Br François 4



**The promise**

On Wednesday, 8 September 1819, Gabriel Rivat put on the distinctive clothing of the “Little Brothers of Mary”: black trousers, frock coat, collar and top hat, and knelt down in front of the community of the Brothers.

Kneeling before the assembled community, he signed a promise to consecrate himself to God for five years, to work unceasingly for the practice of all the virtues for his personal sanctification and for the Christian education of the children of the countryside. He committed himself to seek only the glory of God, the honour of Mary and the good of the Catholic Church, to teach freely the needy children presented by the parish priests, to obey his superiors without question, to maintain chastity and to share everything in common. From this date, Gabriel Rival became Br François, taking his mother’s name, and he was only 11 years old. He was the sixth Brother and by far the youngest of Champagnat’s disciples.

Soon the Brothers’ community evolved from catechetical and charitable functions to the running of parish or communal schools, adapting the pedagogical method of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to the rural environment. It is a charismatic community with a universal purpose and not solely parish work. It was during these years that Br François established his status as a disciple and servant of a collective missionary project to which he would dedicate his life.

Br François began teaching at La Valla at the age of 12. Since he was too young to see all his pupils, he climbed on a rock and gave his lessons from there. At the same time, he cooked for the community and for the boarding pupils; in the afternoon, he taught reading, catechism and prayers to those who were lagging behind.

In 1821, Brother François left La Valla to go as cook to the school of Marlhes (Loire) and at the same time to continue teaching with a division of the afternoon class. The Marlhes classrooms were small, damp and poorly ventilated, which is why the school was closed two years later.

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

**Prayer**

Loving God

your call is unique to each of us,

a mystery that surprises us

and invites us with equal dignity

to live Champagnat’s charism alongside our brothers and sisters.

As we deepen our unique call

to be disciples of Jesus like Mary,

keep us mindful of the Spirit’s energy

within our hearts and in our day-to-day events.

Guide us, be with us and lead us with Mary,

on the path of true discipleship.

In Christ our brother we ask this. 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**