of the 8th December, 1854, the Pact of 1855, and the practices he incorporated in the foundation of his Society.

We have seen also that the first statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was modelled on the miraculous medal used by St. Catherine Labouré. All of which clearly indicates that his life from his earliest days came under the powerful influence of devotion to the Mother of God.

Father A. Nicholas, writing in his book - "The Virgin Mary living in the Church" (Paris 1800) - stated that "after the Revolution, when the Winter of impiety began to give way to a new breath of life, the cult of the Virgin Mary gained new vigour from the awakening." This manifested itself in the more frequent recitation of the Rosary and the Litanies, the wearing of the scapular, the pilgrimages to the shrines of Our Lady and the devotion shown during the month of May.(3)

While the various religious Institutes were putting themselves under the aegis of Mary and incorporating devotion to her as part of their religious life, the lay people were forming themselves into pious congregations and confraternities. The two principal devotions were those to the Sacred Heart of Mary and the Immaculate Conception.(4)

The liturgy of the Church followed the trend. In 1804 the Church in France adopted the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. On 31st August, 1805, the Sacred Congregation of Rites gave permission for a Mass in honour of the Sacred Heart of Mary. On 16th September, 1814, Pope Pius VII instituted the feast of Mary, Help of Christians, in thanksgiving for his return to Rome, and the following year he crowned the miraculous statue of Savone and granted the first indulgences for the Month of Mary.(5) On the 27th November, 1850, St. Catherine Laboure was favoured with the apparition of the miraculous medal whose influence was to play such a big part in Marian devotion until the nineteenth century; and on the 16th December, 1834, the Abbe Charles Desgenettes established the Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the parish of Our Lady of Victories in Paris.(6 & 7)

We must note here a remarkable fact worthy of our attention. Very soon the devotions to the Immaculate Conception and the Sacred Heart of Mary began to influence one another mutually. The "Sacred Heart of Mary" began to be referred to as the 'Sacred and Immaculate Heart of Mary,' and the devotees of the Sacred Heart of Mary were drawn to the Immaculate Conception and vice versa.

In 1837 an anonymous writer recorded: "All the congregations which existed in the Church up to this time in honour of the Immaculate Conception had now adopted the name of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and their pious union had as its special object the honouring of the Immaculate Heart of Mary conceived without stain of original sin."(8)

The main propagandist for the devotion to the miraculous medal, Le Guillon, included in his brochure, "Mary Conceived without Sin," several meditations on the Sacred Heart of Mary, and these were destined to be read by the Associates of the various Confraternities, those of the Sacred Heart, the Holy Scapular, Our Lady of Sorrows, the Rosary and the Holy Hour.(9)

The Abbe Desgenettes approved of the combination of the two devotions. In giving his Confraternity the name of the "Sacred Heart of Mary," he added the word, "Immaculate," and chose as the insignia of the association the miraculous medal, representing the Immaculate Conception. He had a picture of the "Sacred Heart of Mary" printed, and several of the members pressed him to have a medal made along the same lines. He consented but kept the "miraculous medal of the Immaculate Conception" as the badge of the Confraternity.(10)

The spiritual writers of the time began to explain the combination of the devotions, to justify it, and to spread it amongst the faithful.(11) The combination seemed to be a result of the circumstances of the apparition in which Our Lady gave the miraculous medal to St. Catherine Laboure. The circumstances of this manifestation were in three phases. In the second apparition Our Lady appeared standing with her arms extended and the hands inclined under the weight of the treasures of graces she was holding. The apparition was in the form of an oval-shaped picture under which was the inscription, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." St. Catherine was told to have a medal made representing this picture, and Our Lady promised many graces to those who would wear it.

In the third manifestation she was shown what was to be on the reverse side of the medal: the monogram of the Blessed Virgin, composed of the letter M surmounted by a cross, having a bar at the base and the two Hearts of Jesus and Mary above. "Being disturbed," wrote the Saint, "as to what was to be on the reverse side of the medal, one day during meditation I seemed to hear a voice telling me, "M and the two Hearts say enough."

We see here the two devotions are united, but the accent is on the Immaculate Conception and so on the powerful mediation of Mary. The first phase, made known to the public only after 1876, and represented by a statue four years later under the title of "Virgo Potens" clearly expresses this idea and spirit. Mary is holding a globe of the world in her hands and on each of her fingers there are three rings. Some of the precious stones in the rings are throwing out rays of light, while others are not, and Our Lady explains the significance. The rays of light are symbols of the graces she gives to those who ask for them, while the stones not glittering are the graces she can give but is not asked for.

It was a characteristic of Marian devotion of the last century to put the accent on the protection and power of the Mother of God. This was undoubtedly due to the special needs of the time and the spiritual atmosphere of the post Revolution revival. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary emphasised her maternal love and that to the Immaculate Conception her great power which crushed the head of the serpent.

The idea of Our Lady's power, of course, is not strange to the devotion to her Sacred Heart. The works of St. John Eudes and Father de Galliffet, which were being widely read at the time, made much of this attribute of Mary.(12) Both authors, however, make this power only one of the many factors which unite the two Sacred Hearts. The Provincial Synods of 1850 had underlined the special power of Mary Immaculate, while they emphasised her maternal protection in the devotion to her Sacred Heart.(13) The propaganda of the Miraculous Medal and the Confraternity founded by Father Desgenettes followed the same idea. (14)

This explains why Issoudun took the image on the Miraculous Medal as the model for the representation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.(15) But anyone who has carefully read the early literature on devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will readily understand that, while admitting Our Lady's power because of her Immaculate Conception, it put the accent on her power over the Sacred Heart of her Son because of the great love He bore her. In doing this there is immediately established that relationship between the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary which is the proper object of the devotion and in which it finds its excellence. Thus the foundation of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is the Divine Maternity, which in its full reality sums up on Mary's part all the relationship between Mother and Son.

But these relations between Mother and Son consequent on the Divine Maternity were not a new discovery made by devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. They constituted the fundamental point in the writing of St. John Eudes on the Blessed Virgin. Lebrun wrote, "What Father Eudes recommended above all was to honour Mary less for what she is in herself and for her perfections than for her relationship with Jesus to Whom she gave bodily life, and in Whose Heart she has continued to live spiritually."(16)

Father de Galliffet shares the same opinion: "There exists between Jesus and Mary an inseparable union and an immense love - a union in eternity, in time, in all their states and relationships. There is a resemblance in their perfections, in their virtues, in their privileges, in their richness, their power and their glory. We are able to honour them together."(17)

This was the theological opinion popular in the last century, ratified by the Provincial Synods and the spiritual writers who had systematically studied this relationship.(18)

Speaking of the Founder and his first companion, Father Piperon wrote: "Both were trained for the priestly life by the disciples of Father Olier, and both had preserved a profound respect and affection for the traditions of the seminary."(19) We have already spoken of this in previous chapters, but the influence of Father Olier was most noticeable in their devotion to Our Lady.

In Father Faillon's book, "The Interior Life of the Blessed Virgin," in which he compiled in 1866 the works of Father Olier, we find much the same ideas as in the notes made by Father Chevalier when preparing his book on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. There are long lists of quotations from the Fathers already quoted by Father Faillon and identical quotations from Father Olier. The influence of the saintly Sulpician is also very obvious in Father Chevalier's sermons.(20)

To make sure of their spiritual solidarity Father Olier had firmly imbued his disciples in the devotion to the "interior lives of Jesus and Mary," or more simply, "Jesus living in Mary." This latter title clearly expresses the relationship between Son and Mother, while making the union with Jesus the central point of the devotion. This was to be the same later on in the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

In speaking of Mary as "Spouse," Father Olier draws some profound and visionary conclusions. As spouse of the Father, she is the Mother of Jesus according to the flesh and of the Church according to the Spirit. Conjointly with her the Father calls in Jesus Christ those who

wish to become members of His Son, and as Spouse of the Father, Mary is the Mother of the predestined. As Spouse, Mary shares in the Eternal Father's right to dispose of the merits of Christ, and she becomes not only the Mother of Jesus living in the Flesh, but of Jesus in the glory of His resurrection. As Christ recognises this relationship of Mary with His Eternal Father, He communicates the Holy Spirit to us through her.(21)

When the new Adam on the Cross accepted the Church as His Spouse in the person of Mary, He gave her as the seal and precious badge of love - the sword of sorrow. "But after His resurrection He made her share in His royalty. Thus Mary became 'that dear and ever-loving Princess' who as Mother of Christ and Spouse of the Father became the dispensatrix of all the treasures of grace to creatures."(22) And Father Olier concludes by saying that nothing is more admirable than this union between Jesus and Mary wherein the Son accords His Mother joyfully and lovingly everything He is able to give her. "Nothing was more admirable than the union of the Heart of Mary in Jesus - a union which became to her a nourishment, a life, a perfect joy. She was filled with the same sentiments, dispositions, desires and prayers."(23)

We are not surprised to find reference to this relationship in other texts. For example, "Mary is the replica of the interior life of Jesus." "Mary is the lively expression of His love and praises." "She has being, life and movement only through Him. She breathes, sees, speaks and acts interiorly and exteriorly only in Him." "She is the perfect adorer of Jesus, His Throne of Grace, a Tabernacle where He wishes to be adored, a Voice through which He wishes to be heard, a place of delights, a treasure, a Seat of Justice, a place of repose where He wishes to rest." "She is our advocate, our asylum, our refuge, the co-redemptrix, the mediatrix with her Son, our Judge."(24)

"What a communion is that between Jesus and Mary! How we ought to honour this relationship between Son and Mother - its love, its colloquys! I beg you to meditate often on this interior life of Mary whom God has given us as the custodian of the sacred gift of her Son to the Church. She is the loving and faithful dispensatrix of grace for the salvation of men, and in her we will find all that is to our advantage here on earth,"

Father Olier had an image of Our Lady in a glass case in his presbytery under which was written the text: "With her, by her and in her," Father Chevalier used the same text on the cover of his first brochure on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

St. John Eudes summarised the relations between Jesus and Mary in his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary. For Father Olier the basis of his devotion was the interior lives of Jesus and Mary. For Father Chevalier it was the power of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Each of these three devotions, whilst being similar in many respects, had their own particular object and seal, and their own particular attraction. As the spirit of a devotion is characterised by its object, these three devotions led souls to Mary and a more holy state of life by three distinct ways. With Father Olier, more so than with St. John Eudes, the accent is placed on the power of Mary. Let us see in what way he exposes and justifies these relations. Several texts will help us to see how closely Father Chevalier followed his ideas.

"The love of Jesus Christ," wrote Father Olier, "was the true principle of power which Mary possessed, and so Jesus took pleasure in procuring good and honour for her and seeing her enjoy the power He communicated to her." "If she had the great power to procure anything she wished, it was not from the title of justice but from the great love that the Father and Son bore her. Their love was not able to refuse her anything. She proposed to Our Lord the things she wanted with such a tender and powerful love that it would also seem He was subjected to her."

"The power of this Divine Mother," writes Father Olier, "as it pleases God to show it to me, is such in Heaven that her Son submits Himself to her in her quality as Mother - a power He cannot now take from her." It is in this spirit that we read the following texts: "Mary possesses by right all the graces which Our Lord has given His Church." And again, "Behold the reason why Our Lord, before expiring, so that the rights of His Mother over Him would not finish with His death, gave Himself to her in the person of St. John in a twofold manner. Surviving, as it were, in His well-beloved disciple. He would continue His obedience to His Mother." "Since love is the basis of all, Mary remains always our Mediatrix of love and impetration." Because of this fact her power grows rather than diminishes and the marvels and miracles in the Church are a sign that this Heavenly Mother has the power of her Son in her hands - a power that she uses according to goodness and mercy."(26)

Father Olier bases this unity and community of power between Mary and God on her state as Spouse. In a sermon which he wrote in the seminary, Father Chevalier used Father Olier's idea that Mary's power with the Father was because she was His Spouse, but her power with Jesus was because of her divine maternity. We will consider the difference between these two titles to power a little later on, but first we wish to draw attention to another point:

When Father Olier speaks of the power of Mary over the Hearts of the Father and the Son he wishes to say that this influence flows only from the love the two Divine Persons bear her. Because they love her so much they wish her to share their power. But this expression does not speak of the source of this power nor does it tell us in what lies its exact content. For Father Chevalier, on the contrary, the power of Mary over the Heart of her Son flows from His love for her, and its content is in the Sacred Heart. The power which Father Chevalier venerates is the power of love, a power over the treasures of the Sacred Heart which Jesus has merited by His love. The understanding of the devotion to the Sacred Heart includes this comprehension of the devotion to Mary.

In a sermon on Pentecost written at Bourges, Father Chevalier refers to Father Olier, "one of Mary's faithful servants," as attributing to Mary the power of distributing to priests the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the sermon he asks Mary for the grace "to love unreservedly your Son and to make Him loved, for the grace also to love you yourself and to spread the glory of your name."

His sermon on the text, "Mundus gaudebit," also finishes with a prayer: "Mary, help me. Without you I can do nothing. You are the stem of Jesse on which flourishes the flower of salvation. If I wish to gather this flower I must draw this stem towards me." "Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac."

Again, on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul he concluded his sermon: "Obtain this love for me from your Son, the love that made St. Peter exclaim: 'Lord, Thou knowest that I love You!' For to love Jesus is to possess all. It is to possess you, O my Mother, O my Queen of Heaven!" He affirms that, as Our Lord is the Divine Shepherd, so Mary is the Divine Shepherdess. "On my love for Mary," he writes, "depends my sanctification and that of the souls entrusted to me. Decevit nihil dare nisi per Mariam. Ab omnipotenti Filio omnipotens Mater facta est." He continues with a thought from St. Gregory which he was to use later on in his brochure on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: "Tanto altior, tanto clementior."

The most important sermon of this period was entitled: "The Mercy of the most Holy Virgin towards Sinners," for which he took as text, "Ecce Mater Tua." Father Chevalier often preached this sermon in later years, with a few minor alterations, and he inserted passages of it into other sermons. The classic quotations of St. Bernard and St. Gregory, which he applied to his teachings on devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, were first used in this sermon. After stating that the Church calls Mary the "Mother of Mercy," he tells the story - as Father Olier had done - of the woman of Thecua whom Joab sent to David to seek pardon from Absalom. Likewise Mary obtains pardon for us.(28) "What have we to fear?" asks St. Bernard. "To doubt the goodness and power of Mary would be to injure her. Mary not only is able to help us, but she wants to help us."

In the first point of the sermon he remarks: "Who will be able to doubt her power when he considers the glory she brings to Our Lord and when he considers her titles of Spouse and Mother?" He emphasises the honour which Mary procures for God by reason of her immaculate purity and her divine maternity. Mary is the one creature in whom the image of God has remained intact. She is the "masterpiece" of the all-powerful God, given to us in all her magnificence. The significance of her maternity follows from the fact that the God-Man was able to offer His Father an honour and reparation worthy of Him. "Judge, then," he writes, "the greatness of the merits of Mary with the King Who makes recompense for all good."

"That Mary is the Spouse of God is sufficiently established from the words of the Annunciation, and, being so, what right does not this glorious title give her?" He repeats in conclusion the words of Father Olier: "She has conquered the Heart of the Son of God."

But for Father Chevalier it was the Maternity of Mary which spoke most eloquently of her power. It was a subject about which he always became ardent and enthusiastic in his sermons and instructions. "With this divine prerogative," he wrote, "what right is there that she cannot expect? Jesus is in Heaven, it is true, but there He is none the less the Son of Mary and she is none the less His Mother; and her prayers, being those of a Mother, are almost in the nature of a command. We have only to recall Cana to see how Jesus always respected the wishes of His Mother. Did it not seem here that He anticipated the time for the working of His miracles? Jesus made it a duty not to refuse His Mother anything. If you enjoyed such power at Cana, what then is your power in Heaven over the Heart of your Son, O Mary?" "It is without limit," says St. Bernard, "not by nature but by grace. Ab omnipotenti Filio, omnipotens Mater facta est."

God has ordained that all graces be distributed by Mary. Why is this? Because Mary is as that ladder of Jacob by which Jesus comes down to earth and by which we can ascend to Him in Heaven. Jesus is the fruit of the womb of Mary, and it is only right that we go to the tree to gather that fruit. Finally, Mary is the "janua coeli," the gate of Heaven and, if we wish to enter, it must be through her. "O Mary, how powerful you are! It is imperative that you help us. 'Dona dabit semper per Mariam, si quidem ne facultas ei deest!'"

The second point of the sermon stresses the fact that Mary's greatest wish is to help us. "Her bounty towards sinners who invoke her," says St. Gregory, "is all the greater because of her power with God. Maria, quanto altior, tanto clementior erga conversos peccatores." With Father Olier the young seminarist recalls the example of Mardochoy who called upon Esther for help, and he reminds Mary that her Son died for us, and is longing for us. "Since you are able then to be a Mother to us, you can help us."

We have become her children at the foot of the Cross. Christ gave us in the person of St. John to the Mother of Sorrows and said to her: "I am their Redeemer and also their Judge, and as this latter title may possibly diminish their confidence, I appoint you as their powerful Protectress. I give them to you to-day as your children. You will be to them a Mother and, above all, a Mother of Mercy. You know the power you have over My Heart. Do not fear then to intercede for them." By the words, "Behold your son," the Blessed Virgin received the heart of a Mother.

Later on, Father Pipher, in explaining these thoughts of Father Olier and Father Founder, wrote: "Those ineffable words, indeed almost sacramental words - 'Woman, behold thy Son,' - produced in the heart of Mary in a sublime way the sentiments of Mother in our regard." (29)

Father Chevalier goes on to say that we are unfortunate children, and that a mother has always special favours for her needy ones. "We are the price of the Precious Blood. Mary is placed with the alternative of not recognising this Precious Blood, or, as the Mother of Mercy, using It in our regard. She must employ, then, all her power to make us live in the grace of God." (30) The sermon concludes with an exhortation to greater confidence.

Throughout the sermon, Father Chevalier several times mentions Mary as the "Spouse of the Father," but he does not use this title as the Source of her power. For him this power was a power over the Sacred Heart of her Son and with Father Olier he looked on this Heart as the symbol of Love, but not as yet the source of all the graces merited by Love. The expression, "heart of a mother," used more than once in the sermon signifies the source of her power. St. John is not representing Christ as the Son of Mary but as representing us.

Regarding Father Olier's reference to the Risen Christ as the Judge of sinners, Father Faillon asks how are we to reconcile the two functions of Our Lord - that of Judge and that of Advocate. This latter role, he says, is left to Mary who is the mediatrix with her Son. Father Chevalier approaches the question from a different angle. For Him Our Lord is the Judge, but not a severe judge, which is in keeping with His Sacred Heart. This modifies the role of Mary. She is the mediatrix with a loving and merciful Judge on Whom she exercises her maternal love. "I am their Redeemer and their Judge, and as this latter title might diminish their confidence, I appoint you as their powerful protectress."

We possess several of the Founder's sermons and instructions on Our Lady prior to the publication of the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, but unfortunately most of them are without dates. We find him treating of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which was the popular devotion of this period. We may note here the main points worthy of our attention:

The Heart of Mary is the masterpiece of God's work. It is a Heart living and glorious in Heaven, full of love for sinners on earth. It is glorious because God formed it for the model of the Heart of His Divine Son, It is a Sanctuary, a living Ark, etc. The Heart of Mary is an abundant source of grace, from which we are able to draw the living waters of grace. It is an admirable Heart because of the graces it has received; because of its virtues, its love and the ineffable glory it enjoys in Heaven. The Heart of Mary loves us because she is the creature who most resembles God and because her Heart is the one most like the Heart of her Son. She loves us tenderly because she is our Mother.

The ineffable glory of the Heart of Mary evokes our supreme admiration and confidence. What sublimity of greatness, power and glory we find in her! Her Heart is the Heart of a Mother, a Mediatrix and a Protectress. She is a refuge for the unfortunate and for sinners, a consolation for the dying and for the souls in Purgatory.

Again and again in these sermons, as in his Seminary sermon on the Divine Maternity, we find the trilogy: "Love, Power, Glory." Her love is always the basis of her power and our confidence in her while being the crown of her glory.

These ideas continued to influence him after the inspiration of the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, as is shown in the sermon he preached on the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, 1857, two years after the inspiration of the title. He commenced the sermon by recalling the circumstances of the inspiration as the title was as yet known only to a small group of his intimate friends:

"Oh, Name of Mary, you are all the more dear to my heart as your feast brings back a sweet memory to me. It is exactly two years to-day since this modest sanctuary was blessed under your auspices and that we solemnly received the beautiful name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, while the whole Church was celebrating your grandeur. I will proclaim then to my well-beloved brethren that yours is a name of glory, power and love. It is indeed a name of glory - 'Ab initio et ante saecula creata sum.'"

He goes on to speak of the place of Mary in the divine plan of redemption. "She is the one privileged by the Holy Trinity. The whole Church goes down on its knees before this glorious name. In the sweet name of Mary is found the summary of all her titles - 'Deus ex genere meo.' As Mother of the Incarnate Word, the Virgin is endowed with august prerogatives in keeping with her high dignity. Where could be found a name which would embrace them all? 'Mary,' which in Hebrew means 'Sovereign,' was the answer, and that precisely is what the Virgin is. She is Sovereign in Heaven where the saints place their crowns at her feet; Sovereign on earth where men stand in veneration before her throne; Sovereign even in Hell in so far as her foot still crushes the head of the serpent.

According to St. Bernard, the name 'Mary' also signified 'Light,' a fitting name indeed, since she carried in her womb the bright Sun of all Intelligence. Providence has given her to the world as a shining Light to guide us on our way. It is a name of glory because it shines in brilliance over the vault of Heaven, a name associated with that of Jesus in all His triumphs and conquests."

"The name of Mary," - so begins the second point - "is not only a name of glory, but one of power because God Himself obeyed it. 'Et erat subditus illis.' By virtue of this name we are able to obtain all we need. When you have some special grace or favour to ask, mention the name of Mary. It is a name of power because it is able to command demons. It is the terror of Hell and Satan is not able to hear it without groaning with rage as souls escape him. Be not astonished at this, for the person who bears this name was created to crush the head of the enemy of mankind. 'Ipsa conteret caput tuum.' It is a name of power in all our temptations and can lead us to victory.

It is also a name of love, as it is the name of a mother full of tenderness and mercy, watching over and protecting us with great solicitude. Mary is our hope, our guiding star, our consolation. And Father Chevalier concludes: "Never forget to put the name of Mary side by side with the adorable name of Jesus. Never separate them." By the Immaculate Conception Mary becomes the perfect image of the Divinity. God has for her a tenderness of predilection. He has made her the depository of His power. 'Omnia mea tua est.'"

We are able to follow Father Chevalier's main trend of thought concerning devotion to Our Blessed Lady during the first ten years of his priesthood. They were based on the same sentiments and ideas that he had expressed in his sermons during his seminary days. His main devotions were to the Sacred Heart of Mary and the Immaculate Conception. We find the influence of these ideas in the novena in preparation for the 8th December, 1854, as he himself clearly expressed in a text dated 1865:

"As there is an intimate and necessary relationship between the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Conception, and since the pure and holy Heart of the Immaculate Virgin is the mediatrix with the Heart of God, it was through a novena to her, at the time of the definition of the dogma in 1854, that the grace of the institution of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was sought and granted."(31)

These were the preliminary ideas and events which led up to the inauguration of the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. As the Founder himself expressed it: "It is to the 8th December, 1854, the memorable day of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that we must return to find the origin of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, such as it exists to-day."(32)

The Pact of 1855 and its circumstances again express the Founder's fundamental thoughts concerning Our Lady, namely her glory, her love and her power. He was looking for a title which would be a combination of all these attributes of his heavenly Mother. This title he found on the 9th September, 1855, whilst he was praying before the image of Our Lady, which seemed to be prompting him to use the words of St. Alphonsus: "O Mary, you can obtain anything you wish from the Heart of your Divine Son." He was anxious to find a title which would incorporate Mary intimately in his apostolate for the Sacred Heart. On the 24th August, 1884, in a letter to the Archbishop of Bourges he recalled this search: "Knowing that all is achieved through Mary, we had the idea of associating her name in the work of spreading the knowledge of the Heart of her Son. There was wanting a new title, which would embrace her co-operation in the work of regeneration. It was then that the name came to us - 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.'" (33)

Part II: The Meaning of the Devotion. Mary's Power the Result of the Divine Maternity.

We have studied in other chapters the history of the devotion and the origin of the title, and have quoted the relevant texts.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart itself has been the subject of the intense study of theologians who have carefully probed its meaning, its problems, etc. so it is not to be wondered at that devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has likewise occupied the attention of the spiritual authors, who have studied its meaning and validity.

Father Chevalier's mind on the subject is quite clear from his books and brochures. In his writings on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart he adopted the same plan he followed when treating of the Sacred Heart. Less concerned with defining the devotion or the title in his books he turned his attention to the exposition of the desired ascetical end, i.e., a life conformed to the spirit of the devotion and the glorification of all the worthwhile elements contained in the two ideas of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The brochures, on the other hand, contain a precise definition for they are concerned directly with the devotion.

The following remark of Father Veermersch can be applied to the more important of the writings: "The object of a devotion must not be confused with the object of all the acts pertaining to the devotion." We have seen that there is a difference between the uniform social structure of a devotion and the various types of life which it is able to inform and influence. If certain authors from the beginning of the century have ignored this distinction, it is not to the welfare of the devotion. Far from resolving the difficulty which they consider as a contradiction, they have attempted to modify the traditional definition of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. However, it is significant that before 1920 no spiritual writer of consequence had admitted that the distinction involved a contradiction. Until then there had been unanimity, a unanimity that followed Father Chevalier's interpretation of the devotion and which he would let no one change.(34)

Another point worth remarking is that in their strange interpretation of the various pertinent texts these modern authors all reach different conclusions, which is certainly not in favour of their theories.(35) They assert that many of the original aspects have been changed by a later influence. Much of the confusion goes back to the establishment of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, of which we spoke in Chapter XV. Certain texts have remained intact, while others were changed in the process of founding the Confraternity. Fortunately we possess an authentic document composed in the days when no one as yet was thinking of forming a Confraternity. It is the Founder's brochure on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which appeared in November, 1862. The occasion of its publication was a request from Fr. Ramiere, who wished to print some of Father Piperon's notes in his "Messenger of the Sacred Heart."

This brochure is the oldest authentic explanation of the title and was printed only after long meditations and discussions between the first Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It is a source in which we find the original ideas of the Founder. Fr. Piperon calls it: "A short but substantial work on the object of the devotion, 1865."(36)

The brochure consists of an Introduction and two parts. The Introduction gives an exposition of the four ends of the devotion (of which we have treated in Chapter XV). The invocation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it says, is a definite cult, and "the child of Mary who invokes the sweet name proposes:

- (1) to thank God and to glorify Him because He has chosen Mary to form from her pure body the Heart of Christ.
- (2) to honour the sentiments of love, obedience and filial respect of the Heart of Christ.
- (3) to recognise and glorify by a special title the power which Christ has given Mary over His Divine Heart.
- (4) to beg this holy Virgin to lead us to the Heart of her Son, to open to us its treasures and to enable us to partake of them abundantly."

The first part of the brochure deals with the power of Mary - the power that she had with Him on earth and now enjoys in Heaven. After noting that the word "lady" means "Mistress," the author goes on to elaborate on this power of the Mother of God. Basing his conclusions on the Gospels, Father Chevalier points out that while He was on earth Our Lord always submitted Himself to the will of His Mother, and so in this sense she is mistress of His Heart.

The second part treats of our own times and our relationship with Mary living in Heaven. Has Mary still this authority over the Heart of her Son? Is it likely that the Mother of the Saviour would now lose the most precious jewel in her crown?

Father Chevalier here quotes five texts from the writings of the Fathers to prove his point. (We note here that it may be difficult to ascertain exactly the source of these texts. This is the only place in his writings where he used the quotation from St. Ignatius of Antioch.)

(1) "Mary must always be listened to as God Himself showed her a deference without limit as to His true and spotless Mother." (St. Germain of Constantinople).

(2) "What the justice of God may find difficult to save, Mary saves by her intercession." (St. Ignatius of Antioch).

(3) "All the treasures of grace are in the hands of Mary." (St. Peter Damien).

(4) "Everyone, even God Himself, obeys the command of Mary." (St. Bernard).

(5) "The prayers of the Mother of God are in the nature of a demand." (St. Anthony).

Only two of the texts are accompanied by a commentary: Regarding the text attributed to St. Ignatius, he adds: "We are able to be saved only by the merits of Jesus Christ. If Mary then is able to save poor unfortunate sinners from the decisions of divine justice, is it not by grace of the power she holds over the Heart of her Son?" And on the text of St. Peter Damien he comments: "The treasures of grace being enclosed in the Heart of Jesus - Which St. Paul refers to as the Throne of grace (Heb. 1V 16) - Mary can only take possession of them in so far as she is the mistress of that Heart - the Lady of the Sacred Heart."

The first part concludes with a resume of the texts, and the final statement that "Mary is always the sovereign, the mistress of the Heart of Jesus, the source of Mercy and the throne of grace."

We note here that from now on Father Chevalier uses the expression "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," whereas until now it had been "The Lady of the Sacred Heart." The sudden transition to the possessive adjective is so natural and logical that he does not even explain it.

The second part deals with our attitude in regard to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. "This name ought to be always on our lips and engraved in our hearts as it gives glory to our Mother and is a compendium of all her other titles. When we invoke this name we say, 'O Mother, be mindful of your power; remember the mercy of the Heart of Jesus, your Son.' And it is as if we hear Christ saying, 'Ask, O Mother, for these children all the graces you desire. You know you have supreme power over My Heart.'"

"We are able to call Mary," wrote Father Chevalier, "The Star of the Sea, The Mother of Mercy, The Queen of the Angels, The Queen of the Saints, etc., but above all these titles is that of Mother of God and consequently the one all-powerful over the Heart of her Son. And so we will make known to the whole world that as sovereign and mistress of the Heart of her Son, she draws from that Source all the graces she gives mankind and consequently can be called 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.'"

As the brochure was to be published in the "Messenger," Fr. Chevalier concludes by appealing to all the devotees of the Sacred Heart:

"Do you wish to receive a favourable welcome from the Sacred Heart? Do you wish to drink from the living waters of grace - to feel the warmth from this burning furnace of love? Then, do not forget that it was Mary who gave Him to us; that God Himself wished to draw life from the most pure heart of the Virgin, His Mother; that she is still the mysterious channel by which grace comes to us. It is through her, in union with and in her that we must go to the Heart of Jesus. Assured, then, of pleasing Jesus, call His Mother 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.' This is indeed the way of thanking God for choosing Mary as His Mother."

These, then, are the sentiments of Fr. Chevalier expressed in the most ancient document we have from his pen - thoughts expressed long before other influences, such as the Confraternity, made themselves felt. It is clear from the text that in the Founder's mind the power of Mary over the Heart of Jesus was fundamental. Indeed we can say it was the only thought that he wished to impress on the minds of his readers.

The power of Mary existed on earth and still exists in Heaven - a power based on her divine Maternity. It is the power of a Mother over the Heart of her Son. Father Chevalier demonstrated this twofold power - her terrestrial and heavenly power - from Scripture and tradition. The main text from the gospel - "He was subject to them" - clearly shows her power over her Son while He was on earth, but it is only an introduction to indicate Our Lord's perpetual regard for His Mother.

We have already quoted the extracts from the writings of the Fathers of the Church which the Founder used to prove Mary's power in Heaven. These indicated the extent of that power, its characteristics, its object, its foundation and the certitude of the result. He summarises these points in the following commentary:

"She whose prayer is in the nature of a command, she whom God Himself obeyed, she who possesses in her hands the treasures of grace and whom God always hears because of His limitless deference for her, is none other than the Sovereign, the Mistress of the Sacred Heart, the source of Mercy and the throne of grace - in other words, 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.'" There we have the whole meaning of the title. And since such is the total content, the brochure concludes: "Call, then, His Mother, 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.' By this title you are thanking God Who chose her for His Mothers you will bless Jesus Who has crowned her: as Queen and Sovereign of His Heart; you will recall to our Mother her power, and the source of her goodness to men, and you will give her the purest, most complete and most legitimate praise."

Thus the fourfold end of the devotion is attained when the child of Mary invokes Our Lady under this title, employing these ends in their explicit sense, and not adding other elements which can be deduced from them. We repeat what Fr. Veermeersch has said; "The proper object of a devotion must not be confounded with the object of all the acts pertaining to it," "even if," as Bainvel points out, "these acts are directly associated with the object of the devotion." Fr. Chevalier himself will explain later how these acts and their objects are able to be associated with the proper object of the devotion.

In the brochure Fr. Chevalier draws another conclusion, one which followed the theme of many of his sermons: "This power gives glory to Mary and is advantageous for us."

Her power is the first and most glorious jewel in her crown, and as "our" mother she extends it to us both as "the" Lady of the Sacred Heart and "Our" Lady of the Sacred Heart. That which is glorious in the first case is her power over the Heart of Jesus, and in the second case, the fact that she exercises this power in our regard. By invoking her thus we recognise this power that she has over the Sacred Heart. And so we have the transition from "The" Lady of the Sacred Heart to "Our" Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The word, "Lady," is considered in the brochure in a twofold sense, i.e., in relation to the Sacred Heart and in relation to us.

In the first sense in which we consider her as the Sovereign and Mistress of the Heart of Jesus, her power is twofold: that which she possessed on earth and that which she now possesses in Heaven. She is always heeded by God who grants her every command. Here she is the Lady.

In the second sense her power is considered only in relation to us and only in her present life in Heaven. The principal intention of the Founder is to invite us to venerate Mary under this new title. This is why he emphasises the power which she puts at our disposal. We notice, for example, that he does not bother to comment on the three texts from the Fathers which speak of the power of Mary in general. But he does so with the other two texts which deal with her power with sinners and the treasures of grace with which she favours us. He underlines in both cases the relationship of Mary with the sacred Heart, which is the foundation of the devotion. When we honour Mary under this title Jesus seems to say: "O My Mother, ask graces for these children," and we in our turn, "O Mother, be mindful of your power; remember the mercies of the Heart of Jesus, your Son."

The entire conclusion speaks only of this power in reference to us, as right from the beginning he kept drawing attention to the fruits of this veneration. "Beg this Holy Virgin to lead us herself to the Sacred Heart of her Son; beg her to open to us the treasures of love and mercy which this Heart contains and to make us drink more abundantly from the fount of all grace."

However, the power of Mary is not restricted merely to our needs. She remains always "the" Lady of the Sacred Heart. It is precisely because of this that she has that power in our regard. It is because she is "the" Lady of the Sacred Heart that she becomes "Our" Lady of the Sacred Heart.

If we wish to bring out more clearly this double relationship of which Fr. Chevalier speaks so much, we might render the invocation: "Our Lady, being the Lady, of the Sacred Heart, pray for us."

Incidentally, this twofold relationship implied in the title became the occasion of translation difficulties in 1875.

The Polish language has not an expression equivalent to "Our Lady." For the Poles the Blessed Virgin is always "Matko Bosko" - Mother-of- God - which excludes the double meaning which Father Chevalier intended by "Lady." At best the title would signify for them "The lady." This is why the translating the title they first resorted to "Queen of the Sacred Heart." When that title seemed too strong or expressive of further ideas, they translated it as "Mother of the Heart of Jesus," conforming to the idea of "Matko Bosko." The Holy Office decreed eventually that the title remain expressed in the French, where it approved of the invocation "Our Lady" as combining the twofold meaning, and approved also of the honouring of Mary by the faithful as "their Lady."(37)

The power of Mary over the Heart of Jesus is the only object we venerate in the devotion side by side with the Person of Our Lady herself. It is the one object with which the brochure treats, and we know that it was Father Chevalier's mind to have but the one explicit and

separate object to be honoured in any particular devotion. Father Piperon confirms this. He wrote: "A devotion, while having the one object, can accomplish a multiple end."

Father Deidier has written: "It is of the nature of devotions not to be general. The Church does not approve of such devotions. This power is the one object of the devotion, the material object."(38) "By "this title," Fr. Chevalier clearly states, "we recognise and glorify the power which Jesus has given Mary over His Heart." And Father Piperon: "The object of a devotion is that to which the homage is specially directed. The object, then, of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is Mary the Mother of God, honoured particularly because of the sovereign power she possesses over the Heart of Jesus. This brings us to the twofold question: (1) "Is this power of Mary venerated in the Church?" and (2) "Is it a valid object of a devotion?" He goes on then to prove that it is.

Fr. Deidier, commenting on those texts of Fr. Piperon., sees in this power the same role that the Heart plays in the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary. In this devotion Mary is studied in her own Heart, whereas the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has for its object the power of Mary, the maternal influence of Mary over the adorable Heart of her Son. This is why he says the whole question rests on the principles on which this power is founded. "We wish to proclaim nothing else than the rights of the divine Maternity." The whole question is "Does Mary exercise a power, a sovereignty over the Sacred Heart?"(39)

There are no other texts that would suggest that there is anything except this power that constitutes the object of the devotion. This Object comprises only one element, not two, as we find in devotion to the Sacred Heart where the Heart and Love resolve themselves in their symbolic union into the one object. This is why the power itself represents the mystery of Mary which is honoured, and the aspect under which her person is considered. This power over the Heart of her Son gives glory to Mary and it flows from the love which Jesus has for His Mother. We thus find epitomised under the one title the three ideas which Father Chevalier used to bring out in his sermons.

Along with this single object, according to Father Piperon, there exists a multiple end. First of all, the proper end - namely, to recognise and glorify the power which Jesus has given Mary over His divine Heart, or, in other words, the veneration of the power of the Mother of God. Since this is a power over the Heart of Jesus, Father Chevalier calls it "the co-operation of Mary in the work of the Sacred Heart." By this means one reached the final apostolic end to which the devotion as a whole was tending. To repeat what he said at the end of the brochure: "To beg this holy Virgin to lead us to the Sacred Heart, to open Its treasures to us, and to enable us to draw freely from this Fount of grace. It is through her, in union with her and in her that we must go to the Heart of Jesus." And Father Piperon: "The most assured way of reaching the Heart of Jesus is by devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."(40)

Since the life of the soul of the devotee must be in conformity with that of the Person venerated, Father Chevalier added a fifth end, namely, "to repair with her and through her the outrages inflicted on the Sacred Heart and to console Him in His sufferings and bitter disappointments, by living a pious and edifying life."

We can easily appreciate that this is only one of the aspects of our imitation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. We have already said that the Association is merely a means we use, in Father Piperon's expression, "on the road which leads to the Sacred Heart." We journey this road "with her and by her," with the help of her maternal power.

In Chapter XV we spoke of what might be called the sixth end, namely, "to confide to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart all the difficult and seemingly hopeless causes, an end which flows from the proper object of the devotion and leads to its final end." We will consider other possibilities when Fr. Chevalier speaks of the foundation of the devotion.

All homage rendered the Saints, says St. Thomas, ascends to God, and both Frs. Chevalier and Deidier have expressly stated that any devotion has the glory of God as its ultimate end. Fr. Deidier explains that a cult brings great glory to God because God is the Source of all supernatural good which is found in creatures. Justifying this theocentric idea, Father Chevalier expressly applies it to devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The power of Mary, the object of the devotion, has its origin in God Who chose Mary as the Mother of the Incarnate Word, and in the loving communication to her by Christ of all His treasures. Since the devotion leads to God and ultimately must end in Him, the final objects of the devotion will naturally be to thank God for the choice of Mary and to honour the sentiments which Jesus nourished in His Heart for His "Blessed Mother.

The authors of the last century were all in accord concerning the essential elements of the devotion, its object and its ends. Father Piperon, in particular, expresses them clearly in the two documents publicising the devotion in 1857. The fact that in the second text he does not include the strict definition is of little account, as the object is contained in the section on the third end of the devotion. We must remember that at the time when this text appeared there was no discord of interpretation, and those concerned were of the same mind.

We can understand why the various authors were in agreement in spite of the variety of traits amongst them. All accepted the same definition of the devotion which put a Marian seal of a similar nature on their spirituality. All admitted the same significance of the title, namely, that "Mary, because of her divine Maternity, possesses a great power over the Heart of her Son and that it is through her that we must go to this Divine Heart." They all had a great honour for the Immaculate Conception which shone forth from the glory and power which Jesus had given her through love and the fruits of which she communicates to us through love.

If we are permitted to apply the text in which Fr. Chevalier gives an outline of the nature and end of devotion to the Sacred Heart, we could say here: "The devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has for its end the rendering of a particular cult to the power of Mary over the Heart of her Son, in order that by contact with this divine Mother, so animated with love for Jesus and us, our own hearts, full of confidence in her maternal bounty, will in their turn burn with this powerful love of Jesus and conform themselves in all things with this perfect spirit of the love of Mary for the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

The proximate end, then, of the devotion is the veneration of the power which Mary exercises for our benefit over the Heart of Christ in her role as Mediatrix and Distributor of the grace of Christ, so that we enter into contact with the person of Mary under the aspect of her powerful Maternity and, confident in this power, we direct our love with hers towards the Heart of Jesus. Through her, with her and in her we strive to live in this spirit of love. Thus, while the devotion and its special object remain intact, the text opens up vast perspectives on the richness contained in the term, the person and the object. As in the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we see in this richness, the possibilities which open up to souls in their individual trends, and the special blessings God will grant this devotion,

From the beginning of the devotion the relationship between the veneration of Our Lady and that of the Sacred Heart attracted the attention and love of the faithful who found in it a source of blessing in their spiritual life. Its object is the power of the Mother of God over the Heart of Jesus, of the Heart of the Redeemer, the Source of all grace, with Whom Mary is our mediatrix, distributing its treasures to mankind.

As the devotee of the Sacred Heart finds his seeking of the all loving Christ the determining factor of his life, the grace he receives from Mary is likewise directed to this end. Thus the practices and aspects of his devotion to the Sacred Heart take on what we may call a 'Marian atmosphere,' the expression of a devout soul who has entered into contact with Mary in her role as Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Just as by revering the human love of the Sacred Heart and living more intimately with Him we elevate ourselves to the plenitude of His personal love, so by devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart we benefit from the full extent of her power - the power which Fr. Chevalier names as that of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In other words, we benefit from the perpetual and inherent power which Mary has over the Sacred Heart and the Heart of God. In this consists the great glory of the divine Mother, the Daughter and the Spouse, the Queen of Heaven and Earth, whose power over the Heart of her Son we are daily able to experience in a sensible form. The perspectives and possibilities which open up before us by this means are well nigh inexhaustible.

In his writings, Fr. Chevalier indicates various ways of realising and developing this extension of the devotion, while respecting its specific object. He wrote, for example, "Mary is Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for two reasons: firstly, because she is the Mother of God, and, secondly, because she is the Mother of men." And elsewhere, "The title of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has its origin in the divine Maternity, its development in its illustrious prerogatives, its 'raison d'etre' in our affiliation at the foot of the Cross, and its justification in the name of Mary, which is in itself the complete resume of all the glories of the august Virgin."(41)

Who does not remember his outstanding sermon on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary in 1857? His books on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart treat of this development of the devotion, just as those on the Sacred Heart deal with the fullness of life to be obtained in the Sacred Heart.

He develops the idea of the power of Mary being derived from her divine Maternity in his catechism: "We must conclude," he writes, "that the Blessed Virgin Mary is truly the Mother of God, since the word 'Mother' is applied to a person who brings a son into the world, and the Son she bore was no other than God Himself. However, this physical relationship does not constitute in itself the whole nature of the divine Maternity. In fact, we might say it is the least of the relations between the Incarnate Word and the Blessed Virgin. It constitutes the incomparable privilege of the divine Maternity, but there are other relationships greater and more elevated. However, it does form the foundation of all the others.

What, then, are these other relationships? We can distinguish them into the moral and the supernatural. By the moral relationship existing between the Blessed Virgin Mary and her divine Son we mean precisely that which follows in their capacity as Mother and Son. As Mother, Mary acquires certain rights over her Son and contracts various duties towards Him. Likewise, Our Lord, as Son, acquires the right to all those things which a mother should give her child, such as God has ordained, and contracts certain duties and obligations towards her. In this fact consists the moral relationship of which we speak, a relationship which exists between every mother and child. It exists in a real sense between Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, since He is truly Man and received His life from Mary. We must remember, of course, that, being God, Our Lord was not obliged strictly and rigorously to obey His Mother who, although perfect, was still a creature. The fact that He did obey Her - "He was subject to them" - resulted from His great love for His Mother and for men. However, by thus establishing this voluntary relationship with His Mother, He conferred on her a right - not an essential one, it is true, but a real right - resulting from a free and voluntary concession.

Besides these rights and obligations there is another relationship between mother and child which really defies cold philosophical definition. It is a mysterious bond which unites in a very intimate way the mother to the child and the child to the mother - a bond which brings them so close together that we might say the mother is in the child and the child in the mother. When the mother and child make use of their rights and fulfil their duties in a perfect manner, and in keeping with the intimate bond of heart between the two, there results a moral union between mother and child which surpasses any unity we may conceive in the order of nature and becomes a union of ineffable beauty. By virtue of this union, whatever pertains to the one, i.e., to the mother or child, in the way of dignity, honour, merit or glory, pertains to the other, is communicated to the other and becomes the proper and personal property of each.

Now, what is meant by the supernatural relationship? According to St. Thomas, the closer a thing approaches its principle, the more it shares in its glory. By her divine Maternity, the Blessed Virgin is united to the Divine Word, Who has taken His body from her. She is united to Him most intimately, since by virtue of the ineffable bond by which she is united with the Divine Word, she gives life to the Body of the very Son of God. Thus, she makes the Son of God her own Son and is drawn to Him in the closest manner possible. She participates in His glory, His greatness and His prerogatives in a degree which surpasses anything we can conceive. She is constituted in a supernatural order apart from all else, which is called the order of the Divine Maternity.(42)

Her Maternity is not merely the fact of a woman becoming a mother. It is a "state" over and above the physical fact implying many other relationships. These relations taken together form the moral and supernatural aspects of this state. When this relationship exists in the highest degree, as it does here between Mary and Jesus, it forms a moral union so intimate and beautiful that we are not able to conceive anything more beautiful in the natural order. Founded on the intimate bond between the heart of the mother and that of the child, it forms a communion of all the great attributes of both their beings. As Fr. Deidier states: "This corporal union never exists without a certain spiritual union."

If this is the aspect of the maternity on which depends the transfer of power from the Son to the Mother, the Divine Maternity strengthens this transmission, thanks to the supernatural relationship. On this point, two ideas dominate the reflections of Father Chevalier. Firstly, he argues that if in the natural order the mother is the principle from which the child takes its being, then in the supernatural order of this Maternity, Mary is the principle of her own Principle, since her Son is God, Who has taken His Body from her. Already he had stated that Our Lord had voluntarily accepted and taken on Himself the natural consequences of His human birth, because of His great love for His Mother and for men. In this case, the child, as it were, does not exist because of the will of the Mother, but she becomes His Mother because of the choice and will of the Son. It follows that in this maternity the accent is put more on the relationship of the Mother to the Son, Who is her Principle, than on that of the child to the Mother. This is what makes Mary glorious: the participation of the Mother in the richness of her Son. Likewise, the acceptance of the Son of all the natural consequences of this maternity is an abundant proof of Our Lord's love for men.

The second idea follows from the first. The Power of this Mother is ineffable and insurpassable because her Son is God, living in glory, majesty and supreme power and because He permits His Mother to participate in these privileges in so far as a human being can do so. In Mary's Maternity, the Son dominates all, and the Mother is intimately united with Him not only as her Son but as her God." And so this Maternity contains all the principles on which rest the ineffable power of the Mother of God over the Heart of her Son.

The divine Maternity is, consequently, a complex idea which includes a whole group of relations between Mary and Christ, and these in turn lead to a number of effects which make the relationship still more intimate and give us new reasons to believe in this great power of the Mother of God over the Heart of her Son. This power has been demonstrated by many historical facts, examples of the "illustrious prerogatives" of the divine Maternity, which form the basis of our devotion.

Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit the soul is moved to honour the power of Mary because of one or other of these reasons. Fr. Chevalier respected this action of grace and left it to the individual devotee to choose the aspect or effect of the divine Maternity which impressed him the most and, inspired him to honour this power of Mary over the Heart of her Son. But it is clear that the fundamental reason for all is the love which united the two persons.

In his brochure, Fr. Chevalier expressed the thought which he was to repeat often, namely, that by devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart we are sure of pleasing Mary because it brings to her mind the object dearest to her heart, the Heart of her Son.

For Father Piperon, the love of Mary and Jesus for each other is the basis of her power. "The love of a Mother," he wrote, "what power it has over the heart of a son! Is not love the measure of power of one heart over another?"

It is noticeable that the group of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from the Marseilles region stressed this aspect of the devotion, namely, the union of hearts, in the early days of the Society. Fr. Deidier speaks of "the maternal union of Mary with the body of Jesus and consequently with His Heart." "The union of the heart of our Mother," he wrote, "with the Heart of her Son is the basis of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

He goes on to explain this spiritual union more fully, concluding: "That which makes Mary so powerful over the Heart of Jesus is assuredly her love for His Heart, her union with Him and the harmony of their sentiments."

The Issoudun 'Annals' noted that the altar in Our Lady's chapel is designed to show "both the tenderness of Mary with her children and the power she has with the Heart of her God - to bring out in particular the relationship between the Immaculate Heart of this august Queen and the

Divine Heart of her Son."

Father Jouet had this relationship of the two hearts continually in mind when he wrote his "Meditations for the Month of May." In the preface, after explaining the devotion and its foundation, he wrote: "The thirty-two considerations are compiled to make us understand better the grandeurs of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, her limitless power over the Heart of her Son and her great desire of bestowing on us the treasures of love and mercy of which she is the Dispensatrix. God made a Mother worthy of Himself, as He wished her to be. What thought is there that can make us best comprehend the ineffable grandeur of the Queen of the Heart of Jesus?"

"If this admirable Virgin had not had the prerogative of becoming the Mother of Jesus, her glory would not have been insurpassable, but, thanks to God, the Incarnate Word was not content merely to have a mother who would give Him His flesh and blood, but He chose one after His own Heart and Soul."

"He did not choose a mother whose work would be done after she gave the God-Child to the world, one who would disappear as the flower before the fruit. He chose a Mother who would be as inviolably united to Him as the root is to the stem, a Mother from whom He would never be separated, with whom He would always be united in love, who would reproduce Him in the souls of men and be an object of glory to the elect in Heaven."

"He chose a Mother who would sit on His right hand; who would reign over His Heart; into whose hands He would place the infinite treasures of His Passion and Death; in whom He would be glorified throughout the centuries. She possesses a sovereign power over the Heart of God. A God is her Son, a God Who is the sublime architect of every work she undertakes; a God Who is the Eternal Protector of anyone who wishes to honour her as a Mother and to serve her for ever."

In practically all the meditations, Fr. Jouet refers to the Heart of Mary in relation to the Heart of Jesus as the source of all Her graces, both for herself and for us. He continues: "Love has bound the two Hearts together in the closest of bonds. The virginal Heart of Mary re-echoes all the sentiments of the Sacred Heart of her Son, shares all His thoughts and sacrifices. Both Hearts, as it were, are the same Heart. No wonder that Christians have hailed this new name of the Mother of God with enthusiasm - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Having shared His chalice of bitterness with Him, Jesus has given her special rights to share His love, and Mary, as in all the circumstances of the life of her Son, has merited this name - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Jesus wanted, above all, the Heart of Mary, and she in return has inherited the Heart of Jesus."

"This Heart of Mary has co-operated fully in the work of the salvation of souls. She influences the Heart of her Son with her own maternal Heart in her quest for souls. Daily her all-powerful prayers ascend to the Heart of her Son, gaining abundant graces for the Church.

The graces from the Holy Spirit and from the Heart of Jesus were united in the holy reservoir of the Heart of Mary, graces which were dispersed in the hearts of the Apostles. What will be the sentiments of our own hearts when we, by God's grace, will enter God's Kingdom? To whom will we unite ourselves if not to the Heart of our Mother, our hope of salvation, who will be waiting for us and whose final favour will be to present us to the Throne of Mercy, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus?"

"In Heaven, Mary finds realised a dream of her maternal Heart. She finds the Heart of Jesus multiplied in every heart. One is assured then of going to the Heart of Jesus through the Heart of Mary, and it is a sweet consolation for poor human beings to know, they can invoke her as their tender Mother her who can say to Our Divine Mediator as the Heavenly Father can say, 'You are my Son.' That is why we repeat often with faith, hope and love: 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us.'"(43)

This insistence on the fact that the intimate union between the Hearts of the Mother and Son is the source of Mary's power, no doubt results from the fact that the first faithful followers of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were already ardent devotees of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

But the Divine Maternity contains in itself another reason more profound. All the relations of this Maternity find in the union of love their most sublime and most devout expression, and this is the reason why Mary has such power over the Heart of her Son. Thus, all that is comprised in devotion to the Heart of Mary becomes the basis and justification for the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Because of the close relationship of the two devotions, the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart used to invoke also the Sacred Heart of Mary, and in 1867 under the one request an indulgence was sought for the two invocations.

In another document we have found the wording of a request seeking the granting of an indulgence for the recitation of the Litany of the Immaculate Heart and permission to say the Mass of the Immaculate Heart every Tuesday.

In all this Father Chevalier was fulfilling his promise of 1855 to honour the Immaculate Heart of Mary by establishing the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, since the devotion was to show the power of Mary resulting from the mutual love of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

As an epigraph to his brochure, Father Chevalier wrote that this new title, after that of "Mother of God," is the most beautiful that love and faith can give to Mary. From the belief in this power the cult of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart leads us naturally to the love of Our Lady, and through this love of the Mother of God we are led to the love of her Son. "Love," says Fr. Chevalier, "is the ultimate word in our relationship with God, the summary of our entire religion."

The power which we revere in Mary is founded on love. It is a power produced by the love of Jesus for His Mother and for us, and its whole object is to lead us to the loving Heart of Christ.

We come then to what Fr. Chevalier refers to as the "raison d'etre" of the devotion, a relationship with the Mother of God solemnly ratified at the foot of the Cross when we were made her children. The first authors of the devotion gave a very important place to this scene at Calvary. Father Chevalier had already treated it at length in his important sermon written in his seminary days, and Father Piperon had often repeated the ideas, particularly in his "Pouvoir de Notre Dame du Sacre Coeur." To quote Father Piperon again, "Not only does a mother love without limit, but she is always anxious to help her children. If she is powerless to do so, she finds the frustration of this maternal instinct more cruel than death itself. Our Lord knew this, and so when He gave Mary the rights and love of a mother, He gave her at the same time a sovereign power over His Heart - that Heart which He would allow to be pierced with a lance as a source of life for men. And would not the great compassion of Mary be a source of power over the Heart of her Son? Would; not the compassion of a tender and devoted Heart give her some authority over the Heart whose sufferings she has shared? It was during the Passion, particularly during the hours of the agony, that the Heart of the Son and that of the Mother were tenderly united and were suffering the same anguish. It was at this time that Mary really acquired the supreme sovereignty over the Heart of Jesus."

Father Deidier uses the same argument: "That which gave the Blessed Virgin such power over the Heart of her Son was her union with It during the numerous sufferings of the Passion." And Father Jouet: "By partaking of the chalice of bitterness, just as she had done in all the other circumstances of His life, Mary justly earned the title 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart' because in return she received as heritage the Heart of Jesus."

This union between the two Hearts in every circumstance of life and the resulting heritage of the Heart of the Son by the Mother is but a consequence of the divine Maternity. Father Piperon has written: "Further to what we had to say about the power of Mary, it follows that she is the Mother of Divine Grace. She gives us her Son by her powerful and efficacious co-operation. Her love as Mother of God gives her a limitless power over the Heart of her Son, and as the Mother of men, she is the powerful Mother of Mercy, which enables her to fulfil her sacred ministry. As Mother of Sorrows, her compassion for the sufferings of the august Victim of the sins of men has merited for her a supreme dominion over the Heart of Jesus. That is the teaching of the devotion we bring you."(44)

It is evident that any devout soul can concentrate on some other aspect of the devotion, for example, on the reparation of Mary, and find there a moving and telling expression of the divine Maternity. But that remains a personal and individual spiritual outlook regarding the Blessed

Virgin or a transitory experience of his or her spiritual life, which is associated with the object of the devotion. It will lead the devotee to a more intimate and fervent veneration of the proper and specific object of the devotion - the power of the Mother over the Heart of her Son.

We repeat Fr. Píperon's words concerning the Founder's attitude to the devotion: "It was the object of all his preoccupations; one might say it was 'the passion' of his life. Was it not a mission which the Queen of Heaven had entrusted to him for the glory of the Heart of Jesus and the good of souls? The Reverend Father was convinced of it. Far from keeping this mission to himself, his great desire was to see his confreres filled with zeal in their efforts to propagate the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He repeatedly taught us that this was one of the principal ends of the Society and the most assured way of glorifying and making known and loved the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Let us add that, by spreading this devotion, he found an apostolic way, together with the help of the still small band of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, of establishing a world-wide movement in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the Heart of her Son. The history of the devotion clearly proves this.

A devotion which originated from the hearing of prayer on 8th December, 1854 - the foundation day of the Congregation - and which was nourished by numerous graces and favours, was to be a source of life for the work commenced by the grace of the Mother of God and under her auspices. As Fr. Chevalier wrote in his Constitutions: "In order that our Society may grow and preserve the fervour of its spirit, all the members must pray assiduously to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to Mary who is invested with such great power over the Heart of her Son."(45)

We are now able to form an idea of the spiritual experience of Father Chevalier from whom the title and devotion of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart originated.

The doctrine of Father Olier had made him conscious of the profound significance of the divine Maternity with its consequences in the mutual relationship of love with her Divine Son - consequences which were emphasised in both the devotions of the Sacred Heart of Mary and the Interior Lives of Jesus and Mary. He was also deeply aware of the consequences of this mutual love as it affected us, that is, of the role of Mary as Mediatrix and Distributor of Divine Grace.

For Father Chevalier, as for the early Fathers of the Society, the power of the Blessed Virgin, which is the foundation of all her functions, is primarily expressed in her Immaculate Conception. Just as for him the devotion to the Sacred Heart was an intimate matter of the heart, of the love of Christ, so the power of Mary resided in the fact that she could dispose of the treasures of this Sacred Heart, a power she had received in virtue of her divine Maternity. These treasures she communicates to us through love, because she is our Mother and feels for us with a mother's heart.

On the historic 8th December, 1854, Father Chevalier turned to the Maternal Heart and solicited the foundation of the Society in virtue of her power over the Sacred Heart, a power expressed especially in her Immaculate Conception. The graces she has gained for the Society is sufficient proof of the ineffable power which this Immaculate Mother possesses over the Heart of her Son, a power of distributing the treasures which It contains.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF FATHER FOUNDER

E.J. Cuskelly, MSC, 1959

Note : The following article was contributed by Father Cuskelly to an abridgement of JULES CHEVALIER, MSC by Father Henri Vermin, MSC.

The abridgement of the twenty chapters of this book was made by the MSC scholastics at the Sacred Heart Monastery, Croydon, Vic., 1959.

Father Cuskelly's article has particular reference to Chapter XVIII of Vol. I, Father Vermin, of the Dutch Province, died without completing the second volume.

The last three chapters of Fr. Vermin's book are concerned with "Orientations Spirituelles". Chapter XX on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has already been treated (Feast of O.L.S.H.). Chapter XIX on Fr. Founder's teaching on devotion to the Sacred Heart has also been considered elsewhere - and regarding its doctrinal content is assumed as being sufficiently known to need no further discussion here. Its influence on the spirituality of Fr. Chevalier will, however, be brought out. Obviously, then, my main concern is with Chapter XVIII; and in order that it might serve to set forth more clearly the spirit of our Founder, I shall first of all recall some of the points made in earlier papers, indicating briefly their importance for the forming of that spirit. For this purpose, I have utilized Fr. Vermin's article in the *Analecta* of 1952, and - with apologies to Fr. Vermin, if they are needed - run in a few considerations from Spiritual Theology, in the hope that they will help in an appreciation of the genesis and genius of the Founder's spirituality.

The importance of such an appreciation can hardly be over-stressed. For, as Pope Pius XI reminded us, the founder of a Religious Institute carries out his work under a Divine inspiration, and the members of that Institute cannot err if they endeavour to follow his way. For them also it is the way of the more perfect living of their vocation.

First of all, you cannot understand any system of spirituality, nor any spiritual way, unless you see it as the expression of the personal spiritual life and experience of the one to whom it owes its origin. A school of spirituality, or a system or way of spiritual life, is never something worked out at a desk; not something in the merely speculative order, with a nice arrangement of all things according to their value worked out according to one or other theological system. Personal experience is the decisive factor; a central intuition, a lived experience - something taking hold of your heart and soul and transforming your life.

Secondly, there is nothing essential to Christianity which is excluded from a genuine spiritual way. The essentials are common to all: the goal, union with God, and Christ, the way: sacraments, liturgy, grace, virtues, taking up the cross etc. The essential principles are always the same: the schools of spirituality result from a special accent given to one or other of the common elements; a special highlighting, or a special starting point - e.g. St. Francis and the imitation of Christ in his poverty.

Thirdly, when the personal experience, or central intuition comes to a man, it transforms, under its own special light, all things else that make up the whole of his spiritual life. Nothing is taken away that was of value; but their value is now relative to the principal personal value in his life. Similarly, the experience is usually not a completely isolated and disconnected event in his life. It builds on to all that has gone before in his own life - and whatever came before is, under God's providence, by way of preparation. The whole thing is somewhat like lighting a fire. The spark, or the flame, is the energising and characteristic element. But it is not lit in a vacuum - it is applied to the materials already gathered and built up. Once it is lighted, you do not remove these materials; but the fire creeps back, transforming and diffusing its light and energy over the whole.

The spark in Fr. Chevalier's spirit was devotion to the Sacred Heart - characterizing his spirituality. But you must not see it isolated, but rather built on to what went before in the way of life and doctrine, diffusing its light and colour over what was already there, giving it new direction.

With these principles in mind, let us take a quick look back over his life. Fr. Vermin's book, and the very fine summaries we have heard, make Jules Chevalier a very living figure. We see him as a high-spirited kid stealing apples and playing practical jokes; as a youth who was man enough to hand out a good punch on the nose when it was called for; as a seminarian who floored one of his fellows when he became insufferable. Beneath all this, however, there is evidence of the stuff that saints are made of - not in the way of pious prodigies - but in qualities of character that can be marshalled into the service of the supernatural and which, in him, were early directed towards higher things. This

direction was nothing strikingly extraordinary: the salutary influence of a good, common-sensed Catholic mother, such as you would find in most good Catholic families, and the help of a parish Priest who took an interest in the boy.

There were certain things about Jules that were more than ordinary; and these can all be summed up by the one word: 'Fidelity', fidelity in corresponding with any demands that God made on him, or that he judged God had made - and this from a very early age, Fr. Vermin writes, on page 362: "In order to pass a judgment on a Founder, it is most important to note the unity and fidelity which characterize his life and his activity in pursuit of the goal."

Jules Chevalier, from his earliest years, possessed this quality of fidelity to God's demands and to his vocation in a measure that was certainly more than ordinary. This comes through, from the very first chapter: in his scraping the meat from a sandwich his mother made - aged nine years he was - for it was against the law of the Church; in his generosity in carrying out all that he considered demanded by the vocation to be a priest - a vocation which, in spite of obstacles, he never doubted. He was resolute in the practice of prayer - not from any great lights received, but because it should be done. For long years he worked as an apprentice in order to gain money to educate himself as a priest, and he studied in his spare time. He kept himself apart from his fellow comrades and their good fun, in spite of their insistences, for he judged that they might hinder the following out of his vocation. Fidelity, generosity, single-mindedness: great qualities, really, when they are put wholeheartedly in the service of God. That they were comes out in that incident when, as a seminarian, Jules told his relatives: "I am becoming a Priest to be in the service of God, and not of my family; to gain souls for Jesus Christ, and not to enrich my relatives" (page 32). It is testified to, repeatedly, by his seminary companions.

There are, from his seminary days, three incidents, which with the help of God's grace, were to be very important in preparing him for the personal experience of contact with the Sacred Heart which was to transform his life. The first was the fall from the cliff while at the Seminary of Saint-Gaultier. The spiritual import of this accident is expressed by Fr. Vermin in these words: "In his powerless inability, not understanding why he was not already dead, he had a clear consciousness of the absolute dominion of God on whom all depends, and who held in His hands his vocation and his life - he first realized his total dependence, and the obligation of putting himself entirely at the service of God. This he promised to do." (page 52)

The second incident which we must recall is the grace (I use Fr. Chevalier's own words) of being able to renounce a friendship - a rather strong one - with one of his fellow students, because God made him see that this too-natural friendship was not consonant with the mission He wished to entrust to him. As Fr. Vermin writes: "It seems to have been the sacrifice of this friendship that was for him personally a condition asked by God for advancing to a higher perfection."

The third notable event in this period of the life of Jules Chevalier is his first Retreat after he had passed from the Seminary of Saint-Gaultier to that of Bourges. He himself attaches much importance to this Retreat. He dates his 'conversion'¹ from it.

Here, I think, it would be useful to run in a few brief considerations on the nature of what is commonly called a 'second conversion'. The terminology dates from St. Clement of Alexandria - at least in its more usual acceptance; Garrigou-Lagrange demands one for the entry into each of the three ways - but conversions non sunt multiplicandae sine necessitate. It is so called from its parallel with the first conversion to the Faith: it is a renewed, complete self-giving to God and His Will; to merit the name it must be generous, decisive, firm and constant. According to the Dictionnaire de Spiritualite, there can be two types: sudden or slow. Now, here I shall give only the points which have a parallel with the incidents in the life of Fr. Founder.

The sudden conversion, says the author of this article, can come:

- (a) after a more difficult victory over self - sometimes accompanied by a strong light and a movement of grace: e.g. St. Francis of Assisi. The reason is evident - this generous self-renunciation for God's sake is a gift of self to God, and can involve the whole soul in a very deep way. (c.f. friendship)
- (b) or it can come after a revelation of the nothingness of human things and the accompanying realization that God is all (e.g. St. Francis Borgia at the grave of Isabella - c.f. the fall).

When the conversion is slow - it is often due to a retreat; St. Ignatius is very insistent on this, The motives of the conversion can be many - the more disinterested are the more noble, and also, from the psychological point of view, more efficacious; for they can bring about complete forgetfulness of self and cost to self. "Qui amat non laborat", as St. Augustine says.

Prepared by these other incidents and the graces of which they had been the occasion, Jules gave himself generously to the will of God, his soul open to receive the influence of God. Together with this, he was submitted to the influence of the French School of spirituality - the school of St. Sulpice. This spirituality was essentially Christocentric and sacerdotal - seeing Christ the High Priest as the one who, par excellence, glorified God, and practised most perfectly the virtue of religion (a virtue on which the school laid much emphasis). The work of a priest, as Jules was called to be, was essentially to share in and continue that work of Christ - to let Christ take possession of and live on in himself; he would think only of the glory of God. In this way a priest would forget himself, die to himself; he would let Christ live in him and work through him. Thus his whole life would be directed in Christ to the glory of God. It would centre around the Eucharist and the sacrifice of the Mass, for it was there that Christ principally continues His work. It had a great devotion to the interior life of Christ which the priest tried to reproduce in himself (and thus incidentally Berulle prepared the way for devotion to the Sacred Heart). It loved to repeat two texts from St. Paul: "I live now no longer I, but Christ lives in me", and Hebrews in regard to Christ coming into the world: "See, I am coming to do thy will, O my God," A further insistence was on the necessity of dying to self in order that Christ might live in us, In this, as in all things, the model was Christ, emptying himself and taking the form of a slave at the Incarnation - and also in the Eucharist, hidden under the sacred species.

Centred on Christ the High Priest and Mediator, this spirituality must of necessity consider the twofold aspect of priesthood: Christ giving supreme glory and adoration to God, Christ giving life and salvation to men. Its prayer has been summarized under three heads: Christ before our eyes, Christ in our hearts, and Christ in our hands. The first two: adoration and communion express the more contemplative aspect, the third the apostolic or active: working together for the glory of God and the salvation of men with Christ. Fr. Piperon tells us that a favourite text of Fr. Chevalier in those days was Heb. 12:2: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the origin and crown of all faith, who, to win his prize of blessedness, endured the cross and made light of its shame, Jesus who now sits on the right of God's throne."

All these steps in his formation were preparatory for the definitive grace given him on the occasion of the study of the doctrine of the devotion of the Sacred Heart. "This doctrine went straight to my heart," he wrote, "and the more I went into it, the more completely captivating I found it." Devotion to the Sacred Heart was not something altogether new to him; but now he brought to its study the newness of a soul re-made.

1. His own natural temperament had given him a sense of duty and constancy; and he showed generosity and fidelity in developing and directing his natural qualities in the service of God.
2. The fall down the cliff had given him the perspective of God's supremacy, and the total dependence of all creatures.
3. The generous renunciation of a too-natural friendship had given him total detachment and set his heart free for God alone.
4. The retreat had given him the grace for complete supernatural dedication; for the fully-lived complete abandonment of himself to God and His demands.
5. Saint Sulpice had given him a Christ-centred, self-forgetful system of spiritual service and life in Christ for God and for souls.
6. But it was his 'discovery' of devotion to the Sacred Heart which was the spark which gave fire to his life, and living unity to all that comprised it. There is the animating principle. It did not substitute for all the rest (no spirit ever does), but it was the flame that gave light and warmth,

and distinctive colour to all the rest. It soon permeated his whole life, and by his Ordination to sub-deaconate, we can say that his spirituality was definitely formed.

Before developing the treatment of this spirit, and showing how it worked itself out in practice and into the Constitutions and the spirit of the Society, it will be useful to indicate how, in what we have been considering, parallel to his personal formation, Divine Providence was preparing him for his vocation as a founder. In order that the vital personal experience which is at the heart of every way of spirituality should be of more than personal value and really influence others, two things (according to the article "Ecole de Spiritualite" in the Dictionnaire de Spiritualite) are necessary:

1. It must be accompanied by a certitude which can leave no doubt of this mission to propagate it.
2. It must be accompanied by a self-mastery in the person who experiences it - so that his care henceforth is only to help others share his own vision. We shall consider these in inverse order. In the accounts of his life as a

seminarist, what appears most clearly is his long and constant striving for self-mastery: fidelity to rule and duties, assiduity at studies, application to prayer, poverty, mortification, penance, humility, readiness to take every occasion to practise charity. These things are mentioned again and again, and many examples given. Fr. Píperon has to excuse him from the charge of severity with himself and with others. Others were (many of them) repelled by his obvious efforts at recollection and devotion. The plain fact of the matter is that for many of his fellow students, his obvious, very serious efforts not to be merely natural made him appear un-natural, and a pious 'pain in the neck'. He himself was aware of this, and tho' not holding seriousness and severity were the same thing as sanctity for all, he judged necessary in his own case - to quote Fr. Píperon - "strong constraint, violent effort to conquer and dominate his strong nature, and to make it supple," Fr. Píperon, the Founder's champion, goes so far as to admit that there could have been exaggeration in a lot of this. The reason was that he wanted to be a saint in a hurry.

These efforts because they were inspired by the right intention paid off, and the balancing effect of devotion to the Sacred Heart gave him serenity. A year's meditation on it brought him at subdeaconate the peaceful, untroubled possession of himself. His self-mastery was achieved, and henceforth he radiated something of the courteous charm of the Heart of Christ which helped him much more effectively to influence others.

His care henceforth was to help others share the vision, and let it influence their lives. Hence the group of seminarians "Chevaliers du Sacre Coeur". There came to him too, in his Seminary days, in the various steps that have been traced for you, the certitude that he was called by God to establish a society of priests - missionaries, to combat the evil of the day - irreligion, incredulity, indifference, and immorality. The inspiration came to him in prayer, and he never doubted that it was of God. Then, when he "found" the appeal of devotion to the Sacred Heart, "it stirred up within me", he wrote, "an ardent desire to become the apostle of this devotion, which Our Lord Himself had given to the world as a powerful means of sanctification, and which He desired to see spread everywhere."

From now on, he is the Founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. All he needs is the practical means of implementing his vocation. The steps in that implementation you have heard, and there is no need to repeat them,

What is his vision of life as he now conceives it, for himself and for the members of his Society? As we consider the answer to this question, you can see how his devotion to the Sacred Heart, as it were, takes hold of the past and puts it into practice with a newness that came from the force of his vision. I do not think there is any exaggeration in speaking of Fr. Chevalier's personal experience of the meaning of devotion to the Sacred Heart, and its consequent domination of his whole life as a sort of vision, Fr. Vermin, and before him Fr. Delaporte, remark on the 'quasi-visionary'¹ tone with which he writes of the Sacred Heart (page 385). As I have said, I shall not delay on his exposition of the doctrine of the Sacred Heart. There is nothing extraordinary about it - or rather there is this which is out of the ordinary: his sureness in selecting from the various opinions then current on various aspects - the soundest one always. But even this is what we should have expected. For if a Founder, as Pope Pius X says, is inspired by the spirit of God; and if Fr. Chevalier's special inspiration was to work himself and through his Society for the spread of the devotion to the Heart of Christ, that work would, on all essential points, be along the right lines.

You could work out, from what we have already considered, just what Fr. Chevalier's vision must have been. A genuine spirituality does not, when the personal experience comes to it, neglect everything that has led up to that experience. It utilizes what it already possesses. Now Fr. Chevalier's devotion had been centred on Christ the High Priest. Devotion to the Sacred Heart does not replace this: it becomes now, Devotion to the Heart of Christ the High Priest (page 377). It is important to remember this. Now, as we have said, a priest cannot be thought of except as a Mediator - as combining worship of God with sanctification of men: for a priest is, in the very essence of the priesthood, the bridge between God and man. Obviously, then, Fr. Chevalier's devotion to the Sacred Heart could not have been a consideration of the Heart of Christ considered without any connexion with the souls whom His Priesthood had saved.

And, of course, over and over again in what Fr. Chevalier wrote we see that his vision is one of the Sacred Heart and the world in need. As a matter of fact, in point of time, the world in need of God in the evils of the day entered first into his vision. This also fits into the general process of his spiritual formation. Saint Sulpice and the French school placed much stress on the virtue of religion. Acknowledging God's excellence and adoring Him was man's first duty and highest privilege. In recognizing his dependence on God, man found his true peace, and his real happiness was founded on his service of God.

The fall, which has been mentioned, with its spiritual consequences, would have prepared Jules' soul for a deep appreciation of this doctrine. In consequence of this and of his own sense of duty and loyalty, he would have been very deeply affected by the knowledge that in the world there was so much indifference, so many men who failed to recognize God and give Him thanks. This Godlessness was, to him, a great evil that must be remedied - for God's honour and man's good. As he studied the thesis on the Sacred Heart and read the life of St. Margaret Mary, he saw that Christ Himself had revealed the most effective remedy - Devotion to His Heart. He wrote that the formal object of the devotion is: "The love with which this Heart is animated for men, or, in other words, Our Lord in His Love for men."

Once you have that vision, you have everything or the whole explanation of Fr. Founder's subsequent life and activity - of our motto: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved": for this was Christ's own Heart's desire - this was the world's greatest need, and greatest remedy. It explains why, as Fr. Vermin insists, our vocation is at once contemplative and active: in *actione contemplativus*. Just recall the method of prayer of Saint Sulpice that he had learned: three steps: adoration and communion - contemplating the Heart of Christ in His adorable Person, in His relations with the Father, reproducing His virtues; co-operation - zeal and apostolic activity.

This vision explains why, for him, and in his Constitutions, there is so much insistence on the necessity of prayer. First you must contemplate and adore the Heart of Christ, set yourself on fire with Its love before you go out to cast this fire upon the earth. That is why he always opposed any suggestions (those of M. Cham-grand for instance) that his society be one of missionaries without vows and community life. Community life was necessary, for it was the means of prayer, of steeping themselves in the divine love of the Heart of Christ, without which they would be nothing. His old favourite text from Hebrews 12:7 was not forgotten. In one form or another it recurs in the Constitutions he drew up: "Ever keeping before their eyes the divine pattern of perfection, Jesus Christ Our Lord" etc. (N. 7)

The vision explains, too, those notes which are regarded as characterizing our spirit: ever-burning love of the Heart of Christ, and zeal for souls. Fraternal charity is another important characteristic note - in it, says Fr. Chevalier, the M.S.C. will be second to none. For we are all men who have shared the same vision, whose life is dominated by this same thought of the Sacred Heart and the world in need of His love. Our thoughts are not centred on ourselves, but on the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart - "Ametur ubique. . ." We are all brothers working for a common cause, caught up and working shoulder to shoulder in a great enterprise in which there is a certain urgency, for "caritas Christi urget nos".

No matter what we do, teaching, preaching, cooking, gardening - these are all directed to the one end. If it helps to this end - that the Sacred Heart be known and loved - it does not matter what we do, provided it be done.

"May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!" That is what mattered for Father Founder. To that end, he was ready to encourage and work for any means that were proposed: Association of Secular Priests and third Order, Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Apostolic Schools. A similar readiness for any work that contributes to the spread of the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart - in any way - Fr. Founder expected of his disciples (Constitutions N. 7). This single-mindedness in conspiring towards a common end must, according to St. Thomas' teaching on friendship, contribute much towards that spirit of fraternal charity which is regarded as being characteristic of our Society. This charity will exist in the same measure as we share in the vision of our Founder. What are we? Students, brothers, teachers, preachers? No - we are M.S.C., men who work "ut ametur ubique Cor Jesu" - by any means, at any task. It is not the means that specify our work, but the purpose: the love of the Heart of Christ.

Imitation of Christ, and obedience, pass over from their Sulpician setting to the new perspective of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Devotion to the Heart of Christ the High Priest demands imitation - imitation first and foremost in His priestly activity: giving honour and glory and adoration to God, and being filled with zeal for the salvation of men. Imitating His virtues will not be merely external but "I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me" - the love of His Heart will transform our way of living to His likeness. "They will be second to none in obedience", wrote Fr. Chevalier, seeing now the "Behold I come to do Thy Will, O my God" as being inspired by the love in the Heart of Christ who, out of love and obedience, humbled Himself even to the death of the Cross. Priest - especially in the Eucharist.

And anything else that Fr. Chevalier did, or wrote, or asked of his followers, can all be seen as inspired and coloured by his vision of the Sacred Heart and the world in need. It would be unnecessary to run through any more details. However, one thing must be mentioned here (and now I really must apologize to Fr. Vermin, for we part company). Keeping in mind what we have just considered, there can be no possible doubt about what Fr. Founder meant by devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. For Fr. Chevalier the object of every devotion was a person. Now when you think of the vision which dominated Fr. Founder's life, the Sacred Heart and the world in need, and when you ask, "Where does Mary fit in?", the answer can only be: between the Heart of Christ and the world in need. That was where he saw her. Now remember that he considered his own vocation and ours as contemplative-active. You could contemplate Mary in her union with Christ - and when you spoke of her, or wrote of her - you must speak or write of Divine Maternity, Immaculate Conception and all the rest. Or you could think of your apostolate to the world in need, and you would draw confidence from the thought of the power of love that the Divine Maternity gave her. And when you spoke to those who had need of grace and love, you spoke in terms of the Memorare and the hope of the hopeless. To me, this explains everything; it explains why you have two opinions - both claiming the authority of Fr. Founder. They, as it were, come from the other side, seeing Our Lady first, and not, as Fr. Founder saw, first the Sacred Heart, and then Our Lady (which, incidentally, by way of confirmation was the approach of the Sulpician School; c.f. further, Fr. Chevalier's book which is entitled "The Sacred Heart in its Relations with Mary". This explains, too, why some distinguished between the "popular" devotion to be preached to the people - and the fuller devotion for more religious souls: they divided what Fr. Chevalier had combined: "in actione contemplativus". It further explains why some, approaching from the wrong perspective, found some seeming opposition between some of the early documents and they maintained that someone had been tampering with them.

But approach it from Fr. Chevalier's viewpoint - see his vision (and their early portrayal in the illustrations at the back of Fr. Vermin's book), and without entering into later discussions about the formal object, there can be no possible doubt about the way that Fr. Chevalier saw devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Furthermore, I should like to note that tracing through the genesis of Fr. Chevalier's devotion is not enough unless at the end you see it transformed by his dominating experience and vision. This central principle of schools or ways of the spiritual life must apply to his devotion to Our Lady as it applies to all things else. If you make an exception here, you make a mistake. If you apply the principle as you must, everything falls into place.

"In forming an opinion of a Founder, it is very necessary to take note of the unity and the fidelity which characterize his life and his activity in pursuit of his goal."

So far we have been considering the unity in the life of Fr. Chevalier. Before passing onto the fidelity, I should like to sum up schematically that unity in the formation of his spirit and ideal, its confirmation, and its expression. Its formation and expression I have treated of in these pages. By its confirmation, I mean all those indications, under Providence, that this was the work of God - they were varied, and some of them, as has been pointed out in previous papers, were extraordinary. All together, they removed all possible doubt about the genuine nature of Fr. Chevalier's own inner convictions.

M. S. C. SPIRIT and IDEAL

Supported by External Signs:

6 Sacred Heart: World in need	1. Issoudun	M.S.C. Society O.L.S.H. - devotion
5 St. Sulpice - "system" centred on Christ	2. Fr. Piperon and Maugenest	Secular Priests of Sacred Heart Third Order
4 Retreat - conversion: Grace of complete dedication - supernal.	3. Signs of Dec. 8	Association of O.L.S.H. Apostolic Schools
3 Generous sacrifice of natural friendship:	4. Archbishop's approval	In the Society: Constitutions and Spirit; Love of Sacred Heart
2 Fall - perspective of God's supremacy and total dependence.	5. Opposition overcome	Zeal
1 Natural temperament Loyalty - constancy	6. Approval of Holy Father	Fraternal Charity Eucharist
	7. Approval of Cure of Ars	

Obedience
Humility

Formation ,

Confirmation .

Expression. . .

FIDELITY

If, as has been said, you judge a founder by his fidelity, Fr. Chevalier must rate extremely high. And if you wish to transpose this into terms of charity, there is the sentence of Dom Marmion: "Fidelity in all things is the most delicate flower of love."

Much of what was entailed in his fidelity to the inspiration and vocation God had given him is evident from the consideration of how all his work was the expression of the spirit of his devotion to the Heart of Christ. As Fr. Mandonnet had written of St. Dominic:

The history of a creative spirit is especially manifested in the work that he accomplishes. That work is the term to which all his efforts are directed.

A goal eminently and clearly perceived, which must be attained; 1
practical sense in the choice of the means to be used; 2
an indefectible will to put into action the means at his disposal; 3
that is the permanent and common plan of the life of men who have built well on the road of the centuries,

The facts of his life show that in the choice of means and in carrying them through Fr. Chevalier manifested wonderful fidelity to his mission. Fidelity explains why he gave this particular form to his institute, why he did not try to retain nor adapt certain religious practices which however he admired. For him there was never any question of solemn vows, office in choir, strict cloister as e.g. with the Trappists with whom he made his retreats. On the other hand, nothing could move him from his determination to retain for his Institute the common life and the vows. Fr. Piperon wrote of him: "He was endowed with clear, practical judgment and a firm will which no difficulty could disconcert. When, after serious reflection he had taken a decision, he carried it out generously with no worry about obstacles which he either overcame or turned aside. If the obstacle appeared insurmountable he waited for more favourable circumstances. Then, when the right time had come, he took up again, with renewed energy, the project which had been temporarily suspended."

Like all founders, Fr. Chevalier was not concerned with which of the categories his institute would be classified into. The Will of God alone mattered for him, and not whether theoretically his institute was the most perfect possible form of Religious life. What concerned him was that he had been faithful to the call of God, and let others classify his response if they cared to. However, his ideal had been realized and so it is possible to classify it - as we have already done, summarizing Fr. Vermin's longer exposition of the contemplative-apostolic category.

With regard to the classification of the particular type of soul that Fr. Chevalier was, Fr. Vermin has recourse to Saudreau's distinction between seraphic, cherubic and angelic. The distinction is according as, in the soul's spiritual life, light predominates (cherubic), or love (seraphic), or action (angelic). St. Ignatius, with his insistence on the service of God, is classed by Fr. de Guibert as being among the angelic.

Fr. Chevalier, says Fr. Vermin, would be classed among the seraphic: 'for love is the centre and motive force of his life', and "service is a consequence of love", and certainly the following words of Fr. de Guibert apply well to Fr. Founder:

The faculty which grace reaches more directly is the will. Taken hold of by the grace of love, they are moved to do good with ardour and firmness. They feel themselves urged to prove their love to God; they seek the means to please Him. What shall I do for God? What work shall I undertake for His Glory? That is their first preoccupation. It is only secondarily, and in consequence of their love that they will set about trying to know Him better. They are more notable for the power of love which makes them do great things than by abundance of light. . . Fr. Piperon wrote;

The whole life of our founder can be summed up in this motto which he has left us: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!" ... all for the love of the Heart of Jesus. A sublime ideal which inspired all his works, which even to his last hour renewed and sustained that early ardour to respond to the desires of Our Lord revealing devotion to his adorable Heart to the world. May his disciples after the example of their venerated father have only one desire, only one motive in all their works: to immolate themselves so that the Heart of Jesus may be always and everywhere loved and glorified.

These souls do not enjoy as many lights as others, but once they have received them, they concentrate all their efforts in the direction indicated. Having been shown the end, they don't care very much about the means - provided they be means to that end. They can seem to be dissatisfied, always seeking new ways of obtaining the goal. This tendency in Fr. Chevalier - the tendency to take on anything for the glory of the Sacred Heart, without calculating exactly the possibility and the resources - struck fear into the hearts of the cautious Jesuits of Vaugirard.

As far as we can judge from his writings, the lights which Fr. Founder received concerning the character of his congregation, were: an apostolic union of priests, living in community with vows, totally dedicated to the Sacred Heart. But the concrete realization of this ideal was left to his own judgment. His Rules were an adaptation, first of the Seminary rule, then of the Jesuits, under the guidance of the Fathers of Vaugirard, then of Fr. Ramiere. But none of them fitted in with his idea of his mission, and he finally decided that it was God's Will that he himself should draft the Formula Instituti. The whole process shows a soul drawn on by the force of its love - but not knowing precisely where to go. Often such souls, concentrating on the goal and neglecting a preliminary study of the means to attain it, can fail to give sufficient consideration to details and circumstances - as also to the desires and character of their collaborators. Their force of will can become hardness and obstinacy. Accordingly the conduct of God with such persons can be 'to break the will and make it supple' (Saudreau). This explains all the trials and opposition which Fr. Chevalier encountered and which he is to meet in fuller measure after 1870. He himself expresses it thus: "As soon as I wished to set off in one direction, God imposed another and all that I attempted failed; all the success comes from the Sacred Heart and from the Blessed Virgin." It is this fidelity in trials, the determination to keep trying to do God's will, which constitutes the sanctity of these souls, and which wins God's blessing for the work they are always struggling to attain and towards which He has inspired them.

So, in spite of his idea of copying the Jesuits, his real inspiration - that of the Sacred Heart - led him finally to modify his plan and to express it more in accord with his own divinely inspired ideal. Even the military spirit of the first Formula Instituti (borrowed from the Ignatian ideal) - 'military standards, an army ranged in battle and well disciplined' - gives way in the later Constitutions of 1897 to a formulation more apt to express a service inspired by love. It is equally strong and exacting, but the spirit is his own now and not an imitation of the Jesuits. That spirit has, I think, for the purpose of this summary already been treated sufficiently when discussing how it brought unity to his own life and activity; how his Society is to be imbued by it in all its fullness.

We know that Fr. Chevalier's whole life was, as it were, sealed with his love for the Sacred Heart, and fidelity, its finest flower. According to St. Thomas, constancy in well-doing, and in supporting trials, is one of the most difficult things of human nature. According to the teaching of Spiritual Theology - teaching which has been given special stress in this century - sanctity is to be judged by fidelity to the will of God, or by the constant, generous and faithful carrying out of the duties that God asks of us.

From his earliest years it is uncompromising fidelity to what he judges to be the will of God which characterizes Jules Chevalier. An early example, as I have said, is his refusing to have a meat sandwich on Friday. His mother and moral theologians judged that when there is nothing else to eat you may eat meat on Friday. Jules thought that if there was nothing else, you went without.

Two great lights were given him in life - to both of them he was determinedly faithful. The first was that God wanted him to be a priest and a worthy one. To achieve that goal he worked and studied doggedly for years knowing that somehow God would provide the means for the realization of the goal he had inspired. Through the years at the Seminary he made violent and determined efforts to acquire the virtue he believed necessary to be a good priest. He may have been mistaken in some of his efforts, but the devotion to the Sacred Heart that had come to him finally made him find the right way.

The second light was that he was to found the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. There was much uncertainty at times about the means. Certain things made it seem that somehow all the steps he had taken were wrong. So he went to pray at Paray and to reflect on his mission. Again, from this sanctuary of the Sacred Heart, peace came into his life; and the extra confirmation which came from the Cure d'Ars and the approval of the Holy Father sent him forward with a confidence that nothing could ever shake. Trying now one thing, now another, never daunted

by difficulty or seeming lack of success, or opposition, or scepticism, he was always faithful to the call of God, generous in living and working according to the vision he had seen. The Sacred Heart must be loved, adored and honoured by the world - men must come to this Heart in love, to learn to live by Its love and grace.

That is all. But it is much. With the end of this first volume of Fr. Vermin's work we have come to the year 1869, and Fr. Chevalier 45 years old. His second volume will teach us more about the history of the Society. I doubt if it will teach us more about Fr. Chevalier. We shall see him facing what were for him really heartrending difficulties. But he will face them with the same courage and fidelity to his call that we have already seen so remarkable in him. We shall see him still as a man possessed of a vision: the Sacred Heart with its value for the world; a man convinced of his mission: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!"; as a man who will work for that mission with the heroic fidelity that marked him all his life.

FIDELITY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUNDER

J. Bertolini, M.S.C., 1965.

On the subject of our reflection one could establish a whole anthology of pontifical texts, above all those by Popes Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI.

As to the whole Church, a visible and living society, the Sovereign Pontiffs have also given to religious families, on many occasions, directives to carry out a courageous and wise adaptation to contemporary exigencies of evangelisation in a world constantly in the course of evolution. It is to be an adaptation made in fidelity, that is to say, having respect both to the essential and permanent realities of the religious state, and to the charismatic vocation proper to each religious institute. The Head of the Church could not allow to be led by caprice this chosen section of the People of God, which is the religious state. For if this latter is not a structure of the Church, it is a structure within the Church.

"It belongs to the Church," says *Lumen Gentium* (45), "to govern with wise legislation the practice of the evangelical counsels. For by that practice is uniquely fostered the perfection of love for God and neighbour. Submissively following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, she endorses the rules formulated by eminent men and women, and authentically approves later modifications. Moreover, by her watchful and shielding authority, she keeps close to communities established far and wide for the upbuilding of Christ's body, so that they can grow and flourish in accord with the spirit of their founders."

After having heard the talks given on the faithful adaptation of the religious life under the theological, biblical and juridical aspect, it has fallen to my lot to focus attention on "fidelity to the spirit of the Founder", and, in the same perspective, on adaptation and renovation. At the outset I must make it clear that it is not, for the moment, question of an explicit treatment of our Founder nor of the end and spirit proper to our Congregation. However, I shall not fail to make reference to all of these.

I feel that we can measure the scope of this "fidelity to the Founder" only by trying to give an answer to this twofold question:

What is to be understood by Founder, Father and Lawgiver?

What is to be understood by "fidelity to the spirit of the Founder"?

FATHER AND LAWGIVER:

This twofold functional qualification attributed to the religious Founder is, as regards the venerated Father Chevalier, but the echo of the conviction of all our Superiors-General right from the time of his first successor, Father Lanctin. It is in harmony with the tradition of the Church concerning Founders as far back as the very institution of the religious life. It is constant, and perhaps without nuances, in the official acts of the Magisterium, as in the discourses or messages addressed by the Sovereign Pontiffs to individual religious families. We find it, for example, in the letter of Pius XI, dated 14th March, 1924, on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Father Chevalier. The Pope, speaking of the merits of our Founder, refers to him as the "Father Legislator of your Congregation" (*Analecta M.S.C.* IV, 189).

This double qualification sums up the mission and the role of every founder worthy of the title.

THE MISSION OF THE FOUNDER

Making itself the echo of previous declarations, notably those of Pius VI, of Leo XIII, of Pius XI and of Pius XII, the Conciliar Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, emphasises the charismatic and hierarchic origin of the multiple and diverse forms of religious life which, in the course of time, have arisen in the Church in answer to the new needs of evangelisation - "to serve, each in its own manner, the salutary mission of the Church". (43)

At the charismatic origin of each religious family, Order or Congregation, we find the conjunction of one or several elite souls, "strong and generous", to quote Leo XIII, and of a spiritual need of a given epoch. These elite souls, instruments of the Divine Will, are, ordinarily, certain among the faithful who discover, in the Church and under the impulse of the Spirit, a new manner of loving God above all things; of following Him in love according to the Gospel counsels; of serving the Church and witnessing to its mystery before believers and unbelievers.

Innovators in a certain sense, these Founders invent neither a new Christ nor a new Church; but, as the householder in the Gospel "who draws out from his treasure new things and old" (Mt. 13, 52), attentive to the conditions of their time, they experience the imperative need to respond to a mission and to a vocation, not only personal but social, thus giving to the Divine Founder of the Church a new witness of His redemptive mission: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you". (Jn. 20,21)

"Initiators of a love of their Lord which is ever-ancient and ever-new", (G. Martelet. *The Holiness of the Church and the Religious Life*), they allow themselves to be moulded and guided by the Spirit of Pentecost."

Their inspiration, while being evangelical and ecclesial in its content, is not at the outset however, hierarchic in its source. But, rich with this inspiration, the Founders one day present themselves, petitioning and submissive, to the hierarchic authority of the Church. There then passes between themselves and the Church what passed formerly between the monk, Anthony, and the bishop, Athanasius: the exchange in the faith of a spiritual gift and of a canonical approbation in order that "there may be received by the guardians of the Body what comes to them from the Head by way of the inspired members."

Is not this exactly what passed, in 1855, between Father Chevalier and the Archbishop of Bourges; in 1860 and, above all, in 1869 between himself and Pope Pius IX?

Thus it is that Founders, whilst offering themselves to the Church in order to be at her service in a particular manner, look to her for the authorisation to love with the Heart of Christ and to love Christ Himself with the heart of the Church. But both the one and the other are acting, at the outset, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

This mission of the Founder, does not however, stop at himself alone. His grace, his charism as Founder, reaches out to all his disciples. The Church recognises in these Founders "men of the spirit". She never wearies of urging their disciples and their whole religious family to follow them and to respond in fidelity to the personal and social vocation of their Founder.

"We exhort all religious," said Pius XI, "never to lose sight of the example of their Founders. When these elite men created their Institutes, what else did they do but obey an inspiration from God? That is why all who reproduce in themselves the particular character which the

Founder wished to mark his religious family, will, assuredly, never stray from their origins."

"Their disciples, as the best of sons, will have it at heart to glorify their father by observing his counsels and penetrating themselves with his spirit. As long as they walk in the footsteps of their Founders, they will be faithful to their duty of state." (Pius XI. *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, 1924)

It was just four days before this exhortation of 19th March, 1924, that Pius XI said of our own Founder that "he seemed to have taken his decision under a sign from God". (*Analecta M.S.C.*) This was also the conviction of that man of faith, the devoted and faithful Father Pipéron: "The foundation of a Congregation," he wrote, with reference to the foundation of our own Society, "is not an ordinary work dependent upon the will of man which he can, according to his own good pleasure, undertake or not as if it were question of constructing a monument, laying out a property, or any other operation left to the free choice of human ingenuity. The Founder receives his mission from God. It is said to him as to Moses: 'Look well, and execute according to the model which is shown to you'. (Ex. 25:40)" And this first witness of Father Chevalier added: "It is on fidelity to correspond with the light given by the Holy Spirit that depends the success or otherwise of the Founder's enterprise." (*Annals. Issoudun. 1908. Also Biographical Notice of Father Chevalier, p. 123-4*)

"Look well at the model which is shown you . . . and execute accordingly." That is not easy. Founders are men as were the prophets. The charismatic mission of the latter can aid us to understand that of Founders, whilst allowing for different objectives. Both the one and the other are, in a certain sense, men ahead of their time. It is not difficult to recognise the Founders in the oracle of Joel predicting that in the latter times God "would pour out His Spirit on all flesh; then their sons and daughters will prophesy; their young men will see visions and their old men dream dreams" (Joel, 3,1-5; Act. Ap. 2, 17). Like the prophets, Founders often present themselves as men of God, human individuals of whom the Lord has possessed Himself in order to make resound in the ears of humanity immersed in terrestrial problems, a word from another world. Very often these men have difficulty in grasping themselves the import of the message confided to them. They are men who feel themselves impelled, but who at times hesitate, grope their way, stammer, or even, maybe, understand well the inspiration which has come to them, but cannot see very well the way to bring it to realisation.

Yet this spirit of prophecy which has taken possession of them is the same Spirit which animates, enlightens and orients the Church, above all at the great turning points of its history, as is that which we are witnessing today. It is this Spirit which gives to the Church the supernatural wisdom which allows her to adapt herself to the new needs of the world, to renew herself wholly whilst remaining eternally young. It is the same Spirit who has raised up the marvelous phenomenon of the religious institute under so many diverse forms according to the individual grace of each Founder: diversity of inspiration, diversity of physiognomy, but a harmonious diversity which throws into greater relief the homogeneity and richness of the religious institution itself.

This Spirit, nevertheless, does not permit that one enclose oneself into frames that are ready-made and unchangeable. He brings it about sometimes that one burst the frames, become maybe a little too rigid, in which in times past the original inspiration may have been expressed. He makes it obligatory to look ceaselessly at new horizons, to respond to other needs, to new exigencies. It is easy to understand then why Founders, as the prophets, have not always found life easy. Among their contemporaries, they are often regarded as somewhat of intruders. At times they are misunderstood, opposed and ever persecuted. Such and such a Founder sees himself thrown into the sea like Jonas, then cast up on to the shore; another, as it were, seized by the hair like Habacuc to be transported where the Spirit wills. God, too, makes use of secondary causes, these latter at times being the very sons of the Founder. Many names come to mind when we begin talking of the vicissitudes of Founders. Furthermore, it is not always easy to discern what they really willed themselves. And how many would not be able to avow, as did St. Francis de Sales, the Founder of the Visitation, "What I have achieved is not that which I set out to do." But, in spite of all, it is always fidelity to the original design that has guaranteed the ultimate success which the Church honours in beatifying and canonising so many Founders. We must not forget that, in the original thought of each of them, lie hidden potentialities which, as a result of a favorable evolution, impose themselves sooner or later. Or to make use of an analogy, all the petals of a flower are already present in the bud.

At the outset of every foundation there is, then, a charismatic inspiration which determines the mission of the Founder and of his whole religious family. And of this grace of foundation it can be said that it is at the same time both one and diverse. It is one in its general finality. The Founders - Anthony, Augustine, Benedict, Dominic, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola and after them, all the others who in the course of the centuries are related more or less to the first - yes, all have manifested but one and the same response of love to Christ Jesus. In what has been called the following of Christ, each and all have sought solely the supreme end of creation-redemption: to build the People of God for the glory of God. One, this grace of foundation is nonetheless, diverse: on to the essential common background have been grafted different families, each with its own particular physiognomy, and its special works. These families have been approved by the Church but have had at times a character which was only local or transitory since responding to temporary needs. As a consequence, an evolution imposed itself in respect to the exigencies of the religious life which are always valid.

With regard to these diverse religious families, their Founders have always understood - and we must do so with them - that they had a twofold mission, that of FATHER and of LEGISLATOR. The better to be able to measure the scope of the fidelity of which it is question, it would be well to situate this double function on a doctrinal basis.

FATHER

This title "Father" reflects much more than a pious practice of filial veneration: it is founded on a theological tradition.

We know that, right from the beginning of monachism, this title of "Father" was associated with the idea of spiritual direction. For the monks of the desert the father is the man of experience who realises in himself the plenitude of the monastic state and who, marked with the sign of the Spirit, can serve them as guide and head. As is the case of preaching which stirs up faith, as for baptism which introduces into a new life, likewise for spiritual direction which leads to sanctity, there is always a reference to the divine paternity.

Later, with the development of cenobitism, the paternity of the Founder takes on a different tonality: it expresses not only a personal perfection, but an authentic generation. All the cenobites are sons; they set for themselves the ideal of being "true sons of Pachomius".

During the Middle Ages, the paternal role of the Founder was often exalted by the benedictine or Cistercian Abbots. "St. Benedict is truly our father." affirms one of them. "He it is who, through the Gospel, has engendered us in Christ Jesus." (Aelred de Rievaulx 4- 1166) This Pauline expression (1 Cor. 4. 14) occurs again in connection with St. Odon, Founder of Cluny, St. Bernard, Founder of Clair-vaux, and later in the Mendicant Orders in connection with St. Dominic.

If, from the 16th Century on, especially among the disciples of St. Ignatius, the Founder still receives the traditional appellation of "Father" or "our Father in Jesus Christ", one has, nevertheless, the impression that the image has lost its force. The relationship between the disciples and the founder expresses itself very readily by means of analogies other than that of generation. It is to be noted in passing that this latter theme has been taken up again in our times by the Little Brothers of Jesus in connection with Father de Foucauld, though the latter, strictly speaking, did not found any religious institute during his life time. (Voillaume. *AU* Coeur des Masses*, p. 497)

Little by little the spiritual writers have tried to disengage the theological bases of this paternity, and in different ways. Certain among them, more sensible to the actuality of this spiritual generation, have seen the act of religious profession as a new birth, a father-son bond; a logical deduction from the theory, less accepted today, which presents religious profession as a "second baptism".

For others, it is the initial institution of the religious family which throws into relief this paternal role of the Founder: it is because such and such a one has established a new religious family that his disciples venerate him as Father. It remains nonetheless true that each religious is inserted in such or such a religious family on the day of his profession. And in order to justify the assertion that the Founder truly engenders his

Institute, there are others who lay stress on his personal merits, above all when his sanctity has manifested itself to such an extent as to be "canonised" by the Church. But is it exact to affirm that such a one has arrived, by his own personal merits, at founding the institute, even when it is made clear that it is question of merits "ex congruo"? For there is no proportion between the meritorious efforts of the Founder, holy though he may be, and the charismatic gift of the foundation. The very charity of the Founder is a divine grace.

By stressing thus the divine initiative, recalled so often by the Sovereign Pontiffs, the religious family founded appears less as the fruit of a purely human effort than that of a divine mission. From this theological point of view, then, the image of paternity yields place to that of mediation, as in the case of the prophets whose sanctity was not always very clearly in evidence.

The Jesuit, Nadal, affirmed: "When Our Lord desires to aid His Church, He acts thus: He raises up a man to whom He gives a special grace and strength in order to serve Him in a particular manner ... a grace corresponding to his vocation ... Thus He acted with St. Francis. God offered him an efficacious grace from which he personally was to profit and in which he was to make others participate" (J. Nadal, S. J. Commentary de l'Institute Soc. Jesus) In our own days, a disciple of Father de Foucauld, Father Voillaume, says likewise "that the particular grace of each founder" is "transmitted by him to his sons and daughters." (R. VoiHaume. Letter to the Fraternities. 1957) For Nadal, this characteristic and particular grace of the religious Institute is also defined as "the special mode which differentiates us from other religious."

We are able then to conclude: the Institute which a certain Founder has brought to realisation at a certain moment of history, is the sign of a ministry which, in the order of grace, prolongs itself in the members who, by their profession, are inserted in this religious family. God has raised up a man, and what He has raised up in this man He raises up still in the vocation of his spiritual sons, and more especially in those who have collaborated with the Founder during his life-time. These latter, indeed, have they not often contributed largely to the realisation of the initiative of the Founder? We have only to think of a Father Piperon, M.S.C., a Father Jouet or a Father John Vandel, M.S.C. The latter, Founder of TOeuvre des Campagnes and of the Apostolic School, understood this well. Discussing with Father Chevalier his entry into the community of Issoudun, and proposing to the latter some modification of the first Rules, he jotted down in his notebook the following heading:

Some Notes for Issoudun

1. Nothing must be changed or weakened as regards the original idea which is from God; auxiliaries are given to aid and develop it.
2. The authority and the principal inspiration must come from him who conceived the work - "of the Holy Spirit, from the Virgin Mary".
Contrary thoughts may come from humility; but they do not come from a design of God.
3. If a new idea attaches itself to the original one so as to form one with it, he who has contributed this thought has a certain right of paternity in the work; but this paternity must be subordinated to the first and absorbed by it..." (Manuscripts Vandel M.S.C. Archives, Paris),
Ten years later, Father Vandel wrote in all humility to Father Piperon: "The Apostolic School is not my work, but a work of the Society." (26th July, 1874) We know, furthermore, that the spiritual direction contributed by Father Piperon to our Society has caused him, in the tradition of the first Fathers, to be considered as the "spiritual Founder" of our religious family, he himself having contributed largely to its characteristic spirit, I note this tradition, in spite of the reflection, tainted with regret, of Father J. B. Guyot at the General Chapter of 1900. In his "Memoir on teaching devotion to the Sacred Heart", this first Master of Novices who at that time had the charge of "Spiritual Father", dared to avow in presence of Father Founder and Fathers Piperon, Maillard, Lanctin, Ramot, Meyer, etc. that -
"Our humble Congregation, hardly out of its infancy, has not yet been able to form for itself a spirit characteristically its own. Now the spirit is that which vivifies. The life, the future, the activity, the fruitfulness of a Congregation are in its spirit..." (Analecta M.S.C. 1900)

On this side, Father Piperon esteemed to such a point Father John Marie Vandel that he did not hesitate, in his Biographical Notice of Father Chevalier, to cite the following testimony of Father Lanctin: "The zeal and holiness of Father Vandel have contributed so much to the success and development of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart that he can rightly be considered as its second Founder."

There would be much to say on the apostolic and, excuse the expression, "diplomatic" merits of Father Jouet in the establishment and early development of our Society and its works under the authority and paternity of Father Founder: the Approbation of the Institute and its Constitutions; the Annals and Archconfraternities; our Missions; the creation of our first Provinces, etc., even if Father Piperon, whilst affectionately acknowledging his merits, avowed at the same time that Father Jouet was no "administrator". I cite Father Piperon: "What this dear Father expended in zeal and in talents, all that he undertook for the glory of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is incredible ... He went all over France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Spain for the extension of the Archconfraternity ... Father Chevalier found in him the most active of workers, the one who was the most devoted and at the same time the most useful for his works. It is undoubtedly to Father Jouet that we owe their success. In my humble opinion, he was in our midst a man of Providence, the right hand of our venerated Founder ..." (Biographic Notice on Father Chevalier, p. 57) One could cite many other examples illustrating this theme of 'paternity-mediation'. Far from being in opposition to each other, these two concepts are complementary. Both have a direct reference to the mission of Christ-Mediator in the Mystical Body, acting always "in the name of the Father", "in the name of Him Who sent Me", and He is the source of all paternity.

In accordance with this idea of Christocentric mediation and with his own' comprehension of the Heart of Our Lord, Father Chevalier could, in all humility and truth, declare: "Our little Society is not the work of man. hut of God. It was born in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, under the powerful protection of Mary." (Ms. of 1859) And again in a letter to Father Leblanc, S.J. at the beginning of his consultations with him concerning the organisation of the Society: "I have always believed that God had designs of mercy on our little House ..."

If then it is legitimate to found our fidelity on the idea of the 'paternity-mediation' of Founders, this conviction gains still greater weight when we consider the more concrete role which we expect of each one of them. i.e. the function of Legislator.

THE LEGISLATOR

The grace of paternity-mediation signifies for the Founder that he must organise his Institute, give it an end and orientation, determine its activities, infuse into it a soul which will inspire it in everything and animate each of its members, leading the latter to efficaciousness and to sanctity.

All this is expressed in a Rule or Constitutions.

We know the four great Rules recognised by the Church: those of St. Basil, St. Benedict, St. Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi.

In the course of the history of the religious institution, the detailed organisation of the institutes, under the diverse aspects of the communitarian liturgical and apostolic life, has demanded practical precisions and directives adapted to the end and spirit proper to each religious family. This, under the influence of usages and customs, and then through a decision of Founders or reformers, has given rise to the Constitutions. These Founders amplified one or other of the primitive Rules, either retaining them or adapting them as a basis for the new Institute. Other Institutes, as that of the Jesuits, established their Constitutions without direct relation to the primitive Rules. From then on, Constitutions approved by the Church come into the foreground and become, so to speak, "the Rule". For foundations of these latter centuries the custom has become prevalent of establishing this new kind of "Rule".

The Church owes it to herself to command and to orientate, as much by her doctrinal action as by her legislation, every form of religious life. But whereas the primitive Rules, rather brief, were above all characterised by spiritual and ascetical directives, on the contrary, the Constitutions approved during the last two centuries have lost this original richness. Under the influence of a legalism which became ever more and more detailed, a kind of "uniform" came to be thrown over the particular laws of the Institute, something like waterproof sheeting which hindered

increasingly the penetration of the breathing of the Spirit, or the emergence of the soul and specific character of the Founder and of his religious family. It is among these formulas that we have to search with a microscope to discover the end and characteristic spirit of the Founder to which each religious is asked to give a fervent fidelity! We would, however, love to be able to say to the young religious of our day when, on the day of their Profession, there is handed to them the book of the "holy Rule", what our own venerated Founder was accustomed to say: "Esteem our Rules; they come from God. Love our Rules; they are an outpouring of the love of the Heart of Jesus for us." (Father Chevalier: Conference on the Directory. About 1900) Or again, "The Rule is the luminous cloud which directs us to the true Promised Land. It is the miraculous star which, if we follow it, leads surely to Jesus."

And yet, if we are to believe a canonist of renown, Father J. Creusen. "When the Rules of an Institute are well conceived, they express precisely what the love of God and of the neighbour demand habitually of the religious of this particular Institute. Saint Ignatius wrote that the supreme and most efficacious rule is 'the law of love which the Holy Spirit is accustomed to write in hearts . . .' The end of the Constitutions then will be to teach the religious what the law of love demands of him."

Who would dare not to recognise that a religious Founder had such a noble ambition? Under the motion of the Spirit, the mission of Founders is, then, to determine at the very outset a way of living the Gospel message and of participating in the very mission of Christ in their own epoch. Ordinarily, God shows them, sometimes in a direct fashion, a general plan, a fundamental idea, an orientation or a spirit which is to animate the whole of the work to be realised.

As to the task of organising the particular structures, and determining concretely practical ways of responding to the end and spirit of the plan proposed or suggested by grace, God acts in Founders with the same liberty which characterises the outpouring of His gifts.

He may confide this task to the Founder alone, or to several individuals. He may share it among several, either in simultaneous contact with one another, or successively. Again, He may give to an individual Founder solely the general idea which will find its definitive form only after much trial and error, and with the successive contributions of collaborators or of disciples. Again, it may happen that God presents such and such a Founder with a very decided plan: an ideal and form concretely defined and outlined, leading to immediate action. In this case, the Founder will be called upon to legislate immediately. But the one to whom He offers only an initial project, an ideal which calls for a wise and slow maturation, as also the discovery of a means of execution, such a one will have to communicate this project, this ideal, to his companions, to his disciples. Or God may leave the precise working out of the plan and its practical details to secondary agents, that is to say to events, to the experience of life or to successive individuals holding the responsibility, in other words, of all those factors which give to a foundation a certain progressive development. One notes this in the case of a St. Francis as in that of a St. Dominic, a St. Ignatius, a Father Eymard, a Father Chevalier, and so many others. Even St. Benedict himself avowed at the end of his Rule that he "had described only those observances which lead to a certain dignity of manners and a commencement of monastic life."

Often the first Rules present themselves as a resume of the personal experiences of the Founder, and the source of the doctrine of the Founder must not be sought elsewhere than in the fidelity of the latter to the teachings of Christ and of His Gospel. Such is indeed the primary end of the religious life: to assure the following of Christ, God incarnate through love in order to save humanity and lead the People of God to the Father. The great Founders have not claimed simply to "create" new "forms of life" but rather to "translate into concrete institutions their own personal readings of the Gospel, their own intuitive grasp of the life of Christ, model and prototype of all perfection." (cf. Besret, O.Cist. Criteres pour une Renovation) It is easy to understand the uneasiness felt by many religious of our time when many Constitutions seem to put the accidental before the essential, the negative before the positive, the means before the end, the details of administration before the exigencies of the Gospel, the minutiae of observance before true charity towards God and the neighbour. The first concern of renovation must be a "fresh reading of the Gospel with attention to all its demands." And it is in so far as the Founders, in their primitive Rules, legislated under the influence of this concern to reproduce the evangelical life, that renovation is to be understood in its very true sense of "a return to the Founders". We shall come back on this.

For the moment, another point is to be noted. If, in former times, one sought signs of the authenticity of the Rule or of the doctrine of the Founders in supernatural phenomena such as visions or miracles, from the 16th Century on the criterion rests upon the hierarchical authority of the Church. As was said in connection with the subject of paternity, there are always two things basic to every foundation: divine inspiration and the approbation of the Church - a charismatic vocation and ecclesiastical sanction. Doubtless, it is through the mediation of the inspired Founder that God speaks to His Church, but it is definitively the Church which has the mandate to discern whether the inspiration truly comes from God. To the Church, likewise, with its constant concern that respect be had to the original spirit of the Founder, is reserved the 'placet' for every renovation or important adaptation of the Rules of individual Institutes. What is very certain is that the Church exacts, and herself respects, a special and clearly defined end.

Certainly, it is not just to differentiate his Institute at all costs from others that a Founder seeks approval for his Rule or his Constitutions, submitting a particular form of religious and apostolic life, offering new means of evangelisation. It is because he has experienced, through an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the imperious need to put the accent on a certain aspect of the Gospel mission. It is because it is not in his power not to respond loyally to a personal and social vocation up to this time existing only in potentiality. Hence the characteristic and specific end of his Institute. This specific end will, evidently, vary from individual to individual, each contributing to it his personal and charismatic vision of God and of the world, his response to the exigencies and the needs of his time.

And since it is question of nothing else than serving the Church, the latter for her part is sovereign mistress of every active participation in her mission in the world. Each Founder knows that "where the Church is, there is the Spirit" (St. Irenaeus). Thus, in faith, he submits his idea, his plan, his Constitutions. For himself, as for his whole Institute, he receives from the Church the grace of the Sacraments and her teaching: "There is no authentic Catholic spirituality which is not ecclesial and sacramental" (Besret. Criteres pour une Renovation)

And one receives from the Church only to give better. "Religious are not consecrated to God by a consecration which takes into account only the individual and God. No, they are consecrated to God through Jesus Christ and in the Church." (Besret) And this participation in the life of the Church, this insertion of the living member in the total Body of the Spouse of Christ-Saviour, must be clearly expressed in particular Constitutions. Every reform has reference, not only to the juridic plan of the laws, but much more to that of the spirit which must animate them. We all know the directive of Paul VI in his Allocution of 23rd May, 1964: "Every religious family has a task which is special to itself, and it is absolutely necessary that it remain faithful to this. Herein lies, for the Institute, the gauge of its fecundity and of the constant flow of heavenly graces. No renovation of discipline must be introduced which does not correspond to the nature of the Order or Congregation or which departs in any way from the spirit of the Founder.

"This renewal of discipline demands likewise that it be implemented by the competent authority and by it alone. For this reason, as long as this adaptation of observance is not completely finalised, the religious must not introduce novelties on their own account, nor relax the discipline or give way to criticism, but they must so act that, by their fidelity and their obedience, they will aid and facilitate this work of renewal. If things are so, your rules will be changed in their letter, but not in their spirit which will remain in its purity."

What the Holy Father seems to fear above all is to see the religious Institutes depart from their specific task, and the characteristic seal imposed upon them by their Founder. The Pope, while desiring the necessary adaptations, insists that they "conserve faithfully the rules of the religious family given to it by its Founder." "As for the matter of undertaking new enterprises and new works," he says, "abstain from those which do not truly respond to the principal task of your Institute, or to the thought of the Founder. For the Institutes are strong and prosperous as long as their discipline and their works, and the way of life of the members, remain inspired by the pure spirit of their Founder,"

SPIRIT AND FIDELITY

"Spirit", considered as the intellectual and moral quintessence of an author, of a work, of a foundation, is a concept which seems relatively recent, above all since the middle of the 17th century. But we can trace it back to the Bible. Of his master, the prophet Elias who was about to be taken from him, Eliseus, his disciple, asked as a last favour that he leave him his "spirit" (4 Kings, 2,9). And we have also Saint John of the Cross describing a grace by which the Founders of an Order receive light and power to transmit to all their disciples who come after them, their virtues and their "spirit". This "spirit" of foundation presents itself as a particular form of supernatural charity, a charism, given by God to a Founder and transmitted by his paternal mediation to the whole of his religious family. By this grace of foundation the religious family is committed directly to the realisation of a special mission in the Church, the mission vested in the Founder. In the religious family and its members, this spirit becomes in a concrete and vital fashion a way of thinking, acting and being, wholly relative to the spiritual and apostolic mission which the Institute is to realise in the Church. Let it be clearly stated that this specific form is in virtue of the mission of Christ Whom this religious family must reproduce, give witness to, and make known.

The guiding light and the living soul of the Founder and his sons, this spirit, which can claim for itself neither a complete autonomy nor an absolute authority because accepted and protected by the Church, can change nothing of its essential elements without itself disappearing, and without at the same time destroying the *raison d'être* of the religious family. Thus, without this spirit which characterises our Society, we ourselves would no longer be the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart founded by Father Chevalier. In this connection, Rev. Father Eugene Meyer could say with justification: "If anyone among us wished to aim solely at his own sanctification, he could indeed be truly a religious, but he would not be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart." (Circular. *Analects MS.C. D. 487*)

A reality living and flexible, this spirit bears within itself, as every heavenly treasure, riches old and new. Progressively it delivers up its secrets and discovers its potentialities to the family which possesses it, which plumbs its depths in order to understand it better and to adapt its potentialities to ever new needs. For at each epoch, this spirit must be rethought in the light of concrete and contemporary situations.

On the other hand, however, it must never be forgotten that the spirit is expressed in the letter.

The letter is made up of the ensemble of rules, Constitutions, usages and customs - everything which determines and organises, above all, the exterior life of the members and adapts the means to the end. The letter 'incarnates' the spirit in the realities of daily life. It is the servant of the spirit whose full development it directs.

An adaptation in fidelity must respect this bond between the letter and the spirit. I shall not go into detail here with regard to a twofold danger: on the one hand that of underestimating the letter on the pretext that it is the framework and not the flame; and on the other the danger of attaching an exaggerated value to the letter through a blind conservatism which fixes an institution in a rigorous fidelity to minutiae, crystallises the Institute in out-moded and inefficacious means and, in practice, prevents the realisation of its spiritual mission. An exaggerated attachment to the letter often proceeds from a lack of fervour in regard to the spirit.

How to recognise this spirit of the Founder? If the Founder has been faithful to himself, and if the religious family has been faithful to its Founder, ordinarily, the contemporary Constitutions, despite their evolution, should permit the reading of this spirit in the letter of the text. But, as we shall see, the Constitutions alone do not suffice.

In order to discern this spirit, Pius XII gave a directive, which was also a caution.

"Each Society," he said, "makes a point of conserving this spirit intact, as is its right and duty to do. It wants to see its members impregnated with it, and preoccupied in making it penetrate their whole life. The Church, for its part, and the Sovereign Pontiffs, in approving a particular type of religious life, intend that it be preserved in all its purity and hence they watch over it with care.

"If it is agreed that Major Superiors be accorded the right to tell their religious what the spirit of the Institute is, the question arises: Where is to be found the objective expression of this spirit? Major Superiors cannot decide this according to their own taste or impressions, even if in all good faith and sincerity. If the Major Superior happens himself to be the Founder, and if he has received from the Church the approbation of his own personal ideas as the norm of a state of perfection, then it is always permissible to refer to his own intentions. But, in the contrary case, recourse must be had to the idea of the Founder which is expressed in the Constitutions approved by the Church. A subjective conviction does not suffice, even if supported by such and such a passage of the Constitutions.

"When a Superior proposes to the members of his community (he genuine spirit of the Founder, he exercises his right, and the members must, in conscience, obey him. The rights and duties of both parties are, in this regard, correlative. The Church and the Popes intend always both to defend the rights and to urge the duties, but within the due limits. In order to avoid trouble for all concerned and to preserve peace, it suffices that each recognise and practise this norm which, for centuries, has been the practice of the Church and remains still in vigour." (Acts of the Holy See. 1958. p. 50)

One recognises the firmness of the Church. Once she has accepted the thought of a Founder and authenticated it by the approbation of the Constitutions of the Institute, she acknowledges that it is she herself who has founded canonically this Institute. It was under the impulse of this conviction that Father Chevalier, in the Audience of 1874. asked Pope Pius IX to allow himself to be regarded as the "Founder and personal Superior" of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. (Piperon. Notice. 109)

One notes also in the above text of Pius XII, the concern to safeguard the authority of the Founder, an authority based on a charism recognised by the hierarchy, a charism given by the Spirit of Christ, in the Church, for the Church, and as a consequence, submitted to the hierarchy which has the mission of discerning it, accepting it and protecting it. and which on this account accords, to the institute founded, its juridical insertion in the Church.

It must be recognised, furthermore, that the charism of the Founders, personal and social, is not accorded as such to all the Superiors who come after them. It is first of all in docility to him who is named Father and Legislator that the Superiors and the members of the whole religious family follow Christ. The Superiors have as their first mission to maintain this fidelity to the spirit of the Founder throughout new situations, governing in his spirit according to the grace transmitted by his mediation, and according to his teachings. They prolong the charismatic direction of the Father of the family.

Another point. When one speaks of a return to the Founder, it is important not to allow oneself to be carried away by the illusion that each individual can play at being Founder. It does not suffice merely to ask: What would the Founder do in the present situation? The latter started from zero. He had his hands free to bring his institution to a concrete realisation. But the Superiors who come after him do not start from zero. They have on their hands existing institutions, a whole tradition, and religious who have been "engendered" or "inserted in the family" by their profession and according to the Constitutions. They have the responsibility not only of the vocations to come, but also of the members already committed for life, before God and with the ratification of the Church, in a well-determined religious family.

Pius XI, as we have seen, spoke explicitly in 1924 of "the grace of the Founder"¹ in order to incite religious to fidelity to the characteristic spirit of their Institute, and the recent Popes from Pius XII to Paul VI. in order to stimulate renewal in the religious life, have insisted on fidelity to the origins. "Is it not because, in the supernatural economy, the special grace of the beginning continues to be offered, and that it is here above all that the will of God for the Institute today is to be encountered? Certainly, the initial grace has led, in the course of the centuries, to realisations which are no longer of our time. But this same grace persists - reaching the contemporary generations of religious which, In the Providence of God, it has raised up. And, in this case, it will be useful to recognise and accept it." (Bergh)

Let us then be realists!

If on the one hand, in order to discern the real spirit of the Founder, it is legitimate to have recourse to his first legislative writings, it is not a question of confining to these latter alone his spirit. These writings are to be read in the context of the personal experience of the Founder and must be read in the light of the other writings of the Father of the family. His message would be impoverished if not understood in the context of his life, and of the conditions of his time.

On the other hand it does not suffice to consider merely the life and writings of the Founder. Recourse must also be had to the whole contribution of a tradition, born under the influence of the initial grace, of the experience of his disciples. No religious institution is a finished act, imprisoned in the past, above all in the limited past of its foundation. Rather is it a living organism which requires perpetual modifications or adaptations. Without speaking of the imperfections inherent in all legislation, the evolution of time, quite as much as fidelity to the Founder, sooner or later exacts the reassessment of certain issues and that new options be made. It is then indispensable, and not merely useful, to confront the new demands with the primitive intuition of the Founder. Such a procedure allows the latter to stand out in clear relief and assures the required fidelity to his spirit. This is the import of the caution of Paul VI: "Your Rules will be thus changed in the letter, but the spirit will remain in its purity." Citations from the Sovereign Pontiffs to this same effect could be multiplied.

If Pius XII urged the Institutes to follow the example of their Founders in adapting their enterprises to their times, it is lawful to think that a failure to adapt would be contrary to the spirit of the Founder. A genuine adaptation is, then, a sign of fidelity. It prompts certain modifications of the Constitutions and of the observances in order to effect a better realisation of the spirit of the Founder in given circumstances. Mgr. Ancel has this opportune remark to make: "True adaptation has not its origin in a diminution of life, but rather in an increase of fervour. The more ardent is the life, the better it adapts itself. In consequence, it is only those religious societies which are really fervent which can make a true adaptation." (Acta et Documenta. p. 124) We have here an argument in favour of the primacy which must be accorded to the spiritual renewal. That goes a long way beyond the simple revision of the Constitutions!

An adaptation made in fidelity requires discernment and prudence, as Paul VI pointed out to the Salesians (1965). "It is essential to distinguish the forms which are essential from those which are merely accessory; the interior forms which give life to your works from the exterior ones, susceptible in themselves to an ever-greater perfection and to new applications; forms which are basically valid, from those which with the passage of time become weak or inefficacious."

A few other points call for attention:

- The charismatic character of a religious institution does not infallibly guarantee its permanence. Many religious institutes have declined and disappeared. Normally these failures and setbacks come from a loss of contact with the charism of the beginnings. It is for this reason that the hierarchy never ceases to recall the various religious families to their origin and to their specific end. At times, with the certitude gained from mature reflection that what was originally the work of the Holy Spirit no longer gives proof of being so, the hierarchy intervenes to suppress or dissolve certain Institutes which have become devitalised and without efficacy in the Church.
- As religious life blossomed in the Church under the action of a charism freely imparted by the Spirit to the Founders, there is also a diversity of charisms to be respected: all stirred up in the members of the different Institutes by the same Spirit and which, by the development of the initial grace given to the Founder, contribute at the same time to maintain faithfully the originality proper to each Institute and to promote its development.
- It is not by a yielding to sudden crazes, to transitory fashions, to superficial retouches, without reference to the nature and the permanent exigencies of the religious life, that we shall succeed in allaying the restlessness of our generation. The new is not always the best; the old is often charged with experience and grace; every modification made without recognising the spirit of the Founder is a dangerous commitment of the future of the Institute.
- Before modifying a point of Rule or customs, under the pretext that it needs adaptation, it would be wise to see how this custom or this point of Rule came to be introduced in the first place, how it responded to the spirit of the Founder, what was its value and significance. Likewise, before introducing a new element, judged necessary or useful, it would be not less opportune, not only to ask if it responds to the spirit of the Founder, but also, in the measure possible, to consult our historical evolution. For example, in acting thus with respect to certain wishes expressed at the time of the last General Chapter, we would discover that the very things asked for already existed in the past, in the lifetime of the Founder, and that they had become overshadowed, or even set aside, and that at times despite the will of the Founder. I think, for example, of the privileged place accorded prior to 1900 to the missions among the infidels, in the works of the Society, or to the place reserved to the parochial ministry, or to the formulation of the general end. A renovation can sometimes be a reconversion. In this connection, I supplement this text with an expression of the thought of Father Founder prior to 1877.

To conclude our reflections, I quote a resume of a letter of the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious to Mgr. Dubois, Archbishop of Besancon, in July, 1964, on the occasion of a Congress at Angers, Cardinal Antoniutti here calls attention to the fact that religious life exacts the liberty to embrace it as the Lord and the Church propose, and in consequence, the liberty to live it such as it has been embraced at the profession made according to the special end of an approved Institute.

"The Church intends that the liberty of the Institutes and of their members to live the religious life such as they have consciously embraced it, be respected "Providence has enriched the Church with a great variety of religious families, each of them with a specific vocation and a determined mission to fulfil, according to particular means. To this fidelity correspond both a structure and a characteristic physiognomy: spiritual, apostolic and juridic. "Certainly Holy Church is materially preoccupied that each Institute renew itself constantly, in order to respond faithfully to the vocation and the mission proper to itself, and that, as much with respect to a return to the Sources as for renewal and adaptation to fresh exigencies. Nevertheless, the Church has no intention of imposing changes in Constitutions or in structure* of a life freely chosen at profession, which are rooted in the characteristic nature of an Institute, itself having the declared and definitive approbation of the Holy-See.

"The stability of the religious state, and the bond contracted at profession, must guarantee to the one who embraces a determined type of religious life the liberty, the right and the obligation to remain faithful to it even until death. It will happen that competent authority may see the necessity of deciding upon changes and adaptation as regards the secondary elements of each Institute. No-one can exact that an already-existing Institute be modified and transformed in opposition to its spirit willed by the Founder and sanctioned by the Church."

Here, then, is the justification, in order to effect a renovation in fidelity, of an open and loyal dialogue with the whole of the religious family: each member of our Society, in virtue of his profession, has the right to recognise himself in the end. the spirit and the organisation of the Society as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, according to the vocation and the mission of Father Chevalier, his Founder, Father and Lawgiver. To him alone, our title manifests fully the thought, the spirit and the fundamental orientation of our religious-apostolic Society: all is centred on the Heart of Him Who has been sent by the Father for the salvation of men.

By vocation, the Missionary of the Sacred Heart has the mission to reproduce according to means, the mission of the Word Incarnate, sole Mediator and Redeemer. And the dimensions of this mission are expressed in our device: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved". Our Founder never ceases to repeat to us: "By these words, we recall our most lofty mission, and strive to dedicate utterly to it our strength and our life." (Circular. 1899)

FATHER CHEVALIER: THE MAN OF AN IDEA AND OF A WORK

J. Bertolini, MSC MSC General Chapter, 1969

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart is what we are by our free response to a divine vocation, in an apostolic and religious Society founded by the venerated Father Jules Chevalier.

I have been asked, on the occasion of this chapter of renewal, to evoke the personality of our Founder. You expect me to do it with loyalty; I do it also with frankness.

Of Father Chevalier I shall etch neither a physical nor a moral portrait. That would not have any bearing on this Chapter. For the purpose which is now yours, it is more important to situate our Founder in relation to the mission which was his in his time; and his time comprised fifty years of the history of our Society.

The humble curate of a parish in the centre of France, he took it as a matter of conscience, in the middle of the last century, that God was calling him to fulfil a special mission in the Church. He responded with all the ardour of his youth and apostolic temperament to what he believed to be a need of his time: namely, in a society which was becoming debased, to save man by making known to him the love of Christ the Saviour. A means presented itself to him: devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In itself nothing original: it was a sign of his time. This then will be his Idea. To this idea - an ideal to which his whole being aspires - he will give a practical realization: a religious Society of missionaries. This will be the Work of his lifetime.

And when he will be no more, one will read in a great Parisian newspaper, under the pen of a secular confrere who was not exactly among his friends:

"His name remains associated with a work, with a living posterity in the heart of which he himself will live on, as founders continue to live in their religious families ...If we go back to his origins, he was a mediocre subject with little future... he nevertheless made his way. He created a religious order; he built monuments; he even wrote works which, without being masterpieces, are lacking neither in character nor in authority. But the man stands out above all by reason of the character he brought to the service of an idea. .. He is the man of an idea and a work..."

I maintain this last affirmation; it may appear simplistic, but we can justify it. There will be other intuitions, other realizations. All, however, gravitate around his idea and his work in order to serve them.

The sons of Father Chevalier also expressed their sentiments after his remains were deposited in the crypt of his Basilica at Issoudun.

One of them, who about twenty-five years later set himself up as a severe judge on the basis of a fragmentary and prejudiced piece of information, published for his part this appreciation:

"(Xtr dear and venerated Founder is for all who know him an extraordinary man; for us his children, he is moreover a saint..." And as final conclusion he added:

"Nothing succeeded for this enterprising and indomitable man, but his works live on; they develop in a marvelous fashion. External for us, the corporeal covering falls and dies - but the soul survives."

With more sincerity and fairness, I cannot subscribe fully to his double affirmation.

For sure, you all have a certain knowledge of Father Founder: a hasty sketch by his most faithful companion, Father Piperon, an incompleting biography by Father Vermin, other popular monographs, certain oral traditions. Have we truly reached the soul of the Founder, that soul which survives?

A man of action, he was to a certain extent reserved. At the end of his long life, he has left us miscellaneous versions of his Spiritual Testament, and two Memoirs handwritten and unedited, which border on autobiography, namely: "Annals of the Little Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" (1901), and "Intimate Notes not destined for publication." (1902)

If these retrospective writings can give us an authentic reflection of his personality, nevertheless one can fully grasp his thought only in the light of his extant correspondence. Voluminous certainly but only partial, it is the result of about fifty years of responsibility as Superior and Founder; correspondence with his first companions, his Assistants, and a number of his sons . . . The most expressive is that addressed to Father Victor Jouet, for it is mutual. With this latter, more than with Father Piperon and the others, Father Chevalier shows himself more intimate and open, and consequently we discover better his soul, his mind, his intentions, his desires, his joys and his sufferings . . . - It is there that we can meet the real Father Chevalier, provoked by his correspondents who oblige him very often to give out what he never would have said otherwise.

The subject of my thesis will perhaps surprize you. But I can count on your sympathetic attention.

1. A first question poses itself: What after all did Father Chevalier want? Or else: What was his idea? What was his work?

To reply to this will be to underline the fundamental and constant orientation of" his thought, of his idea, then its progressive realization as the concrete work of his life.

First of all two remarks must be made.

When we refer to the Founder we cannot forget that he was actually Founder for almost half a century, always faithful to his fundamental orientation, always seeking ways to bring it to realization.

It is necessary, therefore, to find him in 1900 as well as in 1854, before 1854 as well as after 1900.

Besides, his whole life, in spite of many contrasts, offers a unity of thought and action put to the service of his idea and his work.

(a) His idea, the inspiration of his youth, is rooted in an ideal to which he aspires with all his generosity and his whole apostolic temperament. As a seminarist, "While studying the treatise on the Incarnation, our professor," he will say, "added thereto a thesis on devotion to the Sacred Heart. .. This doctrine went to my heart, and the more I became penetrated with it, the more I experienced its riches."

He meditated on the first biography of Blessed Margaret Mary. This reading "excited in me a keen desire to make myself the apostle of this devotion which Our Lord had himself given to the world as a powerful means of sanctification, and which he wished to see spread everywhere."

This will be the orientation of his life - an orientation somewhat unforeseen, which could have passed for something novel. It is true, for some years several dioceses, among them his own, that of Bourges, had been consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or had adopted a liturgy in his honour.

But at this epoch, this devotion was still at the stage of its early modern development. A part of the clergy, not yet liberated from the spirit of Jansenism and Gallicanism, remained perplexed. They were willing to tolerate this devotion, since the Roman Church had approved it, but then asked of it to remain an interim devotion, of limited scope, merely a help to general piety . . . Jules Chevalier did not understand it thus. Having taken stock of the spiritual needs of contemporary society, more and more marked by what he would call with others "the illness of modern times," which was the fruit of Protestantism, Jansenism, Rationalism, Indifferentism, a certain Liberalism, and finally Atheism, he put his finger on a remedy. At the basis of his thought, this illness of modern times is summed up in the contempt or the refusal of God, who has so loved the world that he gave his Son to be the Saviour of men.

"For this ill of souls and of society," he wondered, "what is the remedy? Where does it exist? It does exist: he who has prepared it has deigned to reveal it to men, and he has surrounded this revelation with all the guarantees which give certitude. Let us MV with joy: the remedy is in the Sacred Heart of Jesus." This was his profound conviction. He would strive to demonstrate with joy, in his successive works, how this "remedy" was prepared in the Old and the New Testament, in the tradition of the Fathers, and the teaching of the Church ... He was not a theologian: he would himself submit his principal works to Roman theologians; they would be approved by two masters of the Sacred Palace: they would be contested by others. .. All the same, one recognizes in them two qualities: unction and fearlessness. He subscribed to the theology of his time, he did not escape the gropings and the insufficiency of doctrinal statement. But whatever criticism there may be, the positions he took up often go

beyond those of contemporary authors: everything considered, they approach astonishingly close to the positions of the encyclical of our times, that of Pius XII.

He had his conception of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In a letter to a Jesuit Father we find a resume of what he would develop in his works: "You realize that of which I had always been convinced. You make of the Heart of the Divine Master the centre wherein everything converges in She Old as in the New Testament, the pivot on which everything in Catholicism revolves: the sun of the church, the soul of our souls and the centre of our love, the cradle of our holy religion, the source of our mysteries, the origin of our sacraments, the pledge of our reconciliation, the salvation of the world, the remedy for all our ills . . . It is thus that I understand the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: it embraces everything, it answers everything."

Or again:

"Humanity, although composed of diverse members, forms however only one blood, only one body; we are all one body. Now the heart that gives the life to all the members of this great body, is the Mean of Jesus. He alone unites us to one another, and he alone unites us to God. As soon as we detach ourselves from him, we separate ourselves from each other, and we lose, together with the divine life of which he is the source, the true feeling of human fraternity. This divine Heart is then the centre around which gravitate all hearts."

Or again:

"The Word, come forth from the Heart of the Father, has made the world rise up from nothingness." "And from the Heart of the Word Incarnate, pierced on Calvary, I see come forth a new world, the world of the elect. And this creation, full of grandeur and fecundity, inspired by love and mercy, is the Church, that mystical body which will perpetuate him on the earth until the consummation of time..."

"Today still, God sees the whole world entirely in Christ, who recapitulates it in himself, who is the summary and living expression of all creatures; and as for us, we see Jesus Christ whole and entire in his Heart, which is the resume of his adorable person; his Heart and himself is all one, the Heart of Jesus is the whole Jesus. . ." Taking this conception as his point of departure, Father Chevalier affirmed:

"In principle, devotion to the Heart of Jesus has always been the soul of Christian piety, for it is no other than the dilation of charity.¹¹ "We must then love it, practice it and spread it by all means, as being our supreme hope."

(b) Such is his conviction. To serve it, he felt himself called to an altogether

practical conception. In a memoir addressed to the Holy See, he indicated how the idea began. As a seminarist "I was pursued by the thought of a Congregation the special end of which would be to spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

From Rome itself, he would write one day: "God has great designs on the Church and on the world through the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But to make it known, men are needed who will be its missionaries. By what means, however, will they hear it if not by preaching? How indeed shall they preach unless they are sent?" . . . "There would be needed a society of priests consecrated to the Heart of the Saviour, whose mission would be to spread devotion to him, to make known the riches of his heart, and to pour forth on souls his love and his mercy."

As far back as the time of the novena of December 1954. we know how much he had at heart the foundation of the Society. We know the name given to its members from the time of the contract with Mary Immaculate in January - February 1855, approved by the ecclesiastical authority on the 9th September of the same year:

"They will take the title of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and they will strive to fulfil all that it signifies." This profound significance is brought out in one of his meditations:

"(Jesus) is the first Missionary of his Heart. He is the first to make known to men the love which he has for them. Everywhere, always, in all his actions, Our Lord is preoccupied with the mission which he has come to fulfil on the earth..."

Likewise, according to the expression drawn from the first edition of his Spiritual Testament, our Founder will say:

"Our Lord sends us in his Love."

This significance, consecrated by the magisterium of the Church at the time of the Decree of Praise, has also been recognized by the People of God: in its name, more than forty bishops, from 1868 on, bear witness how our Society has been understood and accepted; then later still more solicited the approbation of the Institute and its Constitutions.

Over and above the devotion itself, its propagation belongs to the very end of this Society. The means were submitted to a constant research, to a certain evolution in expression and in form, but it is always and fundamentally the Love of Christ the Saviour which must be brought to men, by all means possible, by all works of the Apostolate.

"By our title", says Father Chevalier, "we are what we are. Missionary of the Sacred Heart signifies APOSTLE of the Sacred Heart, or propagator of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. This title then can befit the parish priest just as well as the curate, the chaplain just as well as the professor; in a word all members of the Society, in whatever rank they may be."

More than once he goes so far as to say: "We are the official Missionaries of the Sacred Heart."

His Society he conceived as eminently apostolic. It happened in 1876 that a psychologically unbalanced confrere sent to Rome an unfortunate document, seeking for the Society a more contemplative orientation. The Founder got his procurator to reply to the Sacred Congregation: "We want the perfection of our Institute, but we do not want change. We have entered this Institute to be missionaries of the Sacred Heart; this word sums up everything."

This is the realization of the motto adopted from the beginning; "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!" He did not miss an opportunity of coming back on to the imperative implied in this motto. It is the apostolic inspiration of all his enterprises, of all the works of his Society. "This device comprises within itself the principle, the motive and the end of all the works . . . of our Society." To attain this end, the Society will embrace all the types of ministry which the church can offer. 2. Such was, in broad outline, the constant orientation of our Founder.

How did

he set about concretely realizing his work?

This was not an easy matter. How many investigations, how many hopes, how many proceedings, how many sufferings! . . . Did he himself not say, on the first page of the "Annals of the Little Society":

"When God wants a work, obstacles for him are means; he makes light of human wisdom, upsets its forecasts, calls to life what, according to it (that is, human wisdom) should never see the light of day, develops and strengthens into fecundity what was condemned to die. The foundation and the development of the little Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are a proof of this truth."

At the outset, in contrast with other founders, Jutes Chevalier was neither a religious trained in the religious life, nor a bishop capable of giving himself permission to go ahead. He was on the contrary a young secular priest. He had, if you wish, his charism, his grace of foundation. Subsequently the magisterium of the Church would welcome and approve his thought and his work.

Rare are the founders who have had the merit of founding a religious society in their youth. Rarer still those who have directed their work for almost half a century. Very rare those who have stayed, in spite of everything, fixed to the cradle of their work throughout their whole lifetime, such as was Father Chevalier, a power always in action, but a stable power, faithful to himself, faithful to his work, even to the point of sacrifice.

At the time of his resignation as Superior General, in September 1901, the Society counted five hundred and fifty-three living members, including four bishops, one hundred and eighty priests, one hundred and fifty-five brothers, one hundred and ninety-four scholastics, spread over four provinces, twenty-seven residences and three foreign missions. The Decree of Praise, and the definitive approbation of the Institute and the Constitutions, had been obtained at a pace comparable to that of similar contemporary institutes.

Was it a success or a failure? I do not mention here the other works established meanwhile.

The Society which had passed through so many vicissitudes of external and internal character, and which since the chapter of 1897 had regained its equilibrium after the dramatic upheavals of the crises from 1888 to 1897, found itself at a secure enough stage. This stage was going to be, despite or because of the new trials for the works in France, a point of departure for a period of greater development.

Before arriving at this stage, forty-six years had passed. Years of growth. A whole evolution had taken place at the level of realizations. It is very necessary to point out the principal landmarks.

fa) A period of gestation and growth in the midst of multiple trials, sometimes crucifying for the Founder. But his faith was great. His courage far from ordinary. He had for himself and his work a Hope: let us say the Hope of difficult and desperate causes.

Everything commenced in a way disconcerting to human reason. In mid-October 1854 Father Chevalier was thirty years of age. He had only three years of priesthood. He arrived at Issoudun for his third post as curate. He found there - to his surprise - a seminary companion, Father Maugenest, himself a curate at Issoudun since January of the same year.

The old cure of this parish of more than twelve thousand souls was greatly in need of two young curates, youthful and active. Not more than about three weeks after the arrival of Father Chevalier, the Society of his dreams was conceived and decided on. You know the facts, the opposition, the proceedings ... Six months passed. At last, despite the unanimous opposition of the Episcopal Council, the Archbishop declared in full session:

"I had promised these two priests that, if they would bring me a new sign of the will of God by finding resources. I would approve of their enterprise. This sign they have brought me; I am therefore bound. I authorise the two curates of Issoudun to join together and to commence their work. From today let us name their replacements."

Without influence, without fortune, without any other confreres, there was nothing but to look to the future. The least that one can say is: it was a success! This success Father Chevalier attributed to the protection of Mary Immaculate, of whom he had asked a first sign for December 8th, 1854. If she had granted his desires, he had promised to give to the Church, "as the first fruit of the glory with which she was going to crown her, a new Society consecrated to the Heart of Jesus . . . Then to make Mary loved and honoured by all the means possible and in a special manner."

We know how he kept his promise:

"Out of gratitude to Mary, they will regard her," says the Contract of 1855, "as their foundress and their sovereign; they will associate her in all their works and they will make her loved in a special manner." "From the beginning of our work," the Founder would write. "We thought of giving a name to Mary in order to show her our gratitude, and to express her power over the Heart of her Son, a power of which she had given us so many proofs. We settled on that of OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART, as best expressing our thought."

You know the important place taken from then on in the preoccupations of Father Founder, by the justification of this title - the difficulties, the struggles, the victories. All this went on from the crowning of 1869, followed by the marvelous development of the Association established already in 1864, and become a universal Archconfraternity with its headquarters in Rome, indissolubly linked with his Society.

"It is we," he wrote to the Cardinal-Vicar in 1875, "whom Providence has chosen to be the founders and the natural propagators of this work which is doing so much good for souls, and which has received the approbation of four hundred archbishops and bishops, of whom seventy-five are Italians."

The Society of Father Chevalier is profoundly marked by a Marian dimension; as pointed out in the Annals brought into being in 1866 by Father Jouet, one of the best interpreters of Father Chevalier, it is founded "on the relations of the Mother of God with the Heart of Christ." When I say, "one of the best interpreters of Father Chevalier," this is so true that the first editor of the Annals of Issoudun submitted each number to his superior, and he himself gave to Father Chevalier a great part of the matter of the principal works which the latter published. Notably all the citations of the Fathers of the Church are the contribution of Father Jouet. This is verified by correspondence. Certain chapters are even textually articles of Father Jouet, published in the Annals.

With reference to the Marian devotion of Father Founder. Father Piperon did not hesitate to speak of a true mission, declaring:

"As for this mission, far from attributing it to himself alone, he had it at heart! to see all his confreres full of Zeal to propagate the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He often taught us that that was one of the principal ends of our Congregation, and the most assured means of glorifying the Sacred Heart of Jesus and making him loved. He told me one day: 'When Father Maugenest and I promised to take the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, to honour the Blessed Virgin and to make her honoured in a special way if our prayer was answered, our thought did not stop at our two selves alone, but we wished formally that our little Congregation in project should be destined to this double end. If we are missionaries of the Sacred Heart, as our name and our motto indicate, we ought to be also apostles devoted to the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.'"

Father Piperon states again:

"From the day on which was manifested to the world the ineffable power which Jesus has given her over his adorable Heart, dates the initial progress of our much loved Congregation. We believe we can affirm with full assurance that Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will never cease to protect it, as long as we ourselves remain her faithful servants."

Permit me to add: without being a distinctive element, an element either necessary or exclusive, in practice this devotion distinguishes us in the eyes of the faithful from other institutes dedicated to the Heart of Christ.

Whatever may be the controversies, the doctrinal discussions of yesterday or today, this devotion was largely accepted by the faithful because it put Mary in direct relationship with her Son, and also because the confidence of the faithful was happy to invoke Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in difficult causes, on the spiritual as well as on the temporal level, according to the intention of Father Chevalier. Moreover, we as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart must recognize, in all loyalty and gratitude, that it is thanks to the active and generous zeal of so many Associates that our Society has been able to establish almost all its works, and assure the foundations of the majority of the Provinces, if not all. Our Lady has preceded us everywhere.

(b) A religious society, to attain its proper end, gives itself to activities, to ministries.

To begin at the beginning. The Contract of 1855 says simply:

"The priests of the Sacred Heart in their solitude will imitate by preference the hidden life of Mary in the temple and in the house of Nazareth. In their apostolic life they will imitate her zeal for the salvation of souls, and her great mercy towards sinners."

There are intentions; there are the realizations. The first are still ill-defined, intimately hidden in the heart of the Founder. God alone knows them as they really are. We can only state the facts.

We have two versions of the Contract. The correction of the first Article shows that the two Fathers did not explicitly consider the apostolate of Berry as an obligation to which the founders bound themselves and their successors. They did not bind themselves to the apostolate in Berry, but stated only that "they would continue the work of St. Ursin, first apostle of Berry." The Rules of 1855 and 1857 make no allusion to an explicit work which the evangelisation of Berry would have been; neither do they make any allusion to a parochial ministry. Ulterior circumstances would bring about the adoption of this kind of ministry. After indicating the fundamental orientation, the Rules of 1855/57 on the subject, "Works that the Society can undertake", indicate: Retreats for priests and lay people, sodalities of the Sacred Heart for men and youths, apostolates among soldiers

and among apprentices, education of youth, affiliation of secular priests. There follows a lengthy directive on the procedure to be adopted in parish missions.

There would be experiments in these apostolates in the community at Issoudun. But, in fact, the members of this primitive community for a dozen years would number only two or three, no more. Meanwhile, Father Maugenest, appointed archpriest at Bourges, would come back, but in order to take charge of the parish of Issoudun in the name of the community: Father Chevalier would leave his residence only for journeys in France and to Rome, being entirely preoccupied with one great project: a Society of the Sacred Heart, which would be the fusion or the federation of diverse diocesan Associations of priests of the Sacred Heart. From so many proceedings and consultations, notably with the Jesuit Fathers, there would be only one double result: some few recruits for his community, and the preparation of Constitutions which would end up as the 1868 Formula of the Institute. As for Father Piperon, he would undertake a preaching mission throughout France to raise funds for the erection of the Church of the Sacred Heart and the first monastery.

Granted that in 1864 there were five priests, one, Fr. Maugenest, was parish priest of Issoudun: two others, Fr. Guyot and Fr. Durin, were parish priests outside of Berry in the diocese of Moulins: another, Fr. Jouet, was a professor at Marseilles. Which signifies that if the intention of Father Chevalier was the evangelisation of Berry, then I must admit that up till then he had not succeeded.

There arrived on the scene Father Vandel, founder of the Apostolate of the Country Districts. Discovered through his book, he was induced to find in the community at Issoudun a centre for the "Missionaries of the Country Districts" which would be the fulfilment of his own special work. This did not come to be. For Father Chevalier pressed him to join with him, for, he wrote to Father Leblanc, S.J.. "Father Vandel is a man of God, a very precious person. His intuitions and his advice will be of great assistance to us. We would have only one desire, that is to put him at the head of the Apostolate, which he would direct, I am convinced, with prudence and wisdom, With Father Vandel joining us, it will be easy to attract his missionary priests into our Apostolate." Father Vandel hesitated for friere than a year. At last, to be sure of keeping him with him, Father Chevalier accepted his unexpected offer: the creation of an Apostolic School. Concerning this foundation I regret that I cannot go along with Father Vermin. This institution is the work of Father Vandel. It is he who drew up its first set of rules; it is he who assured its recruitment until his death; it is he who was responsible for the finances of this institution, distinctly separated from those of the Society. Father Vandel ran it so well that, whilst reimbursing the community at Issoudun down to the last postage stamp, he would without any difficulty pay for the necessary building beside the College of Chezal-Benoit, he advanced the funds for the construction of the first Novitiate of Montlucon, and lent 25,000 francs for the purchase of the house which was to be from 1874 the first residence of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Existing documents confirm all these statements and discountenance all the legends.

Whatever one wishes to think about it, this Apostolic School was a nursery of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Father Vandel, who was himself thinking only of the country districts of France, entered into the views of his Superior who did not cease looking beyond France. The works of the Society were becoming better defined. The first students of the Apostolic School arrived from diverse provinces of France, from Corsica and from Switzerland. Their letters to Father Vandel reveal to us that the majority of them were thinking only of the foreign missions. From as early as the first year. Father Chevalier presented to them one day a Roman prelate: "Rev. Fr. Superior told us that Mom. Chaillot would, on behalf of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, ask the Sovereign Pontiff for a mission, be it in Oceania or some other country." In a circular Father Vandel wrote in 1868: "The type of life of the students is regulated according to our anticipation of their future ministry, whether it be in the giving of missions in France or in the rigorous apostolate of the foreign missions."

The Formula of the Institute, which constitutes the first expression of the official Constitutions, far from localizing the apostolate in France, points out among the forms of the apostolate: "With the approbation of the Holy See, the Society embraces various apostolic ministries, even among the infidels." This would be restated by the Constitutions of 1877/91. which are those of the Founder. They specify: "Our little Society has also for its end the spreading of the Faith among the infidels. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved! We will then be always ready, according to the measure of our strength, to undertake every sort of mission in any part of the world whatsoever, according as it pleases the Sovereign Pontiff and the Superior General." The hour of realizing this wish was not long delayed.

In 1872 Father Founder confirmed this orientation:

"Their restricted number does not permit them to devote themselves for the time being to missions in infidel lands, but they will accept this work, so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as soon as they can; it is their desire and that of the Holy See."

Dating from this year, the Apostolic School commenced to become international. In the following year, 1873, at the request of the Bishop of Toronto, one of the Fathers was sent to Canada in connection with this project. But it was from the time of the installation of the first community of scholastics in Rome, December 1875, with Father Jouet, that the latter, sharing more deeply than anyone else in the mind of the Founder, would be the principal instrument in the realization of missionary ideals. He had just established the Archconfraternity in Spain: he was going to England to sound out the possibilities of a foundation. The General Council of the 25th February, 1876 envisaged foundations in England, in America, in Holland or Belgium: "An Apostolic School attached could have great advantages for the propagation of the Society," say the Acts. Consideration was given to teaching the English language to the students in view of future missions. In 1876 a new foundation was made at Watertown. It was hoped that this would be the base for other fields of apostolate. The farewell celebration had been a missionary day. It was on the occasion of the Founder's feast day: "It brings us great joy," said a witness, "to announce to you that there are requests everywhere for Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, in Austria, in England, in Spain, as far as Oceania."

Under the date of 26th January, 1878. Father Chevalier wrote to his procurator: "Beg Mgr. Agnozzi to keep us a good foreign mission for which we will prepare ourselves, and which we will accept as soon as possible. If he could let you know in advance! . . ."

Exactly a year later, Rome proposed the Mission of Auckland, New Zealand. A novena of prayer was asked for in each community for the feast of St. Joseph. The young members were thrilled with joy and hope. But there was fierce opposition on the part of the Assistant, Father Guyot. Father Chevalier accepted the offer in principle: but in spite of himself his response to Rome was too timid. For once Rome was in a hurry, and the mission was confided to others. Keen was the disappointment of the Founder who had already sent to the Father Procurator three names for the choice as the Vicar Apostolic: "This mission," he had written, "corresponds entirely to one of the principal ends of our Institute, and to the most ardent desires of the majority of our Fathers, especially our apostolic youth." He did not lay down his arms; he returned to the charge in the following year . . . And soon, by circumstances as picturesque as unexpected, it was the whole of the immense Vicariate of Melanesia and Micronesia which called for his decision. This decision was clear: it was Yes. And yet, from November, 1880 his religious had had to flee from France; the situation had become more difficult.

His Assistants, dispersed in different places, were in opposition. Father Guyot threatened to resign and sent an angry memorandum to Rome. Cardinal Simeoni was warned sufficiently to take no account of it whatsoever. Father Chevalier played the trump card: "Ask Cardinal Simeoni to draft an official letter, saying clearly that it is the Pope who asks, so that I can put it under the eyes of the Assistants and the Archbishop of Bourges." You know the official story, the fine and famous letter of 25th March, 1881: Father Chevalier himself had asked Father Jouet to put on it the date of the 25th March . . . You know also the no less beautiful response . . . All these documents, and for a very good reason, were not published until the August number in the Annals of Issoudun. Without this audaciousness of the Founder, our missions would not have commenced in 1881.

For sure the first missionary expedition was a strange adventure, despite our Fathers. Everything almost came to grief. Once again the unshakeable authority of Father Chevalier was needed to say: "Hold on! Have patience! You will not be abandoned."¹

In this development of the concrete orientation of his work, Father Chevalier, conscious of his grace as founder, gave proof of a courage and tenacity far from ordinary. He gave proof of the same in what followed, in circumstances still more difficult. I must limit myself. I am putting several testimonies in the notes. And all this does not express the whole sum of the sufferings of this man, apparently self-controlled and calm, but of a very deep sensibility. We know the sword which struck his heart the very day of the crowning of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. His suffering was great also on the very day of the first departure of his sons for Oceania. His particular situation at Issoudun, in this period of religious persecution, obliged him to conduct himself already as a secular priest of the diocese of Bourges, like several of his confreres. He was unable therefore to get to Barcelona. He went and secluded himself in the Major Seminary at Bourges for the priests' retreat. From there, he sent this message to his Procurator:

¹ Very dear Father, it is impossible for me to be (here of the departure of our much loved and heroic confreres, who are going to bear the knowledge and the love of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady to Oceania. How I envy their lot! What a sacrifice not to be able to bless and embrace them at this solemn hour. Please offer my apologies to these privileged ones. Ask for their blessing in return for me and for the Society. . . How much I suffer to be unable to be at Barcelona at this hour!"

While the Society was taking on a fresh elan with these new perspectives for the future, while new houses were being founded in Europe, America and Australia, while the Institute of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was consolidating itself on a sure footing, a new generation was rising, growing up, developing in strength, and contesting . . . The moving spirits stirred up sharp difficulties: reasons were not lacking: these reasons were not always understood or appreciated with serenity and justice . . . Twenty years passed, difficult, turbulent, between two religious persecutions in France - . .

The Founder often felt very alone in face of responsibilities always growing more heavy, . . . "The cause appeared desperate, and we wondered with anxiety," he avowed, "how all this was going to end up. The idea was always the same: to destroy the Congregation and to build another on its ruins . . . Heart filled with anguish and tears in our eyes, we foresaw the approaching ruin of our beloved Society. Deprived of all human help . . . we turned towards the Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: Save us, we perish! . . ."

From 1886 the Founder intended to complete his Constitutions; from 1888, he dreamt of a Vicar General with right of succession: he had already made his choice: it would be young Father Klotz . . . Did the latter have any knowledge of this? I do not know. But what we know is that he was intelligent and enterprising, one of the most accepted leaders of what was called the "opposition", and the one perhaps who made Father Chevalier suffer most. "Oh, how I pity the poor Superior of a Congregation who at every step dashes against contradictions, whilst night and day he is wearing himself out for the general good. I would like to see another do better than myself. You will see . . . But let us not precipitate anything, knowing how to wait on the Heart of Jesus for light and help: neither has ever been lacking us." Encouraged by his most faithful confreres, Father Chevalier understood that, to save his work, it was not yet the moment to relinquish the helm. "Let us have confidence, we shall come out stronger from the painful crises through which we are passing." He knew how to wait, how to conciliate and how to pardon much. To one of his sons who came back to the fold, he said: "How happy I am to know you are content: Felix culpa. How good God is. How admirable in his designs. He has made us both pass through a series of painful trials. The result has been to attach you more irrevocably to your holy vocation, to extend our well loved Society by the creation of a new Province (that of Australia), to bring back concord, confidence, union and peace among us, to bind still closer the bonds which united us, to overwhelm me with joy in proportion to what I have suffered most."

Another hour could come, that of a greater sacrifice, to save what he considered necessary to be saved, in the service of what was his constant ideal, in the service of his work which had to survive all trials . . . The events of 1901, on the advice of his most enlightened sons, on the advice of Rome itself, determined him to make a decision of courage and faith. I give the text of the letter preserved in the Vatican Archives:

"Issoudun, diocese of Bourges, 28th August, 1901.

Most Holy Father,

The undersigned has the honour of soliciting two favours of Your Holiness, towards the end of safeguarding the interests of his Institute and preserving his title of Archpriest of Issoudun:

1. to deign to accept his resignation as Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart;
2. to secularize him for as long a time as events demand, whilst interiorly he still keeps his obligations as religious.

Jules Chevalier.

Sup. Gen. of the Miss. of the S.H. and Archpriest of Issoudun."

The confreres who remained at his side until his death, several of whom benefited from a like secularization, were not under any illusion. Others, less informed of the existential situation, or guided by sentiments more or less acknowledged, believed later in making a mystery of what had been officially announced by the first successor of the Founder. He himself, more a missionary of the Sacred Heart than anyone else, resuming his whole thought in a letter of 1906, said to Rev. Father Eugene Meyer, superior general: "Let us see in the trials which the good God prepares for us an effect of his love and his mercy. Let us draw profit from them. The religious congregations had perhaps too far forgotten their precious and sublime vocation. They had become accustomed to living in ease and perhaps also in worldliness. Divine Providence seems to want to recall them to their first vocation, which is the continuation of the life of Jesus Christ in the world, and participation in his sufferings: 'If you will be perfect. . . ' The practice of poverty is a treasure which will never be exhausted. Priests and religious, if they are what they ought to be, will never lack what is necessary. So I am under these circumstances without anxiety for the future. This is not a prophecy that I am making. It is quite simply a deduction from the philosophy of history."

Cannot one add this thought to his last Testament?

THE CHARISM OF JULES CHEVALIER

J. Van Kerckhoven, MSC, 1974

INTRODUCTION

A charism - a gift of the Holy Spirit in view of the common good of the Church (cf. 1. Cor 12) - is difficult to express and to describe in words. The charism of a Founder and of a religious congregation in particular is something so complex that it is not a simple matter to categorize it. In actual fact, being a gift of the Spirit, the charism is a spiritual reality, before all else something wholly interior which belongs to the order of the divine life and mystery. Moreover, it is a living thing. It belongs to the existential order. It is something which our abstract concepts can never express in its fullness. It manifests itself in the life of every day and in circumstances which at times seem to have little relevance. It wants to be lived, and it is as intangible as life itself. Finally, the charism of a religious congregation is a gift which is communicated to a group of men. It will be present in all its fullness in the Founder; it will be more evident in his first companions; it will continue in the members of the religious group who remain faithful to the call of the Spirit. This charism necessarily presents as many facets as there are individuals, for the latter, whilst belonging to the same institute and participating in the same community charism, will each live his own personal vocation within the setting of the common vocation. This means that there will be continuity and, at the same time, difference, since the Spirit respects the individual personality of each.

One can sometimes try to sketch the general traits of the charism of a religious institute and to highlight the primitive inspiration. For the institute itself, this is important insofar as its community charism manifests the designs for it of the Spirit of God; indicates its mission and its raison d'être; and gives to it its particular physiognomy.

This article is divided into two parts. In the first - more historical and of greater length - it is a question of the charism of Father Chevalier in his own epoch, that is, the 19th century; in the second, consideration is given to the value of this charism for the present time - the second half of the 20th century, f 1)

I: THE CHARISM OF FATHER CHEVALIER IN HIS OWN TIME

Father Jules Chevalier (Richelieu 1824 - Issoudun 1907) founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart on December 8, 1854. the day of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, when he was a young priest only three years ordained and a curate at Issoudun (a town of 15.000 inhabitants in the diocese of Bourges, France).

He had conceived the idea of this foundation a few years previously when still a student of theology. Appointed curate at Issoudun in 1854, he there met again a fellow-student of seminary days. Father Maugenest. This latter knew of his projects and shared his aspirations. Together they decided to make a novena to the Immaculate Virgin in order to obtain, through her intercession, a sign from Heaven regarding the foundation of a religious society dedicated to the Sacred Heart. This society would have for its mission "to make known to men all the treasures of love and mercy of the Adorable Heart of Jesus and to prevail upon them to give themselves to him." (2) Their prayer was heard through the donation, as providential as unexpected, of an appreciable sum of money. This permitted them to commence the projected work. "They decided to take the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and to strive to live to the full its significance." (3) This title which signifies "apostle of the Sacred Heart and propagator of the devotion to the Sacred Heart" was officially given to them by the Vicar General of Bourges (acting for Cardinal du Pont), on September 9, feast of the Holy Name of Mary and the date of the blessing of the first chapel.

APOSTOLIC CHARISM

Father Chevalier was of an active nature, a determined, courageous and energetic worker. Endowed moreover with a sure and practical judgment, with a strong and tenacious will which no difficulty could rebuff, he possessed incontestably the natural qualities of an apostle and a leader. (4) Possessed by the love of the Heart of Christ and of his interior spirit - all of which he had come to know at the school of M. Olier - from being rather severe in character and of a reserved exterior according to the description of his fellow-students, he became "gentle, affable and smiling" (5): an attitude which characterized him definitively for the rest of his life. Later, the trials and the sufferings which belong to every form of apostolic life were not spared him: they are the price of an effective apostolate and serve to sanctify the apostle himself. From them he learned to await the hour of Providence. He learned also a limitless confidence in the Heart of Christ and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He was always a man of wide vision and his love of Jesus made him undertake great works. After the example of his Master, however, his preference was always for the poorest and the most forsaken. The poorest of all are those who do not know Christ. In the seminary he had the desire to become a missionary. He had spoken of this desire on several occasions with the Superior. Finally, on the advice of the latter, he had postponed his "departure" - awaiting the hour of Providence. (6) His thought carried him to the spiritual needs of the Church in the west, and he conceived the project of founding a community of missionary priests who would work for the regeneration of society. His director considered this idea merely Utopia and Jules took the resolution to put it out of his head. However, "a voice which I could not silence said ceaselessly to me: 'One day you will succeed. God wills this work'." (7) In actual fact, his project was realised and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were to find their apostolate not only among civilised peoples, but were to set out in their hundreds for the foreign missions.

His congregation will be a distinctively apostolic one. He had always conceived it as such. When in 1876 a certain Father Captier, an unstable and unbalanced individual, complained to higher authorities that, in his opinion, the congregation had taken on too much activity and that, as a consequence, the interior life was suffering; that the congregation should rather be a contemplative institute, Father Chevalier reacted with vehemence: "We entered this institute in order to be missionaries: this word 'missionary' sums up everything. Our institute of missionaries cannot be transformed into a contemplative order." (8)

The exterior organization of the congregation was to be at the service of the apostolate. The rule of the community would be adapted to the active life. There would be neither strict enclosure, separation from the world, nor office in choir as in the case of the Trappists where Father Chevalier loved to make his annual retreats. This is not to say that he underestimated the necessity of prayer for the apostolate. Quite the contrary. He placed particular insistence on the value and the importance of mental prayer and adopted for himself and for his disciples the practices of Ignatian spirituality: methods of prayer, examen, examination of conscience, spiritual exercises etc. His ideal, although the inspiration which gave birth to it was different, was to be that of the Jesuits: 'Contemplative in activity'¹. Contemplation and action were not to be juxtaposed, but were to interpenetrate. They would find a higher union in love, for the value of prayer as of apostolic activity depends on the degree of love.

THE APOSTOLIC OBJECTIVE

Father Chevalier had been deeply moved by the sad religious state of France in the middle of the 19th century. He was keenly aware of the spiritual misery of the people. And the apostle in him suffered. To his way of thinking the evil had reached catastrophic dimensions. It was the negation of the very existence of God by atheistic theories and indifference in the matter of religion which had attacked the mass of the people. In the Formula Instituti - the document which he presented to the Holy See in 1868 in order to obtain the approbation of his religious congregation, and in which he set forth the Opportuneness of this institute, he indicated as the root of this 'modern ill' two major causes: pride which inspired rationalism and sensualism, which in their turn led to moral licence (9). The same ideas are to be found in the Constitutions of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the editions of 1877 and of 1891. Apostle by nature and by grace, formed in the apostolic spirit of the Sulpician spirituality, Jules Chevalier sought an appropriate, powerful and efficacious means to check evil and to cure the wounds of society. *

This means he will discover in the devotion to the Sacred Heart. When he was still a theology student, his professor had added to the treatise *De Verbo Incarnate* a thesis on the Sacred Heart. For Jules Chevalier this was a revelation, an event of the spiritual order: "This doctrine went to my heart," he wrote, "and the more I became penetrated with it, the more I was attracted to it." (10) Shortly after, the reading of the *Life of Margaret Mary Alacoque* by Mgr. Languet helped him to understand the infinite riches of grace and mercy of the Sacred Heart and the efficaciousness of the devotion. For Jules Chevalier this was a new spiritual experience and at the same time a call to the apostolate. His decision was taken: henceforth he would be the apostle of this devotion to the Sacred Heart which Our Lord gave as a powerful means of sanctification and which he wished to see spread everywhere. This decision was a life commitment. When, in 1860, Pius IX said to him in the course of an audience: "The Church and society have no hope save in the Heart of Jesus." these words became the leitmotif of his life and his work. (11) They expressed perfectly the fundamental option which he had taken from the beginning, and authoritatively confirmed the inspiration and the objective of his entire apostolic activity.

For what reasons did Father Chevalier consider the devotion to the Sacred Heart as the adequate remedy for the ills of society of his time? For internal reasons first of all, that is to say, reasons inherent in the very meaning of this devotion which is a religion of the heart. The response to the love of God can only be a response of love on the part of man. It comes from the heart. It touches the very depths of the personality. Of its very nature, it will produce a change of mentality, an authentic conversion of heart. The cure for egoism, pride and sensuality begins by a cure of the heart. Given this latter, the regeneration of the way of life and the rechristianisation of the world will be but the logical consequence. What cannot be the expectations for the spiritual renewal of the Church and of the world if the true friends of Christ choose to honour and to imitate this divine Heart in spirit and in truth? (12)

An adequate remedy also for reasons of the external order, chief of which is the abundance of benefits and graces attached to the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Here we probably have the reason for his choice of this means of sanctification and of regeneration. For the love of Christ is charity; it manifests itself by the gifts and benefits which it distributes in profusion to those who believe in the love of his Heart and who wish to respond to it. Father Chevalier speaks willingly of "the treasures of love and mercy of the Heart of Jesus". He is convinced of the necessity of an abundance of grace for the conversion of the world. He knows that this superabundance is characteristic of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, That is why he finds in it the "sovereign" means which he seeks.

Undoubtedly, it was the reading of the Life of the Venerable Margaret Mary by Mgr. Languet which reinforced this intimate conviction. In the saint's visions Christ spoke often of the special protection and the graces of sanctification which he would bestow upon those who honour his Divine Heart. From the writings of Saint Margaret Mary twelve promises have been gleaned - commonly called the Promises of the Sacred Heart. It would be easy to double this number. Father Chevalier was struck by the favours attached by Christ himself to this devotion. That is why he saw in it the means par excellence for the rechristianisation of the world.

VAST OBJECTIVE:

Father Chevalier's plan for the apostolate is extraordinarily vast. It is limited to no one region nor to any one continent. It is on a world-wide scale. This devotion must be carried everywhere. Everywhere there must be created a universal movement in favour of the Sacred Heart. To his congregation - the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, he gave the motto: *Ametur ubique terrarum Cor Jesu Sacratissimum*: (May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved).

Some have maintained that the primitive idea of Father Chevalier envisaged only the rechristianisation of Issoudun and of Berry. It is true that, according to the intention of the donor, the sum of money promised on Decembers. 1854, (the sign from Heaven asked by Father Chevalier) was destined for a work in Issoudun and its surroundings. But, as his biographer, Father H. Vermin (13) says, Father Chevalier did not consider the apostolate of Berry as an obligation for himself and for his successors. Besides, he had carried out the will of the donor by establishing at Issoudun the centre of the Congregation and of the apostolate of the Sacred Heart. Also right from the beginning, when his companions were few in number, Father Chevalier sent them throughout the dioceses of France there to preach the devotion to the Sacred Heart. And some years later, he sent his missionaries into every continent to carry the love of Christ.

This movement for the Sacred Heart, according to his intentions, was to be extended to all the faithful of no matter what social category or race. Towards the middle of the 19th century, thanks to St. John Eudes, to Saint Margaret Mary and other apostles, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was well enough known in France. But it was far from being practised by the ordinary run of the faithful. Rather was it considered to be the privilege of a spiritual elite: religious men and women, secular priests and pious faithful, The intention of Father Chevalier was to see it spread and practised among people of every category.

A GROUP OF APOSTLES OF THE SACRED HEART:

For the realisation of this apostolic objective, apostles of the Sacred Heart were necessary and in great numbers. "God has great designs on the Church and on the world through devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But in order to make him known there must be men who will be his missionaries." (14)

Here, too, the plan of Father Chevalier is wide in its scope. In the Formula Instituti (n. 6) he shows the 'family' of the Sacred Heart as composed of three groups of apostles:

1. A group of men religious, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to which group will be added in 1874 women religious, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
2. Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart.
3. Lay people.

The principal group is that of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart whose sole objective will be themselves to live the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and to spread it among others by every means at their disposal. They have "received from the Church, by the approbation of their Constitutions, the mission of propagating throughout the entire world the knowledge and the love of the divine Heart of Jesus." (15) They are to be the animators of two other groups, the associated Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart and the Third Order of the Sacred Heart, the end of each being to honour the Heart of Christ by their love, reparation and imitation, each according to their state. Both priests and lay people will promote the apostolic works of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and support the enterprises of the great family of which they are the members. (16) At some time in the future, he planned to unite all the associations of priests dedicated to the Sacred Heart, throughout France, and to form one central Association based at Issoudun. But the principal work of Father Chevalier was the institute of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart with its own specific objective and organisation. He did not want an institute to which was merely attached a work of the Sacred Heart as in the case of the Society of Jesus. His idea was the foundation of a religious congregation uniquely and totally devoted to the Sacred Heart. He wanted an apostolic community of priests who would themselves live by the spirituality of the Sacred Heart, bound by perpetual vows to the cause of the Sacred Heart, and whose *raison d'être* would be the spread of this spirituality among the faithful.

Questions about the originality of the work which he envisaged did not preoccupy him in the least. He had perceived the call of the Spirit. He had only to obey the inspiration of grace. He was interiorly convinced of the necessity and the urgency of his apostolic enterprise. And with the help of God, he brought it to realisation, "It is true," he said, "that from the very origin of this devotion, a great many religious, priests and faithful have been urged and are still being urged to propagate it with zeal. But on the one hand, its excellence, and on the other, the extent and profundity of the evil for which it is the remedy, seem to demand the foundation of a special Society whose members, by personal attraction and by particular vocation, will consecrate themselves officially to his service and become his apostles in order to apply the remedy and diffuse the beneficial effects. Such is the *raison d'être* of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as is proved by their Constitutions and the Brief of Approbation". (17)

As to the sources of his inspiration, its apostolic orientation comes in part from the Sulpician formation received in the Seminary of Bourges. Mention can also be made of the spirituality of the French School imparted to him by his directors and professors. The devotion to the Sacred Heart had been taught according to the doctrine generally current in France towards the middle of the 19th century. But above and beyond this, in the case of Father Chevalier, it is important to stress the strong influence of Paray-le-monial and of the writings of Saint Margaret Mary. In connection with his insights concerning the 'modern ills' and the devotion to the Sacred Heart as 'remedy'¹ for the evils of society during his own epoch, it would be surprising if he had not been acquainted with the Instruction of Mgr de Villele, Archbishop of Bourges, dated 1834 and treating of this subject. He had also had close contact with the Jesuits of Vaugirard, with Father Ramiere. S.J., director of the Messenger of the Heart of Jesus, in connection with the organisation of his work and the elaboration of the constitutions of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. These Jesuits helped him to follow his own way. His dependence upon them was far from being servile. (18)

The spiritual objective of Father Chevalier was integrated in its own epoch. But what is remarkable is his fidelity to his original choice, together with the firmness and perseverance with which he pursued his original idea throughout a priestly life of more than fifty years. There is evolution in the sense of a deepening of the primitive doctrinal vision, and adaptation in the realisation of the plan. But he is always faithful to his fundamental orientation. It is not that he did not experience uncertainty, or that he did not meet with enormous difficulties in the realisation of his plan. These were trials which would serve for the sanctification of the apostle of the Sacred Heart. In the midst of the doubts and uncertainties

concerning the future of his work, he sought only to know the Will of God, that is to say, the design of the Holy Spirit, to follow this and abandon himself to it. The words which he uttered on emerging from one of these spiritual crises have the ring of a profession of faith in the divine initiative and a cry of triumph: "Our little Society is not the work of man but of God." (19)

A DOCTRINE OF THE HEART OF CHRIST:

Leaving aside all the Scholastic distinctions between object and end of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, between material and spiritual, between immediate and mediate objects - clearly expressed nevertheless in the writings of Father Chevalier, e.g. in his 'Catechism of the Sacred Heart', it can be affirmed that his conception of the Heart of Christ corresponds in broad outline with the wide vision of the Encyclical 'Haurietis Aquas' of Pius XII. It was the precursor of the latter, for his writings date from more than half-a-century prior to the appearance of this pontifical document.

The Encyclical retraces briefly the scriptural, patristic and theological foundations of the cult of the Sacred Heart and indicates the close link between the devotion to the Heart of the divine Redeemer and the worship which we must give to the love of the Saviour and the love of the august Trinity for all men. (20) When comparing the writings of Father Chevalier with the doctrine of the Encyclical, there are to be found the same fundamental themes and at times even the same expressions. His book "The Sacred Heart of Jesus" has been considered one of the best on the subject as regards its theological value and its references to Sacred Scripture and Tradition. His charism is wholly centred on the love of the Word Incarnate, a love of which the physical Heart of Christ is the symbol. "Heart" is for him the synonym of love. "The Heart of Jesus," he said, "is nothing but love and charity." (21) It is true that by Heart he intends, not only the symbol of love, but also love's seat and organ, and that his exposition as well as his argumentation is often based on the notions and the functions of "seat" and "organ" - a teaching which today is out of date. But the Encyclical, too, speaks often of the beatings of the Heart of Christ. Nonetheless, however, even as a symbol of love, the Heart can be taken as centre of the personality and of liberty. This it is which corresponds to modern Actions.

It is not a question of an abstraction, but of a person, a person who loves. This person is the person of the Word who, as God, loves with a divine and eternal love, and as man with a human love, strong of will and full of affection (the triple love of the Encyclical). The Heart of the Word Incarnate "is filled with love for the Father and for men." (22) As regards men in particular, it is the infinite love and mercy of God which has taken form and stature in Christ the Saviour and which has overflowed into his human Heart, "The infinite charity of God ... is enclosed in a human Heart which is the Sacred Heart of Jesus." (23)

"The Word, issuing from the Heart of the Father, has called forth the world from nothingness. And from the Heart of the Word Incarnate pierced on Calvary, I see emerge a new world, the world of the elect. And this creation full of grandeur and fecundity, inspired by love and mercy, is the Church, this Mystical Body which will perpetuate Christ on earth until the end of time ..." (24)

"Today still, God sees the entire world recapitulated in Christ who is the full and living expression of all creatures; and as for us, we see Jesus Christ whole and entire in his Heart which is the resume of his Adorable Person. The Heart of Jesus is the whole of Jesus ..." (25)

The love of Christ - living and glorious, or the Heart of Jesus - is for Father Chevalier so central to the person of Jesus, so central to the work of creation and to the mystery of salvation that it is the "sacred bond which links heaven and earth and knits the whole of creation to Christ from whom it emanates," ... "the centre of all that exists," ... "the sum-total of the whole Catholic religion". The encyclical 'Haurietis Aquas'¹ will say that the Heart of Christ is "the perfect expression of the Christian religion." (26)

In 1863, congratulating Father Ramiere, S.J. on an article published in the Messenger of the Heart of Jesus, (4, 1863, p. 19), Father Chevalier wrote to him: "You make the Heart of the Divine Master the centre to which everything converges in the Old as in the New Testament, the pivot on which everything in the Catholic faith turns, the sun of the Church, the soul of our soul, the hearth-fire of our love, the cradle of our holy religion, the source of our mysteries, the origin of the sacraments, the pledge of our reconciliation, the salvation of the world, the remedy of all our ills and the strength of the Christian. It is this that I, too, understand as the devotion to the Sacred Heart. It embraces all, it responds to all."

This grandiose vision of Father Chevalier is much more than a purely intellectual contemplation; it is very realistic in its influence on human relations. It is the Heart of Christ who cements union between men and creates an authentic human fraternity. "He alone unites us together and he alone unites us with God. As soon as we detach ourselves from him, we separate from one another, and we lose together with the divine life, the sentiment of true human fraternity. This divine Heart is the centre around which gravitate all hearts." (27)

A SPIRITUALITY OF THE SACRED HEART:

The spirituality of Father Chevalier and of his Congregation is a spirituality of the Heart of Christ.

At the origin of a spirituality, there is a truth of the faith which takes hold of a group of men and, giving a special character to their religious life, becomes the inspiration of their manner of thinking and noting, of their whole life, This spiritual movement or spirituality consists before all in an interior attitude. It can be accompanied by exterior practices and exercises of piety; but the latter will never be the essential.

The spirituality of the Sacred Heart starts from the principle: "God is love" (I John 4,16), from the love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ (Rom. 5), of which his wounded Heart is the sign, even a privileged sign as Saint John insists in his Gospel in reference to the Old Testament (John, 19).

Such is the spirituality of Father Chevalier, a man possessed by the person of Christ, totally under the influence of his love, of his Heart. Such is the spirit which he has willed to give to his religious Congregation. As his first biographer, Father Charles Piperon, writes: "Our Father Founder wished that in our whole life, in our works, in our discourses, in our churches, in our services and our prayers, everything should remind people of the divine Heart of Jesus who has so loved men. He would have liked everything to bear the imprint of this blessed Heart; without that everything becomes insipid." (28)

At the centre of a spirituality such as that of the Sacred Heart, there is to be found a means of accentuating one or other aspect in preference to others, something which, without creating a new spirituality, gives to it a distinctive character. This is what Father Chevalier has done. In indicating the distinctive spirit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, he has put the accent on imitation of the Heart of Christ. One cannot deny that at times a loving reparation to the offended love of Christ - that mystical current deriving from Paray-le-Monial which persisted throughout the 19th century - is one of the characteristics of devotion to the Sacred Heart according to Father Chevalier. This is even mentioned among the ends of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. But the other aspect, imitation, is much more accentuated. When it is question of defining the spirit of the Congregation, it is that alone of which it is in question (20). Did not Saint Margaret Mary say that the devotion to the Sacred Heart is rather a devotion of imitation and of perfect conformity to his holy virtues than of prayers?

The spirit proper to a religious congregation flows from its special end. The specific end of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart consists:

1. In a particular worship of the Sacred Heart, especially in the Holy Eucharist, and in reparation for the injuries and ingratitude of which he is the object on the part of men.
2. In an imitation of the virtues of the Heart of Christ by all the means made available in religious life.
3. In the sanctification of souls by means of devotion to the Sacred Heart, by making known the treasures of grace of which this Heart is the source and by diffusing this worship among priests and faithful. (30)

The spirit which corresponds to this triple end consists:

1. In a sincere, personal, intimate and always ardent love for the Heart of the Word Incarnate which must be the seal of the holiness of the Missionary of the Sacred Heart and which urges him to reproduce in himself the sentiments of the Sacred Heart, This response of love is the fundamental act and the primary disposition of all spirituality of the Sacred Heart.

2. In the imitation of the virtues of the Heart of Christ. Here we have the aspect especially emphasised by Father Chevalier as the spirit distinctive of his Congregation. These virtues are: a fraternal love between the members of the institute, and apostolic charity even to extremes in the service of men; humility taken in the wide sense which comprises simplicity, poverty of spirit and the absence of all seeking for ostentation; the gentleness of Christ which is the fine flower of charity, his mercy and exquisite goodness towards sinners; and lastly, obedience, a fundamental disposition of the Heart of Jesus who was lovingly submissive to the will of the Father, and of respect for all religious and civil authority. (31)

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART:

In any exposition of the charism of Father Chevalier one cannot neglect to speak briefly of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart without the treatment being incomplete. This Marian devotion was in actual fact, an original means of bringing to realisation Father Chevalier's apostolic objective which remains ever the same: the rechristianisation of the world through the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The classic adage of Catholic piety: "To Jesus through Mary", becomes for him: "Through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to the Heart of Christ". "Knowing that all is done through Mary," he wrote, "we had the thought of associating her in the diffusion of the knowledge and love of the Heart of her divine Son. But there was needed a new title to signify her cooperation in our work of regeneration. It was then that we had the thought of calling her Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." (32)

As a logical consequence of his spiritual orientation, Father Chevalier considers everything in its relation with the Heart of Christ, even the persons and things which are the most elevated and holy, including the Mother of God. It is from his own spiritual experience that there came forth both the title and the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

At the time of the foundation of his congregation, he had made a contract with the Blessed Virgin in which he promised that if he were heard, he would "make her loved and honoured by all possible means and in a special manner." The underlining is his own. (33) This special manner will be the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart whose end is to "glorify ... the most holy Virgin in the relations of ineffable love between herself and the Heart of Jesus." (34)

This title came to him shortly after the foundation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He saw in it the fulfilment of his promise to Mary. "We claim this title to be the honour of our little Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart," he writes, "for it is here, at Issoudun, that it came to birth ... Its origin is identical with ours on the memorable day of the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception." (35) He calls Our Lady of the Sacred Heart "the foundress of our little Society" (36), the development of which will proceed in proportion to the expansion of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Indeed, through lack of vocations, the beginnings of the congregation were extremely difficult. Its development actually came about as a result of the spread of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Right from the beginning, the expansion of the devotion was remarkable. The disproportion between the means of expansion - even if an article of Father Chevalier, in the Messenger of the Sacred Heart of

1863, did make it known to a wider public - and its rapid diffusion in all parts of the Catholic world is such that it can be called quasi-miraculous. Father Chevalier had spoken of it in public for the first time in 1860-61 - to a group of faithful at Issoudun. The first Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was erected in

1864. At the end of this year, it counted more than 100,000 members. In 1867, there were more than a million. In the following year, two million. A petition of 1878 speaks of more than 14,000,000. In 1895, Father Chevalier, after checking the figures, mentions 18,000,000 members enrolled in the Universal Arch-confraternity. Already in 1869, the feast of the Crowning of the Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in the name of Pius IX had brought to Issoudun: thirteen bishops, hundreds of priests and 30,000 pilgrims. (37)

There is no doubt that the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was in the 19th century a providential means of spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart among the simple faithful. It is thus that it was related to the principal objective of Father Chevalier. He had it at heart to "see all his confreres full of zeal to propagate devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." "He taught us often," continues his first biographer. Father Pipéron, "that this was one of the principal ends of our Congregation, and the surest means of glorifying and making loved the Heart of Jesus ... We must therefore be the devoted apostles of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It is our vocation." (38) For Father Chevalier, to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart meant to be a disciple and apostle of the Sacred Heart through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

THE MISSIONS:

It may be asked if the foreign missions belong to the charism of Father Chevalier.

Modern sociologists distinguish between the objective of a group which comes together in view of attaining a common special end - in other words, the *raison d'être* of the group - and the projects, at times very varied and variable by means of which the objective is realised. Father Chevalier makes the same distinction. His objective and the specific end of his Congregation is the regeneration of society through devotion to the Sacred Heart. A variety of projects, of works, of occupations can serve towards the realisation of this objective, but no one of them is absolutely necessary. "The word 'missionary' ", he writes, "signifies apostle of the Sacred Heart or propagator of devotion to the Sacred Heart. This title can belong to a parish priest or a curate, to the chaplain as well as to the professor, in a word, to all the members of the Society no matter what their degree." (39)

The least that one can say is that the foreign missions constitute a preferred work. Today they are the principal work of the congregation (40): more than one third of the personnel, that is to say, more than a thousand priests and brothers work now in countries in the course of development.

It is Father Chevalier himself who oriented the activity of the congregation towards the foreign missions. Right from the beginning he had a keen desire for the missions. As a young seminarist, he would gladly have gone there himself, but on the advice of his director, he gave up the idea. The lack of vocations during the earliest years of the Congregation did not permit him to send his religious there. But the thought of the missions never left him. In 1866, Father Jean Vandel founded the apostolic school. From the very first year this school was animated by a veritable missionary spirit and Father Chevalier regarded it as a nursery of future vocations. In the Formula Instituti of 1869, the foreign missions are mentioned as one of the works by which the end of the Congregation would be realised. The departure of the first Missionaries of the Sacred Heart for America in 1870 is the fruit of this missionary spirit. When at last in 1881, the Holy See proposed the evangelisation of the immense vicariates of Melanesia and Micronesia, Father Chevalier joyfully accepted and, by dint of diplomacy, patience and tenacity, he succeeded in overcoming the opposition of his Council. It is no exaggeration to say that on this occasion he took advantage of his charism as Founder to launch his Congregation definitively on its mission to carry the Good News to the poorest among the poor, those who do not know Christ.

It is to be noted that he sees this work as all the other works from the perspective of his principal objective: for example, at the departure of the first missionaries from Barcelona in 1881, he salutes them as those who are going to bear "the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart and of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" into faraway islands. It is through this work of the missions that is most fully realised the motto which he left to his Congregation: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved."

II. THE CHARISM OF FATHER CHEVALIER TODAY

Today the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, like so many other religious Congregations, is questioning itself. We are asking ourselves how, in this second half of the 20th century, to live the charism of our Founder, how to present it to men of our time, especially the young. For we are firmly convinced that this charism and the message of Father Chevalier are always valid but that they must be proposed in harmony with the sensibilities and aspirations of men of today, and must be adapted to the changes in the life of the Church and in the world.

Has the objective of Father Chevalier still some value in our time? Can the Heart of Christ still be proposed as an inspiration of the spiritual life and as a remedy for the evils afflicting men in their social life? In 1956, Pope Pius XII in his Encyclical "Haurietis aquas", considered the cult of the Sacred Heart the appropriate 'medicine' for the sickness of man and of the society of this 20th century. Does this still hold today? If so, how? In what manner must the message be handed on so that it can be accepted? The question can and must be asked.

For the last twenty years we have witnessed a general lack of interest in the Cult of the Sacred Heart among Christians. This is a fact. There is no need to prove it. It is obvious. But then, can it be that a devotion which for centuries did so much good in the Church and in which one has to see the action of the Holy Spirit, will, all of a sudden, disappear? In a meeting at Paray-le-Monial on October 16, 1972, a number of Superiors General of Congregations dedicated to the Sacred Heart stated: A spiritual reality which was a source of profound inspiration to lay people and religious cannot, all of a sudden, cease to be of any value.

When trying to find a solution to this problem, we will have to take into account the objections raised nowadays against the devotion of the Sacred Heart and to evaluate the causes of its regression. It will be worthwhile to distinguish between Cult and Spirituality of the Sacred Heart; to put the accent on biblical and patristical foundations; to keep in mind modern man's sensibility as regards the symbol of the heart and its devotional and artistic expressions; finally, to bring out the relevance the devotion has in giving an answer to the actual aspirations of man and society.

CULT AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE SACRED HEART

When we speak of devotion and Cult of the Sacred Heart, many of our contemporaries think only of very concrete religious practices and pious exercises. In a time of crisis of faith, many are asking themselves these questions: Does God exist? Did Christ really come to save man? Is there happiness in a life after death? It then happens that even good Catholics, those who want to help their brethren in danger of losing the faith, are not much interested in what appears to them accessory and secondary, in all that is 'devotional'. When a fire threatens to destroy the whole house, one tries to save what is essential. Especially the young are not attracted by 'devotions' and go straight to the essential. It is evident that one can be a good Christian without having a particular devotion to the Sacred Heart.

But the Spirituality of the Heart of Christ places us in the very centre of the mystery of salvation. It is the way of seeing and living the mystery of Christ in its totality; under a particular aspect, it is true, but one which is fundamental for the Christian religion, namely the love of God, manifested in Jesus Christ, of which the pierced Heart is an eloquent symbol. We see the person of Christ in whom God loves us with a human heart. It is a vision and an experience of Christ which will put their stamp on the whole life of a Christian.

It is first of all a vision: "We have known the love God has for us" (1 Jn. 4:16). Without the love of his Heart the profound personality of Christ is absolutely incomprehensible. But through love everything in him becomes clear and luminous: his words and actions, his life and his death, the Church he founded, the Spirit he gave us, the sacraments he has left us. Thus Father Chevalier speaking of the devotion of the Sacred Heart and taking it as a spirituality, could write: "It includes everything".

Then it is a personal experience: "We have believed" (in this love). Man's answer is an answer of faith and love. This adherence to Christ, this love, is a dynamic power which in turn mobilizes the whole life of man, his being and his activity. We then understand that this way of contemplating and of living the mystery of Christ becomes a spirituality.

This distinction between devotion (Cult) and spirituality of the Heart of Christ does not mean that the practices of devotion and worship should be suppressed, especially those related to the Eucharist, the sacrament of love. A deep spirituality always wants to express itself outwardly. Nowadays a spirituality has a better chance of being accepted. Those who cling to the old practices may always profit by them. Those for whom these practices are out of date and outmoded, will almost necessarily find others better adapted to their mentality in harmony with the liturgical renewal in the Church. This spirituality consists mainly of love, imitation and reparation.

LOVE

The Heart of Christ expects from man an answer of love: a sincere and deep love which is a personal encounter, an intimate contact, an experience of Christ in a living faith. For a spirituality of the Sacred Heart this is fundamental, and it responds to the aspirations of modern man. There exists nowadays a striving for true interior life, a return to prayer. One resorts to all kinds of methods, even oriental ones, in an endeavour to find a road leading to this almost mystical contact with God. The various 'movements of the young' consider this experience of Jesus essential. Is it not proper to love to seek the presence of the beloved person?

IMITATION:

This response of love must be authentic (another demand of the young); and it must prove itself in acts, must go to the brethren the way Christ told us to. And then it will necessarily lead to imitation of the Heart of Christ. At times one blames the Sacred Heart devotion for being exclusively interior and personal, for forming only pious souls but not real apostles. Evidently this means having a wrong idea of the Heart of Christ, the Man for Others, whose preference was the poor, the neglected, the abandoned. In our days this imitation of Christ calls for collaboration with other men in building a new and better world in justice and peace where the Third and the Fourth world are not forgotten.

REPARATION:

Love of Christ will urge us to make reparation for the ingratitude and indifference of men. The humble desire to expiate and compensate for our faults through love, through renewed fervor of charity, is simply a spontaneous reaction of a true and delicate love; it wholly uproots our egoism and our base calculation's. True, our time is less inclined to the idea of reparation. It is then useless to look for all sorts of theological explanations, although it remains likewise true that the mysteries of Christ transcend the succession of time. It suffices to understand with "a thought of the heart", as Pascal says, that Christ is in agony till the end of time and that we must not go asleep during this time. Thus we ask ourselves: What have we done with Christ today? How did we understand him? Have we perhaps dishonored his Name and deformed his message? - These are all so many reasons for making reparation. And even the Christian of today will make reparation if his love for Christ is strong enough.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION:

Furthermore, our time requires that we give a solid biblical foundation to the theology of the Sacred Heart. One reproach made to the Cult of the Sacred Heart, as also to devotion to Mary, is that for centuries it developed without taking into account the scriptural data and relying only on spiritual writers. Our time is very sensitive to this reproach. No doubt, it is exaggerated. Father Chevalier, for example, in his book on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, has made an effort to link devotion of the Sacred Heart to its biblical sources and to put it at the very center of revelation. When we take into account that he had no specialized theological and biblical training, we must say that it was a praiseworthy attempt indeed. We also have to remember that the biblical sciences have made great strides in our time and thus we can give a much more solid foundation to the theology and spirituality of the Heart of Christ by opening to them the riches of biblical doctrine unheard of till now. This concerns especially Paul's doctrine on redemption through love, and even more so does it concern the theology of S. John who makes the love of God the center and culminating point of the mystery of Christ. John is a theologian. He meditated for a long time on the life and message of Jesus. There are in his theology, the result of this long meditation, as in every theological system, first principles upon which depends all the rest, and which contain, as in a seed, the whole doctrine. One such principle John gives in his first letter (1 Jn. 4,16): "God is love". At the end of his Gospel (Jn. 19, 31 -37), he presents the same principle in concrete visible form, "a theological picture", as they say: the picture of Christ on the Cross. John attributes great importance to the thrust of the lance and to the blood and water which flowed from the pierced side of the Savior. And we understand that this scene is for him the

culminating point of his Gospel, a scene comprising the whole history of salvation: the prophecies of the Old Testament, the Incarnation, the life and death of Christ, the Church, the sacraments and the gift of the Spirit. (References to the O.T. are many, viz: Ex. 12,46; Num. 21.8; Ps. 34.21; Ez. 47,16,12; Zach. 12,10; 13,1; 14,8).

And this mystery is presented as a mystery of love. It is the final conclusion of what John said in his Gospel, as for example Jn. 3.14-15; 7,39; 12,32: "And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself; 19,37: "They will look on the one whom they have, pierced"; 15,13: "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends".

And so we can ask ourselves whether today the picture of Christ on the Cross with his wounded side and open heart would not better serve the devotion and spirituality of the Sacred Heart, especially since this biblical representation puts us in the very center of the mystery of salvation as the mystery of love. It would do away with sugary pictures, 'hippy' style, which may have satisfied the taste of the last century, although they gave a distorted image of the personality of Christ. But today they are the cause of lack of interest on the part of many Catholics in the devotion of the Sacred Heart. Besides, when speaking of this spirituality, we should not use too often the word "heart", although it will always remain a universal symbol of love. In the past the word has been abused, even for political and patriotic ends.

A spirituality of the Sacred Heart can satisfy the profound aspirations of our time. Actually, our age is an age of man. The question is all about the rights of man, development of his personality, respect of man, the sciences of man, etc., while a great longing for more fraternity and unity among men pervades all nations and continents. The Church in Council has given echo to this universal aspiration: "The conditions of this age lend special urgency to the Church's task of bringing all men to full union with Christ, since mankind today is joined together more closely than ever before by social, technical, and cultural bonds" (L.G. n. 1). For "the truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light". . . "Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (Gaudium et Spes, n. 22). As perfect man "the Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the longings of history and of civilization, the center of the human race, the joy of every heart, and the answer to all its yearnings" (Gaudium et Spes, n. 45).

CONCLUSION:

It is in this line that we have to see the charism of Fr. Chevalier. It has lost nothing of its actuality.

It is through this charism, this grace and mission, that the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart finds its identity. Today as yesterday it wants to be an apostolic fraternity whose aim is to live and propagate the spirituality of the Heart of Christ. More than ever does the Society try to discover the foundations of this spirituality in Scripture and Tradition. This common objective is achieved through various projects. All members are invited to collaborate in these projects, each according to his personal vocation, to the needs of the Church and of men of our time.

NOTES

1. Father J. Chevalier published numerous books, brochures and articles. His principle works are: *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, 4th edition, pp. VI-512 (Librarie de Vie et Amat. Paris, 1900) and *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*. 4th ed. pp. XXII-644 (Librarie de l'Oeuvre S. Paul, Paris, 1895). Biographies: Father Jules Chevalier Charles Piperon. (Society St. Augustine, Lille, Bruges. 1912. New edition, 1924); P.O. Keulers: Jules Chevalier Een Levensbeeld. (Nederlandsche Boekhuis. Tilburg, 1924); Henri Vermin; *Le Pere Jules Chevalier*. (1824-1869), pp. 528 (Maison Generalice, Rome, 1957).
2. J. Chevalier. Regies 1855. Cf. J. Nouwens: *De Fine et Spiritu Societatis in Constitutionibus et Directorio Communi Synopsis*. (MSC. Romae, 1966).
3. H. Vermin, o.c. p. 116. P.C Keulers, o.c. p. 1 12 ss. Piperon: *Le T.R.P. Chevalier*, Ms. 1902-1904, p. 34-35. (Archives MSC Rome).
6. . Chevalier: *Notes Intimes*. Ms. p. 23 (Archives MSC Rome. 1902).
7. J. Chevalier: Ms. Without title. 1859.
8. J. Chevalier. *Letters*. Archives MSC Rome.
9. J. Chevalier: *Formula Instituti*, Cf. *De Fine et Spiritu* . . . Synopsis, 20.
10. J. Chevalier: *Notes Intimes*. p. 23. Ms. Archives, Archives MSC. Rome.
11. J. Chevalier: *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, o.c. p. 386: id., *Notre Dame du Sacre-Coeur*.
12. M.S.C. Issoudun. (1865); id *La Societe des MSC*. p. 11 (Bourges 1872). *Formula Instituti*, cf. *Supra*, p. 20.
13. H. Vermin: o.c. p. 117.
14. *La Societe des MSC*. Bourges, 1872, p. 3-4. Issoudun, 1882. p. 41.
15. J. Chevalier: *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, o.c. p. 399.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 383-410.
17. J. Chevalier: *La Societe des MSC*. p. 3-4. *Supra*.
18. H. Vermin, o.c. p. 373-374.
19. J. Chevalier: *Ms sans titre*. 1859. *Supra*.
20. A.A.S. 1956, p. 315.
21. J. Chevalier: Ms. 1859, p. 34.
22. -26. J. Chevalier: *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, o.c. p. 209 *Supra*. 277 et passim.
27. *Messenger du Coeur de Jesus*. 7(1865). p. 329.
28. C. Piperon, *Le T.R.P. J. Chevalier*, o.c. p. 79.
29. *Formula Instituti*. 11,1. *Constitutiones*. 1877 et 1891. *De Fine- Synopsis*.
30. *Ibid.*, Also 31.
32. Letter of Father Chevalier to the Archbishop of Bourges. August 24. (Archives MSC. Rome 1884.0,
33. J. Chevalier: *Annales de la Petite Societe MSC*. P, 4. Archives MSC, Rome.
34. J. Chevalier. *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, o.c. p. 453.
35. J. Chevalier: *Annales de la Petite Societe*. p. 22. *Supra*.
36. *Ib.* p. 8.
37. *Annales de Notre Dame du Sacre-Coeur*, Issoudun, 1969, p. 249. *La Semaine religieuse du Berry*. 15.9.1869. Josef Storck: *Unsere Liebe Frau yom Heiligstem Herzen Jesu*. p. 122 (Verlag der Hiltruper Missionare. Munster.) 1953.
38. *Annals de la Petite Societe des MSC*. (Rome).
39. J. Chevalier: *La Societe MSC*. p. 3-4, Bourges. 1872; Issoudun 1882, p. 41-4,
40. *Documents of Renewal MSC No. 7*, Rome, 1969.
41. A.A.S. : 1956, p. 350. Voir le tres beau livre de Josef Heer: *Der Durchhohrte. Johanneische*
42. *Begrundung de Herz-Jesu-Verehrung*. (Casa Editric*, Herder, Roma, 1966).
43. L.G. 1.
44. G.S. 22
45. *Ibid.* 45.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART AND THE INTENTIONS OF THE FOUNDER

J. Bertolini, MSC, 1974

Translation of a conference given at Rome to the Sisters of the Italian Province in three successive groups commencing April 23, May 10, and June 7 respectively. The occasion was a week of renewal in preparation for the Centenary of the Congregation on August 30, 1974.

I have been asked to speak to you about the foundation of your institute, and of the intentions for it of Father Founder - Jules Chevalier. In this connection, much has already been said or written. I shall restrict myself to setting out the facts as given in the documents of the epoch.

After reading certain statements which have appeared in print, even in the course of this year, I shall begin by asking: Does it not belong to a Founder himself to determine the date which he willed to be regarded as the foundation date of his institute? This is precisely what Father Chevalier, in accord with the Archbishop of Bourges, did with regard to the Congregation - at first diocesan - of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

We possess, in his own handwriting, a sheet of paper which could be considered as its birth certificate. This is not, as could be thought, an extract from a homily given at the official ceremony of installation. It records merely the Sunday announcements made by the Archpriest of Issoudun, on Sunday August 30th, 1874, in the parish church of Saint Cyr or perhaps in that of the Sacred Heart.

Father Chevalier begins by recommending the Perpetual Adoration beginning on September 1st, in the Church of the Sacred Heart, as also the retreat in preparation for the feast of September 8th, Our Lady's Birthday and the 5th anniversary of the crowning of her statue. He goes on to announce the ceremonies of the feast and invites the parishioners to decorate the streets of the town for the public procession. Then he adds: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has just accorded a new favour to Issoudun which is her privileged town. For a long time now many persons desirous of consecrating themselves to the service of the Queen of the Sacred Heart have been asking to come together in community. The time did not appear opportune and above all the hour of Providence had not yet arrived. Now, However, very special circumstances have allowed the Archbishop of Bourges to bring to realisation these desires so often reiterated.

On this very day, in the name of His Grace, this new community is founded and the religious of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are going to be installed. They will occupy themselves with works of piety, with providing a lodging for women coming on pilgrimage or who wish to make a few days of retreat under the gaze of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and also with the education of girls. Let us ask God to bless this new foundation which will be of such service to Issoudun.

Here indeed was a surprise for Issoudun. All the preparations had been made with much secrecy, circumstances which it would take too long to detail here having made this necessary, But for Father Chevalier who had just celebrated his fiftieth birthday the new foundation marked the realisation of a project which went back, as he himself will say, "to the very origin of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart".

From the very first time that Mary was given the name Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it was impossible to forbid oneself the thought that this divine Mother would soon form for herself a court of honour which, in union with her and under her protection, would be consecrated to the Heart of Our Lord. A year previous to the official erection of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in a letter of 1863 to Father H. Leblanc, S.J., of Paris, Father Chevalier, after having spoken of a Third Order of the Sacred Heart for lay people, had added:

Many persons belonging to all classes of society, but principally to the well-to-do, are writing to ask me if we have not also for women a community devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is a sister-society to our own. For the last ten years, I myself have been thinking about just such a project. You are the only one to whom I have spoken of it. What do you think of such a project? And what does Father Provincial think? (Cf. Archives, S.J. Chantilly letter Chevalier, April 9, 1863).

"For the last ten years" - significant words. Father Chevalier here reveals that the idea had been in his mind from the very origin of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The Annals for September, 1874, announced that the new foundation had been made on August 30th. And the October number gave the essential outlines regarding the origin, the end, the works and the resources of the new institute.

From where did its first religious come? Father Chevalier, in his brief announcement of August 30th, had spoken of "very special circumstances" which ultimately permitted the realisation of the project. These circumstances, as we already know, arose from within the Association itself at Paris during the insurrection of the Commune at the end of the Franco-Prussian War - 1870/71.

In gratitude for a visible manifestation of the protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, an institute by the name of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, erected in 1865, under the direction of Mother Marie Françoise Lefebvre-Durufle in the Rue de Vanves, had undertaken to promote the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart as also the works of Issoudun. Under the impetus of Father Jouet, a Parisian centre of the Association had been established at this convent. Little by little, as a result of personal relations with Father Jouet, the Sisters felt called to respond to the design of Father Chevalier, and this Paris community offered itself as the nucleus of a new institute under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Whilst still maintaining the house at Paris where they were responsible for a group of girls, they would establish another house at Issoudun under the general direction of Mother Marie Françoise.

All the necessary arrangements were made between Issoudun, Paris and Bourges, i.e. between Father Chevalier and the respective Archbishops of the two latter places. It was decided that all the Sisters would take the new habit on the same day, August 30th, 1874.

Another favourable circumstance - the acquisition at Issoudun of No. 10, Place du Sacre-Coeur, an edifice which went by the name of the Pilgrimage House and which, until this year of 1874, had been occupied by the Third Order of the Sacred Heart directed by Louise Therese de Montaignac. The latter, after ten years of association with Issoudun, had just detached herself therefrom in order to constitute her own independent group - the Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Montlucon.

I add in passing that the Cause of Louise Therese de Montaignac has been introduced at Rome. Recently I had to collaborate with the Historical Institute of the Sacred Congregation for Religious in regard to the critical biography of the servant of God, particularly in what concerned her ten years of association with Father Chevalier. At the same time, it was also question of the relations of Father Chevalier with another servant of God, Catherine Volpicelli of Naples. Thus the consequent advantage for me of a precious new source of documentation concerning the life of our common Founder.

But to return to Issoudun. The acquisition of the house there was facilitated by the generosity of a fervent member of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who lived at Turin and who had devoted herself to the works of Issoudun since 1871. Extant correspondence with her goes back to that time. It is here question of the Countess Felicite Pirinoli (nee de Briancon).

Her husband having died some months earlier in this year of 1874, Countess Pirinoli had manifested the intention of herself entering the proposed congregation. She took this resolution on May 3rd, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On the following June 25th, she arrived at Issoudun in the company of Father Chevalier who had returned from Rome via Turin. (Cf. The Journey to Rome of Fathers Chevalier, Jouet and J.M. Vandel. They were the guests of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent (Antide Thouret) on the Aventine where was to be found the first Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - old model - venerated at Rome).

The Countess first of all stayed for several weeks in the Paris community and then came back to Issoudun on August 10th. The Paris Superior was able to write to Father Jouet "Madame Pirinoli left us yesterday as if she were already one of us. I remarked this to Father Superior. Certainly the devil will not fail to organize a thousand wiles as only he knows how, but he will not have the victory." Was this a presentiment? We shall see.

Between August 14-17th, Mother Marie Françoise herself came with another Sister to make the final preparations for the installation at Issoudun. She returned there on the evening of August 29th with ten of her daughters - bringing with them the new habits made at the Tue de Vanves.

Then the following morning, Sunday August 30th, at the 8 a.m. Mass in the Church of the Sacred Heart, thirteen Sisters received from Father Chevalier the large oval medal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart designed by Chertier of Paris. All went off very simply. And on the same day, those who had remained in Paris likewise took the habit of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The new institute was founded.

All were considered as novices. In the group, besides Mme Pirinoli, was Louise Baptiste of Issoudun. We shall speak of her again. The next day, Father Jouet who had been the most ardent collaborator in this foundation, and who would be its first chaplain, was able to write to a religious at Tarragona, Spain: "Do you know that yesterday we inaugurated the first community of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It is a great work which is commencing. Courage!"

Eight days later, on the feast of September 8th, signalled this year by the elevation of the Church of the Sacred Heart to the rank of a Minor Basilica, the Archbishop of Bourges gave his blessing and encouragement to the young congregation. They were there, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, humble and unpretentious but not unperceived, above all in the procession, the choir Sisters in a white habit with blue veil and scapular, the coadjutor Sisters all in blue, and the two tourieres in black. They were there - happy and confident in a future of which they were unaware. Of this future, I shall say a word in due course. Incidentally I would like to say that this distinction into three categories of Sisters was an importation from the Paris community. Some months later, on the request of Father Chevalier, it will be modified by the Archbishop of Bourges, to include only choir and coadjutor Sisters.

So much for the foundation. Now let us see -

WHAT WERE THE INTENTIONS FOR IT OF THE FOUNDER?

In the first place let us not forget to situate Father Chevalier in the 19th century when religious foundations were multiplying - each the response to an urgent need. "The charity of Christ urges us." (2 Cor, 5/14) Whether it is question of the evangelisation of youth or of pagan peoples, of the solacing of the misery of the sick and the aged, or of the re-Christianisation of society and the formation of elite Christians, this upsurge responds to the fundamental command of the Lord:

"Love one another ... It is to Me that you do it." It aims at giving to the God who is Love the response of love which He awaits from men.

Furthermore, all these new foundations of the 19th century, undertaken in response to some urgent need of charity, experienced the necessity of balancing their active apostolate by contemplation, the principal form of which was Eucharistic adoration.

Let us note, too, that often the same founder, on the basis of the same fundamental spirit, instituted distinctive foundations and at different times. Such was the case with Father Chevalier: Twenty years after the foundation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, he established your institute - himself giving to it its first rules. "The Constitutions of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," he stated, "are those of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart adapted to their needs."

As I said previously, the Annals of Issoudun for October,] 874, gave a resume of the origin, end, and works of the new Institute.

1. THE ORIGIN.

This we already know. It goes back to the very beginning of the Association and even further back in the apostolic thought of the Founder. From the very first time that Mary was given the name of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it was impossible to forbid oneself the thought that the Queen of the Sacred Heart would soon form for herself a court of honour which, in union with her and under her protection, would be consecrated entirely to the service of the Adorable Heart of Our Lord, 'After her shall virgins be brought to the King.' Ps. 44,

Their motto will be that of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!'

This fundamental intention will be found in tact at the time of the reorganization of the institute under the direction of Mother Marie Louise Hartzler. (cf. Father Chevalier, 1895. p. 485)

2. THE END OF THE CONGREGATION.

Right from 1874, the end was formulated as follows:

To devote themselves to the Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ through the intermediary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for the sanctification of priests. a. To devote themselves to the Heart of Jesus. That says everything. It signifies the perpetual worship of honour and reparation which the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart wish to give Him, and the measure of the love which they want to have for Him. The Heart of Jesus is to be their all, in everything, everywhere and always to an increasing degree. Such is the fundamental end in view of which their holy rules have been written.

That presupposes an intimate and deep knowledge of the love of Christ, a knowledge which is drawn from His Heart - "centre of all" according to an expression which Father Chevalier is very fond of using in his works. That presupposes imitation of Christ - the Love of God incarnate, an imitation which has no other end than to reproduce His life, to adhere to His sentiments and to love as He has loved His Father and men, Here we have the profound orientation which will determine the various exercises of the spiritual life, notably the daily adoration - in a word, the contemplative aspect of the society.

b. Further - TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES THROUGH the intermediary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

This is an important specification, one which characterises your spirituality, giving it its particular seal. According to the thought of the Founder, 'This is the best means'. And the Archbishop of Bourges who had approved the first rules and kept a copy of them, addressing the first Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart on September 8th, 1874, said to them:

"Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - see in her your Superior, your protector, your model. Look at her and reproduce her faithfully in your whole way of life. She is Virgin, she is Mother, she is Queen. Be virgins by your virtues, mothers by your works, queens by your efficacious intercession with the Heart of Jesus."

Note the reference to intercession with the Heart of Jesus - another theme dear to Father Chevalier.

c. Father Chevalier adds still further:

FOR THE SANCTIFICATION OF PRIESTS: This intention was inspired by Margaret Mary Alacoque. The Visitation nun of Paray-le-Monial had consented to make a donation of all that she was able to do in favour of priests and religious in order to lead them to an exemplary and efficacious priestly and religious life. It was likewise inspired by the concern which Father Chevalier always manifested for the sanctification of priests. Think of his institution of the Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart, etc. He intended, then, that his daughters should be encouraged to offer the Heart of Jesus through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart their daily actions, their prayers, penances and merits so that those who have the responsibility of guiding the faithful may reproduce in their own life and apostolate the virtues of the Heart of Christ.

Later on, however, whilst continually urging his daughters to maintain this intention of his, he will not express it so explicitly in the rules. If we wish to sum up the presentation of the end after 1882, it would be as follows:

1. To devote themselves to the Heart of Jesus through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
2. To render to this Divine Heart a worship of adoration and reparation.

3. To glorify Him by making Him known and by propagating devotion to the Holy Virgin under the name Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
 4. To promote the sanctification of the members of the society by-imitation of the virtues of this Divine Heart and of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
3. THE WORKS. The first one singled out is spiritual: it flows from the fundamental orientation,
 - a. Daily perpetual adoration of the Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist (the Sisters alternating in the name of the community). This will be their work of predilection . . . Always this adoration will be made in union with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who is the first and most perfect adorer of the Heart of Jesus.

(A point to be noted: In this same year of 1874 there had been officially instituted and presented to the faithful the Perpetual Worship of the Sacred Heart. In its presentation and in that of the first rules of your institute we find a striking similarity of expression).

- b. To this work of a more specifically-contemplative nature is added one of an apostolic aspect:

The education of girls: The Founder knew only too well that in education lies the germ of the spiritual and social regeneration of the world. Thus he states:

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will interest themselves very particularly in the education of youth, and will spare nothing in order to put their boarding schools on a par with the best educational establishments. Thus they will provide girls with a solid Christian education and form their heart to a sense of duty and the practice of virtue. We shall return to this topic, c. In the third place, he lays down the Works of Zeal and Piety which providence will present and which will be in keeping with their rule.

Here Father Chevalier makes provision for a great openness in regard to the development of the institute and to the needs of the Church. For the time being, however, i.e. back in 1874, it is just question of putting apart of the residence at Issoudun at the disposal of women coming on pilgrimage or desiring to spend a few days in retreat close to the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. We have sufficient evidence of this form of apostolate from the very first year of the Congregation's existence. Later, the Founder will add - The care of the sick and The Foreign Missions even among the infidels.

To return to the subject of education. It is certain that this form of apostolate was envisaged as being undertaken at the very commencement of the institute, Together with the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it was precisely this type of apostolic work which had decided the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Rue de Vanves, Paris, to put themselves under a new title at the disposition of Father Chevalier. In Issoudun itself, one of his parishioners, Mile Louise Baptiste, directress of a small boarding school, had decided - as we have seen - to enter the new community. Through a circular letter she had announced to the families of her pupils her intention to enter religious life under the name of Sister Marie Therese, as also the closure of her own establishment and the forthcoming opening of a boarding school under the direction of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This decision, kept secret right up till the foundation of your institute, was a great surprise for Issoudun. In actual fact, it provoked such a strong opposition on the part of certain members of the Baptiste family that Mile Louise was constrained to quit the community and re-open her school!

For Father Chevalier, this was a serious reverse.

It was also a great disappointment for the religious come from Paris. They saw their hope of opening the boarding school which had been announced for Easter, 1875, vanish. Furthermore, on her return to Paris, Mother Marie Francoisfc, whilst still remaining the Superior, had left the direction of the Issoudun community to Sister Felicite Pirinoli, still a novice.

Soon another unfavourable circumstance came to cause a serious rift in the understanding between Paris and Issoudun. The unfortunate controversy stirred up towards the end of 1874 concerning devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart following upon certain Polish interpretations and also the misunderstandings concerning an intervention from Rome, caused Mother Marie Françoise to believe that she had been deceived in joining up with Issoudun. Little by little, under various internal and external pressures, she detached herself from Issoudun, followed by some of her Sisters - disappointed maybe at having to recommence a novitiate, or perhaps disillusioned by not finding at Issoudun the occupations which they had had at Rue de Vanves. Despite the good offices of Father Jouet, a definitive separation became inevitable.

However, a few Sisters remained faithful to Father Chevalier and to their title of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Sister Felicite from this time on assumed the charge of Superior of the reduced Issoudun community and considered herself the 'foundress' - unwilling to adopt the intentions of Father Chevalier, himself named the Superior by the Archbishop of Bourges. Mother Felicite herself preferred to confide in Father Jouet, the first chaplain of the community. From the end of 1875, however, Father Jouet lived in Rome. During the year 1875 there were still nine Sisters. Following upon certain disagreements with the Superior, two withdrew, soon however to be replaced by other postulants.

At the time of her profession in September, 1876, Sister Felicite had accepted to pronounce a fourth vow - that of giving herself to the education of girls. Nevertheless, this work will be more and more set aside by her, and this despite the intentions of the Founder. She will get Sisters who entered the community for this purpose to quit it, She will refuse postulants manifesting similar dispositions. She dreams only of a contemplative congregation. As Father Founder himself avowed in March, 1877, "In order to justify herself, she falls back always on her own private inspirations from God."

One day, she had made a resume of the Constitutions with the intention of presenting it to Rome in the hope of receiving a Decree of Praise. Father Chevalier corrected this resume putting the work of education in the forefront. Mother Felicite wrote to Father Jouet protesting that her idea would never be to oppose this praiseworthy and holy end of Father Chevalier. "Nevertheless," she adds, "as long as he leaves me Superior, I shall consider that I am failing in my duty by allowing it to be undertaken to the detriment of the good of the community and of souls, and as long as it is obvious that God does not approve of it. We must always hold absolutely to the carrying out of His Holy Will."

Father Chevalier will inform the Archbishop of Bourges very clearly of this attitude based on a "dangerous mysticism", reminding His Grace that the Constitutions which he himself had approved have been based on those of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart:

They have two principal ends in order to respond to the aspirations of the Sisters:

- The contemplative life which consists in the exercises of piety, in adoration, and in reparation;
- The active life which comprises the education of girls and other works of zeal compatible with their vocation.

Mother Felicite, however, no longer wants to hear the word 'education'. She wants to shut herself up in the contemplative life. It is useless to say to her that the rules state the contrary; that it does not belong to her to alter them or to change the end of the foundation; that it is not for her to pledge the future or to turn aside from this young community vocations which present themselves under the best conditions and with the aptitudes and the attraction for teaching. None of these forceful arguments can make the slightest impression on Mother Felicite who can compromise everything if Your Grace does not intervene . . . She has not fear of putting herself into opposition with me or with the rules. It is time to define very clearly the end of these religious . . .

(October 18th, 1877)

The Archbishop will do everything possible to prevent a total dissolution of the community. The years 1877-1881 will be marked by new flights of fantasy on the part of Mother Felicite, by new trials for the young institute. We cannot dwell at further length upon these difficulties. Always they will be overcome by the indomitable courage of Father Founder. Unfailingly, he exercises patience even when Mother Felicite goes so far as to forbid the Sisters to communicate either directly or by letter with him (this does not hinder certain ones from so doing), or when she judges it useless that he come to give spiritual conferences.

When the hour of the Foreign Missions will sound (1881-1882), Mother Felicite will withdraw from the Congregation, leaving, as she herself says, "the responsibility to Father Chevalier". There will still be problems of a financial order since she is largely the proprietor of the three little houses which then comprised No. 10 Place du Sacre-Coeur. A solution, however, will be found to these. It is now the hour of Madame Marie Louise Hartzler - March, 1882.

During almost seven years, the direction of the pious but erratic Mother Felicite, who could not see eye to eye with Father Chevalier in his intentions for the apostolate, had nearly put the frail institute on the way to complete annihilation. No such thing happened, however, thanks to the patience and tenacity of Father Chevalier - always supported by his Archbishop - and to the fidelity of a few generous Sisters.

Marie Louise Hartzler, the new Superior and "a woman of intelligence and great merit," to quote Father Chevalier, will assure the continuity: the same Founder, the same title, the same habit - at least for a time - the same residence and, above all, the same fundamental rule. As for Mother Felicite, she left Issoudun in about mid-June, 1882, not however without manifesting her regard for Sister Marie Louise Hartzler. She found lodgings first of all with the Ladies of Calvary in Paris. In the spring of 1883, she entered the Visitation convent at Poitiers, she herself having a sister in the Visitation institute at Nice. From the summer of 1884, however, the Countess was a lady boarder with the Religious of the Sacred Heart at Villa Lante, Rome.

With gentleness and firmness, Marie Louise Hartzler will know how to carry out the authentic intentions of the Founder. She will reorganize the young institute, give it a new lease of life, and assure its rapid development for the service of the Church and of her missions.

In 1899, towards the end of his life, Father Chevalier wrote The Religious History of Issoudun. With delicacy and charity, he passed over the difficulties of the first years. Well aware that the continuity of his work was now assured, he also confirmed the fact whilst Mother Marie was still alive that, based upon an unflinching confidence in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the foundations of the institute had been laid on SUNDAY, AUGUST 30th, 1874.

JULES CHEVALIER AND THE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

J. Bertolini, MSC, 1975

The celebration of the Centenary of your Congregation last year, 1974, recalls the circumstances of the first installation at Issoudun, on the 30th August, 1874.

In this Holy Year, your General Chapter invites you once more to study the great figure of your venerated Founder. That is, surely, to use an expression of Pope Pius XI, who was well ahead of Vatican II, in the best interests "to reproduce in ourselves the characteristics by which each Founder wished his religious family to be recognized".

A voice more important still has already asked you to reflect on the mission and the charism of your Father and Legislator ... At first I had thought of treating the final years of his long and meritorious life, in his relations with your Congregation. On second thoughts, to know more for myself, I wondered what had been Father Chevalier's relations with you from your foundation till the end of his life. It is possible in answering your imprudent invitation, I run the risk of being a little talkative and will put your patience to the test. So before commencing I excuse myself and ask your fraternal co-operation.

To begin, I think of the proud declaration of a young apprentice shoe-maker to his employer, when he answered the call of Our Lord to enter the seminary:

"I am going away and am putting my foot on the first rung of the ladder." "I foresee many difficulties and many misfortunes, but sustained by God and Our Lady, I have confidence that Providence will help me. I expect everything from the Good God and his Holy Mother,"

To this confident statement, I add another witness, dating from the day of his Golden Jubilee, 50 years of Father Chevalier's priesthood; the official preacher for the feast day, Canon d'Haranguier of Quincerot, rather solemnly, but without disturbing the humble Jubilarian said:

"It is a fact which pertains not only to the annals of the religious history of this diocese of Bourges, but to the religious history of the Church itself, that at the same time as he received the priestly consecration, this priest was endowed with a special grace to contribute to the extension of the Devotion to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to invite thousands of souls to draw with greater abundance from the treasures of grace which this devotion contains."

We touch here on what was the "mission" of Father Chevalier in his two foundations, the MSC's and the FDNSC's. We cannot doubt: it was with the same spiritual and apostolic vision that this man of deep faith established our two Congregations, to give to the Church and to the world disciples who would be witnesses of the love with which God loved us and still loves us. And it was to realise his mission even better that he responded to the inspiration to venerate the Mother of the Son of God Incarnate under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In Her he had seen the first witness; in Her he had found that great Hope which never ceased to vitalise him, encourage him, and spur him on, step after step, despite all the difficulties which accompany a mission entrusted to weak, human instruments.

For what concerns your Congregation, it is certain - since he himself already affirmed it in 1863 - that from the first years of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, he thought of combining some religious women in a Community, functioning with the first Society, and dedicated to the Heart of Jesus.

Father Piperon, his first and faithful companion, said. "He sought ceaselessly new ways of glorifying Our Lady."

To found such an Institute, well and good. But it was essential to find the person capable of sincere collaboration and capable of implementing the ideal that he had conceived for such a Congregation. Indeed, at times, he would have hoped for some person or other. But to speak of definite attempts before 1874. apart from what was called "The Third Order", I shall say nothing. No serious document can prove it. There was, surely, about 1872, the attempt of the Misses Ledoux of Issoudun, associated with the Secretariat of the Society of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. But it was clearly foreign to the plans of Father Chevalier; further, with his Council, in reference to the matter with the Archbishop of Bourges, he strongly opposed it.

However, at the same time, in silence and prudence, he was preparing a possible realisation. We must retrace our steps a little: for the last years of Father Chevalier's life are best explained by the past; a past of sufferings and of great consolations.

From the 30th August, 1874, to the death of Father Chevalier, we can discern three distinct phases in his relations with your Congregation.

FIRST PHASE

The first phase extends, as you know, to 1882.

Eight years of alternating hopes and disappointments. In the plans of Providence, a phase rich in merit and one which will accomplish many great benefits in the following phases.

From the beginning, it has been stated that your Congregation took its origin in the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. That is true. It all commenced with the resolution of a fervent Member, already the founder of a small religious family, to place herself under the direction of Father Chevalier, in giving to her one community at Tue de Vanves in Paris, the Religious of the Holy Name of Jesus, a new way of life with the title, "Society of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart".

It was a precipitate foundation, as later on there will be other similar enterprises of the dynamic and enthusiastic Father Victor Jouet, who from 1871 had been an active instrument in this foundation. Later he was named its chaplain and spiritual director. The "Ledoux" case and the handing over of the Pilgrims' Centre that the Third Order of Montluçon was ready to cede in leaving Issoudun in 1874, were also two elements of this hasty action. The acquisition of the house, destined to be the first "convent", was facilitated by the intervention of another zealous Member, living in Turin, and having contact with Issoudun for several years; she was recently a widow, and felt attracted to the religious life as her own sister had already entered the Visitation Order.

It was the Countess Felicity Pironoli, nee Briançon.

Hearing of the approaching foundation at Issoudun, she went there on 25th June, 1874 with Father Chevalier returning from Rome. Later she was going to spend some weeks in the Community at Rue de Vanves . . . Who could be a good prophet in this year of 1874?

On 3rd June, the Superior in Paris, Mere Marie-Françoise Lefebvre-Durufle, wrote to Father Chevalier:

"Deign to bless this little community which is happy to be all for the Sacred Heart under your guidance, and which waits in silence your advice to do what the Heart of Jesus wishes."

Travelling from Turin to Rome, Father Chevalier had reassured Madame Pironoli:

"Be at peace, my child, you are going to a place of peace." Some weeks later, when Madame Pironoli was returning to Issoudun, Mere Marie-Françoise, confided to Father Chevalier:

"Madame Pironoli left us yesterday as if she were really ours. Surely the devil will not fail to make many attempts to have his way, but he will not succeed." Whose victory will it be? Frankly, I would be tempted to reply, "Providence". That Providence in which Jules Chevalier had placed all his confidence when he put his foot on the first rung of the ladder.

What follows has been fully described by Sister M. Venard. After the first months, Mere Marie-Françoise, recognized as "superior general" of the two Communities of Issoudun and of Paris, returned temporarily to Paris. This state of affairs became permanent. First of all she stated health reasons.

But we must admit that she had not found at Issoudun what, in good faith, she had hoped; and her daughters left at Issoudun and entrusted by her to Sister Arsène also shared the disillusionment of their Mother. She had constantly felt that the presence of Sister Felicity would be a serious obstacle; so she refused to yield to Father Chevalier's request to transfer the novitiate to Issoudun. Some Sisters rejoined her without delay in Paris. Other circumstances relating to the activities of the Association in 1875, and the influence of other advisers, all indicated a new direction. Father Durin wrote from Paris: "Father Jouet seems to be doing all in his power to lead these ladies to repentance . . . Having taken an active part in this foundation, he suffers to see it in this condition but he will never do anything with this spirit. . ."

Inevitably a separation was near at hand. Sister Arsène, doubtless under the inspiration of Father Founder, wrote to the Superior:

"Well, dear Mother, after much prayer and reflection, the grace of the Divine Heart of Jesus has touched us and enlightened us; now we see we were far from God's Will and the sacred promises we made at the feet of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun, the day of our installation, to the Reverend Fathers, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who founded us and to the Archbishop of Bourges, the 8th September last. . . The Sisters who are here with me, like myself, are firmly resolved to be true Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to embrace the rules and constitutions and to observe them faithfully. The Mission - (I underline this word) - that this good Mother has entrusted to us is too wonderful to renounce. Since Vanves is no longer possible - and we regret this greatly - we have made our resolution after much prayer and reflection before God to remain faithful . . ."

Poor Sister Arsène, in spite of all her ability and good will, thought that she was going to become one of the victims of the inexorable opposition of Sister Felicity Pironoli, who had just taken charge of the Issoudun Community and intended to direct it according to her own ideas, that she thought were God-given. For her this Congregation was to be contemplative rather than active. Hence her obstinate refusal to enter into the plans of the Founder regarding the education of young girls; and the elimination of the Sisters, or aspirants, wanting to teach; and, insidiously, a certain opposition for the Sisters to communicate with Father Founder - which did not prevent them from sending letters to him in secret. He held out but he suffered in coming to the convent parlour; and the Mother suffered in seeing him come. So one can easily see that communication was difficult. The poor Daughters did not know to what saint to turn; they doubted, equally, the good faith of the Mother and the Father!

"She wants to see the house fall," wrote Father Chevalier. "She is more and more difficult and odd towards me. All the same. I offer this new trial to the Good God."

One day he decided to tell her the whole truth:

"My good and dear Mother, since 1876, I do not think I have hindered you very much in the government of the little Society. . . You have done almost everything you wanted to do. I understand, dear child, that to avoid all misunderstanding, all distress, and to draw down the blessings of God on this newly-born work and to enlighten the minds of all, there is the greatest need for the most perfect accord and the most cordial relations between the Rev. Mother Superior and the representative of the Archbishop, to whom you kindly give the name of Founder." The next day, more incisively, he added:

"You take counsel only from yourself and from strangers, and under pretext that God is bound to give you light, you follow your own ideas, your particular conceptions, your judgement, as if they were inspirations from heaven; and, supported by these false principles, you think you are dispensed from obeying your Archbishop and your Superiors, good Mother, because they are not in accord with you. That, dear Mother, is the crux of all our difficulties."

She referred to Father Jouet, asking that he no longer be regarded as Superior, but Father Chevalier. She had written one day to Father Jouet, "From the beginning of this work, God has made each of us collaborators in its formation . . . Later, by a hidden design, yet always holy, divine Providence allowed that a saint should come between us. . ."

Lovely indeed! But who was this troublesome "saint"? First of all, I shall say, he was a wise man. From the beginning he had seen clearly. He had warned Father Jouet: "The Sisters generally believe that Sister Felicity has insufficient experience to rule the house. They recognise her worth and her virtue . . . There is great uneasiness; there is much suffering. I have tried to pour out oil and balm: do not act quickly but be kind and trusting; do not let us make any charges; they have the grace to do the right thing, with our advice, and a cordial relationship with the Rev. Father Superior." Two years later, this same confrere said to him, in relation to Mother Felicity:

"I saw a person too confident of herself, and under an illusion regarding divine assistance . . . But, judging this Congregation according to the state of its present existence, I must say the Sisters are most edifying; the Superior is full of faith and most devoted; the ladies coming on pilgrimage are very edified. . ."

"This last consideration of the Pilgrimage is according to me the most important to convince me that these good Sisters are raised up by Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to help spread this great devotion, especially if the Sisters are able. . . to direct the pilgrims. It is a question of time, lengthy formation by competent men. Prayer - patience - confidence!"

Here, this troublesome "saint" had written the final lines of his last letter, dated the day of his death, 25th April, 1877. I name him Father Jean-Marie Vandel.

Yes! "Let us pray, let us pray!" Father Founder ceaselessly said. So in 1877: "Let us pray. We need a woman of judgement and good sense in this house. Let us try to find her. Let us ask Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for this woman!" In 1878: "Let us pray and see if there is a responsible and serious woman in whom we can confide."

In 1880: "There is really nothing we can do with Mother Felicity. Her plan is to depart from what we present and what is reasonable." "Would you know a good and holy lady who would like to dedicate herself and take the direction of this little society, which would revive easily under another influence . . .?"

To me, these quotations seem useful in stating fully what Father Founder wanted in the Superior of this Congregation.

In 1881, an important event gave rise to great joy and eagerness in the young members of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. At last, after many requests from the Founder, the Holy See offered him the Mission of New Guinea . . . Father Chevalier went to tell Mother Felicity, saying to her: "This will be a new field for your daughters also!" It was too much. The Mother hastened to write to Monsignor Marchal, telling him of the Founder's visit.

She confessed she had reflected well and added: "Permit me to tell you that it is impossible . . ." From this time, she decided to leave the responsibility to Father Chevalier and to withdraw, giving abundant reasons to the Archbishop of Bourges.

Here I conclude the first phase, the longest and the most painful.

SECOND PHASE

In February and March, 1882, the Community was reduced to three former Sister Co-adjutors of Mother Felicity - Sisters Clare, Emilie and Madeleine: a postulant from Issoudun. Mademoiselle Camille Sabourain, another from Niort, sent by Father Bontemps, and a lady boarder, Madame Hartzler. It was then that the courageous Sister Madeleine, disguised as a lady boarder, made her visit to Bourges.

But she discovered that Monsignor Marchal was already well aware of the languishing community at Issoudun. He already knew that Madame Hartzler refused to take charge of the community. When Sister Madeleine made reference to Mademoiselle Sabourain, he hesitated a moment and encouraged Sister to fidelity and patience. Then he charged her with a difficult commission for Father Chevalier: "Tell Father Superior that within three months he must find somebody to reorganise the community . . ." Sister Madeleine, embarrassed, confided in Sister Claire, and she informed Father Chevalier . . . Proceedings went ahead with Bourges . . . Mademoiselle Sabourain, following the humble refusal of Madame Hartzler, accepted the direction of the little community, under the name of Sister Marie du Calvaire. Madame Hartzler became Sister Marie Louise. It was the 24th March. The position of Sister Marie du Calvaire was only temporary. Father Chevalier had learned from experience that there was need of a conclusive and firm decision. He wrote in this vein to Monsignor Marchal, on 5th December, 1882. ". . . I have informed the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that from Friday next, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the twenty-eighth anniversary of our foundation, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, we would commence in a very serious way this little community and its birth would also be the Feast of the 8th December. . . Then he informed Monsignor of the experiment with Mademoiselle Sabourain, "virtuous and intelligent" but too young and sometimes lacking in prudence. And he continued in stating his decision:

"With the latitude that your Excellency has deigned to grant me... I have selected Madame Hartzler who has lived here for two years; she is a widow, aged 45, and her two sons are with us. She is very good, very pious, prudent and discreet."

So it was on the evening of 7th December, that the Founder with great delicacy told the community that Sister Marie du Calvaire had asked to be relieved of her responsibility and that, despite her protestations, Sister Marie Louise had been named "Superior". As an act of deference, Sister M. du Calvaire knelt down before her and kissed her hand.

Despite the tenor of the letter of 5th December to Monsignor Marchal, who would have been led to believe that a new society was coming into being, it was only a continuation with a new vision. Otherwise, Father Chevalier, would not have written in 1899, while Mother Hartzler was still living, what he said of the foundation in his "Religious History of Issoudun". He would not have recalled in his Testament, which was destined for you in 1905, "the painful beginnings" of this foundation which had given birth to "so many trials and so many vexations"¹.

Yes! Continuity with the same Founder, the same Rule, the same Constitutions (1881 Edition), the same residence, and, for some time yet, the same religious habit, and finally the same title. Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, a title which was so dear to him and which he considered as a whole way of life.

Remember! What did he desire for your Institute in 1877: "a woman of judgement and good sense"; "a responsible and serious woman in whom we can confide"; "a good and holy woman" . . . And no name was written down! He had to pray and seek. Yet, he would find all these qualities in Mother Marie Louise Hartzler. What might surprise you is that Madame Hartzler had made her first journey to Issoudun before 1877-1876, actually. She gave details of it to her director, Abbe Vuillemin:

"At Issoudun, I went to see the Mother Superior of the Religious of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, a community which has been in existence only two years and whose superior is Rev. Father Chevalier, the founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the cure of the parish. For quite a time I wanted to know about this community towards whom I felt attracted, while nourishing the secret hope of entering there later. . . I spoke of my plans to Rev. Father Chevalier, as well as to the Mother Superior, and both of them encouraged me."

Let us admire the secret ways of Divine Providence in which the youthful Chevalier had placed all his confidence even from the first "step" on the ladder!

Very soon it was seen that the heart of the community had found an encouraging serenity. The door was open not only for successive departures, but for new vocations full of promise. Thanks to the public appeals of Father Navarre, Superior of the Mission of Oceania, and to the recruitment of Fathers Bontemps, Lavialle and others, postulants kept on coming . . .

The Novitiate was commenced anew on 8th December. While awaiting a Mistress of Novices, the Founder had assured the Archbishop of Bourges that he was going to take care of the spiritual formation of the Novices himself. In May, 1883, he wrote, "I am very busy" . . . Then in June, "There are ten Novices already and in good dispositions . . . I would much prefer that Propaganda take care of this work than our Archbishop . . . The Constitutions (with amendments) state expressly that the Sisters will be concerned with the foreign missions . . ." Monsignor Marchal did not hasten, however, to approve the constitutions. The lessons of the past made him prudent.

But Father Chevalier was becoming impatient. He was even tempted to send a group of Sisters to Rome for their formation under the care of Cardinal Simeoni. Monsignor Marchal, informed indiscreetly by Mademoiselle Sabourain at Issoudun on 26th May, 1884, said rather facetiously to Father Chevalier:

"Since Rome wishes to authorise them, apply to Rome!"

However, Monsignor Marchal, with much pleasure, on the day after the Feast of 8th September, gave the habit to twelve postulants and received the vows of five Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It was in 1884, and Rome had asked for a second contingent of missionaries for New Guinea. Rome also approved of the Sisters' departure. Monsignor Marchal, hearing this, wrote to Father Chevalier on 30th September:

"I myself would not have dared to advise you to send your Sisters to the distant mission of Oceania. But since Rome has spoken, I no longer hesitate. . . Who knows if tomorrow you will be the object of the same good will? . . . I am of the opinion. Reverend Father, that you send the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to Sydney, provided that one of your Fathers lives near them and carries out the office of Procurator of your Mission. God's will seems clear to me. I hope therefore that there will be in this new-born congregation souls strong enough and courageous enough to respond to the call of the Holy See. It will be a source of new blessings for this Institute."

The prudent Archbishop had become a good prophet! He himself came to Issoudun to encourage the five departing Missionaries, for the Feast of 17th October, and gave the Sisters their Mission Crosses.

With this new house in Australia, and later in the Missions, Father Chevalier recognized once again that the work of education which he had written into the Constitutions ten years previously, was one of the principal means of the apostolate of the Institute.

At Issoudun, despite all his other occupations, the good Father continued to form his daughters by simple instructions, always practical, on the religious life and the apostolate. He insisted very much on the spirit of simplicity, of obedience, and of mutual charity. He was not the man for lengthy spiritual direction; he judged this more harmful than helpful! Above all, he recommended interior mortification rather than exterior mortification, abandonment to God's will, devotion to the Blessed Eucharist as the source of intimate union with the Heart of Jesus, and a meditative silence rather than long prayer formulas. He also spoke often of reparation, but a reparation in close union with the Heart of Jesus and with Our Lady always united with her Son; a reparation made by offering the works and sacrifices of each day, along with all its trials and difficulties. In a special way he placed emphasis on the imitation of Our Lady in her relations with Jesus, on the imitation of his Divine Heart - meekness, humility, simplicity, obedience to the Father . . . Mother Marie Louise, in perfect oneness of thought, followed the same style of formation. Together they discussed often what measures to take, what adaptations to make. Little by little, they succeeded in making secondary changes in the Constitutions. . .

The Father also followed his missionary daughters with much interest. They had no hesitation in writing to him, directly, and especially when they met some difficult challenge and they did not wish to worry their good Mother General.

I would like to emphasise another constant occupation of the Founder: to obtain the Decree of Praise from the Holy See in order to give the Institute papal right and to give it a greater guarantee of recruitment and of development. He asked this continually from his Procurator in Rome: in October, 1885, in February, March and October 1886 and still later. In 1893, he thought it opportune to recommend your Institute highly to the new Archbishop of Bourges. Monsignor Boyer, saying to him, "It grows little by little in an excellent spirit of humility, simplicity, and great love for the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin. This work which is truly blessed by God is one of my sweetest consolations in the midst of the difficulties and bitter trials of the present moment. . ." An allusion to a serious crisis which threatened our own Society between 1891 and 1894.

On taking charge of the Vicariate of the Gilbert Islands, Father Chevalier recommended once again to Monsignor Boyer to ask Rome for the Decree of Praise which he desired so much, laying stress on the fact of the dedication and the religious spirit of the Sisters in the service of the Church. That was in 1896. But the new Cardinal Boyer fell ill and died on 16th December.

They had to wait for a new Archbishop. It was Monsignor Servonnet. Alas! He was a prelate who did not favour any religious congregations in his diocese, and certainly not the Sisters at Issoudun . . . Father Chevalier counted more on the intervention of Sydney's Cardinal. Cardinal Moran had just at that time laid the foundation stone of your first Convent at Kensington, on 3rd October. 1896. But he had to be patient . . . Father Founder asked once again, in 1901, in a letter to Cardinal Moran in Sydney, and he asked the Fathers to support his request. What he wanted so much in this year of the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood, was to offer this favour and this joy to your Institute which was developing so beautifully.

But from 1901, the religious persecution in France only delayed still more the Roman approbation. And still greater trials were going to test Father Chevalier's courage.

THIRD PHASE

You have already guessed it: the third phase had come; very short, but most crucifying for the Founder, already weighed down by the trials of his advanced age. In future, his relations with your Institute will be more intimate in spite of the events which follow . . . The most infamous Law of Associations was going to place all French congregations in a tragic situation: Was it necessary, yes or no, to ask for an authorisation of legal status, which would entail grave obligations and that without any assurance? Monsignor Servonnet, recognised as favouring the Government, advised for it. But as Father Meyer said, "It is certain that Monsignor Servonnet wishes even more than the Government to drive us out of Issoudun. He set out for Rome, but I was there before him ..."

After several meetings with his Council, Father Chevalier had sent him to Rome with precise instructions, in order to discuss the matter with the Procurator, at the time Father Genocchi, and to discuss the problem with the Vatican congregations and his Cardinal friends. Unanimously all advised Father Chevalier to do all in his power to keep his position as permanent Cure at Issoudun, and to hand over his charge as General to his Vicar, Father Lactin, and to ask for himself and his confreres who remained in France the Indult of Secularisation that Rome was willing to grant to French religious. Let us see clearly what is meant by the word "secularisation"; it must not be taken in its present sense, nor even in the sense of the Code of Canon Law before 1918. It meant to place oneself under the jurisdiction of a bishop, without dispensation of vows, and with the obligation to return to the community after the storm.

In order to grasp the intimate thoughts of Father Chevalier, whose situation was most unusual, here is the text of his letter sent to the Holy Father, and kept in the Vatican archives: it was dated 28th August, 1901. Religious had to decide before 3rd October, the date of the initiation of the French law.

"Most Holy Father,

The undersigned has the honour of asking of Your Holiness, with the intention of safeguarding the interests of his Institute and to retain his title as Archpriest of Issoudun, two favours:

1. Kindly accept his resignation as Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart;
 2. Secularisation for as long as circumstances demand, while retaining interiorly his obligations as a religious.
- Deign. Your Holiness, to bless him and accept his most devoted service and his most filial obedience in Corde Jesu,"

On this most clear petition, the Congregation for Religious had written "URGENT" in capitals, then the words, also in capitals, "ACCORDING TO THE LATEST RESCRIPT" . . . There was no delay. The two rescripts were dated 3rd and 4th September.

About twenty of our Fathers who remained in France: Issoudun, Paris, Marseilles, Vichy, were assured of the same rescript of secularisation. Two only, after asking for it, later asked for another indult of remission of their vows and left the Society; all the others died as "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart" many years after the death of Father Founder. In 1907, circumstances were still graver than in 1901. So the others went into exile, after the sequestration of our houses in France. Father Lactin and his council took refuge in Belgium. Father Chevalier did not have to seek out a Bishop: he stayed on the spot, Archpriest of Issoudun, named by the Government and the diocesan authority in 1872. His four curates, secularised like himself, lived with him, and two Brothers; three other Priests secretly carried on the work of the Archconfraternity and lodged with friends. At the Presbytery, religious life in common continued as always, with the additional blessing. A Sister took charge of the kitchen.

As to your Institute, so restricted in France and having no works of importance, Father Founder advised the seeking of legal recognition; there was not even a reply to the letter! This was far from reassuring but the Sisters were not forced to leave. On 17th October, the seals were placed on the Basilica. That same evening, a Justice of Peace presented himself at the Convent; Mother Hartzler could only state that the request for recognition had been regularly made!

In the midst of these trials, Father Founder had the consolation, on 13th October, of receiving the vows of some Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; and on 28th October, of giving the Mission Cross to seven Sisters, of whom the Dutch Sister, Sister Bernadette, would later have the honour of preparing the Congregation of the "Ancillae Domini" in Papua. Before this ceremony, the Retreat was preached by Father Piperon, who set out for Chimary in Belgium on 17th October.

As a matter of prudence, it was necessary to restrict the number of Sisters reunited at Issoudun, after the closing of our houses. From 1902, after an earlier attempt at Anvers by Father Reyn, the Belgian houses came into being: Thuin, then Tongre Notre-Dame, etc. Good Father Piperon visited them regularly, assuring the Sisters of his precious spiritual assistance.

In 1903, on the express request of Father Founder, the Archbishop of Bourges granted the extension of the position of Superior General to Mother Marie Louise for a third mandate of six years. Since 1897, your possessions had been legally sold to the same Society who owned our goods. Through prudence. Mother Marie Louise transferred a part of your possessions to Belgium.

It is good to note that when all these possessions were put up for public sale, Father Chevalier intended that they all be bought back.

Such was not the opinion of the French Provincial and of Father Meyer. The Founder insisted. And thanks to a reserve that he himself had prepared with the generosity of some benefactors, a reserve he had entrusted to our Fathers in Antwerp, thanks especially to the generosity of his friend, the Count of Bonneval, who agreed to present himself as the only buyer, Father Chevalier gained his desire - he had given reason in Rome in 1901: "to safeguard the goods of our Institute".

However, the Father had a fear, and he confided it to the French Provincial, Father Carriere: "There is also," he wrote in April, 1906, "the possessions of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. They have sacrificed all that they possessed in building their convent which is now in the hands of the civil society without any compensation. Can we abandon them? I do not think so. Since the interruption of the pilgrimages, they have neither money or resources. For our sake they have generously devoted themselves to our Missions. Issoudun is their cradle. Not yet approved by Rome, they have the Archbishop of Bourges for their real Superior. In his name he has entrusted me with this community; if, unfortunately, they were obliged to leave Issoudun, their superior would be the Bishop of those dioceses where they would have houses. That would cause a division and a dislocation in the Community. All these reasons make it a duty for us to keep them here at Issoudun, at least the general administration. The matter is serious and demands our attention . . ." Our Province in France was already very embarrassed financially, especially with the maintenance of the houses in exile, and could not grant the Founder's wish. So he encouraged Madame de Lapparent to come to the help of the Sisters. With Mother Hartzler, he insisted on the last request of his letter to the Provincial: "at least the general administration". His reasons were well understood, but one had to recognize that the insecurity left by former events would advise a transfer from France, at least provisionally, for the Novitiate and the general administration especially as the works in Belgium were developing so successfully. At all events the new general administration of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart advised such a decision. It was to be a subject of many discussions between Mother Marie Louise and Father Founder . . . and, at the time of voyage to Belgium in 1906, Mother Marie Louise, with great delicacy, told him of the decision made by her council. To her letter of 15th October, Father Chevalier replied immediately on the following 18th. In its brevity, one can discern his heartache: another "step" on the ladder! "Dear and Good Mother,

By reason of all the advice you have been given and of the favourable advantages you see for the prosperity of your dear Congregation, I bow my head and I offer my prayers that it become more flourishing in the land of Belgium. So you have complete liberty to act and to put your flats into execution. I ask the Divine Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to bless you and to grant all you desire. Kindly accept, very Reverend Mother, the assurance of my affection and unalterable devotedness in C.J.

J. Chevalier."

So Mother Marie Louise left Issoudun, which she never saw again. She left there a group of five Sisters who, with filial devotion, surrounded the venerable old man, more and more paralysed by his infirmities. As in the past, they found many occasions to see him, either when returning from his walk in the park, or in his invalid's armchair, he was happy to see them. Smiling, he teased them, giving some words of advice, putting his name on a holy picture with some fitting words . . . They recalled his visits of early days to their convent, especially on his feast day: "Well, my children," he used to say smiling, "what nice thing have you to welcome me today?" It was a real joy to see him come into the refectory, very simply, like a good Father among his children . . . He used to listen to our good wishes; once he replied: "Good wishes, yes, but I trust there will never be any untruths!" For his feast day in 1893, in response to the good wishes of the Sisters, he gave each one a copy of the second edition of his book, "The School of the Sacred Heart or Lessons in Perfection". There was still a way of handing on his teachings. As he said before to his Missionaries, he recommended to his daughters: "Do not wish that your Congregation be bigger and more learned than any others; try to make it great and renowned by its virtues, humility, charity; this is what pleases the Heart of Jesus and what He loves to see resplendent in His Spouses!" The last five years will witness to the dignity of the venerated Father, when, in January 1907, he was cruelly driven from his Presbytery and insulted . . . But he who had already pardoned so much, who had always been ready to pardon any in advance, replied with a broken voice: "Nothing happens without the permission of God!" It was the second last step on the ladder . . . The ultimate was approaching; it would be the date which is so dear to us, 21st October, 1907. His House of the Sacred Heart was in good hands. Suddenly, the Basilica opened; he knew his tomb had been prepared in the crypt, under the chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: his thanks was still a smile . . . For his Daughters, there were only his words which he left them in his Spiritual Testament written in 1905: "It is to your good Mother that you owe your existence. Never will you be able to thank Her enough. Moreover, I have confidence that She will always continue to protect you as she has done to this day." May I be permitted to share the same wish!

(iii) REPARATION

St. Madeleine de Pazzi was set on fire with love for the Heart of Jesus. Seeing that his sufferings in the great mystery of our Redemption were either ignored or scorned by the majority of mankind, that the Eucharist he gave us in the excess of his love was the object of indifference, she exclaimed: "Love is not loved"¹ . . . St. Francis of Assisi said the same thing. This suffering gives birth to reparation.

I. NECESSITY OF REPARATION

Since man's first revolt against God, reparation has become a necessity. All the sons of Adam can say, more or less, like David: cf. PS. 38 and 51.

This is the cry of guilty and repentant humanity. Like the royal Prophet, it feels that its own expiation is insufficient. Indeed, since infinite majesty is offended, the reparation must be infinite.

That is why the Son of God, in response to his love, became a victim, taking our nature and thus giving to his expiation the value required by divine justice. But he wishes that all those he redeemed share in his work of reparation, so that there may be harmony between his Heart and ours. (Col. 1,24) Does this work of reparation stop at Calvary? No! It continues on our altars because sin never ceases . . . Constantly as victim, Jesus offers to his Father, in expiation for the sins of the world, the same sacrifice which he offered on the cross. In its mystical immolation, his adorable Heart makes reparation unceasingly for the offenses committed. His perpetual and complete oblation is like a hymn of praise which drowns the noise of the blasphemies and outrages. There, on the table of sacrifice or in the tabernacle, Jesus Christ utters a cry, not of retribution of justice, but of mercy and pardon.

Moreover, he makes the Eucharist the epitome of all his benefits, the highest expression of his love for men. It is in this divine Sacrament that he shows the extent of his love for us. He makes it the throne of his mercy, a source of life, an ocean of blessings. How do men respond, for the most part, to these signs of his loving kindness? Alas! with ingratitude and contempt. Instead of making reparation as they should and thus uniting their satisfaction to that of Jesus, to appease God's justice and obtain his graces, they outrage him by sin, indifference or forgetfulness. In the whole of humanity . . . there is only a very small number, only an almost imperceptible group of sincere adorers and faithful friends.

So Jesus Christ complained of this neglect to Saints Gertrude, Brigitte, Lutgarde, Colette, Therese and many others, He showed himself to these special friends in the dreadful state to which his executioners had reduced him during his Passion. He told them that his Heart was much less affected by the acts of cruelty committed by his murderers in the past than by those which are committed against him today, and that it is not for this past that he wants reparation, but for the present.

This is what he said to St. Margaret Mary . . . "Behold, how sinners behave towards me." Then he showed himself to her as the "Ecce Homo" . . . He then said to her: "Is there no one to share my suffering in the pitiable state in which sinners have put me, especially at this time?"

One day, when she was before the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lord showed her his divine Heart and said: "See this Heart which has loved men so much, that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, to prove to them its love, and in return I receive for the most part only ingratitude . . ." "See my heart," he said. "It is pierced . . . It is my chosen ones who have done this to me." "If these outrages came only from my enemies, I could perhaps bear them, but no, they come in a large measure from those very ones on whom I have bestowed my greatest benefits, whom I admit into my intimate secrets, and on whom I lavish each day marks of the tenderest affection . . ." Such are the complaints of the divine Repairer. . .

In the Apocalypse, had he not already said that the apathy of a tepid soul revolted his Heart? (Apoc. 3, 15-16) And does not St. Paul affirm that those who commit crime crucify again the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt? (Heb. 6,6) And elsewhere he says that those who sin voluntarily, after having known the truth . . . wander into myths. (II Tim. 3,8 and 4,4)

But can Jesus Christ, today glorified and impassive, suffer? No, the Doctors of the Church tell us. The terms used are figurative. God uses them to accommodate himself to our language; we would be wrong to take them literally. That is true. But God surely wishes to give us a message. Since Jesus Christ does not suffer, how can he tell us that we make him suffer and that he is the actual victim of our sins? We are in the presence of a profound mystery, before which reason must yield. To wish to penetrate deeply into it would be to attempt the impossible . . . However, let us try to raise a corner of the veil which hides the truth from us.

II. THE MYSTICAL SUFFERINGS OF THE HEART OF CHRIST

God is sufficient in himself. Before the creation, nothing was wanting to his happiness. The existence of the world brought nothing to him that was necessary and its destruction would not take anything from him. However, by the very fact that he made it freely from nothing, he must maintain with creatures relations that are fitting to his equality as Creator. And in their turn, creatures must behave towards him as being the work of his hands. To break off these relations is to fail to recognise his authority, to violate his most sacred rights, to refuse him what belongs to him, to defy his will. . . Can God remain indifferent to these insults? Why are we astonished that he complains?

Sin is not only a revolt, it is an outrage against God. "Indeed what does the sinner want? Either that God does not know about his crime, that he remains indifferent to it or that he cannot punish him." (St. Bernard) It is then basically the destruction of the divine Being that he wants, since he wishes him to be without wisdom, justice or power, perfections without which God could not exist.

Guilty man goes still further. He is not content with this intentional decide:, he tries to put it into execution. What does he do by committing sin? He commits such an act in opposition to the divine attributes that God experiences an infinite hatred towards it and the grief that he feels is so great that it would be capable of causing his death if he could cease to exist.

When we offend God, it is no thanks to us that he does not suffer; and if a superior and insurmountable force was not opposing them, our sins would have the power of making him suffer. Thanks to his impassibility, it is true he does not suffer, but on our side, we do willingly and freely all in our power and all that is necessary to make him suffer. It is in vain that we protest, saying that this is far from our thoughts and that this horrifies us. This may be so . . . but having established the cause, we cannot be indifferent about the effect. And if once again a superior power did not place the God Man beyond our reach, he would of necessity be submitted to suffering

When Jesus Christ shows us his pierced Heart . . . reproaching us for our cruelty, it is only to make us aware of the effects of the implicit desire contained in the sin we commit, the conditions to which it leads of its nature and that it would actually reach this state if it were not prevented by an absolute impossibility from proceeding further.

Let us go back eighteen centuries to the time when Our Lord was on earth. Sin met God, who had become capable of suffering in the humanity which he took in a Virgin's womb. Sin profited by the circumstance and the God-Man, whom impassibility no longer protected, momentarily was done to death. Now, for God, there is neither past nor future; all is present. For him what has been done or will be done is always being done at the present time. From all eternity, he saw our sin, tormenting his well-beloved Son on the day of his Passion, although in the order of time the decide of Calvary would be accomplished centuries before our existence,

Moreover, if Jesus Christ had not expiated our sins on the cross, if the satisfaction which he made acceptable to his Father was not infinite, he would have to suffer and die again to appease divine justice. Consequently, when Our Lord is complaining that we crucify him again, when he shows himself as he was at the time of the Passion, in reality it is only to present to us the expiation that his Father would need to exact in reparation for our sins, if, in advance, this expiation had not already taken place, or if it was not sufficient for all time. He only wants to put before us, as he sees it, the work of sin which for him is carried out unceasingly and always remains present.

Jesus Christ is not only God; he is also man. If as God he has before him always the sight and hatred of sin, as man, he still retains, in all its intensity, the sentiment which he expressed at the beginning of his Passion, when he said, "Father! if it be possible, take this chalice from me!" (Matt. 26,39; Mark 14,36; Luke 22,42)

In putting on perfect immortality, he was deprived of passibility which is a beginning of death. Suffering being a punishment for sin, Jesus Christ who is holiness itself holiness substantial and infinite, must be beyond its reach and had the right to complete happiness, from the first moment of his existence. If during his life suffering was able to affect him, it was because, by a remarkable miracle, he had temporarily suspended the exercise of his right to supreme happiness. It is in order to show us his love that he wished to satisfy absolutely, by suffering, his Father's justice. Once his mission was accomplished and our debts were repaid, he entered into glory and impassibility. But the sensibility remained with him always . . . He is in heaven with his Body whole and entire, and so with his Heart. Now like every human heart, and even more so, the Heart of Jesus was sensitive, (there could be no doubt about this). Why would he be no longer so now? Would the sensibility be an imperfection in the Word Incarnate? Evidently not. Then sensibility being inherent in human nature, Jesus possessed it in his glorified state. His sensibility is transformed (this must be recognised) but it exists, although we cannot state exactly either its workings or its effects. Jesus loves all that he loved, with the love with which he loved it; his affections have not changed in their object.

He keeps them carefully in his Heart. He has carried them with him to the highest heaven, as the richest part of his inheritance. He retains then the full extent of his love for God, his Father, whose glory he came to repair, and his love for man, whom he redeemed with his blood. So when he sees his Passion despised and rendered useless by a great number, God outraged again, in spite of all his benefits . . . he is deeply affected. Thus we see without any doubt what would reduce him once again to the agony, if he was not impassible, what also would cause him to exclaim, from his glory and from his tabernacle: "May this chalice pass from me!"

And when in order to try to melt our frozen hearts, Jesus Christ declares that our sins are still making him suffer, and when he shows himself actually exposed to the same outrages and the same tortures as at the time of his Passion, his language and his revelations are true. It is as if he was saying: O sinners who offend me, recognise what you have done, look at the treatment you subjected me to while I was on earth. In persevering in your crimes, you dishonour my Father and you draw down upon yourselves a terrible sentence by the way you abuse my goodness to you. Why are

you surprised that I complain? I am no longer subjected to suffering, that is true. But do not think from that that I am indifferent. In acquiring impassibility, I have not rid myself of my sentiments. I love you so much, in spite of your coldness and ingratitude, that if it was necessary and my Father would agree to it, I would willingly come down again on earth and allow myself to be crucified again, if only this would allow me to save even one among you. You are always so dear to me and your interests are so precious that if you are lost, my Heart, although insensible now to suffering, will none the less be profoundly saddened by this. (Heb. 6,6)

By drawing our attention again to all the scenes of Calvary. Our Lord wishes not only to urge sinners to conversion, but also to ask us to console his Heart and to make reparation by prayers, mortifications and good works, for the outrages which are committed against him,

"See this Heart which has loved men so much," he said to St. Margaret Mary. . . "and in return, I receive for the most part only ingratitude . . . That is why I ask that the First Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated to a special feast to honour my Heart . . . and that a special cult be given to it... in order to MAKE REPARATION for the outrages it has received."

III CHARACTERISTICS AND EFFECTS OF REPARATION

Reparation is then one of the principal ends of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Also all Christians are invited by our Lord himself to follow this way . . .

But what is reparation? It can include all acts; the following are the principal: knowledge, adoration, love, satisfaction, prayer, praise, supplication, thanksgiving, imitation, union with Jesus Christ, zeal for his glory and the salvation of souls and mortification.

To make reparation worthily for the outrages which the Heart of Jesus receives, one must first of all know his dignity, his excellence, his greatness, his perfections, virtues, prerogatives, love, sufferings, the treasures of grace which he contains, in a word all that can make him worthy of love in heaven and on earth. This knowledge is necessary. How indeed can we pay homage to an object if we do not know its nature or its qualities? It is not possible to enthusiastically go in search of a good we do not esteem, still less one we do not even know. (Rom. 10,14) (Phil. 1.9)

How rare are souls who apply themselves seriously to this knowledge of the Heart of Jesus! For the most part, they remain indifferent to this masterpiece of divine power, this sanctuary where dwells the divinity, this unfathomable abyss of all-riches, this unique beauty which delights the angels and saints. They run after phantoms which they are not able to reach, they become passionately fond of mere trifles, wear themselves out acquiring vain knowledge and neglect that which can teach and save them. This is perhaps the outrage that we should repair most, because it is the cause of many others.

To knowledge of the Heart of Jesus, must be added adoration. Nothing is more just or more reasonable. Studying this divine Heart, we shall know that it is the Heart of a God, and then we will prostrate ourselves before him, in self-abasement and humility. (Matt, 4,10; Luke 4,8) We will offer him the homage which he asks for and the honour that he merits and in that way we will compensate for the wrongs that he receives . . .

If knowledge of the Sacred Heart engenders adoration, it also produces love, This divine Heart is also infinite goodness, charity itself, mercy incarnate. We must then love it, not only because it possesses in a supereminent degree all the qualities possible, but also on account of the boundless love it contains, the immense benefits with which it overwhelms us and all the favours which it unceasingly bestows on us each day in spite of our sins. So our love for him should be generous, active and persevering. (1 John, 4,19) If it is so, we shall share naturally in his joy as in his sorrow, we will grieve over all that causes him anxiety . . . We will shrink from no difficulty, no sacrifice to make up to him. We will suffer all in order to console him.

Then we will pray as fervently as we can. Prayer consoles, prayer disarms, prayer obtains all. (Si. 35,21) Sometimes it takes the form of supplication and praise, sometimes that of thanksgiving for gratitude, And this means, so efficacious in itself, becomes as it were all powerful, when we unite it with the sentiments of the Heart of Jesus and imitate the example which he gave us, so that God may see in us the image of his Son. (Rom. 8,29-30; Phil. 2.5; Exod. 25,40; Jn. 13,15; Eph. 5, 1-2; Col. 3,3)

So we will feel ourselves set on fire with an ardent zeal to procure the glory of the Heart of Jesus, to extend his empire, to win souls to him and to make him reign everywhere. In this way we will make up for the wrongs done to him.

But you will ask how can reparation do this! It is so insignificant! It would never be worthy of God's majesty! It would never make up to him. If we were left to ourselves this would certainly be true. But we know that a Christian in sanctifying grace is no longer simply man. Through his Baptism, he becomes a son of God by adoption. (Gal. 3, 26 & 4,4-5) Consequently his works are no longer purely human. Because of his union with Jesus Christ, with whom he has been made a member, his acts have a supernatural virtue so great as to be acceptable to the divine Majesty.

Moreover, in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, offered ... as a means of salvation and a supreme remedy for the evils of society, our Lord offers his divine Heart as the substitute for our weakness, which we can use to raise our prayers and our merits to infinite proportions. It also offers a means for human nature to carry out the great precept of love and fulfil all the obligations which this requires.

Our adorable Saviour himself has assured us of this. If fervent Christians can make reparation in a certain measure . . . what can we not hope for if Mary offers to the Heart of her Son his merits, if she addresses her prayers to him in reparation for the wrongs he receives?

Just as when there is question of reparation towards the Blessed Trinity, that of Jesus is alone sufficient, being alone infinite, so when reparation is made to the humanity of our Lord, to his Sacred Heart . . . that of Mary . . . exceeds all others . . . Indeed who knows better than she the excellence and holiness of the Heart of her Son? Who can adore it more perfectly and love it more ardently? Who can praise it, thank it, pray to it with as much merit and efficacy? Who can recall his virtues as faithfully as she, and offer him satisfaction as acceptable and as complete as hers? Who has ever been so desirous to procure his glory and win souls for him? This holy Virgin is indeed the Reparatrice par excellence for the outrages offered to the Heart of Jesus. Although the efficacy of this reparation is so great, God still wishes that we unite ours with it also ... No person is exempt. (Col. 1,24)

O incomparable Virgin! What are you doing at the foot of the Cross? To the Redeemer, who sacrifices himself, loaded with sorrow and expiring in agony and abandonment, you offer the satisfaction that he asks for and the consolation he desires . . . You ask mercy for sinners of the present, as for those of the past and the future . . .

Mary continued this role of Reparatrice and advocate during the years she passed on earth after the Ascension. She continues it still and will continue it till the end of time. Her intervention is all the more efficacious because she alone, after God, can measure the greatness of the crimes, the number and enormity of the offenses committed towards her divine Son, because she alone, after God, can know the sensibilities of his Heart, the intensity of its love for men and the immensity of his sufferings brought about by their coldness, indifference, ingratitude and sins; because she alone of all creatures can obtain, through her merits and all-powerful intercession, pardon and mercy from this divine Heart, to which she is united by the most sacred ties . . . Many examples could be cited . . .

O blessed Virgin, since you have such power with the Heart of Jesus, with you and through you we wish to repair the outrages committed against him. From now on, we will confide to you all our interests, we will make our requests through you, so that they will be heard. On Calvary, when all the disciples had fled, you were alone with one faithful friend, mysterious representative of all the elect, to give marks of love to the Victim who was being sacrificed . . .

Since then, you have never ceased carrying out this same role, for the Passion of the Saviour is renewed at every moment . . . You carry out this ministry of reparation towards this divine Heart, outraged continuously by the sins of men. The new title which we address to you in order to show

your co-operation in this wonderful work . . . inspires us with great confidence, for it tells us what you are for us, it makes us understand the greatness of your merits, the efficacy of your power and the deep love of the Heart of Jesus for you.

(iv) THE PERPETUAL WORSHIP OF HONOUR AND REPARATION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

I. ITS END AND NATURE

All the works and efforts of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (e.g., Society M.S.C., Secular priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart, Archcon-fraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Third Order of the Sacred Heart, Congregation of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart), are directed to one single end viz., to communicate to as many as possible a true devotion to the adorable Heart of Jesus. The importance of this end will be appreciated better if one has a right idea of this devotion.

By its nature it surpasses all others, for it is directed towards the most worthy object - the Heart of the Word Incarnate:'

- It calls forth the most perfect acts of the virtue of religion.
- it increases our love of God and promotes the exercise of this love which " is the greatest and first commandment" (Matt. 22,38), and the virtue which gives value to all others. "If I have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13,2) . . . Indeed the person who loves truly the Heart of Jesus longs to give himself without reserve to Him.
- In thinking of His greatness, he wishes to humble himself before Him.
- Contemplating His great mercy and love for men, he is filled with gratitude and wants to spend himself in His service.
- Remembering His painful sufferings endured for us, he wishes to sacrifice himself in return.
- Seeing the indifference, coldness with which His love is repaid, he wants to offer himself, even to the shedding of his blood.

In a word, the Heart of Jesus becomes more and more the centre of his thoughts and affections, his only treasure - "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6,21) "Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3,11), and before long he will "have put on the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2,5) and his life - "to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil. 1,21)

It is easy to understand that from such a person the Heart of Jesus receives the honour, love and reparation He seeks. He reigns as master in the only kingdom He desires in this world - "The kingdom of God is within you." (Lk. 17,21)

Is not the practice of this devotion, as described here, the way to live a truly Christian life? ...

Could we but spread everywhere this devotion, then God would be glorified by all men and His love would reign in all hearts. Is not this the mission of the Church . . . and the remedy for the evils of our time!

Thus understood, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the quintessence of our religion, and in working to spread it we could do nothing better to bring more benefits to men and more glory to God.

It would seem that the various Associations, etc., established by the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart should, if they were fully developed, suffice to assure the reign of the Heart of Jesus in all hearts. However, there still seemed to be one thing missing which could bind together all these works and give them unity. This is the special cult we are going to propose as that of "Perpetual Worship of Honour and Reparation to the Heart of Jesus."

Presented on the 25th March 1874 to the members of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Perpetual Worship was established immediately, and it developed quickly, carrying with it treasures of grace.

II. MOTIVES FOR THE PERPETUAL WORSHIP OF HONOUR AND REPARATION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

We will point out three of these motives:

1. To unify our efforts to practise devotion to the Heart of Jesus.
2. To attain the principal end of this devotion which is reparation.
3. To respond to the urgent desires of Our Lord Himself.

This cult differs from others concerning the Heart of Jesus. Each has a particular end, whilst the perpetual Worship helps the development of all and unifies them. Thus in helping them attain their end, which is the reign of the Heart of Jesus on earth, the perpetual Worship is their completion. Thanks to it, the numerous associates of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, our priests, the members of the Third Order, etc., united in this perpetual Worship of Honour and Reparation, form one single family, one single people among whom the divine Heart is honoured in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4,24), and where He has established His reign of peace and love.

2. The final word in devotion to the Heart of Jesus is reparation, due to Him for all the outrages which He has received and continues to receive on the part of mankind. Since these outrages are countless, let the friends of the Heart of Jesus unite with one another to make reparation, and with this end in view we appeal to our 18 million associates of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to all the members of our other works, to all the faithful, to take up the practice of a perpetual worship of honour and reparation to the Heart of Jesus.

3. The express desire of our Lord Jesus Christ is to see established everywhere and for always a worship of reparation and honour to His divine Heart. Let us listen to Blessed Margaret Mary:

"This loving Heart presented Himself to me with these words: I have a burning thirst to be loved by men in the most Holy Sacrament, and I find scarcely anyone who will offer himself according to my desire to quench my thirst, by making some return to me." Another day, speaking of the ingratitude of men, He said:

"They have only coldness and rebuffs for all my eagerness to do them good. But at least give me this pleasure of supplying for their ingratitude as much as you are able."

In the famous apparition on the octave of Corpus Christi, Jesus asks that a feast be established in honour of His Heart, that Holy Communion be received on that day, an act of reparation be made for the outrages committed towards Him. Our Lord not only asked Blessed Margaret Mary for the cult of reparation; He asked the angels. They pay continuous homage to the Heart of Jesus in order to repair the sorrow that this divine Heart has suffered and still suffers in the most Blessed Sacrament through our ingratitude and coldness. (Life of B1. Margaret Mary) If the angels in heaven repair continually the ingratitude towards the Heart of Jesus, of which men on earth are guilty, should we not establish among us this perpetual Worship of honour and reparation?

Therefore in proposing to the faithful, and especially to members of our works, this practice, we are realising the most ardent desire of Our Lord.

III. REASONS FOR THE PERPETUAL WORSHIP OF HONOUR AND REPARATION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

Of what does this cult consist? How is it organised? What are its practices?

1. Of what does this cult of honour and reparation consist? It consists principally of offering each day to the Heart of Jesus all our actions, our prayers and our sorrows, in a spirit of adoration and reparation: the whole substance of devotion to the Heart of Jesus is there.

This practice does not impose any obligation, it only asks for love, love for the Heart of Jesus. All our works, however ordinary they may be, even the most indifferent, become acts of love, so long as they are done with the intention of pleasing Our Lord.

Now we can form this intention in a general way in the morning and renew it from time to time during the day. All our works, done thus for the Heart of Jesus, will become acts of love and reparation.

In order to make this cult practical, this is what is suggested: On each day of the week a special cult of honour and reparation is offered to the Heart of Jesus in the following order: (Note: the order given here by Father Chevalier was later slightly changed, as follows)

Sunday	-	cult of Adoration
Monday	-	cult of Love
Tuesday	-	cult of Thanksgiving
Wednesday	-	cult of Petition
Thursday	-	cult of Compassion
Friday	-	cult of Expiation
Saturday	-	cult of Union

That means, for instance, one offers all to the Heart of Jesus in a spirit of adoration and to make reparation for the indifference of so many who forget to adore Our Lord, or who outrage Him instead of adoring Him, etc. ... This gives to each day of the week a special character by acts of adoration, love, gratitude, expiation, supplication, etc., and all this is offered in homage and reparation to the Heart of Jesus.

2. But how is this organised, and how is it made perpetual? Certainly, the perpetual Worship can be organised on a personal basis, by taking the particular cult for each day. The essential is there and in this way the perpetual Worship is accessible to all. But to enjoy the promise which Our Lord made, to be in the midst of those who are united in His name, it is better to form groups of seven who share between them the different cults to be given to the Heart of Jesus. Each group will form a perpetual circle in which the Heart of Jesus will never remain without receiving some homage. We say groups of seven persons. This number is necessary so that each person, according to the day, can change the worship offered to the Heart of Jesus.

This method of practising the perpetual Worship is especially practical in seminaries, religious houses and boarding schools, among priests of the same district, people in the same parish. When it is not possible to form groups, it is necessary to be content with private perpetual worship.

IV. THE PRACTICE OF "REPARATEUR" OR "REPARATRICE"

Each day successively, one person of the group is reparateur. on that day, he acts in the name of all those who make up the group. On first awakening, he offers himself generously to the Heart of Jesus to fulfil the office of the day on behalf of the group and he retains this office until the same time the following day. Even sleep, offered to Our Lord, does not interrupt this mission. Each breath becomes a meritorious act - the body is sleeping, but the heart watches and each of its beats is an act of love for the Heart of Jesus.

Morning Offering: This offering each morning of all our acts of the day in a spirit of reparation and love is the basis of this devotion and is most pleasing to the Heart of Jesus.

Holy Mass: We assist at Mass in a spirit of reparation, according to the cult of the day, honouring the Heart of Jesus as victim for the world. Our Lord recommended to Blessed Margaret Mary to assist at Holy Mass with the dispositions of the Blessed Mother at the time of the Passion.

Holy Communion: We receive Holy Communion in a spirit of reparation according to the cult of the day.

Spiritual Communion: We make frequent spiritual communions. Simply the desire for Holy Communion is so pleasing to the Heart of Jesus that He said one day to Blessed Margaret Mary that these desires for communion pleased Him so much that if He had not instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, He would do so to satisfy her.

Visit to the Heart of Jesus: We love to visit the Heart of Jesus, really present in the Blessed Eucharist. Blessed Margaret Mary spent there all the time she had free and Our Lord told her how much that pleased Him.

Way of the Cross: In making the Way of the Cross, we offer to the Heart of Jesus at each station the cult of the day. For devotion to His Passion should not be separated from devotion to His Sacred Heart.

Act of Reparation: We make in the evening an act of reparation according to the cult of the day, that is to say, to show by our words to the Heart of Christ our sorrow at the sight of the ingratitude of men and our desire to compensate by our homage for all the wrongs done to Him.

Holy Hour: We make the Holy Hour on Thursdays. This exercise was taught to Blessed Margaret Mary by Our Lord. It consists in passing an hour in prayer and meditation on the agony of Our Lord in the garden of olives.

Consecration to the Heart of Jesus: After Communion, we make to the Heart of Jesus an entire offering of ourself. Blessed Margaret Mary said that this is an exercise very pleasing to the Heart of Jesus.

Mysteries of the Rosary: We meditate on the mysteries, during the recitation of the Rosary, in union with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, honouring with her the Heart of her divine Son in these different mysteries.

Zeal for the propagation of devotion to the Heart of Jesus: Our Lord promised many graces to those who would practise the devotion to His divine Heart and also to those who would make it known.

Zeal for the interests of the Heart of Jesus: To devote oneself to the interests of the Heart of Jesus, through the apostolate of good works, good example, expiation and prayer. Each remains free to do, on his day, the practices which will fit in best with his vocation and his work.

JULES CHEVALIER: MAN WITH A MISSION 1824-1907

E. J. Cuskelly, M.S.C. 1975

CASA GENERALIZIA MISSIONARI DEL SACRO CUORE ROMA

Contents

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I. [PERSON AND PLACE](#)

1. Issoudun.
2. Jules Chevalier.

CHAPTER II. [THE FIRST THREE WORKS](#)

1. Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.
2. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
3. Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart.

CHAPTER III. [SHOW ME YOUR FRIENDS](#)

1. Charles Piperon.
2. Jean-Marie Vandel.
3. Victor Jouet.

CHAPTER IV. [AMETUR UBIQUE](#)

1. Consolidation.

2. Expulsion and expansion.
3. Foreign Missions and further expansion.

CHAPTER V. [SPIRITUALITY, CHARISM, MISSION](#)

CHAPTER VI. [A SPIRIT SHARED](#)

1. Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
2. MSC Sisters.
3. The Third Order.

Introduction

CHAPTER VII. [WORTHY OF SPECIAL MENTION](#)

1. The Reluctant Novice-Master.
2. Scholar and Gentleman.
3. MSC Brothers.
4. A Multiplicity of Founders.
5. Lucien Cattin.
6. Jean Captier.
7. Quito . a Dream rvf

CHAPTER VIII. [MSC CRISIS](#)

1. General Considerations.
2. A partial Analysis.

CHAPTER IX. [THE HUMAN DRAMA](#)

1. The Crisis of Victor Jouet.
2. A Father and his Sons.

CHAPTER X. [MISSION ACCOMPLISHED](#)

1. Life in the Local Church.
2. The Laws of the Land.
3. Facts and Figures.

CHAPTER XI. [JULES CHEVALIER AND PROFILE](#)

If this book had a sub-title, it would be "Introduction to Fr. Jules Chevalier". It is meant to be just that, no less and no more. The members of the General Council thought that some of our prospective and younger members needed such an introduction. Since I had a short history of authorship behind me, they suggested that I undertake the work.

My aim has been to try to portray something of the spirit and personality of the Founder. I had to resist the temptation of trying to write a history of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (M.S.C.) and the further temptation of spending too much time on particular events, interesting as they may be. Someday someone more qualified and with more time at his disposal, will write such a history. However, since Fr. Chevalier did so many things and lived through interesting years and events, there is the danger that the man remains hidden behind his works and behind the events. That is as he would have wanted it to be.

However, for us who belong to Societies which he founded, there is a desire to know what manner of man he was. And, as I hope these pages will show, there is inspiration indeed in the knowledge. There were some difficult times in the history of the MSC Society. Since these times were not long gone, a desire to avoid hurt to living persons cast a veil of secrecy over certain events. An unfortunate result of this was that the personality of Fr. Chevalier was likewise obscured in the secrecy. This is a pity. For he was a fine and very extraordinary person. It has been a very rewarding experience, searching through the Archives, to discover something of the personal charm and spiritual strength of the man whose charism it is our privilege to share.

I hope that those who read these pages may have some of the same pleasure of discovery.

If this book had a dedication, it would be to the members of the MSC Community of the General House, Rome. Had some of them not pushed me, the book would never have been begun. Without their support, it could not have been continued. Without their advice and assistance (particularly that of Fr. J. Bertolini, "archivist extraordinary") it would not have been finished.

Rome, 1975.

E. J. Cuskelly, MSC. (Superior General)

1 PERSON AND PLACE

1. ISSOUDUN.

If you go south from Paris through the city of Orleans, you will come after a few hours (or less if a Frenchman is driving you) to the town of Issoudun. In most days it is a quiet town, 300 kilometres from Paris and off the tourist track, out in the rolling farmlands of the Department of Indre. On other days it comes surprisingly alive, for it is a centre of pilgrimage from all over France. If you do not know its history, you will wonder why this should be. You will also wonder why, for thousands of priests, brothers and nuns scattered over 30 countries of the world, Issoudun should be thought of as the place of their origins and in a sense as home.

The answer to these unspoken questions is suggested by the fact that in the crypt of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart is the tomb of Fr. Jules Chevalier, who here worked out his life's dream - over a period of more than 50 years. We ask then what his dream was and why it was *here* that he chose to work it out.

Fr. Jules Chevalier came to Issoudun in 1854, aged 30, ordained 3 years, appointed curate to the parish. And he knew that here, in this unlikely place, his true life's work could really begin.

It is wrong perhaps to speak of his dream; for he was a young man with a sense of mission. His view of his mission can be simply stated - although its accomplishment followed an arduous and winding path. It can be simply stated, for it was always simply and clearly seen. Man's greatest need, if he is to find meaning and happiness in his life, is to learn to believe in God's love for him, and to let it transform his life. Christ's whole work - for which he was sent by the Father - was to bring man to this belief. Jules Chevalier was convinced that he was called to share in this mission of making God's love known to the world. He saw that in his day, devotion to the Sacred Heart was the most effective means of declaring his message loud and clear. With the companions of his seminary days he talked of forming a band of priests to be the missionaries of Christ's love, dissipating the religious indifference that lay heavy on parts of the earth - in France itself and in foreign lands. When he wondered where to begin, he thought naturally enough of the regions of indifference he actually knew - the region of the Berry, and in this area: Issoudun came at once to my mind!

This was the vision that took shape in his mind in the latter years of his studies for the priesthood in the Major Seminary of Bourges. As far as we know there were no Crusaders among his ancestors; he was only a baker's son. In the years before he entered the Minor Seminary at the

relatively late age of 17, he himself was an apprentice shoe-maker. But there was something of the crusading spirit in his make-up; and like a tent-maker long before him, he had an infectious enthusiasm for the cause of Christ. He had, too, a certain quality which would get others to accept his leadership.

In those seminary days he set up an association among the more fervent students which was called the association of the Knights of the Sacred Heart (Chevaliers du Sacre-Coeur). This was more than a pun on the name Chevalier - it was an indication of what his association was all about. It pointed up the high ideals and the enthusiasm of the young men who were ready to go out into the world to do battle for the cause of Christ: streaming the ensign of the Christian cross against black pagans, Turks and Saracens². However *their* ensign bore the symbol of the Heart of Christ; *their* enemies were the ills of our time, indifference, incredulity, abuses³. They would go out into the world as priests to fight against all that was evil and unchristian and they would do this in dedication and self-forgetfulness.

There was a deal of romanticism in all this, it can not be denied. But there was realism, too, as later years would show. And there was the conviction and enthusiasm which is needed if one is to do anything worthwhile. Chevalier was convinced of three things:

(1) Parts of France and of the world, were suffering from a lack of living faith, from indifference. Moral ills came in the train of this lack of faith.

(2) The doctrine and devotion of the Sacred Heart was a wonderfully efficacious means to preach the Gospel message of God's love and care for men and to rouse up in human hearts a religious response. This response could only result in man's greater happiness and a greater human good.

(3) A band of missionary priests, fervent and well-formed in their own spiritual lives could be a most effective force in bringing about the results he hoped for.

Reflecting one day on the sickness that consumes our world, he was to write later, I got the idea - or rather God inspired the thought - of founding a community of missionary priests who would cure it... The further I went Op, the more I was possessed by this thought... But where should this community begin? Issoudun with its 14,000 souls and its 3 priests came to my mind immediately⁴. It came to his mind because it had a reputation for religious indifference even in the old Province of the Berry which at that time, was not noted for religious fervour. The members of the seminary association all shared its general aim: to grow spiritually through the practice of devotion to the Sacred Heart. But Chevalier's particular plan - that of founding a group of missionary priests - while generally taken to be an interesting flight of imagination, was not regarded as being very practical.

However, in the mind of Jules Chevalier, it was more than a flight of imagination and he had already marked out in his mind two young men whom he would like to have with him in his enterprise. Nevertheless, he did not have the courage to speak to them about this. One was Emile Maugenest; the other was Charles Piperon. Maugenest was a gifted young man, with a pleasing personality, zealous and dedicated. He had a prodigious memory, and was an uncommonly good speaker. His words were simple and often eloquent. In his discourses he avoided the faults of banality and over emphasis. Generally he spoke more to the heart than to the mind. He had the rare talent of making little things count; of captivating his audience and of always leaving them favourably impressed⁵.

Charles Piperon had neither the eloquence nor the personality of Maugenest, yet Fr. Chevalier saw in him the qualities of dedication and loyalty which were to shape his whole life. Time went by. The young men dreamed their dreams and went their various ways. Maugenest went to continue his studies at St. Sulpice with the idea of entering that community. Piperon, in need of a rest, took time out from his studies at home. Jules Chevalier was ordained priest on June 14th, 1851. He then devoted the first few years of his priesthood to assisting sick or elderly parish priests in their declining years. He had three appointments in quick succession: Ivoy-le-Pre, Chatillon-sur-Indre, Aubigny-sur-Nere. Then in October 1854, he was transferred as curate to Issoudun.

Issoudun! At this nomination memories of his seminary dreams came flooding back into his mind and heart. Was this then a sign that he had seen clearly all along? Had he, after his wanderings, come finally to his own land to which the Lord had called him? As he turned these questions over in his mind, he came to Issoudun, and there met the other curate, appointed some months previously: Sebastien Emile Maugenest! At St. Sulpice Maugenest's confessor had felt that it was God's will that he should return to work in the archdiocese of Bourges and had advised him accordingly.

To Chevalier this coincidence of finding himself and Maugenest together as curates in Issoudun seemed a sure sign that it was God's will that he put into practice his long-cherished plan to form a group of missionaries of the Sacred Heart. After a month's thought, he broached the subject to Fr. Maugenest and was delighted to find that the latter shared his enthusiasm for the idea. This enthusiasm, in fact, dated from the days when it had been talked of in the circle of the Knights of the Sacred Heart.

However, the enthusiastic young men could do nothing without the consent of their parish priest, Fr. Crozat, to whom they had to confide their plans. Fr. Crozat was an elderly man who had long desired and prayed for the conversion of the people of Issoudun. His health was not robust. This, together with a certain timidity of character, meant that he lacked the particular type of energy which would have been needed to bring about any large-scale and significant changes among an indifferent people. When his two young and enthusiastic curates told him of their plans, he felt that their eagerness and youthful energy might mean that there was yet hope for Issoudun. "Not only do I share your feelings, he said, but I will help you all I can to establish a house of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun: if you succeed in founding it, I can sing my *Nunc Dimittis*"⁶.

Even with the backing of their esteemed parish priest, they felt their poverty and their powerlessness. They felt the need of assurance that God indeed willed their work. This was the end of November 1854 and the Catholic Church throughout the world was preparing for the Papal definition of the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception on December 8th. They decided therefore that they would make a Novena to conclude on 8th December. They would ask Mary to obtain from her Divine Son a sign that their work was according to His will, and that He would give them the means to succeed in it. The Novena was concluded in the parish church with a certain enthusiasm and originality. Fr. Maugenest painted a special picture for the occasion - which drew this wry comment from an expert: If Our Lady heard their prayers, it was certainly not from love of art!

If our prayer is heard, they promised, we will call ourselves the missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Our particular mission will be to render to the Heart of Jesus, throne of wisdom, of love and mercy, a particular cult of adoration, homage and reparation; to spread this devotion everywhere; to make known to men, as much as we can, the treasures of sanctification which it contains; also to make Mary known and honoured in a special way - by every possible means⁷. Their prayer was heard - and ever since, December 8th 1854 has been regarded as the day that the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart came into being. After he had finished the celebration of High Mass in the Church, Fr. Chevalier was approached by a Mr. Petit, one of the few fervent parishioners, with a letter from a Mr. Philip de Bengy. Its message was: an anonymous benefactor wants to give 20,000 francs for a work for the spiritual good of the people of Berry: a house of missionaries would have his preference. The only condition was that the work had to have the approval of the Cardinal Archbishop of Bourges.

The two young curates were practically delirious with happiness, and sang their hymns of gratitude. Their older parish priest shared their faith and their gratitude, but set about thinking out practical plans to get the Cardinal's approval. He let a month go by before he sent Fr. Chevalier to see the Cardinal, bearing a letter which he had worked out long and carefully. Cardinal Dupont declared that he was disposed to accept their idea of a missionary foundation. But he thought that they should have more tangible resources than their Mass stipends and their trust in Providence. He would authorize the work when they were assured of sufficient financial support. And, he added, you might ask the Blessed Virgin

to bring to perfection what she has. already begun". Fr. Chevalier returned home and he and ir. Maugenest decided to begin a second Novena, to finish on January 28th, 1855.

Fr. Crozat did not disbelieve in Novenas - after all he had just witnessed the surprising response to their first one. However, this time he decided to take a little insurance on the side. He went begging. On January 28th, he informed his curates that another anonymous benefactor (who in fact was a well-known member of the French nobility, the Vicomtesse du Quesne) had promised to give them a yearly amount of a thousand francs- This would enable them to live. The Cardinal was convinced that the finger of God is here. In spite of the opposition of his diocesan Council, he approved the work of Frs. Chevalier and Maugenest. I promised these two priests, he said, that should they bring me a new sign of the will of God by finding resources, I would approve their project. This they have done, and so I am bound. I authorize the two curates of Issoudun to get together and begin their work. So let us name their replacements'.

Let us now look behind the scenes a little. We have seen the story as Frs. Chevalier and Maugenest lived it. To them it was all providential. But divine Providence uses human instruments and it does not take anything away from Providence to look for the human instruments behind the extraordinary coincidences and the money falling from heaven.

In this whole scene there were, in fact, two main instruments of Providence (over and above the Vicomtesse du Quesne, and the practical old parish priest who went to ask her help). They were Fr. Pierre Gasnier, and Fr. Ferdinand de Champ-grand. The former, Fr. Gasnier, came on the scene as Superior of the Major Seminary of Bourges, and as adviser to the Cardinal as a member of his Diocesan Council. When Jules Chevalier was at the Seminary, Gasnier had been Professor of Moral Theology. It would seem most likely that he knew of Fr. Chevalier's idea of starting a group of missionaries for the Berry. Certainly he favoured the idea. It would seem probable that he was then instrumental in having appointed to Issoudun two young men he knew to be likewise favourable to the idea.

Fr. Gasnier knew Fr. de Champgrand. at that time Professor at the Major Seminary of Bordeaux. They were both Sulpi-cians and good friends. Fr. de Champgrand was of a very well-to-do family of the Berry and a generous man. Many were the religious and charitable foundations which he contributed to in his lifetime. He responded with keen interest when Gasnier approached him about his idea of missionary priests for the Berry. Mr. Philip de Bengy, whose letter to Fr. Chevalier announced the gift of 20,000 francs, was Fr. de Champgrand's brother-in-law. Since he lived at Issoudun, it was natural that he should be charged with conveying the news of a gift from an anonymous benefactor who was, in fact, his own brother-in-law.

There were then two pairs of priests (Chevalier and Maugenest, Gasnier and de Champgrand) who, in different ways, had come up with the same idea: that of forming a group of priests, who would be missionaries to the poor and religiously ignorant people of the Berry countryside. De Champ-grand had promised the money to start the work if the Cardinal approved. Chevalier and Maugenest had offered to do the work. It seemed a happy coincidence. But then it became clear that the thinking of the two groups did not coincide exactly. In fact, it contrasted sharply on a very fundamental point. Fr. de Champgrand had been thinking of a group of diocesan priests who would unite to do a particular work. Fr. Chevalier felt the work could not be done effectively except by a religious congregation; his idea was to found a religious society of missionaries. De Champgrand was strongly opposed to the idea of founding new religious congregations, and even talked of withdrawing the offer of financial aid, since this was not what he had in mind.

Here, Fr. Crozat the humble and practical parish priest of Issoudun, took a hand again. He reminded de Champgrand that a promise was a promise; he suggested that the amount should be increased from 20,000 to 25,000 francs; he pointed out that the one condition laid down had been fulfilled - the Cardinal had approved. He also suggested a practical way in which Fr. de Champgrand could insure his investment: he, de Champgrand, would be the owner of the property bought with his money for the missionary group. If it succeeded, he could then make it over to the new congregation in the clear knowledge that he was helping a good and stable work. Should it not succeed, the property could be sold - and he would have retained his money which he could then put to better use.

De Champgrand eventually agreed to keep his promise and to help the new group with the money, even though he disapproved of some aspects of the undertaking.

So Frs. Chevalier and Maugenest were now in a position to put their plan into practice. This was in 1855. Looking ahead a little, let us note that by June 1856, a third member had come to join their community. He was Fr. Charles Piperon.

2. JULES CHEVALIER.

«He inspired confidence, a confidence that commanded respect. He was of medium height, well built, with an upright stance and plenty of hair. He had a pleasing appearance, a warm voice and spoke rather slowly. His modesty, his zeal, his careful attention to duty, his affable piety, and his prudence in his relations with others were things one noted¹⁰.

This was the Chevalier whom Issoudun saw in 1854. But by what routes had he come? And in what ways had he become the sort of person who inspired confidence; who was himself confident that, under God, he would succeed in the enterprise he had taken on?

The young man who came as curate to Issoudun in 1854 had already come a long hard road. Along the way he learned a number of things that made him what he was. He had learned that determined and persevering effort, even in the face of obstacles and opposition, will pay off eventually. He had learned that if the effort is made selflessly, in an attitude of readiness to seek and accept God's will, then God will make things possible, even if he does not make them easy. But, since *selflessly* is a key-word here, an ascetic effort to be selfless is continually called for.

Chevalier was born in Touraine in the little town of Richelieu (Pop. 2,500) some distance to the west of Issoudun. His parents were poor, and his father at least was not very pious. Piety in fact was a rather rare thing among the men in that part of France in those days. For, in the troubled times after the French revolution, religious education had been rather rudimentary. However, Jean-Charles Chevalier was a good man, a baptized Catholic, who was to receive the sacraments when he was dying. He married Louise Ory on January 22nd, 1811; he was aged 28 years, she was 18. Their first two children were Charles and Louise. The third, Jules, was born on March 15th, 1824.

His mother was more pious, as mothers tend to be, and she trained him well in Christian and human values. For instance she taught him not to steal - and that very effectively. Once when he was very young, he had accompanied his mother to the market and, while her back was turned, had helped himself to an apple from a merchant's stall. When they returned home, his mother saw him take his first bite from the stolen fruit. She made him return to the market, ask for pardon and give back the stolen apple, spoiled and all as it was. This one recorded and remembered example is indicative of pedagogical good sense which her son later appreciated.

She taught him other things as well - how to temper the rather-ardent and impetuous character he had inherited from his father by the good humour he could learn from her and by the courage and tenacity which he saw her exercise in difficult situations. She gave him a taste for the practice of his religion. Jules himself gives witness to this fact in a poem he wrote in later years:

Heart of Jesus, I was still very young
When my childish voice learned to say your name;
I had barely reached the age of reason
When I learned to bless and love you.
... my good and tender mother said to me:
My child, let the Heart of Jesus always be

Your support, your treasure, your light.

Then often she loved to take me to your Temple...".

For the rest, Jules passed his childhood in that special world where children live, with its mixture of accidents and practical jokes, its moments of hysterical giggling and its times of childish tragedy, the seriousness of being an altar-boy, and the irresponsibility of being a child at play. To recount any particular incident, would take away from the wonder and the ordinariness of that childhood world.

At the age of twelve, Jules was asked to leave his childhood world behind. His family was poor. His father had really been destined for a liberal profession, but because of impoverished circumstances was forced to take up a trade. First of all he started a grain business, and then became a baker. His business was not all that successful, and the family had little more than the bare necessities of life. Then shortly after Jules made his First Communion on May 29th, 1836, he made known his decision (which he had thought about for some time) to become a priest. He asked his parents to take him to the Minor Seminary of Tours where some of his cousins and friends had already gone. His mother had to explain to him that the family could not afford to pay for his studies. She advised him to take up a trade and to leave the future in the hands of God who, should it be his will, would somehow make it possible for Jules to become a priest. Jules cried with disappointment, but added: All right; I'll take up a trade since I must. But when I have saved up enough I'll go and knock on the door of some religious house, asking to be taken in so that I can finish my studies and be a priest¹². His mother smiled and friends who heard the story often asked him teasingly, through the next few years, when he was going off to this religious house.

Jules took up a trade - since he must. He became apprenticed to a shoe-maker; more interested in saving money for his studies, than he was in making and repairing shoes. It has been noted that Jules became rather serious at this stage of his life - as well he¹ might. He brought a child's earnestness to a man's task, and bore the double burden of learning a trade and yet trying to prepare himself for the priesthood. As part of this preparation he felt that he should not take part in the worldly amusements of his fellows, such as drinking wine in the cafes. He spent much of his time at the presbytery and helping the poor. And he began to study Latin, getting up early and staying up late to do so, and devoting his free time on Sunday to this task. He was teased by the other boys for this, naturally, but took it all with extraordinary good humour and composure.

He faced up to this difficult phase of his life with the determination and temperament of a fighter. It should help our appreciation of his character if we see a couple of the recorded instances of how his fighter's temperament came out in other ways. One of the servant lads in the establishment of Mr. Poirier (to whom he was apprenticed) was particularly unpleasant towards Jules - so much so that the neighbours complained and Delamotte advised Jules to give him a good punch. Jules did not take any notice until one evening, he had all that he could stand. «Listen» he said, all I would have to do would be to lift a finger and you would call for help, saying you were being killed. Is that so, said the other, I'll teach you a thing or two; and with that he struck Jules whose reactions were quick and reflexes good. The lad received a solid blow in the face and began to bleed: Help, I'm being murdered, he cried. A few days later (the pattern is still the same all over the world), the lad who lost the fight invited Jules to come along and meet his big brother who had a few things to say to him. To which Jules replied that he was not scared of either brother - big or little. Then the little brother invited him along to the cafe for a drink!

At this point let us go ahead a few years to look at the only other pugilistic incident on record. It was in the minor seminary, and in the chapel of all places. Jules was kneeling in the chapel; behind him were a couple of his fellow seminarians who liked to tease the newcomers. They pushed him a couple of times, so that he lost balance and fell forward on his hands. Then one of them did it a third time. As Jules wrote later: Instead of getting up and going out, as I should have done, I turned around and gave him such a slap on the cheek that he remembered it forever after. and never tried the same trick again".

In his seminary days, Jules saw this tendency to react to provocation as a defect that he would have to master if he were to be a good priest. It was against this characteristic that he fought when he imposed a severe discipline on himself as a seminarian. He did not think that severity had any special merit; he knew that *he* needed special discipline to bring his temperament under control. In later life he was judged at times to be hard. Possibly he was - for to that his strength and weakness would have inclined him. At other times it was a recurrence of what happened here - there was a limit to the amount of unreasonable action he felt obliged to endure.

In early 1841 a man called Mr. Juste passed through Richelieu. He did not normally come this way, since the town was off the beaten track. This time he came by chance. However, if you believe that Providence rules chance choices, you will see something providential here. Among other things, Mr. Juste was administrator of a tract of forests situated near Vatan, 21 kilometres to the north of Issoudun. At that time, he let it be known, he was looking for a man who would work for him as caretaker of the forests. At Richelieu the man recommended to him - and accepted for the job - was Jean Charles Chevalier. In offering him the position, Mr. Juste said: I believe that you have a son who wants to be a priest; if you wish, I shall be happy to take care of his entry into the seminary...¹⁴.

If God wants something, he will make it possible, although he may not make it easy. The Chevalier family left Richelieu and moved to Vatan in March 1841. To be more exact, they moved to a house 4 miles from this town of 3,000 people. They lived in the house reserved for the caretaker of the forests. Jules walked the 4 miles to town and back each day, so that under the tuition of Fr. Deldevese, the curate, he could continue his latin lessons. In October that year, at the age of 17, he entered the Minor Seminary of Saint-Gaultier.

It had been made possible for him to begin his seminary course but the beginnings were not easy. He was a seventeen-year old among children four to five years younger. He had come from Richelieu and not from the Berry: he was an outsider by origin and age. There is little variety in seminary life; it can be deadly dull, especially if you have no companions of your age or interest. Chevalier later confessed that this was the one time that he had serious doubts about his vocation: he was strongly tempted to leave the seminary, and go home. But with some good counselling from the Superior he saw the crisis through and finished his studies, passing in 1846 to the Major Seminary of Bourges.

We have already seen something of the more momentous things that he was to discover at Bourges. He was universally regarded as a very good seminarian, virtuous, sincere and hardworking. It is interesting to read the different reports. They all point out that although he might not be the most brilliant of students he worked extremely hard and had very fine qualities of character. Even the longer reports really say no more than this one says - great eloquence in its very brevity -Excellent in piety, average in intelligence,»¹⁵.

In ten years in the seminary, a man of piety, determination and generosity can come a long way. A man of study and prayer can grow very close to Christ, Jules Chevalier was that sort of a man. To try to give an account of all phases of his spiritual growth would be to go through all the aspects of the spiritual life. Let it be simply said that Jules Chevalier was the kind of a man who came a long way in his dedicated seminary years, a man who, in that time, grew ever closer to Christ. He became, through his whole heart and soul, what he was soon to become in name and in fact: a missionary of the Sacred Heart¹⁶.

Notes Chapter 1

¹ Fr. Chevalier makes frequent reference to Issoudun when he recalls his seminary days, and his years as a young curate.

². Shakespeare, Richard II.

³ In the 'Formula Instituti' and early Constitutions, the ills of the world are mentioned in some detail. The crusading spirit comes out in this text: *Ipsium Societatis nomen satis indicat quo sub signo militare appetat Societas.*

⁴ From an early Chevalier Ms, written about 1859; quoted by Vermin (= Vermin, Le Pere Jules Chevalier, Rome, Maison Generalice MSC, 1957), p. 68.

⁵ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes (1902), pp. 32-33. *ib.*, p. 35.

⁷ Chevalier, Ms Annales de la Petite SocietS (1901) pp. 3-4.

⁸ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 37.

⁹ *ib.*, p. 40.

¹⁰ Sadouet, Ms Souvenirs personnels; and Piperon, Ms Notice sur les origines (1899), pp. 31-32, quoted by Vermin, p. 108.

¹¹ Chevalier, Ms Plans divers pour un careme, quoted by Vermin, p. 6.

¹² Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 8.

¹³ *ib.*, p. 18.

¹⁴ *ib.*, p. 12.

¹⁵ Quoted by Vermin, p. 44.

¹⁶ There were some specific and important occasions in his life during the seminary years. These will be mentioned in Ch. V., in the context of the development of Chevalier's spirituality.

* Only titles of *published* material are printed with quotation marks.

2 THE FIRST THREE WORKS

1. MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART.

In the year 1855, On Sunday, September 9th, feast of the Holy Name of Mary, the missionaries were installed by His Eminence, Cardinal Dupont, Archbishop of Bourges, and received the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart'.

Fr. Chevalier's account is correct, but it leaves some things unsaid. Firstly, the Cardinal being ill, the Vicar General installed them in his stead. Secondly, they were installed in a barn! Admittedly the barn had been disguised as a chapel - but their material beginnings were humble indeed. With limited funds their choice of properties was limited, too. They bought a house which had been abandoned for years, together with a barn or store-room, both buildings situated in a garden with an adjoining vineyard. They set about transforming this property into the first house of their religious community.

The transformation was not easy. All the money the young priests had, had been used up in the purchase of the property. They were helped by a man of the parish, a Mr. Voisin. His son had studied in the seminary with Fr. Chevalier and his brother was a priest too. He had helped Fr. Chevalier find and acquire the property, even lending him 5,000 francs. They had to make some necessary repairs and adjustments. He also helped them in this work, for he was a good carpenter. With his help they made repairs to the buildings, removed some of the dividing walls in the barn to make one larger building and 'disguised the age of the walls with red and white paint'². And when all this was done, Fr. Chevalier had to admit that this improvised chapel had the privilege of an extreme poverty and a wretched appearance³.

The group of Missionaries was launched; it would need a lot of effort if it were to stay afloat. We have previously mentioned Chevalier's fighting qualities and his determined perseverance. He was going to need them now. About a month after his installation, his 'wretched chapel' threatened to fall down about his ears. In fact it started to fall down around the statue of St. Joseph. The dividing walls which had been removed had been retaining walls as well; and one of the side walls began to collapse. Mr. Voisin, as good a neighbour as his name implies, came to the rescue once more. He summoned workmen to arrest the collapse and repaired the crumbling wall. Some sympathetic benefactors paid for the repairs. However, it was clear that the old building did not have many years ahead of it and that a new chapel would have to be built.

It did last a few years more. But in 1858, the Cardinal Archbishop of Bourges temporarily condemned it and ordered it closed. He had been told that it was a public danger, likely to collapse at any moment. Therefore he ordered it to be closed. He would allow it to be re-opened for public worship only after a conscientious architect had declared that it would not fall down. Consequently an architect was called in, further repairs were effected and it was declared safe to be opened once more to the public.

One good result of this last incident was that a decision was made to get to work on building a real church. For this it was first necessary to buy an adjoining piece of ground as a site for the new church. An appeal was made to Fr. de Champ-grand, the original benefactor. He helped them buy the new property. Then the fathers set about collecting funds for the building. Some money came as gifts, some from the sale of images of the Sacred Heart. The total result was sufficiently encouraging for them to begin the foundations in March, 1859. The foundation-stone was blessed on June 26th of that year. Fr. Piperon preached appeals throughout the diocese and beyond. He also went as far as the Midi and Savoy to collect funds for the church. The new Archbishop of Bourges, de La Tour d'Auvergne, appointed in 1861, encouraged the work. In fact he was to be a life-long friend and supporter of the MSC community. On July 2nd, 1864, the Archbishop solemnly consecrated the church which today is the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

All their efforts were not taken up with material building: they were missionaries and dedicated to their work. The poverty of their first chapel caused them no concern - especially since it was well frequented. But they were concerned about the fact that very few men came to worship. Therefore Fr. Chevalier decided to institute a Men's League of the Sacred Heart. Starting in October 1856, he visited the 'homes of the people, and made many personal contacts. After a few months he had 30 men inscribed in his League. He announced a Men's Mass on one Sunday of the month. It was quite an event to have 30 men attend - men of the people, winegrowers, farmers, workmen, etc. At Easter 1857, fifty or so men went to communion - it was the first public communion of men at Issoudun since the beginning of the century. By the end of that year 300 men were listed as members of the League of the Sacred Heart.

Fr. Maugenest was much appreciated as a preacher and was much in demand. Together, he and Fr. Chevalier were making a definite contribution to the Christian life of Issoudun and nearby parishes. At the same time they were intent on building up their own religious community. They wanted their first year to be a Novitiate year, so they devoted a good deal of time to meditation and study. Manual labour also had its place in their lives, for they could not afford to pay anyone to work for them. They did their own housekeeping and their own cooking. Any religious Congregation has its Constitutions or Rules, and Fr. Chevalier, in what he called a 'Provisional Essay', drew up the Rules of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He was the religious superior and rector of the public chapel, taking care of the services there, while Maugenest looked after the preaching in the surrounding churches.

Towards the end of 1856 they could consider their Novitiate completed and on Christmas day of that year, they took their religious vows. These were private vows, since their group had not yet been officially approved as a religious congregation. But of course this public approval was not needed for them to feel bound in conscience by the vows they made. For their taking of vows they had one witness: Fr. Charles Piperon, a friend from seminary days who had come to join them. He had been ordained on June 10th, 1854, and later appointed to Bourges as chaplain to the hospice and to the prison. Within the small community he looked after the finance - what there was of it. He also acted as hospital chaplain.

The young missionary religious community was taking shape nicely, when it, too, was threatened with collapse. Agent of the threat was the Cardinal Archbishop of Bourges. As we have seen, he had shown himself favourable to the enterprise. But when faced with the difficulty of finding a priest for an important position in the diocese, his decision was ruled by the immediate need. He was having some difficulty in finding a

priest to be archpriest of the cathedral parish and dean of the city of Bourges. While he was looking for a solution to his difficulty, Fr. Maugenest came to Bourges to preach the Advent sermons in the church of St. Peter. Here, as always, his preaching made a deep impression. The Archbishop, knowing his many qualities as priest and preacher, but believing him at least five years older than his 28 years, told him that he was going to appoint him archpriest of the Cathedral.

Fr. Maugenest, objected, wept, made other suggestions. He spoke of the work at Issoudun which his departure could jeopardise. It was all to no avail. The Cardinal said authoritatively: I am your Archbishop, and as such, your superior; you owe me obedience⁴. Fr. Chevalier, when he, too, came to plead with the Archbishop to leave Fr. Maugenest with him, met with the same inflexible attitude. If this was a bitter blow for Fr. Maugenest, for Fr. Chevalier it was even more bitter. The Cardinal had not only reduced his little community to two - he had taken away the most gifted member of the group. Fr. Maugenest, because of his personal charm, his gift of eloquence which made so much impression, and at the same time his humble and unassuming personality, was the one who gave Chevalier and Piperon great hopes that their community would amount to something. It is easy to understand that Fr. Chevalier should be bitterly disappointed and that Fr. Piperon could write; they had taken from him the only one on whom he could count. What could he do from now on with one subject only and that one of so little value?⁵

What they both did was to go to the Trappist monastery of Fontgombault to make a retreat. They came back from this retreat resigned to their loss, but convinced that it was the will of God that they continue with their work.

In that last quotation Fr. Piperon reveals much of what he always was: a genuinely humble man intensely devoted to Fr. Chevalier and his work. He was to be, in many ways through word and writing, the best interpreter of Fr. Chevalier's ideas and spirit; he was to work loyally with him all his life. He was a perfect second, never aspiring to lead -but always to help; ever convinced that he had little to give, but always ready to give it all. But what he had to give he wanted to give within a religious community and not out in a permanent parochial ministry. In fact when Fr. Chevalier suggested that, after Fr. Maugenest, the Archbishop might send them, too, to work in parishes, Piperon replied: In that case I shall look for a religious congregation that will have me. I'll go to the ends of the earth rather than accept a parish⁶.

Fr. Chevalier later wrote of him as the dear and venerated Fr. Piperon... . Pious, good, zealous, charitable and devoted, fearing neither work nor fatigue, nor privations⁷.

In 1859 Fr. Chevalier began to show signs of fatigue. He lived poorly and worked hard. The efforts - and the trials - of the last few years had drained much of his physical energy. Having lost Fr. Maugenest and having had his troubles with the Archbishop, he felt himself somewhat alone and unsupported in his efforts. He was living another moment like that of his early days in the seminary when he felt very much alone.

Then encouragement came to him from a number of quarters.

A priest friend took him on a vacation for the first two weeks of July. On July 14th he had the privilege of an interview with the saintly Cure of Ars, John-Mary Vianney. This holy man told him that, although he had further trials ahead of him, his new society would be blessed by God and would do much good in the Church. Encouraged by these words and by the fact that the Cure promised to make a Novena of Prayer joined in spirit with the community of Issoudun, Fr. Chevalier went back home. Later in the year, a visit to Paray-le-Monial, shrine of the Sacred Heart, gave him further confirmation in his vocation.

On his return from Paray, says Fr. Piperon, he was a new man. Gone were his worries, to be replaced by a calm acceptance of whatever God's will might be. At the same time, he had a greater confidence than ever that his work would succeed. His conversations and his sermons showed that at Paray he had drawn further inspiration and further confirmation in his spirituality of the Heart of Christ.

In August 1860 another priest friend took him to Rome with him where he had a private audience with Pope Pius IX to whom he spoke of his religious congregation and the work he envisaged for it. The Pope listened kindly, praising his efforts to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart and giving his blessing to Fr. Chevalier's work.

With the appointment of Archbishop de La Tour d'Auvergne to Bourges as Coadjutor, and then his taking over the Archbishop, Fr. Chevalier knew he had a staunch friend and supporter at home. With new hope, he devoted himself to carrying on his work. He mounted the pulpit that Fr. Maugenest had left vacant, even if he could not preach as well. Fr. Piperon, who has a delightful way of saying things in a way he does not quite mean, wrote: Often, ...he was truly eloquent. And even at the times when he was not so eloquent, he had a strong and pleasant voice and carried his audience along with him because of his zeal and sincerity, especially when he spoke of the infinite mercy of the Heart of Jesus, and the greatness of Mary*.

Of his own preaching, Fr. Piperon does not give an account, although he, too, preached far and wide, appealing for money for the new Church of the Sacred Heart and spreading devotion to Our Lady.

2. OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART.

Looking back over more than a century one might be tempted to judge 'that Fr. Chevalier and his missionaries spent a disproportionate amount of time on propagating devotion to Our Lady. One might also be inclined to think that much effort was diverted from missionary work into building up the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Before drawing these conclusions and in order to understand the growth of Fr. Chevalier's work, we need to see things in the perspective of 19th century Catholic piety. It was in this perspective that his own spiritual life developed and that his work was done. It was an age of Marian piety. To Jesus through Mary was an old Christian adage that had entered into the life of the people, who responded more readily to popular devotions in honour of the Madonna than they would have done to practices which today might be considered more theological and more liturgical. Jesus and Mary were closely associated in any prayer - and in many a Christian practice of piety.

Shortly after I was baptized, she (my mother) took me to the Church and consecrated me to the Blessed Virgin and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. u gave a very poetic colouring. Jules Chevalier wrote this memory of a consecration which he considered very real'. When he formed his special group in the seminary it was called the association of the knights of the Sacred Heart *and of Mary*.

Later when at Issoudun he sought a sign that it was God's will that he should begin his group of missionaries, he and Fr. Maugenest decided to make a Novena to Our Lady. They promised, that should their prayer be heard they would spread devotion to the Heart of Christ, and would make Mary loved and known in a special way, by all possible means. We have already seen how, on two occasions, just as the two young priests concluded a Novena to Mary, they received two different and generous promises of assistance which made their work possible. It was natural that he should say in later years: Our Lady has done everything in our Congregation.

It was natural, too, that against the general background⁸: the times and with his own particular experiences, he should look to Mary for continued help in his work of bringing the love of the Heart of Christ to men and of bringing men to believe in and respond to that love. A further natural development was that he and his companions should begin to think and speak of Mary as Our Lady of the Sacred Heart⁹. At that time new titles and special devotions played a more significant part in popular religious practice than they do today. There is a certain note of excitement running through the stories of the discovery of the new title and the establishment of the new devotion. Any new devotion had to have the approval of the Holy See, and wary eyes were watching for suspect innovations in doctrine and practice - as Fr. Chevalier was to learn by experience later. Therefore he seems to have given a good deal of thought and prayer to the whole idea before launching it.

Once during the summer of 1857, while he was relaxing with his fellow-priests, they were discussing plans and ideas for the new church they were building, Chevalier asked what were their thoughts about the title under which Mary should be honoured in the new church. Various

suggestions were made - but of course he was leading up to the proposal he had had in mind for some time: that of honouring Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In explaining what he meant he said that the title Our Lady of the Sacred Heart indicates Her who was blessed among all women by the Heart of a loving God. At the same time it points to her as the Mother of men whose only desire is to lead all men to the Heart of her Son. Finally this name makes us understand that our heavenly Mother, sharing in Christ's triumph in eternal glory, is forever our powerful advocate with the Heart of her loving Son¹⁰.

The idea was simple and clear - everyone was enthusiastic about it. At the beginning of 1861, when preparations were being made for the inauguration of the first part of the church, Fr. Chevalier wanted it to include a stained-glass window of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The first image was (like the idea itself) the result of a simple juxtaposition of an image of Mary and an image of Christ. First he took a well-known image of Mary Immaculate, standing with her hands extended towards the earth, signifying that she makes grace rain upon the earth. In front of this statue he placed the figure of the Christ child, indicating his Heart with his left hand and pointing to his Mother with his right - as if to say: It is through my Mother that the treasures of my Heart are poured out on earth.

The devotion took on immediately. Certainly not all would have appreciated the full theological content which Fr. Chevalier had in mind. Many were chiefly interested in her power of intercession. But even this could be the beginnings of growth to a more selfless devotion and to a discovery of the unfathomable riches of the Heart of Christ. In his concern to dissipate the religious indifference of the Berry, Fr. Chevalier would of course have considered all the possible ways and means of succeeding. Now the Confraternity was an old and efficacious means of nourishing the spiritual life of the laity - if one could get the laity interested in becoming members of a confraternity.

These brotherhoods, or spiritual associations go back a long way. St. Boniface really got them going as spiritual and charitable unions. They were a way of having christian values permeate the whole life of the laity. By the acceptance of a certain 'rule of life' the members found a practical way of seeing that they prayed and kept the eternal truths in mind. In the earlier centuries much stress was put on works of charity - as in later Catholic action. Later the accent was put more strongly on the prayer and piety side of the spiritual life.

Marian confraternities were rare before the 13th century, when they really blossomed in Italy and then spread to other countries in Europe. All confraternities flourished insofar as they could nourish popular spiritual piety.

Obviously there was a number of things pointing towards the establishment of a Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. They pointed towards it, not as something apart from Fr. Chevalier's main work, but as an extremely efficacious means of achieving all that he wanted to do. This was an age when people came to Jesus through Mary; it was a time when confraternities expressed and nourished the spirituality of the laity. People showed signs of responding enthusiastically to this new devotion which, 'in a way they had not thought of before', linked Christ, Mary and men in the bonds of a love that was tender and compassionate. Even the fearful and the indifferent could be led to confidence and friendship with Christ, where they had not responded to the call to religious duties presented in other ways.

The missionaries of the Sacred Heart drew the obvious conclusions. They worked at spreading devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and also establishing a Confraternity with the same title. It soon became clear that they found a most effective way of carrying out their mission of bringing men to the Heart of Christ in faith and love.

Fr. Charles Piperon played a large part in the early publicising of the devotion. In 1862 and 1863 he travelled a lot to preach appeals for the new church at Issoudun. To priests whom he met on his trips he spoke of the new devotion, explaining it with the help of images which he gave out. One of the priests he met was a famous Jesuit, Fr. Ramiere, editor of the review *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. A short article on the devotion - given him by Fr. Piperon - was published as a study in his review. In this way it became known throughout France and 'beyond'.

The spread of the devotion was really extraordinary. In almost every place that the MSC were to go in subsequent years they found that the devotion had preceded them. To some extent this was due to Fr. Ramiere's publications and to the fact that the Jesuits made the devotion known in many places where they had missions.

The local Archbishop, de La Tour d'Auvergne, was also keenly interested in the devotion and was anxious to see an association or confraternity established, asking Fr. Chevalier to write statutes for such an association. These Statutes were approved by the Archbishop on January 29th 1864, and on April 6th, 1864 the Confraternity was solemnly proclaimed in the church of the Sacred Heart. The Archbishop had his own name inscribed as the first member of the Confraternity. There were thousands of others even in the first few weeks. So many were the demands to admit new members and to set up filial branches, that a request was made to Rome to have the association made an Archconfraternity. Among the filial branches was one at Sittard in Holland, a number in Belgium (e.g. at Averbode), others in Italy. This spread of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was one of the factors which led to a number of young people from outside France asking later to be admitted to the MSC Society.

SECULAR PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART.

It is possible for a man to get so caught up in his particular work that he fails to see the importance of other similar efforts. It is not unknown for religious to be more concerned, with the good of their own group than the good of the whole Church. Fr. Chevalier's goal was as broad as the Church and the world: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!' His group of missionaries, he hoped, would make an important contribution towards this end. But there were others, too, working for the same goal.

Out in the French countryside, the first field for his work, there was already a number of priests working. Often they lived alone, and always in a certain isolation from their fellow priests. They were not always as successful as they wanted to be in their efforts to foster Christian fervour. At times they were disheartened and discouraged. Fr. Chevalier believed they could be helped to renew their courage and their ministry. As a means of helping them in their own-spiritual lives and in their priestly apostolate he set out to form an association of Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart. This was not a new idea; there was already a number of such associations throughout France. But some of these groups obviously needed new life. Fr. Chevalier hoped to achieve this by federating the various groups and centering them on Issoudun. The heart of the wider fraternity would be the central group of religious Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. But all who shared the spirit and the aims of the MSC would make up the wider brotherhood. At the same time this brotherhood could and should extend to include lay-people who would share the same apostolic spirituality of the Sacred Heart. We find therefore that, at one stage, Fr. Chevalier sees his total Institute as embracing 3 categories: 1. Religious in the strict sense; 2. A group of affiliated Priests of the Sacred Heart; 3. Tertiaries.

If this association with the MSC were to have its desired effects, it would give spiritual help and renewed apostolic zeal to men out in the field of the apostolate. And if it did that, it would seem a natural consequence that some priests would feel that they would receive greater spiritual support by becoming members of the religious group. This in fact was to happen. The thought of this possibility presented Fr. Chevalier with a problem. His group existed to do active missionary work in the field. Would he be justified in withdrawing men from that work to bring them in to live in his religious group? His conclusion - as early as 1863, - was that such priests could become members of his religious congregation while remaining in their parishes as long as pastoral necessity demanded. This was the case very soon for Fr. Guyot, parish priest of St. Paul's at Montlucon, and Fr. Durin, parish priest of Nocq-Chamberat.

This undertaking to contribute to the spiritual good of the 'affiliated Secular Priests' was a good work and a big one. It was in fact a bit too big for the MSC group at Issoudun to handle effectively at that stage of its development. The group simply did not have enough personnel to be able to give the scattered priests the support (pastoral and spiritual) which - rightly - they expected from their Association. For this reason, and for one other, their ties with the MSC Congregation were gradually to disappear. The second reason was that it was not clear what exactly

those ties were. Were the affiliated secular priests *members* of a total wider Institute or were they merely associated with it? When the basic text of the MSC religious group (the Formula Instituti) was approved in 1869, the other two branches, Secular Priests and Tertiaries, were approved only as works of the Society.

For many years Fr. Chevalier and his priests carried out an apostolate of spiritual animation of the group of Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart affiliated to the MSC. They wrote letters and circulars. When Fr. Delaporte entered the MSC congregation he was made responsible for this work. He edited a review for them and drew up a set of Rules. Their number became quite large and even extended to other countries, e.g. Switzerland.

Meanwhile, other religious Congregations sought to have their own groups of affiliated secular priests. Other associations were formed under the patronage and the name of the Sacred Heart. In France and Italy today there are Apostolic Unions of priests of the Sacred Heart. However, the particular group once associated with the MSC Society ceased to exist as a specific association.

It must be noted, however, that Fr. Chevalier's work for these secular priests had notable, even vital, repercussions for his own Congregation.

It helped him think out the life-style that his own religious group demanded: not monastic, yet not just an association of priests. In the three-fold division mentioned above: It is the religious who form the elect body of the society (the elite); they can be ecclesiastics or lay-people (clerics, or lay-brothers and non-clerical students), living in community or dispersed in the world, carrying out the duties belonging to them. They will bear the name Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or Religious of the Sacred Heart. They will make the vows of Obedience, Poverty, Chastity and Stability. These are annual vows for five years and then perpetual. However, nobody is obliged to take perpetual vows - although the principal office-bearers in the Society will be chosen from among those who have pronounced perpetual vows. "

For the members who were religious in the strict sense, vows were required - which from 1869 to 1877 were made as perpetual vows at the first profession. The affiliated priests were free to take vows or not as they wished; although their taking of vows was not considered a religious profession.

Furthermore, this work for the association of Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart brought him into contact with other priests who shared his aims. It brought a number of them to enter his religious Society.

Here it may be as well to make two observations which will have to be made sometime during this work.

Firstly, note how Fr. Chevalier's vision of his work is broadening. Or note how little of his work is actually being done in and for the Berry; how much of his concern - with the Association of Secular priests and the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - goes beyond the boundaries of one Province; how few of his priests even at this early stage (1860's) come from the Berry, or work there in the ministry.

We can perhaps take the year 1867 as a milestone in the history of the MSC group, since in that year the second Community was established at Chezal-Benoit with the Apostolic School beside it. By the beginning of that year the list of the MSC personnel reads like this:

1. Fr. Jules Chevalier 'stationed at Issoudun, and working chiefly in the Chapel' of the Sacred Heart.
2. Fr. Charles Piperon, working with Chevalier, and also going out preaching in many places.
3. Fr. Antoine Mousseaux came to Issoudun to join the MSC in 1863, and took Piperon's place as chaplain to hospices.
4. Fr. Jean-Baptiste Guyot - parish priest at Montluçon.
5. Fr. Joseph Durin - at Nocq-Chamberlat.
6. Fr. Louis Bazire (a Norman) works at Issoudun in the Office of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
7. From Marseilles, came Fr. Victor Jouet. While remaining in the diocese of Marseilles, he becomes editor of the Annals.

These last four priests all came to the MSC in 1864.

8. In 1865, came a Breton, Fr. Paulin Georgelin, who, in 1867 was professor in a clerical school at Rimont.

9. Fr. Jean-Marie Vandell, from the diocese of Lausanne. Founder of L'Oeuvre des Campagnes, he continues this work, and travels to many parts of France.

10. Fr. Pierre Malabat - preacher and writer.

11. Fr. Celestin Laporte, from the diocese of Tours.

We spoke of a broadening vision not of a changing one and this brings us to our second observation. The founding of a religious congregation is not done in one day - it is a drawn-out process lasting through the active life of the Founder. Nor does the Founder have his total vision clear in all its details right from the very start. He is conscious of being urged on by his sense of mission; but how exactly this mission will work out in practice he will know only as he meets and adapts to factual situations. Fr Chevalier's original motto was May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be *everywhere* loved. Although for practical reasons he looked at and spoke of the Berry, he was carried beyond its boundaries by the sudden and extremely widespread interest in the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the Confraternity. Likewise his work for the Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart quickly took him beyond provincial boundaries.

In fact, as a student he had been counselled into limiting his vision to the Berry. He had then been very attracted to the foreign missions. We shall see this later when treating of the foreign missions as one of the chief works of the MSC society. However, he was in a *diocesan* seminary; he had entered to work in the diocese. In spite of his attraction for the foreign missions, it was quite understandable that his director should have told him to forget it and to prepare for work in the diocese where missionary work was necessary enough. He had limited his vision to the diocese for so he had been counselled. But the course of events in his life were breaking down the imposed limitations and forcing him into the broader vision of what his group might work for: that the Heart of Christ might be loved everywhere.

Notes Chapter 2

¹ Chevalier, Notre-Dame du Sacre-Coeur, 4 ed., Issoudun, Pele-rinage, 1895, p. 4.

² Abbe Dalailier, quoted by Vermin, p. 136.

³ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 42.

⁴ *ib.*, p. 48; and Piperon, Le T.R.P. Jules Chevalier, simple notice biographique, Lille, Soc. Saint Augustin, 1912, pp. 32-33.

⁵ Piperon, Ms Notice, pp. 60-61; and Piperon, Ms Le T.R.P. Chevalier (1904), pp. 73-74, quoted by Vermin, p. 160.

⁶ *ib.*

⁷ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 47.

⁸ Piperon, Le T.R.P. Jules Chevalier, 1912, p. 30.

⁹ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 3.

¹⁰ It is possible of course to explain all Mariology in connection with the title, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. But if a devotion is to be helpful, as a devotion, it must be both rich in content, and simply seen. Cf. Art. *Devotion* in Diet, de Spiritualite.

¹¹ Plan de la Societe des Missionnaires du Sacre-Coeur, Bourges, Pigelet (1864), p. 11.

We have already met Fr. Píperon. Since this is a book about Fr. Chevalier there is no possibility of doing justice to the life and person of any of his faithful collaborators. But they must at least be introduced. If there is an MSC 'old faithful', it must surely be Fr. Charles Píperon. Born on July 26th in 1828 at Vierzón, he was ordained on June 10th, 1854. In 1856 he joined up with Fr. Chevalier as an MSC.

He would die on February 16th, 1915, after almost 60 years in the Congregation which he served devotedly in many important ways. He led the little MSC band into Holland when they were first forced to leave France. Then he was Novice Master from 1880 to 1898. He was Assistant General from 1869 to 1905.

Many things could be said about him. However, nothing that was said would do him greater justice than what was written of him by Fr. Emile Maugenest. For another reason, too, it is best to let Fr. Maugenest speak here. He was a co-founder of the MSC Society and, but for exceptional circumstances, would probably himself have been one of the life-long collaborators of Fr. Chevalier. As it was he was a life-long friend, both of Chevalier and the MSC. On hearing of the death of Fr. Píperon at Thuin in Belgium he wrote on March 5th 1915;

This morning of the first Friday of the month, I come down from the altar where I celebrated holy Mass so that by the application of the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the gates of heaven might be opened to dear Fr. Píperon who loved this Heart so much and served him so well and for sixty years worked so hard for his glory.

He did so much for the Sacred Heart by his words, his prayer and by his cooperation in the foundation, the support and the progress of the great work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun. Above all it was by his example that he contributed powerfully to the establishment and continuance of the work and to the spiritual formation of its religious. The spirit of your Order was to be, in effect, the realization of the great commandment of the Sacred Heart: Learn of me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Thanks be to God, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart practise, in all things and in the highest degree, the virtues of this adorable heart. Above all else, this is their strength; it is this which gives edification; it is this which gains for them the admiration, the esteem and the confidence of men; it is this which draws down God's blessings on their undertakings, their works and their ministry. These abundant blessings are visible in the immense propagation of the archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in the astonishing vitality of their Apostolic Schools, in the rapidity and development of their conquests of apostolic zeal in your missions of Oceania.

If the spirit of your Order has so much value, what more can we say to the glory of the humble Fr. Píperon than to salute, in his admirable life, the perfect example of this spirit which is none other than that of the Sacred Heart.

"Yes, if the merit and the glory of the eminent Fr. Chevalier is that he founded your order by the force of his creative genius, the merit and the glory of the humble Fr. Píperon is that he gave you your spirit by his practice of the virtues of the Sacred Heart. For more than 60 years he was a model of these virtues before our very eyes,

I loved him much and admired him more. I have never known anyone who was so humble, nor anyone who to me seemed marked to the same degree with the true seal of sanctity.

Maugenest went on to express the wish that, after the war, Fr. Píperon's body would be brought from Belgium where he had died, to be buried in the crypt of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, beside Frs. Chevalier and Vandel.

That is his place, he continued, and if then I am still of this world, and as strong as I am today, the desire to kiss the relics of this venerable priest will perhaps make me travel once more, before I die, the road to Issoudun '.

In response to a request to elaborate further on what he had said about Fr. Píperon in this letter, Fr. Maugenest later wrote:

One thing only in his life struck me, but it struck me so strongly and deeply that I have the full certitude of having known him well and appreciated him truly. This co-founder, with Fr. Chevalier of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, was the perfect exemplar of the spirit and virtues proper to your order. He was meek and humble of heart - everywhere, in all things, with everyone and always.

His meekness

Fr. Píperon had a strong will, a great strength of character, and he really proved it by his constancy in his vocation and his fidelity to the work of Fr. Chevalier at that time of trial at the beginnings of the foundation when all the first companions of the founder... abandoned him. In all that he did, in all the works entrusted to his devotion, in all difficulties, he always showed this moral strength. So his gentleness, or meekness, was not, in his case, a matter of temperament. It was the result of virtue. But this gentleness enveloped and hid so completely both his force of will and strength of character that the almost universal opinion of those who knew him saw in him, rather than the virtue of meekness, the natural good nature of a peaceful temperament. How wrong they were! His gentleness was truly the virtue of meekness, from which flowed charity, goodness, devotedness, the affability which he showed in all his dealings with others: with his superiors, his equals, with the sick in the hospitals, with the boys in the Apostolic School, with the faithful entrusted to his care and to his zeal. I have never heard anyone say that they saw him angry, impatient or ill-humoured. From this viewpoint of meekness, I myself always found him constant, with never a failure even in circumstances in which contradiction tried his patience.

His humility

In my long life which has put me in contact with so many good priests and holy religious, I have never known anyone who seemed to me to be as humble as Fr. Píperon. Only God sees the depths of the heart. But to judge from his words, acts, conduct, in short from his whole life, Fr. Píperon was truly humble of heart. His was indeed a humility of the heart - conceived inspired and produced from his heart to become the salient and characteristic feature of his life - and this to the point that this universal humility was the first thing which struck those who met him. He was humble everywhere and in all things.

Humble in his reserved attitude, in his modest comportment, in his quickness to take the last place everywhere. Humble in his words. He was intelligent and learned, knowing well what he knew, endowed with sure and solid judgment. Nevertheless, especially in conversation and discussion, he appeared diffident and reserved.

Humble in his hidden monastic life during the first years of the foundation. The 'monastery' at the Sacred Heart was so poor that the Fathers themselves had to take care of all the chores, even the most menial. You would have had to have seen him to have an idea of the joyful and charitable eagerness with which he took on himself all that was most difficult and least dignified. He was sacristan, gardener, cook, all at the same time, and seemed happiest when he was sweeping the house and washing the dishes.

Humble in his public life and ministry. He had a good grasp of doctrine and he spoke easily. But it was so often his turn to speak and, moreover in the early years he had so much to do, that he often mounted the pulpit with insufficient preparation and had to improvise. But the simplicity with which he consented to speak in these circumstances, with no preoccupation about the opinion of the congregation, showed that his humility, in the ministry of preaching, was not inferior to his zeal.

Humble in humiliations. To undergo humiliations without being troubled or preoccupied, without sadness, revolt, or bitterness against those who cause them is perhaps the best proof of true and sincere humility. In a marked degree, Fr. Píperon had this quality of humility.

Earlier I mentioned his improvising in the pulpit. These improvisations often resulted in failures in oratory - and he accepted the humiliation with perfect serenity. Also he had external natural defects which did not lessen his affability, but did render his conversation less pleasant than it might have been - and led to criticism, teasing and jokes from his confreres, especially among the secular clergy. His was the same good humour and the same readiness to forgive which characterizes the humility of children. This is the most perfect humility, which Jesus give us as the model of ours...². This was Fr. Chevalier's dear and venerated Fr. Píperon.

2. JEAN-MARIE VANDEL.

The devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was to be an influence in later bringing young men to join the Society. The work for the Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart brought a number of men already priests to become members of the Congregation. One of these, in fact, was also to bring with him the idea and the initiative which made possible the acceptance and formation of the younger men. This was Fr. Jean-Marie Vandel.

It was their common interest in the priests of the country parishes which brought Frs. Chevalier and Vandel together. Fr. Vandel had, in fact, been the founder of l'Oeuvre des Campagnes: the Work for the Country areas, in 1857. A book which he wrote on this subject had been given to Fr. Chevalier by Fr. Henry Leblanc, S.J., who had also acquainted Vandel with the work being done by Chevalier. The 'Work for the Country areas' involved a number of the French nobility and the well-to-do in assisting the priests in the poorer country parishes. Fr. Vandel desired to extend his work by founding a group of Missionaries for the Countryside. His idea was that these missionaries would be supported by l'Oeuvre. The Superior Council of l'Oeuvre however, did not accept his idea as part of their program. Vandel was then favourably predisposed towards the missionary group which Fr. Chevalier was founding, and when the two men met in 1865, they found they had much in common. Fr. Chevalier, by spoken word and written letter, made every effort to get Vandel to join his group. For he was impressed deeply - as others were too - by Vandel's zeal, his holiness, wisdom and experience. He had in fact a good deal more experience than Fr. Chevalier. Born in November 1808 in the village of Nernier in Savoy, he had been ordained in 1846 as a priest in the diocese of Lausanne across the Swiss border from his native village. Prior to his ordination he had passed a number of years as prefect in the Jesuit boarding-schools at Chambéry in France and Fribourg in Switzerland. He had also spent 2 years with the Jesuits at Avignon.

Being forced to leave Switzerland because of the political troubles with the Church there, he had been given refuge at Lyons by Pauline Jaricot famous for her work of obtaining material support for the foreign missions with the Work for the Propagation of the Faith. For a while Vandel thought of devoting his life to this apostolate. However, since he could get back into Switzerland while other priests could not, he felt that duty called him back there, where he was made parish priest of Nyon (1848-1856). Ill health forced him to relinquish his parish and retire to France. His retirement was rather active for in 1857 he got involved in the work for the country priests.

Eight years later ill-health brought the two men together. Fr. Chevalier had been working too hard and living too poorly and his health had suffered in consequence. In 1865, suffering from persistent laryngitis, he had been ordered to go to one of the baths, then so often prescribed for physical ailments, to take the waters. At one of these watering-places, Mont-Dore, he met Vandel. Together they forgot their ailments and spent long hours discussing their ideas for the work that both were trying to do.

In the following year, 1866, Fr. Vandel came to Issoudun to join the young MSC community. The members of the Oeuvre des Campagnes did all they could to keep him in Paris. They feared that his leaving would mean the ruin of the work. However, he could assure them that he would be able to do as much as he had done for them, and perhaps more, as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. And indeed he did.

As well as his knowledge of the work for priests in poor parishes, Fr. Vandel brought with him two other items of knowledge which were to enable him to make a most important contribution to the young congregation which he joined. Firstly, having worked with the Jesuits at Avignon, and knowing many of them from his Fribourg days, he now knew of the work the Jesuit priest Fr. de Foresta was beginning at Avignon. This was the work of setting up an apostolic school. Aware that much was being done to get money for the foreign missions, de Foresta felt that more could be done to get men for the missions. He therefore set about working out a way to train young men for the missionary priesthood. So, side by side with the existing Jesuit College at Avignon, he set up a school for boys who expressed an interest in the missionary priesthood. It opened in the autumn of 1865, and naturally enough was called an apostolic school.

He had worked with Pauline Jaricot. Vandel then knew quite well that she had thought out the idea that, if you had a lot of people giving a small amount of money for the missions, you would finish up with a lot of money. This was the sou par an (penny a year) idea.

Fr. Vandel simply put the two ideas together: firstly, set up a school for boys who are interested in going on for the missionary priesthood in the society of the MSC; secondly, in order to meet the cost of this work, make an appeal to the people to give a penny a year. The idea was accepted by Fr. Chevalier and launched. Because of the small amount asked for, the whole plan was known as the Petite Oeuvre (the Little Work). In a number of languages the resulting minor seminary was called Petite Oeuvre; in others, it was the Apostolic School.

The first apostolic school for the MSC got under way in October 1867. The place was Chezal-Benoit quite close to Issoudun. As Benoit suggests, it had once been a Benedictine Abbey. Closed during the French revolution, it had been turned into a college or high school which had a very good reputation in the late 1840's and early 50's. (As a point of interest, it may be noted that Fr. Maugenest had gone to school there as a boy.). The Archdiocese of Bourges acquired the property in 1860 in order to keep it going as a catholic school. Staffing was a continual problem, and approaches were made to the MSC priests to help out. In 1867 the Archbishop and Fr. Chevalier came to an agreement which was mutually beneficial. The MSC community would provide some of the teaching staff; the students of the MSC apostolic school could follow the courses while living in a part of the secondary buildings of the establishment. Applications that year for the apostolic school were not lacking -there were 150. Naturally only relatively few could be accepted. The school opened with 14 on October 10th, 1867; by the end of the first school-year, there were 27 who had come, and some who had gone. One of those who came and stayed was a boy from Issoudun, aged 12 years, and named Arthur Lanctin. He was to become the second Superior General of the MSC Society, first successor of Fr. Chevalier.

Meanwhile, for the upkeep of these boys, the penny-a-year program was under way. Fr. Vandel had published the plan; the Bulletin of the Oeuvre des Campagnes had given it publicity and a number of the friends and benefactors of this work gave their support to the new project of Fr. Vandel whom they regarded highly. The Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, only recently published, also helped spread the idea which appealed to a wide number of people. Among those who appeared in the first list of benefactors were the director and students of the Apostolic School of Avignon!

The program for supporting the apostolic school was so well received by the people, and the money so well administered by Fr. Vandel that, during Vandel's lifetime, no other money was needed to keep the venture going. In fact, he could and did lend a helping hand to the MSC society from time to time.

Fr. Vandel did not live at the school, but at Issoudun. At Chezal-Benoit, a young priest named Fr. Remy Ledoux had charge of the boys. One of the supervisors was a young man called Theophile Cramaille. Although not actually a student, he was later spoken of as the first priest from the Apostolic School. Of the boys themselves in that first year, 8 became priests: 3 outside the MSC Congregation, and 5 MSC. For the next century, in the different provinces of the congregation, the Apostolic Schools would provide the majority of vocations to the ranks of the priesthood.

On the morning of April 26th, 1877, Fr. Vandel was found dead in his room. He had given just over 10 years of his priestly life to the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. In that time he had contributed considerably to its stability and its life by the success of his plan for the apostolic school. He had given the group the support of his own wise advice - had, in fact, been named one of the first Assistants General. Fr. Chevalier felt his loss very deeply indeed. Very close ties of friendship had existed between them and he relied on Fr. Vandel with complete confidence in his judgment and vision. When he wrote or spoke of him in later years it was always the good Fr. Vandel or the holy Fr. Vandel as of a man whose memory was forever held in veneration and love.

Fr. Vandel was 57 years of age when he joined the MSC society. At that age, it seems a bit surprising that he should join at all - especially since he was well 'established', as founder of the Oeuvre des Campagnes. Furthermore, the little group he joined had very few priests. There were five at Issoudun, all of them a good deal younger than he. Yet he joined this group and was immediately completely at home. He helped build up their numbers by the Apostolic School that he founded. (At his funeral Mass celebrated by Fr. Chevalier, two priests from the Apostolic School assisted as ministers).

He was frequently spoken of as the second founder of the society. This was not only because of what he did - but also because of what he was in his own life and person. In His private notes he wrote:

I am a Missionary of the Sacred Heart in everything, in body, soul, heart, thoughts words, actions, in my sufferings, my manner, my relations with others... May God be blessed³.

In a very real sense, when Jean-Marie Vandel became a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, he was only putting an official name on what he already was. And this obviously explains the ease with which he fitted into the little group of Issoudun, finding himself at home. It explains too, how he won the immediate respect and affection of the priests and boys among whom he worked.

His personal spiritual life had long since been centred on the Heart of Christ and devotion to Mary had become an essential part of his life. The same missionary zeal, the same concern for people (affected by indifferentism and lack of faith) that inspired the MSC had inspired his work of the Oeuvre des Campagnes. But now, while the zeal and concern were strong within him, advancing age and illness had lessened his physical strength. The priests he found at Issoudun were animated by a similar missionary zeal. They were younger than he, and in their energy and strength he found support, while in their spirit he found brotherhood. And while he found here a spirit and a spirituality which harmonized so well with his, they found in his person the sort of priest that they aspired to be. He seemed to have worked into his own life and attitudes and actions a certain incarnation of the kindness of God, the hesed which the Heart of Christ symbolized and suggested.

"What this was can best be shown by quoting his own words. For when he is setting forth what he hopes for from the priests of the Oeuvre des Campagnes, he unconsciously (in the opinion of those who knew him) describes himself -although, in his humility he would have thought he was far from this ideal.

The characteristic virtues of the priests of l'Oeuvre des Campagnes will be:

A childlike *humility*, which is always simple and joyful: 'Nisi efficiamini.....'.

A *compassionate kindness*, which opens out into happiness at the sight of a child, a poor man, a sick man, an old man, an unhappy traveller...

A *spirit of piety* which sanctifies one's relations of charity and which takes the place of austerities and long exercises of prayer through the habitual sentiment of the presence of God Our Father, of Mary our good Mother... of the angels guardian. The Our Father, short ejaculatory prayers, some beads of the rosary while coming and going will become part of our missionary's breathing.

A frank and natural *modesty* like that of a father and a mother who fear God and who will not tolerate in themselves nor in others anything which could offend the ears and eyes of their children. From this aspect, the missionary's prudence should render his conduct irreproachable as was that of Our Lord, coming, going, eating, conversing in public and in private, among the Jews. He went into houses, stopped by the wayside, visited, cured, consoled the sick, spoke to everyone, ate with the rich and the poor, stayed with his friends, listened to requests and questions, conversed with the sinful woman, the Chanaanite, the Samaritan, Martha and Mary, curing St. Peter's mother-in-law, the daughter of Jairus... but never a word of blame was uttered against him for his conduct... except by the Pharisees. There is our Model, our Rule, our life.

A *patience* which knows how to wait, which can appear to do nothing, which can always hope, which is not disconcerted, which can put up with innumerable inconveniences, which can appreciate as a worthwhile result that of simply having given out some objects of piety, of having got some children to pray, some people to enter the church... finally a patience which can be resigned to having done nothing. Our Lord was not always fortunate in his mission⁴.

A further characteristic note of Fr. Vandel was his gratitude, which is the mark of a certain fineness of character. Those who, in later years, recorded their memories of him point out that he was always grateful for any kindness, moved almost to tears by the generosity of people who helped him in his

Just after his death, a person who had known him for 24 years wrote: His simplicity, his humility, his delicate tact made him the sort of person who impressed everyone. Grown-ups felt his sanctity; little ones were captivated by his charity⁵.

Author Louis de Wohl wrote books on St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. The former he called The Living Flame, the latter The Quiet Light. It is easier to write about a living flame - the movement and colour catch the eye and hold the interest. The quiet light may have more value, even more merit, by its steadiness and consistency, but it is harder to write about at length. In this line of thinking, Fr. Jouet whom we shall consider in the next section would be the living flame, while Jean-Marie Vandel is the quiet light. In his quietness he gave confidence, and the steadiness of his strength upheld many who knew him. The light of his example, his faith, charity and patient kindness inspired many and gave them unforgettable memories of the holy Fr. Vandel second founder of the MSC Society.

3. VICTOR JOUET.

If the young MSC group was to receive its stabilizer in Jean-Marie Vandel, in Victor Jouet it was to receive its dynamo. It could be debated who contributed more, for both gave much, although they had different things to give. With quite different personalities but with the same generosity, they came to the young community in different ways. Victor Jouet was the first to come. On a cold December day in 1864 he blew into Issoudun like a warm Provençal breeze. He was a son of the South, a priest in the diocese of Marseilles. He came from the land of the troubadours, and something of the troubadour went forever with him. This is clear, too, in the account of his coming. You can read his own version of it in an ex-voto testimony in the Basilica of Issoudun:

A traveller for one day only,

It is here that I learned your glorious title

O Sovereign of the Heart of Jesus.

I fell at the feet of your beautiful image.

And I rose up your missionary for life.

In one second - what a grace! What a vocation!!

28 December 1864. VJ. Miss, of Sac. Heart⁶.

This is his own poetic account. But, in fact, no account of Fr. Victor Jouet can be prosaic. Born in Corsica of a French father and a Spanish mother, he was exuberant, enthusiastic, highly intelligent and of great personal charm. He was ordained a priest for the diocese of Marseilles in June, 1862, at the age of 23. It was the Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart which brought him into contact with the MSC. It was devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which kept him. His Bishop, Mgr Cruice, having heard of the new Congregation at Issoudun thought that they might have something to offer to the re-vivification of the association of the Priests of the Sacred Heart in Marseilles. So he sent Fr. Jouet to Issoudun to find out.

His coming to Issoudun is best described in the words of Fr. Píperon:... *. Fr. Jouet arrived on the day after Christmas, at four o'clock in the morning of a freezing day. He had come direct from Marseilles dressed for the southern climate and having taken no precautions against the winter cold. As soon as he arrived we hastened to take him to the best room and to light a fire for him. In this room was a statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. As soon as he saw it, quite excited he asked what Madonna this was. 'It's Our Lady of the Sacred Heart', we told him. 'And what does Our Lady of the Sacred Heart mean?' he asked. 'Well, we honour the Blessed Virgin under this title and we have an association in her honour'. 'How long has this association been going?' 'It began in April this year and has about two thousand members'. 'Have you an altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart?' 'Yes, in the church where I'll take you later'. 'Can I say Mass there?' 'Certainly'. 'Can I say Mass there straight away?' 'Well, just wait a little. Let me light a fire, and when you have got warm, I shall go and prepare the altar'. 'But, I'd like to say Mass immediately'. With these words we left our guest in order to get wood to light the fire. When we returned some minutes later, we found him on his knees, in tears, in a state of exaltation. Mary had conquered this ardent soul; he had consecrated himself to her without reserve. From then on, as he himself loved to say, he was 'the plaything (le jouet) of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart'. He did not want to wait any longer. 'I'm no longer cold', he said, 'take me to the church, I want to say Mass at the altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart' We had to yield to his insistence. Quickly we prepared the altar and the sacred vestments and he began the holy sacrifice. I have never forgotten the deep emotion with which he pronounced the words of the sacred liturgy, nor the prayerful accents of his voice. When he had finished his thanksgiving - which was rather lengthy, I took him back to his room so that he might get warm. He asked a lot more questions about Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and spoke of nothing else but this new devotion.

Certainly Fr. Píperon and the other priests at Issoudun were themselves enthusiastic enough about their new devotion. But this man from Marseilles had them a bit worried: At the time, I just did not understand this way of behaving, and I wondered whether this young priest was mentally balanced and whether this extraordinary enthusiasm was perhaps the result of some illness⁷.

Later on Fr. Jouet told him that, at that time, he received an extraordinary light of grace and the clear knowledge that he should devote his life to the service of Our Lady.

Do not conclude from this that Jouet was a pious enthusiast. Nobody was the equal of Fr. Jouet in conquering the most insurmountable obstacles. With fire in his soul, a spirit forever active, an energetic will, he knew when to act and when to stop and wait before later taking up again the activity he had left off. He was a man of ardent faith, of complete self-abnegation. He never thought of himself.

Fr. Chevalier found in him the most active worker, the most dedicated and at the same time the most useful for all his works. It is to him that we owe their success⁸. These further testimonies of Fr. Píperon round out the portrait of his character. This was the Victor Jouet who came to Issoudun at the end of 1864 looking for information about the work of the MSC for priests in the parishes. He went back to Marseilles with this information and with his new found enthusiasm for devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which he made known at Marseilles.

In September 1865 he made his private vows as a member of the MSC Society. For some years he could do little more, for the new Bishop of Marseilles, Mgr Place, was a declared enemy of new religious congregations and resisted Jouet's pleas to be allowed to leave the diocese to join the MSC community. Although forced to remain at a distance, this did not prevent him from working for them, especially in the area of making known devotion to Our Lady. It was his idea to begin the publication of the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the first issue of which appeared in January 1866. For seventeen years in the midst of all his other preoccupations and activities he edited these Annals. And in view of his many activities, this was an extraordinary feat. It was he who began what has long since drawn crowds of pilgrims to Issoudun - the procession of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart on September 8th.

Fr. Chevalier encouraged Jouet to keep trying to break down his Archbishop's opposition to his leaving the diocese. But then in 1869 Jouet became ill and had to take a year off for treatment. It was typical Jouet-style treatment. After a short while in Switzerland, he felt better and then spent some time in Issoudun. After this he set out for Spain to propagate devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. His goal was Tarragona and Barcelona where some French-speaking relatives of -his- were living. At the French-Spanish border he had one of those interesting experiences which happen to men like him. Not knowing much Spanish he said a prayer to St. Joseph to see him through his difficulty of finding a Place to stay overnight. When he descended from the train a coachman approached him and asked: Are you a French missionary? I am. Then come with me, Father, your coach is waiting. The coach pulled up before a fine house. The owner came out and said: You are very welcome, Father... but... you are not the priest I was expecting. You saw no other priest on the train? There were no others. Oh, well, you are welcome just the same - you must be my guest for the night. Next day a letter arrived from the intended guest saying he could not come and Fr. Jouet continued his journey to Tarragona, more than ever confident that St. Joseph was interested in his journey. At Tarragona he set up an Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and began to get supporters for the devotion throughout Spain.

After his year's treatment, he applied to his Archbishop for a year's convalescence - which he spent travelling to Savoy, Issoudun, Belgium and back into Spain - editing the Annals of Our Lady as he went. In 1871 he entered the community at Issoudun and in 1872 went with Fr. Chevalier to Rome. Here he was to appeal to the Pope Pius IX, to be allowed to leave his diocese and join the MSC Congregation. His application was supported by a letter from the Archbishop of Bourges. Since it was out of order for a bishop to put such opposition in the way of a priest wishing to join a religious community, Pope Pius IX granted Jouet's request - giving a written permission for seven years - to leave the diocese. Then in the presence of the Pope Jouet took his public vows as a missionary of the Sacred Heart and went back to Issoudun. On November 5th, 1875 he was elected Assistant General.

He then went to Rome in order to try to straighten out a question concerning the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. A Confraternity had been set up in Rome and there was a certain confusion as to its connection with Issoudun, and which was to be the central and primary one. Jouet was not actually intended to stay in Rome. However, the business was prolonged and he was further engaged in trying to find a house for the MSC scholastics who were to be sent to Rome for studies. When they arrived in December 1875, Jouet was asked to stay there and become superior of the MSC house. In February 1876 he was named Procurator, his task being to represent the MSC congregation in all its dealings with the Holy See. This he was to do for many years and he was also to make many friends in Rome. This latter fact is not remarkable, for Jouet had a gift for making friends wherever he went.

Fr. Píperon gives some interesting accounts of Jouet - in Rome and elsewhere:

He took the spirit of poverty to its extreme limits. You had practically to force him to replace his old clothes... We have often seen him ask for an audience with important people, having only an old soutane, and even that torn. Then, over his old soutane, he put an overcoat which was no more respectable. One day we had an audience with the Pope. When it was time to go to the Vatican I went to his room to find him dressed as usual. 'Well', I said, 'it's time to go and you are not yet ready'. 'I am ready!' he said, and he put on his old coat, which was torn, and his old hat, yellowed with age. 'Let's go', he said - 'we've just got time!...

- 'What! You're going to the audience in that outfit? Look at your soutane, its all torn...'
- 'That's nothing. Anyway, my coat will cover it.'
- 'But your coat's falling to bits. Look...'. Laughing happily, he said to me:
- 'Look, you don't understand. Now see whether my coat won't do.'

He took the worst part of his coat in his hand, covered it with his battered old hat, and said to me: 'Now that's O.K. Let's go!' So off we went, and on the way he forgot his¹ disordered appearance and in that state he was presented to the Pope.

What he did at Rome on that day he repeated everywhere. In spite of this he was everywhere well received. His easiness of manner, his circumspection, and above all his pleasant smile, his great wit, his savoir-faire charmed everybody he met. In his presence one quickly forgot the strange poverty of his dress, the outer man, and saw only his qualities of mind and heart.

Here is one more fact taken from among a thousand.

He had just come home from a long trip. I saw that his shoes were practically without soles and letting in the damp. I scolded him and said: 'Why don't you change your shoes? Do you want to get sick?'

- 'But', he said, in all simplicity, 'I have no others.'

- 'And you've said nothing about it.'

- 'And what's wrong with these shoes? I don't need to ask for any others.'

Without any further formality, I told the cobbler to make him a new pair. Next day Fr. General decided to make a long trip and to take Jouet with him. They were to leave that morning. Forgetting the sorry state of his shoes, Jouet was all set to leave. So we got him a new pair of shoes. When he returned, he found in his room two pairs of shoes, one new and the other, his old ones, repaired. Soon I saw him coming to me with two pairs of shoes in his hands: "They've made my room into a shoe-shop!" he said, 'what do I do with all this?' 'Keep them - its not too much for you since you are always travelling'. 'No. Its against poverty. I need only one pair. Give the rest to someone else'⁹.

On February 25th, 1876, foreseeing the possibility of a difficult political situation in France, the General Council of the MSC Society met at Issoudun. They realised that it was probable that the priests in France might well be put in prison. In order to plan wisely for the eventuality of political persecution, they drew up the following document signed by Frs. Chevalier, Piperon, Vandel and Guyot:

Having invoked the light of the Holy Spirit, the help of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the intercession of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and St. Joseph Friend of the Sacred Heart, the Superior General explained to the Council that, to guard against serious events that could take place in France, prudence suggested that timely provision should be made for the security of the Society and its members. The care of souls to which he is bound as Archpriest of Issoudun makes it impossible for him to withdraw to a safe place in the eventuality of violent persecution. Therefore it has been agreed that if death or imprisonment (quod Deus avertat) should deprive the Institute of its venerated Head, and a General Chapter be unable to meet according to the Rule, the government of the Society will pass immediately, and ipso facto, to *Fr. Victor Jouet*, Procurator General of the Society, as Vicar General...¹⁰.

This is a very interesting document; it shows the serious nature of the apprehensions of the MSC priests in France. It also might give rise to a question: Why Fr. Jouet? To that the obvious answer is: Why not? For one reason, living in Rome he was safe from any persecution in France. Another reason is found in the words of Fr. Piperon:

Fr. Chevalier found in him a most active worker, the most dedicated, and at the same time the most useful for all his works. It is to him that we owe their success. In my humble opinion, of all of us, it was he who was the man of Divine Providence, the right arm of our venerated Founder".

We shall meet Victor Jouet often in the course of this story.

Conclusion.

Piperon, Vandel, Jouet - these were Fr. Chevalier's most faithful and constructive collaborators during those vital years. They were also his oldest and most trusted friends. There is an adage which says: Show me your friends and I will tell you what you are. It says much for Jules Chevalier that he could enlist and keep the friendship of men such as these. And when we speak of friendship, Maugenest must take his rightful place with the rest. For, although he would go a different way, all of them knew and acknowledged that in so doing he was but going where God called him. He remained attached to them all by the bonds of a deep friendship. To Fr. Chevalier, all of them gave a life-long loyalty and love.

Notes Chapter

¹ Letter Maugenest to Berlin MSC, La Rose, March 5th, 1915.

² Letter Maugenest to Berlin MSC, La Rose, August 27th, 1915.

³ Written in his Garnet Messes IV, Ms, 27 Sept. 1869.

⁴ Vandel, Ms for the priests of l'Oeuvre des Campagnes.

⁵ Letter De Fresne, May 6th, 1877, quoted in Annales Issoudun, 1877, p. 138.

⁶ Quoted by Vermin, pp. 277-278.

⁷ Piperon, Ms Notice, p. 98-101, quoted by Vermin, pp. 274-278.

⁸ Piperon, Ms Notice, p. 113 f. * ib.

¹⁰ Document, Archives MSC, Rome.

¹¹ Piperon, Ms Notice, p. 113 f.

1. CONSOLIDATION.

It is people who make a Society and give it its spirit: men like Chevalier, Piperon, Vandel, Jouet and the rest. These men had taken as their motto May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved (Ametur ubique terrarum Cor Iesu Sacratissimum).

However, before they could work effectively 'everywhere', they had to consolidate on the home front. The consolidation of the MSC group itself was closely linked with developments in two other areas:

- the position of the MSC at Issoudun, and
- devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

We need to consider briefly these two developments.

a. *The MSC at Issoudun.*

As we have seen, when Frs. Chevalier and Maugenest began the work of founding their group of missionaries, they left the parish of St. Cyr and set up their own centre which became known as the Sacred Heart. It was not a parish centre - although it became a centre of devotion for many of the parishioners of Issoudun. With the secular clergy at St. Cyr, and the missionaries at the Sacred Heart, there was the possibility of a certain division in the parish. It could have been argued that both the work of the parish and the apostolate of the missionaries would be helped by giving St. C-yr to the MSC. It could be argued the other way, too: that the missionaries would be freer to devote themselves to their missionary apostolate if they were not tied down to the care of the parish.

In 1861, what looked like the ideal arrangement was made. Fr. Maugenest came back to Issoudun. He had long been asking to be permitted to do this. Now he was appointed as parish priest of St. Cyr. Fr. Chevalier was delighted since the parish had been entrusted to one of our own. One might have expected that Maugenest and Chevalier would have taken up where they left off, carrying on as co-founders of the New Congregation. However, for four years the two men had gone their different ways. They could not retrace their steps.

The two chief factors at work in the life of Maugenes had been his preaching (for which he was richly endowed), and his desire for religious life. It was a consistent further step that he should feel that he was called to join the Order of Preachers, the Dominicans. It seems certain that Fr. Vandel, as his confessor, had advised him that this was his true calling. On December 31st, 1871, he left Issoudun to enter the Novitiate of the Dominican Order. He would spend the rest of his life as a Dominican. Before leaving Issoudun, he made a gift of his personal library to the MSC Community and remained in friendly contact with the MSC until his death in 1918. From time to time he returned to Issoudun to preach both at St. Cyr and at the Sacred Heart. In 1904, he was at Chevalier's side to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the MSC Congregation.

It is further interesting to note that before he himself had been appointed parish priest of St. Cyr he had strongly urged the Abbe Crozat to resign his parish in favour of the MSC. Now with his own departure for the Dominican Novitiate, there was no Archpriest of the parish of Issoudun; the way was open for what he had himself proposed.

The Archbishop then proposed that the MSC take over the parish. In the discussions of the General Council, they argued the reasons for and against. When Fr. Chevalier hesitated, the Archbishop insisted. He pointed out that troubled times were coming in France, in which, a parish priest approved by the government might be in a more stable position than a religious. In that case, he said, it could well be that the parish of Issoudun would serve as a plank of salvation for the young religious congregation. Seeing the wisdom of this thinking, and grateful for the Archbishop's interest in the welfare of his MSC Society, Fr. Chevalier accepted, and was named Archpriest of St. Cyr, Issoudun, in March 1872. He had tried hard to get Fr. Piperon to accept the position. But Piperon had refused and kept on refusing. He could not accept in conscience, he said, for he was simply not made for responsibility. Nevertheless, Fr. Chevalier appointed him as assistant pastor, and he took care of much of the pastoral work in the parish.

Meanwhile, «the Sacred Heart was becoming well known throughout France. When the church was erected as a minor basilica in 1874, this action on the part of the Pope gave the final stamp of approval and respectability. Owing to the enthusiasm and enterprise of Fr. Jouet, Issoudun was fast becoming a centre of pilgrimage. Here had come the national pilgrimage of October 17th, 1872, and the Catholic Pilgrimage of September 8th, 1873, with 30,000 pilgrims, many bishops and priests, even from outside France. This pilgrimage of September 8th was to become, and to remain, the most important yearly event at Issoudun.

b. *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.*

These pilgrimages were, for the most part, in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. To a large extent, as already mentioned, the growth of the MSC Society was connected with the spread of this new devotion. Obviously, then, anything that affected the devotion, favourably or unfavourably, would have similar repercussions on the new Society. And if at times - to us who look backwards (with a different mentality) from a different point in time - there seem to have been some petty rivalries, let us remember that the devotion and its connection with Issoudun and the MSC was seen as far more important then, even for the very development of the Society. If the devotion were suspect - then so were the MSC. If the devotion, its propagation and its Associations, passed into the hands of other congregations - then the young MSC community would lose one of its important works and one of its reasons for existence. One of the early high-lights was the solemn crowning of the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun in 1869, September 8th. In those days this was a solemn ceremony - especially when carried out with the special delegation of the Pope himself. It was solemnly setting a seal on the value of the devotion with the approval of the Pope himself. That September 8th, the Archbishop of Bourdeaux and fifteen bishops were present; the ceremonies were carried out in pomp and splendour.

But even then, there was the beginning of the trouble that Fr. Chevalier had to contend with for some time - objections from the Holy Office or at least demands for an explanation. Although the historical chain of events is somewhat complicated, the main facts involved are fairly simple. Those were the days when, in prayers, preaching and hymns, and in spiritual writings, pious exaggerations abounded. They were also the days when the Holy Office kept a careful eye out for doctrinal aberrations. And when the careful orthodox eye meets with the pious exaggerations, misunderstandings and conflicts are a fairly predictable outcome. This is exactly what happened with regard to devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which, in popular expression at least, gave a certain emphasis to Mary's maternal power of intercession. Theologically this presents no problem. But the pious exaggerations did. Terms like Queen of the Sacred Heart, Sovereign of the Sacred Heart, Sovereign mistress of the Sacred Heart aroused suspicions. And when suspicions are aroused, they are hard to dislodge; and they spread. In this instance, they spread to the design of the statue itself. We have seen the very simplicity of Fr. Chevalier's idea of juxtaposing the statues of Jesus and Mary, the Child standing before his Mother. However, once the cloud of suspicion had fallen, even the statue appeared ominous: for did it not show a large Madonna standing over a small Christ?!!

While the outward festivities of the Crowning of the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were going on (Sept. 8th, 1869), Fr. Chevalier was in quite a turmoil. That very morning, he had received a please explain from the Holy Office. The Archbishop had informed him that in the morning's mail he had received a request to send to the Holy Office a full account of all that had been written about the new devotion. This and other like ones later were worrying moments for Fr. Chevalier, for, as we have indicated, a condemnation of the devotion would most likely be a fatal blow to the young Society.

Fortunately, the devotion was never condemned. But Fr. Chevalier and other members of the Society had to spend a lot of time over the years allaying Roman suspicions - or suspicions relayed to Rome by others. They also had to observe detailed instructions as to which formulae could not be used when speaking or writing of the devotion. They had to follow norms about the images of Our Lady. All this had a certain nuisance value, and caused the early MSC an amount of worry and apprehension. But the details need not concern us here '.

In these years since the establishment of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun, Associations of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had sprung up in a number of places. Several of these were in Italy - at Osimo, Anagni, Bologna, Florence, etc. In 1872 a Confraternity was erected in Rome. Fr. Chevalier had given his support to the petition for this establishment. However, when the Confraternity was set up, the image was different from that of Issoudun, and was being run independently of Issoudun. Fr. Chevalier was disturbed at this and sent Fr. Jouet to Rome to look into the matter. As mentioned previously, in the circumstances of those times, it seemed particularly important to the MSC that all Confraternities of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart be connected with the MSC and related to Issoudun, They did not want two distinct and different Confraternities of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The Roman Confraternity became an Archconfraternity in 1873. So there was a period of polemic and rivalry and much diplomacy by Fr. Jouet in Rome. This all concluded in 1879 when a decree of union was issued and the universal Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart with its seat at Rome, was entrusted to the care of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

This was made easier by the acquisition of a church at Piazza Navona, in the centre of Rome, which became a church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It was an old church known as St. James of the Spaniards, in a state of disrepair. The Spanish government in Madrid was no longer interested in keeping it going for the Spanish Catholics in Rome and wished to sell it. The City of Rome thought - to buy it to use for profane purposes. A group of Protestants also thought of buying it, so that they would have a pro-testant church in the heart of Rome. Pope Leo XIII, newly elected Pontiff, did not favour either the profane purpose, or the protestant enterprise. Having heard that the MSC were looking for a place in Rome, he urged them to save this building for the Catholic Church. The MSC were thus under double pressure - that of their own desire to set up a sanctuary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Rome, to be the centre of the universal Archconfraternity; and that of the Holy Father, urging them to acquire this property. He even offered to lend them 100,000 francs.

The MSC bought the church on July 12th, 1878, with the help of the Pope's loan. It was restored and opened on May 23rd, 1879 when it was consecrated to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. At the time of the restoration of the church, an upper store was built to serve as a residence for an MSC community in Rome.

c. The MSC Congregation.

In 1860 Fr. Chevalier had paid his first visit to Rome. There he spoke with Pope Pius IX of the new group of missionaries of the Sacred Heart which he had begun at Issoudun. The Pope said to him ...increase and multiply, and preach devotion to the Sacred Heart everywhere. I hope that, before I die, I will have the opportunity of giving canonical approval to your Congregation.²

That opportunity came in 1869. Over the years Fr. Chevalier had worked at drawing up a Rule, or Constitutions, for his Religious Society. In this he consulted many priests and was helped by the Jesuits, in particular by Fr. Ramiere. In 1868 he had these 'constitutions' ready under the title of "Formula Instituti". In presenting them to Rome for approval he had to present also an exposition of the state of the Society - its numbers and material possessions as well as testimonial letters from Bishops. When he sent his petition (dated December 25th, 1868), to Rome for approval, it was accompanied by testimonial letters of 28 bishops, with a few more to follow. In February 1869, he was received by the Pope, having given his documentation to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars. This Congregation gave its *Decretum Laudis*, or Decree of Praise to the MSC Congregation on March 8th. The Constitutions were later approved for a period of experimentation.³ Therefore the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was now a religious congregation "of Pontifical right". Juridically, therefore, they were no longer subject to the Archbishop of Bourges but directly subject to the Holy See. Although Fr. Chevalier had presented a plan for his society with its three branches, the reply concerned only the religious congregation strictly so called. The vows were stressed as essential.

It was agreed that, later that year, all the members of the MSC community who could would get together to make a retreat. This they did in September, at Issoudun. under the direction of Fr. H. Ramiere S.J. Towards the end of the retreat, September 26th they elected a Superior General and Assistants. They also made their public perpetual profession. Some of those who could not be present participated in the elections with a postal vote. Fr. Chevalier was elected Superior General, with Fr. Piperon as First Assistant. The other assistants were Frs. Vandel, Bazire and Guyot.

As we have indicated, there was a certain provisional character about this Decree of Praise which pointed out that, after some experimentation and further study of the Constitutions, definitive approval would be given to the new Congregation. This definitive approval came from Rome on 20th June, 1874.

But, of course, for a new Congregation to develop it needs to receive recruits and to form them well. The MSC Congregation had already set up its minor seminary or "apostolic school" at Chezal-Benoit. This was the great work of Fr. Vandel. Although it went into recess during the Franco-German war of 1870-1871, it reopened soon afterwards. Among the post-war (1872-1874) students were names to recur in the later history of the congregation: Henri Verjus, F.X. Klotz, Emil Merg, F. Barral, E. Meyer from France, while others gave it an international character. There was Fora from Spain, Ilge from Germany, Peeters from Holland. There were others, one from Italy and two from Ireland, whose MSC careers were to be short. In France and elsewhere the Apostolic School was to be a source of vocations to the Society for more than a century.

After the Apostolic School the young aspirants would have to do a year's Novitiate. Before obtaining the *Decretum Laudis*, especially since most of those who joined were already priests, they had been satisfied with a year's probation, usually at Issoudun. But now it was necessary to do things more systematically and to set up a regular Novitiate under the direction of a Master of Novices. The first Novitiate was erected at Montlucon, and the first official Novice Master was Fr. Guyot who was pastor of the parish there. Fr. Guyot always seems to have been far more interested in the parish ministry than in being Novice Master. From the very beginning he was given an assistant, a «Socius», who practically did all the work of training the Novices in the principles and practice of religious life. The first of these was Fr. Remy Ledoux. The Novitiate was blessed in August 1869 and opened on 12th September. It was suspended by the war and reopened in 1871. This time Fr. Miniot was the new Socius. In the summer of 1873 the Novitiate was transferred to St-Gerand-le-Puy. In 1875 the third Socius was appointed: Fr. Ramot. He was later appointed as successor to Fr. Guyot as Novice Master in name as well as in practical fact.

At the end of the Novitiate, the young men made their religious profession. Those who were going on for the priesthood would then have to do their philosophical and theological studies. The first arrangements made for these studies (for the six young men professed in the autumn of 1874) were very haphazard indeed. Three of them, Grom, Lanctin and Berthon, went to Chezal-Benoit where they worked as teachers and supervisors. At the same time they were given some classes themselves by Frs. Marie and Captier. The other three, Barral, Postal and De Mondion were provisionally put up at Issoudun where they were given lessons by some of the priests in the community. Little by little a scholasticate was organized at Issoudun with a special rule and a special body of professors. This was pretty well set up by 1879.

At the same time some scholastics were being sent to Rome. We have seen that the MSC authorities were concerned about the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart there. The General Council thought that the interests of the Society would be best served by having some of its members permanently in Rome - especially since at that time the Holy Office was having (and causing) further worries about the orthodoxy of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This time they were caused by some exaggerations in Poland. Fr. Jouet was sent to Rome in order to try to clear up the problems about Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and also to investigate the possibilities of sending students there. After a preliminary approach to the French Seminary, it seemed more advisable to send the students to Propaganda Fide College, in view of the fact that many of them would one day be foreign missionaries. In August of that year, 1875, the General Council decided to set up a community in Rome, including five students. The students went to Rome in December of that year.

However, as yet Fr. Jouet had not found an available residence suitable for the foundation. A temporary solution which Fr. Chevalier accepted, was proposed by Fr. Jouet: to accept the hospitality offered by Fr. Regis, Procurator General of the Trappists in Rome. Fr. Jouet wrote: Fr. Regis willingly offers us the hospitality of his Procure, which is between St. John and the Colosseum, near St. Clement. He lives there with his secretary, one brother and a retired bishop. He has two chapels and would give us the use of one of them. There is an immense dormitory where, we could take the cells needed; we would have ample space in the refectory; the brother who does his cooking would do ours. We would have a large heated room which would be reserved for us to work in... But since Trappist beds are a bit hard, we would need to buy others... Fr. Regis likes us well, knowing our history thoroughly and also our devotion and its image and he has had our statue kept at St. Pauls, Tre Fontane...⁴

Frs. Chevalier and Jouet found it easier to agree on the house than on the superior of the community. Fr. Chevalier had proposed Fr. Ariens, the first Dutch MSC. Fr. Jouet opposed the choice. He wanted Fr. Ramot or Fr. Miniot. Fr. Chevalier did not think Miniot suitable, 'with his ideas of a community that can't be found anywhere'⁵; Fr. Guyot wanted Ramot to succeed him as Novice Master. Finally another solution was found: Fr. Jouet, while remaining Assistant General, would be named Superior of the House in Rome, and Procurator 'for the time-being' (the time-being was to last for 17 years). Fr. Miniot was to be sent to be second in charge and to look after the scholastics. This solution was a great relief to Jouet. For he had been given an instruction from Fr. Chevalier which he found it difficult to carry out:

...You will take the students to Propaganda Seminary and bring them home. You can ask the Superior for a little room in which to work while they are in class...⁶. No, sitting still all day, and playing nursemaid to five scholastics was not for Victor Jouet! He therefore was all the more pleased to welcome Fr. Miniot on his arrival in April 1876.

Later on when they had acquired their new quarters in Piazza Navona, the MSC moved community, scholastics, and Confraternity to this one central house. It later became apostolic school and scholasticate for the Italian students of the Society.

1879 was the Silver Jubilee (25 years) of the MSC Congregation. It was also the year of the first General Chapter, which will be mentioned again later. The MSC Congregation had acquired a certain character and a certain stability. Outside of France it had houses in Rome and in Watertown (U.S.A.).⁷ It may be of interest to note the names of the members of the Society at that time.

PRIESTS:		<i>Year of birth</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Priesthood</i>
<i>Issoudun (St. Cyr) from'</i>	Chevalier	1824	1856/69	1851
1872	Piperon	1828	1864/69	1854
	Hamel	1828	1874	1860
	Heriault	1851	1872	1877
	Vatan	1853	1877	1878
<i>Issoudun (S. C.) from</i>	Morisseau	1829	1873	1854
1855	(sup.)	1836	1871	>
	Marie (Thorey)	1843	1871	1875
	Cramaille	1855	1874	1878
	Postal	1856	1879	?
	Papin	1847	1871	1873
	Batard	1820	1877	1878
	Baltzer	1840	1873	1864
	Lavialle			
<i>Chezal-Benoit from 1867</i>	Lanctin (sup,	1855	1874	1878
	Maillard	1851	1875	1878
	Berthon	1855	1874	1878
	Barral P.	1855	1874	1879
<i>Rome from 1875</i>	Joue't	1839	1865/72	1862
	Miniot	1830	1868/69	1854
	Casas	1851	1877	1878
<i>St-Gerand-le- from 1873</i>	Guyot	1827	1865/69	1850
	Ramot	1846	1874	1870
<i>Arles from 1878</i>	Deidier	1836	1878	1859
	Albert	1831	1869	1866
	Chappel	1817	1870	?
	Navarre	1836	1878	1872
<i>Watertown from 1876</i>	Durin	1836	1865/71	1859
	Ariens	1817	1875	1845
	Grom Ign.	1855	1874	1878

SCHOLASTICS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Year of birth</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Residence</i>
Grom Benjamin	1857	1875	Watertown
Bizeuil	1856	1875	Issoudun
Carriere	1857	1875	Rome
Thomas	1854	1876	Issoudun
Letonnellier	1846	1876	Issoudun
Giroux	1854	1876	St-Gerand
Klotz	1858	1877	Rome
Hartzer Ferd.	1858	1877	Issoudun
Treand	1856	1877	Issoudun
hevenot	1857	1877	Watertown
Van den Bosch	1858	1877	Issoudun
Brunet	1845	1877	Chezal-Benoit
Ceyssat	1854	1877	Issoudun
Legros	1853	1878	Issoudun
Verjus	1860	1878	Issoudun
Peeters H.	1860	1878	Issoudun -
Merg E.	1860	1878	Issoudun
Fora	1859	1878	Rome
Meyer	1861	1878	Rome -
Vedere	1859	1878	Rome
Ilge	1860	1878	Issoudun
Hartzer Leop.	1860	1878	Aries -
Chetail	1859	1878	Chezal-Benoit
Vandel Jules	1860	1878	Rome -
Sahut	1854	1878	Chezal-Benoit
Veron	1849	1878	Chezal-Benoit
O'Mahony Corn.	1859	1878	Chezal-Benoit
Neenan Will.	1862	1878	Chezal-Benoit
Roux	1855	1878	Issoudun

BROTHERS:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Year of birth</i>	<i>Profession</i>	<i>Residence</i>
Barbier	1814	1872/79	Issoudun
Delimoges	1858	1875	Issoudun
Bono Charles	1831	1876	Watertown

Romain Alexandre	1852	1876	Chezal-Benolt
Fromm Mesmin	1860	1878	Rome

The *whole Congregation*, in September 1879 numbered 29 priests 29 scholastics and 5 brothers, totaling 63 *professed members*.

Already deceased were 4 priests: Sauret, Jean-Marie Vandel, J.M. Neenan and Georgelin; and two scholastics: Georges Mayer and Stanislas Lecorre.

d. *Why Watertown?*

Watertown is not one of the truly famous cities of the U.S.A. like New York, Chicago or Los Angeles. In fact, many an American can not tell you where it is. Yet it is the site of the first MSC foundation outside of Europe - and it is worth visiting. One may naturally ask why we picked on Watertown, and what were the facts of history which led the MSC Society to begin here its first foundation in the new world.

The beginnings of the answer to these questions lie in the quick spread of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to Canada and the United States. Knowledge of the devotion led to a knowledge of its source: Issoudun and the MSC Community. In 1864, Mgr Charbonnel, former bishop of Toronto and then a preacher of sermons and retreats, came to Issoudun, and was asked to preach a special sermon on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He preached on it outside Issoudun thereafter, and came back for frequent visits to the MSC community, to whom he spoke much of Canada, no doubt generating a keen interest in that part of the world. We know that in 1870 tentative arrangements were being made with the Bishop of Ottawa to send three missionaries to his diocese. Before final arrangements could be made, the Franco-German war intervened. After the war, -an application was received from Archbishop Lynch of Toronto to send men there. His application is supported by a certain Mr. L. Gibra who seems to have been a former fellow-seminarian of Frs. Chevalier and Piperon. He was rather exuberant in his promises of how well Toronto could serve as a springboard for the works of the MSC Society in the New World.

In 1873 the General Council decided to send someone to Toronto to see what the possibilities really were and what were the future hopes for expansion. Fr. Chappel, a priest of 55 years, with very little knowledge of English left for Toronto on July 21st, 1873. He was accompanied by a brother, Brother Henri Dechatre. Because of his lack of knowledge of English, he was not too clear on what sort of permanent work he should engage in - and it would seem that the Archbishop shared his uncertainty. Even a visit of Archbishop Lynch to Issoudun on 'his way to Rome and on his return journey, did little to clarify the situation. Consequently Fr. Chappel, growing impatient, went to Montreal and sent Bro. Henri back to France. At Montreal he worked for a while as curate in a parish.

At the end of 1875, the Bishop of Ogdensburg in the U.S.A. asked for help from the Archbishop of Montreal. Did he know of any group of french-speaking priests who might look after the French-Canadian catholics of Watertown? Immediately Fr. Chappel's name was suggested⁴ and towards the final days of 1875, he was already in Watertown. From there he wrote to Fr. Chevalier of the definite possibility of setting up a centre for the MSC and their works at Watertown in the state of New York.

The General Council accepted his recommendation, and on April 20th, 1876, a missionary-sending celebration was held at Issoudun for the first group of MSC who were to depart as 'missionaries' for the New World. Fr. Durin, named as Superior of the new foundation and two scholastics, Benjamin Grom and J.B. Metayer, set out for Watertown. There are, however, a couple of facts which should be mentioned, since they connect with other parts of this account. Watertown has a number of 'firsts' to its credit. It was the first MSC house outside of Europe. Its first Superior, Fr. Durin was, in 1881, to become the superior of the first group of MSC missionaries to Oceania. He was succeeded at Watertown by Fr. Ramot; to the Watertown community came also the first Dutch MSC, Fr. T. Ariens, and the first Irish MSC priest, Fr. J.M. Neenan. The former was soon to leave the Congregation. The latter, after a few months, was the first MSC to die in the Americas.

2. EXPULSION AND EXPANSION.

By the year 1879 the MSC community had been in existence for 25 years. And in 1879 the Republicans came to power in France. This meant trouble for the Church. The offensive against 'clericalism' would, on two different occasions - (1879-1886 and 1898-1907) - take on such a blind fury that catholics would have the impression of an effort at de-christianization inspired by the spirit of the Revolution⁸- 1879-1886 is the period we are about to consider, and 1898-1907 were the last years of Fr. Chevalier's life.

Since, the MSC Society was seriously affected by these attacks on the Church, we should try summarily to explain what they were all about. Relations between the Church and the Republicans in 1879 were not at all good - through the fault of believers and their adversaries alike⁹. First of all the adversaries had among their most powerful people (like Jules' Ferry, minister for public instruction), men who were secularists in the sense that they wanted to do away with religion. Ferry, in fact, had declared that his aim was to organize humanity without God¹⁰. Many of these men were free-masons, and French free-masonry at that time was atheistic, strongly opposed to the Church. Therefore the anticlericalism of many of these men was something deep and deadly. It was not merely an opposition to too much interference on the part of Bishops and priests - it was a real hostility to the Church as religion¹¹. It was that esprit laic that in theory and in practice rejects the faith and all that proceeds from it. Therefore they attacked the forces of instruction in the faith, seeing here the most powerful influence against them. They attacked religious congregations, especially the Jesuits, and recruitment for the clergy.

The fault was 'also of believers'. In their fear of and opposition to these laicizing tendencies, Catholics failed to appreciate that in the Republican movement there were many things that were inevitable and a lot of things that were good. State governments had to come of age without interference from the Church; many of the poorer classes had no hope of social justice except in a new political regime. Failing to appreciate these things, many catholics, and most bishops aligned themselves very strongly with the political party of the monarchists. Those bishops were rare who warned that it is foolish to entail religion to a political party (Mgr. Guibert) or who, like Mgr. Besson, would declare We are not men of a party, we are ministers of Jesus Christ.¹² Most catholics were aggressively monarchistic, even going so far as to boycott Republicans, reporting people to the authorities for singing the Marseillaise and other bits of petty persecution. It was clear that, if the Republicans came to power, the Church would reap the harvest of reaction.

The Republicans did come to power in 1879 and Jules Ferry set about organizing his 'humanity without God'. As minister for public instruction, he could and did bring in laws that struck at the teaching orders and recruitment of the clergy. These laws forced the MSC, along with other religious congregations, to take their students elsewhere if they wished to continue educating them for the priesthood and religious life.

On the 5th of November, 1880 (First Friday of the month, for good measure) Fr. Chevalier saw, in one day, all of his religious thrown out of their houses of France by the police and the armed forces; ignoble seals were placed on the doors of the Basilica of Issoudun and the other chapels of our houses... ". The doors of the Basilica were closed and barred to all entry. In the beautiful chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the votive lamps went untended; the flames flickered and died. It would not have been strange if, in this situation, Fr. Chevalier's own faith had wavered, or if he had given up hope for the future. Numbers of Religious Orders which then had Provinces in France, today have none. In France the MSC had one house left -that of the parish of Issoudun which was left untouched because it was less obviously a 'religious' house. They were dependent on France for what limited finance they had; they hardly had a foothold in Spain and the house of Watertown was small and far away. Rome with the students was more a house to be supported than one which could help the rest of the Society.

Fr. Chevalier had begun his enterprise with one companion; he now had about sixty. He began in a barn which he had replaced by a beautiful basilica; this they had taken away from him But they could not take from him the courage and the determination which was so much

part of his character; nor could they take the devotion and the loyalty of a Piperon a Jouet or most of the other men who had joined him. In fact he had foreseen the likelihood of these unhappy events; he had foreseen and, insofar as his meagre resources permitted, he had planned for this eventuality. If he had doubts, no one ever knew. He had begun in a barn; it necessary, 26 years later, he and his companions could do the same again.

If we look ahead just 2 years in time and north a few hundred kilometers in distance, we shall find the MbC in full-production again - this time in a factory! In Tilburg Holland an old cloth factory had been bought and turned into a place for producing MSC. In later years and in better quarters, it would turn out almost exclusively Dutch MSC for the Province which was to become the biggest in the Society, and one worthy of praise for its contribution to the local Church as well as for its missionary achievement. However, in those days it had French MSC as well, German and Swiss, Irish and Belgian. Big and all as the factory was, it was soon filled to overflowing - with Novices and apostolic school-boys, with scholastics and with trainees for the MSC brotherhood - and with an Office for the Dutch Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. There were, of course, too, the priests needed to carry on these various activities. And at the head of this busy and complicated enterprise, responsible for all the afferent sections was - the man who was simply not built for responsibility, Fr. Charles Piperon!

If we look back two years, we will find Fr. Chevalier writing to the Archbishop of Bourges in February 1876: "The last elections must make us religious rather apprehensive... Humanly speaking, at a time more or less distant, we shall be defenceless. Allow me to explain to Your Excellency the measures of prudence which the circumstances seem to suggest... Forseeing the possibility that our Apostolic School, our Novitiate and our Scholasticate will no longer be permitted in France, we think that, during the troubled times, we should transport these works to England, Belgium or Holland where we have many associates and some good benefactors. To that end, I intend to send Fr. Durin - a man of order, virtue and intelligence - before he leaves for America, to visit these different countries in order to ensure us refuge in case of need¹⁴.

After the fateful events of November 5th, 1880, Fr. Chevalier put his plans into effect. For the scholastics the immediate solution was relatively easy. They went to Rome where they were welcomed by the other MSC scholastics already there. In Issoudun itself a number of families had offered to house the priests whom Fr. Chevalier would want to stay with him at this time. The boys from the Apostolic School at Chezal-Benoit were brought to Issoudun and divided into small groups. In different parts of the town dormitories had been prepared for them and during the day they carried on with their classes in other quarters.

Our fathers expected to be driven out of their cells on Friday, November 5th; and that is exactly what happened. The Sacred Heart permitted that his missionaries should be expelled on the day consecrated to him. All noted this coincidence and were happy to suffer something for the Sacred Heart...

Early in the morning when the boys were in the crypt... making meditation, Fr. Chevalier came to warn them all to withdraw into the study hall of the day-school. The police were already knocking at the main door of the house... While the fathers were being evicted, the scholastics of Issoudun and Chezal, dressed in lay clothes, were seated beside us in the study as if they belonged to our group... The police passed back and forth before our door without stopping... The Basilica was closed and sealed off at all doors but nobody noticed the crypt! Fr. Chevalier had taken care to position himself in front of the stairs leading to the crypt, thus hiding the entrance... He was as calm as usual, even smiling...

The fathers went to take refuge in the town. With the boys there remained only Fr. Laviale and the other fathers who had been at Chezal. Nevertheless the existence of the Apostolic School was not unknown at Issoudun. The authorities could have caused trouble; therefore it was decided that we would be regarded as *day-students*. Accordingly we had to think about evacuating the house of the Sacred Heart, and going to sleep and take our meals in the town. That Friday evening, we slept at the Sacred Heart for the last time.

Saturday 6th, November 1880. The whole morning was spent carrying beds into the town to three different houses: Madame Du Quesne put an entire house at our disposal; the Des Meloizes family; and Madame de Verneuil whom the good Fr. Vandel used to call 'the grandmother of the Apostolic School'. Other families had offered their homes but so that the boys would not be too scattered, we limited ourselves to these three families...

For our meals, the *Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* gave us part of their house...¹⁵.

In this way the boys of the Apostolic School could carry on at Issoudun. The Novices and students could not remain in France. They had to leave and there was no point in their leaving unless a number of priests went with them to continue their MSC formation elsewhere.

While his confreres took the road into exile, Fr. Chevalier remained behind at Issoudun to work and pray that, in spite of this severe blow, the young congregation might yet be saved. I went often to throw myself at the feet of Our Lord, he wrote, and I said to him: My divine Saviour it is I and I alone who, by my sins, am the cause of this disorder. Strike me; I deserve it, but have pity on my brothers and save from shipwreck this little congregation completely devoted to your divine Heart...

With the grace of God I did my best to develop our works and make them prosper, to procure some resources and provide for the needs of all our exiled brethren. How many worries and how much work by day and night!!¹⁶.

HOLLAND.

The Novices were to set out for Holland and it would not be too long before part of the Apostolic School would follow.

As events were to prove, Holland was a good choice. At that time the MSC community had already a number of links with Holland. First of all there was the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Sittard, where at the Ursuline Convent chapel an Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been begun in 1866 and become very well known. Fr. Chevalier had preached there in December 1873 when the bishop of Roermond crowned the statue in the name of Pope Pius IX. There were already some Dutch scholastics and students in the Apostolic School. Fr. T. Ariens, former professor at the Minor Seminary of s'Hertogenbosch, was professed as an MSC in April 1875. Although by this time he had left the Society, he did furnish an extra link with the diocese to which the MSC Novitiate was transferred from France. Fr. Jouet was called in as usual for these affairs of public relations.

He had been sent to Holland once before, to Sittard, in August 1871. It had been a very sudden departure from Issoudun with a last-minute notification which ruined some plans that Jouet had made. And so, he wrote, "I'm sent to do a few days retreat in a Dutch cheese... O holy obedience, how lovable you are!!". Closer acquaintance with the cheese and the people of Holland made him write far more enthusiastically on 10th October 1880:

All goes well in this part of the world... The rat of the fable which withdrew one day into a Dutch cheese must have been very intelligent, for he could not have found a more delicious spot, nor one more favourable to peace and the well-being of religion. Since we have been here, we have found the greatest good-will towards our Society".

He found the bishop of s'Hertogenbosch very cordial and generous. Not only would he welcome the MSC to the diocese, he would even let them have a house belonging to his seminary, called Huize Gerra. So Fr. Piperon took his Novices there at the end of 1880.

They had a house; but they had little else. They had no heating and they suffered from the cold and the dampness. Their poverty was somewhat alleviated by the generosity of the professors of the Seminary and their friends but it was grim none the less. The health of more than one of those early novices was permanently impaired. But they had a spirit which kept them going.

November 1881 saw the profession of the first novices formed outside of France. Among them were some names later to become famous in the Society and beyond: Bontemps founder of the mission in the Gilbert Islands; Couppe, first Bishop of New Britain; Linckens, founder of the German Province, and of the MSC Sisters; Reyn whom we shall see in later chapters. It was quite a collection of founders! This

profession immediately presented a further problem in planning. Would the young students join the MSC scholastics in Rome or should other arrangements be made for them? Perhaps it was felt that the faith and generosity of the Catholic community in Holland held real promise for the future of the MSC. Anyway it was decided that the students would stay there. This decision was helped by the offer made by the Director of the Seminary, that the MSC students would be welcome to follow the course of studies at the

The house at Gerra was small and the community was growing. And Fr. Chevalier wrote from France: "The Apostolic School is no longer safe at Issoudun. At any moment we could receive orders to send the boys home to their families. So will you please look for a house which could take the boys as well as the Novices and the Scholastics. And please hurry - there is no time to lose"¹⁹.

Fr. Piperon therefore bought the factory at Tilburg. Today, if you visit Tilburg, a Dutch MSC will show you the place where the old factory stood. The site is occupied by a bank, and a book and stationery shop. For sentimental reasons it was later purchased by Jan Brocken, brother of the first Dutch Superior General of the MSC Society, so that it would always have some connection with the MSC. But time marches on and sentimental reasons weaken with the years, to give way to hard business realism and our factory is gone for good.

In 1882 Tilburg was under way as an MSC foundation, with apostolic schoolboys, Novices, and students and a very promising group of young men who aspired to be brothers in the Congregation. It was here that the MSC brotherhood got its first really vital boost. Tilburg was under way and it would grow and prosper until it was the central house of a flourishing Dutch Province.

After the students and the Novices came the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In those days there was the feeling that, in every country, the MSC were not really established until, by means of the Annals they were making known Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The Annals were already being published in France, Spain, Rome, Watertown. At Tilburg it was Fr. P. Barral who got the Annals launched. He was an intelligent young man full of energy and free from all inhibitions. The fact that he was from Savoy and the local language was Dutch presented no problem for him. He wrote the Annals in French and got some teaching brothers to translate it for him. He even went further afield and with the authorization of the bishop of Cologne was also editing a German Annals by 1884. In this way the Congregation of the MSC became better known, gathering friends and supporters in different lands.

It was thus that the damage done to the MSC Society in France was compensated for in a relatively short time. The stability of the foundation which had been threatened by the French persecutions was restored and the future was full of promise.

SPAIN.

At this stage the MSC community was well established in Rome, as we have already seen, and Italy in its own time would become a separate Province. Through Fr. Jouet's early journeys into Spain, an Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been established at Tarragona and an opening provided for the MSC should they decide to make a foundation in Spain. For Fr. Jouet, our public relations man, had taken good care that most of the bishops would know about the Society. And in setting up the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, he had seen to it that an agreement was signed that the centre of this association would be transferred to the MSC house when the Society should decide to open a house in Spain.

With the persecutions of 1880, it was decided that the time had now come to have a solid base in Spain. At that date, there was only one Spanish MSC, Fr. Casas, ordained two years and living in Rome. There he got instructions from Fr. Jouet and set out to bring the MSC Society back to his native country, beginning a foundation at Barcelona. Temporarily he lodged with the Presentation Sisters, looked after the editing of the Annals and waited to be joined by a group of french confreres. These arrived on 10th November. There was the superior Fr. Deidier who had to leave the house of Aries when it was closed by force. He was accompanied by two young scholastics, *Henry Verius* and William Neenan. They obtained a house to live in and the scholastics went to the Major Seminary to continue their studies. In a modest chapel which they set up in the house, they also ministered to the spiritual needs of some French migrants. Later they acquired an old hospice of St. John of God, with a public chapel which became the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. However, this foundation did not make the same progress as that in the north. It stagnated for some years under superiors who lacked drive and dynamism. It began to thrive after 1901, and later developed into the Spanish Province.

There was, of course, a certain initial expansion outside of France which preceded the expulsion of the religious orders. In this early growth we have seen the foundation of the MSC house in Rome, and we have mentioned Watertown, the first MSC foundation outside Europe.

ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

Fr. John Mary Neenan, the man who was to die as a young priest at Watertown, had come to the MSC Society from the diocese of Cork in Ireland. He was already ordained when in 1876 he entered the Novitiate to become a dedicated member of the MSC community. So enthusiastic was he for the Society that he got two of his brothers to leave Ireland and follow him, William first of all and later Daniel. On his way to Watertown, he did some more recruiting for the MSC in Ireland and England and obtained five more candidates for the Society - three from Ireland and two from England. It seemed to be a quality of those early Irish MSC that they became ardent recruiters for the Society. In 1881 Michael Tierney, a professed scholastic went home for holidays and when he returned brought more candidates with him.

This flow of vocations from across the Channel and the Irish sea - at a time when the position in France was most unpromising - encouraged Fr. Chevalier to look in this direction for a further foundation. Looking back we might regret that a foundation was not immediately made at Cork, Ireland, from where many of those early vocations came, and where today the Provincial House of the Irish Province stands. An initial attempt to open a house in Ireland did not succeed. Or rather, while the initial MSC overtures were being met with typical Irish caution, some definite offers were being made from England; one of these was accepted. And so it came about that the first MSC foundation across the Channel was made in England, and not in Ireland. For some time, Issoudun had correspondence with dioceses in England regarding devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The devotion had spread quickly to England and Archbishop Manning had approved it for the Archdiocese of Westminster. Then in 1876 the Duke of Norfolk, head of that staunchly Catholic English ducal family, had written to Issoudun in view of a possible foundation in England. Fr. Jouet was sent to England to examine this and other offers, while Fr. Chevalier himself made a trip across the Channel in 1882.

Following on Fr. Chevalier's visit, a beginning was made at Madeley in Shropshire. Fr. Deidier came from Spain to start the work, with James Lynch who would be cook and factotum for some time. At Madeley there was a large presbytery, a fine sanctuary of Our Lady - but very few Catholics. Since there were very few possible candidates in the immediate vicinity, it was decided to look for them further afield. Michael Tierney, who had already proved his recruiting ability, was sent to Ireland to look for vocations. Then he too came to Madeley and an Apostolic School was set up as well as a centre for the confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and an editorial office for the Annals in English.

There were soon 16 boys in the Apostolic School; there was great enthusiasm for devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In 1886, the foundation was moved to Glastonbury where the school would have more space to expand. This it did under Fr. Peter Treand who replaced Fr. Deidier... and the future was full of promise.

However, the promise faded for a while. Fr. Treand was called to Sydney in 1891 where he was to do a fine work in building up the Australian Province. But Australia's gain was Glastonbury's loss and after his departure the work declined. The early promise never died; it would come to strong life, however, only after a house was opened at Cork in 1909.

3. FOREIGN MISSIONS AND FURTHER EXPANSION.

The 1st September 1881 was an historic and eventful day in the life of the MSC Congregation. For it was the day of the first departure of a group of missionaries for the lands of the infidels. That morning in their little chapel at Barcelona, there had been a moving ceremony of farewell. In the evening they boarded the ship the Barcelona and set out for the south seas, for the mission of Melanesia and Micronesia, particularly for New Guinea. A telegram from Rome brought them a cheering farewell message:

His Holiness Pope Leo XIII cordially blesses Fr. Durin, his companions, his benefactors, and all Melanesia and Micronesia consecrated to the Sacred Heart²⁰.

Fr. Durin's companions, as he led out this first missionary group, were Frs. Louis-Andre Navarre, Theophile Cramaille, Br. Mesmin Fromm, and George Durin. Their field of labour was a vast area of Oceania; although in fact the MSC would later be concentrated particularly in Papua and New Guinea and the Gilbert Islands. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 24th, 1881 a decree from Rome had officially entrusted to the care of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart the 'Vicariate of Melanesia and Micronesia'.

This was the beginnings of many glorious pages of our mission history, of difficult journeys, of suffering and sacrifice, of men dying far too young from fever and the effects of poverty. But the dedicated effort of the long line of men who sailed south and east from Europe was to build up the Church in many lands: In Papua New Guinea, Gilbert Islands, Indonesia and the Philippines.

That September 1st was an historic and eventful day, for it saw practical realization being given to the spirit that had long breathed in the MSC Congregation. This spirit was first stirred in the soul of Jules Chevalier, seminarian: Reading the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, I felt the desire for the foreign missions born within me. I felt ready to make any sacrifice to carry the light of the Gospel to the unbelievers²¹.

This desire had to be held in check for a long time; firstly because the Rector of the seminary told him not to talk about it any more; secondly because, in the early days of his founding the MSC, the benefactor on whom his work depended thought exclusively in terms of missionary work within France itself. However, the everywhere of the Society's motto was always taken seriously: May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be *everywhere loved*. And, as we have already seen, the MSC Apostolic Schools were inspired in part by the idea of Fr. Foresta SJ. Whose 'apostolic school' was founded to provide priests for the foreign missions. Even in the first year of the MSC Apostolic School, the foreign missionary spirit and intention breathes through the letters of the boys, v.g.: I left my parents... principally to acquire the knowledge and the piety needed by 'boys destined as we are to propagate the faith and the whole of Christianity in distant wild and underdeveloped lands. As we talk about the future... some say: I want to be a missionary in China, others in Japan, others in Australia, etc.²². "Work among the infidels was early written into the Constitutions (or Formula Instituti) as one of the works for which the young Society existed. And even though some may feel that it was not quite the real thing, or hardly a work among the infidels, when the small MSC group left for Watertown, they were given a real missionary farewell. When the students went to Rome to study, they declined the offer to go to the French Seminary in favour of Propaganda College since, at Propaganda, as future missionaries they would be better prepared.

To a group animated by this spirit then, the question was not whether they would go to the missions, but *when* they would be in a position to undertake such a work knowing that they had sufficient resources to make the work succeed. There was naturally much excitement throughout the Society when, early in 1879 it was proposed that the MSC take on the mission of Auckland in New Zealand. Cardinal Simeoni Prefect of Propaganda Fide had approached Fr. Jouet, MSC Procurator in Rome asking him to write to Fr. Chevalier about it. Chevalier wanted so much to accept. Even Fr. Piperon wrote: If I were young I would ask for the honour of being among the first to go. Novenas were made, opinions were asked, possibilities and personalities were discussed at length. The big doubt was whether those men who might ensure the success of the mission could be spared from the works at home. In spite of the definite No of some, especially Fr. Guyot member of the General Council, Fr. Chevalier could not bring himself to refuse. But he did ask that Rome give them time to study the whole situation and work things out carefully. But, in very little time Propaganda found another solution and to this day, there is no MSC foundation in New Zealand.

In the year 1880, with the expulsion from France, Fr. Chevalier had many other things to think about. But persecutions could not stifle his missionary zeal. In February 1881, noting that the elderly Mgr. Steins who had been appointed bishop of Auckland, had died, Fr. Chevalier wrote to Fr. Jouet: Do you think they will offer us this mission again? However, a group of Benedictines had gone to Auckland with Mgr Steins, and Fr. Jouet replied: The Prefect of Propaganda desires very much that we accept the large and beautiful mission of New Guinea and the surrounding islands... We can begin slowly... and God will give the increase...²⁵.

So discussions would resume, and novenas would start again but this time to decide whether the small MSC Congregation would accept the mission to New Guinea or Melanesia and Micronesia. Two things Fr. Chevalier knew quite clearly: one was that Fr. Guyot would oppose their acceptance of the mission; the other was that he was not going to let this opposition stop him.

Fr. Guyot's opposition is tied up with a number of personal factors of the man's character and relations with Fr. Chevalier. These will have to be considered in a later chapter. For the time being let us note that the opposition of Guyot, member of the General Council, threatened to put this missionary project in danger. So Fr. Chevalier set about circumventing the danger. He wrote to his trusted ally, Fr. Jouet in Rome: We've got to accept this beautiful and important mission. Circumstances will never be more favourable... And the announcement of this mission will bring great blessings and numerous vocations to our Congregation. This is my conviction....

Then he set about ensuring the acceptance of the members of the Council:

This is what you must do. You must write me a letter which I can show to the Archbishop of Bourges (who evidently will not be in favour of this mission) and to the priests of our Council. You should tell me in this letter that the Holy Father has made it known through Cardinal Si-meoni that he wants us to accept the Mission of New Guinea... that we would please him, that it is a new service that he asks of us, that he will protect us, etc. etc. Cardinal Simeoni too should write me a letter in which he says more of the same things. But let him say clearly that the Holy See confides this mission to us.

In this way, there will be no further opposition on the part of the Archbishop, nor on the part of our fathers, who bow before the sovereign will of the Holy Father...*.

later:

The more I reflect, the more I am convinced that we *must accept*... All the fathers think as we do except the fathers on the Council... If the Pope expresses a real desire and if he makes this known in writing, I believe the cause is gained...*.

When a Founder finds that his Council has less vision and less courage than he, he is sometimes reduced to this sort of manoeuvring!! When the request came from Rome, he piously said that they must repeat the words of Peter, in spite of the difficulties: At thy word, we shall let down the net. Here he felt that he was using his right, as Founder, to interpret the meaning of his own charism and the desires of the greater number of the members of the Congregation.

And Guyot? He gave a rather grudging 'placet': This morning after Mass the thought came to me that from the human point of view we have committed quite a few follies which, however, have served to glorify the Sacred Heart, and our acceptance of the mission in New Guinea could well have the same result...^M. The others were more gracious in their acceptance and the mission was taken on. However, the nomination of Fr. Durin as superior of the mission re-kindled Guyot's smouldering resentment and he wrote to Rome giving all the reasons why the MSC should not be entrusted with this mission. Some good public-relations work by Fr. Jouet was needed and the Holy See, in spite of Guyot's submission,

went ahead with the plan. As events were to prove, Guyot need not have worried about Fr. Durin for the latter became ill on the long journey to New Guinea and returned home leaving Fr. Navarre to replace him as Superior of the mission.

The day came which Fr. Chevalier had so longed for: a group of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart sailed for the missions of Oceania. He himself felt very deeply the fact that he could not be at Barcelona to give them his blessing and say goodbye. In those difficult days of persecution of religious orders, he had to act as if he were a simple secular priest of the diocese of Bourges. He wrote: It is impossible for me to be present at the departure of our beloved and heroic confreres who are going to carry the love of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady to Oceania! O how I envy them! What a sacrifice for me not to be able to bless and embrace them at this solemn hour! Please present my excuses to these privileged men. Ah! how I suffer at not being able to be present at Barcelona at this solemn hour!»⁵

This letter was written from the Seminary of Bourges where Fr. Chevalier was taking part in 'la retraite pastorale'.

All through the years he would give his missionaries the utmost support, sending men and money as generously as he could, encouraging admonishing, cherishing, and writing often letters such as this:

Look after your health! Moderate your zeal! Don't expose yourself unnecessarily to danger, nor to extreme fatigue... * (to Mgr Verjus).

The history of these missions has many heroic chapters. They have been written lovingly and with admiration in more than one account, in the Annals, in books and articles. They are still being written in the daily lives of hundreds of MSC who live and work in Melanesia and Micronesia, in Indonesia, the Philippines, in Africa, Latin America and Japan.

Randwick. From these beginnings in 1884 and 1885, especially due to the influence of Fr. Peter Tre"and, an Australian Province developed, to be officially erected in 1905.

In 1885 Cardinal Moran was on a visit to Rome when Fr. Jouet invited him to visit the MSC community at Piazza Navona. Together the two men discussed the missions and they discussed the possibility of setting up a seminary for the missions somewhere in Europe. This would be similar to the seminary which the Scheut Fathers had recently set up for the African missions. The Cardinal wrote a letter to Fr. Chevalier suggesting the idea and Fr. Jouet publicised the venture in various editions of the Annals. Fr. Chevalier and the General Council approved the idea.

The question remained as to where this seminary should be set up. France was obviously out of the question, because of the political situation there. Meanwhile, a further factor had come into play which affected missionary planning. This was that in 1884 Germany had done some colonizing in the south Pacific, annexing New Britain and the northern part of New Guinea. Now while Germany was not averse to missionaries coming into her colonies, she would not, at that time, be very favourable to French missionaries. Consequently, Fr. Chevalier thought in terms of a foundation which would provide his Society with German recruits. However, Bismarck was no more favourable to religious foundations than was the French regime.

Further expansion.

AUSTRALIA.

This missionary effort in Oceania was to be the occasion of further development of the MSC Society. First of all it was necessary for them to have a base in Australia. The Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Moran, himself keenly interested in the evangelization of the islands gave the missionaries support and encouragement. A base for the missions was set up in Sydney and as a further help the Cardinal in Sydney gave the MSC the parish of Botany Bay and Randwick.

BELGIUM.

It was finally decided that the missionary seminary should be opened at Antwerp. With its important sea-port it was an international centre where French as well as Belgians, Germans and Dutch would to some extent feel at home. In January 1886 the Archbishop of Malines (Mechlin) gave permission to transfer part of the MSC community from Tilburg to Antwerp. A property was obtained at Borgerhout and Fr. Piperon came there with his Novices in 1886. A young priest Fr. Klotz took his place as superior of Tilburg. (His name should be noted, for he will play an important part in a later chapter of the Society's history). Since the purpose of this foundation at Antwerp was to gain more recruits for the young missionary Society, the Apostolic School was set up there at the beginning of the school-year 1887-1888. Right from the start there were some students from Germany.

AUSTRIA.

However, since a very particular reason for this foundation was to gain students from Germany, it was a natural development to think of making a German foundation within German territory. Two years before two priests had been sent to investigate the possibilities of such a foundation: Fr. J. Ilge, German, and Fr. J. Baltzer, Alsatian. They had settled in Berlin but under Bismarck prospects were not bright and it seemed wiser to look for a more friendly climate. This they found in Austria. Frs. Ilge and Peter Barral were sent to investigate and found a property at Liefering on the outskirts of Salzburg.

Negotiations having succeeded, in spite of certain misgivings that the Society might be taking on too many foundations, the house of Salzburg was officially established in 1888. Fr. Klotz was named Superior and in two years there were 25 students in the Apostolic School, while the Novitiate for the brothers was going well.

From these beginnings would develop the two German MSC Provinces - one in the North, and the other including Austria and Bavaria.

The years from 1881 - 1888 saw much movement within the Society: serious missionary involvement and a number of new foundations. To take such steps supposed a solid faith in the future expansion of the Congregation, for they demanded a supply of men and money. Fr. Chevalier, of course, always thought positively and believed in following the rays of hope wherever they shone. He believed that, given serious thought and planning, one could ensure future success by courageous action and trust in Providence. Not all of his companions could share his confidence. Many of them were more cautious and calculating and perhaps a little afraid of the greater demands that wider growth would bring. They were somewhat apprehensive as to whether the Congregation could really cope with all that it was taking on. As a consequence they were not always happy about the decisions made.

However, history shows that the courage of the Founder was to be well rewarded, for all these steps had very positive results for the life and work of his Society.

Notes Chapter 4

¹ This first trouble came from some of the Bishops of France, among them Bishop Place of Marseilles, and 'the better known Dupanloup.

² Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 56.

³ When a Congregation, already existing in several dioceses wishes to become of Pontifical right (and thus, in many things not subject to the local bishop), it has to apply to Rome, sending its own petition, testimonies from the bishops, a statement on the situation and hopes of the Society, and its Rules. The Decree of Praise elevates the Institute to the status of Pontifical right. It praises the zeal of the Founder, the aims of the Institute, the spirit, etc. The Rules are not usually approved until some time later - and then usually after some suggested changes have been made. The MSC Formula Instituti was approved on June 20th, 1874.

⁴ This, as other letters of Jouet, are in the General MSC Archives, Rome.

⁵ Letter of Chevalier, November 28th, 1875.

⁷ No mention has been made of some foundations which have little bearing on the chief purpose of this book: v.g. Tournus, Aries, Paris; MSC foundations which were of limited duration.

⁸ A. Latreille et R. Redmond, *Histoire du Catholicisme en France*, vol. III, Paris, Ed. Spes, 1962, p. 419.

⁹ Daniel Raps, *Un combat pour Dieu*, Paris, Fayard, 1963, p. 160.

¹⁰ *ib.*, p. 21.

¹¹ *ib.*, p. 15.

¹² *ib.*, p. 162.

¹³ Piperon, *Le T.R.P. Jules Chevalier*, p. 146.

¹⁴ Letter of Chevalier, February 1876.

^K Cf. Dossier Barral and *Annales Petit Oeuvre*, p. 183 ss.

¹⁶ Chevalier, *Ms Notes intimes*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁷ Letters of Jouet, MSC Archives, Rome.

¹⁸ *ib.*

¹⁹ Letter of Chevalier, quoted by Piperon, *Le T.R.P. Jules Chevalier*, p. 167.

²⁰ Cf. *Annales Issoudun*, 1881, p. 225.

²¹ Chevalier, *Ms Notes intimes*, p. 22.

²² Dossier Vandell and *Annales Petite Oeuvre*. MSC Paris.

²³ Letter Piperon to Jouet, February 18th, 1879.

²⁴ Letter of Chevalier, February 21th, 1881.

²⁵ Letters of Jouet, MSC Archives, Rome.

²⁶ Letter of Chevalier, March 19th, 1881.

²⁷ *ib.*, March 24th, 1881.

²⁸ Letter of Guyot.

²⁹ Letter of Chevalier, Bourges August 30th, 1881.

³⁰ Letter of Chevalier, October 29th, 1890.

5

SPIRITUALITY, CHARISM, MISSION

Jules Chevalier was more than a man of action. He was certainly a very active man and any account of his life must be largely concerned with what he did. There can be a danger that in seeing his works, we lose sight of the man and we do not want to do that. To understand what his work was all about, we have to try to understand something of his inner motivation and spiritual strength. Only these deeper realities will explain what appears on the surface in a very striking way. What appears is firstly a serenity in his faith that, no matter what happens, God will be forever _ with him¹ and secondly a calm confidence that he is called to a special mission in the Church.

Occasionally only, very occasionally and under severe stress, would this confidence waver and even then his serenity would be undisturbed. For he knew that while he could be mistaken in his ideas about what God's will was for him, his trust in God could never be misplaced. Furthermore, his confidence in his mission was unshaken by great external difficulties such as the French persecutions. On two occasions only do we see any hesitancy: firstly in the long years when Fr. Piperon was his sole companion and others did not join him; secondly in the later period of internal crisis in his MSC Society.

No man can get to this steadiness in faith and fidelity to God's will without many gifts of grace and without his own generous cooperation. Certainly, in his own temperament, Jules Chevalier had received a large quantity of determination. But here we see a man who has gone far beyond his own natural qualities, to be totally given to Christ in a spirituality which was strong and self-less. If we see how that spirituality was forged, we will better understand the spirit he tried to breathe into the various groups which came into being as the result of his inspiration.

SPIRITUALITY.

One can say that a spirituality is formed. One might say more truly that the spiritual man is forged under the different influences which are brought to bear on him, so that he is fashioned into an instrument of God's will. We shall consider briefly this forging process in the life of Jules Chevalier. Firstly, however, let us note that a spirituality is never worked out coolly and calmly at a desk, putting nice spiritual patterns together. Personal experience is a decisive factor - what a man lives - so that a central intuition and a lived experience take hold of his mind and heart, transforming his life.

When this happens, nothing essential to Christianity is excluded from the 'spiritual way'. The essentials are common to all spiritualities or schools of spirituality. Different schools result from a special accent given to one or other of the common elements - as for instance, St. Francis' stress on the imitation of Christ in his poverty.

Then, when a personal experience or central intuition comes into a man's life, it transforms, under its special light, all things else that make up the whole of his spiritual life. Nothing is taken away that was of value, but the value of other things is now relative to the principal and dominating value in his life. Rarely is a man's spiritual experience an isolated event in his life, disconnected from other factors. It builds onto what has gone before; and what has gone before is, under God's providence, by way of preparation.

The whole process is like that of kindling a fire. The spark, or the flame, is the energising and characteristic element. But it is not lit in a vacuum; it is applied to materials already gathered and built up. Once it comes alight the flame creeps back, transforming and diffusing its light and energy over the whole.

The transforming spark came into Fr. Chevalier's life with his discovery of devotion to the Sacred Heart. However, this discovery should be seen, not as something isolated from his previous spiritual experiences, but as taking up and transforming much that was already there.

Already there, in the life of Chevalier, was a quality of fidelity to God's demands and to his own vocation, in a measure which was certainly out of the ordinary. This comes out in his generous response to all that he considered as demanded by his vocation to be a priest - a vocation which, in spite of obstacles, he never doubted. He was resolute in the practice of prayer - not because of any great light received therein but because he believed it was something he should do. For what must have seemed a very long time he worked as an apprentice, studying in his spare time and waiting for God to provide the occasions which he felt must come. He kept himself apart from his comrades and their good fun, despite their insistences, for he judged that he was thus more sure of being faithful to his vocation.

Fidelity, generosity, single-mindedness: these are fine qualities when they are put whole-heartedly at the service of Christ. That they were is clear from his own statement to his relatives when he was a seminarian: I am becoming a priest to be in the service of God and not of my

family; to gain souls for Jesus Christ and not to enrich my relatives². His seminary companions also testified to this dedication.

In classical spiritual literature, it is customary to speak of the forging into a solid spiritual way as a second conversion. The process is so called from its parallel with the first conversion to the faith. It is a renewed self-giving to God and his will. To merit the name it must be generous, decisive, firm and constant. Whether it comes about suddenly or gradually, there are certain factors which, together or singly, are usually present in the process. Three of these factors mentioned in treatises on spirituality³ find their particular application to the life of Fr. Chevalier. It will be therefore useful to mention them and then to see how they were verified in his life. These are:

a) A sudden revelation of the nothingness of human things, together with the accompanying realization that God is all. Such, for example, was the experience of St. Francis Borgia at the grave of Isabella; and it can bring about the decision to give one's life totally to God.

b) Similarly, a conversion to God can come after a more difficult victory over self - a victory which is sometimes accompanied by a strong light and movement of grace. A striking example of this is St. Francis of Assisi. It is not hard to see why this should be a generous self-renunciation for God's sake is a gift of self to God and can involve the soul in a very deep way.

c) A retreat, with its time of silent and serious reflection and prayer is also (as S. Ignatius insisted) often a time of grace and conversion.

Now, either Chevalier was a more difficult man to convert than most, or his was a slow conversion not quite corresponding to the approved theories - for all three of these experiences featured in his spiritual life in his seminary days. The first - a sort of revelation of the nothingness of human things before God - came to him after a fall down a cliff. Other seminarians have fallen down cliffs before and since. But if the annals of seminarians' cliff-falls were written, that of Chevalier would certainly feature among the most interesting.

It was a day in winter, probably 1842 when Chevalier was still at the seminary of Saint-Gaultier and the students went for a walk along the banks of the river Creuse, near the chateau of Conives. Three of 'the more audacious' decided to take the steepest way down a mountain. Their feet slipped on the snow; two managed to save themselves by clinging to some bushes about thirty or forty metres above the ground. Chevalier kept on going, and when they picked him up at the bottom, there was no sign of life; he had all the appearances of death, so much so that the priest who was the leader of the outing thought he could not be given absolution. Everyone thought he was a corpse. He was taken to the nearby chateau, where they lit two candles beside him, while those who watched by the 'body' said their beads for the repose of his soul⁴. The rector of the seminary was notified of the 'death' and terribly saddened; he sent a doctor with a carriage to bring back the 'body'. But then the 'corpse' heaved a great sigh, startling the mourners, and was carried back alive to the seminary. The poor rector meanwhile had assembled the students in the study hall where they recited the *de profundis* and he read a passage about sudden death. Hearing the noise of the approaching carriage, he went out to receive the body of the student he believed dead, deeply moved by the whole affair. He was utterly startled when he heard Chevalier call out that he was not dead at all. The poor man was sick, for several days; *he* was the only real casualty of the whole incident.

Such were the humorous twists of the whole affair that one would hardly have expected the experience to startle Chevalier into total conversion. Nevertheless, it was a profoundly moving experience for him and, since he had seen death so close, he became thereafter more serious, living more by faith⁵.

A further important step was that he was called to make a generous self-renunciation. Externally the incident would appear as minor, did not Chevalier himself attach great spiritual importance to the event. It was merely a question of renouncing a particular friendship with a fellow seminarian. It was an ordinary enough friendship; however, Chevalier felt that his preoccupation with his friend was preventing him from being totally possessed by his effort to grow closer to Christ and to progress in the virtue required for the priesthood. And he regarded it as a grace of God that he saw it best to renounce this friendship before it became a serious obstacle to his vocation⁶.

His next noteworthy grace he regarded as being given him during a retreat at Bourges, preached by Fr. Mollevaut of Saint-Sulpice. His words, simple but ardent and full of faith made a profound impression on my soul. I came out of these exercises *converted* and desirous of being an exemplary seminarian⁷.

Prepared by these and other incidents, as well as by the graces of which they had been the occasion, Jules gave himself generously to the will of God, his soul open to the divine influence. At the same time he was formed in the *French School of spirituality* practised and taught by his director Father Ruel as well as by the other Sulpitian Fathers who staffed the seminary of Bourges. This spirituality was essentially christo-centric and sacerdotal, seeing Christ the High Priest as the one who, par excellence, rendered glory to God and carried out his Father's will. A strong accent was put on the virtue of religion (Christ was even called the perfect religious of God) and the worship given to God. The work of a priest, as Jules was called to be, was essentially to share in and continue that work of Christ. Christ should take possession of him and live on in him. In this way a priest should forget himself, die to self⁷ letting Christ live in him and work through him, so that his whole life and activity was directed to the glory of God. His life should be centred on the Eucharist and the sacrifice of the Mass. For it is here that Christ principally continues his work of giving glory to God and accomplishing the work of man's redemption.

Much stress was put on the effort to reproduce in oneself the interior states of Christ in the different mysteries of his life. (Two favourite texts of Scripture were:

"I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me⁸, and Then I said, just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book: God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will. 'If Christ is to live in us, we must die to self. In this, Christ is again our model, emptying himself in the Incarnation,' sacrificing himself on the Cross and in the Eucharist.

Centred on Christ the High Priest and Mediator, this spirituality must, of necessity, consider the twofold aspect of priesthood: Christ giving supreme glory and adoration to God, and Christ giving life and salvation to men.

Its specific method of prayer was also very Christ-centred, being summed up in three steps:

Christ before our eyes - reflective meditation; adoration;

Christ in our hearts - our affective response; communion;

Christ in our hands - union with Christ in action.

The thrust of this method of prayer was that we might be united with Christ in his adoration of the Father and in his work for the salvation of men.

Through all his life Jules Chevalier loved those texts of the epistle to the Hebrews (12,2 and 3,1) which tell us to fix our eyes on Jesus, apostle and high-priest of our religion. We can sum up the forging process in the life of Jules Chevalier in this way:

a) His own natural temperament and family training had given him a sense of duty and constancy. He showed generosity and fidelity in developing and directing his natural qualities in the service of God.

b) The fall down the cliff had given him the perspectives of God's supremacy and the total dependence of creatures.

c) His generous renunciation of a natural friendship had given him a great detachment, setting his heart free to be given to God.

d) The special retreat had given him the grace of strong supernatural dedication, making him ready to respond completely to the demands of God's will.

e) Saint Sulpice had given him a Christ-centred, self-forgetful spirituality strengthening his desire to live and work with Christ for the glory of God and the salvation of man.

f) For natural and supernatural reasons, he had developed a deep concern for people afflicted by the ills of modern society.

g) Then he was to discover devotion to the Sacred Heart which was to be the spark giving fire to his life, transforming it and giving it unity and purpose.

CHARISM.

By means of these different influences a founder was being formed. But perhaps of more practical interest than the formative process is the founder's charism. Especially since Vatican II this has been the subject of discussion and research in view of renewal and adaptation of religious institutes¹⁰. Without going too deeply into the origins and meanings of the word charism, we can say that, for our purposes a charism may be described as:

A gift of the Spirit to an individual for the good of others'... it brings him"(the founder) to focus on some particular aspect of Jesus' life, leading him to follow Jesus and to serve others for his love in a particular way¹¹.

Fr. Chevalier's charism was a grace that he received giving him a particular dynamic vision calling for a definite response. In trying to describe his charism as accurately as possible, we meet with a double difficulty. Firstly, - from his living for more than fifty years as a priest, and from all that he wrote - how pick out the dynamic element which constitutes his charism? Secondly, how distinguish what is essential to it from the time-bound elements and the cultural conditioning which would have affected his expression of it?

Obviously historical research and analysis is called for. This itself has an intrinsic difficulty. For a researcher is also an historically and culturally conditioned person. He looks with time-bound and limited eyes at the time-bound and limited work of the founder. No one today can know the exact way that the founder himself thought and felt about the vocation and the dynamics and life of his religious community¹².

Fortunately he can check the result of his research against the experience of living communities. For the charism of the founder of any religious community is this charism as it is lived *now*. It does not exist in the air... it is *these* individual, unique persons, and not others, who at this "moment share and live the charism".

A charism is a grace given *for* others.

This does not mean that we can read history backwards, or make the founder say things which in fact he never thought of. But in the present expression of the charism of an institute, we have a control against which to examine the conclusions of our historical research. This also suggests a way to avoid getting our readers lost in a maze of textual analysis while wondering where it is all leading. We can therefore first of all look at some of the most recent official expressions of this charism as lived in existing religious institutes. We shall then try to analyse Chevalier's own experience.

There are three religious congregations which owe to Fr. Chevalier their foundation - or at least their inspiration: The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Hiltrup¹⁴. If we study the latest expression of the spirit of these Congregations, we would expect to find certain common characteristic notes all pointing towards the charism of their Founder. Let us have a look.

In the Documents of the General Chapter of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1969, we find these texts:

1. It (our spirit) is shaped by a love for justice and a *concern for all*, especially the very poor¹⁵.

To bring... a message of hope, particularly to those who search for life's meaning: to those who live in subhuman conditions: to those whose rights are disregarded¹⁶. In every man who hopes, in every man who seeks to find himself and longs for unity in a world of justice and peace, in every man who is oppressed, we discover Christ".

2. When he laid down his life for his friends, when his side was pierced, Christ gave us his Spirit. This Spirit puts love into our hearts and gives us the will to serve. Looking on him who was pierced on the Cross we see the new heart that God has given us, and we wish to point this out to all men. We discover the love of God made man for others, and we believe in this love. We want to proclaim it and the new life it makes possible for all¹⁸.

3. Ours is a family spirit, and a spirit of brotherhood. It is shaped by charity, kindness, humility, simplicity, hospitality and good humour¹⁹.

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart wrote:

1. Their *concern opens out to every man* of every race and creed and condition²⁰.

2. They see in his pierced and glorious heart, the symbol of God's love incarnate²¹. The Congregation... makes known the surpassing riches of God's love revealed in Christ²².

«... consecrated to a particular participation in his saving mission... As he was sent by the Father, so they are sent by the Church to make known that he is the revelation of God's infinite charity to men; that he loves them with a human heart; that he is the answer to their hopes, their questionings, their every need^B.

3. They seek to enter into (his) disposition of humility... They strive to manifest in their own life the charity, gentleness and kindness of the Lord who was himself meek and humble of heart²⁴.

In these two different accounts there is a very clear coincidence on three points:

1. A deep concern for all men:

2. A belief in the love of God revealed in Christ, together with the conviction that men can find there the answer to their deepest needs.

Consequent on this realization is the mission to bring this love to men.

3. This love must be revealed through die charity, the gentleness and the kindness of those who are called to share in Christ's mission of 'revealing the kindness of God'²⁵

The same emphases occur in the documents of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart:

They are called to love the poor with the tenderness of the Heart of Christ²⁶, recognizing that «in today's world we meet poverty in many and various forms such as insecurity, suffering, loneliness, discord among nations aimlessness, injustice, oppression, frustrated hopes, despair, homelessness, hunger and other forms of want²⁷. They have learned to look to the Person of Christ in whom man's longings and God's graciousness meet in redemptive incarnation²⁸. Theirs is a mission to declare that God in his merciful love is ever present to the world in Christ²⁹ theirs is a service which serves and instructs, encourages and consoles, helps and heals³⁰.

They are called to live a charity which always shows itself in kindness³¹, which gives a genuine human affection to others, which shows at all times a respect for their dignity as persons³². Their tradition has insisted on the virtue of meekness, and a humility which is a poverty of spirit: All that we have and are is a gift from Him, and so we stand before God, aware of our nothingness, totally open to Him and dependent on his graciousness³³.

We see the converging lines of thought in these three versions. Allowing for natural differences of emphasis^M, we note the three constants: concern for men; belief in the loving-kindness of God revealed in Christ; and the call to make this known through our work and through our living charity, our kindness, our 'humanity'. Now, if a Founder's charism is alive in the Congregations he has founded, we would expect that Fr. Chevalier's charism somehow includes these three particular emphases.

In fact, historical research indicates that these were the constituents of his own vision of his vocation. We shall consider them individually, remembering that it is through the living experience of a man that his inspiration comes and his charism takes shape. It need not follow the best logical or theological order.

1. *Chevalier's concern for mankind.*

The early documents of the MSC Society reflect Fr. Chevalier's preoccupation with the evils of our time (Le Mal moderne). It was because he saw in devotion to the Sacred Heart a remedy for the ills of our time, that he decided to form an association of priests to combat these ills³⁵. In his Formula Instituti, and the first Constitutions, explaining the opportuneness and the end of his new Society, he states that: Devotion to the Sacred Heart was revealed as an efficacious remedy to cure the ills of a world growing cold and afflicted by serious ailments³⁶.

A document printed in 1866 to publicize the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart is quite instructive. The first two and a half pages are devoted to: I. LE MAL MODERNE. This is then followed by II. LE REMEDE AU MAL. The ills of Society are here listed as Protestantism, Jansenism and Rationalism. However, it would be a mistake to suppose that Chevalier thought of these isms as mere impersonal systems. He saw them as affecting human persons, giving them wrong values resulting in forgetfulness of Christ and his love, leading to rigorism and unhappiness. Behind the systems he saw souls who are so dear to Christ³⁷.

It would also be a mistake to think that Chevalier was primarily preoccupied with the systems as such. In our ecumenical days, we would find it hard to classify Protestantism as one of the ills of the modern world. We would be more preoccupied with materialism than with rationalism; and while Jansenism may linger on, it is not one of the major worries of those who want to work for the kingdom of Christ. Chevalier saw deeper than any specific system to the «egoism and indifference which he set out to combat³⁸. This egoism and this indifference to God and the rights of man today have other external manifestations. Anyone who is «concerned for mankind will know where to look.

The young Chevalier was concerned for people who suffered from the ills of his time. He was preoccupied by the social evils of his day³⁹. He was specially concerned for the poor, in their double need... temporal and spiritual⁴⁰, for these are the privileged friends of the Heart of Christ⁴¹. 'Privileged friends' are not the only friends and Fr. Chevalier never thought of limiting the apostolate of his congregations to those in real 'temporal or spiritual' poverty. For he felt that the lives of all could be enriched by a spirituality of the heart of Christ.

2. His discovery (in devotion to the Sacred Heart) of the 'compassionate Christ' *concerned for mankind.*

Jules Chevalier had profited by his seminary studies; he had been helped very much spiritually by the French School of spirituality. But neither the studies nor the spirituality had been able to ignite in his soul that spark which transforms an ordinary generous response to God's grace into a charismatic one. It was his living contact with devotion to the Sacred Heart which did that. Prior to this time he had conceived of religious practice as a duty of the virtue of religion. It was a sublime duty, and one which was also a privilege, calling for our gratitude and generous response. Nevertheless, the transformation of his own life and his spiritual and apostolic inspiration, came to him as he discovered devotion to the Sacred Heart⁴². When his professor of theology developed a thesis on the Sacred Heart with much knowledge and piety... this doctrine went straight to my heart. The more I went into it, the more attractive I found it⁴³.

This was much more than an emotional reaction to a 'private devotion' as some might be inclined to think, as they look back from a viewpoint of a greater theological and biblical development. For Chevalier it was a deeply spiritual experience. A few considerations can help us understand why this was so. Firstly, in those days, in many a seminary,

- catechetics was concerned with 'knowledge' of truths of the faith and teaching about religious observance;
- religious practice was shown as a duty following on the virtue of religion;
- scriptural studies were concerned more with textual exegesis than with the great biblical themes;
- dogmatic theology spoke of many truths to be believed; but *ONLY devotion to the Sacred Heart* gave a vision of the whole of religion as being God's love revealed that man might respond in love.

Jules Chevalier had learned to look constantly to Jesus who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection⁴⁴. He had learned to admire this Christ as the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature⁴⁵. But it was only now that he learned that God's nature was love⁴⁶. It was only now that he learned that this only Son, begotten from all eternity from the Heart of God the Father, is the radiance of his charity among men⁴⁷. It was now that the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed⁴⁸ to Jules Chevalier. He had learned to know Christ the Adorer of the Father; now he met the Christ who «had compassion on the crowds⁴⁹; the Christ who is capable of feeling our weaknesses with us⁵⁰.

His new insights did not negate his previously acquired knowledge. They complemented it. Jesus is still the one who gives perfect adoration to God⁵¹.

The heart is the central point of his divine humanity. It is there, on this sacred altar that Jesus offers to God his Father an adoration which is permanent and worthy of his greatness. And so it is this divine Heart which is the glorifier par excellence of the divine majesty⁵². Religion remains man's duty and Jesus is Religion par excellence⁵³. However, if Religion is a bond, is it not a bond of love which alone can bring about a spiritual union?... and if we take the word "religion" in the sense of a bond broken and restored, I shall ask: Is it not love which has brought this bond to be, which has bound together the two extremities which were separated.....?

This revelation to him of Christ in his love as being the 'last word in all things' came at a time when he was weighed down by his concern for men in their indifference, their coldness, their fear of God. And now he discovered a Christ who, far more than he, had been concerned for mankind: During his mortal life, he was happy to pour out all the tenderness of his heart on the little ones, the humble, the poor, on those who suffer, on sinners - and on all the miseries of mankind. The sight of a misfortune, an unhappiness or any pain, touched his heart with compassion⁵⁵.

And so for him the heart of Christ is full of love and mercy⁵⁶. The heart of Jesus is essentially merciful⁵⁷. The mercy of this divine Heart appears on every page of the Gospel⁵⁸. Chevalier is particularly taken by the idea of Christ as the Good Shepherd. He devotes a number of Meditations to different aspects of this theme⁵⁹ and proposes to his missionaries the mind and example of the Good Shepherd⁶⁰.

Fr. Chevalier would have found meaningless the distinction made later between - going directly to the Person of Christ, or going to Christ through his heart. As already mentioned, he lived at a time when the Sacred Heart, and it alone, pointed up this loving compassionate Christ of the gospels. He lived, too, at a time when people were probably more sensitive to symbolism - the symbol leading immediately to the symbolised, but not in itself constituting an object which arrested the attention.

The Heart of Jesus is the epitomized and living expression of his divine Person... O My God! your Heart is you... So, His Heart and himself, it's all the same⁶¹.

This divine *charity*, taken in its full extension, i.e. in itself and in its different manifestations is the formal object... *the spiritual and primary object* of the cult of the Sacred Heart⁶².

For him there was no problem - he thought of the Christ whose heart felt compassion for the crowds; the Christ who, because he was gentle and lowly of heart could ease the burdens of those who came to him to find rest for their souls. But a gentle Christ is not a weak Christ; the

Heart of Jesus possesses in perfect degree the virtues of *courage, strength, constancy and generosity* ⁶³.

Jules Chevalier had discovered his charism: A particular angle of looking at Jesus in the Gospels, a special stress or emphasis upon a certain way of following him and a certain way of serving him in other people⁶⁴. We have just considered his particular way of looking at the Christ of the Gospels. We have seen how this fitted in with his concern for men. The third aspect of Chevalier's charism could be expressed as:

3. *A mission of love; manifesting the kindness of God.*

This mission is carried out *in* the work of service, and by the *way* of serving; in love and kindness.

a) *The service* - is to be missionaries of the love of Christ, to work to deliver men from the evils of their time. In giving the reason for the existence of his Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Fr. Chevalier proposed a double motive: On the one hand the excellence (of devotion to the Sacred Heart) and on the other the extent and depth of the evil of which it is the remedy⁶⁵. This double motive, he believed, demanded the foundation of a special society, whose members, by taste and attraction and particular vocation consecrate themselves especially to the service of the Sacred Heart, becoming its apostles in order to apply the remedy and propagate its benefits⁶⁶.

This can be regarded as a double aim; or more truly it can be seen as seeking to incarnate the total Christian message of saving love in the whole life of man, personal and social. In his book on the Sacred Heart, Chevalier gives some indications as to *how* devotion to the Sacred Heart is the remedy for the ills of his time. He quotes Mgr. Baudry: To the egoism of our epoch and to its sensual tendencies, to its religious indifference, it opposes the cult which is the most dedicated, the purest, the most disinterested, the most tender and compassionate⁶⁷.

Making more specific applications, Fr. Chevalier indicates how its presentation of the humble Christ helps overcome pride; the obedience of Christ, totally submitted to his Father's will challenges man's spirit of total independence; Christ's immense charity and his desire for unity overcome the spirit of division; and finally the noble and generous strength of Christ delivers us from a servile spirit towards the State in its unjust demands. While they must render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, Christians must have the courage to stand up for the demands of truth and justice⁶⁸.

b) *The way of serving - in love and kindness.*

The first response to our vision of Christ in his love will naturally be a love given to him in return and sharing his love for others. We will serve him, practising *his* virtues: his zeal for the glory of God, his patience, his charity towards others, his kindness, his humility, his spirit of poverty... ".

«God, who is goodness itself (Deus caritas est) whose heart is full of love for all who weep, groan and suffer, loves to see in his children a likeness to himself. And when he meets a truly compassionate soul, he gives it abundant grace...⁷⁰.

Since the image of Christ the Good Shepherd was one which Chevalier loved, it was natural that he would use it to indicate the way his missionaries should serve: with the operative charity of Christ for men, and especially with that immense mercy towards the lost sheep ⁷¹. Goodness, charity, mercy, these are the virtues which the Holy Spirit recommends to us unceasingly ⁷².

An immense mercy, but one which expresses itself in the simplest and most human way: a word coming from the heart, said with interest, with love, with a compassionate kindness... ⁷³.

Especially must we practise meekness which is taught us, prescribed by Jesus Christ as being the privileged virtue of his Heart... This virtue is indispensable.... with it we have all the others. We can not, in fact, be meek without being humble, charitable, patient, mortified, master of ourselves and our passions

The one word meekness (especially in English) does not readily suggest the total virtue which Chevalier had in mind. It was the strength which enabled us to conquer pride, impatience, fatigue; to be possessed by the faith that every man is my brother, in the full strength of the word⁷⁴, and then to act towards him with unflinching kindness and total acceptance of his person. This was probably nowhere more fully expressed than in a text of his MSC Constitutions: In order that they might truly be disciples of Him who declared himself meek and humble of heart, they will combine the greatest meekness towards their neighbour with a deep humility and complete self-forgetfulness. Their dearest desire will be to persuade Christians that the yoke of their loving Saviour is sweet and his burden light. Intent on following in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, they will attract his sheep by kindness, drawing them with the bonds of love. If necessary they will carry them on their shoulders. With every possible effort they will totally exclude the opposite spirit of fear and rigorism by which Jansenism did so much harm to the Church⁷⁴.

All of these things were written later, they are no more than the expression of what he saw in essence when, as a seminarian, he experienced his charism in his own life.' It is very illuminating to consider how Chevalier's character was suddenly possessed by this charism, his way of acting totally transformed by it. The doctrine of the Sacred Heart, he had said, went straight to his heart. But it did not immediately flow from his heart to penetrate his outward personality. In his effort to live the spiritual life he had become severe, serious... stiff as a poker in his relations with others, taciturn ". Then he did his retreat for ordination to Subdiaconate and a minor miracle was wrought before the eyes of his fellow seminarians. On the day of his ordination, wrote a still wondering Piperon, he appeared completely different... a man entirely renewed, a subdeacon kind, affable and always smiling. We wondered at this sudden change, brought about by a few days of retreat and the grace of Holy Orders. The Abbe Chevalier had realized that in order to do good he had to act in the most attractive way, the way of kindness accompanied by a holy joy and pleasant conversation. Once he had taken this resolution, he carried it out with his natural strength, without one single failure. From that moment his influence grew. Those who had avoided him were drawn to him by his joyful and amiable conversations which he could always finally direct to God, for the good of his listeners⁷⁵.

Even after fifty years, the wonder of this transformation and its unflinching continuance, had not passed from Piperon's mind: And still today, he wrote, after fifty years, we find him always good, compassionate, amiable towards all who approach him. He has become all things to all men in order to gain all to Jesus Christ. This is the great secret which draws souls to him from every country; nobody takes leave of him without taking away a kind and consoling word and an encouragement to do good⁷⁶.

For nearly sixty years, Fr. Chevalier lived his Charism of Kindness⁷⁷.

CHEVALIER'S SPIRITUALITY.

A charism expresses itself in living the whole of Christian spirituality. While it gives a special colour to one's view of the Christian mystery and brings certain emphases and priorities to the practice of Christian virtue, it must embrace the whole. It can not exclude anything which is vital or essential to Christian spirituality. For novice-masters and educators in the spirituality of the Institute it is necessary to spell out all the details. But it is not necessary, nor is it possible, for us to do that here. Furthermore, as one spiritual author has said, there are as many spiritualities as there are men. Even within a religious congregation, each person will bring his or her own spiritual gifts to the living of the spirituality of the Institute. Therefore, any attempt here to draw out all the consequences for a spirituality resulting from Chevalier's charism would be either repetitious or restricting.

There are, however, some special points which it would seem worth treating briefly. Firstly the question of

For his own Institute of men, Fr. Chevalier chose the title Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and it was not chosen lightly. In rejecting other possible titles, such as Priests of the Sacred Heart, he was trying to express a particular insight into his own charism. He did not use the term in the restricted sense of a mission to those who had not yet heard the gospel, or to churches in other lands. This more strictly 'missionary' work he had in mind even from his seminary days⁸¹ and it has always been regarded as a specially important apostolate of the congregations which he founded. However, he used the term missionary in the broader sense of being sent to those in need, to bring to them the treasures of love and mercy of the Heart of Christ⁸².

However, I refer to an insight into 'mission' which regards *Him who sends the missionary* (for 'missionary' means 'one who is sent'). Here, I believe, Fr. Chevalier had a certain intuition of a truth which is being stressed by post-Conciliar theologians of the active religious life.

«Each apostolic community should be grounded in and patterned after Jesus' own fulfilment of the mission he received as the Father's Son⁸³.

Apostolic religious are, like Christ, sent by the Father united with Him in prayer and action, moved by His Spirit⁸⁴. Fr. Chevalier had written:

He (Jesus) is the first Missionary of his Heart... He was the first to make known to men the love he had for them... Everywhere, always, in all his actions, he is concerned with the mission he has come to fulfil on earth⁸⁵.

While considering his call to the apostolate, Fr. Chevalier looks to the origin of his mission - the mission of Christ in which he is called to share. For him this was more than a theoretical theological truth. It was a consciousness of reality into which he grew.

He began (as many of our contemporaries begin) with a deep concern for men in their need of faith, and love and christian values. But for some time he could not see how to respond effectively to their need. Then he discovered a Christ who was compassionate and who, more deeply than he, had lived a concern for mankind. And whereas he saw that his own concern for men was powerless,⁸⁶ he saw that the love of Christ was redemptive: His love has saved the world, his blood has purified it, his grace has changed it, and his tenderness conserves it". His own feeling of powerlessness was removed by a realization that he was called to work as an instrument of Christ's saving power, to be sent as *He* was sent, in the power and love of the Father.

«This is what Jesus Christ does for the conversion of souls; he calls us all to *unite our efforts to his* so that we may *work with him* to convert the souls who have gone astray⁸⁸. In this way we rise above merely human effort. We strive to reproduce in our hearts the sentiments of the Heart of Jesus... it (the interior life) forms Jesus Christ in us ever more fully; it makes us live with his spirit and his life⁸⁹. This is not merely for the personal life of the individual, but also for the ministry of the apostle where it is not the man, but God himself who acts, speaks and sanctifies⁹⁰.

Most of these truths were a carry-over from what he had learned in the French School of spirituality. They gradually fell into place in his spirituality of the Heart of Christ. And thus his *human concern for mankind was transformed into mission*. This human regard for others, the desire to do something for their welfare is itself a gift of God. But easily enough it can remain a too-human preoccupation fraught with anxiety and dissatisfaction and even discouragement when we do not get results. For Chevalier, the realization of the truths we have just quoted transformed his human concern through his appreciation of the nature of the mission of Christ, in which he was called to share. He saw that if Jesus had ever ceased to live His close personal relationship with his heavenly Father, His 'apostolic work' would have been useless. His work was salvific because, united as He was with the Father in loving Sonship, He drew men to the Father by drawing them to Himself. It was only through His union with the Father that He would be a giver of the Spirit. Any apostolate is a sharing in the apostolic action of Jesus, from the Father, in the strength of the Spirit. And, even active religious need whatever measure of prayer and contemplation is required to keep them in constant living contact with the source of their 'mission'. Otherwise, while they can be independent operators, they can not be missionaries in the real sense of the word.

True to his Sulpician tradition, Fr. Chevalier knew that if his Missionaries wanted Christ to work through their hands, they must, through prayer and contemplation, have Him before their eyes and in their hearts. Only then could they feel confident that they had entered into his mission, letting Him love through their human hearts, letting *His* care for mankind shine out through their human kindness.

Therefore, he would write that his missionaries must unite themselves with this divine Heart, be penetrated by its sentiments, cooperate as docile instruments of its designs of mercy...⁹¹. Speaking of his own mission, Christ had said: He who sent me is with me,- and he has not left me to myself... I am not alone, because the Father is with me⁹². For Fr. Chevalier now the need not to be left alone, the need to have Christ with him, was vital to his whole idea of mission.

As he got to see the length and breadth of the redemptive love of the Father revealed in Christ, the Person of Christ (seen through the evocative biblical symbol of the heart) dominated his vision in a new way. This did not mean that people came to matter less, but that Christ came to matter more. His concern for others did not diminish; but he was less anxious, knowing that Christ's concern overshadowed his. His confidence increased, for he saw now that what he had felt, was *only a share in Christ's concern for mankind*; and what might have been a too-human preoccupation was converted into mission. For he saw it as the call to let Christ love through *his* human heart, and to work, and live and pray that others might see how God loved the world.

He was now ready to look for others to join him. For included in his Founder's charism was the urge and the ability to get others to share his vision and respond to it. He was unshakeable, even against the opposition of Fr. de Champgrand his first benefactor, that his call was to found a *religious society*, not just a group of priests. Here, I believe, is contained one element of the double intuition he had in insisting that his was a society of missionaries. On the one hand (as he was to insist against complaints from one member) we are missionaries, not contemplatives. On the other hand (as theologians were to insist later) religious profession is a "consecration for mission". He wanted companions who were *more than men of action*; he wanted men who would let themselves be drawn to Christ, to share in his concern for others, so that their own desire to help others, and their human concern could be *assumed by God and converted into mission*. Their concern and urge to action would thus be purified and strengthened, consecrated as it was by religious profession.

Consecrate them in truth... As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself that they too may be consecrated in truth⁹³. It is truer to say that, at religious profession, God consecrates us to him, rather than that *we* consecrate our lives to his service. Similarly, in the question of mission, while we can say that we are sent by Christ, it is more exact to say that we are made to share in His mission in love from the Father - so that our mission is real to the extent that Christ lives in us and works through us. It would seem that it was in this perspective that Fr. Chevalier saw his own mission and that of the members of his missionary society?

It appears that there were two successive stages in Chevalier's spiritual view. Let it be noted immediately that they are complementary and not contradictory. In the first stage, it is the concern for men, the preoccupation with the 'mal moderne', which seems to dominate. In the second it is Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In this second stage, at times he gives the impression that he feels more compassion for the forsaken shepherd than for the lost sheep!

The Sacred Heart of Jesus, source of Light, of Truth and of Life, is not well enough known, is not loved enough⁹⁴. It is natural that Christ will dominate the life of any real apostle, as he dominated the life of Paul. This does not make him less an apostle. It is not that people come to matter less. It is just that Christ matters more. And the complementary character of the two stages is evident if we remember that the

Christ who dominated Chevalier's vision was the Christ who had compassion on the crowds, Christ the Good Shepherd, the Christ whose Heart was filled with love and mercy for mankind. Now he is urged less by his human preoccupation - but he is urged, inexorably, by the *caritas* Christi to spend himself for the cause of Christ.

The urgency of this thrust comes out in the very choice of words, and their italicization, in this text which treats of the characteristic note of the MSC Society {words which, by reason of familiarity may have lost their force): *a true and sincere ever burning love of the Word Incarnate* (italicized in text); which while it will be the seal of their sanctity for the individual members, will lead them to put on the mind and virtues of this divine Heart, and will communicate to them the *operative* charity of Christ for men, and specially that *immense* mercy towards the lost sheep⁹⁵. In a fervent response to the Gospel, any love for Christ must lead to concern for men; and any Christian concern for men will bring one closer to Christ. This is why I think that one can take two views of an MSC spirituality - and eventually it will be seen that the two views are really one.

The first would begin with the text of St. John:

We have learned to recognize the love of God in our regard and have made it our belief⁹⁶.

The second is a response to St. Augustine's exhortation in his Confessions: Return to your own heart and find him. From the starting point of St. John, one could set out an MSC Spirituality in four different aspects of belief in God's love:

1. We have believed in the love of God for us personally. This is a living faith-experience which has provoked the gift of our own hearts to Christ. From this flows a life of personal dedication to Christ and his Kingdom.

2. We have believed in the love of God for all men - a love which would give their lives meaning and purpose, if they would accept it. And here is the source of all missionary and apostolic effort.

3. Because we believe in this love of God for all men whom he wills to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth; because we believe that this love will work through those who consecrate their lives to him, we *are confident* that, if we work with *courage* and perseverance, God will give the increase.

4. And if we are a group that has come together because all its members have believed in his love, a real fraternal charity will reign among us.

These truths are easily enough enunciated. They can be lived in superficial fashion; but they can be part of a strong and satisfying spirituality only if we, too, have taken the trouble to ponder these things in our heart. With St. Augustine we must have returned to our own heart to find God; and we must have listened to the cries of every human heart, to the deep human needs of man: the questioning, the anxiety, the desperate need for meaning, for a love that is real, ennobling and uplifting. We need to have understood how doubt and darkness can often lie heavy on the human spirit.

And when we say that we have learned to believe in the love of God manifested in Christ, we express the conviction that this love is able to give meaning and purpose to all human life; that it can answer man's deep questioning and quiet the restless human heart.

This implies that we live what I would call a spirituality of the heart. This means that:

a. We have to go down to the depths of our own soul in a realization of our profound personal needs of life, of love and of meaning.

b. We must find, through faith and reflection, the answer to our own questioning in the Heart of Christ, i.e. in the depths of his personality, where man's yearning and God's graciousness meet in redemptive incarnation,

c. Then, fashioned by these forces, our own heart will be an understanding heart, open to, feeling for, and giving to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

d. We will not be *dis-heartened*, or dis-couraged in the face of difficulties. We follow Christ who loved with a human heart as Vatican II reminds us; he shared our humanness that we might know that over us all is the everlasting love of the Father. In God's good time the omnipotent love of God will have its way. It is *this* love in which we have learned to believe.

Courage:

«Courage, strength, constancy, these Chevalier regarded as virtues of the Heart of Christ, for they express the very qualities of love. He himself had the courage to *undertake* difficult enterprises for the cause of Christ - a courage based on 'belief in his love'. For example, invited to accept the vast mission of Micronesia and Melanesia he wrote to Fr. Jouet, replying to objections from Fr. Guyot, on June 25th, 1881:

Our Religious... without being either eagles or saints... are far from being inferior to others in devotion, obedience... We will accept this mission... because the good God always blesses and rewards obedience and sacrifice.

He had the courage to be *constant* and to *persevere* through the multiple difficulties met with in the course of his life.

He had the *courage to hope*, even when others did not, even when others thought there was no future for religious life, at least in France. On April 24th, 1906, he wrote to Fr. Car-riere, Provincial of France. «... the faith is not dead... Where did Fr. Meyer get the idea that the Religious Orders have had their day, or that they can not be built up again? He forgets then that the life of perfection is an essential part of the Church....

Obedience and mutual charity

This juxtaposition of ideas is rather unorthodox. Consequently, those with a passion for tidier classification have sought to improve on Chevalier's text by considering obedience under the vows, while leaving the mutual charity as part of the spirit of the congregation, or part of community living. Doing this takes away a lot of the strength of what Chevalier was trying to say. For him obedience was closely connected with his charisma and 'obedience in mutual charity' a strong point in his view of religious life.

From the Ecole Francaise he had learned to savour that text from the epistle to the Hebrews where Christ says that he comes into the world to do thy will, O God⁹⁷, and Psalm 40 to which it refers: I delight to do thy will, O my God; Thy law is within my heart⁹⁸.

By the very wording, as well as the content, of these texts, they would have fitted easily into his vision of the heart of Christ. Obedience, as much as humility, meekness, charity, was considered a virtue characteristic of those who aspired to be Missionaries of his Heart". They had to keep in mind the example of Jesus who was obedient unto death¹⁰⁰.

Fr. Chevalier wrote: Those who enter our society can very well let others surpass them in knowledge, mortification and poverty; but when it comes to *obedience and mutual charity*, they will allow nobody to do better than they¹⁰¹. This is a noteworthy passage. First of all, it takes a text of St. Ignatius and changes it in a way which would make a Jesuit shudder (how could a Jesuit light-heartedly settle for being second-rate in knowledge?). St. Ignatius had called for obedience and denial of one's own will and judgment, two things which are obviously of a piece. Far less so are 'Obedience and mutual charity'. Yet here Chevalier was not merely sewing a new patch on to a different-coloured garment received from the Jesuits. He was wanting to make a very definite point.

To appreciate what his point was we need to realize that, at this stage, he was growing away from his dependence on the Jesuits. He had looked to them for help as to how to go about founding and shaping his new religious institute. Their help had been generously given; their assistance was invaluable. Chevalier naturally went through a stage of imitating much of what they did, copying their rules and practices. But if his institute was to grow, his own charisma would have to express itself more clearly, informing its documents and constitutions. Growing then to its independent consciousness of its own identity, it substituted new emphases, replaced old expressions. Particularly clear was the elimination of all military images. The well-disciplined army gave way to an apostolic community vivified and unified by love. The members saw that waving a military flag would scatter the sheep rather than draw them 'by the bonds of love'¹⁰².

It is in the light of this transition that we understand why Chevalier links obedience and mutual charity. One could interpret this as meaning, partially at least, 'obedience in mutual charity'. We understand that Fr. Chevalier insisted on the great importance of obedience, above all in an institute in which the primary end is not service (in the specific Ignatian sense), but the love of God, if *this institute is to continue and to carry out its mission*. For if other institutes can rely not only on their spirit but on a rigid organization in the service of God, an institute like his must find its strength above all in its very spirit!¹⁰⁴.

'Community', for an apostolic institute, can never 'be merely a grouping of people being nice to one another. It needs to be strongly united in the charity of Christ. It needs to be able to count on the generous cooperation of its members in obedience and mutual charity. To this they can be inspired effectively only by living for Christ who came to do not his own will, but the will of the Father.
Self-sacrifice.

The element which has proved to be the one constituting the very essence of all spirituality is the vital rhythm made up of renunciation and positive union... No spirituality can become real outside of this rhythm (manifested by these words of Christ: If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross, which constitutes the negative side, and follow me in which the positive side consists)¹⁰⁴. We have seen the positive elements in Fr. Chevalier's charism. They can be made very attractive. They can also be utterly demanding; and this the negative side of self-renunciation must not be forgotten. Otherwise we make of Chevalier's teaching a sort of spiritual fairy-floss, which is all sweetness and no substance.

His was to be a congregation built on charity and on an obedience modeled on that of Christ, obedient unto death. He had a keen concern for men which would be translated into a total availability in the constant daily self-giving of the apostolate.

He was fascinated by the love of Christ but it was only through considering the depth of the wound in the side of Christ that one could appreciate this love ¹⁰⁵.

His was a charism of kindness. This demanded far more than being nice to nice people: There are two sorts of kindness which we must not confuse. The one comes from grace and the efforts we make to acquire it; the other proceeds from nature and is the result of temperament. This latter, if it is not perfected by serious virtue, easily develops into indifference. It makes the character soft, indolent, apathetic. The soul is without force, without energy... this so-called good nature is a fault against which we must react; it is not a virtue. The virtue which the Lord recommends is quite different: it is the fruit of prayer and generous efforts; lively and hasty characters have to do themselves violence to acquire it... This virtue is not natural to man; he needs incessant efforts to acquire it with the help of God. We are all born violent, angry, inclined to be carried away. Opposition irritates us; resistance inflames us and contradiction makes us angry. Why? Because our nature is vitiated and our heart is filled with pride... It is impossible for the proud man to be kind, or for the irascible man to be humble.

This is why Our Lord unites kindness and humility and recommends these two virtues in a special way: *Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde* ¹⁰⁶.

There is no need to spell out the details of the self-renunciation which Chevalier's spirituality demanded. But for the sake of completeness it had to be noted that he considered it an ever-operative principle.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart?

We have seen that Chevalier's charism consisted in (a) a particular angle of looking at Jesus in the Gospels, the compassionate Christ, the Good Shepherd, the one who revealed the love of God in our regard;

and (b) a special stress on a certain way of following him, a certain way of serving him in other people:

as missionaries of his love, in charity, kindness.

The total vision and response have been indicated in the preceding pages.

For Fr. Chevalier all this was living devotion to the Heart of Christ and being an apostle of the devotion. The question remains: to what extent is devotion to the Sacred Heart part of his charism? To what extent is it his historically and culturally conditioned expression, in his own language, in his own time¹⁰⁷ of the biblical and spiritual realities which can be expressed in other ways? These are questions which can be answered only by the members of the congregations who *live* his charism now. Some of their more recent documentation and research would seem to answer the questions asked. It would, however, be a pity if discussion of these points obscured the light of Chevalier's vision, or lessened the dynamism of the charism which was so clearly his.

Reparation.

Where did Reparation find its place in Fr. Chevalier's spirituality? Prior to answering that question we must answer another: what is the place of reparation in devotion to the Sacred Heart? After the time of St. Margaret Mary, a lot of emphasis was placed on reparation. Not enough attention was given to a distinction made in spiritual theology between mystical graces and charismatic grace. The latter is given for the good of others; the former are given to help the individual respond to a particular vocation. Every mystic is a special person with a very special and usually very singular vocation in the Church. Much of what Margaret Mary wrote about was no more than a record of her private mystical graces - quite different from the contents of the 'revelations' which contained a message for all. Her private, special graces were not meant for public consumption. However, a generation avid for mystical grace was not discriminating enough in publicising the message of Paray-le-Monial. Some distinctions have to be made:

1. The call to 'console the Heart of Christ', couched in a language common to the mystics, was addressed to the generosity of the Saint herself. Attempts to transpose it into 'ordinary' piety have often resulted in sentimental and complicated approaches to Christ. This aspect is certainly not a necessary part of devotion to the Sacred Heart, even as taught by St. Margaret Mary ¹⁰⁸.

2. Then there is the juridical aspect: this comes more from Jansenism than from the revelations of Paray... someone else must take the place of the sinner and merit salvation for him by prayer and suffering.. Such a conception of reparation forgets the demands and the largesse of merciful love. In order better to insist on the price to be paid... it makes sin stand out far too much¹⁰⁹.

3. We would be wrong then to make reparation consist in the contemplation of a sorrowful Christ, followed by particular exercises of expiation ¹¹⁰.

4. AUTHENTIC REPARATION is our devotion itself, this gift of our person to the Heart of Jesus, in faith in his mercy, in the peace of a soul which abandons itself to him; it is, above all, the Heart of Jesus himself, victim for our sins, but also satisfaction for our sins. He, and he alone, can make reparation for us. This reparation is accomplished especially by the sacrifice of the Mass. Christ there offers himself to the Father; we offer Him; and we offer ourselves with Him This offering will entail (always as part of 'authentic reparation') that, in our daily life, we shall live the mystery of 'the whole Christ' or the mystical Body,

- uniting our sufferings and joys with those of the Lord;
- praying in solidarity 'forgive us our sins' and
- combatting the sin in our own life and in the world around us.

It is fairly clear that it is only this authentic reparation which enters essentially into Chevalier's spirituality. Naturally, in his time he would quote St. Margaret Mary in his books and other writings. However, in the Paray devotion: The essential aspect is the love of the Heart of Christ, following on the contemplation and worship of its symbolic image; and it is our life consecrated in response to that love. The aspect of reparation is added on only as a filigree in the whole devotion (that, let us repeat, for us; for St. Margaret Mary it was quite different).¹¹² This

view of the devotion coincides with the vision which inspired his desire to become an apostle of the Heart of Christ. This desire, he says, came to him after reading the life of Blessed Margaret Mary, a book written by Mgr. Languet and given to him by his confessor¹¹³. The book has a very fine introductory note on Devotion to the Sacred Heart which is still rather wonderful to read. It is full of the joyous discovery of the love of God revealed in Christ and of the infinite tenderness for us of this God incarnate for our salvation¹¹⁴. Every man, in expressing his thoughts, will reflect the culture of his times. And Fr. Chevalier could not always have made the distinction between Margaret Mary's mystical graces and her public message. However, the accidental things of a culture can easily be left aside. For it is clear that Fr. Chevalier's was not a mystique of consolation; it was a mystique of mission in love and mercy. It was also - as a continuing thrust of the French School - a mystique of worship, adoration and praise.

Note on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Fr. Chevalier's devotion to Our Lady stands out in his life and his work. He wrote a book on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and there is no need here to write another. I would merely point out how much can be deduced from two facts. Firstly, his 'vision' was that of the Sacred Heart, or Christ in his love and the world in need. Mary would find her place naturally within his total vision: close to Christ, and between him and the world in need. If consideration concentrated on Christ in the total mystery of his love «in all its manifestations, one saw Mary as touched by the splendour of all of this. If one looked at the world in need, one saw that Mary, sharing in her Son's concern for the world, would bring to the world-in-need all the grace and love that it was able to receive.

It is therefore easy to see how some would have deduced that devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was principally to Mary in her role of mediating grace and helping mankind. But it is also easy to see how this resulted from seeing only half of the picture that made up Fr. Chevalier's total vision. Within that vision, Mary is obviously the Woman touched with the splendour of the multiple manifestations of the love of God revealed in the Heart of Christ.

Notes Chapter

¹ See Chapter XL

² Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 19.

³ Cf. art. Conversion in Diet, de Spiritualite.

⁴ Chevalier, «Histoire Religieuse d'Issoudun depuis sa fondation jusqu'a nos jours, Issoudun, Gaignault, 1899, p. 407. Cf. also Ms Notes intimes, pp. 14 S.

⁵ Cf. Vermin, pp. 30 &.

⁶ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, pp. 19-21.

⁷ ib., p. 21.

⁸ Gal. 2, 20.

⁹ Heb. 10, 7.

¹⁰ An application of Perfectae Caritatis, especially n. 2.

¹¹ Futrell S.J., Discovering the Founder's charism, in The Way, Supplement no. 14, 1971, p. 63.

¹² ib., p. 65.

¹³ ib., pp. 63 and 69.

¹⁴ See Chapter VI for historical details.

¹⁵ Documents of Renewal, n. 12.

¹⁶ ib., n. 5.

¹⁷ ib., n. 1.

¹⁸ ib., n. 3.

¹⁹ ib., n. 12.

²⁰ Constitutions, Special General Chapter, 1969, n. 3.

²¹ ib., n. 9.

²² ib., n. 8.

²³ ib., n. 12.

²⁴ ib., n. 14.

²⁵ Titus 3, 4.

²⁶ General Chapter, 1967, n. 23.

²⁷ General Chapter, 1972.

²⁸ ib.

²⁹ General Chapter, 1967, n. 7.

³⁰ ib., n. 56.

³¹ Constitutions, 1922, n. 9.

³² General Chapter, 1967, n. 46.

³³ General Chapter, 1972.

³⁴ For instance, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart write: Their particular charism is total dedication *in union with Mary* to the Heart of the Word Incarnate. Constitutions, 1969, n. 9.

³⁵ Chevalier, Ms Annales de la Petite Societe, pp. 1-2.

³⁶ Formula Instituti, n. 1; cf. Constitutions, 1877.

³⁷ Regies, 1857.

³⁸ ib.

³⁹ See Chevalier, Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus, 4^e edition. Paris Vie et Amat, 1900, book 3, chapter 3, p. 229 ff.

⁴⁰ Chevalier, «Meditations pour tous les jours de l'annee selon l'esprit du Sacre-Coeur, 4^e id., Issoudun. Pelerinage, 1892, Vol. I, pp. 73-74.

⁴¹ ib., p. 74.

- ⁴² This was not the first time that he had heard of the devotion; but it was the discovery with a real rather than notional assent.
- ⁴³ Chevalier, *Ms Notes intimes*, p. 23.
- ⁴⁴ Heb. 12, 2, a text he quotes often.
- ⁴⁵ Heb. 1, 3, quoted a number of times in *Meditations*.
- ⁴⁶ The «Deus Caritas est» of I John, 4, 8. 16, frequently rolls off his pen.
- ⁴⁷ Chevalier, *Fxrole du Sacre-Coeur ou Lecons de Perfection*, 6^C Edition, Issoudun, Pelerinage, 1892, p. 341.
- ⁴⁸ Titus 3, 4.
- ⁴⁹ Mt 15, 32, often quoted by Chevalier, v.g. *Meditations Vol. II*, pp. 112, 116, 128.
- ⁵⁰ Heb. 4, 15.
- ⁵¹ Chevalier, *Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus*, p. 69.
- ⁵² *ib.*, pp. 74-75.
- ⁵³ *ib.*, p. 76.
- ⁵⁴ *ib.*, p. 76.
- ⁵⁵ Chevalier, *Meditations*, Vol. II, p. 32.
- ⁵⁶ An expression repeated in early Rules and Constitutions.
- ⁵⁷ Chevalier, *Meditations*, Vol. II, p. 61.
- ⁵⁸ *ib.*, p. 62.
- ⁵⁹ Chevalier, *Meditations*, Vol. I, pp. 520-543; Vol. II, pp. 47-55
- ⁶⁰ In most versions of his Constitutions, and also in *Directorium Commune*, 1897.
- ⁶¹ Chevalier, *Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus*, p. 132.
- ⁶² *ib.*, p. 148; cf. p. 5.
- ⁶³ *ib.*, p. 182.
- ⁶⁴ Futrell, *art. cit.*, p. 68.
- ⁶⁵ *La Societe des Missionnaires du Sacre-Coeur de Jesus* Issoudun 1872, p. 14.
- ⁶⁶ p. 14.
- ⁶⁷ Chevalier, *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 235.
- ⁶⁸ *ib.*, pp. 238-242.
- ⁶⁹ Chevalier, *Meditations*, Vol. II, p. 43.
- ⁷⁰ *ib.*, p. 115.
- ⁷¹ *Directorium Commune*, n. 6.
- ⁷² Chevalier, *Meditations*, Vol. II, p. 464.
- ⁷³ *Meditations*, Vol. I, p. 74.
- ⁷⁴ *ib.*, p. 525.
- ⁷⁵ *Meditations*, Vol. II, p. 466.
- ⁷⁶ *Constitutions*, 1877, *Caput III*, n. 3.
- ⁷⁷ Piperon, *Ms Le T.R.P. Chevalier*, pp. 34-35, quoted by Vermin, p. 74.
- ⁷⁸ *ib.*
- ⁷⁹ *ib.*, p. 74-75.
- ⁸⁰ See Chapter XI for a fuller development. As we have seen in Chapter III, this same charism was evidently shared by Fr. Chevalier's companions.
- ⁸¹ We saw this in Chapter IV.
- ⁸² *Regies*, 1855, n. 1.
- ⁸³ Malatesta S.J., *Consecration and Mission*, in *The Way*, Supplement no. 13, 1971, p. 13.
- ⁸⁴ See the two articles by Beyer S.J. *Apostolato and Apostolato e Discernimento in Vita Consacrata*, 1973.
- ⁸⁵ Chevalier, manuscript, quoted by Vermin, p. 368.
- ⁸⁶ Chevalier, *Meditations*, Vol. II, p. 120, where he quotes John 15,5: «Without me you can do nothing».
- ⁸⁷ *Regies*, 1857, n. 1.
- ⁸⁸ Chevalier, *Meditations*, Vol. II, p. 57.
- ⁸⁹ *ib.*, pp. 45-46.
- ⁹⁰ *Meditations*, Vol. I, p. 515.
- ⁹¹ *Plan de la Societe des Missionnaires du Sacre-Coeur*, Bourges, Pigelet (1864), p. 2.
- ⁹² John 8, 29; 16, 32.
- ⁹³ John 17, 17-19.
- ⁹⁴ *Regies*, 1857, n. 1.
- ⁹⁵ *Directorium Commune*, n. 6.
- ⁹⁶ I John 4, 16.
- ⁹⁷ Heb. 10, 5-9.
- ⁹⁸ *Ps. 40*, 8.
- ⁹⁹ *Regies and Constitutiones passim*.
- ¹⁰⁰ Cf. Phil; 2, 8, often quoted.
- ¹⁰¹ *Formula Instituti*, paragraph 4, 3.
- ¹⁰² Vermin gives more details concerning this transition in Chapter 18 of his book.

¹⁰³ Vermin, p. 374.

¹⁰⁴ Diet, de Spiritualite, Vol. IV, 1, col. 121, quoting Mt 16, 24, in art. Ecole de Spiritualite.

¹⁰⁵ Chevalier, Le Sacre-Coeur de J&us, p. 15. 'Chevalier, Meditations - Vol. II, p. 108-110.

¹⁰⁷ Futrell, art. tit., p. 65.

¹⁰⁸ Jean Ladame has brought this out especially in his two books, « Les faits de Paray-le-Monial », Paris, Saint-Paul, 1970; and « Ce Coeur si passionne, Paris, Saint-Paul, 1974

¹⁰⁹ Ladame, Ce Coeur si passionne, pp. 139-140.

¹¹⁰ Ladame, Les faits de Paray-le-Monial, p. 202.

¹¹¹ ib.

¹¹² ib., pp. 201-202.

¹¹³ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 23.

¹¹⁴ Languet, La vie de la venerable Mere Marguerite-Marie, Avignon, Seguin Ame", 1830, p. XVI.

6

A SPIRIT SHARED

1. DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART.

In Paris, in 1865, a religious community of women detached itself from its parent body and became independent. This it did with the advice and the approval of Archbishop Darboy of Paris. The new community took the title of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, with its residence in Rue de Vanves, Paris. The reason for the move had been that the parent Institute, the Dames de Jesus Christ, had become infected with Jansenism. The new community, with Mother Marie Françoise (Francine Lefebvre-Durufle) as Superior developed a strong devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Fr. Victor Jouet came to preside at the erection of her statue in their garden shrine. The community became quite friendly with the MSC Fathers: they made banners for the pilgrimage to Issoudun on September 8th, and became zealous promoters of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

However, they found that it was easier to break with an old way of life than to find a completely new place in the church and the world. The sisters were uncertain about their future. In their quest for a more secure way, they turned over in their minds an item of information which one of their members had heard from Fr. Píperon. This was to the effect that Fr. Chevalier had hopes some day of founding a group of Sisters dedicated to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Why not ask him to accept them as the first members of his new Congregation? This they eventually decided to do.

Here it seemed that Fr. Chevalier finally had a solution to a problem which had vexed him for some years. He had long wanted to see a female institute established parallel to his. institute of men'. But a man can not be a mother Superior. He has to find someone else who can; and much depends, in the difficult period of an Institute's early years, on the central figure of the Superior. To a large extent it was the failure to find such a person which brought about the collapse of earlier efforts to bring into being the Congregation which he desired. Now, in Mother Marie Françoise he seemed to have found the right person, and in her group of Sisters the ready-made nucleus of a new religious congregation.

Fr. Chevalier therefore accepted the proposal of the Paris, community - but on some very clear conditions. They were to be the first members of a *new* community The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. They must therefore accept whatever changes were asked for in their spirit, rule and. works. The sisters already professed would undergo a certain period of formation in order to adjust to the requirements of their new life-style. Postulants and Novices would begin again, 'da capo', postulancy and novitiate respectively. The sisters were so happy at being accepted and helped by Fr. Chevalier, that they gladly embraced these conditions as being the first steps in acquiring their new identity.

Among Fr. Chevalier's many talents was a gift for making friends of Counts and Countesses. One such friend was the Countess Pirinoli of Turin whom, at this time, he decided to invite to come in pilgrimage to Issoudun. When she did so, he spoke to her of the things being done there. He explained too that, while he had the nuns for his new Congregation, he had no convent. He did have a suitable house in mind, n. 10 Place de Vouet, but he had no money to buy it. As he had hoped she would, the Countess helped him solve the financial problem. He had the nuns and the convent; and he had a suitable apostolate for his sisters. A young woman of Issoudun, Louise Baptiste wished to enter the new Congregation and to have the sisters conduct the boarding school for girls which, until then, had been in her charge.

On Sunday August 30th, 1874, the congregation at the 8.00 Mass in the Basilica was rather surprised to discover that a new religious community had come to life in their midst. Dressed in their new blue and white habits they came to the Mass in a group. Fr. Chevalier explained to the people that the Archbishop had approved the foundation of a new community of Religious of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The first members were being officially installed at that Mass of August 30th. Among them was the Countess Pirinoli who was a widow without family ties, and felt that she was called to join the new Society. Not all the sisters from Paris had come. Some had remained there to continue with the hostel for girls and children they had in Rue de Vanves. The Superior, Mother Marie Françoise, would spend her time between the two convents. The new religious Society had got under way with a certain flourish. But the tide which had flowed strongly now began to ebb. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had their slow and difficult beginnings; later they were to go through a period of crisis. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were to combine both crisis and slow growth into a shaky start lasting over a number of years. The first ebbing of the tide came when Louise Baptiste withdrew from the community. She took her boarding school with her, thus depriving the Sisters of what was to have been their principal field of apostolate at Issoudun. Consequently the former religious of the Holy Name who had looked forward to enlarging their apostolate by moving to Issoudun, found themselves restricted to caring for the retreatants and pilgrims, and looking after the altar linens of the two churches in the town.

In a previous chapter we have seen that attacks on the orthodoxy of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were a blow to Fr. Chevalier. They were a rather shattering blow for the new Congregation, Having fled from the influence of Jansenism, they now found themselves suspected of being tainted with a new heresy. Some of their priest friends assured them that the MSC had indeed fallen into error.

A further complication was that the Superior, Mother Marie Françoise was not in good health. She found the Issoudun climate difficult; and her doctor advised her not to make Issoudun her habitual residence. She therefore stayed in Paris. Genuinely perturbed about adverse judgments on devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, she decided that it would be wiser for the Paris Community to disassociate itself from Issoudun, reverting to its former title. She would give the nuns at Issoudun complete freedom to make up their minds. She had prayed for light - with the Memorare of St. Bernard, not of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

When Mother Marie Françoise had retired to Paris, she had left the Countess Pirinoli in charge at Issoudun. The countess, known in religion as Sister Felicity, was a good woman, and one for whom the sisters had a genuine affection over the years. However, she was not suited to be the Superior of this infant community. But, because there was no one to take her place, she continued on as Superior. There were now nine nuns in all, when Fr. Chevalier spoke to them on the Feast of the Sacred Heart 1875, impressing upon them that a great work of building a new Congregation lay ahead of them.

Sister Felicity, however, seemed more intent on whittling down the group than on building it up. She became a source of particular difficulty because of her sincere convictions that, as Superior, she received privileged communications from God which she was obliged in

conscience to act on. These special lights justified her non-observance of directives given by the Founder and her ecclesiastical Superior. Her state of mind is illustrated in her letters. For example:

... me whom, as Superior, God particularly assists²; I always have a great fear of not following exactly the Will of God which never fails to manifest itself by circumstances which the Superior has the right and duty of studying before Him³.

It was her conviction that this should be a contemplative community, and that education should not be part of its work. She tried therefore to discourage the entry of those who thought they had a vocation to the apostolate of Christian education. Further, she felt - in accord with her convictions - that those nuns in the community who favoured such an apostolate would be better elsewhere. She brought pressure to bear on them, and shortly the community lost three of its very promising members. The Congregation had its basic charter, drawn up by Fr. Chevalier and approved by the Archbishop of Bourges. Sister Felicity drew up her own. In it she wrote that it seemed that the education of girls is not assigned by Providence to this community which seems rather destined to prayer and to consecrate itself to the poor children by teaching Catechism, conducting, nursery schools, etc...⁴. Fr. Chevalier believed in prayer; he believed in working for the poor, but he always envisaged a wider apostolate for the congregations he founded.

Sister Felicity was to stay on as Superior until 1882. During all that time, Fr. Chevalier made patient, but unsuccessful efforts to get her to work for the kind of congregation he had in mind, not against it. One may wonder why Fr. Chevalier allowed things to go on in this way for so long. Probably he reasoned that if the work collapsed now it might never start again. Without a superior it would collapse, and at the moment he had no one who could take the place of the Countess. She could at least keep the community alive until the right person came along. There is an old saying that while there is life there is hope. The life and the hope in this little community was in the loyalty and determination of a group of three lay-sisters, Sisters Madeleine, Emily and Claire. Here were the human foundations for Fr. Chevalier's hope. For through all the doubts and the many difficulties, these three went on believing in the future of a Society of Religious of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; even though their hopes wore thin when the total community was reduced to Sister Felicity and themselves.

He had, further, a spiritual ground for his own faith and hope. For he saw this work as one of the ways of fulfilling the promise that he had made in his pact of 1855 of seeing that Mary was specially honoured⁵.

His attitude through these years is marked by the qualities we have come to know in him: a steady faith, a patient perseverance in doing what he could, and the conviction that, in God's good time, the work would be blessed. But one must admire even more the faith of the three sisters - Madeleine, Emily and Claire. For him, important though it was, the new congregation was a work he felt called to do. For them it was the commitment of their whole Hfe.

Finally the woman they had been waiting for came to Issoudun to join the community. She had taken the decision five years before when she had spent some time with the members of the group. She was Marie Louise Hartzler, a young widow whose two sons Leopold and Fernand were studying to be priests in the MSC. In 1881 these two would no longer be her responsibility. Fernand was to be ordained in November, and Leopold was not far away from ordination. Both of them were in Rome; her own mother had recently died. With no further family ties to hold her back she was now free to carry out her desire to become a Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. She came to Issoudun early in September 1881. There she had some moments of doubt, when she discovered that the promising community of nine had dwindled so much. However, she decided to stay, but insisted that she remain a simple member of the community.

The community, when she entered, was provided with a temporary superior who, in Fr. Chevalier's mind, would soon give way to Sister Marie Louise Hartzler. In March 1882, he had decided that it was finally time to accept the resignation which Sister Felicity had offered the year before. This she had done very nicely, seeing that her hopes for a purely contemplative community could not be realized: The grace of preference which the heart of Jesus has accorded to your Congregation, Reverend Father, in destining it for the foreign missions, will very naturally come to be shared by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart whose Society is connected with yours. Since the Institute, however, lacks at present any organization to that end, allow me to ask you to be good enough to undertake this yourself. Permit me at the same time to beg you to accept my resignation from the charge of Superior. This withdrawal is indispensable in view of the circumstances from which the greater glory of God and the Sacred Heart will result.

May I also humbly beg your pardon, Reverend Father, for all the trouble that I have caused you by my inexperience and lack of religious spirit'.

Her resignation accepted, Sister Felicity went back to being a Countess.

Meanwhile, the little community at Issoudun was in charge of a certain Sister du Calvaire - whom we shall meet and farewell in two sentences. For Fr. Chevalier informed the community, on December 7th of that year that she wished to be relieved of her charge, and that Sister Marie Louise would be the new Superior and Novice Mistress. Reluctant as she was, she accepted. In choosing the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception to make this announcement, Fr. Chevalier would certainly have had in mind the significance of that Feast for his first foundation of the MSC. In fact, because of the spiritual leadership she was to give, this appointment of Sister Marie Louise as Superior had much of the significance of a real foundation about it. And if one looks at the spiritual realities as well as the historical facts, Marie Louise Hartzler could be called the co-foundress of the *neuf* Congregation. For it was she who saw that the spirit which Fr. Chevalier wanted this group to possess became, in reality, part of its very life and soul. He would devote much time and effort to the new community, giving frequent counsel and conferences. But it was she who would mould its members, and be mother and leader of the Daughters for many years⁷.

Since the French Government had begun its attack on religious congregations in 1880, with special attention to the teaching orders, there could be no question yet of the education of girls as envisaged by Fr. Chevalier. However, the same missionary field that opened up for the MSC in 1881, now lay open before the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart as well. The MSC in Oceania were to ask Fr. Chevalier if sisters of the new Congregation could join them in the mission fields. The Society had its first professions in September 1884, and some of the newly professed found themselves instant missionaries. Five weeks later the first five sisters left France for Oceania in the company of five missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Members of the MSC group were future bishops, H. Verdus and L. Couppe.

In the missions and in Europe, to a large extent, from now on Fr. Chevalier's two congregations would follow similar paths of expansion, and encounter similar difficulties. The purpose of this book is not to write the history of either congregation; but to illustrate the life, work and spirit of Fr. Chevalier. A very important part of that work was the foundation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He set out to give to this new congregation the same spirit he had tried to give the MSC. He brought to this work the same desire that others should share with him the mission of spreading the love of Christ throughout the world. He worked at it with the same refusal to be discouraged by difficulties. He brought to it the same spirit of faith and patient persevering kindness. He was finally rewarded by finding other people with similar faith and courage, with their own gifts of community building to make this dream, too, become a reality.

These sisters, too, were to be missionary, just as Mary was the first apostle of the grace of the Word Incarnate, the first missionary of his love⁸ Like Mary, they were to be missionaries of his love. The like Mary should also be underlined, for to these Daughters of Our Lady he wished to give a certain dimension of Marian devotion which would be stronger in their spirit and piety. This would be a difference of tonality only for The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will regard the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as their founders and will always be intimately united with them in spirit and in works⁹.

Fr. Chevalier, as Founder and devoted spiritual guide, played a very big part in the early formation of the Congregation, while Mother Marie Louise Hartzler was eager to absorb what he had to teach and to hand it on to her daughters. Some of his proposals did not seem to have a great deal of personal conviction on his part; but since that was the way the Church did things then, that was the way he would do them, too. One example of this was his introduction of the distinction between lay-sisters and choir sisters.

In his revision of the Sisters' Constitutions in 1899, he proposed that the Superior General of the MSC be also the Superior General of the Sisters. Although this was a normal enough practice at the time, the sisters, understandably were "filled with apprehension"¹⁰. However, the Holy See showed itself more advanced regarding 'women's lib' than the MSC. The norms for Religious published in 1901 ruled that no new religious congregation was to follow the example of the older ones in this regard. This undoubtedly saved some headaches all round for future generations. Future Superiors General might not have limited their role to that of the kindly paternal counsellor which Fr. Chevalier always showed himself to be, never interfering in internal administration, and insisting that others be not allowed to do so.

He had an important role to play in drawing up the early Constitutions and setting the spirit of the Congregation. He wanted the same spirit to be shared by both congregations. However, this did not mean simply printing exactly similar sets of constitutions with His on one and Hers on the other. He made adaptations. The early Constitutions of the Sisters have stronger prescriptions for the practice of adoration and for reparation than the MSC.

Every spirit exists only as incarnate in a particular group. The group has its own living persons who receive and live the spirit. The same spirit will be incarnate with different emphases which go to make up the group's lived charism. Sharing a spirit does not mean uniformity. It does however, as history shows, mean a similar inspiration and a unity in spirit and in works. In missions and elsewhere, Fr. Chevalier contributed much to the Church by the two groups which he founded, and by the common inspiration which he gave them in their common mission of being apostles of the love of Christ to the world in need.

While much more could be written about the Sisters, it would contribute little to the main purpose of this book, which is to try to see, behind the various foundations, the spirit and personality of the man who was their Founder and ours. The rest of this book is written for them too.

2. MSC SISTERS.

Fr. Hubert Linckens M.S.C. is the official Founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. He was a reluctant founder, forced by circumstances into this role. The circumstances were a combination of a need for German Sisters in the M.S.C. missions, and the German Government's attitude towards foreign religious congregations. Part of the vast territory in Oceania entrusted to the missionary care of the MSC in 1881 became, in 1885, a German Protectorate. Particularly affected from the MSC point of view was the Vicariate of New Pomerania (New Britain). The Colonial division of the German Government requested that gradually only German missionaries be sent to the Vicariate. We have already seen how the MSC Society took steps to cope with the new situation.

In 1894 Fr. Hubert Linckens was assigned to the task of establishing a Mission House in Germany. He was, at the same time, appointed Procurator of the Sacred Heart Mission in New Britain; as such he would also represent the Mission in all transactions with the German Government. He was busy enough with cares about getting the MSC and the Mission House established in Germany when the Government approached him with a further request. This was to provide German Sisters to replace those of other nationalities in New Britain. He promised that the MSC Congregation would look into the matter in due time - when the other works were established. In 1898, the missionaries put further pressure on Fr. Linckens, writing of the urgent need for German Sisters. He finally realized that he had to accept the responsibility of trying to help the missions in this way, too.

In April 1898 he set to work on preparations. He would get the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to make a foundation in Germany for the training of young girls as religious missionaries. A temporary residence was bought, plans for a new convent were drawn up, and an agreement with the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was made. At this stage the German Government ruined his well laid plans by insisting that it would approve the foundation of a convent for missionary sisters provided that it be not the convent of any existing foundation.

He thus had no other choice but to found a new congregation. He did succeed in getting the German Government to allow two Sisters from an existing German Congregation to help with the formation of the Sisters. These were the Sisters of Divine Providence.

During all this time he was treating of the matter with the General Council of the MSC Congregation. It is quite clear that the Council was keeping a careful eye on this new foundation. Since Fr. Chevalier was still Superior General, and since he was the Founder par excellence, it would seem certain that his was the opinion which prevailed. There is no doubt whatsoever that it was the clear intention both of Fr. Linckens and the Council that, 'as far as possible, the MSC spirit would pass into the new Congregation.

The Acts of the General Council of May 4th, 1899 read

In regard to a house of Sisters near the house of Hiltrup in Westphalia: having heard the explanations of Fr. Linckens, Provincial, and having considered the demands of the German Government and the Bishop, the Council permits the erection of a new house which will be in fact independent of the Superior General of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun: also a Novitiate may be formed by two Sisters of Divine Providence. However, the Council demands that, as far as is possible, the rules, constitutions and *modus vivendi* be conformed to those of the said Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart ... because these rules etc are the most conformed to *our own*. Moreover, let the Provincial see that these sisters do not easily become independent of our fathers, after these have provided everything for their establishment; consequently material dependence should also remain".

Fr. Linckens wrote back saying that there was no need to worry about the material side of things. He went on to say: They form then, so to speak a *part of our congregation*, like the second order, entirely at our disposal ... As regards the name, you recall no doubt my earlier correspondence ... As we are called Missionare vom hi. Herzen Jesu, the sisters will be called Missionsschwestern vom hi. Herzen Jesu. The habit will be analogous to that of the lay-sisters at Issoudun; in the missions it will be white if the climate demands it. The details I shall leave to the Superior and the Mistress of Novices, for what man knows the details of female costume? Prayers, constitutions and rules, uses, and customs are the same as ours, with what changes are necessary for the female sex. Then, I think, there will be more uniformity and resemblance between them and us than between the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and ourselves, at least as far as I am au courant¹².

But one might add, what man dares to make comparisons between women?

In a later letter, he wrote:

I have not yet any copies of the Sisters' Constitutions or anything similar. Next week the Mistress of Novices and the Superior are coming to organize everything. It will therefore be necessary to 'let them begin with the rules of the Sisters of Providence and then gradually adjust things along the lines desired'¹³. The letter was written to Fr. Meyer who at that time was Secretary General. In the margin in pencil one word is written NO! Fr. Chevalier had a constant habit of writing his comments in the margin of letters received. Fr. Linckens began to build a house for the new nuns. In August 1899 the first candidates gathered do a rented house where they were entrusted to the care of two Sisters of the Divine Providence, Sisters Servatia and Mechtildis. They moved into the new house in December; and the new religious community was canonically erected by the Bishop of Münster on February 6th, 1900. Fr. Linckens was to write later that March 25th is written in letters of gold in the history of the MSC Sisters. This was the day of the reception of the habit. There was a large number of new Novices, ten of whom would be professed.

Fittingly the ceremony was presided over by Bishop Couppe, MSC Vicar Apostolic of New Pomerania (New Britain) their future mission-field. The first professions took place on March 25th, 1901.

This community was no slow starter. Nuns came quickly; and they set out quickly for the missions. In 1902, five left for the Marshall Islands and seven for New Pomerania. Four more left for the Marshalls on December 8th, 1903; and in February 1904, 6 more set out for New Pomerania.

Then, on August 13th 1904, five of these young sisters were killed by natives in the Baining Mts. New Pomerania. It was a tragic and glorious day in the Congregation's history, for they are known as the Baining martyrs. The five Sisters killed were: Sisters Anna Utsch, Agnes Holler, Angela Balka, Sophia Schmitt, Agatha Rath. At the same time, two MSC priests (Frs. M. Rascher and H. Rutten), two MSC brothers (Brs. E. Plaschaert and J. Schellekens) and a Trappist brother (L. Bley) were killed by the natives. Steps were taken long ago to have their cause of beatification and canonization introduced. In this process, the most difficult thing to do is to prove whether the massacre was inspired by hatred for the faith or for other reasons. However, it was love of their faith that took these Sisters there, ready to give their lives if necessary. The same love sent others to take their place.

The Superior, Sister Servatia (of the Divine Providence) died on April 6th, 1904. She was replaced by Sister Mechtildis until, in 1906, the first MSC Sister took over as Superior - Sister Franziska Pledge who had herself gone to the missions in 1902. The period of the foundation, said Fr. Linckens was now over.

Their Constitutions had been approved for 10 years, on March 1st, 1906. They had their own MSC Superior. By the end of that year, they had 104 'members': 14 postulants, 9 Novices, 69 Sisters temporarily professed, 12 Sisters with perpetual profession (with Sister Anna and her 4 companions praying for them in heaven). In a very few years, much had been done indeed ¹⁵.

The early years of this congregation are something of a success story. It has been said that much of the success was due to Fr. Linckens' talent of being able to adapt to circumstances. He saw immediately that the division into choir and lay-sisters would not help - and so he would not have the distinction. He would not have minded, either, if the sisters had had no specifically religious habit, so as not to stand out from the crowd - and clearly the candidates were all well-dressed. However, he did 'like to have beautiful sisters'¹⁶. Whether he had the same success in this wish as in the rest of his work, the Sisters are too modest to record. This practical common sense also made him see that, Founder and all as he was, there was no call for him to set out to try to find a new charism. The one he had was serving him and his Congregation well. His conferences, as well as the historical records, show that it was this spirit he was determined to share with them - which is why he called them the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

A statistical Note:

In the *Annuario Pontificio* of 1975, the following numbers are given:

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart: 2771 members.

Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: 1866 members.

Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart: 1702 members.

The women outnumber the men.

3. THE THIRD ORDER.

Fr. Chevalier's motto was that the Sacred Heart of Jesus should be loved everywhere. His desire was that as many people work in as many ways as possible to this end. Taking as a starting point the older religious Orders, with the first Order as that of the men, the second a group of religious women, and the third a group of non-religious but devout laity, Fr. Chevalier, too could speak of a Third Order of the Sacred Heart. In the French Annals, we find expressions such as this: The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart or Second Order founded by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. In this thought-pattern the Third Order is a third family, whose members share the life, merits and favours of the first two Orders to which they are united ¹⁷.

On the other hand, in his original plan, Fr. Chevalier envisaged his Society as consisting of three branches: the first that of the MSC religious, the second that of the Affiliated diocesan Priests; and the third - the devoted group of the laity. In fact the Bull of Pope Pius IX which concedes indulgences to the Third Order, sees it precisely in this framework. This double vision makes things somewhat complicated.

The history is more complicated still. The story begins in 1864 when Fr. Chevalier met Louise-Therese de Montaignac de Chauvance (1820-1885). In Montlucon she had begun a certain foundation centred on devotion to the Sacred Heart and dedicated to different pious and charitable works. She had been assisted by the Jesuits, and she thought that a union with the MSC, as a Third Order (according to Chevalier's original plan) could give her work standing and strength. In 1865 this group of Montlucon and other groups connected with Miss de Montaignac became the Third Order of the MSC with herself as Superior. It was a Third Order for women only, without vows. Members were not obliged to live in community, although some did.

Progress was made, but not without difficulties, in many dioceses, also outside of France (v.g. the group of Caterina Volpicelli 1839-1894, in Naples). But the foundation of Miss de Montaignac had its own life which developed independently of the MSC. In all honesty, it must be confessed that the MSC were of little help to her or her group. The general idea was fine, the enthusiasm very nice. But the practical implementation was almost nil. She was feeling her way; and they were feeling theirs, and perhaps were hoping to receive as much as to give. The Jesuits were the ones who really helped her group effectively. Accordingly, in 1874, the union with the MSC came to an end. Her group went ahead and became The Pious Union of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart¹⁸. Caterina Volpicelli's group became the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart¹⁹. The causes of beatification of both of these ladies has been introduced, that of the latter in 1911, of the former in 1914.

However, Fr. Chevalier still thought that there were lay-people who could profit by some sort of Third Order, and a new beginning was made after 1874. New Rules were written and some sort of new form of organization was sought for. In the new Constitutions of the MSC, the idea remains. For him, the Third Order is clearly for people of both sexes living in the world. They were to do a novitiate and make a profession (or act of consecration). When Fr. Chevalier sent a petition to Rome for indulgences for the members of the Third Order, he said: Some years ago, with the approval of His Grace the Archbishop of Bourges, we began this work...: today it numbers about three hundred members spread through the Provinces of France, and also in Italy, in Belgium, England, Austria, Canada: every day new people join up²⁰.

Nevertheless, he himself had to admit: Until recently, the progress of the Third Order of the Sacred Heart has been rather slow. On the one hand, the new Third Order was not well known, and many faithful even many associates were unaware of the spiritual favours which the Holy See had granted. On the other hand, the young Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart almost crushed beneath the weight of the important and numerous works to which it had to give its attention, could not devote itself as it should have done to the propagation of its Third Order. Today careful attention is being given to this third and precious branch of the tree planted at Issoudun on December 8th, 1854²¹. These same words are repeated in the sixth edition of the Rules for the Tertiaries which was published in 1902.

However, the Third Order lived on and received the approval of a number of Bishops. The Annals make frequent mention of it, saying, in 1905, that it had developed in nearly all parts of the world ²². Fr. Lanctin had 'been more modest in a request addressed to the Holy Father in 1904, speaking of nearly two thousand members spread throughout most of the catholic countries of Europe. The Norms concerning Religious published from Rome in 1901 put an end to the name. The MSC could not have a Third Order any more²³ than a Second. And so, on October 4th,

1904 the old Third Order became the Sodalitium Cultorum Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu - 'Sodality of the Devotees of the Sacred Heart'. The title was Rome's idea: and could do with some updating.

From then on its history would be too long to give here, and probably of no great interest. We shall then conclude this brief note with two texts which indicate how the Third Order, as Chevalier saw it, came under the heading of a spirit shared: It must have, he said:

a spirit of kindness and humility, of zeal and of charity, of detachment and obedience, of prayer and mortification, which each will try to acquire, taking the Heart of Jesus as a model and studying it with care.²⁴

It is a form of life which takes complete possession of the soul in order to unite it to the Heart of the Divine Master, while it aspires to Christian perfection in the state of 'life in which Providence has placed it.'²⁵

Notes

¹ Cf. Chevalier's letter to Fr. H. Leblanc S.J., April 9th, 1863.

² Letter to Fr. Jouet, March 23rd, 1877. M.S.C. Archives, Rome.

³ Letter to Fr. Jouet, December 27th, 1877.

⁴ In a statement drawn up for Fr. Chevalier, November 28th, 1877.

⁵ Cf. *Annales Issoudun*, 1887, pp. 64-65.

⁶ Letter to Fr. Chevalier, August 3rd, 1881.

⁷ For a fuller account of Sister Marie Louise Hartzler and her Congregation, cf. Sister Mary Venard F.N.D.S.C., "The Designs of His Heart", Cork, The Mercier Press, 1966.

⁸ Chevalier, *Notre-Dame du Sacre-Coeur*, 4^C *Ed.*, Issoudun, Pele-rinage, 1895, p. 108.

⁹ Constitutions of The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, 1881.

¹⁰ Acts of the General Council, August 18th, 1899.

¹¹ MSC Archives, Rome.

¹² Letter to Fr. Meyer, May 30th, 1899. To distinguish them from the Cabrini Sisters, their official title is Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Hiltrup.

¹³ Letter to Fr. Meyer, July 8th, 1899.

¹⁴ Cf. Linckens MSC, *Die Missionsschwwestern vom hist. Herzen Jesu*, Hiltrup, 1913, pp. 21-22; *Personalbestand der Missionsschwwestern vom hist. Herzen Jesu am 1. Dezember 1906*.

¹⁵ Schw. M. Hilsindis MSC, Pater Hubert Linckens MSC Stifter der Ordensgemeinschaft der Missionsschwwestern vom heiligsten Herzen Jesu von Hiltrup, 1967, p. 55.

¹⁶ *Annales Issoudun*, 1887, p. 64.

¹⁷ Chevalier, *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, 4^e *Ed.*, Paris, Vk et Amat, 1900, p. 398.

¹⁴ *Decretum Laudis* 1881, definitive approval 1895.

¹⁹ *Decretum Laudis* 1890, definitive approval 1902.

²⁰ January 29th, 1878.

²¹ *Regies du Tiers-Ordre du Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, Issoudun, 1887, p. VI.

²² *Annales Issoudun*, 1905, p. 76.

²³ Chevalier, *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 401.

²⁴ Delaporte MSC, *Annales Issoudun*, 1887, p. 26.

7

WORTHY OF SPECIAL MENTION

1. THE RELUCTANT NOVICE-MASTER.

Most people appointed to take charge of novices accept the appointment with some reluctance. However, there could seldom have been a man who, before, during and after his term as Novice Master, regarded the work with less enthusiasm than Fr. Guyot, first M.S.C. Master of Novices. He may even have been the only man in history who asked for, and received from his superiors, monetary compensation for fees lost through having to give conferences to his own Novices!

Despite his long membership of the MSC Society, Fr. Jean Baptiste Guyot is a hard man to get to know from the records. The more so because in his will he expressed the absolute will that no biographical notice should appear in the Annals about him after he died. He was born on July 12th, 1827 at Gannat (Allier) in the diocese of Moulins, and was ordained priest for that diocese on December 21st, 1850. He followed the normal diocesan path as assistant, chaplain and parish priest until he took over the parish of Saint-Paul at Montlucon in 1861. In 1863, while assisting at a retreat preached to a reunion of associate Priests of the Sacred Heart, he felt attracted towards the religious life, with the special intention of devoting himself to the Heart of Christ. In that same year he followed a Retreat at Issoudun.

He gave very serious thought to this attraction towards the religious life, discussing it with his spiritual director, the parish priest of Arfeuilles and two Jesuit priests, Frs. Bertrand and Bieuville. The advice he received was uniformly in favour of his joining the MSC Community. He expressed this desire in a letter to Fr. Chevalier which, I believe, explains much of his life, and his attitudes for the rest of his life: I have often thought, he says, of the advantages which your congregation offers: that of being a religious while remaining in the ministry where, in spite of myself, I am retained by circumstances which I must regard as the expression of God's will... '.

He was strongly attracted to being a religious. It would seem that he felt the spiritual need of the strength and the support which religious consecration would offer him. At the same time, he felt that he should stay in the parish ministry. There is no indication that he ever wavered in his fidelity to his religious profession and his wish to remain an MSC. But he did not waver, either, in his determination not to live in community!

On January 20th, 1865 he made his profession in the hands of Fr. Chevalier. He stayed on as parish priest of Saint Paul's at Montlucon. The Novitiate being canonically opened there on September 12th, 1869, Fr. Guyot reluctantly accepted the appointment as Novice-Master. But Fr. Ledoux was appointed as socius to help him. The Franco-German war relieved Fr. Guyot of his unwanted burden, when the novices were dispersed in September 1870.

However after peace was restored, the Novitiate was reopened. Although not any more enthusiastic about the job than he had previously been, Fr. Guyot was again asked to take charge of the Novices in 1871. He still needs a socius to do the work for him, and this time it is Fr. Miniot. (As a point of interest it was Fr. Miniot whose initiative introduced the Cult of Perpetual worship into the Novitiate, as a practice of devotion in honour of the Sacred Heart. In 1874 it was officially approved as a practice for the whole Society).

In 1873 the Novitiate was transferred to the chateau of St-Gerand, still in the diocese of Moulins. The acts of the General Council of that year have this record: In spite of his insistence that he be freed from this charge, Fr. Guyot is unanimously confirmed as Master of the Novitiate which is to be transferred from Montlucon to St-Ge-rand².

The next year he had a new socius; Fr. Celestin Ramot, himself just out of the Novitiate. In spite of his inexperience, he had to bear the main burden of the novices' formation, for Guyot (who really was regarded as a very fine preacher) preached sermons, retreats and missions in most places in France outside of the Novitiate. Finally the expulsions from France in 1880 brought solace to at least one man for the Novices went to Holland, while Fr. Guyot stayed in France. It is in the Acts of the General Council in 1872 that we read this interesting item: The Council willingly grants to Fr. Guyot the indemnity of 900 francs which he claims for the loss of fees occasioned by his conferences to the Novitiate³.

As well as that of Novice Master, there was another role which Fr. Guyot played over the years: That of 'leader of the opposition'. In 1869, when Fr. Chevalier was first elected Superior General, Fr. Guyot was elected as one of the Assistants, a post to which he was reelected until he himself resigned in 1891. However, he always found a reason for not going to live at Issoudun. In 1883 he went to Vichy where he stayed practically all the time until his death on April 22th, 1914. His qualities seem to have been highly regarded by Fr. Chevalier who made every effort to have his collaboration rather than - far too frequently - his opposition. For instance, the following is typical of what Fr. Chevalier often wrote to Fr. Jouet: The good Fr. Guyot is not happy, and while he is discontented, everything weighs on him. He is quite mistaken, believing that the Council takes no notice of the proposals of Fr. Guyot. He goes over the past and uses every excuse to get the Council to accept his resignation... We must all make it clear to him that he has always been and still is one of the most influential members of the Society, and that if sometimes his opinion has not prevailed that has not been for personal reasons⁴. Fr. Chevalier's constant efforts doubtless had some effect. However, Guyot opposed many of his plans: the purchase of the Church of St. James of the Spaniards in Rome; the Mission of Auckland, and that of Oceania, among the most important issues. It seems certain that any young MSC with a grievance would get a sympathetic hearing with Guyot. Yet no objective cause ever appears for this chronic state of opposition. In 1888 the General Council named him Visitor of all the MSC Communities. This seems to have been inspired by the desire to get him out of his isolation and into contact with the different MSC houses. If he would not live in any of them, something might be achieved by getting him to visit them all! We *shall* see more of Fr. Guyot in the next Chapter.

2. SCHOLAR AND GENTLEMAN.

Fr. Paulin Georgelin was the first Latinist of the Society. By the time he came to the MSC, he had a long career of the study and teaching of Latin behind him. The study he began at the age of seven years, the teaching at the age of 12 when he was explaining Latin authors to the pupils in his father's school at Quintin. At the age of 13 he took over a whole class. Paulin Georgelin was born in 1810 at Saint Brieuc (Cotes du Nord), where his father was professor of rhetoric before moving to Quintin where he became headmaster of the school. In his teaching the father was helped by his son. The father died in 1826, and the following year after passing his exams brilliantly, Paulin was asked, at the age of 17, to take his father's place as headmaster of the school. He in turn was helped by his brother Adrien, more precocious even than he; at the age of 8 he corrected the exercises of the fifteen-year old boys. When Adrien died, aged eight and a half, Paulin had not the heart to continue. So he spent some years teaching in Universities until he went to teach school in Vannes where his mother was now living, having retired to her home-town after the death of Adrien.

In 1834 he did a retreat under Fr. Leleu, SJ. When this priest asked him if he had ever given any thought to being a priest himself, the suggestion generated a desire for the priesthood. Two years later, the Bishop of Vannes gave him permission to study theology at the seminary while he kept on with his teaching. He was asked to spend one year only in the seminary - after which he carried off all the prizes in theology. He was ordained priest in 1838, and named chaplain to the college where he had been teaching. Soon afterwards Fr. Georgelin became associated with the Faithful Companions of Jesus, and worked as chaplain and teacher in a number of their schools and orphanages. This association took him to Switzerland for some years. There he met Fr. Jean Marie Vandel. He returned to France to work with the Faithful Companions in Paris. He worked there for 15 years until, in 1865 he heard of the existence at Issoudun of the young Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. For a number of years his spiritual aspirations had been suggesting religious life to him, mixed up with ideas about missions and a strong devotion to the Sacred Heart. The total mixture led him to Issoudun, where, despite his age of 55 years, he decided that this was indeed the Congregation for him.

After entering the Society it was natural that he should be engaged in teaching. First of all he taught rhetoric and philosophy at Chezal-Benoit. However, through Fr. Vandel, the MSC became interested in a clerical school in Rimont in Burgundy and Fr. Georgelin went there at the end of 1866. Here there were high hopes of an eventual MSC community. In those days of a broad view of the Society, not very clear distinctions were always made between affiliated priests and religious properly so called. And so when the school of Rimont was merged with that of Tournus, we find mention of the priests of Tournus as members of the Society. Georgelin had spent about a year at Rimont, returned to Issoudun and came back to Tournus for the beginning of the school-year 1868-69.

During the war of 1870-71, Garibaldi's invasion forced Fr. Georgelin to take refuge in Switzerland. He went to Carouge (in the vicinity of Geneva) where he had previously spent six years with the Faithful Companions of Jesus. These welcomed him back gladly - as did also his former altar-boy, now Bishop (and later Cardinal) Mermillod. The latter put pressure on Fr. Chevalier to leave Fr. Georgelin with him for some time; and so he stayed in Switzerland until called back to Issoudun in 1872. Since in that year the Archbishop of Bourges had insisted that the MSC take the parish of Issoudun, Fr. Chevalier needed men to assist him. Fr. Georgelin seemed an excellent choice: he could work in the parish and also assist Fr. Chevalier as secretary and latinist.

He was one of those men who automatically bring honour to the position they occupy - and thus themselves have no need of honours. The most modest position was good enough for him. And as curate in the parish, as before chaplain, head of a college or in charge of an independent school, with zeal and piety he did what there was to be done... His favourite virtue was always that of humble and utter devotedness⁵. Always remembered as a gentlemanly priest as well as scholarly, simple and kind, he made his own contribution to creating - in the lived reality of daily life - that MSC spirit which others were to inherit.

3. MSC BROTHERS.

There were no MSC brothers about in the very early days of the Society. Had there been, Fr. Chevalier's chapel would not have begun to fall down. In fact, he planned right from the start to have brothers in his society, not only to help build chapels in the missions and elsewhere, but to contribute in a number of ways to the Society's missionary goals. In the first years, however, Fr. Chevalier felt that the top priority in recruitment was for priests. Nevertheless, the first Rules which he drew up in 1855 show clearly that he considered that his congregation would quite naturally be made up of Missionaries and Brothers of the Sacred Heart:

1. The men who ask to become Brothers of the Sacred Heart will offer the same assurances as the Missionary novices.
2. The time of probation and conditions of admission will be the same.

3. As far as possible they will follow the general rule; furthermore a particular rule will be drawn up for them (just as there were particular rules for the missionary novices)...

6. The brothers will take care of the material side of things in the community ... kitchen, door, garden, the sick, etc. ...
10. They will have the same privileges and same advantages as the missionary religious⁶.

In the next draft of the Rules, in 1857, the brothers are envisaged as helping the bursar in the community⁷. By the time of the Formula Instituti in 1869, *teaching* is also regarded as one of the works of the brothers. Now, too, all the members, Priests and Brothers are called Missionaries of the Sacred Heart; all will have a religious habit, although previously the habit was not required for the brothers by rule.

Members: In the first degree will be the coadjutor brothers, who will be engaged either in primary teaching of the children, or in material services⁸.

In those early years of the Society, if careful records were kept, they have not all survived. The first written references to the existence of brothers in the MSC community is found in the diary of Fr. Vandel: Fr. Georgelin who has his bachelor's degree is going to leave for Rimont (the college at Tournus) *with a brother*⁹. Fr. Georgelin leaves tomorrow, with a brother for Paris, and the day after next for Rimont¹⁰. This brother's name is not known.

In Fr. Chevalier's letter to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, dated December 25th, 1864, asking to have his MSC Society approved, he states that there are three Brothers among the members. We know that before 1869 (after which records were more carefully kept) two of the brothers were Elzear Penasson and Henri Dechatre. We have already met the latter on his trip to Canada. The brothers came from different walks of life; for at that time there was an aspirant Jean Pailloncy, a former student of the Apostolic School, and another who was an ex-soldier, Sergeant Laprade, known predictably as the captain.

Fr. Chevalier's -idea was that brothers could do a variety of works. One of their early occupations was in the Issoudun Office of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, where they did valuable work. One of them, Brother Alexan-dre Delimoges was a very capable office worker and became the Director of the Bureau.

We have seen that, when the MSC Society took refuge in Holland, young men from that country began to enter the Society in notable numbers, many of them asking to become brothers. The first Dutch brother was Henry Adan, born on August 30th, 1859, professed on October 17th, 1885. He was to die in Papua on November 7th, 1931; but before then he would contribute much to the missionary work in his trade as a carpenter. And by his constant good humour, he contributed considerably to community life, making light of the difficulties in the early days and helping others to do the same.

Careful readers of the Necrology would have noted that, among the brothers who died in the missions, there was a number from Volendam: J. Kras (1892), N. Kieft (1897), E. Zwarthoed (1898), C. Zwarthoed (1908), C. Hansen (1911), J. Poijer (1922). Volendam is not a big city; it is a fishing village in the Dutch province of North Holland. But it is world-famous, not by name perhaps, but as the village of clogs and Dutch bonnets, beloved of tourists. Attached to Volendam is one of the interesting stories (in substance historically true) regarding MSC brothers. In those early days of the Society, one of the priests was making a recruiting trip for brothers through Holland. Somewhere along the way in North Holland, someone who had heard of the purpose of his travels told him that he should go to Volendam, a very Catholic village. And so, runs the account in the Dutch Annals, one fine summer day he found himself on the steps of the presbytery in Volendam. He explained the purpose of his visit to the parish priest, who wasted no time in getting down to business. The fishing fleet had just come into port; and when the two priests arrived there, the people were already gathered together. The MSC priest kept a bit to the side in the shadow of the parish priest who strode purposefully through the crowd of fishermen who were shouting and calling out. He mounted the platform from which the auctioneer sold the fish, called for silence, and the crowd fell quiet. The dear brethren pressed curiously around the unusual pulpit. They soon knew the subject matter: this missionary priest needed a fine lot of young men who were ready to go with him as brothers to work in the missions. (Were there any bids?) The missionary thought it was a truly evangelical way of seeking vocations (cf. Mt. 4, 18-20); but he was not a little surprised when, after the short explanation given by the parish priest, three strong young lads who wanted to go presented themselves to him. It was literally: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men' and 'immediately they left their nets and followed him'. That very evening three more candidates came to the presbytery. Next day six young men from Volendam, after a rather matter-of-fact leave-taking from home and friends, set out for a distant mission-house which would be for them a clearing-house for the missions¹¹.

I do not know whether these are the six, whose names we have seen. But, clearly, we should have more exegesis of the Necrology.

Finally, it was a Dutch brother, Bro. van Heugten, who took devoted care of Fr. Chevalier in his declining years.

4. A MULTIPLICITY OF FOUNDERS.

A Founder tries to pass on his charism to the members of his Society - without, however, wishing to pass on the charism of being Founders in their turn. Yet this was what Fr. Chevalier did in more than one instance. Being a Founder of a Congregation of Sisters presented no problem, for this did not clash with remaining a member of the MSC Congregation. And tension was reduced to a complete minimum in the case of Fr. HUBERT LINCKENS who, as an MSC founded a congregation of MSC Sisters.

On the other hand when a man feels that he is called to found a congregation or society of men, it is almost impossible for him to identify himself completely with the new group while remaining a member of the other. The call to be a Founder of such a group, by psychological necessity takes with it a call to leave one's former group. While the former confreres regret the departure from their midst of a talented member, they rejoice that their particular loss results in a greater good for the Church. Two of the early MSC called to be founders of other groups (and ipso facto called to leave the MSC) were Frs. P. Barral and T. Reyn.

Fr. PETER BARRAL was born in Savoy at Moutiers on November 6th, 1855, and was to die there in 1929. An active man within the Congregation, he decided in 1891 that he could find better scope for his activities elsewhere. Fr. Jean Marie Vandel had always been in his eyes the model of what a priest should be; so, too, the Apostolic School was the model he used in his new work. In April 1895 he received permission to start such a work in the diocese of Coire, Switzerland. His work spread beyond Switzerland into France and Italy. He founded the Institute of Bethlehem -which later became (or resulted in) the Foreign Missionary Society of Bethlehem in Switzerland; he founded also the Poor Missionary Sisters of Bethlehem¹².

Fr. THEOPHILE REYN was born, March 8th, 1860 at Beveren near Antwerp in Belgium.

We shall see more of Fr. Reyn in the following Chapter. Here we wish only to note that, still young, he left the MSC Society in order to found a religious society of priests to work for the apostolate of the workers in Belgium. He had an early insight into what was to be realized later on a wider scale: the need for a special apostolate in this field. His congregation of les Aumoniers du travail was founded on November 21st, 1894.

There were to be other foundations by MSC after the period with which this book is concerned. Within our time, there is one further item of interest in the field of foundations. Not to be outdone by the Fathers some of the MSC brothers decided that they, too, could be called to work in this field. The prime mover was a PETRUS ONCKELS, of Arcen in Dutch Limbourg, who had entered the Society at Tilburg, making his profession on October 4th, 1888. It seems that, in 1896 he tried to found an order of brothers at Antwerp, Belgium. Some of the other MSC brothers joined him. They envisaged a special apostolate among the children of the poor. Their intentions were no doubt laudable, but the work did not persevere.

5. LUCIEN CATTIN.

The MSC Apostolic School opened at Chezal-Benoit in October 1867. To help finance it an appeal had been launched for many people to help by giving a sou per year (twenty sous make a franc).

The first student to arrive was a sixteen-year old from the Jura in Switzerland, named Lucien Cattin. He arrived at Issoudun on April 2nd, proudly bringing 588 sous from 588 people. These were people of his home district to whom he had explained the plan and who had gladly cooperated. His 29 francs 40 were entered in the books, and Lucien later started work with the rest of the boys.

The next chapter in his story is simply and movingly told in the words of Fr. Vandel:

The Apostolic School has made the sacrifice of its first-fruits. The first of our students to arrive and one of the best of our boys has declared, after some months in the school of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, that he believes he is called to join the Company of Jesus (Jesuits). We could not harden our hearts to this request, but believing it to be the will of God, we were happy that the firstfruits of the Apostolic School be gathered by Mary for the famous Society which bears the name of her Son. We foresee that the Apostolic School will be blessed for this sacrifice¹⁴. When Lucien Cattin took the habit as a Novice of the Company of Jesus, it was Fr. Vandel who gave it to him. Years later, in 1901 with the expulsion of religious from France, Fr. Lucien Cattin, S.J. offered to organize a house of studies for the MSC students in Lebanon. Political difficulties prevented the realization of this plan. But Fr. Cattin had kept his attachment to the MSC over the years - as over the years he was a zealous apostle of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

It was from Lebanon that his offer came. In fact, he had become the founder of the Jesuits' Eastern mission, rector of the college of Alexandria in Egypt, Provincial Chancellor of the Mission of Syria, Rector of the University of Beyruth -and later Knight of the Legion of Honour. He died in 1929.

6. JEAN CAPTIER.

Some interesting characters have wandered into and out of the MSC Congregation. One of these was a Jean Captier who came after he had received tonsure in 1868. For different reasons, chiefly some sort of nervous illness as it has been vaguely termed, he could not 'be admitted to Major Orders. However, in 1871 he was admitted to temporary profession as a brother in the MSC Congregation. He taught for some years at the college of Chezal-Benoit; he was there when Archbishop Lynch visited the place while staying at Issoudun in 1873.

The Archbishop was looking for men for his Archdiocese of Toronto, especially those who could speak English. Discovering that Captier spoke English well, he suggested that he might return with him as a missionary in the diocese of Toronto. But I am not a priest, he said, I am only a brother. Archbishop Lynch suggested that perhaps he might ordain him. At that Captier told a story of how, many years before he had spoken with the Cure of Ars who had told him that one day he would enter a Congregation not yet in existence, which would be composed of three branches. This had come true with his entry into the MSC. The Cure had also told him that someday he would meet an understanding bishop who would ordain him priest. You have just met him, said Archbishop Lynch. I am going to Rome, and on my way back I shall ordain you priest - with the permission I shall get from Pope Pius IX. (Some have said that Pius IX would give you permission to do almost anything you asked for). Sure enough, on his way back, Archbishop Lynch ordained John Captier - Minor Orders, Subdiaconate, Diaconate and Priesthood, all within the week. However, when the Archbishop left for Toronto, he did not take his newly-ordained missionary with him. Perhaps Captier refused to go; or perhaps the Archbishop had clear evidence of the lack of balance which marked his personality. At all events, he left Fr. Jean Captier at Chezal-Benoit. He left the MSC Congregation in 1879. But before he left he stirred things up. In October 1876, he sent a Memorandum to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. A couple of days later, he sent another one almost cancelling the first; but the first made quite an impression, because Fr. Jouet got wind of it and sent a copy to Fr. Chevalier. Fr. Chevalier and the Archbishop of Bourges prepared a refutation of the Captier document which they sent to Rome.

Fr. Captier had requested that the Holy See authorize a canonical visitation of the MSC Society: He gave a list of reasons why this should be done: The Institute, he said, lacked stability; it did not provide its members with the means of tending effectively towards religious perfection; the interior life was relegated to the second place; devotion to the Sacred Heart did not enjoy the pride of place it should have; the society was feverishly engaged in too many activities. Too much money had been spent on the foundation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and contrary to Canon Law, Fr. Chevalier had assumed direction of this group of Sisters. Also, Fr. Chevalier had suppressed almost all the spiritual exercises at the Apostolic School. With this last item, we probably come to the *real* reason for Captier's complaints. Fr. Chevalier had intervened in the running of the Apostolic School feeling that the line of formation being given there was not quite healthy, being tinged with an unreal mysticism. Cap tier was a man of many qualities and gifts; he was a mystic and had a gift for composing prayers. (It is possible that he was the author of the Memorare to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which became so widespread as a prayer of members of the Arch-confraternity).

After Captier left our Congregation he joined the group now known as the Priests of the Sacred Heart, founded by Fr. Dehon. He was one of the chief reasons for the provisional suppression of this Congregation before he was asked to leave it, too, in 1883. The last that was heard of him was that he tried, unsuccessfully, to join a Religious Group in Marseilles.

However this affair turned to good, in that it made Fr. Chevalier and the General Council take stock of the actual situation, seeing what truth there was in the accusations brought by Jean Captier. First of all, it brought about a clear declaration of the nature of the Society: We have entered this pious Institute to be *missionaries* of the Sacred Heart: this word sums up everything... our Institute of missionaries can not be transformed into a contemplative order¹⁴. Secondly, at a special meeting of the General Council, it was clearly stated that serious attention must be given and every effort made to live the religious life fervently, to see that formation is solid, and so on¹⁵.

Note: The phrase; Our Lady has done everything in our Society was, it seems, frequently used by Fr. Chevalier and other early MSC. It originated with a visit of Jean Captier to the Cure of Ars who told him he would enter a Congregation 'of three branches, in which Our Lady would do everything'. This was in 1852.

7. QUITO - A DREAM OF ELDORADO.

The Spanish conquistadores moved into South America to conquer and claim these lands for their Sovereign. (With elements of fact mingled with tales of fiction, they developed a dream of Eldorado, the land of fabulous riches which lay somewhere ahead awaiting discovery).

Something of this same spirit of adventure animated many who set out to «conquer the world for Christ. It is reflected in many of the early documents of our own Society. For example, with regard to the first M.S.C. foundation in Austria, Fr. Jouet wrote: Forward! ... with courage and confidence; Conquer Austria, Bavaria, Hungary, Germany, Russia and the whole world for the Sacred Heart, and you will be the happiest men on earth and the most highly rewarded in heaven!¹⁶.

Then, from the very land of the conquistadores an Archbishop came to Europe with his own plan for conquering South America for the Sacred Heart, and with his dream of a magnificent Basilica of the Sacred Heart, which would be a wonderful shrine, a source of Christian light and faith for millions. Archbishop Jose Ignacio Qrdonez came from Ecuador, the small Republic which had become well-known and well-liked throughout Christendom because of its eminently Christian President Garcia-Moreno. There were many who thought that this man, Garcia Moreno, should be canonized; for his assassination in 1875 was seen as the martyrdom of a man who had set about building a nation in which Christian values were normative. The proposed Basilica of the Sacred Heart was to be erected in his memory at Quito, capital of the country. It was thought that such a basilica would serve as a shrine not only for the Republic of Ecuador, but for people from all over South America. It was

as champion of this project that Archbishop Ordonez of Quito came to Europe with the hope of getting a group of Religious to take care of this national shrine.

On January 18th, 1887 at the French Seminary, Rome, the Archbishop met Fr. Victor Jouet, Procurator of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Knowing something of Fr. Jouet's character, we can well understand that, at the end of their conversation, the Archbishop concluded: I do not think that I need look any further. Fr. Jouet was fascinated by this spiritual Eldorado that he could see so clearly with his vivid imagination. He sent a telegram immediately to Fr. Chevalier. At Issoudun the project appeared as attractive. There were elements in the situation which would incline the MSC to be emotionally in favour of the request. Firstly, on October 8th, 1873, Garcia Moreno had officially proclaimed the Sacred Heart of Jesus patron of the Republic of Ecuador! Secondly, he had been enrolled as a member of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun. Thirdly, on April 1st, 1874 he had written asking that my wife, Mariana Alcazar de Garcia Moreno and if possible my only son, Gabriel Garcia Alcazar, aged four years¹⁷ be enrolled in the same association.

The Council decided to accept. Even Fr. Guyot thought of going as superior, taking Fr. Klotz with him. But it was insisted, especially by the Archbishop of Bourges and Fr. Guyot, that clear contracts be drawn up and serious guarantees given. They could not, of course, foresee that serious guarantees could mean different things to the different parties making the agreement.

On 21st February a contract was signed between Archbishop Ordonez and Fr. Chevalier. Each promised to pay half the been profoundly Christian and who had cost of the missionaries' voyage. These, once arrived in Quito, would be given lodgings and the Church of the Segrario in the Cathedral parish. The Church would serve temporarily as Church of the Sacred Heart and centre of pilgrimage while the new Basilica was being built. The M.S.C. would have the spiritual direction of the new Basilica - cooperating with a Committee which would be set up. Any conflicts would be referred to the Pope for solution.

The first group was to leave on May 10th accompanying the Archbishop on his return voyage. Those named were: Fr. Morisseau, as superior; Fr. Caer (these two were aged 58 and 52 respectively); then two young priests Frs. Derichemont and Francois Barral, and two brothers. They set off for Quito and their hopes were high.

But the realities they encountered on arrival were quite different from what they had expected, and their hopes were quickly dashed. Ecuador was an extremely poor country, with very few resources and very little interest in a national shrine. The parish of the Sagrario which was entrusted to them had been long abandoned; the people who lived in the area were not at all parish-minded, having got into the way of going to other churches for the sacraments. What the missionaries found most disheartening was the conviction that the work had been taken on too hastily without sufficient knowledge of what exactly was involved. The Archbishop was also disappointed, for he had the idea that the MSC were going to assume all responsibilities for the new Basilica including that of financing the project. He complained to the group that they were not doing anything in this regard. Fr. Morisseau let the Episcopal Curia know that he was surprised at this departure from the contract. He also informed Fr. Chevalier that, in his view, it would be best to cut their losses there and then, having the whole group leave Ecuador either for Europe or for the missions in Oceania. It would have been wise to follow Fr. Morisseau's advice. But it is not easy to reverse quickly a decision as big as this had been. It is not easy to give up hope that, with persevering effort, some worthwhile success can be achieved. Fr. Chevalier exhorted his men to this perseverance and continued effort. But the group itself began to fall apart. Fr. Caer, outspoken and eccentric, irritated the Archbishop to the point that he asked for his removal from Quito; he went to Peru where he tried to join the Picpus fathers. Brother Juste was sent away from the community, and the Archbishop took him on as professor of French in the seminary of Ecuador. Bro. Xavier Mayer, who arrived in 1889 to join the group, did not last very long. He left in the same year. Fr. Peyrot arrived in 1889; he died in 1890. Shortly after his death, two new young priests arrived from France. One of them, Fr. Mon-corget, died two weeks after his arrival from an illness contracted on the voyage.

In spite of everything, the missionaries set about doing what they could, reorganizing the parish, setting up the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. With regard to the wonderful Basilica nothing was done - until Fr. Morisseau heard that the Archbishop had torn up the old contract and made a new one with a different religious congregation. It was then that Fr. Chevalier and his Council decided to send Fr. Jouet as Visitor to the community of Quito. He had been the most enthusiastic supporter of the project in the first place; he seemed the most likely to be able to set things right. On his voyage to Quito he had the Company of the new Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. Macchi, with whom he got on very well. They were determined that, together, they should be able to put things in order. They succeeded. Ably and firmly, Fr. Jouet got the Archbishop to rescind the new contract, acknowledging the continued validity of the one signed at Issoudun. He reorganized the existing community; and asked Issoudun for a man able to organize things for the construction and running of the new Basilica. (Fr. Guyot growled that since it was Jouet who got us into this mess, he should be left there to finish off his work!)¹⁸. The man chosen for the job was Fr. Pierre Barral, brother of Francois already in Quito. He had been the chief instrument in founding the MSC house in Salzburg. In this and other enterprises, he had given proof of his ability to organize. The General Council set out precisely what his job was to be: to be in charge of the spiritual direction of the work of the Basilica, in agreement with the Archbishop and a Committee responsible for the whole work; to launch a campaign of propaganda to collect the necessary funds - but without committing either the MSC Congregation or the Quito community to financial obligations. Barral was very capable; he was also enthusiastic, independent and at times arrogant. He could get things done - but at the same time he could antagonise a lot of people in the process. In fact he got things moving for the construction of the Basilica - and in the process he antagonised the Archbishop who asked Issoudun to withdraw him. After a period of truce, he left Ecuador never to return.

This was December 1890. There were some further changes and interchanges of personnel, but by May 1891 the MSC of Quito insisted that the whole project was impractical. In September of that year the General Council decided to abandon Ecuador. Fr. Jouet, however, who felt particularly involved in the affair, fought a delaying action until the General Chaptd. of 1893 which unanimously voted to finish once and for all with the whole enterprise. In April of 1894¹⁹ the last MSC went back to Europe.

It would be a long time before a Basilica of the Sacred Heart was ever built at Quito. The shining national shrine did not then come into being; in the late '90's a simple chapel was erected and dedicated to the Holy Heart of Mary. The facts of the final achievement were far different from the wonderful dreams proposed to the first band of MSC adventurers. The cost to the young MSC society was considerable - in men and in morale. Two priests died in Ecuador, two left the Congregation, and not one of the four brothers who went to Quito remained in the Society. The Quito affair was more than a failure; it was a tragic failure, and there were those who felt that it had been undertaken without sufficient responsible planning - like an expedition to find a new Eldorado.

Notes Chapter 7

¹ Letter to Fr. Chevalier, December 1st, 1863.

² Acts of the General Council, August 1st, 1873.

³ *Ib.*, September 17th, 1872.

⁴ Letter to Fr. Jouet, December 17th, 1877.

⁵ Cf. *Annales Issoudun*, 1879, pp. 210-213.

⁶ *Regies des Missionnaires du Sacre-Coeur*, 1855, Ire Partie, Ch. 3, art. 2.

⁷ *Premieres Regies manuscrites*, 1857, Ire Partie, Ch. I, art. 5, n. 3.

⁸ Formula Instituti Missionariorum Sacratissimi Cordis Iesu, 1869, Paragraphus sextus, I, 1.

⁹ Dossier Vandel, Archives MSC, Paris, December 21th, 1866.

¹⁰ *Ib*, December 29th, 1866.

¹¹ Cf. Annalen van O.L. Vrouw van het H. Hart, Tilburg, 63 (1949), p. 117.

¹² Cf. Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione, Vol. I, sub verbo.

¹³ «La Petite-Oeuvre du Sacre-Coeur. Un sou par an pour les vocations ecclesiastiques. Premiere Annee 1867-1868, Issoudun, 1869, p. 29.

¹⁴ In a document to the S.C. of Bishops and Regulars Jouet replied to Captier's Memorandum of Oct. 17th 1876 and to his letter of Oct. 19th 1876.

¹⁵ Special session of the General Council, January 16th to 22nd, 1877.

¹⁶ Letter Jouet to P. Barral, June 30th, 1887.

¹⁷ Annales Issoudun, 1875, p. 274.

¹⁸ Letter Guyot to Pipheron, June 16th, 1889.

1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The founder of a religious society is a charismatic leader. While he is forming his group of collaborators around him, the group will naturally take on the sort of structure which is described technically as a charismatic-type organization. In such an organization, as experts in sociology point out:

- a) the focus on which the organization is centred is the inspiration, intuitions and drive of the charismatic leader;
- b) The charismatic quality of the leader draws others with him and enables him to impart or impose his ideas on his followers;
- c) Control in the organization comes from the exercise of these same qualities; and decisions are usually announced in definite terms.

In the early stages of forming such a group, the first companions of a founder, or charismatic leader, look to him for drive, leadership, decisions. The very reason that they join a new group is because they believe that the founder has the inspiration and the intuitions which can shape the group. If they could not accept this type of leadership and organization, they would not join. Naturally they build up a loyalty to the leader, and a habit of mind which accepts his decisions easily.

However, as the group develops, particularly a group which aspires to become a religious congregation within the Church, it must take on different organizational structures. Chapters, councils and consultation must play a larger part in its life. Laws laid down by the Church must be followed, and even the charismatic leader becomes subject to them. He thereby loses some of his liberty. He may become the Superior General of the approved institute - but now he has to exercise a different sort of leadership, or at least one which has to take more account of the requirements of altered structures. At this later stage, the members joining the group are drawn less by the person, or even the personal charisma of the Founder as it exists in him. They come because of the objective existence of that charisma in the stated aims and nature of the institute. They expect that they will fit into the new phase of the organization with Councils, consultation and so on - and they expect, to a large extent, that the Founder-become-General will be as bound by the organizational demands of the Institute as they are.

Therefore, even before any consideration of personalities involved, the stage is automatically set for friction and for tension as the whole group with its different component parts works into a new understanding and a new style of cooperation in which all are involved. One can see and foretell the sort of tensions which are almost bound to arise - between those who feel that the supreme law is loyalty to the Founder and his inspirations and ideas, and those who feel that all are now called to share by discussion and dialogue in decisions made with a greater participation of the whole community. For some of the older generation, the new ideas will smack of disloyalty. Some of the younger generation will think that they are not allowed to grow up or have sufficient say.

A further element of tension comes into the situation when a group is passing from the stage of being predominantly of one nationality to that of being an international religious group. This is particularly the case when a certain amount of uniformity is (or was) regarded as being necessary for the religious life of a single institute. There will be of necessity, national and cultural differences - and some of these will come into religious life with the candidates. Yet the candidates enter a group which has a declared religious ideal and a definite religious spirit. When you ask people of a different nationality to live religious life as you have lived it, you are immediately presented with a question which has no quick and easy answer:

How much of what you ask from this new group is *imposing* accidental expressions of an ideal; and how much is simply *declaring* what a generous response to the religious ideal *demand*s in any language or culture?

A priori then, it can be said that as a religious group grows, it has to make a double transition:

- from that of charismatic and very personal leadership to a more democratic type of government;
- from that of being a group of a single culture to being an international congregation.

N.B. - This latter issue, in our case, is very minor and very peripheral. Had it been the only tension involved, there would have been no M.S.C. crisis.

In the normal course of events there are two instruments provided by Church law to ease a religious congregation through these stages of transition. These are:

- the General Council which counsels and assists the Founder-General;
- the General Chapter which every six years brings together a number of the members of the Congregation to legislate, solve problems, and make decisions for the whole religious society.

Particular Circumstances.

However, for the MSC, the political situation disturbed the normal course of events. The expulsion from France of many of the religious had also brought about a scattering of the General Council. Fr. Pipheron was at Tilburg; Fr. Jouet was in Florae as Procurator; and Fr. Guyot, although living in France, was at some distance from Issoudun. Fr. Morisseau stayed with Fr. Chevalier for some time before being transferred to Tilburg and then to Quito. The General Chapter should have been held in 1885. But because of the political situation and the dispersion of the members, the General Council judged that it should be deferred. Perhaps it was not strictly necessary to defer the Chapter, but there were at least sufficient grave inconveniences in the way of holding it that the Council could judge, and Rome would approve, that it should be deferred. Those who felt strongly that the Society still needed to make the two-fold transition mentioned above would, naturally, have been disappointed with this decision. They would have felt that, despite the difficulties, an effort could and should have been made to hold the Chapter.

It should also be noted that the very qualities which make a Founder able to exercise his charismatic leadership successfully will make it harder for him to accept that the time of transition has come. He has been called on to declare what his vision means in practice; to declare the spirit and life-style of his religious congregation. Because others have been happy to accept his declarations, the religious society has come into being. The very drive and determination which enabled him to build the group will make it all the more difficult for him not to over-run the right moment when he has to sit back and let others have more say in the decisions, and let others tell him how his ideal is to be adapted to different

cultures and changing *mentalities*. The scattering of the General Council had effects perhaps unperceived by Fr. Chevalier in their full implications. The Council had been divided by political events. Fr. Chevalier consulted them often by letter; but correspondence does not make collegiality. As individuals they received and wrote letters, often not knowing the viewpoint of other councillors. From respect towards the Founder, and without live discussion together, they would have agreed with Fr. Chevalier's proposals more often than they might have done in a different situation. Also, we have seen one instance of Fr. Chevalier's 'manoeuvring to make sure that the mission of Oceania was accepted. The feeling grew, among some of the Councillors and beyond, that he was imposing his views more than was good for the whole. This led to resentment. The postponement of the General Chapter was, then, seen as a further indication of an unreadiness for full consultation. Furthermore, without the constant *viva voce* meetings of the Council, it was not possible for Fr. Chevalier to gauge the depth of feeling of discontent. A knowledge of the extent of this feeling would have counselled different action.

Then there was the question of different practices of the religious outside of France: adaptation or laxity? And if there were something of the latter, how best deal with it? Fr. Chevalier wrote: This scattering of the members led forcibly to a certain relaxing of regular discipline, especially in our houses of the North where the works had taken on too wide a spread. The habits of these countries, being different from those of France, had opened the door to more than one abuse. Our first Rules, drawn up at the beginning of the Society and for the Religious of whom it was then composed, no longer catered for its actual needs. The Superior General, out of care for the future of his Congregation, wished before he died to put the finishing touches to his work by complementing the common and particular rules which did have a number of gaps. His aim was to rule out the arbitrary and to establish the greatest possible uniformity of conduct in our houses. He thought rightly that this was his own serious duty to guard against dangerous shocks after he had gone. Therefore he sent to all the superiors of the houses (even the distant ones) proof copies of these new Rules together with the request that, after having consulted their confreres they send all observations to him. He would take account of these in the final version. This was done.

The appearance of this directory stirred up violent dissatisfaction in the houses of the North...*.

With the same aims in mind, Fr. Chevalier set about 'completing the Constitutions' and sent them to Rome. Rome found some things too demanding - such as two years Novitiate instead of one. It further pointed out that the Society was obliged to choose between two courses of action. Firstly, if the old Constitutions were retained, even with minor modifications, they could be approved definitively, since the ten years trial had now drawn to a close. Secondly, if the Society were to adopt new Constitutions, it would have to embark on a further period of trial for another ten years. The decision must be made by a General Chapter.

CHAPTER 1891.

The General Chapter began at Issoudun on January 8th, 1891. Members of the Chapter were: Fr. Jules Chevalier, Superior General; the Assistants General: Frs. C. Piperon, V. Jouet, J. Guyot, A. Delaporte, J. Morisseau (Secretary General), F.X. Maillard (General Bursar); Local Superiors: T. Reyn (Antwerp), P. Treand (Glastonbury), L. Hartzler (Salzburg), X. Klotz (Tilburg), C. Ramot (Watertown). Present as a former Superior was Bishop L. Couppe. The superstitious man will perhaps note the ominous fact that there were 13 Capitulants.

The rather involved course of events in and after the Chapter can probably best be followed by taking 3 different topics:

1. The Constitutions.
2. Opposition to and criticism of the General Administration.
3. The existence of certain canonical irregularities within the Congregation and action taken to put these in order.

1. *The Constitutions*. Here there was no real problem. The Chapter voted unanimously to adopt the old Constitutions (approved for 10 years in 1877). On July 24th, 1891, Rome gave definite approval to these Constitutions.

2. *Opposition to and criticism of the General Administration*. Since this is the most complicated of all the issues involved, it will be studied in greater detail in Chapter Eight. However, the major elements in it are not hard to understand. It was, as already noted, the particular MSC expression of a crisis that is common enough at a certain period of transition within a religious group. Let us note a few historical facts which feature largely in the Chapter discussions. Since there was a General Chapter in 1879, there should have been another Chapter in 1885. The General Council, because of the difficulties of the French persecutions and the subsequent MSC diaspora, judged that it would be too difficult to hold and asked that it be deferred. Rome approved. In 1890 - at a request from the General Council, Fr. Chevalier's term as General was prorogued for 12 years. Fr. Chevalier had written new Constitutions and a Directorium, and presented them to Rome for approval. This, as the text from Fr. Chevalier says, excited a violent discontent in the houses of the North.

On the floor of the Chapter, Fr. T. Reyn, Superior of the house of Antwerp tried to explain why this opposition resulted, and still existed. He said: One thing essential to the structures of Religious life is that the Society *through the General Chapter* has the right to elect its Superior General; and the right to change, or leave unchanged, its Constitutions and its Rules. Now our Major Superiors did all this, or tried to do all this themselves. *They* asked for and obtained the prolongation of the General in office. *They* asked for (and might have obtained) the changing of Rules and Constitutions. *They* decided that we could not have a Chapter in 1885. This Chapter must ensure that these things do not happen again.

For in this way of acting, our Major Superiors usurped the rights which belong by law and by right to the Society as a whole - in and through the General Chapter.

I think his point is clear. I think that, for us who look back at a distance, it is also clear that his point is valid. Furthermore, here there is obviously a call to accept the transition in structure which we mentioned above - to a more democratic group from a group ruled by the more personal charismatic leadership.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to make these points in a given real-life situation without criticizing or seeming to criticize the actions of those involved. And often, if the point is not sufficiently understood or does not seem to be accepted, then personal criticisms are often used to force it home. The members of the Administration felt themselves under attack. They appealed to the historical events of the last few years - persecution in France and dispersal of the MSC group - to justify their actions. Rightly or wrongly, it was replied that this situation had really changed very little in the last few years. If a Chapter was possible now, it was possible earlier on - had it been really desired.

At some stage in the debate, two members of the General Council disassociated themselves from the Administration and took the side of the younger men. Frs. Guyot and Delaporte were of the opinion that they did not have enough say in the General Council - where, they said, Frs. Chevalier and Jouet made most of the decisions. Fr. Jouet particularly became the target of attack; and a number of decisions of the General Administration in the last few years were criticised, special mention being made of the ill-fated expedition to Quito.

To those who still felt strongly that there was a special function to be played by a General - Founder who had a right to exercise a charismatically personal leadership; and to those who put a particular stress on obedience in religious life (an obedience corresponding to this type of superiority) - it was felt that the younger group were lacking in religious spirit. This feeling was strengthened at hearing what were believed to be uncharitable and unjust accusations.

Two groups emerged clearly - The General Administration (or part thereof) and those with them; and the dissident group. Fr. General and his supporters were to feel that the next development was part of this concerted opposition. This next step was:

3. *The reaction to certain canonical irregularities which were deemed to exist in the Society*. The General Council had proposed that these irregularities be looked into - but had not foreseen many of the conclusions. The chief of these, it was suggested, was that it was doubtful whether Fr. Chevalier had really been General of the Society for a number of years! To see the reasons for this assertion, let us put forth a bit of

chronology: In 1869, Fr. Chevalier was elected Superior General for 12 years. In 1881, at the end of this time, a Rescript prolongs his charge for 1 year. In 1882, prolongation for 1 year.

In 1883, the same.

In 1884, the same again.

In 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888 ... nothing.

In 1889, he is prolonged for a year.

In 1890, he is prolonged in office for 12 years (Decree from Cardinal Protector).

Now what follows might have seemed rather tragic at the time. But in retrospect it can raise a smile here and there. Present at the Chapter was a young Alsatian Fr. X. Klotz, Superior of Tilburg, a very promising young man who had studied Canon Law in Rome, and whom Fr. Chevalier had thought might some day succeed him as Superior General. As he studied some of the documents he had his doubts about certain legal angles, and he put these forward in the Chapter. They caused a furore. Eager young canonists can get carried away by their zeal for legal rectitude in a way that sometimes does not best serve the greater good. He himself wrote in later years - on Nov. 1st, 1925: When you give an account of those disturbed years, take care not to suppose that there was bad faith on either side. Each man acted according to his conscience. Our misunderstandings are explained by the events. If in 1891 I had had the experience of 1925, as the documents passed through my hands to be read at the Chapter, I would not have had the imprudence of making public the irregularities which I discovered in them. I would have taken Fr. Chevalier aside, I would have drawn up an appeal to Rome, and he would certainly have signed it. And Rome, in its indulgence, would have given a 'sanatio in radice' at the simple request of a Superior General. This would have established order where there was disorder, with no fuss, no shocks, no hurt. But then I was just in the thirties! At that age one is not as much in control of his impressions as at 67².

And at that age, what did he do? He pointed out the gap in the Rescripts prolonging Fr. Chevalier's term of office. (In the discussions, it would seem that Frs. Chevalier and Jouet forgot about the 1884 Rescript. This is understandable in the circumstances!) Discussion concerned the years 1883-1889. He was not renewed in office. Therefore he had not been Superior General. Therefore, all those he had admitted to Profession in those years were not validly professed! Among those 'invalidly professed' are three members of this Chapter: Bishop Coupe, Frs. Reyn and Delaporte. And since Delaporte, as Assistant General took part in the convocation of the Chapter - perhaps the Chapter is invalidly convoked!

Fr. Jouet replied that, in making his application in 1889 he had explained the previous omissions as due to the unsettled state of France and the MSC society scattered about Europe. Therefore, he said, the Rescript of 1889 had carried with it a sanatio of all irregularities. Fr. Chevalier was also of the opinion that implicitly, this Rescript contained the Sanatio of the preceding irregularities, since Fr. Jouet had mentioned them in his petition.

However, those were the days (now happily gone) when a single Canon Lawyer could put the fear of God and the Inquisition into a group of ordinary mortals who knew not Canon Law. Consequently Fr. Jouet's reply did not remove all their fears. Then Fr. Klotz increased their fears by suggesting that some among them were probably subject to penalties and censure in view of that well-known decree *Romani Pontificis*. Such would be Frs. Piperon and Ramot who, as Novice Masters had actually admitted postulants to the Novitiate before the arrival of the testimonial letters.

They could therefore have incurred certain penalties; they could have lost their active and passive voice in the Society, and therefore have no right to be present or vote in the Chapter! There was more, but this was enough to get the members of the Chapter to agree to sign a document exposing their doubts to Rome, and requesting a sanatio ad cautelam. They also agreed that Fr. Klotz and Fr. Piperon should be delegated to take this document to Rome, the Chapter meanwhile going into recess. All the Chapter members including Fr. Chevalier, signed the document. Frs. Klotz and Piperon, therefore set off for Rome.

Given the fact that the Chapter had split into two camps, the Archbishop of Bourges thought it would be advisable that Fr. Chevalier should be represented in Rome, and that Fr. Jouet should go there for this purpose. The Archbishop wrote in this vein to Cardinal Monaco, Protector of the Congregation, indicating the advice he had given Fr. Chevalier (letter of January 21st). Fr. Chevalier wasted no time accepting the advice; he got his letter off to Cardinal Monaco on January 20th. In it he ventures to suggest that the Cardinal might call, Jouet to Rome by telegram. Furthermore, not having much faith in Klotz's viewpoint, he suggests that the Cardinal might find it useful to talk to Piperon on his own. Then with or without telegram, Jouet set off for Rome, too.

The document the two delegates took to Rome was an extraordinary one really. It mentioned, of course, the doubts we have recorded. It further stated that two of the Assistants did not remember whether they were consulted about the application in 1889 (which bore their signatures!) Furthermore some members of the Chapter doubt the validity of the reasons given for postponing the Chapter. (This was a bit rash, since Rome had judged and approved these reasons!). Then, owing to the scattering of the Assistants, several members had been admitted to profession without the consent of the Assistants. Were these professions valid? The General had delegated Superiors to receive profession {whereas the Constitutions speak of his delegating Provincials). Were *these* professions valid? Some Novices had been professed outside the house of the Novitiate - it would seem that these professions were invalid. Some Novice-Masters, without Indult, had been named as Novice-Master, not having the requisite canonical age.

Bishop Coupe, as Bishop, was no longer under the General. Can he therefore be a member of the Chapter?

Are those members 'invalidly professed' validly at the Chapter? Because of doubts about the way the General was approved, was the decree convoking the Chapter legitimate? What were the fathers really hoping for as a result of this representation to Rome? In the last paragraph of the document they ask that all irregularities (if they exist) might be fixed up, so that they can get on with the Chapter. Fr. Chevalier at least suspected that they were being over optimistic. In his letter to the Cardinal Protector, of January 20th, he wrote:

Whether the Holy Father judges that the present Chapter be dissolved, or continue, may I make bold to ask Your Eminence to request that either in the continuation of this Chapter or in the formation of a new one, His Holiness should deign to designate to preside as Apostolic Delegate either His Grace the Archbishop of Bourges, or should His Grace not be able to be present, then Bishop of Synope, his brother and Coadjutor.

The suspicion was well founded. Cardinal Monaco was instructed to dissolve the chapter and declare it dissolved. This he did in a document dated January 27th, 1891. It added that the participants were to go home, and that, until further arrangements were made by the Sacred Congregation, business was to be carried on as it had been up to date. Meanwhile the Acts of the Chapter were to be sent to Rome. However, when the General and the Assistants looked around for the Acts, they found that they were not at Issoudun. Fr. Klotz, secretary of the Chapter had gone back to Tilburg taking the documents with him. If Fr. Chevalier had feared that Klotz would not give an unbiased account to Rome, Klotz now returned the compliment. He asked permission to go to Rome himself; permission was refused. Klotz still went to Rome. In those days such a course of action was regarded as being a serious breach of religious obedience, Fr. Chevalier says that in Rome, Klotz was not given a very warm reception, but was threatened with interdict.

Then, under date of April 15th, a letter was sent to Fr. Chevalier from Cardinal Verga Prefect of the SC of Regulars. It was brief, and couched in those courteous terms which the Curia uses even when summoning someone to Rome:

Reverend Father,

This Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, earnestly desiring to put an end to the difficulties which have arisen in the Institute of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, of which Your Paternity is Superior General, invites you to come to Rome, where you will be able to

clarify these questions for us. While awaiting a prompt reply indicating the day of your arrival, I wish you all the best in the Lord...

It was May by the time Fr. Chevalier could comply with this summons; and May in Rome is full of Church holidays. When he got there, he found that Cardinal Verga, was away on vacation. He had a half-hour talk with the Pope, and a two-hour talk with the Secretary of the S.C. of Bishops and Regulars. The Secretary was *tres affable et tres paternel*. However, he would certainly have made it clear that Rome could not make light of mistakes which resulted in doubts about the validity of some 190 professions.

There is a delightful document in the General Archives, under date of June 13th. It begins:

The Founder and Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun, in the Archdiocese of Bourges, humbly explains that, in his institute a few irregularities have occurred... 'A few irregularities' - such as perhaps he was not really Superior General for several years; and some superiors were perhaps not really delegated to receive profession of the subjects - sometimes also novices received without testimonial letters, and professed at times outside the house of the Novitiate - and perhaps as a result religious invalidly professed.

Therefore he asks a *sanatio* for any irregularities - and from such censures that may have been incurred here and there. Rome, from long experience, is not perturbed by a 'few irregularities'. The Sacred Congregation therefore benignly granted the faculty to the Cardinal Protector to absolve and regularize as requested. This he did on June 15th. There were a few important additional items in the Rescript which Cardinal Monaco executed: firstly of confirming the rescript extending Fr. Chevalier's term as General for 12 years (i.e. from 1890).

Secondly, he could confirm the actual Assistants in office until the next General Chapter; with the proviso that they reside with the General.

Thirdly, the *sanatio* of profession was given to those who would ask for it in writing. (Tax on the Rescript was 23 lire!).

Fr. Chevalier then set off to make a round of all the houses, explaining things to the members, and allowing each one to make his own free choice. It is significant that of all the 190 or so people concerned, only one left the Society. This seems to indicate that, whatever the intensity of the Chapter warfare, most members were happy to be in the Congregation. There can be no doubt that the whole business was not a very happy experience for those most deeply involved. Nevertheless there are many indications that the crisis was to some extent over-dramatized. One such indication is the number of people who joined the society in those years:

In the years 1891-1892 - there were thirty novices (clerical): of these, some left, but 21 made their profession on October 17th, 1892 and others later.

In 1892-1893, there were 26 novices: the chief group of 14 was professed on October 9th, 1893, with others later.

In 1893-1894, there were 33 Novices, and the following year, 38.

After Fr. Chevalier's trip around the houses, all professions were now regularized. The clouds of canonical doubt were dissipated: Fr. Chevalier was clearly nominated as Superior General for many years to come; the Assistants were confirmed until the next Chapter. The clause about Assistants residing with the General meant that Fr. Jouet, as Procurator in Rome, could not continue as Assistant, and Fr. Guyot had resigned after the Chapter. To replace these two, Frs. Maillard and Morisseau were named Assistants.

One important practical question remained:

What could and should be done about a new General Chapter?

An expert in modern problem-solving techniques would have said that the only way to restore harmony in this troubled situation was for the parties concerned to talk things out - in this instance in Chapter. This was in fact Fr. Chevalier's idea. (Although he was of the opinion that normally chapters were not much use, he shared the opinion of his confreres that, at this time, a new chapter was called for.)

On February 17th, Fr. Maillard wrote to Fr. Jouet: He (Fr. Chevalier) still believes, and we do too, that to have a Chapter convoked as soon as possible, to be presided over by an Apostolic Delegate is the only way to calm people down and finish these matters. So would you please act along these lines.

On September 5th, 1891, Fr. Chevalier and his Assistants officially petitioned the Holy See to be allowed to hold another Chapter, *with the same members* as in January. (Chevalier here went along with Reyn and Co.). Naturally, the Holy See had not heard of twentieth century techniques for solving problems, and perhaps it did not believe that this particular group of MSC was capable of finding a solution in friendly dialogue. On January 27th it had dissolved the Chapter and declared it dissolved. In reply to this petition of September 5th, it said that after having weighed all things carefully, the answer was No. If a Chapter were to be held, it should be held according to the Constitutions recently given definitive approval. Furthermore it could be held only after the Sacred Congregation gave permission - a permission it was not yet ready to give.

On March 5th, 1892, in reply to a further request to hold a Chapter, the S.C. again replied that it did not judge it opportune to do so. However it did express itself prepared to listen to the serious reasons which the Superior General might be prepared to put forward showing that such a Chapter was necessary or useful.

On July 17th, in reply to a further request from Fr. Chevalier, permission was granted. But evidently, the S.C. still had little faith in the MSC group. For the following conditions were laid down:

1. President of the Chapter would be, Mgr. A. Marchal, Bishop of Sinope, as Apostolic Delegate. He should interview each of the members before the Chapter began.
2. The members should put in three days of spiritual exercises before starting the Chapter.
3. Members will be chosen and be present as prescribed by the Constitutions.
4. The business of the Chapter will be to elect four Assistants General and a Procurator General - and also a commission of four members who, under the Presidency of the General, will write a Directorium.
5. The members, if they wish, may express their opinion, but this time all decisions will be taken by the Holy See.
6. The Apostolic Delegate has a right to end the Chapter when he judges fit.
7. For the rest, let the Constitutions be observed.

If Rome thought that it had found the right formula for solving the MSC problem, it was destined to be disappointed.

On February 11th, 1893, the Chapter was officially begun under the presidency of Mgr. A. Marchal. Again there were 13 Capitulants present (but five good men were absent):

J. Chevalier, Superior General; Assistants General: Frs. C. Piperon, J. Morisseau (Secretary General), F. Maillard, A. Batard (General Bursar); Local Superiors: T. Reyn (Antwerp), V. Casas (Barcelona), C. Ramot (Glastonbury), F. Miniot (Paris), F. Barral (Quito), L. Hartzler (Salzburg), A. Lanctin (Tilburg), F. Derichemont (Watertown). As an extra item of business they had been asked by Cardinal Rampolla to vote on whether they suppress the foundation in Quito. The vote for suppression was unanimous. But the most important business of the Chapter was the election of Assistants and Procurator. Elected were: Fr. Ramot, First Assistant, and Frs. Morisseau, Delaporte and Lanctin as Assistants. Fr. Guyot was elected Procurator General.

Mgr. Marchal had exhorted the Chapter to act for peace and unity; he had stressed the importance of choosing Assistants who would help the General, and not oppose him. Now, as he read the written submission given him - according to the condition n. 5 - he saw that these four men had, in the submissions given him to take to Rome, expressed rather bitter opposition to Fr. Chevalier. He had doubts - and he expressed these doubts in his report to Rome - about the spirit in which these men had come to do their work. It seems to me, he said, ... that the election had been prearranged and that nothing would persuade the electors to abandon the decision they had taken together ... Since they had the majority, they named as assistants those who, in 1891 had most violently declared themselves against the old administration... (Report of Feb. 11th). Since Mgr. Marchal and Fr. Chevalier were good friends, since they shared the same views about authority and obedience, neither would have been

happy about these elections. To what extent one influenced the other to think the elections might have been invalid would be impossible to say. But certainly each confirmed the other in his suspicion.

Fuller reports were sent on February 20th and 22nd. The Sacred Congregation replied, on March 10th that it was not clear from his reports whether the elections were valid or not (because perhaps pre-arranged by factions). He was therefore to make further enquiries and send a fuller report. Meanwhile the newly elected Assistants were not to exercise their functions; the old officials were to be reinstated until, after further enquiries, the Holy See made other arrangements.

As a result of the enquiry, Rome decided that the MSC Society needed some further outside assistance. Archbishop Boyer, the new Bishop of Bourges was named Apostolic Vis-itor of the Society. The elections of February 11th were declared null and void. Frs. Píperon, Morisseau, Reyn and Vaudon were named 'provisional Assistants'. Maillard had written to Boyer that he felt it would be better for the Society if he were not appointed Assistant. Fr. Carriere was appointed as Procurator and Superior of the House in Rome; Fr. Batard - Bursar, and Fr. Maillard Minister of the Missions. All this was communicated by the Archbishop in a letter of August 21st, 1893. He added confidently: The peace mission which has been entrusted to me will be easy to carry out. When he died at the end of 1896, Fr. Chevalier could write to the Holy Father:

Little by little, calm has been restored, spirits have been pacified and hearts united by bonds which cannot be broken again. We can bear witness that, at this moment, perfect agreement and harmony exists between superiors and subjects, as also between all the members of our Congregation⁴.

2. A PARTIAL ANALYSIS.

Having seen the course of events during this critical period, we must now try to go behind the scenes and see if we can come out with an understanding of this part of our history. Insofar as that is possible, we shall endeavour to do so with all respect for our departed confreres. We should leave to be buried with them the evidences of human weakness, the little things which might take away from the good they did. For the tragic thing about the crisis was that these were good men caught up in misunderstanding that caused much personal heartache. Mistakes were made all round. Ours is not to sit in judgement; we shall merely try to understand.

There were, first of all, two basic ideologies about government of the Society, at this stage of its development.

1. The era of the foundation is closed. Henceforth the Chapter legislates, the Superior administers⁵.

2. The Superior General ... (the Founder) is not an ordinary Superior ... He is the head and the root ... It is for us (Assistants) to be the principal members and the chief branches living with the same life and the same sap, in order to communicate it to others. While the assistants must discuss, give suggestions, and give or refuse consent, they cannot set out systematically to oppose the General-Founder.

The work is in the formative stage and it is from the Founder that the initiative must come in harmony with those who have espoused his work and who share a mutual confidence with him.... Even a Chapter can not *impose* its will on the Founder if he is totally opposed to the suggestions of a certain group⁶.

As we have seen, a number of the members came to the Chapter of 1891 convinced of the first thesis; convinced, too, that by not calling a Chapter, the General Administration had deprived the members of the Society of their rights. They came then with certain resentments - and resentment often leads to exaggerated statements. When the exaggerations are rebutted, the resentment increases. They spoke of the Chapter as the Supreme Tribunal; this supreme tribunal could pass judgment on the Administration. In passing this judgment, it had many things to criticize, such as too many foundations which it was difficult to staff. - But especially did it criticize the omissions in observance of Canon law: non-consultation of Assistants by the General; obtaining Indults from Rome instead of calling a Chapter earlier; and the failure to obtain indults when they should have been obtained. The sons were more learned than their fathers on some of these points, and they let it be known that they did not appreciate the muddling of the General Administration and its careless attitude towards the prescriptions of Canon Law.

The General Administration which had lived and worked through the difficulties of the political persecutions saw things from their history and experience. They felt that they had done what they could to keep the Society alive - and that sheer necessity dispensed from worrying too much about the law. They had scattered their Assistants (Píperon to the North and Jouet to Rome) to have their best men in their most important projects. It was easy enough for young men who had grown up in the sheltered houses *they* had established and supported in fear and sacrifice, to say what should have been done.

But the Chapter fathers were determined to say what would be done from now on. They would have no more of this haphazard type of government. They would, to begin with, see that Assistants and General came together. If this could not be done at Issoudun, then it would be done in Rome where most General Houses were, anyway. In vain could Fr. Chevalier protest that at that stage of the Congregation's life, Issoudun was vital for the Society's existence - as the centre of its works and as the source of its financial stability. The chapter voted that the General House should be transferred to Rome. This was an example of what the opposing school would call imposing decisions on the Founder-General. It was also an un-canonical example of the Chapter acting beyond its powers!

Then, when the revelation of canonical irregularities made it clear that recourse to Rome would be needed - it was not the Superior General who would have such recourse, nor his Procurator. The Chapter would elect *its* delegates to Rome - these, as we know were Frs. Píperon and Klutz. The members therefore resented the fact that Fr. Jouet himself went to Rome. It did not consider whether, as Procurator he had the right to represent the Society in Rome - the Chapter, that Supreme Tribunal had not sent him! And then ... As the official delegates of the Chapter presided by the Superior General returned with empty hands, it was he (Jouet) who triumphantly bears the decree of dissolution which made it impossible to elect the Procurator and the Assistants⁷. (The text omits to say that the Chapter over-ruled Chevalier's strong plea to end Fr. Jouet to Rome).

The reaction to this decree was predictably strong. The almighty chapter had been dissolved. It could not change the administration - as the logic of its position would have demanded, and as it had planned to do. Everyone was told to go home - and go on being ruled by this Administration they had so much criticised. Fr. Guyot, a man of quick reactions, judging that this decision was an insult to the dignity of the Chapter members resigned as Assistant. Klutz resigned as Superior of Tilburg. Before departing, the members got together and decided that they should ask for another Chapter consisting of the same members.

It is clear that, among a number of those present a certain mentality continued, as if they were still the Chapter charged with seeing that laws were kept and Constitutions observed - and then of keeping a careful eye on the wayward General Administration. They did not seem to realize fully that as Jouet wrote in some exasperation later, The Chapter was dissolved, is dissolved and remains dissolved. Klutz as secretary of a Chapter which no longer existed, took off with him the Acts of the Chapter, which the *Superior General* was supposed to send to Rome. He continued in this character of representative of the Chapter for some time: He took the Acts to Rome, and he and others whom he represented hired a lawyer in Rome to defend their rights in the Holy See. He obviously felt called to defend the rights of the oppressed, as he called them, and lived for the day when the Chapter would meet again to see that justice would be done. When he heard that Fr. Ramot might be going to Sydney as Superior, he wrote to tell him not to go for he would be needed in the next Chapter. Klutz certainly regarded himself as a sort of religious Robin Hood, ready to right the wrongs being done:

I'm armed from head to foot... etc. and I'm waiting on your signal either to lay down my arms, or to dash into battle again. Do not delay in bringing me up to date. One day lost could be fatal for us...⁸.

This group was so convinced of the Tightness of their cause that they could think of no explanation of the dissolution of the Chapter unless unless there had been some dirty work at the cross-roads!

Obviously Fr. Jouet had engineered the dissolution, and he must have used unfair means to do so - since right was on their side. Some even said that he slandered them to the Archbishop of Bourges and to Rome. Others said that Chevalier had told him to seek a dissolution so that the old Administration could carry on. If this were so, then they thought they were justified in fighting that justice be done.

The other side set much store on authority, obedience and respect for authority. Even those who believed that there was much to be said for the claims of the younger men could not go along with the way they were going about things - either in or after the Chapter. Not all of them would have been sure that you need to add much, if anything, 'because your Superior is also Founder. But they were certain that something was wrong when you started to take away what chri-stian virtue demanded. Fr. Piperon wrote sadly: I don't see the Spirit of God in all this tempest. Where respect is lacking and charity and obedience too, there can not be the action of God. It is this that frightens me ...⁹. Even the suave Delaporte who took their side is forced to admit that they had gone too far. Piperon also wrote, in a report to Rome about the Chapter, of schoolboy anger... lack of reverence, lack of gratitude, presumption

Fr. Chevalier had been superior for 35 years. He lived in a time when much stress was put on religious obedience. In the two Marchals, Archbishop of Bourges and Bishop of Sinope, he had men who shared his views. All insisted that obedience and respect for authority were essential for religious life.

Both of these things seemed to be sadly lacking. Therefore Fr. Chevalier was convinced (and remained convinced to the end of his life) that lack of religious spirit was the root cause of all the trouble. This lack of religious spirit could not be countenanced; it had to be resisted, and as Superior he had to guard against its spreading. Those who aligned themselves with Klotz were the rebels, the opposition, the other side. It so happened that, in the Chapter, three of these men had been Superiors of the houses in the North: Klotz at Tilburg, Reyn at Antwerp and L. Hartzler at Salzburg.

Since Klotz had resigned as Superior of Tilburg, where he was also Novice Master, he would have to be replaced - or the Novitiate would have to be transferred elsewhere. Fr. Chevalier and the Council decided that they would transfer the Novitiate to Chezal-Benoit, close to Issoudun. A Rescript was obtained from Rome, and Fr. Piperon was sent to bring the Novices from Tilburg. Frs. Reyn, Vandel and Meyer went to Tilburg to oppose the transfer of the Novices. They maintained that nothing could be done until the difficulties had been resolved (a sort of moral on-going existence of the Chapter, despite the Roman decree that the old Administration continue to administer the Society).

The concern for safeguarding the religious spirit pushed Chevalier even further; the senior boys of the northern apostolic schools were brought to Issoudun, where the scholasticate also would be under his vigilant and paternal care. Naturally this upset the partie adverse very much indeed. It was seen as an attempt to diminish the importance of the houses in the north. Some strong things were said. Some very reasonable things were also written about the disadvantages of bringing the boys and Novices to be educated outside their own countries, particularly in view of Germany's attitude towards missionaries educated in France, and with regard to the mind of people contributing to the education of boys in the local seminaries. However, it was the anxiety about the evil spirit which had the final say. At this time, too, some people, Jouet among them, wrote and said some unwise things about French and catholic as interchangeable words.

This could pour no oil on the very troubled waters of the time.

Every prolonged struggle of this sort leads to something of an obsession on both sides. If the one side was a bit obsessed with the chapter-complex, the other was equally obsessed with the mauvais esprit, seeing it even in helpful criticism. An issue in early 1893 was whether Fr. Chevalier had the right to open the letters of the Assistants (let us not forget that in those days the Superior, by religious 'law, was expected to keep a careful eye on the correspondence of his subjects). The Bishop of Sinope judged that it was fair enough - the Superior General was entitled to know what «the other side» was up to! In point of fact Chevalier got some very juicy morsels of correspondence in this way.

Another obsession was that it was Jouet's machinations that had brought about the dissolution of the Chapter. Some suggested that Fr. Chevalier had instigated this move. Certainly, in Rome, Jouet spoke with the Cardinal Vicar of the possibility of dissolution. Furthermore, Chevalier had sent Jouet to Rome to speak on his behalf, not to agree with Klotz. But how much pressure he brought, or could bring, to bear on the S.C. is matter for conjecture. Correspondence between Chevalier and Jouet (neither of whom could pretend to the other) takes it for granted that it was entirely a decision of the Sacred Congregation. Even more likely is what Fr. Jouet wrote: The Chapter committed suicide - the Congregation only declared it dead!

For it is clear that the chapter grossly overdramatized a number of issues. It was a very small chapter of a very little congregation, which did not even have its Constitutions definitively approved. Its claims of being the Supreme Tribunal really representing the Society cut very little ice in Rome. It consisted of 13 men; those who were not part of the General Administration were local Superiors, appointed by that Administration, and elected by it to participate in the Chapter. The document it sent to Rome was a confession of being in a complete juridical mess - and it further suggested that some Roman Cardinals had given indults on grounds which were canonically insufficient. This insinuation is hardly ever appreciated by Roman Cardinals! Then the solemn delegation of two specially chosen representatives instead of the normal representation from General or Procurator did not impress either. As Cardinal Monaco said: Why did not Fr. Chevalier simply write a letter? The fact that one of the anti-administration group was Fr. Delaporte did impress, but unfavourably. He had been Superior General of another Congregation in France, les Peres de la Misericorde. In this position he had administered the Congregation so badly that he had to leave the Congregation. Hearing that he was one of the leaders of the Chapter majority did not convince Rome that this small band of good men and true (7 or 9 of the 13) was going to right all wrongs and straighten out the Society's troubles. A further question was whether the Chapter really had any further business to discuss. It had been called to make a choice between old and new Constitutions. It had done that. Therefore, said Rome, you might as well pack up and go home. (The Chapter members were a bit ingenuous in thinking that they could get an over-night 'sanatio' in response to the many different doubts they proposed. Even with Jouet 'exerting pressure', it was nearly six months until the Rescript was given. And then Fr. Chevalier still had his long trip tadjip around the houses of the north before the whole matter was cleared up).

But if the Chapter over-dramatized, so did Fr. Chevalier. (It is difficult not to over-dramatize in an emotionally charged situation). Perhaps Fr. Chevalier began the over-dramatization with his judgment of the abuses in the houses of the North. Fr. Delaporte wrote: Before the Chapter of 1891 in a small number of houses there was some discontent, some ideas a little bit special; but there was nothing in all this to cause concern. These houses had been visited very little; they were out of contact with the centre of the Society, necessarily entrusted to the care of confreres without experience. It was inevitable that they would fall short in some things. But, all things considered, the Apostolic School and their apostolic ministry were flourishing there, and the financial situation was quite satisfactory ¹⁰.

Certainly, whatever the 'abuses', the new Rules, descending to details in many minutiae, were not well calculated to restore religious discipline. Suggestions by confreres which, it seems clear, were inspired by friendship and a desire to help, were taken by Chevalier as attacks on my administration. One such attack it was alleged, was made by Fr. Reyn when, in the Chapter, he suggested that, if the good of the Society demanded that Fr. Chevalier remain parish priest of Issoudun, then let him, while remaining General, have a Vicar-General appointed to visit the Society constantly to keep in personal contact with his subjects. Today anyone who made the same suggestion for a man in the same position would be regarded as talking sense. Reyn was judged to be talking revolt.

When, in July 1891, the Constitutions were approved, a couple of modifications made by Rome added some further fuel to the fire. For Rome said that as well as being finally professed, Superiors had to be 35 years old. It further said that, at this stage, only superiors in office {and not ex-

superiors) could take part in the Chapter. This was a blow to those who still considered themselves as 'the moral chapter'. Some of them were not old enough to be superiors or assist at the Chapter. Also, Klotz, Delaporte, and Guyot were automatically excluded. Again the cry went up that this was Jouet's doing, a deliberate plot to keep these men out of the Chapter. Although, when it suited them, they complained that the Society was being too much ruled by indulgences and not enough by the Constitutions, they were happy enough that Chevalier got an indulgence to name superiors under 35.

Then came the Chapter of 1893 and its later annulment. This double event could contribute nothing to improve the dispositions of either side. You can imagine the different versions of what led to the annulment - some saying it was at Chevalier's instigation, while he was convinced that this particular General Council had been foisted on him by the *partie adverse*. The Bishop of Sinope, the Apostolic Delegate was not very helpful to him here. Before his first meeting with the Council, he showed Chevalier the written allegations of these four men severely criticizing his administration. The Bishop himself was not very favourably impressed by them. At the end of February 1893, he wrote to Chevalier that he could not accept an invitation to come to Issoudun to speak with him and his Council. He had a prior engagement. Further I no longer have any confidence in the good manners of these agitated fellows, and assuredly they would be lacking in respect towards me ... It is not fitting that I be laid open to this sort of thing.

By now things were pretty grim in the small MSC Congregation, even judged through friendly eyes. In April of the previous year, Mgr. Marchal, Archbishop of Bourges had written to Rome that, because of the situation in France and beyond, Fr. Chevalier could not cover all the Society. And because of the incomplete organization of the Society's government ... confidence has been weakened among nearly all the members, it has been lost by several. And with the confidence, obedience and respect have vanished on the part of a certain number ". The recent events would make for deterioration rather than improvement.

A further sad event in this intervening period was the expulsion from the Society of Fr. Klotz. There is abundant correspondence to, from, and about Klotz. The main lines we could guess - on the one side the plea that he is fighting for justice, and is unjustly treated; on the other hand the statement that he is a cause of dissension and constantly trying to stir up trouble against the lawful superiors of the Society. After his expulsion, he wrote letters of repentance and pleaded to be taken back.

In 1893, it was obvious that serious and special measures were needed to clear up an unhappy situation which had lasted too long. Fr. Chevalier fell back on an old well-tryed device of making Novenas. Rome appointed a wise and impartial Apostolic Visitor, Mgr. Boyer, the new Archbishop of Bourges. The combination of prayer and impartiality gradually brought healing to the group. The impartiality was manifested first of all in the choice of Assistants: Piperon was a loyal friend of the Founder; Reyn was a representative of the younger group; Morisseau had been with Chevalier on some issues and against him on others, while Vaudon seemed to enjoy the respect of all. Boyer refused to believe that all who criticised the General Administration were rebels - and he instructed Chevalier not to use this or other similar terms. He listened to all who wished to speak to him, and recognised the validity of many points of the younger men. He even got Fr. Chevalier to accept Fr. Klotz back into the Congregation, to give him another try.

Fr. Chevalier, at least in the beginning was not altogether convinced of the Archbishop's impartiality - he thought he was too much on the 'other side'. However, while he prayed for the Archbishop's enlightenment, he did what he was told - and he did it for a number of years. And perhaps this was better for his soul and for his society than he ever realized.

When an Apostolic Visitor is appointed to a Religious Congregation, the General and Council have to get his permission for any steps to be taken; all Council decisions must be submitted to him for approval, and a constant account of administration must be given him. He becomes, for the time being, a sort of Super-Superior General with Presidential powers. His appointment is a sign to the society that a careful eye is being kept on all proceedings. In this instance, it was therefore clear to all that their General Administration had to give a careful account of every move they made. It was also clear that they had better learn to cooperate with authority, for here the authority of the Holy See was very much involved. With obvious representatives of «the people» on the General Council, it was evident that every effort was being made to ensure that there was government for the people. If there was a real love for the Society in the members, this was the way to bring it to express itself in harmony and cooperation.

There was such a love for the society in most of the members; and it produced that peace the Visitor had promised. There was to be, however, a little more sadness before the happy ending. Fr. Reyn was to leave the society of the MSC. During this time of crisis, he had been living his own personal drama. His letters to Fr. Chevalier are rather impressive. He is honest; he says what he thinks, and he thinks well. But he cannot admit to thinking what he does not believe; and if Fr. Chevalier takes this badly - well, that is unfortunate and sad for both of them. Let us see how he writes to Fr. Chevalier:

We have different ideas, R. Fr. Superior, about the division which exists in the Society, but I have never asked God that my way of seeing things should triumph. I ask him only that truth and justice should prevail, and to give me the grace to submit completely and humbly if I am wrong. If then, Rev. Fr. Superior, I have caused you pain, it is only because, in conscience, I believed myself obliged to do so. It is because in my heart as a religious there are two great loves: the one for our dear Society, the other for its venerated Founder¹². Also My reverend and very dear Father, pray much for me. For if these difficulties should last much longer, I believe that my vocation will be endangered. Ah, if our Rev. Fr. Superior only knew well the state of minds, if everyone would dare to speak to him with this frankness and openness of heart... Oh I am convinced that our well loved Superior would not hesitate an instant to make any sacrifice in order to satisfy the just claims of the Society. For the Society is *his* work, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are *his* sons. And he has too good a heart, he is too good a father to let his best children perish ... I fear that our Reverend Father Superior has a false idea of the situation. He believes, perhaps, that he is not loved and esteemed as he ought to be...
13.

It was this Fr. Reyn who, two years later gave his resignation as Assistant General, on the grounds that he had no confidence in the Administration of Fr. Chevalier; soon afterward he asked to leave the Society. He had made plans to go to Belgium to found a Society of Chaplains to Workers, as it is called today. With him went Fr. Jules Vandel and some of the students. Fr. Klotz also joined them. Fr. Vandel, and one of the French students, Courbon, later returned to the Society. The others were gone for good. Earlier we saw the serene comment of Fr. Klotz in later years. In saying our farewell to Fr. Reyn let us see this quotation: In 1930 I met Fr. Reyn in Rome. He told me that his feelings of bitterness in those days had long given way to a great liking (*sympathie*) and that he considered his Congregation as a branch of ours grown up on its own soil, by the grace of God¹⁴. Perhaps it is a bit difficult for two Founders to live and work harmoniously in the same Congregation!

This was the last sad blow in the crisis. There was one further blow - although it is hard to know how to classify it - as sad or humorous. Two of the original chapter members, still fighting a rear-guard action, sent to Rome a copy of Fr. Chevalier's two books - on the Sacred Heart and Our Lady - in an effort to get them condemned! The Holy Office was not interested.

Notes Chevalier

¹ Chevalier, *Ms Annales de la Petite Societe*, pp. 32-33.

² Quoted by Peeters, *Ms Congregation M.S.C., Croissance et Jeunesse*, IV, p. 42.

³ Chevalier, *Ms Annales de la Petite Societe*, p. 35.

⁴ Letter to the Holy Father, December 30th, 1896.

⁵ Letter Delaporte to Chevalier, September 1891.

⁶ Jouet to the Archbishop of Bourges, March 6th, 1891.

⁷ Letter Delaporte to Chevalier, Good Friday, 1893.

⁸ Klotz to Ramot, quoted by Chevalier to Jouet, March 30th, 1891.

⁹ Letter to Jouet, February 26th, 1893.

¹⁰ Letter to Chevalier, Good Friday, 1893.

¹¹ Archbishop of Bourges to the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, April 20th, 1892.

¹² Letter to Chevalier, November 23rd, 1891.

¹³ A letter of Reyn, September 5th, 1891.

¹⁴ Wemmers in Onze Provincie, Missiehuis Tilburg, May 1942, p. 7.

1. THE CRISIS OF VICTOR JOUET.

There are times when one man must die for the people, either because the people demand it, or the man himself knows that it must be done. At this time of crisis in the MSC Congregation, the demands of the people were quite clear; they had selected a victim: Fr. Victor Jouet. This was evident in the *Chapter* of 1891, of which Fr. Piperon wrote: "I found most objectionable and a crying injustice the accusations brought against the Rev. Procurator General in open Chapter. An avowed criminal dragged before his judges would not have had -to listen to anything harder or more intransigent'.

After the Chapter the younger men repeat that Fr. Jouet is the only one responsible for all the difficulty. Some of the older men note that this feeling towards Jouet is irremovable. The principal cause of all our woes is to be found in Fr. Jouet's way of acting². Fr. Jouet is completely "de-valued", It is suggested that, if he is to govern the Society and restore peace, Fr. Chevalier should get rid of Jouet; it is even suggested that he denounce him as a bungler and an adversary of the Congregation³.

In defense of Fr. Jouet, Fr. Piperon wrote to the Prefect of the S.C. of Bishops and Regulars:

I took careful -account of the accusations brought against him so immoderately, both in individual sessions of the Chapter and in private conversations, and I could find nothing which authorized such conduct in regard to him. In all the violent reactions I was able to find only exaggerations of facts very simple in themselves, which could have been explained in a good sense. I must say things as I see them - these were schoolboy rancours. It was clear to me that passion dictated the accusations... He goes on to add: It is twenty-five years now that I have known Fr. Procurator intimately; I affirm, and were it necessary, I would affirm under oath, that I do not know any religious in the Congregation more devoted to the good of this Congregation, more obedient to his superior, nor one who has worked with so much selflessness for the common good. (cf. 1).

In reply to Fr. Guyot's suggestion that in Jouet's way of acting, there was one of the main reasons for the present difficulties, Fr. Chevalier writes magnificently in his defence: First of all we must distinguish the Procurator, the Superior and the religious.

1. As Procurator, with what can we reproach him? Nothing, absolutely nothing. It would be a long time before you would find his equal. Every affair of the Society which was entrusted to him he has made succeed. It is to him that we owe... that the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was erected into a universal archconfraternity with its centre in our church, with us as its perpetual directors. It is to him that we owe our Vicars Apostolic, the Procure in Sydney, our mission Seminary in Antwerp. It is to him that we owe the esteem we enjoy in Rome, and the sympathy of the Holy See and all the Cardinals with whom he has to deal.

2. As Superior, his position has been most difficult. He had too much to do, and no doubt he was forced to neglect some things and do others imperfectly ... He was busy with building, with book-keeping, with hospitality to visitors, with the Procure, with errands to run for everyone, with running the house with insufficient and inexperienced personnel, with scholastics who were often undisciplined, pretentious, demanding...; further he had to devote his attention to the association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, editing the Annals, the apostolic school, bursaring, etc. Obviously he was crushed by the work: we have then to make allowances for his position.

3. As a religious: with what can he be reproached? His piety is admired by all; the spirit of faith animates all his actions; his obedience is blind, his devotedness absolute to the point of immolation. His character is good, kind and easy: he is intelligent without being pretentious, mortified, poor, self-forgetful, never seeking his own ease. You will find few religious in our Society who have such a rare combination of qualities. He's not without fault, I know, but no man is perfect. What saddens me deeply is to see this unjust violence manifesting itself against Fr. Jouet, who lives only for the good of our Society never calculating what he gives in the way of zeal and sacrifice; it is seeing so much ingratitude in his regard. Tell me: who has worked as much as he for the success of our works? Didn't he give the impetus to the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and to the Apostolic School too? Who founded the Annals and got them 16,000 subscribers - something people seem to forget these days?

Isn't it he who has by his travels, his preaching, his writings which are so much appreciated, more than anyone else, procured the sympathy and the resources which we benefit by? Isn't it he who by his indefatigable zeal, his enterprise and his *savoir faire*, has created our magnificent pilgrimages? Isn't it he who saved the house of Antwerp from ruin, when the young fathers, today so worked up against him, had so gravely compromised it that the Archbishop of Mechlin wanted to get rid of us? It was this dear confrere, sick and all as he was, who went to plead our cause, which was truly desperate, and finished by gaining the day⁴.

How does it come about that a man so highly regarded by his closest associates is so strongly attacked by the younger men, to the extent that Guyot and Delaporte can see that he is de-valued? First of all let it be noted that even his strongest defenders admit that he was not successful as a local superior. We saw that in Chevalier's text. Piperon also admitted: Despite his eminent and numerous qualities, he was not an administrator. He did not know how to govern men or material things. A man of affairs, preacher, writer, gifted for managing important affairs, he could not tie himself down to the hundred and one details which the government of a house demands⁵. In this, he too was 'a victim of circumstances'. With its limited personnel, the MSC group had, in its early years, to entrust too many tasks to individuals. As superior of the students in Rome, Jouet could not spend the time with them which such a position demands. The students felt neglected. And when Jouet returned home from his numerous commissions, he reacted strongly and over severely to the lack of discipline in the house. In the resulting malaise in the community, a number of the students were taken away. Many of these felt that it was thanks to Joue't that we have not finished our studies, and thanks to him that the scholasticate in Rome was much less important than it might have been. Some of these who resented past treatment, and had no confidence in Joue't as a result of their experience as students, were now members of the Chapter. They also knew that, in setting up the house in Rome, he had got into some financial tangles. The part he played in taking on the various foundations, including Quito, was also well known.

Now when it was felt that the Society was too widely extended for its numbers, when some were worried about this situation, it was obvious that they would try to lay the blame on Jouet, especially since they had some old resentments against him. Furthermore, coming to the Chapter feeling that the Society was too much administered by indults, and not enough according to the constitutions, he was the natural one to

blame. For as Procurator, he had got these permissions which they did not now approve - and he had failed to get others, the failure resulting in the juridical mix-up that came to light in the Chapter.

That in all things he was acting as Procurator; that all foundations were approved by the whole Council; that all the Administration bore equal responsibility for not applying for necessary permissions - these were things which some conveniently forgot, in singling him out for special attack. Others did not forget but they attacked him knowing that, in so doing, they were attacking the General, too. They knew the old man's fighting qualities, and they preferred to skirmish with Jouet. They were to find that Jouet himself was no mean fighter!

Then, when he went to Rome and returned with the decree of dissolution of the Chapter, they were utterly convinced that he had procured it by unfair means. Their obsession with the Chapter, Supreme Tribunal, called to right all wrongs against the General Administration, generated a fixed idea, which persisted for a long time, that any decision which came from Rome unfavourable to them was due to the machinations of Jouet.

It may be as well to repeat that this trip to Rome becomes a keypoint as the Chapter members seek to justify their resentment against Jouet. And resentment justified, or anger labelled as righteous, is very hard to dislodge. This 'righteous anger' flared up in the Chapter. Armed with canons from the Code, the young men saw themselves as enlightened Crusaders for the right. (And although *he* does not record it, when Piperon questioned some of their accusations, he was publicly informed that he was an old ignoramus!).

They sent Klotz, their elected champion, to Rome to do battle for their cause, and to bring back various 'sanationes'. Then when they had cleaned up the mess caused by their fathers, they would get on with the business of the Chapter. One important item of business was to replace the old administration with less ignorant and more competent men. Fr. Chevalier wrote that they already had the various positions, including Vicar-General, assigned to members of their group. And the Bishop of Sinope is later astounded at the sublime confidence of these young and inexperienced men that they could run the Society without any problem.

When such cocksure confidence meets with failure it has to blame someone. When the elected champion descends into the lists and comes home without his trophy, he and his electors will cry foul play. They never questioned whether a Chapter has the right to over-rule its General and President about who should take to Rome a petition for indults. The document contained no more than this; and many indults were for matters not connected with the Chapter. This was clearly the Procurator's job.

Why did not Fr. Chevalier simply write a letter? asked Cardinal Monaco. Chevalier saw that Klotz was going to do more than present a document - he was going to plead a cause. The young champion was out-manoeuvred, and Jouet was never forgiven.

Both Chevalier and Jouet knew that, during the Chapter of 1891, much of the criticism directed against Jouet was meant for the Founder. It worried Chevalier, but it did not seem to disturb Jouet unduly. He wrote soon after to Fr. Chevalier that he did not hold one word against his conferees who had spoken against him - although he did admit to a lingering taste of bitterness. He went back to his Procurator's office, determined to see that Chevalier was treated as a Founder-General should be.

When he had gone, Fr. Chevalier got much free advice on how to solve the problem. Fr. Delaporte was a writer by profession, and he deluged Chevalier with letters (one of them of 15 large pages), in almost all of which there was the advice to get rid of Jouet. Guyot's opinion has already been recorded. In spite of his repeated defence of Jouet, Chevalier could see that the opposition to Jouet was massive. The young men pleaded with their Cher Pere Superieur to show an understanding of the justice of their claims, to show the heart of the father they knew him to be. This would be made clear to all of them if he would get rid of Jouet.

He knew the young men were wrong; but he could see that they were in earnest. They would be satisfied only if he gave them the head of Victor Jouet; and he was no Herod. It was a dreadfully painful position to be in - and there seemed no way out. Meanwhile, quite unaware of the position of his Superior General, Jouet blithely wrote from Rome about how well things were going.

Then a letter came to Fr. Chevalier asking whether the MSC Society might be able to let Fr. Jouet take on an important mission for the Propagation of the Faith in the United States of America. This work, as well as being an important one for the missions, would make the MSC well known through the whole U.S.A. and could be very advantageous to the MSC society. Perhaps here was a way out for Fr. Chevalier. He wrote to Fr. Jouet putting the proposition to him, stressing its importance, and suggesting that perhaps Jouet might like to accept it after he had got some of the more urgent business fixed up in Rome. He would remain officially Procurator, with a vicar carrying out commissions in his name. What did Jouet think?⁷ In his reply Jouet showed that the proposition interested him⁸. Chevalier must have sighed with relief - perhaps he would be able to satisfy the crowd without beheading Jouet.

However, as the year wore on Jouet began to grow puzzled. At Issoudun things did not seem to be as clear-cut as he saw them in Rome. For him the issue had seemed quite clear: protect the position of the Founder-Superior and bring the dissidents into line. First Morisseau and then Chevalier seem to favour compromises - compromises which he did not think would work. He wrote to Fr. Chevalier along these lines: 'You are being inconsistent, and making us appear inconsistent before the Sacred Congregation. You began to fight the issue on the grounds that a group, lacking in religious spirit, were working against their lawful religious superiors. Now you want this, group to meet in Chapter to discuss and decide - so that their attitudes will prevail. You suggest that one of them (Fr. Chevalier had written about possibly making Reyn an Assistant) be put on the General Council. The S.C. refused their request that they choose an Assistant to replace Guyot, and approved our choice, Maillard; now you want to give in to them. If you were right in the first instance, then how can you be right now, wanting to make concessions to those whom you have said are animated by a 'mauvais esprit'?'.

He saw, too, that these were compromises in which he himself was involved - and he came to realize the truth about the offer of a trip to the United States. In a letter of Sept. 10th, 1891, he continued:

They then turned on Fr. Jouet, and asked that he withdraw. Fr. Jouet wrote his resignation (as Assistant) at the request which Fr. Piperon made on your behalf. The Cardinal Protector and Mgr. Sepiacci told me: don't do anything it's not necessary... But you wanted to push ahead and give them this bit of consolation, which they then declared was not enough... *You then proposed to them my departure for America...* You have letters from Fr. Klotz and Fr. Morisseau which tell you clearly that this will not satisfy them either...⁸. Chevalier made no further reference to America. But by this time, Fr. Jouet had begun to suspect the fix his Founder was in. The suspicion grew to certainty as he became aware of how strong the animosity against him was. He heard some of the things that others wrote about him - to Issoudun, to Rome. He read some of them, too. He read statements like this:

I do not dare to suspect that Fr. Jouet would or could have deceived, no matter how little esteem I have for his frankness and loyalty.

I think he's very pious, a bit too much after the french fashion, it's true, but I think he is even more political and diplomatic than pious ... a man who, by his tricks and cunning, drives a whole Congregation to despair. Alas! if our poor Congregation had been governed as the Constitutions prescribe, it would long ago have got rid of this Procurator... the Procurator who knows how much he is detested, but who clings to power. He is strong against his superiors who placed too much confidence in him; and any revelations would be as compromising for them as for him... I express here not just my personal opinion, but, I would say, the opinion common to most members of the Society⁹. Jouet copied the letter into his notebook. Even though he knew that the author was a very boorish and difficult young man, he still must have been hurt by reading this text. Others were more gentlemanly, but they, too, expressed opposition...

And finally he knew what he must do for the Society he loved and its Founder whom he loved even more. He himself must do what Chevalier could never bring himself to do. It was now clear to him that Chevalier could never regain the confidence of many of his younger men

while he, Jouet, was mixed up with the General Administration. *He* was the stumbling block, and although he would never understand why this should be, he knew that there are times when one man must die for the people. He knew what must be done.

He thought that he should sacrifice himself in the cause of peace and the general good, and he did so with great sorrow. In withdrawing he wanted still to serve the congregation. I was in Rome when he took his decision. He had talked to me on different occasions, and at great length, of his enemies, his perplexities and the motives which inclined him to withdraw.... Thus writes Fr. Píperon who was in Rome in mid-1892¹⁰. Fr. Chevalier's pretext for painless extraction of Jouet from the European MSC scene by sending him to America had not worked. Jouet now found a pretext which, he hoped, would save Chevalier trouble. He made out a case for the invalidity of his final profession in the Society. I shall not give the details here, but, in reality it is not much of a case. It might present a canonical problem, but it is not convincing - my canonical experts tell me that there is no doubt his profession was quite clearly valid. Had there been real objective reason to doubt, Jouet could quite easily have got a 'sanatio in radice'. As Fr. Reyn had written in another context, Jouet had probably got more indults than any other man in the history of religious life, and if he really wanted an indult, he could get one. In this case he obviously did not want one; and the reason, equally obviously, was that he *wanted* to have a juridical pretext for calling into doubt his position in the Society. In this way he could withdraw from official activities for reasons which he could insist that Chevalier accept. But his motivation was not juridical doubt; it was the belief that, in this way, he might help to bring about peace in the Society.

It is not quite clear from the records when he confided in Pr. Chevalier. But a letter written in October 1892 shows how deeply Fr. Chevalier was feeling the whole situation: I'm discouraged in seeing that everyone is abandoning us. Still we've always had the desire of doing the right thing and of giving satisfaction to everyone... If I should give my resignation, I am prepared to do so, for my position is no longer tenable. The letter of Bishop Verius, in which he recounts his audience with Cardinal Monaco, has caused me indescribable pain. He says that the Cardinal told him that you also have asked to leave the Society... Is it possible that you want to abandon me, you too?!

Jouet had, in fact, discussed his position with Cardinal Monaco. He writes back to Chevalier on October 26th: I saw Cardinal Monaco this evening and I told him that more than ever I intend to remain devoted to you and to the Society ... but later we shall see what the good God wants. This is what I said to Mgr. Marchal and to Fr. Píperon, and this is what I ask you to accept, too, as being, in the situation in which we are, that which is best for me; in the interests of the Society itself.

I pray and I get others to pray; and I suffer from this state of things, but I am convinced that the good of the Society (to which I am more than ever devoted in your person and in that of Fr. Píperon) will come out of it all...¹⁰.

On September 10th, 1892 he wrote an official petition to be excused from the Chapter at the beginning of 1893 for personal reasons. In one of his letters he wrote in the interest of peace; this was his real reason. To make his drawing off from the Society less obvious, he took on a special work as so many MSC did then and have done since. He was put in charge of the Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart in favour of the Souls in Purgatory; he also had the task of constructing a Church in Prati in Rome, to be a shrine for prayers for the holy souls. With a touch of the old Jouet humour, he added: That won't disturb any of the living. (After his death, this Church and the surrounding parish passed into the care of the Italian MSC.)

His status vis-a-vis the whole Society was arranged in the greatest secrecy. Fr. Jouet was most insistent that apart from Chevalier, Píperon, and later Maillard, no one was to know. He was given a yearly pension from the Society of 1800 francs. In January 1893, he wrote:

I am still convinced in the bottom of my heart, that spontaneously putting myself at a distance from the affairs of the Society, particularly the Administration, will calm spirits on both sides, and that a peaceful solution will come about.

He said that the work for the Holy Souls was going well, and this sign of God's blessing confirmed his conviction. He went on:

Nobody can object to my devoting myself to the souls in Purgatory, so that I won't hinder the liberty of the living.

It should be noted that, in his own mind he was only leaving the affairs of the Society, not the Society itself. He was always hurt if anyone omitted the MSC after his name. I am and I remain in heart and soul what I have always been in fact, even if I am not canonically... a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. It was you yourself who gave me this title seven years before I asked the Holy Father for permission to enter the Society... Further my position, I hope will be temporary only. It is made necessary by the work for the Holy Souls to which I desire to consecrate the little strength that is left to me, and for the good and peace of the Society¹¹.

He saw his position as temporary only. But the years go by and there is no going back. Writing to him in 1897, Chevalier remarked that several Assistants and some confreres had heard it said that he no longer 'belonged to the Society. This impression was confirmed by the fact that he was signing Jouet MASC, the A indicating Apostolic. I replied, he said, that the Cardinal Vicar has asked for you to devote yourself to the construction of the Church of the Sacred Heart in the Prati dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and that from that moment you were subtracted from the jurisdiction of your Superior General, depending only on the Cardinal Vicar as long as your presence was necessary for the work confided to you; but that in the internal forum you remained always a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun¹².

This explanation, said Chevalier, pleased the Assistants who esteemed Jouet highly: for you are so much a part of the foundation of our Society in our eyes and in the eyes of the public, that they could not understand if it were different... I have no doubt of this, and I would be desolate if it were otherwise.

In these latter words we have, too, an explanation of why Jouet could not merely take up a place on the edge of the MSC Society. As Fr. Ceresi wrote after Jouet's death: "he was an exuberant man in body and spirit, born for enterprise and combativeness, made for movement... he could not, by the intimate law of his life and without denying himself, adapt himself just to sitting around". He had been Chevalier's comrade-in-arms through all the exciting years; now that was gone forever. He could not just sit in his religious cell. He needed to be up and doing. Taking his new direction must be seen, says Fr. Ceresi of his former superior and father under the light of fidelity to his own intimate duty and to the special mission of his existence.

It was to this same concept of his 'mission' that Jouet himself appealed when discussing his situation with Píperon:

My mission in the Society is finished: I see that there I can no longer do any good¹⁴. We would say rather that by some quirk of fate, things had come to such a strange pass in regard to his position in the Society, that the final step in his mission for the Society was to 'withdraw from its affairs'. The development of his thought after the recorded conversation with Píperon indicates that this, too, was the conclusion he drew. But he did not withdraw by asking for a dispensation from his vows; perhaps he might never have had the heart to do this. And in the logic of the position he took up, there was no need to.

In order to take up a position which would enable him 'to withdraw from the affairs of the Society' without asking for a dispensation, he went back to the year 1872 when Pope Pius IX had given him permission to leave his diocese of Marseilles in order to become an MSC. This permission was given for seven years, ad septennium, dated July 7th. 1872. Immediately he made his profession before the Pope, Fr. Chevalier renewing his. Now this permission 'for seven years' was never renewed, said Fr. Jouet: therefore he was still 'a priest of the diocese of Marseilles'. Having many friends among the Roman Cardinals, and being a man of influence, he managed to get some of them to accept his thesis: while the Bishop of Marseilles was happy to acquire an extra priest for the diocese.

However, what Jouet fails to mention is that:

- prior to 1877, public profession in the MSC Society was perpetual;

- On June 3rd, 1874, together with Frs. Chevalier and Vandel, he had renewed his profession before the Pope, and all three had taken the fourth vow of stability - which could only be taken by the perpetually professed;

- On January 18th, 1879, Bishop L. Robert of Marseilles wrote that he considered Jouet freed totally from his diocese to be perpetually an MSC. There was then, absolutely no need for a papal renewal of special permission to stay with the MSC when the septennium expired in July of that same year.

How much Jouet really believed his own argumentation, and how much it was his way of 'withdrawing' without leaving the Society or giving Chevalier the impression he was deserting him, we have no means of knowing. But whatever be the answer to these unanswered questions, one thing is clear - what Jouet did in those days was done for love of the MSC Society. In his last will and testament he left his property at Marseilles and Rome to Fr. Charles Piperon MSC. If Shakespeare were to have written his story he might well have adapted the words he wrote of Brutus to read: 'this was the noblest MSC of all'.

2. A FATHER AND HIS SONS.

A complicated question, like that of the MSC crisis, is more easily understood if one sees it from different angles. Looking from different viewpoints one also appreciates better the character of the people involved in this human drama. Let us remember that it was a *group* problem. We shall therefore better grasp the factors involved if we invoke the aid of some simple principles of group dynamics. Any active religious group has two sets of goals:

- a) its task-goals, or the job to be done;
- b) its goal of satisfying emotionality need - the needs of friendship and human relationships.

With regard to the task-goals, for the purpose in hand we need note only two things. Firstly a group will tend to dissatisfaction if its members feel continually that the job, whatever it is, is not being done reasonably well. Secondly, members will also be dissatisfied if they feel that they are not sufficiently qualified to do the job properly. These two dissatisfactions (in the field of task) can be offset by factors in the emotionality field - i.e; by understanding and friendship. Especially is this so when it is felt that superiors, united with their subjects in sympathetic understanding, realize the defects in the work area and are determined to remedy these as soon as reasonably possible. But if corresponding to the void in the job satisfaction there is also a void in the fulfilment of emotionality needs, the objective situation is one in which the group runs a high risk of disintegration or explosion.

We shall understand a lot of what happened in 1891 to 1894 if we realize that the MSC Congregation was not providing its young members with a sufficient measure of satisfaction in the two areas mentioned in the previous paragraph. This was an almost inevitable result of the dispersion following on the persecutions of 1880. It has a logical explanation which can excuse everyone from blame. But logical explanations can never satisfy frustrated psychological needs.

Firstly, the MSC group were trying to do too many things. They were committed to more jobs than they could handle. The point does not need to be argued. We can simply quote Fr. Chevalier himself:

the young Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (was), as it were, crushed under the weight of works which were so important and so numerous¹⁵.

If the Society was crushed, there were men 'being crushed, too. And in such circumstances the task can not be performed sufficiently well. This is also clear if we consider that, secondly, many of the men were doing jobs they were not prepared for: The Society, having used up its men and its forces, was overburdened with works which were not being done properly. Children, grown men, young religious just out of the novitiate, carried out a whole host of tasks¹⁶. The older men would have felt this less. They had their own ministry, preaching, writing, pastoral work. But it was the young men who were put into the work of education in seminaries and apostolic schools. Just how overburdened they were does not matter much. They felt that the situation was bad - and the others admitted they had reason to feel this way. Reasons could be given excusing the state of affairs - the founding period of the Society, the persecutions. But even good reasons do not help men in a si-

They could have been helped through this by experiencing a sympathetic understanding and a fatherly support. This Fr. Chevalier gave magnificently to those with whom he lived (see Ch. XI). But the diaspora following 1880 had separated them from Issoudun; and his appointment as parish priest of Issoudun made it imperative for him to stay there. He was more than a distant Superior General of modern times: he was their Father and Founder, and the *only* Major Superior they had. But circumstances kept him separated from them; and no amount of letter-writing can substitute for personal contact. It should be noted, too, that this generation of young men had been further deprived of the 'father-son' relationship in the course of their religious formation. Guyot was an absentee novice-master; Jouet 'because of his many tasks' was hardly ever home in the scholasticate in Rome.

To men in this potentially dangerous situation, the General Chapter would have seemed a ray of hope. It was both a chance to 'make contact', and a chance to plan for a more satisfactory task-situation. These were hopes for the satisfaction of some rather vital personal needs.

At this point let us pause to point out how the whole situation, together with its historical development, would have served to make Jouet, inevitably, the target of animosity. It was believed (rightly or wrongly does not matter, for it was believed strongly) that he was the main agent in taking on all the works of the Society. In this way he contributed to their job-dissatisfaction. But even worse was the fact that he had sent some of them away from Rome before they finished their studies. Therefore he was to blame for the fact that they felt themselves disqualified from performing their tasks adequately. Anyone who knows students will realize how this would have been a bitter resentment they found it hard to lay aside. He had failed them, too, in their emotionality needs through the long years of the scholasticate. And by having (in their eyes) the Chapter dissolved, he had blasted their hopes of getting out of a very trying and frustrating situation. While things failed to improve, it was going to be hard for them to forgive Jouet. However, the central personal drama was to be worked out between Chevalier and his sons. In saying this, I have no wish to turn this into a chapter of a sentimental or psychological novel. But that is how the record reads. Piperon (and Chevalier himself?) summed up this situation in the scriptural phrase: I have raised up sons and they have turned against me¹⁷. Guyot, writing to Chevalier to give his analysis of the crisis said that Fr. Chevalier had to show them the heart of a Father¹⁸. And as the story develops, we see the older men - Jouet, Guyot, Piperon and Delaporte - retire to the wings, waiting for the principal drama to work itself out on centre-stage. And as one looks at the correspondence of those days from this point of view which the actors themselves have suggested, it is extraordinary how the story develops as an exact parallel to real life events which many of us know so well. I refer here to the case of a very good Christian father who works hard for his family. He gets involved in, let us say, building up a new business which requires that he work late at night and, often enough, during the week-ends. As a result, he sees little of his family. He lays down rules for their conduct: they must not stay out too late at night, they must study hard. Individual questions to resolve are solved as cases of right and wrong; but there is no time for the on-going dialogue or the easy relation which comes from a lot of time spent together. Then one day one or a number of his children, who have grown into young adults while his back was turned, clash with the father and perhaps walk out of the home. On his part there is puzzled bewilderment - on theirs a conviction that there will never be understanding between them. We know the dialogue and the recriminations: All my work in building up this business was for the family (yes, but you did not give us your time or yourself). Parents have the duty of seeing that the children do the right thing; they are entitled to expect respect and obedience (yes, but we are grown-up now, and are entitled to expect some discussion.) etc. The parallel with Chevalier and his priests is quite clear as we watch the course of events. The course of events began when Chevalier published his new rules. These, he said, provoked a 'violent reaction in the houses of the North'. Prior to that time, despite the existence of a potentially troubled situation *omnia recte procederunt, atque in optima pace essent comportata*, things were going peacefully. The publication of the rules was an *inopinata perturbatio*. The reaction it

caused can be understood only against the background which we have already outlined. Anyone who did not realize the depth of the psychological frustration, the strained state of the group dynamic, would be surprised at the strong reaction - particularly a man who thought he was acting reasonably and in accord with his rights, even obliged by 'his duty so to act. He was the Founder thinking to put the finishing touches to his work before he died'¹⁹.

On February 20th, 1889 a Memorandum was sent to the Holy See from some of the priests, setting forth their complaints: - there had been no Chapter, there were irregularities in administration, and finally, without consultation these new rules came out which were too detailed, too severe. The Latin text was quoted and carefully exegeted to prove the 'severity'. Examples were given to prove both the unnecessary detail and the severe demands: - Students were expected to say the breviary together; all were expected to observe silence all through the monthly day of retreat on First Fridays; the religious should not blow on their soup, touch their hair (ever!) - they should cut their nails!

On March 5th, the Memorandum was passed to the MSC Procurator pro informatione et voto. Jouet, of course, sent a copy to Fr. Chevalier.

The latter wrote back to Fr. Jouet in a very calm tone, 'only half-surprised', for I know that the devil does all he can in order to throw the spirit of division into the most united religious families²⁰. Fr. Chevalier was a very supernatural man. Unfortunately he was stronger on demonology than on group dynamics. While he could put the trouble down to preternatural causes, his faith could keep him calm and serene. This was to make it more difficult for him to admit the real issues and find an early solution. This, probably is why Delaporte would later write: I had a long and friendly discussion with the Rev, Fr. General. I was dismayed by his serenity. There is no possible doubt about the Tightness of his intentions.²¹ No one ever questioned the rightness of his intentions through this time. But others, too, were dismayed by his serenity. It is fine to believe that with God's help all will come out right in the end. However, those who feel that they have a legitimate grievance would like to see some human solutions to their problems. Here often his sons groaned in dismay - they felt that their father was missing their point, or attributing to bad will what was due to human frustration with a situation which could be improved.

God is my witness, he wrote, that in drawing up the Constitutions and the common Rules, I have sought only his glory and the good of our dear confreres²² (This no-one would deny. The Memorandum spoke of him as a man who is still living, and of outstanding piety)²³. He went on to say: After thirty-five years of experience and sixty-nine years of age, I felt the need, before I die, of putting the final touches to our dear work in order to save the future from shocks and arbitrary decisions²⁴. (But, dear Father, they would say, this is an impossible dream). He continued that, in making the Rules more precise, he was merely filling in a few gaps. (But if one fills in all the gaps, especially for men feeling hemmed in by overwork, it becomes impossible to breathe). He says that "The French translation takes away the apparent severity of the Latin (and the Memorandum does give the impression of a scrupulous exegesis). Although the Memorandum said that he had introduced the changes without consultation, he points out that he had consulted the Assistants, all the Superiors of the Institute and the older fathers. (And here, they said, is our point: what of the younger ones?) In fact the Memorandum, he writes, is written by some young Fathers with no experience of life. And young men in religious life also let their nails grow long out of vanity and have their hair artistically arranged like men of the world - so why not point out the right religious way of acting. It sounds like a modern father; and we can almost hear the sons' reactions.

He makes the father's understandable complaint: Why did they not ask me first, before sending a complaint to Rome? We could have talked it out together. And had we not been able to agree, they could have talked with the Assistants. Then they could have gone to Rome had they still not been satisfied. This was the aspect which hurt him most. And it was on this point that the young men did not have a valid answer.

Going to Rome behind his back with a complaint to the Holy See, without giving him a chance to explain, or to change things 'in the family' - this was their worst mistake. For this goes outside the normal son-father relationship (no matter how much they might later protest that they have it restored). It became difficult for him then to see their further steps, in and after the Chapter of 1891, as no more than a search for dialogue. He could not but see them as attacks on him and his administration - as the representation to Rome had been. It is very hard for any man to trust a son who, behind his back, has tried to have him condemned.

Issoudun, in the whole debate, is very much like the business in the family incident we have proposed as a parallel. Long before, Fr. Piperon had seen that taking the parish was not to be an unmixed blessing: either the parish will suffer, or the Society - or perhaps both²⁵. The parish did not suffer, for Fr. Chevalier had some very devoted assistants with him. He repeatedly stressed how much Issoudun meant to the Society financially, and therefore for the formation of these young men who criticised it. He felt that *they* did not appreciate what Issoudun was doing for the Society and for them. And so he could not understand why they wanted to move the General House from Issoudun. But he did not appreciate what Issoudun was doing to him, and through him to them. It was keeping him away from them - which was why they wanted him out of Issoudun. But realizing that Issoudun did mean a lot to the work and therefore to the Society, they were prepared to compromise; let him stay at Issoudun if he must. But let a Vicar-General be appointed to play the role of father to the congregation. They had too much love and respect for him even to think of proposing another General. Yet he saw this suggestion of the Vicar-General as a sign that they wanted to get rid of him, and the attacks on Issoudun as ingratitude. In reality it was their way of saying that, in a choice between Issoudun and him, it was *him* that they wanted.

So with the two Chapters, the closing of one, and the annulment of the other, there was hurt and misunderstanding; there was disappointment on one side and on the other the feeling of being condemned to continue in frustration. The words the young men had spoken out of frustration had been attacks indeed. They *had* been out of order; but they found it hard to be classed as rebels motivated by an evil spirit. Father and sons had arrived at an impasse, and there was deep suffering on both sides. Delaporte and Guyot wrote long letters to Chevalier telling him how to fix up the whole situation. They both got rather smart verbal slaps for their trouble. And this was not just out of the hurt that Chevalier felt for the unhappy situation with the young men. He reacted out of a double pain. They were telling him that the young men loved him and respected him, that all he had to do was to show the heart of a Father. This he so wanted to do. However, as the situation had developed, they were asking him to do it by sacrificing Jouet. At the same time that they were asking for the declaration of total peace with him, they were making war with Jouet. And Piperon wrote: Those who conducted this war have done a great wrong, I've always been convinced... I pity very much those who have forced him to withdraw; and towards this well loved priest I retain the most sincere affection and the most lively gratitude. His decision to leave afflicted Fr. Chevalier greatly. It was another cup of bitterness of which he had to drink so abundantly at that time. He loved Fr. Jouet tenderly, and never forgot his unwearying devotion to the Congregation.

At the beginning of the MSC society, Fr. Chevalier had had Fr. Maugenest, his most gifted and loved co-founder, taken from his side. Toward the end of his life, Fr. Jouet, his closest friend and alter-ego had been forced to take the same road away from him. Obviously this sort of thing cuts pretty deep into a man's heart. From Jouet's course of action in these troubled years, we see something of how fine a man he was; and we can perhaps understand some of the hurt that Chevalier suffered when his sons were saying that *this* man must be sacrificed if they were to see in him the heart of their father. We can understand a bit better that, in response to their appeals, he appealed to authority. He could not do what they asked. He had to refuse. When we know what was being asked, and the tragedy that came into the lives of good and dedicated men in those days, we may not find exaggerated Fr. Chevalier's claim that the Evil One was at work in the troubles that beset the Society. Something could be said for demonology as well as for group-dynamics.

Eventually Jouet would make it clear that there was no need to sacrifice him for the common good; he would sacrifice himself. This, however, was not to become known until late in 1893 or, for the public, later still. After the Chapter in January 1891, Chevalier found himself in

this impossible situation. He could not make the move which his opponents were asking. He decided to make some others. Perhaps if he drew the teeth of the opposition, things would calm down. He replaced Delaporte as superior of the house in Paris, and set about moving others out of the battle area. He tried to send Ramot to Sydney - but at Klotz' rallying-cry, Ramot declined to go. Fr. Pierre Treand (although classified by Chevalier as moderate opposition only) was sent to Sydney - for which the Australian Province will be forever grateful.

These moves did not help. They confirmed in their opinion those who considered that Chevalier was being stubbornly opposed to necessary changes; they made others waver. And they gave Klotz material for the subversive campaign which he seems to have embarked on at this time. What was Chevalier to do? He had to find a solution to the problem as it presented itself. It is not always easy to put into practice the norm of good counselling: to see beyond the 'presenting problem' to the real problem behind it. The problem presented itself to Chevalier in rather unpleasant terms:

- Memoranda had been sent to Rome behind his back;
- Attacks were launched on his Administration with lack of charity and 'the rancour of schoolboys' (Piperon);
- there was the fierce (and for him incomprehensible) attack on Jouet.

He was neither psychologist nor sociologist. He was the Founder and Superior General of a religious society, which others now seemed to be trying to tear apart. He was a man who believed strongly in obedience, and in the duty in conscience of a superior to see that his subjects acted with virtue²⁷. The very qualities which had enabled him to build a new religious community in difficult circumstances had also contributed to his present problem. They now contributed to his difficulty in solving it.

For where a man's strength is, there will his weakness lie. Chevalier was a strong man, a man of boundless energy, and a wide vision. He had the courage to risk and the tenacity to succeed. His strength was his weakness; and one might ask whether, up to this point, he had really understood the weak. We are *all* born fiery and aggressive, he wrote²⁸. But what of those born hesitant, timid, in need of support and encouragement? In his own tremendous dedication, did he expect too much of people who could not summon the same unflinching dedication as he? In his wide vision of building up a missionary society, did he take enough account of the more limited world of young and inexperienced men hemmed in by the pressure of more work than they could manage calmly and efficiently? Under the pressure of his own work, taking for granted the same utter dedication in others as in himself, his letters had become 'laconic in tone, with the accents of the boss'²⁹. He had lapsed into the blunt *Berry* way, and his letters were not informed by that 'charism of kindness' which marked his personal relations with others. Pressure of work did not allow him the leisure of the kindly letter which would have helped so much. His were business letters more often than not; and this meant that his correspondence was concerned, for the greater part, with decisions taken, matters of discipline. Also, in order to make it easier to implement decisions of the General Council, local superiors used to publish difficult directives as coming from the Superior General. As a result: Our young people do not know you, Reverend Father, and it is regrettable. When others speak in your name, it is always with exaggerated severity.³⁰

What was needed now was that a current of kindness and paternal condescension goes out from you Reverend Father, and from those who speak and act in your name, and then our confreres will come back to you and stay.³¹ This was the answer, but how put it into execution in the existing factual situation? For a long time Chevalier could only wait and pray and hope.

The departure of Reyn and Klotz from the Society was a turning point. Klotz was the chief trouble-maker and a source of dissension was gone. But Reyn and Jules Vandel and some six or seven students went, too and this made others realize that they were in the process of destroying themselves. Jouet's withdrawal from the affairs of the Society drained off some of the more aggressive feelings. In these years Chevalier learned, too, to see beyond the presenting problem; and in spite of the Memoranda and the attacks, he learned to trust again. For Reyn left, not in anger, but as a son who knelt to ask his father's blessing. And immediately Fr. Chevalier received a heartening response from the students.

They had naturally been disturbed by the events of those times, and the departure of some of their number. They discussed their future, and in two different interviews, representatives of the Dutch and the German groups talked with Fr. Chevalier. He was deeply touched to see that their sole concern was to save their vocation as MSC. They suggested that, to this end, they should go back and continue their studies in their own countries. In the discussions although serious and a bit tense, he was amiable as always³². It was evidently a man-to-man discussion. He suggested the possibility of going to Rome; he also offered the opinion that with Fr. Vaudon now in charge of the Scholasticate, things would settle down. The students said that they did not really share his confidence in Vaudon; nor did they think that going to Rome would help them much at the moment. They felt that for their vocation as MSC, it would be best to go back to the houses in their home countries. Their proposition was evidently inspired by grace, Fr. Chevalier wrote³³.

Shortly afterwards the Province of the North was erected comprising mainly the houses and personnel of Antwerp, Tilburg and Salzburg. Whereas earlier, Chevalier had felt that the move for a Province had been a 'separatist movement', he now saw it as a positive step. It was a way both to better administration of the houses, and to more personal contact with a major superior. Not long afterwards, Chevalier could write to Jouet: Thanks be to God, since the departures of Frs. Reyn and Klotz and the erection of the Province of the North, concord, peace and union reign among us now. May the Sacred Heart consolidate this state of affairs ever more

It is impossible to give all the steps in the process of things working themselves out. But work themselves out they did not overnight and not without suffering. Even some time later we find Chevalier pleading with others to give him a fair go - not to blame him for every decision that someone finds a bit hard:

You know well, dear friend, that in all questions submitted to the Council, I have only one voice. I do not want to impose my opinion. For the last four years, not to say always, this is the line of conduct I have imposed on myself, no matter what some may say- so for the love of God, don't make me responsible for the decisions taken³⁵.

There were still human problems, disagreements among complaints. Fr. Chevalier - whose calm and serenity never ceased to impress and amaze people - suffered a lot underneath. This suffering is occasionally, though rarely, betrayed in a letter:

I'm wearied, and tired, and sick, from all these disagreements³⁶. Despite this, the laconic letters have given way to warm, friendly thoughtful messages: Don't pay too much attention, dear friend, to the stories of certain confreres who probably use my name as a cover for expressing their own thoughts. Let it be enough for you to know that I love you, that I have a high regard for you, and more than anyone I appreciate the qualities with which the good God has endowed you.³⁷ Now he frequently runs in a *P.S.* either thoughtful, or good-humoured, or a combination of both. For example, to Fr. Vaudon: 'I was so sorry to hear about your accident, and I do hope that you soon recover. I was very relieved to hear that it was not serious. Would you believe that when I told the curates in the parish (your good friends, incidentally) about the way you fell out of the carriage, the blighters burst out laughing!'

Others suffered, too, of course throughout this period. Guyot wrote in 1896 that his life had been literally poisoned by Chapters, and he did not ever want to hear the word again. Nor did he want to be burdened with any position of responsibility in the Society: I love this society and I want to pass my last days in it, and die there in obedience and in peace; this idea of any authority being given to me troubles and crushes me³⁸. Fr. Delaporte, who was to die in 1895 was not very much affected by the whole affair. In spite of his 270lbs (122 kilos) he sat lightly in life's saddle, and took the bad with the good.

There is one case in which we can see Fr. Chevalier live the whole history of this time, the case of Fr. Jules Vandel, nephew of the more famous Jean Marie. On Feb 11th, 1891, he wrote to Fr. Chevalier a plea which was rather incoherent, but repeated it is you, Father who alone can save the Society, it is you who, they say, are responsible for all these troubles, and you have understood that through Fr. Jouet they are aiming at your person. We are all convinced... that you will not fail your sons, nor yourself, nor the Heart of Our Lord. Had Chevalier been able to see through to the real problem, he would have seen the emotionality needs behind this cry of the heart. He saw the presenting problem only, and wrote across the letter probably for Jouet:

To be kept. Here is the insolent letter of Fr. Vandel, to which I have replied with kindness, but firmly and with truth. We have no copy of this reply, but a further letter of Vandel does indeed acknowledge its kindness, expressing gratitude for the signs of paternal affection which you showed me³⁹. He goes on to repeat that he believes the solution must come from Chevalier; he then replies to the questions you put to me. Firstly, he does not admit that he was wrong in not expressing his worries about the state of the Society. He had expressed them once in Rome and the results, alas, did not encourage me to frankness. Immediately Fr. Jouet got rid of half the scholastics... Fr. Jouet had me sent away from Rome a year before I had finished my studies. God knows I have forgiven this dear Father from my heart, but it is difficult to wipe out the impression made. He goes on to speak of the state of the houses either without enough men, or men who are incapable, or have not received suitable formation... You yourself, Reverend Father Superior, are you not crushed by the weight of your work? If you do not look after yourself, if you have no consideration for your rest and your strength, at least you should be troubled by the fact that your works, and souls, are suffering as a result. There are, he says, too many men with too much work, and it was against this evil that the Chapter was to concentrate.

He admits to having written with too much feeling, but those who are particularly touched by the state of affairs are then carried away and express themselves strongly. Further it is hard for the young men to have applied to them the words of St. Paul about neophytes being carried away by pride and falling into the snare of the devil. In the same epistle to Timothy, Vandel points out, St. Paul also says not to let anyone despise his youth. The others are not the opposition, but men who have expressed their honest opinions, who remain with a sincere devotion to your person and to our dear society... And by doing so little you can regain the affection, the profound consideration with which you should always be surrounded. His letter was endorsed and signed by Fr. Meyer.

But the waiting became too long, and in February 1894 Fr. Vandel left the Society with Fr. Reyn. Before then he had sent a Memorandum to Cardinal Mermillod in Rome. In a copy of it, written in Jouet's hand we read the Rev. Fr. Jouet, whose brilliant qualities are well known, but who, alas has lost the confidence of his confreres and does not really represent the Society. But not very long after leaving the MSC he is again in contact with Jouet, through the intermediary of his cousin in Rome, Sister Leontine Vandel. This time he is arranging his return to his father's house. He wrote to his cousin in September 1894 that his readmission was practically a *fait accompli* "thanks to our dear Father Jouet... The Rev. Fr. General has left no stone unturned to bring things to a quick and happy conclusion⁴¹. The happy conclusion came about, and he went to Sydney to join his good friend, from the same Swiss village, Fr. P. Treand. On board ship he wrote: My venerated and well loved Fr. Jouet, I left Europe with my heart full of your goodness, your charity and your friendship. As the ship left port, I could not tear my eyes away from you; I saw the great sign of the cross you traced in the air; I received your last blessing, and I sent you my last goodbyes and my last thanks...⁴².

In the next January, Fr. Chevalier wrote to him: How good God is, how admirable in his ways. He made us pass, you and me, through a series of painful trials. The results were good for you and good for the Society which now has a new Province; and God has filled me with consolation which is so much the sweeter, because I suffered much. So let us say with dear Fr. Jouet: Vive les difficultes, vive le Sacre Coeur. And in conclusion: Give my, kind regards to all our dear fathers and brothers, and pray much for him who never forgets you...⁴³. In reply, Fr. Vandel wrote:

Your last letter was so full of paternal tenderness that I was deeply touched by it⁴⁴.

Although a special case, the Vandel affair was not an isolated instance. The crisis was over: father and sons had found themselves again.

Notes Chapter 9

¹ Letter to the Prefect of the S. Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, April 28th, 1891.

² Letter Guyot to Chevalier, January 24th, 1891.

³ Letter Delaporte to Chevalier, February 1st, 1891; cf. also Correspondence Reyn-Chevalier.

⁴ Letter to Guyot, January 28th, 1891.

⁵ Píperon, Ms Notes intimes.

⁶ Cf. Letter Jules Vandel to Chevalier, February 11th, 1891.

⁷ Letter Chevalier to Jouet, March 21st, 1891.

⁸ Reply to Chevalier, April 3rd, 1891. A further offer to have him named Bishop in New Guinea did not please him too much.

⁹ H. Peeters MSC to Mgr. Rinaldini, Internuncio in Holland, February 5th, 1892.

¹⁰ Letter to Chevalier, October 1st, 1892.

¹¹ Letter to Chevalier June 15th, 1893; cf. letter to the same, December 5th, 1895.

¹² Chevalier received no reply to this letter.

¹³ Annali di Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore, Roma, October 1912, pp. 299-302.

¹⁴ Píperon, Ms Epreuves, p. 26, MSC Archives, Paris.

¹⁵ Chevalier, «Regies du Tiers-Ordre du Sacre-Coeur de Jesus», Issoudun, 1887, p. IV.

¹⁶ Letter J. Vandel to Mgr. Verjus, July 21st, 1892.

¹⁷ Isaiah, 1,2.

¹⁸ Letter to Chevalier, January 28th, 1891.

¹⁹ Chevalier, Ms Annales de la Petite Societe, p. 35.

²⁰ Letter to Jouet, March 25th, 1889.

²¹ Letter to the Archbishop of Bourges, May 1893.

²² Letter to Jouet, March 25th, 1889.

²³ Postulatum ad S. Congregationem Episcopis et Regularibus prae-positum, February 20th, 1889: Fundator in vivis est vir sane spectatae pietatis.

²⁴ Letter to Jouet, March 25th, 1889.

²⁵ Píperon, Ms Notes sur l'etat actuel de la Congregation, November 1873.

²⁶ Píperon, Ms Notes intimes.

²⁷ Cf. Chevalier, Meditations, vol. II, p. 338; vol. I, p. 234, Meditation sur la vigilance des superieurs sur leurs inferieurs.

²⁸ Chevalier, Meditations. vol. II. p. 110.

²⁹ Letter Guyot to Chevalier, January 24th, 1891.

³⁰ Letter Vaudon to Chevalier, August 26th, 1892.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Wemmers, Onze Provincie, May 1942, p. 5. " Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, pp. 64-65.

³⁴ Letter to Jouet, January 2nd, 1895.

³⁵ Letter to Vaudon, October 21st, 1896.

³⁶ Ib., June 30th, 1896.

³⁷ Ib., March 10th, 1895.

³⁸ Ib., May 5th, 1896.

³⁹ Letter to Chevalier, February 27th, 1891.

⁴⁹ Memorandum (undated) to Cardinal Mermillod.

⁴¹ Letter, September 1st, 1894.

⁴² Letter to Jouet, October 6th, 1894.

⁴³ Letter to J. Vandel, January 8th, 1895.

⁴⁴ Letter to Chevalier, March 9th, 1896.

1. LIFE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH.

It has become a commonplace to say that every man must live and work in his local Church. Founder though he was of international Congregations, Fr. Chevalier was nevertheless subject to this law, even more than most Founders. For him the 'local Church' was a triangle with one apex at Issoudun, another at Bourges where the Archbishop lived, and the third at Paris where an anti-religious government was in power. The inter-relation of these three factors had much to do with the atmosphere in which he carried out his work.

In the latter part of his life Fr. Chevalier's position was made more difficult because of the Archbishop's attitude towards him and his missionaries. Chevalier was very much a man of the Church, and he liked his relationships with the Ecclesiastical authorities to be not only correct but also friendly. On the whole they were happy relationships. Nevertheless, "even though he did not have equally friendly relationships with the six archbishops under whom he lived and worked, he was always more than correct, and he knew how to combine an attitude of absolute deference with a feel for his own rights and the interests of his religious community".

A quick look at the principal Chevalier-Archbishop connections will help us understand a number of things in these later years of Chevalier's life, as well as give us some further insights into his character. During the vital growing-period of his Congregation, he was fortunate in having Archbishops who were his friends and helpers. First of all Cardinal Dupont and Archbishop Menjaud had appreciated his work and favoured its growth. After the latter's death, in December 1861, he was succeeded by his Coadjutor, the Prince-Archbishop Charles-Amable de La Tour d'Auvergne Lauraguais. What his friendship meant to the MSC can be gathered from this quotation from the funeral oration for the Archbishop eighteen years later:

You would have, if not the right to reproach me, at least a cause for regret, if I did not call you as witnesses, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun. Tell me, could a founder have done more than he did for you?².

The answer to this rhetorical question is given by Fr. Piperon: In him Fr. Chevalier found an enlightened and prudent counsellor, a devoted protector, an affectionate father, the strongest support of his congregation in which the venerable prelate was as interested as if it had been his own work³.

When the Archbishop died, continues Piperon, we feared for a while that he (Chevalier) would not get over his grief. In his last years, when he spoke of this outstanding benefactor, a lively emotion was evident in his voice. He truly loved the venerable Archbishop as the best of sons loves and venerates the most affectionate and tender of fathers⁴.

It was this great friend and wise counsellor who saw how strategic a move it could be to appoint Fr. Chevalier as parish priest of Issoudun. Having him named as irremovable rector could give solidity to the MSC Congregation in the time of political difficulties which he foresaw as inevitable. When in 1872, Archbishop de la Tour d'Auvergne offered the Society the parish of Issoudun, I presented some good reasons for not accepting it. His Eminence replied: 'I have no wish to impose it; I am acting only in the interest of your Congregation. We have a republic now! and in France it could go to extremes. Perhaps one day the possession of this parish will be a plank of salvation for your Institute and your works'. This prophecy was realized⁵.

By 1880 of course, there was a new Archbishop J. Marchal (1880-1892). But he also wished to help Fr. Chevalier to use the parish of Issoudun to escape, as far as possible, the effects of the persecutions. He cooperated with him, asking from Rome that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart be dispensed from the common life, and placed under the authority of the Bishops of the dioceses in which they live, as Apostolic Delegates, *ad nutum S. Pontificis*. We feel certain that, if this is done, it will be possible to avoid the dispersion of the Congregation; it will allow it to keep its apostolic school and scholasticate, and to continue the work of the great pilgrimage of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart⁶. His hopes were not completely fulfilled. But when the scholasticate was dissolved, he gave refuge to five MSC seminarians in his own seminary, going to meet them himself at the station of Bourges to take them in his carriage to their place of refuge.

However, he did make it possible for Fr. Chevalier and his priests to hold their ground at Issoudun, giving them legal cover. Fr. Chevalier could prepare this statement for the civil authorities:

You come here to expel the religious. There are none. All those who live in this house are secular priests, incorporated in the Diocese of Bourges, and have their faculties from His Grace, the Archbishop of the Diocese, who is the tenant of this house since June 24th.⁷. It is important to see this particular arrangement as a background to the steps which the MSC were forced to take in 1901, when the Archbishop of the time would be less friendly and less cooperative.

Archbishop Marchal was also a good friend to Fr. Chevalier, although in some ways their friendship did not get off to a good start. An Archbishop coming into Bourges in those days was in a slightly difficult position. As the bishop he was supposed to be the spiritual leader; and he found, at Issoudun, a spiritual leader already established. Spiritually and financially, Issoudun was an important centre in the diocese. Some of the local clergy would not have been displeased to be named to the parish. The new Archbishop heard rumours and criticisms, and gave some credence to them. The following, somewhat lengthy, quotation is given because it brings out a few interesting points.

After the death of Archbishop de la Tour d'Auvergne, so devoted to Fr. Chevalier and his works, when Archbishop Marchal was named as Archbishop of Bourges, he received a number of letters from priests of the diocese against Fr. Chevalier, which stated that he did not take care

of the parish of St. Cyr, devoting all his time instead to the Sacred Heart and his personal works. Against him it was said that he had not introduced any parish works; he had neglected the catechism and other lay-movements, etc.

Thus when Archbishop Marchal came to make his first visit to the community on the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, he was quite cold towards Fr. Chevalier. During dinner, His Grace asked who was the preacher for the ceremony which was to take place in the Basilica. Fr. Chevalier took the occasion to say that, should His Grace wish to say a few words, the faithful - everyone in fact - would be very happy. The Archbishop's reply was rude. He said that maybe he had been able to tell *Archbishop de La Tour d'Auvergne* what to do; but he himself was not going to be steered by Chevalier. He would govern his own diocese the way he thought he should, etc. etc. Poor Father Chevalier accepted the heavy blow without a word and with the greatest humility. But there was complete silence for the rest of the meal! However, before leaving the community the Archbishop understood that he had gone too far, and apologized.

Some time later the Archbishop came to give Confirmation at Issoudun. He asked for the records of the works established in the parish. They brought him a dozen registers: that of the Blessed Sacrament, of the Rosary, of the Christian Mothers, of the Children of Mary, of the youth group, of the Catechism of Perseverance, of the boys and girls, of the Soldiers' apostolate, of the voluntary catechists, of the Servants' Group, of the General Communion of girls for the first Friday of each month, of the boys for the first Sunday of the month; the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul to visit and help the poor, the work of the Sisters taking care of the sick; the work of the Propagation of the Faith, of the Holy Childhood and of St. Francis de Sales. All these works had been begun by Fr. Chevalier and his missionaries. The Archbishop and his brother the Vicar General examined these registers one after the other. They inspected the Church, and its new additions. Before giving Confirmation, the Vicar General, Bishop August Marchal, went among the seats and questioned a large number of children indiscriminately. The Archbishop had four come up before him, two boys and two girls, and asked them questions about the whole catechism. After the questions, the Archbishop rose, and having conferred with his brother, he spoke to the children complimenting them on their knowledge. 'I'm forced to admit', he said, 'that the parish of Issoudun is among the best in the diocese for organization, the children's knowledge' etc.

The Vicar General declared that at Issoudun things were done in much the same way that he had done them when he was parish priest.

He would like to come himself sometime to preside over the catechism lessons (advanced). For this special reunion he was astonished and delighted to see the body of the Church of St. Cyr filled with the youth of both sexes. Also, later on during his pastoral visits, Archbishop Marchal used to cite Issoudun as an example for the organization of catechetics. He used to say that only at Issoudun was catechism taught publicly from the pulpit during the childrens' Mass, and there too the prescription of the Council of Trent was followed to the letter, that catechism should be taught every Sunday. Before leaving Issoudun the Archbishop took Fr. Chevalier aside and said to him: 'During my first visit you must have found strange my way of treating you. Well! I can tell you now that I had some preconceived ideas against you and your administration of the parish; you'll have to forgive me because I had received a whole series of letters from priests of the diocese which contained unworthy calumnies. I've got their names there, he said, tapping his forehead, and I'll keep an eye on them'.

'Ah, Your Grace', said Fr. Chevalier, 'you ought to forget all that. That's the way human nature is made. I've outlived worse things than that'.

Some years later Archbishop Marchal who had studied all Fr. Chevalier's works, particularly those of the parish, exclaimed at table during dinner: 'I wish that all my parishes were looked after by religious: they would gain a lot'. And that after having praised the parish priest and his curates. The same day Fr. Chevalier recommended to the Archbishop a priest of the diocese who hoped to be made a canon and who had asked him to speak for him to the Archbishop. The latter said, in his frank way: 'I'll tell you one thing, Father. I'm not very keen on naming canons and even less the one you recommend, because he was one of those who wrote against you when I was first named Archbishop of Bourges'. 'Well in that case, Your Grace, I recommend him doubly to your benevolence. You could not give me greater pleasure than to make him a canon for the good he has done for the diocese'⁸.

The man was made a canon; the Archbishop had finished up taking orders from Chevalier after all! The account brings out far more than this, of course; it shows Fr. Chevalier as a man of humility, meekness and charity. It gives an idea of his apostolic zeal and his pastoral activity.

Archbishop Marchal was succeeded by Archbishop J.P. Boyer (1892-1896). He was appointed in the midst of the MSC crisis, and he was named Apostolic Visitor to the Society.

Neither the unhappy situation of the Society, nor his own personal temperament allowed for a warm and friendly relationship with Fr. Chevalier. He confessed that he found it hard to see the rights and wrongs of the internal MSC dispute; however, it was clear to him that the worst thing he could do would be to give the impression that he was on one side or the other. He strove to give the impression of complete neutrality demanded from an arbiter. For Chevalier, used as he was to a completely different relationship with his Archbishop, this novel experience was not to his liking. He growled to himself, in his *Notes Intimes*, about: 'The Apostolic Visitor... who never came to visit us... he remained peacefully in his palace'. In one letter to the Archbishop, Chevalier dropped a polite but pointed hint: It is a pity, Your Grace, that although you are the Apostolic Visitor of our Congregation, your health prevents you from visiting our houses yourself; you would see that nothing is neglected and that everything is done according to the Constitutions¹⁰.

However, this Archbishop, too, came to appreciate Chevalier's qualities; and Fr. Chevalier himself seemed to appreciate the reasons which kept him at a distance. He wrote that perhaps the opposition of the Archbishop was "more apparent than real". There was no question now of his making suggestions to his local Ordinary. In letters to previous Archbishops he had "presumed to suggest" and ventured to propose and so on, with a very easy relationship. Now he was often summoned to the episcopal palace at Bourges. Now we find him writing phrases such as these: Your Grace, would you please indicate the line of conduct I am to follow: Not wishing to do anything without the complete approbation of Your Grace, I venture to submit... Fr. Chevalier had four years in which to practice this rather humbling and complete obedience; and he did it without fail.

While he liked Archbishops, he did not like them looking over his shoulder and breathing down his neck. He probably would not have appreciated either having to have all official communications bear this message: All Right - Seen and Approved, and signed by the Archbishop - Apostolic Visitor ".

Consequently when Archbishop Boyer died in 1896, Chevalier wasted no time in writing to the Holy Father. The letter was written in the approved style¹⁴. Its message is this: Holy Father, four years ago, because of difficulties in our society, in your paternal solicitude, you gave us an Apostolic Visitor. While we mourn his loss, we thank you for your kind intervention. He did his job so well, that we do not need any more Visitors! May we, therefore, be left to stand on our own feet, have a General Chapter, and get on with the job.

To his great relief his request was granted; and perhaps just in time. For Boyer was to be succeeded by a man whose friendship Fr. Chevalier never won. His last Archbishop, Pierre Servonnet, was to remain cold towards him, and was to give him no help whatsoever in further difficulties with the French Government. Historians of the Diocese of Bourges do not rate him very high: A pious prelate and austere, leading the life of a seminarian in his palace, hard on himself and others, but in many ways mediocre, inadequate and of a changeable character¹⁵. He was a republican Archbishop who could not control his republican zeal. His inadequacy or his naivete were too evident in this field not to appear outside; they made him obstinate in his judgments, but left him in good faith.¹⁶

Fr. Chevalier was a royalist; he had little faith in the Republic. He and the Archbishop were to adopt quite different attitudes regarding the line of conduct which religious should adopt after 1901. But their political differences were already clear prior to that date. They were to

have other differences as well. The first of these was to be with regard to financial matters. Fr. Chevalier, against his better judgment but yielding to pressure from Cardinal Boyer, had agreed to buy the property of the College at Chezal-Benoit. The agreement was, however, conditional, depending on Government approval and, when this approval was not forthcoming, both Fr. Chevalier and Mgr. Bardel (Auxiliary to Boyer) considered that the contract had lapsed. Servonnet did not take this view. There were in consequence some months of strained relationships between the two men.

Differing from him in politics, having touched him in his pocket-book, Fr. Chevalier was now to offend the Archbishop in his pride. The latter had been having some difficulties with the opening of a Catholic school at Chateauroux. This school had been founded by a civil society, enlarged with a legacy of a Mrs. L. Marchain, and was to be reopened on condition that the college was run by religious. Somewhat autocratically the Archbishop decided that he could ignore the desires of the laity, and that he would staff the college with priests of the diocese. The laity resisted and made approaches to Fr. Chevalier to have the MSC take over the college. He got in touch with the Archbishop for advice; the latter wrote by return of post telling him: Accept! I name Fr. Vaudon superior of the establishment, and Fr. Pouvreau official director before the Academy¹⁷. Now both these men were MSC, and they both had jobs already at Chezal-Benoit. Fr. Chevalier therefore reminded the Archbishop that he had no power to make such appointments; it was for the Religious Superior to do so. In this case since the religious superiors did not feel that Fr. Vaudon, in spite of his many qualities, was really qualified for this new position, they could not accept the Archbishop's proposal. The latter tried to affirm that he did have the right and quoted some documents from Rome. Fr. Chevalier remained firm, refusing to accept the Archbishop's interpretation of the documents. Considering that an important matter of principle was at stake, he remained firm even though the superior of the Seminary of Bourges came to him saying: I know the Archbishop. If you persist in your refusal, you will have in him an irreconcilable enemy who could do you much harm¹⁸. However, having talked the matter over with his Council, Fr. Chevalier felt obliged to maintain his position.

From then on the Archbishop's attitude was indeed one of irreconcilable enmity; it was an enmity that was conditioned by these experiences: saying that Fr. Chevalier wanted to govern the diocese,¹⁹ and with a certain obsession about money. For example: His Grace disapproves the fact that a large and luxurious religious house was built, and that nothing was spent for St. Cyr and for works useful for the country²⁰. One has only to visit Issoudun to discount the charge of luxury, and independent authorities bear witness to how much Fr. Chevalier spent on St. Cyr²¹. We have already seen an independent authority witnessing to the Archbishop's obstinacy; and when obstinate men get fixed ideas not much can be done about them. The 'financial' idea is very clear in this letter to Fr. Chevalier: I read with interest the account you gave me of your festivities. Now, *you* have a really solid basilica. I would like to build a more modest one for St. Solange. When that time comes will you aid us generously? We would need about 10,000 francs.... By way of comment, Fr. Chevalier scribbled on this: A letter full of irony ².

Nevertheless he could not simply resign himself to opposition from his Archbishop. In a letter to the latter for his feast-day, he concluded with this humble request: On the occasion of your feast, Your Grace, we beg you to forget the complaints you may have against us, to forgive us if we have committed some fault, and to show your goodwill towards us for we very much desire this. The Archbishop replied:

I thank you for your good wishes which I know to be sincere; I know that you have always had for me personally all the deference I could wish for. But it must be recognised that there is opposition between the interests which are my responsibility and those of your congregation such as your administration understands them... I would willingly have an open discussion with you on this subject when the occasion offers, although I do not see the necessity, nor does it seem likely that we can change anything...³. The olive branch was not to be accepted!

In the course of the years, then, we see a variety of experiences in Fr. Chevalier's relations with the Archbishops of Bourges. Firstly with the Prince Archbishop de La Tour d'Auvergne he enjoys a very close and enriching friendship, a friendship so close that in no moment of his life have we seen him shed such abundant and bitter tears, as over the mortal remains of this dear deceased⁴. We have, secondly, seen him publicly insulted in his own house by his new Archbishop - and then turn enmity into friendship by all that he was as an extraordinary man and an exceptional priest. We have seen him carefully submitting to the authority of the Apostolic Visitor over a period of four years, obeying as humbly as any novice. And finally we have seen him, respectfully but firmly and for the sake of his Congregation, refuse to have his own rightful authority disregarded. We have seen, too, how he refuses to let this lead to a permanent personal attitude of opposition and how he will not easily resign himself to not being in complete harmony with his Archbishop. But when his own overtures of peace are politely but definitely refused, all that he can do is to continue to be correct and to carry on. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; with or without episcopal favour, he still had a mission to accomplish and a number of things to do.

The first of these was to have a General Chapter. Looking around his MSC Society, he saw that the most complete peace, union and harmony now exist among us²⁵. He looked to the North where on May 5th, 1894 a new Province had been erected with Fr. C. Ramot as Provincial and he could write: The Province of the North... gives us a deep satisfaction²⁶. From the South Cardinal Moran of Sydney has written me a letter in which he sings the praises of my confreres, convinced that our Congregation, well-liked and highly regarded by the whole Australian Episcopate, has a great future in those countries (i.e. Australia and Oceania)²⁷. He was heartened by what he saw and heard and he felt that a Chapter which everyone would like will consolidate our Society even more and give it a new impulse²⁸.

He had asked for this Chapter in February 1896, but although it was convoked for August 15th of that year, the members of the Chapter did not come together until July 19th, 1897. In his conferences prior to the beginning of Chapter business, in the preliminary retreat, Fr. Chevalier touched very lightly on the immediate past. Speaking of the MSC Society, he said: You know its origin, the crises through which it has had to pass, the difficulties which it had to encounter, and the divine protection which has been given to it. Our Congregation, willed by heaven, has a special mission...²⁹. He then went on to remind the Capitulants that they had to build for the future. He stressed that, for the welfare of religious life, they needed a rule which was strong but impregnated with charity. He placed special emphasis on the duties of superiors and the need for a sense of responsibility in their work. So much depended on them, on their sense of responsibility, their prudence, their good administration.

One of the interesting though less important matters treated was the wearing of the habit. This had been under discussion for some time, especially since, in the Province of the North the practice had been to some extent neglected. There it was felt that in protestant countries it was not a cause of edification but in fact the contrary, to go out of the house clad in a soutane with a red heart on the chest.

The decision of the Chapter was: the habit is to be worn, but when MSC go out of the house, they may leave their hearts at home!

Writing a circular letter to the members of the Society on August 11th, Fr. Chevalier said the Chapter "could hardly have had a happier outcome. And even the official Latin account would speak of the laughter which rang through the Chapter halls: Non raro quaedam solutio vel explanatio fuit data iis verbis, quae spontaneos risus cicerent et fessis animis exoptatam afferrent relaxationem³⁰. Shortly afterwards, since things were going so well in the North and vocations were numerous, it was decided to erect a German Province on September 1st, 1897. Fr. Hubert Linckens was appointed Provincial. The erection of this German Province was urged also by the special requirements of the German Government regarding missionaries in its territories. The mission of New Pomerania (New Britain) assigned to the Province of the North in 1894 now became the mission of the German Province. In a further effort to work as well as possible with the German government, the German Province, unlike the other Provinces, was directly subject to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.

Fr. Chevalier went to Hiltrup for the opening of the central house of the new Province in August 1898. There he became quite ill and spent some time in his room. Then he knew that age (he was 74) was catching up with him and that it was time for a younger man to take over.

Thinking over his course of action, it was natural that his thoughts should go to Fr. Jouet who had helped him so much in building his work. He wrote to him about the state of his health and that the time had come for him to give to another the responsibility of ruling the Congregation. The Assistants, he said, approve: but on condition that I remain in charge of the Congregation as long as I live, and that a Vicar is appointed with the right of future succession. I would prefer the opposite, i.e. a new Superior General³¹. He explained his reasons to the Society in a letter of July, 1899; and a Chapter met in April 1900. To the Chapter he said: I offer you purely and simply my resignation, and I ask you dear confreres to accept³².

The Chapter did not accept his resignation. As a sign of their veneration and affection for their Founder they re-elected him Superior General (28 votes out of 31). Then, acceding to his request for a Vicar General, they elected Fr. A. Lanctin to this position. Fr. G. Genocchi was elected Procurator General. And even within the closed circle of an MSC Chapter, Fr. Chevalier had one further little bit of "bishop-trouble", this time with an MSC - Bishop Coupee Vicar Apostolic of New Britain. Like many mission bishops, he had a great concern for the welfare of his own mission territory. Preoccupied by the need for priests, he did not like the provision of the 1897 Directory which stated that no MSC could be obliged to go to the missions if he did not wish to go. Having recourse to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, he had obtained permission to require an oath to go to the missions from any young man desiring to enter the Novitiate at Hilstrup. He hoped in this way to ensure a constant supply of personnel for his mission. From a similar motivation he asserted that the MSC houses at Antwerp, Belgium and Kensington, Australia, should be totally directed towards the foreign missions. Finally he wanted some rigid rules made about financial contributions from benefactors. The General Chapter of 1900 discussed these matters and worked on the questions of the relations between the MSC Society and its own bishops.

For Fr. Chevalier, the Chapter was the end of an era. From now on much of the Society's government could be left to Fr. Lanctin. He himself could stay at Issoudun; and one would have hoped that he might pass his remaining years in peace and a leisurely semi-retirement. His own Society was stable and growing. Even in France the anti-religious laws had not been applied too strictly and the MSC had seven residences in the country, with their house of philosophy in French territory in Algeria. However, this was no more than a surface calm; anti-religious feelings were soon to be let loose; new laws were to be passed, and they were to be rigorously enforced by the man who was to be known as the little Fr. Combes.

2. THE LAWS OF THE LAND.

On July 2nd 1901, the Law regarding the Associations was passed. It has been said that it was really a 'law against religious societies', for its aim was to strike a further blow against the Church and in particular against religious congregations. Since these were 'associations' they came under the law, according to which only those associations would be permitted whose goal was not contrary 'to the constitutions of the State'. Furthermore, all associations (and therefore congregations of religious) must come under the control of the State. The State would judge whether they should exist or not, according to their usefulness. All must ask for authorization under pain of dissolution: but of course authorization would not necessarily be given on demand. Some Congregations, such as the Jesuits, saw that it was useless for them even to ask for authorization. Most of the others were disposed to try.

What should the MSC do? With their Republican Archbishop maintaining that at Paris there was a great, unfavourable dossier on them in government files³³ they were not encouraged to ask for approbation. (More than one Republican bishop resorted to this tactic against religious congregations in his diocese). However, a stronger reason was that the MSC and Chevalier particularly had no faith in the friendliness of the government. They decided not to ask for authorization. Events were to prove the wisdom of their decision; very few orders were approved and at least 1500 establishments of religious were closed. On November 2nd, 1902, of 59 petitions for authorization, 54 were refused by the government. On March 18th, 1903, 25 out of 28 were refused, and so on.

Six times in June of 1901, the General Council met to discuss what should be done when the law was passed. In the very first chapter of this book we have seen the judgment that Chevalier was a man who inspired confidence. He gave his confreres confidence now. Writing to him for his forthcoming fiftieth anniversary of priestly ordination, Fr. Guyot said:

"I thank God for having kept you with us until now; your experience and your spirit of decision will be able to save much wreckage from the ruin. I think that at the fatal day of the vote we shall not be caught unawares; measures will have been studied and agreed on. Please then indicate the action we must take..."³⁴

We shall be united in spirit with our confreres who will be gathered around you, Reverend Father, in the same sentiments of affection, respect, submission and the desire to see your days prolonged, to see God's grace abound in you, the kingdom of the Heart of Christ strengthened in us all, and our little Society emerge victorious from the trials which await it."

This vote of confidence and esteem is all the more striking coming from one who differed from Chevalier on a number of points in the past.

Discussing their course of action Fr. Chevalier and his counsellors would naturally have thought, first of all, of what they had done in 1880, when with Archbishop Marchal's help, they had simply merged with the local clergy. But now Servonnet was Archbishop of Bourges and this made quite a difference: We could escape (from the law) at least partially, if the Archbishop would cooperate and take us under his protection, incorporating us into the diocesan clergy. But it is certain that he, even more than the government, wants to get rid of us from Issoudun. He has declared roundly that he will not do a thing to keep us there, and even that he believes that Fr. Chevalier can not remain parish priest. It is this enmity of the Archbishop and his connivance with the government which causes us the greatest difficulty."³⁵

This judgment of Fr. Meyer is confirmed by Fr. Genocchi, writing from Rome:

"I would have liked to see the Archbishop with more sympathy for Fr. Chevalier and the fathers of Issoudun. But he has none... He is even convinced that we are not wanted at Issoudun and that we will soon be gone"³⁶.

Even though these letters were written a little later, the realities they express were clear in the minds of the men who, in June and July faced up to the future of the MSC.

Judging it useless to ask for government authorization, knowing that the Archbishop would not help them, they had to ask whether it was really important for them to stay at Issoudun. The answer to this question is contained in a document which Fr. Meyer took to Rome on July 20th when, in the name of the Council, he went to discuss the situation with the Roman Congregations. They must at any cost save the works at Issoudun. And *the Reasons*:

1. If the works at Issoudun perish all the works of the Society in France and in the missions will perish. For our Society's recruitment is by means of Apostolic Schools; so we have to support boys, novices, scholastics (actually 70 boys, 20 novices, 70 scholastics = 160 people), and this requires more than 100,000 francs. Now all this comes from Issoudun by means of the Annals, the Contributions for the Apostolic School, Masses etc., Archconfraternity etc. If the works of Issoudun were taken from us, we would have to send away these 160 people, which would mean vocations lost and an accumulation of material and moral ruin. On the other hand, if the works of Issoudun are kept, even if we are not approved, the essential works will be saved; for vocations will not be lacking. The apostolic school, the novitiate and the scholasticate will be set up outside of France at the frontiers.

2. Repercussion of these disasters for the missions:

a) no more missionaries; and, therefore, in a short time the total abandonment of the Vicariates of New Guinea and the Gilbert Islands;

b) then too, the cessation of many gifts, in particular Mass offerings for the missionaries;

c) our destruction would bring about that of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who are the indispensable helpers of our missionaries³⁵.

The Memorandum goes on to strengthen the argument; but it is clear enough. It is to be noted that here, as all through his last years, Fr. Chevalier is fighting for the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart as much as for his own MSC Society. Now, too, others were realizing clearly what Chevalier had stressed before - the importance of Issoudun for the welfare of the two Congregations.

Having decided that it was vital for some MSC at least to stay at Issoudun, two further questions remained. Who would stay? And how would this be arranged? There was only one practical answer to the first question: Fr. Chevalier was irremovable parish priest of Issoudun, recognised as such by law. If he were to leave, Servonnet would not replace him with an MSC. Because of age and failing health he could no longer visit his scattered society in his capacity as Superior General - and for that reason he had asked for a Vicar. If he were to leave France, there was little he could do for the Society. But by remaining he could do much. If he could, he would stay; but this meant that the Society would be better governed abroad if he resigned as Superior General in favour of Fr. Lanctin who already had the right of succession. Some of his confreres would stay with him at Issoudun, and others in other parts of France.

But how was this to be arranged? They could not stay as members of an unauthorized 'Association'. They would then legally cease to be members of that association. Rome was having a busy time in those months trying to find ways and means of helping the religious congregations in France retain what was necessary for their survival. Eventually in March, 1903, a special decree would be passed: Given the particular circumstances in which French Religious Congregations now find themselves...^M. But even before this decree, special arrangements were being made, and urgent permissions given.

On August 23rd, Fr. Genocchi wrote to Fr. Chevalier: I have explained your situation relative to the parish of Issoudun to the two above mentioned Cardinals (Gotti and Parocchi). Cardinal Parocchi says that you *must* do everything possible, absolutely everything, to retain your position. He advises you to ask for secularization, which you can use with the Archbishop and the Government if necessary.

Cardinal Gotti is of the same opinion: he says that you should make the request, pure and simple, yourself... You should simply say that having good reasons to be provided with a secularization, with a view to keeping your position as Archpriest, you make your request to the Holy See. On August 28th, Fr. Chevalier sent a double petition to Rome, asking that his resignation as Superior General be accepted and that he should be secularized 'for as long as events demanded'. Both requests were granted. In the *Analecta* of December 1901, it is stated that, for reasons we have already seen, Fr. Chevalier resigned as Superior General and asked for a certain secularization: *quandam saecularisationem*³⁹.

A number of years later, Fr. H. Peeters, smelling a certain scandal in the word 'secularizationem', and failing to grasp the significance of the 'quandam' spread the rumour that Fr. Chevalier had left the Society. Like all rumours, and especially those that smell of scandal, this one went about and abroad. And yet, if one studies the special arrangements made 'for the special circumstances in which the French religious congregations found themselves', the whole affair is very clear and very positive.

A preliminary observation which may be useful is that, at that time, no one employed the later distinction made between excommunication and secularization. Prior to the Code of Canon Law of 1918, any separation from one's religious institute was called secularization. If a man wanted to leave his Congregation, he asked for a *dispensatio super votis*, a dispensation from his vows. But in these special cases, in which many religious then found themselves, there was no question of dispensation from vows. They asked for an *absolutio a vinculo quo tenentur erga Institutum* - dissolving the bond which attached them to the Institute, so that they could then be numbered among the secular clergy. And in view of the particular circumstances, their request was granted. It was according to this latter and more recent form that Chevalier's dispensation was granted. And he had asked for it in these terms:

that he might be secularized for as long as the events demand, while *keeping in the internal forum his obligations as a religious*⁴⁰.

It is understandable that, given the double use of the word 'secularization', some were not as clear on what was involved as was Chevalier; and in the *Analecta* of June, 1902, it was explained that:

There is not the least doubt that religious secularised in this way only, continue to be true religious, almost in the same way as those members who are sent by their superiors to live in a distant country⁴¹. There was one interesting little difference. Those who dissimulated their connection with their religious institute were often expected to wear, concealed on their person, some sign of their religious affiliation.

The MSC were to wear their hearts sewn on the inside of their soutanes!⁴².

Fr. Chevalier was not left alone in France. The so called 'Province of France' (the Province to be erected officially only on August 25th, 1905) had its 'first Provincial Council' in February 20th-26th, 1902, at Barcelona. President was Fr. Lanctin, Superior General and Provincial of France. One of the questions studied was the 'personnel of the Province'. On October 3rd, 1901 the General Administration had moved to Chimay in Belgium, and its members (Frs. Lanctin, Ramot, Piperon, Meyer, and Carriere) were listed as belonging to the French Province. But our immediate interest concerns the third category listed (after the Provincial Government): At Issoudun: Rev. Frs. Chevalier, Heriault, Brunet, Perriot, Michel, Maillard Batard, Bertin - secularized. At Paris: Frs. Bouvier, Morisseau, Astier - secularized. At Vichy: Fr. Guyot, secularized. At Marseilles: Fr. Pacaud, secularized. In their dioceses: Frs. Doutre and Suchet, secularized⁴³.

It is not known whether all these men sewed their hearts on the inside of their soutanes, but they all considered themselves as MSC. Fr. Doutre, to leave the Congregation, got a *further* descript of dispensation from his vows on November 4th, 1902.

With their situation regularized by Rome, the 'secularized MSC' remaining in France went ahead with what they had to do. First of all there was the question of living their religious life. Fr. Lanctin made a canonical visitation of the houses of Issoudun in February 1902 and he wrote of the Presbytery:

All are very attached to Fr. Chevalier and bear him a strong and deep affection. They 'realize that, all his other sons being scattered, it is up to them to show him a cheerful and careful attention, to console him by their priestly zeal, by their religious spirit and by their charitable understanding. They must obey him in all things, not only as local superior, but even as Superior General, whose powers I delegate to him⁴⁴.

It would have 'been less the delegated powers, and more his paternal interest and his privileged position as 'elder statesman', which made him keep an interested eye on all that was going on in the Society. He wrote letters to the MSC in Canada and Australia. He gave his opinion freely to Fr. Lanctin and later to Fr. Meyer when, in the General Chapter of 1905, he was elected Superior General. He had no qualms about writing to the Cardinal Protector with suggestions as to what should be done regarding proposed changes in the Constitutions⁴⁵. He was also freely consulted about special cases.

It is obvious that the colony of the secularized MSC considered themselves more as "dispersed religious", a term which was frequently enough applied to them in those days. The following letter from Fr. Bertin to Fr. Lanctin, on December 29th, 1904 shows how life went on almost as normal: With the keenest joy and the most profound gratitude for your kindness in which you granted my desire, I wish to notify you by this present letter that, on December 25th, 1904, I had the happiness of consecrating myself more intimately to the Sacred Heart by pronouncing the fourth vow in the hands of the Venerated Father Founder of our dear Congregation.

May Our Lady of the Sacred Heart deign to help me serve better henceforth the glory of the Sacred Heart and the interests of our dear Congregation.

And will you yourself, very Reverend Father, please bless him who is happy to declare himself your affectionately devoted son in the Heart of Christ...

Signed. Bertin.

Immediately following the signature were these words: I certify that Fr. Bertin, MSC has made the fourth vow in my hands, on December 25th, 1904.

J. Chevalier.

The dispersed religious were far from considering themselves separated brethren.

In these years, too, Fr. Chevalier concluded his career as a writer.

Apostle of the Sacred Heart that he was, he neglected no possible means of preaching the love of Christ and deepening that devotion in the hearts of men. He may not have been a gifted writer but part of his philosophy of life was that we do not have to be 'eagles or saints' to achieve something worthwhile for Christ; and he knew that his books did help a number of people. The fact that his books ran to several editions prove that in this way too, he exercised his missionary vocation. He had already written a number of works:

1. Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus dans ses rapports avec Marie. Notre Dame du Sacre Coeur was to be the later title of a second edition of this book.

2. Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus.

3. Histoire Religieuse d'Issoudun.

4. L'Ecole du Sacre Coeur.

5. Meditations pour tous les jours de l'annee, selon l'esprit du Sacre Coeur (2. vols).

6. Le Sacre Coeur et le Ciel.

There were also some smaller, very minor publications such as a retreat, and collections of hymns for the use of his parishioners.

Now in his last years he wrote: "L'Apocalypse et les Temps Presents." It was finished in 1904 and because of his physical debility of that time, he wrote much of it holding the paper on his knees. It was part of his fight against Le Mal Moderne and in an appendix he says that Free-Masonry is a diabolical sect, inspired by Satan himself. He knew that the government would not be happy about it, nor Archbishop Servonnet. In a rather smart diplomatic move he had his book approved by the Master of the Sacred Palace in Rome.

However, he does not by any means become obsessed with the ills of the time, nor does he see them as purely negative. Let us see in the trials that the good God sends us a purpose of his love and his mercy, he wrote to Fr. Meyer on April 13th, 1906. Let us try to draw profit from them; perhaps religious Congregations had too much forgotten their beautiful and sublime mission. They had grown accustomed to live in ease and perhaps in worldliness. Divine Providence seems to wish to recall them to their pristine vocation which is the continuation of the life of Jesus Christ in the world and sharing in his sufferings: *si vis perfectus esse*. The practice of poverty is a treasure which will never fail. Priests and religious will never want for what is necessary if they are what they ought to be. Therefore in this regard I am completely unapprehensive about the future. Persecution, like poverty, is a blessing. Far from complaining about it we should rejoice like the apostles for having been judged worthy to suffer with and for our divine Master.

There is a wonderful calm about these words coming from a man who was suffering from a painful illness and who was feeling the effects both of poverty and persecution. The separation of Church and State had been voted through on December 9th, 1905. Salaries previously paid to priests by the government were cut off. In the opinion of Fr. Meyer and others the MSC might not be able to retain their properties at Issoudun. While they were very worried, Chevalier was calmly confident that he could bring to a happy conclusion this last work for which he had remained in France. This one last thing he would do for the Society before he died - and not only for the MSC Society.

We must also safeguard the property of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. They sacrificed all that they possessed for the construction of their convent which they then put into the hands of the civil society without any compensation. Can we abandon them? I do not think so. They are without money and without resources now that the pilgrimages have been stopped. They have devoted themselves generously to us and to our missions .

The Civil Society referred to here was the Societe Immobiliere dep Indre formed in 1897 in perfectly legal fashion. At that time, Fr. Chevalier had already foreseen that religious would probably be dispossessed of their property. He had therefore organized a civil society which could legally acquire 'ownership' of the properties which belonged to his religious. However, such was the strength of free-masonic feeling against the Church that even the legal correctness of this society did not save the religious from expropriation. The law regarding Association, as applied by Combes, took care of that and the properties were put up for auction. To many this seemed the end of the fight; they had fought well, but they had lost. But Fr. Chevalier would not admit defeat. There was still another way. By 1903 he had sent 40,000 francs to be banked by Fr. Nysters in Belgium, and in 1906 he could write that he hoped to increase this amount to 60,000.

His plan was to enlist the aid of friends who were wealthy enough for the government to judge that they could be acting in their own name and to get these to buy the church properties when they went up for auction. These would be sold for much less than their real value and later on the money which Fr. Chevalier had collected and saved for this purpose could be used to re-imburse the buyers. In carrying out this plan the Vicomte Bernard de Bonneval was a good friend indeed to Fr. Chevalier and of invaluable assistance. He was warmly thanked and praised by the Holy See for his help to the Church in these times. With his help the MSC properties were saved and later paid for with the monies collected through Fr. Chevalier's devoted efforts. Bonneval bought the Basilica; he had the body of Fr. J.-M. Vandel (which had been buried in the adjoining park) transferred to the crypt. He also obtained permission to prepare there a tomb for Fr. Chevalier himself. The basilica was re-opened just a few days before his death. With his faithful collaborators he had managed to fight successfully his last fight for the works he had begun. In this regard his mission was accomplished.

However, it would be very wrong to give the impression that Fr. Chevalier during this time, was merely using the parish of St. Cyr for other ends. He was a man of too much integrity to do that. He was also a man who was described as having a passion for souls. That passion would only die with him and until he died he would devote himself to the parish ministry with whatever strength remained to him. For this work, he had, too, his band of devoted curates. There is a very interesting testimony given by one of the brothers about his last years. In 1904 he was very ill, and his confreres were afraid he was going to die, weakened as he was by haemorrhages and sickness. But, writes the brother: In this very critical state of health which one could say was between life and death, the good father, without worrying about his illness, led a very active life as if he were in good health. He never omitted his breviary nor his rosary; he received visitors, replied to numerous letters and often, I believe, he forgot his own sufferings in giving himself completely to others. His state of health improving Fr. Chevalier soon resumed his former occupations, i.e., he 'began to say Mass, first of all in his own room where he had a very nice little chapel where, with permission of the Holy Father, he could say Mass. But his zeal was not content with this, soon he must go to the parish church to hear confessions and preach.

I seem to see him still: he was running, so content was he to make his appearance again among his dear parishioners. What a joy for him but also for everyone, for who did not know Fr. Chevalier? Even the most hostile to religion and the poor. They were happy to be able to meet him going and coming to and from the church, for it was not always easy to come and visit him at home.... For a long time he continued his ministry, but the good God knows with what fatigue. The curates wanted to relieve him especially for the Sunday mass in the parish, but he rarely accepted their offer and that only when he absolutely could not do any more. He regarded the service of the parish mass as a personal duty of the parish priest and he wanted to continue this right until the end⁴⁷.

The end was not very far off. But before then Fr. Chevalier was to pass through what was, in some respects, both his saddest and finest hour. Pushing the separation of Church and State to further lengths, the State was claiming church properties from the clergy and expelling them from their presbyteries. On December 15th, even the 'republican Archbishop' Servonnet was expelled from his palace. But our interest is less in the episcopal palace than in the presbytery of Issoudun.

On Monday January 21st, 1907, a date which will remain forever engraved on the memory of our parishioners, at about 8.00 in the morning, the police commissioner, accompanied by three policemen and two keepers, made his way to the presbytery. He found the door closed. In spite of his summons the door remained closed and he went off to give an account of the results of the wretched mission which he had been ordered to accomplish. At 2.00 p.m., he returned accompanied by his policemen and this time by a housebreaker, named Peris, who works for M. Naudin a locksmith of Rue de d'Amendier; these two names should pass on to posterity. For several locksmiths had refused to have any part in this act of brutality.

After the three summonses which had no more effect than those of the morning, the commissioner ordered Peris the housebreaker to stave in the door. The latter, pale and trembling before a crowd of a thousand people who were beginning to murmur, took a pole-axe and struck the door, which resisted the blow. Immediately the crowd cried: 'Down with the thieves! Long live Fr. Chevalier!' At each blow of the pole-axe which rang out lugubriously making a painful impression on the people present, the same cries were heard. Finally the door gave way and the commissioner soon found himself in the presence of the venerable Archpriest, surrounded by his curates, the Count de Bonneval and several men of the town. Fr. Chevalier protested strongly against the odious measures being taken against him who had never transgressed the laws of the land. The curates likewise protested.

Having heard their protests, the Commissioner ordered the Archpriest to move out; he said that he was unable to do so, and that if they wanted to chase him out of his dwelling, they would have to carry him. At a sign from the commissioner, two of the policemen removed their caps and hoods and took hold of the armchair in which the venerable priest was seated. As they could not carry it by themselves, the commissioner gave them a hand. During this time Peris, the housebreaker, with a churlish air, had his hat on his head and smoked a cigarette.

When Fr. Chevalier appeared at the door, carried by the police, the crowd bared their heads and cried: 'Long live Fr. Chevalier! Long live Fr. Chevalier! Down with the thieves!' Fr. Chevalier got into a carriage which took him to Rue Daridan to the house which Count de Bonneval had put at his disposal. The 'Parce Domine' was sung and all along the way cries were heard of 'Long live Fr. Chevalier!'.

As soon as the venerable pastor had moved into his new dwelling he received numerous visits; each day an uninterrupted line of people of all ranks of life came to present their homage and to say how disgusted they were by what had happened to him.

Having expelled the parish priest from the presbytery, the commissioner then had the curates Frs. Heriault and Brunei removed also; they were seized by the arm and led to the door for they, too, would not leave the presbytery except by force⁴⁸.

This is a stirring and moving account. It shows that neither age nor sickness nor persecution could quench Fr. Chevalier's indomitable spirit. It indicates the loyalty and total devotion of his confreres, and it lets us see the veneration of his people loved him.

Fr. Chevalier was to die nine months later but he still had some things to do. He continued and successfully concluded the business of redeeming the MSC properties. He had to give his parishioners what time he could and he had to visit some old friends, knowing that it was for the last time. He had already prepared his Spiritual Testaments well in advance. They reflect something of the grave preoccupations of the years from 1890 onwards. They are the expression of a father's solicitous concern as he takes leave of his children for the last time, wanting - vainly perhaps but out of a desire to protect - to rule out all possible harm. They need to be read with these considerations in mind. The Testaments were three in number, and they indicate the three great loves of his life; The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and the people of the parish of Issoudun; there was one for each group.

Exactly nine months after he was expelled from his presbytery, Fr. Jules Chevalier died on Monday October 21st, 1907. He died fortified by the last rites of the Church with his friends and confreres at his bedside. Among them was Fr. E. Meyer, Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Other friends were far away and most of his confreres were in exile. In Belgium, Fr. Piperon was thinking of him and praying for him. He, too, was an old man now, but he was ready to come - probably hoping to come - to Issoudun if only his superior would give the word. Having heard that Fr. Chevalier was gravely ill, he had written to Fr. Meyer on October 11th:

For several days now all our prayers have been for the Reverend Father (Chevalier), and today more than ever. Do you think, Reverend Father, that my presence would be useful in any way? I do not see that it would, but if you find that it would, just give me a command, for I would not undertake such a journey except from obedience.

The obedience was not given, and the humble Fr. Piperon who never pushed his own desires, made this last sacrifice. He made it with grace, writing later to Fr. Meyer: I was very consoled to know that you were at Issoudun to receive the last words and the last sigh of our well loved Father ... No one better than you could give him comfort in his last hour⁴⁹.

Fr. Chevalier wanted no flowers on his coffin: he wanted no panegyric preached. Let us then conclude this section with two brief quotations.

Pastor of souls in the highest and noblest sense of the term, Fr. Chevalier was for sixty years the good counsellor, the faithful and sure friend of those who had recourse to the light of his deep faith, or made appeal to his heart which was an inexhaustible source of indulgence and kindness. Persecuted like so many of his brethren, he remained smiling but unshakeable in adversity; he never had a word of bitterness against those who seemed to have made it their aim to destroy his work⁵⁰.

The faithful of his parish weep for him as for a father, and pray to him as to a saint⁵¹.

3. FACTS AND FIGURES.

In the early years of Chevalier's life it is the vision and the enthusiasm which dominate. Later it is the 'agonia' of coping with the difficulties which beset him on every side. In his final years the man himself stands out for what he is in himself. Therefore, to some extent, in this chapter the man has dominated the history which has somehow become a background against which he moves. In order not to leave suspended too many historical threads, we give some facts and figures up to 1907, facts and figures which did not fit easily into the text of the Chapter.

In 1905 at a General Chapter of the MSC Society, Fr. Lanctin, successor to Fr. Chevalier, produced a document which he had received from the Holy See, allowing him to resign as Superior General. His reasons were ill-health and the conviction that the office was beyond his strength. Fr. E. Meyer was elected as his successor and was to remain Superior General until 1920. This same Chapter of 1905 decided that the General House should be transferred to Rome; a move which took place shortly after the Chapter. A little later Fr. Meyer wrote to his friend Fr. Jules Vandel in Sydney: If Fr. Treand had been at the Chapter, the betting is a hundred to one that he would have replaced Fr. Lanctin, for he is a man who brings people together; while you and I, and others too are people *of a party*, having some for us and some against us. However, things went very well at the Chapter; it was incomparably better than that of 1900: no personal questions, no disputes, a complete harmony, a sustained interest given to all questions, and intense effort on the part of all... Change of Assistants ... the good Fr. Piperon was really too old ... it would have been cruel to make him go to Rome.

The Society was by then divided into five Provinces: The Province of the North, erected May 5th, 1894. The German Province, erected September 1st, 1897. The Italian Province, erected September 1st, 1900. The French Province, erected August 25th, 1905. The

Australian Province, erected December 8th, 1905.

A further General Chapter, for the revision of the Constitutions was held in Rome, from September 5th to October 4th, 1907.

In 1906, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart moved their General House to Thuin in Belgium. They kept in constant touch with Fr. Chevalier by letter. Mother Marie Louise Hartzler was not to live very long after Fr. Chevalier. She died on February 22nd, 1908.

The following are the main statistics of both Congregations at the time of Fr. Chevalier's death.

At the end of 1907, the MSC Society, founded by Fr. Chevalier, numbered roughly 800 members:

4 bishops,
325 priests,
272 brothers,
201 students.

Facts and figures at December 8th, 1907 were:

Superior General: Fr. Eugene Meyer... Via di Porta Pinciana 32, ROME

Assistants: Fr. G. Genocchi

J. Field

J. Wemmers

E. Kuntz

PROVINCES:

1. *The Northern Province:*

Provincial: Fr. T. Okhuijzen

Houses: In Holland: Tilburg, Arnhem.

In Belgium: Borgerhout-Anvers, Heverlee.

Mission of the Province:

Prefecture Apostolic of Dutch New Guinea.

Prefect Apostolic (Fr. Neyens), 14 priests, 11 brothers.

2. *German Province:*

Provincial: Fr. H. Linckens

Houses: Hiltrup, Oeventrop, Salzburg.

Mission of the Province:

Vicariate Apostolic of New Pomerania.

Bishop Couppe, 27 priests, 41 brothers.

Vicariate Apostolic of Marshall Islands.

Ecclesiastical and Religious Superior: Fr. Erdland. 2 priests, 4 brothers.

3. *Italian Province:*

Provincial: Fr. N. Nicolo *Houses:* Rome, Omega, Florence.

4. *French Province:*

Provincial: Fr. P. Carriere

Houses: Issoudun: Basilica and Secretariate; Paris; Canet de Mar and Barcelona - in Spain; Fribourg (Switzerland); Thuin (Belgium); Quebec, Beauport (Canada).

Missions of the Province:

Vicariate Apostolic of British New Guinea: Archbishop Navarre, Coadjutor Bishop de Boismenu: 26 priests, 23 brothers.

Vicariate Apostolic of Gilbert and Ellice Islands; Bishop Leray, 23 Priests, 14 brothers.

5. *Australian Province:*

Provincial: Fr. P. Treand

Houses: Randwick, Kensington, Douglas Park, Fingal (Tas)

- depending from Randwick, Port Darwin.

Houses directly under the Superior General

England: Glastonbury, St. Albans, Braintree.

U.S.A.: Watertown, Natick.

The Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, founded twenty years later than the MSC, also had a slow beginning. However, by the year 1907, they had made steady progress and had made their mark as missionary sisters. The state of their Congregation was:

FRANCE

Issoudun - 4 sisters.

No expansion in France because of the persecutions.

BELGIUM

Thuin - Generalate and Novitiate. 22 sisters

6 novices and postulants.

Superior General: Mother M. Louise Hartzler

Assistants: Mother M. Valeric Mother M. Stanislaus Mother M. Eugenie

The 4th Assistant was Mother M. Gertrude, left at Issoudun to keep the Congregation in contact with Father Chevalier.

Tongre Notre Dame - 3 sisters Dour - 5 sisters Ham sur-Heure - 2 sisters Couillet - 3 sisters A total of 39 sisters, mostly engaged in caring for the sick.

AUSTRALIA.

Kensington - 15 sisters

10 novices and postulants

Botany Bay - 5 sisters

Bowral - 4 sisters

Bowraville - 5 sisters

Mathinna - 4 sisters

Campbelltown - 4 sisters

Gormanston - 3 sisters

Queenstown - 5 sisters

A total of 45 sisters, mostly engaged in teaching.

MISSIONS.

Thursday Island - 5 sisters

British New Guinea - 27 sisters distributed in 6 stations

New Pomerania - 13 sisters distributed in 3 stations

Gilbert Islands - 18 sisters distributed in 8 stations

A total of 63 sisters working in the missions.

Thus 32 houses with 151 sisters, 16 postulants and novices.

Notes Chapter W

¹ Abbe" J. Belleville, Le T.R.P. Chevalier d'Issoudun, Article in L'Univers, November 1907.

² Mgr. Duquesnay, Annales Issoudun 1879, pp. 257-258.

³ Piperon, «Le R.R.P. Jules Chevalier», 1912, p. 137.

⁴ Ib.

⁵ Letter to Archbishop Boyer, January 20th, 1894.

⁶ Letter of Archbishop of Bourges to the Holy Father, July 27th, 1880.

⁷ Statement, November 5th, 1880.

⁸ Heriault, Ms Vertus du R.P. Chevalier, pp. 11-18.

⁹ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, pp. 63-64.

¹⁰ Letter to the Archbishop, May 13th, 1895.

¹¹ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 72.

¹² Letter to Archbishop Boyer, August 21st, 1892.

¹³ Cf. v.g. Chevalier's Circular Letter on Observance of the Rule September 28th, 1896.

¹⁴ Letter to the Holy Father, December 30th, 1896; signed by all MSC Superiors.

¹⁵ G. Devailly e.a., Le Diocese de Bourges, Paris, Letouzey et Ane, 1973, p. 208.

¹⁶ Ib. *Cambism* is derived from the name of Emile Combes, a Freemason notorious for his hatred of the Church.

¹⁷ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 75.

¹⁸ Ib., p. 76.

¹⁹ Carriere in a letter to Meyer, October 24th, 1906.

²⁰ Genocchi in a letter to Meyer, August 5th, 1901.

²¹ After Fr. Chevalier's death, a diocesan priest was named to the parish of Issoudun, Fr. Augustin Gay. His successor was another diocesan priest, Fr. Armand Chevalier. In a book which he wrote: *Issoudun, sa Paroisse a travers les ages*, Issoudun, Gaignault et Fils, 1934, he pays an eloquent tribute to Jules Chevalier's work for the parish church, with precise figures of the money he gave, collected and spent.

²² Letter to Chevalier, September 11th, 1899.

²³ Letter to Chevalier, July (figure illegible), 1900.

²⁴ Piperon, Le T.R.P. Jules Chevalier, p. 134.

²⁵ Letter to Archbishop Boyer, February 11th, 1896.

²⁶ Chevalier, Ms Notes intimes, p. 65.

²⁷ Letter to Archbishop Boyer, February 11th, 1896. ^{2*} Ib.

²⁹ Mss of Chevalier's Conferences to the Chapter, 1897.

³⁰ *Analecta Societatis Missionariorum Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu, Issoudun*, 1 (1898), p. 30.

³¹ Letter to Jouet, July 4th, 1899.

³² *Analecta Societatis* 3 (1900), p. 55.

³³ Cf. Letter Genocchi to Meyer, August 3rd, 1901.

³⁴ Letter to Chevalier, June 11th, 1901.

³⁵ Letter of Meyer to J. Vandel, August 12th, 1901.

³⁶ Letter of Genocchi to Meyer, August 5th, 1901.

³⁷ Notes to be taken to Rome by Fr. Meyer, Assistant and Secretary, from the General Council meeting of July 1901.

³⁸ *Attends peculiaribus conditionibus in quibus religiosae Galliarum congregationes nunc versantur...*, March 24th, 1903.

³⁹ Chevalier's request was granted, September 3rd, «iuxta nuperri-mam formulam. The notification was given to the Society in *Analecta Societatis*, 4 (1901), pp. 21-22: *quamdam saecularizadonem*.

⁴⁰ Rescript of September 3rd, 1901.

⁴¹ *Analecta Societatis*, 5 (1902), p. 17. If they wished to leave the Society, then they must get a further dispensation, this time from their vows. In the letter referred to in note 42, Fr. Lanctin wrote: *Vous n'avez pas la remise pure et simple de vos voeux: la piece qui vous a etc transmise est uniquement celle de votre secularisation... Devant Dieu, devant votre conscience, devant le for interne de l'Eglise, vous etes religieux: vous gardez vos voeux qui vous lient envers Dieu, et les restent intacts*».

⁴² Letter Lanctin to Teste, without date, 1901 or 1902.

⁴³ *Compte rendu* of this Council Meeting, February, 1902.

⁴⁴ *Compte rendu* in Lanctin's handwriting.

⁴⁵ Letter to Cardinal Protector, June 21st, 1905.

⁴⁶ Letter Chevalier to Carriere, April 23rd, 1906.

⁴⁷ Unsigned testimony of MSC Brother (= Brother J. van Heugten), Archives MSC, Paris.

⁴⁸ *Bulletin Paroissial d'Issoudun*, May, 1907.

⁴⁹ Letter of Piperon to Meyer, October 23rd, 1907.

⁵⁰ From Le Reveil de PIndre, Chateauroux, Sunday October 27th, 1907.

⁵¹ Quoted in Annales Issoudun, 1907, p. 441, from l'Univers, November 2nd, 1907.

11 JULES CHEVALIER PERSONALITY AND PROFILE

Our young people do not know you, Father, and it is regrettable wrote Fr. Vaudon to Chevalier in 1892. These young people gathered their impressions of their Founder second-hand, and when others speak in your name, it is always with exaggerated severity. The young men went off to other countries; often their second-hand impressions were passed on. In this final chapter, we shall let the men who *did* know Fr. Chevalier give their testimony for all to hear, testimonies from their first-hand knowledge of the man.

These testimonies will be almost exclusively from men who lived very close to him for a long time. Given the peculiar circumstances of the French persecutions of religious congregations, there were not many of his confreres who stayed with Fr. Chevalier after 1880. Those who live very close to another man get to know all his human limitations and weaknesses. It is therefore said that no man is a hero to his valet. The man who is an exception to this rule is an exceptional man indeed and Chevalier was a notable exception. I do not mean here to build a case on the testimony of the one man who was his valet in a stricter sense - although this has its own eloquent quality. The Dutch brother, Bro. van Heugten, who cared for Fr. Chevalier in his declining years, was naturally asked for his appreciation of the Founder. Oral tradition has it that his reply was always *C'eait un geant*, which could be freely translated to read: he was a big man in every way. Clearly one looks for fuller comment than this and the men who will make that comment in this chapter are those who were closely associated with Fr. Chevalier as curates or secretary. We shall let their testimonies speak, with as little comment as possible.

However, before listening to MSC voices who might possibly be suspected of prejudice, it is interesting and gratifying to note that the most complete and most eloquent testimony comes from one who was not an MSC at all. The Abbe J. Belleville, a priest of the diocese of Bourges, wrote the following appreciation:

Oblivion covers the memory of most men, as grass covers their graves. But there are some who, when they die, take their place in history and who can say with the poet: *Non omnis moriar*. Fr. Chevalier is one of these. His name remains attached to a work and to a living posterity in the midst of which he will live on, as the patriarchs in the multitude of their descendants, and the founders of orders in their religious families.

Yet, if we look at him in his early years, he was an ordinary person with little promise of a bright future. His first teachers doubted about him and it was not without hesitation that he was admitted to Orders. This was a point of resemblance with the Cure of Ars which perhaps does him honour... However, he made his way. He created a religious order; he built monuments; he even wrote books which, while they are not masterpieces, have a certain style and authority.

But a man's chief worth is that of a spirit put in the service of an idea. It seems that Fr. Chevalier entered life with an idea to which he dedicated himself without reserve and without wavering. It is a mystical idea - devotion to the Sacred Heart and a practical conception - the foundation of a Society of missionaries of the Sacred Heart. His whole life is summed up in this. He is the man of an idea and a work. Having taken his place so to speak, in the Heart of Christ, he will never leave it, come what may. Time and again, for one reason or another, they can close his chapel or his basilica, and he never gives up hope of coming back.

He does not like noise; violence is not his affair; but he does not renounce his rights; he goes calmly to his goal, and nothing can turn him aside; he is sweetly stubborn.

He has at his service a further strength: calm and unruffled self-possession. We have seen him prey to all sorts of difficulties, exposed to contradictions - and he never lost his peace of soul. During those unforgettable feast-days when he drew about him numerous bishops, so many priests and immense crowds of the faithful, far from being agitated, he appeared to be there as the 'prime immovable mover'. Giving himself completely to the person talking to him, he seemed to have nothing else on his mind except the subject of the conversation. A man of easy access, he was kind to all. His whole person breathed simplicity; but it was the simplicity of the dove which, according to the Gospel, was allied to the prudence of the serpent.

Yet he was the man who was to move so many men and so many things. Hardly was he on his own ground when he made his influence felt. He found a word, a title which he gave to the Blessed Virgin; he makes it echo through the Christian world which is thus awoken. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is invoked across the world and Issoudun becomes a famous pilgrimage. A basilica is built which doubtless only needs the patina of time for its modern gothic to gain the approval even of the most demanding art critics. And soon it will be the town of Issoudun itself which will be entrusted to his care Father Chevalier will be from now on, parish priest of Issoudun and superior of his missionaries.

This is his great work, his great claim to glory in the eyes of men and, without doubt, in the judgment of God. He showed he was able to move men as well as stones, to raise up the spiritual building of a religious order as well as the walls of a basilica. His disciples came from everywhere, from near and far, from country presbyteries and from seminaries, from the temples of the world and of religion, which sent him their strays. Like God himself, he took them all: *et infirma ... et ignobilia ... et contemptibilia*; he assembled, he arranged, he vivified all these elements, and he used them for the conquest of the world. In a little while you will find them again, in Europe, America, Oceania...

No one will think that such a work can be done without difficulties or contradictions; trials are naturally inevitable and supernaturally necessary. Fr. Chevalier met with them along his way. He was neither surprised nor discouraged by them. He did not even lose that serenity of soul or face which singled him out.

His congregation had grown quickly, by the entry of elements perhaps too heterogeneous to be fused into unity. From this fact resulted differences of viewpoint, of aspirations and of tendencies which were bound to manifest themselves sooner or later. Not all were as attached to Issoudun as Fr. Chevalier was. For him it was the cradle of his children and he dreamed of uniting them often around this blessed hearth.

The persecution would solve this question by chasing all from the paternal house, condemning them to exile. He remained alone in this land of France who, for us catholics, either devours or rejects her children. Superior General for life of this religious order, he had to renounce his title and his charge, and conceal the last bond which still attached him to his religious family. A little later he was thrown out of his house, and he was carried sick, impassive as a roman senator on his wheel-chair; this old man of eighty years was thrown into the street.

He had grown with his work in prosperity; in adversity he managed to bring it to perfection. With a simplicity which never changed he wore his catholic reputation which was a kind of halo for him. Rome appreciated him, Popes respected him. His relations with the six archbishops under whose reign he lived and worked were not all equally friendly. But he was always more than correct and he always combined an attitude of absolute deference with a feel for his own rights and the interests of his community.

We do not intend, nor are we able, to write here a life of Rev. Fr. Chevalier. It belongs to his spiritual sons to carry out this duty; they will not fail to do so. But since we cannot bury his great memory as solemnly as the town of Issoudun buried his mortal remains, we render him at least this modest homage. And we confidently propose his wonderful priestly life for the imitation of all his brothers in the priesthood².

The picture is nicely balanced and finely drawn. It is the portrait of a man who is strong and serene, easy of access and kind to all and all these things because, having taken his place in the Heart of Christ, he would never leave it, come what may. The words of Belleville coincide with those of Fr. Piperon who knew Fr. Chevalier longer than anyone else. Although we have seen them once, it is worth recalling them here:

Still today, after fifty years, we find him kind, compassionate, amiable towards all those who come to him. He has become all things to all men to gain them all to Jesus-Christ. This is the great secret which draws so many souls to him from all countries...³.

Charity expressed through kindness was characteristic of his whole life. It was so characteristic that people took it for granted. It is remarkable how often, just in passing, it was said of him that he was amiable as always, that he had all the time in the world for anyone who approached him. Another thing that was taken for granted and casually mentioned as well known was his ineffable smile: he smiled with that beautiful smile which lit up his whole face⁴. These remarks occur in recounting factual happenings; their authors are not out to give a character portrayal. For this reason they are all the more valid. It says much of the person indeed, when the things which come most naturally to mind about him are his wonderful smile, his attentiveness to people, and his amiability which one knows will be always there. Here, too, was one reason why he had the gift of leadership.

He had what was needed to command men and lead them; he knew how to sway them by giving himself to them; he endeared them to him by the charm of his person and the enticement of his words. And all this was that he might give them to God, for his was the soul of an apostle.

Yet the seeming simplicity of his courteous charity was the result of constant ascetical effort, thought out and applied in every detail. It was asceticism with a mystical inspiration for it grew from the conviction that *he* personally, *and others* were wooed by the love of the Heart of Christ, folded in his tenderness, with his favours lavished upon us⁶. The mystic inspiration and the ascetical demands come out in his Meditation on fraternal charity⁷.

Mystical in inspiration, his ideas about the practice of charity were down to earth:

If you do not try to give others pleasure, if you believe yourself better than they, if you despise them because they do not share your opinions, if you speak with superiority or disdain, then you have not charity. If you wound them in discussion by your lack of manners or kindness, posing as a superior person who claims to know everything and whose judgements are unchangeable, you prove that charity is not in you If anyone asks a service of you, do not refuse, if something does not please him, make sure that you do not speak about it in his presence, and if he does not agree with you on some things do not disagree with him harshly. Avoid disputes, murmuring, mockery and sarcasm - and also reprimands unless it is your job to make them.⁸

He practiced what he preached. For example, he had written: If something nice happens to your neighbour, rejoice with him as if it had happened to you: congratulate him from your heart. If, on the other hand, he has trials, pity him as if you were suffering in his place and make every effort to show him your sympathy⁹.

In the testimony of nuns who knew him we see one example of how well he could put this advice into practice: The Rev. Fr. Chevalier, Founder of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, was keenly interested in them on all occasions. He often came to see them and gave them conferences, especially on feasts of the Blessed Virgin He was present at all the important events of the community: ceremonies of reception of the habit, Profession, departure of the mission sisters, or others. The day of his own feast he came to receive the good wishes of the sisters who gave him their congratulations. He used to reply very much to the point and used the flowers of his bouquet to spell out the spiritual symbolism of each one.

Two principal traits of his character remained engraved on the memory: his great *kindness towards all* and his tenacious *manliness*...

When the postulants arrived at the community Mother M. Hartzler used to send them to see the Father Founder. This good Father received them with unequalled kindness and was delighted to see the little flock increase.

On the other hand it was a real heart-break for him when he saw the big community leave Issoudun to seek refuge in Belgium, when it was uncertain how long they could stay safely in France. Then, if it were possible, he redoubled his paternal tenderness for the few who remained at the *Place du Sacre Coeur*.

When there was a departure for the Missions, he would come to see those who stayed behind and consoled them in their moment of sadness. He used to promise that some day he would go with them to New Guinea. This was all that was needed to dry their tears¹⁰.

Because he understood the practice of charity so well, Fr. Chevalier knew that it had to be a human virtue, and that it gained considerably if it were spiced with *humour*.

The many things that he had to do, and the care he brought to these tasks did not prevent him from taking his recreations with the community; he was always there. When he was still at the Sacred Heart, from time to time, especially in winter, he liked to play a game of draughts with a confrere, preferably with one of the brothers. Sometimes he would amuse himself by some clever little bits of cheating. The good brother always finished by discovering this; then his vehement recriminations amused us a lot - and Fr. Chevalier more.

Serious and reserved as he was in general, not taking too much time with his visitors in his office, at recreation he was always gay and talkative. His great pleasure was to joke with his confreres and to tease them gently, especially those who lent themselves to his shrewd attacks and his flashes of wit; with him recreations were always truly amusing and relaxing.

He had a great facility for rhyme and he used this gift more than once to lampoon one or other confrere. His verses were always full of humour his allusions sly, and at times points were scored. But this was always done so nicely and with so much warmth and good humour that nobody could be hurt by it; often those who were the targets of the songs applauded more loudly than the rest. In this way he put everyone at ease and without losing anything of his authority or his prestige he put himself on the same level as the least important of us. Even though he had supreme authority in the Society, he never took advantage of it; he was never anything but the '*primus inter pares*'. Thus his company was so pleasant; this was one of the beautiful sides of his character".

Fr. Heriault, who gives us this glimpse into community life at Issoudun was for very many years Fr. Chevalier's companion and assistant in the parish. He also informs us that Fr. Chevalier did not limit his jokes to members of his own community. He recalls the following incident, after Fr. Chevalier had won, in a raffle, a set of trick glasses, with a liqueur solidly sealed into the glass.

On new year's Eve, according to their custom, the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul came to wish a happy New Year to their pastor and father. After the usual good wishes, Fr. Chevalier said to the Sisters: 'Look, I've received an excellent liqueur. Since it is New Year, we shall drink together to your good health'. The good sisters were aghast at the offer. 'But Father', said Mother Gaillard, 'you have never made such an offer before. And you know well that our holy rules forbid us to accept anything, especially liquor'. Fr. Chevalier insisted, Mother Gaillard kept on protesting. Finally Fr. Chevalier went to his cabinet and took the tray with the glasses filled with liqueur. He himself took a glass. 'Come on Sisters, let's all have a glass; it's very mild, and won't do you any harm'. 'But, Reverend Father', said Mother Gaillard, 'I can't understand why you are so insistent'. But Sister Therese, a Norman (a real apostle in the parish, who died regretted by all), broke in and said to the Superior: 'Mother, since Fr. Chevalier asks us to take a glass, why refuse? It will not do us any harm; and also we have to obey him'. So then the Superior and all the sisters took a glass and set about tasting the liqueur. They made unheard of efforts to drink the liquid. 'Well, Reverend Mother Gaillard', said Fr. Chevalier, 'what do you think of my liqueur'. 'Strange', she said, 'I can't taste it at all. It is quite insipid'. 'And what about you, Sister Therese, how do you find it?' 'Oh, Father', she said, 'I can't swallow a thing; nothing comes out of the glass'. The knowing ones had put their fingers into the glass and tumbled to the trick. Then there were great bursts of laughter ... Next day the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and the singers of St. Cyr, also had their little glasses, without being able to taste the liqueur. Fr. Chevalier loved little tricks like this, which are still remembered¹².

Charity and Apostolic Work

Charity dominated his life. But for him charity meant far more than being nice to people. It was the charity of Christ which drove him to work untiringly for the spread of the Kingdom. Fr. Maillard who knew him well and as his secretary had an exact idea of how much Fr. Chevalier did, wrote of the almost incredible amount of work which he did during his life. In greater detail, he says: Founder and Superior General for forty-seven years of a Congregation which developed considerably in its later years: parish priest for forty-five years of a parish of twelve thousand souls, a parish not easy to run: with a voluminous correspondence, he still found a way of writing several books which must have demanded a lot of study and research He was thus at times quoted as a model of activity and an indefatigable worker.

“(For example) during the period 1872 to 1880, when he was named curate of Issoudun until the expulsions, his rule was the following:

He used to sleep then at the Community of the Sacred Heart: from 5.00 a.m. he was at meditation with his confreres: at 6.00 he went to his confessional in the Basilica: at 6.30 he celebrated Mass at the altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, then, after his thanksgiving, he was again at the service of his penitents This ministry over, he had breakfast while going through his mail. He passed the rest of the morning in his office writing letters and receiving any of his confreres who wished to see him At 11.00 he went to the parish church to teach catechism to the children until noon. He dined at the presbytery and passed the rest of the afternoon there at the disposition of his parishioners. If he had no visitors he went to visit the sick of the parish.

At 6.00 p.m. he went back to the Basilica for the exercises of the community and stayed there for the night. (It was only after the expulsions of 1880 that he had to live full-time in the presbytery, since the Government allowed only two priests to stay at the Basilica to take care of the property. But the change of residence made no change in his habits and his schedule; he was as assiduous at the exercises of the little community of the presbytery as he had been in the large community of the Sacred Heart).

His functions of parish priest and Superior General of the Congregation brought him a crowd of visitors; he received them always with perfect politeness, giving them the time to explain everything at leisure, then at the end of the interview, he graciously showed them to the door, and then returned to the task that had been interrupted as if he had not been disturbed at all. One could say that he was, to use an expression that he himself adopted, like ‘an ox at the plough’, tracing a furrow with a calm energy and an invincible constancy without letting himself be stopped by the unevenness of the ground or by any difficulty¹³.

Previous chapters have given ample evidence of the apostolic dedication of Fr. Chevalier's life. There is no need to delay on it further. However, we should perhaps note that, in his work, he was concerned with the poor in a particular way. He gave to them generously, knowing that, at times, he was being deceived by their hard-luck stories. He used to say, however, that he would rather give to undeserving cases than refuse to give when the need was genuine.

He never failed to wonder at or give profuse thanks for divine providence which, in proportion to the needs of his Congregation, sent him not only his daily bread but at times considerable gifts. On the other hand, he poured out generously among the poor, part of the offerings which he received. ‘When I speak of *the poor*’ said his former bursar and secretary, ‘I do not mean only the needy people in his parish or elsewhere; he was always full of compassion towards those and his alms were abundant. I speak also of the works of education and the apostolate (outside our own society), to which he gave with generous heart and hand. When, after 1880, the French Government had suppressed the financial grants which until then it had been making to the major seminaries, Fr. Chevalier organized a collection among the clergy of the diocese of Bourges, on whom he had a great influence. He put his own name at the head of the list for quite a large sum and his example was so well followed that the money collected in this way, and assured for the following years, was greater than the amount suppressed by the Government. It was this fine gesture of charity and zeal for supporting priestly vocations which won for Fr. Chevalier and his works the good graces of Archbishop Marchal of Bourges who, until then, had been rather cold and reserved towards the Congregation’.

The work of the Good Press also profited considerably from his generosity; the good newspapers such as *l'Univers*, *la Croix*, *le Peuple Français*, etc. more than once asked his help, which they received according to the measure of his means¹⁴.

There was an obvious breadth to his works of charity, and to his vision. He saw the value of the mass media. And his interest in his own Congregation did not detract from a wider interest in anything which was for the good of the Church. Just as his mind and heart were open to all, his house was too, for *hospitality* is one of the expressions of charity:

He exercised a generous hospitality, especially towards the clergy, regular or secular. His house was always open to his confreres in the priesthood and if his table was simple and frugal, his welcome was always very cordial. This fact contributed a lot towards gaining him the sympathy of the clergy of the diocese of Bourges.

The ecclesiastical conferences of the region of Issoudun, composed of twelve parishes, were held regularly six times a year at Fr. Chevalier's place. According to the diocesan statutes, each priest of the conference should pay fifteen francs a year to cover the cost of reunions. Fr. Chevalier never asked the members of the conference for this money and if by chance some of them gave it to him, he accepted it for his works and thanked them effusively as if they had been his benefactors.

Priests often came to the community of the Sacred Heart either on pilgrimage or to do a few days' retreat. He would never permit us to ask anything at all for their stay. If, as frequently happened, some of them left an offering to recompense the community, Fr. Chevalier wanted us to show them a lively gratitude¹⁵.

From these last two quotations it is clear that Fr. Chevalier was a *grateful man* ‘never ceasing to wonder at or give profuse thanks for Divine Providence’, thanking people warmly for what others would consider their due. A truly grateful man is a *humble* man in the positive Scriptural meaning of humility: the man whose weakness does not trouble him, but gives him reason to rejoice in wonder when the power of God comes to his aid¹⁶. It is the attitude of soul which can sing a *Magnificat* before the wonderful works of God, and which can be overwhelmed by human kindness.

Since this was so, he was honestly and utterly convinced that whatever he had been able to achieve was God's work. And therefore he simply did not like other people paying *him* compliments for what he had done. Others appreciated his qualities:

You are venerated by your sons, Reverend Father... Everyone agrees: Providence has given you many qualities, the qualities of which Founders are made”.

In Fr. Chevalier's mind, however, there were still strong memories of powerlessness in his poverty. Firstly, he never forgot how he was unable to enter the seminary until providential aid arrived. Secondly, the fulfilment of his dream to found the MSC was made possible through similar help. Thirdly, he knew that it was God's grace that had helped him master his own character, so that he might live the kindness of Christ¹⁸. Convinced of the *given-ness* of all things, he lived the logical consequences of this conviction. While he would willingly join in any hymn of gratitude to God and the Sacred Heart, he was uneasy if anyone complimented him.

If the praise was public, he could not hide his dissatisfaction. This could be read on his unhappy face and often, at the end of the reunion, he complained strongly. He had invited a talented religious of great zeal to preach a novena or solemn triduum. This man had pleased him because his preaching was simple and solid. But on the last day the preacher thought it fitting to pay him a compliment which, incidentally was very well put, complimenting him on the fine works which had resulted from his zeal. It was at the time that they were expanding. Fr. Chevalier was not at all pleased. Hardly had we left the church when he said to me: ‘The man lost his head! He will never preach in our chapel again. Really one should not profane the sacred word.’ He kept his word. However, we must admit that as years went by he became more considerate in his judgements, although he was always opposed to human praise¹⁹.

He was utterly honest in his humility. He could therefore state quite simply his belief in his own failings. A good example of this is found in his Spiritual Testament. There we see two aspects of his humility: a humble self-depreciation, and a genuine gratitude towards his confreres.²⁰

I avow, humbly, that I was not equal to the mission confided to me. The abuse of grace and my many sins, often paralysed the action of Divine Providence. Without doubt I have scandalized others and given bad example. I sincerely ask pardon for this and I beg my confreres again that they too will pardon me and ask God to show me mercy and to admit me to heaven one day despite my unworthiness.

I thank them sincerely for the affection which they have always shown me, for their valued cooperation, for their deep attachment to the Society and for their unflinching devotion both to me and to our works. This is a great consolation which I shall take with me to the grave.

It was evident to all that - apart from acknowledging his faults and asking pardon for them - Fr. Chevalier felt that neither he nor others should waste their time paying attention to himself. He set scant store by his personal appearance - even after one of the parishioners left a comb and boot-polish outside his confessional (an incident which he related with great amusement)²⁰. On great occasions he was to be seen mingling with visiting dignitaries, himself with a biretta over one ear and dressed like the country parish priest which he insisted he was²¹. He wrote his Notes Intimes; but in reading them one has the definite impression that they were written out of a sense of duty rather than from any great interest in writing about himself. At his Requiem Mass there was no funeral oration, for he had asked that they should not cover either his memory or his coffin with flowers²².

The truth of course was that he was so caught up in his mission for Christ and for others that he had no patience with anything which diverted attention to himself. For he was an extraordinarily *singleminded* man; he was 'a man of a work and an idea'. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved. This is what he lived for; this he worked for. His vision of life and his daily attitudes were marked by that strong simplicity about which Belleville wrote. And therefore people remarked his 'calm and imperturbable self-possession'. This was the result of virtue, the fruit of long and determined effort to acquire self-mastery. Simplicity had come into his life because convinced that charity was the virtue proper to the Sacred Heart²² he had made it a complete life-style. He had achieved in his life a unification in simplicity which results from charity strongly lived. This is not easy; it demands that one accept the detailed daily demands of charity. In a life filled with personal contacts this requires a constant and total asceticism. The first demand of charity he saw as an untiring effort to work for the spread of the Gospel. The second was that one's whole personality and way of acting towards others should be filled with a kindness and courtesy which would radiate the kindness of Christ. For him this was not easy, for he had an eager and impatient temperament which he had to work hard to master. How well he succeeded, with the grace of God, is amply evidenced by the various people whose words we have recorded here.

And there is even more.

After his death, some of his close friends wrote of his *love for his enemies*. This way of speaking has a good Gospel precedent. However, it is unlikely that Fr. Chevalier would have classified those who opposed him as enemies.

As l'Abbe Belleville remarks:

Trials are naturally inevitable and supernaturally necessary. Fr. Chevalier met them on his way; he was neither surprised nor discouraged by them.

That is just human nature, he said once, when he was informed by the Archbishop of Bourges that a certain priest had been very critical of him, saying that he was not running the parish properly. He went on immediately to recommend strongly that this man be given ecclesiastical honours in the diocese²⁴. In fact those who knew him used to say that the surest way to receive a favour from him was to be offensive to him first. He was kindness itself if ever any of the free-masons who had worked against the church in general and his undertakings in particular came to him for help. In these matters he simply put into practice what he had written:

If sometimes others make you suffer, bear with them in punishment for your sins, seeing the hand of God in those who afflict you, for they are only instruments of his justice²³.

During the time of the crisis in his own MSC society, this extraordinary charity comes out most clearly. Fr. Klotz was the chief cause of all his woes and Fr. Lanctin was among those who opposed him. Yet, in the midst of the whole battle, in 1891, Fr. Chevalier proposed and got the General Council to approve a grant of 1200 francs to the Lanctin family because they were in financial difficulties. On March 4th of the same year, he got the Council to increase the financial aid they were giving to the family of Fr. Klotz.

Actions like this draw forth the judgment: he was indeed a big man in every way.

Before leaving this point, there is one further testimony we should consider:

He had, alas, enemies in his own congregation among his children. Many of these subjects, either through jealousy or ambition, dared to denounce him infamously either to the Archbishop or even to Rome.

At the ceremony of confirmation in 1895 Cardinal Boyer called me to his room and for a good hour questioned me about Fr. Chevalier and asked if I knew him intimately. 'Your Eminence', I said, 'for twenty years I've been his curate and I know him better than anyone'. 'Well, what do you think of him?' 'I think', I replied, 'that he's a holy man, humble, modest, regular in all things, charitable and with a great dedication for the good of all'. 'What do you think of his morals?' 'Why do you ask a question like that, Your Eminence?' 'I ask it. Answer it well.' 'Your Eminence, you ought to hope that all the priests of your diocese were of equal integrity to Fr. Chevalier!' 'Then you have nothing with which to reproach your Superior!' 'One thing only, Your Eminence, that he is too kind'.

Thereupon his Eminence embraced me and said: 'Dear Father you are the only one who has spoken to me in this way. A great number have denounced him to me: some have even soiled (sic!) his grey hairs. It is infamous. I believe you, father; and I shall see that justice is done'. In fact, after the death of Cardinal Boyer, which took place the following year, Mgr. Bardel, Auxiliary of Bourges and today Bishop of Sees came to see Fr. Chevalier and said to him: 'Father, all your priests are not your friends. Before leaving Bourges, I bring you all the letters which were written to Mgr. Boyer against you. I did not want this dossier to remain in the files of the Archbishop's House. I bring it to you. You can read it and see what they reproach you with'. Fr. Chevalier thus knew all his enemies, even those who had been guilty of the indignity of calumniating his morals. (Both of them are dead - a priest and a brother). The good God has judged them. Fr. Chevalier kept this dossier until he died...

He revenged himself on his enemies by receiving them with kindness and charity. He invited them to his table and treated them better than his friends. I have seen several sitting at table with him who did not even suspect that he had in his possession their letters denouncing him to Cardinal Boyer. Reading this famous dossier, he kept repeating: 'May the good God forgive them'²⁶.

A strong man's meekness.

Jules Chevalier was a strong man - strong with that extraordinary strength which, based on confidence in God, can go ahead in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. In this we see that he was more than a man of action. A man of merely natural action cannot wait in hope and patience over the long empty years as he could. In all these circumstances, he leant much more on his confidence in God than on his own resources²⁷. In spite of the political persecutions, because of his drive and determination, his congregation grew and flourished while others fared badly. Some smaller ones disappeared altogether. Others, larger and more widespread, lost all their French Provinces. He could persevere, disappointed but not discouraged, when new Archbishops of Bourges, unfavourably influenced by reports about him, were openly hostile to him. Usually, as they came to know his true worth, these prelates were converted into admirers, as were Archbishops Marchal and Boyer.

It was the same during the difficult and even dangerous phases through which the Congregation had to pass... (notably in the most terrible of all: the one provoked by the events which occurred from 1891 to 1894) ...At this sad time, the majority thought that the Society was definitely going to founder. Fr. Chevalier, I believe, never shared these sentiments; he seemed to me to have a complete and absolute confidence in a happy outcome of these events. History has proved him right²⁸.

Fr. Chevalier was a strong man and in his own personal life this strength was brought to bear on acquiring the virtue of meekness. How remarkably he succeeded is proved by everything that has been said about him, and especially by the incidents recorded in the last few pages. But let us remember that it was a strong man's meekness - as meekness is a strong man's virtue; for it is strength directed and controlled. Christ did not cease to be meek when he drove the money-changers from the temple - for his Father's glory. He did not fail in meekness when he branded the Pharisees as whited sepulchres and sons of Satan.

Chevalier had a fighter's temperament. From his seminary days he had refused to fight to defend himself or his good name. He had controlled and directed his energy to fight against the difficulties confronting his congregation. Even calumniated, he would not fight to defend himself. But in the critical years of the Congregation there was a lot more at stake than his personal reputation. For instance, Fr. Jouet was, in the words of Piperon, 'the victim of crying injustice'. Piperon would deplore the injustice; Chevalier set out to fight against it. Guyot and Delaporte were two men who, in public debate and in private letters to the Founder, attacked Jouet. Because of their age and reputation, they could have more influence than others in seeing that injustice prevailed. In replies to their letters, Fr. Chevalier not only defends his friend and confrere; he sets forth in strong language the reasons why they are not entitled to throw stones at Jouet.

Piperon also saw in some of the young men 'schoolboy rancour, lack of obedience and charity'. For a Society whose very survival depended on 'obedience in charity', Chevalier saw some of these men as attacking the very existence of his congregation, which he believed to be God's work and for God's glory. He could not sit back smiling to let them destroy it. Fr. Klotz, in his own words, had declared himself armed from head to foot, ready to rush into battle. This he did in numerous ways, exhorting to disobedience, sowing discord among the students. And when he shattered his lance on Chevalier's shield and got slapped about the ears for his pains, there were cries that Chevalier hit too hard. Reading some of his letters, out of their time and out of the context, some people have felt that they indicate that Chevalier was hard. This is to forget some of the Gospel; it is to fail to see that any such letters were written only to defend people against crying injustice, or to defend the Society itself. These things do not take away anything from Chevalier's charism of kindness. They illustrate that his was a strong man's meekness; meek, kind, considerate through most things in life, but strong against rancour and injustice. Chevalier, wrote Belleville, was the man of an idea and a work. The work we have seen. The idea is a *mystic idea* ...Having taken his place so to speak, in the Heart of Christ, he will never leave it, come what may²⁹.

In these words l'Abbe Belleville rather beautifully describes what he considers the mystic quality of Fr. Chevalier's spirituality. Of course, if you identify mysticism with the passing of long hours in contemplative prayer, you will find it impossible to apply the term to Fr. Chevalier's life. His writings, even his *Notes Intimes*, are certainly not the writings of a mystic. And Fr. Piperon, by nature a more 'contemplative soul' than Chevalier, thought that there was not enough prayer in his life to fit Piperon's picture of the perfect Founder³⁰. Fr. Guyot expressed the same opinion - although Fr. Chevalier's reply suggests that more of his night-hours were passed in prayer than others ever knew³¹.

However, the term mystical is often enough used to indicate the conscious living of the spiritual life as God's gift experienced, rather than as our own effort at asceticism or the practice of virtue. A certain mystic quality was present in Fr. Chevalier's living of charity. After he passed through the stage of obvious ascetical effort, there was the rather remarkable transformation when he seemed to live the mystery of Christ-living-in-him and acting and loving through him. Conscious as he was of Christ before his eyes in his meditation, and Christ in his heart in his prayer and exercise of charity, he seemed to live a conscious union with Christ in his hands - Christ working with him in his apostolic efforts. He was as conscious of the presence and action of Christ in his activity as he was in his prayer. And he would write in his Rules:

The missionaries will have a tender devotion to the adorable Heart of Jesus; they will not forget that it is the source of all graces, a hearth of light and of love, an abyss of mercy; they will have recourse to it often in their trials, their temptations, their tedium, their difficulties³². Furthermore, he would find Christ in the people for whom he worked, seeing them always as the souls who were so dear to Christ³³. He had, in a sense, a mystique of mission, conscious of sharing in the mission of Christ, High-Priest and Apostle, conscious of the love of God given to every man whom he met. This did not mean that he thought one could find God in others and not make efforts to meet him regularly in prayer, and especially in the eucharist. In his own busy life, his assiduous practice of the religious exercises of his religious community is stressed by those who knew him. We have seen Fr. Maillard's testimony. Fr. Heriault gives his own account:

His regularity:

During the thirty years that I had the honour of being his curate and of living with him, he always gave the example of the greatest regularity. Apart from rare exceptions, he was always the first at morning prayer at 5.00. If one of his religious was missing from prayers, he would take hold of the cord of the internal bell, and I assure you that he woke up the man who had not heard the alarm. If someone missed out on meditation, at breakfast at a propitious moment, he would say: 'Well, dear Father, you must have been very tired, since we did not see you at prayers this morning', or 'you were out on a sick-call last night - which would have made you miss prayers this morning?'. In this way, he gave a little lesson to his religious, without appearing to touch on it. In spite of his many calls, he was always very regular at the particular examination of conscience. He was regular too for the time of Mass. He could not understand how anyone could make the faithful wait. On the vigil of feasts or the mornings of the great solemnities when he was kept in his confessional by penitents who forced him to delay Mass a little, he could hardly bear it. And so he used to counsel the faithful not to wait to the last minute for confession so as not to hold up the priest who was to celebrate the Mass.

His piety:

Unlike certain saints, Fr. Chevalier did not have what I would call a demonstrative piety. His piety consisted above all in one's duty accomplished. In spite of his many duties, he neglected none of his spiritual exercises... He said Mass very well with much devotion. In his last illness, he said it right up to the last...

After Mass he went to his confessional and stayed there for a long time. Punctually he made his visit to the Blessed Sacrament every evening. He recited his breviary piously. To say Matins and Lauds he went to the confessional, every evening from 5.30 until 7.00. Many a soul in difficulties, or tormented by remorse profited by his assiduousness in the confessional to unburden themselves to him.

He went to confession regularly once a week unless his confessor was away or unavailable... He had an altogether special devotion to the Sacred Heart. Daily he recited an act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart as well as the Litany of the Sacred Heart. Many times a day he recited the Memorare to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He never went to bed without having said his rosary. He often made the Novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart... It was in his little instructions on the Sacred Heart or on Our Lady that his solid piety was noted and in his talks in the confessional, according to the accounts of many of his penitents³⁴.

Conclusion

We could write more; we could repeat things already written in other chapters. But all this would hardly improve the portrait. Perhaps our last testimony can best be that of Fr. Maillard, given in the difficult times of 1891, and given as a solemn testimony to the Sacred Congregation

of Bishops and Regulars:

I can affirm that during the eighteen years that I have had the good fortune to belong to our society, I have been forced to admire the zeal and the devotedness of our venerated Fr. General and Founder; but my admiration has increased to become veneration in the last five years, because in that time, seeing it at closer quarters and studying it every day, I have been able to appreciate better the life of abnegation and perpetual sacrifice of our venerated Superior General”³⁵.

Fr. Chevalier died on October 21st, 1907.

His death was gentle calm and serene³⁵. Strength and serenity had marked his life: he was strong and serene in death.

His death was very moving and very beautiful. At the bedside of the dying, ordinarily one feels an immense pity for so much suffering and so much weakness, and one needs to care for them as for little children. Fr. Chevalier, on the contrary, seemed to die in the full strength of his faith and his will; there was no feebleness, but a serenity and a calm which inspired respect and did good to the soul”³⁶.

Notes Chapter

¹ Letter Vaudon to Chevalier, August 26th, 1892.

² Belleville in L'Univers, November 1907.

³ Piperon, Ms «Le T.R.P. Jules Chevalier», p. 36, quoted by Vermin, pp. 74-75. Cf. Ch. V.

⁴ Benin MSC, Memoire, November 16th, 1907.

⁵ L. Jourdon in Annales Quebec, 1907, p. 443.

⁶ Chevalier, Ecole du Sacre-Coeur, p. 246.

⁷ ib, p. 245.

⁸ ib.

⁹ ib.

¹⁰ Memoire Sister M. Gertrude, F.N.D.S.C.

¹¹ Fr. Heriault, Memoire.

¹² ib.

¹³ Fr. X. Maillard, Memoire, written in 1923.

¹⁴ ib.

¹⁵ ib.

¹⁶ Q. 2 Cor. 12, 10.

¹⁷ Letter Guyot to Chevalier, January 24th, 1891.

¹⁸ In writing his Notes Intimes and Annales de la Petite Societe, he recalls all these things.

¹⁹ Piperon, Ms Le T.R.P. Jules Chevalier, p. 85, quoted by Vermin, p. 212.

²⁰ Heriault, Memoire.

²¹ ib.

²² Le ReVeil de l'Indre, Chateauroux, Sunday, October 27th, 1907. In his «Testament pour la Paroisse dTssoudun» Chevalier had written: N.B. Je desire qu'on ne depose aucune fleur, aucune couronne sur mon cerceuil, que mes obseques soient simples et qu'on n'y prononce aucun discours. Ce que je demande c'est de prier beaucoup pour moi,

²³ Chevalier, Ecole du Sacre-Coeur, p. 245 ff.

²⁴ Heriault, Ms Vertus du R.P. Chevalier, pp. 17-18.

²⁵ Chevalier, Ecole du Sacre-Coeur, I.e.

²⁶ Heriault, Ms Vertus du R.P. Chevalier, pp. 18-22.

²⁷ Maillard, Memoire.

²⁸ ib.

²⁹ Belleville in L'Univers, November 1907.

³⁰ Piperon, Retreat Notes, November 1873.

³¹ Letter Guyot to Chevalier, January 28th, 1891.

³² Premieres Regies manuscrites des Missionnaires du Sacre-Coeur, 1857, Ch. III, art. 6, 1,1.

³³ ib., introduction.

³⁴ Heriault, Ms Vertus du R.P. Chevalier, suite.

³⁵ Letter to Cardinal Prefect of the S. Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, May 4th, 1891.

³⁶ Letter Meyer to Jo uet, October 22nd, 1907.

³⁷ Letter Meyer to J. Vandel, November 15th, 1907.

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART: FATHER FOUNDER'S CONCEPT OF HER ROLE IN OUR FDNSC VOCATION

Sister M. Bernard, FDNSC

- Father Founder's basic ideas in relation to the place of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in our vocation as Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart;
- The relevance of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in our contemporary apostolate.

FIRST POINT: FATHER FOUNDER'S BASIC IDEAS

An understanding of this amounts to having a look at what Father Founder meant by devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and then seeing where our own religious Institute fits into the pattern.

Not every element of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is equally basic to the Marian character of the Congregation. Hence we have examined those aspects which were high-lighted in the primitive Constitutions written by Father Founder himself; we have studied the way

in which they have been interpreted in the various editions of the Directory, the first of which dates from his time; and also the sound traditions which have come down to us from the beginning. All this we have compared with what is to be found in the present Constitutions. Actually these are based on the 1908 revision necessitated by the Norms of 1901, and* with minor modification, are those which received the Decree of Praise. This revision, owing to the deteriorating state of health of Father Founder, was, with the latter's permission, entrusted to Father Eugene Meyer, MSC.

It has already been said that not every aspect of the devotion as conceived by Father Founder is equally basic to the character of our vocation as Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In this context the word devotion is used in the sense of that which gives orientation to devotedness to an ideal. Father Vermin, MSC, in his biography of Father Chevalier says that Father Founder's earliest recorded explanation of the devotion is to be found summarised in a brochure which he wrote in 1862. An explanation is also given in Father Piperon's book *The Power of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*. What gives this latter summary of Father Founder's thought its authenticity is the fact that Father Chevalier himself wrote the preface to the book.

Now this particular summary has a special relevance to the character of our own Congregation, for it contains a point omitted in Father Vermin's one. Moreover, it is precisely this point which epitomises the Marian orientation of our Institute, in distinction to that of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart whose End and Spirit it shares and on whose Constitutions its own are based.

Father Piperon records Father Founder's explanation to his first companions of what we mean when we pronounce the words OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART. He sums it up thus:

1. We glorify God for his choice of Mary to form from her most pure substance the Adorable Heart of Jesus;
2. We honour the sentiments of the Heart of Jesus towards his holy Mother;
3. We recognise the inexpressible power which he has given her over his Heart;
4. We beg Mary to lead us herself to the Heart of Jesus, to reveal to us his Mysteries and to open to us his treasures of grace;
5. (This is the point which interests here) We unite with our Mother in glorifying the Heart of Jesus and in making reparation for the sinful outrages against this Divine Heart;
6. We confide to her the success of the most difficult and hopeless cases. Now the point which is specially relevant to our own Congregation, and which also figures in part in the pact of 1855 made with Mary concerning the foundation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, is the fifth one: We unite with our Mother in glorifying the Heart of Jesus, and in making reparation for the sinful outrages against this Divine Heart.

Here it is that we find expressed Father Founder's basic ideas concerning the place of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in our vocation as Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: union with Mary in doing two things - glorifying the Heart of Jesus and leading a life of reparation.

"We unite with our Mother . . ." Herein is the basis of the Mother-daughter bond expressed in the title Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Father Founder would tolerate no interference as regards this concept of daughter, with its significance - a restricted one certainly - of a filial right to penetrate into the intimate bond of love between Mary and the adorable Heart of her Son. In trying to trace the origin of this, his idea of "daughter", the same idea of a special filial relationship with Mary was found in the Rules which Father Founder wrote in 1857 for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It was as yet too early for Mary to find a place there as Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, so she is to be honoured under the title of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Here is the text of Article 2:

We must love Mary as a son loves his mother. For it is Mary who conceived us and who brought us to birth in the religious life.

The idea of conception is, of course, a reference to the date of 8th December, 1854, and that of birth to the religious life to Christmas night, 1856, when himself and Father Maugegest pronounced at midnight the vows of religion. But you will notice that the basic idea of a Mother-son relationship is identical with our Mother-daughter one.

As regards the rest of this point (in Father Piperon's summary) - union with Mary in glorifying the Heart of Jesus, and in making reparation, these two ideas are to be found in all the editions of our Constitutions drawn up by Father Founder himself. Though he omits specific reference to union with Mary, he takes it for granted, for it is developed in the Directory. Nor does he ever omit it in all the propaganda he made, through his books and otherwise, in order to attract vocations. Incidentally, Vatican II also stresses this idea of union with Mary. "The Blessed Virgin is intimately united with the Church", i.e. its members. (Lumen Gentium 63)

A rather good application of what exactly Father Chevalier means by glorifying the Heart of Jesus (in union with Mary, is to be found in his book *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart According to Scripture, the Fathers and Theology*. Here he shows that it was at the word of Mary that Christ inaugurated his mission of salvation by manifesting his Divinity, thus strengthening the faith of the disciples on whom he was to build his Church. I quote:

"The Word, the Eternal Splendour of the Father, had veiled his glory in the virginal womb of Mary. . . Was it not fitting that through Mary also this glory of Christ, hidden till then, should be manifested to the world?" This then, in the concrete, is the pattern for one aspect of what Father Founder presents as the vocation of the Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - through Mary to glorify', i.e. make manifest to the world, the Divinity and the mission of the Heart of the Word Incarnate. This, of course, can be done directly or indirectly by a life of worship, and either hidden devotedness or active apostolate.

There is, too, the other aspect of our vocation as expressed in this point under discussion - that of reparation, especially Eucharistic reparation. Again we refer to Father Founder's book on *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* in order to find the Scriptural source of this union with Mary in reparation. Here he shows her on Calvary in close union with Christ, the sole Reparateur. "There Mary stands beside the Cross, associating herself in perfect union of will with the Divine Victim - immolating herself with Him." (p. 21) In his book *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, he develops more fully this theme of reparation: "Christ's work of reparation did not stop on Calvary . . ." (p. 217) And further on: "It is in the Eucharist that we unite ourselves with His work of reparation." (p. 221)

As far as our own vocation goes we find this doctrine of reparation given a Eucharistic application in the Director. Here it is stated that during the Sacrifice of the Mass, we unite ourselves with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - asking her to "make us understand the Mystery of the Cross so that we may offer the Divine Victim with her and according to her spirit". It is in union with Mary, too, that we make our daily half-hour of Adoration of the Eucharistic Presence. The Directory instructs us to "ask Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to adore as she adored, to love as she loved, to make reparation as she made reparation." Incidentally, as regards this latter element of reparation - at one time Father Founder seems to present it as centred with Christ on God, at others as directed immediately to Christ, But this is immaterial since, in virtue of the Hypostatic Union, all comes together in the Trinity. Nowhere in our Constitutions does Father Founder specify how reparation is to be made. The matter is left completely open. Thus each is free to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The last element in Father Founder's basic idea concerning the place of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in our vocation concerns the apostolate. I am not referring, for the moment, as to how we are to employ devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart as a means to the apostolate, but to the fact that we are committed to do so. The source of this obligation has traditionally been regarded in both the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and our own Congregation as rooted in the Pact made with Mary by Father Chevalier and his companion in 1855. Among other things, they engaged themselves to the mission of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus everywhere loved; of causing Mary to be honoured in a special way, and of associating her in all their works. These obligations were assumed on behalf of all future members of the Society and, by implication, on behalf of all who would belong to our own as yet unborn Congregation, destined itself to be a particular expression of the special honour pledged to Mary.

Consequently, together with the engagement concerning the Sacred Heart, the Pact also contained a very specific commitment to the Marian apostolate. This was later to take the form of propagating the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart as a most effective means of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus everywhere loved. Hence, it was that Father Founder wrote into our early Constitutions that one of the obligations of the members was the diffusion of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Surprisingly enough, this was omitted in the 1908 revision. There was also suppressed a chapter containing the injunction that, for their own spiritual life and for the apostolate, the members must make a thorough study, not only of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, but also of that to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. To recapitulate thus far: We have seen that the essential notions concerning Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which Father Founder considered basic to our vocation are love, reparation and apostolate through Mary. They can all be summed up as a life of union with Mary in her love for, and her mission of drawing all to the love of the glorified Heart of her Son, whose wounded side is the sign of God's love for her and for us; the source of his gift of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Sacraments and all the graces of which He has made her the dispensatrix. Or, as was said over 80 years ago in the French Annals of which Father Chevalier was the editor:

The Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart came into being to honour the great mystery of Mary in her relations with the Heart of her Divine Son; the mystery of the intimate bond which unites her with his adorable Heart; of her collaboration on earth in the work of Redemption; and of her glorious participation in heaven, as dispensatrix of all the graces necessary for the salvation of souls, That, by the way, is as up-to-date as Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*.

A further remark concerning this point of basic elements. *Perfectae Caritatis* insists on the integration of the interior life and the apostolate, since this integration is of the very essence of an Institute of the religious-apostolic life. As Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, we have an assured means of this integration in fidelity to our programme of union with Mary under all the aspects of her title, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. So much for the first section of this paper - Father Founders concept of the role of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in our vocation.

SECOND POINT: THE RELEVANCE OF THE DEVOTION

From soundings throughout the Congregation, it is evident that the Sisters think that the devotion is as valid today as it was in Father Founder's time, provided we do what he did and with extraordinary success, i.e. MAKE IT RELEVANT.

Let us see what he did. The traditional image was used as a resume of the doctrinal significance. The wording of the Memorare and of the Novena Book {people wore them out} fixed in the consciousness of those who used them the idea that Mary, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, is an all-powerful Mother, that through her maternal influence over the Heart of her Son, she has the power to help out in even the most desperate cases; that she simply can't say no to the trusting children whom she loves. So much for the past.

Now for the present. How are we to get the same message over today? The doctrine is fundamentally the same. The needs of individuals and groups are at least basically the same. The answer would seem to be along these lines.

Logically the devotion depends on the devotion to the Sacred Heart. To make it relevant, then, it must be presented naturally in conjunction with a devotion to the Sacred Heart made relevant, and that poses its own problem. One solution to that, at least as far as explanation and the wording of prayers goes, would seem to be to root both in Scripture where Father Founder rooted them. In so doing, moreover, we have two advantages.

In the first place, today's People of God look for the Scriptural approach. Secondly, we can give a presentation enriched with all the insights of modern Scriptural exegesis. Father Founder, for instance, had his direct 19th century way of presenting the miracle of Cana. But we in our later 20th century are very much aware of St. John's use of symbolism. Thus we can see in a wider perspective the power of intercession with his Love which Jesus gave to Mary. This allows us to show the relationship between that which he would give her as Mother of all men when, with his death and resurrection, his "hour" would have come in all its fulness and the mystery of salvation be consummated.

Another way of making the devotion relevant is also that of Father Founder. He related it directly to people's needs. Hence, he made much of the prayer of petition. He has often been accused of stressing too much this aspect at the expense of other aspects of the devotion. On the contrary, he was showing a fine psychological insight in adapting a means to an end. He was leading souls, by a way of their needs fulfilled, to love for the Mother who fulfilled these needs* and, through love for her, to love of her Son. In other words, this was a way of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus everywhere loved. He was only doing what Vatican II, in the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests reminds priests of the post-Conciliar epoch to do. "They must lead the faithful along to an ever-improved spirit of prayer . . . according to the NEEDS and graces of each." (5) Furthermore, the Church herself, in the restoration of the Prayers of the Faithful to the Mass, has taken a practical step to prove that there is nothing unbalanced or second-rate about prayer of petition.

A further means of making the devotion relevant could be that our thinking and presentation of it should have as its source those aspects which are truly in the main current of the Church's teaching today, aspects already brought before us in Conciliar teachings. Thus, for example, at a time when Mary's Motherhood of the Church is proposed for the contemplation of Christians, then it is fitting that our understanding of Mary in her relations with the Heart of Christ should give us a perspective for the deeper contemplation of her motherhood of the Church.

A helpful point emerges out of this - if we thus keep our emphasis (in this doctrine) concurrent with Conciliar teaching, we will be more likely to have a terminology of the devotion which is consonant with that of other biblical and liturgical trends.

Again, if we consider the sociological drives of our times, we find that the devotion has indeed genuine relevance. When the people the world over are drawn by the Spirit to succour the needs of the under-privileged and oppressed, what more authentic and inspiring ideals could we have than Christ whose heart exhausted itself out of love for all men, and his Mother, whose heart was completely one with his in this compassionate and saving love for men?

Again, we find the devotion relevant from the modern psychological viewpoint - the great emphasis on the dignity of the human person, on personal freedom in our commitments - all this can be seen par excellence in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

We could say something about the visual presentation in the form of images, etc., but this is an immense field and had better be held over.

To sum up this point as to the relevance of the devotion. We are agreed that, as far as doctrine goes, the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has great potentialities. It is as up-to-date as *Lumen Gentium* whose whole sweep of doctrine concerning Our Lady can be synthesised, if so wished, from the point of view of the relations of Mary with the Love of God made manifest in the Divine Heart of her Son.

What is needed, however, is a concerted plan of action for making it as relevant to the world of our day as Father Chevalier, with amazing success, made it to the world of his day. As to the nature of this concerted plan of action, well - that is the nut we still have to crack!

CHARISM OF JULES CHEVALIER: HIS PERSONAL CALL, AND PERSONAL RESPONSE

J. Savage, MSC Formation Meeting, Rome, 1976

This morning, Sisters, I would like to put before you a few reflections on what we call the charism of Father Chevalier. I am very well aware that there is much more to be said than what I am going to say. I am also aware of the fact that what I am going to say is of very little importance compared with what you will be saying to one another once you come to share the life that is in you.

Nowadays, as we know, it has become customary to speak of Fr. Chevalier's charism as a SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS. I will use this expression rather than 'Devotion to the Sacred Heart', not because I object to the word 'Devotion', but because I think the word 'spirituality' expresses more accurately for people of our day what Fr. Founder meant in his day when he spoke of Devotion to the Heart of Jesus. In our day the word 'devotion' has become confused with the word 'devotions'. This is quite a different word - meaning 'practices of piety'. As we know, Devotion to the Sacred Heart for Father Chevalier - while finding expression in various practices of piety - was something far more than these practices. It is, for him, a whole way of life: a special way of responding to the Christian vocation.

I might recall, without delaying unduly on the point, that in itself the word DEVOTION expresses very well what Fr. Chevalier had in mind. We have only to reflect for a moment to see that the word 'devotion' is related to the word DEVOTED - and we know what it means when we say one person is devoted to another. It means that this person LOVES the other with all his heart and proves by deeds that he wishes to make a TOTAL RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS OF LOVE. This is very much what Fr. Chevalier had in mind.

Perhaps it would be good to begin by defining this word 'CHARISM'. It comes, as we know, from the Greek word for a 'gift'. Theologians usually define a charism as a gift given by God to one individual for the sake of others. We are interested in the gift given to Fr. Chevalier for our sake.

As we begin our reflections on his charism I think we should recall, first of all, the great debt of gratitude we owe him for having done so much - all he possibly could - to make sure that his charism would not be lost but would be faithfully transmitted to us. When we, Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart or Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, reflect today on our Founder's charism, we are not engaging in guess work.

To start with, he did not die so very long ago, and the older ones amongst us have met and talked with Religious who knew him personally. Father Chevalier also found time in his busy and active life to express his ideal for us in writing: in two large theological works and in other smaller works besides.

But quite apart from all this, we have the even more important LIVING TRADITION within the two Congregations he founded. Looking into our own lives we should be able to find his charism living on in us today. Indeed, insofar as a charism is a living thing, this is the only place we will really find it: in LIVING PEOPLE. I might add - in people whose HEARTS ARE ALIVE as the heart of Jules Chevalier was: alive with love for God and his fellow man.

Turning our minds to Fr. Chevalier himself, we know (and we would expect it to be so) that he was providentially prepared for his mission as our Founder.

On the level of natural gifts (and let us never forget that these are just as much gifts of God as the supernatural gifts of grace) the young Jules Chevalier was endowed with a generous measure of determination - knowing the difficulties he had to overcome in founding our Congregations we can be grateful that he was! He was, by nature, a strong character. As Fr. Cuskelly says, "He was by temperament a fighter."

But he was much more than this. His generous nature responded generously to the supernatural gifts of his baptism and he showed while still young that he was destined to be a MAN OF FAITH and a MAN OF FIDELITY.

This fidelity was tested and developed during the years he waited for an opportunity to follow his vocation to the priesthood. Fidelity is a readiness to respond to the demands God makes on us. There can be no real fidelity in us without trust in God's fidelity, and we see already in the youthful Chevalier an unshakeable TRUST that God would make it possible for him to do what God was asking him to do.

So it seems that we could characterize the young man who eventually entered the Seminary of Bourges as a MAN OF FAITH, a MAN OF FIDELITY, a MAN OF TRUST.

During his seminary days he was fortunate in the spiritual direction and spiritual formation he received. The Sulpician Fathers who staffed the Seminary encouraged him to develop a fervent interior life of personal union with Our Lord. The spirituality in which he was formed was eminently Christ-centred and sacerdotal. The aspirant to the priesthood was reminded that he had to be 'another Christ' - that he must allow Christ the Priest to live on and work on in him.

All this was the foundation prepared by God to receive the special gift he was given for our sake: a gift we call his charism - his SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

Although he would never have claimed to be a great theologian, he did have - even as a student - a solid and sure grasp of theological truth. (Later on he was to show in his writings that he was in many ways outstanding and ahead of his time.) So it is fitting that the grace which was to give him his characteristic 'spirituality of the heart' should come to him through his study of Theology.

He has told us the story himself. When his lecturer in Theology began to present to his class the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Jules Chevalier found himself deeply moved. "This doctrine," he said, "went straight to my heart. The more I went into it, the more attractive I found it."

Putting this in the language of Spiritual Theology we could say that Jules Chevalier had discovered his personal 'spirituality'.

It might be useful to say a few words about what is meant by a 'spirituality'. We all know the old saying: 'Unity is strength'. It applies very truly in the spiritual life. If a man's life towards God is to have real strength, real vigour, it is necessary that his spiritual energies should be unified and not dissipated. He needs to see all the richness and variety of revealed truth, and all the many virtues of Christian living, in ONE UNIFIED VISION. There is nothing left out; but now he is able to see everything from one point of view - a viewpoint that makes a strong appeal to him. In this way there is achieved a unified attitude of the whole man to God.

Jules Chevalier found the UNIFYING PRINCIPLE which made a strong appeal to him in what he saw revealed by God in the open Heart of Jesus. Everything that had been developed in him by his earlier training now fell into place, given new power because unified in a single vision.

It was apparently during his retreat for sub-diaconate that the grace he had been given took full possession of him and transformed his whole personality. Father Píperon tells us that up to this time his determination to live a spirituality of fidelity had resulted in his becoming "rather serious, and stiff in his relations with others". On the day of his ordination something extraordinary happened. Again Fr.

Píperon is our witness: "He appeared as a man ENTIRELY RENEWED, kind, affable and smiling". Writing fifty years after the event Fr. Píperon still marvelled at this extraordinary change, and he marvelled even more that the transformation was permanent.

I think we have here the key to an understanding of the spirituality Jules Chevalier began to live. He realised that to LIVE IN ACTION a spirituality of the Heart of Jesus meant striving to be the kind of man Jesus was: a completely loving person - a Man who was 'all heart' - a Man who was, in the powerful phrases of St. Paul, 'the love of God made visible'; the kindness of God made manifest to many (Titus 3,4). Could we say that he had changed from a 'spirituality of fidelity' to a 'spirituality of love'? I think it would be more accurate to say that he had come to realise, in the depth of his being, that the perfection of fidelity is the perfection of love.

Fidelity, we know, is always a relationship between persons. But not any kind of relationship. It is the relationship between persons who are in some way bound to one another and wish to live up to that commitment. In its perfect form, fidelity is the relationship between persons who LOVE one another and wish to live up to the DEMANDS OF LOVE.

The new Sub-deacon, soon to be Fr. Chevalier the priest, now realised that this is the secret of the perfect fidelity of Jesus. He realised that this is what St. John is trying to tell us in his Gospel (a Gospel he called: The Gospel of the Sacred Heart): that we will only see the real meaning of Jesus' life from the vantage point of Calvary; that we will best grasp the MYSTERY OF JESUS - and be grasped by it - if we stand with John and Mary gazing at His open Heart. The unwavering fidelity of Jesus, his tremendous achievement of personal holiness, (the achievement of a human will like ours), has its source in the utterly unselfish and self-sacrificing love proclaimed and revealed by St. John in the powerful symbolism of

His open Heart. Chevalier expresses it most succinctly: "The Heart of Jesus is the last word. Everything leads to Jesus, and in Jesus everything leads to His Heart."

Having discovered the secret of Jesus' spirituality, Jules Chevalier had also discovered his own personal vocation and his mission in the Church. He was, as Fr. Cuskelly says, "a young man with a sense of mission." He felt strongly - even before his ordination to priesthood - that he was called to share his vision with others.

No doubt this young man was aiming high. He stated his ideal with characteristic boldness. He said he wanted to be "animated by the spirit of the Heart of Jesus, so as to make his own the sentiments, the virtues, the love and the life of Jesus." Putting this in modern terms I think we could say that he wanted to live the same way Jesus lived: the same kind of spirituality - a spirituality of the heart.

We can't accuse him of illusion or spiritual pride because this is the very ideal St. John says every Christian must strive to attain. "We can be sure we are in God only when the one who claims to be living in Him is living THE SAME KIND OF LIFE as Christ lived." (1 John 2,6)

Chevalier was under no illusion. He was well aware of the challenge - and he wants us to be. He was well aware that to strive to live this way means waging an unrelenting war on the pride and egoism which are the chief obstacles in us preventing us from living the utterly unselfish, loving life we see Jesus living in the Gospels. All his life Jules Chevalier strove for greatest SIMPLICITY. He was very far from "taking himself too seriously". Modesty and simplicity were characteristics of the spirituality he lived, and he tried to form others in the same way.

Just in passing, it is interesting to note a superficial likeness between his ideal and the ideal proposed by some of the best of modern psychologists as the surest way to true maturity and genuine personal fulfillment. These psychologists, who are only now catching up with Our Lord, tell us that we should strive in every situation to be completely loving persons.

The similarity is striking and significant (especially for those who are called upon to form the generous young people of today), but it remains a superficial likeness. Jules Chevalier was not striving for a psychological ideal to be attained by human means. He knew that of himself he could not attain the ideal he had in mind.

Only the Holy Spirit. Divine Love in Person, could enable him to live the way Jesus lived. His part was to allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in him as He did in Jesus. Fr. Lescrauwaet has expressed this very well in his wonderful little work: 'Triptych for a Spirituality of the Heart': "The Holy Spirit was first poured out by the Father into the Heart of the Word made flesh . . . making Jesus say 'ABBA' to the Father from the depths of his being; making Him reach out to men as Brother of them all" p. 26. Jules Chevalier (again I am quoting Fr. Lescrauwaet) "wanted to be carried along by the same Holy Spirit in this twofold movement: from Jesus to the Father and from Jesus to men" p. 19. He wanted his life, like the life of Jesus, to be a life of love - and love is essentially a matter of personal relationships. In union with Jesus he wanted to relate to the Father and to his fellow men as Jesus related to His Father and His fellow men.

As we would expect in a man whose spirituality was dominated by the Mystery of the Incarnation, everything is coloured by his personal relationship with Our Lord. It was a relationship of the heart - of warm and affectionate personal friendship. He really shared his life with Our Lord. He believed quite simply that Jesus loved him personally and he really loved Him in return.

Even though he uses daring words to express our relationship with Our Lord, his Theology is faultless and he shows a deeper penetration into the mystery of the Mystical Body than was common in his day. He could write like this: (Le Coeur de Jesus 80-81) "Our personal union with Jesus surpasses imagination. It is not just a matter of union through imitation and love. It is a mysterious becoming-one-in-life with Jesus. He is the Head, we are the members. As the Head and members go to make up one body ... so also does the complete Christ consist of Jesus and us."

United with Jesus, sharing the Divine Life with Him as a 'son of the Son', Fr. Chevalier wished to be borne along by the Spirit towards the Father. He wished to relate to the Father as Jesus did - in total obedience and submission, in adoring and trusting love.

He had been taught in his seminary days that Jesus is the Perfect Adorer of the Father. The Father had been worthy of perfect adoration from all eternity. He had only begun to receive it when His Incarnate Son offered from His Human Heart an adoration worthy of Him. Fr. Chevalier's own experience and practice of ADORATION was to adore the Father with Jesus: to come into the presence of the Father WITH JESUS THE PERFECT ADORER. Moved by the same Spirit which fills the Heart of Jesus he knew that he too could say ABBA, 'dear Father', from the depth of his heart.

We have already seen that from the day of his Ordination to Sub-diaconate Jules Chevalier strove to be 'like Our Lord' in his relationships with others. He knew that without this the rest would be mere illusion. To accept Jesus as my Brother and His Father as my Father, without accepting the fact that this must profoundly affect my attitude to others, would be the very worst kind of selfishness.

Jules Chevalier accepted the challenge. A strong and determined character by nature, he strove to learn the meekness of Christ in his relationships with others. He tirelessly exhorted his spiritual sons and daughters to do the same - and wrote his exhortations into our Constitutions. He wrote in one of his Meditations: "Above all we must practice meekness which is prescribed by Jesus as the outstanding virtue of His Heart: 'Learn from Me.' he says, 'to be meek and humble of heart.' This virtue is indispensable: with it we have all the others, for we cannot be truly meek without being humble, kind and patient, master of ourselves and our passions." He had learnt from the Heart of Jesus that true meekness is the very opposite of weakness, it is, on the contrary, the strength which enables me to overcome egoism, impatience and fatigue, so that I can - to use Father Chevalier's words - treat every man "as my brother in the full sense of the word."

Throughout his long life, during which he was often tried by conflicts and misunderstanding, our Founder continued to live what Fr. Cuskelly describes so well as his CHARISM OF KINDNESS

The living tradition expressed in your Constitutions reminds you that to be true Daughters of such a father you must do the same. First and foremost among yourselves:

"It is above all her own sisters that the dedicated religious loves with a genuinely human and unselfish affection." C. 21

Beginning here, your KINDNESS must overflow, so that you show in your lives that you "share the Saviour's love for all mankind."¹ C. 20

Perhaps I could not conclude in any better way than by quoting again from Fr. Lescrauwaet, p. 28:

"Because his spirituality was one that was lived, and because his own heart never rejected the gift of the Spirit, Father Chevalier found his way to Christ's Heart and to the hearts of men. His spirituality may well be called a 'spirituality of the Heart' because it was both affectionate and outgoing, because it inspired devotion as well as never-ending hope. His spirituality was a 'spirituality of the heart' because he believed with all his being in love. If he had been asked about his ultimate hopes for the world, and for the Church, he would have repeated a conviction of his earlier days: 'Nothing is stronger than love.' It was in this spirit that he wrote: (Le Coeur de Jesus p. 76)

The Heart of Christ - that is the last word.

Everything leads to Jesus Christ.

'I am the First and the Last', He says.

And in Jesus everything leads to His Heart.' "

DISCIPLESHIP

We saw this morning that Mary is presented by St. John as the perfect disciple of Jesus. He also presents Her to us as the Mother who teaches Her children how to be disciples of Jesus in their turn.

Mary does not call us to be Her disciples. She is, if you like, the Tutor who shows us how to learn from Jesus.

So She is a perfect model for those who are called upon to undertake the spiritual and religious formation of others. She is, of course, much more than a model. You have placed your Conference under Her patronage and protection because you know that, as Mother of the Lord, She will be powerful on your behalf. She certainly desires - more ardently than you do yourselves - that your conference will be the source of many blessings for your whole Congregation.

This morning I would like to put before you a few reflections, (or rather, a few thoughts for your own reflection) on this topic of DISCIPLESHIP.

It seems to me that this is what your conference is all about. You have come as disciples. You want to learn, with Mary's assistance, how to understand more fully and appreciate more deeply your special charism as Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. You have come not just for your own sake, but in the hope that what you learn will help you form others in discipleship according to the mind and heart of your Founder.

If we reflect today, in a general kind of way, on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, we can follow this up tomorrow by considering Father Chevalier's special way of learning from the Heart of Jesus.

If we begin by taking a look at the word 'DISCIPLE', we find that it says quite simply: someone who learns.

This is good as far as it goes. We are those who learn from Jesus. But there are different ways of learning and different kinds of disciples. Some disciples are simply learning a doctrine. Their task is to understand and remember their master's teaching. Their training is theoretical. Their progress is measured by their knowledge.

There are, on the other hand, disciples who are learning an art or a trade. For them it is not sufficient to understand what the master SAYS. They must do more than listen. They have to watch the actions of the master and learn to DO what he DOES. Their training is practical. Their progress is not measured by their knowledge but by the way they put their knowledge into practice.

We have a special name for this kind of disciple. We call them APPRENTICES. This is what we are. We have been apprenticed to Jesus to learn from Him. I think Fr. Chevalier would approve of this word 'apprentice'. He knows what being an apprentice means. During the years of waiting for an opportunity to follow his vocation he was himself apprenticed to a shoemaker. He learned from experience that it is not enough to have the theory in your head. You have to know how to put the theory into practice.

I think Our Lord Himself would also approve of the word 'apprentice'. He also knows all about it. He is the Master Craftsman who accepts us as His disciples, but He also served his time as an apprentice in the school of life. It was foretold of Him in the third of the Servant Songs in Isaiah that He would become the teacher of the nations because he was first of all the perfect Disciple of Yahweh. (Is. 50:4-9)

"The Lord God has given me a disciple's tongue.

So that I may know how to reply to the wearied

He provides me with speech.

Each morning He wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple." The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus "learned obedience from what He experienced." He is able to be our compassionate High Priest because "he has been tempted in every way that we are, though He is without sin." (Heb. 1:11) "It was essential that He should in this way become completely like His brothers, so that He could be a compassionate and trustworthy High Priest. Because He has Himself been through temptation, He is able to help others who are tempted." (Heb. 4:15) We will come back on this point because it is important, but I would just draw your attention in those texts to the idea that Our Lord Himself learned compassion through the experience of our humanness.

It is clear enough that we come as apprentices to Jesus to learn something very practical. The disciple of Jesus is one who learns from Him how to ACT like Him in all the various situations of life.

This is basic and yet we can sometimes forget it. No doubt it is important to be always seeking new inspiration through an ever deeper understanding of Our Lord's teaching, but it is always with a view to action. Our main task is to put His teaching into practice. Until we begin to ACT like Jesus we have not begun to be His apprentices.

We might be inclined to say: "How can I sincerely ACT like Jesus when I am not like Jesus?" This would be to forget the power of grace: to forget that the Spirit of Jesus has been poured into our hearts to make us like Jesus. So, even though we are painfully aware of the fact that we are, in so many ways, so unlike Jesus, we must accept the graces we are given and begin to act the way He did. We must, if you prefer it this way, begin to act AS THOUGH we were like Him. We will discover that this is the more effective way to become like Him.

To advance along this road of discipleship great learning is not necessary. We are concerned with something practical - the ART OF LIVING. In this art, as in every art, there are not a great number of basic principles to be learned. There are just a few. The beauty of the finished product depends on the perfection with which these principles are applied in practice.

Jesus has not left us guessing about the basic principles we must learn to apply-in living His way. He sets them out quite plainly. There are three of them. He says: "If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must

1. forget himself

2. take up his cross every day

and 3. follow Me." (Matt. 16, 24)

Let us have a look at these principles one by one.

As soon as He takes me on as his apprentice Jesus asks me to 'forget myself. This is basic if I am to become an unselfish person like Him. We know from experience that what He is asking is just about the hardest thing in the world. We can be grateful that we have the example of His life and the power of His grace to assist us.

Long ago the great Pope Gregory the Great wrote of the egoism which constantly harried us: which is always in danger of spoiling our activity. But he reminds us that this experience of egoism, of self-centredness, of the deep-seated selfishness that is in us, is not meant to discourage us. It is meant to make us humble and to increase our desire for God.

Secondly, Jesus asks his apprentice to 'take up his cross every day'. He is asking us to adopt His attitude to suffering. He is not asking us to seek suffering or to ask for it - but to accept it, and not always try to avoid it. We must make good use of what we find hard, since it is in this way that we will grow in the likeness of our Master - in personal and Christlike maturity.

The mature person is one who has learned to accept reality as it is - he has learned to accept himself as he is. He has learned to accept others as they are. He has learned to accept God as He is - so often a "hidden God". He has learned to accept the often difficult circumstances of life.

The apprentice of Jesus must be learning to transform all that is hard - not to his personal liking - into a mature sharing in the cross and resurrection of Jesus. He must be learning to say with St. Paul: "All I want is to know Christ: the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering."

Finally, Jesus asks His apprentice to 'follow' Him. Not all apprentices have to live with their master: no doubt it is better if they do. But with Jesus it is essential. The apprentice must live with Him. must share his life with Him.

This final requirement brings us to the heart of Christian discipleship (and, incidentally, to the heart of your own charism too). It reveals how demanding and how wonderful is the relationship Jesus wishes to establish with us. It is certainly demanding. We cannot learn from Jesus his way of living simply by imitating Him. The personal transformation of the disciple cannot be brought about that way. If it were simply a matter of 'imitating' Him, He would remain 'out there' as a model. The imitating would be something I did. I would be in control of the situation.

But that is not how it is. The transformation of the disciple into the likeness of Jesus can only be achieved through friendship - through the transforming power of love. So Jesus demands that I 'follow' Him - that I live with Him as a friend. Now I find that I am not in control of the situation. He is. At every moment I find myself challenged to respond to the demands of His friendship. At any moment I can hear Him say: "Would you do this for me?" Friendship is a demanding thing. Friendship with Jesus can be very demanding indeed.

So the disciple of Jesus knows what to expect. At least, he should know what to expect. To be a disciple of Jesus is to experience difficulty. Not just at the beginning, but always.

We should not be surprised at this. It would be surprising if it were otherwise. Neither should we be surprised if we find the difficulty increasing. The demand Jesus makes on us is an on-going one. Notice that ominous 'every day' in the Gospel text. We must take up the cross every day. As life goes on Jesus will ask of us an ever more radical self-forgetfulness, an ever deeper renunciation of self. He will ask an ever more mature acceptance of the cross in our life. He will invite us to an ever closer personal union with Him.

Being who He is, and loving us as He does, Jesus MUST keep on asking more and more: keep on calling us to an ever more radical choice of His way. We would be making a fatal mistake if we were to misinterpret this experience of continual difficulty as a sign of no progress: if we were to say to ourselves, "I have got nowhere myself. What right have I to be instructing others?"

Rather, you should see your own personal experience of difficulty as a precious grace - an absolutely necessary grace for those entrusted with the formation of others. You can only help others to discipleship if you are living discipleship in your own life. It is necessary that you should be constantly seeing as though for the first time what Jesus means and what He expects of you. In this sense, to be a disciple is to be always a beginner.

This deep sense of being very much a beginner yourself will enable you to meet the young people entrusted to you where they are - not where you might like them to be. Their deepest need is to be understood. They hope to find in you someone who understands. You are destined to be a 'most significant other' in their lives. The fact that you experienced when you were young the difficulties they are experiencing now will make you understanding and compassionate. The fact that you are experiencing right now on a deeper level the difficulties they are experiencing at the level of beginners will keep you humble and enable you to help them in a truly personal and authentic way.

Perhaps we could end here. But I think the Gospel has something more to say. It seems to say quite clearly that there can come times in our life when to experience discipleship is to experience 'impossibility'. One scene that comes to mind is the call of the rich young man (Matt. 19.25). Jesus asked a great deal. It seemed to the young man himself that Jesus was asking the impossible. He couldn't do it. So "he went away sad". As they watched him go. Jesus remarked: "How hard it is for a rich man to enter heaven." The disciples were amazed. "Who can be saved then?" they asked. Matthew tells us that Jesus "looked straight at them" and said: "It is impossible for men. For God everything is possible."

There may well come times in our own lives of discipleship when we find ourselves in the position of the rich young man. Jesus may seem to be asking the impossible. Whatever it is - some particular renunciation of self: some special cross to bear: a call to deeper union involving the surrender of something we have been relying on for our security - when we look into our own hearts and measure our resources against His request, we can only say in our turn: "Lord, I cannot." The Lord will reply: "I know you can't - but I can."

This experience of utter powerlessness is not meant to make us despair. On the contrary, it is a purifying grace meant to make us grow in TRUST - and real trust is the greatest proof of love.

So - we will never be finished with discipleship. We can never outgrow the need to keep growing. It is not only those who are, as we say, 'in formation' who must be constantly growing. It is even more important that those entrusted with their formation should be constantly growing too - constantly open to the Spirit of Jesus who, in every age, wants to renew the face of the earth.

And if we will never be finished with discipleship, we will always be in need of our Tutor. She will always be there: showing us how to reach out to Jesus and how to reach out to one another.

We are realizing more and more that this 'reaching out to one another' is essential for any genuine renewal of our lives. We are not saved or sanctified in 'splendid isolation' but through incorporation into one Body. We are meant to be instruments of grace to one another through open-hearted encounter and interaction. This is true at all times. It will be true in a very special way during your conference.

THE MISSIONARY CHARISM OF JULES CHEVALIER IN RELATION TO THE LAITY

Dennis J Murphy msc (Rome, 1993)

1. Practical experience of various relationships between laity and our Society is a more valuable basis for discussion than any research I have done into past documents; but what I am going to present here may help confirm that experience; it may also question it; and it may, I hope, stimulate further discussion about this important topic.
2. More research needs to be done on Father Chevalier's idea of a three branch Society, particularly on some details; however I feel confident that sufficient evidence is already available to draw some definite conclusions.
3. Two approaches seem open to me. One is simply to present the historical facts. This is certainly interesting and even enlightening. The other approach is to concentrate on some basic principles that seem to me to underlay and emerge from those facts.
4. I have decided to follow the second approach, since I presume that most are aware already of the facts, at least in a general way. Furthermore, experience of other discussions has convinced me that unless there is clarity about the underlying principles, discussions easily become more confused than necessary.
5. Therefore, I shall attempt to clarify, even at some length, the three main elements in the title of this paper: the nature of a charism, our Founder's understanding of his mission, and finally what he meant by the involvement of laity in that mission. For me, these three points are inseparably connected.

CHARISM

6. A charism is not merely a thing; for example, an attitude, an approach to life or to mission; it is the Spirit of God himself active in us. Studying and discussing a charism is useful, but it will remain simply words unless we are open to the creative power of the Spirit. This involves humble, earnest prayer and a radical openness to be converted to a life according to the Gospel.
7. Paul VI's *Mutuae Relationes*, following *Evangelica Testificatio*, refers to the beginning of a religious congregation as 'an experience of the Spirit'. This experience comes as a grace to a Founder; its continuance and renewal in us is also a grace for which we must pray, often from a frustrating experience of our own powerlessness and poverty. This process is evident also throughout the life of our Founder.
8. In order to share today in the 'experience of the Spirit' that gave birth to our Society we need to do more than simply return to Father Chevalier; we need to be open, as he was in his time, to the Spirit speaking to us through the Scriptures, through the Church and through world of our time. *Mutuae Relationes* expresses very well this integrated approach to the charism of founders:

The very charism of Founders appears as 'an experience of the Spirit', transmitted to their disciples to be lived safeguarded, deepened and constantly developed by them, in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in the process of growth. *Mutuae Relationes* 11

9. Consequently, research into the past would be fruitless, unless it prepared us for the same 'experience of the Spirit' that moved our Founder. This does not mean that we are asked to imitate every detail about Father Chevalier; our task is to discover his *essential concerns*. The creative power of the Spirit can bring these to life again in us today in new ways and help us contribute to the Church's mission as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

10. This integrated approach to charism has to be applied also to Father Chevalier's plan to found a lay Third Order of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. We have a few examples of rules and structures he drew up or had drawn up for him. Sharing in our Founder's 'experience of the Spirit' does not involve accepting all the details he described. In fact some of them are not consistent with each other. Much less is it a matter of working out a consensus based on a lowest common denominator of details he mentions. It is more a matter of examining these documents to discover his basic purpose in founding a Third Order. In this way too our minds may become more open to what the Spirit could be inviting us to do today.

11. Enthusiasm is one sign that we have really heard what the Spirit is saying to us. The Greek etymology of the word 'enthusiasm' means to be possessed by a god, possessed by a power greater than our own limitations and frailty. To share in Father Chevalier's own 'experience of the Spirit' is to be given the gift to rediscover today his enthusiasm, an enthusiasm capable of carrying him through extraordinary difficulties and disappointments. If that initial enthusiasm, which will be greater than our own strengths and weaknesses, is not found, Provinces, and even the Society as a whole, will die, or what is worse, stagnate. One of the dynamic elements in the Church since Vatican II has been a growing realization of the importance of the laity. Perhaps contact with that powerful movement of the Spirit in the Church is one way in which our own vitality will be increased.

THE MISSION OF JULES CHEVALIER

12. Father Chevalier did not work out a structure for his Society from some theoretical principles. Nor did he merely imitate others. He was very much a pragmatist. He was a man with an urgent sense of mission and any structure he gave to his organization was essentially for the purpose of carrying out that mission. This must remain for us today an indispensable touchstone in evaluating relationships between ourselves and the laity. If we enter this sort of relationship for self-advancement or for assurance of survival, we are on the wrong track. We were founded for mission; that too has to characterize our relationship with laity.

13. Our Founder saw his mission in very concrete terms: the regeneration of society in accordance with the Gospel. There can be no doubt about that point from his writings. It was one of his essential, consistent concerns and not merely incidental or transitory. His basic 'experience of the Spirit' was that society was rotten within (the 'mal moderne') and that this social sickness had to be set right by a counterforce. We need not enter into the details of his political convictions; to some extent they are irrelevant; nor should we try to read history backwards and turn him into a liberation theologian or even a Father Dehon, the socially minded founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. Father Chevalier was neither of these; his basic concern was that if people took the Gospel seriously and lived accordingly, society would be changed for the better and only in this way would it be so changed.

14. Father Chevalier's insistence that 'devotion to the Sacred Heart' was the social force that could counteract the evils of society probably appears to us today a bit embarrassing and even hopelessly out of touch with reality. But since, on the other hand, he was an essentially practical and down-to-earth pastor, we have to suppose that his understanding of the devotion was more comprehensive than we had come to expect.

15. In the early days of the Society, Father Chevalier worked very closely with Father Henry Ramiere SJ. At a later date, conflicts would emerge between the two, but their basic aims and motivations remained the same. In July 1863, the Jesuit wrote in the *Messenger du Sacre-Coeur* (the emphasis in the following texts is mine):

Are some individual practices or even some confraternities for public homage of the Heart sufficient? No, evidently not. These practices are excellent, but they would not suffice to regenerate society. To produce such a result, it is necessary first of all that devotion to the Sacred Heart penetrate right into the deepest depths of souls who have adopted it; that it form them entirely into the image of that divine Heart, and that it make of these souls so many perfectly docile instruments, through whom he will be able to realize the plans of his love to their fullest extent. op.cit. p.12

16. This same aim would be expressed also in Father Chevalier's *Formula Instituti* (1869).

In order therefore that this true and most salutary devotion towards the Heart of Christ might be widely spread, both amongst the laity and especially amongst priests, and so might bring forth rich fruits in christian society, it has seemed good to establish a religious Society which would set before itself this special aim and would pursue it by all possible means. To it has been given the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus because they accept the glorious mission of glorifying the Heart of Jesus, of making manifest the treasures of grace with which it is filled and of repairing the outrages wrought against it.

Formula Instituti I, De Opportunitate Instituti

17. The *Formula Instituti* added a brief description of two associations (one of diocesan priests, the other of lay people) through which the Society would more effectively achieve its aim. The rules governing these two associations were not part of *Formula Instituti* but were to be presented in a separate document. What was sought was approval of the idea of the associations in principle.

We shall first set out the formula of the aforementioned Society and shall add to it a brief conspectus of the two associations, priestly and lay, by which this religious Society chiefly attains its aim.

Formula Instituti I, De Opportunitate Instituti

18. When the *Formula Instituti* was approved on March 8, 1869, the two associations were clearly mentioned in the text itself. In this way, at least in principle, the three branch concept of Father Chevalier's organization was recognized by Rome.

4. As regards the laity, there are not a few who, moved by divine grace towards greater perfection and desirous of defending the Church in these times, would be helped most effectively in the attainment of both these aims if they were to form an intimate society whose bond would be the love of the Heart of Christ.

5. Likewise secular priests can be fitted to attain the perfection of their sublime calling and to fulfill its duties by no better means than this: to strive, with common endeavour, to honour and imitate the Heart of Christ the High Priest

These two associations will be mentioned also in the Founder's 1877 Constitutions, but there they are placed explicitly, within the very purpose of the Society. Later in that same text a fuller description is given of them. (1877 Constitutions, Chapter II, Article 3)

19. Clearly Father Chevalier had no intention of founding a religious Society for its own sake; he did not want an inward looking institute that would be concerned primarily with itself; or that considered that it could carry out its mission on its own. For him, the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was not an end but a means; it was founded to continue Jesus' own mission and in this way counteract the evils that were destroying society.

20. Furthermore, the texts quoted from the *Formula Instituti* show that Father Chevalier considered that his Society could not achieve its mission without the active cooperation of a group of secular priests and of laity; two groups *by which this Society chiefly attains its aim* (*Formula Instituti*). Those strong words, taken from the first approval of Father Chevalier's project by the Holy See, and later incorporated into his first Constitutions have long been forgotten, but through a renewed 'experience of the Spirit' they are coming to life once more in our own time.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

21. One cannot understand properly the mission Jules Chevalier had in mind for his Congregation unless we see what he understood by the practice of devotion to the Sacred Heart; particularly in so far as he saw it as an answer to the evils of his time. His writings show clearly that he understood the devotion not merely as a collection of pious exercises, but as a comprehensive and effective way of living the Gospel, following what we may call a way of the heart; the heart being understood in the full biblical meaning of the word.

22. It may be useful before going further to mention a few things about the heart as symbol. A symbol is not merely a cipher, like 'x' in an equation. Once the meaning of 'x' is known, the cipher is no longer needed. A symbol, on the contrary, does not have one exclusive meaning. It can be seen from a variety of aspects; and because it suggests various trains of thought, it is not replaceable by one or other concept.

23. Biologically the *heart* is a central, essential organ for pumping blood. For this reason, it has taken on in most languages and cultures the wider significance of *centre, essence, interior life, basic dispositions, the deeper aspects of a person* etc. Because it symbolizes the depths of a person, it also symbolizes the deeper functions of the senses, and also of mind, will and spirit. Today in western culture the *heart* is taken almost exclusively as a symbol of *love*, but the meaning in the Bible is far wider; this is true also of Father Founder's use of the word *heart*.

24. Father Chevalier found a rich symbolism of *heart* in the Scriptures, in the Fathers of the Church and in a mystical tradition that placed a special emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. This form of mysticism, concentrating on the *heart* or dispositions of Jesus as a way to the Father and to others, blossomed in the Middle Ages and had a marked influence, for example, even within Benedictine and Franciscan spirituality. It would influence also the Jesuits (e.g. Peter Canisius) even before their acceptance of their special commission concerning the *devotion* that came to them through St Margaret Mary.

25. This same tradition, emphasizing the dispositions of *heart* of Jesus, had a deep influence also on what has been called the French School of Spirituality as expounded by Cardinal de Berulle and his followers; a spirituality in which Father Chevalier was formed during his seminary days; a spirituality that was given an even sharper missionary thrust through his own 'experience of the Spirit' when he contemplated the evils of his time. In fact, I would suggest, this bringing together of the Heart of Christ (and our hearts too) in response to the evils of society constitutes an essential aspect of Father Chevalier's 'experience of the Spirit' and hence also of our *charism*.

26. It should be added that the tradition stemming from Cardinal de Berulle linked inseparably the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary. Though we shall not be dealing with this subject here, we should not forget that Father Chevalier's *charism* or 'experience of the Spirit' had an essential Marian aspect.

27. Understood in the light of this long *heart* tradition, therefore, the *devotion* was for Father Chevalier a way of life, even a way of understanding God's revelation; it was a way also for transforming society by introducing into it, as effectively as possible, the dispositions, the *heart*, of Jesus. It was also a way for understanding God's plan for the universe.

28. Consequently, from the beginning, Father Chevalier understood this *way of the heart* to be essentially missionary, so much so that the distinction between his mission and his spirituality is, it seems to me, artificial, if not indeed misleading. In other words, he saw himself sharing fully in the mission of Christ by living and helping to spread this way of the heart that for him summed up the whole of the Gospel. This joining together of mission and life is typical of the writings of St Paul and St John, sources to which Father Chevalier frequently returned.

29. Understandably, therefore, because the Founder understood 'devotion to the Sacred Heart' in this comprehensive way he agreed with Henry Ramiere SJ in a letter he wrote to him on December 1862:

You are doing what I have always thought: You make the Heart of the divine Master the centre on which everything in the Old and New Testament converges, the pivot around which everything in Catholicism turns ...the salvation of our world, the remedy of all our ills. That is how I understand devotion to the Sacred Heart: it embraces everything, it is the answer to everything.

30. Father Founder did not change this early understanding of the comprehensive nature of devotion to the Sacred Heart; nor did he cease to stress its social dimension. Later in life he would write:

This remedy in which gentleness mingles with effectiveness, has a new aspect and an attractive form. It contains the quintessence of all that can quickly bring back to social life nations that no longer have it. The remedy is Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In itself alone it is a whole world of theology.

This devotion has so much fascination; it is so well put together to attract us, that as a result, to know it is to love it. Its range is enormous; we have already been able to convince you of that. It embraces everything; dogma and moral; the past, the present and the future. When one practises it, its religious influence penetrates irresistibly. That is why this devotion is essentially social, restoring all things.

Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus p.280

31. From the above quotations, it is clear that Father Chevalier's mission, even when he expresses it in terms of 'devotion to the Sacred Heart' is identical with the mission of Christ and the Church, even though expressed in the language of the heart.

32. At times it is said that 'devotion to the Sacred Heart' was bypassed by Vatican Council II. Certainly the expression does not appear, but as Father Jan Bovenmars has shown, the biblical language of the heart had an important part to play in the documents of the Council and even in that crucial document *Gaudium et Spes* that is concerned with the mission of the Church in our time (*Biblical Spirituality of the Heart*, Jan G. Bovenmars MSC, New York, Alba House, 181ff). The same is equally true of practically all the major encyclicals of Pope John Paul II and can be verified also in the New Catechism. Mission according to a way of the heart is a basic assumption of all these documents that harmonize, in my opinion, with the basic intuitions of Father Chevalier concerning 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'.

33. Admittedly today much confusion is avoided by using the expression 'spirituality of the Heart' instead of 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'. But even the expression 'spirituality of the Heart' does not do full justice to what Father Chevalier was speaking about.

34. Some today distinguish various elements in what is meant by this 'heart tradition' within the Church:

34.1 **Liturgical worship:** In its liturgical worship the Church celebrates the one mystery of Christ under various aspects. One of these aspects centres on the Heart of Christ. The Scriptural texts and prayers used in the Church's liturgy are very important for an understanding of the significance of the Heart of Christ.

34.2 **Devotion:** Devotional practices and iconography have also an important part in expressing and keeping alive this tradition. They are obviously relative to different times, peoples and places, but it remains always true that a spirituality needs to be expressed and nourished by various forms of prayer suited to particular individuals and groups.

34.3 **Spirituality:** That is, a way of living the Gospel. Some prefer the expression 'way of the heart' rather than 'spirituality of the heart'

34.4 **Theology:** If a spirituality has genuine and deep roots in the bible and in the Church's tradition, it will also provide an approach for understanding God and the world; it will provide also a basic principle or principles for morality, even though not providing automatic answers to particular problems.

ONE MISSION A VARIETY OF WORKS

35. The Church has only one mission and that is the mission of Christ. Our mission is to share in that one mission. As I have tried to indicate, we need not fear that Father Chevalier's insistence that the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart was the mission of our Society trivialized the biblical presentation of the mission of Christ and his Church. On the contrary, the symbol of the Heart summed up very effectively and comprehensively the *heart* of the mission of Christ and continues to do so. This can be easily shown from Father Chevalier's writings.

36. As mentioned already, this approach has a special foundation in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John. To spread devotion to the Sacred Heart, as Father Chevalier understood it, was in fact to share in the one mission of Christ even if seen from a particular aspect: the aspect of communion and interiority. Pope John Paul II's description in *Redemptoris Missio* repeats what can be found also in the writings of Father Chevalier. These same sentiments were repeated daily by all early Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in a prayer based on Chapter 17 of John's Gospel. The text from *Redemptoris Missio* deserves to be quoted and reflected on:

John is the only Evangelist to speak explicitly of a 'mandate', a word equivalent to 'mission'. He directly links the mission which Jesus entrusts to his disciples with the mission that he himself has received from the Father: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21). Addressing the Father, Jesus says: "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world". John 17:18

The entire missionary sense of John's Gospel is expressed in the 'priestly prayer': "This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent". John 17:3

The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son. The disciples are to live in unity with one another, remaining in the Father and the Son, so that the world may know and believe (cf. Jn 17:21-23). This is a very important missionary text. It makes us understand that we are missionaries above all because of what we are as a Church, whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries in word or deed. op.cit. n.23

37. Taking up the rich traditional view of the Church as communion, Vatican Council II states that:

The Church, in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament - a sign and instrument that is, of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race. Lumen Gentium no.1

This same text, together also with *Ad Gentes* no.3, gives this union and unity an essential missionary aspect. A similar vision of the Church and its mission as communion was held by Father Chevalier:

Do you hear the cry that comes to us from over eighteen hundred years? It is a testament of love: I want all to be no longer anything but one in love (Jn 17:11); to have but one heart and one soul (Acts 4.32); to form but one and the same single family; to be united among themselves and with us as much as possible, just as we ourselves are in the Godhead (John 17:21) From where comes this call, this programme of love? From the Heart of Jesus. Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus, p.241

38. No one, I suspect, would want to express our mission today under the title 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'. It would be completely inadequate and misleading. Perhaps, however, we might have something to learn from Father Chevalier's practice. There is a risk sometimes that generalized talking about the 'mission of Christ' or the 'mission of the Church' can reduce it to the proclamation of a message or merely social transformation. It is that, of course, but it is above all a way of living: a missionary spirituality, if one prefers that expression. Father Chevalier did not have an abstract, theoretical idea of mission. He was a pastor involved in meeting the demands of parish life. For him, the presentation of the mission of Christ involved very concretely an integral way of living the gospel that could be usefully expressed and helped even through simple prayers that appealed to people. Jesus lived close to ordinary people; the continuance of his mission is no different.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION OF OUR MISSION

39. Even though we would not describe our mission today using the expression 'devotion to the Sacred Heart', we still have to remain creatively faithful to Father Chevalier's basic intuition. In doing this seriously, I am of the opinion that we shall retain a more integrated view of mission than otherwise, because, unfortunately, mission is often described almost exclusively in terms of doing things and not sufficiently in terms of being. It would seem to me that the text of Father Chevalier cited above (no. 37) indicates that the renewed presentation of the Kingdom of God and of the Church in terms of communion can help us understand a basis on which he linked together mission and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

40. The post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* on the vocation and the mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world (December 30, 1988) has much to say about the Church as communion, recalling the words of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod. The connection between mission and communion is particularly noteworthy.

Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other; they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other; to the point that communion is to be considered both the source and the fruit of mission: communion is missionary and mission aims at communion. No. 32

41. According to Father Chevalier, the 'cry from the heart of Christ' that comes to us across the centuries is a cry for communion. This is not merely a call to practise devotions; it is a call to be church in the full significance of that word.

The reality of the church as communion is, then, the integrating aspect, indeed the central content of the mystery, or rather, the divine plan for the salvation of humanity. No. 19

42. Our particular spirituality, in other words, by no means puts us on the periphery, concerned with something accidental to the life of the Church and its mission. It identifies us with it. It should hardly need mentioning that it is in *communion* that the various ministries of the Church find their origin and purpose. For religious to live this *communion* calls essentially for the communion of priests, religious, laity.

43. When we think of mission we often enough think primarily of service of others, particularly the poor and marginalized. This is good, for it is an essential element of our mission. However, it might be helpful to remember that Father Chevalier usually spoke of our mission to others in terms of their sanctification: that is, helping them to live in union with Christ. This, for him, was also the purpose of 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'.

44. We accept also that if we are to be evangelizers, we must be ourselves evangelized: that is, if we are going to get others to take the Gospel seriously, we have to take it seriously also. Father Chevalier described this in terms of making our own the dispositions (heart) of Christ. This too, was an essential element of 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'.

45. Many of us would probably feel that these two aims (to evangelize and be evangelized) sum up sufficiently the aim of a missionary congregation. Father Chevalier however gave a threefold purpose for his Society of missionaries both in the Formula (*Paraphus Primus*, Iff) and later, using the same words, in the 1877 Constitutions (Ch II No 5ff). These three aims were not to be considered in isolation; each could be understood properly only in the light of the others.

46. Perhaps the most surprising point for most of us is that Father Founder puts worship as the first purpose of the Society. He does this deliberately; for it is characteristic of his understanding not only of religious life but of life in general. God is God; we are his creatures; therefore our basic attitude has to be adoration, worship. A spirituality of the heart should have no difficulty in seeing that genuine worship involves also complete readiness to serve both God and others, particularly those in need. The God we worship is a God who is concerned for the poor and oppressed. This is the biblical tradition of the prophets concerning worship, a tradition which culminates in Jesus and continues in the risen Christ.

47. If we are not actively concerned for others, our worship is an aberration, and clearly contrary to the teaching of Jesus. Today however there is perhaps a greater danger of the opposite; namely, we tend to value the worship of God only in so far as we feel it may promote or support concern for others; that is, as a means to an end. God, on the contrary, is to be worshipped because he is God. To subordinate him to other ends is a form of idolatry, for it presumes that those ends are more important and greater than he. Worship of God needs no other reason than God himself. It is true that authentic worship of the triune God revealed by Jesus should strengthen our commitment to the service of others, but this cannot be the ultimate reason for our worship.

48. Father Founder's theocentric understanding of the first end of religious life was not in accordance with the usual Thomistic formulation that emphasized personal sanctification through the practice of the evangelical counsels as the first general aim of religious institutes. Father Chevalier did not follow this common formulation, though he obviously accepted that personal sanctification was essential. In fact he was asked to change the wording of his constitutions to fit in with the more usual Roman formulation of the ends of a religious institute.

49. The Founder's theocentric approach was influenced by the Sulpician tradition of spirituality in which he had been formed, and also by the Ignatian *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam, For the greater glory of God*, often abbreviated as AMDG. In fact, Father Chevalier often writes AMSCG on his letters: *For the greater glory of the Sacred Heart*. To seek the glory of God is a central theme in the Exercises of St Ignatius. From the beginning of the first week, the retreatant is required to meditate on the 'Principle and Foundation', the first words being:
Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord and by this means to save his soul.

Father Chevalier took the necessity of adoration and praise of God with utmost seriousness; he took also the mission to bring others to worship God with utmost seriousness also. This was a feature of his rule for religious and also laity.

MISSION AND WORKS

50. Though there is only one mission of Christ, there exists a vast variety of works by which this one mission can be carried out. Characteristically, Father Chevalier did not limit our Society to any one particular work, though in our history there has often been a tendency to do this. For him, our identity was not to be found in our works, but in our mission. And our mission was to continue the mission of Christ following what I have been calling a way of the heart, understood in the full biblical meaning of that word.

51. This distinction of mission and works will be most important when we come to examine the laity. When some speak of laity sharing in our mission, they immediately think of ways in which laity can share in our works, not making any distinction between the two. Laity of course can share in our works and often times do, but that is not to be the starting point for understanding how they share in our specific mission. The essential and specific point we are dealing with here is their sharing with us in the one and the same mission, but doing this specifically as lay people immersed in the world. In stressing this point, I do not want to rule out new experiments being made with lay people sharing not only in our works but even in our communities; but it would seem to me that we would be on the wrong track if we limited the way laity can share in our mission to this, at times contentious, point.

LAITY AND OUR MISSION

52. It may appear that I have spent too much time on Father Founder's idea of mission, but it is essential if we are to understand the importance for him of the laity. Reading his early publications about the nature and mission of his Society, I have the strong impression that he would have found it unthinkable, or perhaps even impractical, to speak of changing the world and its values without involving laity, for they were the ones more intimately immersed in that world. Religious priests, brothers and sisters, together with secular priests, had an essential role to play, and Father Chevalier stressed that; but if Christ's mission was to be continued in the world on all levels of society, the role of the laity was at least equally as essential and at times even more essential.

53. This applied not only to the Church's mission, but also to the mission of the Society; for the Society's mission was simply the Church's mission seen from a particular point of view.

54. Father Chevalier's first publications about the Society (leaving aside the Rules which were never published) speak at length about the secular priests of the Sacred Heart and a third order of laity; less was written about what we today consider to be, in an almost exclusive way, the Society. This helped give rise to a doubt in the second generation of MSC, and also later, that in fact he did not intend to found a religious congregation at all. Father Piperon and the Founder's own letters from the time prove the contrary beyond any doubt.

55. This emphasis on the two other branches of the Society that he had in mind (secular priests and laity) did not indicate that he was vague or ambiguous about the branch of religious priests and brothers. He clearly wanted a group of *religious*, in the usual understanding of that word, modelled, at least in principle, on the Company of Jesus.

56. He was attracted to the Jesuits it seems to me, mainly because of St Ignatius' complete commitment to mission. Moreover they had been given a special role in spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart. He was attracted to them also because of their missionary obedience; that is, obedience modelled on Christ's own complete obedience to his mission, *even unto death*. Philippians 1:5ff plays a central part in Father Chevalier's idea of a missionary spirituality. Contemplation of Jesus, pierced on the Cross, was for him essentially a missionary experience, just as it was also for St Ignatius.

57. However Father Chevalier was also convinced that a religious congregation on its own was insufficient as a missionary force; for that reason he came back frequently to the three branch structure of his society in his early writings. For example, in a brochure published in 1866, *Les Missionnaires du Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, he wrote:

They (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) must be truly religious in order to resemble Him more closely whose Kingdom they want to spread. At the same time they must keep as close contact as possible with the clergy, in order to spread everywhere the divine influence of the Sacred Heart ... And finally, a lay third order will penetrate where the priest would not be able. In this way, if it is possible, nothing will be allowed to escape the rebirth that comes through the influence of the Heart of Jesus. op.cit p.8

58. Consequently Father Chevalier accepted that the one mission (summed up in devotion to the Sacred Heart) that he was giving to his Society had, of necessity, to be carried out by a variety of groups if it was to be effective: religious priests and brothers; religious sisters; diocesan priests and laity.

59. Unfortunately, after the thoroughgoing re-writing of Founder's Constitutions in 1907, it seems to me that we have grown used to thinking of the Society exclusively as us religious priests and brothers. As a result, the only way many of us can give an MSC identity to a group of laity is by associating them either with one of our communities or with one of our works; we may feel that the only way open for them is to actually live in one of our communities and share in its work. Father Chevalier's statements seem to me to indicate clearly that a group of laity obtains an MSC identity primarily by becoming identified precisely as lay people, with our mission, and not principally by community life, though that is not excluded.

60. For Father Chevalier, religious (priests, brothers and sisters) had their part to play, so did secular priests and laity. No one group had a monopoly on the one mission he had in mind. Nor was the distinction between these groups to be diminished or abolished; it was not a matter of laity and secular priests trying to be religious, or religious and secular priests to live like laity, or religious priests like secular priests and vice versa. Each had *their* way of carrying out the one and same mission. Their very difference was their source of strength, for it spread the mission further within the world that our Founder wanted to 'regenerate' through the Gospel, in other words, to evangelize. Consequently, for the sake of its mission, the Society had to answer the needs of each group.

In order to fulfil its mission the Society must spread as much as possible; but it will spread only in so far as it answers the various things that people are looking for.

Les Missionnaires du Sacre Coeur de Jesus, p.10

61. Father Chevalier was convinced, from his own experience as a priest rather than from theory, that secular priests and lay people in the world could live in *their* way evangelical perfection:

It is not only inside a religious house that privileged graces come into being. They are found too in the world. The Spirit blows where he will. The power of the Sacred Heart shines forth in proportion to the difficulties that it meets. In this Society, there is a place for all degrees of calling and of virtue. op.cit. 19f

62. Though Father Chevalier held that a vowed life was in itself preferable if possible, he readily accepted that one could live the counsels without vows, and that for some people that could well be the better way because of their particular circumstances.

It is better for them to keep their freedom and to join only by a commitment based on honour and good will with the liberty to withdraw from the Society without fear of offending God, even venially. And it is precisely because of this freedom that they will be devoted more faithfully to the Congregation and serve it with greater generosity. Would it not be unfortunate to deprive them of the valuable helps in religious life and deprive the Society of their service and merits, merely because they do not dare or do not want to bind themselves by vow? They believe they are sufficiently committed by the vow of their baptism, by concern for their salvation, by the obligation of the commandments of God and the Church, by the vows of the priesthood if they are priests. A word given seriously is sufficient for them to believe they are bound to observe faithfully the rules of the Society. op.cit. p.18f

63. Personally my study of the early documentation has convinced me that this three branch vision of the Society was an essential part of Father Chevalier's 'experience of the Spirit' as Founder; in other words, part of his missionary charism, and also, at least in principle, part of our charism also. In this regard, it may be of interest to note that Henry Ramiere SJ considered that the lay Third Order and the associated group of diocesan priests were essential aspects of Father Chevalier's project. The Jesuit's observation as an outsider is valuable. When Father Chevalier was having some trouble in having his three branch theory accepted in his Formula Instituti, the Jesuit wrote to Blessed Louise Therese de Montaignac on August 18, 1868:

I am ill at ease about the result of the examination to which the Archbishop of Bourges has submitted the Plan of the three Societies of the Sacred Heart, before seeking the Holy Father's approval of it. The few words that Father Chevalier has written to me about the matter lead me to believe that the examiners tend to make the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart a work similar to the hundred and one associations established in various dioceses.

The Plan of a third order is turned down as too complicated; that of an association of priests as calculated to arouse hostilities with the bishops. If these two important means of action, which alone distinguish the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from other Societies founded up to this time, are taken away from it, what will be left to it of a specific nature? op. cit. p.18f

THE NATURE OF A THIRD ORDER

64. Before developing more at length the relationship between Father Chevalier's concept of the mission of his Society and the laity, some distinctions may be necessary. A failure to make these distinctions has, I would suggest, caused confusion among some Missionaries of the Sacred Heart when discussing this topic.

65. Father Chevalier was actively engaged in parish work throughout the whole of his priesthood, despite the fact that he was also the Superior General of a rapidly expanding international religious congregation. I do not know whether this is unique for a founder, but it is certainly extraordinary. Involvement and cooperation with lay people, therefore, took up a lot, even at times the major part, of his time. He realized also the effectiveness of associations and sodalities that could support lay people in carrying out the duties of their faith and help them live effectively as Christians in the world. He was responsible for founding and promoting a variety of these associations.

66. His experience in this would not differ, in principle at least, from the experience of priests working in parishes today. They are necessarily involved with a variety of lay associations: for example, basic ecclesial communities, youth groups, Marriage Encounter, St Vincent de Paul Society, etc. For this reason, it is common enough in a number of parts of the Society to find MSC engaged in parish life to be not very enthusiastic about what are sometimes called 'associate members', because it would seem to force them to give some priority to our MSC organization in relationship to other groups that have every right to exist in a parish, particularly if they are promoted by the diocese.

67. Father Chevalier does not seem to have experienced this as a difficulty, mainly because he did not see the identity of his Third Order to be based on its involvement with a particular MSC community, work or parish. It was a specifically lay branch of the Society that functioned from the basis of its own statutes and structure, with its own identity.

68. One of the most successful associations founded by Father Chevalier was what became eventually the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Its statutes were approved on January 29, 1864, and promulgated on April 6 of the same year. It was destined to spread throughout the world. Although Father Chevalier was uncharacteristically slow in acting upon this idea of an association in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, proposed by his Archbishop, (a slowness that puzzled Father Piperon), he nevertheless prized it very highly indeed, when after a few months delay, he set to work on the project.

69. The Third Order envisaged by Father Chevalier differed from the association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, at least as understood at that time. The Third Order was not so much a *work* of the Society as an *extension* of it into the laity. From his own experience the Founder knew what a Third Order meant, for he had been a member of the Third Order of St. Dominic. His involvement with the groups founded by Blessed Louise Therese de Montaignac and Blessed Caterina Volpicelli (both of which for a time formed a Third Order of our Society) made him well aware of the aims and methods of such a movement.

70. As we have seen, he wanted to incorporate laity into the specific life and mission of the Society. As we have also seen, but it may bear repeating, this did not mean that they had to take part in any *works* of the Society or be involved with a particular MSC community. It was an attempt to help laity live in *their* way the life of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and in *their* way carry out its mission: that is, practise devotion to the Sacred Heart in the comprehensive way our Founder understood that word and in this way actively counteract the evils of society and help transform it.

71. An introductory explanation in the Rules for the Third Order, approved by the bishop of Bourges in 1865, helps us understand the sort of thing Father Chevalier had in mind. At the same time, it would not be correct to limit the Founder's ideas to these rules. Because of the particular situation, for example, these rules deal exclusively with women, because they had in mind particularly Blessed Louise Therese de Montaignac's group. In other Rules for the Third Order he mentions explicitly that members can be either men or women.

72. On some points we would express ourselves differently today; the important thing is the essential message; and it is quite clear:

This association is not a simple confraternity, nor a sodality, similar to those whose aim is to provide people who belong to them extra means to gain their salvation in the midst of the world. Nor is it a religious Society strictly so called, where one could attain perfection only by renouncing the world. The members of this Association desire to steer a middle course between people who lead a Christian life in the world satisfied with the observance of the commandments, and those who leave the world to lead a more perfect life. In as much as from an external point of view they resemble the first group, they have to resemble the second group by their interior dispositions.

The sort of life to which members of the Third Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus devote themselves is this: to remain in their families, to carry out the duties of their state of life, to retain freedom of activity in the world and nevertheless to aim at perfection, to put no limit to their devotion to Our Lord, and to carry out in society an apostolate which is all the more useful in that it does not give rise to mistrust.

73. As I mentioned when dealing with the meaning of charisma, it would be a mistake to think we are bound today to the details of this Rule, but an examination of it can be useful in giving us an idea of the sort of thing the Founder had in mind. It comprised three groups: novices, associates and professed. Though the associates could take vows, these were not modelled on the practices and traditions of religious congregations: a way of life not feasible for people living in the world. The aim was to live, in the world, the virtues of the evangelical counsels, free of the formalities usually followed by religious.

74. Since it would be very useful to have centres in various places which could act as a uniting point for members, two or three unmarried members might live together in community. However a strict warning was given that this should not develop into the sort of model found in religious communities:

The Associates will be able to live in their families and occupy, any sort of position in society. Community life will not therefore be obligatory for any of them. However, it is desirable that those who are single live together; in order to experience among themselves the delights of family life and in order to carry out good works.

The houses formed in this way, in various localities, should serve naturally as centres for the Association and facilitate considerably the advancement and spread of the work. But anything which gives the appearance of a religious house strictly so called is to be avoided, as being against our aim and harmful to the sort of good that this work is called to do. op.cit. p.8

75. The Superior of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was to be at the same time the Superior (also called Director General) of the Third Order. He was allowed, however, to choose one of his confreres to be Director General. In each diocese there was to be a Diocesan Director who would be, where possible, one of the Priests of the Sacred Heart associated with the Missionaries. Where numbers required it, there would also be local Directors. The Directors were more or less chaplains of the Tertiaries.

76. However, the Third Order was by no means to be governed completely from outside. Within it there were to be members who carried out the task of Superior General, Diocesan Superiors and, where required, local Superiors. From the evidence we have, Father Chevalier left the group very much to govern itself and intervened mainly by advice and encouragement when presented with problems. In fact, if anything, he was probably too little involved in the early years, mainly because of ill health, but also because of trust in what Father Ramiere was doing. This trust would in time lead to serious problems.

77. The Superiors of the Third Order were primarily what are called at times today 'animators of groups'. In the spirit of the organization, they were to avoid anything that looked like superiority:

The Third Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is an Association based on humility and bound together by love. It keeps as far from itself as possible any suggestion of haughty commands or ambitious intrigue. There is no place in it for any inequality of rank. In it there are only sisters (Ed. The particular group in mind were women followers of Louise-Therese de Montaignac) intent on helping one another as much as they can. In place of honours, the Third Order offers to those who are put in charge of others only greater care for others and a more complete sacrifice of self. op. cit. p.14

78. Every six years at least, the professed of the Third Order were to meet to elect from their number a Superior General and deal with matters of common interest. The meeting was called a Council. Decisions were to be made by majority vote. In the case of changes to the rule, the majority had to be two-thirds. However, the decisions had to be submitted to the Director General (the Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart); if he was not opposed to them, they became law. Once a fortnight or once a month, depending on circumstances, the members of the Third Order were bound to regular meetings. The general format of these meetings was also described in the Rules.

79. Even granted the heavy involvement of the Jesuits in Montlucon, even granted that the Rules were mainly written by Jesuits, there is no doubt in my mind that Father Chevalier saw in the Montlucon Third Order and its Rules at least one way in which his vision for a lay branch of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart could be realized. The important thing for us today, it seems to me, is that it helps us realize the possibilities Father Chevalier's 'experience of the Spirit' was opening for him. From this point of view, these 1865 Rules are not for slavish imitation today, but they can help us realize what can be done in order to carry out in our time this basic concern of our Founder.

CONCLUSION

80. What I have been saying could be filled out by more historical detail. But more importantly than research in archives, things are happening throughout the whole society. At the French Chapter in 1993, two full days were given to a joint meeting with the variety of groups that are striving to live according to our spirit and mission. All were agreed that it was the most inspiring part of the whole Chapter. Recently in Rome, the de la Salle Brothers had several days with associated lay people during their General Chapter. According to reports this was also a highlight of their chapter, reinforcing, at the same time, their own specific vocation as religious. The matter was discussed at our 1993 General Chapter and one of the outcomes of that was the decision to have an international meeting.

*Ours is a spirit of family
and a spirit of true friendship,
formed by kindness and understanding,
by compassion and mutual forgiveness,
by gentleness; humility and simplicity
by hospitality and a sense of humour*

MSC Constitutions No. 32

FATHER JULES CHEVALIER : WHO WAS HE?

Gene Tostain MSC 1995

Translated from the French by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Aurora, Illinois, U.S.A.

Mark McDonald, MSC, translator

Raymond Diesbourg, MSC, editor

Ronald Leinen, MSC, editor

Original title: Le Pere Jules Chevalier...C'est qui?...

Maison Provinciale Missionnaires du Sacre-Coeur Paris 1995

Chevalier Printing & Publishing Center

Communication Foundation for Asia Manila 1996

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

FOREWORD

1. THE MEETING

2. AFFER THE STORM, A NEW GENERATION APPEARS
3. THE SECOND WAVE
4. THE SULPICIAN
5. THE SACRED HEART
6. WHO WAS JULES
7. JULES CHEVALIER, THE PRIEST
8. ISSOUDUN
9. DECEMBER 8, 1854
10. THE BEGINNINGS
11. OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART
12. THE PILGRIMAGE
13. THE GROWTH OF THE CONGREGATION
14. FATHER CHEVALIER AND THE POPE

PREFACE

On the occasion of the 140th anniversary of the foundation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the 130th of the consecration of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the 125th of the annual pilgrimage, and the 120th of the foundation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the year "Jules Chevalier" was inaugurated at Issoudun (September 1994 - September 1995).

This event gives a special tone to the celebration of the different pilgrimages that occur during the year. It was fitting that we introduce to the public the Fr. Chevalier who was at the origin of these missionary foundations (the priests and the sisters) and of the pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

We are indebted to the able writing skills of Father Jean TOSTAIN, Missionary of the Sacred Heart, for this simple and attractive presentation of Father Chevalier. He was not the first to undertake the task. His most famous predecessors, Father Vermin and Father Cuskelly (former superior general, now a bishop in Australia), did the initial research to introduce their Founder first to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart themselves. Since these two works are now out of print, we needed, for this jubilee year, a publication for the general public which could help us discover the spiritual riches of Father Chevalier and the grace he brings to our times. This is what you have here, at least in part, since this book will be continued so that Father Chevalier's life can be seen from birth to death. The demand for a book for the pilgrimage season (Easter to October) put pressure on our calendar and the decision was made to print what Father Jean TOSTAIN had already written.

We are most thankful to him for this work and the service it provides to pilgrims who are anxious to learn about the man who was behind the missionary and Marian spirit that gives life to the Issoudun shrine.

Father Daniel Auguie, MSC Rector of the Basilica Issoudun, Easter 1995

FOREWORD

Photographs, maps, graphs... At Issoudun, in the cloister adjoining the Basilica, posters had been put up to inform pilgrims and passersby about the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, their spirit, their missions, their place in the Church. At the end of the exhibit there was an enlarged photo of Father Chevalier. A gentleman with a puzzled, pensive look stood there with his hands behind his back contemplating the photo. As I passed him, he asked me, without really expecting an answer: "*Jules Chevalier, who is he?...*"

Below the picture, in bold print, you could read: "Rev. Father Jules Chevalier, founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." But that was not what the man (who certainly knew how to read) was asking. His question really meant: "*Where did this man come from? To what moment of history does he belong? How did it happen that from a small, little-known country town he founded a world-wide organization with such importance and vitality?*"

Christopher Columbus discovered America - everybody knows that! Yet, in 1992, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of that event, book store windows suddenly came alive with dozens of books about him - some small, some big; some with a lot of pictures, some a bit more austere; some in simple language, some much more scientific. And for those who don't like to read, they even made a movie - a big movie with a famous actor. It was very popular. This was because suddenly, we were preparing to celebrate in a big way an event that changed the world, everyone was asking the question: "*But just who was Christopher Columbus?...*" Certainly this man didn't just wake up one morning and say: "*All right! And what if I go and discover the New World?*" How did that come about; why at that moment in history? All of a sudden we wanted to know more about him and to learn about the times and the events that preceded, surrounded and led to this crazy undertaking.

It is possible that Jules Chevalier will be canonized someday (his cause has been introduced in Rome). On that occasion books, big and small, will be published to explain how he was able to crystallize the aspirations of his time and bring about the beginning of a response. In the meantime, so as not to make the gentleman who was asking the question wait too long, this little book is intended to give a brief answer to the question: "*Jules Chevalier, who is he?...*" A brief answer, perhaps, but long enough to give that gentleman the desire to know more.

1

THE MEETING

July, 1859... It is early afternoon. A priest rings the bell at the door of the rectory in Ars. Wearing an energetic face and a threadbare cassock, Father Jules Chevalier has come calling. He is 35 years old. A friend of his took him along on a pilgrimage to La Salette, but he wanted, at all costs, to make a detour through Ars by himself. He needs advice and encouragement. Who better than the holy Cure, whose reputation had won over the whole of France, to give them to him?

Five years before this, Jules Chevalier had founded at Issoudun a small congregation with a big goal and the assurance of an important mission to accomplish: to have people come to know that God is love. An enormous undertaking! Many religious congregations had already seen the light of day in this first half of the Nineteenth Century when the needs of the Church were so great. Each one of them had a precise purpose: education, schools for the poor, rural evangelization, foreign missions... Jules Chevalier did not reject any of these things to start with, or rather he accepted them all beforehand, but his goal was much greater: to tell people that God loves them, to tell it everywhere, to tell it to everyone.

His bishop, thinking that it was important to encourage everyone with high ideals and that the diocese could only profit from a new center that would benefit the whole region, had supported him. But after five years, the "Congregation" of the "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart" still had only two members! The tangible results were not in proportion to the hopes. They were thinking about simply giving the parish of Issoudun to the two priests and of forgetting about this plan for a religious family that had never gotten off the ground.

No one answers his ring. Hesitantly, Jules Chevalier pulls the cord again. He hears the sound of someone running and the door opens violently. A very angry priest appears. Seeing that the nuisance who rang is also a priest does not calm him down, on the contrary! "*Only priests are rude at this point!... The pastor is not seeing anybody.*" The door closes with a slam. Jean-Marie Vianney, the humble Cure of Ars, is now very well protected! Father Chevalier leaves, quite sad at having failed in his attempt.

But he does not have time to go very far. A voice calls him back: "*Father! Father!...*" It is the same priest as a moment earlier. "*Please forgive my anger. But we are bothered so often! Come on in! I hope that in just a moment the pastor will be able to see you. He was very tired, but now he*

is better." What a sudden turn of affairs! Without a doubt Father Vianney had heard the sharp rebuff and had insisted on seeing the bothersome visitor. He is always available, for everyone.

And there he is, the holy Cure with his surplice on his arm. He was going to hear confessions, as usually, sometimes up to 18 hours a day! He is pale and thin with his eyes set deep in their sockets. Deeply moved, Father Chevalier informs him about his little foundation and of his goal.

The Cure of Ars answers him. *"This work is the work of works! Have confidence! You are only at the beginning of your set-backs and you will have more. Hell will do all in its power to destroy your undertaking which is destined to save many souls. But the Heart of Jesus and his good mother will intervene."*

Pious words? Passing banalities? Yes, if you like, just like everything that the Cure of Ars said. Later on, no one dared use his sermons, his "catechetical instructions" that he so laboriously writes each day in the sacristy - they are really quite trite! Jean-Marie Vianney is not an orator; he is not an educated man. It was all in the way he looked and in his conviction. Words were only accessories. The Cure of Ars converted great numbers of people by saying "banalities" with a burning faith. Christians were not led into error by him and even the great Lacordaire himself was deeply moved when he heard him speak of the Blessed Trinity.

Jules Chevalier is also moved, convinced and comforted. He finds his speech again and asked the holy Cure to make a novena with him. This was Father Chevalier's custom: every time he found himself before an important moment, a problem, or with a big decision to make, he made a novena! The Cure of Ars promises to join him. He will make the novena. Jules Chevalier returns to Issoudun with his spirit restored. A few days later he learns of the death of Jean-Marie Vianney. Our holy saint continued his novena in heaven. And since he entered eternity where time no longer has any meaning, that novena will last forever. How blest are the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart!

This famous meeting between the Cure of Ars and Father Chevalier is much more than anecdotal. It is a sign. The encounter between these two apostles, one who had "run the course," as St. Paul said, and the other just beginning, is a meeting of the two generations of priests who re-evangelized a France ravaged by the sufferings of the revolution. The first generation, with very little support at hand, had tried to save and reestablish the essentials. The second generation was to go further in the hope of opening up to the entire world.

One cannot really understand the place Father Chevalier had or the role he played, i.e. his vocation, without seeing him in his historical context. Jules Chevalier's message is universal but it took root and developed in very particular circumstances. Mother Theresa's message is universal but would we have been privileged to hear it if Calcutta had been a prosperous city? Would there be a "Red Cross" today if Henri Dunant had not been present and so helpless at the battle of Solferino? Jules Chevalier is, first of all, a man of his age before being an apostle for future ages and for the entire world.

What was that age? *"How did all of that come about?"* Who is Jules Chevalier? What were the events that created him? Under what circumstances was he called to proclaim God's message of love? It is necessary to look, even if only with a glance, at the times that gave birth to such a tremendous spirit and such a great fire.

2 AFTER THE STORM, A NEW GENERATION APPEARS

For all patriotic Frenchmen, June 18 is a most memorable date. I am speaking of June 18, 1815: the disaster at Waterloo. The following day, June 19, a small humble-looking seminarian was ordained a subdeacon at Lyons. It was the John-Mary Viartney we saw in the previous chapter. His ordination, of course, had nothing to do with the battle of Waterloo. If Napoleon had won the battle, our future saint would still have been ordained. But the closeness of the two dates helps us to put that historical moment in better perspective.

The year 1815 marked the end of Napoleon - the real end of Napoleon after his reappearance for 100 days. King Louis XVIII, after returning to France in 1814, had prudently left when Napoleon came back so as not to get in the Emperor's way. But once Napoleon was on his way to Saint Helena, the king was back again. A new regime was under way. New? Not really, since it called itself the "Restoration."

France was coming out of the most tumultuous 25 years of its history. They were also the most terrible since they witnessed its glory being drowned in the depths of destruction and terror.

The Revolution had not started off so badly, however. When the Estates General opened on May 5, 1789, the clergy was well represented. The meeting had been preceded by the "Lists of Grievances" drawn up in each parish (the word "commune" was not yet in use). These "Lists" presented suggestions for the reform of the Church - reform that was sorely needed - as well as for other sectors of the life of the nation. One does not detect any particular animosity against the Church in these documents. Moreover the opening of the assembly was marked with a long solemn procession in which Robespierre himself piously carried a candle.

On August 4, in a moment of euphoria, the clergy, along with the nobility, renounced its privileges. Since the ordinary priests had very few privileges, this meant the high clergy which in fact was a very privileged class. Here again there was nothing to cause alarm. Equality and sharing are, after all, well established Gospel values.

There followed on August 26 the Declaration of the Rights of Man. In itself it contained nothing that Christians would oppose. To the present day, Christians and priests throughout the world have been imprisoned, tortured and killed for having dared to defend the principle that all people are children of God and are worthy of respect. But in 1789 these "Rights of Man and of the Citizen," fundamental principles of the new regime, were a smoldering fire. They had been directly inspired by the teachings of the philosophers of the Enlightenment (Voltaire and his famous *"Let us crush the infamous thing,"* had come on the scene just 20 years before this). Since religion was considered a form of oppression, it could not be supported. And the horizon grew dark.

Things soon became worse, however, for another reason. The state needed money. It was to solve a financial crisis that the king had called the Estates General in the first place. On November 2 quick approval was given to Bishop Talleyrand's solution: all the goods of the clergy became property of the state. It was as easy as that! True, the monasteries were very rich, perhaps even too rich. But this transfer of property, unprecedented and uncontrolled as it was, would ruin the Church. Churches were taken over and ransacked, used as quarries or destined for profane use. The bourgeois class and the rich farmers who acquired these goods so cheaply were then/or the Revolution and against the Church out of fear that what they had gained would be taken from them.

Since monasteries no longer existed, the National Assembly very logically forbade religious vows in a decree of February 13, 1790. Before the Revolution the monasteries had gone through a period of decadence and the number of monks was quite reduced. With this new blow, the end seemed near.

In its rush to bring about reform, there was no stopping the National Assembly. It was decided that the dioceses would have the same boundaries as the departments and so their number went from 135 to 85. Bishops and pastors were to be elected by the total electorate, including non-Catholics, just as any other civil officials. King Louis XVI was too weak and had to approve this "Constitution." It was certainly against his wishes but he approved it just the same.

The clergy was thrown into complete disarray. Thirty-two bishop deputies rose in protest. The Assembly answered by demanding that all members of the clergy with an official appointment take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution. The result was a complete dismemberment of the clergy: some were "insubordinate" priests who were hunted down and massacred when they were caught; others, about 35,000 of them, went into exile and the rest were "the oath takers" in whom the general public had little trust.

Pope Pius VI rigorously condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the Declaration of the Rights of Man in its existing form. But he had little influence. The persecution only grew stronger. The king, symbol of the old order, was sent to the guillotine. Group executions became

more common. On one day 300 priests were killed during the massacre of September 1792 in the center of Paris while hundreds of others died in the countryside. Such was the "Reign of Terror" which reached its climax from September 1793 to July 1794. Of that time it would be correct to say that practically all public religious cult had disappeared in France.

The fall of Robespierre on July 27, 1794, brought a pause in this fury of destruction. On February 21, 1795, the Convention recognized a limited freedom of religion. The Church got some of its breath back and tried to reorganize. A sort of council of the French church met in Paris. "Missions" took place in the country, in barns, anywhere. For better or for worse, lay men and women taught catechism. But in 1797, the Directory, fearing a resurgence of the royalists, again took a hard line against the Church. Many priests were arrested, deported to Guiana or shot.

When Napoleon came on the scene in November of 1799, nothing changed at first. But since people on both sides were sick of so much violence they were more than disposed to reach a compromise. Napoleon was convinced that he could not govern without a religious compromise on the part of the French people. So, for purely political motives, he sent representatives to speak with the legates of Pope Pius VII. These talks led to the Concordat of 1801. According to the concordat all the bishops of the old regime were to resign. The First Consul would himself name the new bishops and the Pope would give them a canonical appointment. There were only 60 dioceses left in France. The government guaranteed equitable treatment for the clergy but not for religious since Napoleon did not want to hear of them. The owners of national treasures would not be bothered. Once the Concordat was signed, Napoleon added 77 "Organic Articles" designed to make of the Church in France a Gallican Church. This had long been the dream of some: a Church that would be an instrument of the government's policies. The Pope protested but to no avail.

This was not the freedom the Church had hoped for; but it was at least a sort of truce that would permit her to begin to heal the wounds. Freedom of worship was solemnly reinstated at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris on April 18, 1802. Slowly the dioceses began to reorganize. Although there was a tremendous shortage of priests, vocations were numerous. The new priests had very little formation but tremendous good will. Here and there seminaries were timidly opened. It would take some time for the results to be felt.

And this brings us to 1815: Waterloo, the Restoration, and John Mary Vianney.

If I speak so much about the Cure of Ars, it is because he is so well known and, contrary to what one might think, not really an exception. The little Cure of Ars was a very holy man, but he also reflects an entire period in Church history. Today Mother Theresa of Calcutta is certainly an extraordinary person but she is also the symbol of an era in which personal commitment is more common than ever. From "Doctors without Borders" to Peace Corps volunteers, hundreds of associations and tens of thousands of women and men of good will work throughout the world to help people live with the dignity they deserve. Mother Theresa does not do any more than all these anonymous generous persons. She just does it better, that's all. She does it completely, totally and with deeper motivation. John Mary Vianney in his humble forgotten hole in Ars was only doing what hundreds of anonymous humble priests were doing, each in his little parish.

Who were these little known priests? There were, first of all, men traumatized from seeing France so quickly and so totally dechristianized. Perhaps a better word would be "paganized." "Leave a parish for twenty years without a priest and they will start to worship the animals!" the Cure of Ars said. That was not a warning, but an observation!

These priests had very little formal education. There were few, if any, seminaries at this point. A candidate would spend only a year or two living with an old priest who had survived the storm. He would study a bit of Latin, the language of all religious books, and as much theology as he could. The candidates did have to pass an examination by the bishop; but they were judged more for their piety and motives than for their intellectual background. You have to work with what you have! John Mary Vianney, not a belated vocation but a slow one, and especially reluctant to learn from books, was finally accepted, with a lot of doubts, and sent to a very small far-off parish. "If he doesn't do any good there, at least he won't do any harm!" the bishop said.

And so these humble priests of the beginning of the Nineteenth Century were very poor. The small "compensation," provided by the State, was administered by the communes, which themselves were often very poor. Moreover, it was only given to the pastors of recognized parishes and not to those in charge of missions. The Cure of Ars had a mission. His bouts with hunger are well known. But this was true of other priests as well.

Above everything else, however, this generation of priests was bolstered by a spirit that we cannot even imagine. The Revolution, this horrible time which had affected everything, was over. The king was back. Now was the time for the "RESTORATION." They were going to restore the Church too. They were going to rebuild it and make France a Christian country "like before," even better than before.

They preached change, conversion, penance. If the Cure of Ars "succeeded," it was due first of all to his prayer and his own penance. It was also because he was especially severe and not the mild-mannered apostle we may think a saint must be. John Mary Vianney prohibited dancing of any kind and often preached on hell and on the Poor Souls of Purgatory who are damned for all eternity. When his frightened parishioners came to confession, he would sometimes refuse absolution, at times for several weeks in a row, until they would show some really visible signs of conversion!

At the same time, the priests tried to give back to God all the glory God deserved. There were numerous triumphal processions. Poor as he was, the Cure of Ars found a way to buy the best priestly vestments available. He dreamed of transforming his little church into a sumptuous edifice. The work would take place only after his death but according to plans he had drawn up.

What results did this new enthusiasm for "restoring" the Church produce by the middle of the century? The answer is not clear. The parish of John Mary Vianney was, to be sure, converted. "Ars is no longer Ars!" he said, and the crowds came from everywhere to see the holy man. But what about other places? The results were very different, depending on the region. In 1850, in Vendee 90% of the population was made up of practicing Catholics while in the region of Paris only 10% of the people made their Easter duty. In Orleans it was 4% of the men and 20% of the women. And so on. The good will of the priests was not enough. It was noted that the dream of a Church "like before" was just a dream. Nothing ever becomes "like before." It is always necessary "to go forward." Too many things change; too many things continue to change.

Out in the rural regions, no one understood what was happening in Paris. The constitutional king was not really like the king of past eras. Louis XVIII was weak and vacillated between being lax and being authoritarian. At one and the same time he wanted to be the one to restore the former values and the guardian of the values "gained by the Revolution." Charles X, who was famous for his debauchery as a young man, became a ridiculous bigot. His inept laws gave rise to a new wave of anticlericalism. There were riots in Paris and the Archbishop's palace was ransacked. The king was overthrown and replaced by Louis Philippe (called "Philippe-Egalite"). His reign ended with the revolution of 1848. And then a new Republic was proclaimed.

No, nothing seemed to make sense. There had been too many bomb shells in too short a span of time. No one knew where to turn. Rather than hostility, indifference became the order of the day.

Indifference! That is what gave rise to new apostles, to a Father Chevalier and many others. They were better armed than their predecessors but their mission seemed more difficult.

Fr. Chevalier's visit to the Cure of Ars allows us to see a meeting between two different generations of priests. We should not, however, think that there had been a break or an abrupt change between the two generations. Beginning with the end of Napoleon's times, and even earlier, these changes occurred gradually. It could not have happened in a day. One needed time to see the changes slowly evolving.

Little by little thousands of parishes were reopened. To supply these parishes with priests, the seminaries were reorganized and most of them entrusted to the Sulpicians, a sign that preparation was being taken seriously, as we shall see later. Candidates to the priesthood studied in the minor seminary, followed by five years of major seminary. Their studies were solid and their spiritual formation even more so.

At the same time we see a phenomenon proper to this post-revolution era of the French Church: hundreds and hundreds of religious congregations were born. A few old ones were reborn, although some, like the Jesuits, had a hard time finding their place because dioceses wanted them but individual governments did not. For the most part, all these small new congregations of men and women were responding to particular needs. There was so much to do! Many dedicated themselves to primary and secondary education, especially for the poor. Others evangelized the rural areas and preached parish "missions." But there was also quite a movement toward the "foreign" missions, resulting in the surprising phenomenon that at the time of France's greatest need, she became the most missionary! The majority of these congregations were "diocesan" and were intended to meet a local need. Many disappeared in the following century or joined with others. But a large number of them later experienced considerable growth and spread throughout the world.

This growth of religious congregations can be explained by the belief, often very strong, that in urgent situations it is necessary to give oneself completely by a total consecration of one's life. Moreover, many concluded that individual and isolated efforts would be difficult and would have no future. The support of a community gives strength and is a pledge of continuity. There was another reason which we have to take into account without wanting to exaggerate it: studies in the diocesan seminaries were not free and in a France racked with poverty there are many poor people with vocations. The religious congregations accepted all these young people of good will. This, of course, does not exclude other possible motives, such as gift of self and search for community!

With numerous, well-prepared priests and men and women religious whose only desire was to work in the "Lord's vineyard," one would have thought that the Church of France was on the right road to straightening things out. But it was not that easy! The historical context had changed and ways of thinking were different.

The generation of the Cure of Ars had as its primary concern to bring the prodigal son home and the sheep who had been lost in the upheaval back to the fold. It was then possible to believe, in spite of appearances, that France was still a Christian country, a country of Christians who were hurting, abandoned and left to their own devices. It might have been sufficient to bring them back to the right road. But the task that seemed so great proved to be much more difficult than they had ever imagined.

First of all, and this was something quite new, the Revolution left behind an anticlericalism that was rather widespread at all levels of society. Previously it had only existed among the intellectuals and the radicals of Paris. But there had been too many expeditions to hunt down priests, the "enemies of the people," during a twenty-year period. Some effect of all this was sure to remain. Also, reputation was a factor, especially for the men. After having sung the praises of the "new ideas," no one wanted to be considered a reactionary! Both the separation of Church and state and the end of the Church's monopoly on education were ideas that surged ahead even in the most remote parts of the country, thanks to the newspapers whose numbers began to multiply and which were distributed in the villages by peddlers. The dream of bringing things back to "the way they were" was not shared by everyone!

But what really dominated the scene was indifference. It was a new phenomenon, at least in regard to how widespread it became. Under the old order, religion was an integral part of society. No one could imagine public life, or life itself, without religion, or at least state religion. Even the appearance of Protestantism, with all the divisions that followed, had not changed this basic mind-set. People had either favored or opposed the possibility of a Protestant state, and some even got themselves killed rather than renounce their convictions. However, a Protestant state would have remained a religious country as in other parts of Europe. But a country without God? Under the old order people could not even conceive the notion!

That does not mean that each subject of the Kingdom had deep, sincere faith, but rather that religion was just a part of life. People would not have been able to live without it. The clergy and the monks were often ridiculed, condemned or made fun of, but much in the same way that we act towards our politicians today. We would never imagine a single moment when we would be able to live without government officials. The religious "dimension" could at times appear to be hollow and empty; but it was a dimension. It made it possible, at any moment, to be in contact with God. People admitted - and the kings were the first to do this! - that they could very well live their lives as sinners. But sinners are not people who live without God, since sin by definition is an offense against God. Louis XIV used to get rid of his mistress during Lent so as to be able to make his Easter duty and then he would take her back! Hypocrisy? Human weakness? Whatever we may call it, it certainly was not indifference! Even the most morally dissolute feared dying without the Sacraments, as they prayed, "From sudden death, deliver us, O Lord!" Children were baptized at birth. That made it possible to give them religious education later on, even if it was not always the best, and to give each person the eventual possibility of hearing and answering God's call.

But indifference is a completely different thing. This indifference slowly won over a people who had seen too many changes, too many successive and contradictory truths affirmed with the same violent methods! Whatever could be considered an institution was on shaky ground. The Revolution, the Empire, the constitutional kings whom no one respected anymore, the Republic, and then what? The framework was coming apart and religion with it... *"And what is truth?"*

Indifference is not opposition to religion nor is it hatred of God as would be experienced a century later under communist regimes. No, it was just that people did not think about God at all. They had other things to worry about! Life was hard. The slaughters that took place during the Napoleonic wars had left great empty spaces in the work forces of the country. People were poor. The exodus from the rural areas had begun and a poor working class was being formed in the cities from uprooted people who had lost all points of reference.

We, the people who are about to enter the twenty-first Century, are well acquainted with this indifference which continues to develop, first because of the total disarray in the economic world and then for the opposite reason with the arrival of comfort and the consumer society. God? Who needs him?

But for Father Chevalier and the priests of his generation, the discovery of an indifference that was becoming more and more common was a shock, a world turned upside down. They saw in it the cause of the evils of their time, and of all times. When God is not present, on what can we center our lives? On what can society's life be based?

As a result, it was not so much a return to the "practice" of religion that they would preach nor the need for penance. They would preach, above all, about God. They talked about a God who was no longer known, a God that people had forgotten. Realizing that Christianity is not just composed of prodigal sons who have to get back to the right path but rather lost sheep, wandering without any direction, they remembered the kindness Jesus had for those sheep: *"At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with compassion for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep who have no shepherd..."* (Matt. 9,36)

4

THE SULPICIAN

Jules Chevalier, like many of the priests of his generation, was well prepared to speak of God to the people because of the formation he had received at the major seminary in Bourges. As we have already noted, the Priests of St. Sulpice were in charge of that seminary.

Here I believe it necessary to make a small digression to clear up a common misunderstanding. When we hear "Saint Sulpice," many immediately think of a certain art form that was very popular at the end of the Nineteenth Century and beginning of the Twentieth. People either like it or they do not. Without getting caught in that debate, in general, people do not care for it. Thanks to mass production, this "art" has given

our churches and chapels a great number of plaster statues, pictures and other religious objects of a sugary, sentimental nature that does not do anything for today's young people. This whole line of production has nothing to do with the Sulpicians or "Priests of Saint Sulpice". It merely comes from the sellers of pious goods who surround the church of St. Sulpice in Paris, a neighborhood that specializes in that type of goods. The Sulpicians do not deserve to be associated with the dainty works of art that are generally associated with the religious goods dealers of their neighborhood! (N.B. There is also a subway station called "St. Sulpice." It is not run by the priests of the same name either!) The Sulpicians, from the Seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris, are important. They have a long history, closely connected with that of the Church in France.

It was the Council of Trent, in response to the first wave of the Protestant Reformation, which first decreed the need for opening seminaries. The Council lasted almost 20 years (1545-1563). Although they took their time back then, it took even longer for the Council's decrees to be implemented. Vincent de Paul was the first in France to bring together candidates for the priesthood and that was about 100 years later. At first, seminary education consisted in a retreat of eleven days which presented the men to be ordained with the basic elements of theology. These must have been really basic to be covered in eleven days. But Vincent de Paul also invented on-going formation for the clergy in his "Tuesday Conferences." Little by little, seminaries were set up in all the dioceses in the form of sessions - of a few months at first, then for a year and then two years at the time of the Revolution. By the time of Jules Chevalier, 50 years later, the cycle was of five years. The bishops turned the running of these seminaries over to the Sulpicians, the Lazarists founded by St. Vincent de Paul, or the Eudists of St. John Eudes. All had a common origin which we must consider briefly in order to understand where Jules Chevalier received his inspiration and what were the roots of his Congregations.

This history goes back to Pierre de Berulle, a theologian and great spiritual master (1575-1629) just after the Council of Trent. Berulle is the one who introduced the Carmelites to France and thus made possible St. Therese de Lisieux. But above all he developed a theology of priesthood that would influence generations of priests.

Father Pierre de Berulle was from the nobility and yet began to renounce all his benefices. This was 200 years before the Revolution and was quite extraordinary because one became a priest in order to be assured of income. Vincent de Paul, for example, a priest from Landes, went up to Paris with the sure hope of finding a paying job. And there he found Christ among the poor!

But Berulle was also a very learned man. He lived at a moment of history that saw the rise of what was called "Humanism." Greek and Roman thoughts were rediscovered; people had a great urge for experimentation and reason was all the rage. The great Descartes in his *"The Discourse on Method"* tried to bridge the gap between faith and reason - not an easy task. But Berulle began with a point of view that is as simple as it is profound. God is unknowable, but Jesus, the Son of God, has a concrete historical existence. So we have to begin with Jesus to come to God. Berulle wrote a "Life of Jesus" that is quite remarkable since it stops with the birth of the Savior. It consists in the contemplation of the person of Christ: at one and the same time man and God. Berulle was profoundly moved by this. God is no longer inaccessible; we can reach God through Christ. *"In him, the incomprehensible God is understood, the inaudible God is heard, and the invisible God is seen..."*

Through him, with him, in him God is close to us. The only prayer that counts in God's eyes is that of Christ: our only way to pray then is to join with Christ. The Son of God shares everything with his Father: united with Christ, we share all his goodness, his holiness, his grace. There is but one goal: become other Christs, be the Christ. Berulle did not invent anything, he simply rediscovered what St. Paul said: *"My life is Christ," "We form but one body in Christ," "Heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ," "It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me,"* and many other such texts. How marvelous!

We are perhaps less moved to a sense of wonder and admiration because these are all things that our priests taught us in catechism. We have the impression that we know all this. But knowing and feeling are two different things. The saints are those who have felt these things. In every generation they "write" the "Life of Jesus" ... in their life. Jules Chevalier was overcome with wonder early on in his life. The words of scripture that he liked the most were: *"With our eyes fixed on him..."* (Heb. 12,2). His line of action was quite simple: never "lose sight" of Christ Jesus. And right from the first edition of the Rule of his religious Congregation, he began with these words that for him were the essential: *"With our eyes fixed on Our Lord Jesus Christ..."*

Continuing his meditation, Berulle became very conscious of the fact that if the vocation to be united with Christ belongs to each baptized person, the priest has an indispensable role in the living out of this vocation. The priest, by the sacrament of Holy Orders is "conformed" to Christ. This rather scientific word is probably best translated as "rendered similar to Christ in a special way."

Christ is *"the sole mediator between God and men"* (1 Tim. 2,5).

Only he can offer God a sacrifice and that is the one he offered on the cross. Those baptized into him can offer only one sacrifice: his unique sacrifice. But to do that they need the priest. Without the priest there is no Mass, no sacrifice made present.

Christ is also *"the head of the body"* (Col. 1,18). For a Jew like St. Paul the head was a symbol for life in the same way that we speak today of the heart. The priest transmits this life of Christ through the sacraments: without a priest there would be no Sacrament of Reconciliation and no Eucharist, the full "communion" with Christ.

The head is also the one who gives direction, such as the Good Shepherd and who teaches. Here again, the role of the priest is to instruct - not to teach an abstract doctrine but to make Christ present, to make him "alive" for people and to point them towards him. The priest is also the head because he is the one who coordinates, in the name of Christ and in place of Christ, the activity of the members of the body. He is the sign of unity of all the baptized in Jesus Christ.

One can easily understand from this profound meditation that Berulle had a very lofty idea of priesthood. He wanted to live, as perfectly as he could, according to the model of priesthood given by God made man, Jesus Christ. He gathered around himself a group of priests and founded a community according to the rules of the "Oratory," the community founded by St. Philip Neri in Italy a century earlier. Among his disciples we find a great number of famous people of this very fertile period of Church history: St. Vincent de Paul, Father Olier, St. John Eudes, St. Grignon de Montfort.

One should note that all of these great spiritual leaders really had their feet on the ground. Pierre de Berulle, as a member of the nobility, believed it his duty to be involved in politics. Consequently he opposed Richelieu, succeeded in reconciling Louis XIII and his mother, and accepted the office of cardinal near the end of his life. Father Olier was not content with just founding a seminary, he also sent his Sulpicians to open numerous schools in the countryside. Vincent de Paul is well known for his works of charity for the poor, especially with the foundation of the Daughters of Charity. St. John Eudes, among the many things he did, led the fight against the problem of prostitution. All this was a logical conclusion, the way to extend to their time the respect and love that Jesus had for people. Men and women are the Body of Christ and they merit great respect. These spiritual leaders wanted to go to people, as Christ did, to bring them to God, through Christ. We will see later that Father Chevalier was totally opposed to having cloistered religious in his communities.

One of Berulle's first disciples, Father Olier, known as "Mister" Olier, was closely connected to Vincent de Paul, or "Mister" Vincent. Olier transformed the parish of St. Sulpice in Paris and opened a seminary there. To run it he founded the "Company of the Priests of St. Sulpice." Within a short time the Sulpicians founded other seminaries in France or were called by the bishops to teach in their dioceses.

What did the Sulpicians teach? Philosophy and theology, of course, and Sacred Scripture - everything that had to be taught in a seminary. And in doing all that they spoke about Christ. But they spoke of him in a different way than people were used to: they spoke of him as a living person, as a somebody, as one who was present. Christ could not be reduced to a subject matter or to dogmatic definitions. Up until that point, especially after the arguments brought on by Protestantism, people had the habit not of speaking of Christ but of making speeches "about" Christ. The style

used in the decisions of the Council of Trent was in this same line: "If anyone should say about Christ that... let him be considered a heretic!" "If anyone says that the humanity of Christ..., that the divinity of Christ..., that the resurrection of Christ..." But was anyone thinking about Christ himself? That way of talking is like speaking of hospital patients according to the operations they have had: "The stomach in Room 14 is awake..., The gall bladder in 20 had a bad night..., The prostate in 32 can go home tomorrow." But what about the sick person? He or she has been forgotten. Yet we are talking about a person, who cannot be reduced to an organ. Christ is also a Person, in all the fullness of that word. For Jules Chevalier this would always be his conviction: Christ was never for him a subject to be studied for an exam at the end of his seminary studies. He was someone who was present; someone who lived with him and with whom he lived.

Later the disciples of Father Olier would speak even more deeply of the "religion" of Christ. They would call Christ the "religious of the Father." These words have evolved and no longer have their original meaning. We might replace them by the words "covenant" or "mediation." We might speak of Christ as "The Mediator of the Father, the bridge between the Father and the human race. The religious, in the original meaning of the word, is the one who connects or binds together two things. The human person as a sinner has lost his or her connection with God. Christ repairs this disorder and reestablishes the covenant. By becoming like us, the Son of God has become the living covenant between the human race and God. In Christ, each human being can say "Father" and receive, through Christ, the life that the Father gives. Christ is thus the perfect "religious" and we become "religious" with him. The history of the world becomes the history of the building up of the Mystical Body of Christ.

To be a "religious" with Jesus in order to share with him and then with the world, intimacy with God the Father, Jules Chevalier would henceforth consecrate his life. Even though this is the calling of every baptized Christian, we can easily understand why Father Chevalier so strongly wanted to be a "religious" and found a "religious" congregation, in spite of all the objections people would make. His reason was not to set him apart from the clergy that is called "secular" and even less for reasons of organizational efficiency. It was to affirm more clearly that the priest, like Christ and with Christ, is a "religious" of the Father.

5

THE SACRED HEART

During his first years at the major seminary, Jules Chevalier's fellow students would probably not have been enthusiastic in their description of him. Jules had always been a serious young man, an "eager beaver" we might say. Each day he became more of a model of work and strict fidelity to the rule of the seminary, a model of piety, attentive to the needs of others and reserved in his speech. But most people really do not like "models" very well. It would not have taken much more for those who lived with Jules to say that he was "too much." He had been pegged, once and for all, as a "rigorist." As a matter of fact, at that time in his life, he tended to be rather austere and aloof. No one had anything against him, he just was not a happy-go-lucky fellow. An important transformation was being carried out in him, one that eventually had to appear externally.

Jules Chevalier was totally focused on one thought: since we are united to God by Christ, we are the Body of Christ. Therefore we must become what we are! Consequently he undertook to purify himself, trying to gain self-mastery with constant efforts. No, he was not a rigorist. It was not a question of the rule for the rule's sake. It was not to gain merit nor for ascetic motives. It was something else. For him, our efforts should not be aimed at making us similar to Christ - we already are - but at destroying in us everything that might tarnish this image of Christ. It was not a question of going to Christ but of putting aside anything that could separate us from him.

At the same time, Jules was taken up with the conviction that the priest, like Christ, is the "religious," the one who unites human beings to God the Father. And so it was in order to be able to speak of God to others, in order to be understood by them, that the "religious" should also try to be as faithful a reflection of Christ as possible. The struggle to purify himself on the part of our young seminarian, so taken up as he was with his mission, was not undertaken out of a spirit of penance to atone for his sins or those of others. It was done so that he might become a more credible voice, so that he might find the right tone to communicate his message. He was intent on becoming as close a reflection of Christ as possible so as to make Christ better known and to draw all people to him.

He undoubtedly began to sense that the task was not all that easy. On one hand, to resemble Christ he had to undo all the things that he felt were foreign to Christ; on the other hand, his seriousness, his "rigidity," might drive away the people he was trying to win over. If his confreres appreciated somewhat this "model" fellow student of theirs, the lost sheep would never rush to follow such an austere shepherd! But what could Jules do to overcome this indifference that he considered to be "the" evil of his time? How could he make God present to people? How could he "connect people with God?"

It was at this point in time that the idea of a congregation took root in the mind and heart of Jules Chevalier. It was not really such a new idea in that epoch. We have already seen how new congregations were cropping up all over. A group, using names like "army," "legion" and "cohort," meant strength and support. While most of the religious associations that were founded at that time were very local in nature and had very precise purposes, Jules immediately thought of something world-wide, of something universal. It would not be sufficient to create a few bastions, a few forts of fervor in the midst of an immense ocean of indifference. It was necessary to go everywhere, to everyone.

Jules was only in his second year at the major seminary. He still had a long way to go. His superior, with whom he shared his idea, threw a bit of cold water on his fervor. Father Ruel, who was an otherwise remarkable man with good judgment and great faith, was also aware that the bishop had given him a very precise mission: to prepare priests for the Diocese of Bourges which was in such great need of them. He was not about to encourage Utopian projects for far-away missions! And so he suggested to our young seminarian that he should first think about converting, for example, a city like Issoudun.

There was a bit of irony in this proposal of good Father Ruel. Issoudun, a city of 15,000 people, was considered, in fact, the most anticlerical and the most "paganized" city of the region. It was well known that newly ordained priests feared being assigned there. But Jules Chevalier accepted voluntarily this idea of an apostolate at Issoudun. What really stayed with him was the idea "...first Issoudun." He was in agreement with the idea of Issoudun and would not talk any further because he was not supposed to. But his mind was made up: Issoudun would be the point of departure, the springboard, to speak of God to the world.

He was not there yet: first he had his studies! With the approval of his superior, Jules did found a small group within the seminary itself, made up of fellow students whom he felt to be especially zealous, they took the name "Knights of the Sacred Heart" - "*Chevaliers du Sacre-Coeur*" - humorously chosen by his classmates because of the play on words with the name of their "founder," Jules Chevalier. They met during recreation times and during outings. They spoke of God and of the indifference of the people. They often prayed together; and they spoke of Issoudun. This was not because they would all necessarily have that as their future apostolate but rather to help focus their ideas. Issoudun was the archetype and the fortress of the indifference that they wanted to take on.

All taken up with his studies and his burning projects for converting the world, Jules Chevalier became more and more serious. He wanted to be another Christ, the best possible. That was his life and it demanded so much giving up and so much self-control. The little association of the "Knights of the Sacred Heart," instead of making him loosen up, only encouraged him to double his efforts at self-discipline.

It was at this point in the normal cycle of studies that they came to the chapter on the Incarnation. Jules was especially interested and took copious notes. The Incarnation was the Son of God becoming man so that men could become sons of God. It was the same reality that so struck Pierre de Berulle and it deeply interested Jules Chevalier. He went deep into his theology studies; he scrutinized the commentaries of the Fathers of the Church and the saints.

At the conclusion of this series of lectures on the Incarnation, the professor made a very passionate presentation on the Sacred Heart. For Jules Chevalier this was suddenly a revelation! He went to see the professor and spoke with him at length. He left with a "Life of St. Margaret Mary"

under his arm, which he read with great interest.

He was astonished. One thing became clear to him: Christ is not only present to people, he also loves them - with a total love, with God's love. He is not only the Word Incarnate, he is also love incarnate. "God is Love." Christ is God. Therefore, Christ is love. He is love made human. And he asks us to love him, to return "love for love." The God of the Old Testament, before whom the greatest prophets hid their faces, becomes approachable in Jesus Christ. One can love God in Christ. The Lord had foretold this through the prophet Ezekiel: "*They will be my people and I will be their God...*" (Ezk. 37,27). With the coming of Jesus, we can say: "now we are your people, and you are our God." For Jules this was a moment of grace. He felt that he had just discovered what he had been searching for with such difficulty and with such great pains. The way to be truly united with God, the way to "connect" all people with God is love!

When we say that this was Jules' discovery of the Sacred Heart, we should be more precise. He was well acquainted with the "devotion" to the Sacred Heart that the priests of the Nineteenth Century had spread far and wide. His mother had consecrated him to the Sacred Heart when he was little and she had even given him his "certificate of consecration" that he carefully kept with him. All chapels and churches of the time had their Sacred Heart statues. There were prayers and novenas to the Sacred Heart in all the parishes. When Jules formed a group with some of his fellow students, it was only natural that they took the name "Knights of the Sacred Heart".

His knowledge of the Sacred Heart was about a "devotion" which was preeminent among devotions since it had as its object the Heart of Christ himself. But it was a devotion nonetheless - a means of concentrating piety - like the rosary, the Christmas crib, or a favorite icon. Tradition could just as easily have left us other devotions regarding Christ, his sacred hands, for example. The hands of Christ worked for thirty years; they blessed, healed, raised the dead, multiplied loaves. They were pierced on the cross and gave witness to his resurrection, "*Look at my hands, Thomas...*". Yes, why not those sacred hands of Jesus? It is true that we honor the "five holy wounds" of Christ. Yet it is especially the more noble heart which was singled out. But usually people stopped with this aspect of the devotion. It was an act of pious respect for everything connected with the person of Jesus.

But what Jules discovered, on the contrary, went to the very core of the matter. The heart of Jesus is the symbol or sign of the love of the Son of God, of the infinite love of God. People in love have always known this. When they say: "*I give you my heart...*," that means: "*I give my self to you, my whole self...*" God loves us. He shows us this in Jesus Christ. God loves us and gives us his heart. And he asks for our heart in return. This insight provided Jules with the revelation people needed and in a language that everyone could understand - the language of the heart. It was a revelation that would shake up the world.

We might compare the insight Jules received about God's love to courtship between a young man and a young woman. Let us imagine that he is trying to win over her heart. You can give him advice and tell him the best way to reach his goal and talk about the things he should do to attract her attention. All that might not really convince him or might even discourage him. But if you can assure him that the young lady is already head over heels in love with him, that changes everything and makes it all so much easier for him! He will then have just one concern: not to do anything to displease his admirer. Thus the religious (the "matchmaker," if I may use that term), no longer has to cry "*Penance! Penance!... I call you to your obligations and your duties!...*," but simply: "*God loves you!*" And then even the most indifferent person, the one who does not think about anything and does not expect anything, on learning that he or she is loved, will at least stop being indifferent.

With us, God took the initiative. "*God loved us first..., God sent the only begotten Son...*" (1 John 4,19). This son became one of us, with a human heart, to show us the Father's love, to make it visible, palpable. All this so that we men and women might share this love and belong to God as Christ belongs to us. Thanks to St. Margaret Mary, Jules Chevalier truly discovered and understood what the Gospel has proclaimed for 2,000 years: "*As the Father has loved me, Jesus said, so I have loved you... Live on in my love.*" Moreover, in Jesus' prayer the night before he gave his life to destroy all that separates us from God, he also said: "*Father, as you are in me, and I am in you, may they also be in us...*"

If only he could tell this to people, find the words to express this, the world would be saved. God's love for us... God's impatient waiting to be loved by us... "*The Heart of Jesus,*" Father Chevalier would later write, "*that is the center where everything in the Old and New Testaments comes together. It is the pivot, the sunlight of the Church, the hearth of our love, the origin of the sacraments, the pledge of our reconciliation, the salvation of the world, the remedy for all our ills.*" Yes, it is all revealed and summed up in the Heart of Jesus.

Later on some people would try to find fault with Father Chevalier for being too attached to the heart as a symbol. It is true that he used the heart everywhere, much like a young man in love who carves a heart in the trunk of every tree. We find hearts everywhere at Issoudun: in the wrought iron work of the banisters, in the tiles of the roof and in the arrangement of the bushes in the gardens. He wanted the basilica to be in the form of a heart; the door of the tabernacle was a heart made of gold. All that seems a bit exaggerated to us. But we must also remember that in our present day and age we are no longer as sensitive to symbols. We see this change in the meaning of national colors and flags. Our three national colors no longer remind us of anything but July 14 dances and the insignia on the uniforms of our better sports teams. At best, the flag is the glorious sign of a gold medal at the Olympic games. But during World War I our men gave their lives for that flag, to save that flag, to honor that flag. They gave their lives for everything which that flag symbolized: all the values that they proudly held dear, everything they believed in, everything that made up their lives, and all those whom they loved.

For Jules Chevalier, the heart was the sign, "*the center, the pivot, the hearth of our love...*" This "sign" was also the rallying point, the point of convergence for all the lost sheep who had no direction in life. "*From the pierced heart of Jesus on Calvary,*" he wrote, "*I see a new world arising, a world full of greatness and life inspired by love and mercy, a new world that the Church must perpetuate on our planet...*" We can imagine the enthusiasm, the exaltation and exultation that overcame our future priest, so anxious to be another Christ and haunted by the indifference of his time, when he discovered in the heart of Jesus and in the love of God, the simple, obvious response to all his anguish.

Just at this moment the time had come for him to take another step, a decisive one, on his way to the priesthood: Jules Chevalier was about to be ordained a subdeacon. He made an eight-day retreat as was the custom. A profound transformation took place within him. Once the ordination was over, his confreres discovered in the new subdeacon a man they had not known before. He was smiling, affable, pleasant, even light-hearted in his behavior. One can easily see the broad smiles of his classmates who were happily surprised by the radical change that had come over serious Jules! "*Provided it lasts...!*", as most skeptics would say when they are sure that something will not last.

And it did last - until the end of his life so filled with setbacks. This was because the transformation of Jules did not come from a good resolution that he made in a moment of grace. He had not decided to change his behavior; it was he himself who had changed. He did not have to force himself to be different. The smile and the gentleness that seemed so new came from the bottom of his heart. And if we reflect a bit we see that it was not really a transformation but rather a maturing, a budding: "*If the grain of wheat that falls to earth does not die, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.*" (John 12,24). All of these efforts that Jules had made to die to himself so as to remove from himself everything that could tarnish the image of Christ had now come to fruition. "*Put to death the parts of you that belong to the earth... Get rid of all that...*," wrote St. Paul. "*You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, the one which is forever renewed in the image of its Creator.*" (Col. 3, 9-10).

Jules Chevalier was transformed because from then on he was able to say with St. John: "*We have recognized the love God has for us,* out making an impression on those around him. Whether it was his earlier "rigorism" mixed with a little severity or his later becoming more affable, people talked about him. They noted his strong personality and some very positive qualities. This was why he had no problem in forming a small group for prayer and reflection. His classmates were aware of who he was and were happy to be associated with him.

But in the course of their "informal" ("impromptu" might be a better word) spiritual conversations, his confreres, on one or the other occasion, must have asked Jules about his family background, his childhood, his vocation. As soon as someone begins to emerge from the pack, the question is inevitable: Who is that man? Who was Jules Chevalier? How was it, for example, that he wound up at the seminary in Bourges which was not his home diocese? In what kind of a family did he grow up? How did his desire to be a priest come about? What happened after that and how come he was so much older than his classmates? In a closed milieu like that of the seminary, people are anxious to know about each other and friendship is built upon this type of sharing. Jules, who was always so interested in others and loved to have them talk about things that were important to them, must have been persuaded, on one occasion or another, to relate something about his childhood and the events that brought him to Bourges.

Jules was born at Richelieu. The very name of the town reminds us of the famous cardinal. The Richelieu family owned a country home in Touraine, near Chinon, in what is today the Department of Indre and Loire, but very close to the border with Vienna. Bishop Armand de Richelieu, who was first a fairly good bishop of Lucon, caught the eye of Louis XIII for his outstanding qualities and became the famous government minister we all know. Once he became both a duke and a cardinal, he deemed his ancestral manor unbecoming his rank. He had it torn down and built a great chateau in its place. Near by, right in the middle of the countryside, he built an entire city to lodge his numerous attendants and servants.

The chateau was destroyed during the Revolution, indicating that the revolutionaries could be impartial when it came to selling both churches and castles stone by stone. The city remains more or less in its original condition. While some people might describe it as a picturesque little town, this author found it a dismal bore. A long wall forms a rectangular enclosure about 700 by 500 meters. The streets are all at right angles and the houses are exactly the same. One thinks of housing projects built of stone instead of brick.

If Jules Chevalier's personality could be described as rigid, or at least well organized and methodical, no doubt this was partly due to his home town which was without imagination, without wandering streets, without any nooks or crannies, with no hiding places for childhood play. It was in this austere setting that he was born on March 15, 1824, the third child in a poor family. His father, Jean-Charles, had come from a fairly well-to-do family, but the death of his parents had left him without means. Jean-Charles attempted several trades, as a grain salesman, then a baker, without being able to bring his family out of a poverty that bordered on destitution. At least he knew how to read and write which was not the case for all the poor of that time and this would prove to be important for him later on. Jean-Charles was not a bad person. He was not a practicing Catholic but was Christian by tradition. He was something of a lost soul due to his successive failures.

His wife, Louise Oury, was the youngest in a family of thirteen children. That's hard: thirteen mouths to feed. An aunt took charge of little Louise and raised her. This aunt was a religious person who, during the Revolution, hid members of the nobility and some priests who said underground Masses in grottos, even though she had previously been investigated by the revolutionary court. She gave Louise a solid religious education which would mark her entire life. But the little girl did not go to school - there was no school.

It is important to look more closely at Jules' childhood situation. Each of us is marked by his or her background and milieu. Jules was born very poor. He would keep the heart of a poor man all his life; doing without came naturally to him. Moreover, in his bleak and barren home town he felt all the misfortunes of the Revolution. The local church, which had been abandoned for a long time, was in a dismal state. During his childhood they were still selling stones from the chateau and his mother must have spoken to him of her beloved and heroic aunt, of priests being hunted down, of underground Masses at which both presiders and faithful were risking their lives. Jules, who had a very receptive temperament, was without a doubt profoundly marked by the constant insecurity that poverty brings and by the evils of his time.

Nonetheless, Jules' childhood had a normal development. You can be both poor and happy when you are part of a united family. The biographers have had fun revealing a few of Jules' pranks and other little details to show that he was a normal little boy, that he had a good mother, and that he had been raised well. Beyond that there is nothing unusual to tell.

What is of greater importance is that early in life Jules was attracted to the church. It was situated in the center of a square city, on a square park, at a point where four straight streets crossed at right angles. Without doubt it was for him a place to get away, a place where there was life. At an early age he became an altar server. He would rise before dawn to serve Mass and do a hundred things for the priest. At home he would drape himself in a cloth that reminded him of the chasuble, would "celebrate Mass," and tried to repeat with meaning the sermons he had heard at church. Besides these "celebrations," and when the priest did not need him, Jules visited the poor, the elderly, the sick and made himself useful. One could always say that the young boy had nothing else to interest him and nothing else to do. One could always wonder what might have become of Jules had he been able to spend his free time playing video games or watching cartoons on television. Even so, there was certainly something more here. Richelieu was not any more fun for the other children of his age; and they did not all spend their time serving Mass and visiting the poor.

When Jules reached his twelfth birthday, he was at the right age, according to the customs of that time, to receive his first communion and leave school to make his mark in life. Of his first communion, our only information is a short note he wrote years later: *"When I came back from church, my heart was overflowing with joy..."* While that may not seem like much, it is a lot when we remember the great reserve Jules Chevalier had in all matters concerning his personal spiritual experiences.

This joy would soon be put to the test. Jules firmly announced to his family that he was going to enter the seminary. They should have guessed that. His parents were dismayed - not because they were opposed to a vocation, in fact they were quite moved by this -but because it was just not possible. The seminary was not gratis and they were not able to pay the tuition; even if it were reasonable. Moreover, the small additional salary that Jules could earn was absolutely necessary for the family.

For Jules this was a heavy blow. But he did not let it defeat him. "Very well. I will learn a trade first, I'll save up, and when I have enough money, then I'll go to the seminary!" We can already see the Reverend Father Chevalier in this decision of a twelve year old child. He was a person who never let anything stop him. He was a man who began building a community center and a basilica with nothing. He was the one who threw himself into a project which would have world-wide consequences at a time when he was alone and had no support. But as he himself would write one day: *"Obstacles are nothing more than means."*

And so Jules became an apprentice to a shoemaker. Soon he quit his job to go to work for another shoemaker because the first one was not seriously teaching him the trade. Such audacity! That was just not done at the time, at least not by a mere teenager. Jules went about his work seriously; but at the same time he considered himself to be in a period of preparation on his path toward the priesthood. He left childhood quickly and had soon become a serious young man. Rather than joining in the pastimes of the other young people of his age, he spent all his free time at the rectory, working in the church, or visiting the poor. He got up early to go to Mass. We can only imagine the quips from his friends at that "age without pity" addressed to the *"future priest,"* the dreamer, the "enlightened" one.

The day finally arrived when Jules believed his dream was to come true. A Lazarist priest, who had come to Richelieu for a parish mission, noticed him and asked questions. He promised to make an effort to have Jules admitted to the seminary for free. All he would have to do in the meantime was to study a little Latin and that would be it. Jules, tutored by the pastor and full of enthusiasm, threw himself into Latin studies. In order to do this he began to get up even earlier each morning and went to bed even later. He even had his grammar book open in front of him as he hammered on the soles. Unfortunately, this did not last very long. The seminary was going through some financial difficulties and it was no longer possible to accept students for free. This was a tremendous let-down for Jules, but he continued to study Latin. That was his way of showing that he still believed in his vocation.

But the years went by and by. And Jules was not able to put any money aside as he had hoped. Although the horizon was ominous, Jules kept working just the same. He was sure that one day he would be a priest and he said it to everyone. He kept repeating it in spite of the funny looks and compassionate smiles he received. He did not know how it would happen, he just knew that it would happen. And yet, he would soon be seventeen years old. What hope was left for him, the young shoemaker's apprentice?

Miracles happen when we least expect them. One day a traveler stopped at the inn in Richelieu for a drink. While chatting with the barkeeper, he said that he was looking for a forest ranger. He needed a solid, honest man who would be willing to take the job immediately. The maid, who had overheard the conversation, told him that she knew someone with a family to feed who was very deserving. *"Does he know how to read and write?"* asked the man. *"Yes!"* said the girl and added: *"They're very good people; their son wants to become a priest."* The deal was quickly made. They went to fetch Mr. Chevalier immediately and he was hired on the spot. In the euphoria of the moment, the man in question said that he would be happy to pay the tuition for a seminarian!

The little two-room house in the forest where the Chevaliers were going to live was all alone in the middle of the woods, six kilometers away from the nearest village, Vatan in Indre. It was far from Richelieu, and could even be considered in another world. They had 100 kilometers to go in a carriage with their few humble pieces of furniture. It was a real expedition, an uprooting. But Jules was happy; he was going to enter the minor seminary. He had known that it would happen. He was not surprised but we can guess the joy he felt.

It was March of 1841. There was no question of entering the seminary in the middle of the academic year. Nevertheless, at the pastor's request, the parochial vicar agreed to give Jules a few lessons while he was waiting to enter. Each day he traveled undaunted the 12 kilometers round trip journey to Vatan. He returned to his study of Latin with a renewed fervor.

October came and he was, at last, in the minor seminary that he had been dreaming about for five years. The school was located at St. Gaultier, near le Blanc, at the other end of the department. Far from Richelieu and far from Vatan where his parents lived, Jules felt lost. Moreover he was seventeen and one-half years old, the age when most other students were finishing. He was embarrassed by his height and broad shoulders, in the classroom reserved for the youngest students. He, the manual laborer, had to begin studying full time. It was no piece of cake. The daily schedule, strictly controlled by a very detailed rule, seemed to him sad and heavy. Moreover, he felt himself a foreigner, far from home and far from everyone he knew. In his home region of Touraine, people are rather friendly and communicative. The people of Berry, on the contrary, are rather reserved and it takes them time to make friends.

Jules went into a deep depression. He wanted to leave - not to abandon his vocation but to transfer to the seminary in Tours where his benefactor would certainly pay his tuition as well. There he would at least feel at home with people from his own region. The rector tried to placate him. A change is always risky. God had brought him there and might just want him there. He asked Jules to be patient for another month until the retreat towards the end of October.

Jules got hold of himself. He made the retreat with the others and, through will power, regained his calm. He stayed, of course, and began to work diligently. Jules continued on his path. The following year, given his age and the fact that he knew more Latin than the others, they had him skip a year. Being in the same class as the older students was a lot better. He finished his studies with honors. Thus he became a member of the Diocese of Bourges and would one day be pastor of Issoudun. It happened by chance and just barely - his family only stayed at Vatan for two years. The supervisor of the holding was changed and there was no further need of Mr. Chevalier. He took the family back to Richelieu where he became the caretaker of a farm. Jules, for his part, remained firmly rooted in Berry. Was this an act of divine providence? We could be right in thinking so especially since his tuition was paid for him only for the first year.

During the monotony of the months at St. Gaultier a rather startling thing happened that deserves to be mentioned. One day during an outing, Jules climbed up a ledge with some of his classmates to admire the panorama. In coming down he tried to take a shortcut. He slipped on the snow and came crashing down the steep incline. He was found motionless some 30 meters below. They thought he was dead and carried the "body" into a nearby chateau where they improvised a mortuary chamber. They lit candles and started to pray. Some of the group, feeling the deep sentiments of the moment, returned to the seminary and shared the horrible news with the others. The rector was devastated and had every one go to the chapel to sing the *De Profundis* while he sent a doctor to certify the death. When the latter arrived on the scene, the "dead man" opened his eyes and the doctor could certify but a few bruises.

What a strange experience! For hours Jules remained motionless. Without being able to move so much as an eyebrow, he could still hear everyone around him lamenting his death. He wound up believing it himself thinking, *"This is death? Then I am about to appear before God!"* From this little adventure that we now consider more funny than tragic, Jules was to carry with him a sense of the fragility and brevity of life. He decided at that time to dedicate his fleeting life totally to God.

Next came the age for military service. Although clerics were exempt at that time, Jules, five years behind the rest in his studies, was not yet a cleric at the age of 20. And military service lasted seven years. So many more years would be lost when he had already lost so much time. A lottery was used to decide who would go. Only those who drew an unlucky number were drafted. Since he had to participate in this cruel lottery at Richelieu, his place of birth, his father did it for him. The poor man, always so unlucky in his life, for once came out on top and drew a good number. Jules was saved. What would have happened had he been held back another seven years? In the eyewitness accounts we have of that time, nothing would lead us to believe that Jules would have been upset. In any case, he was sure of his vocation and sure that nothing, nothing at all, could stop him.

And thus Jules arrived at the end of this first stage of five years. Before entering the major seminary, he went to Richelieu for a short vacation. He was wearing a cassock, as it was the custom at the time to give it to the better candidates early on in their formation. People understood then that he was well on his way to his goal. Many rejoiced and those who had laughed about his dreams of priesthood no longer did so. They even felt that at this stage it was all unfortunate: *"With the education you have, and without having to go in the army, you could do well in life!"* And Jules answered in such a way that they realized that he would!

His married brother came from Paris, and his married sister from Tours, to meet him in Richelieu. They had never paid him much attention until this point. Now they suddenly discovered that he was important. Without trying to be too obvious, they tried to let him know that they hoped he would take care of them and their children. Jules did not react. They became more direct and referred to a certain priest they knew who had been able to get good jobs for his nieces and nephews. At that point Jules blurted out: *"If you count on me, you will be disappointed! I am becoming a priest to serve God, not to enrich my family!"* The atmosphere in their house must have suddenly become a lot cooler that night.

Who was Jules? At that point he was a young man of 22 years of age, pensive, marked by a rough and poor childhood, plagued by difficulties and haunted by one desire, that of consecrating his life to God. If he seemed to be of a rather serious nature, it was because nothing in his life up to this point had been very easy and because he sensed that he still had a long way to go. He had dreamed about the minor seminary as if it would be a little paradise. Those five years were, in fact, quite difficult for him. It had been hard work under a darkened sky without much sunlight. Jules at least had learned that he should not just dream any more. The path he had chosen would not be easy and he knew that. But far from discouraging him, this thought made him stronger and more resolute.

In October he entered the major seminary at Bourges where we met him in an earlier chapter. There he would come to know that God loved him, and that his vocation was not to consecrate himself to God's service, as he had thought up to that point, but to make God known. *"With his eyes always fixed" on Jesus, he continued his journey...*

On June 14, 1851, Jules Chevalier was ordained a priest. That was certainly an important event in his life and we should like to be able to stop and reflect on it. Jules had such a lofty ideal of the priest, one "conformed" to Christ, who made Christ corporally and fully present for people. The "real presence" of Christ in the Eucharist was so essential for him. Everything he had learned from the Sulpicians and meditated on at length he was now to live in its fullness. It was, for him, the prayer of Jesus come true: *"Father, I in you, and they in me!"*

Yes, we would certainly like to share the sentiments and the meditation of Jules Chevalier on the day of his ordination when he became, for his brothers and sisters, a priest of Jesus Christ, like Jesus, with Jesus. Unfortunately we have nothing or very little to go on. Some time later this simple note was found: *"I celebrated my first Mass in the little chapel in the garden, the one dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. At the moment of the consecration, the greatness of the mystery and the thought of my unworthiness penetrated me so fully that I dissolved into tears. I needed the encouragement of the holy priest who assisted me to complete the sacrifice. An unforgettable day..."*

We have to be content with this small glimpse into his feelings. It is a little more than what we have in reference to his first communion when he spoke of *"overflowing with joy,"* but not much more. Jules Chevalier, who wrote volumes, most notably a very long book on the Sacred Heart, never spoke of himself or his personal experiences.

In the same way, we have very little if anything about his "conversion," at the time of his subdiaconate, and very little on the change in his life with his personal "discovery" of the Sacred Heart. When exactly did he become certain that his vocation was to found a congregation of "missionaries?" All we know is that one day, during his second year at the major seminary, he spoke of it to his superior. In spite of the misgivings of the latter, he held his project in the depths of his heart - for the time being.

All this leads us to suppose that the name of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart did not come about, as we have long believed, as a sudden inspiration that he had in the first years of the congregation "to thank Mary by means of a special title." This title he must have had with him for a long time, since his seminary years, but he had kept it to himself. When he proposed it to his community it was with a certain timidity, bordering on shame, like someone who places in public view something that up to that point had been an intimate and private experience.

This reserve, this modesty, was above all an attitude or reflex action of a humble man. The humble person never blows his or her own horn. The humble listen but never speak of themselves or about themselves. They only speak when questioned or when they believe that it is their duty, e.g. when they know something that everyone should know and that no one else will say if they do not.

Jules Chevalier had the heart of a humble man. That did not come just from the fact that he had experienced material poverty in his childhood or because he had not had the money to pay his tuition. He was very conscious of the fact that he had a priestly vocation and later the vocation to be a founder and conscious too of the fact that this calling did not come from himself, was not of his own initiative or his own insight or generosity. He was convinced that he, little Jules, had been called, in spite of the few qualifications he had to carry out such a mission. When he speaks of his "unworthiness," he is not using a figure of speech or a catchy phrase. He was convinced that he was unworthy.

He had become a priest. Three days later he began his ministry as parochial vicar in a small parish. In the course of three years, Father Chevalier would be assigned to Ivoy-le-Pre, Chatillon-sur-Indre and Aubigny-sur-Nere, three different parishes in quite far-flung corners of the huge Diocese of Bourges. Each newly ordained priest was sent out like this in his first years as a practical training experience in ministry. They were sent to sick or very elderly pastors who needed temporary help.

The pastors who had Father Chevalier as a temporary vicar could only rejoice over his stay with them. He was very open to advice and direction from them and, at the same time, was full of personal initiative. As he himself said: *"The children, the sick, the poor, the weak were (for him) the object of special care."* Consequently, with the approval of the pastor, he organized perpetual adoration in one place. In another he set up a special Mass for men which continued long after he left or gave new life to associations or groups that already existed. According to testimony that we have, "fifty years later, people still remembered the young vicar's stay in the parish."

In the third parish, in Aubigny, Father Chevalier assisted the pastor in his agony and death. He was a good and holy priest who was very old. After having received the last rites from his associate, he called him close to speak with him. I quote all his words as they were written later by Father Chevalier because they are a perfect illustration of the "passage" from one generation of priests to another. Both were very generous and zealous generations but with different "points of view." The first was all taken up with the beloved flock, the second was concerned about the lost sheep.

"My dear Father, I am about to die but first let me give you a little advice," said the priest from the generation of the Cure of Ars. *"In the course of my many years of ministry, I devoted myself too much to pious and devout souls. I spent long hours in the confessional with them, without much to show for it, and that to the detriment of what I should have done for the men and the young people as well as to the detriment of my other duties. It has been a great failing on my part. Unfortunately, this fault is shared by a great number of pastors. We take too much care of the women and not enough-of the 'men. Avoid this stumbling block. May your preferences be for the little ones, the poor, those who have no education, the abandoned ones..."* Father Chevalier simply added: *"I promised him..."*

Two weeks later a new pastor arrived at Aubigny and a few days later our parochial vicar, now free to go elsewhere, received a letter from the bishop. It was his new assignment. He opened the envelope with curiosity. He was ready to go anywhere they wanted to send him. His heart leaped with joy: he was assigned to Issoudun!

The appointment to Issoudun was for Jules a true sign from heaven - it was the sign. He remembered how his plan for a vast congregation of missionaries had been deemed wild and idealistic by the superior of the seminary. Good Father Ruel had answered with a somewhat ironic proposal: *"Instead why not convert Issoudun first?"* Jules, convinced that this congregation would see the light of day, had taken this answer as a divine response: he would begin in Issoudun, first of all. But then nothing, nothing at all had happened to confirm his understanding. He had finished his years of study without the slightest indication that his plan had any possibility of coming to fruition.

Still this project had remained in his heart as a firm conviction. He had been willing to wait. *"How would that happen?"* He did not have any answer to the question. But he **knew** that it would happen. He was confident. With peace of heart, he then set out zealously in service to the diocese in parish ministry, as any other young priest would have done. Three more years went by. It was just like the years that went by, one after the other, at Richelieu when he was a shoemaker and **knew** that he would be a priest. The people around him could never believe it. And nothing gave them any reason to believe it. But he prepared himself in prayer, devoting himself to the poor and studying Latin under impossible conditions and working wholeheartedly at his trade. He had then the same conviction he had later: to accomplish "the duties of his state in life" was the best preparation while waiting for God's time to come.

Jules' appointment to Issoudun was unexpected which is why he took it as a visible sign. In fact the usual practice in the diocese was that after three years as an itinerant vicar under the direction of seasoned priests, every new priest was named pastor in some small parish where he would exercise his ministry alone. Jules expected an appointment of this kind. Instead he was again named a parochial vicar. But vicar at Issoudun! He was filled with joy. It was the same joy that had overtaken him when a passing traveler had declared, in a matter of fact manner, that he would be happy to pay the tuition of a seminarian.

Jules hastened to consult the diocesan directory to see the names of the priests already assigned to Issoudun with whom he would be forming a pastoral team. There was the pastor, Father Crozat, an elderly priest. Then there was another vicar, appointed just a few weeks earlier. And Jules

received his second shock of the day when he read the name: Emile Maugenest! Father Maugenest had been a fellow student with him at Bourges. He had considered him to be the most zealous of the "Knights of the Sacred Heart!" Without ever saying anything, Jules had always thought that he would be the ideal companion with whom he could found the congregation of missionaries.

What was he doing in Issoudun? Jules had lost track of him. Maugenest had, in fact, left Bourges before the end of his seminary years to enter the Sulpicians at Paris. That had not come as a surprise to anyone. He had been outstanding in every regard, very gifted, very religious and very generous. And now, just after returning to his diocese, he had been appointed to Issoudun, almost at the same time as Jules. No, all that was just too much of a coincidence to be just a coincidence. Jules saw there the miracle, the sign he had been waiting for. There is no doubt that it was a sign. That it was a miracle is less certain unless, of course, we take into account the fact that God sometimes acts through the good will of other people.

Issoudun was a real problem for the bishop and his council. The town had felt the backlash of the post-revolutionary period more than any other. There had been uprisings that had been put down with force. The bourgeois class had slowly left this city deeming it to be too insecure. There remained a populist majority that was bitter with the memory of past hardships. They wanted to be free of all constraints, whether they came from the State or the Church. Moreover, Issoudun, which had once had several convents, had seen many priests and religious leave during the Revolution to get married and raise large families. All these scandals had driven a number of believers away from the Church.

In 1830, Father Crozat had written in his report to the bishop: *"The moral revolution was felt more here than anywhere else. Nowhere else, perhaps, has there been such a complete break with the past."* Things did not improve much after that. It is true that Sisters and then Brothers had been able to reopen two schools but only after many difficulties and with a number of risks and even a few scary moments. There were still about a hundred families of more or less practicing Catholics. Was this a leaven of hope in the dough? Father Chevalier, on his arrival at Issoudun, was a bit surprised to find, for example, that religious education before first communion had been reduced to just 15 days. And for a long time, they said, there was only one man who made his Easter duty.

"What can we do for Issoudun?" those in authority in the diocese were asking themselves. It was too much for Father Crozat. For one thing he was well on in years, worn out and tired. At the same time he was a very timid man, not very enterprising and often did not know what to do next. Lack of success in his pastoral undertakings had left him even more fearful. One example of this fear arose from was the result of all the old stories about the lack of morality in the former convents which were still making the rounds in town. As a result Father Crozat was constantly preoccupied with the fear of giving scandal. When he went to visit the sisters, he always wore surplice, stole and biretta to show that it was his ministry, and only his ministry, that led him there. The rest of the time he was usually in church, in a dark corner, saying his rosary all day long. Let us not judge anyone and let us not be too quick to smile. Perhaps those humble rosaries of Father Crozat were what earned Issoudun the grace of Father Chevalier's coming.

Among the members of the bishop's council was the superior of the major seminary. This was not Father Ruel but his successor, Father Gasnier. He had been a professor at the seminary before that and he knew Jules and his "Knights of the Sacred Heart" well. He remembered their conversations about Issoudun. He suggested to the bishop that he look for a solution among the younger clergy and to name as parochial vicars the two most zealous members of the group that had once caught his attention. The bishop was won over even though Father Maugenest, the other young priest in question, had already been destined for the cathedral in Bourges. Thus the miracle happened!

9

DECEMBER 8, 1854

Jules was definitely beside himself. For a month he had been in Issoudun, in daily contact with Father Maugenest. The atmosphere was warm and friendly. But Jules was looking for an occasion to bring up the subject of the congregation. He was hoping that his confrere would bring up memories from the past, as often happens with old classmates. He hoped he would make reference to the "Knights of the Sacred Heart." That would be a good occasion to say: *"Yes, and speaking of that..."* But nothing happened. Emile Maugenest did not seem to have any recollection of the past. Maybe none of that had impressed him very much; perhaps Jules had imagined things.

Jules did not dare bring up the subject. He was waiting for a sign. But finally he could not wait any longer. He told himself that there had been plenty of signs and that now was the time for him to dive into the water. So he went to find Father Maugenest and, without beating around the bush any longer, made his presentation: *"Two plagues beseege our unfortunate century: indifference and selfishness. We need an efficacious remedy that can be applied to these two evils. This remedy is to be found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is pure love and charity. Moreover, this adorable heart which is so devoted to us, is not sufficiently loved by men. They are ignorant of all the treasures it contains. And so we need priests who will work to make it better known. They will have the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart."* Whew! He had said it! He had said it all.

Father Maugenest was shocked. He had also had the same idea, from his seminary days, following his talks with Jules. But Jules had not spoken about it and seemed to have forgotten. And so Emile had not dared speak about it first. *"But I have had this idea for a long time,"* Maugenest added, *"I'm with you, let's begin right away!"* They embraced and, with tears in their eyes, knelt to thank God.

Let's begin right away. While that was very nice, Jules, the elder of the two, wanted to be practical. How could two young priests, without any means of support and perhaps not all that worthy, have the audacity to go ahead with this on their own? They decided to speak with their pastor, good Father Crozat. If he should be in favor, that would be a sign. And that would also be a **first** step since he would certainly intercede with the bishop on behalf of their plan.

They lost no more time and went to find Father Crozat. The timid priest did not answer right away; he just sat there and thought. Our two young vicars stared with pleading looks at the statue of the Immaculate Mother on the pastor's desk. Finally the old man answered with "conviction in his voice:" *"My sons, I not only share your feelings, but I will also help you with everything in my power to establish a house of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun. And if you found it, I will be able to intone my Nunc Dimittis!"* Had it been possible, they would have embraced him. But that just was not done.

There remained the problem of finances. Obviously our two "founders" did not have a penny to their name. The pastor was not rich either. So Jules proposed his favorite way to solve dilemmas: they would make a novena. They were in the last days of November and the 8th of December was approaching. That December 8, in 1854, would be a very important day, as Pope Pius DC planned to solemnly proclaim the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

The novena began on November 30 so as to end on the feast day. Father Maugenest, who was later described as "not much of an artist," had time to paint a picture that they placed in front of the pedestal of the statue of Mary Immaculate. "Two priests on their knees-above, in the air, the Heart of Jesus hurling rays of light on the two priests." As an expert would say later: *"If Our Lady deigned to answer their prayer, it certainly was not because of the art!"* Our Lady, it is true, looks first at the heart of the artist.

We can be sure that the novena was prayed fervently. On December 8, the solemn Mass was celebrated by Father Chevalier, with the painting in prominence on the altar. "Father Crozat cried tears of compassion," but the two young priests were also deeply moved. Only these three knew the secret. They were the only ones to make the novena. After the Mass Father Chevalier was informed that a man wished to speak with him. He went to the rectory. The gentleman said that he was only an intermediary and that he had come to tell him that an anonymous person was offering 20,000 francs for a work to benefit the souls of Berry, preferably a house of missionaries. There was but one condition: this work would have to have the approval of the Archbishop.

One can imagine the reaction of Father Chevalier: *"Sir, you were sent by heaven!... This is Mary's answer!..."* Father Maugenest, who had remained in church for his prayer of thanksgiving, knew nothing of all this. He arrived in excitement and said: *"I am sure that our good Mother will give us the miracle we asked for."* *"You are right!"* answered Father Chevalier. Overcome with emotion he was barely able to explain that the miracle had already happened.

They hurried to the pastor to share the good news and to ask for an immediate audience with the bishop. In light of the evident sign sent by Our Lady, he would surely have no option but to approve the project. Father Crozat was not quite so sure. Besides the deep prudence nature had given him, he had the benefit of long experience. He knew that the authorities rarely made decisions in the enthusiasm of the moment. Father Crozat thought that this was going a bit too fast. He wanted a few days to think about it.

Jules Chevalier waited patiently, something he was used to. It did not bother him. As far as he was concerned, his congregation was born on that 8th day of December, 1854. The rest would come with time, like his entering the seminary and his appointment to Issoudun. God was the one who acted, who did everything. His part was to be ready, to wait in prayer and in the faithful accomplishment of his daily duties: *"Be prepared. At an hour you do not expect the Lord will come."* (Matt. 24,44)

Father Crozat needed a month of reflection before he decided to intervene for them. Thus in the month of January, Jules Chevalier was able to visit his archbishop, Cardinal Dupont, *"with a good letter from our holy pastor to explain our plan, to tell him about the grace we just received and to ask for his approval."*

The bishop said that he was very moved to learn about it all and that he was in favor of permitting this missionary foundation; but... he was anxious about the future. Twenty thousand francs would be enough to buy a small house; but what about afterwards? How would the community support itself? They would have to be sure of a steady income. Providence is fine, but we are not to tempt it. *"If God is in favor of your work, God will send you the necessary means. Pray to the Blessed Virgin to bring to fruition the work she has so well begun!"* Now that was a way of talking that Jules Chevalier could understand. *"His words,"* he said *"were words of prudence and faith."*

When Jules returned to Issoudun, we can by now easily guess his next move: another novena. This second one was planned so as to end on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary which that year would fall on January 28. But this novena would not be like the first one which had been made with spirit, passion, exaltation. Our two "founders" felt that they would have to become serious. *"To bring the Blessed Virgin more on our side,"* they wrote, *"we will make a contract with her."*

It was Emile Maugenest, the intellectual, who drew up the famous contract in due legal form with eight articles. It was ceremoniously entitled: *"Contract made between the Blessed Virgin and two priests of the Sacred Heart,"* and read in part: *"If the Blessed Virgin ... overcomes the difficulties... and brings this work to fruition... we, on our part, pledge the following: the official name of the members of the community will be Missionaries of the Sacred Heart; they will attempt to live up to its meaning... They will have a special love for the Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary... Out of gratitude to Mary they will consider her their foundress and will associate her with all their works and they will make her loved and honored in a special way... They will never preach or hear confessions without speaking of Jesus and Mary... They will imitate the hidden, interior life of Mary... In their apostolic life they will imitate her zeal for the salvation of souls..."* There followed provisions for the principal and secondary patronal feasts, for the statues they should have in their chapels. Such items would prove that they were not just dreamers because concern for concrete details was necessary in a well organized society.

This "contract" drawn up in a form that pretends to be official, legal and completely serious was both childlike and attractive and at the same time had a clumsy, pompous, improvised side. Without pretending to be a first "Rule" for the Congregation since they were only trying to obtain the grace of Mary's intervention, many of the essential elements of the rule are already present: preaching the Sacred Heart everywhere, compassion, special love for Mary.

At the principal Mass on January 28, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the "contract" was carried to the altar in solemn procession.

Could our two future missionaries have been expecting a renewal of the "miracle" of December 8? But there was no miracle. It would be something much simpler. It was good old Father Crozat who went to find his two vicars after the Mass. He told them that he had not been idle, that he had been looking. And he was happy to announce *"that a generous lady, inspired by grace, has promised an annual gift of 1,000 francs for as long as it is needed."* Bravo Father Crozat! Bless you, anonymous benefactor!

"Our joy was full," wrote Father Chevalier. His joy did not come just from the assurance of sufficient income (1,000 francs at that time would be roughly 100,000 francs today). Income was not his real problem. He knew what poverty was like and was not concerned that he might "tempt Divine Providence." No, what filled him with joy was the fact that now the bishop would have to give his approval.

The bishop was, in fact, quite impressed. *"The hand of God is here, I can see it,"* he said. *"Very well, I will submit your project to the members of my council and I will let you know their decision."* Everything seemed to be on the right track. Unfortunately, the council was unanimous in its decision to reject the proposal of a congregation at Issoudun. Young men without experience would be a fiasco. The authority of the diocese would be called into question and ridiculed. The bishop, feeling that his promise was still binding, presented the question to three different meetings of the council. Each time he received the same negative answer, just as categorical as it was unanimous.

Father Chevalier went to Bourges to meet the eminent members of the council. *"I was about as welcome as a dog in a game of lawn bowling,"* he said prosaically. Even Father Gasnier, the one who was behind his appointment to Issoudun, was not in favor: *"The bishop is not in the habit of going against the advice of his council. You can consider the matter closed."* *"Not so fast, Father Superior!"* replied Chevalier. *"The Blessed Virgin will have the last word. We are going to pray to her."* The seminary superior retorted: *"If you win, she will have performed a real miracle!"* *"She has done a lot already. She will not abandon us!"* said Father Chevalier. And with a slightly malicious bit of audacity, Father Chevalier added: *"Father Superior, I have great confidence in your prayer. Would you promise to join us in our prayer?"*

Father Gasnier was completely flabbergasted and shaken as well. He noted that these young men were very determined, deeply convinced. What if God truly wanted this congregation? He agreed to pray with them. Slowly he began to change his opinion and was strengthened in this by a letter from Father Crozat, who was now showing some initiative. He wrote Father Gasnier a detailed letter and gave a clear presentation of the project expressing very clearly his personal support and affirming that the plan was viable. Good old Father Crozat!

But things were not quite as simple as they seemed, due to a deep misunderstanding. If it had been merely a question of a "work," a diocesan association, to promote the evangelization of Issoudun and its region, everyone would have been in agreement. But Father Chevalier wanted a congregation. Actually, he was concerned about being fully "religious," in the Sulpician meaning of the term. They were especially skeptical over the fact that he felt his vocation was to reveal the love of Christ to the whole world and to make him loved everywhere. He agreed to begin with Issoudun; but he did not want to be limited to one diocese.

That was where things began to break down. To understand just what was happening, we have to go back to the "miracle" of December 8, to the 20,000 francs that fell from heaven. Like so many "miracles," it has an explanation, at least in part. What was truly remarkable was not that this sum of money came to Father Chevalier but that it arrived precisely on December 8. The rest can all be explained.

Father Gasnier, who was responsible for the appointment of the two new vicars in Issoudun, remembered that back in the seminary Jules had come up with a plan for an association of which the "Knights of the Sacred Heart" was just a rough draft. He thought that such an association would be just what was needed to bring Issoudun out of its indifference. Consequently he sought out and went to see Father de Champgrand, a fellow Sulpician and native of Berry, who was teaching at the seminary in Bordeaux. This Father de Champgrand, because of his family, was quite well off and agreed to make an important contribution. But this was for *"a work to benefit the souls of Bern."* This had been clearly specified by

the intermediary who brought news of the gift on December 8. Overjoyed by what he thought was a response from the Blessed Virgin, Jules Chevalier had not attached very much importance to that fact. But now Father de Champgrand came out of his anonymity and clarified that it was only for a work for Berry; otherwise, he would withdraw his offer.

Father Gasnier, without thinking it out any further, had asked his friend de Champgrand to support a work for Berry. In all honesty he could not now go against him. That is why he took the position he did in the bishop's council. But now, moved by the determination of Father Chevalier, he tried in a very friendly manner to convince his friend to change his mind. To do this, he sent him Father Crozat's letter. It is unfortunate that this letter no longer exists because it must have been very convincing. In the end, even though reluctantly and against his better judgment, Father de Champgrand gave in. He said that he still did not believe that a religious congregation was viable and that he still had his doubts but that, since he had no other options, he gave his approval.

In one way, he was forced to do this because the diocese had taken Father Chevalier's side by giving the authorization that had been required. But there had not been a change of heart on the part of the council which remained unanimous in its opposition. They objected that there were already too many new congregations, no need for new ones every day, that this was not what the diocese needed. But the bishop had made the decision without them and stated his position: *"Gentlemen, I have reflected and I have prayed. I never go against your advice. But this time, if I were to follow it, I believe I would be going against Providence. I promised that if these two priests were to find the means, I would approve their undertaking. I am thus committed. I therefore authorize the two parochial vicars to begin their work. As of today, let us appoint their replacements."*

It was June 4, 1855. On June 10, the secretary at the bishop's office made this note in the official journal: *"Father Jules Chevalier has been authorized to take the title of Missionary of the Sacred Heart and consequently, to cease his functions as parochial vicar."* A short time later, the same entry was made for Father Maugenest.

10 THE BEGINNINGS

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had come into existence. They existed because they were listed as such in an official register, even if this register was but a simple list of diocesan appointments. In any case, there was a lot more to do. They needed a house, which for a number of reasons, was not going to be an easy need to fulfill. First, they had to face the anticlericalism of Issoudun. Many simply refused to sell a house to some "priests." Thus they had to try to find a trustworthy man who would pretend to buy the house for himself. That did not make things any easier. Another consideration was that not just any house would do. The houses for sale were either too expensive or too small or built so close to other houses that there would be no room for future expansion.

Finally they found one on the edge of the fields that surrounded the town. It was not very high and about 20 meters long. It had been vacant for some time and was somewhat dilapidated but had a garden and an adjoining building, a sort of garage. The only problem was that they still did not have the money that Father de Champgrand had promised them. Because of that they almost lost out to someone else. Luckily, the wife of the prospective buyer noticed that the "property" was almost next to the cemetery; and she would have nothing to do with it. In the meantime the new parochial vicars had arrived at the rectory. Maugenest and Chevalier were forced to give up their rooms and were out on the street. At that point they decided to spend a few days with their families.

Jules went back to Richelieu. Mrs. Chevalier was overjoyed. She asked about his new parish and wanted to know if the people were nice, etc. Being both very religious and very poor, her dream had been to spend the rest of her life keeping house for her priest son. For her that would mean both happiness and security. But Jules answered: *"I am not a pastor, I am a missionary."* His mother fainted. They had a hard time bringing her to. Then for a week Jules had to put up with his mother's tears and her desperate arguments as well as a "virtual siege" on the part of his family. *"My mother who was a generous and faith-filled woman,"* wrote Jules, *"finally understood the reasons for my decision and agreed to the separation that would last forever here on earth. I found her to be heroic."* He then took refuge with the Jesuits at Poitiers.

Finally, after a month, they purchased the house in Issoudun. They made the necessary repairs: a door and a partition or two -which left Father Chevalier without a window in his room. They converted the garage into a chapel. It was a shaky building about three meters high. They removed two inside walls and applied some whitewash. They found some chairs "like they have in churches" and a simple table which became an altar "that radiated poverty."

These improvements, modest as they were, were only carried out thanks to a loan of 5,000 francs. That was quite a sum given their humble condition. It may be of historical interest to note that the first house of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the real mother house, was situated more or less where we find the entry to today's buildings on what would become the Place du Sacre-Coeur.

Our brand new Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had planned to make their first year a time of novitiate. It would be a time of silence, meditation, prayer and study while they stayed apart from the world. They planned to go out to the neighboring parishes to preach only on Sundays and feast days. But Father de Champgrand began to put pressure on them. He had not given them the money to spend all their time praying but to evangelize the region! The bishop led them to understand that he expected much from them -immediately. As for Father Crozat, good priest but bad pastor that he was, he very gently informed them that he hoped that *his religious would bring about a renewal of Issoudun - without too much delay!*

Our missionaries soon had to give up the idea of living separated from the world. One night, due to the ill-conceived remodeling work, one of the chapel walls fell down. They thought it a catastrophe, especially since they did not have even a penny to do repairs. The curious townsfolk came to see the disaster and they discovered something that was not generally known: the Fathers were living there. The town began to talk. Some generous benefactors offered to repair or replace the damaged part of the chapel. All of Issoudun, a town where nothing ever happened, became interested in the project. In the final analysis, they were quite proud of this new installation which would give some importance to their city. Gifts came in. Thus, the townsfolk not only repaired the wall but also built a small steeple, and gave a bell and a small organ. The refurbished chapel "would be the envy of many country parishes," which leads us to conclude that churches were very poor at that time. From that point on, the chapel would become more and more popular with the people, partly due to curiosity and partly because they all had worked, more or less, to restore it. It was, in a way, their church. An opening in the side of "Sacred Heart" chapel had brought about an opening in their indifference. That is truly symbolic.

At this point the bishop found a clever way to orient the community to outside ministry. The hospital and the hospice in Issoudun had asked him for a chaplain. At the same time, a young priest of the diocese, Paul Morel, had asked for permission to join the young congregation. The bishop gave his consent, in January 1856, on the condition that he fill the role of chaplain. Now our religious were tied to a steady outside ministry. Unfortunately, Father Morel, gifted as he was, had very poor health. He could not get used to the Spartan regime of community life, and lasted only a few months before he asked to be moved. At about the same time another priest, the chaplain of the hospital and prison in Bourges, shared with the bishop his desire to enter a monastery. The Bishop suggested that he enter the community in Issoudun instead and accept the responsibility of being chaplain at the hospitals.

It just so happened that the new recruit, Charles Piperon, had been a very active member of the "Knights of the Sacred Heart." Along with Emile Maugenest he had been one of those closest to Jules Chevalier and he would play an extremely important role in the congregation. He was a simple man, not too sure of himself, but with tremendous generosity. He would be the perfect right-hand man to Father Chevalier and the faithful

interpreter of his spirit and ideas. He proved to be an untiring itinerant preacher - as long as he was sent and did not have to take the initiative himself - and a competent and scrupulous manager of day-to-day affairs.

For his part, Father Crozat, in his likable stubbornness, did not give up his dream of "using" this new force that the community provided him. His idea was to make the new "church" a second parish in town. It would be a parish that would take the load off the present one and undoubtedly give the whole town more fervor. On this point the young Missionaries of the Sacred Heart did not have to defend themselves. Father de Champgrand, who still was very much attached to the idea of missions in the countryside, made a very loud protest. The bishop joined him. Besides it would have been impossible: according to the concordat which was still in force, the creation of new parishes depended on the communes. Father Crozat's request made a lot of waves but did not amount to anything. Yet this mild-mannered, obstinate pastor tried, every time he could, to have the fathers take part in the more important ceremonies in the parish. They participated, e.g. in the triumphal procession of August 15, wonderfully organized by Father Piperon, but did not consider themselves to belong to the parish. Father Chevalier, who did not want to be tied down to one diocese, could not accept being limited to one parish.

Just the same, the chapel of the Sacred Heart became a very active place. The priests were often called upon by the local pastors and did a lot of preaching in the neighboring parishes. Already in 1855, the "Rule" of the Society listed among the works to be undertaken: retreats for priests and lay people; "Conferences of the Sacred Heart" (these would be associations similar to the "Conference of St. Vincent de Paul" today) for young people and men; for soldiers; for maids; for workers; for apprentices, etc. It was a vast program and our young religious dedicated themselves to it with enthusiasm. And slowly they brought all this to fruition. But this only represented a part of their intense activity.

As can be noted, if the women had their conference, the men had many of them as well. Perhaps Father Chevalier remembered the last words of Father d'Aubigny: *"we are too occupied with the women and not enough with the men."* That may have been true but it only confirmed his goal: to be concerned with "the most abandoned." That was his true vocation. And so, there was a lot to do. Consequently the chapel, which could hold up to several hundred people, was full on Sundays. But for the most part it was filled with women. At Issoudun at that time men did not practice their religion. It was something that was just not done. Whether it was because of what others would think or out of habit, it was a fact. And no one could change that.

No one, that is, until Father Chevalier took up the challenge. He decided on a Mass just for men. To organize this, Fathers Maugenest, Piperon and himself beat the bushes for a month to have men sign up. On the first Sunday, thirty men showed up - not a great success after a month of "recruitment" by three people through the whole township. It was a happening in the city and on leaving the church the thirty neophytes had to pass by two long lines of joking, sarcastic on-lookers: a whole group of curious men and women, women especially! But the men took this as a mark of pride. The next time they numbered 50, then 100, then 300. It seems that Father Chevalier was having some success in his attack on indifference. But he was not surprised. He knew that the Sacred Heart would overcome the indifference. His only concern was to make the Sacred Heart known and loved in more and more places, everywhere.

It was becoming evident that the chapel was too small. During the different ceremonies, many people had to stand outside. From the first days of 1857, Father Chevalier began to speak of building a new church, a real one. He had no money and he knew that he would certainly need a lot of time before gifts from the faithful would permit him to start work. But that was just another reason to spread the idea immediately. At that moment a catastrophe struck in the form of a letter from the bishop ordering the closing of the chapel. "They" had told him that it was in danger of collapsing and could fall on the faithful. The letter came on a Monday. Father Chevalier rushed to Bourges to explain to the bishop that his chapel was not a danger for anybody. But the bishop did not want to take any risks. He ordered work to be done to shore up the building and demanded an architect's certificate assuring the chapel's stability before he would permit it to be reopened. The work was done on the double, in three days, and with the certificate in his pocket, Father Chevalier returned to see the bishop on Saturday. On Sunday, the chapel was filled as usual. But this adventure confirmed him in his idea that a new church would have to be built.

As we can see, our religious were quite busy and their "novitiate" anything but peaceful. Nonetheless, they considered it valid and decided to make their vows. On Christmas Day 1856, Emile Maugenest and Jules Chevalier took their vows with Charles Piperon, who arrived later, acting as witness. These were only private vows since the Congregation did not yet exist juridically. And since they were not bound by the laws of the church in this private undertaking, they took final vows immediately. They did this "according to the Rule of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart," a rule carefully drawn up in prayer and meditation by Father Chevalier. It bore the prudent title: "Temporary Draft."

The Congregation seemed to have a promising beginning at least if we judge by the success of its activities. They were meeting a real need of the Church of their time. Father Chevalier, however, was concerned with the lack of new recruits. Many religious congregations were born in the Nineteenth Century and they had no problem in finding many members right from the beginning. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, however, were just three in number. Several priests came to try life with them but none remained very long. Life was not easy at "Sacred Heart." They rose at 4:00 a.m. in order to have enough time for prayer. Extreme frugality was the ordinary bill of fare and there was great poverty and lack of conveniences in the house. The pastoral work was heavy: one preaching assignment after another in the neighboring parishes, one mission after another, retreats, long hours of confessions in the chapel. One thinks of the beginning of the apostolate for Jesus and the apostles when the enthusiastic crowd was pressing in from all sides: *"People were coming and going in great numbers and they did not even have time to eat."* (Mk. 6,31). It was at this moment that the young Congregation, still so small in numbers, was to receive an unexpected blow that Father Chevalier thought was fatal.

Father Maugenest, a remarkable and respected preacher, had preached for Advent, 1857, in the cathedral in Bourges. This drew the bishop's attention. The diocese desperately needed priests and, even if there were some good "ordinary" priests, there was a dire shortage of really good ones. The bishop was looking desperately for a pastor for the cathedral. He decided to withdraw Father Maugenest from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to name him the archpriest. Father Maugenest protested as much as he could. The cardinal simply replied: *"I am your bishop! You owe me obedience!"* Father Chevalier left immediately for Bourges to insist that Father Maugenest was the pillar of the young congregation and that without him everything would collapse. The bishop replied: *"If your work is from God, the loss of one of its members will not prevent it from succeeding. If it is merely the work of men, the presence of this member will not keep it from ruin."*

Fathers Chevalier and Piperon were destroyed by this irrevocable decision. For them it was a disaster. They withdrew to a monastery for a few days to try to sort things out. Meanwhile Father Maugenest had been officially sent to a convent to think things over. The bishop simply told him: *"You will leave there, it is my hope, completely submissive."*

This ordeal was a new experience for Father Chevalier. Since childhood, of course, he had met many obstacles in life that kept him from going ahead as fast as he would have liked. He had learned to wait and finally the obstacles disappeared and he was able to go ahead. But never before had any trial forced him to take a step backwards. Maugenest was his right arm. He was even more than that. He was the little Society's best asset: the most mild-mannered among them, the most cultured, a competent and efficient man. And he was a religious completely dedicated to his mission. Without Maugenest, they would have to give up a lot of things and take a step backwards just at the time when the future was full of promise.

As we might imagine, Maugenest "submitted." And the other two accepted this, with death in their soul, as they knelt before the tabernacle. They had not even had time to make a novena. They made the resolution, in spite of their despondency, to continue the work they had begun. But they were crushed. The trial was too hard, too unexpected. They felt that everything had been put in question. The temptation to doubt was there. Yet in the writings of Father Chevalier there is no trace of a complaint and much less of a word of criticism. Poor people do not complain. Either they accept fate with a spirit of resignation or, with their back to the wall and their jaws locked in determination, they fight back.

Jules Chevalier decided to fight. But he did so with the energy that comes from despair. His real fear was that the departure of Maugenest would only be the first step in the dismemberment of the community. He expected to receive, any day, his own appointment to a parish. Father Crozat was getting older and older. The rumor was spreading that the two religious might just be appointed to replace him. Father Piperon repeated daily that if he had to leave "Sacred Heart" he would withdraw to a monastery. That did not raise Father Chevalier's spirits very much. But he still wanted to keep struggling. If he had to leave, it certainly would not be because he had slacked off. He spent himself without reservation in order to save what was most important. He worked so hard that the following year, 1859, he fell sick. When he recuperated, a friend took him on pilgrimage to La Salette to give him a change of pace. It was on this occasion that he made the detour through Ars and met the holy Cure, John Mary Vianney.

Father Chevalier came back from Ars with his spirits revived. He had not just been consoled; he had been renewed. "*He was a new man,*" wrote Father Piperon. He understood that the departure of Father Maugenest, which had come close to crushing him and his work, was nothing but a trial. God not only was asking him to continue but even to go forward. After eighteen months of darkness, the route ahead, though still long and difficult, again appeared open and bathed in sunshine. He made another pilgrimage, this time to Paray-le-Monial, the source of all the things that had been revealed to him about the Sacred Heart. They welcomed him in a warm and brotherly fashion. He returned home full of energy and enthusiasm.

The ten years that followed (1859-1869) were to be the truly "glorious" ones for the congregation. The basilica would rise rapidly. New members would come to join the little community and among them some great figures who would give the Society a powerful lift into the future. Soon crowds of people were coming to Issoudun. To help them continue the experience of their pilgrimage, a magazine was inaugurated. It soon had a large circulation and would make Issoudun known throughout France. The high point of all this was on September 8, 1869. In the presence of fifteen bishops and a huge crowd of people, the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was crowned in the name of Pope Pius IX.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart! "*She is the one who had done everything!*" Father Chevalier used to say. We must acknowledge that the rapid growth of the congregation went hand in hand with the equally rapid spread of this new name given to the Mother of the Savior. For many people, Issoudun is first of all the holy place where one goes to pray to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart with complete confidence. It is appropriate that we stop and consider the origin and history of the glorious title of "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" before we speak further of the events and persons who made up this epoch.

It is difficult to determine the precise moment when Father Chevalier was inspired to give this new name to Mary. Father Piperon thought that it was September 9, 1855, the day when the bishop came to bless the first modest chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart - "*a perfect jewel in the style of a barn,*" as Father Piperon used to say. On that day Father Chevalier revealed his project of erecting an altar consecrated to Mary to honor her with a special title, as he had promised with Father Maugenest in the "contract" of January 1855. It would have been at that time that the name of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart first occurred to him. However, we would be justified in thinking that we should go back much farther, if not for this new name, then at least for all that it contains and signifies.

Father Chevalier had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, like all the clergy of the nineteenth century and, in a general way, all the Christian people of that time. This was something Our Lady acknowledged since that century was also the time of the great apparitions: 1830, rue du Bac; 1846, la Salette; then Lourdes in 1858, Pontmain in 1871 and Pellevoisin in 1876. Jules had been consecrated to the Blessed Virgin by his mother at the time of his baptism. From the formation he received from the Sulpicians he cherished a great devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Mary was present in all his prayers. He associated her with all the events of his life.

The key moment leading to his devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was certainly his "discovery" of the Sacred Heart and the radical change it caused in him. When he founded his little club in the seminary, he wanted to associate Our Lady with it. He wanted people to say "*Knights of the Sacred Heart and of Our Lady.*" That was too long and people usually just said: "*...of the Sacred Heart.*" But when Christ was revealed to him as Love made man, the place that Our Lady held in his life became even more important. She was the one who had given Jesus a heart. She was the one who had given Jesus to the world. She was the one who drew people to him, "*Do everything he tells you!*". Jesus, in turn, gave her to us, "*Behold your Mother!*", at the very moment that his heart was to be opened by a lance, allowing "blood and water" to flow out forever as the signs of all the grace contained in his Heart. Yes, the "discovery" of Jesus resulted in the discovery of Mary in a new light. And if at that moment Jules did not formally come up with the name "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," he would, at least from then on, always pray to Mary as the one given us by the Sacred Heart and the one who leads us to the Sacred Heart.

Because he wanted very much to become, with Christ, a "religious of the Father, a man of the covenant between God and us, Father Chevalier saw in Mary a perfect "religious," who united her Son to the human race and the human race to her Son. But all this was so great, so vast. Perhaps he thought that a mere name, a mere title, could never contain everything he had discovered about Mary. To say everything about Jesus it was sufficient to speak of the Heart of Jesus. That was a symbol that spoke to everyone. It was complete and total and expressed well all the love Christ has. But how could he express with just one word the fact that Mary gives us all the love of her Jesus and that she presents to him all our love?

The genius of Father Chevalier's insight was that at one and the same time Our Lady gives us the treasures of the Sacred Heart and shows us the path of (to) the Heart of her Son. Henceforth, "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" would be the name he had been looking for. It was complete; it said everything. He kept this name in the intimacy of his heart. It was only when he undertook the construction of the basilica in 1857 and they were discussing the altar that would be dedicated to Mary that he first spoke of this to his confreres. In the face of the surprise this caused, he gave a brief but clear and complete explanation of what this title signified. That would seem to prove that he had been reflecting on it for a long time.

Father Piperon explained that after he had had the inspiration of the name "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," Father Chevalier waited for two years before he spoke to his confreres and two more before he made it public in 1859. Thus there was a delay of four years, or more likely, *at least four years*. Piperon explained this long delay by the fact that Father Chevalier wanted to study the title thoroughly, in scripture and tradition, to see if it was in harmony with Church doctrine. It was only when he was certain, that he revealed this secret which had become so dear to his heart. As a result of this long work of meditation and prayer, we have a rather lengthy book: "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, according to Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and Theology." "*It was,*" said Father Piperon, "*a monument of Catholic science and learning.*" There were five different editions - all of them quickly out of print.

While there may be less intellectual curiosity in the modern age, there is certainly more interest in the spiritual dimension of life. People still seek for what the apostles asked of Jesus: "*Teach us to pray.*" Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is the one who can do this for us. Our prayer never stops with her. She is the one who takes our prayer and "leads us to the source of living water." During the last century, people often prayed for solutions to their material problems. People were less educated and poorer than today. They had no social welfare programs. Loss of a job or sickness on the part of the father of the family was a guarantee of a life of misery. Above all, health care was not what it is today. It was only in 1885 that Pasteur "discovered" germs and his famous vaccination against rabies. In all the wretched situations that might arise, people felt that only heaven could do something.

This is why Father Chevalier struck a responsive chord when he presented Our Lady as the "Treasurer of the Heart of Jesus," the one who could obtain everything from her Son, the one who is the "Hope of the hopeless." This is not wrong, theologically speaking, but it is much too

restrictive if we just stop there. Father Chevalier became aware of this danger very early on and in the years to follow never ceased trying to set things straight by insisting on the great virtues of Mary: blessed among women, chosen by God, filled with grace. He emphasized her close relationship with the Savior of the human race and her place in the history of salvation. He explained the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart when he wrote: *"The purpose... is to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary under the special title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in the relationship of overwhelming love that exists between her and the Sacred Heart of Jesus."* Our Lady's power of intercession is only mentioned later on as a consequence.

This is nothing more than the path we follow in the *"Hail Mary."* We begin by admiring and praising Mary who is full of grace, loved by the Lord, blessed among all and Mother of the Savior. It is only afterwards, and because of all that, that we can say: *"Pray for us... now..."* And even then the insistence is placed on the principal good we are asking for, our union with God: *"Pray for us sinners..."*

This is why, in fidelity to the spirit of Father Chevalier, we later abandoned the early version of the *"Memorare"* prayer to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart written by Father Joué't. The new one expresses much better all his thinking by first celebrating the wonderful things the Lord did for Mary and by asking her to help us live in the love of her Son and to lead all people to the source of living water. Only then do we express our confidence in her because she is and will always be our Mother. To call Mary "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" is the best way to express all the bonds that unite Mary to the Love-God. In sum, it leads us to discover this Love of God for us and to live in him, like she who was always *"the servant of the Lord."*

Early on there were some other changes. The first images of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart showed Mary with her hands open in a gesture of welcoming and giving. Jesus, at about the age of twelve, was standing before her and pointed to his own heart while also pointing to his mother. This is the beautiful statue at the shrine in Issoudun, the one that was crowned in 1869. Because of the growing popularity of images that had not come from Issoudun, the Holy See feared that some would see in this a Mary who dominated Jesus, who held power over him - a sort of "Queen Mother" with all the negative and exaggerated undertones that that term had in popular speech. Thus Rome asked that Mary be represented holding her infant son in her arms with him still showing us both his heart and his mother. The infant in her arms was also a better way to express the bonds of love created by the maternity of Mary.

Today we use the image of Jesus on the cross with his side opened as our representation of the Sacred Heart. Mary is at the foot of the cross showing with her outstretched hand, the way that leads to his heart, open for all people. The other hand is open towards the earth to shower on us the graces that that heart holds: *"hope and salvation, justice and peace."*

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is not connected with any particular image. At other shrines they venerate an image or a statue which is often very old and worthy of great respect but one that can not be altered because it expresses a special aspect of the richness of Mary's grace. And there is nothing more that can be said about that aspect. But to try to make a representation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is to try to say *everything*, everything that can be said about Mary. No image could ever do that perfectly. That is why we will never be completely satisfied, no matter how much we try to improve our representation. However, regardless of the statue or image we use, it is always in fidelity to the intuition of Father Chevalier that we try to express ourselves.

12 THE PILGRIMAGE

What finally brought Father Chevalier to reveal to the public the name of "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" was the construction of the basilica. The church was to have an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and he had decided that this would be the altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Consequently, the time had come for him to share this idea with others. The building was already going up and was beginning to take form.

Father Chevalier, as we have already seen, wanted this new church of the Sacred Heart as early as 1857. The former barn was too dilapidated and small and was always on the verge of collapsing. From the start Father Chevalier asked around for money. He did so without much success. Issoudun and its region were not rich and he was not always well received. Out of tenacity, he continued after Father Maugenest left but without much success and perhaps without much hope.

After his return from Ars, he began on a grand scale. Since Father Piperon continued, courageously, in spite of doubt, to go far and wide throughout France on his preaching trips, Father Chevalier put him in charge of collecting funds. To all the people who contributed, our brave preacher was to give a picture of the Sacred Heart. Father Chevalier had these pictures printed in Paris at great cost - a risky undertaking given their financial state. The result was astonishing. Everybody wanted to have "their" Sacred Heart. Donations began to flow in. The cornerstone was officially laid on June 28, 1859. Work went ahead rapidly and the first section, the sanctuary and half the nave, were solemnly blessed by the Vicar General on June 16, 1861, and opened to the public.

As had been planned, a side altar was dedicated to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Perhaps more importantly, a beautiful stained glass window was put in - the first representation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Father Chevalier had pictures of it printed and it was again Father Piperon, always the devoted and untiring one, who was put in charge of distributing them. This time the result was not just astonishing, it was absolutely unbelievable. We must admit that Father Piperon knew how to speak about Our Lady of the Sacred Heart with conviction. Pastors, convents and apostolic groups everywhere requested the famous picture, by the hundreds, by the thousands. And they came to Issoudun to see "the real" picture. There was a crowd everyday. Naturally, donations followed. In 1864, the church was completed and consecrated on July 2 by the new bishop, Bishop de la Tour d'Auvergne, who proved to be a great friend and supporter of Father Chevalier and his work. On the day of consecration he was surrounded by five other bishops and a great crowd of people.

In the meantime, Father Chevalier wrote a small article on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to answer a request made by the new pilgrims. Father Ramiere, a famous Jesuit, asked for permission to print it in the *"Messenger of the Sacred Heart,"* the publication of "The Apostleship of Prayer," still published today in France under the name *"Source de Vie."* This was the first time, May, 1863, that something appeared in print about Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The response was tremendous throughout France and even in other countries where the magazine was known. Forty bishops came to know about the new devotion and gave their official approval.

The pilgrims became more and more numerous and asked to be inscribed in the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The multiplication of confraternities was a phenomenon of the time. It corresponded to the multiplication of religious congregations and for much the same reasons. The many confraternities that were created then were opportunities for Christians to find points of reference where they would have the comfort of belonging to a group, the assurance of mutual prayer and an official place in the Church. The problem at this point was that the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart did not yet exist. Forced by the request of the pilgrims and the hundreds of letters from people asking to be enrolled, Father Chevalier decided to go ahead. He was also gently pressured by the bishop who insisted that he write up the statutes of the new confraternity as soon as possible.

Father Chevalier took his time. This is a very curious fact and it always remained a mystery for Father Piperon. He wrote: *"He was of a zealous nature, quick to carry out his resolutions and humbly obedient to the smallest requests that came from authority. But when he was asked to prepare the statutes of the future association, he just answered: 'There is no hurry...' We waited for two long months... Then one day, as if waking from a long sleep, he went to work..."*

Yes, this was very curious, but very revealing as well. Father Chevalier, who might have appeared to be impulsive, quick to make decisions, quicker in carrying them out, was in fact a man who took time to think things through. He appeared to be "quick to carry out his resolutions" and his decisions seemed to be spontaneous. But this was because he never shared them with others until the last minute, after he had let them mature

in the secret of his heart and his prayer. Pressured by the question of a confraternity, he wanted to take his time, as usual. This was merely the first time somebody noticed.

But there can also be another explanation. The multiplication of confraternities was very much in fashion at that time. They were religious "families," small fervent groups in which Christians, a bit lost by all the upheavals of the time, found solace as well as support and a certain security. But Father Chevalier did not want a small group, a privileged little family. For him the Sacred Heart was *"the center, the pivot around which everything turns."* Coming from the Sacred Heart he did not envisage a family but *"a new world... full of greatness and fecundity; a world that the Church must perpetuate on earth."* His motto was: *"May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere."* Everywhere, by everyone... And Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was the first person to be associated with this mission. It was hardly enough for Father Chevalier that she be known and loved by a few people, within the confines of a small group, no matter how fervent. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had to be known and loved everywhere, by everyone. This is why Father Chevalier hesitated so much and took so long to make up his mind.

When he finally acquiesced to the insistent requests of the pilgrims, his confreres and his bishop, it was because he had found a solution that would permit him to create a confraternity that would make Our Lady of the Sacred Heart better known and loved but which would also be open to all and not just to the privileged few.

All the confraternities of the time had very detailed statutes that enumerated prayer obligations, feasts to be celebrated, required practices and other commitments. This was often what the faithful were looking for: a strict framework that would help them in their Christian life. Father Chevalier wanted none of that because many would hesitate to join a group where they might not be able to live up to all the rules. So he found a solution: the only obligation of the confraternity would be to say, morning and evening, *"Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!"* Who could think that this would be too much? The confraternity was open to everybody, everywhere.

From that point on, the Confraternity developed very rapidly. Father Chevalier did write up the statutes to explain the spirit and purpose of this confraternity, stipulating that the only real obligation was still to say the name of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart each morning and evening.

The statutes of the new association were approved by the bishop who wanted to be the first to be enrolled and who presided at the first solemn meeting. The ceremony was largely improvised since it had only been announced the day before but, as Father Piperon wrote: *"The Church of the Sacred Heart was too small. The crowd spilled over onto the huge square outside. You would think that the entire parish of Issoudun had come together in the new shrine!"* This all happened in 1864. Only ten years earlier, Issoudun was the very symbol of indifference. Even if people came from all over France, and within a short time from other countries as well, the pilgrimage was not something introduced from outside. The local people were very much a part of it.

The Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was off to a good start and had great success. Hundreds of thousands of people, and soon millions of people, were enrolled. Father Chevalier was right in wanting it to be accessible to everyone. During his visit to Rome in 1869, he asked the pope to bless the new confraternity. *"What are the obligations?"* asked Pius IX. *"Only to say morning and evening: 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!'"* *"That's not very difficult!"* said the Pope and asked to join on the spot. And so for the last ten years of his pontificate, Pius DC prayed to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, every morning and every evening.

This gave the Confraternity its strength: the understanding that in the presence of Mary, in the Church, with the Pope and many bishops and millions of Christians around the world, one formed a great family *"where each one prayed for the intentions of everyone else."* There was no sense of a "closed group." On the contrary, there was a strong feeling of universality, of fraternity. That is what Father Chevalier had wanted: that Jesus, Love made man, the Sacred Heart, be loved everywhere, by everyone because of, through and with Our Lady.

That is indeed the meaning of the famous statutes that were so well thought out. This is the way they begin: *"The Association has as its purpose:*

- 1) *to glorify Mary with this new title that so admirably presents her glorious privileges;*
- 2) *to give Jesus, through Mary, a cult of adoration, love and reparation;*
- 3) *to glorify the power of intercession of the Virgin Mary over the Heart of Jesus by entrusting to her the success of desperate cases in both the spiritual and temporal order;*
- 4) *to plead with the Blessed Virgin to lead us herself to the holy heart of her Son, to have us know and love it, to open for us the treasures of love and mercy that it contains and to have us drink more abundantly from this source of all graces."*

This is contained in the *"Memorare"* to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that millions of associates recite daily: Our Lady, filled with grace, who offers to her Son our praise and thanksgiving, who presents our needs to him and who, above all, makes us live in his love.

The Confraternity was soon raised to the level of archconfraternity when it became international. In the 1960's, since the name "Archconfraternity" really did not mean much to people any more, it was renamed the "Fraternity," a much more comprehensible name. But the reality did not change. The essential obligations are as few as ever so that it might remain open to everyone. Above all it is a spirit, a way of praying and living one's daily life in union with the loving Christ, through Our Lady. It is this spirit of fraternity that gives the Issoudun pilgrimage, even on days when there are huge crowds, a family atmosphere. It is so characteristic and perceptible that one does not find it at other pilgrimage sites, even at the most "prayerful."

The Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart needed a magazine to maintain contact with all the members of this great family, to continue the pilgrimage in the reality of people's everyday life, to spread devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, along with the love of her Son, even further, everywhere, and to give testimony to the graces received through her intercession. Father Chevalier dreamed of this and let the project mature since a magazine required time and competent people. The arrival of Father Jouët, who was as lively as he was enlivening, was Our Lady's response to this need. Father Jouët published the first number of the *"Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart"* in January, 1866. The success was immediate and miraculous.

Since then the Annals have continued and are well into their second century. They continue to come out each month in about ten different international editions. The French edition has a circulation of about 150,000 copies. Obviously, it is no longer the simple magazine of its origins which was made up mainly of testimonies and published with the rather elementary publishing means of that time. Today's Annals, in color, are the product of all the modern techniques of printing. As the magazine of the Fraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart it is also meant to meet the needs of our time by helping people to deepen their faith and by giving them a basis for Christian reflection. But it is still the same spirit, that of Father Chevalier, that gives it life. He is the one who has us say to Mary: *"Make us live, like you, in the love of your Son."*

More and more pilgrims came to enroll in the Confraternity and to pray to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at her own shrine. As Father Piperon said: *"The prayers became more fervent in the presence of the holy image and it seemed that there they were more favorably received and more surely granted."* But the chapel was not built for such crowds. *"The Blessed Virgin's altar, located in a side nave, was so small and the chapel so filled with people that the pilgrims could barely convince themselves that this was the privileged shrine where they had come to pray."*

Something had to be done. Besides the numerous, and often small, offerings that Father Chevalier had received for the construction of the church, there were a number of diamonds and other jewels. Were they old jewels from old families that had survived the revolution and the troubles of a France in full mutation? Perhaps. But often they were also humble objects, the jewelry of poor people, made of silver or gold. The times were not too far removed from a rural civilization where barter had been a matter of course. To give gifts in kind was a rather common custom. To give Our Lady something concrete that held personal value made a lot of sense.

The idea occurred to Father Chevalier that, instead of cashing in the jewels, he could make a crown, even two crowns: one for Our Lady and one for her Son. It was not exactly an original idea: many places of pilgrimage had their statue crowned. While it may sound too simple to be true, to wear these splendid crowns, a large, beautiful statue would be needed. The small side chapel was not big enough for that. So, they had to build a shrine. And that is what Father Chevalier did - just to be able to crown Our Lady.

Even if Father Chevalier had always thought that the pilgrimage would become important, as demonstrated by his conviction back when they were converting the barn into a chapel, he certainly never thought that it would become so huge so quickly. He had begun the church without any money in hand and without knowing exactly what the future would bring. In any case, he had to make it bigger, not just for the pleasure of putting in a bigger statue but to receive the ever growing number of pilgrims. In spite of the hesitation of the architect, he had the back of the sanctuary of the new church torn down and with an extension of the nave, built the large chapel of Our Lady. It was a success; for besides being sufficiently large, the new shrine was a very appropriate place for quiet and prayer. At the same time a large statue, made of one marble block, was sculpted by a famous artist and two beautiful crowns were prepared by goldsmiths.

Taking advantage of a trip to Rome, made necessary by the requirements to have the congregation officially recognized, Father Chevalier took the two crowns with him. He offered Pope Pius IX a bronze miniature of the statue and asked him to bless the two crowns. Not only did the Holy Father agree, but he also signed an official decree on January 23, 1869, delegating the bishop of Bourges to crown the statue in Issoudun in his name. It was during this same audience that Pius IX asked to enroll in the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. During the rest of that memorable day Father Chevalier kept unpacking and packing his crowns to have all the cardinals, one after the other, admire his works of art!

The coronation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart took place on September 8, 1869. It was a triumphant occasion that necessitated months of preparation. On that day the city of Issoudun (the entire city, even the remote hamlets) was drowned under garlands of greenery, flowers and triumphal arches. The town, its administration, the army, all the official bodies, and all sorts of organizations rushed to accompany (follow?) the townspeople who were caught up in an enthusiasm that was both extraordinary and restrained. A huge crowd of pilgrims had come, some several days in advance after several days of travel, by train or by horse-drawn carriage.

On the day of the celebration, "according to the most conservative estimates of the local newspapers," 30,000 people jammed the "Place du Sacre-Coeur" and overflowed onto the adjacent streets. The ceremony took place outdoors in perfect weather. A majestic altar was set up. Fifteen bishops were present and 700 priests. The priests were not just there to add more solemnity. During the glorious triduum which preceded the great day, and during the octave that followed, and which never seemed to end, they heard confessions "day and night."

John Mary Vianney had said: "*Ars is no longer Ars.*" Father Chevalier could have said: "*Issoudun is no longer Issoudun.*" For him, the important thing was that people had come from everywhere, under the honorary patronage of the pope himself, to render homage to the Sacred Heart through Our Lady. They had come from all of France and even, in spite of the difficulties of travel, from abroad, where the Confraternities of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were growing fast. "*Honor to you, noble inhabitants of Issoudun,*" the preacher intoned, "*you who have cooperated so faithfully with the unique grace given you by the Queen of Heaven who chose your city as the center and birthplace of a devotion to which, perhaps, the very salvation of the world is attached: the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which today reaches to the five continents of the world!*"

Since 1869 it has always been on September 8 when the pilgrimage reaches its peak. Now, however, to permit people who work to participate, the celebration is always held on the nearest Saturday. No longer are there triumphal arches or martial music. We have less need today to reassure ourselves with that type of pomp. But the universal character of the pilgrimage is always there in the diversity of the crowd and by the presence of priests and bishops from Africa, Oceania and other parts of the world and also by the numerous mission departures that are celebrated that day. These are mission-sendings made by all the Fraternity present.

Even though it is less external, the people's fervor is no less great. It is a fervor nourished by the confidence that we, with one voice and heart, place in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. We know that in helping us in our daily difficulties and in opening us to the world, she is teaching us "*to live in the love of her Son.*"

13 THE GROWTH OF THE CONGREGATION

As we have seen, during its first five years the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had but three members, and these became two after Father Maugenest, the co-founder, left. This lack of recruits troubled Father Chevalier, for the work to be done was immense. The two priests were in demand everywhere since their missions gave new life to all the parishes where they preached. At the same time, the crowds at "Sacred Heart" were getting bigger every day. "*The harvest is great, the laborers are few.*" Jesus had been the first to be concerned.

There were a number of reasons why few candidates were coming. First there was a certain doubt people had as to the exact nature and purpose of the society. Was it a local congregation founded to give new life to already existing parishes and to preach missions in abandoned and dechristianized areas? Or was it a congregation with a universal goal destined to spread throughout the world? Even if this was all very clear to Father Chevalier from the beginning, it was much less clear for the bishop and those in charge of the local clergy. They had the intention of "using" this new force primarily for the good of the diocese.

The huge dechristianized diocese, still the largest in France, was lacking in vocations at least in relation to its needs. We have already seen that the bishop was forced to take Father Maugenest back at the risk of "sinking" the recently founded congregation. There simply was no one else at that time capable of filling the post in question. We also saw that the same bishop authorized another priest to enter only on the condition that he assume a fixed ministry, even if it were the chaplaincy of the hospitals and hospices. On the other hand, priests who might have thought about entering the little society hesitated. It would have meant leaving their parishes with no hope of being replaced.

These difficulties eventually proved to be fortuitous for the congregation. As things turned out, the first recruits came from other dioceses from all over France once the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were well enough known - thanks to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. By the year 1865, the congregation numbered about a dozen - very few of them natives of Berry where they exercised their ministry. They came from Allier, Brittany, Normandy, Bougogne, Marseilles and Switzerland. Among these first Fathers there were many men of great worth. Had recruitment remained purely local, it would never have achieved such great quality.

At the very beginning, besides these serious reasons for few recruits, there was also a practical problem that made it difficult to accept new members. There simply was no room for them. Given the size of the first house, they could only accept one postulant at a time. When he returned from Ars in 1859, Father Chevalier had the attic extended to accommodate twelve cells. This was hardly luxury but they were available rooms not just for postulants but also for any priest who wanted to come and make a retreat in the community. They were quickly occupied and soon proved to be too few in number. In 1866, they began to build the first wing of the present residence and finished the work in a few months.

Accepting priests as members of the congregation was both convenient and risky. Convenient because the society did not have to worry about their education. Risky because it was a hit and miss proposition and did not offer a solid basis for the future. Father Chevalier was thinking about a formation house, a seminary where he could accept young men who wanted to join the congregation. But that was a difficult enterprise, both risky and burdensome. He did not think it right to use for that purpose the money that had been given for the construction of the church of the Sacred Heart.

It was at that time that Father Jean-Marie Vandel entered the congregation and brought with him a new idea. Father Vandel was from the region of Savoy but for various reasons was working as a pastor in Switzerland. He had been sick and returned to France to recuperate. He used

the time afforded by this forced vacation to found "The Work of the Rural Areas" ("Oeuvre des Campagnes"). This ministry brought together generous lay people who committed themselves to financial support for priests who lived alone and whose poverty often bordered on misery. But these priests were not only poor, they were also too few in number. At the same time, many young men were thinking about priesthood but did not have the money to pay the tuition at a seminary. Father Vandel had the idea of opening a seminary that would admit them for free.

This very simple idea was borrowed from Pauline Jaricot, the extraordinary foundress of "The Association for the Propagation of the Faith" which had as its aim aid to foreign missions. The members of this association committed themselves to contribute a penny a week. This was something everyone could do and the association grew and was able to give considerable help to the missions. Father Vandel thought that with the great number of pilgrims and members of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it would be possible to ask from each a donation of at least a penny a year. Even the poorest among them would be happy to be able to participate in this way in the formation of future priests. The great number of donors would undoubtedly make it possible to gather the money necessary to run the seminary. If little streams make great rivers, it is also true that tiny drops of water make little streams.

With great timidity Father Vandel submitted his idea to Father Chevalier since it had already been rejected by the directors of "The Work of the Rural Areas" who thought it too risky. But Father Chevalier enthusiastically accepted the idea as soon as he heard it. He must have remembered his long years of waiting at Richelieu and thought that many young men might not be as fortunate as he had been in finding a providential benefactor. Besides, he knew how generous the poor are. He was sure that if they were offered something that was within their reach, they would do much.

In fact, "The Association of a Penny a Year for the Promotion of Apostolic Vocations," that Father Vandel had founded, enjoyed great success from the beginning. In October 1867, a minor seminary, that was officially named "The Little Work" ("la Petite-Oeuvre") because of its limited financial support, was founded at Chezal-Benoit near Issoudun. There was a diocesan school there in an old abbey that had been closed during the Revolution. The students of the Petite Oeuvre lived in a dormitory and went to the school for class. Some of the classes were taught by Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The opening of the Petite Oeuvre, announced far and wide by the Annals, immediately drew a large number of benefactors and a great number of candidates for the priesthood: 150 in the first year. Prudently, Father Vandel accepted only twelve. The work was just beginning. He was sure of being able to take care of twelve students but no more. He did not want to take the risk of accepting more than that. But in the following years, the gifts increased and he was able to accept all the serious candidates who applied.

For one hundred years, the Petite Oeuvre, whose installations were multiplied around the world, assured the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart a large group of quality candidates: priests formed from their youth to follow a Christ who loved them and to imitate him, "...with their eyes fixed on him" on his mercy, his patience, his understanding, his acceptance of all the poor. It was because of the priests who came from the Petite Oeuvre that the congregation was able to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world, to go everywhere.

It was because of the Petite Oeuvre that Father Chevalier was able to respond, in 1880, to the Pope's request to open missions in unexplored countries like Papua. Among those who made up the first group of students at the Petite Oeuvre of Chezal-Benoit: Bishop Henri Verjus, "The Apostle of the Papuans," who died of exhaustion in 1892 at the age of 32 and whose cause for beatification has been introduced in Rome.

Father Chevalier had entrusted the founding and the running of the Petite Oeuvre to Father Vandel. He turned the whole thing over to him. Future members for the Society seemed to be assured. But that was not enough for Father Chevalier. His goal was not to assure the future of "his" congregation but to put in place all possible means to reveal to people the God who loved them. For this he contemplated various projects and took at least a first step towards realizing them.

First he established relations with the Jesuits. His idea was quite simply to be affiliated with the Company of Jesus. His congregation would have been just a branch of the Jesuits, with the special mission of making the Sacred Heart better known. It would profit from the powerful help and vast experience of the Company in order to accomplish its task more efficaciously. *"Our Society should be a daughter of your Society. It should draw its nourishment and its life from your constitutions, from your organization, from your spirit, from your cooperation and from the bonds that should unite us. We will consider St. Ignatius to be our founder. We will be an expansion, another radiation of the Society of Jesus."* Officially, even if discretely, discussions between the two groups went quite far but did not reach any conclusion.

At the same time, Father Chevalier tried to get another project going, that of associated priests. The purpose was to be a support for priests who were isolated and to carry even further the proclamation of the Sacred Heart to the world. These priests could take vows or not. Yet all would have the name "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart." He was encouraged to go in this direction by the fact that at Issoudun old Father Crozat had finally been replaced by Father Maugenest. He still considered himself to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart- he had, after all, made final vows. Nevertheless he no longer depended, properly speaking, on the society, but directly on the bishop. Why not ratify this situation officially and extend it to others?

Father Chevalier organized meetings, conferences and even a congress to try to make a federation, under the name of "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart," out of the little associations of priests that already existed all over France. The Jesuits with whom he was still in contact encouraged him. New persecutions of religious were not only possible, they were quite probable. These religious "out in the field" would thus be a safeguard for the continuation of Father Chevalier's mission. Moreover, he was aware of the great needs of the dioceses and saw a great advantage in this solution: *"...for this association, offering powerful means for perfection, would stop, at least in part, the emigration of the best subjects whose presence is so important in their diocese..."* And in a private audience, in 1860, Pius IX seemed to have encouraged him: *"I would like all priests to belong!"*

But Father Chevalier did not stop there in his exploration of *"all possible avenues."* He also wanted to associate lay people with his work. Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, with or without vows, living in community or not. A Third Order was born. Groups were formed, especially at Montluçon. The members, mostly women, numbered 300 from different countries. But this never became well organized and lacked a clear framework and truly concrete connections with the Society.

This early project of a vast organization of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart with religious living in community and priests or lay people living outside as "aggregate" members, as well as priests or lay people as associate members, was a failure. That was due to two factors. First, the priests in the congregation were too few in number to handle and give life to such a huge organization. Second, when it was time to seek official, legal recognition of the congregation, Rome was determined to return to strict norms. They wanted to put some order in the anarchy of all those "congregations" that had multiplied spontaneously in the Nineteenth Century outside of the established norms. Only religious with vows who were attached to a local community were recognized as making up the congregation. Priests and lay people who were associated with them - with or without **private** vows - were considered as just belonging to the "works" of the congregation and not as an integral part of it.

In the face of this setback some of the associated priests became full members of the congregation, among others Father Vandel and Father Jouet. But later this setback would become a challenge for the sons of Father Chevalier, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart .today. It is up to them to find new ways to bring to life the vision of their founder by using *"all possible means"* to let people know that God loves them by appealing to all people of good will, whoever they are. *"...To them also, so that the world might know..."*, Jesus said.

Father Chevalier spent the month of February, 1869, in Rome to take care of all the necessary details concerning the approval of the Constitutions of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This approbation depended on the official "ministries" of the Church that were made up of very demanding canon lawyers. The pope was not directly involved, but Father Chevalier met with him to request, among other

things, that the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart be crowned in his name. Pius IX was deeply interested in the history of the congregation that he had so strongly encouraged in 1860 and to which he had given his special blessing. On March 8 the decree approving the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was signed. From that moment they had a recognized place in the Church. They were no longer a tiny association that depended on one bishop. They would be able to go all over the world, to go everywhere.

Once the celebration of the crowning of Our Lady, an event that took up everyone's time, was over, a novitiate according to the new rules was opened at Montlugon on September 12. On the 19th, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, who still numbered only 11 members, met in a general assembly and officially elected Father Chevalier their superior. They professed their religious vows in a completely official way on September 28. At this point (1869) they were at a distance of fifteen years from the "sign" Our lady had given on December 8, 1854. The congregation came out of its infancy and entered its adult stage. It was now completely organized and had canonically recognized statutes.

At this point Father Chevalier was 45 years old. During the previous fifteen years he had engaged in incredible activity as an inspired preacher, a bold builder and an organizer with a vision. Even from a purely human point of view he caused admiration. *"He would have succeeded anywhere,"* one of those close to him said. For his part, he had never lost sight, even for a single instant, of the "mission" he felt he had received. That was his true source of strength.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were still few in number but were about to increase in size rapidly. Ten years later, in 1879, they numbered 63, with an average age of 32. From 1880 on, tragic events would hasten the extraordinary extension of the congregation to other countries and lead the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to the ends of the earth.

14

FATHER CHEVALIER AND THE POPE

During his major seminary days, Jules Chevalier wrote: *"I did my theology with the manual written by Bailly who was considered a good author. God gave me the grace of not sharing that common opinion. I protested in class with all the respect due the professor. I was horrified by Bailly's extreme Gallican theories. The arguments were fierce and passionate. I was considered an ultramontane and I was not the only one. Just about everyone was against the author and the professor."* "Gallican," "ultramontane" - names that in their time were the cause of much deeper divisions than those brought about more recently by the words "traditionalist" and "progressive."

"Gallican" comes from the Latin *"gallicus."* The word means "Gallic" and is practically synonymous with "French." Gallicanism refers to the French Church, but with a particular twist. It refers to the Church of France as autonomous, national, independent of the pope. While Gallicanism has a history that goes back a long time, it had its high point and its major proponents from the Seventeenth Century up to the time of the French Revolution. The people of that time lived under the regime of "Christianity." The laws of the Church were often the only prevailing laws. At the same time, the pope had considerable temporal power. He was the political leader of the powerful Papal States and more or less considered himself the world's boss.

Since people had not been able to separate what belonged to Caesar from what belonged to God, Caesar began to insist on his rights. The king, crowned at Reims and considered to be God's elect with absolute power, also thought of himself (at least in part and Louis XIV is a good example) as the head of the Church in his Kingdom of France. The king was often supported in this line of thinking by the high clergy who found it useful to have two sovereigns, whereby they could play one off against the other and obey neither. In 1682, a declaration of the Assembly of the Clergy proclaimed the rights of the Gallican Church as more or less independent of Rome. They would only recognize a certain overseer's role for the pope. Anglicanism would take this line of thinking to its natural conclusion and do away with the pope completely.

As for "ultramontane," the word does not have the connotation of extremism that the prefix "ultra" might lead one to believe. Today we would speak of "transalpine." "Ultramontane" - from beyond the mountains, from the other side of the Alps - describes a supporter of Rome, of the pope. Most of the young clergy of the Nineteenth Century were ultramontane and the reason is easy to understand. The Revolution had come close to wiping out the Church of France along with the regime with which it had become identified. Survival could only come from placing the Church above local contingencies by insisting on its universal, catholic character. At that time the fact that the Church was "Roman" seemed to be the pledge of this universality.

This ultramontane movement soon met with official approbation. Beginning in 1850, Bailly's "extremely Gallican" manual which had been in use in seminaries for decades, was withdrawn and put on the index. More importantly, this drive for a more universal Church would lead, at Vatican I in 1870, to the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility. One hundred years later, however, at Vatican II where Gallicanism was no longer a problem, the meaning of the dogma of papal infallibility was complimented by the doctrine of the collegiality of the bishops.

Jules Chevalier was ultramontane. He was not the only one among his classmates but, as his recollections seem to indicate, he was one of the most outspoken and daring of the defenders of that position. It is a bit surprising since but a short time before he had been but a simple, uneducated shoemaker. His family which was so poor, was certainly more concerned about making a daily living than about debating great ideas. So where did he get this confidence?

It came, without any doubt, from the universal character of his vocation: the entire world was and always would be the field of his apostolate. His first inspiration had been to become a missionary to a far-away place. In the face of his superior's misgivings, he had accepted a compromise: Issoudun first. But the key word for everything that he undertook was: **...everywhere**. When he "discovered" the Sacred Heart, his motto became: *"May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere."* And to this day, it is the motto of his congregation(s). To be "Roman" or ultramontane came as a necessary conclusion from his concept of priesthood: to give, like Jesus and with Jesus, his life for the world. *"When I am lifted up, I shall draw all people to myself."* And Jesus had also said: *"Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to every creature."* As a result, *"the disciples went out preaching everywhere."*

We have already seen how Pope Pius IX always welcomed Father Chevalier so positively. He took a personal interest in his plan for a religious congregation, had himself enrolled in the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and agreed to have the statue crowned in his name. He also strongly supported the founding of the Petite Oeuvre and insisted on giving his penny, a gold penny, as a sign of support and encouragement for all the benefactors. He thought that the idea of Priest Associates was a very good one and hoped that it would flourish. He approved the first constitutions of 1869 with great joy.

In 1874, when Father Chevalier went to Rome for the final approval of his congregation, he brought with him all the necessary documents and letters of recommendation signed by 28 bishops. He was afraid that these formalities would take a long time. But the pope told him: *"Tomorrow I will see the cardinal involved. I will have him hurry it up"* And Pius IX did that so well that within a month and on the day of the feast of the Sacred Heart, as a thoughtful act of courtesy, he was able to sign the decree.

Encouraged by such great kindness, Father Chevalier was bold enough to make a rather unusual request. He asked Pius IX to allow Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to consider the Holy Father their founder and to have him and his successors as the superior of their congregation. Later Father Chevalier would write: *"Pius IX was so kind as to state in a document that he signed that he was the real and true superior of our Institute which he considered his and he gave us permission to wear a habit like his, that is a white cassock with a red cape and a white biretta."* Father Chevalier wanted to use the new habit immediately but the pope told him to refer the question to his bishop. The bishop, given the troubles that the government was making at that time for religious congregations, felt that it was not the time for them to draw attention to themselves. His advise was to keep the black cassock but with a "Roman" collar instead of the soft collar that priests in France were wearing. He also permitted a Sacred Heart badge that was sewed onto the front of the cassock.

During the audience the pope expressed a wish, a veiled request: *"Previously they asked me to consecrate the Church to the Sacred Heart. The times were just not favorable. But if Catholics were to ask for that today, I would do it willingly. We have to respond to the devotion of the faithful."*

Father Chevalier had been accompanied by Fathers Vandel and Jouet. On leaving the audience the three were overcome with joy and decided to do everything they could to carry out this project for the glory of the Heart of Jesus: that the entire Church be solemnly consecrated to him. A petition was drawn up and published in the June 1874 edition of the Annals. They already had a fairly high circulation but they had "extra copies printed to send throughout the world."

In less than six months Father Chevalier was off to Rome again, "carrying a beautifully bound folio of the letters of 160 cardinals, archbishops and bishops from France, Italy, Spain, Holland, Austria, Belgium, Canada and other countries. In addition there were letters from mitered abbots and superiors general from a great number of religious orders and congregations. There were also 28 volumes of petitions signed by the laity, each containing 100,000 signatures for a total of 2,800,000 petitioners. Soon after two more volumes were sent from Issoudun to bring the total number of signers to 3,000,000."

The pope responded: *"We have had these petitions sent to the Sacred Congregation of Rites whose duty it is to treat this sort of question with the care and maturity it merits."* But he must have given the administrative foot-dragging a bit of a push for on "June 16, 1875, Pius IX consecrated all the faithful to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." The Pope had the 31 volumes put in the Vatican Library. Leo XIII made reference to this in his encyclical that consecrated the human race to the Sacred Heart.

All these details were recorded in the Annals of that time. This is a proof that the magazine was not content just to speak of the pilgrimage to Issoudun and to record the thanks of the people who had obtained favors from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It was concerned about opening the spirit and the prayer of its readers to the world and the universal Church.

Today we are much less moved by this whole question of consecration to the Sacred Heart. We are much more concerned with the encyclicals that treat of doctrinal questions and the social and moral issues of our time. That is all very good and normal. But back then Christians were looking for points of reference in the midst of a topsy-turvy world and were awakening to the discovery of the universal Church. A movement in public opinion in favor of that consecration was of great importance. And Father Chevalier was the one behind it all.

It is possible to conclude that the interest Pius IX took in Father Chevalier and his work came from a natural empathy. There are people we meet who awaken our interest because we find in them an echo of the things we find dear to ourselves. But the following pope, Leo XIII, who had fewer occasions to meet Father Chevalier, showed the same interest. On one occasion he spontaneously offered to loan him 100,000 francs to help him buy and restore a Church in Rome that was being used for profane purposes so as to establish there the world-wide headquarters of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This is notable because Pius IX and Leo XIII were very different kinds of pope.

Pius IX, the longest reigning pope in history (32 years: 1846-1878), was at first taken up with a number of necessary reforms in a liberal spirit that won him great popularity. But he was driven from Rome by the 1848 revolution, and after he returned he was as authoritarian as he had once been liberal. Perhaps he reproached himself for having been too weak and not having foreseen these events. He was returned to power in 1849 by the French army and up to 1870 he opposed Cavour and Garibaldi, the builders of Italian unity. In spite of what was happening, he called the First Vatican Council in 1869. It came to a halt because of the war. In 1870 he was forced to accept the annexation of Rome as capital of a unified Italy and from that point on he considered himself the prisoner of the Vatican. In 1864, he published his encyclical "Quanta cura," with its famous corollary, the "Syllabus," condemning numerous errors of the modern world, a step for which he would be roundly criticized.

Pius IX was a holy pope who was not understood by his time and who, in turn, probably did not understand his time. Beyond the agitations of that time, Father Chevalier only looked to what was essential. Pius IX was certainly convinced that that was also the pope's duty. But in order to hold on to what seemed to him to be essential, he was caught up in fighting on other fronts. He must have regretted that distraction and it led him to look with kindness on men like Father Chevalier.

Leo XIII also became pope in very difficult circumstances for the Church: the Roman question, capitalism and socialism, scientism, colonialism, demographic expansion, Christian disunity - all problems that he faced courageously. He was not able to resolve the question of the temporal power of the pope and in 1881 even considered taking refuge in Austria. But he did succeed in reconciling Christians with their respective governments. He convinced faithful French Catholics to accept the Republic. With "Rerum Novarum," his famous encyclical on the worker question, he denounced the misdeeds of liberalism. With "Aeterni Patris" in 1879, he gave new life to theological studies. He was a great missionary pope and organized the Catholic hierarchy in India, Japan and Africa. He also worked hard for Christian unity.

With the encyclical "Annum Sacrum" of 1889, the first dedicated to the Sacred Heart, he laid the theological foundation for the devotion. At the end of that same year he solemnly consecrated the human race to the Sacred Heart. In 1903 he set up an archconfraternity devoted to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. With that the connection between the Sacred Heart and the Eucharist was firmly established. Perpetual adoration began to spread as well as the practice of frequent communion. There were certainly a lot of points of convergence with Father Chevalier. He too felt the suffering of persecution and his congregation had to go into exile in 1880. He too was keenly conscious of the evils of his time. He too felt that the remedy was to make the Sacred Heart known and loved throughout the world. The Eucharist was also the center of his life: *"The members of the Society will have special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, especially in the sacrament of the Eucharist,"* we read in the Constitutions. He too believed in the power of love to bring about reconciliation among people: *"Following the example of the Good Shepherd, they will lead their sheep with the bonds of loving kindness and they will not hesitate, if it should be necessary, to lay down their lives for them."*

Leo XIII died in 1903 and Father Chevalier in 1907. They were spiritual as well as historical contemporaries.

In 1872 the office of pastor at Issoudun became vacant. Father Maugenest, always a religious at heart, but a diocesan priest in fact, was tired of having to straddle the fence. He was not able to return to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart without making the bishop go back on his decision. Since he was still drawn to religious life and preaching, he entered the Dominicans. The Archbishop then asked Father Chevalier to be pastor.

He had two reasons for doing this. Considering the greater good of Issoudun, it would bring about perfect harmony, on a pastoral level, between the basilica and the parish. Secondly, there was great fear for the future because of the political upheavals that were occurring. It was feared that the religious congregations would experience the worst of this in the near future. The parish would then be a place for the fathers to find refuge.

At that time, more than 50 years after the Revolution, France was still having difficulty finding its identity. It was torn between the nostalgia of a stormy yet familiar and therefore comfortable past and the uncertainty of a new world full of promise and peril. The Nineteenth Century was a true hinge between the ancient world and the modern world. And the Church, in spite of itself, was very much caught up in this whirlwind.

The Revolution had been a shock, a turning upside down of everything. This sudden change could have been different. It could have happened with less violence. But no one would say that it was not necessary or that it could have been avoided. People accepted it and tried desperately to save what small bits of values, security and normalcy they could. When a house begins to fall down, one is always tempted to prop it up, to fill in the cracks, to cover over the damaged parts to restore its old form until the time comes to do something new, to start again from the ground up, to

rebuild the house. That way one has a house rebuilt on the solid foundations of the old one, a house which can better meet the new needs of each person, a house that is more pleasant for all and better prepared to face the storms to come.

Before 1789, the Church encompassed all facets of human life. After the Revolution, with the industrial society, the new philosophies and the increasing importance of science, a world was being-built up outside of the Church. For a long time the Church had erected barriers against the menaces coming from the outside world. Now it faced the danger of becoming a stranger to the world. The bishops, though all born to families of the nobility, were not insensitive to the misery of the slums where the workers lived. However, they were not readily able to analyze the causes and find solutions. The old city parishes became overcrowded. There was no contact with the priest. The clergy remained preoccupied with individual morality: owners should be generous and the workers diligent.

The first forms of socialism were born in a Christian context. In the second half of the century they became irreligious. The Church was considered to be on the side of the powers that exploited others. This was the time of Proudhon, Marx and the First International. Religious leaders had no option but to oppose this socialism that denied God; but they had nothing else to offer except to preach resignation and encourage works of charity. The Christians who did become interested in social problems were conservatives. They dreamed of a counter-revolution which would reestablish the old order of things and bring the present order to an end. These Christians were generous but very paternalistic.

It was not until the encyclical "Rerum Novarum" in 1891 that something more realistic began to appear. In his letter, Leo XIII noted that the world had changed and that the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few brought about "undeserved misery" for others. He called upon Catholics to open their eyes finally to the world in which they lived.

In this context Father Chevalier has quite an original place. He expressed no opinion in relation to the social problems. Unlike many others, he had no solutions to propose. The formation he had received had not prepared him, as it had others in different moments of history, to face the problems of his epoch head on. His insight, his goal, his "mission," his passion were on a different level. *"All religious principles and convictions have disappeared from institutions,"* said Leo XIII's encyclical, *"and workers are left isolated and defenseless."* This was also the opinion of Jules Chevalier. He wanted to take people out of their isolation by putting them in a closer relationship with God - not a paternalistic God who made laws, condemned and rewarded; not a far away God who would somehow satisfy the need in every human heart for mystery and the sacred; but rather a human, accessible God; a God who loved and who expected only one thing: to be loved in return.

Jules Chevalier felt that it was love that would save the world. He did not want to reestablish or restore anything. It was a new world that he had in mind as he wrote: *"from the Heart of Christ I see a new world emerging."* When you love and are loved, everything becomes new and you see everything in a new light and find new paths to follow. There are no more duties and obligations because you go ahead of and beyond all that. There are no more hesitations, fears, or frantic, sterile quests because love is spontaneous and inventive and looks to the future.

Father Chevalier did not propose solutions for the evils of his time but rather a way to eliminate their source. They all came from indifference, selfishness, ignorance, envy, injustice, untruth. However, as St. Paul said, *"love is patient, love serves others, it is not jealous nor puffed up, does no evil, is not self-seeking, does not harbor grudges, does not rejoice over evil but rejoices with the truth."* (I Cor. 13,4).

We could also add that love, real love, excludes no one. That is because the one who loves always wants to share his happiness with everyone. And that is why with Father Chevalier these two words always come up: everyone... everywhere. The indifference against which he wanted to fight was the lack of relationship not to values but to persons. That lack of someone means loneliness, solitude, sadness, life without purpose.

These reflections help us understand what happened next to Father Chevalier and his congregation. One could be led to think that he lived that period carried along, in spite of himself, by the vicissitudes that had nothing to do with him. Whatever the case, he often appears to a lot of people to be a good little priest who founded "his" work in a little town, somewhat apart from an agitated world. Circumstances alone would account for the growth of his congregation. On the contrary, from the very beginning, it was precisely his awareness of the evils of his time that led Father Chevalier to found his congregation to make the love of Christ known to **everyone**.

When the bishop asked him to be pastor in Issoudun, some very significant events were occurring in France. The country had been traumatized by defeat. The elections of 1871 had resulted in a rural, conservative majority that hoped for a restoration of the monarchy. But the people of Paris rose up against the Assembly and the government of Thiers. The "Commune" was proclaimed. Violent measures were taken against the Church: confiscations, arrests. The repression ordered by Thiers was terrible with several tens of thousands of deaths recorded. The rebels for their part shot their hostages, among them Archbishop Darboy and 24 priests.

Once the revolt of the Commune was crushed, the government and the Assembly, which was referred to as "the Moral Order," became very pro-Church. The construction of the Basilica of Montmartre was undertaken as a "public necessity." One hundred deputies took part officially in a national procession] to Paray-le-Monial. A law granted freedom for Catholic higher education. All these measures exasperated the "republican" camp and they waited for a chance to take revenge. There were henceforth two Frances: one was "republican," anticlerical and secular to an extreme; the other was "monarchical" and blindly attached to traditional values.

Father Chevalier belonged to neither France. He was far above this struggle. They said he was a royalist. Let us just say that he was not a republican. That is not the same thing. It was impossible that he be a "republican" in the meaning the word had at the time. That was because a republican, by definition, was someone who admired the Revolution that had rescued France from slavery to the nobility and the clergy. He believed in the unlimited progress of science. Catholics seemed to him to be adversaries who wanted to bring back the monarchy and support a backward religion destined to disappear, and which should be helped to disappear.

It is in this context that Father Chevalier accepted the appointment to be pastor of Issoudun. The bishop had pointed out to him the prudence of being prepared for a change of governments. The religious congregations would then be subject to persecution. But even the most "republican" of governments would not be able to attack the parish priests. The people would not permit it. For Father Chevalier, being pastor was a guarantee of being able to stay at Issoudun and protect his work, at least in part.

When he first began his work at "Sacred Heart," Father Chevalier did all in his power not to be tied down to one parish. But now the circumstances were different. Fifteen years earlier there were only two of them. To have accepted the parish then would have meant tying the entire congregation to it. Now it would only be one work among many. Father Chevalier had always said that one could be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart anywhere: as pastor, teacher, chaplain, foreign missionary. The only thing that made him hesitate was the fact that he already had too much to do. Would he be able to handle yet another responsibility?

He would be able to and he would do it very well. At the same time he continued to take an active part in his congregation which was being shaken by the events of the time and in spite of that, or perhaps because of that, was growing. He also oversaw the pilgrimage, to which he gave a national and international dimension, and the organization of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which now had its headquarters in Rome and was established in a great number of countries. This would also be the moment of his second great undertaking: the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that he founded and guided.

At the same time he radically transformed the parish. His first concern was the catechetical program to which he gave new strength and seriousness. He inaugurated a Mass for children, a Mass for men, perpetual adoration and a number of works of charity and piety for young men, young women, boys, men, women. He knew how to mobilize all people of good faith and was helped by some of the younger Fathers. The bishop had told him that it would be a good learning experience for them. In spite of all these activities and worries, he undertook the reconstruction of the huge parish church which had stood in ruins since the Revolution. His only regret was not to have been able to finish the spire because of lack of cooperation on the part of city government. He remained pastor at Issoudun for 35 years - until his death.

As had been foreseen, things began to change in France. In 1876, under a brand new Constitution of a Republic that had been voted in by a one-vote majority, the voters chose their Assembly. For the first time, universal suffrage was in effect. The results were quite clear: two-thirds of the deputies elected were out and out republicans. President MacMahon only survived three years with a "split" government and resigned in 1879. Grevy, a republican, became president with a republican government and a large republican majority. It was the minister of education, Jules Ferry, who would prove to be especially active and effective.

The republicans wanted to confine religion to the domain of private life. "*Clericalism is the enemy*" was the slogan of the day. The Church, however, ran almost all primary and secondary education and by that very fact produced people opposed to the government. To put a stop to that, Jules Ferry took a number of measures. One law declared primary education to be free and obligatory. Consequently, each department had to have a secular teacher training school. When these measures were accepted without too much opposition, another important step was taken: private education would be tolerated but only authorized congregations could teach.

The Jesuits with their secondary schools and the Dominicans were the targets of this new law. The majority of small congregations, and even those that did not engage in primary education, formed a block, whether out of solidarity with the Jesuits or because they deemed it useless to ask for the permission which they felt would be routinely refused. In the face of this united opposition, the government decided to expel all the congregations that were not authorized.

Given the climate of those times, things did not happen very gently. The police and the army carried out orders in a brutal fashion, breaking down doors and throwing religious out on the street. In some places, wearied by the hostile reaction of the local population, the soldiers went beyond their orders and ripped down crucifixes and carried out senseless desecrations. For a long time Catholics would remain traumatized by these events.

At Issoudun, where the attachment of the local population to their "Sacred Heart" was well known, the authorities took all necessary precautions. On November 5, 1880, a first Friday of the month, at 5:00 a.m., soldiers invaded the square. The calvary guarded the streets and all the local troops were present. The prefect and sub-prefect were there to supervise the operation. The police commissioner, wearing his official sash, arrived at 7:00 a.m., surrounded by his agents and a locksmith with a bunch of keys and a carpenter armed with an axe to break down the doors in case of resistance.

After the reading of the official acts, the locksmith forced the doors open. Father Chevalier stood in front of one of them and protested forcefully against this violation of private property. The commissioner passed by him and with his agents and the locksmith visited all the rooms, forced open their doors and expelled the missionaries with brute force. The basilica was then closed. It was declared off limits for religious cult. Seals were placed on the doors. There had been no lay people to evacuate since the building had been surrounded from 5:00 a.m.

The only safe haven left for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was the rectory at Issoudun which was officially declared property of the diocese. The Fathers who could not be lodged there were taken in by some of the families in town. As for the students of the Petite Oeuvre, they had left Chezal-Benoit a few days earlier as a precaution and were housed here and there in hastily prepared makeshift dormitories.

When night fell the stained glass windows of the chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart still glowed in the dark for a few hours from the small votive candles inside. And then the lights burned out.

EPILOGUE

One day the little sanctuary lamps were to shine again. They are burning today and give the chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart its special atmosphere of reflection and meditation.

In the meantime many things happened. The Fathers were forced into exile. They went to Belgium, to Holland, to Austria, to Spain and even further, always further. Faster than anyone thought, they spread **everywhere**.

Father Chevalier, quartered in the rectory at Issoudun, continued to watch over it all and to support his priests in all the countries where they were dispersed. They underwent all the difficulties one could imagine and lived in extreme poverty but they were buoyed up by the same enthusiasm that had inspired their founder.

In 1881, from Spain, took place the first departure for the famous Mission of Papua. At that time it was uncharted territory, so primitive and so distant. Father Chevalier had not yet been in Issoudun 25 years and already his Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were half way around the world, at the other end of the world, to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus loved everywhere.

The Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, very modestly founded by Father Chevalier amidst great difficulty in 1874, also enjoyed tremendous, rapid growth throughout the world.

Father Chevalier died in 1907 after having been forcefully evicted from his rectory during a new persecution.

All that is another story that deserves to be told some day. This short book did not have as its purpose to tell the story of the congregations founded by Father Chevalier but just to answer one basic question: Who was Jules Chevalier? Where did he come from and in what period did he live? How did he come to found, in a small and forgotten country village, such an important world-wide organization? It offers a response to the basic question so many ask: "*Who was Jules Chevalier?*"

Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Sacred Heart Basilica, Issoudun, France, crowned by the delegate of Pope Pius IX on September 8, 1869.

FATHER CHEVALIER AND HIS TIMES

Fr Jean Tostain

MSC

Given at the general chapter Issoudun September 1999
Translated by Fr Ray Deisburg msc (USA province)

I am honoured by Father General's invitation to speak about "Fr. Chevalier and his times." I am also somewhat embarrassed, since I do not consider myself particularly competent...

It was thought that, to speak about "Fr. Chevalier and his times", it would be good to call on a Frenchman, for the history of France at the time of our founder strongly influenced his journey, we might even say determined it. But in our different Provinces there are confreres who are infinitely more qualified than I to speak about the spirit and message of Fr. Chevalier, and more detailed research will be necessary in the future.

Introduction

To speak about the times of Fr Chevalier is not merely of anecdotal interest. It is the key to understanding the journey which was that of our founder. His vocation, his mission, was to bring "a true remedy to the evils of his time". To understand better what were the evils and the times is to understand better his mission and the mission which he left to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The "evils of his time" should not be understood as temporary evils, or passing difficulties which all human societies experience. Jules Chevalier was aware that the times in which he lived deeply portrayed the evils of all human history.

The difficulties of his time were part of a serious crisis, whose roots went deep into the past and which brought about a lasting upheaval. The Church of France, in particular, experienced this upheaval very intensely. The strongest and clearest expression of the upheaval was the French

Revolution, although its origins go further back in history. The genius of Fr Chevalier was that he would come to understand that it was useless to try to restore and old order, and that to remedy the evils brought about by its disappearance it would be necessary to bring people to a new world. "From the heart of Christ, I see a new world emerging..."

What is remarkable is that Jules Chevalier seems always to have been aware, at least intuitively, of the evils of his time. For him it was not a sudden discovery, a kind of "conversion". The discovery or sudden insight occurred with regard to the "remedy" for these evils, which came to him all of a sudden with the revelation of what the "devotion" to the Sacred Heart is in reality.

During childhood we are marked unwittingly by events and environment. The upheavals of the French Revolution of 1789 were still recent history for the young Jules Chevalier. Our founder was born in 1824, only 35 years after all these events had started. In his childhood, he lived with the consequences.

In Richelieu, Chevalier's birthplace, the church had been transformed by the revolutionaries into a "temple of Reason" and then left practically in ruins. It had only been partially repaired by the time Jules was a child. Richelieu had been entirely and artificially constructed to serve the chateau of the prince of Richelieu. Other than the chateau, confiscated at the time of the Revolution, the young Jules knew only the ruins whose stones were still sold to the highest bidder. The church... the chateau... were, in his eyes, a miniature example of a society that had lost its landmarks.

Throughout the country, the entire social system had collapsed. The search for equality had generated the desire to eliminate everything that was not "the people" the nobles, the wealthy, the priests, as well as the intellectuals, the scholars had been pursued, arrested, beheaded. By the time Jules Chevalier came on the scene, the furor had finally died down. But his mother had been raised by an aunt who had been to prison because she was accused of having hidden priests. Family memories often leave more of a mark, especially for the children, than major events farther away.

Already we can guess what would be the reaction of Jules Chevalier throughout his life. Since nothing seemed certain, he turned instinctively toward that which is eternal and certain: God. The child was very pious, getting up early to serve Mass, offering to help the priest with anything. There was more here than just a passing sentiment as often happens with children. Jules began quite young to work as a shoemaker, in a trade of little interest to him, yet time-consuming. In those days, children worked 10 hours a day. That left him little free time. And if he had to get up earlier to attend Mass, he never had time to play with youngsters his own age. Hoping against all hope of one day entering the seminary, it was while repairing shoes that he learned Latin grammar.

While these may seem like small matters, they indicate the way in which Jules Chevalier already wanted to be on top of his times rather than letting them control him.

1. Jules Chevalier and the Ideas of His Time

The French Revolution, which had repercussions even into the smallest villages, was much more than the kind of simple revolution that many countries have experienced over the course of history. It was not just a matter of changing the government, but a complete reversal of mentality, a collapse of the value system which had guided the western world up to that point. The closest comparison we can make is that of the collapse of the Soviet world, although the comparison is weak. The Soviet system was fairly recent (3/4 of a century), and was faced with the "free" world. The French Revolution, on the other hand, was the event which marked the end of a value system established for more than ten centuries, the reference point for the western world, which we call Christendom.

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the most imposing assembly of the entire Middle Ages, consecrated the theocratic form of government, already clearly instituted by Pope Innocent III. The Church has the two "powers", the spiritual and the temporal. The authority of sovereigns comes from papal delegation, which in turn comes directly from divine delegation. It was never imagined that there could be any other form of government than monarchical rule, with a "divine right" of kings under the authority of the Pope, who did not hesitate to put an entire country under interdict if the monarch did not conform to Christian law, Christian morality and papal authority.

The Church had total control over all teaching (only Catholic universities where theology had a place of prominence), over science (only the fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible, the book which explained everything. We note that only 150 years before the Revolution was the condemnation of Galileo), over justice (there were only ecclesiastical tribunals), over politics and the alliances between nations, over the arts, literature, etc. In short, over all aspects of people's lives.

The first crack in this system of values was the arrival of Protestantism (Luther in the 16th century). Although simplified, we could say that first of all there was a denial of the authority of the Pope over consciences, but also a certain questioning of revelation, allowing great room for the personal interpretation of Scripture. In his "Little Treatise on Human Freedom", Luther affirmed only the authority of Holy Scripture and clarified the doctrine of justification by faith. "Human liberty" "Liberty" would be the key word of the French Revolution.

In his book on the Sacred Heart, Fr Chevalier ascribes the first real break to the French philosopher Descartes (1596-1650). Breaking with Scholasticism, Descartes allowed only reasons as the basis of all science. The "method" that he advocates is to achieve truth starting from an evident intuition followed by logical deduction. "Reason", after liberty, is the other key word of the French Revolution, which went so far as to establish grandiose ceremonies to the "goddess Reason" (even seen in Richelieu). Reason opposed to revelation: therein is the root of upheaval.

People of good will at the time of Jules Chevalier were torn between fidelity to that which the Church had been for centuries and that which was good in the new ideas. Reason and freedom are values that Christian faith does not repudiate, quite the contrary; but they can be used wrongly.

With regard to reason, St Paul wrote:

"For what can be known about God is evident... As a result they have no excuse;... they became vain in their reasoning...; while claiming to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1, 19-22).

With regard to freedom, for St Paul the choice is simple: Man does not know how to be free. Either he recognizes his dependence on God and God frees him, or he does not recognize it and becomes a slave to sin.

"Do you not know... that you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (Rom. 6,16) *"For you were called for freedom."* (Gal. 5,13)

Now St Margaret Mary (1647-1690) was a contemporary of Descartes (she was born 3 years before his death) and Fr Chevalier in his book on the Sacred Heart presents the revelations and devotion to the Sacred Heart as a response to the new philosophy.

This was the discovery he made on the eve of his subdiaconate. For him, it was a new insight. By discovering in the Sacred Heart "the center, the pivotal point, the quintessence of Christianity", he discovered by that very fact the remedy for the evils of his time. Love overcomes the conflict between authority and freedom, just as it does between revelation and reason.

To the reason-revelation conflict, St John answers "...everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God" (1 Jn 4, 7); or again in St Paul "love rejoices with the truth" (1 Cor. 13, 6). To the freedom-obedience conflict, St John says "For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn 5, 3), echoing the words of Jesus: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Mt 11, 30).

We can understand his joy over this evidence that enlightens everything, resolves everything.

It is often said that there was nothing surprising in Fr Chevalier's decision to include the Sacred Heart in the title of his congregation, for many of the numerous congregations begun in the 19th century put themselves under the protection of the Sacred Heart. Devotion to the Sacred Heart was quite popular in the church of France and among the people (1873: Sacred Heart Basilica, Montmartre). But as Fr Braun has written:

“The devotion to the Sacred Heart was not, for our Founder, one devotion among many. For Jules Chevalier, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was the essence of Christianity, the center where all converges, the compendium of everything, it embraces everything and is the answer to everything.”

It was first “a personal discovery which, from the beginning, connects to the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of the epiphany, of the manifestation of the love of God in Jesus Christ, with his human heart, his heart open to all.”

The Sacred Heart is “the whole Jesus” as Fr Chevalier never tired of saying and repeating. And Jesus is the love of God incarnate, continuing to “be incarnated” in humanity.

Thus understood, “devotion” to the Sacred Heart was truly for Fr Chevalier the answer to the main evils of his time: rationalism and egoism (in the sense of: I alone decide what is good and what I must believe and do). Reason and Freedom are the two entities which, in this context, become evils. They were evils to which the response was often an intransigent dogmatism and moralism, which also have no place in the Kingdom of Love.

Love transcends all dogma and paths of reason. Did not St Paul say to the Corinthians:

“If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing;... If knowledge, it will be brought to nothing... Love never fails”. (I Cor 13, 8).

2. Jules Chevalier and the Society of His Time

Another context which Fr Chevalier faced during his time was the arrival of democracy. For us in the 20th century, it is an essential good, and if it is not yet established in all countries, we are certain that it is only a matter of time and that all nations are moving, often painfully, toward democracy. In the 19th century, it was a complete upheaval of all established values. Democracy was in fact born from the French Revolution. That is why, once again, this revolution was not just a local event, but one of global importance.

Certainly “democratic” governments had existed in ancient times, but in reality there was a social class in charge, the aristocrats (in Greek, *aristos* meaning the best). There was no question that the ordinary people, much less the slaves, took part in decision making.

However the idea of democracy had been making headway for some decades. We can see it in the Protestant communities who went to establish themselves in what would become the United States of America and who in fact lived democracy. But this was due to a series of historical circumstances rather than the deliberate desire to establish a new system of social relationships. There was no leader to preach the democratic system in opposition to some other, but only the desire to be free from the dominance of England (which was for the most part a liberal enough government) and to manage by themselves.

The theoretical concept of democracy was born with the French philosophers of the 18th century who set the stage for the Revolution and who are called the “philosophers of the Enlightenment”.

Among them, we note in particular Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In his *Social Contract*, one of his numerous works which had far-reaching effects, Rousseau imagines original man, “natural” man, at the zero moment where there is still no legitimacy. Therefore if this legitimacy did not exist for all eternity, it comes neither from nature (such as, for example, the authority of parents), nor from God, but from man’s will, that is to say, from a contract. In this manner, the idea of democracy is born: what constitute a political regime as valid is not the fact it reflects the natural order, nor that it is based on a claimed “divine law”, but that is rooted in the “will of the people”. What is decided or allowed by all, or at least by the majority, becomes the norm; that is what is right and legitimate.

It is understandable that the Church of that time did not want democracy. Even today, we can certainly question some of the consequences of this system, which Churchill described as “the worst of all systems of government, with the exception of all the others”. Even a die-hard democrat can wonder about the legitimacy of certain things which are recognized as “legal”, such as abortion, euthanasia, etc.

The French clergy would vigorously oppose democracy. It was not, as has often been suggested, to defend its privileges. The lower clergy had an important and decisive role in the meetings of the “*Etats Generaux*” (Three Classes) which marked the beginnings of the Revolution. It was under their influence that the first revolutionary laws were passed, such as the abolition of privileges (August 4, 1789). And the clergy of the 19th century, in the post-revolutionary period, was a poor, generous and selfless clergy, such as we find in the Cure of Ars. There was in this sense a true renewal of the clergy. But the clergy remained deeply committed to the monarchical government which alone, it seemed to them, was capable of maintaining the divine law and of opposing the random “law” of democracy. In today’s terminology and with our present values, we say that the clergy of that time was “on the right”, while a large part of the present-day clergy prides itself on being “left”. But these categories do not apply to the 19th century. “Being on the left” today means to stand on the side of the poor, to defend the poor. The clergy of France in the 19th century was much more “on the side of the poor” than we, multiplying works of charity, teaching the poorest of the poor, and themselves living, for the most part, in great poverty. But they found themselves on the side of the rich in their struggle for the “restoration”, and thus for the definitive return of the king, but above all for the return of true, fundamental values.

At the end of the 19th century, after many rather pitiful attempts at restoring the monarchy (Louis XVIII, Charles X, Louis Philippe, Napoleon III), and some especially bloody convulsive starts (the revolution of 1848, the “*Commune*” in 1871), and a war (1870), the Republic (already the third one) is definitively instituted, by the majority. It is not until 21 years later that Pope Leo XIII in 1892, and therefore rather late, declares that the Church in France must accept the republican government which, one hundred years after the revolution, had toned down a lot. For the majority of the clergy this was wrenching and incomprehensible.

Where was Fr Chevalier in this serious debate of his time? We would be tempted first of all to say that he in no way entered the polemic. Contrary to all those who had some authority or an audience in the French Church then, and it is a remarkable exception, we find nothing in his writing in defence of the principle of the monarchy; and Fr Chevalier would have had occasion with the crowds coming to Issoudun, or with the widespread *Annals*. It is also true that we cannot say that he was “republican”. He could not be. It was impossible for him to be a republican with the meaning that it had then. For a republican of that era was defined by his admiration of the revolution which snatched the French away from servitude to nobles and priests. Thus a catholic appeared to be a witness for an obscure religion that was meant to disappear, and which should be helped to disappear!

Thus Fr Chevalier, from the beginning, does not stay outside of, but above the debate. His purpose, his mission is to struggle against what he calls indifference and egoism, which are for him the principal evils of his time.” Indifference is to ignore God, to have lost reference to God. Egoism or selfishness is to find value only in what suits the individual, without reference to anyone but himself.

Fr Chevalier does not speak of “struggle”, of “combat”, of “restoration”, of “re-establishment”, he speaks of the “remedy” needed against the two evils of his time, and this remedy is to make known God’s love. Whatever the political regime, the essential thing for him is to establish the reign of love, the love of the word Incarnate. When Fr Chevalier goes to find Emile Maugeness to propose the foundation of a congregation, he says to him; “Two scourges are eating away at our unfortunate century: indifference and selfishness. We need an effective remedy to be applied to these evils... This remedy is found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus who is nothing other than love and charity...”

Contrary to the preachers of his era, heirs of a long Jansenist tradition, who called to penance, to conversion, to a “return” to the right way, shaking up the people (who were becoming fewer) recalling their duties and the demands of an almighty God, Fr Chevalier asked the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart “to speak often about the mercy of God.” Let people know that God loves them and that they can love him. His policy is this: not to change the institutions but to get at the deeper evil by changing people’s hearts. Where loves reigns, there is no more injustice.

Our MSC Constitutions, even in their renewed and expanded form, are the concretisation of the message of Fr Chevalier who himself wrote the first version. We read:

"With our Founder, we contemplate Jesus Christ, united to his father... He is the good Shepherd... he gives us the will to serve... He helps us live and work for justice and peace... He casts out fear... We want to proclaim his love to the world" (6-10)

They continue:

"Follow the example of Jesus, we will strive to lead others to God... to unite them to him by love, and to free them from fear... the spirit of our Society... is above all one of love for justice and concern for all especially the very poor." (6-13)

"We will be attentive, as our Founder was, to those who suffer... In the poor and the little ones, in all the victims of injustice and violence, we will discover the face of Christ... We will work courageously to guarantee their human rights and to change the hearts of their oppressors." (20-22)

What could be more "republican" than that!

Fortunately, the new Constitutions speak about "respect for human rights". The "Declaration of the Rights of Man" dates from the same year as the French Revolution (1789), was expanded in 1793 and then in 1795, and served as a basis for the United Nations Declaration in 1948. The revolutionaries, after eliminating the past based on "divine law", felt obligated to create a new basis of rights, the "human rights". Fr Chevalier does not denounce these "Human rights", as the Church of his time would do so vigorously. And it is true that he does not talk about them either. It was a taboo and controversial subject. Yet he wrote some simple, almost naïve, but marvellous lines on the fact that each person is a unique being and thus worthy of infinite respect (cf. The Sacred Heart, pp. 81-85 in the French edition).

Moreover, we have no doubt of this "democratic" spirit of Fr Chevalier, who did not want to speak about obligation and duty, submission and obedience, but only love, in the way our Constitutions speak about obedience, recalling that *"Jesus became obedient out of love... We profess obedience to share in his spirit of obedience that we may serve better our brothers... It is in communion with our brothers that we seek to discover the will of God"* (38-40).

This political problem (Royalists, Republicans, etc.) could have at times seemed secondary. In France it had (and keeps!) considerable importance because of the historical context and of the decisive impact it seemed to have for the future of the Church. It was very important at the time of Fr Chevalier. He did not avoid it, but surpassed it.

3. Jules Chevalier and the Church of His Time

In the powerful currents manifested in the Church, Fr Chevalier ardently presented himself as an "ultramontanist".

Ultramontanism (from "ultra" beyond, and "montes" mountains, in this case the Alps) refers to a very strong line of thought favourable to the authority of the Pope, which spread in Catholic milieus in France as well as in Germanic countries throughout the 19th century. It was opposed to the theories of Gallicanism (from Gallica: France) and other movements which tended to make the authority of national councils prevail over that of the Pope, and the sovereign rights of the State over the operation of a national Church. Gallicanism did not originate with the Revolution; it had much deeper roots. Kings and States, reacting to the absolute authority of Rome in all matters, wanted more autonomy and independence. But in the 19th century, Ultramontanism mounted a reaction against the excesses to which these theories had given rise; like the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" in 1790 whereby all priests had to swear allegiance to the State and the "organic articles" added by Napoleon to the Concordat of 1801 in order to give power to the State over the organization of the Church. The ultramontanist movement sought the restoration of the spiritual authority of the Pope after the revolutionary crisis, an issue to which Pius VII then Gregory XVI devoted themselves. It was Pius IX especially (1846-1878) who would engage, with the approval of the majority of Catholics, in the politics of Roman centralization and of the powers of the Pope. This would have its crowning glory in 1870 with the proclamation, through the 1st Vatican Council, of the dogma of papal infallibility.

It is a question that is difficult to treat briefly. It started, primarily in our country, any violent and long controversies which are far from extinguished.

For it is true that conservatives saw in the restoration of the spiritual authority of the Pope the hope of restoring a social order based on the pre-eminence of the Church.

It is true that to his encyclical *Quanta Cura* in 1864, condemning naturalism, liberalism and indifference, Pius IX added his "Syllabus", condemning 80 "errors of our times". Certain propositions were courageous (the ravages of economic liberalism were condemned for the first time) but many others appeared unacceptable, especially to us today, such as the refusal of the separation of Church and State, the proclamation of the Catholic religion as the only religion of the State, the refusal of all public worship of other religions, etc. It was an awkward and unfortunate text, but which merely repeated the earlier condemnations of other Popes and which was perhaps more of a warning than a condemnation.

Thus many confreres, especially in France, knowing the attachment of Fr Chevalier to the Pope, considered our Founder a conservative who should not be followed on this point. The reproach is not justified.

Fr Chevalier's ties to the Holy See are much earlier than Pius IX. From his basic courses in the seminary, Jules Chevalier saw only the damage done by the old Gallicanism. And so in France, in the wake of the Anglican Church, the General Assembly of the Clergy, meeting in "Council" in 1682, had proclaimed the freedom of the Gallic Church almost independent from Rome. King Louis XIV (1638-1715) thought of himself as head of the Church in France, consecrated by anointing, supported in this by the upper clergy and by prominent men like Bossuet.

For Jules Chevalier all the misfortunes of the Church of France came from this break with the universal Church for the benefit of the local Churches. It is a point of view which does not strongly agree with our own times. Today we would like to have more autonomy for the local Churches so that they might better adapt to pastoral and liturgical plans, to needs, to cultures, to the mentalities of each country. But what preoccupied Jules Chevalier was the independence of the Church. France, among other countries, had experienced a Church subjected to civil power. The Church then was considered a political instrument, a guarantee of social order; she had a prominent place in the good functioning of State affairs. This is obviously not its role and for Jules Chevalier the Gallic Church had thus lost its *raison d'être*, which is essentially to announce the Kingdom of God and not to manage earthly kingdoms. It seemed to him then that giving the universal Church its rightful place was a guarantee of freedom, of renewal, of rebirth of original purity.

Napoleon, coming to power in 1799, was aware that after the violence of the Revolution, damaged national unity could not be restored without religious peace. And so he began difficult negotiations with Rome which finally resulted in a Concordat in 1801. A concordat is a compromise. Thus the Catholic religion is recognized as the religion "of majority of Frenchmen" and no longer "of the State", and that the Emperor reserves the right and exclusive power to name bishops. Under his authority come the publication in France of all texts of the Holy See, the running of Synods, etc. Therefore what a Jules Chevalier, who lived his whole life under the Concordat, wanted was the full and complete independence of the Church.

On the eve of the Concordat, to justify himself before the Assembly to which he belonged, Napoleon declared:

"I do not see in religion the mystery of the Incarnation, but the mystery of the social order; she attaches to heaven an idea of equality which prevents that the rich be massacred by the poor. How can we have order in the State without religion?... When a man dies of hunger next to another who abounds in goods, it is impossible for him to accept this difference if there is not an authority who says to him: God wants it so; there have to be poor and rich in the world; but later and for all eternity, the distribution will be different."

Jules Chevalier evidently had another idea of the priest.

This same Napoleon, a few years later, held Pope Pius VII prisoner for five years outside of Rome (1809-1814). And he called a National Council (1811) which decided, under his pressure, to give to archbishops the power of investing bishops, since the Pope was “unable to”. This happened only ten years before the birth of Jules Chevalier.

Thus, in this his time, Father Chevalier was an “Ultramontanist” not in dreaming of all-powerful Church, but in wanting to see reborn an independent Church which could become once again fully herself. He loved the Church “as Christ loved the Church...” He wanted her to be resplendent, without blemish, holy and irreproachable” (cf. Eph. 5, 25-27). For this new world that he saw “*emerging from the Heart of Christ, this creation, so fertile, full of grandeur, and inspired by love and mercy, is the Church, the mystical Body of Christ, which makes this new creation present on earth...*”

Conclusion

“Fr Chevalier and his times” is a vast subject. A session of a week at least would be necessary to treat it and delve more deeply into some concrete facts.

With regard to the Ideas of his time,

* we should speak about anticlericalism and some of its consequences, such as the expulsion of religious, the separation of Church and State.

With regard to the Society of his time,

* We would have to look at the serious problem of the great poverty of the people, of the rural exodus, of industrialization and the emergence of a wretched and exploited class of workers; we would have to tackle the very interesting subject of the lightning progress of science, and in particular of medicine, a materialistic, mechanistic medicine to which Fr Chevalier is strongly opposed (principally in his book on the Sacred Heart).

With regard to the Church of his time,

* we would have to look at the Jansenist movement, with its ancient roots yet so powerful still; we should also spend time on the deplorable pastoral situation of the era, and how Fr Chevalier dealt with this, especially as a pastor; we should speak about the extraordinary missionary momentum in France in the 19th century and, in particular, the vision of Fr Chevalier; we need to consider the beginning of a multitude of religious congregations during this time, and in this context, how our MSC congregation is unique; and we should also speak of the intuition that Fr Chevalier had on the role of laity in the Church. In his time, this vision was not understood or approved, it now seems essential for the Church of our time.

Many other subjects could also be tackled, subjects that are perhaps secondary but revealing. Within the time limit, I could only (and I fear, very poorly) suggest general subjects, but ones which appear to me to be essential.

I am deeply convinced that what we most need to be aware of is that Fr Chevalier did not leave us a way of acting, a “method” that we should apply or adapt to our era. It could even be that in similar situations, times having changed, the world having changed, we would take a different approach from his. Fr Chevalier is not an intellectual who elaborated a doctrine, He was above all a man of intuition. Whatever the evils we encounter, it is from this intuition that we are inspired to find a remedy.

Our founder lived in a century crisscrossed by powerful and contradictory currents, a century of upheavals. But he had this intuition about what was essential: God the Father is love, the Word sent by him is love, his Incarnation is the Incarnation of love, and the Church coming forth from his open Heart can only be love. To open people’s eyes and hearts to this love is the essential mission. It is valid for all times, including ours, and for all situations. Father Chevalier does not favour any particular means nor any particular mission. “*Everywhere... for all... by all... by all means and all ministries...*” provided that we have the essential goal.

“*With our Founder, we contemplate Jesus Christ, united to his Father...*” , and like Paul completing in his flesh what is lacking in the passion of Christ (Col 1, 24), we want to achieve what is still lacking in the coming of this “*new world..., this creation inspired by love and mercy...*”

Jules Chevalier did not leave us a method. He bequeathed us a spirit.

Fr Jean Tostain, msc
Issoudun, September 8, 1999

EVANGELIZATION THROUGH COMPASSION

Dennis Murphy M.S.C.

INTRODUCTION

Our world has been influenced, for better or worse, by people who ask basic questions and try to give answers. It has not been noticeably influenced by those who simply accept or reject their answers without grappling with the questions.

These two statements might seem obvious, even trite. But how many people really ask basic questions about anything? How many people drift through life without ever asking even one fundamental question?

Jules Chevalier was a man who has had a tremendous impact on our world, because he grappled with questions about his identity, his relationship with God, his purpose in life, the basis of his dignity, his call as a Christian, his relationship with all the peoples of the world, etc.

The problem with appreciating the answers of Jules Chevalier is that we don't personally address the questions he asked, We may also too readily assume that a study of this man who lived in a foreign country, another century is of interest only to the archivist, the novicemaster, the specialist in esoteric affairs, to certain members of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or to members of the historical society of the Catholic Church. That would be a big loss, for Jules Chevalier came up with fundamental and challenging answers to many of life's most important questions.

How did it come about that this man who was born of very ordinary parents and lived in a little country town, blessed with only ordinary intelligence was able to touch the hearts of his countrymen, bringing many of them back to the Faith, at a time when the Government was *persecuting* the Church in France? What was it that drew his fellow priests to him? What was it that moved friends and neighbors to assist him, so that he could establish religious societies of men and women burning with a desire to bring the love of Christ to every man, woman and child throughout the world? What was it that inspired thousands of young people to aspire to become Missionaries of the Sacred Heart? What was it that gave him the courage to surmount the great obstacles that came his way?

This essay endeavors to portray the driving force in the life of Jules Chevalier - Founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. However, unless the reader asks the questions that Jules Chevalier asked, and really tries to answer them in his or her own life, then the power which his answers can release will never take place. Ultimately, this is what the essay attempts to do: not simply to inform or entertain but to

challenge readers to ask themselves about their own purpose of existence, their own dignity, their own call to share in the mission of making Christ known and loved, and to move some of them to become associated with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in their mission of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere.

CHEVALIER'S STORY

Jules Chevalier lived in France in the 19th century. He worked as a parish priest throughout his adult life.

It was after his second year of working as an associate pastor that he approached his spiritual director for guidance about a recurring dream. He felt deeply that God was calling him to establish a religious company dedicated to the work of making the compassionate Christ known and loved everywhere. He believed that the image of the Sacred Heart was the perfect symbol of this compassion. He felt therefore that God was calling him and his future companions to devote themselves to making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere. Jules envisioned them doing this through preaching, writing, giving retreats, teaching, and caring for others - with the utmost gentleness. He felt that the work should begin in the region of Berry, France, but spread throughout the whole world.

His spiritual director asked him *why* he thought this call was so important. Was there a fundamental need for this kind of work? Did Jules really think through the implication of his call? Was he just trying to escape the present demands of his pastoral duties *by* imagining himself doing something else that might not be that essential?

These were valid questions. They demanded honest answers. But Jules had pondered them long before they were asked and was convinced that he knew the answers through God's grace.

During his early years., but especially during his days in the seminary, Jules had thought through the basic questions of his relationship with Christ and his call to make Him Known and loved. The answers he came up with stirred within him the desire to share them with others. He was convinced that ignorance of Christ's great love led people to be uncaring and selfish. It spawned a deep spiritual sickness in their hearts which only Christ could cure.

Jules came from a poor family. The place and date of his birth is recorded as Richelieu, France, March 1824. His father was particularly unsuccessful as a businessman. Jules had to drop out of school because of finances. He took up the trade of shoe repair. This was a disappointment, because he had hoped to become a priest. Nevertheless, he did not become bitter. Instead he used the experience to reflect upon the mysterious ways of God. To be sure, he didn't come up with perfectly clear answers as yet. But he was started on his search.

When Mr. Chevalier was offered a job as caretaker of the woods around yyy the family moved to that area. This brought Jules in contact with Father Deldevese, who offered to give him some lessons in Latin. To enjoy this aid Jules walked four miles to and from the rectory. The move also enabled Mr. Juste, the employer of Mr. Chevalier, to meet Jules. He was impressed with his serious mind, determination and hard work. So he offered to sponsor his priestly formation.

Jules marvelled at the kindness of God, demonstrated through men like Mr. Juste, as he set out to begin his long journey to the priesthood. Gratitude for the help afforded him enabled him to persevere. It wasn't easy for Jules. He was beginning high school when most of the young men were finishing their studies. His simple cobbler work had also slowed his mind. Despite these obstacles, he applied himself, passed his exams, and made many friends among the students. What it cost him can be appreciated in the words he later wrote: "It was during this period that I felt the greatest compulsion to leave and return home."

As he moved on to the major seminary in Bourges, he began to reflect more and more on the life of Christ. As he did, he found many echoes in his own life:

Christ was born of ordinary parents ·
He lived in a small town ·
He did common labour ·
He was so "ordinary" that he became a stumbling block for many people ·
He experienced all the common joys and sorrows of his people.
He shared completely the life-style of those around him.

Why did Christ choose that kind of life? Why didn't he come among us as a powerful, influential personage? Is there something basic, something very important in his choice?

As he probed these questions, God enabled him "to grasp the breadth, the length, the height and the depth of the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge." (Eph.3,18)

Jules was thrilled to discover that by his solidarity, his sharing of our common lot, his compassion, Christ pronounced the value of such an existence, and of the people who lived it. By living the life He did, Christ declared the sacredness of the ordinary person, the small village, simple celebrations of life, the value of physical labour, the holy nature of ordinary things like streams, stones, sparrows, fields of wheat, women in labour, needles and lamps, sheep and goats, thorns and lilies.

It overwhelmed Jules to realize that most people were unhappy, because they never really entered into the sacred dimension of their own being and the things around them. God had sent his own Son to remind us that his love was in us and all around us. But most *people* were blind and deaf to it. They needed to know that when Christ came among us as a common man, He made it possible or us to rediscover our own value, and the value of everything around us. By coming among us in the way He did, Christ pointed out the error of those who think that life has meaning only for the beautiful, the strong, the wealthy, the powerful, the well travelled, the clever and well educated, the famous and recognized.

Jules began to burn with a desire to make this compassion or solidarity of Christ known to others. He was convinced that once they really understood it, their whole view of themselves, others and the world about them would change. They would begin to grasp just how much God loves the world and all the myriads of creatures in it. Most of all, they would begin to stand in wonder at the meaning of a human being ... a creation so utterly magnificent that God had sent his Son to become one of them to redeem them, i.e. to bring them back to a sense of their own dignity, everlasting value and power to do good.

For Jules, the finest symbol of this compassionate kindness of God was found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It blended the human and divine, the sacred and the secular, the triumph of love over hate, the eternal love of God made present in flesh, the value of suffering, the meaning of death and the hope of resurrection. Like nothing else, it challenged us to ask the basic questions:

Who is He?
Why did He become human?
Why did He live the life He did?
Why did he suffer and die?
Am I that important?
Are others that important?
Is there real love and meaning in the ordinary grind of life?
Can there really be meaning in pain?
Is there life after death?

How is the value of life measured?

What is He asking of me?

Already as a student Jules felt that he had to do something practical about his desire. So he organized group of seminarians who wished to know and make known the compassionate kindness of the Heart of Christ. He called them: Knights of the Sacred Heart, a rather romantic title. When the members got together, they dreamt of making the love of Christ known among the Moslems. A bit exaggerated one might think. But beneath the surface lay a genuine desire to make the compassion of Christ experienced by every person. And this desire did not pass away when Jules and his companions were ordained.

Ordination for Jules came on the 14th of June, 1851. Shortly afterwards, he was assigned to work as assistant to a number of sick and ailing priests. In October, 1854, he came, by God's design to Issoudun.

When he arrived, he found not only a kind and sympathetic pastor, but one of his closest friends of seminary-days, Sebastian Maugenest. It was in this year that he shared with them his dream of founding a religious society dedicated to making the compassionate Kindness of Christ Known throughout France and the whole world. He felt that the "mal moderne" or "sickness of the modern person" lay in his or her estrangement from God. With that estrangement came a loss of personal dignity, disrespect for nature and people, and philosophies that were frightening in their approach to persons, society, wealth and power. The widespread religious indifference in France, the divorcing of science from its sacred dimension in universities, the gathering storm clouds of political anti-clericalism and the exploitation of workers by employers were all symptoms of the "mal moderne".

By spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fr. Chevalier believed a radical healing could take place in the hearts of people. Unless that radical healing took place, the "modern sickness" would go on and on.

Fr. Crozat, the pastor, assured Fr. Chevalier of his support in founding the new religious society, and Fr. Maugenest expressed his desire to be one of its members. The three of them decided to make a novena to Our Lady, and ask from her Son some sign that God favored this work. The novena was to conclude on December 8th, 1854, the day the Pope had marked to proclaim the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Fr. Chevalier promised that if their prayer was heard, he would do all in his power to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart and to honor Our Lady in a special way.

The little community had just finished celebrating Mass on Dec. 8th when Mr. Petit, a devout parishoner handed him a letter from Mr. Philip de Bengy. It contained a gift from an anonymous benefactor for 20,000 francs. The benefactor wanted it to be used to set up a mission house for the spiritual welfare of the people of Berry. But he stipulated that the Archbishop of Bourges had to give his approval.

Frs. Chevalier and Maugenest set out immediately to get his approval. The Archbishop was sympathetic, but didn't think the men could survive alone on the tiny income from their mass stipends. He required them to find another, steady source of income, before he would give his permission. So the two men returned and began another novena to Our Lady. This one finished on January 28th, 1855.

Fr. Crozat went begging, while the two men prayed. On the day they finished, he informed them that another "anonymous" benefactor had decided to assure them of a yearly sum of 1000 francs to help them survive. Without hesitation they returned to the Archbishop and told him of their good fortune. The Archbishop approved the foundation of the new society in his diocese, despite opposition from his Diocesan Council.

At this late date we might think that the two young priests would have received those gifts, whether they had prayed or not. But it was precisely because they prayed that others who knew them, and admired their faith, were moved to help them. The anonymous benefactor later turned out to be one of their former seminary professors, Fr. de Champgrand. The advisors to the Archbishop was Fr. Gasnier, the Superior of the seminary at Bourges. Both these men had been impressed by the level-headedness and zeal of Jules. Both believed that he should be given the chance to succeed.

Most dreams start out very humbly. Fr. Chevalier's was no exception. After obtaining Archbishop Dupont's blessing, he and Fr. Maugenest tried to find a property with housing suitable to their meager funds. Another good friend, Mr. Voisin helped them locate a nearby property. It had an old house and barn, with a garden and vineyard. He helped them make repairs and even lent the young priests another 5000 francs, to make the needed changes.

Despite all this help, the place looked pretty shabby. But this didn't dismay Fr. Chevalier. On September 1855, they welcomed the Vicar of the Diocese into their humble dwelling to officially install them as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Shortly afterward they began special Masses for working men, and began to visit the homes of the neighboring families, encouraging them to dedicate their families to the Sacred Heart. The small chapel in the converted barn was often filled to capacity. People were ready for the message that the missionaries were preaching. Fr. Maugenest, in particular, was popular as a preacher throughout the diocese.

Nevertheless, the two men were intent on developing their own religious community. They looked upon 1855 as the year of their Novitiate. Both spent a great deal of their time studying and reflecting. They also did their own cleaning and cooking. Fr. Chevalier drew up a provisional set of rules for those who wished to live as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

On Christmas 1856 the two men pronounced their private religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. A witness of these vows was another priest, Fr. Charles Piperon, a friend from seminary days, who, had come to join them.

Everything looked bright and hopeful. However, the first of a whole series of major trials was about to take place. These trials would have crushed a person of lesser faith than Fr. Chevalier.

The instigator of the first great trial was Archbishop Dupont! He had been impressed by the preaching of Fr. Maugenest and was determined to have him assume the duty of Archpriest at the cathedral. He called in Fr. Maugenest and reminded him that he was still his religious superior, since the young congregation had not yet received approval from Rome. Then he ordered him to assume the vacant post of Archpriest at the cathedral.

Fr. Maugenest asked the Archbishop to reconsider. He pointed out other possibilities, but to no avail. Fr. Chevalier also tried to intercede for him, but with no success. In sheer agony Fr. Chevalier suggested to Fr. Piperon that the two of them make a retreat at the nearby Trappist Monastery of Fongombault. The retreat helped them accept the loss, and resign themselves to the providence of God as they continued their work.

The two men returned and took up where they left off. Support and consolation came from many quarters. More and more men began to practice their Faith. Aid to help them build a permanent church came in steadily. On the 26th of June, 185x they laid the corner stone of the future basilica in honor of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady. Encouragement also came from John Vianney, the saintly Cure of Ars. A priest friend introduced Jules to this holy man. The Cure told Fr. Chevalier not to be discouraged by the trials he would have to face. He was convinced that the Sacred Heart would bless the new congregation with success. He promised to join Frs. Chevalier and Piperon in a novena of prayer to this end.

These words of the Patron of Parish Priests did much to restore the confidence of Ft. Chevalier, and help him appreciate further the quality of compassion.

In 1860 another priest friend persuaded Fr. Chevalier to accompany him to Rome, where he had arranged a private audience with Pope Pius IX. In this audience Fr. Chevalier spoke of his tiny congregation and the vision he had for it. The Holy Father listened patiently and attentively. He encouraged him to continue and gave him his blessing.

When he returned he found that the new co-adjutor of the diocese, Archbishop d'Auvergne favored the new congregation and encouraged the missionaries to preach and raise funds for their work throughout the diocese. This move enabled the men to make such rapid progress that by July 2nd, 1864, they were able to invite the Archbishop to consecrate the new church in honor of the Sacred Heart. When he came he found a

beautiful building. But what deeply impressed him was the community of believers that Fr. Chevalier had built. The building itself was only a reflection of the Faith of those people, and that Faith had been revived and inflamed by the preaching and zeal of the young congregation.

Fr. Chevalier's greatest source of consolation, however, came from the enthusiasm which people showed for Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

He had promised to honor Our Lady under a special title, if he received a favorable sign from her Son that would enable him to begin the congregation. When this took place, Fr. Chevalier wanted to create a devotion and title that would indicate the tremendous influence of Mary over the Heart of her Son.

So he called her "Domina", which can be translated as Queen or Lady. This translation loses some of the power that the title indicates. The "Domina" is the strongest kind of advocate a person could have...someone who has the ear and the heart of the King...someone who can touch him as no one else can.

In fact, some theologians in Rome thought the title was too strong, and opposed its approbation. On the other hand, the common person was greatly attracted by the person with power to intercede, to plead the cause of sinners. These people lived in an age that was strongly attracted to the Blessed Mother. The 19th century was a Marian century. Sayings like: "To Jesus, through Mary" were extremely popular. So when Fr. Chevalier spelled out his approach to Our Lady in a series of popular writings, prayers, and devotional practices, these spread like fire in late autumn.

When Fr. Chevalier saw this, he invited those who practiced the devotions to join the Spiritual association which he called the Confraternity to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Roman authorities ratified the Association. Through it Fr. Chevalier was able to instruct and interest many thousands of people in his approach to Christ and in world evangelization through a *better* understanding of compassion.

The Confraternity became the principal tool for assisting the Missionaries. To further its popularity, Fr. Piperon approached the Jesuits about publishing articles on Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in their widely read magazine: *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. At that time, the MSC had no publications of their own. The Jesuits happily cooperated. This brought the devotion to many throughout Europe.

Soon Bishops and Archbishops everywhere requested information on the Devotion, so they could begin an Association in their dioceses. Through the Devotion people also learned of the MSC and their vision of world evangelization. Through the Devotion men began asking to be admitted to the Society, so that they could help bring the compassionate love of Christ to others.

In the work of making the love of Christ known and appreciated throughout the world, Fr. Chevalier envisioned his congregation to be composed of three branches:

- 1- the Professed Religious
- 2- Diocesan Priest Associates
- 3- Laymen and Laywomen Associates

These people would share the same spirit and Aims, would draw strength from the same apostolic mission and spirituality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This spirituality was to be centered on the compassion of Christ. This compassion would lead, through God's grace to personal and community healing.

Fr. Chevalier felt that diocesan priests and laity should be free to make private vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as the Spirit moved them. The important point was to allow the spirituality and vision of the Society to penetrate their lives.

As the internal structure of the Society and the training of its professed members began to demand more and more of his time and energy, the importance of the associated members was allowed to wane. And so the full implications of associated membership was never fully developed by the Founder. In recent times, the notable contributions of dedicated laypeople to the Society and its missions has refocused attention on the original ideal of Fr. Chevalier. The MSC realize that they have much to offer those associated with them, but also much to gain. By making it possible to admit sincere and zealous diocesan priests and laity into the Society, the dream of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere becomes realistic.

Such people would also call forth the very best from the MSC Priests, Brothers and Sisters. Associates would expect them to be knowledgeable, authentic and holy. They would also challenge them by their own generosity, zeal and compassion.

Since this is becoming more and more evident, literature and programs are being developed to enable this to take place. Once they are completed, the broad vision of the Society which Fr. Chevalier once had will finally come into being.

The Sacred Heart had surely consoled Fr. Chevalier for his loss of Fr. Maugenest. But one person in particular effected this in his own quiet, steady way. That man was Fr. Charles Piperon. This humble, hardworking, faithful man was the second person to join Fr. Chevalier. He persevered and served the Society for forty years, principally in the work of forming those who came to join the Congregation.

Perhaps the greatest tribute was paid to him by Fr. Maugenest, who remained a life-long friend of the MSC. On hearing of Fr. Piperon's death he wrote: "Fr. Piperon did so much for the Sacred Heart by his words, his prayer and by his cooperation in the foundation, the support and progress of the great work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun. Above all, it was by his example that he contributed powerfully to the establishment and continuance of the work and spiritual formation of its religious.

"I loved him and admired him. I have never known anyone who was so humble, nor anyone who seemed marked to the same degree with the true seal of sanctity...I desire to kiss the relics of this venerable priest...He was the perfect exemplar of the spirit and virtues proper to your Society... He was meek and humble of heart everywhere, in all things, with everyone and always."

Another stabilizing force in the life of Fr. Chevalier was Jean Marie Vandel. This Diocesan Priest met Fr. Chevalier in 1865. At that time he was seeking priests who would be willing to care for neglected country parishes in France.

Fr. Chevalier so impressed him, that he asked to join the Society and help begin a minor seminary to assist young boys who were interested in becoming Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. His background of working with Pauline Jaricot (Foundress of the Propagation of the Faith) helped him in working out a practical plan to achieve this project. In this plan he asked every person who knew the MSC to give one sou per year. That amounted to about one cent. A penny had some worth then, and when multiplied hundreds of thousands, became a substantial gift.

So great was the response that in 1887 he was able to begin the school at Chezal Benoit, in a former Benedictine Abbey. Twenty-seven boys entered. Of these, three became Diocesan Priests and five became MSC Priests.

Fr. Vandel also began a news bulletin for MSC benefactors. He called it the *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*. Through this magazine, he was able to elicit continuing support for the seminary, and also make a contribution to other MSC works.

Unfortunately, this zealous man lived only ten years as an MSC. What he established continued. The humility, concern, kindness and compassion he exhibited also continued to exert an influence on those who had known him.

A third early member of the MSC who proved of great assistance to Fr. Chevalier was Victor Jouet. He too, had been a diocesan priest. Already in 1864 he wished to join the MSC, but his Archbishop, who was opposed to religious congregations in his Archdiocese, objected to his entrance and would not release him. Finally, Fr. Jouet went to Rome and asked Pope Pius. IX to give him permission. This was granted. In 1872 he finally entered the Society.

We are told that Victor cared nothing for his appearance, but made up for this defect with a very warm personality. Appreciating this fact, Fr. Chevalier sent him to Rome to find a suitable place for the MSC students who would study there. Later he was appointed Superior of the MSC

in Italy, where he also acted as liaison with the Holy See. He played a notable role in harmonizing the many widespread Confraternities of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart under the office in Issoudun.

It says a lot that Fr. Chevalier was able to attract such zealous men to join him. Frs. Piperon, Vandal and Jouet remained completely loyal to him and made their own invaluable contributions to the Society. Without many others like them, the MSC would not be what they are today.

Even though Ft. Maugeness left the MSC, he remained a life-long friend of Fr. Chevalier and the MSC. He eventually joined the Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominicans. Before he did, he donated his personal library to the community at Issoudun. From time to time he also returned to Issoudun and the parish at St. Cyr to preach. These were occasions to renew friendships and to enjoy a bit of MSC hospitality. He had also persuaded Fr. Crozat to resign as Pastor of St. Cyr., so the MSC could care for the people. And it was shortly after this that Archbishop d'Auvergne prevailed upon Fr. Chevalier to accept the parish for the welfare of the people and to ensure the survival of the MSC in France.

Archbishop d'Auvergne knew that the anti-clerical French Government was preparing to expel all religious congregations from France. He also knew that they were willing to tolerate the presence of parish priests attached to the Diocese. When Fr. Chevalier learned of this, he accepted the position of pastor, with Ft. Piperon as his associate. He was formally installed in March of 1872.

Before the storm of religious persecution broke, Fr. Jouet had organized huge pilgrimages to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun. Even Bishops and Archbishops joined in these holy visits. On September 8th, 1873, 30,000 people came to this small town to honor Our Lady and ask her to intercede for them.

Another joyful occasion in this period was the official Papal approval of the tiny congregation. When he had visited Pius IX in 1880, the Holy Father gave Fr. Chevalier his blessing, and told him: "Increase and multiply and preach devotion to the Sacred Heart everywhere. I hope to give canonical approval to your Congregation before I die." His wish was fulfilled. In 188x Pius IX signed his name to the Decree of Approval.

Strangely enough, it was in these early times that the second MSC community was founded in Watertown, New York! In this unusual turn of events, Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart played an important role. French speaking migrants and some of their shepherds had brought the Devotion to the New World. In 1874 Msgr. Charbonnel, former Bishop of Toronto, came to visit the shrine at Issoudun. He was asked to preach on Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He brought back with him a warm feeling of friendship with the community at Issoudun. He had also left an interest about Canada in the community. So when Fr. Chevalier was later approached by Archbishop Lynch of Toronto for some missionaries, he sent Fr. Chappel, and Brother Dechatre to take a look. However, when the Archbishop did not decide on what kind of permanent work the MSC might do, Fr. Chappel sent Brother Dechatre back to France, while he went to Montreal. Here he stayed until 1875. In that year, the Bishop of Ogdenshut, N.Y. asked the Archbishop of Montreal if he knew of any French-speaking priests who could help him. He suggested Fr. Chappel. Fr. Chappel accepted the offer, and came to Watertown, N.Y. Here he perceived the possibility of establishing an MSC community that could carry out its ideals, while caring for the local people. He sent his ideas to Ft. Chevalier. Fr. Durin was sent as Superior of the new Community, accompanied by two students, Benjamin Grom and J. ~let.~.yer. On April 20th, 187~ the Issoudun Community held its first missionary departure ceremony for those going to the New World.

The MSC community at Watertown has a long history of service to the local people. It is also credited with having in its midst the first members of the Dutch and Irish MSC. Its Superior, Fr. Durin, was also in charge of the first group of MSCs that went to the South Pacific.

By 187~ the Society of Fr. Chevalier had established itself rather firmly in France. It had also sent its first group of Missionaries overseas. The proceeding 25 years were not without heartaches, but these were always overcome, because of the faith and courage of the Founder and those who followed him.

However, 187? brought a new deeper testing. In that year the virulently anti-clerical Republicans came to political power in France. They rapidly passed laws which forbade religious congregations to live and operate in France. Houses of religious formation were ordered closed and students forced to go elsewhere for their training. Before these laws could be implemented, Ft. Chevalier sent some of the members to find possible locations for the students who were studying for the priesthood. When the Basilica and Community house and school at Issoudun were closed by the police on Nov. 5th, 1880, some of the students were sent to Rome, while others were sent to Holland.

Once again, severe trials like this did not crush Fr. Chevalier. It simply made him turn to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady for enlightenment and courage. He discovered in the trials new opportunities to help people believe in God and his mysterious love of them. He found his own faith and love deepened by the compassion shown him and his followers by those who assisted them.

This was clearly the case for those who went to Holland. At Sittard, a Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been thriving since 18~. Bishop Hertogenbosch, knowing of the plight of the MSC, sent word to Ft. Chevalier that they were welcome in his Diocese. He even offered to house them in his seminary. Fr. Piperon brought his young fledglings there. They lived simply, but were never in extreme want, thanks to the kindness of the diocesan professors and friends. Some famous persons emerged from that first group of displaced students:

Bontemps - founder of the Mission in the Gilbert Isles (present day Kiribati)-

Coupe - first Bishop of New Britain in Papua New Guinea,

Linckens - founder of the German Province and the MSC Sisters., founder of the Society of Chaplains to Workers in Belgium.

Until 1881 Fr. Chevalier had been able to help the boys in the minor seminary by placing them in private homes. With increased anti-religious pressure, he contacted Fr. Piperon and asked him to quickly find a place for the boys in Holland. Fr. Piperon Tillburg and rented it. The boys were shipped over and a new product emerged from the old factory!

To support them, Fr. Barral translated the congregation's magazine into Dutch. This met with widespread acceptance, and created the necessary finance to run the school and help the community. Fr. Barral was so enterprising that he also got the authorization of the Bishop of Cologne, Germany, so he could print the Annals in German as well.

The unexpected opportunities which the persecution in France created were not restricted to Holland. Some of the MSC went to Spain, England and Ireland where they began small communities and published additional versions of the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Spanish and English.

A man of lesser faith would have been thinking of survival and consolidation during the period of persecution. However, Fr. Chevalier was planning to send his first group of Missionaries to the far away isles of Melanesia and Micronesia in the South Pacific. Some of his own confreres had balked at the idea, but the Founder thought it imperative that the Society be involved with bringing the compassionate love of Christ to those who had never heard of Him, as well as to those who needed a deeper experience of his love.

So on September 1st, 1881, Frs. Durin, Navarre, Cramaille, and Brs. Fromm and Durin set out for the isles of Papua New Guinea. They were carrying out a Papal Mandate to evangelize the scattered peoples in that vast section of the Pacific. Sickness claimed the Durin brothers and Brother Fromm, but Frs. Navarre and Cramaille made the arduous journey. They laid the foundation of the presently flourishing Church in that section of the world.

When the men departed from Barcelona, Spain, Fr. Chevalier was not able to be present. Because of the persecution, he had to act as if he were a diocesan priest and remain at his parish. This caused him real anguish, as is apparent from a letter he wrote: "It is impossible for me to be present at the departure of our beloved and heroic confreres who are going to carry the love of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady to Oceania! O how I envy them! What a sacrifice for me not to be able to bless and embrace them at this solemn hour! Please present my excuses to the privileged men...Ah, how I suffer at not being able to be present at Barcelona at this solemn hour!"

The persecution in France had brought unexpected blessings to the Society. This was repeated in the islands. When a malicious trader stirred up the islanders to burn and destroy the possessions of Frs. Navarre and Gramaille, this suffering determined Fr. Navarre to sail to Australia and beg for supplies, while Fr. Gramaille held on as well as he could. Cardinal Moran of Sydney welcomed him, and gave him the needed encouragement and support. Through Fr. Navarre he asked Fr. Chevalier to send some Missionaries to Australia too, because he was in dire need of help himself. He offered the parishes of Botany Bay and Randwick to the Society. Fr. Chevalier responded, and before long there was a budding community of MSCs in Australia. Through the years they have provided Missionaries for many isolated places in that country, and sent men to Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and Japan. Compassion begets compassion. It is never without fruit.

One unexpected fruit of the Australian venture reappeared in Europe! Cardinal Moran met Fr. Jouet in Rome in 1885. He suggested the MSC begin a mission seminary, and advertise it in the Annals. In that way the MSC could insure men for the missions they undertook, in the event one or the other nationality was prevented from working in a country. Cardinal Moran was thinking of Papua New Guinea, when he suggested this idea. Germany had annexed New Guinea and the surrounding isles. They were very nationalistic. The French missionaries were looked on with distrust by the German Government. However, if the MSCs had a missionary seminary which took in men of all nationalities they could send in the "acceptable" nationality and insure the continuation of Christian evangelization.

Fr. Chevalier, with the General Council, approved of the idea and decided that the seminary should be rounded in Antwerp, Belgium. This place was centrally located for the French, Dutch, Belgians and German students. A property was purchased at Borgerhout and once again Fr. Píperon moved there with his novices.

However, since the primary reason for the missionary seminary had been to ensure German Missionaries for New Guinea and the surrounding isles,

men were sent to Germany and Austria to find suitable locations where the MSC might start a community. Salzburg, Austria, was settled on.

By 1888 there were 25 students in the minor seminary there, and an MSC Brothers' novitiate was thriving. In the Sacred Heart's mysterious designs, the sufferings borne in trust had yielded a rich harvest of blessings.

At this point we must go back in time and look at another great blessing which came to the MSC. This was the congregation of Sisters founded by Fr. Chevalier, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

In 1865 a small group of women, who had assumed the title of Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus became quite interested in Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and also very friendly with the MSC Fathers. Fr. Píperon told them that Fr. Chevalier had envisioned founding a group of Sisters with a spirit kindred to that of the MSC Fathers and Brothers. Hearing this, the Sisters approached Fr. Chevalier and asked if he would accept them as the first members of his congregation. He agreed to do so, if they were willing to be retrained in the spirituality and rules he had evolved. When they accepted these conditions, Fr. Chevalier asked the Archbishop for permission to begin a religious foundation for women. He also asked a wealthy benefactress to help him with accommodation for the Sisters. She found him a suitable house in Issoudun. So on August 15 1874, the work of forming the new members began.

The work had its ups and downs, particularly in the form of unstable leadership among the Sisters. Dissention reduced the group to three by 1882. Finally, the woman Fr. Chevalier had prayed for came along. She was Marie Louise Hartzler, a widow, whose two sons were studying to be MSC Priests. This gentle, generous, well organized woman possessed the same spirit and vision as Fr. Chevalier. Once she was appointed Superior, things took an upward swing. New women joined and remained. They were full of enthusiasm for the foreign missions. In 1884, only two years after the first MSC Priests arrived in Papua New Guinea, five Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart left with five new MSC Fathers for that distant land. Two of the Fathers were to become Bishops: Henry Verius in Papua and Louis Couppe in New Britain.

These women exhibited the same courage, zeal, kindness and compassion as did the MSC Fathers and Brothers. As true members of one family, they shared the same hardships, deprivations, sicknesses, as well as joys.

Prevented from educating girls in France, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart gave themselves unreservedly to this work in P.N.G. and Australia. Their schools over the years have ranked among the finest. It is also worthy of note that a girl from their High School on Yule Island in Papua designed the National Flag of P.N.G. And a Sister from the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart composed the National Anthem of P.N.G., which is sung daily in all the schools of that beautiful country.

Another great congregation of women religious was founded by Fr. Hubert Linckens, MSC. This is the Congregation of the Missionaries Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Why found another congregation of Sisters with the same vision and spirit of Fr. Chevalier? Why not start another branch of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart?

The reason for the new foundation lay in the extreme nationalistic attitude which the German Government took toward missionaries who wished to enter and work in New Guinea. They insisted that they had to be Germans who came from religious foundations which were German. An extension of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which had been founded in France would never do.

To overcome this difficulty, Fr. Linckens had been sent to Germany to establish a mission house. While he was there pressure came from the overseas men who wanted Sisters to help them with the education and medical care of the island peoples. He approached Fr. Chevalier for advice. Following this advice, he asked some German Sisters of Divine Province to help him draw up a new rule and training program for young women who wished to become Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He found a house for this purpose in Hilstrup, Westphalia. Then he got permission from the Bishop to begin. In working out the details, Fr. Linckens was careful to model everything on the spirituality, rules and training of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

In 1877 the first candidates arrived and on March 25th, 1900 the first Sisters received their religious habits from Louis Couppe, Bishop of New Britain. Many future Sisters, would leave their homes in Germany to join this remarkable Bishop in building Christian Communities in the rugged island world of New Britain and New Ireland.

The MSC Sisters experienced remarkable growth in mission-minded members from the very beginning. Between 1902 and 1904 nine Sisters were working in the Marshall Isles and thirteen more in New Britain. Then after five young MSC Sisters, two MSC Priests, two MSC Brothers and one Trappist brother were massacred by some disgruntled natives of New Britain, many young German women expressed a desire to become MSC Sisters. By 1900 the young Congregation had 104 members!

The Old saw: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians" had taken a new twist.

Today the MSC Sisters and Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart have thousands of members teaching and demonstrating the compassion of Christ throughout the world. Anyone familiar with them cannot help but be impressed by their gentleness, kindness, and total dedication to young people, the aged and the sick.

Each religious congregation that perdures captures the spirit and vision of its Founder - in the members, meetings, life-style, works and documentation. However, this is not achieved without misunderstandings, tension and struggle. The MSC Congregation was not spared this process.

While Fr. Chevalier lived, his persuasive views on many things, and his manner of living exerted great influence on those around him. As the Congregation grew and members had less and less direct contact with him, the more vocal of the members who lived at a distance had, at times, more influence on their immediate companions than did the Founder. Some of these men felt that a General Council of members, rather than the Founder should be the ones who made decisions and interpretations. Some felt that the Founder was unable to grasp and deal adequately with

the manifold problems that confronted the Society. They also pointed out the errors of the Founder, especially in regard to omissions of Canon Law. They felt that he had by-passed the general membership in consultation and decision-making. They wanted a greater say in how the members should live, what they should do, how they should do it, and where they should work,

In a sense this is a natural evolution, but it is very difficult to implement while the Founder is alive. In the case of the MSC, it was made more difficult by the persecution in France. In his biography of Jules Chevalier, Fr. E.J. Cuskelly, MSC, documents some of the doubts, criticism., anger and polarization of the members that *were* present in the early meetings of the members.

Ultimately these tensions were largely surmounted by prayer and face-to-face encounters in the presence of an impartial consultant. These two aids remain indispensable, when tension between members and groups reaches the critical point.

Tensions also arose between the Founder and the Episcopal Authorities. As was seen earlier, Archbishop Dupont's demand that Fr. Maugeness return to the diocese and serve as Archpriest of the cathedral caused anguish to Fr. Chevalier. Later, Archbishop Marchal succumbed to poison-pen letters accusing Fr. Chevalier of neglecting his parish. Consequently, he treated the Founder rudely and coldly. Fr. Chevalier's answer was prayer, coupled with diplomacy in letter-writing and meetings. To these he added obedient, faithful service of his people. These methods won the day.

His reconciliation with the Archbishop and his forgiveness of his maligners has been recorded. The Archbishop said to him: "During my first visit, you must have found my way of treating you very strange. Well, I can tell you now that I had some preconceived ideas against you and your administration of the parish. You'll have to forgive me, because I had received a whole series of letters from priests of the diocese which contained unworthy calumnies. I've got their names, he said, tapping his forehead, and I'll keep an eye on them." Fr. Chevalier replied: "Oh, your Grace, you ought to forget all that. That's the way human nature is made. I've outlived worse things than that."

Then came Archbishop Boyer, who in contrast to the friendly Archbishop d'Auvergne, remained distant toward Fr. Chevalier for a number of years. He, too, finally succumbed to the obedient, cheerful, friendly attitude of the Founder. In his latter years, he frequently called Fr. Chevalier to his palace for consultation.

Archbishop Sevonet, on the other hand, never thawed out. He remained an austere, aloof Prelate, offering little help or sympathy to Fr. Chevalier, and never asking his advice. Indeed, he attempted to interfere in the internal working of the Society by insisting that certain men be appointed Superiors. Despite this, Fr. Chevalier remained cordial, respectful and diplomatic in dealing with this difficult man.

The most severe tensions, however, came from the anti-religious French Government. In the twenty-year period from 1880-1900 was difficult, then the period from 1901-1907 must be termed near-impossible. In 1901 a law was passed outlawing all but approved organizations. However, the Government had no intention of approving Societies like the Jesuits or the MSC. Fr. Chevalier asked advice from his confreres and the Cardinal Protector in Rome. The Cardinal advised him to ask to be secularized, so that he could ensure the houses of the Society would not be confiscated, and he could continue to assist his Missionaries. This came as a shock: to Fr. Chevalier. Only through prayer did he find the strength necessary to make this most difficult decision. In 1901 he resigned as Superior General and petitioned Rome to secularize him. This meant that he would no longer be looked upon officially; as a professed religious. He would be seen as a diocesan priest caring for the parish of St. Cyr.

This difficult decision is almost impossible to appreciate fully. Even though Fr. Chevalier had determined to keep his religious obligations, and was still viewed by all the members as the spiritual leader of the Society, and was, in fact able to help many of them, the legal disassociation from them caused him deep sorrow.

His sorrow was shared by the MSC priests who chose secularization with him that they might remain in France and carry on their apostolic work. In fact, they continued to meet and encourage one another. So we could say that they were really dispersed Religious, rather than secularized ones.

When Governmental pressure mounted and the sale of unused church properties was demanded, Fr. Chevalier persuaded his wealthy friends to purchase the MSC properties which were selling very cheaply, and hold them in trust. He promised to reimburse them when the crisis was over. Through this ploy most of the houses and churches cared for by the MSC were saved.

A final indignity by the Government was reserved for Fr. Chevalier near the end of his life. In 1907 State Officials began expelling all the clergy from their churches and homes, including Archbishop Sevonet! When they came to the rectory where Fr. Chevalier lived, they demanded he unlock the door and come out. In protest, he refused. So they smashed in the door. When they did they found the old man in bed, refusing to leave. So they carried him out into the street, bed and all. When they did, they found themselves surrounded by the people of the parish who shouted: "Long live Fr. Chevalier! Long live Fr. Chevalier!" The life-long compassion he had shown so many of them was not forgotten. A carriage was quickly put at his disposal and took him to the home of Count de Bonneval, where each day a long line of people of all ranks in life came to visit the old man, and seek his guidance.

In the last nine months of his life, this holy man continued to encourage the repurchase of MSC properties. He consoled and inspired all who visited him. He also prepared his Spiritual Testament for his spiritual sons and daughters.

On October 21, 1907, exactly nine months after he was expelled from the rectory of St. Cyr, Fr. Chevalier met face-to-face the One he had loved with his whole mind, his whole heart and with all his strength. Like the One he served, he had been born of poor parents, lived in a little town, did menial work, was filled with compassion for everyone, accomplished remarkable deeds, was misunderstood and persecuted by the leaders of his people and finally died outside his home. Like Christ, Fr. Chevalier. challenges us by his kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, zeal, charity for all, but above all by his compassion...his willingness to identify and suffer with those he wished to help know and love the Sacred Heart.

Like Christ, Jules Chevalier sowed the seeds of his life that have borne abundant fruit in later times.

Today the MSC Fathers and Brothers, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the MSC Sisters are found throughout the world, carrying on the great work which he began.

Home bases, or Provinces, of the MSC Fathers and Brothers are located in Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Spain and the United States of America. About 2,400 men are attached to these Provinces.

From the home bases the Missionaries care for people in their own country, but they also go out to other countries to spread the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart. Among their many missions are the Marshall and Kiribati Isles, Senegal, Zaire and South Africa, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil, Argentina and Chile, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan.

The service of the Missionaries assumes many forms. Working as pastors, teachers of religious and secular subjects, tradesmen, nurses, bookkeepers and administrators they not only do things that need to be done, but help the people they serve acquire these skills, so that they can take care of themselves and assist others with the same compassion.

The spiritual sons and daughters of Fr. Chevalier realize that salvation for all peoples lies in their knowing and loving Jesus Christ. The words of St. John are always before them: "God has given us eternal life and this life is in his Son; anyone who has the Son has life, anyone who does not have the Son does not have life." (I John 5,11)

With Fr. Chevalier they discover the urgency of the task. Christ is not an option for the welfare of people. He alone is the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6). There is so much suffering in the world because most people have not yet known God's answer to our misery. This

suffering is compounded *by* those who have heard about Him, but reject him because they never experienced his love from those who profess to be his followers.

The spiritual sons and daughters of Fr. Chevalier know that Compassion is the way to announce the love of Christ to others. Compassion or identification with the people they are attempting to help, is the key to success.. He or she must live among them, sharing their life style as far as possible.. sharing their joys and sorrows and serving with the spirit of Christ. The truly compassionate missionary is deeply his/her indebtedness to Christ for everything, especially for forgiveness. He/she, therefore, will never be condescending, harsh, self-seeking, but always strive to be patient, gentle, kind and forgiving. He or she has but one aim: To make people really believe in Christ, because they have experienced his love through those who have come in his name.

What a vocation! How awesome it is to be chosen and sent by God to help others believe in his Son. Yet how necessary it is for their salvation. And how urgent it is, not only for the individuals.. but also for society itself. The Christ is not as so many think, an option that can be ignored without serious consequences. Christian evangelization must therefore be seen as something vital and the method of *evangelizing* through compassion as intimately linked with its success.

To make everyone aware of these truths was the goal of Jules Chevalier. It remains the goal of his spiritual sons and daughters of the Sacred Heart.

5. JULES CHEVALIER: TALKS TO MSC AND FDNSC NOVICES

Sister M. Venard, FDNSC Hartzler Park, 1972

- I. JULES CHEVALIER: A MAN SENT BY GOD
- II. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST MISSIONARY OF THE SACRED HEART
- III. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST AMONG THE M.S.C.
- IV. JULES CHEVALIER: MAN OF FAITH
- V. FATHER CHEVALIER'S WORKS IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

I. JULES CHEVALIER: A MAN SENT BY GOD

To date, no complete and authoritative life of Father Chevalier has yet been written. Such a work demands much painstaking research over a long period and the certainty that, as far as possible, no sources of original documentation have been overlooked. Nevertheless, thanks to praiseworthy efforts which have been made in many directions, I think I am right in saying that, in general, the outline facts of his life and achievements are well known to every Missionary of the Sacred Heart and Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who has spent some time in our respective societies.

This, of course, cannot be so true of relative newcomers. Our first talk will, therefore, be aimed at giving a clear outline presentation of the sequence of events of his life - lived, as it was, in a certain century and in a certain geographical setting. For some, maybe, this will be no more than a refresher, which will also be useful. For whilst outlining events. I hope to provoke some constructive thinking as to the significance of these events for Jules himself; for his two Societies: and for each of us individually whose particular grace it is to have been called to carry on his mission in the Church.

We shall, therefore, be treating history from more than a merely chronological angle. For history is something more than mere events. To quote C. H. Dodd, a non-Catholic Scripture scholar, "History is occurrences plus meaning." We have a good illustration of this in the study of the Gospels. Mark, Matthew. Luke and John certainly give the main events in the earthly life of the historical Jesus. However, they interpret these events in the light of their faith in God's design of salvation.

So, too, with the life of our Founder. Its events and circumstances must be seen as having meaning for us who have been given the grace to perpetuate his mission in the Church. We must be able to interpret the facts and make use of the insights thus received in our own Sacred Heart-centred mission and spirit. A discovery of the activity of God in the life of Jules Chevalier can develop in us a spirit of faith sharpened to discern His directing Presence in apparently chance, or even humanly-designed circumstances in our own lives as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or as Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Now to get down to the actual life story of Jules Chevalier. The sources of what is being given here are the main facts already known; available documentation with which many may not be perhaps so familiar; and lastly a few interesting oral traditions, now in writing, which have come down to us from those personally acquainted with Father Chevalier.

As regards historical documentation relative to our two Societies, I must point out that no one document - and this is particularly true of letters - taken by itself, can be considered as telling the whole story in regard to one or other society. To explain. We have the same Founder. The history of our institutes is very closely linked. A certain piece of MSC or FDNSC documentation, say a letter, may be useful to the historian of either society. But what it records will have to be interpreted within the context of the general situation of the particular society in question. To clarify what I am trying to say. Three people - a geologist, a botanist and a painter - would perceive a particular spot, say in the Dandenongs or the Blue Mountains, each from a completely different angle. The geologist would examine it from the view of say rock strata; the botanist from that of the relationship of soil composition to vegetation type; whilst the painter would have an eye to natural beauty and its artistic expression. So it is with the historian handling a document. We pass on now to the actual details of the life of Jules Chevalier. Founder of both the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Jules Chevalier was born at Richelieu in France on March 15, 1824. Richelieu, together with all the other places where in the main he lived his life, is situated roughly in the centre of France. Very briefly, he was the third and last child of a rather low-income family, the father being a baker. The mother did her best to supplement resources by selling vegetables in the local market. The father, who had come down in the world, was not a good business man and was not in the best of health. He was a non-practising Catholic and had his moments of depression when times were hard. But, all in all, he was a decent-enough man. His wife was a fervent Catholic and the family was well respected.

If we are looking for significances in the life of Jules Chevalier, they are there, but are to be found in the ordinary circumstances of his very ordinary life. In the past, over much has been made of an incident whereby he was allegedly abandoned, under rather dramatic circumstances, by his mother to the care of Our Lady. Briefly, the circumstances are supposed to be these.

One day, as she was selling vegetables, the father, in a disgruntled mood, turned up in the market place. He publicly upbraided her for being late home to prepare the dinner. He also got his eye on baby Jules in his basket, and made no secret of the fact that he was finding a third child to be fed a bit of a burden. The mother, naturally upset, grabbed up little Jules. ran impetuously to the church opposite, and deposited him basket and all at the feet of Our Lady. Since he was the cause of all the trouble, Mary could have him. A few minutes later the parish priest came into the church, saw and recognized him and went out to the market place to see what had happened. There he found the mother in tears being comforted by other women. One of them went back to fetch the baby.

Much was made of that story, especially after Father Chevalier himself became somewhat of a public figure, in order to demonstrate the power of Our Lady of Miracles whose image is venerated in the Richelieu church. Near the back of the church there is a large plaque to the effect that Madame Chevalier, in a fit of despair due to the blackest misery, abandoned the baby, Jules Chevalier, to Mary; that he grew up in Richelieu;

and that later he founded the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The story inscribed on the plaque then finishes up with the lesson to be drawn: "Those who are confided to Our Lady are never abandoned."

The story did, perhaps, have some basis in fact - maybe a momentary emotional outburst on the part of both father and mother. But the later history of the united and respected Chevalier family would make one suspect that a lot of legendary details have grown up around the reputed incident.

Something far more significant for our purpose is what Father Chevalier himself wrote in a document which he entitled "Personal Notes not Intended for Publication". This document is dated April 8, 1902, that is, five years before he died. Here he makes the following statement:

"Shortly after my baptism, my mother carried me to the church and there consecrated me to Our Lady and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

In other words, after he had been consecrated once and for all by the liturgical rite of baptism, his mother formally confided him in a particular way to the Heart of Our Lord and to the care of Mary. As we look back over his long and full career, one is struck by the degree to which his whole life was a lived special consecration to the upbuilding of the Church through his apostolate for the Heart of Christ through Mary. In this retrospect, his mother's simple act of realistic faith can take on a far richer significance than any which an unverifiable incident of his babyhood might suggest.

As Jules grew through his boyhood - a high-spirited, in fact, often an annoyingly mischievous one around the town - he developed a vocation to the priesthood. To himself and to all who knew him, this was an unrealisable dream. For it was common knowledge in Richelieu that the Chevalier family would never be able to finance his seminary education. By the time he was fourteen, however, this manly, thoroughly likeable boy with the frustrated vocation had so aroused the interest and sympathy of some in a position to help that steps were taken to do something for him. It was arranged that he be received gratuitously into the Junior Seminary of Tours, the diocese in which Richelieu was situated. Imagine his happiness at the prospect. But it was to be a short-lived happiness. For the bishop discovered that the seminary finances were in a bad way, and forbade any further intake of students unable to pay fees. A significant frustration, surely. For it happened that the priesthood in that particular diocese was not pan of God's plan for Jules.

Nothing daunted, he stuck to what he recognized as his priestly vocation. He would earn enough money to pay his own way. So he got himself apprenticed to a bootmaker. Furthermore, he took up the private study of Latin.

This state of affairs continued for three years. Each morning saw him serving the Mass of Father Bourbon, the parish priest. After this the two took coffee together in the old presbytery which had been part of a Vincentian monastery when the Vincentians had charge of the parish. Coffee finished. Jules went off to his bootmaking, tenaciously clinging to the idea that he was to be a priest, and doing all he could to prepare himself.

At long last, God himself intervened - quite unexpectedly, in a positive way. A stranger passing through Richelieu put up at a local inn. His name was Juste, of the Forestry Department. He had been returning home after some trip and, for no particular reason, had taken the alternative route through Richelieu. During a meal, a waitress-friend of the Chevalier family overheard him say that he was looking for a trustworthy forest-ranger for some forests in his charge at Vatan about twelve miles from Issoudun. She speedily informed him that she herself knew just the person he was looking for. The result was an interview with Jules' father who was accepted for the position. Straight away, arrangements were made for the family to move to Vatan. Better still, when M. Juste heard that his new ranger's son wanted to be a priest, he took the initiative, himself offering to pay for his education in the Junior Seminary of St. Gaultier in the family's new diocese of Bourges.

Now it happened that the town of Issoudun where Jules was destined to be an instrument in God's divine design was also in the same diocese of Bourges - a mere few miles from Vatan. God had thwarted his efforts to get into a seminary in his former home diocese of Tours, but very significantly helped him into this one. More striking still. No sooner had the Lord installed him exactly where he wanted him than M. Juste moved off elsewhere. This meant that the latter had no further need of his forest-ranger. So Jules' Dad, out of a job, returned to Richelieu with his family, and there, luckily enough, got a good position as a rural constable. As for Jules, he stayed behind in the seminary. Awkwardly enough, with the departure of his benefactor, his fees were no longer paid. Even so he was kept on, for by this time he had become so much appreciated by his seminary superiors that they decided to put him through his studies gratuitously.

All the same he was finding the going hard. It was difficult to adapt himself to the ways of boys much younger and less mature than himself. He became homesick and depressed. He wanted only one thing - to get back to Richelieu where he was known, understood and looked up to. As for the priesthood, he argued to himself, once he could provide for his fees, there was always the possibility that he would still get into the seminary of his own diocese of Tours. In this same seminary, also, he had a cousin and friends.

But that is just where God didn't want him. As a matter of fact, his superiors understood and appreciated him more than he knew. He was persuaded to defer his decision to quit until the end of a retreat. He did so. By that time, all his misgivings had vanished.

Four years passed. In 1846, at the age of twenty-two, he was promoted to the Major Seminary in the city of Bourges itself. He wasn't among the most intellectual of the seminarians, but he was very earnest - a bit too earnest, in fact, for some of his fellow students who were put off by his somewhat rigorous piety.

Again God intervenes in this life - this time to indicate to Jules that he is calling him to a special vocation within the priestly vocation. The professor of dogmatic theology, when treating of the Incarnation, added a treatment of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For Jules this was a decisive moment in his life. He records his own impression:

"This doctrine went right to my heart. The more I became penetrated with it, the more I found in it."

He spoke to his director of his new spiritual understanding. The director then gave him to read the first published life of the then Blessed Margaret Mary, apostle of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This reading led Jules to a new conviction. "The reading of Mgr. Languet's book," he wrote, "aroused in me a lively desire to make myself the apostle of this devotion." (Ms. 1859)

Here, then, was a new moment of grace. Captivated by the dogmatic and spiritual riches of devotion to the Sacred Heart, he had received a new understanding of something with which he had been familiar from childhood. Remember that his mother had consecrated him to the Sacred Heart. Furthermore, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, he grew from understanding to deeper understanding of the devotion. As a result, from being a somewhat taciturn and rigorous student, he became affable, outgoing and smiling. This gave him an ascendancy of leadership over the other seminarians. In other words, he was growing in virtue in a more human way. Incidentally, the word 'Virtue' is a fine, strong word which comes from a Latin word meaning 'strength'. To grow in virtue means to grow from strength to new strength. But Jules' virtue had a particular orientation - the reproduction in himself of the love of the Heart of Christ. This ideal he would later express in the Constitutions of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (1877 edition):

"Those who take the glorious name of Missionaries of (the Sacred Heart will find in it a stimulus to practise the virtues of this divine Heart, and to propagate with an ever greater ardour the knowledge and the love of him. They will consider themselves worthy of such a beautiful title only insofar as they attain to living the very life of the Heart of Jesus." (Text, page 18) Something further now took place. His mission as apostle of the Heart of Christ began to manifest itself. Within the seminary he asked and received permission to form a Guard of Honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. During their free time, the members of this group undertook to succeed one another before the Blessed Sacrament, there to adore the Heart of Our Lord in the Eucharist and to pray for the needs of the Church. Here we have an indication of the future Founder. Our own Congregation was still far in the future, but when it did come, he gave it this special feature of a daily half-hour of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and for exactly the same intentions. This is still a feature of our daily prayer life.

Once more, God intervenes, this time in frustration of Jules' desire. He wanted to volunteer for the foreign missions. His seminary superior told him to put the idea out of his head. It was, he was told, in dechristianised France that his mission lay. Jules obeyed, not blindly in the sense so often given to the word, but with the full awareness of faith that all he had to do was to cooperate fully in God's plan by doing his will as it became manifest. It certainly was God's plan that his own personal mission lay in France. That mission, however, was to found in France two institutes which would send missionaries to all peoples to the ends of the earth, in particular to pagan peoples who had never heard of the love of Christ.

Next step. Jules now begins to dream of founding, after his ordination, a society of priests consecrated to the Heart of Christ - priests who would dedicate themselves to making him known and loved everywhere. Again a setback. Father Chevalier will be his own spokesman here:

"Ten years ago, when I was still in the Major Seminary, I was preoccupied with the thought of the moral disease eating into our century. I conceived the idea, or rather (note his assurance here) God inspired me with the thought, of founding a community of priest-missionaries who would work for its eradication. I told my director about this. He regarded it as an illusion, a figment of my imagination. Feeling very humiliated, I resolved to forget the idea. But it persisted. Something kept saying to me: 'One day you will succeed. God wants this work.' Obsessed with this thought, I timidly cast my eyes upon one of the seminarists whom I thought would be just the one to second me in this enterprise. But I never mentioned the matter to him. Where would this community be established? . . . Suddenly there presented itself to my mind Issoudun with its three priests to serve 14,000 people." (Ms. 1859)

Two years later, on June 14, 1851, in St. Stephen's Cathedral, Bourges, Jules Chevalier was ordained priest. For the next three years, he served in three different parishes. But he never relinquished the idea that he was destined to found a society of priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and that the place of foundation would be Issoudun. Nevertheless he left the realization of the idea to God who, he was sure, had prompted it.

Towards the end of these three years, he was expecting still another transfer. It came - in mid October, 1854. He was still preoccupied with the idea of the society of priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Nevertheless, before he slit the envelope, he acted in accordance with his characteristic spirit of faith. He made an act of union with the Will of God whatever the letter would make this will known to be. He himself tells what happened:

"Before opening the letter, I went on my knees and said to God: 'Lord, I want your will alone. I accept gladly in advance the next post assigned to me.' Hardly had I read the first lines when I saw to my great astonishment that I was appointed curate at Issoudun. Then I opened the Ordo. There I found that my fellow-curate was the very one Sebastien Maugeness on whom I had cast my eyes for association in the projected work." (Personal Notes, pp. 30-31)

It took but a few days for Father Chevalier to get himself installed in Issoudun - reputed as the town most hostile to religion in all that region of France.

How did the people of Issoudun see him - this new curate who had come among them? Well, a photograph taken in 1854, together with the memoirs of an old MSC (Father L. Sadouet) whose parish priest he was during the latter's childhood and early manhood, makes us picture him as a straight, well-proportioned young man. He is thirty-three and of rather pleasing appearance. He is of medium build with a fine head of hair. Unpretentious and zealous, he immediately wins the appreciation of his parish priest and the two curates. Some of the ladies of the parish, however, were not so happy with him. They wanted someone more social than pastoral. To his great amusement, they made a spiteful insinuation that he was negligent in his personal appearance. One day, he says, when he went into his confessional, he found a parcel addressed to himself. In it there was a hair brush and comb and a tin of shoe polish. These individuals, too, were eventually won by his genuineness and his priestly concern for everyone in the parish. More importantly, he was not long before beginning to leave his mark upon the spiritual life of those for whom he was responsible.

Here at Issoudun, except for brief trips to Rome and other places, he is going to remain until his death as its parish priest fifty-three years later. For Issoudun is to be the focal point of his mission still however to be initiated - the mission to convince men that God loves them with a human heart.

To sum up this talk on JULES CHEVALIER : A MAN SENT BY GOD. In following the life story of Jules Chevalier until he is appointed to the parish of Issoudun in 1854, one thing stands out in striking relief. In him God has manifestly been preparing a man for a mission. Thus we see Jules as -

- Confided as a baby to the Heart of Christ and His Mother;
 - Directed by God to the priesthood;
 - Guided by Him towards ordination in a diocese other than his own;
 - Orientated by the Holy Spirit towards a special realization of the scriptural, theological and spiritual riches of devotion to the Heart of Christ;
 - Initiated by God into a gradual awareness of his mission to make this Divine Heart loved everywhere to the ends of the earth;
 - Appointed to a parish in a town destined to be the birthplace of a new apostolic impetus in the Church.
- We can conclude, then, by saying that in Jules Chevalier we see a man unmistakably sent by God.

II. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST MISSIONARY OF THE SACRED HEART

When I speak of Jules Chevalier as the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart. I do so in a double sense. He can be called the first in the order of time as I shall try to prove in this second talk. He can also be called first in the sense that no one can have a deeper understanding of the mission and spirit of a society than its founder. Perhaps in this latter connection, it would be more to the point to call him first among the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. For the moment, however, we shall confine ourselves to the first aspect, the chronological one.

When Jules Chevalier found himself, at the age of thirty-three, appointed curate at Issoudun; when he found, too, that his fellow curate was none other than Sebastien Maugeness whom, in thought, back in their seminary days, he had associated with himself in the foundation of a society of priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he was more confirmed than ever in the conviction that his idea was in the designs of God. More significantly still, he found that Father Maugeness shared the same ideal, and was more than eager to throw in his lot with him.

The two young priests possessed neither prestige, nor possessions - only a strong conviction. But a conviction is not enough. Father Chevalier wanted a sure sign. For this they turned to Mary. They asked her that, as the first fruit of the dogma of her Immaculate Conception to be defined on December 8 of that year, 1854, she would obtain for them from the Heart of her Son an indication that He approved the projected Society. They asked also the means to implement it. So they began a novena to end on the very day of the definition. If their intention was granted, they would take the name Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. We know the end of the story. On the very morning the novena concluded, they found themselves presented anonymously with the offer of a sum of money to be used for the foundation of a society of priests who would undertake missionary work in the diocese.

Could any sign have been clearer?

But it goes without saying that the anonymous gift of 20,000 francs had not just dropped miraculously from heaven. Nor, for that matter, had there been anything miraculous about the appointment of Father Chevalier and his companion to Issoudun. What did happen was that Our Lady took in hand a set of circumstances already in project, and guided it to the conclusion prayed for in the novena. The fact was that the religious indifference of Issoudun was a great worry to Father Gasnier, the superior of the seminary where Jules had finished his studies. As a Diocesan

Consultor to the Cardinal of Bourges. it was this Father Gasnier who in actual fact had been responsible for the appointment of the two ardent and energetic young priests to Issoudun where the parish priest could not cope because he was old and in failing health. Furthermore, this same Father Gasnier knew a certain Father Champgrand who was also interested in remedying the religious indifference of Issoudun. It is probable, too, that he knew of Jules' dream of founding a society of missionaries and for this reason he asked Father Champ-grand, who had wealthy connections, to finance the project. Of course, neither curate had any inkling of this. All they saw was that Mary had heard their prayer, which she certainly had, but by using human means.

Nevertheless, in this answer to prayer, lay the source of future suffering for Father Chevalier. Those responsible for the gift of the money had in mind a group of priests living in community and restricted to giving missions in the region. Jules, however, dreamed of something much wider - a religious institute with a universal mission to propagate the devotion to the Sacred Heart as a sure means of curing the moral ills of society. To further complicate matters, Father Champgrand, the donor of the money, was completely opposed to the foundation of a new religious institute, and was even more opposed to devotion to the Sacred Heart. So here was a very awkward situation. The priest had promised the money without realising the real purpose of the project. Father Chevalier, quite unaware of his attitude, had in all good faith accepted the gift.

But the resultant troubles had not yet manifested themselves and, for the moment, Jules could not see beyond the happiness of 8th December. "O Mary," he wrote, "what a happy duty for us. The anniversary of the definition of your Immaculate Conception will henceforth be form that of the conception of our new Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For it is today that (here has commenced for it the mystery of life. " (Vermin. 114) This is why, by an unbroken tradition, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart regard December 8 as the date of the Society's foundation.

This day of the Immaculate Conception was, then, for the two curates a day of unspeakable happiness. All the more so because in everything they had the support of their parish priest, Father Crozat. He told them that he would do all in his power to help them establish in his parish of Issoudun a house of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

So, with his consent, Father Chevalier went off happily to the Cardinal Archbishop of Bourges to get his consent. The Cardinal, however, was a prudent and experienced man. He said that a sign wasn't enough. The two curates must first assure themselves of some means of support. That didn't worry them. Mary Immaculate had already proved that she was on their side and had an interest in the project. So, encouraged by the success of the first novena, they decided upon a second. Furthermore, this time they made a formal contract with her. If she found them the means to maintain the new foundation, they would take the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart already promised; would regard her as their foundress: associate her in all their works: and cause her to be honoured in some special manner. Each day during this novena the document of contract was placed on the altar during Mass.

While this was going on, their parish priest worked so well on their behalf that, on the very day the novena finished, he was able to inform them that another anonymous donor had assured them an annual sum for their livelihood. This was in January, 1855.

But even during the course of the novena the latest trouble brewing had blown up. It came to the knowledge of Father Champgrand that the two Issoudun curates were contemplating something quite different from what he had in mind when offering the money. As already stated, he wanted the new work confined to the region of Berry of which Issoudun was a part; he was violently against devotion to the Sacred Heart; and he strongly opposed the inauguration of a new religious institute. For Father Chevalier, on the other hand, devotion to the Sacred Heart was to be the very reason for the existence of the proposed society and, whatever the works undertaken, they would be means to that end. As for the objection to a religious institute, from the very beginning Father Chevalier had been convinced that the consecration of one's entire person and his activity through the public vows of religion would ensure the most radical form of commitment to the mission of spreading the love of the Heart of Christ.

Our Lady had certainly indicated that the proposed foundation was the will of God. But the very fact of the gratuitous financial aid promised by Father Champgrand was to bring with it eight years of painful difficulty. Whether or not at this stage Father Chevalier had got wind of the situation, he started off a second time for Bourges to see the Cardinal and tell him he had the promise of an annual sum of money for the support of the community. As for Father Champgrand's promised donation to start the work, perhaps he felt sure that if the Cardinal gave permission the donor would most certainly keep his promise.

The Cardinal was impressed and, after some difficulties with his council as we shall see later, freed the two curates to go off and commence the new community. Reluctantly Father Champgrand gave in, but made himself difficult for a long time to come.

By September, a ramshackle house had been acquired where today the great pilgrimages in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart take place. Here, on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary in this year of 1855, the Vicar General of the diocese, in the name of the Cardinal who was ill, officially gave to the tiny community of two the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. To quote Father Chevalier's Personal Notes:

"It was on the very day when the Church celebrates the feast of the Holy Name of Mary that the Vicar General baptised us with the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This new and mysterious birth happened just nine months after our conception on December 8 of the previous year."

He also calls attention to the fact that on this same day there was not just one change of name, but two:

"On that same day on which they received the NAME of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, desirous of manifesting to Mary their love and their gratitude, they gave her in their thought the NAME Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The title seemed to come from Heaven." This quotation is from the Preface to one of the first editions of Father Chevalier's book on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (Ed. 1886, p. 34). In the actual text Father Chevalier, in both cases, printed the word NAME in capitals. He wanted to bring out the point that on the day they became officially called Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Mary became in their thought (his own, of course) Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. On this day, therefore, there were two changes of name. Significantly enough, right from its inception, Mary was associating herself in the life of the Society, for the title, he declared, "seemed to come from Heaven".

Father Chevalier was, however, very prudent. Not for two years, during which time he studied carefully from the point of view of scripture and theology this new title which had come to his mind, did he make it known.

In the poor little house in which they were now officially installed, the two Missionaries began on their own account a period of novitiate, at the end of which they planned to make private vows, "In order to give ourselves without reserve to the Heart of Jesus, we chose the day when he gave himself to us." (Personal Notes) In the silence of midnight, after midnight Mass on December 25, 1856, Father Chevalier and Father Maugenest made perpetual private vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, to which they added one of stability.

Then more trouble began. "Hardly a year went by," wrote Father Chevalier, "when we experienced a new and cruel trial. The Cardinal decided that he would have to take Father Maugenest to fulfil an important post on the Cathedral staff." Father Chevalier in great distress went to see him. He implored him not to take Father Maugenest, otherwise the new Society would face ruin even before it got underway. The Cardinal was not unsympathetic, but his reply was a new challenge to Father Chevalier's faith;

"Either your work is from God, and I believe this after all the graces you have received, or else it is the work of man. If it is of God, then the taking away of Father Maugenest will not, in the long run, affect it. If it is the work of man, then his presence won't save it." (Piperon I.) Words of spiritual wisdom uttered by one who must himself have been a man with a deep spirit of faith, and which were strikingly verified in the subsequent history of the Society.

Father Chevalier was now left well and truly alone - strictly speaking the first and, for a long time, the only Missionary of the Sacred Heart. He certainly did have another associate, Father Charles Piperon, who later became his most faithful and ardent admirer. But at that

particular time. Charles Piperon was very hesitant and did not see eye to eye with him concerning the apostolic mission of the Society. He was afraid of the parish ministry and, as late as 1872, was still thinking of withdrawing and becoming a contemplative. This meant that Father Chevalier had to stand alone in defending and maintaining the plan for the new Society as he had conceived it right from the beginning. (Vermin 214) It is in this sense, then, that I think we are justified in calling Father Chevalier the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

It was some time in the middle of 1857, before the departure of Father Maugenest to take up his post at the Cathedral, that Father Chevalier made known the inspiration which had come to him to give Mary the title Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The story is too well known to be repeated here. In actual fact, however, though Father Chevalier was quite unaware of this, he himself was not using the title for the first time. Research has proved that a contemporary Belgian Trappist had been known to speak of Our Lady under that name for very many years. Furthermore, a certain Father Angel, S.J. had made unsuccessful attempts to popularize it at Paray le-Monial in 1846. As for Father Chevalier, however, he knew nothing of this. "The title,"¹ he said, "seemed to come from Heaven." In any case he can, with absolute certainty, be said to have initiated its doctrinal and liturgical cult in the Church, this of course still in the future. All research seems to indicate that the inspiration came to him independently. He himself was convinced of this.

By mid-1857 Mary had manifestly constituted herself Foundress of the new Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It now remained for Father Chevalier to make her known far and wide under the new name which was to bring her so much honour and love in the Church, and to associate her so powerfully in the mission of the Society to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus loved everywhere.

In 1864, he established a very effective means of doing this - more effective in fact than he foresaw. He established an association of prayer and good works under what later came to be called by the rather cumbersome name of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This had a truly marvelous expansion and spread to the most unlikely places in the world. It can be said that wherever a new field of apostolate opened up for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, she herself had been there beforehand preparing the way. Either her statue had preceded them and was venerated and loved, or she had been active through the Archconfraternity or its magazine, the *Annals*, commenced in 1866 and soon being published in all the main European languages.

It is simply amazing how Issoudun, before the arrival there in 1854 of Father Chevalier the most dechristianized town in France, rapidly became the centre of vast pilgrimages in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Through the propagation of little pictures of the Sacred Heart, he had rapidly got together enough money to begin the building of a Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Its first stone was laid in 1859, and the church itself consecrated in 1864.

Then on 31st May, 1865, a first public feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was celebrated in the new church. Next Father Founder constructed a large and beautiful chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart behind the high altar. Here, in 1869, a white marble statue was crowned in the name of Pius IX. Issoudun, now the town of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, rapidly became and still is the focal point of enormous pilgrimages.

As a further manifestation of the honour promised in the Pact which he made with Mary back in 1855, Father Chevalier founded, in 1874, the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He himself acknowledges that this idea of a feminine institute to work in collaboration with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and for the same end, goes right back to the time when Mary was first given this glorious and significant title.

It can be said that devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has become the characteristic which distinguishes the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from other institutes dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Strangely enough, so closely was the devotion identified with the Society, that in a first approbation given to the Society by the Holy See in 1869, we find these surprising words:

"In 1854, on December 8, the day of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception . . . a pious Congregation of Missionaries, who take their name from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . was founded at Issoudun in the diocese of Bourges by the priest, Jules Chevalier."

I don't know what was the reaction of Father Founder to that mistake of the Holy See, but it does show the extent to which Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had become associated with the Society. So great has been the part which she has played in the history of both our Societies that, if ever it came to pass that she were not accorded her rightful place in them, they would automatically collapse.

The period up to about 1880 can be called the era of the consolidation of the Society. In that year, however, there was in France a revival of one of those periodical anti-religious attitudes left as a legacy of the French Revolution. All teaching and preaching institutes not authorized by the State were dispersed. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were expelled from Issoudun and from their houses of formation in France. The Basilica and the Monastery were placed under seal. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were not, for the moment, molested but for prudence' sake went into secular dress.

What happened? Well, to the extent that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart went into exile, the Society became internationalised. It became established in Spain, England, Australia, Belgium, Holland and U.S.A. As for Father Chevalier himself, though his religious had been expelled, his role as parish priest of Issoudun put him outside the demands of the unjust law. So he remained on to safeguard the interests of the Society in France - and particularly in Issoudun, now become internationally renowned as the pilgrimage centre of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Then, just when things seemed to be at their worst, and the Society's personnel was scattered by the government persecution, the Holy See yielded to Father Chevalier's request, made back in 1878, that foreign missionary work be entrusted to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. For it was written into the Constitutions of the Society that the evangelization of pagan peoples was also one of the apostolic ends of the Society. Remember the frustrated foreign missionary dreams of the young seminarist, Jules Chevalier. In a letter dated March 25, 1881, the Holy See proposed to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart the evangelization of the immense Pacific territory of Melanesia and Micronesia, that is the whole of Oceania except Polynesia where the Marists were working.

The prospect was so frightening to certain members of Father Chevalier's General Council - themselves scattered in exile - that they opposed acceptance. Had it not been for Father Founder's tenacious faith in the mission of the Society to the pagan world, and his consequent moral courage and determination, our missionaries would not probably be working where they are today. However, he had the backing of the Holy See, and, as a result of his acceptance in the face of enormous difficulties within and without the Society, the latter became what he had envisaged it from the very beginning - universal in its mission. After all, the inspiration for its varied forms of apostolic enterprise is 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere'.

In 1901, the persecution of the religious institutes which had abated somewhat broke out with new fury. This time, it was not just the teaching and preaching institutes which were attacked. All religious became the butt of the unjust laws. Come what may, Father Chevalier wanted to stay on in Issoudun in order to safeguard the property and the works there of the Society. So, acting upon prudent advice, he asked the Holy See to relieve him of his office of Superior General and to give him outwardly the status of a secular priest, whilst allowing him to retain all his obligations as a religious M.S.C. - this situation to last for as long as the circumstances demanded. His request was granted. But imagine what it must have cost him to give up all outward semblance of being a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. Some other M.S.C.'s did the same and remained on as his secular curates.

Eventually the secular, as well as the religious clergy, became the butt of government persecution. Father Chevalier, now an old man of 83 and suffering acutely from spinal arthritis, was informed that his presbytery was the property of the municipality of Issoudun. He was given notice to get out. With his usual courage, he refused. So, on January 21, 1907, the commissioner of the Issoudun police had the door axed in. Father

Chevalier could not walk, so he was lifted over the threshold in his armchair and dumped on the footpath. A benefactor then had him taken to a house nearby which he had put at his disposal.

A young man named Sadouet, who with others had been inside the presbytery with Father Chevalier when he refused to come out, gave an eye-witness account of the eviction which there is no time to relate here. If you are interested, ytm will find it in "The Designs of His Heart". But there is one thing which stands out strikingly and that is the closeness of his union with the will of God, and the Christlikeness manifested by his spirit of forgiveness of enemies. His union with God's will is, of course, characteristic. We have only to think back to his action of going on his knees and, in a spirit of faith, accepting the appointment which he knew would be made known in the letter which actually named him curate of Issoudun.

This union with God's will had obviously deepened during his long life. In a chapter on the Life of Faith in the common Rules of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart appended to the 1877 edition of the MSC Constitutions, he had written that conformity to the will of God would be the most outstanding virtue of the Missionary of the Sacred Heart- He certainly was the first to put it into practice. The young man above-mentioned, in his eye-witness account of the expulsion from the presbytery, says that Father Chevalier would not say one word against his persecutors, though the onlookers shouted. "Down with the thieves!" To those who expressed indignation, he merely said in a broken voice: "Nothing happens without God's permission." It is obvious that he was practising to a heroic degree what in this same chapter he had said must characterise the authentic Missionary of the Sacred Heart. This is the quotation:

"The love of God, which exacts of us the life of faith, also imposes upon us [the obligation to love our enemies, to pray for them and to do them good. If ever divine Providence should permit that our Society or one of its houses, or even someone among us, should be the object of calumny, of hatred or of unmerited persecution, let us guard well against every sentiment of bitterness or revenge against its authors. In their regard, let us follow the precept of Our Lord. When this comes to pass, let us thank God and rejoice at the grace accorded us." (p. 33)

This same young man of Issoudun who had stood by Father Chevalier in his hour of persecution, a few months later himself went away to become a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. In 1968, I wrote to him from Issoudun - he was then in the south of France - asking him to tell me something about a photo I had found which was obviously Father Founder's funeral. He replied that he had not been at the funeral as he had left Issoudun a few months previously. In this letter - which I have here - he told me about his last visit to Father Founder in his borrowed presbytery. As I said, the young man - I think his first name was Leo - was then twenty-three, and as the French MSCs of those days had no St. Paul's Seminary for Late Vocations, he had, like Father Founder himself, to complete his secondary studies with boys much younger than himself. So he had to go to the Junior Seminary at Fribourg in Switzerland. On the point of leaving Issoudun, he went together with one of the local MSCs posing as the secular curate. Father Bertin. to say goodbye to his friend and parish priest, Father Chevalier. I have translated for you part of the letter dealing with this last interview with Father Founder.

I left Issoudun in 1907, a few days before the celebration of Sept. 8. Now, before leaving Issoudun for good, I went, as was right, in company with Father Bertin, to say goodbye to the one who had been my parish priest for my twenty-three years.

At that time, he was no longer living in his presbytery near the church of St. Cyr. He had been thrown out of there on the preceding Jan. 21. and had since been living in a house put at his disposal by Count Fernand de Bonneval. his parishioner and long-standing benefactor.

It was there that we found him sitting at his work-table busy at his book, "The Apocalypse and Contemporary Times". He received us with the customary warm smile on his aged face, framed as it was in abundant white hair protruding below the rim of his black biretta. "Sit down," he invited us.

When he learned that the reason for our visit was my forthcoming departure for the Junior MSC Seminary at Fribourg in Switzerland, for a long time he let his heart speak. "The call to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart," he said, "is a grace from Heaven - a grace for which you must be very grateful. But generosity is necessary in order to be able to cope with the difficulties of each day. So, too, is perseverance, in order to be able to surmount all obstacles, that is, if you want to be worthy of the Apostolic School. Go, dear big son (I was then twenty-three), with the protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. I give you my blessing and will pray for you. Please do the same for me. for I have much need of prayers". We got up to go and he resumed his writing. Father Sadouet goes on to say that, a little over a month later, he had received a letter from Father Bertin to say that Father Founder was dead.

As this audience consists of MSCs in formation, I thought that Father Founder's recommendations to a young man about to commence his own period of formation to the life of an MSC might have some interest.

It was on 21st October. 1907. that Father Founder died in a borrowed presbytery. The Basilica of the Sacred Heart and all the other buildings belonging to the missionaries, as well as the Convent of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, were put up for auction. Incidentally, with the permission of the Holy See, all were bought by friends of Father Founder with a view to returning them later to their rightful owners.

Thus ends this second talk on the biographical details of Father Founder, in the order of time, the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart. As given here, both talks are little more than a chronicle of events. Our next two talks will be concerned with giving meaning to these events in relation to the members of our two societies.

III. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST AMONG THE MSC

We now come to consider Jules Chevalier as first Missionary of the Sacred Heart in another sense. It is this. As Founder of the Society, he had the deepest understanding of what it means to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

The object of this talk, then, is to go back to sources and see what Father Founder considered to be the essence of our vocation. (I say our vocation because our society was founded as the feminine counterpart of the MSC one and with the same mission.)

We have already seen how, as a seminarian, Jules had been captivated by the doctrinal and spiritual richness of devotion to the Sacred Heart: how he saw in the love of the Heart of Christ the sole remedy for the moral ills of society; and how, with the strikingly manifest help of Our Lady, he founded the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (and 20 years later in 1874 the MUI^{CS}) with a motto which expressed the very reason for the existence of both Societies: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved forever."¹

1. WHO WE ARE

Let us go back a bit to the pact made with Mary under the date of January 18, 1855. There he wrote;

"If the most holy Virgin Mary. . . triumphs over all the difficulties which hell is raising against us, and realises the proposed work this year, we. . . commit ourselves to the following engagements both for ourselves and on behalf of all who will belong to the same Society. < That includes the members of our own still-in-the-future institute.)" Then follows Article 1:

"Those who will belong to this little Congregation will take the title Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and will strive to live to the full what it signifies."

"They will strive to live to the full what the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart signifies. . . ." These are weighty words. Not only will they strive to live the programme implied in the title, but to live it to the hilt. When we reflect that every future member of the as-yet unfounded Society was also committed to the fulfilment of this engagement with Our Lady, it becomes a matter of urgency to discover what is the significance of this title which has to be lived to the full. Father Founder has left us in no doubt whatever as to this significance. We find it all over the place in what he wrote or said over a period of fifty years.

There is, I think, one consideration which is fundamental to an appreciation of the name given to both our societies. It is this. For all who belong to them. Father Founder - and this is evident from what he said and wrote - meant the name we bear to have definite implications. Name, as he uses it in the context of our respective titles, is not meant merely as a means of identifying us as belonging to a specific institute. The word retains all its profound biblical significance, expressing sometimes the inner essence of a person, at other times a special vocation indicated by the imposition of the new name e.g. Peter (Matt. 16:13-19). From both his writings and his attitude, it is clear that, in the mind of Father Chevalier, the name borne by the members of both our Congregations combines both these senses. It designates what we essentially are - those consecrated by a special vocation to the end for which the Holy Spirit inspired him to found these societies in the Church. I quote him:

"We are (i.e. essentially) the Missionaries, the apostles, of the Sacred Heart." Let the members of the Congregation never forget that they are (i.e. essentially) Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. (Spir. Test.)

In consideration of this, no MSC or FDNSC should ever go through an identity crisis!

Now as to the vocational aspect. I restrict myself, for the moment, to the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart. In its scriptural sense, the word missionary means one who is sent. Christ himself was the first Missionary, sent, as He was, by the Father to carry out His plan of redeeming love. Before His ascension. He passed this mission on to His apostles: "As the Father has sent me. I also send you." (Jn. 20:21) His own mission had been to achieve salvation for all, but not to preach it to all. The salvation achieved by Him was to be applied by the Holy Spirit acting through the members of the Church. Thus the Church is, of its very nature, missionary.

Within this general mission of the Church, Jules Chevalier gradually became aware that he had been given a special mission. This he formulated in the first Rules of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (1857):

"The Sacred Heart of Jesus, sole source of light, of truth and of life is not sufficiently known, is not enough loved. Yet his love has saved the world, his blood has purified it, his grace has changed it, and his tenderness conserves it."

Father Chevalier cannot remain indifferent. Therefore he continues, and it is in the words that follow that we find the first formulation of the mission of the Society: "To make known all the treasures of love and mercy of which his Sacred Heart is the source, to spread everywhere the sacred fire of his love, to save the souls which are so dear to him, to combat the egoism and indifference which outrage him - such is the end of our little Society."

For each of the members of the Society, then, what he essentially is and what is his mission, to which he is committed by vocation, is summed up in the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart. And Father Chevalier himself develops the meaning of the title:

"Missionary of the Sacred Heart signifies apostle of the Sacred Heart, or propagator of the devotion to the Sacred Heart." And again:

"God has great designs for the Church and the world through devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But in order to make this known, there must be men who will be its missionaries, 'for how shall they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent!'"

This last quotation is proof positive that Father Chevalier had always in mind the scriptural sense of the word 'missionary', i.e. one sent by God on a mission relative to his loving design of salvation. As Christ was sent by the Father, so the Church sends us to make known the eternal love of the Word Incarnate, and to foster this love in the lives of others.

I think that a passage from our own revised Constitutions of 1969 could very well sum up what I have been trying to say:

As Christ was sent by the Father
so they are sent by the Church
to make known
that Christ is the revelation of God's infinite charity to men;
that He loves them with a human heart:
that He is the answer to their hopes, their questionings,
their every need.
This, their fundamental apostolate,
is summed up in their motto:
'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!'

Insofar as our own FDNSC Congregation is concerned, all the theological and spiritual significance of the expression Missionary of the Sacred Heart is present in our own title Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. For, to quote Father Chevalier again, Mary in the mystery of the Visitation 'was the first apostle of the grace of the Word Incarnate, the first missionary of his Love.' (Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, page 172) As her daughters, then, we share intimately in this missionary role which is still hers. This idea of Father Founder has been incorporated into our revised Constitutions:

In union with Mary,
the first missionary of His love,
(the Daughter of OLSH) goes with eagerness
wherever the presence of Jesus is to be borne.
Nor would Father Founder tolerate any attempt - and a couple were made - to change the title.

2. TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE AIM TO DO

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved. "These words," says Father Founder, "are to be for us a reminder of our sublime mission - a mission to which we dedicate utterly our strength and our life." So that we might never forget this, he established in both our societies the custom of commencing all our spiritual exercises with this invocation, and, where relevant, of placing it at the head of correspondence etc.

He even wanted it expressed visually. "Do you know," wrote Father Jouet, who was his most intimate collaborator, in a letter to Spain, "that we, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, are wearing on the breast a large red heart with the inscription: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!'" (To Mother Eulalia. Superior of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, Tarragona, Spain, Sept. 12th, 1874) The reference in this letter is to the first time that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart appeared in public in the Basilica at Issoudun wearing the new badge.

Incidentally, the first habit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was white, with red cincture and mantle. On a visit to Rome Father Chevalier had asked Pius IX if himself and his companion could renew their vows into his hands, which the Holy Father was happy to permit. Father Chevalier then went further. He asked that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart be permitted to adopt a habit which would be the same in form as the dress ordinarily worn by the Pope, i.e. a cream cassock and cape with the addition, on occasion, of a red mantle. Again the Pope said yes. Thus the first habit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart symbolised by their badge that they were consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and by their dress that they were the Pope's men.

Things have been modified somewhat with the passing of time. However, until a few years ago, all the elements of the traditional habit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, colour excepted, were the same as the dress which is still worn by the Pope. As for Father Chevalier's original white and red habit, it is displayed in the Museum of the Society at Issoudun.

The badge as currently worn has also been modernized, as has the FDNSC medal, but the symbolism remains the same: the Cross and the Heart of Christ over the world with the letters MSC to signify that the members of the Society are, as Father Founder insisted over and over again, "the official missionaries of the Sacred Heart".

It may come as a surprise to learn that Father Chevalier even wanted the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun to be constructed in the form of a heart. For today's ecclesiastical architecture, this would probably constitute no great problem. But it did for the Basilica's nineteenth century architect, and all the more so because Father Chevalier was not easily persuaded to relinquish his idea as impractical. Even then he persisted that, if only he had the finance, he would surely find an architect of genius who would be able to materialise his dream. However, he had to be satisfied to surmount the spire with a tall statue of the Sacred Heart. In recent years, this was struck by lightning and has now been replaced by a gleaming symbolic heart.

3. OUR CHARISM

At the beginning of this talk, I said that Father Chevalier can be considered the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart, not only in the chronological sense, but because, as Founder, no one could have a deeper understanding of or faith in the Society's charism than himself.

Generally speaking, a charism is an inspiration of the Holy Spirit who makes known to a certain individual that he is to fulfil a specific mission in the Church. The grace which he receives is not so much for himself as for others. If the charism is one of foundation, as in the case of a religious institute, it implies a mission which is handed down to the members of that institute.

The special charism which our Father Founder received and handed down to both our societies is total dedication to the Heart of the Word Incarnate, and to men whom he so loved that he dwelt among them, full of grace and truth, and gave his life for them. Or, as Father Chevalier put it in Article II of the famous Pact made with Our Lady in January, 1855: "The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart will have a special love for, and a particular devotedness to, the Adorable Heart of Jesus." Only then, when they themselves have become penetrated with this love, will they be able to "make him loved and glorified by priests and the faithful." Only then, to quote St. John, will they be able to say convincingly: "My teaching is not from myself. It comes from the one who sent me."¹ (Jn. 7:16)

You will notice here the emphasis placed on the fact that a personal union in love with the Heart of Christ must be the starting point of apostolic action. For devotion to the Sacred Heart rightly understood is diametrically opposed to the modern heresy of activism. For, to quote:

"At the centre of Redemption stands not an action in the activist sense, but a sacrifice. No believing heart can think about (the Heart of Jesus consuming himself for others, down to the last drop of blood, without a strong urge to similar unselfish sacrifice in the service of men."

It is a question, then, of a balanced interpenetration of contemplation and apostolic love. The balance which should exist between these two elements has been brought out admirably in par. 12 of "The Decree on Religious Life" (Vat. II.):

"The entire religious life of institutes of the active apostolate should be penetrated by the apostolic spirit, and their entire apostolic activity should be animated by the religious spirit."

The ideas just expressed are in the purest tradition of Father Founder. In actual fact, it was one of Father Chevalier's own sons, Father Van Kerckhoven MSC, the last Superior General of the Society who, during one of the sessions of Vatican II, proposed their inclusion in the text of the Decree. Accepted verbatim for inclusion in the text, they merely express in a more updated way what was in both the earliest MSC and FDNSC Constitutions. I quote the passage:

"Whilst devoting themselves to the apostolate in the service of the neighbour, (they will never neglect the contemplative aspect of their life."

Curiously enough, it was an imbalance between the contemplative and apostolic aspects on the part of individuals within our two societies which created much worry for Father Founder in the mid-1870's. He had never hesitated in his conviction that the fundamental mission of both his institutes was the penetration of society by the mystery of the Heart of Christ, through diverse works of the active apostolate. Yet in each of our societies, he had to resist vigorously an attempt from within to change the active-apostolic end and have it made canonically contemplative.

In the case of the MSCs, a somewhat neurotic member of the Society opposed Father Founder, and sent off to Rome a document to the effect that the Society was, of its nature, contemplative, and made all kinds of accusations against Father Founder. Father Chevalier was very forthright in his own letter to the Holy See.

"We certainly want the perfection of our Institute, but we don't want any change. We entered this Society in order to be missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This word 'missionaries' sums up everything." (Letter to the Holy See, 1876)

After making much trouble for Father Founder, the self-constituted reformer - much to everyone's relief - left the Society.

The Daughters of OLSH also came in for their share of the same trouble but of a more serious nature and that over a period of five years, i.e. 1876-1881. In our case, the institute was brought to the brink of ruin. The first superior, a certain Mother Felicity, in opposition to Father Chevalier, decided that the Congregation was meant to be contemplative, and did everything she could to wreck the work as conceived by Father Founder. She even styled herself the Foundress. It was only the tremendous loyalty and resistance to pressure on the part of the only three Sisters left which saved the Congregation. This period of painful trial for Father Chevalier came to an end when, on March 25th, 1882, Mother Marie Louise Hartzler entered the Congregation, Mother Felicity withdrawing the same day. Marie Louise ultimately became the first Superior General, and, in collaboration with Father Founder, moulded the sorely-tried Congregation to the end for which he had been inspired to found it.

So much for that digression. To return to our particular charism of total dedication in love to the Heart of the Word Incarnate. There is one word on which we must be clear. It is this. The initial charism given to Father Founder was not something given once and for all, something static belonging to the past. As he conceived it, it was merely the germ of life of the institute. Like all living things in embryo, it had to develop, and he himself saw it do so even during his own long fifty or so years as Superior General. Thus, too, for us the present members of his societies, it has become our own here-and-now charism, something to be lived according to our own epoch even as past members had to live it according to theirs,

4. SAFEKEEPING TO OUR CHARISM

Vatican II has insisted that "safekeeping be accorded to the spirit of the Founder, as also to all the particular goals and wholesome traditions which constitute the heritage of each institute." (P.C.) The place of safekeeping is the book of our Constitutions, or during the time of Constitution revision, our interim Documents of Renewal. Here is to be found the primitive inspiration of the first and foremost Missionary of the Sacred Heart. True, the charismatic spirit developed from his original grace of foundation is perpetuated and develops primarily in the lives of the members of the Society who have, in their turn, the responsibility of transmitting it in all its authenticity. This living, flexible spirit is, however, incorporated in the letter of a written text which is, nevertheless, only its servant. To retain its vitality, this text must for each epoch, be rethought, developed and lived in the light of the contemporary mentality and situations, whilst remaining faithful to the primitive inspiration of the Founder. We are lucky to live in a time when we can experience this being done.

Jules Chevalier, foremost Missionary of the Sacred Heart, laid great stress upon fidelity to the Constitutions and Rules both in his own life and in the lives of those whose spiritual father he was. Here it may be useful to indicate what he meant by the rules.

As well as the Constitutions or the basic laws of a society, religious institutes need more detailed regulations to direct the daily living of their members. Because the community is a social group, there will be directives to help the group function harmoniously and efficiently; because it is a consecrated group, it will have directives concerning such things as ways of being faithful to the vows, to prayer life, the apostolate and so on; because it exists in the Church as a particular form of the consecrated life, e.g. the MSCs or the Jesuits, it will have observances concerned with maintaining the institute's identity and spirituality. For instance, we as Daughters of OLSH sing or say each day the prayer 'Hail, admirable Heart of Jesus', we give special honour to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the First Friday etc.

Father Chevalier laid such great stress on the observance of both Constitutions and Rules because he saw in them what they are meant to be: a means to an end. In a conference which he gave to the MSC community at Issoudun some time about 1900 on the book of rules then called the Directory, he said:

"If we wish to be holy - to work efficaciously for the salvation of souls and the extension of the Society - let us be always, in everything and everywhere, faithful observers of our Constitutions and Rules."

In a letter to a newly-ordained priest, Father Eugene Meyer, MSC, who would one day succeed him as superior general, he wrote:

"What the Missionary of the Sacred Heart has most need of today is holiness of life. This you will achieve by observing faithfully every day, in a great spirit of faith, all that our rules require."

Not only did Father Founder regard religious rules as a means to an end. He looked upon them as a grace. Again I quote the above-mentioned conference on the Directory:

"Let us love our rules. They are for us an outpouring of the love of the Heart of Jesus."

It is the fashion, in some quarters today, to be somewhat intolerant of rules, or, to use the in-word 'structures'¹, as inhibiting personal liberty. But it is of the very-nature of religious life, as it is of the Church, to have structures. In any group, natural or supernatural, practical patterns of doing things will develop simply as a result of living together and being motivated by the same ideal. Therefore, to be opposed to all rules is as inhibiting to human and group development as to be dominated by them.

When Father Chevalier insists on fidelity to rule, he is insisting on fidelity to a freely-accepted pattern of living as a precious means to what he knew would help to make an MSC or an FDNSC true to character. That is why he saw rules as something positive - a gift from the love of the Heart of Christ.

It is pretty evident that Father Chevalier often uses the word 'rules' to cover both Constitutions - or the institute's basic laws of life - and rules or statutes which can be called its bylaws. Now both one and the other are important insofar as they safeguard the wholesome, life-giving traditions of the institute. This does not mean that the exterior forms of such traditional rules must be conserved forever unchanged, for it is not the form of a tradition that matters, but the wholesome tradition itself. Older practices which ensured the continuity of the spirit of our two societies in their own day, but which are now no longer carriers of this spirit, have been and are legitimately being replaced by new ones better adapted to contemporary situations and mentality.

All this means, then, that if we are true to the spirit which he has left us, we shall reverence and love our freely-accepted patterns of living - call them what you will - but as adapted to our own times, not to the mid-19th century or the early 20th. Certain ones of a past generation may seem odd according to our own late 20th century mentality, just as many of our own freely accepted and revered ones most certainly will to the generations to come. But it must be remembered that the Holy Spirit - and this applies to the Church in general - always works through the mentality of an epoch.

There is one thing, however, which we do reverence in regard to the past. This is the spirit of faith which prompted MSCs and FDNSCs of a bygone generation to be faithful to their own contemporary patterns of observance which for them expressed outwardly the timeless elements basic to our particular form of religious life.

Our contemporaries wish to create a better world, more united, happier for all. This is the very cause for which Our Lord gave his life. It was in the pierced Heart of Christ that Father Chevalier saw a meaningful reminder of this. "To the spirit of division," he wrote, "the Heart of Jesus opposes his immense love - his ardent wish to see all men united."

To penetrate the hearts of men with this divine, uniting love was his mission, and the mission which he handed down to us. It is in our current Constitutions or Documents of Renewal which, after the Gospel, are the book of life of our two societies that we shall find the authentic expression of the charisma of Father Chevalier, first among the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - a charisma now become our own.

IV. JULES CHEVALIER: MAN OF FAITH

In the last talk (III), we spoke of Father Chevalier as the one who had the deepest understanding of the special grace of the Society expressed in its motto: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved'.

When we stop to think of it, this is a staggering goal. We want to dedicate a whole life and a whole life's activity that the Person of Christ, who is divine-human love, may be loved to the ends of the earth - and forever!

Now to be whole-hearted about this mission, we must have faith in it. as Father Chevalier himself had faith in it and in everything connected with its fulfilment.

This talk, then, is going to be on JULES CHEVALIER: MAN OF FAITH. Jules Chevalier, in his Annals of the Little Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart written in 1901, six years before he died, was able to look back over nearly fifty years as Founder with a clear vision of faith. He begins with the following words:

"When God wills a work, obstacles for him are means of achievement; he takes no account of human wisdom; disconcerts human reckoning; brings to birth what, according to its reasoning, would never have seen the light of day; develops and strengthens to fruition what it had condemned to die."

Now, faith implies a free response to something a person says or makes known. This response involves a relationship of confidence in that person, and there must be grounds for that confidence. As regards Father Chevalier, the grounds for his faith in his mission - a faith which persisted unshaken through many trials and sufferings - are indicated in a provisional draft of Rules for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart drawn up in 1855:

"The little Society of the Sacred Heart is not the work of man. It is the work of God. It was born in the Sacred Heart of Jesus under the powerful protection of Mary. . ."

It was this unshakeable faith that his work was willed by God which carried him undaunted through the seemingly insuperable obstacles to its accomplishment. Much has been written about Jules' tenacity of purpose, of his obstinacy in following a line of action once he was convinced that this was the thing to be done in a given set of circumstances. From the psychological point of view, one would say that this tenacity was part of his particular temperament. For he was, by nature, endowed with a strong will which was not afraid of difficulties and obstacles. Rather, in face of them, his will was stirred to greater energy, and set itself to persevere till it reached its goal.

Now, Paul VI, in his recent Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life, insists on the necessity of passing from the psychological level to the level of "that which is truly spiritual". This is where grace comes in, building as it does on nature. The sublimating factor in the case of Jules Chevalier was a highly-developed spirit of faith - faith which resides in the intellect and provides motives for the will. Then, because of the direct correlation between faith in the intellect and love in the will, the stronger the faith, the deeper the love. Love, in its turn, generates a still greater courage and confidence. Seen in this supernatural light, Jules' tenacity of purpose, astonishing at times to his contemporaries and often judged as obstinacy, becomes understandable.

But to relate all this to Jules' character in action. From boyhood, there had been fostered in him a solid spiritual life, characterized by a normally good habit of prayer. This left him sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. He believed with his whole being that God wanted him to be a priest. We have seen his tenacity in clinging to this idea and doing all in his own power to bring it to realization. Once in the seminary, he showed equal tenacity in determining to be the kind of priest he knew God wanted him to be. On one occasion, when he was home for his

holidays, a couple of his relatives hinted to the junior seminarian that, as a priest, he would possibly be able to use his influence on behalf of his family. They received a speedy disillusionment. "If you are counting on me for anything like that, you are in for a big disappointment. If I'm going to be a priest, it is in the service of God and not of my family". This he wrote in the Personal Notes already spoken of.

Nor did he swerve from this line of action when he passed into the Major Seminary. He came out from the entrance retreat determined to make a sound spiritual life the basis of his future priestly life. "The retreat master," he wrote, "recommended to us three virtues: fidelity to the rule, mortification and humility. During the five years of my Major Seminary training, I made every effort to put them into practice."

It is to his friend, Father Piperon, that we are indebted for a rather close look at the seminarian, Jules. Steeped as he was in the spirit of faith, this faith was far from being a mere intellectual knowledge. It penetrated his whole being and drew from him the continued response of loving acts of the will. This explains the wholehearted way in which he cooperated with the grace of his priestly formation.

The ideal of the priesthood put before the students at the seminary captivated him. In himself, the seminarian was taught, the priest is nothing. By his union with Christ who is God he becomes everything - mediator, servant of all in order to redeem them. He becomes Christ, the Sovereign Priest who lives in him. Jules himself synthesises these ideas as follows:

"O Priest, who are you? You are not for yourself, because you are nothing. You do not exist for yourself, since you are a mediator with God. You do not belong to yourself, since you are the servant of all. You are not yourself since you are God. Who are you, then, O priest? You are all and nothing." As a logical consequence of this ideal, Jules saw that, as a priest, he must be transformed into Christ who will live in him and thus through him give life to his Church. Who will declare that, even as far back as his seminary days, Jules Chevalier was not ecclesial in outlook?

In this matter of transformation into Christ, he really got down to detail in matters insisted upon by Vatican II in its decrees on Religious Life, Priests and Priestly Formation - that is penance, poverty and charity. Concerning penance, not only would he refuse himself a fire in his room in the depth of a French winter, but he was known to practise other kinds of penance the exact nature of which his inquisitive fellow-students failed to discover. In his practice of poverty, he would have won the approval of those who are calling most loudly for its witness in the Church today, particularly by priests and religious. Not only did he practise charity in manner and act among his confreres, but this also took the form of a practical concern for those outside the seminary.

Incidentally, it is strange how we talk in all the in words about what our concern must be for our fellow-men. It is as though in this matter of concern we are about to turn over a new leaf - and things will be changed as never before. Yet, if we confine ourselves merely to the history of our own two societies, what riches we have in our own past, riches which are relevant to us today; what inspiration in the witness of our own Founder, and of those pioneers who have handed down to us his spirit. Rewrite the life of Jules Chevalier in contemporary terms of commitment, involvement, concern, confrontation (I am thinking of his courageous stand as a seminarian when a certain professor was departing from orthodoxy), and we would have a biography that might have a chance of getting over. My point is that the basic ideas covered by these contemporary terms are timeless no matter what names we give them. And they will always have a drawing power.

But to get back to Jules' concern for others. As an example I would like to pause on an incident with which you will be familiar, but which may perhaps take on a new freshness when related to ideals which are supposed to be specially characteristic of today's dissatisfied young people. They are yearning, we are told, to pour themselves out on others - the poor and underprivileged. And many do. But have not many of them always wanted to do so? Think of the poor man in bad health, who, nevertheless, had a large family to support and who came to the seminary each morning to clean the toilets: how Jules sized up the situation that the work was too strenuous for him; how for a long time he took it upon himself to share the lowly task, instead of taking the view that the man was paid to do the work: and how it was only through the indiscretion of a fellow-student who caught him at his work of compassion that the rest of the students came to know of the affair. Only an isolated instance we may be tempted to say. Agreed! But it shows a disposition, and that is something which cannot be improvised. Hence the telling power of this particular incident.

Father Piperon closes his testimony of Jules as a seminarian as follows:

"Such was Jules Chevalier as I knew him during the few years passed with him at the seminary. Until the last, he was the model for all by his regularity, his zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, his poverty, simplicity and affability. His lively faith led him to enter wholeheartedly into all spiritual practices compatible with seminary life."

This concluding remark is very relevant in the context of this talk on Jules Chevalier: Man of Faith. His lively faith led him to enter wholeheartedly into all spiritual practices compatible with seminary life. There comes immediately to mind another well-known fact - his initiative in establishing in the seminary the group called the Knights of the Sacred Heart. Its object was that the members help one another to the priestly virtues. To this end it was agreed that, in a spirit of mutual trust and openness, they point out one another's defects, and suggest remedies. Incidentally this is not far removed from some of today's group techniques at least in principle. Note also the group's Eucharistic orientation. In their free time they were to succeed one another before the Blessed Sacrament - there to adore the Eucharistic Heart of Christ, make reparation for sin, and through the intercession of Mary ask grace for the Church, the Pope, bishops and their priests, and for the just and sinners. He also established this Eucharistic adoration in one of his first parishes, and has even made it a feature of the prayer life of our own institute.

It is also obvious from this how easily Jules' simple faith led him to prayer. Looking back over his life, we see how he always turned to prayer in difficult circumstances. It is interesting to note how often this prayer took the form of a novena. Generally speaking, novenas seem to be out of fashion today. At least they are reputed to be, but one wonders! It is important to remember, however, that it is not the form prayer takes which matters - this will vary according to mentality. What counts with God is the timeless element of persevering faith, no matter how expressed. And this is exactly what Father Chevalier's well-known novenas expressed - a tenacious, persevering faith which invariably brought the grace asked, because he was disposed to receive it. After all, the Gospels have enough of Our Lord's reactions to unshakeable faith. "Great is your faith. Be it done as you have asked." In any case how momentous for us, his sons and daughters, were those faith-novenas of Father Chevalier.

Think of the one in preparation for the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The faith that it expressed drew from the Heart of Christ through Mary an unmistakable sign that the Society was in the designs of God.

There was the second novena, asking Mary to obtain the financial aid necessary to assure the maintenance of the foundation. "I can authorize you to commence this foundation," said the Archbishop of Bourges, "only if you have a sufficient and assured revenue. If God wills your work, He can send you the wherewithal to maintain it. Ask Our Lady to complete what she has so well begun."

We know the result of this second novena. The money was forthcoming. Good! But then the Cardinal's Council voted unanimously against the project, so the Cardinal adjourned the decision. One of those who had been present at the Council meeting counselled Jules to drop the project. He told him that, during the Council meeting, his idea had been under fire for a full half hour. There was nothing left to do but bury it.

"Not so fast," retorted Jules. "Our Lady had yet to say the last word. We're going to pray."

But when the Cardinal's Council came together again, there was the same unanimous opposition. Then the Cardinal completely dumbfounded everyone.

"I have reflected," he said. "I have prayed. It is not my habit to act contrary to your advice. But for this once, I feel that I must do so. Otherwise I believe that I would be acting contrary to the designs of God. I promised these two priests that if they brought me a fresh sign of the will of God by finding resources, I'd approve their project. They've again produced this sign. Therefore I'm committed. I authorize the two curates to commence their work. This very day we'll appoint men to replace them."

In the archives of the Archdiocese of Bourges, there is to be seen this entry under date of 10th June, 1855: "Jules Chevalier has been authorized to take the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart and, consequently, to cease his function as curate at Issoudun." There is a similar entry for Father Maugenest.

There is still another momentous novena in the life of Father Chevalier. Troubles upon troubles, largely consequent upon the government persecution of religious institutes, seemed to be threatening the very existence of the Society. For one thing, in the 1890's, Archbishop Boyer of Bourges was unfriendly to the Society. He wanted to take the parish of Issoudun from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as being religious, and transfer it to the secular clergy. Just to show how closely the destinies of our two societies were linked, it is interesting to note that the Archbishop's displeasure was extended to the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, too, as being one of his works established in the parish. I quote Father Founder's reference to this:

"The little community of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which we founded at Issoudun, though so good, devoted and fervent, has like ourselves (the MSCs) had the privilege of receiving absolutely no mark of sympathy on the part of Monsignor. They asked him for two favours and both have been refused. The first was to open a little school in their house, the second to apply to Rome for a Decree of Praise for their institute." (1895) In the second place, as is evident from his Spiritual Testament to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Father Chevalier was experiencing painful difficulties within the Society, even as there had been within our own. That, however, is a matter for the MSC historian rather than for me.

All these combined troubles occasioned for Father Chevalier what was perhaps the sharpest testing of his faith during the whole course of his long life. In his anguish, feeling sure that his beloved Society was facing impending ruin, yet with faith unshaken, he turned to prayer. Here is what he writes:

"The heart filled with anguish, and eyes filled with tears, we could foresee the proximate ruin of our beloved Society. Deprived of all human support, and unable to count upon that of him who had the mission to sustain us and all the powers to defend us (he is here referring to the Archbishop), we turned to the Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Our prayer consisted only of these few words: 'Save us. We are perishing.'"

As had happened twice before, and on the very last day of the novena, the crisis came to an end and the difficulties began to resolve themselves.

One could say that the whole life of Father Chevalier was at times almost a blind act of faith. Yet there was one occasion on which he seemed to have a foresight of the future. This was when the walls of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in construction at Issoudun were barely above ground level. It is Father Piperon who tells the story.

One day Father Founder was talking intimately to us about the future of his work. "A time will come," he said, "when you will see crowds flocking here from different parts of France and elsewhere." "When I see that," replied one of his hearers, "I'll declare you a prophet!" But with calm assurance, Father Chevalier merely replied, "You will see it yourselves with your own eyes, and you will bless the Sacred Heart of Jesus for it."

His presentiment came true. Every year, since about 1869, the pilgrims have come in their tens of thousands, not only from all parts of France but from all parts of the world - to pray at the feet of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart enshrined in her beautiful chapel stretching far back behind the sanctuary.

Apart from this one of an almost supernatural intuition. Father Chevalier, unlike the founders of many religious institutes, was not guided by any extraordinary light. He had to grope his way to solutions through the most painful of problems. Perhaps one of the greatest was back in 1869. It took the form of a summons to come to Rome and bring with him everything written on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which title had fallen under suspicion. This letter arrived on the very day on which Issoudun was preparing to crown the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in the name of Pope Pius IX. It was when the bells were ringing for the solemn Mass when the Archbishop of Bourges - this one a great friend of the Society - handed Father Chevalier the letter in question. The first impulse of Father Chevalier was to call off the ceremonies, but the wise Archbishop told him to go ahead, that he himself would take the responsibility with the Holy See. Even so the day of triumph for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart became one of bitterness for her apostle. Ultimately everything was sent to Rome and the denunciation of the title rejected. Here as in all his enterprises, one fact stands out strikingly, and it is this which puts the seal of authenticity on Father Chevalier's conduct. In deep faith he always submitted everything to the discerning judgment of the Spirit-directed Church.

His faith was tested, too, amid the darkness of human frustration. From the very beginning of the Society, he had intended it for the foreign missions. Since 1878 he had been making formal requests to the Holy See for a mission field to be entrusted to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. In January 1879 the offer came. The Society was offered the diocese of Auckland in New Zealand, which had been without a bishop for nearly four years, also the appended missions. But the offer came to nothing on account of opposition from Father Chevalier's Council. This was most certainly in the designs of God for, in 1881, came a new offer - the immense Pacific territory of Melanesia and Micronesia. Again, there was strong opposition, especially on the part of Father Guyot, one of his councillors. But this time Father Chevalier stuck to his guns, convinced that the acceptance of the Pacific mission was the will of God for the Society. He knew, furthermore, that the Holy See was behind him, and also the MSC communities who had been consulted.

Even so, with a holy diplomacy, he took steps to ease matters. He got Father Jouet, the Society's representative in Rome with the Holy See, to persuade the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to write him a letter saying that it was the wish of the Pope that the Society take on these missions. It certainly was the wish of the Pope but, reasoned Father Founder, a formal expression in writing of the Pope's will would help vastly when it was a question of securing the agreement of the opposition on the MSC General Council.

He asked that the letter be addressed to himself and that, if the Cardinal thought good, he himself be asked to take the decision personally, especially since he knew that the rest of the Society was just rearing to have this mission field. He even suggested to Father Jouet that he get the Cardinal to date the letter the 25th March, the Feast of the mystery of the Incarnation. And what is there to criticize in this, or be shocked at? The time was within a few days. To me the time element is irrelevant. For Father Chevalier the date is a meaningful symbol. I quote his reply: The official letter, which Your Eminence did me the honour of addressing to me, bears the date of March 25th. This date is significant. It is the day which Heaven chose to announce the news of salvation through the Incarnation of the Word. It is likewise the day which Leo XIII chose to propose to us that we accept the mission of Melanesia.

After the example of Mary, we have made known with simplicity the insufficient numbers we have and our understandable misgivings (only 29 priests, 3 lay brothers and 26 scholastics). But since, Your Eminence, like the angel you say, 'Have no fear; accept the offer made you; the Spirit of God will be with you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you,' with the Virgin of Nazareth, our humble Congregation responds: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word.' It would be a very undiscerning mind which would see in Father Chevalier's implementation of the date anything other than a manifestation of his spirit of faith. Even a cursory glance at his writings will prove his love for the mystery of the Incarnation, e.g. the number of times he speaks of the Word Incarnate. In the extract quoted he himself says that the date is significant and he meant it to be. For he wanted it to manifest a relationship between the announcement made through Mary of the news of salvation, and the announcement made by the Church that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart would evangelize the pagans. It might be of interest to know, too, that he suggested to Father Jouet who was doing the business in Rome that he give to the above reply another symbolic date, for example Good Friday, as being the May of salvation'. Again a manifestation of Father Chevalier's spirit of faith.

As for the members of Father Chevalier's Council who had opposed the acceptance of the mission, we cannot pass an unfavourable judgment on them. They were probably acting in accordance with their conscience in what they considered the best interests of the Society, which was certainly in no position to embark on what seemed to them a very imprudent venture. Nor will this be the last time that Father Guyot in particular will oppose the missionary audacity of Father Chevalier. Four years later, it was question of a new mission field - this time of New Guinea. He threatened to write to Rome and have it stopped on the grounds of imprudence. This time the first five missionary Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were involved and the departure was scheduled for October 17, 1884. Yet two weeks before sailing date, so strong was his opposition that no one could be sure that the departure would take place. It did, however, and we know the rest of the heroic story.

But never, throughout this time of trial, did Father Chevalier waver in his extraordinary spirit of faith. "If the Sacred Heart of Jesus wants this land of New Guinea for his missionaries, all obstacles will resolve themselves," he wrote to the faithful Father Jouet. Had it not been for his unshakeable courage and determination, the MSCs and FDNCS may not today be carrying on their extensive apostolate in the Pacific missions.

Yet what suffering of mind and heart this had cost Father Founder. For conflict in personal relationships can hurt deeply, and that it did hurt one has only to read his Spiritual Testament to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. As always, however, he pardons those who consciously or unconsciously have been the cause of pain to him. Furthermore, he acknowledges that he himself may have made mistakes and so may have given rise to criticism of himself and his administration.

In all this, we must remember that no man is perfect, and that the charism to be a Founder does not carry with it immunity from mistakes of the practical judgment. In situations like these, we must try to be very objective in our conclusions and remember that whatever happens in history is because of people. Where one person feels that he has perfectly justifiable reasons for doing something, he runs into opposition from someone else who, in his turn, feels quite justified in his own position. All we need do, then, as we ourselves look back, is to try in all fairness to understand motives on both sides. In this, too, we who come a long time after, are greatly helped by being able to evaluate subsequent events. If Father Founder had not taken the stand he did, may be Issoudun would not have been the great Marian centre which it is today with an influence and works throughout the world to the glory of the Heart of Christ through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; the field of apostolate of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart may have been more restricted; and the Daughters of OLSH could have been a diocesan rather than a pontifical institute, their activities limited to one French diocese.

There is a further point. Historical characters must always be shown in the round. By that I mean with all their strengths and weaknesses. This you will agree makes them more credible and arouses sympathy for them. In 1872 the parish of Issoudun was entrusted to the MSCs by an archbishop who had a great affection for the Society. Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne. His two successors, Archbishops Marchal and Boyer, who found themselves with the government persecution of the religious institutes on their hands, were not so enthusiastic about the MSCs having the parish administration. So we have tension, with Father Chevalier wanting at all costs to retain the parish and thus save the MSC works of which Issoudun was the centre. It is encouraging to leaf through his correspondence and note how, when exasperated, he could express himself with a certain vivacity. But so could St. Paul. I am thinking of two letters in particular - both in connection with our own society. At the time, Father Founder had resigned as Superior General of the Society so as to hold his position as parish priest of Issoudun. But he still kept his eye on MSC affairs. In his effort to save MSC property, the General Bursar was prepared to let FDNCS property fall into government hands. Did Father Founder write a forthright letter to the Superior General, Father Meyer in Rome! The FDNCS had stood by the MSCs in everything, he said. It was unthinkable not to save the FDNCS property!

Again, Mother Marie Louise, our own Superior General, was in Belgium, and, while leaving a small community in Issoudun, wanted to transfer the general administration there even as the general administration of the MSCs had been transferred to Rome. She, too got a forthright letter from him reproaching her with her lack of courage. Eventually, however, he saw she was right, that it could not function in France, and so he humbly gave his blessing. After all, it was the development of the works which he wanted, not mere attachment to retaining the headquarters at its place of origin.

No one was more humbly aware of his own human weaknesses than Father Founder himself. Again we can refer to his Spiritual Testament to each of our Societies. Here I quote the MSC one: "God, despite my unworthiness, has used me, a lowly instrument, to found the little Society MSC. I have received an abundance of most precious graces, but have not profited by them as I should have. In order to punish me, he has therefore permitted that I become the butt of the most painful of trials."

Note how in this, it is again his spirit of faith which speaks. His mind does not dwell on human agents; he sees just the presence of God punishing him for his infidelity. And he humbly asks pardon of the members of the Society for any hurts he may himself have caused them. Yet as he looks back over his long life, he can make a statement which is simply staggering in its utter assurance. Just listen to it: "I think I can here claim that, in all things, I have sought only the glory of the Sacred Heart, the good of our little Society, and of its members."

Jules Chevalier, man of faith during his long career as founder and spiritual father of our two societies, is here at the end of his life able to make a final humble, yet daring act of faith in his own fidelity to the mission given him by the Holy Spirit over fifty years previously.

May he, first among the missionaries of the Heart of Christ which the Church relies on us all to be, be our inspiration to a like spirit of faith in, and fidelity to, everywhere and our common mission of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus loved - forever.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART AND THE INTENTIONS OF THE FOUNDER

J. Bertolini, MSC, 1974

Translation of a conference given at Rome to the Sisters of the Italian Province in three successive groups commencing April 23, May 10, and June 7 respectively. The occasion was a week of renewal in preparation for the Centenary of the Congregation on August 30, 1974.

I have been asked to speak to you about the foundation of your institute, and of the intentions for it of Father Founder - Jules Chevalier. In this connection, much has already been said or written. I shall restrict myself to setting out the facts as given in the documents of the epoch.

After reading certain statements which have appeared in print, even in the course of this year, I shall begin by asking: Does it not belong to a Founder himself to determine the date which he willed to be regarded as the foundation date of his institute? This is precisely what Father Chevalier, in accord with the Archbishop of Bourges, did with regard to the Congregation - at first diocesan - of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

We possess, in his own handwriting, a sheet of paper which could be considered as its birth certificate. This is not, as could be thought, an extract from a homily given at the official ceremony of installation. It records merely the Sunday announcements made by the Archpriest of Issoudun, on Sunday August 30th, 1874, in the parish church of Saint Cyr or perhaps in that of the Sacred Heart.

Father Chevalier begins by recommending the Perpetual Adoration beginning on September 1st, in the Church of the Sacred Heart, as also the retreat in preparation for the feast of September 8th, Our Lady's Birthday and the 5th anniversary of the crowning of her statue. He goes on to announce the ceremonies of the feast and invites the parishioners to decorate the streets of the town for the public procession. Then he adds: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has just accorded a new favour to Issoudun which is her privileged town. For a long time now many persons desirous of consecrating themselves to the service of the Queen of the Sacred Heart have been asking to come together in community. The time

did not appear opportune and above all the hour of Providence had not yet arrived. Now, However, very special circumstances have allowed the Archbishop of Bourges to bring to realisation these desires so often reiterated.

On this very day, in the name of His Grace, this new community is founded and the religious of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are going to be installed. They will occupy themselves with works of piety, with providing a lodging for women coming on pilgrimage or who wish to make a few days of retreat under the gaze of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and also with the education of girls. Let us ask God to bless this new foundation which will be of such service to Issoudun.

Here indeed was a surprise for Issoudun. All the preparations had been made with much secrecy, circumstances which it would take too long to detail here having made this necessary, But for Father Chevalier who had just celebrated his fiftieth birthday the new foundation marked the realisation of a project which went back, as he himself will say, "to the very origin of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart".

From the very first time that Mary was given the name Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it was impossible to forbid oneself the thought that this divine Mother would soon form for herself a court of honour which, in union with her and under her protection, would be consecrated to the Heart of Our Lord. A year previous to the official erection of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in a letter of 1863 to Father H. Leblanc, S.J., of Paris, Father Chevalier, after having spoken of a Third Order of the Sacred Heart for lay people, had added:

Many persons belonging to all classes of society, but principally to the well-to-do, are writing to ask me if we have not also for women a community devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is a sister-society to our own. For the last ten years, I myself have been thinking about just such a project. You are the only one to whom I have spoken of it. What do you think of such a project? And what does Father Provincial think? {Cf. Archives, S.J. Chantilly letter Chevalier, April 9, 1863).

"For the last ten years" - significant words. Father Chevalier here reveals that the idea had been in his mind from the very origin of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The Annals for September, 1874, announced that the new foundation had been made on August 30th. And the October number gave the essential outlines regarding the origin, the end, the works and the resources of the new institute.

From where did its first religious come? Father Chevalier, in his brief announcement of August 30th, had spoken of "very special circumstances" which ultimately permitted the realisation of the project. These circumstances, as we already know, arose from within the Association itself at Paris during the insurrection of the Commune at the end of the Franco-Prussian War - 1870/71.

In gratitude for a visible manifestation of the protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, an institute by the name of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, erected in 1865, under the direction of Mother Marie Françoise Lefebvre-Durufle in the Rue de Vanves, had undertaken to promote the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart as also the works of Issoudun. Under the impetus of Father Jouet, a Parisian centre of the Association had been established at this convent. Little by little, as a result of personal relations with Father Jouet, the Sisters felt called to respond to the design of Father Chevalier, and this Paris community offered itself as the nucleus of a new institute under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Whilst still maintaining the house at Paris where they were responsible for a group of girls, they would establish another house at Issoudun under the general direction of Mother Marie Françoise.

All the necessary arrangements were made between Issoudun, Paris and Bourges, i.e. between Father Chevalier and the respective Archbishops of the two latter places. It was decided that all the Sisters would take the new habit on the same day, August 30th, 1874.

Another favourable circumstance - the acquisition at Issoudun of No. 10, Place du Sacre-Coeur, an edifice which went by the name of the Pilgrimage House and which, until this year of 1874, had been occupied by the Third Order of the Sacred Heart directed by Louise Therese de Montaignac. The latter, after ten years of association with Issoudun, had just detached herself therefrom in order to constitute her own independent group - the Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Montlucon.

I add in passing that the Cause of Louise Therese de Montaignac has been introduced at Rome. Recently I had to collaborate with the Historical Institute of the Sacred Congregation for Religious in regard to the critical biography of the servant of God, particularly in what concerned her ten years of association with Father Chevalier. At the same time, it was also question of the relations of Father Chevalier with another servant of God, Catherine Volpicelli of Naples. Thus the consequent advantage for me of a precious new source of documentation concerning the life of our common Founder.

But to return to Issoudun. The acquisition of the house there was facilitated by the generosity of a fervent member of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who lived at Turin and who had devoted herself to the works of Issoudun since 1871. Extant correspondence with her goes back to that time. It is here question of the Countess Felicite Pirinoli (nee de Briancon).

Her husband having died some months earlier in this year of 1874, Countess Pirinoli had manifested the intention of herself entering the proposed congregation. She took this resolution on May 3rd, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On the following June 25th, she arrived at Issoudun in the company of Father Chevalier who had returned from Rome via Turin. (Cf. The Journey to Rome of Fathers Chevalier, Jouet and J.M. Vandel. They were the guests of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent (Antide Thouret) on the Aventine where was to be found the first Statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - old model - venerated at Rome).

The Countess first of all stayed for several weeks in the Paris community and then came back to Issoudun on August 10th. The Paris Superior was able to write to Father Jouet "Madame Pirinoli left us yesterday as if she were already one of us. I remarked this to Father Superior. Certainly the devil will not fail to organize a thousand wiles as only he knows how, but he will not have the victory." Was this a presentiment? We shall see.

Between August 14-17th, Mother Marie Françoise herself came with another Sister to make the final preparations for the installation at Issoudun. She returned there on the evening of August 29th with ten of her daughters - bringing with them the new habits made at the Rue de Vanves.

Then the following morning, Sunday August 30th, at the 8 a.m. Mass in the Church of the Sacred Heart, thirteen Sisters received from Father Chevalier the large oval medal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart designed by Chertier of Paris. All went off very simply. And on the same day, those who had remained in Paris likewise took the habit of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The new institute was founded.

All were considered as novices. In the group, besides Mme Pirinoli, was Louise Baptiste of Issoudun. We shall speak of her again. The next day, Father Jouet who had been the most ardent collaborator in this foundation, and who would be its first chaplain, was able to write to a religious at Tarragona, Spain: "Do you know that yesterday we inaugurated the first community of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It is a great work which is commencing. Courage!"

Eight days later, on the feast of September 8th, signalled this year by the elevation of the Church of the Sacred Heart to the rank of a Minor Basilica, the Archbishop of Bourges gave his blessing and encouragement to the young congregation. They were there, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, humble and unpretentious but not unperceived, above all in the procession, the choir Sisters in a white habit with blue veil and scapular, the coadjutor Sisters all in blue, and the two tourieres in black. They were there - happy and confident in a future of which they were unaware. Of this future, I shall say a word in due course. Incidentally I would like to say that this distinction into three categories of Sisters was an importation from the Paris community. Some months later, on the request of Father Chevalier, it will be modified by the Archbishop of Bourges, to include only choir and coadjutor Sisters.

So much for the foundation. Now let us see -

WHAT WERE THE INTENTIONS FOR IT OF THE FOUNDER?

In the first place let us not forget to situate Father Chevalier in the 19th century when religious foundations were multiplying - each the response to an urgent need. "The charity of Christ urges us." (2 Cor, 5/14) Whether it is question of the evangelisation of youth or of pagan peoples, of the solacing of the misery of the sick and the aged, or of the re-Christianisation of society and the formation of elite Christians, this upsurge responds to the fundamental command of the Lord:

"Love one another ... It is to Me that you do it." It aims at giving to the God who is Love the response of love which He awaits from men.

Furthermore, all these new foundations of the 19th century, undertaken in response to some urgent need of charity, experienced the necessity of balancing their active apostolate by contemplation, the principal form of which was Eucharistic adoration.

Let us note, too, that often the same founder, on the basis of the same fundamental spirit, instituted distinctive foundations and at different times. Such was the case with Father Chevalier: Twenty years after the foundation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, he established your institute - himself giving to it its first rules. "The Constitutions of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," he stated, "are those of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart adapted to their needs."

As I said previously, the Annals of Issoudun for October,] 874, gave a resume of the origin, end, and works of the new Institute.

1. THE ORIGIN.

This we already know. It goes back to the very beginning of the Association and even further back in the apostolic thought of the Founder. From the very first time that Mary was given the name of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it was impossible to forbid oneself the thought that the Queen of the Sacred Heart would soon form for herself a court of honour which, in union with her and under her protection, would be consecrated entirely to the service of the Adorable Heart of Our Lord, 'After her shall virgins be brought to the King.' Ps. 44,

Their motto will be that of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart: 'May the

Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!'

This fundamental intention will be found in tact at the time of the reorganization of the institute under the direction of Mother Marie Louise Hartzler. (cf. Father Chevalier, 1895. p. 485)

2. THE END OF THE CONGREGATION.

Right from 1874, the end was formulated as follows:

To devote themselves to the Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ through the intermediary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for the sanctification of priests. a. To devote themselves to the Heart of Jesus. That says everything. It signifies the perpetual worship of honour and reparation which the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart wish to give Him, and the measure of the love which they want to have for Him. The Heart of Jesus is to be their all, in everything, everywhere and always to an increasing degree. Such is the fundamental end in view of which their holy rules have been written.

That presupposes an intimate and deep knowledge of the love of Christ, a knowledge which is drawn from His Heart - "centre of all" according to an expression which Father Chevalier is very fond of using in his works. That presupposes imitation of Christ - the Love of God incarnate, an imitation which has no other end than to reproduce His life, to adhere to His sentiments and to love as He has loved His Father and men, Here we have the profound orientation which will determine the various exercises of the spiritual life, notably the daily adoration - in a word, the contemplative aspect of the society.

b. Further - TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES THROUGH the intermediary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

This is an important specification, one which characterises your spirituality, giving it its particular seal. According to the thought of the Founder, 'This is the best means'. And the Archbishop of Bourges who had approved the first rules and kept a copy of them, addressing the first Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart on September 8th, 1874, said to them:

"Our Lady of the Sacred Heart - see in her your Superior, your protector, your model. Look at her and reproduce her faithfully in your whole way of life. She is Virgin, she is Mother, she is Queen. Be virgins by your virtues, mothers by your works, queens by your efficacious intercession with the Heart of Jesus."

Note the reference to intercession with the Heart of Jesus - another theme dear to Father Chevalier.

c. Father Chevalier adds still further:

FOR THE SANCTIFICATION OF PRIESTS: This intention was inspired by Margaret Mary Alacoque. The Visitation nun of Paray-le-Monial had consented to make a donation of all that she was able to do in favour of priests and religious in order to lead them to an exemplary and efficacious priestly and religious life. It was likewise inspired by the concern which Father Chevalier always manifested for the sanctification of priests. Think of his institution of the Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart, etc. He intended, then, that his daughters should be encouraged to offer the Heart of Jesus through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart their daily actions, their prayers, penances and merits so that those who have the responsibility of guiding the faithful may reproduce in their own life and apostolate the virtues of the Heart of Christ.

Later on, however, whilst continually urging his daughters to maintain this intention of his, he will not express it so explicitly in the rules. If we wish to sum up the presentation of the end after 1882, it would be as follows:

1. To devote themselves to the Heart of Jesus through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
2. To render to this Divine Heart a worship of adoration and reparation.
3. To glorify Him by making Him known and by propagating devotion to the Holy Virgin under the name Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
4. To promote the sanctification of the members of the society by-imitation of the virtues of this Divine Heart and of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

3. THE WORKS. The first one singled out is spiritual: it flows from the fundamental orientation,

- a. Daily perpetual adoration of the Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist (the Sisters alternating in the name of the community). This will be their work of predilection ... Always this adoration will be made in union with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who is the first and most perfect adorer of the Heart of Jesus.

(A point to be noted: In this same year of 1874 there had been officially instituted and presented to the faithful the Perpetual Worship of the Sacred Heart. In its presentation and in that of the first rules of your institute we find a striking similarity of expression).

b. To this work of a more specifically-contemplative nature is added one of an apostolic aspect:

The education of girls: The Founder knew only too well that in education lies the germ of the spiritual and social regeneration of the world. Thus he states:

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will interest themselves very particularly in the education of youth, and will spare nothing in order to put their boarding schools on a par with the best educational establishments. Thus they will provide girls with a solid Christian education and form their heart to a sense of duty and the practice of virtue. We shall return to this topic, c. In the third place, he lays down the Works of Zeal and Piety which providence will present and which will be in keeping with their rule.

Here Father Chevalier makes provision for a great openness in regard to the development of the institute and to the needs of the Church. For the time being, however, i.e. back in 1874, it is just question of putting apart of the residence at Issoudun at the disposal of women coming on pilgrimage or desiring to spend a few days in retreat close to the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. We have sufficient evidence of this

form of apostolate from the very first year of the Congregation's existence. Later, the Founder will add - The care of the sick and The Foreign Missions even among the infidels.

To return to the subject of education. It is certain that this form of apostolate was envisaged as being undertaken at the very commencement of the institute, Together with the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it was precisely this type of apostolic work which had decided the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Rue de Vanves, Paris, to put themselves under a new title at the disposition of Father Chevalier. In Issoudun itself, one of his parishioners, Mile Louise Baptiste, directress of a small boarding school, had decided - as we have seen - to enter the new community. Through a circular letter she had announced to the families of her pupils her intention to enter religious life under the name of Sister Marie Therese, as also the closure of her own establishment and the forthcoming opening of a boarding school under the direction of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This decision, kept secret right up till the foundation of your institute, was a great surprise for Issoudun. In actual fact, it provoked such a strong opposition on the part of certain members of the Baptiste family that Mile Louise was constrained to quit the community and re-open her school!

For Father Chevalier, this was a serious reverse.

It was also a great disappointment for the religious come from Paris. They saw their hope of opening the boarding school which had been announced for Easter, 1875, vanish. Furthermore, on her return to Paris, Mother Marie Francoisfc, whilst still remaining the Superior, had left the direction of the Issoudun community to Sister Felicite Pirinoli, still a novice.

Soon another unfavourable circumstance came to cause a serious rift in the understanding between Paris and Issoudun. The unfortunate controversy stirred up towards the end of 1874 concerning devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart following upon certain Polish interpretations and also the misunderstandings concerning an intervention from Rome, caused Mother Marie Françoise to believe that she had been deceived in joining up with Issoudun. Little by little, under various internal and external pressures, she detached herself from Issoudun, followed by some of her Sisters - disappointed maybe at having to recommence a novitiate, or perhaps disillusioned by not finding at Issoudun the occupations which they had had at Rue de Vanves. Despite the good offices of Father Jouet, a definitive separation became inevitable.

However, a few Sisters remained faithful to Father Chevalier and to their title of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Sister Felicite from this time on assumed the charge of Superior of the reduced Issoudun community and considered herself the 'foundress'¹ - unwilling to adopt the intentions of Father Chevalier, himself named the Superior by the Archbishop of Bourges. Mother Felicite herself preferred to confide in Father Jouet, the first chaplain of the community. From the end of 1875, however, Father Jouet lived in Rome. During the year 1875 there were still nine Sisters. Following upon certain disagreements with the Superior, two withdrew, soon however to be replaced by other postulants.

At the time of her profession in September, 1876, Sister Felicite had accepted to pronounce a fourth vow - that of giving herself to the education of girls. Nevertheless, this work will be more and more set aside by her, and this despite the intentions of the Founder. She will get Sisters who entered the community for this purpose to quit it, She will refuse postulants manifesting similar dispositions. She dreams only of a contemplative congregation. As Father Founder himself avowed in March, 1877, "In order to justify herself, she falls back always on her own private inspirations from God."

One day, she had made a resume of the Constitutions with the intention of presenting it to Rome in the hope of receiving a Decree of Praise. Father Chevalier corrected this resume putting the work of education in the forefront. Mother Felicite wrote to Father Jouet protesting that her idea would never be to oppose this praiseworthy and holy end of Father Chevalier. "Nevertheless," she adds, "as long as he leaves me Superior, I shall consider that I am failing in my duty by allowing it to be undertaken to the detriment of the good of the community and of souls, and as long as it is obvious that God does not approve of it. We must always hold absolutely to the carrying out of His Holy Will."

Father Chevalier will inform the Archbishop of Bourges very clearly of this attitude based on a "dangerous mysticism", reminding His Grace that the Constitutions which he himself had approved have been based on those of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart:

They have two principal ends in order to respond to the aspirations of the Sisters:

- The contemplative life which consists in the exercises of piety, in adoration, and in reparation;
- The active life which comprises the education of girls and other works of zeal compatible with their vocation.

Mother Felicite, however, no longer wants to hear the word 'education'. She wants to shut herself up in the contemplative life. It is useless to say to her that the rules state the contrary; that it does not belong to her to alter them or to change the end of the foundation; that it is not for her to pledge the future or to turn aside from this young community vocations which present themselves under the best conditions and with the aptitudes and the attraction for teaching. None of these forceful arguments can make the slightest impression on Mother Felicite who can compromise everything if Your Grace does not intervene . . . She has not fear of putting herself into opposition with me or with the rules. It is time to define very clearly the end of these religious . . .

(October 18th, 1877)

The Archbishop will do everything possible to prevent a total dissolution of the community. The years 1877-1881 will be marked by new flights of fantasy on the part of Mother Felicite, by new trials for the young institute. We cannot dwell at further length upon these difficulties. Always they will be overcome by the indomitable courage of Father Founder. Unfailingly, he exercises patience even when Mother Felicite goes so far as to forbid the Sisters to communicate either directly or by letter with him (this does not hinder certain ones from so doing), or when she judges it useless that he come to give spiritual conferences.

When the hour of the Foreign Missions will sound (1881-1882), Mother Felicite will withdraw from the Congregation, leaving, as she herself says, "the responsibility to Father Chevalier". There will still be problems of a financial order since she is largely the proprietor of the three little houses which then comprised No. 10 Place du Sacre-Coeur. A solution, however, will be found to these. It is now the hour of Madame Marie Louise Hartzler - March, 1882.

During almost seven years, the direction of the pious but erratic Mother Felicite, who could not see eye to eye with Father Chevalier in his intentions for the apostolate, had nearly put the frail institute on the way to complete annihilation. No such thing happened, however, thanks to the patience and tenacity of Father Chevalier - always supported by his Archbishop - and to the fidelity of a few generous Sisters.

Marie Louise Hartzler, the new Superior and "a woman of intelligence and great merit," to quote Father Chevalier, will assure the continuity: the same Founder, the same title, the same habit - at least for a time - the same residence and, above all, the same fundamental rule. As for Mother Felicite, she left Issoudun in about mid-June, 1882, not however without manifesting her regard for Sister Marie Louise Hartzler. She found lodgings first of all with the Ladies of Calvary in Paris. In the spring of 1883, she entered the Visitation convent at Poitiers, she herself having a sister in the Visitation institute at Nice. From the summer of 1884, however, the Countess was a lady boarder with the Religious of the Sacred Heart at Villa Lante, Rome.

With gentleness and firmness, Marie Louise Hartzler will know how to carry out the authentic intentions of the Founder. She will reorganize the young institute, give it a new lease of life, and assure its rapid development for the service of the Church and of her missions.

In 1899, towards the end of his life, Father Chevalier wrote The Religious History of Issoudun. With delicacy and charity, he passed over the difficulties of the first years. Well aware that the continuity of his work was now assured, he also confirmed the fact whilst Mother Marie was still alive that, based upon an unflinching confidence in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the foundations of the institute had been laid on SUNDAY, AUGUST 30th, 1874.

JULES CHEVALIER AND THE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

J. Bertolini, MSC, 1975

The celebration of the Centenary of your Congregation last year, 1974, recalls the circumstances of the first installation at Issoudun, on the 30th August, 1874.

In this Holy Year, your General Chapter invites you once more to study the great figure of your venerated Founder. That is, surely, to use an expression of Pope Pius XI, who was well ahead of Vatican II, in the best interests "to reproduce in ourselves the characteristics by which each Founder wished his religious family to be recognized".

A voice more important still has already asked you to reflect on the mission and the charism of your Father and Legislator ... At first I had thought of treating the final years of his long and meritorious life, in his relations with your Congregation. On second thoughts, to know more for myself, I wondered what had been Father Chevalier's relations with you from your foundation till the end of his life. It is possible in answering your imprudent invitation, I run the risk of being a little talkative and will put your patience to the test. So before commencing I excuse myself and ask your fraternal co-operation.

To begin, I think of the proud declaration of a young apprentice shoe-maker to his employer, when he answered the call of Our Lord to enter the seminary:

"I am going away and am putting my foot on the first rung of the ladder." "I foresee many difficulties and many misfortunes, but sustained by God and Our Lady, I have confidence that Providence will help me. I expect everything from the Good God and his Holy Mother,"

To this confident statement, I add another witness, dating from the day of his Golden Jubilee, 50 years of Father Chevalier's priesthood; the official preacher for the feast day, Canon d'Haranguier of Quincerot, rather solemnly, but without disturbing the humble Jubilarian said:

"It is a fact which pertains not only to the annals of the religious history of this diocese of Bourges, but to the religious history of the Church itself, that at the same time as he received the priestly consecration, this priest was endowed with a special grace to contribute to the extension of the Devotion to the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to invite thousands of souls to draw with greater abundance from the treasures of grace which this devotion contains."

We touch here on what was the "mission" of Father Chevalier in his two foundations, the MSC's and the FDNCS's. We cannot doubt: it was with the same spiritual and apostolic vision that this man of deep faith established our two Congregations, to give to the Church and to the world disciples who would be witnesses of the love with which God loved us and still loves us. And it was to realise his mission even better that he responded to the inspiration to venerate the Mother of the Son of God Incarnate under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In Her he had seen the first witness; in Her he had found that great Hope which never ceased to vitalise him, encourage him, and spur him on, step after step, despite all the difficulties which accompany a mission entrusted to weak, human instruments.

For what concerns your Congregation, it is certain - since he himself already affirmed it in 1863 - that from the first years of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, he thought of combining some religious women in a Community, functioning with the first Society, and dedicated to the Heart of Jesus.

Father Piperon, his first and faithful companion, said. "He sought ceaselessly new ways of glorifying Our Lady."

To found such an Institute, well and good. But it was essential to find the person capable of sincere collaboration and capable of implementing the ideal that he had conceived for such a Congregation. Indeed, at times, he would have hoped for some person or other. But to speak of definite attempts before 1874. apart from what was called "The Third Order", I shall say nothing. No serious document can prove it. There was, surely, about 1872, the attempt of the Misses Ledoux of Issoudun, associated with the Secretariat of the Society of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. But it was clearly foreign to the plans of Father Chevalier; further, with his Council, in reference to the matter with the Archbishop of Bourges, he strongly opposed it.

However, at the same time, in silence and prudence, he was preparing a possible realisation. We must retrace our steps a little: for the last years of Father Chevalier's life are best explained by the past; a past of sufferings and of great consolations.

From the 30th August, 1874, to the death of Father Chevalier, we can discern three distinct phases in his relations with your Congregation.

FIRST PHASE

The first phase extends, as you know, to 1882.

Eight years of alternating hopes and disappointments. In the plans of Providence, a phase rich in merit and one which will accomplish many great benefits in the following phases.

From the beginning, it has been stated that your Congregation took its origin in the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. That is true. It all commenced with the resolution of a fervent Member, already the founder of a small religious family, to place herself under the direction of Father Chevalier, in giving to her one community at Rue de Vanves in Paris, the Religious of the Holy Name of Jesus, a new way of life with the title, "Society of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart".

It was a precipitate foundation, as later on there will be other similar enterprises of the dynamic and enthusiastic Father Victor Jouet, who from 1871 had been an active instrument in this foundation. Later he was named its chaplain and spiritual director. The "Ledoux" case and the handing over of the Pilgrims' Centre that the Third Order of Montluçon was ready to cede in leaving Issoudun in 1874, were also two elements of this hasty action. The acquisition of the house, destined to be the first "convent", was facilitated by the intervention of another zealous Member, living in Turin, and having contact with Issoudun for several years; she was recently a widow, and felt attracted to the religious life as her own sister had already entered the Visitation Order.

It was the Countess Felicity Pironoli, nee Briançon.

Hearing of the approaching foundation at Issoudun. she went there on 25th June, 1874 with Father Chevalier returning from Rome. Later she was going to spend some weeks in the Community at Rue de Vanves. . . Who could be a good prophet in this year of 1874?

On 3rd June, the Superior in Paris, Mere Marie-Françoise Lefebvre-Durufle, wrote to Father Chevalier:

"Deign to bless this little community which is happy to be all for the Sacred Heart under your guidance, and which waits in silence your advice to do what the Heart of Jesus wishes."

Travelling from Turin to Rome, Father Chevalier had reassured Madame Pironoli:

"Be at peace, my child, you are going to a place of peace." Some weeks later, when Madame Pironoli was returning to Issoudun, Mere Marie-Françoise, confided to Father Chevalier:

"Madame Pironoli left us yesterday as if she were really ours. Surely the devil will not fail to make many attempts to have his way, but he will not succeed." Whose victory will it be? Frankly, I would be tempted to reply, "Providence". That Providence in which Jules Chevalier had placed all his confidence when he put his foot on the first rung of the ladder.

What follows has been fully described by Sister M. Venard. After the first months, Mere Marie-Françoise, recognized as "superior general" of the two Communities of Issoudun and of Paris, returned temporarily to Paris. This state of affairs became permanent. First of all she stated health reasons.

But we must admit that she had not found at Issoudun what, in good faith, she had hoped; and her daughters left at Issoudun and entrusted by her to Sister Arsene also shared the disillusionment of their Mother. She had constantly felt that the presence of Sister Felicity would be a serious obstacle; so she refused to yield to Father Chevalier's request to transfer the novitiate to Issoudun. Some Sisters rejoined her without delay in Paris. Other circumstances relating to the activities of the Association in 1875, and the influence of other advisers, all indicated a new direction. Father Durin wrote from Paris: "Father Jouet seems to be doing all in his power to lead these ladies to repentance . . . Having taken an active part in this foundation, he suffers to see it in this condition but he will never do anything with this spirit. . ."

Inevitably a separation was near at hand. Sister Arsene, doubtless under the inspiration of Father Founder, wrote to the Superior: "Well, dear Mother, after much prayer and reflection, the grace of the Divine Heart of Jesus has touched us and enlightened us; now we see we were far from God's Will and the sacred promises we made at the feet of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun, the day of our installation, to the Reverend Fathers, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who founded us and to the Archbishop of Bourges, the 8th September last. . . The Sisters who are here with me, like myself, are firmly resolved to be true Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to embrace the rules and constitutions and to observe them faithfully. The Mission - (I underline this word) - that this good Mother has entrusted to us is too wonderful to renounce. Since Vanves is no longer possible - and we regret this greatly - we have made our resolution after much prayer and reflection before God to remain faithful . . ."

Poor Sister Arsene, in spite of all her ability and good will, thought that she was going to become one of the victims of the inexorable opposition of Sister Felicity Pirinoli, who had just taken charge of the Issoudun Community and intended to direct it according to her own ideas, that she thought were God-given. For her this Congregation was to be contemplative rather than active. Hence her obstinate refusal to enter into the plans of the Founder regarding the education of young girls; and the elimination of the Sisters, or aspirants, wanting to teach; and, insidiously, a certain opposition for the Sisters to communicate with Father Founder - which did not prevent them from sending letters to him in secret. He held out but he suffered in coming to the convent parlour; and the Mother suffered in seeing him come. So one can easily see that communication was difficult. The poor Daughters did not know to what saint to turn; they doubted, equally, the good faith of the Mother and the Father!

"She wants to see the house fall," wrote Father Chevalier. "She is more and more difficult and odd towards me. All the same. I offer this new trial to the Good God."

One day he decided to tell her the whole truth:

"My good and dear Mother, since 1876, I do not think I have hindered you very much in the government of the little Society. . . You have done almost everything you wanted to do. I understand, dear child, that to avoid all misunderstanding, all distress, and to draw down the blessings of God on this newly-born work and to enlighten the minds of all, there is the greatest need for the most perfect accord and the most cordial relations between the Rev. Mother Superior and the representative of the Archbishop, to whom you kindly give the name of Founder." The next day, more incisively, he added:

"You take counsel only from yourself and from strangers, and under pretext that God is bound to give you light, you follow your own ideas, your particular conceptions, your judgement, as if they were inspirations from heaven; and, supported by these false principles, you think you are dispensed from obeying your Archbishop and your Superiors, good Mother, because they are not in accord with you. That, dear Mother, is the crux of all our difficulties."

She referred to Father Jouet, asking that he no longer be regarded as Superior, but Father Chevalier. She had written one day to Father Jouet, "From the beginning of this work, God has made each of us collaborators in its formation . . . Later, by a hidden design, yet always holy, divine Providence allowed that a saint should come between us. . ."

Lovely indeed! But who was this troublesome "saint"? First of all, I shall say, he was a wise man. From the beginning he had seen clearly. He had warned Father Jouet: "The Sisters generally believe that Sister Felicity has insufficient experience to rule the house. They recognise her worth and her virtue . . . There is great uneasiness; there is much suffering. I have tried to pour out oil and balm: do not act quickly but be kind and trusting; do not let us make any charges; they have the grace to do the right thing, with our advice, and a cordial relationship with the Rev. Father Superior." Two years later, this same confrere said to him, in relation to Mother Felicity:

"I saw a person too confident of herself, and under an illusion regarding divine assistance . . . But, judging this Congregation according to the state of its present existence, I must say the Sisters are most edifying; the Superior is full of faith and most devoted; the ladies coming on pilgrimage are very edified. . ."

"This last consideration of the Pilgrimage is according to me the most important to convince me that these good Sisters are raised up by Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to help spread this great devotion, especially if the Sisters are able. . . to direct the pilgrims. It is a question of time, lengthy formation by competent men. Prayer - patience - confidence!"

Here, this troublesome "saint" had written the final lines of his last letter, dated the day of his death, 25th April, 1877. I name him Father Jean-Marie Vandel.

Yes! "Let us pray, let us pray!" Father Founder ceaselessly said. So in 1877: "Let us pray. We need a woman of judgement and good sense in this house. Let us try to find her. Let us ask Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for this woman!" In 1878: "Let us pray and see if there is a responsible and serious woman in whom we can confide."

In 1880: "There is really nothing we can do with Mother Felicity. Her plan is to depart from what we present and what is reasonable." "Would you know a good and holy lady who would like to dedicate herself and take the direction of this little society, which would revive easily under another influence . . .?"

To me, these quotations seem useful in stating fully what Father Founder wanted in the Superior of this Congregation.

In 1881, an important event gave rise to great joy and eagerness in the young members of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. At last, after many requests from the Founder, the Holy See offered him the Mission of New Guinea . . . Father Chevalier went to tell Mother Felicity, saying to her: "This will be a new field for your daughters also!" It was too much. The Mother hastened to write to Monsignor Marchal, telling him of the Founder's visit.

She confessed she had reflected well and added: "Permit me to tell you that it is impossible . . ." From this time, she decided to leave the responsibility to Father Chevalier and to withdraw, giving abundant reasons to the Archbishop of Bourges.

Here I conclude the first phase, the longest and the most painful.

SECOND PHASE

In February and March, 1882, the Community was reduced to three former Sister Co-adjutors of Mother Felicity - Sisters Clare, Emilie and Madeleine: a postulant from Issoudun, Mademoiselle Camille Sabourain, another from Niort, sent by Father Bontemps, and a lady boarder, Madame Hartzler. It was then that the courageous Sister Madeleine, disguised as a lady boarder, made her visit to Bourges. But she discovered that Monsignor Marchal was already well aware of the languishing community at Issoudun. He already knew that Madame Hartzler refused to take charge of the community. When Sister Madeleine made reference to Mademoiselle Sabourain, he hesitated a moment and encouraged Sister to fidelity and patience. Then he charged her with a difficult commission for Father Chevalier: "Tell Father Superior that within three months he must find somebody to reorganise the community . . ." Sister Madeleine, embarrassed, confided in Sister Claire, and she informed Father Chevalier . . . Proceedings went ahead with Bourges . . . Mademoiselle Sabourain, following the humble refusal of Madame Hartzler,

accepted the direction of the little community, under the name of Sister Marie du Calvaire. Madame Hartzler became Sister Marie Louise. It was the 24th March. The position of Sister Marie du Calvaire was only temporary. Father Chevalier had learned from experience that there was need of a conclusive and firm decision. He wrote in this vein to Monsignor Marchal, on 5th December, 1882. ". . . I have informed the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that from Friday next, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the twenty-eighth anniversary of our foundation, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, we would commence in a very serious way this little community and its birth would also be the Feast of the 8th December. . . Then he informed Monsignor of the experiment with Mademoiselle Sabourain, "virtuous and intelligent" but too young and sometimes lacking in prudence. And he continued in stating his decision:

"With the latitude that your Excellency has deigned to grant me... I have selected Madame Hartzler who has lived here for two years; she is a widow, aged 45, and her two sons are with us. She is very good, very pious, prudent and discreet."

So it was on the evening of 7th December, that the Founder with great delicacy told the community that Sister Marie du Calvaire had asked to be relieved of her responsibility and that, despite her protestations, Sister Marie Louise had been named "Superior". As an act of deference, Sister M. du Calvaire knelt down before her and kissed her hand.

Despite the tenor of the letter of 5th December to Monsignor Marchal, who would have been led to believe that a new society was coming into being, it was only a continuation with a new vision. Otherwise, Father Chevalier, would not have written in 1899, while Mother Hartzler was still living, what he said of the foundation in his "Religious History of Issoudun". He would not have recalled in his Testament, which was destined for you in 1905, "the painful beginnings" of this foundation which had given birth to "so many trials and so many vexations"¹.

Yes! Continuity with the same Founder, the same Rule, the same Constitutions (1881 Edition), the same residence, and, for some time yet, the same religious habit, and finally the same title. Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, a title which was so dear to him and which he considered as a whole way of life.

Remember! What did he desire for your Institute in 1877: "a woman of judgement and good sense"; "a responsible and serious woman in whom we can confide"; "a good and holy woman" . . . And no name was written down! He had to pray and seek. Yet, he would find all these qualities in Mother Marie Louise Hartzler. What might surprise you is that Madame Hartzler had made her first journey to Issoudun before 1877-1876, actually. She gave details of it to her director, Abbe Vuillemin:

"At Issoudun, I went to see the Mother Superior of the Religious of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, a community which has been in existence only two years and whose superior is Rev. Father Chevalier, the founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the cure of the parish. For quite a time I wanted to know about this community towards whom I felt attracted, while nourishing the secret hope of entering there later. . . I spoke of my plans to Rev. Father Chevalier, as well as to the Mother Superior, and both of them encouraged me."

Let us admire the secret ways of Divine Providence in which the youthful Chevalier had placed all his confidence even from the first "step" on the ladder!

Very soon it was seen that the heart of the community had found an encouraging serenity. The door was open not only for successive departures, but for new vocations full of promise. Thanks to the public appeals of Father Navarre, Superior of the Mission of Oceania, and to the recruitment of Fathers Bontemps, Lavialle and others, postulants kept on coming . . .

The Novitiate was commenced anew on 8th December. While awaiting a Mistress of Novices, the Founder had assured the Archbishop of Bourges that he was going to take care of the spiritual formation of the Novices himself. In May, 1883, he wrote, "I am very busy" . . . Then in June, "There are ten Novices already and in good dispositions . . . I would much prefer that Propaganda take care of this work than our Archbishop . . . The Constitutions (with amendments) state expressly that the Sisters will be concerned with the foreign missions . . ." Monsignor Marchal did not hasten, however, to approve the constitutions. The lessons of the past made him prudent.

But Father Chevalier was becoming impatient. He was even tempted to send a group of Sisters to Rome for their formation under the care of Cardinal Simeoni. Monsignor Marchal, informed indiscreetly by Mademoiselle Sabourain at Issoudun on 26th May, 1884, said rather facetiously to Father Chevalier:

"Since Rome wishes to authorise them, apply to Rome!"

However, Monsignor Marchal, with much pleasure, on the day after the Feast of 8th September, gave the habit to twelve postulants and received the vows of five Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It was in 1884, and Rome had asked for a second contingent of missionaries for New Guinea. Rome also approved of the Sisters' departure. Monsignor Marchal, hearing this, wrote to Father Chevalier on 30th September:

"I myself would not have dared to advise you to send your Sisters to the distant mission of Oceania. But since Rome has spoken, I no longer hesitate. . . Who knows if tomorrow you will be the object of the same good will? . . . I am of the opinion. Reverend Father, that you send the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to Sydney, provided that one of your Fathers lives near them and carries out the office of Procurator of your Mission. God's will seems clear to me. I hope therefore that there will be in this new-born congregation souls strong enough and courageous enough to respond to the call of the Holy See. It will be a source of new blessings for this Institute."

The prudent Archbishop had become a good prophet! He himself came to Issoudun to encourage the five departing Missionaries, for the Feast of 17th October, and gave the Sisters their Mission Crosses.

With this new house in Australia, and later in the Missions, Father Chevalier recognized once again that the work of education which he had written into the Constitutions ten years previously, was one of the principal means of the apostolate of the Institute.

At Issoudun, despite all his other occupations, the good Father continued to form his daughters by simple instructions, always practical, on the religious life and the apostolate. He insisted very much on the spirit of simplicity, of obedience, and of mutual charity. He was not the man for lengthy spiritual direction; he judged this more harmful than helpful! Above all, he recommended interior mortification rather than exterior mortification, abandonment to God's will, devotion to the Blessed Eucharist as the source of intimate union with the Heart of Jesus, and a meditative silence rather than long prayer formulas. He also spoke often of reparation, but a reparation in close union with the Heart of Jesus and with Our Lady always united with her Son; a reparation made by offering the works and sacrifices of each day, along with all its trials and difficulties. In a special way he placed emphasis on the imitation of Our Lady in her relations with Jesus, on the imitation of his Divine Heart - meekness, humility, simplicity, obedience to the Father . . . Mother Marie Louise, in perfect oneness of thought, followed the same style of formation. Together they discussed often what measures to take, what adaptations to make. Little by little, they succeeded in making secondary changes in the Constitutions. . .

The Father also followed his missionary daughters with much interest. They had no hesitation in writing to him, directly, and especially when they met some difficult challenge and they did not wish to worry their good Mother General.

I would like to emphasise another constant occupation of the Founder: to obtain the Decree of Praise from the Holy See in order to give the Institute papal right and to give it a greater guarantee of recruitment and of development. He asked this continually from his Procurator in Rome: in October, 1885, in February, March and October 1886 and still later. In 1893, he thought it opportune to recommend your Institute highly to the new Archbishop of Bourges. Monsignor Boyer, saying to him, "It grows little by little in an excellent spirit of humility, simplicity, and great love for the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin. This work which is truly blessed by God is one of my sweetest consolations in the midst of the difficulties and bitter trials of the present moment. . ." "An allusion to a serious crisis which threatened our own Society between 1891 and 1894.

On taking charge of the Vicariate of the Gilbert Islands, Father Chevalier recommended once again to Monsignor Boyer to ask Rome for the Decree of Praise which he desired so much, laying stress on the fact of the dedication and the religious spirit of the Sisters in the service of the

Church. That was in 1896. But the new Cardinal Boyer fell ill and died on 16th December.

They had to wait for a new Archbishop. It was Monsignor Servonnet. Alas! He was a prelate who did not favour any religious congregations in his diocese, and certainly not the Sisters at Issoudun . . . Father Chevalier counted more on the intervention of Sydney's Cardinal. Cardinal Moran had just at that time laid the foundation stone of your first Convent at Kensington, on 3rd October. 1896. But he had to be patient . . . Father Founder asked once again, in 1901, in a letter to Cardinal Moran in Sydney, and he asked the Fathers to support his request. What he wanted so much in this year of the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood, was to offer this favour and this joy to your Institute which was developing so beautifully.

But from 1901, the religious persecution in France only delayed still more the Roman approbation. And still greater trials were going to test Father Chevalier's courage.

THIRD PHASE

You have already guessed it: the third phase had come; very short, but most crucifying for the Founder, already weighed down by the trials of his advanced age. In future, his relations with your Institute will be more intimate in spite of the events which follow . . . The most infamous Law of Associations was going to place all French congregations in a tragic situation: Was it necessary, yes or no, to ask for an authorisation of legal status, which would entail grave obligations and that without any assurance? Monsignor Servonnet, recognised as favouring the Government, advised for it. But as Father Meyer said, "It is certain that Monsignor Servonnet wishes even more than the Government to drive us out of Issoudun. He set out for Rome, but I was there before him ..."

After several meetings with his Council, Father Chevalier had sent him to Rome with precise instructions, in order to discuss the matter with the Procurator, at the time Father Genocchi, and to discuss the problem with the Vatican congregations and his Cardinal friends. Unanimously all advised Father Chevalier to do all in his power to keep his position as permanent Cure at Issoudun, and to hand over his charge as General to his Vicar, Father Lactin, and to ask for himself and his confreres who remained in France the Indult of Secularisation that Rome was willing to grant to French religious. Let us see clearly what is meant by the word "secularisation"; it must not be taken in its present sense, nor even in the sense of the Code of Canon Law before 1918. It meant to place oneself under the jurisdiction of a bishop, without dispensation of vows, and with the obligation to return to the community after the storm.

In order to grasp the intimate thoughts of Father Chevalier, whose situation was most unusual, here is the text of his letter sent to the Holy Father, and kept in the Vatican archives: it was dated 28th August, 1901. Religious had to decide before 3rd October, the date of the initiation of the French law.

"Most Holy Father,

The undersigned has the honour of asking of Your Holiness, with the intention of safeguarding the interests of his Institute and to retain his title as Archpriest of Issoudun, two favours:

1. Kindly accept his resignation as Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart;
 2. Secularisation for as long as circumstances demand, while retaining interiorly his obligations as a religious.
- Deign. Your Holiness, to bless him and accept his most devoted service and his most filial obedience in Corde Jesu,"

On this most clear petition, the Congregation for Religious had written "URGENT" in capitals, then the words, also in capitals, "ACCORDING TO THE LATEST RESCRIPT" . . . There was no delay. The two rescripts were dated 3rd and 4th September.

About twenty of our Fathers who remained in France: Issoudun, Paris, Marseilles, Vichy, were assured of the same rescript of secularisation. Two only, after asking for it, later asked for another indult of remission of their vows and left the Society; all the others died as "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart" many years after the death of Father Founder. In 1907, circumstances were still graver than in 1901. So the others went into exile, after the sequestration of our houses in France. Father Lactin and his council took refuge in Belgium. Father Chevalier did not have to seek out a Bishop: he stayed on the spot, Archpriest of Issoudun, named by the Government and the diocesan authority in 1872. His four curates, secularised like himself, lived with him, and two Brothers; three other Priests secretly carried on the work of the Archconfraternity and lodged with friends. At the Presbytery, religious life in common continued as always, with the additional blessing. A Sister took charge of the kitchen.

As to your Institute, so restricted in France and having no works of importance, Father Founder advised the seeking of legal recognition; there was not even a reply to the letter! This was far from reassuring but the Sisters were not forced to leave. On 17th October, the seals were placed on the Basilica. That same evening, a Justice of Peace presented himself at the Convent; Mother Hartzer could only state that the request for recognition had been regularly made!

In the midst of these trials, Father Founder had the consolation, on 13th October, of receiving the vows of some Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; and on 28th October, of giving the Mission Cross to seven Sisters, of whom the Dutch Sister, Sister Bernadette, would later have the honour of preparing the Congregation of the "Ancillae Domini" in Papua. Before this ceremony, the Retreat was preached by Father Piperon, who set out for Chimany in Belgium on 17th October.

As a matter of prudence, it was necessary to restrict the number of Sisters reunited at Issoudun, after the closing of our houses. From 1902, after an earlier attempt at Anvers by Father Reyn, the Belgian houses came into being: Thuin, then Tongre Notre-Dame, etc. Good Father Piperon visited them regularly, assuring the Sisters of his precious spiritual assistance.

In 1903, on the express request of Father Founder, the Archbishop of Bourges granted the extension of the position of Superior General to Mother Marie Louise for a third mandate of six years. Since 1897, your possessions had been legally sold to the same Society who owned our goods. Through prudence. Mother Marie Louise transferred a part of your possessions to Belgium.

It is good to note that when all these possessions were put up for public sale, Father Chevalier intended that they all be bought back.

Such was not the opinion of the French Provincial and of Father Meyer. The Founder insisted. And thanks to a reserve that he himself had prepared with the generosity of some benefactors, a reserve he had entrusted to our Fathers in Antwerp, thanks especially to the generosity of his friend, the Count of Bonneval, who agreed to present himself as the only buyer, Father Chevalier gained his desire - he had given reason in Rome in 1901: "to safeguard the goods of our Institute".

However, the Father had a fear, and he confided it to the French Provincial, Father Carriere: "There is also," he wrote in April, 1906, "the possessions of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. They have sacrificed all that they possessed in building their convent which is now in the hands of the civil society without any compensation. Can we abandon them? I do not think so. Since the interruption of the pilgrimages, they have neither money or resources. For our sake they have generously devoted themselves to our Missions. Issoudun is their cradle. Not yet approved by Rome, they have the Archbishop of Bourges for their real Superior. In his name he has entrusted me with this community; if, unfortunately, they were obliged to leave Issoudun, their superior would be the Bishop of those dioceses where they would have houses. That would cause a division and a dislocation in the Community. All these reasons make it a duty for us to keep them here at Issoudun, at least the general administration. The matter is serious and demands our attention . . ." Our Province in France was already very embarrassed financially, especially with the maintenance of the houses in exile, and could not grant the Founder's wish. So he encouraged Madame de Lapparent to come to the help of the Sisters. With Mother Hartzer, he insisted on the last request of his letter to the Provincial: "at least the general administration". His reasons were well understood, but one had to recognize that the insecurity left by former events would advise a transfer from France, at least provisionally, for the Novitiate and the general administration especially as the works in Belgium were developing so successfully. At all events

the new general administration of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart advised such a decision. It was to be a subject of many discussions between Mother Marie Louise and Father Founder . . . and, at the time of voyage to Belgium in 1906, Mother Marie Louise, with great delicacy, told him of the decision made by her council. To her letter of 15th October, Father Chevalier replied immediately on the following 18th. In its brevity, one can discern his heartache: another "step" on the ladder! "Dear and Good Mother,

By reason of all the advice you have been given and of the favourable advantages you see for the prosperity of your dear Congregation, I bow my head and I offer my prayers that it become more flourishing in the land of Belgium. So you have complete liberty to act and to put your flats into execution. I ask the Divine Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to bless you and to grant all you desire. Kindly accept, very Reverend Mother, the assurance of my affection and unalterable devotedness in C.J.

J. Chevalier."

So Mother Marie Louise left Issoudun, which she never saw again. She left there a group of five Sisters who, with filial devotion, surrounded the venerable old man, more and more paralysed by his infirmities. As in the past, they found many occasions to see him, either when returning from his walk in the park, or in his invalid's armchair, He was happy to see them. Smiling, he teased them, giving some words of advice, putting his name on a holy picture with some fitting words . . . They recalled his visits of early days to their convent, especially on his feast day: "Well, my children," he used to say smiling, "what nice thing have you to welcome me today?" It was a real joy to see him come into the refectory, very simply, like a good Father among his children . . . He used to listen to our good wishes; once he replied: "Good wishes, yes, but I trust there will never be any untruths!" For his feast day in 1893, in response to the good wishes of the Sisters, he gave each one a copy of the second edition of his book, "The School of the Sacred Heart or Lessons in Perfection". There was still a way of handing on his teachings. As he said before to his Missionaries, he recommended to his daughters: "Do not wish that your Congregation be bigger and more learned than any others; try to make it great and renowned by its virtues, humility, charity; this is what pleases the Heart of Jesus and what He loves to see resplendent in His Spouses!" The last five years will witness to the dignity of the venerated Father, when, in January 1907, he was cruelly driven from his Presbytery and insulted . . . But he who had already pardoned so much, who had always been ready to pardon any in advance, replied with a broken voice: "Nothing happens without the permission of God!" It was the second last step on the ladder . . . The ultimate was approaching; it would be the date which is so dear to us, 21st October, 1907. His House of the Sacred Heart was in good hands. Suddenly, the Basilica opened; he knew his tomb had been prepared in the crypt, under the chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: his thanks was still a smile . . . For his Daughters, there were only his words which he left them in his Spiritual Testament written in 1905: "It is to your good Mother that you owe your existence. Never will you be able to thank Her enough. Moreover, I have confidence that She will always continue to protect you as she has done to this day." May I be permitted to share the same wish!

(iii) REPARATION

St. Madeleine de Pazzi was set on fire with love for the Heart of Jesus. Seeing that his sufferings in the great mystery of our Redemption were either ignored or scorned by the majority of mankind, that the Eucharist he gave us in the excess of his love was the object of indifference, she exclaimed: "Love is not loved"¹ . . . St. Francis of Assisi said the same thing. This suffering gives birth to reparation.

I. NECESSITY OF REPARATION

Since man's first revolt against God, reparation has become a necessity. All the sons of Adam can say, more or less, like David: cf. PS. 38 and 51.

This is the cry of guilty and repentant humanity. Like the royal Prophet, it feels that its own expiation is insufficient. Indeed, since infinite majesty is offended, the reparation must be infinite.

That is why the Son of God, in response to his love, became a victim, taking our nature and thus giving to his expiation the value required by divine justice. But he wishes that all those he redeemed share in his work of reparation, so that there may be harmony between his Heart and ours. (Col. 1,24) Does this work of reparation stop at Calvary? No! It continues on our altars because sin never ceases . . . Constantly as victim, Jesus offers to his Father, in expiation for the sins of the world, the same sacrifice which he offered on the cross. In its mystical immolation, his adorable Heart makes reparation unceasingly for the offenses committed. His perpetual and complete oblation is like a hymn of praise which drowns the noise of the blasphemies and outrages. There, on the table of sacrifice or in the tabernacle, Jesus Christ utters a cry, not of retribution of justice, but of mercy and pardon.

Moreover, he makes the Eucharist the epitome of all his benefits, the highest expression of his love for men. It is in this divine Sacrament that he shows the extent of his love for us. He makes it the throne of his mercy, a source of life, an ocean of blessings. How do men respond, for the most part, to these signs of his loving kindness? Alas! with ingratitude and contempt. Instead of making reparation as they should and thus uniting their satisfaction to that of Jesus, to appease God's justice and obtain his graces, they outrage him by sin, indifference or forgetfulness. In the whole of humanity . . . there is only a very small number, only an almost imperceptible group of sincere adorers and faithful friends.

So Jesus Christ complained of this neglect to Saints Gertrude, Brigitte, Lutgarde, Colette, Therese and many others, He showed himself to these special friends in the dreadful state to which his executioners had reduced him during his Passion. He told them that his Heart was much less affected by the acts of cruelty committed by his murderers in the past than by those which are committed against him today, and that it is not for this past that he wants reparation, but for the present.

This is what he said to St. Margaret Mary . . . "Behold, how sinners behave towards me." Then he showed himself to her as the "Ecce Homo" . . . He then said to her: "Is there no one to share my suffering in the pitiable state in which sinners have put me, especially at this time?"

One day, when she was before the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lord showed her his divine Heart and said: "See this Heart which has loved men so much, that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, to prove to them its love, and in return I receive for the most part only ingratitude . . ." "See my heart," he said. "It is pierced . . . It is my chosen ones who have done this to me." "If these outrages came only from my enemies, I could perhaps bear them, but no, they come in a large measure from those very ones on whom I have bestowed my greatest benefits, whom I admit into my intimate secrets, and on whom I lavish each day marks of the tenderest affection . . ." Such are the complaints of the divine Repairator. . .

In the Apocalypse, had he not already said that the apathy of a tepid soul revolted his Heart? (Apoc. 3, 15-16) And does not St. Paul affirm that those who commit crime crucify again the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt? (Heb. 6,6) And elsewhere he says that those who sin voluntarily, after having known the truth . . . wander into myths. (II Tim. 3,8 and 4,4)

But can Jesus Christ, today glorified and impassive, suffer? No, the Doctors of the Church tell us. The terms used are figurative. God uses them to accommodate himself to our language; we would be wrong to take them literally. That is true. But God surely wishes to give us a message. Since Jesus Christ does not suffer, how can he tell us that we make him suffer and that he is the actual victim of our sins? We are in the presence of a profound mystery, before which reason must yield. To wish to penetrate deeply into it would be to attempt the impossible . . . However, let us try to raise a corner of the veil which hides the truth from us.

II. THE MYSTICAL SUFFERINGS OF THE HEART OF CHRIST

God is sufficient in himself. Before the creation, nothing was wanting to his happiness. The existence of the world brought nothing to him that was necessary and its destruction would not take anything from him. However, by the very fact that he made it freely from nothing, he must maintain with creatures relations that are fitting to his equality as Creator. And in their turn, creatures must behave towards him as being the work of his hands. To break off these relations is to fail to recognise his authority, to violate his most sacred rights, to refuse him what belongs to him, to defy his will. . . Can God remain indifferent to these insults? Why are we astonished that he complains?

Sin is not only a revolt, it is an outrage against God. "Indeed what does the sinner want? Either that God does not know about his crime, that he remains indifferent to it or that he cannot punish him." (St. Bernard) It is then basically the destruction of the divine Being that he wants, since he wishes him to be without wisdom, justice or power, perfections without which God could not exist.

Guilty man goes still further. He is not content with this intentional decide:, he tries to put it into execution. What does he do by committing sin? He commits such an act in opposition to the divine attributes that God experiences an infinite hatred towards it and the grief that he feels is so great that it would be capable of causing his death if he could cease to exist.

When we offend God, it is no thanks to us that he does not suffer; and if a superior and insurmountable force was not opposing them, our sins would have the power of making him suffer. Thanks to his impassibility, it is true he does not suffer, but on our side, we do willingly and freely all in our power and all that is necessary to make him suffer. It is in vain that we protest, saying that this is far from our thoughts and that this horrifies us. This may be so ... but having established the cause, we cannot be indifferent about the effect. And if once again a superior power did not place the God Man beyond our reach, he would of necessity be submitted to suffering

When Jesus Christ shows us his pierced Heart . . . reproaching us for our cruelty, it is only to make us aware of the effects of the implicit desire contained in the sin we commit, the conditions to which it leads of its nature and that it would actually reach this state if it were not prevented by an absolute impossibility from proceeding further.

Let us go back eighteen centuries to the time when Our Lord was on earth. Sin met God, who had become capable of suffering in the humanity which he took in a Virgin's womb. Sin profited by the circumstance and the God-Man, whom impassibility no longer protected, momentarily was done to death. Now, for God, there is neither past nor future; all is present. For him what has been done or will be done is always being done at the present time. From all eternity, he saw our sin, tormenting his well-beloved Son on the day of his Passion, although in the order of time the decide of Calvary would be accomplished centuries before our existence,

Moreover, if Jesus Christ had not expiated our sins on the cross, if the satisfaction which he made acceptable to his Father was not infinite, he would have to suffer and die again to appease divine justice. Consequently, when Our Lord is complaining that we crucify him again, when he shows himself as he was at the time of the Passion, in reality it is only to present to us the expiation that his Father would need to exact in reparation for our sins, if, in advance, this expiation had not already taken place, or if it was not sufficient for all time, He only wants to put before us, as he sees it, the work of sin which for him is carried out unceasingly and always remains present.

Jesus Christ is not only God; he is also man. If as God he has before him always the sight and hatred of sin, as man, he still retains, in all its intensity, the sentiment which he expressed at the beginning of his Passion, when he said, "Father! if it be possible, take this chalice from me!" (Matt. 26,39; Mark 14,36; Luke 22,42)

In putting on perfect immortality, he was deprived of passibility which is a beginning of death. Suffering being a punishment for sin, Jesus Christ who is holiness itself holiness substantial and infinite, must be beyond its reach and had the right to complete happiness, from the first moment of his existence. If during his life suffering was able to affect him, it was because, by a remarkable miracle, he had temporarily suspended the exercise of his right to supreme happiness. It is in order to show us his love that he wished to satisfy absolutely, by suffering, his Father's justice. Once his mission was accomplished and our debts were repaid, he entered into glory and impassibility. But the sensibility remained with him always ... He is in heaven with his Body whole and entire, and so with his Heart. Now like every human heart, and even more so, the Heart of Jesus was sensitive, (there could be no doubt about this). Why would he be no longer so now? Would the sensibility be an imperfection in the Word Incarnate? Evidently not. Then sensibility being inherent in human nature, Jesus possessed it in his glorified state. His sensibility is transformed (this must be recognised) but it exists, although we cannot state exactly either its workings or its effects. Jesus loves all that he loved, with the love with which he loved it; his affections have not changed in their object.

He keeps them carefully in his Heart. He has carried them with him to the highest heaven, as the richest part of his inheritance. He retains then the full extent of his love for God, his Father, whose glory he came to repair, and his love for man. whom he redeemed with his blood. So when he sees his Passion despised and rendered useless by a great number, God outraged again, in spite of all his benefits ... he is deeply affected. Thus we see without any doubt what would reduce him once again to the agony, if he was not impassible, what also would cause him to exclaim, from his glory and from his tabernacle: "May this chalice pass from me!"

And when in order to try to melt our frozen hearts, Jesus Christ declares that our sins are still making him suffer, and when he shows himself actually exposed to the same outrages and the same tortures as at the time of his Passion, his language and his revelations are true. It is as if he was saying: O sinners who offend me, recognise what you have done, look at the treatment you subjected me to while I was on earth. In persevering in your crimes, you dishonour my Father and you draw down upon yourselves a terrible sentence by the way you abuse my goodness to you. Why are you surprised that I complain? I am no longer subjected to suffering, that is true. But do not think from that that I am indifferent. In acquiring impassibility, I have not rid myself of my sentiments. I love you so much, in spite of your coldness and ingratitude, that if it was necessary and my Father would agree to it, I would willingly come down again on earth and allow myself to be crucified again, if only this would allow me to save even one among you. You are always so dear to me and your interests are so precious that if you are lost, my Heart, although insensible now to suffering, will none the less be profoundly saddened by this. (Heb. 6,6)

By drawing our attention again to all the scenes of Calvary. Our Lord wishes not only to urge sinners to conversion, but also to ask us to console his Heart and to make reparation by prayers, mortifications and good works, for the outrages which are committed against him,

"See this Heart which has loved men so much," he said to St. Margaret Mary. . . "and in return, I receive for the most part only ingratitude . . . That is why I ask that the First Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated to a special feast to honour my Heart . . . and that a special cult be given to it... in order to MAKE REPARATION for the outrages it has received."

III CHARACTERISTICS AND EFFECTS OF REPARATION

Reparation is then one of the principal ends of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Also all Christians are invited by our Lord himself to follow this way . . .

But what is reparation? It can include all acts; the following are the principal: knowledge, adoration, love, satisfaction, prayer, praise, supplication, thanksgiving, imitation, union with Jesus Christ, zeal for his glory and the salvation of souls and mortification.

To make reparation worthily for the outrages which the Heart of Jesus receives, one must first of all know his dignity, his excellence, his greatness, his perfections, virtues, prerogatives, love, sufferings, the treasures of grace which he contains, in a word all that can make him worthy of love in heaven and on earth. This knowledge is necessary. How indeed can we pay homage to an object if we do not know its nature or its qualities? It is not possible to enthusiastically go in search of a good we do not esteem, still less one we do not even know. (Rom. 10,14) (Phil. 1.9)

How rare are souls who apply themselves seriously to this knowledge of the Heart of Jesus! For the most part, they remain indifferent to this masterpiece of divine power, this sanctuary where dwells the divinity, this unfathomable abyss of all-riches, this unique beauty which delights the angels and saints. They run after phantoms which they are not able to reach, they become passionately fond of mere trifles, wear themselves out acquiring vain knowledge and neglect that which can teach and save them. This is perhaps the outrage that we should repair most, because it is the cause of many others.

To knowledge of the Heart of Jesus, must be added adoration. Nothing is more just or more reasonable. Studying this divine Heart, we shall know that it is the Heart of a God, and then we will prostrate ourselves before him, in self-abasement and humility. (Matt. 4,10; Luke 4,8) We will offer him the homage which he asks for and the honour that he merits and in that way we will compensate for the wrongs that he receives . . .

If knowledge of the Sacred Heart engenders adoration, it also produces love, This divine Heart is also infinite goodness, charity itself, mercy incarnate. We must then love it, not only because it possesses in a supereminent degree all the qualities possible, but also on account of the boundless love it contains, the immense benefits with which it overwhelms us and all the favours which it unceasingly bestows on us each day in spite of our sins. So our love for him should be generous, active and persevering. (1 John, 4,19) If it is so, we shall share naturally in his joy as in his sorrow, we will grieve over all that causes him anxiety . . . We will shrink from no difficulty, no sacrifice to make up to him. We will suffer all in order to console him.

Then we will pray as fervently as we can. Prayer consoles, prayer disarms, prayer obtains all. (Si. 35,21) Sometimes it takes the form of supplication and praise, sometimes that of thanksgiving for gratitude, And this means, so efficacious in itself, becomes as it were all powerful, when we unite it with the sentiments of the Heart of Jesus and imitate the example which he gave us, so that God may see in us the image of his Son. (Rom. 8,29-30; Phil. 2,5; Exod. 25,40; Jn. 13,15; Eph. 5, 1-2; Col. 3,3)

So we will feel ourselves set on fire with an ardent zeal to procure the glory of the Heart of Jesus, to extend his empire, to win souls to him and to make him reign everywhere. In this way we will make up for the wrongs done to him.

But you will ask how can reparation do this! It is so insignificant! It would never be worthy of God's majesty! It would never make up to him. If we were left to ourselves this would certainly be true. But we know that a Christian in sanctifying grace is no longer simply man. Through his Baptism, he becomes a son of God by adoption. (Gal. 3, 26 & 4,4-5) Consequently his works are no longer purely human. Because of his union with Jesus Christ, with whom he has been made a member, his acts have a supernatural virtue so great as to be acceptable to the divine Majesty.

Moreover, in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, offered . . . as a means of salvation and a supreme remedy for the evils of society, our Lord offers his divine Heart as the substitute for our weakness, which we can use to raise our prayers and our merits to infinite proportions. It also offers a means for human nature to carry out the great precept of love and fulfil all the obligations which this requires.

Our adorable Saviour himself has assured us of this. If fervent Christians can make reparation in a certain measure . . . what can we not hope for if Mary offers to the Heart of her Son his merits, if she addresses her prayers to him in reparation for the wrongs he receives?

Just as when there is question of reparation towards the Blessed Trinity, that of Jesus is alone sufficient, being alone infinite, so when reparation is made to the humanity of our Lord, to his Sacred Heart . . . that of Mary . . . exceeds all others . . . Indeed who knows better than she the excellence and holiness of the Heart of her Son? Who can adore it more perfectly and love it more ardently? Who can praise it, thank it, pray to it with as much merit and efficacy? Who can recall his virtues as faithfully as she, and offer him satisfaction as acceptable and as complete as hers? Who has ever been so desirous to procure his glory and win souls for him? This holy Virgin is indeed the Reparatrice par excellence for the outrages offered to the Heart of Jesus. Although the efficacy of this reparation is so great, God still wishes that we unite ours with it also . . . No person is exempt. (Col. 1,24)

O incomparable Virgin! What are you doing at the foot of the Cross? To the Redeemer, who sacrifices himself, loaded with sorrow and expiring in agony and abandonment, you offer the satisfaction that he asks for and the consolation he desires . . . You ask mercy for sinners of the present, as for those of the past and the future . . .

Mary continued this role of Reparatrice and advocate during the years she passed on earth after the Ascension. She continues it still and will continue it till the end of time. Her intervention is all the more efficacious because she alone, after God, can measure the greatness of the crimes, the number and enormity of the offenses committed towards her divine Son, because she alone, after God, can know the sensibilities of his Heart, the intensity of its love for men and the immensity of his sufferings brought about by their coldness, indifference, ingratitude and sins; because she alone of all creatures can obtain, through her merits and all-powerful intercession, pardon and mercy from this divine Heart, to which she is united by the most sacred ties . . . Many examples could be cited . . .

O blessed Virgin, since you have such power with the Heart of Jesus, with you and through you we wish to repair the outrages committed against him. From now on, we will confide to you all our interests, we will make our requests through you, so that they will be heard. On Calvary, when all the disciples had fled, you were alone with one faithful friend, mysterious representative of all the elect, to give marks of love to the Victim who was being sacrificed . . .

Since then, you have never ceased carrying out this same role, for the Passion of the Saviour is renewed at every moment . . . You carry out this ministry of reparation towards this divine Heart, outraged continuously by the sins of men. The new title which we address to you in order to show your co-operation in this wonderful work . . . inspires us with great confidence, for it tells us what you are for us, it makes us understand the greatness of your merits, the efficacy of your power and the deep love of the Heart of Jesus for you.

(iv) THE PERPETUAL WORSHIP OF HONOUR AND REPARATION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

I. ITS END AND NATURE

All the works and efforts of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (e.g., Society M.S.C., Secular priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart, Archcon-fraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Third Order of the Sacred Heart, Congregation of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart), are directed to one single end viz., to communicate to as many as possible a true devotion to the adorable Heart of Jesus. The importance of this end will be appreciated better if one has a right idea of this devotion.

By its nature it surpasses all others, for it is directed towards the most worthy object - the Heart of the Word Incarnate:

- It calls forth the most perfect acts of the virtue of religion.
- it increases our love of God and promotes the exercise of this love which " is the greatest and first commandment" (Matt. 22,38), and the virtue which gives value to all others. "If I have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13,2) . . . Indeed the person who loves truly the Heart of Jesus longs to give himself without reserve to Him.
- In thinking of His greatness, he wishes to humble himself before Him.
- Contemplating His great mercy and love for men, he is filled with gratitude and wants to spend himself in His service.
- Remembering His painful sufferings endured for us, he wishes to sacrifice himself in return.
- Seeing the indifference, coldness with which His love is repaid, he wants to offer himself, even to the shedding of his blood.

In a word, the Heart of Jesus becomes more and more the centre of his thoughts and affections, his only treasure - "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6,21) "Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3,11), and before long he will "have put on the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2,5) and his life - "to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil. 1,21)

It is easy to understand that from such a person the Heart of Jesus receives the honour, love and reparation He seeks. He reigns as master in the only kingdom He desires in this world - "The kingdom of God is within you." (Lk. 17,21)

Is not the practice of this devotion, as described here, the way to live a truly Christian life? ...

Could we but spread everywhere this devotion, then God would be glorified by all men and His love would reign in all hearts. Is not this the mission of the Church . . . and the remedy for the evils of our time!

Thus understood, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the quintessence of our religion, and in working to spread it we could do nothing better to bring more benefits to men and more glory to God.

It would seem that the various Associations, etc., established by the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart should, if they were fully developed, suffice to assure the reign of the Heart of Jesus in all hearts. However, there still seemed to be one thing missing which could bind together all these works and give them unity. This is the special cult we are going to propose as that of "Perpetual Worship of Honour and Reparation to the Heart of Jesus."

Presented on the 25th March 1874 to the members of the Association of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Perpetual Worship was established immediately, and it developed quickly, carrying with it treasures of grace.

II. MOTIVES FOR THE PERPETUAL WORSHIP OF HONOUR AND REPARATION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

We will point out three of these motives:

1. To unify our efforts to practise devotion to the Heart of Jesus.
2. To attain the principal end of this devotion which is reparation.
3. To respond to the urgent desires of Our Lord Himself.

This cult differs from others concerning the Heart of Jesus. Each has a particular end, whilst the perpetual Worship helps the development of all and unifies them. Thus in helping them attain their end, which is the reign of the Heart of Jesus on earth, the perpetual Worship is their completion. Thanks to it, the numerous associates of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, our priests, the members of the Third Order, etc., united in this perpetual Worship of Honour and Reparation, form one single family, one single people among whom the divine Heart is honoured in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4,24), and where He has established His reign of peace and love.

2. The final word in devotion to the Heart of Jesus is reparation, due to Him for all the outrages which He has received and continues to receive on the part of mankind. Since these outrages are countless, let the friends of the Heart of Jesus unite with one another to make reparation, and with this end in view we appeal to our 18 million associates of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to all the members of our other works, to all the faithful, to take up the practice of a perpetual worship of honour and reparation to the Heart of Jesus.

3. The express desire of our Lord Jesus Christ is to see established everywhere and for always a worship of reparation and honour to His divine Heart. Let us listen to Blessed Margaret Mary:

"This loving Heart presented Himself to me with these words: I have a burning thirst to be loved by men in the most Holy Sacrament, and I find scarcely anyone who will offer himself according to my desire to quench my thirst, by making some return to me." Another day, speaking of the ingratitude of men, He said:

"They have only coldness and rebuffs for all my eagerness to do them good. But at least give me this pleasure of supplying for their ingratitude as much as you are able."

In the famous apparition on the octave of Corpus Christi, Jesus asks that a feast be established in honour of His Heart, that Holy Communion be received on that day, an act of reparation be made for the outrages committed towards Him. Our Lord not only asked Blessed Margaret Mary for the cult of reparation; He asked the angels. They pay continuous homage to the Heart of Jesus in order to repair the sorrow that this divine Heart has suffered and still suffers in the most Blessed Sacrament through our ingratitude and coldness. (Life of Bl. Margaret Mary) If the angels in heaven repair continually the ingratitude towards the Heart of Jesus, of which men on earth are guilty, should we not establish among us this perpetual Worship of honour and reparation?

Therefore in proposing to the faithful, and especially to members of our works, this practice, we are realising the most ardent desire of Our Lord.

III. REASONS FOR THE PERPETUAL WORSHIP OF HONOUR AND REPARATION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

Of what does this cult consist? How is it organised? What are its practices?

1. Of what does this cult of honour and reparation consist? It consists principally of offering each day to the Heart of Jesus all our actions, our prayers and our sorrows, in a spirit of adoration and reparation: the whole substance of devotion to the Heart of Jesus is there.

This practice does not impose any obligation, it only asks for love, love for the Heart of Jesus. All our works, however ordinary they may be, even the most indifferent, become acts of love, so long as they are done with the intention of pleasing Our Lord.

Now we can form this intention in a general way in the morning and renew it from time to time during the day. All our works, done thus for the Heart of Jesus, will become acts of love and reparation.

In order to make this cult practical, this is what is suggested: On each day of the week a special cult of honour and reparation is offered to the Heart of Jesus in the following order: (Note: the order given here by Father Chevalier was later slightly changed, as follows)

Sunday	-	cult of Adoration
Monday	-	cult of Love
Tuesday	-	cult of Thanksgiving
Wednesday	-	cult of Petition
Thursday	-	cult of Compassion
Friday	-	cult of Expiation
Saturday	-	cult of Union

That means, for instance, one offers all to the Heart of Jesus in a spirit of adoration and to make reparation for the indifference of so many who forget to adore Our Lord, or who outrage Him instead of adoring Him, etc. . . This gives to each day of the week a special character by acts of adoration, love, gratitude, expiation, supplication, etc., and all this is offered in homage and reparation to the Heart of Jesus.

2. But how is this organised, and how is it made perpetual? Certainly, the perpetual Worship can be organised on a personal basis, by taking the particular cult for each day. The essential is there and in this way the perpetual Worship is accessible to all. But to enjoy the promise which Our Lord made, to be in the midst of those who are united in His name, it is better to form groups of seven who share between them the different cults to be given to the Heart of Jesus. Each group will form a perpetual circle in which the Heart of Jesus will never remain without receiving some homage. We say groups of seven persons. This number is necessary so that each person, according to the day, can change the worship offered to the Heart of Jesus.

This method of practising the perpetual Worship is especially practical in seminaries, religious houses and boarding schools, among priests of the same district, people in the same parish. When it is not possible to form groups, it is necessary to be content with private perpetual worship.

IV. THE PRACTICE OF "REPARATEUR" OR "REPARATRICE"

Each day successively, one person of the group is reparateur. on that day, he acts in the name of all those who make up the group. On first awakening, he offers himself generously to the Heart of Jesus to fulfil the office of the day on behalf of the group and he retains this office until the same time the following day. Even sleep, offered to Our Lord, does not interrupt this mission. Each breath becomes a meritorious act - the body is sleeping, but the heart watches and each of its beats is an act of love for the Heart of Jesus.

Morning Offering: This offering each morning of all our acts of the day in a spirit of reparation and love is the basis of this devotion and is most pleasing to the Heart of Jesus.

Holy Mass: We assist at Mass in a spirit of reparation, according to the cult of the day, honouring the Heart of Jesus as victim for the world. Our Lord recommended to Blessed Margaret Mary to assist at Holy Mass with the dispositions of the Blessed Mother at the time of the Passion.

Holy Communion: We receive Holy Communion in a spirit of reparation according to the cult of the day.

Spiritual Communion: We make frequent spiritual communions. Simply the desire for Holy Communion is so pleasing to the Heart of Jesus that He said one day to Blessed Margaret Mary that these desires for communion pleased Him so much that if He had not instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, He would do so to satisfy her.

Visit to the Heart of Jesus: We love to visit the Heart of Jesus, really present in the Blessed Eucharist. Blessed Margaret Mary spent there all the time she had free and Our Lord told her how much that pleased Him.

Way of the Cross: In making the Way of the Cross, we offer to the Heart of Jesus at each station the cult of the day. For devotion to His Passion should not be separated from devotion to His Sacred Heart.

Act of Reparation: We make in the evening an act of reparation according to the cult of the day, that is to say, to show by our words to the Heart of Christ our sorrow at the sight of the ingratitude of men and our desire to compensate by our homage for all the wrongs done to Him.

Holy Hour: We make the Holy Hour on Thursdays. This exercise was taught to Blessed Margaret Mary by Our Lord. It consists in passing an hour in prayer and meditation on the agony of Our Lord in the garden of olives.

Consecration to the Heart of Jesus: After Communion, we make to the Heart of Jesus an entire offering of ourself. Blessed Margaret Mary said that this is an exercise very pleasing to the Heart of Jesus.

Mysteries of the Rosary: We meditate on the mysteries, during the recitation of the Rosary, in union with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, honouring with her the Heart of her divine Son in these different mysteries.

Zeal for the propagation of devotion to the Heart of Jesus: Our Lord promised many graces to those who would practise the devotion to His divine Heart and also to those who would make it known.

Zeal for the interests of the Heart of Jesus: To devote oneself to the interests of the Heart of Jesus, through the apostolate of good works, good example, expiation and prayer. Each remains free to do, on his day, the practices which will fit in best with his vocation and his work.

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART: THE PART SHE PLAYS IN CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WORLD **J. F. McMahon, MSC, Centenary Mass, Kensington, 1974.**

We spent the first day of our Provincial Chapter on one topic - the charism of our Father Founder, the charism or gift of God to Father Chevalier. It was a gift he got from God, it was a gift to him personally, something which he alone possessed, but he passed it on to future generations, to the members of the Societies which he founded.

The one thing that has come home to us very much in our prayerful reflection on this whole idea of charism is that it exists in one person, belongs to that person, and doesn't exist again in the same form at all; but it can survive in other people. We asked ourselves what signs can we see today, still existing, still strong, of the original charism that belonged to Father Chevalier, and lives on or doesn't live on, in the people who became members of his Congregation and Society. If it is not there, if it can't be seen and found in us, then we have lost it. By working together in small groups, we tried to discover that presence of the Founder today in the Church and in the Congregation. And after each of the eight groups had come back to the central meeting to record the findings, we discovered that there was a remarkable agreement. Each group used different words, different phrasing, different approaches, but substantially we could see, in all honesty, present in members today the same sort of charism that was present in Father Chevalier and has been handed down since his time. This was arrived at, not from a knowledge of Father Chevalier's writings, but from what we could find in people today.

If we could summarize what fifty people said in a few sentences, it would come to something like this: that today Missionaries of the Sacred Heart want to bring people to the love of God; that the means to do this, to present Christ under the aspect of his love and the love of his Father, was to be through devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and to do this with courage, with conviction, confidence, zeal, optimism; and to show that the love of God manifested in the Heart of Christ is a remedy for the evils of this day, as it was the remedy for the evils of another day. Finally, that the Missionary of the Sacred Heart is an active missionary in a Society which is missionary, and that it can welcome, take in, embrace all types and classes of people.

Then the delegates were asked to state what they considered the outstanding events in our history over a hundred years that helped to preserve this charism in people, that helped to spread this charism to all parts of the world. The first three things listed were:

1. the vocation that came very early in the history of the Society, to go out and be a missionary society;
2. the foundation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and
3. the spreading of that devotion by the means popular in that day of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

It is in this sort of context, then, that I should like to express on behalf of the members of the 'other' Congregation Father Chevalier founded, a little before yours, that our Congregations, on this your foundation day, are one in a bond of friendship and the sharing of a common charism, not only in a common Founder; and that if we have kept this charism, you certainly have. It is most gratifying to think that the Marian dimension of Father Founder's charism and our living out of that charism today is not some historical thing in the past. It is with us, and the Marian dimension of it is there also. It is a matter of history that Father Chevalier gave to the Church that part of his charism that concerns the Mother of God. It began as we all know with the theology of Mary Immaculate. He was no professional theologian, but he was theologian in his heart, in his spirit and in his spiritual life, and he perhaps understood more than a lot of professional theologians, even if technically he didn't have their expertise. So he began with the theology of Mary Immaculate. He was aware very much that the greatness and the importance of Mary lies in the fact that she conceived Christ. That before it was possible for all God's loving plan to take effect - to become possible even - she was first of all redeemed by Christ in advance, the only one so privileged. And it was because of that unique greatness, I think, that Father Chevalier realised that if he was to bring men back to an understanding of God's love, then he would have to do it along the same sort of pattern that God did it in the first place, when salvation and the love of God was first brought into the world in the Person of Jesus. If there was to be a new redemption, if there was to be another announcing of the Good News, and especially the good news that God loves, then you can't go wrong if you do it along the same sort of lines and with the same sort of pattern, and link your apostolate with Mary and her place in the salvation of all men.

We share with him, I suggest, that appreciation and understanding of Mary because of the vital part she played in her Son's mission in the world, and the vital part she has always played in Father Chevalier's mission in the world - a mission that makes it possible for us to believe and hope in a Saviour and Redeemer, a mission that makes it possible for men today to believe in the love of God and the love of his Son. Nobody

could have co-operated more closely with Jesus, nobody could have understood better what he was trying to do, what he was involved-in. Nobody loved what he loved as much as Mary. I suppose that from time to time as we study the story of Mary's life, we're inclined to restrict our understanding of her to the part she played in the history of her Son's mission; the role she plays in the Gospel - all those familiar scenes that come back to us in extracts from time to time and in our own reading: her position at Bethlehem and in the Temple, at Cana, or by the Cross, and at Pentecost. Perhaps we could overlook her continuing work, just as we forget sometimes, I'm afraid, the continuing mission of her Son in the world. He is the Risen Christ in the world now. If we don't believe that we just don't understand Christianity. And I suggest that if we don't understand that Mary is with him in the world and working in the world with him through her power especially over the Heart of her Son, then we don't really understand Christianity, let alone what our own vocation is. So his closest co-operator continues her mission in the Church, and has a place in the mission of each religious who owes his or her place in the Church to Father Chevalier.

If, then, we understand our own vocation, our own call from God through him, through the Congregation, we must see it as a continuation of Christ's work in the world, and a continuation of Father Chevalier's work in the world. And it's simply just not possible to separate Mary from the apostolic work that we do today, because she couldn't be separated from the work he did then. And of course Father Chevalier moved from his devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in the sense of her Immaculate Conception, to something different, something new, something that would express in a more heartfelt way an explanation of Mary's part in her Son's mission. Today, as we look back over one hundred years, it is Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that is in a special way commemorated because our attention is directed towards the love-relationship between her and her Son. And since love is the greatest of all the Christian virtues and the strongest of all motivations, and the only satisfying explanation for all that the two of them did together, and are still doing together, we go today to the very heart really of how the mystery of God's love for men finds expression in this way; and as far as we are concerned personally, finds expression in our vocation and in the Congregations to which we belong.

When Father Founder, then, gave us this title and gave it to the Church as well, he left us something that should be a continuing reminder of the way in which God's Good News came to the world in the first place - through a Mother and a Son who love each other in a way we are called to imitate. Somehow she seems to have acted that out in the history of your own Congregation and of our Congregation. It is rather striking to remember that it was devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart that preceded Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in many parts of the world. They followed because she was there first. No Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, no Missionary of the Sacred Heart, understands his vocation properly, then, to continue this vitally important saving work in the world, unless he understands that the one closest to Our Lord in his saving work, the one who understood best what he did, was the only perfect co-operator - we all try to do our little bit but we all fall very short - the one who was dearest and closest to him as he was to her. This is what is in our minds and hearts tonight. And we must never make the mistake of looking upon this as something in the past. We must see this happening here and now. And tomorrow perhaps, when you get a much more public demonstration, outside your own family as it were, of the impact that this has had on the Church at large and on people, then we must see Mary as the Church sees her, as the first of God's children who has herself attained the goal already that God in his love offers to all men. He preserved her from all sin in order to make this possible. He rescues us from sin, so that for us too, it can become a reality.

Our Founder, then, was caught up in this incredibly rich, beautiful interflow of love between the Incarnate Lord and his Mother. He was schooled and taught by Christ. He came to a vivid realisation of her loveliness and importance. And he was also schooled by Mary. He learnt a lot there, His heart under her tutelage expanded with love for Christ that led him to send his missionaries throughout the world. And don't forget, we wouldn't have a vocation unless he had done that. His whole life was dominated by the presence and the action of both Jesus and Mary. Their love-dialogue was open to admit him in a special way.

I suppose our prayer should be that we will somehow find a place in his charisma, his own gift which came from the heart of Christ and is linked with the heart of his Mother. Let us ask God tonight for strength to persevere in such a tremendous call from him - there can't be any doubt about it. Let us also thank God for our vocation and our call, because in his Providence it apparently looks as though that is where our salvation lies. Let us above all thank him for being admitted into that other Trinity - of Mary, and her Son, and Father Founder.

JULES CHEVALIER: TALKS TO MSC AND FDNSC NOVICES

Sister M. Venard, FDNSC Hartzler Park, 1972

I. JULES CHEVALIER: A MAN SENT BY GOD

II. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST MISSIONARY OF THE SACRED HEART

III. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST AMONG THE M.S.C.

IV. JULES CHEVALIER: MAN OF FAITH

I. JULES CHEVALIER: A MAN SENT BY GOD

To date, no complete and authoritative life of Father Chevalier has yet been written. Such a work demands much painstaking research over a long period and the certainty that, as far as possible, no sources of original documentation have been overlooked. Nevertheless, thanks to praiseworthy efforts which have been made in many directions, I think I am right in saying that, in general, the outline facts of his life and achievements are well known to every Missionary of the Sacred Heart and Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who has spent some time in our respective societies.

This, of course, cannot be so true of relative newcomers. Our first talk will, therefore, be aimed at giving a clear outline presentation of the sequence of events of his life - lived, as it was, in a certain century and in a certain geographical setting. For some, maybe, this will be no more than a refresher, which will also be useful. For whilst outlining events. I hope to provoke some constructive thinking as to the significance of these events for Jules himself; for his two Societies: and for each of us individually whose particular grace it is to have been called to carry on his mission in the Church.

We shall, therefore, be treating history from more than a merely chronological angle. For history is something more than mere events. To quote C. H. Dodd, a non-Catholic Scripture scholar, "History is occurrences plus meaning." We have a good illustration of this in the study of the Gospels. Mark, Matthew. Luke and John certainly give the main events in the earthly life of the historical Jesus. However, they interpret these events in the light of their faith in God's design of salvation.

So, too, with the life of our Founder. Its events and circumstances must be seen as having meaning for us who have been given the grace to perpetuate his mission in the Church. We must be able to interpret the facts and make use of the insights thus received in our own Sacred Heart-centred mission and spirit. A discovery of the activity of God in the life of Jules Chevalier can develop in us a spirit of faith sharpened to discern His directing Presence in apparently chance, or even humanly-designed circumstances in our own lives as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or as Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Now to get down to the actual life story of Jules Chevalier. The sources of what is being given here are the main facts already known; available documentation with which many may not be perhaps so familiar; and lastly a few interesting oral traditions, now in writing, which have come down to us from those personally acquainted with Father Chevalier.

As regards historical documentation relative to our two Societies, I must point

out that no one document - and this is particularly true of letters - taken by itself, can be considered as telling the whole story in regard to one or other society. To explain: We have the same Founder. The history of our institutes is very closely linked. A certain piece of MSC or FDNCS documentation, say a letter, may be useful to the historian of either society. But what it records will have to be interpreted within the context of the general situation of the particular society in question. To clarify what I am trying to say. Three people - a geologist, a botanist and a painter - would perceive a particular spot, say in the Dandenongs or the Blue Mountains, each from a completely different angle. The geologist would examine it from the view of say rock strata; the botanist from that of the relationship of soil composition to vegetation type; whilst the painter would have an eye to natural beauty and its artistic expression. So it is with the historian handling a document. We pass on now to the actual details of the life of Jules Chevalier. Founder of both the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Jules Chevalier was born at Richelieu in France on March 15, 1824. Richelieu, together with all the other places where in the main he lived his life, is situated roughly in the centre of France. Very briefly, he was the third and last child of a rather low-income family, the father being a baker. The mother did her best to supplement resources by selling vegetables in the local market. The father, who had come down in the world, was not a good business man and was not in the best of health. He was a non-practising Catholic and had his moments of depression when times were hard. But, all in all, he was a decent-enough man. His wife was a fervent Catholic and the family was well respected.

If we are looking for significances in the life of Jules Chevalier, they are there, but are to be found in the ordinary circumstances of his very ordinary life. In the past, over much has been made of an incident whereby he was allegedly abandoned, under rather dramatic circumstances, by his mother to the care of Our Lady. Briefly, the circumstances are supposed to be these.

One day, as she was selling vegetables, the father, in a disgruntled mood, turned up in the market place. He publicly upbraided her for being late home to prepare the dinner. He also got his eye on baby Jules in his basket, and made no secret of the fact that he was finding a third child to be fed a bit of a burden. The mother, naturally upset, grabbed up little Jules. ran impetuously to the church opposite, and deposited him basket and all at the feet of Our Lady. Since he was the cause of all the trouble, Mary could have him. A few minutes later the parish priest came into the church, saw and recognized him and went out to the market place to see what had happened. There he found the mother in tears being comforted by other women. One of them went back to fetch the baby.

Much was made of that story, especially after Father Chevalier himself became somewhat of a public figure, in order to demonstrate the power of Our Lady of Miracles whose image is venerated in the Richelieu church. Near the back of the church there is a large plaque to the effect that Madame Chevalier, in a fit of despair due to the blackest misery, abandoned the baby, Jules Chevalier, to Mary; that he grew up in Richelieu; and that later he founded the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The story inscribed on the plaque then finishes up with the lesson to be drawn: "Those who are confided to Our Lady are never abandoned."

The story did, perhaps, have some basis in fact - maybe a momentary emotional outburst on the part of both father and mother. But the later history of the united and respected Chevalier family would make one suspect that a lot of legendary details have grown up around the reputed incident.

Something far more significant for our purpose is what Father Chevalier himself wrote in a document which he entitled "Personal Notes not Intended for Publication". This document is dated April 8, 1902, that is, five years before he died. Here he makes the following statement: "Shortly after my baptism, my mother carried me to the church and there consecrated me to Our Lady and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

In other words, after he had been consecrated once and for all by the liturgical rite of baptism, his mother formally confided him in a particular way to the Heart of Our Lord and to the care of Mary. As we look back over his long and full career, one is struck by the degree to which his whole life was a lived special consecration to the upbuilding of the Church through his apostolate for the Heart of Christ through Mary. In this retrospect, his mother's simple act of realistic faith can take on a far richer significance than any which an unverifiable incident of his babyhood might suggest.

As Jules grew through his boyhood - a high-spirited, in fact, often an annoyingly mischievous one around the town - he developed a vocation to the priesthood. To himself and to all who knew him, this was an unrealisable dream. For it was common knowledge in Richelieu that the Chevalier family would never be able to finance his seminary education. By the time he was fourteen, however, this manly, thoroughly likeable boy with the frustrated vocation had so aroused the interest and sympathy of some in a position to help that steps were taken to do something for him. It was arranged that he be received gratuitously into the Junior Seminary of Tours, the diocese in which Richelieu was situated. Imagine his happiness at the prospect. But it was to be a short-lived happiness. For the bishop discovered that the seminary finances were in a bad way, and forbade any further intake of students unable to pay fees. A significant frustration, surely. For it happened that the priesthood in that particular diocese was not part of God's plan for Jules.

Nothing daunted, he stuck to what he recognized as his priestly vocation. He would earn enough money to pay his own way. So he got himself apprenticed to a bootmaker. Furthermore, he took up the private study of Latin.

This state of affairs continued for three years. Each morning saw him serving the Mass of Father Bourbon, the parish priest. After this the two took coffee together in the old presbytery which had been part of a Vincentian monastery when the Vincentians had charge of the parish. Coffee finished, Jules went off to his bootmaking, tenaciously clinging to the idea that he was to be a priest, and doing all he could to prepare himself.

At long last, God himself intervened - quite unexpectedly, in a positive way. A stranger passing through Richelieu put up at a local inn. His name was Juste, of the Forestry Department. He had been returning home after some trip and, for no particular reason, had taken the alternative route through Richelieu. During a meal, a waitress-friend of the Chevalier family overheard him say that he was looking for a trustworthy forest-ranger for some forests in his charge at Vatan about twelve miles from Issoudun. She speedily informed him that she herself knew just the person he was looking for. The result was an interview with Jules' father who was accepted for the position. Straight away, arrangements were made for the family to move to Vatan. Better still, when M. Juste heard that his new ranger's son wanted to be a priest, he took the initiative, himself offering to pay for his education in the Junior Seminary of St. Gaultier in the family's new diocese of Bourges.

Now it happened that the town of Issoudun where Jules was destined to be an instrument in God's divine design was also in the same diocese of Bourges - a mere few miles from Vatan. God had thwarted his efforts to get into a seminary in his former home diocese of Tours, but very significantly helped him into this one. More striking still. No sooner had the Lord installed him exactly where he wanted him than M. Juste moved off elsewhere. This meant that the latter had no further need of his forest-ranger. So Jules' Dad, out of a job, returned to Richelieu with his family, and there, luckily enough, got a good position as a rural constable. As for Jules, he stayed behind in the seminary. Awkwardly enough, with the departure of his benefactor, his fees were no longer paid. Even so he was kept on, for by this time he had become so much appreciated by his seminary superiors that they decided to put him through his studies gratuitously.

All the same he was finding the going hard. It was difficult to adapt himself to the ways of boys much younger and less mature than himself. He became homesick and depressed. He wanted only one thing - to get back to Richelieu where he was known, understood and looked up to. As for the priesthood, he argued to himself, once he could provide for his fees, there was always the possibility that he would still get into the seminary of his own diocese of Tours. In this same seminary, also, he had a cousin and friends.

But that is just where God didn't want him. As a matter of fact, his superiors understood and appreciated him more than he knew. He was persuaded to defer his decision to quit until the end of a retreat. He did so. By that time, all his misgivings had vanished.

Four years passed. In 1846, at the age of twenty-two, he was promoted to the Major Seminary in the city of Bourges itself. He wasn't among the most intellectual of the seminarians, but he was very earnest - a bit too earnest, in fact, for some of his fellow students who were put off by his

somewhat rigorous piety.

Again God intervenes in this life - this time to indicate to Jules that he is calling him to a special vocation within the priestly vocation. The professor of dogmatic theology, when treating of the Incarnation, added a treatment of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For Jules this was a decisive moment in his life. He records his own impression:

"This doctrine went right to my heart. The more I became penetrated with it, the more I found in it."

He spoke to his director of his new spiritual understanding. The director then gave him to read the first published life of the then Blessed Margaret Mary, apostle of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This reading led Jules to a new conviction. "The reading of Mgr. Languet's book," he wrote, "aroused in me a lively desire to make myself the apostle of this devotion." (Ms. 1859)

Here, then, was a new moment of grace. Captivated by the dogmatic and spiritual riches of devotion to the Sacred Heart, he had received a new understanding of something with which he had been familiar from childhood. Remember that his mother had consecrated him to the Sacred Heart. Furthermore, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, he grew from understanding to deeper understanding of the devotion. As a result, from being a somewhat taciturn and rigorous student, he became affable, outgoing and smiling. This gave him an ascendancy of leadership over the other seminarians. In other words, he was growing in virtue in a more human way. Incidentally, the word 'Virtue' is a fine, strong word which comes from a Latin word meaning 'strength'. To grow in virtue means to grow from strength to new strength. But Jules' virtue had a particular orientation - the reproduction in himself of the love of the Heart of Christ. This ideal he would later express in the Constitutions of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (1877 edition):

"Those who take the glorious name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart will find in it a stimulus to practise the virtues of this divine Heart, and to propagate with an ever greater ardour the knowledge and the love of him. They will consider themselves worthy of such a beautiful title only insofar as they attain to living the very life of the Heart of Jesus." (Text, page 18) Something further now took place. His mission as apostle of the Heart of Christ began to manifest itself. Within the seminary he asked and received permission to form a Guard of Honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. During their free time, the members of this group undertook to succeed one another before the Blessed Sacrament, there to adore the Heart of Our Lord in the Eucharist and to pray for the needs of the Church. Here we have an indication of the future Founder. Our own Congregation was still far in the future, but when it did come, he gave it this special feature of a daily half-hour of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and for exactly the same intentions. This is still a feature of our daily prayer life.

Once more, God intervenes, this time in frustration of Jules' desire. He wanted to volunteer for the foreign missions. His seminary superior told him to put the idea out of his head. It was, he was told, in dechristianised France that his mission lay. Jules obeyed, not blindly in the sense so often given to the word, but with the full awareness of faith that all he had to do was to cooperate fully in God's plan by doing his will as it became manifest. It certainly was God's plan that his own personal mission lay in France. That mission, however, was to found in France two institutes which would send missionaries to all peoples to the ends of the earth, in particular to pagan peoples who had never heard of the love of Christ.

Next step. Jules now begins to dream of founding, after his ordination, a society of priests consecrated to the Heart of Christ - priests who would dedicate themselves to making him known and loved everywhere. Again a setback. Father Chevalier will be his own spokesman here:

"Ten years ago, when I was still in the Major Seminary, I was preoccupied with the thought of the moral disease eating into our century. I conceived the idea, or rather (note his assurance here) God inspired me with the thought, of founding a community of priest-missionaries who would work for its eradication. I told my director about this. He regarded it as an illusion, a figment of my imagination. Feeling very humiliated, I resolved to forget the idea. But it persisted. Something kept saying to me: 'One day you will succeed. God wants this work.' Obsessed with this thought, I timidly cast my eyes upon one of the seminarists whom I thought would be just the one to second me in this enterprise. But I never mentioned the matter to him. Where would this community be established? . . . Suddenly there presented itself to my mind Issoudun with its three priests to serve 14,000 people." (Ms. 1859)

Two years later, on June 14, 1851, in St. Stephen's Cathedral, Bourges, Jules Chevalier was ordained priest. For the next three years, he served in three different parishes. But he never relinquished the idea that he was destined to found a society of priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and that the place of foundation would be Issoudun. Nevertheless he left the realization of the idea to God who, he was sure, had prompted it.

Towards the end of these three years, he was expecting still another transfer. It came - in mid October, 1854. He was still preoccupied with the idea of the society of priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Nevertheless, before he slit the envelope, he acted in accordance with his characteristic spirit of faith. He made an act of union with the Will of God whatever the letter would make this will known to be. He himself tells what happened:

"Before opening the letter, I went on my knees and said to God: 'Lord, I want your will alone. I accept gladly in advance the next post assigned to me.' Hardly had I read the first lines when I saw to my great astonishment that I was appointed curate at Issoudun. Then I opened the Ordo. There I found that my fellow-curate was the very one (Sebastien Maugelest) on whom I had cast my eyes for association in the projected work." (Personal Notes, pp. 30-31)

It took but a few days for Father Chevalier to get himself installed in Issoudun - reputed as the town most hostile to religion in all that region of France.

How did the people of Issoudun see him - this new curate who had come among them? Well, a photograph taken in 1854, together with the memoirs of an old MSC (Father L. Sadouet) whose parish priest he was during the latter's childhood and early manhood, makes us picture him as a straight, well-proportioned young man. He is thirty-three and of rather pleasing appearance. He is of medium build with a fine head of hair. Unpretentious and zealous, he immediately wins the appreciation of his parish priest and the two curates. Some of the ladies of the parish, however, were not so happy with him. They wanted someone more social than pastoral. To his great amusement, they made a spiteful insinuation that he was negligent in his personal appearance. One day, he says, when he went into his confessional, he found a parcel addressed to himself. In it there was a hair brush and comb and a tin of shoe polish. These individuals, too, were eventually won by his genuineness and his priestly concern for everyone in the parish. More importantly, he was not long before beginning to leave his mark upon the spiritual life of those for whom he was responsible.

Here at Issoudun, except for brief trips to Rome and other places, he is going to remain until his death as its parish priest fifty-three years later. For Issoudun is to be the focal point of his mission still however to be initiated - the mission to convince men that God loves them with a human heart.

To sum up this talk on JULES CHEVALIER : A MAN SENT BY GOD. In following the life story of Jules Chevalier until he is appointed to the parish of Issoudun in 1854, one thing stands out in striking relief. In him God has manifestly been preparing a man for a mission. Thus we see Jules as -

- Confided as a baby to the Heart of Christ and His Mother;
- Directed by God to the priesthood;
- Guided by Him towards ordination in a diocese other than his own;
 - Orientated by the Holy Spirit towards a special realization of the scriptural, theological and spiritual riches of devotion to the Heart of Christ;
 - Initiated by God into a gradual awareness of his mission to make this Divine Heart loved everywhere to the ends of the earth;

- Appointed to a parish in a town destined to be the birthplace of a new apostolic impetus in the Church.
We can conclude, then, by saying that in Jules Chevalier we see a man unmistakably sent by God.

II. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST MISSIONARY OF THE SACRED HEART

When I speak of Jules Chevalier as the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart. I do so in a double sense. He can be called the first in the order of time as I shall try to prove in this second talk. He can also be called first in the sense that no one can have a deeper understanding of the mission and spirit of a society than its founder. Perhaps in this latter connection, it would be more to the point to call him first among the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. For the moment, however, we shall confine ourselves to the first aspect, the chronological one.

When Jules Chevalier found himself, at the age of thirty-three, appointed curate at Issoudun; when he found, too, that his fellow curate was none other than Sebastien Maugeness whom, in thought, back in their seminary days, he had associated with himself in the foundation of a society of priests consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he was more confirmed than ever in the conviction that his idea was in the designs of God. More significantly still, he found that Father Maugeness shared the same ideal, and was more than eager to throw in his lot with him.

The two young priests possessed neither prestige, nor possessions - only a strong conviction. But a conviction is not enough. Father Chevalier wanted a sure sign. For this they turned to Mary. They asked her that, as the first fruit of the dogma of her Immaculate Conception to be defined on December 8 of that year, 1854, she would obtain for them from the Heart of her Son an indication that He approved the projected Society. They asked also the means to implement it. So they began a novena to end on the very day of the definition. If their intention was granted, they would take the name Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. We know the end of the story. On the very morning the novena concluded, they found themselves presented anonymously with the offer of a sum of money to be used for the foundation of a society of priests who would undertake missionary work in the diocese.

Could any sign have been clearer?

But it goes without saying that the anonymous gift of 20,000 francs had not just dropped miraculously from heaven. Nor, for that matter, had there been anything miraculous about the appointment of Father Chevalier and his companion to Issoudun. What did happen was that Our Lady took in hand a set of circumstances already in project, and guided it to the conclusion prayed for in the novena. The fact was that the religious indifference of Issoudun was a great worry to Father Gasnier, the superior of the seminary where Jules had finished his studies. As a Diocesan Consultor to the Cardinal of Bourges. it was this Father Gasnier who in actual fact had been responsible for the appointment of the two ardent and energetic young priests to Issoudun where the parish priest could not cope because he was old and in failing health. Furthermore, this same Father Gasnier knew a certain Father Champgrand who was also interested in remedying the religious indifference of Issoudun. It is probable, too, that he knew of Jules' dream of founding a society of missionaries and for this reason he asked Father Champ-grand, who had wealthy connections, to finance the project. Of course, neither curate had any inkling of this. All they saw was that Mary had heard their prayer, which she certainly had, but by using human means.

Nevertheless, in this answer to prayer, lay the source of future suffering for Father Chevalier. Those responsible for the gift of the money had in mind a group of priests living in community and restricted to giving missions in the region. Jules, however, dreamed of something much wider - a religious institute with a universal mission to propagate the devotion to the Sacred Heart as a sure means of curing the moral ills of society. To further complicate matters. Father Champgrand, the donor of the money, was completely opposed to the foundation of a new religious institute, and was even more opposed to devotion to the Sacred Heart. So here was a very awkward situation. The priest had promised the money without realising the real purpose of the project. Father Chevalier, quite unaware of his attitude, had in all good faith accepted the gift.

But the resultant troubles had not yet manifested themselves and, for the moment. Jules could not see beyond the happiness of 8th December. "O Mary," he wrote, "what a happy day for us. The anniversary of the definition of your Immaculate Conception will henceforth be from that of the conception of our new Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For it is today that (here has commenced for it the mystery of life. " (Vermin. 114) This is why, by an unbroken tradition, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart regard December 8 as the date of the Society's foundation.

This day of the Immaculate Conception was, then, for the two curates a day of unspeakable happiness. All the more so because in everything they had the support of their parish priest, Father Crozat. He told them that he would do all in his power to help them establish in his parish of Issoudun a house of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

So, with his consent, Father Chevalier went off happily to the Cardinal Archbishop of Bourges to get his consent. The Cardinal, however, was a prudent and experienced man. He said that a sign wasn't enough. The two curates must first assure themselves of some means of support. That didn't worry them. Mary Immaculate had already proved that she was on their side and had an interest in the project. So, encouraged by the success of the first novena, they decided upon a second. Furthermore, this time they made a formal contract with her. If she found them the means to maintain the new foundation, they would take the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart already promised; would regard her as their foundress: associate her in all their works: and cause her to be honoured in some special manner. Each day during this novena the document of contract was placed on the altar during Mass.

While this was going on, their parish priest worked so well on their behalf that, on the very day the novena finished, he was able to inform them that another anonymous donor had assured them an annual sum for their livelihood. This was in January, 1855.

But even during the course of the novena the latest trouble brewing had blown up. It came to the knowledge of Father Champgrand that the two Issoudun curates were contemplating something quite different from what he had in mind when offering the money. As already stated, he wanted the new work confined to the region of Berry of which Issoudun was a part; he was violently against devotion to the Sacred Heart; and he strongly opposed the inauguration of a new religious institute. For Father Chevalier, on the other hand, devotion to the Sacred Heart was to be the very reason for the existence of the proposed society and, whatever the works undertaken, they would be means to that end. As for the objection to a religious institute, from the very beginning Father Chevalier had been convinced that the consecration of one's entire person and his activity through the public vows of religion would ensure the most radical form of commitment to the mission of spreading the love of the Heart of Christ.

Our Lady had certainly indicated that the proposed foundation was the will of God. But the very fact of the gratuitous financial aid promised by Father Champgrand was to bring with it eight years of painful difficulty. Whether or not at this stage Father Chevalier had got wind of the situation, he started off a second time for Bourges to see the Cardinal and tell him he had the promise of an annual sum of money for the support of the community. As for Father Champgrand's promised donation to start the work, perhaps he felt sure that if the Cardinal gave permission the donor would most certainly keep his promise.

The Cardinal was impressed and, after some difficulties with his council as we shall see later, freed the two curates to go off and commence the new community. Reluctantly Father Champgrand gave in, but made himself difficult for a long time to come.

By September, a ramshackle house had been acquired where today the great pilgrimages in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart take place. Here, on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary in this year of 1855, the Vicar General of the diocese, in the name of the Cardinal who was ill, officially gave to the tiny community of two the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. To quote Father Chevalier's Personal Notes:

"It was on the very day when the Church celebrates the feast of the Holy Name of Mary that the Vicar General baptised us with the name of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This new and mysterious birth happened just nine months after our conception on December 8 of the previous year."

He also calls attention to the fact that on this same day there was not just one change of name, but two:

"On that same day on which they received the NAME of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, desirous of manifesting to Mary their love and their gratitude. they gave her in their thought the NAME Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The title seemed to come from Heaven."

This quotation is from the Preface to one of the first editions of Father Chevalier's book on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (Ed. 1886, p. 34). In the actual text Father Chevalier, in both cases, printed the word NAME in capitals. He wanted to bring out the point that on the day they became officially called Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Mary became in their thought (his own, of course) Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. On this day, therefore, there were two changes of name. Significantly enough, right from its inception, Mary was associating herself in the life of the Society, for the title, he declared, "seemed to come from Heaven".

Father Chevalier was, however, very prudent. Not for two years, during which time he studied carefully from the point of view of scripture and theology this new title which had come to his mind, did he make it known.

In the poor little house in which they were now officially installed, the two Missionaries began on their own account a period of novitiate, at the end of which they planned to make private vows, "In order to give ourselves without reserve to the Heart of Jesus, we chose the day when he gave himself to us." (Personal Notes) In the silence of midnight, after midnight Mass on December 25, 1856, Father Chevalier and Father Maugeness made perpetual private vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, to which they added one of stability.

Then more trouble began. "Hardly a year went by," wrote Father Chevalier, "when we experienced a new and cruel trial. The Cardinal decided that he would have to take Father Maugeness to fulfil an important post on the Cathedral staff." Father Chevalier in great distress went to see him. He implored him not to take Father Maugeness, otherwise the new Society would face ruin even before it got underway. The Cardinal was not unsympathetic, but his reply was a new challenge to Father Chevalier's faith;

"Either your work is from God, and I believe this after all the graces you have received, or else it is the work of man. If it is of God, then the taking away of Father Maugeness will not, in the long run, affect it. If it is the work of man, then his presence won't save it." (Piperon)

Words of spiritual wisdom uttered by one who must himself have been a man with a deep spirit of faith, and which were strikingly verified in the subsequent history of the Society.

Father Chevalier was now left well and truly alone - strictly speaking the first and, for a long time, the only Missionary of the Sacred Heart. He certainly did have another associate, Father Charles Piperon, who later became his most faithful and ardent admirer. But at that particular time. Charles Piperon was very hesitant and did not see eye to eye with him concerning the apostolic mission of the Society. He was afraid of the parish ministry and, as late as 1872, was still thinking of withdrawing and becoming a contemplative. This meant that Father Chevalier had to stand alone in defending and maintaining the plan for the new Society as he had conceived it right from the beginning. (Vermin 214) It is in this sense, then, that I think we are justified in calling Father Chevalier the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

It was some time in the middle of 1857, before the departure of Father Maugeness to take up his post at the Cathedral, that Father Chevalier made known the inspiration which had come to him to give Mary the title Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The story is too well known to be repeated here. In actual fact, however, though Father Chevalier was quite unaware of this, he himself was not using the title for the first time. Research has proved that a contemporary Belgian Trappist had been known to speak of Our Lady under that name for very many years. Furthermore, a certain Father Angel, S.J. had made unsuccessful attempts to popularize it at Paray le-Monial in 1846. As for Father Chevalier, however, he knew nothing of this. "The title,"¹ he said, "seemed to come from Heaven." In any case he can, with absolute certainty, be said to have initiated its doctrinal and liturgical cult in the Church, this of course still in the future. All research seems to indicate that the inspiration came to him independently. He himself was convinced of this.

By mid-1857 Mary had manifestly constituted herself Foundress of the new Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It now remained for Father Chevalier to make her known far and wide under the new name which was to bring her so much honour and love in the Church, and to associate her so powerfully in the mission of the Society to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus loved everywhere.

In 1864, he established a very effective means of doing this - more effective in fact than he foresaw. He established an association of prayer and good works under what later came to be called by the rather cumbersome name of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. This had a truly marvelous expansion and spread to the most unlikely places in the world. It can be said that wherever a new field of apostolate opened up for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, she herself had been there beforehand preparing the way. Either her statue had preceded them and was venerated and loved, or she had been active through the Archconfraternity or its magazine, the Annals, commenced in 1866 and soon being published in all the main European languages.

It is simply amazing how Issoudun, before the arrival there in 1854 of Father Chevalier the most dechristianized town in France, rapidly became the centre of vast pilgrimages in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Through the propagation of little pictures of the Sacred Heart, he had rapidly got together enough money to begin the building of a Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Its first stone was laid in 1859, and the church itself consecrated in 1864.

Then on 31st May, 1865, a first public feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was celebrated in the new church. Next Father Founder constructed a large and beautiful chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart behind the high altar. Here, in 1869, a white marble statue was crowned in the name of Pius IX. Issoudun, now the town of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, rapidly became and still is the focal point of enormous pilgrimages.

As a further manifestation of the honour promised in the Pact which he made with Mary back in 1855. Father Chevalier founded, in 1874, the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He himself acknowledges that this idea of a feminine institute to work in collaboration with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and for the same end, goes right back to the time when Mary was first given this glorious and significant title.

It can be said that devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has become the characteristic which distinguishes the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from other institutes dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Strangely enough, so closely was the devotion identified with the Society, that in a first approbation given to the Society by the Holy See in 1869, we find these surprising words:

"In 1854, on December 8, the day of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception . . . a pious Congregation of Missionaries, who take their name from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart! of Jesus . . . was founded at Issoudun in the diocese of Bourges by the priest. Jules Chevalier. "

I don't know what was the reaction of Father Founder to that mistake of the Holy See, but it does show the extent to which Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had become associated with the Society. So great has been the part which she has played in the history of both our Societies that, if ever it came to pass that she were not accorded her rightful place in them, they would automatically collapse.

The period up to about 1880 can be called the era of the consolidation of the Society. In that year, however, there was in France a revival of one of those periodical anti-religious attitudes left as a legacy of the French Revolution. All teaching and preaching institutes not authorized by the State were dispersed. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were expelled from Issoudun and from their houses of formation in France. The Basilica and the Monastery were placed under seal. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were not, for the moment, molested but for prudence' sake went into secular dress.

What happened? Well, to the extent that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart went into exile, the Society became internationalised. It became established in Spain, England, Australia, Belgium, Holland and U.S.A. As for Father Chevalier himself, though his religious had been expelled, his

role as parish priest of Issoudun put him outside the demands of the unjust law. So he remained on to safeguard the interests of the Society in France - and particularly in Issoudun, now become internationally renowned as the pilgrimage centre of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Then, just when things seemed to be at their worst, and the Society's personnel was scattered by the government persecution, the Holy See yielded to Father Chevalier's request, made back in 1878, that foreign missionary work be entrusted to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. For it was written into the Constitutions of the Society that the evangelization of pagan peoples was also one of the apostolic ends of the Society. Remember the frustrated foreign missionary dreams of the young seminarist, Jules Chevalier. In a letter dated March 25, 1881, the Holy See proposed to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart the evangelization of the immense Pacific territory of Melanesia and Micronesia, that is the whole of Oceania except Polynesia where the Marists were working.

The prospect was so frightening to certain members of Father Chevalier's General Council - themselves scattered in exile - that they opposed acceptance. Had it not been for Father Founder's tenacious faith in the mission of the Society to the pagan world, and his consequent moral courage and determination, our missionaries would not probably be working where they are today. However, he had the backing of the Holy See, and, as a result of his acceptance in the face of enormous difficulties within and without the Society, the latter became what he had envisaged it from the very beginning - universal in its mission. After all, the inspiration for its varied forms of apostolic enterprise is 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere'.

In 1901, the persecution of the religious institutes which had abated somewhat broke out with new fury. This time, it was not just the teaching and preaching institutes which were attacked. All religious became the butt of the unjust laws. Come what may, Father Chevalier wanted to stay on in Issoudun in order to safeguard the property and the works there of the Society. So, acting upon prudent advice, he asked the Holy See to relieve him of his office of Superior General and to give him outwardly the status of a secular priest, whilst allowing him to retain all his obligations as a religious M.S.C. - this situation to last for as long as the circumstances demanded. His request was granted. But imagine what it must have cost him to give up all outward semblance of being a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. Some other M.S.C.'s did the same and remained on as his secular curates.

Eventually the secular, as well as the religious clergy, became the butt of government persecution. Father Chevalier, now an old man of 83 and suffering acutely from spinal arthritis, was informed that his presbytery was the property of the municipality of Issoudun. He was given notice to get out. With his usual courage, he refused. So, on January 21, 1907, the commissioner of the Issoudun police had the door axed in. Father Chevalier could not walk, so he was lifted over the threshold in his armchair and dumped on the footpath. A benefactor then had him taken to a house nearby which he had put at his disposal.

A young man named Sadouet, who with others had been inside the presbytery with Father Chevalier when he refused to come out, gave an eye-witness account of the eviction which there is no time to relate here. If you are interested, ytm will find it in "The Designs of His Heart". But there is one thing which stands out strikingly and that is the closeness of his union with the will of God, and the Christlikeness manifested by his spirit of forgiveness of enemies. His union with God's will is, of course, characteristic. We have only to think back to his action of going on his knees and, in a spirit of faith, accepting the appointment which he knew would be made known in the letter which actually named him curate of Issoudun.

This union with God's will had obviously deepened during his long life. In a chapter on the Life of Faith in the common Rules of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart appended to the 1877 edition of the MSC Constitutions, he had written that conformity to the will of God would be the most outstanding virtue of the Missionary of the Sacred Heart- He certainly was the first to put it into practice. The young man above-mentioned, in his eye-witness account of the expulsion from the presbytery, says that Father Chevalier would not say one word against his persecutors, though the onlookers shouted, "Down with the thieves!" To those who expressed indignation, he merely said in a broken voice: "Nothing happens without God's permission." It is obvious that he was practising to a heroic degree what in this same chapter he had said must characterise the authentic Missionary of the Sacred Heart. This is the quotation:

"The love of God, which exacts of us the life of faith, also imposes upon us [the obligation to love our enemies, to pray for them and to do them good. If ever divine Providence should permit that our Society or one of its houses, or even someone among us, should be the object of calumny, of hatred or of unmerited persecution, let us guard well against every sentiment of bitterness or revenge against its authors. In their regard, let us follow the precept of Our Lord. When this comes to pass, let us thank God and rejoice at the grace accorded us." (p. 33)

This same young man of Issoudun who had stood by Father Chevalier in his hour of persecution, a few months later himself went away to become a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. In 1968, I wrote to him from Issoudun - he was then in the south of France - asking him to tell me something about a photo I had found which was obviously Father Founder's funeral. He replied that he had not been at the funeral as he had left Issoudun a few months previously. In this letter - which I have here - he told me about his last visit to Father Founder in his borrowed presbytery. As I said, the young man - I think his first name was Leo - was then twenty-three, and as the French MSCs of those days had no St. Paul's Seminary for Late Vocations, he had, like Father Founder himself, to complete his secondary studies with boys much younger than himself. So he had to go to the Junior Seminary at Fribourg in Switzerland. On the point of leaving Issoudun, he went together with one of the local MSCs posing as the secular curate, Father Bertin, to say goodbye to his friend and parish priest, Father Chevalier. I have translated for you part of the letter dealing with this last interview with Father Founder.

I left Issoudun in 1907, a few days before the celebration of Sept. 8. Now, before leaving Issoudun for good, I went, as was right, in company with Father Bertin, to say goodbye to the one who had been my parish priest for my twenty-three years.

At that time, he was no longer living in his presbytery near the

church of St. Cyr. He had been thrown out of there on the preceding Jan. 21, and had since been living in a house put at his disposal by Count Fernand de Bonneval, his parishioner and long-standing benefactor.

It was there that we found him sitting at his work-table busy at his book, "The Apocalypse and Contemporary Times". He received us with the customary warm smile on his aged face, framed as it was in abundant white hair protruding below the rim of his black biretta. "Sit down," he invited us.

When he learned that the reason for our visit was my forthcoming departure for the Junior MSC Seminary at Fribourg in Switzerland, for a long time he let his heart speak. "The call to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart," he said, "is a grace from Heaven - a grace for which you must be very grateful. But generosity is necessary in order to be able to cope with the difficulties of each day. So, too, is perseverance, in order to be able to surmount all obstacles, that is, if you want to be worthy of the Apostolic School. Go, dear big son (I was then twenty-three), with the protection of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. I give you my blessing and will pray for you. Please do the same for me, for I have much need of prayers". We got up to go and he resumed his writing. Father Sadouet goes on to say that, a little over a month later, he had received a letter from Father Bertin to say that Father Founder was dead.

As this audience consists of MSCs in formation, I thought that Father Founder's recommendations to a young man about to commence his own period of formation to the life of an MSC might have some interest.

It was on 21st October, 1907, that Father Founder died in a borrowed presbytery. The Basilica of the Sacred Heart and all the other buildings belonging to the missionaries, as well as the Convent of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, were put up for auction. Incidentally, with the permission of the Holy See, all were bought by friends of Father Founder with a view to returning them later to their rightful owners.

Thus ends this second talk on the biographical details of Father Founder, in the order of time, the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart. As given here, both talks are little more than a chronicle of events. Our next two talks will be concerned with giving meaning to these events in relation to the members of our two societies.

III. JULES CHEVALIER: FIRST AMONG THE MSC

We now come to consider Jules Chevalier as first Missionary of the Sacred Heart in another sense. It is this. As Founder of the Society, he had the deepest understanding of what it means to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

The object of this talk, then, is to go back to sources and see what Father Founder considered to be the essence of our vocation. (I say our vocation because our society was founded as the feminine counterpart of the MSC one and with the same mission.)

We have already seen how, as a seminarian, Jules had been captivated by the doctrinal and spiritual richness of devotion to the Sacred Heart: how he saw in the love of the Heart of Christ the sole remedy for the moral ills of society; and how, with the strikingly manifest help of Our Lady, he founded the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (and 20 years later in 1874 the FDNCS) with a motto which expressed the very reason for the existence of both Societies: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved forever.'

1. WHO WE ARE

Let us go back a bit to the pact made with Mary under the date of January 18, 1855. There he wrote: "If the most holy Virgin Mary. . . triumphs over all the difficulties which hell is raising against us, and realises the proposed work this year, we. . . commit ourselves to the following engagements both for ourselves and on behalf of all who will belong to the same Society. < That includes the members of our own still-in-the-future institute.)" Then follows Article 1:

"Those who will belong to this little Congregation will take the title Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and will strive to live to the full what it signifies."

"They will strive to live to the full what the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart signifies . . ." These are weighty words. Not only will they strive to live the programme implied in the title, but to live it to the hilt. When we reflect that every future member of the as-yet unfounded Society was also committed to the fulfilment of this engagement with Our Lady, it becomes a matter of urgency to discover what is the significance of this title which has to be lived to the full. Father Founder has left us in no doubt whatever as to this significance. We find it all over the place in what he wrote or said over a period of fifty years.

There is, I think, one consideration which is fundamental to an appreciation of the name given to both our societies. It is this. For all who belong to them. Father Founder - and this is evident from what he said and wrote - meant the name we bear to have definite implications. Name, as he uses it in the context of our respective titles, is not meant merely as a means of identifying us as belonging to a specific institute. The word retains all its profound biblical significance, expressing sometimes the inner essence of a person, at other times a special vocation indicated by the imposition of the new name e.g. Peter (Matt. 16:13-19). From both his writings and his attitude, it is clear that, in the mind of Father Chevalier, the name borne by the members of both our Congregations combines both these senses. It designates what we essentially are - those consecrated by a special vocation to the end for which the Holy Spirit inspired him to found these societies in the Church. I quote him:

"We are (i.e. essentially) the Missionaries, the apostles, of the Sacred Heart." Let the members of the Congregation never forget that they are (i.e. essentially) Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. (Spir. Test.)

In consideration of this, no MSC or FDNCS should ever go through an identity crisis!

Now as to the vocational aspect. I restrict myself, for the moment, to the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart. In its scriptural sense, the word missionary means one who is sent. Christ himself was the first Missionary, sent, as He was, by the Father to carry out His plan of redeeming love. Before His ascension. He passed this mission on to His apostles: "As the Father has sent me. I also send you." (Jn. 20:21) His own mission had been to achieve salvation for all, but not to preach it to all. The salvation achieved by Him was to be applied by the Holy Spirit acting through the members of the Church. Thus the Church is, of its very nature, missionary.

Within this general mission of the Church, Jules Chevalier gradually became aware that he had been given a special mission. This he formulated in the first Rules of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (1857):

"His Sacred Heart of Jesus, sole source of light, of truth and of life is not sufficiently known, is not enough loved. Yet his love has saved the world, his blood has purified it, his grace has changed it, and his tenderness conserves it."

Father Chevalier cannot remain indifferent. Therefore he continues, and it is in the words that follow that we find the first formulation of the mission of the Society: "To make known all the treasures of love and mercy of which his Sacred Heart is the source, to spread everywhere the sacred fire of his love, to save the souls which are so dear to him, to combat the egoism and indifference which outrage him - such is the end of our little Society."

For each of the members of the Society, then, what he essentially is and what is his mission, to which he is committed by vocation, is summed up in the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart. And Father Chevalier himself develops the meaning of the title:

"Missionary of the Sacred Heart signifies apostle of the Sacred Heart, or propagator of the devotion to the Sacred Heart." And again:

"God has great designs far the Church and the world through devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But in order to make this known, there must be men who will be its missionaries, 'for how shall they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent?' "

This last quotation is proof positive that Father Chevalier had always in mind the scriptural sense of the word 'missionary', i.e. one sent by God on a mission relative to his loving design of salvation. As Christ was sent by the Father, so the Church sends us to make known the eternal love of the Word Incarnate, and to foster this love in the lives of others.

I think that a passage from our own revised Constitutions of 1969 could very well sum up what I have been trying to say:

.As Christ was sent by the Father

so they are sent by the Church

to make known

that Christ is the revelation of God's infinite charity to men;

that He loves them with a human heart:

that He is the answer to their hopes, their questionings.

their every need.

This, their fundamental apostolate,

is summed up in their motto:

'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved'.

Insofar as our own FDNCS Congregation is concerned, all the theological and spiritual significance of the expression Missionary of the Sacred Heart is present in our own title Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. For, to quote Father Chevalier again, Mary in the mystery of the Visitation 'was the first apostle of the grace of the Word Incarnate, the first missionary of his Love.' (Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, page 172) As her daughters, then, we share intimately in this missionary role which is still hers. This idea of Father Founder has been incorporated into our revised Constitutions:

In union with Mary.

the first missionary of His love,
(the Daughter of OLSH) goes with eagerness
wherever the presence of Jesus is to be borne.
Nor would Father Founder tolerate any attempt - and a couple were made - to change the title.

2. TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE AIM TO DO

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved. "These words," says Father Founder, "are to be for us a reminder of our sublime mission - a mission to which we dedicate utterly our strength and our life." So that we might never forget this, he established in both our societies the custom of commencing all our spiritual exercises with this invocation, and, where relevant, of placing it at the head of correspondence etc.

He even wanted it expressed visually. "Do you know," wrote Father Jouet, who was his most intimate collaborator, in a letter to Spain, "that we, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, are wearing on the breast a large red heart with the inscription: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!'" (To Mother Eulalia, Superior of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, Tarragona, Spain, Sept. 12th, 1874) The reference in this letter is to the first time that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart appeared in public in the Basilica at Issoudun wearing the new badge.

Incidentally, the first habit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was white, with red cincture and mantle. On a visit to Rome Father Chevalier had asked Pius IX if himself and his companion could renew their vows into his hands, which the Holy Father was happy to permit. Father Chevalier then went further. He asked that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart be permitted to adopt a habit which would be the same in form as the dress ordinarily worn by the Pope, i.e. a cream cassock and cape with the addition, on occasion, of a red mantle. Again the Pope said yes. Thus the first habit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart symbolised by their badge that they were consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and by their dress that they were the Pope's men.

Things have been modified somewhat with the passing of time. However, until a few years ago, all the elements of the traditional habit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, colour excepted, were the same as the dress which is still worn by the Pope. As for Father Chevalier's original white and red habit, it is displayed in the Museum of the Society at Issoudun.

The badge as currently worn has also been modernized, as has the FDNSC medal, but the symbolism remains the same: the Cross and the Heart of Christ over the world with the letters MSC to signify that the members of the Society are, as Father Founder insisted over and over again, "the official missionaries of the Sacred Heart".

It may come as a surprise to learn that Father Chevalier even wanted the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun to be constructed in the form of a heart. For today's ecclesiastical architecture, this would probably constitute no great problem. But it did for the Basilica's nineteenth century architect, and all the more so because Father Chevalier was not easily persuaded to relinquish his idea as impractical. Even then he persisted that, if only he had the finance, he would surely find an architect of genius who would be able to materialise his dream. However, he had to be satisfied to surmount the spire with a tall statue of the Sacred Heart. In recent years, this was struck by lightning and has now been replaced by a gleaming symbolic heart.

3. OUR CHARISM

At the beginning of this talk, I said that Father Chevalier can be considered the first Missionary of the Sacred Heart, not only in the chronological sense, but because, as Founder, no one could have a deeper understanding of or faith in the Society's charism than himself.

Generally speaking, a charism is an inspiration of the Holy Spirit who makes known to a certain individual that he is to fulfil a specific mission in the Church. The grace which he receives is not so much for himself as for others. If the charism is one of foundation, as in the case of a religious institute, it implies a mission which is handed down to the members of that institute.

The special charism which our Father Founder received and handed down to both our societies is total dedication to the Heart of the Word Incarnate, and to men whom he so loved that he dwelt among them, full of grace and truth, and gave his life for them. Or, as Father Chevalier put it in Article II of the famous Pact made with Our Lady in January, 1855: "The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart will have a special love for, and a particular devotedness to, the Adorable Heart of Jesus." Only then, when they themselves have become penetrated with this love, will they be able to "make him loved and glorified by priests and the faithful." Only then, to quote St. John, will they be able to say convincingly: "My teaching is not from myself. It comes from the one who sent me."¹ (Jn. 7:16)

You will notice here the emphasis placed on the fact that a personal union in love with the Heart of Christ must be the starting point of apostolic action. For devotion to the Sacred Heart rightly understood is diametrically opposed to the modern heresy of activism. For, to quote:

"At the centre of Redemption stands not an action in the activist sense, but a sacrifice. No believing heart can think about (the Heart of Jesus consuming himself for others, down to the last drop of blood, without a strong urge to similar unselfish sacrifice in the service of men."

It is a question, then, of a balanced interpenetration of contemplation and apostolic love. The balance which should exist between these two elements has been brought out admirably in par. 12 of "The Decree on Religious Life" (Vat. II):

"The entire religious life of institutes of the active apostolate should be penetrated by the apostolic spirit, and their entire apostolic activity should be animated by the religious spirit."

The ideas just expressed are in the purest tradition of Father Founder. In actual fact, it was one of Father Chevalier's own sons, Father Van Kerckhoven MSC, the last Superior General of the Society who, during one of the sessions of Vatican II, proposed their inclusion in the text of the Decree. Accepted verbatim for inclusion in the text, they merely express in a more updated way what was in both the earliest MSC and FDNSC Constitutions. I quote the passage:

"Whilst devoting themselves to the apostolate in the service of the neighbour, (they will never neglect the contemplative aspect of their life."

Curiously enough, it was an imbalance between the contemplative and apostolic aspects on the part of individuals within our two societies which created much worry for Father Founder in the mid-1870's. He had never hesitated in his conviction that the fundamental mission of both his institutes was the penetration of society by the mystery of the Heart of Christ, through diverse works of the active apostolate. Yet in each of our societies, he had to resist vigorously an attempt from within to change the active-apostolic end and have it made canonically contemplative.

In the case of the MSCs, a somewhat neurotic member of the Society opposed Father Founder, and sent off to Rome a document to the effect that the Society was, of its nature, contemplative, and made all kinds of accusations against Father Founder. Father Chevalier was very forthright in his own letter to the Holy See.

"We certainly want the perfection of our Institute, but we don't want any change. We entered this Society in order to be missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This word 'missionaries' sums up everything." (Letter to the Holy See, 1876)

After making much trouble for Father Founder, the self-constituted reformer - much to everyone's relief - left the Society.

The Daughters of OLSH also came in for their share of the same trouble but of a more serious nature and that over a period of five years, i.e. 1876-1881. In our case, the institute was brought to the brink of ruin. The first superior, a certain Mother Felicity, in opposition to Father Chevalier, decided that the Congregation was meant to be contemplative, and did everything she could to wreck the work as conceived by Father Founder. She even styled herself the Foundress. It was only the tremendous loyalty and resistance to pressure on the part of the only three Sisters left which saved the Congregation. This period of painful trial for Father Chevalier came to an end when, on March 25th, 1882, Mother Marie Louise Hartzler entered the Congregation, Mother Felicity withdrawing the same day. Marie Louise ultimately became the first Superior General, and, in collaboration with Father Founder, moulded the sorely-tried Congregation to the end for which he had been inspired to found it.

So much for that digression. To return to our particular charism of total dedication in love to the Heart of the Word Incarnate. There is one word on which we must be clear. It is this. The initial charism given to Father Founder was not something given once and for all, something static belonging to the past. As he conceived it, it was merely the germ of life of the institute. Like all living things in embryo, it had to develop, and he himself saw it do so even during his own long fifty or so years as Superior General. Thus, too, for us the present members of his societies, it has become our own here-and-now charism, something to be lived according to our own epoch even as past members had to live it according to theirs,

4. SAFEKEEPING TO OUR CHARISM

Vatican II has insisted that "safekeeping be accorded to the spirit of the Founder, as also to all the particular goals and wholesome traditions which constitute the heritage of each institute."(P.C.)The place of safekeeping is the book of our Constitutions, or during the time of Constitution revision, our interim Documents of Renewal. Here is to be found the primitive inspiration of the first and foremost Missionary of the Sacred Heart. True, the charismatic spirit developed from his original grace of foundation is perpetuated and develops primarily in the lives of the members of the Society who have, in their turn, the responsibility of transmitting it in all its authenticity. This living, flexible spirit is, however, incorporated in the letter of a written text which is, nevertheless, only its servant. To retain its vitality, this text must for each epoch, be rethought, developed and lived in the light of the contemporary mentality and situations, whilst remaining faithful to the primitive inspiration of the Founder. We are lucky to live in a time when we can experience this being done.

Jules Chevalier, foremost Missionary of the Sacred Heart, laid great stress upon fidelity to the Constitutions and Rules both in his own life and in the lives of those whose spiritual father he was. Here it may be useful to indicate what he meant by the rules.

As well as the Constitutions or the basic laws of a society, religious institutes need more detailed regulations to direct the daily living of their members. Because the community is a social group, there will be directives to help the group function harmoniously and efficiently; because it is a consecrated group, it will have directives concerning such things as ways of being faithful to the vows, to prayer life, the apostolate and so on; because it exists in the Church as a particular form of the consecrated life, e.g. the MSCs or the Jesuits, it will have observances concerned with maintaining the institute's identity and spirituality. For instance, we as Daughters of OLSH sing or say each day the prayer 'Hail, admirable Heart of Jesus', we give special honour to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the First Friday etc.

Father Chevalier laid such great stress on the observance of both Constitutions and Rules because he saw in them what they are meant to be: a means to an end. In a conference which he gave to the MSC community at Issoudun some time about 1900 on the book of rules then called the Directory, he said:

"If we wish to be holy - to work efficaciously for the salvation of souls and the extension of the Society - let us be always, in everything and everywhere, faithful observers of our Constitutions and Rules."

In a letter to a newly-ordained priest, Father Eugene Meyer, MSC, who would one day succeed him as superior general, he wrote:

"What the Missionary of the Sacred Heart has most need of today is holiness of life. This you will achieve by observing faithfully every day, in a great spirit of faith, all that our rules require."

Not only did Father Founder regard religious rules as a means to an end. He looked upon them as a grace. Again I quote the above-mentioned conference on the Directory:

"Let us love our rules. They are for us an outpouring of the love of the Heart of Jesus."

It is the fashion, in some quarters today, to be somewhat intolerant of rules, or, to use the in-word 'structures'¹, as inhibiting personal liberty. But it is of the very-nature of religious life, as it is of the Church, to have structures. In any group, natural or supernatural, practical patterns of doing things will develop simply as a result of living together and being motivated by the same ideal. Therefore, to be opposed to all rules is as inhibiting to human and group development as to be dominated by them.

When Father Chevalier insists on fidelity to rule, he is insisting on fidelity to a freely-accepted pattern of living as a precious means to what he knew would help to make an MSC or an FDNSC true to character. That is why he saw rules as something positive - a gift from the love of the Heart of Christ.

It is pretty evident that Father Chevalier often uses the word 'rules' to cover both Constitutions - or the institute's basic laws of life - and rules or statutes which can be called its bylaws. Now both one and the other are important insofar as they safeguard the wholesome, life-giving traditions of the institute. This does not mean that the exterior forms of such traditional rules must be conserved forever unchanged, for it is not the form of a tradition that matters, but the wholesome tradition itself. Older practices which ensured the continuity of the spirit of our two societies in their own day, but which are now no longer carriers of this spirit, have been and-are legitimately being replaced by new ones better adapted to contemporary situations and mentality.

All this means, then, that if we are true to the spirit which he has left us, we shall reverence and love our freely-accepted patterns of living - call them what you will - but as adapted to our own times, not to the mid-19th century or the early 20th. Certain ones of a past generation may seem odd according to our own late 20th century mentality, just as many of our own freely accepted and revered ones most certainly will to the generations to come. But it must be remembered that the Holy Spirit - and this applies to the Church in general - always works through the mentality of an epoch.

There is one thing, however, which we do reverence in regard to the past. This is the spirit of faith which prompted MSCs and FDNSCs of a bygone generation to be faithful to their own contemporary patterns of observance which for them expressed outwardly the timeless elements basic to our particular form of religious life.

Our contemporaries wish to create a better world, more united, happier for all. This is the very cause for which Our Lord gave his life. It was in the pierced Heart of Christ that Father Chevalier saw a meaningful reminder of this. "To the spirit of division," he wrote, "the Heart of Jesus opposes his immense love - his ardent wish to see all men united."

To penetrate the hearts of men with this divine, uniting love was his mission, and the mission which he handed down to us. It is in our current Constitutions or Documents of Renewal which, after the Gospel, are the book of life of our two societies that we shall find the authentic expression of the charism of Father Chevalier, first among the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - a charism now become our own.

IV. JULES CHEVALIER: MAN OF FAITH

In the last talk (III), we spoke of Father Chevalier as the one who had the deepest understanding of the special grace of the Society expressed in its motto: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved'.

When we stop to think of it, this is a staggering goal. We want to dedicate a whole life and a whole life's activity that the Person of Christ, who is divine-human love, may be loved to the ends of the earth - and forever!

Now to be whole-hearted about this mission, we must have faith in it, as Father Chevalier himself had faith in it and in everything connected with its fulfilment.

This talk, then, is going to be on JULES CHEVALIER: MAN OF FAITH. Jules Chevalier, in his Annals of the Little Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart written in 1901, six years before he died, was able to look back over nearly fifty years as Founder with a clear vision of faith. He begins with the following words:

"When God wills a work, obstacles for him are means of achievement; he takes no account of human wisdom; disconcerts human reckoning; brings to birth what, according to its reasoning, would never have seen the light of day; develops and strengthens to fruition what it had

condemned to die."

Now, faith implies a free response to something a person says or makes known. This response involves a relationship of confidence in that person, and there must be grounds for that confidence. As regards Father Chevalier, the grounds for his faith in his mission - a faith which persisted unshaken through many trials and sufferings - are indicated in a provisional draft of Rules for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart drawn up in 1855:

"The little Society of the Sacred Heart is not the work of man. It is the work of God. It was born in the Sacred Heart of Jesus under the powerful protection of Mary. . ."

It was this unshakeable faith that his work was willed by God which carried him undaunted through the seemingly insuperable obstacles to its accomplishment. Much has been written about Jules' tenacity of purpose, of his obstinacy in following a line of action once he was convinced that this was the thing to be done in a given set of circumstances. From the psychological point of view, one would say that this tenacity was part of his particular temperament. For he was, by nature, endowed with a strong will which was not afraid of difficulties and obstacles. Rather, in face of them, his will was stirred to greater energy, and set itself to persevere till it reached its goal.

Now, Paul VI, in his recent Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life, insists on the necessity of passing from the psychological level to the level of "that which is truly spiritual". This is where grace comes in, building as it does on nature. The sublimating factor in the case of Jules Chevalier was a highly-developed spirit of faith - faith which resides in the intellect and provides motives for the will. Then, because of the direct correlation between faith in the intellect and love in the will, the stronger the faith, the deeper the love. Love, in its turn, generates a still greater courage and confidence. Seen in this supernatural light, Jules' tenacity of purpose, astonishing at times to his contemporaries and often judged as obstinacy, becomes understandable.

But to relate all this to Jules' character in action. From boyhood, there had been fostered in him a solid spiritual life, characterized by a normally good habit of prayer. This left him sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. He believed with his whole being that God wanted him to be a priest. We have seen his tenacity in clinging to this idea and doing all in his own power to bring it to realization. Once in the seminary, he showed equal tenacity in determining to be the kind of priest he knew God wanted him to be. On one occasion, when he was home for his holidays, a couple of his relatives hinted to the junior seminarist that, as a priest, he would possibly be able to use his influence on behalf of his family. They received a speedy disillusionment. "If you are counting on me for anything like that, you are in for a big disappointment. If I'm going to be a priest, it is in the service of God and not of my family". This he wrote in the Personal Notes already spoken of.

Nor did he swerve from this line of action when he passed into the Major Seminary. He came out from the entrance retreat determined to make a sound spiritual life the basis of his future priestly life. "The retreat master," he wrote, "recommended to us three virtues: fidelity to the rule, mortification and humility. During the five years of my Major Seminary training, I made every effort to put them into practice."

It is to his friend, Father Píperon, that we are indebted for a rather close look at the seminarian, Jules. Steeped as he was in the spirit of faith, this faith was far from being a mere intellectual knowledge. It penetrated his whole being and drew from him the continued response of loving acts of the will. This explains the wholehearted way in which he cooperated with the grace of his priestly formation.

The ideal of the priesthood put before the students at the seminary captivated him. In himself, the seminarist was taught, the priest is nothing. By his union with Christ who is God he becomes everything - mediator, servant of all in order to redeem them. He becomes Christ, the Sovereign Priest who lives in him. Jules himself synthesises these ideas as follows:

"O Priest, who are you? You are not for yourself, because you are nothing. You do not exist for yourself, since you are a mediator with God. You do not belong to yourself, since you are the servant of all. You are not yourself since you are God. Who are you, then, O priest? You are all and nothing." As a logical consequence of this ideal, Jules saw that, as a priest, he must be transformed into Christ who will live in him and thus through him give life to his Church. Who will declare that, even as far back as his seminary days, Jules Chevalier was not ecclesial in outlook?

In this matter of transformation into Christ, he really got down to detail in matters insisted upon by Vatican II in its decrees on Religious Life, Priests and Priestly Formation - that is penance, poverty and charity. Concerning penance, not only would he refuse himself a fire in his room in the depth of a French winter, but he was known to practise other kinds of penance the exact nature of which his inquisitive fellow-students failed to discover. In his practice of poverty, he would have won the approval of those who are calling most loudly for its witness in the Church today, particularly by priests and religious. Not only did he practise charity in manner and act among his confreres, but this also took the form of a practical concern for those outside the seminary.

Incidentally, it is strange how we talk in all the in words about what our concern must be for our fellow-men. It is as though in this matter of concern we are about to turn over a new leaf - and things will be changed as never before. Yet, if we confine ourselves merely to the history of our own two societies, what riches we have in our own past, riches which are relevant to us today; what inspiration in the witness of our own Founder, and of those pioneers who have handed down to us his spirit. Rewrite the life of Jules Chevalier in contemporary terms of commitment, involvement, concern, confrontation (I am thinking of his courageous stand as a seminarian when a certain professor was departing from orthodoxy), and we would have a biography that might have a chance of getting over. My point is that the basic ideas covered by these contemporary terms are timeless no matter what names we give them. And they will always have a drawing power.

But to get back to Jules' concern for others. As an example I would like to pause on an incident with which you will be familiar, but which may perhaps take on a new freshness when related to ideals which are supposed to be specially characteristic of today's dissatisfied young people. They are yearning, we are told, to pour themselves out on others - the poor and underprivileged. And many do. But have not many of them always wanted to do so? Think of the poor man in bad health, who, nevertheless, had a large family to support and who came to the seminary each morning to clean the toilets: how Jules sized up the situation that the work was too strenuous for him; how for a long time he took it upon himself to share the lowly task, instead of taking the view that the man was paid to do the work: and how it was only through the indiscretion of a fellow-student who caught him at his work of compassion that the rest of the students came to know of the affair. Only an isolated instance we may be tempted to say. Agreed! But it shows a disposition, and that is something which cannot be improvised. Hence the telling power of this particular incident.

Father Píperon closes his testimony of Jules as a seminarian as follows:

"Such was Jules Chevalier as I knew him during the few years passed with him at the seminary. Until the last, he was the model for all by his regularity, his zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, his poverty, simplicity and affability. His lively faith led him to enter wholeheartedly into all spiritual practices compatible with seminary life."

This concluding remark is very relevant in the context of this talk on Jules Chevalier: Man of Faith. His lively faith led him to enter wholeheartedly into all spiritual practices compatible with seminary life. There comes immediately to mind another well-known fact - his initiative in establishing in the seminary the group called the Knights of the Sacred Heart. Its object was that the members help one another to the priestly virtues. To this end it was agreed that, in a spirit of mutual trust and openness, they point out one another's defects, and suggest remedies. Incidentally this is not far removed from some of today's group techniques at least in principle. Note also the group's Eucharistic orientation. In their free time they were to succeed one another before the Blessed Sacrament - there to adore the Eucharistic Heart of Christ, make reparation for sin, and through the intercession of Mary ask grace for the Church, the Pope, bishops and their priests, and for the just and sinners. He also established this Eucharistic adoration in one of his first parishes, and has even made it a feature of the prayer life of our own institute.

It is also obvious from this how easily Jules' simple faith led him to prayer. Looking back over his life, we see how he always turned to prayer in difficult circumstances. It is interesting to note how often this prayer took the form of a novena. Generally speaking, novenas seem to be out of fashion today. At least they are reputed to be, but one wonders! It is important to remember, however, that it is not the form prayer takes which matters - this will vary according to mentality. What counts with God is the timeless element of persevering faith, no matter how expressed. And this is exactly what Father Chevalier's well-known novenas expressed - a tenacious, persevering faith which invariably brought the grace asked, because he was disposed to receive it. After all, the Gospels have enough of Our Lord's reactions to unshakeable faith. "Great is your faith. Be it done as you have asked." In any case how momentous for us, his sons and daughters, were those faith-novenas of Father Chevalier.

Think of the one in preparation for the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The faith that it expressed drew from the Heart of Christ through Mary an unmistakable sign that the Society was in the designs of God.

There was the second novena, asking Mary to obtain the financial aid necessary to assure the maintenance of the foundation. "I can authorize you to commence this foundation," said the Archbishop of Bourges, "only if you have a sufficient and assured revenue. If God wills your work, He can send you the wherewithal to maintain it. Ask Our Lady to complete what she has so well begun."

We know the result of this second novena. The money was forthcoming. Good! But then the Cardinal's Council voted unanimously against the project, so the Cardinal adjourned the decision. One of those who had been present at the Council meeting counselled Jules to drop the project. He told him that, during the Council meeting, his idea had been under fire for a full half hour. There was nothing left to do but bury it.

"Not so fast," retorted Jules. "Our Lady had yet to say the last word. We're going to pray."

But when the Cardinal's Council came together again, there was the same unanimous opposition. Then the Cardinal completely dumbfounded everyone.

"I have reflected," he said. "I have prayed. It is not my habit to act contrary to your advice. But for this once, I feel that I must do so. Otherwise I believe that I would be acting contrary to the designs of God. I promised these two priests that if they brought me a fresh sign of the will of God by finding resources, I'd approve their project. They've again produced this sign. Therefore I'm committed. I authorize the two curates to commence their work. This very day we'll appoint men to replace them."

In the archives of the Archdiocese of Bourges, there is to be seen this entry under date of 10th June, 1855: "Jules Chevalier has been authorized to take the title Missionary of the Sacred Heart and, consequently, to cease his function as curate at Issoudun." There is a similar entry for Father Maugenest.

There is still another momentous novena in the life of Father Chevalier. Troubles upon troubles, largely consequent upon the government persecution of religious institutes, seemed to be threatening the very existence of the Society. For one thing, in the 1890's, Archbishop Boyer of Bourges was unfriendly to the Society. He wanted to take the parish of Issoudun from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as being religious, and transfer it to the secular clergy. Just to show how closely the destinies of our two societies were linked, it is interesting to note that the Archbishop's displeasure was extended to the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, too, as being one of his works established in the parish. I quote Father Founder's reference to this:

"The little community of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart which we founded at Issoudun, though so good, devoted and fervent, has like ourselves (the MSCs) had the privilege of receiving absolutely no mark of sympathy on the part of Monsignor. They asked him for two favours and both have been refused. The first was to open a little school in their house, the second to apply to Rome for a Decree of Praise for their institute." (1895) In the second place, as is evident from his Spiritual Testament to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Father Chevalier was experiencing painful difficulties within the Society, even as there had been within our own. That, however, is a matter for the MSC historian rather than for me.

All these combined troubles occasioned for Father Chevalier what was perhaps the sharpest testing of his faith during the whole course of his long life. In his anguish, feeling sure that his beloved Society was facing impending ruin, yet with faith unshaken, he turned to prayer. Here is what he writes:

"The heart filled with anguish, and eyes filled with tears, we could foresee the proximate ruin of our beloved Society. Deprived of all human support, and unable to count upon that of him who had the mission to sustain us and all the powers to defend us (he is here referring to the Archbishop), we turned to the Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Our prayer consisted only of these few words: 'Save us. We are perishing.'"

As had happened twice before, and on the very last day of the novena, the crisis came to an end and the difficulties began to resolve themselves.

One could say that the whole life of Father Chevalier was at times almost a blind act of faith. Yet there was one occasion on which he seemed to have a foresight of the future. This was when the walls of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in construction at Issoudun were barely above ground level. It is Father Piperon who tells the story.

One day Father Founder was talking intimately to us about the future of his work. "A time will come," he said, "when you will see crowds flocking here from different parts of France and elsewhere." "When I see that," replied one of his hearers, "I'll declare you a prophet!" But with calm assurance, Father Chevalier merely replied, "You will see it yourselves with your own eyes, and you will bless the Sacred Heart of Jesus for it."

His presentiment came true. Every year, since about 1869, the pilgrims have come in their tens of thousands, not only from all parts of France but from all parts of the world - to pray at the feet of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart enshrined in her beautiful chapel stretching far back behind the sanctuary.

Apart from this one of an almost supernatural intuition. Father Chevalier, unlike the founders of many religious institutes, was not guided by any extraordinary light. He had to grope his way to solutions through the most painful of problems. Perhaps one of the greatest was back in 1869. It took the form of a summons to come to Rome and bring with him everything written on Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which title had fallen under suspicion. This letter arrived on the very day on which Issoudun was preparing to crown the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in the name of Pope Pius IX. It was when the bells were ringing for the solemn Mass when the Archbishop of Bourges - this one a great friend of the Society - handed Father Chevalier the letter in question. The first impulse of Father Chevalier was to call off the ceremonies, but the wise Archbishop told him to go ahead, that he himself would take the responsibility with the Holy See. Even so the day of triumph for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart became one of bitterness for her apostle. Ultimately everything was sent to Rome and the denunciation of the title rejected. Here as in all his enterprises, one fact stands out strikingly, and it is this which puts the seal of authenticity on Father Chevalier's conduct. In deep faith he always submitted everything to the discerning judgment of the Spirit-directed Church.

His faith was tested, too, amid the darkness of human frustration. From the very beginning of the Society, he had intended it for the foreign missions. Since 1878 he had been making formal requests to the Holy See for a mission field to be entrusted to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. In January 1879 the offer came. The Society was offered the diocese of Auckland in New Zealand, which had been without a bishop for nearly four years, also the appended missions. But the offer came to nothing on account of opposition from Father Chevalier's Council. This was most certainly in the designs of God for, in 1881, came a new offer - the immense Pacific territory of Melanesia and Micronesia. Again, there was strong opposition, especially on the part of Father Guyot, one of his councillors. But this time Father Chevalier stuck to his guns, convinced that

the acceptance of the Pacific mission was the will of God for the Society. He knew, furthermore, that the Holy See was behind him, and also the MSC communities who had been consulted.

Even so, with a holy diplomacy, he took steps to ease matters. He got Father Jouet, the Society's representative in Rome with the Holy See, to persuade the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to write him a letter saying that it was the wish of the Pope that the Society take on these missions. It certainly was the wish of the Pope but, reasoned Father Founder, a formal expression in writing of the Pope's will would help vastly when it was a question of securing the agreement of the opposition on the MSC General Council.

He asked that the letter be addressed to himself and that, if the Cardinal thought good, he himself be asked to take the decision personally, especially since he knew that the rest of the Society was just rearing to have this mission field. He even suggested to Father Jouet that he get the Cardinal to date the letter the 25th March, the Feast of the mystery of the Incarnation. And what is there to criticize in this, or be shocked at? The time was within a few days. To me the time element is irrelevant. For Father Chevalier the date is a meaningful symbol. I quote his reply: The official letter, which Your Eminence did me the honour of addressing to me, bears the date of March 25th. This date is significant. It is the day which Heaven chose to announce the news of salvation through the Incarnation of the Word. It is likewise the day which Leo XIII chose to propose to us that we accept the mission of Melanesia.

After the example of Mary, we have made known with simplicity the insufficient numbers we have and our understandable misgivings (only 29 priests, 3 lay brothers and 26 scholastics). But since, Your Eminence, like the angel you say, 'Have no fear; accept the offer made you; the Spirit of God will be with you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you,' with the Virgin of Nazareth, our humble Congregation responds: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word.' It would be a very undiscerning mind which would see in Father Chevalier's implementation of the date anything other than a manifestation of his spirit of faith. Even a cursory glance at his writings will prove his love for the mystery of the Incarnation, e.g. the number of times he speaks of the Word Incarnate. In the extract quoted he himself says that the date is significant and he meant it to be. For he wanted it to manifest a relationship between the announcement made through Mary of the news of salvation, and the announcement made by the Church that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart would evangelize the pagans. It might be of interest to know, too, that he suggested to Father Jouet who was doing the business in Rome that he give to the above reply another symbolic date, for example Good Friday, as being the May of salvation'. Again a manifestation of Father Chevalier's spirit of faith.

As for the members of Father Chevalier's Council who had opposed the acceptance of the mission, we cannot pass an unfavourable judgment on them. They were probably acting in accordance with their conscience in what they considered the best interests of the Society, which was certainly in no position to embark on what seemed to them a very imprudent venture. Nor will this be the last time that Father Guyot in particular will oppose the missionary audacity of Father Chevalier. Four years later, it was question of a new mission field - this time of New Guinea. He threatened to write to Rome and have it stopped on the grounds of imprudence. This time the first five missionary Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were involved and the departure was scheduled for October 17, 1884. Yet two weeks before sailing date, so strong was his opposition that no one could be sure that the departure would take place. It did, however, and we know the rest of the heroic story.

But never, throughout this time of trial, did Father Chevalier waver in his extraordinary spirit of faith. "If the Sacred Heart of Jesus wants this land of New Guinea for his missionaries, all obstacles will resolve themselves," he wrote to the faithful Father Jouet. Had it not been for his unshakeable courage and determination, the MSCs and FDNCSs may not today be carrying on their extensive apostolate in the Pacific missions.

Yet what suffering of mind and heart this had cost Father Founder. For conflict in personal relationships can hurt deeply, and that it did hurt one has only to read his Spiritual Testament to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. As always, however, he pardons those who consciously or unconsciously have been the cause of pain to him. Furthermore, he acknowledges that he himself may have made mistakes and so may have given rise to criticism of himself and his administration.

In all this, we must remember that no man is perfect, and that the charism to be a Founder does not carry with it immunity from mistakes of the practical judgment. In situations like these, we must try to be very objective in our conclusions and remember that whatever happens in history is because of people. Where one person feels that he has perfectly justifiable reasons for doing something, he runs into opposition from someone else who, in his turn, feels quite justified in his own position. All we need do, then, as we ourselves look back, is to try in all fairness to understand motives on both sides. In this, too, we who come a long time after, are greatly helped by being able to evaluate subsequent events. If Father Founder had not taken the stand he did, may be Issoudun would not have been the great Marian centre which it is today with an influence and works throughout the world to the glory of the Heart of Christ through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; the field of apostolate of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart may have been more restricted; and the Daughters of OLSH could have been a diocesan rather than a pontifical institute, their activities limited to one French diocese.

There is a further point. Historical characters must always be shown in the round. By that I mean with all their strengths and weaknesses. This you will agree makes them more credible and arouses sympathy for them. In 1872 the parish of Issoudun was entrusted to the MSCs by an archbishop who had a great affection for the Society, Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne. His two successors, Archbishops Marchal and Boyer, who found themselves with the government persecution of the religious institutes on their hands, were not so enthusiastic about the MSCs having the parish administration. So we have tension, with Father Chevalier wanting at all costs to retain the parish and thus save the MSC works of which Issoudun was the centre. It is encouraging to leaf through his correspondence and note how, when exasperated, he could express himself with a certain vivacity. But so could St. Paul. I am thinking of two letters in particular - both in connection with our own society. At the time, Father Founder had resigned as Superior General of the Society so as to hold his position as parish priest of Issoudun. But he still kept his eye on MSC affairs. In his effort to save MSC property, the General Bursar was prepared to let FDNCS property fall into government hands. Did Father Founder write a forthright letter to the Superior General, Father Meyer in Rome! The FDNCSs had stood by the MSCs in everything, he said. It was unthinkable not to save the FDNCS property!

Again, Mother Marie Louise, our own Superior General, was in Belgium, and, while leaving a small community in Issoudun, wanted to transfer the general administration there even as the general administration of the MSCs had been transferred to Rome. She, too got a forthright letter from him reproaching her with her lack of courage. Eventually, however, he saw she was right, that it could not function in France, and so he humbly gave his blessing. After all, it was the development of the works which he wanted, not mere attachment to retaining the headquarters at its place of origin.

No one was more humbly aware of his own human weaknesses than Father Founder himself. Again we can refer to his Spiritual Testament to each of our Societies. Here I quote the MSC one: "God, despite my unworthiness, has used me, a lowly instrument, to found the little Society MSC. I have received an abundance of most precious graces, but have not profited by them as I should have. In order to punish me, he has therefore permitted that I become the butt of the most painful of trials."

Note how in this, it is again his spirit of faith which speaks. His mind does not dwell on human agents; he sees just the presence of God punishing him for his infidelity. And he humbly asks pardon of the members of the Society for any hurts he may himself have caused them. Yet as he looks back over his long life, he can make a statement which is simply staggering in its utter assurance. Just listen to it: "I think I can here claim that, in all things, I have sought only the glory of the Sacred Heart, the good of our little Society, and of its members."

Jules Chevalier, man of faith during his long career as founder and spiritual father of our two societies, is here at the end of his life able to make a final humble, yet daring act of faith in his own fidelity to the mission given him by the Holy Spirit over fifty years previously.

May he, first among the missionaries of the Heart of Christ which the Church relies on us all to be, be our inspiration to a like spirit of faith in, and fidelity to, everywhere and our common mission of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus loved - forever.

FAMILY OF JULES CHEVALIER : LAY ASSOCIATES

Klaus Sanders, msc Assistant General 2000

<http://www.laymsc.org/>

In an essay called *'The Layman in the Pre-Reformation Parish'*, published forty years ago in a Catholic Truth Society pamphlet, Cardinal Aidan Gasquet relates the anecdote of an inquirer who asked a priest what was the position of the layman in the Catholic Church. "The layman has two positions", answered the priest. "He kneels before the altar, that is one. And he sits below the pulpit, that is the other." The cardinal adds that there is a third that the priest had forgotten. The layman also puts his hands in his purse.

In a sense that is still so, and always will be so: there will never be a time when lay men and women are not on their knees before the altar and sitting before the pulpit, and for a long time yet they will have to put hand into purse. Nevertheless, now and for the future they do these things in a different way; or at least, doing these things, they feel differently about their position as a body in the Church. (Y. Congar, *Lay People in the Church*. London 1957 / 1959.)

The Mission of Jesus: Life-giving relationship and compassion

If one reads the Gospels carefully it is easy to discover that Jesus was ultimately rejected and put to death because of his way of interpreting the Torah in terms of justice and compassion. His healing on the Sabbath, his eating with the unclean, his table fellowship with the outcasts and sinners had only one aim: to create a new community in which life-giving relationship would guarantee the fullness of life for every one and the end of all discrimination. In acting like this Jesus demonstrated what God's Kingdom was all about: the creation of a new community in which all would be brothers and sisters, where there would be no marginalisation anymore. Here all would be gathered into the one great family of all creatures according to the image and likeness of God the Three in one.

This was to be the precise mission of his disciples as well: to go out into the whole world and to gather people from all nations and races and cultures into this great new family of God. What does discipleship mean? Discipleship is first of all a gift - by our baptism we all became members of the new family of God. Being a disciple means to share in a fundamental experience made and communicated by the master. It means to be caught up in the vision of the master, to be on fire with the fire of the master. It ultimately means to become like the master. A disciple is a person who has made the same fundamental experience that Jesus made. God loves every human person with an unconditional, compassionate love. He is always with us. A disciple is someone who starts living his daily life out of this experience and who sees his witnessing to this experience as taking part in Jesus' own mission and so become a co-worker with God for the salvation / transformation of the world into God's final design. Every Christian is called to mission on the basis of the sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is not a passport to heaven or a ticket to enter into eternal life. It is a call to mission. Most people will find eternal life without being baptised. The privilege of being a Christian consists in having been called to participate in a special way in the mission of Christ to save all human beings. To be called means to "be consecrated", to be taken into God's plan. Because of this we all are "holy, consecrated, set apart" (klêros) to be sent out, to engage actively in God's mission, to become "fishers of men" (Mk 1, 17; see: John Füllnbach SVD, *Called to Mission*. in SEDOS 96 /74)

Mission and role of the laity

The New Testament considers every baptised Christian as 'consecrated' to God. It is enough to recall the Pauline term, which speaks of Christians as *hagioi*, as saints. Furthermore, the NT never considers the ministers of the Church as sacred persons at the expense of other Christians. Quite the reverse, all Christians are chosen and called by God, and all build a clergy, *klêros*, which means a share, a heritage, a specific category consecrated to God (Col 1, 12; 1 Ptr 1,4).

Saint Paul teaches that each Christian receives the charisms of the Spirit for the service of the Church, and so receives gifts of service which are to be exercised in and for the Christian community (1 Cor 12).

All Christians are disciples of Jesus Christ and as disciples are sent into the world to share in the same mission as Jesus Christ.

The Church as a whole is ministerial; every Christian, ordained or not, is called to be at the service of the Christian community and of the world. The ministries of the laity are the direct fruit of baptism and confirmation. Lay people are apostles in the Church and for the world because they are baptised. Full participation in all the dimensions of the activity of the Church seems to be the order of the day, even though there is still a long way still to go to fulfil this ideal.

A more complete and global understanding sees the Church as *communio*, *communio*, where all Christians share responsibility for the whole, although in a different way. The Church, which in the past relied too exclusively on the clergy regarded as being a special class of Christians, has to become a Church of the whole people, a Church which takes into account all Christians according to the different gifts they have received from the Spirit. The reason for all this is the priority given to service, to a servant Church which is at the service of the Gospel in the world and for the world.

The NT never uses the term *laikos* in spite of the fact that it already existed two centuries before in the classical Greek. The word *laos* does occur in the Bible, with the express meaning of the people of God, different from the other nations, the people consecrated to God. The first use of the word 'lay' in opposition to 'priest' is to be found in a Roman document, a letter sent to the community in Corinth and written by Pope Clement, a contemporary of the apostles (Congar, *Jalons pour une Théologie du Laïcat*. p. 20-21). The distinction between clergy and the laity is very clear in the literature of the beginning of the third century (Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen). The words 'high priest' (*archiereus*) and 'priest' (*hiereus*) were used only for Christ (Hebrews) and for the entire Christian community (1 Ptr 2,9 "But you are a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness in to his wonderful light"; Apoc 1,6; 5, 10).

To characterise the functions of the clergy in the Church as sacred and those of the laity as secular presents many theological difficulties. It is easy to understand the sacraments as essentially sacred activities. But if ordained ministers are called to preside at their celebration, the laity also is called to participate fully at their celebration. The sacraments are not exclusively the business of the clergy. They belong essentially to the life of all Christians. Otherwise, if they don't participate in their celebration, they are called non-practising Christians.

Every activity fulfilled by a Christian, whether an ordained minister or not, is, if fulfilled at least implicitly in the name of Christ and for Christ, a sacred activity. If this activity is not fulfilled in the name of Christ and for Christ at least implicitly, the person doing it does not act as a Christian. It is only the act of a human person. We must not forget the famous dictum of Paul to the Christians: "Whether you eat, then, or drink, or whatever else you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1Cor 10,31). To proclaim the word and to listen to it, to celebrate the sacraments are activities shared in by the clergy and the laity, the only difference being in the way each group and each individual takes part in the celebration.

Vatican II, far from resolving all theological questions about the laity or even about the clergy, had often left these questions open. The theology of the laity is very recent in the Church and has undergone vigorous development. Vatican II was the first ecumenical Council which devoted a whole document to the laity.

I think it is important to see that the Church in its entirety is called 'to serve'. Its members, ordained or not, fulfil a multitude of ministries and services. We have to see the Church as essentially a communion of equal members, a communion sent into the world by Christ to serve through the innumerable gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Lumen Gentium makes the distinction between common priesthood and ministerial priesthood. Vatican II affirms that these two "differ essentially and not only in degree" (art. 10). On the other hand art. 32 asserts the radical equality of all the members of the people of God. The problem is to define more precisely the common priesthood.

If we understand the common priesthood as participation in Christ's priesthood with its different services and roles in the Church and in the world, fulfilled in virtue of baptism and confirmation according to the gifts of the Spirit, then we have not just two different groups in the Church but as many groups as there are gifts of the Spirit. Every believer is responsible for the Church and for the world, but everybody according to his or her own gifts.

Lay people are, by right, full members in the Church. They are not just people who need to be told what to do and when. The Church is not a society where some individuals give the orders and take all the initiatives, and the others have to listen and to obey. The Holy Spirit does not speak only to those who are in authority. "It blows where It pleases" (Jo 3,8). Therefore, those in authority have to be attentive to what the Spirit says through all the members of the Church.

The word "klêros", from which our word "clergy" comes, relates to the entire People of God in the NT, because all "share the inheritance (lot, "klêros") of God's holy people" (Col 1,12; see Acts 20,32; 26,18; 1 Ptr 1,4). They are named "those who are called, elected, chosen by God"; they are "the saints"; they form "a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (1 Ptr 2,9). It is not admissible to look at the clergy as 'sacred' at the expense of the other believers.

The clergy and the laity have to work hand in hand to transform the reality of the world into God's design and to live the inner life of the Church called by the NT "*koinonia*", with the meaning of communion with God and with one another. We have to avoid speaking of a double vocation or mission: one in relation to the Church which would be for the clergy, and the other in relation to the world which would be for the laity. All Christians have a vocation or a mission in relation to the Church and another one in relation to the world, though they share in them in a different way.

Lay people are full members of the Church and have a mission for the Church and for the world. From this point of view there is no difference between clergy and laity. With regard to leadership in the Church there is and there will be a difference. It is the ordained ministers who are the ones who normally preside in the Church, and specially for the celebration of the sacraments and of the Word. But in many cases quite a number of lay people are called to exercise a real leadership in the Church, a leadership which is not in competition with ordained ministers.

(see: Eugène Lapointe, OMI, *Mission et Rôle du laïcat dans l'Eglise. Position d'une Eglise d'Afrique*. SEDOS 99/73)

Laity of the Jules Chevalier Family

Father Jules Chevalier, founder of the congregations of the MSC, the FDNCS and, with Father Hubert Linckens, of the MSC Sisters, did not elaborate a structure for his congregations from theoretical principles. He was living the urgency of the mission; all the structures he was giving to his organisation had the main purpose to realise that mission, i.e. to continue the mission of Jesus himself and in this way to fight against the destructive evils of society.

The common mission of the three congregations is a mission without frontiers, open to all kinds of work and apostolates. It is among other things what Fr Chevalier wanted to express when he chose a motto: "*May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere.*"

Thus the goal of the community is to let Jesus Christ be known as well as the love flowing from his Heart. Jules Chevalier was convinced that the devotion to the Sacred Heart was an answer to the evils of his time.

A proper understanding of Fr. Chevalier's idea of mission is essential for a correct understanding of the importance of the laity for him. When we read his first publications on the nature and mission of the Society, we have the strong impression that it was unthinkable for him or maybe 'impracticable' to speak of changing the world and its values without the participation of the laity, since they are more immersed in the world. The religious priests, brothers and sisters together with the secular priests have an essential role to play, but if the mission must progress at all the levels of society, then the role of the laity is at least as essential.

Fr. Chevalier was convinced that a religious congregation in itself was not enough as a missionary force. It is for this reason that he often came back in his early writings to the structure of three branches of the Society. For example, in a brochure published in 1866, *Les Missionnaires du Sacré Coeur* he wrote: *They (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) must be truly religious in order to resemble him more closely whose Kingdom they want to spread. At the same time, they must keep as close contact as possible with the clergy, in order to spread everywhere the divine influence of the Sacred Heart.... And finally, a lay third order will penetrate where the priests would not be able. In this way, if it is possible, nothing will be allowed to escape the rebirth that comes through the influence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*" (op. cit. p. 8).

As a result, Fr. Chevalier had accepted that for the same mission to be effective, it should necessarily include a variety of groups. Each of these groups had its own way to accomplish the unique and same mission.

The MSC, the Daughters of OLSH, the MSC Sisters have been inspired by his vision and his example. To support each other, many of the laity feel they are called to incarnate the same ideals and the same vision, keeping and underlining their status as laity. They bring new challenges and possibilities to a vast ecclesial movement. The charism of the Founder unites consecrated persons and laity who recognise each other as united and animated by the same ideals of life and mission.

In 1993 the General Chapter of the MSC approved a document which underlines the authentic and important role of the laity in "the project of three branches." CS 61: "*Our Fo under wanted the fullness of mission to be realised in a global project with religious men and women, diocesan priests and lay people. He especially wished to have an Association of lay people closely united with the professed members in their spirituality and mission (Constitutions 1877)*".

The last FDNCS General Chapter in 1993 as well as the MSC Sisters' General Chapter in 1990 have recognised the important place of lay people in the vision of Father Chevalier. The FDNCS Chapter has put the 'Promotion of the Laity' on its list of priorities and "*affirms the many initiatives concerning the laity that are already being undertaken in different provinces.... and encourages provinces which have associates to support them in their commitment to live our spirit and mission*".

The MSC Sisters' Chapter "*encourages all provinces regions and districts to study the issue of lay associates and to initiate such an association*".... The General Council of the MSC Sisters declares: *We believe that the association of laity complements, strengthens and enriches our commitment to our Spirituality and Mission.... We encourage our Sisters to promote Fr. Chevalier's dream of having an association of laity working hand in hand with us as we strive to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere....*

The mutual relations between religious and lay people must be characterised by communion and complementarity. The communion between the two forms leads to understanding and reciprocal appreciation, to sympathy for the persons and for the respective way of life, to a sharing of gifts.

From this communion and this complementarity grow up an enrichment and a reciprocal support between religious and the laity. Thus we can have within the "spiritual family" a real experience of ecclesial community which allows us to go beyond the anonymity or the structural membership while the diversities of the groups are respected.

The specific structures of the lay associates must be defined by the laity itself in a realistic discernment, which respects the life of the different groups and the different contexts. However, the structures of interdependence between religious and lay associates need to be defined in a true dialogue and in mutual respect for the two forms of life, so that all can draw water from the same spiritual well, while living the concrete forms of incarnation in accordance to the situation.

The number of countries having lay associates of the Chevalier Family is growing. We find them in Africa (Benin, Cameroon, South Africa, Zaire/Congo), Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, England, France/ Switzerland, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Peru, Spain, USA, Venezuela.

The first "International Meeting of the Lay Associates of the Jules Chevalier Family" in Issoudun 1995 had found a very positive echo. All the participants, religious and laity, about 160, had been deeply convinced that they had lived an intense time during this week of meeting and sharing in the spirit of Fr. Chevalier. The second "International Meeting of the Lay Associates of the Jules Chevalier Family" (19 - 25 July 1999) was also a great success. Again more than 160 participants from 22 countries came to Issoudun. This meeting, on the initiative of the Council of the Laity MSC France/Switzerland, demonstrated the vitality of the lay branch of the Chevalier Family. A charter was accepted as a common basis for all those who see themselves as "Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart". The assembly voted unanimously for a basic structure: a board of international communion, which has its place of reference in Miribel, in contact with Issoudun.

Norma Campos Salgado,lmsc THE LAY MISSIONARIES OF THE CHEVALIER FAMILY IN THE CHURCH OF TODAY

THE HEART OF THE WORD INCARNATE

DENNIS J MURPHY MSC

Imprimi potest Michael Curran MSC Superior General Rome
10 October 2002

Imprimatur

The Most Reverend Dr. Ignatius Pinto Archbishop of Bangalore
India

22 February 2003

@ by Heart of Jesus Society, Bellandur Gate, Bangalore 560 034, India.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

OPub. No. 391 ISBN 81-7086-300-7

Published by : Asian Trading Corporation 58, 2nd Cross, Da Costa Layout, St. Mary's Town, Bangalore - 560 084. Tel: 0805487444,5490444, Fax: 080 547 9444 E-mail: mail@atcbooks.net Website: www.atcbooks.net

CONTENTS

Introduction.

[1. It seems not](#)

[2. The human heart](#)

[3. The heart as centre](#)

[4. The Heart of the Word incarnate](#)

[5. The Heart of the Universe](#)

[6. The new heart](#)

[7. One heart](#)

[8. The pierced heart](#)

[9. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart](#)

[10. Spirituality or Devotion?](#)

[11. A question of images](#)

Introduction

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is not an acceptable term in some circles. In a sense rightly so, because some feel it does not express the richness of this particular approach to Jesus Christ. For example, they find the word 'devotion' more an obstacle than a help. For others, of course, the devotion is simply a non-issue under any aspect. It is over and done with.

For a number of reasons, which I will explain later, I have decided to retain the expression 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'. It is already in place and so has a right of possession. It presents no problem for many who are still helped by naming Jesus Christ 'Sacred Heart'. And to consider the word 'devotion' an embarrassment is to ignore the richness of this word which traditionally has been synonymous with 'religion taken to heart'.

At the same time, it would be out of proportion to get excited about what title we should use. Personal preferences are in order. The main point is that 'heart' is a word which cannot be replaced merely by the use of some synonym; it has linguistic, literary and psychological overtones that are unique to it. There are many such words in all languages; they embody and manifest deeper realities beyond their written and voiced syllables - in some ways they resemble sacraments. Thus, to omit to use the word 'heart' would impoverish the understanding and description of our religion. A word used 1,163 times in the Bible is not without significance. This is not a matter of personal preference but of fact.

'Heart' language can give us an entry into a comprehensive understanding of Christian faith and life. It can readily transmute theology into wisdom and prayer. In the pages that follow I will try to show some of the ways in which a whole tradition of spirituality, with firm roots in the Bible, has experienced this to be so.

There is another point. Shifting the balance from the head to the heart, without excluding intellectual speculation, may open the way for Christian faith to relate more readily with the East where the balance is often more towards experience and interiority than towards abstract thought. It may even be a way for that same faith to make a deeper contact with Western culture which for some time has been showing signs of being disenchanted with the rationalism of eighteenth century Enlightenment.

Sacred Heart devotion has taken, takes and will take different forms. That is to be expected. Some may be disappointed that I have not followed their particular emphasis. I have no desire to undervalue other approaches or to present the following pages as the only understanding of the devotion, for only a pluralism of approaches can do justice to it. I know from experience that there is a welcome variety of emphasis even in the tradition that interests me. Furthermore, I have limited myself to only a few aspects of it.

This book arose from a request to write an article based on a twenty-minute talk I had given. The further I proceeded, the more I realized I was being drawn into areas beyond the limits of my competence and available time. The result is a rather random retrieval of some writings from

the nineteenth and early twentieth century. I have added to them reflections of my own in an attempt to understand aspects of the devotion in the light of recent developments. Obviously these reflections have the limits of a personal point of view.

Though much that follows is an invitation to listen to the past, it is not an invitation to visit a museum - interesting perhaps, but irrelevant. Much less is it an invitation to remain there. The past cannot be repeated; it has no monopoly on enlightenment; but neither has the present. However, the past can throw light on the present and in this way help us take new steps more surely.

I have used regularly the writings of Jules Chevalier (1824-1907)¹, the Founder of the religious Congregation to which I belong. However, this is not technically a study of his teaching. I have placed quotations from him and other authors side by side with my own reflections because they throw light on each other, not because they say exactly the same thing or belong to the same historical, spiritual, or theological context. Although nineteenth century piety has its own unrepeatable way of looking at things, this does not mean that we have nothing to learn from it.

Jules Chevalier was by no means a significant figure in nineteenth century theology. He possessed great vision, plus the determination to translate that vision into deeds, but he was at the same time an ordinary parish priest like so many others of his time. In this way, he can be a voice for the otherwise voiceless and also give unexpected insights into how devotion to the Sacred Heart was widely understood in his time and maybe how it could be given new relevance in our own.

It is possible and even advisable to read the chapters that follow separately and in any order. The same is true to some extent even for paragraphs. Browsing is often more attractive for people who read for relaxation or meditation. Moreover, this method of writing may help readers spot more quickly what they do not need to read, either because they are familiar with it already or not interested. It will also, hopefully, enable some to discover more quickly points they want to reflect on more deeply. For those who have not experienced any problem with devotion to the Sacred Heart, the first chapter's paragraph's on symbol, networks, etc could be left aside. Since the aim has been to make chapters complete in themselves, there is some unavoidable repetition.

For convenience I have shortened some quotations from Jules Chevalier mainly by leaving out repetitions. At times this has lessened the richness of a passage but the sense has remained unchanged. The translations are all my own.

Dennis J Murphy MSC

¹ The main source is the fourth edition of his book *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus* Paris: Librairie de Vic et Amat, Quatrithne Edition, 1900. Already in 1883 he had written a book of 824 pages on the relationship between the Sacred Heart and Our Lady under the title *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus dans ses Rapports avec Marie ou Notre Dame du Sacre-Coeur*. The section on the Sacred Heart was published separately in 1886 and expanded further in the fourth edition of 1900.

1 It seems not

A method of studying theology in the Middle Ages was to list first the objections that could be raised against the point that the author or teacher wanted to make. The objections were introduced by the Latin tag *videtur quod non*, 'it seems not'. There may be some wisdom in using the same approach here.

In 1966, I wrote in an article: "Devotion to the Sacred Heart is just what the Church needs today except for three little things - the words 'devotion', 'sacred' and 'heart'." The article was an attempt to answer that remark, first by seeing what truth there was in it and secondly by suggesting what we could do about it. Though I thought I was bringing out the essentials of the devotion, the article nevertheless hurt and disturbed a number of people. I regret that A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then. I am much older and, I hope, wiser. There may, however, be some value in beginning in the same way.

Looking back now as an old man, I would still claim - I hope not too defensively - that the article I wrote was not. as bad or as negative as some made out. It was an attempt to salvage the devotion, not destroy it. I accept that in now correcting the limitations of a younger man I might be substituting the limitations of old age. That is for others to judge.

Some problems

The following points were bothering me and others when I wrote the article mentioned above. Was 'devotion' an adequate word to describe what Popes and others had claimed to be a summary of the whole of our religion? Was there a danger that the word 'sacred' would confine it to some personal shrine hidden away from the hurly-burly of everyday life? In the nineteenth century, for example, Jules Chevalier and others had discovered its relevance when contemplating the world around them. Finally, did the word 'heart' cause misunderstandings? At that time the nature and power of symbols was still widely underestimated even though individual theologians and philosophers had already made significant breakthroughs.

Leaving aside those today who have never had the devotion put on their menu, problems about it seem to exist mainly for those who have done 'courses'. This does not imply that higher learning necessarily rejects it. One of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, Karl Rahner SJ, disproves that. So also does Teilhard de Chardin and key figures in the post-Vatican II reform like the General of the Jesuits, Pedro Arrupe, and the moralist Bernard Haring C.Ss.R. This would suggest that objections about the devotion are often based on misunderstandings or exclusive concentration on what some perceive as abuses.

Karl Rahner and the others mentioned did not cling to the Sacred Heart devotion out of some nostalgic compulsion to return to the past. Nor was it some sideline or eccentricity. It fitted into the project of their life and work. Rahner claimed that it was in his reflections on devotion to the Sacred Heart that he first discovered the importance of symbol, which would become a key point in his theology. Consequently, the understanding of the 'heart' of Christ is central to his Christology. For Haring the Heart of Jesus summed up his approach to moral theology, which was to have such a great influence after Vatican Council II.

Already in 1918, Teilhard de Chardin was claiming, "the characteristics which Scripture attributes to the Word incarnate, and which the Church has so magnificently collated in the *Litany of the Sacred Heart*, are quite formal in asserting that to Christ belongs the function of binding together into a unity the totality of creation. The world, i.e. our substance, is centred upon God *in Christo Jesu*". Admittedly, Teilhard de Chardin would also have negative things to say about some forms of the devotion in seventeenth century France. His main problem (unnecessarily so) was with reparation, which at that time did not seem to fit into his optimistic, evolutionary vision of the universe.

Charity, love, agape

In the past, theologians tended to dissect the word 'heart' as they would a concept in logic. The way they wrote and spoke at times seemed to imply that we had to worship and pray to a heart. I made the point in the article that 'heart' remained a symbol of love and could be fruitfully used in quite natural ways. After all, the symbol of love took us to the very centre of our faith. But that gave rise to a further question: Why bother about 'heart' at all if it is only a symbol? Why not speak simply of God's love? The word seemed to complicate something that was eminently simple.

When St. John said "God is love", he used an uncommon Greek word, *agape*, not because there were no other words in the language, but because the usual words did not express what the New Testament authors wanted. Translators have always had to face this problem. In English, for

example, the older translators used 'charity'; more recent ones prefer 'love'. Neither is adequate. 'Charity' tends to suggest almsgiving and institutional help, 'love' various degrees of warm affection. Both, of course, are very important aspects of what the New Testament means by 'love', but the words would be misleading if they referred exclusively to human activity. This is not a matter of down-playing human values but of seeing them in a radically new dimension.

The sort of love the New Testament wanted to express does not begin with us or with our activity, however important that may be. The 'love' it is concerned with has its origin in God - the One Jesus calls 'Father'. And to understand *this* love we do not look primarily into the human heart, much less into a dictionary. We have to see how God's Word incarnate revealed this love and lived it. Thus, the linguistic problems we have in translating *agape* become almost side-issues if our reference point is the Heart of the Word incarnate. It sums up in symbol the clear teaching of the New Testament and brings us into the Trinitarian dimension of 'love'. *Agape* has its origin in the Father who loves us even when we are in sin (1 John 4:7-10); it is revealed and made present in Christ Jesus (Rom 5:8); and it transforms our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5).

The New Testament has much to say about mutual love and service, compassion and forgiveness, but the reference point for this centres on the Father's love for us revealed in the death of Christ and made present in us through the Holy Spirit. This is basic in any understanding of the religious experience of St Paul. Christ not only gave his life for him but also to him (Gal 2:20, cf. John 17:26), and nothing could separate him or us from the Father's love present in Christ (Rom 8:31-39). But there are responsibilities on our part. Faith in God's love for us has to be put into practice through our love of others (Gal 5:6) and has to activate all that we do (Rom: 16:14). Thus belief in God's love is not merely a doctrine but a whole way of life which Paul describes in very practical ways (Gal 5:18-23; 1 Cor 13:4-8). This love, which is a fulfilment of the law and the prophets (Rom 13:8-10), can also be called the 'law of Christ' (Gal 6:2, 1 Cor 9:21). The constant reference to the death of Christ as a proof of this love and an expression of its nature is summed up by Paul in Philippians 1:27 - 2:11. This reminds us of the aptness of the *pierced* heart of Christ as a symbol of what the New Testament means by *agape*, love.

It is '*in Christ*' that we experience and understand something of this love that '*surpasses understanding*' (Eph 3: 17f). Or put in another way, it is Christ in us who brings us to this experience: *May the love you have for me be in them and may I be in them* (In 17:26). This should not be left at the level of an abstract statement. Only the way of 'devotion' - of *lived* prayer - can make it a reality.

What is the nature of the Word? His nature is the same as the principle from which he comes.

And if he is the splendour of the glory of his Father,

his power, his image,

the perfect copy of his nature,

he must also be the splendour, the power,

the perfect copy, the substantial expression

of the Heart of God from which he is born.

He must be eternal love.

And this eternal love,

basic to the very nature of God,

and proper to his Heart,

is formed from the blood of a Virgin.

Christ is wholly God,

his living sacrament, his complete gift,

the Heart with which to love us.

Jules Chevalier²

Symbols

When I wrote the article, I knew that symbols were useful; I was not sufficiently aware that they were necessary. Later I came to see more clearly that whereas we can give a substitute for many words, there are others that embody more than a simple reference to an object; they carry within themselves a whole range of experiences both personal and cultural; and they do not have adequate substitutes. Such words are symbols. 'Heart' is one of them.

Sacred Heart devotion is not limited to anyone philosophical explanation of symbol; reflection on our own experience is sufficient. Words like 'child', 'love', 'country', 'death', 'courage', 'fear', 'tears', 'laughter' cannot be limited to a meaning one finds in a dictionary. Even their sound has a wealth of associations. This is true in varying degrees of most words in a language, but some to an exceptional degree.

Words like 'my country' can make present and express to us without diminishment a vast, complex reality within the narrow limits of a shape on paper or a vibration in the air. This analogy has special relevance when we consider the Word of God made flesh.

Even if unnecessary, it may be useful to touch on some wider philosophical and theological issues concerning symbols, otherwise Sacred Heart devotion might be reduced to a mere grammatical discussion about the use of nouns and adjectives.

It would be beyond the scope of our reflections here to enter into the studies of numerous philosophers and theologians concerning the nature and importance of symbols; one will suffice. The neo- Kantian German philosopher, Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), made one of the most comprehensive studies of symbol. There is no need to agree with details of his theories, but it is significant that he made 'symbol' the central point in his whole philosophy. For him, symbolic representation is the essential function of human consciousness; in fact, he held that a human being is by nature a "symbolizing animal". Cassirer emphasized as well the unity of sign and signified in symbols. Conceptually these two aspects could be distinguished, but at the same time they form a single reality, one part of which represents the whole. That is, 'symbolizes' the whole. Cassirer applied this not only to consciousness, but to science, culture, language, art, religion.

An example of one theologian will also suffice for our purposes. Symbol plays a central part in the theology of Karl Rahner. In fact, for him, symbolization belongs to the very structure of reality, just as for Cassirer and Ricoeur it belongs to the very structure of consciousness and knowledge. Rahner holds that there are things which can be called *real* symbols. The human body with its parts, for example, is a *real* symbol of the soul, the embodied self³. It makes the soul present and manifest. A touch of the hand can be a means of expressing the gift of oneself to another. Though this touch is distinct from the gift of self, it is not a separate reality from it. Body and soul form one being - the human person. Following this line of thought, Rahner sees Jesus Christ as the *real* symbol (self-expression) of the eternal Logos (Word) who in turn is the *real* symbol (self-expression) of the Father. Since for Rahner the word 'heart' refers to the deepest reality of Jesus, the centre from which all else emerges, the 'heart' of Jesus becomes the symbol of all that concerns him and his mission. Thus in Rahner's understanding of the word, to speak of symbol as *only* a symbol would be a complete misunderstanding.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the real *symbol*
of the love of Our Lord for us.

A symbol is an object that gives us knowledge
of another object through an analogy it has with it.

The choice of this symbol should not surprise us;
it had to be this way because it is based on truth.
All peoples and our Sacred Books testify that of all the parts of the body,
the heart contains in itself the reason
why it is the overall symbol of love
and the basis for this relationship.
Jules Chevalier⁴

Though symbols are important, they are not ends in themselves. What they are symbols *of* is the primary thing; they are a means to help us comprehend and express more adequately something else. Jules Chevalier uses capital letters at times as a way of emphasizing this point: for example, "the Sacred Heart of JESUS". The primary object is always *Jesus*. And the symbol of the heart is used as a way of helping us to see *Jesus* more fully, and by seeing him follow him more closely. As a young seminarian Jules was advised by his director to read Bishop Languet's biography of Margaret Mary. The Bishop's summing up of the object of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was quite simple: Jesus Christ's love of his Father; his love of us; our response to this love; and the fact that "We cannot express this reciprocal love better than by the word heart"⁵.

Networks, theology and devotion

Though my article had a pastoral intent, it was too abstract - too intellectual in the negative sense of that word. It was based on the assumption that the more precise and clear our concepts are, the closer we are to reality. Experience has taught me that everything exists in a network and can be adequately understood only within that network. And symbols play an important and even indispensable role in tapping into such a network and also in expressing it for us.

It is not sufficient to separate conceptually what appears to be essential from what appears to be dispensable. Arms or legs are not essential, but without them a body is defective and does not function properly. Similarly, Sacred Heart devotion has to be seen and experienced within a whole tradition and not exclusively in a few clear ideas. Only when this is done can worthwhile and lasting advances be made in our own time, or in any time.

When I wrote my article I was ignorant of the theological tradition behind the devotion, especially in the nineteenth century. That was my greatest mistake. Admittedly, devotion to the Sacred Heart is not primarily a doctrine but a very simple way of experiencing and approaching God and certainly not limited to theologians, nevertheless it can only be understood properly in its proper context. Henri Ramiere SJ (1821-1884) popularized devotion to the Sacred Heart through the Apostleship of Prayer and the *Messenger du SacreCoeur*-a Jesuit publication that would be copied in many countries. His approach was by no means merely pietistic, but comprehensively theological with emphasis on the Incarnation, the Trinity, the Church as the Body of Christ, the Eucharist and also on the devotion's social implications. He wrote in 1862: "Devotion to the Sacred Heart properly understood is not a particular devotional practice. It is the whole of religion, but religion seen under its most enlightening and consoling aspect"⁶. In other words, Sacred Heart devotion was not merely a matter of pious practices nor of purely speculative theology; it was 'wisdom' in the biblical sense of that word. In a letter to Ramiere that same year, Jules Chevalier fully agreed with him.

The Heart of the divine Master
is the centre on which converges
everything in the Old and New Testament;
the pivot around which everything in Catholicism turns.
That is how I understand devotion to the Sacred Heart:
it embraces everything, it is the answer to everything.
Jules Chevalier⁷

This comprehensive view of Sacred Heart devotion was not a passing enthusiasm for Jules Chevalier. Much later in life he made the same point based on years of personal experience and study. Towards the end of his long book on the Sacred Heart he showed that what he had written was not simply a description of some acts of piety but a whole vision of Christian faith and morality.

In itself devotion to the Sacred Heart
is a whole world of theology.
Its range is enormous.
We have already been able to convince you of that.
It embraces everything:
dogma and moral; the past, the present and the future.
When one practises it,
its influence penetrates irresistibly.
That is why this devotion is essentially social,
restoring all things.
Jules Chevalier⁸

Learning from the past

'Creative fidelity' is unfortunately misused at times as a sleight-of-hand that masks either a fear of genuine creativity or a fear of genuine fidelity. That was certainly not the way it was understood by the philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, who seems to have coined the phrase. I understand it here as an equally respectful listening to the past and listening to the present. Without this sense of continuity (fidelity) and challenge (creativity) we cease to really *live in history*. We become either museum pieces or passing fads. I am convinced that the same applies to Sacred Heart devotion.

Many things changed after Vatican Council II. Not always wisely. However, some things needed to change and even be forgotten in order that they could be rediscovered in their pristine beauty and in this way open new possibilities for our own time. In the process, theologians recognized that they had created a 'piety void'. Usually this was applied to the 'simple faithful', but others recognized that it was relevant to theology itself.

If our ideas about God (theology) do not lead us into worship (devotion), we have not really grasped who and what God is. In other words, theology that is not open to devotion is suspect; and devotion that is not open to theology is also suspect. Admittedly, the warm word devotion is still suspect among many and 'spirituality' preferred. We will return to this later.

To understand Sacred Heart devotion in its network we need to return to the past, not to be imprisoned there but to be better equipped to answer our needs today. Otherwise we may spend time foolishly, and not without arrogance, reinventing the wheel. It is too often forgotten that Vatican II did not come about merely by listening to the world of its time. For some decades previously, the theologians who most influenced the Council had returned respectfully to the great men and women of the past in order to learn from them. Arguably, this *respectful* return to the past is

lacking in a lot of theology and spirituality today. We are, in consequence, the poorer in facing the needs of our own time in a way that will free us from fads and produce more lasting effects.

In the presentation that follows, I intend to go back frequently to a nineteenth century French parish priest, Jules Chevalier (1824-1907), to see what we can learn from him. Though interested in theology, he was not a theologian. This is an advantage because it keeps us closer to earth and to the people he cared for in his parish for over fifty years. Neither was he original, which is also an advantage. He borrowed much from other books on devotion to the Sacred Heart. He also got ideas from confreres who helped in a variety of ways. Consequently, when we listen to him, we are in contact with a wider current of nineteenth century ideas.

¹ Quoted by Christopher Mooney SJ, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ*. London. Collins 1966, p. 76. Italics mine

² *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 146f. The biblical references are to Heb 1 :3; I Cor 1:24; 2-6; 1 John 4:8; Jn 1:14). The last sentence is acknowledged to the from Mgr. Gay whom he calls "one of the most profound theologians of our century".

³ Rahner himself uses the word 'soul' in soundly theological and philosophical sense. To write off this usage as so-called 'Greek dualism' is both simplistic and unwarranted. The stand taken by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its *Letter on Certain Questions concerning eschatology* (17 May 1979) remains balanced and commonsensical: "The Church affirms that the spiritual element survives and subsists after death, an element endowed with consciousness and will, so that the 'human self subsists. To designate this elements, the Church uses the word 'soul', the accepted term in the usage of Scripture and Tradition. Although not unaware that this term has various meanings in the Bible, the Church thinks that there is no valid reason for rejecting it; moreover, she considers that the use of some word as a vehicle is absolutely indispensable in order to support the faith of Christians. "

⁴ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 152.

⁵ Bishop Languet, *La vie de la Vberable Mere Margurite Marie*, p. xlvi. 6 *L'esperance de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1862, p. 624.

⁷ Letter 9 March 1862. MSC General Archives, Rome.

⁸ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 280

2 The human heart

To understand fully the human heart we need to look into the Heart of Jesus. In Jesus' way of being human, we see what God wants the human heart to be, because it is God's plan that we be *moulded into the image of his Son* (Rom 8:29). But we can also say that to understand the Heart of Jesus, we need to look into the human heart on every level. In its depths the human heart is open to all reality and ultimately to the ground of all reality that we call God. And the Heart of God and the human heart meet in the Heart of Christ.

The Heart of God descends in haste to his creation
with the weight of an infinite love,
and the heart of creation rises towards God
drawn by an attraction that dominates all others in it.
It is in Jesus that these two hearts meet,
and they unite so profoundly that the
two Hearts become one.
Jules Chevalier ¹

Jules Chevalier sees this meeting of hearts already achieved through the incarnation. Through it, Jesus is not merely a link in a chain between God and creation; he fuses both together. While this has already taken place, it's effect will be fully revealed only in the final fulfilment of God's purpose for the whole of creation.

A day will come, when we will know our own heart
by knowing the Heart of Jesus;
we will be able to say with the Apostle:
Everything belongs to us;
we belong to Jesus,
and Jesus belongs to God.
Then the universe in its entirety will appear as it really is,
as a word uttered in time
to express the secrets of eternity.
Jules Chevalier ²

The meaning of 'heart'

It is not unusual for a part or organ of the human body to be used to express the whole person - grammatically this use of a part for the whole is called a synecdoche. The 'heart', for example, is used extensively in this way in the Bible and in many languages. In the Bible, words like 'arm', 'eyes', 'face' are used at times as a graphic way of speaking of the person. The same language is used of God. When a part is used in this way, the meaning goes beyond the mere physiological part; but there always remains a basis in reality for the usage because the person is understood in the light of the part mentioned. For example, 'arm' denotes strength and control, 'face' attention and mood. Thus the 'the arm of the Lord' does not denote the 'arm' as distinct from the Lord, but the Lord himself as one who is strong and in control. Consequently when 'heart' or some other internal organ is " used in this way (e.g. 'liver', 'entrails', 'kidneys') it can present the whole person but under the aspect of 'interiority', including the depths of a person - the *self*.

'Almighty Lord' is not a synonym for 'the arm of the Lord', nor is 'self' a synonym for 'heart'. Symbolic language is open-ended and something important is lost if one does not keep in mind the part with the whole it represents. 'Arm', 'heart', 'face', for example, have a wealth of meaning when used as a synecdoches - that is, symbolically. More importantly, the symbol of the human heart does not limit us to generalizations about God's love and mercy, but reminds us that he has really loved us with a human heart. Moreover, we are reminded that God has assumed not only the appearance of a human being, but has entered into the depths of what it means to be human.

Pope John Paul II referred to this usage of 'heart' in his *Encyclical Redemptor hominis* (4 March 1979) in which he outlined the policy for his Pontificate: "Vatican Council II: in its penetrating analysis of the 'contemporary world' reached the most important point of the visible world, that is, the human person. To do this, it descended, as did Christ, to the depths of the human conscience, reaching right to the interior mystery of the human person, which in the language of the Bible and even outside the Bible is expressed by the word 'heart'. Christ, Redeemer of the world, is

he who has penetrated, in a unique and absolutely singular manner, into the mystery of humanity; he has entered into the human 'heart'"(n.8). Throughout his Pontificate Pope John Paul II has returned regularly to this theme.

Unity in multiplicity

The word 'heart' is not understood in opposition to intelligence. Nor is the 'heart' merely the emotional side of a human being; it is the symbol of the integration of the whole interior life of a person. It is the centre-the *self*. Even if I deny such a centre, I affirm it, for I am aware that it is 'I' who was responsible for the denial. Our concepts may have problems in grasping this centre; it may always escape our understanding, even though it is given in experience. This reinforces the need of a symbol.

The word 'heart' brings the multiplicity in a human being to a unifying centre. The word 'unifying' is important, because a centre cannot exist in isolation; it is always the centre of something. Thus the 'heart' as the centre of a human being, unites body and soul; intellect and emotions; sense perception and rational judgment; passion and will. It was this combination of matter and 'energy' - including spiritual energy - that attracted Teilhard de Chardin to the symbol of the heart. At this centre, we find the dynamism that moves and unites everything else - we find love. And Jules Chevalier, following St Augustine, claims that we are what we love.³

Love sums up the whole person;
it is the whole person,
concentrated at one point.
All the rays converge on this one centre;
everything harmonizes:
attraction, feeling, instinct, intelligence, will; and
all of it echoes together
at the same time
in the heart.
Jules Chevalier⁴

This integrated view of the human person is not a recent development in theology as is sometimes supposed; nor is it exclusively biblical. It seems to me essential also, for example, in Aristotelian and Thomistic anthropology and epistemology. It is a misnomer to refer to every theory that accepts parts in a human being as dualism; for dualism, strictly so called, considers the material side of a human being in negative terms. Sometimes this accusation of dualism comes from people who are at least 'closet' monists. Although the seminary in which Jules Chevalier studied took Descartes as their prime model for philosophy,⁵ the young seminarian was able to maintain a more integrated view of human nature, which both influenced and was influenced by his approach to Sacred Heart devotion.

In this mysterious being called man,
the masterpiece and summary of creation
the soul lives with a bodily life
and the body united to the soul,
of which it is the organ,
lives with the very life of the spirit.
Human functions are neither completely spiritual
since we are not pure spirit
nor completely bodily because we are not merely matter.
Jules Chevalier⁶

Cardinal de Berulle (1575-1629) had a strong influence on the spirituality in which Jules Chevalier was formed. He also was fascinated by the multiplicity in unity that is a human being. "A human being is composed of completely different elements. On the one hand a miracle, on the other a nothing. He is heavenly on the one hand, and earthly on the other. On the one hand he is spiritual, on the other corporal. He is an angel, he is an animal; he is a nothing, he is a miracle; he is a centre, a world, a god"?

The fact that a human being is a unity in multiplicity and a multiplicity in unity may appear so obvious and trite that it does not need to be mentioned. It is obvious, but our tendency to simplify matters is also obvious. For example, we can be reluctant to hold together elements that our intellect and concepts distinguish and even separate. Symbolic language, symbolic objects and symbolic actions not only ease this problem, but give us the means to cope with it. The human 'heart' is one such symbol.

The heart symbolizes not only the inalienable individuality of the person, but also an essential relationship with others, for the heart is a symbol not only of who we are, but also of love. Everything exists in relationship with others. For a Christian, in fact, interrelatedness belongs to the very notion of being. This applies even to the reality of God who is essentially Father, Son and Spirit. Since there is one Creator, there is also one humanity. We are all inalienably individuals, but each individual is also inalienably part of humanity.

Though composed of different members,
humanity is formed by one same body and blood.
The heart which gives life
to all the members of this great body
is the Heart of Jesus.
He alone unites us together
and he alone unites us to God.
As soon as we separate ourselves from him,
we separate ourselves from one another
and we lose the true feeling of the human family
by losing the life of God which is its source.
This divine Heart is then the centre
around which all hearts gravitate.
Jules Chevalier⁸

We are loved

The 'heart' symbolizes (i.e. re-presents, makes present) the self as loved infinitely by God. Though over-simplifying, Hans Urs von Balthasar has beautifully said that when God tells us who we are for him, then we are a person. His love should convince us that *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor rulers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus* (Rom 8:38f).. The human heart certainly unites us with all things, but at the same time it symbolizes the uniqueness of our being a person. Jules Chevalier speaks of this in a daring but valid way.

Each shares in the divine life
in time by grace
and in eternity by glory.
But each receives this grace and this glory
in their own proper, personal measure.
This makes each one,
for all eternity,
a special being,
able to say like God:
I am he who is;
I am this, this particular someone
who is not and never will be someone other.
Just as He Who Is takes his name from his Being,
and calls himself the NAME,
the supreme name,
since he is the supreme being;
in heaven,
each will receive the name of his being,
a. personal name,
different from every other,
which will say for all eternity
who is the one who bears it.
Jules Chevalier ⁹

We are created

We only understand something fully when we understand where and what it comes from. And this includes human beings. To understand the human person properly we have to turn to God the Creator who gives us existence. Creation is not limited to how things begin, but also to how they continue to exist and develop. Evolution does not contradict creation; it describes the sort of universe that God holds in existence - the God in whom *we live and move and have our being* (Acts 17:28). However, we have to keep in mind that in the New Testament God is always the 'God of Jesus Christ' and this gives us a fuller vision when speaking of creation: *there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist* (1 Cor 8:6). We find the same in John's theology of the Word. In the New Testament God and creatures are not viewed independently of Christ.

If the act of creation is not merely a giving of existence in the past but the holding of things in existence at every moment, what is created would return to nothing apart from God. No matter how great a created being may appear, it is and will always be 'from nothing'. This does not belittle creatures; on the contrary, it enhances their significance and dignity. We can revel in their beauty and their grandeur, but at the same time see all this as nothing in comparison with the infinity of God.

Look at the universe!
If all beings should form
the most marvellous harmony
in honour of God,
if there were not a discordant note
in this harmony,
if it were prolonged during ages and ages,
during eternity,
ever more varied, ever more united,
ever more beautiful,
never, never
would it attain the heights of infinity.
Jules Chevalier ¹¹

Berullian spirituality laid great stress on the 'nothingness' of human beings. This would seem to be completely out of line with the modern stress on self-development and self-esteem, which are rightly considered essentials in any modern spirituality. Any effort to bring the word 'nothingness' back into currency would probably be futile and even dangerously misleading. However, we need to avoid reading back into the past our preoccupations without making an effort to understand that same past. Independently of what words we use, a sense of the absoluteness of God remains always basic.

The stress on self-development gives an impression at times of a jejune, or even non-existent understanding and experience of the absoluteness of God in general and of the nature of creation in particular. Added to this, an egalitarian ethos can colour even our relationship with God. This creates unnecessary hurdles in finding common ground in dialogue with Buddhists and also with Hindus who take the Upanishads seriously. It also betrays ignorance of the very strong apophatic tradition within Christian spirituality.

We are created and loved
God looks with immense love
on the smallest, the least of the beings
created by him.

He takes in the whole magnificent scene
 with a look of absolutely indescribable love.
 Nevertheless absolutely nothing of all this,
 neither the details, nor the whole,
 nothing merits to be looked at by God.
 Everything there is limited;
 God is without limits;
 what is the finite in the face of infinite?
 Jules Chevalier ¹²

Statements about 'nothingness' made by de Berulle and his followers have to be seen in their proper context. Even if at times the emphasis did lead to an overly pessimistic view of human nature, at its best it did not downgrade human beings, but on the contrary stressed the utter gratuitous nature of God's love for them - a love which infinitely transcends the limits of our qualities or defects, our talents or lack of them, our success or failure, our self-development or diminishment. Consequently this love gives each and every person inalienable worth and is, because of this, a sure foundation for self-development. The most powerful influence on a sense of self-worth is the experience of being loved; only counterfeits are built up outside of that. Without it the ideal of human maturity can be just as crippling as the much decried search for spiritual 'perfection' in the past. Thus the acceptance of God's gratuitous, unconditional love is the rock on which we have to build everything. We see it symbolized in the Heart of Christ - above all in the *pierced* heart of Christ.

While 'nothingness' may not be a useful word today, at least hearing it from the past can shock us into the realization that we are *creatures*. Significantly, the refusal to accept ourselves as creatures and to want to be like God is presented in Genesis as *the* original sin. To build our lives on this refusal is destructive both of oneself and others. We have to accept our greatness and our limits as human beings - fallen human beings. And it is in that situation that God comes to meet us in the Heart of Christ.

For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:6-8).

God's love was revealed among us in this way. God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 In 4:9-10).

Cardinal de Berulle presented this basis for the dignity of every human being very clearly "We should be truly a nothing (for that fits in with what we are by nature); but a nothing in the hand of God; a nothing destined for God; a nothing in reference to God; a nothing chosen by God; a nothing consecrated to God; a nothing filled with God; and finally a nothing possessed by God and possessing God; and that fits in with what we are by grace" ¹³.

God says to me,
 I have loved you with an everlasting love!
 Me!
 It is specifically me
 whom God has so loved,
 ungrateful me, sinful me.
 God of surpassing majesty,
 God of supreme beauty and limitless perfection,
 God has loved me.
 God!... Me!...
 What distance!
 The infinite!... and nothing!
 And God has loved this nothing!
 Loved!
 O God of love,
 make me understand this word:
 Loved!
 He who has always existed has always loved me,
 and it is through love
 that he has decreed my creation from all eternity.
 Jules Chevalier ¹⁴

One with the universe

The material universe is not merely a stage on which human beings act their given role; they are part of it. Human beings are made from earth transformed by the breath of God (Gen 2:7) and their destiny is to return to the same earth from which they were made: *you are dust and to dust you will return* (Gen 3: 19). Modern science has dramatically expanded this vision. It tells us that the elements from which we are made are more than similar to elements found in the universe; they are elements of the universe. The devotion to the Sacred Heart we are examining here was well aware of this cosmic view of human beings.

From its natural state of inertia, of death,
 God has raised up matter to the level of life in plants;
 from plants he has raised it up to instinct in animals.
 So already in matter there is a sort of knowledge,
 a beginning of love.
 At that level no matter how high it might be,
 the material world is still like a new born child,
 incapable of knowing its mother,
 but there remains a great difference;
 tomorrow the child will let its mother know by a smile
 that it knows her and loves her;
 but if the material world remains where it is,

it will never know who made it,
nor even know that it has been made.
In his almighty genius,
God has found the means to unite matter and spirit.
What a miracle is the human body!
God has formed this privileged matter in such a way
that the whole lower world is united in it,
summed up in it.
Jules Chevalier¹⁵

God can create only out of love; being infinite he needs nothing. He creates in order to give himself; and what is created should naturally respond in gratitude, love, praise and, above all, adoration, particularly since all is 'from nothing'. The universe can only respond in this way through the human person. It follows that our adoration is not a solitary religious act - a contemplative withdrawal from matter. On the contrary it brings the universe to its proper destiny. As Jules Chevalier says, *In us, matter becomes religious*. Consequently, concentration on the 'heart' of the human person is by no means an escape from the outside world nor an exclusive concern for 'interiority'.

In the universe
a human being is the eye of all that does not see,
the heart of all that does not feel,
the tongue of all that remains mute.
A human being is not only a mineral that blossoms,
a shrub that feels,
but an animal who prays, adores and gives thanks.
In us matter becomes religious.
Jules Chevalier¹⁶

Jules Chevalier acknowledged that human beings live in a 'fallen state', capable of all sorts of evil, but at the same time they are by nature and by God's design the 'wonder *par excellence*' of the material universe. From this point of view they are 'priests', praising and adoring the Creator on behalf of the cosmos; he uses the term 'pontiff' in this regard, based on a commonly accepted etymology of the word, 'bridge builder' (*pons facere*).

A human being is a king and a pontiff:
a king by reason of intelligence,
a pontiff by reason of the heart.
While your feet rest on the earth,
creation through you is one.
Thanks to your twofold nature,
an amazing point of union,
there is one world, the Universe,
singing with a single voice,
"Glory to God!"
Beautiful sight!
The world of angels, the world of matter,
the human world!
A created trinity,
one in human beings,
knowing, loving, glorifying
the uncreated, creating Trinity.
What magnificent harmony!
Jules Chevalier¹⁷

The God who holds the centre of our being in existence is the God who is love. However, a centre does not exist in its own right; it is a centre of something and can only be understood properly in the light of that something. And thus our true centre cannot be isolated from our embodiment in the universe of which we are a part. This gives also a ground for the Christian belief in resurrection. In the eyes of God matter *matters* eternally.

Let us not forget
this is God's aim:
to associate external matter in the religion of human beings,
so that he can be glorified, known and loved.
It is in order to be loved that God wishes to be known;
love is the final word for all our relationships with him,
the summary of the whole of religion.
And in us our feelings have a special organ,
the heart.
The heart is the central point where everything converges.
Jules Chevalier¹⁸

We are not only inalienably individuals and inalienably part of humanity; we are also inalienably part of the material universe in which we live, both as individuals and as members of the one human race. Certainly, human beings bring to consciousness this immense network of existence, but it is not merely an exercise of the mind. Above all, it is love that unites everything that is 'other'. And the symbol of this love, is once more the heart.

How marvellous is this material world!
 What perfect unity in this indescribable variety!
 Not a being in isolation!
 Each thing is useful for the whole,
 and the whole useful for each thing;
 it is an immense network,
 all the links of which hold together and converge
 at a central point:
 the human being.
 God's aim is to associate external matter
 to the religion of man,
 so that He can be glorified, known and loved.
 It is in order to be loved
 that God wishes to be known;
 love is the final word
 for all our relationships with him,
 the summary of the whole of religion.
 And, in us, the affective life has a special organ,
 the heart.
 The heart!
 See the central point where everything converges.
 Jules Chevalier¹⁹

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph 3:17-19).

¹ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.76.

² op. cit., p.65, quoting Mgr Baudry. The reference is to 1 Cor 3:22f.

³ Quoting St Augustine in *epistolam S. Joannis* tract II, n. 14. 'You love the earth? You will be earth. You love God? What shall I say? You will be God? I do not dare say this of myself. Let us listen to the Scriptures, "I have said, You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High." (Quoting Ps 82:6)

⁴ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.103

⁵ See Jules Chevalier, *Notes in times*, Presentation et annotations: Jean Bertolini msc, Rome: Missionari del Sacra Cuore, 1986, p.13.

⁶ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.88

⁷ Cardinal de Berulle, *Oeuvre de pieri* quoted by Yves Krumenacker, *L'ecole*

⁸ *Messenger du Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, 7(1865) 529.

⁹ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 83.

¹⁰ op. cit., p.281

¹¹ op. cit., p.67

¹² op. cit., p. 66

¹³ Cardinal de Berulle, *Correspondance* t. III, Letter 683, October 1627. Quoted by quoted by Yves Krumenacker, *L'ecole fran_aise de spiritualite*, Paris: du Cerf 1998

¹⁴ *Retraite*, p. 17f.

¹⁵ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.64

¹⁶ op. cit., p. 63 & 64. The first sentence, taken from page 63, is a quotation from Mgr Gay

¹⁷ op. cit., p. 67 18 op. dt., p. 65 19 op. dt., p.64f

3 The heart as centre

When 'heart' is used with its full symbolic overtones, it means much more than a bodily organ. This wider usage has concentrated so much on the heart as a symbol of love that we have overlooked three other basic aspects: the heart as what constitutes the human person; the heart as the meeting place between God and human beings; and, following from these two, the heart as the focal point of the incarnation of the Word of God.

The heart as the whole person

The heart as a symbol of love is generally considered to be central in Sacred Heart devotion. And it obviously is. But we need to keep in mind that 'heart' is not used as a symbol of love in the Bible. There the word refers to the whole interior life of a person. The heart is not only the source of emotion, but also of understanding, reasoning and decision. More importantly it stands for the whole person. W. Eichrodt, in his *Theology of the Old Testament*, describes 'heart' in the Bible as "a comprehensive term for the personality as a whole, its inner life, its character."¹ To know the heart is to know who and what someone really is. *The Lord does not see as mortals see. They look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart* (1 Sam 16: 17).

This contrast between the outward appearance and the reality within is an important theme in the Bible, particularly in the teaching of the Prophets and of Jesus. It is a mistake, however, to see this in older Liberal Protestant terms as a separation or opposition of interior and exterior religion, which leaves interior religion as sufficient in itself and the only genuine religion. The heart manifests itself in deeds, and the deeds manifest the heart, for the heart is the centre from which all else emerges. Thus it is too limiting to think of 'heart' simply as interiority, as though the symbol was relevant only to introspective personality types. As a symbol of love it is just as typically outgoing as inward looking. Symbols usually do not fit into neat categories.

The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks (Luke 6:45)

Since the heart is the symbolic centre of a human being, it unites matter and spirit; creativity and responsibility; emotion and intelligence; desire and will. It is the summary of all that a human being is. There is a danger that we think of a centre as though it were independent of what it is a centre of, like a precious stone in a box. On the contrary, a centre only has meaning in so far as it is a centre of something. The heart as centre is the self at its deepest level; and this self, though ineradicably individual, is not an isolate. As centre it is a unifier; and unity comes from love. Thus Chevalier sees the meaning of heart as both 'centre' and 'love'.

Love is the life of the heart.
If the heart wants to live,
it is impossible for it to be without love.
Our love is ourself.
It is to the heart,
as an expression of the soul,
that one attributes all that belongs to the soul:
faults and qualities,
vices and virtues,
good points and bad points.
Our heart is our self.
According to St. Jerome,
"If Plato put the soul in the head,
Jesus Christ put it in the heart."
God wants us only for our soul;
and he wants the soul because of its love –
for its heart.
My child, give me your heart (Proverbs 23:26).
Jules Chevalier²

The meeting place with God

The meeting of God with human beings takes place of necessity in the heart where the reality that is God meets the reality of our being; that is, the meeting has to take place where we are truly ourselves, and where God is truly God. In dealing with God the supreme reality, there can be no place for unreality or mere appearances. And what we really are is found in our hearts. This should not be understood as the interior life in antithesis to our external life. The heart manifests itself in what we do; interior and exterior can be distinguished but not separated. The attempt to put a religion of the heart in opposition to external forms in an individualistic sense is biblically speaking an oddity. Thus Isaiah can point to lack of social justice in Israel as a sign that *their hearts are far from me* (Is 29: 13). Jesus refers to the same text (Mt 15:8-9).

Genuine conversion takes place in the heart (Ps 51: 10, 17). And in the new Covenant God writes his law in the hearts of his People. In this way he becomes their God and they become his people (cf. Jer 31:33; cf. Jer 24:7; 32:37-40; ps 37:31; Ezek 36:26-28 cf.11:19; 18:31). The law of God can be written in books and read, but it only becomes alive when it is lived; that is, when it touches what and who we really are - our *hearts*. Again, this use of the word 'heart' goes deeper than our usual contrast of 'heart' and 'intellect', for when we enter into the unifying centre of the human person - the depths of the self - we are at the point that unites everything.

The 'heart as centre' is in no way a promotion of ego-centred psychology or spirituality. The much quoted words of Irenaeus (c.130 - c. 200), *The glory of God is a living human being*", are weakened if they are taken out of their context and humanistic limits put on them.. The full text does not lessen in any way the glory of human life, but stresses its limitless potentiality. "The glory of God is a living human being and the life of a human being consists in beholding God. For if the manifestation of God, which is made by means of creation, affords life to all living beings on the earth, much more does that revelation of the Father, which comes from the Word, give life to those who see God." ³ We become what we are meant to be in our relationship to others; we become *completely* what we are meant to be in our relationship with *the Other*, who is Father, Son incarnate and Spirit, the centre (Heart) around which all else turns. .

"Nothing is easier than to pursue one's selfish interests under the cover of growing in God and of loving in God. The only real protection against that dangerous illusion is a constant concern to keep very much alive (with God's help) the impassioned vision of the Greater-than-All. In the presence of that supreme interest the very idea of growing or enjoying egotistically, for oneself, becomes insipid and intolerable."

The more we experience the centre of our being, the more we experience that we are not the real centre of creation or of humanity. There is the wider humanity-past present and future - to which we belong; there is the immensity of the universe of which we are a part; and there is the Creator who holds in existence not only the centre of our being, but all humanity and the whole universe. My heart, my centre, is what makes me to be *me*. However, I am fully *me* only in openness to the fullness of being; and the centre that binds together everything 'seen and unseen' is God's Word incarnate in Jesus. And the essence of that Word is summed up in the symbol of the Heart of Jesus.

O Heart of the Word incarnate,
O Heart of the universal Christ,
it is you, you above all,
who, gathering into yourself all the elect,
are truly the end of all the works of God,
the universal fruit of creation.

Jules Chevalier⁴

The Heart of God

For Jules Chevalier the heart is not only seen as the centre of human beings and the Word incarnate. There is a centre also in God that can be called the heart of God-what makes God to be *God*. And that heart is essentially love, which is the centre of everything that exists-a love that is stronger than decline, suffering, sin and death.

We know from where the Word comes;
he comes from the unfathomable depths of the divine essence,
from the *Heart of God*.
If he is the *splendour of the glory* of his Father,

he must also be the substantial expression
of the Heart of God
from which he is brought forth.
He must be *love* eternal.
And this infinite love,
which constitutes the very depths of God,
is contained in a human heart
born from the blood of a Virgin.
Christ is the whole of God,
his living sacrament,
his complete gift,
he is his Heart with which to love us.
Jules Chevalier ⁵

¹ *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol II, 1967, p143.

² *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 105f. The full text contains many references to other authors, e.g. Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Suarez, Gratry etc. In the text given here repetitions have been left out for the sake of greater conciseness. The reference to Jerome is his *Com. in ev. Mat.* Lib II, c. 15, verse 19-20. Jules Chevalier's use of 'soul' here has to be kept in the context of the unity of the human being. The importance he continues to give to matter even in his treatment of heaven (op.cit. Livre III, chapters 4-9) makes this very clear.

³ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* Book IV, 20, 7.

⁴ op.cit., p. 76.

⁵ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, 146f. The original text contains a number of scriptural references. The main ones are Heb 1:3 and I John 4:8.

4 The Heart of the Word incarnate

If the Heart of Jesus expresses what makes Jesus to be *Jesus*, it is inescapably bound up with his humanity; and devotion to the Heart of Jesus is therefore essentially Christocentric. However, it has at times been reproached for trivializing the absolute transcendence of God, and even for a tendency to make Jesus Christ a substitute for God. If, however, the Heart of Jesus refers to what makes Jesus to be *Jesus*, the Gospels, the whole of the New Testament and Tradition make clear that his identity consists in his relationship to his Father. Sacred Heart devotion is Christocentric, but the *Heart of Christ, Christ himself, is not centred on himself but opens us to the God who is Father, Son and Spirit. Consideration of Jesus as Word of God helps keep this in perspective.

The Word of God

In 1848, the Sulpician Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Bourges Major Seminary, M. Pellisier, added some notes on devotion to the Sacred Heart at the end of his course on the Incarnation. The Jesuit theologian, Giovanni Perrone (1794-1876), seems to have started this practice, which remained customary in widely used text books up to Vatican Council II. Jules Chevalier, a seminarian at the time, wrote down all the notes given in class. He had known the devotion from childhood, but now he saw it as a summary of the whole of theology. It entranced him. "This doctrine went straight to my heart, and the more I went into it, the more I relished it, seeing afresh its attractiveness"¹. The Professor stressed that while the devotion was "new regarding some of its practices, its principles and spirit were as old as the Church"; and it was "an excellent homage given to the person of the adorable Word incarnate"². This emphasis on the Word of God would remain with Jules Chevalier throughout his life.

And who is the Word? From where does he come?
What is his essence? His nature?
The reply to these questions
will remove a number of veils,
clarify more than one mystery,
and throw a strong light on
devotion to the Sacred Heart.
Jules Chevalier ³

In religious circles in sixteenth and seventeenth France there was a widespread attraction to 'mysticism' in contrast with the growing secularism and anti-religious feeling of that period. Some felt that attention to the incarnation was an obstacle to their experience of the absolute transcendence of God, or at least limited it. Cardinal de Berulle (1575-1629) found a corrective to this in the Carmelite mystical tradition of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. He stressed with them the absoluteness of God - it is a central point in his spirituality - but at the same time he integrated it with the incarnation. His fruitful experience of the *Exercises* of St Ignatius consolidated this. The linchpin in his integration of the incarnation and the transcendence of God was the Fourth Gospel's doctrine of the Word. This was in continuity with the Old Testament presentation of the word of God and divine wisdom (Ps 33:4; Prov 8:22-31; Wis 7:22-28); but at the same time the New Testament went beyond it. Because of his interest in this point, the Cardinal became known as the 'apostle of the Word incarnate'.

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being...
And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory of the Father's only son,
full of grace and truth.
John 1:1-3, 1⁴*

The integration of the humanity of Christ and experience of God as Mystery does not mean that we concentrate exclusively on Jesus, but it does mean that the nature of the Mystery we experience has to be referred back to him, because, in him crucified and risen, God has revealed definitively who and what he is. This does not require that God cannot and does not reveal himself in other religious traditions, but it does imply that God cannot be properly understood apart from his Word incarnate. Certainly, the Light that enlightens everyone (cf Jn 1:4) can be found in a variety of ways in all religions and in all secular movements that promote good. And this light coming from the same Spirit of God enlightens us also about that Light which is incarnate in Jesus Christ. *I am the light of the world* (In 8: 12; cf 1 Jn 1:5-7)

In the Old Testament God makes himself present through and in the cosmos and events, but though he makes himself present, he remains always beyond our comprehension, otherwise he would cease to be God. By definition infinity can never be fathomed - even in heaven. This applies also to God's Word incarnate even though *in him the whole fullness of divinity dwells bodily* (Col 2:9).

The Word of God uttered in and through the dead body of Jesus on the Cross is unique in the history of religion. God is identified with self-giving. In this precise sense it is concrete fact that *No one has ever seen God. It is God's only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known* (In 1:18; cf Mt 11:27).

Since God is essentially beyond our comprehension, our words will never be sufficient to exhaust our knowledge of him. At the same time, his Word about who and what he is remains definitive, particularly in the death of Jesus. It is there that he reveals that he is self-giving (Phil 2:7-8); in other words, that he is love (1 Jn 4:9-10). St John of the Cross, writing for fellow Christians, warned them against seeking new revelations and visions that bypassed the incarnation: "God has given us everything - his only Son. Therefore, anyone who wished to question God or to seek some new vision or revelation from him would commit an offence, for instead of focusing their eyes on Christ they would be desiring something other than Christ or beyond him. God would then answer: *'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him'*. In my Word I have already said everything. Fix your eyes on him alone for in him I have revealed all and in him you will find more than you could ever ask for or desire".

St Teresa of Avila repeats the same advice: "It is clear to me that if we wish to please God and to receive graces in abundance from him, it is God's will that these graces should come to us through the hands of Christ in most holy humanity, that humanity in which his Majesty has proclaimed that he is well pleased... It is by this door that we must enter if we wish his Supreme Majesty to reveal to us great and hidden mysteries. No other way should be attempted, even by those who have reached the heights of contemplation." ⁴

One of the advantages of referring to the Word *incarnate* of God is that it shows us the other dimension to the person of Jesus Christ - person here being used in its strict theological and commonsense meaning as the answer in depth to the simple question "Who are you?" ⁵

Jesus Christ does not begin in the crib at Bethlehem
nor does he come to an end
on the mount of Olives.
He existed from all eternity
in the thought of God.
He fills all ages with his presence.
He shines
on all races, tribes and peoples,
like a mild sun.
He hovers over the universe.
Christ was in all the mysteries,
in all the sacrifices,
in all the rites,
in all forms of worship,
and finally in the whole of religion,
of which he was the substance.
Jules Chevalier ⁶

A summary of all devotions

Cardinal de Berulle made a distinction between the 'mysteries' and 'states' of Jesus; it was a central point in his spirituality. 'Mystery' in this context does not refer merely to a puzzle but to God's plan for the world, which is certainly beyond our reckoning but nevertheless made present and manifest in certain events - in this case the events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God's Word incarnate. On the other hand, contemplation of the 'states' of Jesus concentrated on what these incidents revealed about his enduring attitudes. In this way the emphasis was on the interior life (heart) of Jesus manifested in the various events of his life. Nevertheless, Sacred Heart devotion did not feature significantly in the spiritual life of the Cardinal. It was his close follower, St John Eudes (1601-1680) who would make this transition. With him, the person of the Word incarnate became the *Heart* of the Word incarnate. The emphasis, however, remained the same - the depths of the person of Jesus Christ. However, the introduction of a language of the heart did make a difference. Berulle's theology was beautiful, but high-flying-sometimes referred to as "the metaphysics of sanctity". Attention to the Heart of Jesus did not take away theological depth, but did make the practice of the devotion more accessible, simple and human. St Francis de Sales (1567-1622) remains the classic example of this.

Concentration on the interior 'states' of Jesus led the Cardinal to go beyond any particular mystery in the life of Jesus (his birth, infancy, hidden life, public life, death and resurrection) and concentrate on the *essence* of Jesus as manifested in all of these mysteries. For this reason he introduced for the Oratorians in France a liturgical 'Feast of Jesus' which would sum up all the other liturgical feasts. It is clear that St Jean Eudes had the same intention when he instituted the Feast of the *Heart* of Jesus - that is, what makes Jesus to be Jesus? Berulle spoke of the *person* of the Word incarnate, St Jean Eudes of the *Heart* of the Word incarnate, but both had the same basic idea. The aim was to arrive at the central point that summed up everything that made Jesus to be *Jesus*.

The special object of each devotion concerning the Lord
is divine love in one of its particular manifestations;
but the object of devotion to the Sacred Heart
is the love of the Christ-God
seen as a whole
in all its manifestations
and in each one of them.
Jules Chevalier ⁸

Berullian Spirituality

As a tradition, Sacred Heart devotion comprises a number of converging and even diverging spiritualities. What is generally called the French School of Spirituality is an important one of them. Cardinal de Berulle was certainly the major influence upon it and is generally accepted as its founder though an English Capuchin, Benedict Canfield (1562-1610), had already mapped out some of its main lines in a book that was widely read throughout Europe. It was only in 1928 that Henri Bremond (1865-1933) popularized the title 'French School of Spirituality' in his *Literary History of Religious Sentiment in France*. Umbrella titles, however, too easily cover over the variety that can be found in most movements. Thus it is probably more helpful to apply the term 'Berullian spirituality' to those who followed him more closely. If one wants to use 'French School of Spirituality' it can be used to cover both the teaching of de Berulle and also the various offshoots and even degenerations of it that occurred after his time. It is not possible to understand adequately the Sacred Heart devotion we are examining without reference to this tradition based on the Word incarnate.

Like any founder of a spirituality within Christianity, de Berulle channelled past currents to the needs of his day. Moreover, what he had to say was 'in the air' at the time, but undoubtedly he was the one who expressed it most effectively. As in all Christian spiritualities the Scriptures were basic. There was, however, a wide range of influences on the Cardinal. Among these were the Greek Fathers (especially the two Gregories and Clement of Alexandria) with their stress on the 'divinization' of creation through the incarnation; Augustine with his stress on the continuation of the incarnation in the Body of Christ, the Church; also the writings of the Spanish mystics Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Ignatius of Loyola who in their different ways integrated the experience of the absolute transcendence of God and the incarnation.

In the whole of this tradition, we must always remember that the One God was Father, Son and Spirit. But the same God was also Father, Son *incarnate*, and Spirit. Following the Greek Fathers this involved a 'divinization' of the material universe. It was in this context that Teilhard de Chardin was able to see in the Sacred Heart of Jesus the origin of his view of the cosmos.

In Jesus and through Jesus
the whole world shares in the divine life!
His bones,
solid as rock and possessing the same natural qualities,
are the bones of God;
that flesh that lives like a plant
is the flesh of God;
that life of sensations and instincts that make up an animal is,
in Jesus,
the life of God;
the same for his rational life:
in Jesus,
this life is not only a human life,
it is the life of God.
Jules Chevalier⁹

Although, as we have seen, Sacred Heart devotion did not feature significantly in de Berulle's spirituality, his closest followers would express it in the language of the heart. The following are the main points:

- . A deep realization of the absoluteness of God and, in comparison, our 'nothingness'. This 'nothing', however, had infinite value because it was loved infinitely by God.
- . The infinite, transcendent God had united himself with this 'nothingness' and made it his own through the incarnation. Thus the Word incarnate brought together and summed up in unique way the union of the Creator with the whole of creation.
- . Our relationship with Christ was essentially communion with him and with others. This communion prolonged his presence in history through the Church, with a special emphasis on the Eucharist.
- . The human response to all this had to be one of adoration and self-offering in union with Christ.
- . To be united with Christ was not simply the result of an ascetical process of imitation, but the transformation of our minds and hearts into his. Galatians 2: 19f was a key text: *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me* (cf also Phil2:1-8). The Gospel and Letters of St John as well as the Letter to the Hebrews also had a great influence.

Berulle's spirituality was thus founded on the humanity of Jesus and its prolongation on earth, but always in the context of the Word incarnate of the transcendent God. Each of these elements in Berulle's spirituality would have a part to play also in Fr Chevalier's spirituality based on the 'heart' of the Word incarnate.

Though Berulle stresses the 'nothingness' and 'sinfulness' of humanity, that is not his starting point. In fact, it is always a dangerous mistake to build on negative ideas, a danger that some of his followers failed to notice. Berulle's starting point is not negative, but supremely positive. It is in the context of the infinite Creator that he sees the 'nothingness' of creatures; and it is in the context of God's infinite, unconditional love that he sees both the worth and the sinfulness of those same creatures.

There is always a danger that the elevated theology that was an essential element in Berulle's spirituality could be too daunting for many. It needed to be balanced with the 'devout humanism' of St Francis de Sales who shared Berulle's spirituality, but was able to bring it within the reach of all. Jules Chevalier was influenced by these two closely related traditions within French Spirituality. And a challenge facing Sacred Heart devotion today is to provide a path that can integrate mysticism, humanism, and Church, plus apostolic and social involvement.

Jules Chevalier did his seminary training under the Sulpicians, who were founded by Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657). Though Cardinal de Berulle strongly influenced Olier and Louis Tronson (1622-1700), Olier's successor as Superior General, they both introduced some significantly different emphases. Consequently, at the Major seminary in Bourges Jules Chevalier would have experienced a greater stress on asceticism and a rather clerical approach to the priesthood. Nevertheless, Bishop Charles Louis Gay (1815-1892), who followed de Berulle more closely, had a clear influence on Chevalier, who quotes him and similar authors on a number of important points in his book on the Sacred Heart. Moreover, even from the notes he took on devotion to the Sacred Heart when he was a seminarian there are indications that the Berullian tradition was still alive in his Professors. The same influence can be found in his early sermons.¹⁰ Nevertheless Chevalier never reduced knowledge of the Word to a mere human tradition. He saw it as a gift of the Spirit.

We have been initiated into the knowledge
of the mysteries of our faith,
but if the Holy Spirit does not come to our aid,
we cannot grasp the harmony of these mysteries,

just as we cannot contemplate
masterpieces in a room,
nor admire their beauty,
if the light does not shine on them.
From a supernatural point of view,
the book of the truths of our faith
and the book of nature,
without the Holy Spirit,
remain closed to our eyes.
Jules Chevalier ¹¹

¹ Jules Chevalier, *Personal Notes*. English Translation by Sheila Larkin FDNCS, Rome: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1986, p.14.

² Manuscript, MSC General House Archives.

³ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 139.

⁴ *Ascent of Mount Cannel* Book 2, Chapter 22

⁵ *The Book of Life*, Ch.22, 6-7.14

⁶ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 4. Quoting Mgr. Berteaud.

⁷ Cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite*, Vol I, col. 1557-1559.

⁸ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.148f

⁹ op. cit. p.69

¹⁰ See Jan Bovenmars' collection *Manuscripts sur le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, Fontes MSc. Series I, Opera Jules Chevalier, Vol. 4.

¹¹ *Meditations pour tous les jours de l'annee*, Vol. I, p. 576f

5 The Heart of the Universe

*He is the image of the unseen God,
the first born of all creation,
for in him were created all things
in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and everything invisible,
whether thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers;
all things have been created through him and for him.
He exists before all things,
and in him all things hold together
and he is the Head of the Body,
that is, the Church.
He is the Beginning,
the first-born from the dead,
so that he should be supreme in every way;
because God wanted all fullness to be found in him
and through him to reconcile all things to himself,
everything in heaven and everything on earth,
by making peace through his death on the cross.
(Col 1:15-20).*

Christ and the universe,

Some might prefer to contemplate the cosmic dimension of Christ; others might prefer to focus within the limits of his earthly existence. This is legitimate, provided we recognize that the two views are aspects of the one reality. The humanity and divinity, the cosmic and earthly dimension are certainly distinct objects of thought, but they form one reality. With regard to the humanity, we should remind ourselves that in order to really know someone we need to know their past. We cannot know the risen Christ unless we keep in mind his existence on earth. Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth and the cosmic Christ are one. This is a basic principle of our faith which expresses for us the nature of God who is Father, Son and Spirit.

Contemplation of Jesus pierced to the heart on the cross (cf Jn 19:37) is contemplation also of the transcendent, incomprehensible Creator God. To the eyes of faith, the inglorious death of Jesus on the cross does not hide the glory of God but manifests it by revealing the very nature of God as love (1 Jn 4:9, 16). As Hans Urs von Balthasar has expressed it: God's Word speaks to us most loudly in the silence of the dead Jesus on the cross. In the visions of the Apocalypse, the risen Christ in glory continues to be the Lamb who was sacrificed (Apoc 5:6, 9, 12).

If the 'heart' of Jesus stands for the centre of all that makes Jesus to be *Jesus*, it is there that we find also the centre of that mystery which is the Word made *flesh-through whom and for whom all things were made*. In the heart of this Word incarnate *the fullness of the deity dwells bodily* (Col 2:8). And in him we share in this *fullness-we have come to fullness in him* (Col: 10). In the Word made flesh the creation of the cosmos and the gift of redemption are united in the one great unifying act brought about by him *who is Head of the Body, that is, the Church* (Col 1:18).

When God looks at Christ,
he sees the entire world;
when we look at Christ,
we see him whole and entire
in his Sacred Heart.

Jules Chevalier ¹

Some feel uncomfortable with the cosmic view of Christ because it seems to remove Jesus from us by diminishing the familiarity we feel when contemplating his humanity. When expressed in the language of the heart of the Word incarnate, we may achieve a more suitable balance. The Heart in and through which *all things* are reconciled is a pierced Heart, close to us in our life, suffering and death. Jesus is not only the self-

expression (Word) of God through the human words he utters but through what he *is* in the reality of his life, his death on a cross and ultimately in the reality of his resurrection (Phil 2:8; ct. Col 1:20). This continues in word and in sacrament in the Church where we recall and relive the Creator-God's Word to us - his living presence with us.

Since matter becomes conscious of itself in human beings, we are necessarily related to matter-indeed consubstantial with it. The same applies to the Word made flesh. *All things were made for him* is not a statement about the eternal Word of God in isolation but also a statement about the destiny of the material cosmos and of humanity as part of it.

It is in this context also that Cardinal de Berulle wrote of the relationship between the risen Word incarnate and the universe, describing his risen body as containing in itself the immensity of the universe: "a body which contains in its essential greatness both the earth and the sun, all the stars and the whole expanse of the heavens, a body that governs all bodies and all heavenly spirits"².

The incarnation

It is through the Word incarnate that we know the eternal Word. And in a particular way it is through the pierced Heart of the Word incarnate that we know that eternal Word. The eternal Word and the pierced Word are certainly distinct, but they form one Word spoken by the Father. And if the heart of a matter is the essence of the matter, the Heart of the Word is what makes this Word to be *Word*.

There exist today Christologies 'from above' and 'from below'. Sacred Heart devotion is open to either way, or preferably to both, provided they stand by the basic, staggeringly beautiful fact, central to Christian orthodoxy, that Jesus is fully human, fully divine - as embryo, baby, adolescent, adult, corpse, risen. Berullian theology and spirituality lays stress more on a Christology 'from above', but with uncompromising emphasis on the reality of the incarnation, which does not mean that a part of Jesus is divine (the more spiritually refined part) and part human (his material existence). Jesus is *fully* human. Strictly speaking, it is not simply my mind that thinks, my hand that feels, my mouth that speaks; it is me, not some part of me in isolation, that thinks, feels and speaks. So too with Jesus. In the mystery of the incarnation, God continues to be God; and humanity continues to be humanity, but in such a way that God is born, grows, eats, laughs, cries and dies.

The Church's understanding of our faith can be likened to a structure that is continually being built, and will be so until the end of time and even in eternity. But the dogmas of our faith are like hewn stones that have to remain part of that structure even as it continues to be built. If they are removed, the building becomes something it was never meant to be. The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) is such a stone. It allows for the building to continue, even adjust to changing times and styles, but it has to remain an essential feature of the building.

"Following, therefore, the holy Fathers, we all teach with one accord that the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be confessed as one and the same, that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, composed of rational soul and body, one in being with the Father as to the divinity and one in being with us as to the humanity, *like unto us in all things but sin* (Heb 4: 15). The same was begotten from the Father before the ages as to his divinity, and in the last days, as to his humanity, was born for us and for our salvation, from Mary the Virgin Mother of God... just as formerly the prophets and later Jesus Christ himself have taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers has handed down to us". (Council of Chalcedon, 451).

Jesus thinks, Jesus speaks, Jesus walks;
it is God who thinks, who speaks, who walks.
Descending into the lower stages of human life,
the blood that flows in Jesus' veins,
the vital spirits that animate his nervous system,
the phenomena that made up his vegetative or animal life belong to God;
they are of God and for God.
In Jesus
all is divine in an absolute sense
that is proper to him alone,
both the details and the whole.
Jules Chevalier³

The reality of the incarnation and the magnificence and beauty of the universe in no way lessens belief in the infinite transcendence of God. On the contrary, that transcendence is the starting and finishing point of the Sacred Heart devotion that we are considering here

God looks with immense love on the least of creatures;
he takes in the whole magnificent scene
with a look of absolutely indescribable love.
And now I am saying, and I repeat, and it is equally true:
absolutely nothing of all this,
neither the details nor the whole,
nothing merits to be looked at by God.
Everything there is limited;
God is without limits;
what is the finite in the face of the infinite?
Jules Chevalier⁴

In agreement with Berullian spirituality, Jules Chevalier accepted that in fact the incarnation was for the purpose of redemption from sin. As said in the creed, the incarnation was *for us and for our salvation*. But the purpose of the incarnation was to be found also in the purpose of creation itself: *All things were created through him and for him* (Coll:16); and *There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist* (1 Cor 8:6).

This cosmic dimension of the incarnation was in harmony with the nature of all human beings. We are not aliens descended from another world, and imprisoned in this. We are essentially consubstantial with matter and in this way in solidarity with the universe in which we live. In us, matter becomes conscious of itself. Matter also becomes religious. If God becomes incarnate, he is automatically not only one with human beings, but one with the universe.

From its natural state of inertia and death,
God has raised matter to the level of life in plants;

from plants he has raised it up to instinct in animals.
 So already in matter there is a sort of knowledge,
 a beginning of love:
 a first draft, an outline perfect in itself,
 wonderful, entrancing,
 but only a distant sketch, a long way from its model!
 At that level, no matter how high it might be,
 the material world is still like a new born child,
 incapable of knowing its mother,
 but there remains a difference,
 tomorrow the new born child will let its mother know by a smile
 that it knows her and loves her;
 but if the material world remains where it is,
 it will never know who made it,
 nor even that it has been made.
 Jules Chevalier ⁵

Uniting the infinite and the finite

A major point in Berullian theology and spirituality was the idea that only an infinite being can give God adequate gratitude and praise. Similarly with regard to sin, God required infinite satisfaction, which could only be given by an infinite being. On both counts, no answer could be found among created beings, even though by nature they are open to all that exists and all that is good, and consequently to God himself. However, this openness enables them only to recognize the gap between themselves and God and respond with adoration and praise; but the gap remains. Only God, who as Trinity is infinite self-giving, can completely bridge this gap.

Even if one is not in favour of basing a theology of redemption on the need for infinite satisfaction, the gap between the finite and the infinite remains; and it is turned into tragedy by sin. And the incarnation of the Word can alone bridge that gap.

What can we say? Where can we go?
 What light and what darkness!
 Appear, Sun of suns,
 light of the world,
 living light,
 beginning and end,
 our God and our all.
 Jesus, Jesus,
 appear with all the splendours of your adorable Heart,
 that centre of love.
 Jules Chevalier ⁶

Though the gift was gratuitous, it answered the openness of the human spirit to the fullness of being. And this basic yearning for 'more' which by definition belongs to human understanding and will-to the human 'heart'-embodies and brings to fulfillment the purpose of the creation of the universe.

It was not for its own purposes that creation had frustration imposed on it, but for the purposes of him who imposed it - with the intention that the whole creation itself might be freed from its slavery to corruption and brought into the same glorious freedom as the children of God. We are well aware that the whole creation, until this time, has been groaning in labour pains. And not only that: we too, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free (Rom 8: 19-22).

The Heart of God descends in haste to his creation
 with the weight of an infinite love,
 and the heart of creation rises towards God
 drawn by an attraction that dominates all others in it.
 It is in Jesus that these two hearts meet,
 and they unite so profoundly that the
 two Hearts become one.
 O Heart of the Word incarnate,
 O Heart of the universal Christ,
 it is you, you above all,
 who, gathering into yourself all the elect,
 are truly the end of all the works of God,
 the universal fruit of creation.
 Jules Chevalier ⁷

This whole vision of the Heart of Christ as the centre of the universe and as the purpose of creation is centred in that basic fact and principle of Christian faith - God is love. And God's love is completely gratuitous, bestowed with infinite freedom. Such love is the source and foundation of Sacred Heart devotion.

God is essentially love.
 Each Person of the adorable Trinity
 loves himself
 and in himself loves the other two Persons.
 And if God pours himself out externally,
 it is under the inspiration of his love.
 If the love of God operates,
 it is through his Word.

And so the Word will become incarnate
in the womb of a Virgin,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
who is love.
The Word of God is truly
Christ and love.
Jules Chevalier ⁸

The Church

The exalted view of Christ in Colossians (1: 15-20) includes not only the Cross (1:20) but also the Church (1:18). Some may find this last point startling and even unacceptable. However, in the New Testament we cannot separate Jesus from his community. He is centred on it, and it on him. This applies both to his earthly and risen existence. Nor can we understand him and his community properly apart from the One who sent him. In this context, the Church is even part of the understanding a Christian should have of the Creator-God and his active presence in the world. This is not triumphalism. The community of believers is also a 'community of sinners. It is immersed in the vagaries of history. But to the eyes of faith the risen Christ is present there just as he was with struggling sinners when on earth.

One of the great gains in recent theology and spirituality is the stress on, community. A practical example is in the renewal of ecclesiology and liturgy. But this emphasis is impoverished if it is kept on a purely human level. A good liturgy is then identified with our feeling that we have done something, A good Church is measured by its democratic structure, We can and do forget at times the primacy of what God does, The Church when seen as 'communion' widens and deepens this vision. In this regard the Western and Eastern Churches need to counterbalance one another.

Certainly, the Church is never an end in itself; it is dependent on Christ for its existence, not only in the past but always. Though we are always faced with the temptation to find an easy solution to this mystery with the help of a docetist, dualistic or monistic view of the Church, it remains one Church in all its dimensions, whether they be uplifting or embarrassing, As a parish priest for over fifty years Jules Chevalier was well aware of human frailty; as the Founder of a religious congregation he was perhaps even more so; added to this, some Church authorities at times caused him much suffering, but none of this dimmed or embittered his understanding of the Church, In this he remained faithful to a strong tradition within devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Using the adjective 'institutional' Church can have a corrective value, but when it turns negative, even caustic, as it frequently does, it tends towards a type of docetism.

Nineteenth century Sacred Heart devotion was able to see the Church in the light of the transcendence of God (who is Father, Son and Spirit), in the light of the incarnation (seen also in its cosmic dimension), and in the light of the Body of Christ (seen as continuing his presence on earth). Consequently, the Church in all its dimensions, even 'institutional', remained an essential aspect of the way it understood Christ. It took for granted that the Church on earth was also a Church of sinners because Jesus on earth sought the company of sinners.

A long tradition going back to the Fathers and medieval mystics considered the Church to be born from the pierced side of Christ on the cross. The basis was the Gospel of John (19:34-37). This was at times put in the context of the Church, as a new Eve, the mother of all, taken from the side of the new Adam⁹. It is probably fanciful to seek to pinpoint the origin of the Church in some precise moment of time. It is better seen as a process. At the same time, the vision of the Church born from the pierced side of Christ is not merely theological poetry. It is in Christ that God reconciles the world to himself (2 Cor 5:17-20), and the Church can only exist where Christ, the unifier, is actively present. A fitting symbol of that presence is the opening of his side on the Cross-the absolute proof that he has given himself completely for the unification of all (cf Jn 12:32f; Col 1 :20), And the Church, in its beauty and brokenness, in its struggling and its achievements remains a symbol of that unification.

The Word,
coming from the Heart of the Father,
made the world emerge from nothing;
and from the Heart of the Word incarnate,
pierced on Calvary,
I see a new world emerging,
the world of those he has chosen.
And this creation,
so fertile, full of splendour,
and inspired by love and mercy,
is the Church,
the mystical Body of Christ,
which makes this new creation
present on death
until the end of time.
Jules Chevalier ¹⁰

¹ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus* op.cit., p.132

² *Discours de l'etat et des grandeurs* de Jesus 5e. Paris 1639, p 536. Quoted by Yves Krumenacker, *L'ecole franfaise de spiritualite*, Paris:du Cerf 1998

³ op. cit., p. 69

⁴ op. cit., P .66f ;

⁵ op. cit., p.62

⁶ op. cit.,p. 67

⁷ op. cit., p. 76.

⁸ op. cit., p. 132.

⁹ This is found, for example, in Tertullian, John Chrysostom, Augustine. Pius XII repeats the same in his Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (n. 110). Jules Chevalier also uses it cf. op.cit., pA.

¹⁰ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.145f

*A new heart I will give you
and a new spirit I will put within you;
and I will remove from your body the heart of stone
and give you a heart of flesh.
I will put my spirit within you
and make you follow my statutes
and be careful to observe my ordinances.
Ezek 36:26-27.*

If devotion to the Sacred Heart is to be true to itself, it has to believe firmly in the reality of sin and the reality of forgiveness. Jules Chevalier accepted that the incarnation had in view salvation from sin, but he also saw it as God's way of bringing creation to its fulfilment and of bridging the gap between the finite and infinite. And this bridge was not completed simply at the moment of the incarnation, but by a life lived by Jesus in union with his Father - a life opposed to all that was not love. This whole project was the gift of a new heart to humanity.

Sin

The Heart of the Word incarnate is what makes Jesus to be *Jesus* not merely in the instant of conception, but throughout the whole time of his existence. And in this human it the universe, an infinite step beyond itself. God becomes truly one with us. But in bringing human beings and the universe to this fulfilment in Jesus, God who is Father, Son and Spirit is dealing with a twisted humanity that has to be transformed. Jesus lives, dies and is raised from the dead *for our salvation* (Creed).

The Old Testament prophets looked with horror, anger and grief on the failure of the people to live according to God's word. This was partly because they saw the disastrous consequences of such a failure. The law was not concerned merely with some private area of life that could be called 'religious'. It had explicit social and communitarian implications. The Ten Commandments made this clear and it was hammered home by the prophets.

If the People of God were to worship their God, concern for social justice was essential, for he was the God who had rescued them from Egypt. But when the prophets stressed the need to get rid of injustice, oppression and corruption, they were not merely promoting social change, but above all a change of heart: *these people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me* (Isa 29.13). Thus obedience to God's will was not merely external conformity, it had to come from the heart (Deut 10:12; 11:13; cf Ps 40:8); for it implied loving God with all our heart (Deut 6:5, 13:3; 26: 16; 30:2). And love was not measured by feeling, but by action.

Despite all setbacks, however, the Old Testament prophets could also look on failures with hope; not hope based on the human ability of the people, which had always proved itself inadequate, but on the power of God that could help that human ability transcend itself. The prayer in the psalms sums up the yearning for a better future, *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me* (Ps 51: 10). It would be a mistake to see this language of the heart in opposition to external activity. The request for a *clean heart and a right spirit is associated with the request: rebuild the walls of Jerusalem* (ib. v.18).

Experience had shown that even the words and commandments of God were not sufficient in themselves. To be shown the way was not enough; one had to walk it. Neither was it sufficient simply to conform externally to a moral or ritual code. One had to become a different sort of person - one's *heart* had to change. That was basic. And this change of heart would be the result of the action of God himself. Our twisted selves could not follow a straight path. The spirit (breath) of God who had brought about the first creation (Gen 1 :2; 2:7) would have to bring about a new creation (cf Rom 8:9-11,15-16; 2 Cor 5:17).

A too, negative view?

Sacred Heart devotion, especially because of reparation, has been accused at times of a negative view of human nature. This accusation was particularly aggressive in the sixties and seventies of the last century when a widespread belief, or rather certainty, was that religiously and culturally we had finally 'come of age'. In the age of Aquarius, all we had to do was to let 'human nature' take its course and things could only get better and better. Later generations will look back in amazement and utter disbelief that people could have been so naive - so adolescent - in their claims to adulthood.

Sacred Heart devotion did concentrate on a negative side of 'human nature' and this did lead some into a too pessimistic view of the world. This took the form at times of political conservatism and a suspicion of new social movements. A notable exception to this was Leon Dehon (1843-1925), the founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. Jules Chevalier was politically conservative, but he had a clear vision of our dignity as persons and of our role in the cosmos. Because of intelligence and consciousness both of self and of others, human beings had a 'natural priesthood' that made them mediators between the cosmos and God.

From the point of view of its corruption,
our flesh deserves to be despised,
but in itself,
by its nature and by God's design,
it is on the contrary
the supreme wonder of bodies.
Through it we give God
the homage of the lower world.
The material universe expects from us
the mysterious and exalted dignity
of our natural priesthood.
Jules Chevalier ¹

Christian faith has to accept that the gospel is *the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith* (Rom 1:16). This recognition of 'salvation' involves at the same time a recognition of sin. *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us* (1 in 1: 10). *At same time, We have known and believe the love God has for us* (1 in 4: 16). *As the Creed says, We believe in the forgiveness of sins.*

We believe in the reality of sin; and we believe in the reality of forgiveness. It would be an aberration if stress on the love of God diminished our sense of sin; and it would be an aberration of a sense of sin if it diminished our belief that *God is love* (1 In 4: 16). *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached the perfection of love. We have loved because he has first loved us* (1 In 4: 18f; cf Rom 8:31-38). Belief in God who is love should, if anything, increase a horror of sin which is essentially a rejection of that love; and belief in sin should increase our appreciation of God's love and mercy. The *forgiveness* of sin has always

been and remains a central point in Sacred Heart devotion. For example, traditionally it has battled against the rigid morality and pessimism of what was referred to as 'Jansenism'. The name is not particularly important, the moral rigidity it signifies remains an historical fact.

Jules Chevalier's integration of creation and redemption helped him walk a middle way between a dispiriting pessimism and a facile optimism. The act of creation is supremely positive; God not only brings things into being but conserves them in being, overcoming nothingness. God also recognizes creation as good. A completely negative view of human nature would consequently involve a negative view of the Creator. Orthodox Christianity has always rejected the dualism that finds good only in the human spirit and evil in material things including the human body.

The nature of a being is its likeness to God.
And so
the more one is,
the more one resembles Him.
Or,
the more one resembles him,
the more one is.
It is impossible for a created being
not to resemble God;
for God is all.
Not to resemble him at all
would mean not to exist.
Jules Chevalier²

Jules Chevalier would not have come across Devotion to the Sacred Heart for the first time during his seminary training; the devotion was already established in parishes throughout France. However, it was when he studied Christology that the richness of the devotion suddenly struck him more deeply; he was able to see it as central to and a summary of the whole of our faith. It would seem safe to assume that the Christology we find in his writings had its beginning in the teaching he received in the seminary, for it is well in line with the Berullian tradition of his Sulpician professors. In this, the incarnation is not centred exclusively on sin and its forgiveness but on the infinite gap, independently of sin, between the creature and the Creator - a gap the Creator himself wants to bridge through the incarnation. We cannot appreciate the Sacred Heart devotion that appealed to Jules Chevalier and others in the Berullian tradition unless we can recognize with utter seriousness the difference between infinite and finite being, and God's love, present in the heart of Jesus, that bridges the difference.

What do we see in Jesus?
A God who becomes man
and a man who becomes God.
What a distance is crossed!
It is no longer only a crossing from nothing to being,
but from nothing to God.
Here divine power goes beyond the boundaries of our understanding.
It touches on the limits of impossibility itself.
Hence all marvels are united in Jesus;
or rather,
God in Jesus surpasses himself:
the Man-God is his masterpiece,
masterpiece of his infinite power,
masterpiece also of his infinite wisdom.
Jules Chevalier³

The gift of the Spirit

The Christian sees the fulfilment of the promise of a new heart in the outpouring of the Spirit: *God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given us* (Rom 5:5). This New Covenant (Jer 31:31; cf 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6, 14; Heb 7:22; 8:8; 9:15; 10:16) ensures that we are not simply *performing* acts of love of God and love of neighbour, but we are becoming the sort of person who is now drawn to do that 'naturally' because of the gift of the Spirit. This does not necessarily imply perfection, but it does imply that when we fail we will be 'naturally' drawn to repentance and to continued effort-'naturally' because it will come from a heart transformed by the Spirit. Thus ultimately the new covenant is about God who is Father, Son and Spirit freely giving himself to the world and we freely giving ourselves to him. God, as Creator, can freely bring the whole evolving cosmos into being from nothing without its consent; but he cannot make a covenant unless it is freely given and freely accepted - that is, without love on both sides.

Without doubt, by his right as Creator,
we and everything else are God's possession.
His dominion is absolute;
but he still wants to possess all as a gift.
He gives everything and wishes that all be given him.
And since it is by love that he gives everything,
he wants everything to be given to him by love.
Since there is a gift in God that is *the Gift*,
the Gift that contains everything and gives everything,
the Gift that is his love itself
or the Holy Spirit,
in the same way,
there is in us a gift that is our gift,
the greatest gift of the whole of creation,
our love,
and the organ of this love is our heart

We have received the whole of God's heart,
he wants to have the whole of ours.
My child, give me your heart.
Jules Chevalier⁴

In the Spirit filled heart of the Word incarnate, in what makes Jesus to be *Jesus*, we find the promised heart of the New Covenant. And what takes place in him is gift (In 4: 10). We need to keep in mind, however, that the incarnation is not achieved all at once, complete at the moment of the conception and birth of Jesus. The Word of God became a *human life*. He really entered into time and history. *The child grew* (Lk 2:40). Jesus *learned obedience through what he suffered* (Heb 5:8). He did not pretend to learn or pretend to grow; he did learn and he did grow. To believe otherwise is to disbelieve that the Word was truly incarnate. Thus the gift of a new heart, as found in Jesus, was not instantaneous. He had to live it. *Being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross* (Phil 2:6).

Love

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is not content to contemplate external acts in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It contemplates his interior dispositions that give meaning to all his acts and it contemplates his acts as revealing his interior dispositions. Jesus thus becomes the real symbol (real presence) of the God who is love

If we follow our Lord in his public life,
we see his Heart pour itself out
on every sort of misfortune,
on every sort of misery,
moral and physical.
All the kindnesses
that Jesus sowed along his path,
all the miracles he worked
are so many outpourings of the ineffable goodness of his Heart.
Thus the Gospel that relates them
could be called the Gospel of the Sacred Heart.
Jules Chevalier⁵

The new covenant is a fulfilment not only of the Mosaic Law but of the earlier promises made to Abraham, Noah, Adam and indeed to the whole cosmos. The later covenants do not repudiate the earlier ones but are a means for implementing them more and more fully. The original promises contained a blessing on all people and on the whole of the cosmos. That continued. Thus while the new covenant concerns our becoming the sort of person and people God wants us to become, this cannot be understood properly unless we see ourselves in the context of the whole of the cosmos and the whole of history. As we have seen, the material universe comes to consciousness of itself in human beings; and, in this way, it is fulfilled. And God's ultimate purpose is not simply that the universe can come to consciousness but that love may permeate everything - which is a work of the heart.

God's aim is to associate external matter
with the religion of man,
so that He can be glorified, known and loved.
It is in order to be loved
that God wishes to be known;
love is the final word
of all our relationships with him,
the summary of the whole of religion.
And, in us, the affective life has a special organ,
the heart.
Jules Chevalier⁶

Jesus as the definition of religion

For Jules Chevalier, it is in the heart of Jesus Christ essentially that we find the perfect life that opposes all that is not love. This is not only his love for us but his love for his Father - a love that is manifested in his prayer of adoration, praise and thanksgiving. He is the perfect act of thanksgiving (*eucharist*) on behalf of all creatures. He embodies all that is meant by religion. In him creation is 'outside itself in God. He is the *'ecstasy'* of the universe. Thus in him alone is the fullness of 'religion' found. He is *God's* definition of religion.

Jesus is the supreme and infinite glory of God,
the revelation *par excellence* of his infinite goodness,
the Eucharist of the universe
and the permanent ecstasy of creation in God.
If you want to sum up in a word
what is itself a summary,
Jesus is religion,
religion *par excellence*
living and infinite.
It is principally to the Heart of Jesus that we give this title.
Religion is a bond of love
and so in everything the Sacred Heart is the last word.
Everything leads back to Jesus,
I am the beginning and the end he says;
and in Jesus everything leads back to his Heart.
Jules Chevalier⁷

The bridge between the finite and infinite is not crossed merely by the moment of the incarnation in the womb of Mary as though it were a static, momentary event, like the linking of two carriages of a train together. It has also to be crossed by a *life* spent in obedience to the Father and in the worship and adoration that this obedience implies. In the incarnation two lives are united - divine life and human life. And since obedience and worship have to come from the heart, it is in and through the Heart of the Word incarnate that God will become 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28; Cf. 3:21-23).

Jesus is Man-God.
He reunites the whole of creation:
I am the life, he tells us:
all created life and uncreated life,
plant, animal or material life,
and spiritual and rational life.
And the heart
is the central point of his divine humanity.
On that sacred altar,
he offers to God, his Father,
constant adoration worthy of his infinite greatness.
Thus this divine Heart is the supreme worshipper
of the divine majesty.
Jules Chevalier⁸

The gift of a new heart and the forgiveness of sin are not synonymous. We can be forgiven and yet the deformity within us that leads us to sin remains. The new heart brings transformation, not just forgiveness. Sin is a form of disobedience, a refusal to walk the ways of God, a preference for created things above the Creator. Thus, sin breaks union with God, because it moves us in the opposite direction. For this reason, St Paul and the letter to the Hebrews both explain redemption in terms of the obedience of Christ. This obedience is identical with love, for love is the fulfilment of the law: *The whole law is summed up in a single word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'* (Gal 5: 14; cf Mt 22:26). This is the new heart which is realized fully in the Heart of Christ and which we are called to make our own through the power of the Spirit. This insight is essential in devotion to the Sacred Heart. In so far as this is done, sin is not only forgiven, it is healed.

God does not condemn the intensity of love
but the disorder of love.
True love is willed by God with all the strength
with which he loves his own existence,
for he is the model and source of love.
If our will is moved and directed by love
what other law does it need?
When God elevates nature by grace,
nature opens up and flowers.
How could we love too much,
when the model we have to follow is infinite love.
When one speaks of excess of love,
one does not really speak of love, but of egoism.
To love means to want the good of someone.
True love could not degrade its object.
The creature you love in a sinful way,
you love more than God; you do not love it in itself.
You love it because it gives you pleasure.
This may be passion or infatuation,
but not real love.
Jules Chevalier⁹

We are born into the twisted humanity that we see in Adam. However, through faith in Christ and through Baptism we are born into a new order of existence willed by God - a new Adam (Rom 5:12-21; cf 1 Cor 15:45-49). Obedience is central to the new Covenant. In this way it counteracts the disobedience of the first man. It is not a question here of obedience as a dour sense of imposed duty, but enthusiastic, loving dedication and loyalty (Ps 42:8; cf Heb 10:5-18). Nor is it simply an obedience imposed from outside; it is an obedience that promotes fullness of life; it is a path freely walked. Thus, the obedience of Jesus is not a merely external fulfilment of laws. It comes from a heart that freely lives in a way that is the complete opposite of sin - not without struggle and suffering *Although he was a Son, he learned' obedience through what he suffered* (Heb 5:8).

The death of Jesus gives life because the way in which he died is the complete opposite of sin and so even in death he remains united to the Father, the source of life. *The death he died he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus* (Rom 6: 10: 11). When we are united with him through the power of the Spirit we are *'alive to God'*. The same Spirit that was in the heart of Jesus transforms our hearts into his own relationship with his Father, *God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying "Abba! Father!"* (Gal:4:6). In doing this, the Spirit necessarily puts our hearts into harmony with others: *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* (Gal 5:22f). All this is the opposite to the 'works of the flesh' (sin): *fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these* (Gal 5: 19f).

God's unconditional love is the focal point of salvation. But salvation is not merely the forgiveness of sin. It consists primarily in union with that absolute love that is Father, Son and Spirit. Consequently, it consists also of communion with others and with the universe. Thus love is the beginning and the end of the new Covenant and the new heart. This too is the essence of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
 is the essence of the Christian faith;
 it is the outline and substantial summary,
 of the whole of religion.

The Christian religion is a work of love
 in its beginning, in its development and in its end.
 The history of the Christian religion
 is found wholly and entirely in the sublime statement:
God so loved the world.

Its whole creed
 is reduced to these words of the beloved disciple:
We believe in God's love for us.

That is
 we believe that in God's work
 the Heart has done everything.

Christian morality is contained in the single word
Diliges
(You shall love).

That is,
 you will render love for love,
 you will give me your heart
 in exchange for all that mine has done for you.

The Christian religion,
 we can say,
 could not be identified so completely
 with any other devotion
 as with devotion to the Sacred Heart.
 Jules Chevalier¹⁰

¹ *Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus*, p. 64

² op. cit., p. 281

³ op. cit., p.70

⁴ op. cit., p.65f. The Scripture quotation is from Proverbs 23:26.

⁵ op. cit., p.9

⁶ op. cit., p. 65

⁷ op. cit., p.76

⁸ op. cit., p.74f.

⁹ op. cit., p.347.

¹⁰ op. cit, p. 149. Quoting Cardinal Pie. The Scripture texts are from John 3: 16, I John 4: 16 and Deut 6:5 respectively.

7 **One Heart**

'One heart' generally calls to mind a community that lives in harmony; for example, the early Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 4:32). But we have to see a community in its context if we are to understand it properly. We cannot understand a *Christian* community apart from Christ; and we cannot understand Christ apart from God; and we cannot understand God apart from creation and redemption. In other words, 'one heart' involves the unity of all things: our oneness in ourselves, our oneness with the universe, our oneness with God in Christ, our oneness with Christ in his Church, our oneness in God's plan for the world (his Kingdom) of which Christ and his Church are sacraments, and finally, in all this, we are to discover our mission to bring this same oneness into the societies in which we live, both national and international. Each of these aspects need to be considered if we are to understand properly the apparently simple expression, 'one heart'.

It is widely accepted that the Fourth Gospels presentation of Jesus' experience of God would have taken a couple of generations after the resurrection to mature. Yet expressions found within the authentic letters of St Paul show an equal profundity and are universally accepted as belonging to a much earlier date. And since some of these Pauline texts are found in what are commonly recognized as already existing hymns, we are forced back earlier still. It seems reasonable that the source of these statements have their source in a 'mystic' depth in the religious consciousness of Jesus himself. If John and Paul were capable of such depths of experience and perception, why wasn't Jesus? Has the image of Jesus put forward by nineteenth century 'historical criticism' hardened into a conservatism that is neither genuinely critical nor genuinely historical, based on the presupposition that Jesus *had* to be the moralizing, liberal Protestant acceptable in certain academic circles at that time? Do we need to counterbalance what the West calls 'Enlightenment' by what the East means by the same word? The core of all forms of mysticism seems to be an experience of 'oneness'. Why not Jesus too? Is it reasonable to think that the inspirer of great mystics was not himself a mystic? Following that line of thought leads us back to the real *Heart* of Jesus (cf. Mt 11:25-30).

No single being can be understood properly outside of the parameters of the Creator's plan for the universe. To understand the purpose of anything one needs to see what its maker intended it to be. To some extent we can discover this in examining the nature of anything, but it becomes clearer when we know the mind of its maker. Christian faith is incompatible with explicit or even implicit Deism. This is plain commonsense especially for anyone who accepts the God present in the Heart of Jesus. *When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all* (1 Cor 15:28). Outside of this context, we may be in the legitimate realm of group dynamics, but outside the full reality of 'community' as seen in the light or the Heart of Christ. This comprehensive vision of 'one heart' is central in the tradition of Sacred Heart devotion we are considering.

When we see 'one heart' in the context of God's purpose, it is not a matter of living with some structure imposed from outside. Nor is it a matter of being without structures. To live by the 'heart' is not identical with individual freewheeling. Since our hearts are made for relationships, they are essentially organizing hearts, however unpalatable that may be in some circles. Organization can become oppressive and dysfunctional, but so can a heart that follows its own whims.

The God of Jesus Christ enhances the inbuilt dynamism of human groups and their relationships; at the same time he can take them beyond inbuilt limits. Even in doing this in the order of grace, God builds on our human potential. We cannot unite ourselves with the transcendent God, but he

can unite himself with us. We are open to this because our hearts have been made open to all being.

Jesus Christ is not an end in himself. He is the 'way' to the whole of reality which ultimately surpasses our comprehension. He is also the way through which the whole of reality comes to us. Since the 'Heart' of Jesus means what makes Jesus to be *Jesus*, his Heart is the key to all. And since my 'heart' means what makes me to be me, my 'heart' is the entrance point into the whole of reality.

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph 3: 17 -19.

Jesus Christ is the starting point,
the centre and the summit of the whole of creation,
both natural and supernatural.
He raises it up, he divinizes it,
he gives it back to its Author,
so that creation may glorify him as he deserves.
Everything is summed up in Jesus;
and in Jesus everything leads back
to his Heart!
Jules Chevalier ¹

Unity in variety

Jules Chevalier used the heart as a way of speaking of the centre of a human being, the point that brings multiplicity into unity. In this way he was able to avoid the dualism that divided a human being into a 'spirit' that was good and a 'body' that was evil. God looked on the whole of his creation and saw that it was good. Consequently, it is not wrong to be a creature; on the contrary our failure to accept creaturehood and to want "to be like God" (Gen 3:1-7) is humanity's original sin, which history shows is both personally and socially destructive. A contented acceptance of creaturehood is enhanced by the realization that finite beings are loved by God.

God created all things out of love.
An atom and an angel
are both loved by God
with an eternal love.
Jules Chevalier ²

Jules Chevalier was also able to avoid a monism that strives to reduce human beings to one or other element in their make-up and, in this way, judge the rest insignificant. He was able to accept the whole person and the whole of reality as a unity in variety, because everything had a centre, and consequently everything had its place.

Look at the works of God:
no two things are absolutely the same.
Variety is part of beauty;
the more the variety grows without harming the unity,
the more beautiful is the beauty that results from it.
And this is even more true of the order of grace.
That order,
because it is closer to God,
and even completely divine by its very essence,
must express God better
and give us a more perfect revelation of his beauty
in a greater variety and in a greater unity.
Jules Chevalier ³

One of the first problems that early philosophy faced both in the East and West was the relationship between the one (particularly the 'One') and the many. It has been a perennial problem not only in speculative philosophy and theology, but also in politics and economics. Are humans to be treated simply as means to an end? Mere cogs within the wheel of the state or of an economic theory? Or has a person inalienable rights? Or is there to be a balance between the rights of the one (whatever that 'one' might stand for) and the many? The problem has had its effect also in religion. Is the 'One' so incompatible with the 'many' that, in order to attain perfection, the many must disappear completely into the 'One'? This is the stand taken in the more extreme forms of Indian *advaita*.

Christian faith sees 'otherness' as constitutive of all being, including the Supreme Being. It does not seek to postulate some transcendent 'One' that ultimately obliterates the many. It does not accept that the choice has to be between either the one or the many, but goes beyond both to an absolute reconciliation of opposites in the Trinity, where oneness and otherness are combined. From this aspect, the Trinity is not to be seen merely as a problem; it is an answer to a number of problems. The Christian concept of creation stresses that nothing has existence of itself. God is the One who gives existence to *all* things, including the gift of being 'other' and in relationship with others.

Unity from within

In the Tradition of Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 'heart' continues to have an emphasis on the interior life; and this emphasis has to remain if we are to understand a community in the Christian meaning of that word. The interior life is not in opposition to community; in fact, without a particular form of interior life, community, in the Christian meaning of the word, is not possible. Unfortunately, the interior life and union with Christ have become at times too individualistic and dualistic. Interiority was seen as a retreat from reality around us; and the concentration on the self as in some way opposed to others. This has been one of the accusations made against devotion to the Sacred Heart; at times rightly so. But it is not true of the important tradition of the devotion that Jules Chevalier represents.

Concentration on the interior life of Jesus – and consequently on the *heart* of Jesus - intensified from the time of St Bernard (1090-1153) and continued through people like St Bonaventure (1221-1274), St. Mechtilde (1241-1299), St Gertrude (1256-1302) and St Catherine of Sienna (1347-1380). The movement flowered again in the seventeenth century in people like Cardinal Pierre de Berulle (1575-1629) and reached a highpoint of popularity through the influence of St Margaret Mary (1647-1690), which continued into the twentieth century.

Cardinal de Berulle's followers, St Jean Eudes (1601-1680) and Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657), continued his emphasis on the interior life of Jesus, but spoke of it more explicitly in terms of the *heart* of Jesus. But the heart of Jesus (what makes Jesus to be *Jesus*) does not stop with Jesus. There is a greater 'oneness' without which the Heart of Jesus cannot be understood. There is a Heart in God (what makes God to be *God*). In this sense, Chevalier sees the Heart of God as uniting Father, Son and Spirit. He sees it also as being present on earth in the Heart of Jesus.

We know from where the Word comes;
he comes from the unfathomable depths of the divine essence,
from the *Heart of God*.
If he is the *splendour of the glory* of his Father,
he must also be the substantial expression
of the Heart of God
from which he is brought forth.
He must be *love* eternal.
And this infinite love,
which constitutes the very depths of God,
is contained in a human heart
born from the blood of a Virgin.
Christ is the whole of God,
his living sacrament,
his complete gift,
he is his Heart with which to love us.
Jules Chevalier ⁴

St Jean Eudes spoke of the three 'hearts' of Jesus: his physical heart, his spiritual heart (his whole interior life), and his divine heart (his eternal 'oneness' with the Father and Holy Spirit). "His divine Heart, which he has from all eternity in the adorable bosom of his Father, is but one Heart and one love with the Heart and love of his Father. And connected with the heart and love of his Father is the origin of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, when he gave us his Heart, he gave us also the Heart of his Father and his adorable Spirit's. The oneness of this 'threefold love' has been central in theological developments of devotion to the Sacred Heart and is basic also in Pius XII's Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* ⁶. It is basic also, even if implicitly, in popular piety.

Jean-Jacques Olier founded the seminary of St Sulpice in Paris and also a Congregation whose members are generally known as the Sulpicians. The directory for the seminary, *Pietas seminarii*, centred its apostolic formation around oneness with Christ, particularly Galatians 2:20, *it is Christ who lives in me*. And this text is central in any proper understanding of Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and also in any proper understanding of community.

Pietas seminarii, formulated its basic principle as follows: "The first and last end of this institute will be to live completely for God in Christ Jesus our Lord in such a way that the interior life of his Son penetrates the depths of our heart and that each be able to say what St Paul said about himself with confidence: 'It is no longer I that live, it is Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:20). This will be for all their single hope and their single thought, this also will be their one exercise: to live interiorly the life of Christ and to manifest it in action in their mortal body".

One with Christ

The Sulpician tradition of the interior life would have been present in the formation that Jules Chevalier received in the seminary at Bourges, which was also run by the Sulpicians. It was certainly a feature of his later life and also in his book on the Sacred Heart. In fact, "To live interiorly the life of Christ and to manifest it in action" is central in any form of Sacred Heart devotion. "Make my heart like yours" has been traditionally a characteristic invocation. This is not merely a matter of imitation and ethics; it is based on an interior transformation in which the heart of Jesus (all that makes Jesus to be *Jesus*) takes over and a transformed self emerges. *If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!* (2 Cor 5: 17). This oneness with the risen Christ is a reality now, but will be fully realized and possessed by us at the end of time.

Like iron reddened in the fire,
which becomes fire, bright and burning,
while remaining iron,
we shall remain eternally human creatures,
but in glory we shall be eternally what we are by grace,
penetrated by God,
permeated by God,
being able to say and actually saying:
I live, not I;
it is no longer I who live;
it is Jesus Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20).
Jules Chevalier ⁷

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Gal 2: 19f.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus; who though he was in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Phil 2:5-8.

I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them. Jn 17:26.

From the earliest information we have in the New Testament about Christians we find them attributing to the risen Jesus of Nazareth properties and attributes that had normally been reserved for God. Just as God was present everywhere so too was his glorified Word incarnate, Jesus. Christ The same applies, for example, to creation, the kingdom, forgiveness of sin, redemption, judgment. . Nevertheless, the early Christians spoke in this way within the strict Jewish confines of monotheism. Yet while it is correct to find the roots of the New Testament

understanding and experience of God in the Old Testament, at the same time, something radically new appears. God is no longer simply Yahweh, he is the Father of Jesus Christ. And both the Father and the risen Jesus Christ are spoken of globally as one divinity in action even while being clearly and personally distinguished one from the other. The same can be said for the Spirit of the Father and of Jesus Christ.

Some practical implications

The implications of this way of speaking will be made clearer and more refined through later disputes and consequent conciliar decrees, but the basis is already there in the primitive Christian experience of the one God who is Father, Word incarnate and Spirit. And at the centre of this is the experience of the crucified-risen Jesus, an experience which is the work of the Spirit, for. *No one can say 'Lord Jesus' except through the power of the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor 12:3), and only through the same Spirit can we share the experience of Jesus and cry out with him, *Abba! Father!* (Rom 8: 15). And even though the Risen Jesus is transformed radically by the Spirit of God, he remains identical with Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth . with a baby in Bethlehem, with a corpse on the cross. And the symbol of the heart of Jesus (what makes Jesus to be Jesus) binds all of this together into One.

Union with Christ is thus central to Christianity. In and through Jesus Christ, God who is Father, Son (Word) and Spirit gives himself to us completely, eternally. In Christianity, Jesus is not simply a teacher or prophet. The primary emphasis is not on his words but on himself, and not on himself as an end in himself but as the self-communication of the transcendent God. This is the essence of grace. However, the 'oneness' achieved by God's grace is not a oneness that takes us beyond matter by leaving it behind; it is a fulfilment, a transfiguration of it.

The nature of matter is beyond our imagining. Scientists can present it only in formulae and symbolic diagrams. The more we know about it the more it is seen to possess properties we once thought to be exclusively spiritual. Consequently, the possibilities of matter are also beyond our imagining. However, we can get some intimation of it in the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus. Thus the Heart of God and the heart of creation meet in the heart of Jesus and in this way a new creation comes about - a creation that is at the same time 'already' and 'yet to come'. Christian faith does not accept that God's evolving universe has reached its ultimate culmination in *homo sapiens* as we know him. In God's plan matter has passed through numerous transformations, and we are only one small step in the process. The final step we call Resurrection, already made present in the resurrection of Jesus by the creative power of God who is Spirit.

Through sanctifying grace,
we live the very life of God;
and this life of God is communicated to us through Jesus Christ,
grace being an extension, a prolongation of the Incarnation.
And this grace is centred particularly in his Heart.
Isn't it in the Heart of Jesus
that two loves meet:
the love of God
descending to the whole of creation
and the love of the whole of creation
rising to God?
Isn't this divine Heart
the love of God *par excellence*.
Grace is love.
How could it not be love?
For God is love itself,
and grace is the life of God communicated to us.
Jules Chevalier ⁸

Oneness with Christ is not some out-of-this-world mysticism. It manifests itself in very practical ways in our everyday living. The entry into this sort of experience and the sure test of its genuineness is love of others. St John sums this up in the words of Jesus, *This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you* (In 15: 12). And when we look on *him who they have pierced* (In 19:37), we understand the significance of the phrase as I have loved you. Love for a Christian in general and in devotion to the Sacred Heart in particular is not defined by merely looking into the human heart. The human value of love and service is transformed in the light of the pierced Heart of Jesus, which makes present to us the *kenosis* (self-emptying) of God (Phil 2:6). Or as St John puts it, *We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for one another* (1 John 3:16).

The command of Jesus is not merely one ethic alongside many similar ones. Much less is it a purely humanistic ethic. We live 'one heart' not merely with others but with God and with the whole universe. The last point is crucial in an understanding of Jules Chevalier. The ethic of love of others is shared widely even outside of Christianity; but to understand what Jesus means, we have to understand its context. Union with the Triune God and union with what the Triune God has created is the basis and meaning of Christian love. And, once more, this union has a natural symbol in the pierced Heart of Christ.

Jesus uses the strongest terms
to express our union with God,
and he repeats them,
freely heaping them on one another:
*My Father, may those you have given me
be one like us:
that I may be in them
as you are in me,
so that they be completely one.*
In this union,
there is something of that perfect unity
which in God unites the three Divine persons.
Jules Chevalier ⁹

God, who is Father, Son and Spirit, is both one and other. We too are one and other - one with God and one with others. Everything has come from God and everything returns to him. And so we are destined, in and through Jesus Christ, to be one with him together with the whole of

a transformed creation. Thus, Jules Chevalier sees God's final plan for the whole of creation as simply a fuller understanding and realization of all that the symbol of the Heart of Jesus stands for - of all that makes Jesus to be *Jesus*.

A day will come
When we shall comprehend
the harmonies that exist in our nature.
We shall grasp the relationships between
our material life and our moral life,
between our life of the heart
and the world of intelligence and love.
We shall see our relationships as symbols
of holier and more divine mysteries
in the supernatural order.
A day will come,
when we shall know our own heart
by knowing the Heart of Jesus;
we shall be able to say with the Apostle:
Everything belongs to us,
we belong to Jesus,
and Jesus belongs to God (1 Cor 3:22,23).
Then the universe in its entirety
will appear as it really is,
as a word uttered in time
to express the secrets of eternity.
Jules Chevalier¹⁰

One with others

A Messiah without a renewed Israel would have been incomprehensible to Jesus and his contemporaries. Thus, Jesus Christ's mission to make people aware of his Father's love for them was not individualistic. Nor was his concept of Israel itself 'exclusive' and hence from that point of view also 'individualistic'. In line with the prophets he saw Israel not as centred on itself-a self-imposed ghetto-but, by God's design open to the world. As N. T. Wright has rightly said, the challenge of Jesus to his contemporaries, '*You are the light of the world*', should not be limited to good example within a closed community; it was a call to be true to the universal mission that God had given his people through the prophets.

The love revealed in Jesus' pierced side on the cross and poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5) of its very nature creates unity; and this unity, willed by God, does not destroy the 'many'; on the contrary, by definition it needs the many. The point made by St Paul when speaking of the unity of the Church is not primarily that multiplicity requires unity, but that unity requires multiplicity. And so . our personal union with Christ unites us with others and creates the Church, his Body; and in this way the whole of creation is reconciled with God.

Our personal union with Jesus
is beyond all our imagining.
It is not a simple union of resemblance and of love,
it is a mysterious and profound union of life:
Jesus is the vine and we are the branches,
Jesus is the head and we are the members.
And just as the members and the head form the body,
and the branches and the vine constitute the plant,
the whole Christ is formed by Jesus and us.
Christ is not Jesus on his own.
One should not say
there is one and many,
but rather
many are one in Christ Jesus made man,
the head of the body.
And what is this body?
It is the Church.
Jules Chevalier¹¹

Jules Chevalier comes back to this point repeatedly: the 'oneness' that unites us with God who is Father, Word and Spirit does not only involve solidarity among people, but also solidarity with the world. The 'total Christ' is not only Christ and us, but Christ and the world. This aspect, which has had a resurgence in our time, was very much part of Devotion to the Sacred Heart in nineteenth century France as witnessed in the writings of Jules Chevalier and acknowledged also by Teilhard de Chardin. From this point of view, the *eschaton* - God's final plan for creation-is summed up by Jules Chevalier as " the reality of the Sacred Heart unveiled in its full light".¹²

He is the head, we are the members.
The whole Man is him and us.
The complete, total Christ
is not only Jesus and us;
it is Jesus and the world.
Jules Chevalier¹³

Devotion to the Sacred Heart has at times been condemned as a too individualistic form of piety. This was certainly not the attitude or practice of Jules Chevalier and others like him. For Chevalier, devotion to the Sacred Heart meant taking the Heart of Jesus (Jesus *himself*) seriously; that is, taking the dispositions of his Heart seriously. Associations of priests dedicated to the Sacred Heart in nineteenth century France recited each day a prayer based on chapter 17 of St John's Gospel-the prayer that all should be one.

The social implications of Christ's desire for unity should be clear. A commitment to unity is not just a slogan. It has practical bite. This was clear also in the thinking of Vatican Council II. The Church is the sign or sacrament of union with God and unity among all people. For this reason the Church must, of its very nature, be concerned about justice and the development of peoples. Not to do this would be to betray the very nature of the Church which is meant to be a sign of the unity willed by God. There are also serious implications here for religious community life and for parish life. It was in this context that Father Chevalier saw devotion to the Sacred Heart as 'essentially social'¹⁴. Admittedly this social concern often took a conservative, monarchist direction in the nineteenth century, but that in a sense is accidental; the important thing was that the devotion was recognized as having essentially social repercussions.

In speaking of the Church as a result of union with Christ, Father Chevalier bases himself on the Pauline and Patristic doctrine of the 'total Christ'. That is, Jesus is not the Christ on his own. He is the Christ with others. Each one personally and in community is in a very real sense part of the whole Christ. Thus, the risen Christ is not and never will be "all that he is meant to be" without each of us sharing his life. This sort of 'oneness' preserves both the individual and community.

St. Paul says and repeats
that Christ is the head of everyone (1 Cor 11 :3),
the head of the Church (Col 1:18);
the Church is his body,
his fullness (Eph 1 :22,23):
the mysterious complement
without which Christ himself
would not be all that he is meant to be.
I am the vine and you are the branches (John 15:5).
Do not the vine and the branches,
the head and the members
have the same sap, the same blood, the same life
and, to sum up, the one and same nature?
Jules Chevalier¹⁵

One Bread - the Eucharist,

Devotion to the Sacred Heart has always been bound up essentially with the Eucharist, for the Eucharist is the Sacrament of unity, the Sacrament of God's transformation of the material universe, the Sacrament of the communion of saints, the Sacrament that prefigures resurrection and eternal life. And the 'oneness' it symbolizes is not simply otherworldly; it involves a 'oneness' that embraces the Creator and the whole of creation and has social repercussions here and now.

By the Eucharist
the life of Jesus is in us
as the life of the Father is in him,
and unity is accomplished in the heart,
because communion is a union of hearts.
Do you hear the cry that comes to us across the centuries?
It is a testament of love;
it is this:
"I want everyone to be nothing but one in love,
that they have only one heart and one soul,
that they form but one single family,
that as much as possible they be united among themselves and with us
as we are in the divine essence".
From where comes this cry,
from where comes this project of love?
From the Heart of Jesus.
To break unity is to wound him cruelly.
Jules Chevalier¹⁶

The Pauline doctrine of the 'total Christ' is not merely abstract theology; it is a concrete spirituality, a concrete way of experiencing Christ and of living the Gospel. It is essentially Eucharistic, because it is specifically this reality of the 'total Christ' that is celebrated in that sacrament. In the Eucharist also we celebrate a material universe divinized by the incarnation and transformed by the resurrection. The Eucharist thus becomes the 'pledge of our resurrection'. It celebrates the 'oneness' of this world and the next achieved by the Father and the Spirit through Christ. And the Eucharist is also the symbol of the Church in which all this is to be made present. The eucharistic aspect of Devotion to the Sacred Heart was highlighted also by the widely used expression 'the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus'.

Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed is certainly an important practice in Sacred Heart devotion, and deservedly so, but it should not be narrowed to some form of individualistic prayer. Though using nineteenth century language, Jules Chevalier's description of the Eucharist presents the essentials of Catholic Tradition that we find in Vatican Council II.

The Eucharist is the centre of the Sacraments
that communicate to us the power of our redemption.
It prolongs and multiplies in this valley of tears
the presence of God made man;
the renewal and immolation of Calvary;
the extension of the incarnation of the Word
in each of the members of his mystical Body;
the glorification on earth of nature and humanity;
the supreme perfection of the supernatural life
through the most intimate union
between God and his creature

that can be conceived of here below.
It is, moreover, the pledge of our resurrection
and of our glorification in heaven;
the glory of the Church
of which it is
the profound symbol and active centre of its unity.
Jules Chevalier ¹⁷

Oneness and the individual

Although devotion to the Sacred Heart has an essential ecclesial and social significance; the individual does not become insignificant or unimportant. Our sharing in the life of Christ does not make us become stereotypes. Jules Chevalier stressed that the Wisdom of God manifests itself not simply in unity but in unity in variety; a point he returns to frequently in his book on the Sacred Heart. God loves everything that constitutes the 'oneness' he plans. Nothing, and certainly no one, is insignificant.

Each of us in the body of Christ
is this particular organ,
this particular fibre
and no other.
In this divine vine,
we are this branch, this leaf, this flower or this fruit.
And what we are no one else is,
nor ever will be.
Our common vocation is that we be members of Jesus
by grace and by glory.
Our personal vocation is that we be for Jesus
this particular member
and no other.
Jules Chevalier ¹⁸

The symbolism of the heart holds together 'otherness' and 'individuality', both of which help describe the human person in the full sense of that word. Because Father Chevalier saw the reconciliation of unity and otherness in the Trinity, he saw our essential individuality and our essential relatedness as a sharing in the very nature of God. In our limited, creaturely way, we can share in the 'I am' of God, but that very 'I am' puts us in relationship with God and with others.

Each receives grace and glory in a special way,
each in their own proper, personal measure.
This makes each one a special being
for all eternity,
able to say like God
I am he who is;
and to do this not in some general way,
but in particular:
I am this particular someone
who is not and never will be someone other.
Jules Chevalier ¹⁹

Just as the harmony of the universe does not exclude variety but includes it, even needs it, so the final harmony of God's plan does not exclude variety or obliterate the individual. Just as every part has its part to play in creation now, so also in a transformed, new creation.

My adorable Saviour,
I hear the harmony of your saints.
What magnificent songs
How I would love to have a part that was mine in that harmony!
I do not ask for a brilliant or a principal part:
the least is more than I deserve;
a single note will be sufficient;
but I alone will sing that note;
it will be mine;
and something will be added to the universal harmony!
I will help the whole of heaven sing a better song to you;
you will receive from me a little bit of glory,
that without me you would not have had!
Jules Chevalier ²⁰

¹ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.77.

² op. cit., p.302

³ op. cit., p. 82.

⁴ op. cit., p.146f. The original text contains a number of scriptural references. The main ones are Heb 1:3 and I John 4:8. The italics are in the original text.

⁵ Jean Eudes, *Le coeur admirable de La Mere de Dieu, Vol. 8, Oeuvres Complet, p. 344. Quoted by Bertrand de Margerie, Histoire doctrinale du cult au Coeur de Jesus*. Paris: Mame, 1992, p.157.

⁶ Encyclical Letter on Devotion to the Sacred Heart, *Haurietis aquas*, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Vol. 48, 1956 English Translation, Catholic Truth Society, London. Sections 26-28.

⁷ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.79f.

⁸ op. cit., p. 80.

⁹ op. cit., p.78. In the text, Fr Chevalier refers the reader to Jn 17:11,21,23.

¹⁰ or. cit., p.198-199. Quoting Bishop Baudry.

¹¹ op. cit., p.80.

¹² op. dt., p.290.

¹³ op. cit., p.284. This relies heavily on a formulation of St Augustine.

¹⁴ op. cit., p.280.

¹⁵ op. cit., p. 78

¹⁶ op. cit., p.241. The first few lines are a quotation from Bishop Baudry,

¹⁷ *Le Coeur de Jesus*, p.398 and reference is given to Jn, 17:11,21; Acts 4:32. 17 op. cit., p.214

¹⁸ op. cit., p.83-84

¹⁹ op. cit., p.83.

²⁰ op. cit., p.81f.

8 The pierced Heart

Jesus said to St. Gertrude,
"The principal end I had in view
when my side was pierced
was to reveal to the world
the secret of my Heart,
so that all would understand
that my love is greater than any external signs
that I give of it,
for my sufferings come to an end,
my love never ends" ¹.

The Word incarnate was sent not merely to say 'God loves and forgives you', but to *live* opposed to whatever is not love. His death was part of that project; not so much his death in itself, which was a sinful juridical lynching that could not be approved by God (cf Deut 21:22f; Gal 3:13). The *attitude* with which he died gave it value. His death was in harmony with the Spirit of God and his own 'spirit'. His death was not just an evil passively endured. In dying he was being faithful to the mission given him by his Father. An analogy can be found in the execution of a patriot or martyr, where an evil is transformed into good.

Sacred Heart devotion does not concentrate principally on the physical sufferings of Jesus, but on his 'internal' dispositions and reactions-on his Heart. The saving element in the death of Jesus was not physical suffering by itself, but a wholehearted love of his Father and his Father's project, even though it cost physical suffering. And here again the deeper suffering" is not primarily physical, but the bitter experience of love rejected-the whole project of his life rejected. And this rejection goes beyond the human heart of Jesus to God's infinite love made incarnate in him. This tragic dimension of the mission of Jesus is wider than his death on the cross; it embraces the whole of his being, both divine and human. While the divine and the human are essentially distinct, they form one being in Jesus. That is basic Catholic orthodoxy; and essential in the tradition of Devotion to the Sacred Heart we are considering.

The heart is a symbol of love, but in Sacred Heart devotion the heart is a pierced heart, traditionally surrounded by thorns, surmounted by a cross. It is not only a symbol of love given and accepted, but of love *rejected* - of a person and all he stands for rejected. Both aspects, love and the rejection of love, are essential elements in the devotion, particularly in the tradition that stems from St Margaret Mary. She was overwhelmed by how much God loved the world, but at the same time she was shocked that too often we simply don't care.

While awareness of the rejection of love saves devotion to the Sacred Heart from unrealism concerning love, even God's love, there has been a risk of a one-sided emphasis on rejection. This has resulted at times in a too negative view of life. Consequently, some have accused the devotion of a too morbid concentration on suffering and a failure to recognize that God as Spirit is present in all human endeavours that enhance life and creation.

Suffering

Today there would not seem to be much danger that a spirituality would morbidly concentrate on suffering. On the contrary, suffering is almost a taboo, an obscenity-something to be ashamed of and hidden from sight. Growing numbers consider that socially approved suicide should provide an escape from suffering. They feel that life and suffering are incompatible.

Despite all efforts to the contrary, suffering is an inescapable part of being human. Our senses open us to the experience of beauty and pleasure; they also, of their very nature, open us to hurt and suffering. Our mind, of its very nature, opens us to truth, but also to mistakes, to foreboding, to fear, to depressive memories. The human body also, of its very nature, is open not only to symmetry and growth but also to decay and disease. It follows that the Word incarnate *had* to endure suffering if he was to be fully human and really one with us. The Letter to the Hebrews does not only say Jesus was like us in all things, but that he was "*tested* in every way as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4: 15). He was not programmed for obedience like a robot, he "*learned* obedience through suffering" (Heb 5:8). He knew frustration (Mt 18:17), hunger (Mt 4:3), thirst (John 4:7; 19:28), foreboding (Jn 12:27; Mt 26:38), dread (Luke 22:44). Like the servant of Yahweh he was "a man of suffering" (Isaiah 53:3). Thus, it is not only the symbol of a heart, but the symbol of a pierced heart that helps us know what makes Jesus to be *Jesus*. It helps us realize his solidarity with us even in our suffering. This has attracted many to Sacred Heart devotion and given them strength in moments of trial. It expresses in symbol the invitation of Jesus: "*Come to me all you who are burdened*". He understands.

Galatians 2: 19-20, *I have been crucified with Christ... it is Christ who lives in me*, is central in Sacred Heart devotion. If he lives in me, he must live in me in health and illness, prosperity and poverty, success and failure, strength and weakness, life and death. Just as I cannot be united with Christ without sharing in his suffering, for his suffering is an inescapable part of him, neither can Christ be united with me without sharing in my suffering, for suffering is an inescapable part of me. If we are to live with Christ, we also have to suffer with him. St Paul tells us, *for me to live is Christ* (Phil 1:21); but in the same letter he writes: *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death* (3: 10). For Paul the whole of life had to be identified with Christ and so, even in adversity, he could possess everything (2 Cor 6:3-10).

Just as I am to grow into Christ's image through all that is positive in my life; I am to grow into his image also in the way I cope with all that is negative. And it is not merely a matter of 'coping' - my suffering is a place where I can experience union with Christ. There is much dispute about some of the precise details in the New Testament's association of human suffering and the sufferings of Jesus, but there is no room for doubt that the two *are* associated (2 Cor 1:5; Col 1:24; Phil 3:10-11; 1 Pet 1:11; 4:13; 5:1). To bring Jesus into my suffering does not make my suffering cease to be suffering; nor does it remove the mystery of why there is suffering; but bearing my suffering with Jesus and as Jesus did gives it meaning and purpose. This is not to be . accepted merely as an intellectual theory, but tested through experience. In this, we can be helped by the example of those who have lived it heroically and also by our own struggling efforts to do the same.

Suffering looked at from the point of view of the 'heart' is not complete without consideration of compassion for others who suffer. The Heart of Jesus is pierced not only because of his own sufferings but also because of the sight of the sufferings of others (cf Lk 23:28, *Weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children*). Bearing suffering as Jesus did involves also active compassion for others who suffer (cf Lk 23:28). The parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) and the description of the final evaluation of human existence (Mt 25:31-46) demand that my suffering should not make me self-centred. I can become self-centred in two ways: a reluctance or even refusal to be concerned for others and a reluctance or even refusal to allow others be concerned for me. Love is a shared experience both when we give it and when we receive it. We build up a civilization of love not only when we give love to those in need; we also build it up when we accept it gratefully from others and allow them to love by helping us in our needs.

If we follow Our Lord in his public life,
we see his Heart go out to every misfortune,
to every need, moral or physical.
From where comes that tender compassion
for those who suffer?
From his Heart,
always his Heart.
Jules Chevalier ²

Sacrifice

The deliberate acceptance of a life of 'victim' was a significant current within the tradition of devotion to the Sacred Heart we are considering. The 'little way' of St Therese of Lisieux is but one example. This is not to be trivialized. A victim is a gift given to God on behalf of oneself and others. In Biblical terms, the offering of a victim is useless unless it symbolizes a right relationship with God and others (cf Isaiah 1:11-17; Ps 40:6-8; 51:16f).

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, a mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:6-8)

Nevertheless, many today find the word 'victim' repulsive; they suspect masochism - a type of spirituality that considers human comfort to be somehow against the Gospel. Admittedly, the word 'victim' can be rightly queried if it is viewed in an exclusively passive sense; if it is understood as a means of placating the anger of God; if it values suffering in itself as a good; if it indicates a refusal to do anything to allay suffering. Liberation Theologians stressed particularly this last point; for them, a spiritualizing of suffering dampened the urgency of changing the oppressive social situations that caused it.

Aberations can occur in any approach to religion or in anything else for that matter. Language that is appropriate and useful at one time and place can become misleading or useless in another. But rejection of a 'victim' spirituality would itself be open to query if failed to recognize any positive idea behind it when seen at its best as a total gift one oneself to God and to others. And a rejection of it would certainly be mistaken if it viewed suffering as somehow peripheral, even detrimental to normal Christian living and spirituality. The test case for any philosophy, theology or spirituality is how it stands up to the reality of suffering and death. Hence, even if the word 'victim' may be misleading and inappropriate in spirituality today, the attitude and way of life it stands for touches on the centre of Christian living.

In the letters of St Paul, the suffering on the cross is more than speculative theology. He even considers it to be beyond speculation and incomprehensible without faith. It is outside *the wisdom of language and wise words* (1 Cor 1: 17); a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles (1 Cor 1: 24). At the same time, the suffering on the cross has its own wisdom: *to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God* (ib.). Thus, to be baptised into the suffering and death of Christ is not a negative, life-denying act; on the contrary, we were baptised into his death so that we might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:3-4). This new life involves living and suffering with the attitude with which Jesus himself suffered and died (Rom 6: 10-11), that is, living opposed to sin, opposed to all that is not love. And while life with Christ always looks to a future perfection (Rom 8: 17; Phil 3: 10-11), it exists now (Gal 2:20) even in suffering (2 Cor 4: 10, 11). In this way, St Paul can refer to his own sufferings as the "sufferings of Christ" (2 Cor 1 :5; Phil 3: 10; Gal 6: 17) ³.

The redeeming process of Christ's life, death and resurrection is complete and once-for-all. But while Christ's redemptive act is complete, its effects are not complete until the end of time when God will be *all in all* (1 Cor 15:28). God brought about a new creation through the raising of Jesus who had suffered and died (Gal 6: 15; 2 Cor 5: 17), but it is equally clear in the New Testament that the redemption, wrought by God through Jesus Christ, is brought into the world through the Spirit of God using human instruments, not only through their preaching (cf Rom 10: 14-18), but also through their suffering (cf 2 Cor 4:7-12) and through their prayer (cf 1 Thes 3:12-13). This is one of the ways in which Paul can say: *It makes me happy to be suffering for you now, and in my own body to make up all the hardships that still have to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his Body, the Church* (Col 1:24). God has accomplished all, but it is our task to freely offer that 'all' back to him and be his instruments, both in prayer and action, in bringing it to others.

This is the teaching of the great Apostle:
everything belongs to us,
the world, life, death,
things present and things to come.
We have to offer them to Christ
to whom we belong.
And Christ, in his turn, offers them to God
to whom everything must return.
In a temple everything is made for the altar.
In this great temple of the visible universe,

there is an altar
a unique centre for all that is made.
On this altar the fire of love must burn incessantly.
And what victim will this fire consume?
It is not a particular, determined victim
chosen from others of less esteem.
Our heart is this altar of *holocausts*.
Everything that is, everything that happens,
every creature and every event
should be offered there to God
and, as it were, burnt, consumed
in his honour.
Jules Chevalier ⁴

Intercession and the daily offering

The 'daily offering' is a traditional spiritual exercise of devotion to the Sacred Heart—a commitment to live the coming day united with Christ's own offering of himself to his Father in worship and to others in service. This has been expressed in ways that may fit one culture and temperament more than another, but in principle it has firm grounds in Scripture. And in so far as it involves a commitment to live our everyday life in union with Christ, it is a basic Christian practice. *I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good, acceptable and perfect* (Rom 12:1-2; cf 1 Pet 2:4-5). Thus, the offering of all that happens each day with the commitment that everything *be transformed by the renewal of our minds* gives us much to reflect on.

When we speak of a 'spiritual' sacrifice, it does not mean less real but more real. A spiritual sacrifice is a sacrifice in which the Spirit acts. The sacrifice of Christ is not real because it fits into rituals for sacrifice found in the history of religions, or even in the Old Testament. It is real in the sense of being the fulfilment of all that ritual sacrifices were trying to express. *Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said: "Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart* (Ps 40:6-8). Thus, our 'spiritual' sacrifices are a real participation in the real sacrifice of Christ. We allow him to re-live in us by living as he lived; we face suffering as he did; and we intercede as he does for the salvation of the world.

The intercession of Christ for all (Rom 8:34) expresses in prayer the purpose of his oblation of himself to his Father for the redemption of the world (Heb 7:25). His prayer of intercession and his redemptive act cannot be separated: his suffering gives point to his prayer and his prayer gives point to his suffering. Like the suffering servant (Is 53: 12) his intercession takes place in his acceptance of the suffering entailed in his redemptive mission. And our incorporation into the Body of Christ enables us to participate in his oblation of himself and also in his intercession. This is found in Church practice from New Testament times; the first epistle of John accepts firmly the atonement wrought by Christ (1 Jn 2: 1-2) and the instrumentality of prayer (1 Jn 16-17).

In teaching us to pray the 'Our Father' (Mt 6:9-13), Jesus teaches us a prayer of intercession - of complete openness to the Father and to his plan for the world - but this prayer also teaches us how to live. The 'daily offering', in Sacred Heart devotion belongs to the same tradition. If prayer is to come from our heart just as it does from the Heart of Jesus, it involves a commitment to live each day as he did.

"Christian prayer is primarily the prayer of the entire community of humankind joined with Christ himself. Each individual has his part in this prayer which is common to the one Body, and it becomes the voice of the beloved Spouse of Christ, putting into words the wishes and desires of the whole Christian people and making intercession for the necessities common to all human beings. It obtains its unity from the Heart of Christ himself" ⁵.

According to Jules Chevalier, "the whole substance of devotion to the Sacred Heart" is found in the practice of the morning offering. "It imposes no obligation under pain of sin. It asks simply for love-love of the Heart of Jesus. All our works, our sufferings, no matter how ordinary they might be, even the most inconsequential, become acts of love, since they are made with the intention of pleasing Our Lord" ⁶. Thus the morning offering puts our day in opposition to all that is not love. And this daily commitment to build a 'civilization of love' is not an impersonal programme of our own; its beginning and end is Jesus dwelling in our hearts. It is not merely a proposition or a social programme like any other; it is the fruit of what we call devotion. With Jesus in our hearts we live, suffer and pray with intentions as wide as his own.

Reparation

In Sacred Heart devotion the rejection of God's love revealed in Christ and the consequent impulse to make up for this rejection is called 'reparation'. It has been considered an essential element. In devotion to the Sacred Heart, particularly in the tradition stemming from St Margaret Mary. The word, for a number of reasons, became distasteful in some circles particularly in the naively optimistic sixties and seventies of the last century. But more basic than that was the theology of the atonement and expiation in which it was at times expressed. Because of these negative overtones 'reparation' was probably one of the reasons why some people reacted against the devotion itself. Even in religious congregations dedicated to the Sacred Heart some groups tried to have the word removed from their Constitutions. Part of the problem was that it had become associated with certain ideas and practices that seemed to be misleading or even mistaken.

Reparation is simply the noun form of the verb 'to repair', 'to set things right', 'to make amends', 'to settle a broken relationship'. However, a dictionary definition is not sufficient. Since devotion to the Sacred Heart is essentially a relationship with Jesus Christ *who loved me and gave himself for me* (Gal 2:20), it understands 'reparation' in the light of this mutual relationship. In other words, it does not view sin exclusively from the point of view of psychology or its human effects; it sees sin from the point of view a God who is infinitely holy and infinitely loving and who is incarnate in Christ. It experiences evil as a failure to respond to love with love; and this experience urges us to make amends. Top level theology can be brought in to explain this, but for most people little or no explanation is needed. It is the natural way for us to react when anyone we love is rejected or offended. We feel urged to prove our love more both in word and deed. Reparation, as understood in devotion to the Sacred Heart, cannot be understood properly outside of this relationship.

Theologically, 'reparation' is necessarily bound up with how one understands the atonement and expiation. A widely accepted theology was centred on appeasing God's anger. In its crudest form, somebody had to be punished for sin; Jesus took this punishment on himself and in this way appeased the anger of his Father and satisfied justice. This extreme version of the theory was usually modified in a variety of more acceptable ways. Many theologians, however, became more and more discontent with these slight modifications. Their basic complaint was that any explanation based on the appeasing of God's anger and on a legalistic concept of God's offended justice seemed to undermine the central part played by God's love in the New Testament. However, since God's love is central in devotion to the Sacred Heart, one can suspect the validity of the criticism made of it on this ground.

When the atonement is crudely understood as the appeasing of God's anger, especially in simplistic legal terms, there is an obvious diminishment of the New Testament's emphasis on God as love. At the same time, one needs to concede that the imagery of God's anger is frequently found in both the Old and New Testament. Leaving aside unsophisticated expressions about causality and justice, the underlying idea is the absolute incompatibility between God and evil. Divine anger is also used to describe the inbuilt, destructive consequences of sin.

The image of an angry God has certainly had damaging effects in many lives and it has to be used with caution. However, this caution has resulted at times in a feeling that anger in itself is wrong and to be always avoided. This too can have damaging effects. On the other hand, it is not sufficiently realized that the image of a loving God can also be misguided when it results in a feeling that God does not really care about evil and that evil does not really matter. The two images, love and anger, are co-relatives: each can be properly understood only in relation to the other. Our realization of God's love for us should increase when we recognize his utter incompatibility with evil; and our perception of evil should also increase when we realize the extent of his love. Added to this, God comes to us through the incarnation with experience of what it means to be human. He shows sympathy and understanding for sinners. At the same time, in solidarity with all that is human, he comes in anger against all that is inhuman (cf Mt 25:31-46).

It may sound strange to us, but a common prayer people used in devotion to the Sacred Heart was the *Parce, Domine*: 'Spare, O Lord, spare your people, be not angry with us forever'. It did not seem strange to them; after all, it sums up much of the psalms. And when we realize the absolute repugnance of God towards evil (expressed in the image of his 'anger'), we realize too the staggering implications of his infinite care for us (expressed in the image of 'love'). Thus, if we look at the tragic mess resulting from the world's failure to love, and if we look at our own powerlessness in the face of it, our natural response is an urgent plea to the Lord to rescue us from that turmoil. The mercy of God is central in Sacred Heart devotion and has been one of its most attractive aspects. Nevertheless, it has never allowed 'love' and 'mercy' to be understood as indifference to evil.

The imagery of anger in the Bible not only leaves room for love but actually enhances it; for example, in Hosea (1:1-9), where anger is present but overcome by love. The image of anger is found and implied also in the teaching of Jesus (Lk 21:23; cf Mt 18:34). The infinitely holy God, who is absolutely incompatible with evil, transcends all boundaries, even the boundaries of sin and evil. And as Word incarnate, God becomes united with sinners - *For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God* (2 Cor 5:21).

Anger and love are both images of the ineffable God; and both are analogies. We accept this readily about 'anger', but tend to forget it when we apply 'love' to God. God transcends infinitely all that we can conceive of him. When applied to God our words are more dissimilar than similar to the reality we are speaking about. Nevertheless imagination is a valid category of knowing and is not to be identified merely with make-believe. Imagination can bring us into Contact with reality; it can also mislead; but so can our concepts. Imagery is an expression of the imagination; it causes problems only when we cease to let it work on us as *imagery* and treat it as an abstract concept. This is particularly misleading when it is not viewed in the context of a whole network of other, also valid, images. There is an even greater danger if we use one image in isolation as the conceptual basis for a whole theology or spirituality. This mistake can be made not only in developing a theology or spirituality, but also in criticising it.

Faith in God's gratuitous love is basic in any Christian spirituality, especially one that centres on the Heart of Christ. *We have known and believe the love God has for us* (1 Jn 4:16; cf vv. 7-12). But this faith, of its very nature, must issue in love: *the only thing that counts is faith made effective through love* (Gal 5:6). However, not infrequently those who oppose the use of legal imagery to explain redemption become themselves closet 'legalists' in the way they speak about God's love. God's loving forgiveness can be too exclusively viewed as an acquittal judgement made in favour of a guilty person in a law court. But no magic wand can be waved over the horrors of sin, as if, for example, a man like Hitler is simply absorbed at death into God's loving forgiveness, and the matter closed. Our actions, like ourselves, are immersed in history; they have a past, a present and a future. And the hard fact is that wrong has to be set right (repaired), not merely forgiven and forgotten. We belittle love and forgiveness if we exclude this need to 'repair', that is, to 'make reparation'.

Belief in God's forgiveness should in no way weaken our perception of sin; on the contrary, seeing sin as God sees it should increase our appreciation of his mercy and urge us to make amends. In receiving forgiveness, we receive God's love into our lives, and the measure of our genuine appropriation of that love is the measure of our commitment to set things right. This is basic in the teaching of Jesus. The test that we have really appropriated forgiveness is our own willingness to forgive. Certainly, we do not love in order to win God's love; we love in order to make the love we have received a reality in our lives. Thus the New Testament accepts not only love, but a love that sets things right, in both word and deed-and ultimately in that Word and Deed that is the Word of God made flesh.

God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins 1 John 4:9-10.

Whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: Whoever says, "I abide in him," ought to walk just as he walked. 1 John 2:5,⁶.

The consequences of wrongdoing (and in this sense wrongdoing itself) remain even after forgiveness. The offended and the offender, in their different ways, have to 'set things right'. In his Father's infinite love Jesus is sent to live in complete opposition to all that is not love despite whatever pain and perplexity that might involve. In doing this, as representative of the human race, he 'repairs' it, giving it a new heart. The old Adam is replaced by a new Adam.

In other words, the whole project of his life, given him by his Father, was reparation (repairing), which consists basically in replacing evil with love.

The Word incarnate
is truly Christ and love.
All his actions bear love's indelible stamp.
His law will be a law of grace,
a law of love.
He will live and act only for us:
He will not have a thought, a desire, a word,
nor any action whatsoever,
no affection in his soul,
no suffering in his body, no sensation,
no movement in his Heart,
which does not recognise divine Love as its basis and first cause.

Reparation - a way of living

The *Word incarnate* necessarily shared in our death, otherwise he would not have been truly incarnate. In response, our task is to share in *his* death, that is, share in the spirit with which he died, and in this way to make his death a way of life, a way of living his opposition to all that is not love. In doing this, our Christian life does not become merely an ethic, but a transformation of heart out of which an ethic arises. Reparation is a life transformed by love, a life participating in Christ's own redeeming love, a life of service instead of selfishness.

Reparation is not merely a form of prayer. We have to be and live reparation. *The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus* (Romans 6: 10-11). In Christ, humanity's relationship with God is set right. United with him, we are to live in that same relationship. And in so far as God's 'anger' expresses his utter incompatibility with sin, reparation removes that incompatibility ('anger') by replacing evil with love both in word and in action.

Pope John-Paul II gives us the same message: Reparation is a way of life. "Close to the Heart of Christ, the human heart learns to know the true and unique meaning of our life and destiny, to understand the value of a genuinely Christian life, to avoid certain perversions of the human heart, to join in the love of God with love of one's neighbour. Thus the civilization of love, the reign of the Heart of Christ, will be able to be built on the ruins accumulated by hate and violence. This, in reality, is the reparation asked for by the Heart of the Saviour" ⁸.

According to Karl Rahner, "Reparation means the endurance of the godless situation with and in the Son, in Gethsemane and Golgotha, and fellowship in Christ's apparently fruitless love for the sinful world.". And, "In the cult of the Sacred Heart we worship our Lord under the aspect of the Word incarnate's redemptive love. Consequently the devotion must necessarily include reparation, which is a participation in this redemptive love, and a sharing of its fate." ⁹

In virtue of our baptism,
we become adopted children of God;
consequently our actions are no longer merely human.
Moreover, in devotion to the Sacred Heart
God offers us a means of salvation
and a remedy for the ills of society.
Our Lord makes his divine Heart
supplement our weakness
in order to raise our prayers and merits
to infinite proportions.
He makes it also an easy means
that human nature can use
to accomplish, in its perfection,
the great precept of love,
and fulfil all the obligations contained in it.
Jules Chevalier ¹⁰

We are called to share in the reparation made by Christ. We do this above all in the Eucharist where the once-for-all offering of Christ is again made present in a special way. In devotion to the Sacred Heart a personal relationship with Christ present in the Eucharist is central. This sort of personal devotion is not incompatible with the universal and community dimension of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic Christ, after all, is the one who loved *me* and gave himself for *me* (Gal 2:20; cf Phil 3:7-11), but if our relationship to Christ is limited to that, it belittles the full meaning of what St Paul meant by Eucharist. The sacrament makes the 'total Christ' present. It covers the whole creative and redemptive action of God who is Father, Son and Spirit; and it covers that action in its past, present and future manifestations. In the tradition of devotion to the Sacred Heart that we are considering, this emphasis on the total Christ is also central. In fact, Jules Chevalier saw Jesus himself as the 'Eucharist' of the whole of creation.

Jesus is the supreme and infinite glory of God,
the revelation par *excellence* of his infinite goodness,
the Eucharist of the universe
and the permanent ecstasy of creation in God.
If you want to sum up in a word
what is itself a summary,
Jesus is religion,
religion par excellence
living and infinite.
It is principally to the Heart of Jesus that we give this title.
Religion is a bond of love
and so in everything the Sacred Heart is the last word.
Everything leads back to Jesus,
I am the beginning and the end he says;
and in Jesus everything leads back to his Heart.
Jules Chevalier ¹¹

Consoling Christ?

Memory is essential for an awareness of identity; and awareness of identity brings with it a sense of personal, enduring responsibility for our past actions, both good and bad. Our identity as Christians also depends on our memory of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and this too brings an awareness of how responsible or irresponsible we have been in following him.

There is a method of prayer in which we make ourselves a contemporary of the events of Jesus life, death and resurrection. This is not freakish or unduly complicated. It is a common occurrence when we share deeply in another's memory of the past. It is a commonplace experience in drama. If we need to conceptualize it in order to give it validity, it may help to see this form of prayer as a sharing in the risen Christ's memory of his earthly existence. We do this naturally, without conceptual distinctions, when we pray to Jesus with images of his earthly existence in mind.

Not only is this a method of prayer, but it had a role to play in the formation of the four Gospels themselves. The Evangelists, aware of the Risen Christ, reflected on what he had said and done. This continues to happen when we reflect on what they wrote in the Gospels.

Mainly through the influence of St Margaret Mary, Sacred Heart devotion became identified with regular contemplation of Christ in Gethsemane¹². And the Holy Hour became a popular prayer-form of reparation in response to the complaint of Jesus - *Could you not watch one hour with me* (Mt 26:40). This helped give rise in popular piety to an urge here and now to respond to the sorrowing Christ, making amends for the grief we and others caused. These expressions of 'consolation' have raised problems particularly with theologians. There were grounds at times for criticising this practice, but at times also the criticism was based on a too narrowly conceptual view of human consciousness and language.

If there is to be any communication between God and human beings, it has to be in human terms. For example, we may know intellectually that we cannot inform God about anything or 'change his mind'. Yet we readily use expressions of information and persuasion in prayer because it is the natural (and arguably the only way) in which we can express our needs. It would be a misconception to argue merely from the use of such language to a mistaken understanding of the nature of God. The same is applicable to the language of 'consoling' Christ. Use of such language is indeed optional, and at times it may even be mistaken make-believe, but care has to be taken in condemning those for whom it is an authentic form of prayer. Jules Chevalier makes the point that in the Old Testament God is frequently presented as complaining. The Risen Christ also complains (cf Ap 3: 16). Looked at strictly such language is inadequate; but so is language that makes God indifferent to evil. Perhaps one answer to this is precisely the incarnation of the Word who can feel distressed by rejection and indifference.

The very fact
that God has freely drawn the world out from nothingness
means that he must maintain relations with it
in keeping with his nature as Creator;
and in their turn,
creatures must conduct themselves towards him
as being the work of his hands.
To break these relationships
is to ignore his authority;
it is to refuse him what is his;
it is to despise his will.
Can God remain indifferent to this outrage?
Why be astonished that he complains about it?
Jules Chevalier¹³

There can be no bypassing the risen Christ. At the same time, we can certainly relive the memories of the risen Christ with varying degrees of intensity, just as we can relive with our parents and those we love their memories of past difficulties and suffering. And this experience can increase our love of them and also encourage us to respond with greater love and care for them now. We can also grieve over memories of hurts we may have caused them while rejoicing at the same time about any reconciliation that has taken place. We can make up to them now for past indifference or hurt we have caused. The same applies to our relationship with the Risen Christ and can even give grounds for certain expressions of consolation. Neat categories of past and present lose their significance when, for example, we relive with Jews their memories of the *shoah*.

Holy theologians tell us
that Jesus Christ,
today glorified and impassible,
cannot suffer:
the expressions in question are figurative;
God accommodates himself to our way of speaking;
and so we would be mistaken
to take these words in their usual sense.
This is true.
But God, certainly, speaks this way
in order to tell us something.
Jules Chevalier¹⁴

Could it be that theologians have something to learn from this form of popular piety? I don't know of any theologians today who would be Docetists - people who feel that matter is 'unworthy' of a human person. For example, all stress the real humanness of Jesus who was, like us, an animated *body* - animated *matter*. Some theologians, however, give the impression of being Docetists with regard to the risen Christ. They seem to forget that the resurrection is a statement about the very purpose of matter. Science is opening our minds more and more to its 'mystery'. The nature of matter is not based on our sense experience of sticks and stones. We easily forget that computers and nuclear energy are also matter. Even on a purely human level, it would be highly imprudent for us to draw limits to its possibilities. This is particularly relevant when we take into consideration the omnipotence of the Creator of matter.

Distress and joy are not incompatible. I visit a hospital and am distressed by what I see; in sympathy I can even share the suffering of others, but at the same time this increases more than ever my appreciation and enjoyment of my own good health. Could there be some analogy with the risen Christ? In the gospels he is often described as deeply moved. Has this ceased? Does his glorified state mean that it *has to cease*?

As every human heart is sensitive,
even more so the heart of Jesus was sensitive.
We cannot doubt this.
Why should it not be more sensitive now?
Would sensitivity be an imperfection in the Word incarnate? .
Since sensitivity is inherent in human nature
Jesus possesses it in his glorified state.
We have to admit his sensitivity is transformed
but it exists.
Although we cannot be precise about its operations or effects,

Jesus loves all he used to love
with the love with which he loved it;
his affections have not changed
and have not grown cold.
Jules Chevalier ¹⁵

Eternity strictly speaking is an infinitely perfect and, for that reason, immutable 'now', not needing a past or a future because by definition it possesses the fullness of being 'now'. Eternity defines God and it is his property alone. Finite beings are only eternal in a loose sense. By definition the humanity of Jesus, as humanity, is finite, though his divine nature is eternal in the strict sense of the word. Where there is matter, there would seem to be also the possibility of 'before and after', in other words some form of time even if not the same as our chronological time. Is there some sense in Gerald Vann's suggestion years ago in *The Divine Pity* (1945) that there is necessarily 'desire' in the risen Christ? He will not be fully 'Christ' until all things are united with the Father through him. Only then is Christ fully the 'total Christ'. Paul seems to have this idea. *When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.* (1 Cor 15:28).

¹ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus* p.33.

² op. cit., p. 9.

³ Perhaps it is better for us to translate the expression 'sufferings of Christ' simply with a hyphen, 'Christ-sufferings'. We also have to accept that the author may not have wanted to be as precise about the connection between the two words as we might want him to be.

⁴ op. cit., p. 65. The Scripture reference is to 1 Cor 2:2.

⁵ Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Canticum laudis* promulgating the revision of the Divine Office.

⁶ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 421

⁷ op. cit., p. 148

⁸ See Letter of the Holy Father to Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Society of Jesus in *Prayer and Service*, Vol. I, 1987, p.3.

⁹ Karl Rahner, "Some theses on the theology of the Devotion", in Joseph Stierli ed., *Heart of the Saviour. A Symposium on Devotion to the Sacred Heart*. New York::Herder & Herder, 1957, p. 142, 147.

¹⁰ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p.225. ¹¹ op.cit., p.76

¹² In 1674, St Margaret Mary experienced the Lord saying to her, "Every week between Thursday and Friday I will grant you to share in that mortal sadness which I chose to feel in the Garden of Olives ... You shall keep me company in the prayer I then offered to my Father".

¹³ op.cit., p.219

¹⁴ op.cit., p.218

¹⁵ op.cit., p.221

9 Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

Before the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 1854, Father Jules Chevalier made a novena promising Mary to honour her in a special way if he could get the necessary aid to found the religious congregation he had in mind—the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The success of his prayer in this and other crises made him consider Mary as the Foundress of the Society. Consequently, from the beginning he thought of Mary as connected in some way with the Sacred Heart. In reflecting on a title for Mary, however, he went well beyond a connection between her and a Congregation dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Around 1857, he decided on honouring Mary under the title 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart'. Just as the 'of' in titles like Our Lady *of* Lourdes referred Mary to Lourdes and Lourdes to Mary, the new title referred Mary to Jesus (named Sacred Heart) and Jesus to Mary. Thus the one title mentioned explicitly both Jesus and Mary, reminding us that any celebration of Mary has to be (like her own Magnificat) a celebration of God and his Word incarnate.

'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart' was more than an honorific title; it was a way of understanding Mary and her Son. It had an extraordinary success and rapidly became worldwide. By 1864 there were 100,000 members of the Association Jules Chevalier had formed; in 1868, 2,000,000; in 1882, 14,690,000; in 1891, 18,000,000. In popular piety there was an obvious stress on the powerful intercession of Mary, but the greatest thing we could ask from her was that our hearts could become like the Heart of her Son, Jesus.

O Mary
obtain that our hearts be made one
with the Heart of Jesus
and with yours,
which is like his in everything.
Then the desire of the great Apostle
will be realized:
'Have the same mind in you
as in Christ Jesus' (Phil 2:5);
and we will be able to exclaim with him:
"It is no longer we who live,
but the Heart of Jesus who lives in us."
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, hear our prayer! Amen.
Jules Chevalier ¹

One of the leading theologians of the twentieth century, Yves Congar O.P, remarked that the popularity of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and its pilgrimage centre in Issoudun, France, was not the result of some Marian apparition, as was often the case, but the fruit of the pastoral concern and theological reflection of a parish priest. This made the widespread attraction of the title even more extraordinary. Already by 1862, Father Chevalier had developed a very comprehensive view of Sacred Heart devotion; and it gave him also a very comprehensive view of the significance God had given Mary. This was what he wanted to express in the title 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart'. For this reason, all aspects of the relationship between Jesus and Mary remained the context and basis for her intercession. Mary had to be seen in the light of the Heart of her Son and her word to us was always, *Do whatever he tells you.* (In 2:5).

The Heart of the divine Master is the centre
on which everything in the Old and New Testament converges,
the pivot around which everything in Catholicism turns.

That is how

I understand devotion to the Sacred Heart:
it embraces everything,
it is the answer to everything.

Jules Chevalier ²

When deciding on a title, Father Chevalier also decided on how the new devotion would be depicted. He used one of the most popular statues of Mary, that of the Immaculate Conception. It presented Mary standing open-handed gazing down with great love and tenderness on the world. However, in the original statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the young Jesus stands in front of her, not nursed in her arms as an infant, and Mary looks down at him with all a mother's love and pride. Father Chevalier asked the sculptor explicitly that Jesus be depicted as twelve years old; the age when St Luke tells us he showed his independence in the Temple (Lk 2:41.49) and showed also his readiness to do what Mary and Joseph asked of him (Lk 2:51). Mary accepts her Son's independence and with open hands offers him to the world. He points to his Heart, to the very centre of his being where he shows his love for his heavenly Father and for us. At the same time, he points to his Mother, the one through whom he has come into the world; the one whose task it is to lead all to the Heart of her Son. Thus the statue helped tie together the Heart of God, the incarnate Heart of the Word, the human heart, and Mary as the instrument chosen by God to enable all these to be linked together.

There is a mysterious bond
that binds the heart of human beings
to the Heart of Christ,
and the Heart of Christ
to the very Heart of God!

And the sacred ring
which serves as a link
is Mary,
who has formed from her own blood,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
the sacred Heart of Jesus.

Jules Chevalier ³

The original statue received official Church approval, but at times other loose imitations of it presented Mary as too dominant over her Son. Exaggerated language about Mary's power of intercession also alarmed authorities in Rome. Consequently, while the official statue was, allowed to be used in those shrines where it was already erected, future statues had to be along the traditional lines of Mary holding the infant Jesus in her arms.⁴ As in the original statue, the infant points to his Heart and also to his mother. Today when nineteenth century exaggerations are less a danger and the meaning of the statue is properly explained, permission is being given for the reproduction of the original version. Another image that is growing in popularity is that of Mary standing at the foot of the cross, pointing to the pierced side of her Son. There is a beautiful example of this statue on the sanctuary of the Basilica at Issoudun, harmonizing with the traditional statue that can be seen in the shrine at the back of the church.

In his book on the Sacred Heart, Father Chevalier continually refers the reader back to Mary, the Mother of the Saviour. With practically every fresh insight into the significance of the Heart of Jesus, he reflects prayerfully on how this throws light on the significance of Mary. Rather than repeat everything here, it would be sufficient for readers to reflect back on quotations from his writings cited in this book and in the light of them to reflect on Mary, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, through whom that Heart has come into the world.

This Heart where God works such wonders
and from which he receives so much love;
this Heart which reunites so many wonderful things,
where heaven and earth meet with a kiss of peace;
this Heart from which life flows
and to which life returns;
this Heart, the centre of creation,
is the Heart of your Son.

It is you who have given it to the world,
who have given it to heaven and to God.
May you be blessed in time.
May you be blessed in eternity.

Jules Chevalier ⁵

It was particularly in dealing with the cosmic dimension of the incarnation that Father Chevalier was able to highlight the significance of Mary and of women in general in God's creation of the world, for it was through the instrumentality of a woman that God's achieved his plan for the whole of creation.

To achieve such great things
this adorable Heart uses an instrument,
and you are that instrument,
O Mary.

It is you who have made spring forth
this source of life, light and blessing.

It is through your hands
that such riches come to us.
Since the Heart of your Son

is the centre where all converges,
the meeting place of all worlds,
the glorification of all beings,
the dwelling place of all the elect,
lead us to this incandescent centre
where all is transfigured,
all is divinised.
Jules Chevalier ⁶

Father Chevalier popularized a special prayer, 'Memorare to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart', which became used worldwide. Today a new version of it is used, written in view of developments in theology and the approach to Mary chosen by Vatican Council II.

Remember,
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart,
The wonders the Lord has done for you!
He chose you for his mother.
He wanted you close to his cross.
He gives you a share in his glory.
He listens to your prayer.
Offer him our prayers
of praise and thanksgiving;
present our petitions to him (...).
Let us live like you
in the love of your Son
so that his Kingdom may come!
Lead us to the source of living water
that flows from his Heart,
spreading over the world
hope and salvation,
justice and peace.
See our trust in you;
answer our prayer.
Show yourself always our Mother
Amen.

¹ *Sacre-Coeur de Jesus*, p. 194-195.

² Letter to Father Ramiere S.I., 9 December 1862.

³ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus* p. 182

⁴ A mistaken rumour grew up that the original statue had been condemned by Rome despite the fact that it had been given explicit permission and even blessed by representatives of the Holy See. A letter from Cardinal Patrizi to the Archbishop of Bourges (14 April 1875) made clear that the Issoudun statue had never been condemned. In some circles the rumour still wrongly persists that devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart itself was condemned.

⁵ *op. cit.*, p.76- 77

⁶ *op. cit.*, p.85

10 A devotion or a spirituality?

During a retreat, on the First Friday of December 1939, Teilhard de Chardin jotted down the following words: "The Sacred Heart! Since my infancy it has been for me, instinctively and mysteriously, the synthesis of Love and Matter, of Person and Energy. From this there has gradually evolved in me the perception of Omega: the universal cohesion in unity. I would like to spread effectively this attraction to the universal Christ, to the true Heart of Jesus. I do not want to say 'devotion', which is much too sentimental and too weak" ¹.

Others continue to share Teilhard de Chardin's misgivings about the word 'devotion'. Usually they prefer the term 'spirituality of the heart'. Sometimes they spell heart with a capital letter referring to the Heart of Jesus, sometimes without a capital referring more comprehensively to the human heart in general with some reference, in varying degrees, to the Heart of Jesus. They give priority to 'interiority' and psycho-spiritual growth - undeniably important points.

The move away from the word 'devotion' avoided the misunderstanding that we were concerned with a time-bound piety and not with something essential. Admittedly, it was important to avoid such a misunderstanding. The word 'spirituality' was preferred. This was an important and even necessary change. 'Devotion' could be limited to acts of piety; 'spirituality' reminded us we were concerned with a way of life.

With the passage of time we may have reached a point where we can look again at the word and ask whether 'spirituality' is an adequate substitute on its own. For one thing, 'spirituality' tends to centre on us, 'devotion' on Jesus Christ-on the heart of Jesus Christ, that is, on Jesus Christ *himself*, on what makes Jesus to be *Jesus*. After all, he is for us *the way, the truth and the life* (Jn 14:6). And Peter's response should become ours also: *Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life* (John 6:68). A 'return to the heart' is a very rich tradition in Christian and Eastern spirituality. But it is not the primary aim of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The primary aim remains always a personal relationship with him. That remains its purpose and its end. It is the source of all else. One can arrive at this point from a variety of starting points, but the goal needs to be kept in mind.

You are not to be called Rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father, for you have one Father - the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called directors, for you have one director, the Christ (Mt 23:9-12).

Maybe more significant for devotion to the Sacred Heart are Jesus' words: *All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all*

you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls. (Mt 11 :27-29).

When Father Chevalier presented his 1877 Constitutions to Rome for approval, he stated clearly in the opening paragraph that the aim of his Society was the practice and spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart as a remedy for the ills of society. Both points were essential for him: the devotion and the healing of society. The Consultor in Rome, Mgr de Luca, was not happy with this formulation because it did not mention the sanctification of the Society's members which was the general end of all religious congregations. Father Chevalier had not concerned himself with precise formulations about 'ends'; he simply wanted to stress that in the spirituality and mission he was proposing, the starting point was, above all, a personal commitment (devotion) to Jesus - the acceptance of Jesus as our "one director". His Congregation's missionary spirituality, in other words, had to be defined by a personal relationship with Jesus. From that everything else had to flow, including sanctification.²

In devotion to the Sacred Heart we do not go primarily to the teaching of Jesus about love of God and love of neighbour, we go to Jesus himself. We do not go primarily to Jesus the teacher of something other than himself, no matter how important that teaching may be. We go to Jesus who himself is God's Word incarnate to us. We go, in other words, to the 'heart' of Jesus, to what makes Jesus to be Jesus. We start with Jesus' own awareness of his identity and mission and we strive to make that our own. Jesus is the centre which opens us to the whole of reality, because in him we enter into his relationship with his Father and with His Father's plan for the whole of creation. I pray that they may be all one and the same thing; so that as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, even so they may be one and the same thing in us... May the love you have for me be in them and may I be in them (John 17:27).

The connection between devotion, spirituality and mission found in the Gospel of St John is basic in the devotion to the Sacred Heart which Jules Chevalier promoted. In the encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, Pope John Paul II indicates the variety of approaches to mission in the four Gospels: Mark, proclamation; Matthew, the ecclesial dimension; Luke, the importance of witness. However, the encyclical pays special attention to John just as Fr Chevalier did. John is the only one to speak of "the specific mandate, 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you' (John 20:21; 17:18)... The entire missionary sense of John's Gospel is expressed in the 'priestly prayer'... The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion that exists between the Father and the Son. The disciples are to live in unity with each other, remaining in the Father and the Son, so that the world may know and believe (cf Jn 17:21-23). This is a very important missionary text. It makes us understand that we are missionaries above all because of *what we are* as a Church whose innermost life is unity in love even before we become missionaries in word or deed".³

The devotion to the Sacred Heart we are considering belongs to the Berullian tradition of spirituality. In it, following the great Spanish mystics, the incarnation and the highest mystical experience are integrated. Jesus and the Trinity are inseparable. This aspect of devotion to Christ has at times been played down, but it is essential to the spirituality that attracted Jules Chevalier and others. A personal relationship with Jesus was in no way to minimize its Trinitarian character. Losing sight of this risks trivializing what is meant by devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus
is the entirety of God's gift of himself.
The Word comes from the unfathomable depths
of the Heart of God,
who engenders him equal to himself.
God is love itself, but this infinite love,
which belongs essentially to his nature,
is contained in a human *heart*,
the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
God's living sacrament,
his true Heart with which to love us.
It is through the Heart of Christ
that the love of God,
God himself,
has overflowed on to the world.
It is by grace
that God communicates and gives himself to us.
This gift is not a metaphor, but real.
The Holy Spirit descending personally into the just soul
brings with him the divine persons,
Father and Son,
for he cannot be separated from them.
Jules Chevalier⁴

It would be a mistake to make Berullian spirituality the starting point of devotion to the Sacred Heart in general; but it is certainly the context in which Jules Chevalier saw the devotion and time has been spent explaining it in these reflections. But it is not the starting point. The starting and finishing point is always a personal relationship with Jesus. Berullian spirituality has been called "the metaphysics of sanctity"; his followers brought it down to earth and to everyday life by introducing the 'Heart' of Christ. The practical response to Jesus' invitation, *Come to me... learn from me... I am gentle and humble of heart*, is far more important than any theology or 'spirituality' we may build around it even though they have an important role to play.

In some languages 'cult' is used instead of 'devotion'. 'Cult' means worship. Used in this sense a spirituality of the heart is essentially geared towards worship, which can take on many forms ranging from Eucharistic liturgy to lighting a candle before a statue or icon. Worship in this sense is worship as understood by the prophets. It has essential social implications without which it ceases to be worship of the God of the Bible. If we understand whom we worship, our worship necessarily awakens in us our solidarity with others, particularly those in need. The symbol of the pierced Heart of Jesus keeps this before us.

One of the problems with the word 'devotion' or 'cult' is that it could be identified exclusively with pious exercises. People could think they had satisfied their following of Jesus simply by fidelity to these 'devotions'. Its ecclesial and social implications could be smothered; and we could fail to realize that the devotion meant the transformation of our hearts. Jules Chevalier felt that if we were truly devoted to Jesus, that is, if we overcame indifference and really took him seriously, we would be impelled to transform not only our hearts, but also our society, our Church. He saw the devotion as "essentially social".

'Devotion' is a warmer word than 'spirituality'. It can cover simple devotional practices as well as the heights of mysticism. It brings together understanding and love; interior life and commitment to others; it integrates our emotional, intellectual and moral life. It brings together

worship and life. In saying this, I am not advocating a return to an exclusive use of the word 'devotion', but I am urging that we look closely at the implications in getting rid of it and take steps to retain its positive points no matter what terminology we may choose. At times this has not been done sufficiently when 'spirituality' is used in its stead.

The *Oxford Word Power Dictionary*, based on common usage, defines 'devotion' as 1. *great love*: a mother's devotion to her children; 2. *the act of giving a lot of time, energy etc., to somebody or something*: devotion to duty; 3. great religious feeling. In common English usage, therefore, it would seem that there is no reason to be ashamed of using the term 'devotion' in relation to Jesus Christ. When we speak of 'devotion' in this sense, we mean that we give him our love, our time and energy, with great religious feeling.

The *Oxford Word Power Dictionary* does not mention the common Catholic meaning of 'devotion' that refers to exercises of piety. Certainly, there is an unhealthy dependence on devotional exercises that one needs to grow out of. At the same time, there is an unhealthy rejection of them or a feeling that one is above them. Spirituality can become disproportionately intellectualized or smothered in activity or even over-concerned about self. Exercises of piety, particularly those shared with so-called 'ordinary Catholics', can keep us closer to reality, more humble and even more human and integrated in the way we live our faith and exercise our minds on it.

India for millennia has carried out an unparalleled Introspection into human consciousness. Unlike the West it does not put human and religious consciousness into separate boxes. It seems to me that we have a lot to learn from the Hindu use of the word *bhakti*, 'devotion'. Perhaps it is more exact to say we have a lot to 're-learn'. *Bhakti* is one of the main streams in traditional Indian spirituality; moreover in Indian languages, Sacred Heart devotion is usually called Sacred Heart *bhakti*.

In Hinduism⁵ salvation, or more exactly liberation (*moksa*), consists in union with the One, the Ultimate, what they call Brahman. Brahman transcends all things, is the source of all things and is the One to whom all things return. To attain this union with Brahman, there are three classical Hindu methods of *sadhana* (spiritual effort). They are described as three ways (*margas*): *jnana marga* (contemplation), *karma marga* (action) and *bhakti marga* (devotion). In the *Bhagavad Gita* especially, these three *margas* are not opposed to one another; they form a threefold way to union with Brahman. All are necessary, each implies the others, but there is room for a difference of emphasis.

Jnana marga is the process of seeking union with the transcendent One through contemplative experience of the ultimate ground of all things, particularly of *atman* - the Self of all things. *Kanna marga* is the process of seeking union with the transcendent One through unselfish, disinterested action in the world. *Bhakti marga* is union with the One through devotion (*bhakti*). The essential features of this *bhakti* are faith in, love for and complete trustful surrender of oneself to some particular, personal manifestation of Brahman (God). And the characteristic of a *bhakti* God is his or her concern

for human beings, a concern that at times takes the form of 'incarnations' - *avatars*.

The avatar of the *bhakti* God in Jesus Christ goes beyond the normal Hindu *avatars*. In Jesus Christ God does not merely *appear* in human form, but: *identifies* himself with a human form completely and irrevocably. Consequently, he identifies himself not only with human dignity, but also with human suffering and death. He enters fully into the heart of humanity by himself possessing a human heart and all that it implies.

The divine Word wanted to take on a human nature
in the womb of the virgin.
In this way he took a heart like ours.
The heart will be the fundamental principle of his physical existence.
And when on the cross
the struggle sets in between life and death,
the Roman soldier will strike his Heart
as the source of life.
The life of Christ had already left that refuge!
But from the adorable Heart,
torn by the lance,
from which life had gone,
a new life appeared for us.
Jules Chevalier⁶

For Indians, the complete, loving surrender to Jesus as the divine *guru* is a typical example of *bhakti* religion. In this there are two levels. First there is the level of conventional piety; what we generally refer to as 'devotions'. But *bhakti marga* is also a way to complete union with the Ultimate One or Brahman through these 'devotions'. And in all the *margas* the meeting point with Brahman takes place in the 'cave of the heart'.

The omnipresent Reality is in all this:
the sacrificial works, ascetical practices, knowledge.
O my friend,
those who know this supreme, immortal Being
as seated in the cave of the heart,
destroy the knot of ignorance
here in this life itself.
Mudhaka Upahishad II.1.10.

If the term 'spirituality of the heart' did not open to us explicitly this "omnipresent Reality" seen in the light of Christian revelation; if it became limited simply to *our* activity; if it does not give first place to a personal relationship with Jesus, it would have nothing to do with Sacred Heart devotion, or even with the 'Heart' of Jesus Christ, which is essentially open to his Father. A 'spirituality of the heart' would be something quite different, and it would be better not to claim it as simply a different expression for 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'.

Sacred Heart devotion, understood in the tradition presented here, does integrate within it 'interiority' and 'psycho-spiritual growth' while at the same time keeping the Heart of the Word incarnate as its centre. Sacred Heart devotion does involve exercises of piety, but their context is, as Jules Chevalier insisted, a whole world of theology that embraces the creative and redemptive plan of God who is Father, Word incarnate and Spirit. He saw it also as "essentially social".

If 'devotion' is limited to saying a few prayers; if 'spirituality' is limited to concern about self-development, it is unsatisfactory. However, it is very doubtful whether either of these extremes exists except in the minds of those who reject either one of them. The temptation is always to

simplify things we disagree with so that we can knock them down more easily. On the other hand, 'devotion' can be enriched by the word 'spirituality' and 'spirituality' by the word 'devotion'. The use of both terms ensures that we understand them better and avoid deviations.

¹ Quoted by R Faricy SJ in *Prayer and Service*, 1982, p.114f.

² In the preamble to the Constitutions, Jules Chevalier refers to the name of the Society as "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of JESUS". The use of the capitals indicated the focus.

³ *Redemptoris missio* n. 23c.

⁴ *Le Sacre Coeur de Jesus*, p. 277f. This text has been much abbreviated. The final sentence is taken from a footnote to the quotation.

⁵ Hinduism is an umbrella term that covers a great variety of traditions. I use the word here in the commonly accepted wider sense.

⁶ *Le Sacre-Coeur de Jesus* p.145

11 A question of images

Some have rejected Sacred Heart devotion, others forgotten it because no one any longer explained it to them.

But perhaps one of the main problems for many has been images. Generally the image and the devotion itself were closely identified. Though the result was negative, there remains, in general, something positive in the identification; for images have a central role in devotional Catholicism. In this, it remains true to an important Catholic - and human -tradition.

In 787, the second Ecumenical Council of Nicaea condemned the rejection of images (*iconoclasm*). The Council rightly detected behind this complex movement the influence of the monophysites, who downplayed the humanity of Christ, and of the Paulicians, who considered matter to be evil. The Council decreed that adoration could be given only to God, while homage could be paid to the saints. Veneration of an image was not homage given to the image but to the person it rendered present to us. The Council of Trent made the same point.

There is certainly a horror of idolatry in the Bible, which is understood as honour given to creatures in place of God, which in fact is the essence of sin (Rom 1:23); but at the same time there is a recognition that God shows himself and makes himself present in and through creatures. Idolatry is the abuse of what in itself is good (d. Rom 1: 19; Wis 13: 1-9). Above all, Christ is the image of God (Col 1: 15); and with the incarnation our faith becomes even more inextricably immersed in tangible things (cf 1 In 1:1-4).

The role of the imagination

In the epistemology of Aristotle and Aquinas human knowledge of reality takes place through an intellectual insight into, or interpretation of, sense data. And this has important repercussions in theology. The senses and the imagination can deceive us; intellectual judgements can deceive us even more; but when the two work together 'consubstantially' as it were, our knowledge is *human* in the best meaning of that word. And if God is to communicate with us, it has to be through our human, way of knowing. Imagination is not merely a way of ornamenting truth, it is a human way to truth and reality. And images are the fruit of the imagination.

There is a worrying side to a lack of appreciation of symbols in particular and imagination in general. Some educationalists and brain specialists note that our ability to use our imagination creatively is being eroded by the way television and films provide us with ready-made images. A whole area of the brain is being used less and less. Consequently we read by searching for concepts rather than experiencing those concepts embodied in the images, sounds and shapes in which they are found. If taken to extremes this seriously undermines the reading of the Scriptures which communicate largely through images. It also undermines our approach to faith which is in a sense 'incarnate' in images as is all human discourse. This does not take away from the importance of intellect; it is simply a reminder that our intellect has to be a *human* intellect if it is to function properly; and it is only human when it is associated, in a variety of ways, with how the imagination presents reality.

Certainly people can become too dependent on images, and even debase them by superstition and magic. But there is also a mistaken independence of them. We use a great variety of things to help make events and persons, human or divine, present to us. It may be a sacred book, a monument, a sacred building, a ritual act or a simple keepsake. Religious images belong to the same category. To feel that we were above such things could even be inhuman, so much are they part of our nature. After all, it is as human beings that we approach God and God approaches us. A shrine and the veneration of an image can, in a number of positive ways, bring religion 'down to earth'. For it is only on this earth and through this earth that the Mystery that is God comes to us.

For some decades before Vatican Council II, there was a growing antipathy in some circles to images of the Sacred Heart These had begun after the visions of St Margaret Mary (1673-1675) and proliferated during the nineteenth century. Despite this negative reaction, they remained popular among 'ordinary' Catholics. Dissatisfaction intensified after the Council. Some considered the use of these images to be a sign of an ultra-conservatism that was fearful of the present, imprisoned in the past and immature in faith. Sentimentalism was the word most frequently used. The accusations contained some truth, but as generalizations they were too condescending. Images cannot be summarily dismissed as sentimentalism when countless Catholics have found support in them, among them the poorest of the poor and people whose maturity of faith was tested by prolonged persecution.

Contemplating images

On 14 October 1916, in the second half of the First World War, before the Douaumont engagement on the Western Front, a soldier wrote: "Suppose Christ should deign to appear here before me, what would he look like? Above all, in what manner would he take his place visibly in the realm of matter, and how would he stand out among the objects surrounding him... My gaze had come to rest without conscious intention on a picture representing Christ offering his heart to us. The picture was hanging in front of me on the wall of a church into which I had gone to pray... It was then, as I was keenly pondering over these things and looking at the picture, that my vision began". The soldier was Teilhard de Chardin. ¹

I am not in favour of an indiscriminate return to nineteenth century images; some of them, however, are not without artistic merit even if, like all art, they belong to their time and many today do not find them helpful. I accept also that changing climates and emphases in devotion to the Sacred Heart allow for great variety. Nevertheless we can be helped by trying to appreciate what these images meant and still mean to quite a number of people.

In contemplating the image of the Sacred Heart, Teilhard's attention expanded from its details to a vision of cosmic dimensions, but he did not reject the details; they simply allowed what was beyond themselves to become present to him. Because he perceived its meaning, the image did not confine him within the limits of its details even though the details had their role to play in opening his vision. The image became a way of looking at the person of the Risen Christ and at the universe itself. In fact, contemplating the details of the image enabled him to take the image itself, and even Christ himself, beyond the limits of any particular age or culture.

An image cannot be separated from its meaning. Some years ago I had the privilege of visiting China on three occasions. Traditional images of the Sacred Heart were prominent in Catholic homes and institutes I visited. Clearly, what these images portrayed had helped people

there through periods of great persecution. They had helped give meaning to their lives. In the light of their faith, my earlier misgivings appeared superficial to say the least.

Interest in Eastern icons has taught us much. My time in India also taught me the need for explanations of religious images. Ganesha with his elephant head, the dancing Shiva with several arms, Hanuman the monkey god are at first disconcerting or even grotesque for newcomers. When the imagery is explained, they are seen in a different light altogether. Naturally, the artistic merit of the various images varies, but their meaning remains unchanged. In reference to Hindu iconography, we have nothing to be ashamed of in an image of the incarnate Lord showing us his pierced heart, surmounted with fire and a cross, surrounded with thorns. A God with a wounded heart has much to say to us.

Though I have given much time to explain the theological context of a certain tradition of Sacred Heart devotion, it is not merely a doctrine; it is above all a form of worship and a consequent way of life. If the pages of this book simply impart knowledge but do not lead into some form of contemplative veneration, they will not have achieved their purpose. It would be like learning from a book how to swim without going near the water. Thus if readers have gained some enlightenment anywhere in these chapters, they should transform it into prayer. A meditative recital of parts of the litany of the Sacred Heart may help in this, or some other similar prayers. Some may be helped now and then by contemplation of an icon, even a traditional one if no other that appeals to us is available. In Jules Chevalier's approach, the image of Mary contemplating the pierced side of her Son is particularly apt and used widely today. Contemplation of an image may help us understand a bit more fully and concretely what moved people like Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner. Hopefully, we will see these images in their proper context and grasp their meaning more fully. Only then can we create or find images for our own time that will move us into prayer, contemplation and action.

Traditional images of the Sacred Heart stress the human gentleness and compassion of Jesus; and this is obviously most important; but it is not the only approach. A much different image is portrayed in a large mosaic in Dharmaram College, Bangalore, India. It comes closer to much that has been presented in this book. Jesus stands in great dignity, eyes closed, absorbed in prayer - an enlightened One. Behind his head is a triangle-shaped halo with rays of light coming out of it, symbol of the origin of all things, the Trinity, transcending human consciousness and enlightening human consciousness. At his feet is a flowering lotus, a symbol of immersion in earth and transcendence of earth. His garment has on it symbols of human endeavour: science, art, music, industry, literature, agriculture, research. Human figures surround him symbolizing the contemporary world in its complexity. And all is brought together in the 'cave of his heart, a basic symbol in Indian spirituality.

"Disperse, O Jesus, the clouds with your lightning! Show yourself to us as the Mighty, the Radiant, the Risen! Come to us once again as the Pantocrator who filled the solitude of the cupolas in the ancient basilicas! Nothing less than this Parousia is needed to counter-balance and dominate in our hearts the glory of the world that is coming into view. And so that we should triumph over the world with you, come to us clothed in the glory of the word"².

¹ Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*, London: Collins 1965, p.42

² Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, p. 127f

THE SPIRITUALITY OF JULES CHEVALIER

John Franzmann msc 2005

This talk relies heavily on the book Jules Chevalier, Man with a Mission, written by Bishop Cuskelly when he was Superior General of the MSCs, based in Rome in the 1970s. It also draws on an article written by Dennis Murphy MSC when he was Assistant General, and on some texts from Fr Chevalier.

Jules Chevalier was born in Richelieu, a small rural town in central France, in 1824, a generation after the upheaval of the French Revolution. He was the son of a not-very-successful baker and a very religious mother. He believed from a very early age that he was called to be a priest, but lack of funds meant that he had to give up any idea of priesthood, and he took up an apprenticeship as a shoemaker; though he did manage to start studying Latin, just in case. Improvement in the family fortunes and a benefactor's generosity meant that finally he was able to enter the minor seminary, appreciably older than his companions, and then go on to the major seminary in Bourges, and be ordained priest for that diocese. After a couple of short appointments to various parishes, he was appointed assistant of the parish at Issoudun, and it was there that he undertook his life's work: the foundation in 1854, and the nurturing until his death in 1907, of the religious congregation that he called Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

This talk is not primarily concerned with the events of Jules Chevalier's life, but with the spirituality that inspired his life.

His natural disposition/personality:

In 1954 or 1955 when I was a senior student at Downlands, we staged a play on the life of Jules Chevalier, with a script written by one of the priests. The student who took the lead role was our class leader, and when I think of the young Jules Chevalier he always comes to mind; a very serious young man, slightly older than most of us and much more mature, morally upright, religious, dogged and determined, not a great scholar but hard-working. When I compare him to Jules, I just have to add that Jules seems to have been a bit TOO serious, too moralistic, and so not really much liked by his peers. In the seminary he founded and ran a group called "Chevaliers du Sacre Coeur" concerned with spiritual advancement; this did not go over too well with many of the other seminarians.

His understanding of society and Church:

His attitude to French society of his day was what one would expect from a religiously-inclined young man from a small rural community in the centre of France. He considered that society was in serious decline, and he blamed three influences:

1. Protestantism: When you read some of the words he wrote, you see how violently he opposed Protestantism. He saw it as breaking with authority, and so putting the whole of religious truth in jeopardy; letting people interpret God's word for themselves instead of relying on the accumulated wisdom of the Church; setting up groups in opposition to Christ's representative on earth. It is a bit embarrassing today to read some of what he wrote, but I suppose it is understandable from him in his time. He would link the dangers of this spirit of freedom and rejection of authority with another -ism that he blames,

2. Rationalism: The French Revolution, that he saw as having destroyed the nation of France, was to be blamed on rationalism; the idea that one could plot one's path and the path of society purely from natural reason, with no reliance on tradition, and no room for any supernatural guidance or providence. That one could try to banish God from society, destroying his churches and monasteries and persecuting his servants, was a monstrous thing, and the damage must be repaired.

3. Jansenism: The third influence that he blamed for much that was wrong in religion of his day was Jansenism. He became more vehement against this as his understanding of Sacred Heart devotion developed; in one of his late sermons, it is against this that he concentrates his attack. Jansenism was a form of spirituality that concentrated on the utter worthlessness of humanity against the utter holiness of God. God was to be approached, if at all, in abject humility, with fear, but with the hope that God may look on his unworthy servant in pity and save him from the

damnation he deserved. All the actions of sinners are sins. The vast majority of mankind will not be saved; Christ died only for the predestined few. The Eucharist is not a daily food for strengthening us or a joyful reunion of God's people commemorating the saving actions of Christ for us; it is a sacred act of worship that we are obliged to attend, where we confess our unworthiness in the presence of our Saviour; communion is to be approached very rarely, and only after the soul is washed clean by perfect contrition, the sacrament of Confession, and severe penance. For most people, respectful abstention from communion is to be preferred to its reception.

His spiritual formation in the seminary:

Jules Chevalier's director in the seminary, and I think the whole tenor of formation in the seminary at that time, was influenced by the French Sulpician school of spirituality. This found much of its inspiration in the image developed in the Epistle to the Hebrews of Christ the High Priest.

a. Jesus came for the glory of his Father. This is the first object of his life; as the eternal High Priest he offers worship to the father on behalf of mankind.

b. His offering is one of obedience to the Father: *....I come to do your will...*

c. His offering is on behalf of mankind. His death brought life to the world. In fact more than this, it restores the whole of creation. Sulpician spirituality also made much of the Word, God's creative word who became incarnate in Christ, bringing in the new creation, bringing creation to its perfection in Christ. Dennis Murphy draws parallels between this theology and the insights offered by Teilhard de Chardin in more recent times.

d. The disciple will strive to understand the interior disposition of Christ, and reflect them in his own interior life.

e. This can take place especially at the Eucharist, where Christ is present in a special way, in his priestly sacrifice, and in our hearts.

f. As Jesus brought life to the world, the disciple will strive to do the same, to continue the saving and new-creation work of Christ.

Christ before our eyes

Christ in our hearts

Christ in our hands.

Formative experiences in the seminary:

A spirituality is never the result simply of studying theology, reading books, or learning from someone else. It is not worked out calmly at a desk, but always grows through personal experience. A lived experience impacts on our understanding and our heart, bringing new insights, giving personal emphases and new directions to our living and understanding. Theologians of the spiritual life describe several kinds of life events that are often crucial in this personal development of a spirituality, and Jules had three of the kinds of experiences they describe while he was still in the seminary.

First, some event that reinforces the fragility of human things. In Jules' case, this was a fall down a cliff that left him unconscious and given up for dead. The description of the event makes for humorous reading....but it had a great impact on the young seminarian, strengthening his resolve to give back to God the life that had been almost miraculously restored to him.

Secondly, some major victory over self, a denial of oneself achieved for God. In Jules case, this was to set aside a "particular friendship". "Particular friendships" were warned against by spiritual writers and directors. It meant a too-absorbing, too-emotional involvement with some other person, which was seen as dangerous in the life of one vowed to chastity if it developed too strongly; and was also seen as selfish and divisive and destructive of community charity.

Thirdly, a strong experience of God and his ways during a retreat. A retreat that Jules made under one of the Sulpician fathers had this effect on him. He describes himself as being "converted" during this retreat. The natural fidelity, generosity and high-mindedness that he had were renewed and strengthened.

And then he found the Sacred Heart Devotion, which was to become the dominating force of his spirituality. He studied it as a part of his seminary course, and it made an immediate impression on him; he said, "*the doctrine went straight to my heart*".

Devotion to the Sacred Heart:

The devotion to the Sacred Heart was already known in the Church, developed by such men and women as St John Eudes and St Margaret Mary, and promoted at that time especially by the Jesuits. When we read some accounts of St Margaret Mary's life and inspiration, we wonder (or at least I do) what Jules saw in that devotion, for it too seems to have been infected by a Jansenist strain that emphasised very heavily the great suffering that we inflicted on the heart of Christ, and the demand to make reparation by penance and stern duty; and it was a set of devotional practices rather than an inspiration for a way of life. But Jules did not see it that way, and the book that he took up to read about it did not treat it in that way, or at least had sections that spoke rather of the love of God revealed in the heart of Christ.

For Jules Chevalier, this is the distinguishing mark of devotion to the Sacred Heart, this is the distinguishing characteristic of his spirituality. He starts from the love of God revealed in the heart of Christ. It was a special way of looking at the Christ revealed in the Gospels. As he wrote, "*During his mortal life, he was happy to pour out all the tenderness of his heart on the little ones, the humble, the poor, on those who suffer, on sinners - and on all the miseries of mankind. The sight of a misfortune, an unhappiness or any pain, touched his heart with compassion.*" We have believed in the love of God for us: "*credimus caritati*" - a phrase from St John, was a phrase that he used to characterise his understanding of God - and the phrase lived on as Bishop Cuskelly's motto and constant refrain. We have believed in his love.

So when we set our eyes on Christ, as the Sulpician spirituality school tells us to do in the first of its three phases, what we see is not primarily a teacher of dogma or a demanding taskmaster or a stern judge, but one who loves. If Jesus came to give glory to his Father, it was to glorify a Father whose essence is love; be compassionate as your heavenly Father is compassionate; we see the glory of God reflected in the face of Christ. If he came to restore creation, it was to lead us back to God by reminding us that the way is a gentle way back, a human way, to a God who understands us.

And so for Jules the emphasis of his religious response changed. Before it was a duty, now it is a generous response to love, a return of love. The religion that he was taught was rather dry and academic: the knowledge of catechesis, the duty of practice, scripture mainly as exegesis of passages for proof of some doctrine, dogma as a set of propositions to be accepted - but now it is all understood as God's love revealed and seeking a response. Religion is still a bond, but it is a bond of love rather than of duty. If you want to understand what that emphasis that approach gives to theology and Christian practice, I recommend you read Jim Cuskelly early books, [A Heart to Know Thee](#) and [The Kindness of God](#). The theological discussion on some of his topics has moved on since the 1960s, but what is important is the underlying understanding he brings to the discussion. That any theology that is useful in our lives, and any authentic way of Christian practice, is to be based on the love of God, and is to be a normal human way, a response to a God who knows us and has walked among us.

The Sulpicians go on to say that the next phase of our spirituality, after Christ before our eyes, is Christ in our hearts. That we strive to model our lives on what we see in the life of Jesus. Jules certainly did this. It was even noticeable before he left the seminary. Those who were there with him said that something important happened to him at the time of his sub-deaconate retreat: before that, he was the duty-bound, dedicated but rather austere seminarian, but afterwards his life was characterised by an affable good-nature; frowns and obvious effort gave way to

smiles and gentle endeavour. They referred to him as “*a man completely renewed*”. It seems that the Sacred Heart spirituality had already begun its work on him.

One of his favourite images became that of the Good Shepherd, who carries the lambs in his arms. In the MSC Constitutions before the post-Vatican Council rewrite, we were told that MSC “*following the example of the Good Shepherd*”, were to “*entice his sheep by kindness, and if necessary, they will lay down their lives for them*” - both a beautiful and rather chilling demand. An earlier version from Fr Chevalier kept the image while softening the demand: they were to be prepared to “*carry them on their shoulders*”.

“Their deepest desire will be to persuade Christians that the yoke of their loving Saviour is sweet and his burden light. Intent on following in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, they will attract his sheep with kindness, drawing them with the bonds of love. If necessary they will carry them on their shoulders. With every possible effort they will totally exclude the opposite spirit of fear and rigorism by which Jansenism did so much harm to the Church.”

And so a spirituality based on the heart of Christ leads straight to the third phase of Sulpician spirituality: Christ in our hands. Christ revealed to us for others. A Christ, who was far more concerned for mankind than we are, calls us to help in his work of salvation. Jules Chevalier believed that in the heart of Christ he had found the perfect answer to the ills he found in the modern world. If he could only convince people about the love of God, by what he said and how he lived, then they would want to respond to such generous love. The first movement of his spirituality was straight back to God, a worship that is a return of love, but the second, preaching that love to the world so sorely in need of it, flows on naturally.

And so he founded an order of missionaries of the Heart of Christ. He had this idea right from his seminary times, and, with some luck or the help of providence, was able to begin this work very early in his priestly life, in 1854. When we hear the word ‘missionaries’ we tend to think of people going out to foreign countries to bring the word of God to people who have not heard it. Jules Chevalier did not mean this, though he was willing, in fact eager, to send men to the foreign missions. “*May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere*” was his motto. What he meant by the word was that his men should continue the mission of Jesus. Jesus was the first missionary of God’s love, preaching it and showing it in his world; the missionaries of the Sacred Heart would continue his work; as He said of them, they should “*Preach the goodness of God in the Heart of Christ - its inexhaustible riches...the infinite mercy of the Heart of Jesus*”.... His missionaries “*will preach the Heart of Jesus, and will reveal the superabundant riches of his grace and goodness towards us.*”

His mission was to manifest the kindness of God. This was to be done in two ways:

First, by setting up a society of people drawn by a compassionate God, who would teach this understanding of God and Jesus; and second, by insisting that the way they went about their teaching and service would imitate Christ’s love and his virtues of compassion, mercy, strength that conquer pride, impatience and fatigue. He wrote: “*In order that they might truly be disciples of Him who declared himself meek and humble of heart, they will combine the greatest meekness towards their neighbour with a deep humility and complete self-forgetfulness.*” Their mission to people was to be characterised by a particular way of living, a particular attitude to God and people that was to mirror the compassion of Christ. His missionaries of the Sacred Heart are to try to live Christ’s spirit and his life, both for their own sakes, and for the sake of the mission.

I think it is important to note also that the compassion that Jules Chevalier had for people, and his mission to them, was above all concerned with their relationship with God. Of course he was concerned with poverty and injustice and physical suffering, but before all this he was concerned with spiritual poverty, the purposelessness and hopelessness of a life that does not look to God, and the fear that they would not find the salvation that was promised them in Christ. So his first concern was always the spiritual welfare of people.

The spirituality that concentrates only on alleviating disadvantage and injustice, that sees Jesus only as a crusader for justice and a healer of physical ills, would not have made much sense to him; it would have been misinterpreting the life of Jesus, and doing good in his name without really understanding that his life above all was a response of love to the love of the Father. Human concern is transformed into mission; to be effective, it needs constant contact with Jesus - Christ before our eyes, Christ in our hearts, then in our hands.

Jules Chevalier was determined to let nothing stand in the way of his mission. He said that he had to use every means to make the Heart of Christ known and loved. He did not only found the religious society of missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He established a society of Priests of the Sacred Heart, priests in ordinary parishes who would be inspired by that devotion and have it inspire their work; he made several starts at establishing a community of women to live and spread the devotion, finally founding the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; he made various attempts to establish “third orders” of lay people who would lead a similar life of dedication. All of these were to be an integral part of his work; “*we cannot do without them*”, he said; each would be an influence in its own special way, among its own groups of disciples, in making the Heart of Jesus known and loved. Lay people would be able to influence other men and women, for they understood better than priests and nuns the world of family and work, and the concerns of people in society.

Then he also founded confraternities of people who would join in the prayer and worship of the heart of Christ.

There were times when he almost lost heart. In the early days of his congregation, one of the (only three) key members was taken by the Archbishop for another work, and for a long time no one new came to join the group; he wondered if he had rightly understood the way to go about his mission. Later in his life, when the congregation was larger and spread to various countries, there was serious dissension culminating in disputes about authority in the society and challenges to his leadership; and again he was dismayed that his whole life’s work might come to nothing. And there were plenty of other problems: more than once the civil authorities in France took measures to restrict religious communities and religious practice: his beginning society had to move out to neighbouring countries, his Basilica in Issoudun was closed, and finally he was himself put out of his presbytery in Issoudun. Jim Cuskelly says of him that his spiritual strength, from early in his life, was founded on two beliefs: first, a serenity of faith, that God would be forever with him, and second, a confidence that he had a special mission for the Church in his time. There were a couple of times when this second confidence was shaken (the first two mentioned above); but he was never shaken in his first assurance, that God would be forever with him: *credidimus caritati*. And in return that strengthened again his confidence in his mission: he was not alone, he was with Christ, sharing Christ’s concern and mission.

As you have probably realised by now, I want to say that the whole of the spirituality of Jules Chevalier, the spirituality he inculcated into his missionaries, was to be summed up by the belief in God’s love. We could say that an **MSC spirituality** may develop in four stages:

1. We have believed in the love of God for us personally. This is a living faith-experience which has provoked the gift of our own hearts to Christ. From this flows a life of personal dedication to Christ and his Kingdom.
2. We have believed in the love of God for all - a love which would give their lives meaning and purpose, if they would accept it. Here is the source of all missionary and apostolic effort.
3. Because we believe in this love of God for all; because we believe that this love will work through those who consecrate their lives to him, we are confident that, if we work with courage and perseverance, God will give the increase.
4. If we are a group that has come together because all its members have believed in his love, a real fraternal charity will reign among us.

Today’s MSC have tried to understand deeply the spirituality of Jules Chevalier, and re-express it for our times. They speak of a Spirituality of the Heart, which is not just a statement or a theological treatise, but is pondered in our hearts. It is based on the quotation from St John which is now so familiar to you, “*We have learned to recognize the love of God in our regard and have made it our belief.*”, and on St Augustine’s admonition to those who seek God: “*Return to your own heart and find him*”. We return to our hearts to find God, listen to our hearts,

and to the cries of every human heart, and seek to share with one another an answer to our longings. For the sake of analysis, our theologians separate out four stages:

- a. We go down into the depths of our own soul in a realisation of our profound personal needs of life, of love, of meaning.
- b. We find, through faith and reflection, an answer to our questioning in the Heart of Christ
- c. This will fashion our heart to be understanding, open to the cries of the world.
- d. Not be disheartened at difficulties. The way of Christ is a human way.

I would like finally to say something further of this understanding of God as a compassionate God, made flesh for us in the life of Christ. I find that more and more people are speaking of God in this way: perhaps it is an understanding for our times, perhaps I am now just more alert to it when before I would have passed by such comment without noticing it.

It has been a common lament of religious people, from the Old Testament on, that, faced with a set of God's commandments, we find it hard to follow them. I remember Bishop Cuskelly, back in the days when he was our student director at the seminary, commenting on some spiritual author who was talking about the need for strong willpower, saying that was not a matter of willpower, but of understanding - that the will automatically chooses what is presented to it as the overwhelming good. If this is true, then the important thing in our living is our understanding. I see the life and death of Jesus as supremely important because of this; because it teaches us about God in way that nothing else could have taught us. When I say, 'God loves us', I do so because I see it in the life of Jesus; when I say "God cares", I see that care in the life of Jesus; I cannot explain the problem of evil (how can God let bad things happen to good people) any better than anyone else can, but when I read the life of Jesus, I know that God does not want us to suffer, and is as distressed as we are by human misery. Philosophers may tell us that God is infinitely blessed, in perfect happiness for all eternity, utterly unmoved by anything a mere creature could do, but we read in the Gospels that God wept in the tears of Jesus at the suffering and death of mere humans.

For me, this is what the coming of Jesus means: that when we contemplate the life of Jesus, we find a new understanding of a God who cares for us; it gives flesh to the statement that "God loves you"; it touches our hearts and helps us to respond in doing those things that we would do but cannot by our own strength.

I found some years ago that I was confronted with the basic question: Who is Jesus? Do I really believe that he is the Son of God, Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father, who will come again to judge the living and the dead, and of his kingdom there will be no end? Knowing what I do about God, the Creator and conserver of the universe, infinite, all-powerful, all-knowing, unchanging, present everywhere: do I believe this of Jesus? Certainly I say I believe it, I have said this for all of my life, but what does it mean to me deep down in my heart? What does it mean for me in the way I live my life? I found in seriously trying to address this question that my answer began to turn the question around. I guess I began from: Thanks to philosophers and theologians, I know what I mean by God: how calmly, how securely, do I place Jesus in this category. I finished up deciding rather: It is Jesus who shows me who God is. I am no longer asking the question, "Do I believe that Jesus is God, will Jesus fit into my understanding of God?" but I am rather saying that "God is Jesus, I know who God is for me by looking at Jesus. For a Christian, the best definition that we have of God is given to us in the Gospels; it is in Jesus that God reveals who he is for us. As Paul says: *For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness." who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*" 2 Cor 4:6

And so I now have a different understanding of God: I look to Jesus to tell me who God is. And I find above all that God cares for us. I find in Jesus the embodiment of the phrase from that hymn: divine love in a human heart. So when I read in Luke's Gospel about that great day of miracles when he calmed the storm, drove out the devil from the Gerasene, healed the woman with an issue of blood, and restored to life the daughter of Jairus, I am moved to consider, not only the divine power of Jesus manifest in what he did, but the divine and human love of Jesus manifest in why he acted. How he felt for his disciples terrified in the boat at the immense seas and howling wind; how he was able to banish the demons from the mind of the Gerasene, and have him sit with him, clothed and in his right mind; how he could give peace to the woman who touched his garment in the crowd; and how he comforted Jairus- "*Do not fear; do not weep*" - before he took the little girl by the hand and restored her to her parents. When I read of the funeral procession coming out of the gates of Nain, and of Jesus restoring the son to his mother, I bow before the revelation of the power of God even over death, but I marvel at the immense human compassion that prompted his action. 'God has visited his people' they said. (Lk 7:11-16). When I read the account of the raising of Lazarus, my wonder at Jesus' command over death is joined with wonder at the love of a God who was distressed at the death of his friend. '*Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean*' a leper pleaded with Jesus. *And he stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying 'Of course I want to. Be clean.'* (Lk 5:12-13). Of course I want to. And he touched him, a leper. God wept when Jesus wept over Jerusalem. This may not sit well with the philosophers who tell us of a God whose perfection implies that he is unaffected by anything his creation could do, but Jesus shows me that God's perfection really is love.

This is how Jesus is Messiah for me. He touches my heart in revealing the real love of God for us; not just something we say because we have been told to; not just something we know of God because philosophically we can decide that, since God has all goodness, God must be loving; but something we believe because we see it in the life of Jesus, where God became human for us. God is not now a remote figure in heaven, pushing buttons to control events on earth, but is here with us sharing our lives, rejoicing with us, suffering with us.

And that I think is the vision of Jules Chevalier, his Sacred Heart spirituality.

COMPASSION THE DRIVING FORCE IN THE LIFE OF JULES CHEVALIER

Fr. Dennis Murphy, M.S.C

Our world has been influenced, for better or worse, by people who ask basic questions and try to give answers. It has not been noticeably influenced by those who simply accept or reject their answers without grappling with the questions.

These two statements might seem obvious, even trite. But how many people really ask basic questions about anything? How many people drift through life without ever asking even one fundamental question?

Jules Chevalier was a man who has had a tremendous impact on our world, because he grappled with questions about his identity, his relationship with God, his purpose in life, the basis of his dignity, his call as a Christian, his relationship with all the peoples of the world, etc.

The problem with appreciating the answers of Jules Chevalier is that we don't personally address the questions he asked. We may also too readily assume that a study of this man who lived in a foreign country, another century is of interest only to the archivist, the novice master, the specialist in esoteric affairs, to certain members of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or to members of the historical society of the Catholic Church. That would be a big loss, for Jules Chevalier came up with fundamental and challenging answers to many of life's most important questions.

How did it come about that this man who was born of very ordinary parents and lived in a little country town, blessed with only ordinary intelligence was able to touch the hearts of his countrymen, bringing many of them back to the Faith, at a time when the Government was *persecuting* the Church in France? What was it that drew his fellow priests to him? What was it that moved friends and neighbors to assist him, so that he could establish religious societies of men and women burning with a desire to bring the love of Christ to every man, woman and child

throughout the world? What was it that inspired thousands of young people to aspire to become Missionaries of the Sacred Heart? What was it that gave him the courage to surmount the great obstacles that came his way?

This essay endeavors to portray the driving force in the life of Jules Chevalier - Founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. However, unless the reader asks the questions that Jules Chevalier asked, and really tries to answer them in his or her own life, then the power which his answers can release will never take place. Ultimately, this is what the essay attempts to do: not simply to inform or entertain but to challenge readers to ask their own questions about their own purpose of existence, their own dignity, their own call to share in the mission of making Christ known and loved, and to move some of them to become associated with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in their mission of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere.

CHEVALIER'S STORY

Jules Chevalier lived in France in the 19th century. He worked as a parish priest throughout his adult life.

It was after his second year of working as an associate pastor that he approached his spiritual director for guidance about a recurring dream. He felt deeply that God was calling him to establish a religious company dedicated to the work of making the compassionate Christ known and loved everywhere. He believed that the image of the Sacred Heart was the perfect symbol of this compassion. He felt therefore that God was calling him and his future companions to devote themselves to making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere. Jules envisioned them doing this through preaching, writing, giving retreats, teaching, and caring for others - with the utmost gentleness. He felt that the work should begin in the region of Berry, France, but spread throughout the whole world.

His spiritual director asked him *why* he thought this call was so important. Was there a fundamental need for this kind of work? Did Jules really think through the implication of his call? Was he just trying to escape the present demands of his pastoral duties by imagining himself doing something else that might not be that essential?

These were valid questions. They demanded honest answers. But Jules had pondered them long before they were asked and was convinced that he knew the answers through God's grace.

During his early years, but especially during his days in the seminary, Jules had thought through the basic questions of his relationship with Christ and his call to make Him Known and loved. The answers he came up with stirred within him the desire to share them with others. He was convinced that ignorance of Christ's great love led people to be uncaring and selfish. It spawned a deep spiritual sickness in their hearts which only Christ could cure.

Jules came from a poor family. The place and date of his birth is recorded as Richelieu, France, March 1824. His father was particularly unsuccessful as a businessman. Jules had to drop out of school because of finances. He took up the trade of shoe repair. This was a disappointment, because he had hoped to become a priest. Nevertheless, he did not become bitter. Instead he used the experience to reflect upon the mysterious ways of God. To be sure, he didn't come up with perfectly clear answers as yet. But he was started on his search.

When Mr. Chevalier was offered a job as caretaker of the woods around Vatan the family moved to that area. This brought Jules in contact with Father Deldevese, who offered to give him some lessons in Latin. To enjoy this aid Jules walked four miles to and from the rectory. The move also enabled Mr. Juste, the employer of Mr. Chevalier, to meet Jules. He was impressed with his serious mind, determination and hard work. So he offered to sponsor his priestly formation.

Jules marvelled at the kindness of God, demonstrated through men like Mr. Juste, as he set out to begin his long journey to the priesthood. Gratitude for the help afforded him enabled him to persevere. It wasn't easy for Jules. He was beginning high school when most of the young men were finishing their studies. His simple cobbler work had also slowed his mind. Despite these obstacles, he applied himself, passed his exams, and made many friends among the students. What it cost him can be appreciated in the words he later wrote: "It was during this period that I felt the greatest compulsion to leave and return home."

As he moved on to the major seminary in Bourges, he began to reflect more and more on the life of Christ. As he did, he found many echoes in his own life:

- Christ was born of ordinary parents -
- He lived in a small town -
- He did common labour -
- He was so "ordinary" that he became a stumbling block for many people -
- He experienced all the common joys and sorrows of his people -
- He shared completely the life-style of those around him -

Why did Christ choose that kind of life? Why didn't he come among us as a powerful, influential personage? Is there something basic, something very important in his choice?

As he probed these questions, God enabled him "to grasp the breadth, the length, the height and the depth of the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge." (Eph.3,18)

Jules was thrilled to discover that by his solidarity, his sharing of our common lot, his compassion, Christ pronounced the value of such an existence, and of the people who lived it. By living the life He did, Christ declared the sacredness of the ordinary person, the small village, simple celebrations of life, the value of physical labour, the holy nature of ordinary things like streams, stones, sparrows, fields of wheat, women in labour, needles and lamps, sheep and goats, thorns and lilies.

It overwhelmed Jules to realize that most people were unhappy, because they never really entered into the sacred dimension of their own being and the things around them. God had sent his own Son to remind us that his love was in us and all around us. But most *people* were blind and deaf to it. They needed to know that when Christ came among us as a common man, He made it possible for us to rediscover our own value, and the value of everything around us. By coming among us in the way He did, Christ pointed out the error of those who think that life has meaning only for the beautiful, the strong, the wealthy, the powerful, the well travelled, the clever and well educated, the famous and recognized.

Jules began to burn with a desire to make this compassion or solidarity of Christ known to others. He was convinced that once they really understood it, their whole view of themselves, others and the world about them would change. They would begin to grasp just how much God loves the world and all the myriads of creatures in it. Most of all, they would begin to stand in wonder at the meaning of a human being ... a creation so utterly magnificent that God had sent his Son to become one of them to redeem them, i.e. to bring them back to a sense of their own dignity, everlasting value and power to do good.

For Jules, the finest symbol of this compassionate kindness of God was found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It blended the human and divine, the sacred and the secular, the triumph of love over hate, the eternal love of God made present in flesh, the value of suffering, the meaning of death and the hope of resurrection. Like nothing else, it challenged us to ask the basic questions:

- Who is He?
- Why did He become human?
- Why did He live the life He did?
- Why did he suffer and die?

Am I that important?
Are others that important?
Is there real love and meaning in the ordinary grind of life?
Can there really be meaning in pain?
Is there life after death?
How is the value of life measured?
What is He asking of me?

Already as a student Jules felt that he had to do something practical about his desire. So he organized group of seminarians who wished to know and make known the compassionate kindness of the Heart of Christ. He called them: Knights of the Sacred Heart, a rather romantic title. When the members got together, they dreamt of making the love of Christ known among the Moslems. A bit exaggerated one might think. But beneath the surface lay a genuine desire to make the compassion of Christ experienced by every person. And this desire did not pass away when Jules and his companions were ordained.

Ordination for Jules came on the 14th of June, 1851. Shortly afterwards, he was assigned to work as assistant to a number of sick and ailing priests. In October, 1854, he came, by God's design, to Issoudun.

When he arrived, he found not only a kind and sympathetic pastor, but one of his closest friends of seminary-days, Sebastian Maugenest. It was in this year that he shared with them his dream of founding a religious society dedicated to making the compassionate Kindness of Christ Known throughout France and the whole world. He felt that the "mal moderne" or "sickness of the modern person" lay in his or her estrangement from God. With that estrangement came a loss of personal dignity, disrespect for nature and people, and philosophies that were frightening in their approach to persons, society, wealth and power. The widespread religious indifference in France, the divorcing of science from its sacred dimension in universities, the gathering storm clouds of political anti-clericalism and the exploitation of workers by employers were all symptoms of the "mal moderne".

By spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fr. Chevalier believed a radical healing could take place in the hearts of people. Unless that radical healing took place, the "modern sickness" would go on and on.

Fr. Crozat, the pastor, assured Fr. Chevalier of his support in founding the new religious society, and Fr. Maugenest expressed his desire to be one of its members. The three of them decided to make a novena to Our Lady, and ask from her Son some sign that God favored this work. The novena was to conclude on December 8th, 1854, the day the Pope had marked to proclaim the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Fr. Chevalier promised that if their prayer was heard, he would do all in his power to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart and to honor Our Lady in a special way.

The little community had just finished celebrating Mass on Dec. 8th when Mr. Petit, a devout parishioner handed him a letter from Mr. Philip de Bengy. It contained a gift from an anonymous benefactor for 20,000 francs. The benefactor wanted it to be used to set up a mission house for the spiritual welfare of the people of Berry. But he stipulated that the Archbishop of Bourges had to give his approval.

Frs. Chevalier and Maugenest set out immediately to get his approval. The Archbishop was sympathetic, but didn't think the men could survive alone on the tiny income from their mass stipends. He required them to find another, steady source of income, before he would give his permission. So the two men returned and began another novena to Our Lady. This one finished on January 28th, 1855.

Fr. Crozat went begging, while the two men prayed. On the day they finished, he informed them that another "anonymous" benefactor had decided to assure them of a yearly sum of 1000 francs to help them survive. Without hesitation they returned to the Archbishop and told him of their good fortune. The Archbishop approved the foundation of the new society in his diocese, despite opposition from his Diocesan Council.

At this late date we might think that the two young priests would have received those gifts, whether they had prayed or not. But it was precisely because they prayed that others who knew them, and admired their faith, were moved to help them. The anonymous benefactor later turned out to be one of their former seminary professors, Fr. de Champgrand. The advisors to the Archbishop was Fr. Gasnier, the Superior of the seminary at Bourges. Both these men had been impressed by the level-headedness and zeal of Jules. Both believed that he should be given the chance to succeed.

Most dreams start out very humbly. Fr. Chevalier's was no exception. After obtaining Archbishop Dupont's blessing, he and Fr. Maugenest tried to find a property with housing suitable to their meager funds. Another good friend, Mr. Voisin helped them locate a nearby property. It had an old house and barn, with a garden and vineyard. He helped them make repairs and even lent the young priests another 5000 francs, to make the needed changes.

Despite all this help, the place looked pretty shabby. But this didn't dismay Fr. Chevalier. On September 1855, they welcomed the Vicar of the Diocese into their humble dwelling to officially install them as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Shortly afterward they began special Masses for working men, and began to visit the homes of the neighboring families, encouraging them to dedicate their families to the Sacred Heart. The small chapel in the converted barn was often filled to capacity. People were ready for the message that the missionaries were preaching. Fr. Maugenest, in particular, was popular as a preacher throughout the diocese.

Nevertheless, the two men were intent on developing their own religious community. They looked upon 1855 as the year of their Novitiate. Both spent a great deal of their time studying and reflecting. They also did their own cleaning and cooking. Fr. Chevalier drew up a provisional set of rules for those who wished to live as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

On Christmas 1856 the two men pronounced their private religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. A witness of these vows was another priest, Fr. Charles Piperon, a friend from seminary days, who, had come to join them.

Everything looked bright and hopeful. However, the first of a whole series of major trials was about to take place. These trials would have crushed a person of lesser faith than Fr. Chevalier.

The instigator of the first great trial was Archbishop Dupont! He had been impressed by the preaching of Fr. Maugenest and was determined to have him assume the duty of Archpriest at the cathedral. He called in Fr. Maugenest and reminded him that he was still his religious superior, since the young congregation had not yet received approval from Rome. Then he ordered him to assume the vacant post of Archpriest at the cathedral.

Fr. Maugenest asked the Archbishop to reconsider. He pointed out other possibilities, but to no avail. Fr. Chevalier also tried to intercede for him, but with no success. In sheer agony Fr. Chevalier suggested to Fr. Piperon that the two of them make a retreat at the nearby Trappist Monastery of Fongombault. The retreat helped them accept the loss, and resign themselves to the providence of God as they continued their work.

The two men returned and took up where they left off. Support and consolation came from many quarters. More and more men began to practice their Faith. Aid to help them build a permanent church came in steadily. On the 26th of June, 1859 they laid the corner stone of the future basilica in honor of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady. Encouragement also came from John Vianney, the saintly Cure of Ars. A priest friend introduced Jules to this holy man. The Cure told Fr. Chevalier not to be discouraged by the trials he would have to face. He was convinced that the Sacred Heart would bless the new congregation with success. He promised to join Frs. Chevalier and Piperon in a novena of prayer to this end.

These words of the Patron of Parish Priests did much to restore the confidence of Fr. Chevalier, and help him appreciate further the quality of compassion.

In 1860 another priest friend persuaded Fr. Chevalier to accompany him to Rome, where he had arranged a private audience with Pope Pius IX. In this audience Fr. Chevalier spoke of his tiny congregation and the vision he had for it. The Holy Father listened patiently and attentively. He encouraged him to continue and gave him his blessing.

When he returned he found that the new co-adjutor of the diocese, Archbishop d'Auvergne favored the new congregation and encouraged the missionaries to preach and raise funds for their work throughout the diocese. This move enabled the men to make such rapid progress that by July 2nd, 1864, they were able to invite the Archbishop to consecrate the new church in honor of the Sacred Heart. When he came he found a beautiful building. But what deeply impressed him was the community of believers that Fr. Chevalier had built. The building itself was only a reflection of the Faith of those people, and that Faith had been revived and inflamed by the preaching and zeal of the young congregation.

Fr. Chevalier's greatest source of consolation, however, came from the enthusiasm which people showed for Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

He had promised to honor Our Lady under a special title, if he received a favorable sign from her Son that would enable him to begin the congregation. When this took place, Fr. Chevalier wanted to create a devotion and title that would indicate the tremendous influence of Mary over the Heart of her Son.

So he called her "Domina", which can be translated as Queen or Lady. This translation loses some of the power that the title indicates. The "Domina" is the strongest kind of advocate a person could have...someone who has the ear and the heart of the King...someone who can touch him as no one else can.

In fact, some theologians in Rome thought the title was too strong, and opposed its approbation. On the other hand, the common person was greatly attracted by the person with power to intercede, to plead the cause of sinners. These people lived in an age that was strongly attracted to the Blessed Mother. The 19th century was a Marian century. Sayings like: "To Jesus, through Mary" were extremely popular. So when Fr. Chevalier spelled out his approach to Our Lady in a series of popular writings, prayers, and devotional practices, these spread like fire in late autumn.

When Fr. Chevalier saw this, he invited those who practiced the devotions to join the Spiritual association which he called the Confraternity to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Roman authorities ratified the Association. Through it Fr. Chevalier was able to instruct and interest many thousands of people in his approach to Christ and in world evangelization through a *better* understanding of compassion.

The Confraternity became the principal tool for assisting the Missionaries. To further its popularity, Fr. Piperon approached the Jesuits about publishing articles on Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in their widely read magazine: The Messenger of the Sacred Heart. At that time, the MSC had no publications of their own. The Jesuits happily cooperated. This brought the devotion to many throughout Europe.

Soon Bishops and Archbishops everywhere requested information on the Devotion, so they could begin an Association in their dioceses. Through the Devotion people also learned of the MSC and their vision of world evangelization. Through the Devotion men began asking to be admitted to the Society, so that they could help bring the compassionate love of Christ to others.

In the work of making the love of Christ known and appreciated throughout the world, Fr. Chevalier envisioned his congregation to be composed of three branches:

- 1 - the Professed Religious
- 2 - Diocesan Priest Associates
- 3 - Laymen and Laywomen Associates

These people would share the same spirit and Aims, would draw strength from the same apostolic mission and spirituality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This spirituality was to be centered on the compassion of Christ. This compassion would lead, through God's grace to personal and community healing.

Fr. Chevalier felt that diocesan priests and laity should be free to make private vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as the Spirit moved them. The important point was to allow the spirituality and vision of the Society to penetrate their lives.

As the internal structure of the Society and the training of its professed members began to demand more and more of his time and energy, the importance of the associated members was allowed to wane. And so the full implications of associated membership was never fully developed by the Founder. In recent times, the notable contributions of dedicated laypeople to the Society and its missions has refocused attention on the original ideal of Fr. Chevalier. The MSC realize that they have much to offer those associated with them, but also much to gain. By making it possible to admit sincere and zealous diocesan priests and laity into the Society, the dream of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere becomes realistic.

Such people would also call forth the very best from the MSC Priests, Brothers and Sisters. Associates would expect them to be knowledgeable, authentic and holy. They would also challenge them by their own generosity, zeal and compassion.

Since this is becoming more and more evident, literature and programs are being developed to enable this to take place. Once they are completed, the broad vision of the Society which Fr. Chevalier once had will finally come into being.

The Sacred Heart had surely consoled Fr. Chevalier for his loss of Fr. Maugenest. But one person in particular effected this in his own quiet, steady way. That man was Fr. Charles Piperon. This humble, hardworking, faithful man was the second person to join Fr. Chevalier. He persevered and served the Society for forty years, principally in the work of forming those who came to join the Congregation.

Perhaps the greatest tribute was paid to him by Fr. Maugenest, who remained a life-long friend of the MSC. On hearing of Fr. Piperon's death he wrote: "Fr. Piperon did so much for the Sacred Heart by his words, his prayer and by his cooperation in the foundation, the support and progress of the great work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun. Above all, it was by his example that he contributed powerfully to the establishment and continuance of the work and spiritual formation of its religious.

"I loved him and admired him. I have never known anyone who was so humble, nor anyone who seemed marked to the same degree with the true seal of sanctity...I desire to kiss the relics of this venerable priest...He was the perfect exemplar of the spirit and virtues proper to your Society... He was meek and humble of heart everywhere, in all things, with everyone and always."

Another stabilizing force in the life of Fr. Chevalier was Jean Marie Vandel. This Diocesan Priest met Fr. Chevalier in 1865. At that time he was seeking priests who would be willing to care for neglected country parishes in France.

Fr. Chevalier so impressed him, that he asked to join the Society and help begin a minor seminary to assist young boys who were interested in becoming Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. His background of working with Pauline Jaricot (Foundress of the Propagation of the Faith) helped him in working out a practical plan to achieve this project. In this plan he asked every person who knew the MSC to give one sou per year. That amounted to about one cent. A penny had some worth then, and when multiplied hundreds of thousands, became a substantial gift.

So great was the response that in 1887 he was able to begin the school at Chezal Benoit, in a former Benedictine Abbey. Twenty-seven boys entered. Of these, three became Diocesan Priests and five became MSC Priests.

Fr. Vandel also began a news bulletin for MSC benefactors. He called it the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Through this magazine, he was able to elicit continuing support for the seminary, and also make a contribution to other MSC works. Unfortunately, this zealous man lived only ten years as an MSC. What he established continued. The humility, concern, kindness and compassion he exhibited also continued to exert an influence on those who had known him.

A third early member of the MSC who proved of great assistance to Fr. Chevalier was Victor Jouet. He too, had been a diocesan priest. Already in 1864 he wished to join the MSC, but his Archbishop, who was opposed to religious congregations in his Archdiocese, objected to his entrance and would not release him. Finally, Fr. Jouet went to Rome and asked Pope Pius IX to give him permission. This was granted. In 1872 he finally entered the Society.

We are told that Victor cared nothing for his appearance, but made up for this defect with a very warm personality. Appreciating this fact, Fr. Chevalier sent him to Rome to find a suitable place for the MSC students who would study there. Later he was appointed Superior of the MSC in Italy, where he also acted as liaison with the Holy See. He played a notable role in harmonizing the many widespread Confraternities of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart under the office in Issoudun.

It says a lot that Fr. Chevalier was able to attract such zealous men to join him. Frs. Piperon, Vandal and Jouet remained completely loyal to him and made their own invaluable contributions to the Society. Without many others like them, the MSC would not be what they are today.

Even though Ft. Maugeness left the MSC, he remained a life-long friend of Fr. Chevalier and the MSC. He eventually joined the Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominicans. Before he did, he donated his personal library to the community at Issoudun. From time to time he also returned to Issoudun and the parish at St. Cyr to preach. These were occasions to renew friendships and to enjoy a bit of MSC hospitality. He had also persuaded Fr. Crozat to resign as Pastor of St. Cyr., so the MSC could care for the people. And it was shortly after this that Archbishop d'Auvergne prevailed upon Fr. Chevalier to accept the parish for the welfare of the people and to ensure the survival of the MSC in France.

Archbishop d'Auvergne knew that the anti-clerical French Government was preparing to expel all religious congregations from France. He also knew that they were willing to tolerate the presence of parish priests attached to the Diocese. When Fr. Chevalier learned of this, he accepted the position of pastor, with Fr. Piperon as his associate. He was formally installed in March of 1872.

Before the storm of religious persecution broke, Fr. Jouet had organized huge pilgrimages to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun. Even Bishops and Archbishops joined in these holy visits. On September 8th, 1873, 30,000 people came to this small town to honor Our Lady and ask her to intercede for them.

Another joyful occasion in this period was the official Papal approval of the tiny congregation. When he had visited Pius IX in 1880, the Holy Father gave Fr. Chevalier his blessing, and told him: "Increase and multiply and preach devotion to the Sacred Heart everywhere. I hope to give canonical approval to your Congregation before I die." His wish was fulfilled. In 188x Pius IX signed his name to the Decree of Approval.

Strangely enough, it was in these early times that the second MSC community was founded in Watertown, New York! In this unusual turn of events, Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart played an important role. French speaking migrants and some of their shepherds had brought the Devotion to the New World. In 1874 Msgr. Charbonnel, former Bishop of Toronto, came to visit the shrine at Issoudun. He was asked to preach on Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He brought back with him a warm feeling of friendship with the community at Issoudun. He had also left an interest about Canada in the community. So when Fr. Chevalier was later approached by Archbishop Lynch of Toronto for some missionaries, he sent Fr. Chappel, and Brother Dechatre to take a look. However, when the Archbishop did not decide on what kind of permanent work the MSC might do, Fr. Chappel sent Brother Dechatre back to France, while he went to Montreal. Here he stayed until 1875. In that year, the Bishop of Ogdensburg, N.Y. asked the Archbishop of Montreal if he knew of any French-speaking priests who could *help* him. He suggested Fr. Chappel. Fr. Chappel accepted the offer, and came to Watertown, N.Y.. Here he perceived the possibility of establishing an MSC community that could carry out its ideals, while caring for the local people. He sent his ideas to Fr. Chevalier. Fr. Durin was sent as Superior of the new Community, accompanied by two students, Benjamin Grom and Charles Bono. On April 20th, 1875 the Issoudun Community held its first missionary departure ceremony for those going to the New World.

The MSC community at Watertown has a long history of service to the local people. It is also credited with having in its midst the first members of the Dutch and Irish MSC. Its Superior, Fr. Durin, was also in charge of the first group of MSCs that went to the South Pacific.

By 1879 the Society of Fr. Chevalier had established itself rather firmly in France. It had also sent its first group of Missionaries overseas. The proceeding 25 years were not without heartaches, but these were always overcome, because of the faith and courage of the Founder and those who followed him.

However, 187? brought a new deeper testing. In that year the virulently anti-clerical Republicans came to political power in France. They rapidly passed laws which forbade religious congregations to live and operate in France. Houses of religious formation were ordered closed and students forced to go elsewhere for their training. Before these laws could be implemented, Fr. Chevalier sent some of the members to find possible locations for the students who were studying for the priesthood. When the Basilica and Community house and school at Issoudun were closed by the police on Nov. 5th, 1880, some of the students were sent to Rome, while others were sent to Holland.

Once again, severe trials like this did not crush Fr. Chevalier. It simply made him turn to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady for enlightenment and courage. He discovered in the trials new opportunities to help people believe in God and his mysterious love of them. He found his own faith and love deepened by the compassion shown him and his followers by those who assisted them.

This was clearly the case for those who went to Holland. At Sittard, a Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been thriving since 18~. Bishop Hertogenbosch, knowing of the plight of the MSC, sent word to Fr. Chevalier that they were welcome in his Diocese. He even offered to house them in his seminary. Fr. Piperon brought his young fledglings there. They lived simply, but were never in extreme want, thanks to the kindness of the diocesan professors and friends. Some famous persons emerged from that first group of displaced students:

Bontemps - founder of the Mission in the Gilbert Isles (present day Kiribati)

Coupe - first Bishop of New Britain in Papua New Guinea,

Linckens - founder of the German Province and the MSC Sisters, founder of the Society of Chaplains to Workers in Belgium.

Until 1881 Fr. Chevalier had been able to help the boys in the minor seminary by placing them in private homes. With increased anti-religious pressure, he contacted Fr. Piperon and asked him to quickly find a place for the boys in Holland. Fr. Piperon Tillburg and rented it. The boys were shipped over and a new product emerged from the old factory!

To support them, Fr. Barral translated the congregation's magazine into Dutch. This met with widespread acceptance, and created the necessary finance to run the school and help the community. Fr. Barra1 was so enterprising that he also got the authorization of the Bishop of Cologne, Germany, so he could print the Annals in German as well.

The unexpected opportunities which the persecution in France created were not restricted to Holland. Some of the MSC went to Spain, England and Ireland where they began small communities and published additional versions of the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Spanish and English.

A man of lesser faith would have been thinking of survival and consolidation during the period of persecution. However, Fr. Chevalier was planning to send his first group of Missionaries to the far away isles of Melanesia and Micronesia in the South Pacific. Some of his own confreres had balked at the idea, but the Founder thought it imperative that the Society be involved with bringing the compassionate love of Christ to those who had never heard of Him, as well as to those who needed a deeper experience of his love.

So on September 1st, 1881, Frs. Durin, Navarre, Cramaille, and Brs. Fromm and Durin set out for the isles of Papua New Guinea. They were carrying out a Papal Mandate to evangelize the scattered peoples in that vast section of the Pacific. Sickness claimed the Durin brothers and Brother Fromm, but Frs. Navarre and Cramaille made the arduous journey. They laid the foundation of the presently flourishing Church in that section of the world.

When the men departed from Barcelona, Spain, Fr. Chevalier was not able to be present. Because of the persecution, he had to act as if he were a diocesan priest and remain at his parish. This caused him real anguish, as is apparent from a letter he wrote: "It is impossible for me to be present at the departure of our beloved and heroic confreres who are going to carry the love of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady to Oceania! O how I envy them! What a sacrifice for me not to be able to bless and embrace them at this solemn hour! Please present my excuses to the privileged men...Ah, how I suffer at not being able to be present at Barcelona at this solemn hour!"

The persecution in France had brought unexpected blessings to the Society. This was repeated in the islands. When a malicious trader stirred up the islanders to burn and destroy the possessions of Frs. Navarre and Gramaille, this suffering determined Fr. Navarre to sail to Australia and beg for supplies, while Fr. Gramaille held on as well as he could. Cardinal Moran of Sydney welcomed him, and gave him the needed encouragement and support. Through Fr. Navarre he asked Fr. Chevalier to send some Missionaries to Australia too, because he was in dire need of help himself. He offered the parishes of Botany Bay and Randwick to the Society. Fr. Chevalier responded, and before long there was a budding community of MSCs in Australia. Through the years they have provided Missionaries for many isolated places in that country, and sent men to Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and Japan. Compassion begets compassion. It is never without fruit.

One unexpected fruit of the Australian venture reappeared in Europe! Cardinal Moran met Fr. Jouet in Rome in 1885. He suggested the MSC begin a mission seminary, and advertise it in the Annals. In that way the MSC could insure men for the missions they undertook, in the event one or the other nationality was prevented from working in a country. Cardinal Moran was thinking of Papua New Guinea, when he suggested this idea. Germany had annexed New Guinea and the surrounding isles. They were very nationalistic. The French missionaries were looked on with distrust by the German Government. However, if the MSCs had a missionary seminary which took in men of all nationalities they could send in the 'acceptable' nationality and insure the continuation of Christian evangelization.

Fr. Chevalier, with the General Council, approved of the idea and decided that the seminary should be founded in Antwerp, Belgium. This place was centrally located for the French, Dutch, Belgians and German students. A property was purchased at Borgerhout and once again Fr. Piperon moved there with his novices.

However, since the primary reason for the missionary seminary had been to ensure German Missionaries for New Guinea and the surrounding isles, men were sent to Germany and Austria to find suitable locations where the MSC might start a community. Salzburg, Austria, was settled on. By 1888 there were 25 students in the minor seminary there, and an MSC Brothers' novitiate was thriving. In the Sacred Heart's mysterious designs, the sufferings borne in trust had yielded a rich harvest of blessings.

At this point we must go back in time and look at another great blessing which came to the MSC. This was the congregation of Sisters founded by Fr. Chevalier, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

In 1865 a small group of women, who had assumed the title of Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus became quite interested in Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and also very friendly with the MSC Fathers. Fr. Piperon told them that Fr. Chevalier had envisioned founding a group of Sisters with a spirit kindred to that of the MSC Fathers and Brothers. Hearing this, the Sisters approached Fr. Chevalier and asked if he would accept them as the first members of his congregation. He agreed to do so, if they were willing to be retrained in the spirituality and rules he had evolved. When they accepted these conditions, Fr. Chevalier asked the Archbishop for permission to begin a religious foundation for women. He also asked a wealthy benefactress to help him with accommodation for the Sisters. She found him a suitable house in Issoudun. So on August 15 1874, the work of forming the new members began.

The work had its ups and downs, particularly in the form of unstable leadership among the Sisters. Dissention reduced the group to three by 1882. Finally, the woman Fr. Chevalier had prayed for came along. She was Marie Louise Hartzler, a widow, whose two sons were studying to be MSC Priests. This gentle, generous, well organized woman possessed the same spirit and vision as Fr. Chevalier. Once she was appointed Superior, things took an upward swing. New women joined and remained. They were full of enthusiasm for the foreign missions. In 1884, only two years after the first MSC Priests arrived in Papua New Guinea, five Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart left with five new MSC Fathers for that distant land. Two of the Fathers were to become Bishops: Henry Verius in Papua and Louis Coupe in New Britain.

These women exhibited the same courage, zeal, kindness and compassion as did the MSC Fathers and Brothers. As true members of one family, they shared the same hardships, deprivations, sicknesses, as well as joys.

Prevented from educating girls in France, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart gave themselves unreservedly to this work in P.N.G. and Australia. Their schools over the years have ranked among the finest. It is also worthy of note that a girl from their High School on Yule Island in Papua designed the National Flag of P.N.G. And a Sister from the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart composed the National Anthem of P.N.G., which is sung daily in all the schools of that beautiful country.

Another great congregation of women religious was founded by Fr. Hubert Linckens, MSC. This is the Congregation of the Missionaries Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Why found another congregation of Sisters with the same vision and spirit of Fr. Chevalier? Why not start another branch of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart? The reason for the new foundation lay in the extreme nationalistic attitude which the German Government took toward missionaries who wished to enter and work in New Guinea. They insisted that they had to be Germans who came from religious foundations which were German. An extension of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which had been founded in France would never do.

To overcome this difficulty, Fr. Linckens had been sent to Germany to establish a mission house. While he was there pressure came from the overseas men who wanted Sisters to help them with the education and medical care of the island peoples. He approached Fr. Chevalier for advice. Following this advice, he asked some German Sisters of Divine Province to help him draw up a new rule and training program for young women who wished to become Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He found a house for this purpose in Hilstrup, Westphalia. Then he got permission from the Bishop to begin. In working out the details, Fr. Linckens was careful to model everything on the spirituality, rules and training of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

In 1898 the first candidates arrived and on March 25th, 1900 the first Sisters received their religious habits from Louis Coupe, Bishop of New Britain. Many future Sisters would leave their homes in Germany to join this remarkable Bishop in building Christian Communities in the rugged island world of New Britain and New Ireland.

The MSC Sisters experienced remarkable growth in mission-minded members from the very beginning. Between 1902 and 1904 nine Sisters were working in the Marshall Isles and thirteen more in New Britain. Then after five young MSC Sisters, two MSC Priests, two MSC Brothers and one Trappist brother were massacred by some disgruntled natives of New Britain, many young German women expressed a desire to become MSC Sisters. By 1908 the young Congregation had 104 members!

The Old saw: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians" had taken a new twist.

Today the MSC Sisters and Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart have thousands of members teaching and demonstrating the compassion of Christ throughout the world. Anyone familiar with them cannot help but be impressed by their gentleness, kindness, and total dedication to young people, the aged and the sick.

Each religious congregation that perdures captures the spirit and vision of its Founder - in the members, meetings, life-style, works and documentation. However, this is not achieved without misunderstandings, tension and struggle. The MSC Congregation was not spared this process.

While Fr. Chevalier lived, his persuasive views on many things, and his manner of living exerted great influence on those around him. As the Congregation grew and members had less and less direct contact with him, the more vocal of the members who lived at a distance had, at times, more influence on their immediate companions than did the Founder. Some of these men felt that a General Council of members, rather than the Founder should be the ones who made decisions and interpretations. Some felt that the Founder was unable to grasp and deal adequately with the manifold problems that confronted the Society. They also pointed out the errors of the Founder, especially in regard to omissions of Canon Law. They felt that he had by-passed the general membership in consultation and decision-making. They wanted a greater say in how the members should live, what they should do, how they should do it, and where they should work,

In a sense this is a natural evolution, but it is very difficult to implement while the Founder is alive. In the case of the MSC, it was made more difficult by the persecution in France. In his biography of Jules Chevalier, Fr. E. J. Cuskelly, MSC, documents some of the doubts, criticism, anger and polarization of the members that were present in the early meetings of the members.

Ultimately these tensions were largely surmounted by prayer and face-to-face encounters in the presence of an impartial consultant. These two aids remain indispensable when tension between members and groups reaches the critical point.

Tensions also arose between the Founder and the Episcopal Authorities. As was seen earlier, Archbishop Dupont's demand that Fr. Maugest return to the diocese and serve as Archpriest of the cathedral caused anguish to Fr. Chevalier. Later, Archbishop Marchal succumbed to poison-pen letters accusing Fr. Chevalier of neglecting his parish. Consequently, he treated the Founder rudely and coldly. Fr. Chevalier's answer was prayer, coupled with diplomacy in letter-writing and meetings. To these he added obedient, faithful service of his people. These methods won the day.

His reconciliation with the Archbishop and his forgiveness of his maligners has been recorded. The Archbishop said to him: "During my first visit, you must have found my way of treating you very strange. Well, I can tell you now that I had some preconceived ideas against you and your administration of the parish. You'll have to forgive me, because I had received a whole series of letters from priests of the diocese which contained unworthy calumnies. I've got their names, he said, tapping his forehead, and I'll keep an eye on them." Fr. Chevalier replied: "Oh, your Grace, you ought to forget all that. That's the way human nature is made. I've outlived worse things than that."

Then came Archbishop Boyer, who in contrast to the friendly Archbishop d'Auvergne, remained distant toward Fr. Chevalier for a number of years. He, too, finally succumbed to the obedient, cheerful, friendly attitude of the Founder. In his latter years, he frequently called Fr. Chevalier to his palace for consultation.

Archbishop Sevonet, on the other hand, never thawed out. He remained an austere, aloof Prelate, offering little help or sympathy to Fr. Chevalier, and never asking his advice. Indeed, he attempted to interfere in the internal working of the Society by insisting that certain men be appointed Superiors. Despite this, Fr. Chevalier remained cordial, respectful and diplomatic in dealing with this difficult man.

The most severe tensions, however, came from the anti-religious French Government. In the twenty-year period from 1880-1900 was difficult, then the period from 1901-1907 must be termed near-impossible. In 1901 a law was passed outlawing all but approved organizations. However, the Government had no intention of approving Societies like the Jesuits or the MSC. Fr. Chevalier asked advice from his confreres and the Cardinal Protector in Rome. The Cardinal advised him to ask to be secularized, so that he could ensure the houses of the Society would not be confiscated, and he could continue to assist his Missionaries. This came as a shock: to Fr. Chevalier. Only through prayer did he find the strength necessary to make this most difficult decision. In 1901 he resigned as Superior General and petitioned Rome to secularize him. This meant that he would no longer be looked upon officially as a professed religious. He would be seen as a diocesan priest caring for the parish of St. Cyr.

This difficult decision is almost impossible to appreciate fully. Even though Fr. Chevalier had determined to keep his religious obligations, and was still viewed by all the members as the spiritual leader of the Society, and was, in fact able to help many of them, the legal disassociation from them caused him deep sorrow.

His sorrow was shared by the MSC priests who chose secularization with him that they might remain in France and carry on their apostolic work. In fact, they continued to meet and encourage one another. So we could say that they were really dispersed Religious, rather than secularized ones.

When Governmental pressure mounted and the sale of unused church properties was demanded, Fr. Chevalier persuaded his wealthy friends to purchase the MSC properties which were selling very cheaply, and hold them in trust. He promised to reimburse them when the crisis was over. Through this ploy most of the houses and churches cared for by the MSC were saved.

A final indignity by the Government was reserved for Fr. Chevalier near the end of his life. In 1907 State Officials began expelling all the clergy from their churches and homes, including Archbishop Sevonet! When they came to the rectory where Fr. Chevalier lived, they demanded he unlock the door and come out. In protest, he refused. So they smashed in the door. When they did they found the old man in bed, refusing to leave. So they carried him out into the street, bed and all. When they did, they found themselves surrounded by the people of the parish who shouted: "Long live Fr. Chevalier! Long live Fr. Chevalier!" The life-long compassion he had shown so many of them was not forgotten. A carriage was quickly put at his disposal and took him to the home of Count de Bonneval, where each day a long line of people of all ranks in life came to visit the old man, and seek his guidance.

In the last nine months of his life, this holy man continued to encourage the repurchase of MSC properties. He consoled and inspired all who visited him. He also prepared his Spiritual Testament for his spiritual sons and daughters.

On October 21, 1907, exactly nine months after he was expelled from the rectory of St. Cyr, Fr. Chevalier met face-to-face the One he had loved with his whole mind, his whole heart and with all his strength. Like the One he served, he had been born of poor parents, lived in a little town, did menial work, was filled with compassion for everyone, accomplished remarkable deeds, was misunderstood and persecuted by the leaders of his people and finally died outside his home. Like Christ, Fr. Chevalier challenges us by his kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, zeal, charity for all, but above all by his compassion...his willingness to identify and suffer with those he wished to help know and love the Sacred Heart.

Like Christ, Jules Chevalier sowed the seeds of his life that have borne abundant fruit in later times.

Today the MSC Fathers and Brothers, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the MSC Sisters are found throughout the world, carrying on the great work which he began.

Home bases, or Provinces, of the MSC Fathers and Brothers are located in Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Spain and the United States of America. About 2,400 men are attached to these Provinces.

From the home bases the Missionaries care for people in their own country, but they also go out to other countries to spread the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart. Among their many missions are the Marshall and Kiribati Isles, Senegal, Zaire and South Africa, Guatamala, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil, Argentina and Chile, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan.

The service of the Missionaries assumes many forms. Working as pastors, teachers of religious and secular subjects, tradesmen, nurses, bookkeepers and administrators they not only do things that need to be done, but help the people they serve acquire these skills, so that they can take care of themselves and assist others with the same compassion.

The spiritual sons and daughters of Fr. Chevalier realize that salvation for all peoples lies in their knowing and loving Jesus Christ. The words of St. John are always before them: "God has given us eternal life and this life is in his Son; anyone who has the Son has life, anyone who

does not have the Son does not have life." (I John 5,11)

With Fr. Chevalier they discover the urgency of the task. Christ is not an option for the welfare of people. He alone is the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6). There is so much suffering in the world because most people have not yet known God's answer to our misery. This suffering is compounded by those who have heard about Him, but reject him because they never experienced his love from those who profess to be his followers.

The spiritual sons and daughters of Fr. Chevalier know that Compassion is the way to announce the love of Christ to others. Compassion or identification with the people they are attempting to help, is the key to success. He or she must live among them, sharing their life style as far as possible .. sharing their joys and sorrows and serving with the spirit of Christ. The truly compassionate missionary is deeply his/her indebtedness to Christ for everything, especially for forgiveness. He/she, therefore, will never be condescending, harsh, self-seeking, but always strive to be patient, gentle, kind and forgiving. He or she has but one aim: To make people really believe in Christ, because they have experienced his love through those who have come in his name.

What a vocation! How awesome it is to be chosen and sent by God to help others believe in his Son. Yet how necessary it is for their salvation. And how urgent it is, not only for the individuals, but also for society itself. The Christ is not as so many think, an option that can be ignored without serious consequences. Christian evangelization must therefore be seen as something vital and the method of *evangelizing* through compassion as intimately linked with its success.

To make everyone aware of these truths was the goal of Jules Chevalier. It remains the goal of his spiritual sons and daughters of the Sacred Heart.

THE LAY MISSIONARIES OF THE CHEVALIER FAMILY IN THE CHURCH OF TODAY

Norma Campos Salgado,Imsc

[http://www.laymsc.org/RenInt08/Norma%20\(E\).htm](http://www.laymsc.org/RenInt08/Norma%20(E).htm)

Community of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Pro-Province of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil

In the first place I want to thank you for the invitation to share with you, members of the Chevalier Family, experiences and witnesses which make a difference, or should make a difference, in our families, communities and our various areas of work in a society in which, love, justice and peace are lacking. We have to be more conscious each day that "the Church in which we are baptized members is missionary not only because of its missionary activities but also by the effort to enculturate the gospel and faith."

Laymen and Laywomen, missionaries of the Chevalier family

To be a lay missionary in a family of consecrated people does not make us feel as religious, or as a group in opposition to the clergy or hierarchy or simply as rejecting something.

At the origins of the Church, the term "disciple" was used for persons who had some function and this was substituted by the term faithful. The first ecclesiastical writer to use the term "lay" was Clement of Rome, in the second century, in a letter to the church of Corinth. It seems that it was not used much at the beginning but it was rescued in the twelfth century. Today we are called missionary disciples. Disciples, because we are born of a strong and personal encounter with Christ and brought together in community, missionaries because the true disciple becomes a permanent and ardent missionary.

The identity of the layperson, - one's Christian identity – consists in one's human personality, one's condition as a baptized Christian, assumed into Christ and made concrete through the Spirit. All the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment, that is, the commitment to live in the world as Jesus Christ lived, recreating His attitudes and repeating his gestures. And above all, loving with a heart like His.

I consider that the call from God to serve as a lay missionary of the family of Jules Chevalier is an explicit and singular form of vocation. Explicit, as each day it becomes clearer as we open ourselves to and experience the Heart of God, and singular, as being unique in its characteristics, that is, in its way of seeking to be this Heart of mercy and tenderness in every time and place. We were chosen, called to evangelize, not by letter or messages, or calls or by someone knocking on the door. We perceive the call by the eyes and ears of our heart and by the thirst to have more justice and peace, above all for our poor and excluded brothers and sisters. This vocation is discovered, nourished and made a reality in the Church, a living organism, because the Spirit raises within it, in an unexpected way, the different charisms that are the basis of the different services and ministries in this world lacking so much in love. We have to recognize that the majority of us were won and encouraged to live the spirituality of Jules Chevalier, by the way of life and example of the Missionaries or Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart or the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Our differences identify us and the spirituality brings us together.

Thus we should consider ourselves as creatures who believe in God the Father and the Son and the creative power of the Spirit, as persons who desire to know the will of God and make it a reality, as persons who in their lives have moments of happiness and sadness, of hopes and doubts and hopelessness, experiences of sin and being loved and forgiven, not forgetting that we must walk together building communities. As lay members in this family we should attract and motivate our brothers and sisters to walk together discovering our vocation, being the living and active face of the church in the community. We must take on the responsibility to help our brothers and sisters to live out the commandment of love that Jesus taught us. We must have a firm attitude in face of injustice and lack of values. We must live in such a way that our life is our word.

When someone asks me how to live Christianity as a lay missionary of the Sacred Heart in the family, the community and in the workplace, I reply that independently of where one is, if there is within oneself a space for the Spirit of God and his love, with a deep respect for all creation, everything one does will be a reflection of the following of Christ. Each day one becomes more human and sensitive to the pain of the people and the voice of the church. This is the great challenge of our mission, which should begin among ourselves and permeate the interior of our communities for our people.

The spirituality of Chevalier should be lived in the concrete reality of our time. What we are living today is not the same as the reality of the laity who accompanied Fr. Chevalier. Certainly his ideals of love, of witnessing to God's mercy and tenderness, his charism and spirituality continue today but they must be translated into our time, into the twenty first century.

Lay members of the Chevalier Family in the Church

Men and women today will not accept any orientation that they do not understand or need. They want to be free to decide everything, including how they express their faith, feeling worthy or not, without tutelage. In our fathers' time, nothing was questioned. That's how it should be and that's how it was. Now there is a desire for transformation and freedom that is opposed to submission. This is happening in politics, in economy, culture and laws and the church does not escape from this reality. As a consequence of all this, the missionary disciple becomes more critical, questioning and at times innovating. In the opinion of many, they become rebellious. To achieve the autonomy we are seeking, we need to be capable, aware of our true value as individuals and of our responsibility. In some communities that we have observed, you can perceive these changes and it is possible to feel a spirit of fraternity between the priest and his people, seeking to live a new way of being church. They have seen that it is necessary to change the traditional image which is no longer accepted, that of the "guided sheep". For this transformation, where all are

called to participate, we have to learn and live with autonomy, with participation also in the structures of decision-making, dialogue, listening, love, service and co-responsibility. We recognize here the presence of the MSCs who are included in the example cited above.

The Spirit of God is the one responsible for these changes, initiated in Vatican II when it formulated the challenge that the Church should listen to the signs of the times. One of these signs is the protagonism of the laity. We became aware that the Church had opened a space for the laity but we did not know how to overcome so many years of blind obedience, impossibility of participation, listening, orders and power. We had to overcome submission and our hesitation to assume the commitment on the one hand and the fear and insecurity of our ordained brothers to lose power on the other. All this was an obstacle on the journey. With all the changed occurring, a new mentality is being formed, and a new self-understanding points towards a new autonomy. In spite of the documents of the Church, like Santo Domingo, Ad Gentes, Lumen Gentium, Aparecida and Canon Law itself (1983) and others that speak of the participation of the laity in the orientations of the Church, in practice this participation is happening only to a minor degree. The laity have not been able to overcome a long history of submission. The layperson does not feel encouraged to participate actively, the majority preferring to merely assist at Mass and listen to the homilies. But there is a certain climate of renewal that reflects an awakening of the laity to the challenges of the present culture with new aspirations that can be perceived in some places and parishes:

- a desire for freedom, visible especially in the perception of the dignity of the human person, for example: the rejection of all ethnic or social discrimination as well as the defense of human rights and the environment.
- a growing thirst for participation which demands joint work between the ordained ministers and the non-ordained, including the decisions of the Church. "Listen to the laity, fraternally appreciating their wishes, recognizing their experience and competence in different areas of human activity, in order to perceive together the signs of the times".
- the thirst for formation in order to improve one's competence and preparation for the missionary task becomes a clamour.
- the rise of a biblical spirituality that is closer to life, historical, communicative and affective.
- the role of women in the Church becomes more enriching and questioning each day with the contribution of the feminine dimension.
- the contact with the media provokes a great sensitivity towards world problems.

As lay missionaries of the Chevalier family, do we too have these aspirations?

Are they becoming a reality or are they simply aspirations in my community?

I think our mission begins there. In the first place, we must know as individuals and community, whether we are fulfilling God's will for ourselves and others. How? By our fidelity to our Baptismal promises and the plan that God has for each, using our gifts for the service of the community. Obedience to God is basic for the formation of disciples and missionaries. It is not an obedience that remains in words and good intentions but in that which brings us to assume the commitment entered into and as a layperson and missionary of the Sacred Heart to fulfil it and renew it. We ourselves should pass and try to make others pass from a passive and alienated religiosity to an active and transforming living experience. This is the type of activity that Jesus is asking of our lay communities. In this way we have to face the challenges and overcome the barriers that impede our missionary action.

To achieve this, we must recover the awareness of our mission, which is to be an agent of responsible transformation within and outside the Church. How can we change something if we are unaware of our role? We must ask ourselves what type of laity we are and what is our mentality. Seeking with sincerity the truth and changing where necessary. Patience and fidelity to God will give us confidence. Assured of his understanding, we will have the opportunity to review our decision and be accepted by his mercy. We can question ourselves on the basis of the synthesis of Renold Blank,

Are we?

- Sheep – who want to remain so – feel secure, obedient, maintaining the dichotomy "clergy-laity", afraid of new structures and unwilling to assume responsibility, resisting emancipation and having recourse to tradition and the power of the hierarchy.
- Consumers – those who consider themselves emancipated but seek in religion and the Church spiritual comfort and they be at their service.
- Emancipated – those who represent post-modern men and women. They do not accept the care of the Institutional Church. Here we include the resigned, those who lost hope of change in the paternalistic and power mechanisms of the Church and who silently withdraw as well as the rebellious who do not believe in change in the Church either and leave it because of some negative experiences.
- In which category am I included? Or do I find myself a little in each or at one time am I in one category and at another time in another?

Difficulties and obstacles to the Protagonism of the Laity

The closed structures of the hierarchic power that still exists today is one of the greatest obstacles to the protagonism of the Laity. This power has contributed over the centuries to the appearance and permanence of two classes in the Church, namely the clergy and the laity.

Even we in the Chevalier Family who are accompanied by ordained brothers with a more open vision and who make this burden easier, often feel ourselves blocked in exercising our apostolate to realize our mission; But we cannot say that we were not helped by them. There is a certain comfort when we perceive in the religious of this family, whether ordained or not, structures of communion and fraternal participation that points towards a Church where the keyword is service and not power. This will be the Church of tomorrow and the future where the dignity and value of each charism will be upheld from the perspective of service to the Kingdom of God.

As for ourselves, most of the time we are known by different sectors and by the community in general for our participation in the liturgy, baptism, Vincent de Paul Society, catechesis or extraordinary ministers rather than as Lay missionaries of the Chevalier Family at the service of the community. Where is our identity? If we are small groups in the community and within the greater community which is the Church, and the people who live with us are not touched with the desire to know our spirituality through our living of the same, then it is necessary to reflect on our journey and change. If our mission is to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved and this is not happening in the people around us, that is, in our parish, we should have the courage to recognize that something must be done to achieve our goal. Other difficulties have their origin in this one.

Because we love the Church and believe that she is capable of renewing herself, because the transforming Spirit of God is acting in her, we hope and we work that she may be alive, faithful and credible, that she may be able to promote a mature laity co-responsible in the mission of announcing and making visible the Kingdom of God.

As persons with a Christian identity that respond to the call of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as Lay Missionaries of the Jules Chevalier Family, we must be able, everywhere and at all times, to care for the values that give direction to our life and generate hope, we must take care to put ethical commitments above our personal or collective interests, we must take care that the inner fire of contemplation and prayer is never extinguished. This means especially taking care of our spirituality, experiencing God everywhere and allowing his permanent birth and rebirth in our hearts.

In this way we can say: Wherever there is a Lay Missionary of the Chevalier well formed, participating, coherent and protagonist of the new Evangelization, there Christ is being revealed and there he becomes known and loved.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere known and loved. Forever.