Br François 1

**Introduction**

Brother François (Gabriel Rivat), Director General 1839-1852 and Superior General 1852-1860, was trained by St Marcellin Champagnat. Between 1852 - 1854 he was responsible for developing the *Common Rules, School Guide, Constitutions* and *Rules of Government*. 2022 marks the 141st anniversary of his death.

**Early Life**

Gabriel was born on Saturday 12 March 1808, in the hamlet of Maisonnettes, near La Valla-en-Gier (France). He was the youngest of seven children. Maisonnettes was a hamlet of about 50 inhabitants. The small farm had a stable with perhaps half a dozen cows, and a few sheep, goats or pigs. While not swimming in abundance, they never went hungry.

When Gabriel Rivat was born, Napoleon was holding Pope Pius VII captive and waging numerous wars throughout Europe. Military conscription accelerated from 1810 onwards. His brother Jean-Claude was mobilised in 1811 and in December 1812, following the disaster in Russia, his brother, Jean-Antoine was called up.

When he was five years old Gabriel accompanied his mother on a pilgrimage to Valfleury, at that time an important Marian centre. Her ancient image was saved from the iconoclastic revolutionaries. They probably walked the 20 km on foot. His mother prayed that her sons would return from the war soon and in good health. To achieve this, she promised a picture for the parish church and consecrated her youngest son to the service of the Virgin.

In 1814, Napoleon was forced to abdicate and went into exile on the island of Elba. Gabriel’s brothers Jean-Claude and Jean-Antoine were able to return to their family. At this time, Jean-Antoine has made a decision: he would become a priest and leave for the seminary.

<https://champagnat.org/en/to-be-marist/marist-saints-2/br-francois-rivat/>

# A Prayer of Blessing for the New School Year

May God's Holy Spirit bless all at this school.

May the Spirit of the North, the spirit of the Pacific,

surround us with love.

As the sun gives warmth to the earth,

may the Holy Spirit encourage us to share

God’s love with one another.

May the Spirit of the South, the spirit of the Antarctic,

give us courage.

As we brace for cold winds,

may the Holy Spirit give us strength to face

the challenges which we will encounter.

May the Spirit of the East, the spirit of sunrise,

give us wisdom and understanding,

may we never be afraid to start afresh.

May the Spirit of the West, the spirit of sunset,

give us knowledge and good judgement,

may your Word guide the path which we walk.

May the Holy Spirit of God
who is present in this school,

and in each of us,

surround us all as we begin
this new school year in love and peace.

Amen.

**Champagnat Marist Spirituality and Charism:**

**God’s Presence and Love ✠ Trust in God ✠ Love of Jesus and His Gospel**

**Presence ✠ Simplicity ✠ Family Spirit ✠ Love of Work**

**In the Way of Mary**