

BROTHERS WITNESSES of HOPE

4- BROTHER CONSTANTIN-MARIE
ROULIN
(1874-1926)

The Knight of the Virgin Mary



BRO. CONSTANTIN-MARIE:

THE KNIGHT OF THE VIRGIN MARY

1- A HAPPY CHILDHOOD IN A COUNTRY OF LEGENDS AND A CHRISTIAN FAMILY



Church of Néant-sur-Yvel

Little Désiré Roulin was born on May 19th in Néant-sur-Yvel in Brittany, a village full of Legends: it was the place of the Adventures of the Knights of the Round Table, the Holy Grail, King Arthur and his heroes. The Country had also given birth to Mystical Saints who had a Great Intimacy with God and the Virgin and who had spent themselves for Children, the

Poor and the Sick. Désiré knew well the blessed Anne Toussainte de Volvire, who was Venerated in the Church of her Parish St-Pierre in Néant.

Désiré grew up in a Large Family of Ten Children. All of them actively participated in the Work on the “Grande Touche” Farm and in the life of the Christian Community: Father Pierre was the President of the Council of the Church Factory. The child attended the School of the Brothers of Christian Instruction in Ploërmel. He was Docile and Respectful with his Teachers, Cheerful and Full of Enthusiasm with his



Tomb of St. Anne of Volvire

Classmates. He was part of a Marian Association, which would develop his particular Devotion to the Virgin Mary.

2- BROTHER OF PLOËRMEL "CONSTANTIN-MARIE"

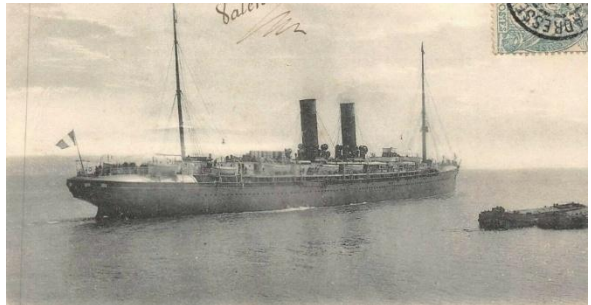


Chapel of the Mother House

When the age came to dedicate himself to his Life's Project, Désiré had very clear ideas. He replied to his Priest who wanted to encourage him to become a Priest: "I want to be a Brother of Father de la Mennais and nothing else, never!" At the age of fifteen, he entered the

Novitiate to prepare for his Mission as a Teaching Brother: He Studied, Prayed, and Played, with Passion. There he was, a Brother with the Name of Constantin-Marie. In his First Experiences as a Teacher, he encountered some difficulties. He acted with Tact and Good Faith, but he had difficulty controlling the Class and he tired easily. His Health was also Fragile: poor condition of his Stomach and Continual Colds. He was nevertheless **accepted for Military Service, but he did not feel comfortable there.** Fortunately, he only spent 14 Actual Days there. After other School Experiences, he was placed in the Scholasticate of Ploërmel.

In that Environment he finally found himself at ease: he spent Four Happy Years where he was able to demonstrate his qualities as an Educator. He was a Joyful Brother in his Community, a Teacher esteemed by all, a Friend of the Young People in Training.



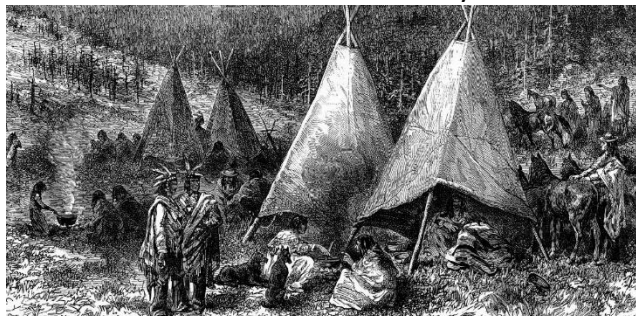
The transatlantic GASCogne

Unfortunately, that time of happiness and fruitfulness was to be suddenly interrupted. In France, the Secular Government of Combes ordered that the Teaching Congregations be dissolved and that all their Members be Secularized. The Brothers who decided to pursue their Vocation had to

operate in Clandestinity or Expatriate themselves Abroad. Brother Constantin was one of the latter. On July 4th, 1903, he embarked at the Port of Le Havre, with a Group of Young Brothers, on the “Gascogne” bound for North America.

3- IN THE FAR LANDS OF NORTH AMERICA

Having landed in New York, the exiled Brothers joyfully met their Canadian Brothers and immediately left for the Far West, in the Territory



Native American Tribes

of the Rocky Mountains. In that Region, the Missionaries of the Society of Jesus had created Missions to Evangelize the Amerindians, who had been confined to the Reserves (Sioux,

Apaches, Cheyennes, Kootenais, Blackfeet, etc.). They had also established Schools to help the Young Natives face the Dramatic Crisis of the Invasion of their Territories. For that, the Fathers needed Missionary Teachers. The Provincial, Father de la Motte, had then gone to Ploërmel to ask for the collaboration of the Brothers of Christian Instruction. About Twenty Brothers had rushed there, among them Brother Constantin.

They spent a year studying English, in a Warm, Fraternal Atmosphere. They explored the Splendid Territory, with its Clear Lakes, its Forests Populated with Animals, its Snow-Capped Mountains. They got to know the Native Tribes, who accepted the Gospel well, but who still preferred to ride fast on their Wild Mounts in the Classroom. At



Alaska

the end of the year of preparation, the Brothers received the Destination

of their Apostolate among the Native Tribes. All except one: Our Brother Constantine. The Superior announced to him that he would go to Alaska, to help the Jesuits, in a Mission among the Inuits. He would go all alone, Thousands of km away from any Community of Brothers, to serve another Religious Institute that he had not chosen. Brother Constantine bowed his head and accepted that Appointment.

-But you didn't say anything?

- Why? Isn't it obvious that it was God who wanted it? I would only do well there. I gave myself wholeheartedly.

He asks the Superior, Brother Abel:

- What would my Job be in Alaska, in the Jesuit Mission?

- You would do what you are told!

The Program was Simple: to put oneself at the disposal of God and

the Jesuit Missionaries for what needs to be done. Brother Constantine did not waste his time complaining. He immediately sets off on his Journey. It was the end of July: it was time to hurry. From Seattle (USA) he disembarked at Nome (Alaska), he arrived at the Delta of the Yukon, the Great River. On Board a Last Boat, he disembarked on August 21st, 1904 at the Mission of Holy Cross on the Great River: A Row of Cabins, Wooded Hills and a Few Buildings made of Logs. A Poor Destination, but Our Brother would make it rich in Faith and Charity.

4- BROTHER AMONG TEENAGERS, HIS LITTLE BROTHERS: THE LONG WINTER IN ALASKA

Brother Corentin had no time to catch his breath before he had to get to Work.



Holy Cross Alaska

The Holy Cross Mission had its Beautiful History. It was founded by Russian Missionaries with the name of Koserevsky. After the Territory passed to the USA, Alaska was Evangelized by Bishop Seghers, who suffered Martyrdom, and by Jesuit Fathers, such as Fr. Tosi, Robaut, De La Motte... The Chapel of the Mission contained a Precious Relic: A Small Piece of the Holy Cross. At the beginning of the 20th Century there was a Parish with Fathers who went to the Villages of the Inuits of the Interior. On site there were Two Schools: One for Girls with the Sisters of St. Anne and the other for Boys with the Brothers SJ. The Boarding School was the

most effective way to Evangelize and give Instruction to the Young Natives, who returned to their Families after Several Years or stayed to form their Own Families on site. Brother Constantin was in charge of the Group of the Youngest Boys, aged 10 to 15. He had not been recognized as a Teacher, because of his Bad English, his Fragile Health, his



Inuit Children

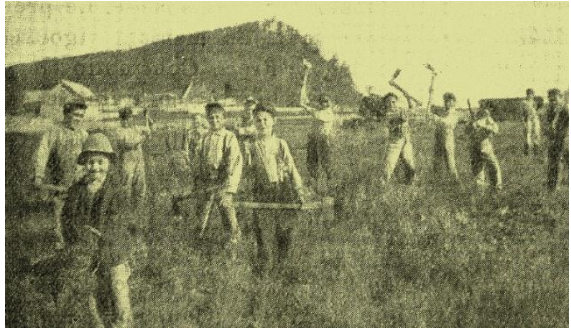
Reserved and Submissive Nature. “You would do what you are told to do”. In practice he was always in the midst of his Young People, except for the two hours of Class in the Morning, one in the Afternoon and at Meal Times, which there they took at the Sisters’. He was called “Supervisor”, but in truth he was an “Elder brother among his little brothers”. Let us follow him in his Tasks with his Young People.

The Work changed according to the Rhythm of the Seasons; in practice were two: Summer and Winter. Brother Constantine had arrived at the end of August, when preparations were being made for Winter. What Work had to be done ?

- Woodworking: we must accumulate a Large Quantity of Wood for the Mission Stoves: They must heat Two Schools, the Chapel, the Kitchen, the Residences of the Fathers and Sisters, the Factories and the Stables... The Stoves must be lit day and night for Eight Months. Our

Brother was at Work with his Little World: the saw Mechanical and long hand saws cut the Trunks, forming a Huge Pile of Wood.

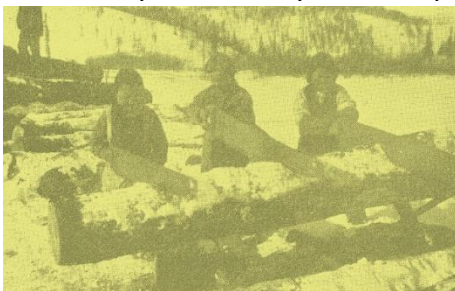
- Fodder must also be accumulated for the Cows and Horses. With their Brother, the Young Men collect about Forty Tons of it, in the Meadows and in the Dried-up Lakes.



Stump removal

But, while cutting the grass, they raise Clouds of Mosquitoes, which attacked the Workers. They were well covered, but the bites did not spare them.

- The Snow had not yet covered the ground. They took advantage of that to pull up the Stumps left by the Lumberjacks, so as to enlarge the cultivable surface. Armed with Picks and Axes, they attacked the Roots. Then, as the expected reward for their fatigue, they went deep into the Forest to taste the Strawberries, Raspberries and Blueberries. On returning to the Mission, they brought with them the Sap that comes out of the Birches: it was burned on the fire and its smoke immediately drove away the Mosquitoes.



- With the Month of October, Winter had come. The River became Frozen and Still. The Isolation was almost complete, but the Daily Activities must be ensured: School, Prayer, Recreation, Meals... We still needed a lot of Wood! Every

day, taking advantage of the Midday light, Brother Constantin took his Little Men to play the Lumberjacks. They climbed the Slope of the Forest to cut the trunks. The First Blows are given by the "Overseer"; the young people load the Branches onto their Sleds, they ride the

Logs and, like the Wind, they return to the Mission to distribute to each Stove its Supply of Fuel.

- In Winter, too, it was necessary to provide Fresh Fish. A circle of ice was cut on the Ponds and the net was cast for fishing, which was often very fruitful. It was also necessary to think of drawing water from under the Ice of the River: It was the Little Bull Brigham who carried the barrel on his sled. He has been torn from the warmth of the stable and he run, helped by the youngsters, to return there immediately and escape the bite of the Frost.



Inuit inhabitants

All followed example of their Brother who, despite his Poor Health, set an example and transmitted his enthusiasm to all.

- The day was not over yet. Bro Constantin made them study the Catechism and Prayers. Then came the Inspection of Clothes. He distributed Needles and Strong Sewing Thread to repair Boots and Mittens; he had the straw in Shoes changed; he had wet Clothes wiped. After Supper, it was time for Recreation. By the light of the Moon and the Many Stars, the Boys launched into Wild Football and Skating Matches. The Good “Supervisor” trotted around incessantly, excited a numb boy who was frozen standing up, picked up a Fallen Player, rubbed the Nose and Hands that were pale under the bite of the Cold.
- Then we went back to the Well-heated Room for Prayers. We went up to the Dormitory on the Bunks on two or three Floors, where we fell asleep quickly and **well. Brother Constantine slept in a Corner, inside a Small Room: A Bed, Table and a Chair.** He watched over their rest: so that the Cold does not disturb the sleep of the young people, he interrupted his sleep several times to go down to the Ground Floor, put Wood in the Stove and rekindle the Fire.

5- BROTHER AMONG HIS TEENAGERS: IN SPRING AND SUMMER

Most of the year was spent under the Grip of Winter, but since January day had slowly advanced into night.

In April the Ice began to melt, Streams fell from the Mountains, the Frozen Mass of the Rivers shook, brook and started moving. The Great Cold gave way to Summer and, for Brother Constantine, the Work doubles.

- First, the Sun must be helped to grow Crops: The Frozen Earth was covered with a layer of Ash (we have tons of it!) to melt the Snow quickly. As soon as the Earth appears, we rush to sow the Hardest Potatoes and



Salmon Fishing

Vegetables. Holy Cross had the reputation of having the Best Gardens in Interior Alaska.

Brother Constantin remembered his Peasant Origins and directed the Operations.

- In late April, Countless Geese stop on the Yukon Sandbanks. The older young go hunting, while the

younger ones collected Eggs deposited on the Banks of the Ponds.

- But the Great Operation of the Summer was the Grandiose Salmon Fishing, which was called “Alaska’s Wheat”. A Reserve must be prepared for the Whole Year. The St. Joseph, the Mission’s Boat, headed towards the Fishing Camps, where Immense Schools of Salmon were coming up. For several Weeks everyone was at Work: they set the nets, collect the Prey, empty the insides, place the fish on pallets to dry and smoke them. They return with tens of thousands of Salmon, each weighing 30 to 50 kgs: they would provide the Daily Meal for the Inhabitants and the Mission Dogs. The Bears were also fond of them and could be seen picking up a Salmon and carrying it to their young.

- For Domestic Animals (Dairy Cows, and Horses for transporting the Missionaries during the Summer, grazing Reindeer) there was to prepare Dry Fodder for the whole year. In Summer the Animals graze in the Meadows, supporting the fight against Mosquitoes. For the boys it was time to cut and store the tons of Hay in the Stables.



Blueberries

1. But the Most Anticipated Event of the Holidays was the Blueberry Picking. It was a Camp that lasted Several Days: The Young People embark on the St. Joseph to go up the Yukon, to the Mountains that were “Blue”, because of those Colorful Berries. From Morning to Night, they picked Blueberries, sometimes in the company of a Bear, who filled up on food before his Long Sleep. The whole Camp, after those Magnificent Days in the Open Air, returned to the Mission with their Supply of several tons of Fruit, which would be precious for making Delicious Cakes throughout the year.

6- THE OBSCURE AND PRECIOUS WORK OF BROTHER “OVERSEER”

What was the role of Brother Constantine in that hive of the Mission? He had no positions of responsibility. He was not integrated into a Community of Belonging. He did not have a Well-recognized Authority. Ultimately, he was a Background Figure. And yet, when he was no longer present at Holy Cross, everyone would realize the Great Void he had left. Let us try to describe that Obscure but Precious Work of Our “Brother Overseer”.

- THE HUMBLE DAILY WORK:

1. Brother Constantin was always with his Little World of Inuits aged 10 to 15. He followed them from Morning to Night, in their "Secondary"



The Bro. Constantin-Marie covered with the "Parkey". T Bro. Constantin's Student Building: On the Ground Floor, Recreation Room, above, the Dormitory

Activities: Work, Routine Occupations, Recreation, Daily Housework, and Daily Prayers. He was a Presence full of Affection and Kindness. He set an example, he encouraged his young people, and he had with them a Relationship of an older Brother: he created a Family Atmosphere,

animated by Christian Feelings. If he did not give Catechism Lessons, he showed the Gospel by his life and his serene and constant example. In that sense he was Reminiscent of St. Charles de Foucault: like him, he Preached the Gospel by his Life in Ordinary Occupations. When their "Brother" left for distant Destinations, called by other Obediences, his young people would write to him Letters Full of Affection, Nostalgia and Faith: they would tell him about their Progress in Education and Spirituality; they would speak to him about their First Communion and Confirmation, about Enrolling in the Marian Association... It was almost an Invocation to tell him: Brother Constantine, come back among us!

"Dear Brother Constantine, I hope you are well, I am well too. Yesterday was the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We had a Holiday. I liked going to School and I wanted to learn more. I made my First Communion on Pentecost last year. I was the Second

Reader. I got a New Cap last year. I have written to you. I would Pray for you when I go to Mass. We had a very Nice Picnic. I hope I would see you again someday. Your ittle Boy."

Philip. Alaska Holy Cross Mission, 11/22/191

Another Letter: still very simple and affectionate

*"Dear Brother Constantine, I hope you are well. That was the First Letter I have written to you. It would not be long. When I become a big boy I would write a long one. I told Father Desjardins about my First Communion. Now I would tell you about those who became Children of Mary. They were Alexis, George and four girls, on the Feast of the Assumption. It was a Great Day for them and I served High Mass three times and Low Mass several times and when **my** brother came out of the Boat he gave me a Mouth Organ. Your beloved boy., James Holy Cross Mission, Koserefsky, Alaska, 12/8/ 1910"*

- A SOLITUDE FILLED WITH LOVE



Building an Igloo

Brother Constantin was very sensitive to Friendship and Community Relations. He loved to tell and pour out his feelings to his Confreres, to Consecrated Persons, and to Young People... But, at Holy Cross, he was alone in his Community of Brothers of Christian Instruction: he could not open up

confidentially to Confreres. Brother Superior General sent him many Personal Letters, Documents and Magazines of the Institute, but he still felt like a Stranger in that Mission. The Jesuit Fathers and Brothers were Fervent Religious, but they were part of another Family. He spent two Very Painful Years of Isolation, until the arrival of Brother René-Maurice at Holy Cross: it was a Great Joy for Brother Constantin to be able to pour out his heart to a Brother of his Religious Family. Even if the moments to

share were not very numerous, they could Confide in each other, Support each other, and Rediscover a Family Spirit.

And yet that Solitude was a moment of Grace for Our Brother, “the Solitary of Alaska.” He could purify his heart of overly emotional attachments, make it stronger through those Trials and attach himself more strongly to the Lord. His Spirituality could be enriched by the Eucharist in the Mass and Daily Adoration. He could develop his Ardent Devotion to the Virgin Mary, especially by following the Doctrine of St. Louis de Montfort. He often read the “Treatise on True Devotion to Mary.” He could savor the lives of the Saints and follow in their Footsteps.

When he was appointed Master of Novices he would understand that the Trying Years at Holy Cross would have been a Precious Preparation for that Post so important and delicatated for the Whole Institute.

- REJECTED STONE BECAME A STONE IN FACT

At the Holy Cross Mission, the Activities were Multiple: The 7 Jesuit Fathers were in charge of the Sacraments and Evangelization, in the Mission and in the Surrounding Area; the 5 Jesuit Brothers followed the School and the Works; the 8 Sisters of St. Anne were in charge of the Girls' School, the Kitchen, the Linen, the Chapel, and the Infirmary. Each had Authority in his Sector. Brother Constantin? He followed the Group of Younger Boys, but he did not have the Direction: he had to carry out what Brother Markham, an American Jesuit, Director of the School and the Works, told him.

The Superior General had given him the Instruction: “You would do what you are told.” And he was Subject to that Order: “In the Morning the Director told me what I must do for the Morning and in the Afternoon what I must do until the Evening.” Brother Markham was rather Authoritarian and rather Cold in his dealings. He had been disappointed not to have been Ordained a Priest. He did not think much of the Brother Supervisor, considered him not very capable of Teaching, not very gifted with young people, not very Educated (he did not know English well): ultimately a Weak Personality and in addition with rather Fragile Health.

Brother Constantin, in his Submission and Humility, did not remonstrate. He accepted everything in Silence, although he would have liked to Teach, Explain the Catechism, and take part in Current Conversations in the



Melting Ice on the River

Community. But he was not highly regarded: “I was esteemed like a Broom Handle.” In that way, he reminded us of St.

Bernadette Soubirous “like a Broom that was put in a corner after use.” He also reminded us of the

Words of Jesus: “The Stone rejected by the Builders has become the Cornerstone.”

Indeed, the True Dimension of Our Brother would be “discovered” when he was no longer at the Mission. His Discreet Work with the young, his attitude of serenity in the Mission, the witness of his Prayer, his Ardent Love for the Queen of Heaven, and the radiance of his “Holiness” would be recognized as a Fundamental Activity during the time of his presence. The Superior wrote to him a few Months before his departure: “I beg you: Pray for the Former Students and for their Superior: I thank you very cordially for all that you have done for Our Mission during those Last Five Years. It was impossible for me to tell you all my feelings in that regard. I assure you that your memory was and would be a Blessing here for many years. There was not a day that I do not feel your absence .../ I cannot tell you the void that your departure left here. Pray for those Poor Children whom you loved so much and to whom you did so much good...” Even the Brusque Director of the School, Br. Markham, who would become a Priest, would recognize the Precious Work of Br Constantin, would write to him to ask for his forgiveness and would send him alms every year for the Institute, in reparation for his Unjust Treatment. We could also note

that in parallel with Br. Constantin, Br. René-Maurice had also left a Part of his Heart in Alaska: “Every time I left a Region, I felt sadness. It was always hard to part with one’s Friends, but for Alaska, in spite of everything, it was sadness. The Only Place I left crying was ALASKA.” Was it the Fraternal Atmosphere and the Supernatural Climate of his Confrere Constantin that had deeply touched him?

7- MASTER OF NOVICES IN ENGLAND: 1909-1921

From an Obscure Position, in a distant and hidden Mission, Brother Constantine was called to fulfill one of the Most Important Responsibilities of the Institute. In 1909 the New Superior General, Brother Jean-Joseph, with his Council, had decided to recall the Brothers from the Rocky Mountains and Alaska Mission, to strengthen other Missions, in particular Haiti and Canada. But Brother Constantine had been recalled before the others: he had been named Master of Novices. That Charge was unexpected, but the Superiors had noticed his Heroic Conduct in Alaska, his Spiritual Maturation, and his Attachment to the Institute. They considered him the Most Suitable Person to fulfill that Role.

At that time the laws of expulsion of Religious Institutes were still in force.

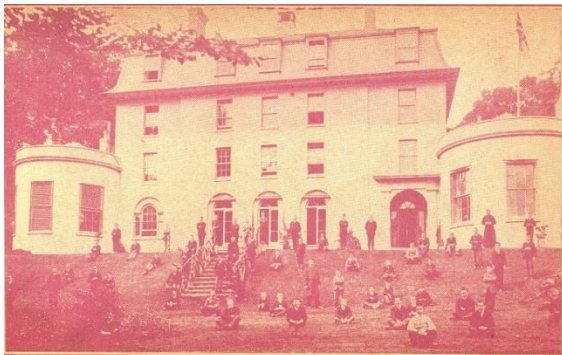
Because of that Persecution, the Novitiate had been transferred to England, first to Taunton (Fullands), then to Southampton (Bitterne). For the life and future of the Congregation, it was essential to resume the Work of Vocations and the Formation of New Recruits. The Brothers had adapted the First English



Fullands Taunton UK

Houses and had resumed the Various Stages of Formation: Postulancy, Novitiate and Scholasticate.

At the beginning, the Candidates were few in number and the rules were quite flexible: we lived in a Family Atmosphere. As the Number of Young People increased, it was necessary to provide a More Complete and Canonical Framework, based on Solid Spiritual Foundations: for that purpose the General



Br. Constantine on the Stairs among his Novices at St Mary's - Bitterne Park - Southampton

Council had chosen Brother Constantin. He did not have any Specific Preparation, but he would face that Task with his Immense Faith and the Delicacy of his Heart.

He approached the young people in a very Paternal Way. He made them understand that he was there to help them, to put himself at their Service. He shared their life, participated in Recreation with them: "While walking with him, the Joyful Words, the Loud Laughter spoke of the Happiness that the presence of the Father brought to the Children". He gave Great Importance to the Eucharist and he took Great Care of the Liturgical Celebrations. But the Novices were struck above all by the Great Devotion of their Master to the Virgin Mary: he invited them to Consecrate themselves to Her, he Solmly underlined her Feasts, he explained to them Marian Devotions according to the Doctrine of Father de Montfort: above all he gave them the example of being a True Son of Mary.

Brother Master organized the Studies and gave the Novices Religious Conferences that he prepared with care, but the Greatest Teaching was that of his life. In the Spiritual Portrait painted by his Biographer, Brother Célestin-Auguste Cavaleau, we could read at the head of the different Paragraphs: "Brother Constantin appeared as a man of God: Luminous and Naive Faith/ Inexhaustible and Radiant Goodness/ Ease and

Gentleness of his Relationships; Affectionate Devotion/ Patience and Humility in all trials/ Life of Spiritual Union with the Most Holy Virgin/ Spirit of Religion/ Spirit of Inviolable Fidelity to his Institute/ Ardent Love for Jesus-Host/ Love of suffering Jesus and progressive purifications." A True Portrait of a man of God.

8- THE TEST OF WAR (1914-1918)

Everything seemed to be going well in the House of St-Mary's of Bitterne (Southampton): the Three Groups of Postulants, Novices and Scholastics were becoming more numerous; one breathed a Climate of Great Fervour and Intense Fraternity; each year a group of young Brothers gave their collaboration to the Schools in France which were slowly getting back on their feet, despite the Clandestinity. But a Terrible Event occurred to



abruptly interrupt that Recovery: The European Nations, and after them that of the Whole World, had entered into a Terrible War which would cause Millions of Victims. All the Resources of the

Countries were requisitioned in that Immense Carnage. All the Available Men were enlisted for the War.

Throughout the Five Years of the War, the young Brothers, including those in Training, had to lend themselves to Military Service. Many of them brought Honor for their Courage, Devotion, help to their Comrades, Apostolate even among the Soldiers. But, what suffering for the Superior Brothers, in particular for the Brother Master! He accompanied the departing ones to the Port, he entrusted them to the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal, and he gave them Paternal Advice. When they were at the Front Line, he maintained a close correspondence with them. Above all, he prayed and offered his Sacrifices for them, following to the

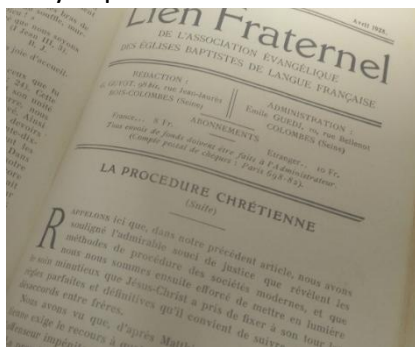
Letter, the Recommendations given by the Virgin in her Apparitions, in particular at Fatima.

From time to time, he had the Joy of seeing some of his Former Novices again, when they came to spend a few days at the Community of St Mary's, to refresh themselves Spiritually and enjoy a Moment of Cordial Fraternity. Unfortunately, there was no lack of Bad News: Brothers wounded Physically and Morally, Brothers who died in the fighting (among the Novices there were 13). At the House of St Mary's, the Brother Teachers doubled their Work; all suffered Deprivation and even Hunger. Fortunately, the Terrible "Great War" ended, without extinguishing Hatred and Greed: Twenty Years Later, the fighting would resume even more devastating.

Brother Constantin resumed his Activity: he was, at the same time, Master of Novices, in Charge of the Studies of the Postulants and the Scholastics, Director of the House of St-Mary's in Bitterne (which was in fact the Mother House of the Institute): a Relentless Job, which he faced with his Great Sense of Duty and his usual smile. The numbers began to rise again: in 1920, there were about fifty young people; in 1921, 90; and then they were to reach 150 and even 200. The prospects for the future were full of Hope.

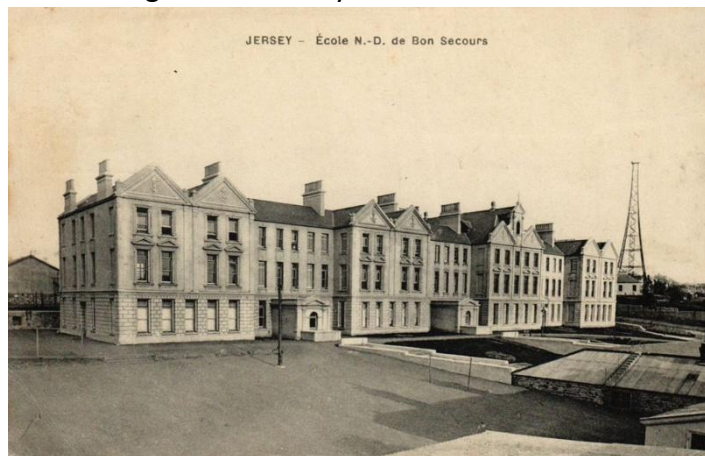
9- GENERAL ASSISTANT AT THE SERVICE OF THE INSTITUTE

In 1921 the Congregation celebrated its General Chapter in Bitterne; they were still in exile. Brother Jean-Joseph had been Confirmed as Superior General, the Council had been Elected; only one Assistant was missing. To everyone's great surprise, Brother Constantin was Elected. As in all the turning points in his life, there were not many explanations: it was Divine Providence that led him. In fact, it was a Surprising Appointment: he fulfilled his important but discreet service as Formator well; he did not have much experience in Administration; his Health did not allow him to make Tiring Journeys and Trips. He did not expect that New Position at all. But, as always,



he bowed his head and obeyed without saying anything, making his own the words of Scripture: "The Obedient Will told of his Victories."

He travelled again to join the General Council, then established on the Island of Jersey, near Brittany. Brother Jean-Joseph entrusted him with Two Tasks. First, he took over the Management of the Magazine "Lien Fraternel" addressed to the Soldier Brothers. He knew the Brothers who were doing their Military Service well and he also knew the Barracks



Environment well. He exhorted the young Brothers, whom he had known in the Novitiate, to be faithful to Prayers, especially to the Eucharist, especially in

times of danger. He insisted on Consecration to the Virgin Mary and to praying the Rosary. He launched them into the Apostolate among their Comrades, without shyness and with enthusiasm. He invited them to join the Associations of Catholic Action and to collaborate with the Chaplains. The other task was Internal to the Institute: it was to write a Summarized but Substantial History of the life of Father de la Mennais and the Vicissitudes of the Institute. Brother Constantine was a loving son of Father de la Mennais. He closely followed the progress of his cause for Beatification, he prayed to him during his visits to the Tomb in the Chapel of the Mother House, he studied his Life and his Writings to conform to them. He would compose and publish a Book on the Father Founder, the History of the Missions, the Work of the Superiors General Cyprien, Abel and Jean-Joseph. The Brochure "The Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel", Paris Letouzey, 1923, 159 pages, was the Fruit of Various Collaborations, but the part of the Work of Brother Constantine was preponderant in it.

Unfortunately, suddenly a Third Task presented itself, completely unforeseen, but which he would discover very early on to be the Most Important: Here too we would see the Finger of Providence! He was 47 Years Old, he was in the period of Full Maturity, the Most Fruitful of his Life. But, at the same time, an Illness advanced, which would Immobilize him in a Plaster Corset. It was Pott's Disease: an Infection of the Spine, which progressively prevents all movement. As always, Brother Constantine would say yes to that New Turning Point of Providence and



Pott's disease

would transform that Illness, with its Limitations, Immobility, Pain, into a means of Personal Sanctification and Apostolic Fruitfulness for the World and for the Institute. He left his Activity as Assistant and prepared to travel the New Path with the Spirit of Mary: Here I am!

In his Last Issue of *Lien Fraternel*, he wrote among other things: “Be Saints for whom suffering and trial are the Occasion to tend with greater energy towards heavenly goods, to purify themselves, to associate themselves, if God granted them that Grace, with the Redemptive Sufferings of the Savior Jesus.” He underwent a First Surgical Operation at the Jersey Hospital, then he was transferred to the St-Jean Clinic in Ploërmel. It was June 10th, 1923: He knelt before the Tomb of the Father, climbed the Stairs to the First Floor and went to the Room, where he would stay Two and a Half Years, “offering his life with Jesus the Savior.” He wrote: “Ask, for my Intention, an Abandonment full of Confidence to the Providential Designs that God has for me; that I knew how to appreciate the Great Benefits contained in the Cross.”

10- ILLNESS AND THE OFFERING OF LIFE

Faced with his Illness, Brother Constantine nourished at the same time a Heroic Resignation and an Invincible Hope. He suffered with the Most Complete Resignation, in Union with Jesus and Mary, but at the same time he hoped to obtain Healing, on condition that it could serve for the Beatification of the Father Founder, as the Superior General had suggested to him. A Trip to Lourdes was also organized for him from April 20th to 25th, 1925. It was very difficult for him: he suffered the Rain, the Pain, and the Travel. But he offered these Troubles to his Mother and Queen of Heaven: he did not ask for his Healing, he simply wanted to visit



that Land sanctified by the presence of the Immaculate.

1. At the Clinic in Ploërmel he continued his Prayer and his Offering. "I was never bored in that Room." His days were filled with many Exercises and Visits from his Friends. He received Holy Communion Every Day, he followed Mass in his little Missal, and he Recited Rosaries without ever stopping. The Nursing Sister testified: "He said so many Ave Marias!" As always, Brother Constantin continued to do well around him. Every Morning he had all the Patients in the Infirmary greeted in his name. He received Visitors, he responded kindly: "His Voice became urgent, ardent and I listened, I drank in his words. He recalled the names

of his Former Novices.” He thanked them for the visit without showing his Personal Embarrassment. He continued his correspondence, as long as his strength allowed him, even using little notes, which his correspondents kept like Relics.

His Most Effective Apostolate was that of Suffering. “It was Truly Admirable to see him so Gentle, Calm and so Resigned,” Testified the Nursing Sister, even during the Painful Dressings. He himself put into practice the Teachings he had given to the Novices: “That was the moment for me to Practice Loving and Trusting Abandonment. May I know how to welcome suffering and unite it to that of Our Savior and to the Sorrows of the Most Holy Virgin.”

- However, the Illness was getting worse. He received the Anointing of the Sick. The Brothers came around him: the Director of the Clinic, Brother Élie-Joseph Déas, the Director of the Agricultural School, his Great Friend, Mr. Hamono, and the Brothers of the Schools of Ploërmel. He joined in the Prayers of the Brothers. He was advised to Intercede from Heaven for his Friends. He received the Indulgence of a Good Death from the Chaplain, Father Cotto. He again invoked Father de la Mennais and tried to light the light: he had entered into the Eternal Light in the arms of his Father. It was the Afternoon of January 2nd, 1926.

HE WAS A SAINT

Currently, Brother Constantine rested in the Small Cemetery of the Brothers at the Mother House of Ploërmel. He left a Reputation for Holiness that was clearly recognized in the Tradition of the Institute. He had been considered a True Saint by the Brothers for a Century. Very detailed Biographies had been dedicated to him, in particular that of Brother Célestin-A. Cavaleau, published immediately after his death in 1933. Illustrated booklets have also been dedicated to him, Addressed to Young People and Children. He was venerated in his Country of Origin, Néant-sur-Yvel (Brittany) and the descendants of the Roulin Family kept his memory with Great Admiration. Immediately after his death,

Testimonies of veneration are multiplied. Here were some Statements: "The ideas of all those who lived in his Company: he was a Saint, a True Saint and that says it all! / I believed him to be a Great Saint and if I learned that Miracles were performed through his Intercession I would not be at all surprised. / I retained from Brother Constantine an impression of Eminent Holiness; we felt that it was enough for us to be like him to be Perfect Religious. / How many times have I not said to my Confreres and my Students that I lived in the Company of a Saint! / His ascendancy was incredible and it was to Holiness, rather than to any talent that it must be attributed. / As soon as I knew him I felt for him the veneration that one must have for Saints. That feeling grew in me as I knew him better. / From the First Interviews, no one was mistaken, his Soul gave off the sound of the Supernatural"

Let us conclude with a Prayer: "Bro. Constantine, be Our Traveling Companion; tell us again, so easily disconcerted by the trial that God and Father; tell us again that Our Vocation was beautiful and that we must keep it at the Cost of all Sacrifices; tell us again that Our Strength was in Humble, Confident and Obstinate Prayer; tell us again that whatever happens, Mary must always remain Our Good Mother."

