Br François 7



**Society of Mary and the Mission to Oceania**

In 1835, steps were taken to obtain authorisation for the Society of Mary from the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome. While François thought that the Marist Fathers and Brothers were part of the same society. Rome approved only the branch of the Fathers and entrusted them with the missions of Oceania.

Their friend and guide, Fr Champagnat, took vows in the Society of Mary on 24 September 1836. The fathers elected Fr Jean-Claude Colin as their Superior General. In October 1836, Bishop Pompallier, newly consecrated as bishop, blessed the new chapel at the Hermitage. In December of the same year, Bishop Pompallier, Frs Chanel, Batallion, Bret and Servant, together with Brs Marie-Nizier Delorme, Michel Colombon and Joseph-Xavier Luzy left France for Oceania.

**Election as ‘Director General’**

After his stay in Paris, Marcellin Champagnat’s heath began to fail. Today’s doctors, when they see the symptoms, think of stomach cancer, but that was not the case in 1839. Marcellin Champagnat’s health declined to the point where he began to think about his succession.

Father Colin as Superior General of the Society of Mary proposed the election which took place on Saturday 12 October, during the retreat of 1839. The 92 perpetually professed Brothers who were present elected Br François (87 votes), Br Louis-Marie (70 votes) and Br Jean-Baptiste (57). That evening, the new Superior and his assistants served at the tables.

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

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus,

like Mary at Cana, we feel challenged

by the needs of the world around us.

You call us to be aware of the signs of the times,

to face current challenges,

without falling into the temptation

of “answering questions that no one is asking anymore”.

You call us to be a prophetic reminder

of the common dignity

and fundamental equality of the entire People of God.

You call us to move away from a culture

shaped by “ego-s”

and to adopt a culture shaped by “eco-s”

(ecology, ecosystems, an economy of solidarity, …).

You call us to be agents of change, bridge-builders,   
messengers of peace, transforming the lives of young people through an education which integrates awakening faith   
and living by Gospel values. Amen.

Mary, our Good Mother, pray for us.

St Joseph, pray for us.

St Marcellin Champagnat, pray for us.

**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**