Br François 8



**Marcellin Champagnat’s Final Illness**

By the beginning of 1840 Champagnat had to retire due to his terrible sufferings. He put the material affairs of the congregation in order by creating a civil Society, and then let Brs François and Louis-Marie do their work.

On 11 May 1840, Fr Champagnat received the last sacraments, made his recommendations to the Brothers and, the following week, arranged with Br François and Br Louis-Marie to finalise his spiritual testament. This was read on 18 May to the whole community, in it we read:

• “I desire that total and perfect obedience always reign among the Brothers of Mary; that the subjects, seeing in the Superiors the person of Jesus Christ, obey them in heart and spirit, and always renounce, if necessary, their own will and judgement.”

• “Let charity always reign among you. Love one another as Christ has loved you”.

• “Just as your will must coincide with that of the Fathers of the Society of Mary in obedience to a single Superior General, it is my wish that your hearts and feelings may always be united in Jesus and Mary”.

• “I also pray to the Lord and wish with all my soul that you may persevere faithfully in the holy exercise of the presence of God, the soul of prayer, of meditation and of all the virtues. May humility and simplicity always be the distinctive character of the Little Brothers of Mary. She is the first Superior of the whole Society”.

• “I leave you all, confidently, in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, until we have the joy of seeing each other together in eternal beatitude.”

**Marcellin Champagnat Dies**

Marcellin Champagnat died in the early hours of 6 June 1840. I t fell to Br François to organise the funeral and to communicate the news to all the Brothers’ communities. In the circular, Br François recalls that, “death put an end to a penitent, industrious life, full of works of zeal and devotion, through the sufferings of a long and cruel illness”. But, he adds, “he will be more effective and powerful as our protector in heaven, with the divine Mary, to whom he gave us everything in his death…. It is now up to us to collect and carefully follow his last and touching instructions”.

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

**Prayer**

Loving God, You call us to love,

a most fragile and precious action.

You challenge us to love unconditionally as You love.

Even when we fail to love others as you love us

You encourage us to extend a welcome to others.

In Mary You give us an example of someone who was prepared

to go the extra mile when her cousin Elizabeth was in need.

In Marcellin Champagnat You give us an example of someone

who seeing the desperate needs of his time responded to the challenge.

Marcellin was aware that each child needed to be loved.

He realised the importance of accepting each person

and allowing them to develop into who
You intended them to become.

May we accept the challenge before us,

to strengthen the Family Spirit in this school. 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**