Br François 10



**The Problem of Legal Authorisation**

A problem that arose from the time of Marcellin Champagnat was the legal and ecclesial authorisation of the Institute. At the time of Marcellin’s death, the Institute was recognised by the bishops of the dioceses where it was present and by the town councils. But it was not recognised by the French government or by the Roman Curia.

The lack of legal recognition created several problems: the difficulty in expanding, since it was limited to a certain region; the possibility of dispensing its members from military service; the need to take a public examination to become a teacher; and the higher cost of taxes and duties to be paid when a Brother died and had made a will in favour of the Institute.

The lack of ecclesial recognition represented a lack of identity, the fledgling congregation was either a third order linked to the Society of Mary or an independent and autonomous religious congregation.

Of all these problems, the main and most urgent is to resolve the problem of the military service for the young Brothers. It should be remembered that in a country in constant war, military service lasted at least 6 years, and it meant a long separation from the Institute for any young Brothers.

In a legally recognised congregation, its members were exempted from military service with an obedience from their Superior. The Superior indicated that the person concerned had been appointed to a school, and that was enough. As the Marist Brothers were not recognised, if one of the Brothers was called up, he had to present himself or a replacement, which at the time of Marcellin’s death meant paying someone about 6000 francs, i.e. 15 times the annual salary of a Brother.

Since the time of the founder, it had been noted that the solution of paying a replacement was ruinous, and he had contacted Fr Mazelier, superior of a congregation of teaching brothers with recognition but few members, to ask him to accept temporarily some of the Brothers called up for military service.

The Brothers of Saint- Paul-Trois-Chateaux numbered about forty. The agreement of union was signed in 1842, and included in the union the same Superior General, Fr Colin, and Director General, Br François; the creation of self-governing provinces, the preservation of the novitiate of Saint-Paul-Trois-Chateaux and that the new society would take the name of Brothers of Mary of Christian Instruction.

In 1844, the Brothers of Christian Instruction of Vivièrs merged with the Marist Brothers on similar terms to the one concluded with the Brothers of Saint-Paul.

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

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, we search for you,

like Mary, in the caravans of life,

in the tumult of our cities,

and in the masses of displaced people who are seeking

a better future for their children.

You call us to open the eyes of our heart

and hear the cries of children and young people,

especially the voiceless and homeless.

You encourage us to be creative in giving resolute

responses to their needs and to empower those who have no voice.

You challenge us to be present in more significant ways

among the children and young people on the margins of the world.

May we have the courage and audacity of Marcellin to respond

as Mary would have us respond as we seek to journey with children and young people living on the margins of life. 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**