Br François 2



**On the Farm**

Following the custom, Gabriel began to help with the work on the farm at the age of seven. He was entrusted with the care of the sheep and lambs. Life in the meadows soon developed in him a taste for botany, reflection and contemplation. In the summer of 1816, there was news in the parish. A young curate was expected to arrive a few days before 15 August. His name was Champagnat. He comes from Marlhes. He surprised everyone by his height: 1.79 m, which at that time placed him among the exceptionally tall.

**Champagnat’s Catechism Classes**

Fr Champagnat was especially concerned with catechism classes; he saw in the young the hope of the Church. At All Saints 1816, he announced its beginning. Jean-Marie, the third of the Rivat children, was 11 years old. He would not miss these classes which must have been started by the previous curate. After a few weeks, Fr. Champagnat wanted to increase the number of children attending catechism classes: “If you bring me a neighbour or a cousin, I will give you a prayer-card”. Jean-Marie replied that he could bring his 8 year old little brother.” “Bring him to me. We’ll see if he can make his First Communion before the others”. And for two years, Gabriel carefully followed this preparation.

Gabriel made his first communion on 19 April 1818, the fourth Sunday after Easter. He had just had his tenth birthday. He keept the memory of this feast, thanks to a prayer-card which he called his “great treasure”. It is a classic image, representing a chalice and a host adored by the angels. Below the table holding the chalice, the lamb is seen lying on the cross.

This act, in the cultural context of 19th century rural France, not only has a religious significance, but publicly marked the end of childhood.

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

God of courage

In the Montagne experience

You inspired Marcellin Champagnat

With a vision of Marist education,

To reach out to young people

In human and spiritual poverty.

You called Marcellin to see, to judge and to act.

He responded to you call in faith,

Relying on your providence

To provide the resources necessary to accomplish the task.

Increase our faith to respond to the Montagne’s in our lives.

Mary our Good Mother

And Ordinary Resource,

We pray that this school may be authentic

In its mission to make Jesus known and loved.

We ask this in the name of Jesus our Saviour and friend.

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**