



Mennaisian
Novena
Nº. 29

**Prayer for the beatification of
John Mary de la Mennais**

O God our Father, you have given
Jean-Marie de la Mennais,
a generous heart and untiring zeal
to make your Son Jesus Christ and his Gospel
known especially to children and youth.

As we venerate him as the Founder
of two religious congregations
devoted to Christian education,
we pray to you that he may soon
be recognized blessed.

Help us follow his example
at the service of truth,
and grant us through his intercession,
the favours we are now asking...

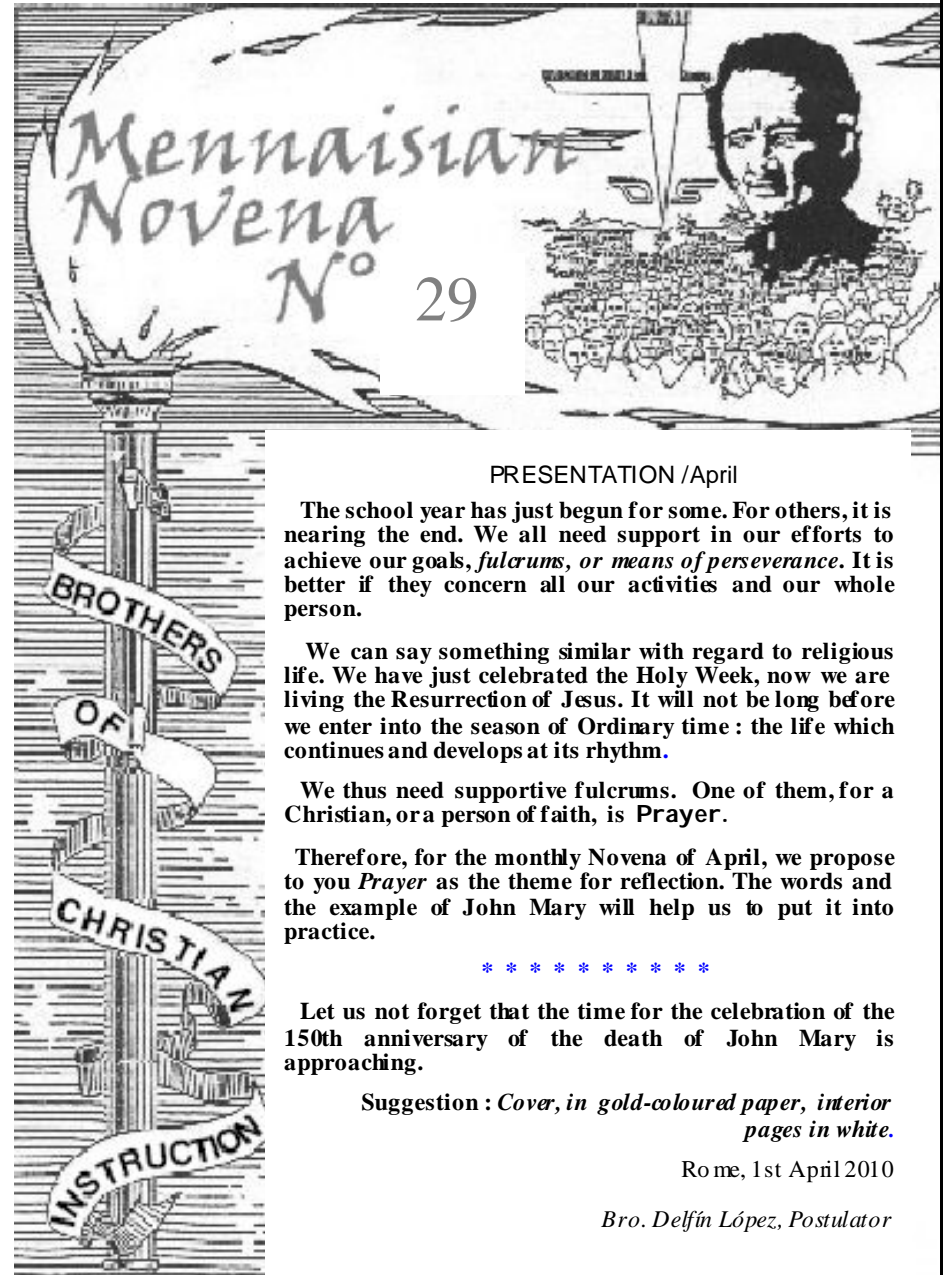
(silent pause)

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

O Lord Jesus, glorify your servant,
Venerable Jean-Marie de la Mennais

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PRESENTATION /April

The school year has just begun for some. For others, it is nearing the end. We all need support in our efforts to achieve our goals, *fulcrums*, or *means of perseverance*. It is better if they concern all our activities and our whole person.

We can say something similar with regard to religious life. We have just celebrated the Holy Week, now we are living the Resurrection of Jesus. It will not be long before we enter into the season of Ordinary time: the life which continues and develops at its rhythm.

We thus need supportive fulcrums. One of them, for a Christian, or a person of faith, is **Prayer**.

Therefore, for the monthly Novena of April, we propose to you *Prayer* as the theme for reflection. The words and the example of John Mary will help us to put it into practice.

Let us not forget that the time for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the death of John Mary is approaching.

Suggestion : *Cover, in gold-coloured paper, interior pages in white.*

Rome, 1st April 2010

Bro. Delfín López, Postulator

Novena to John Mary : How to do it ?

A precaution : to prepare oneself and enter into the theme, it is advisable to read page 4 of the review (in addition to page 1); the meaning of his words and how John Mary lived the proposed theme are explained there, etc.

Here we show a way of doing it, using the materials that we present. There are, of course, other ways of doing it,

Stages.- a) Begin with the sign of the cross.

b) Mention **the intentions** : cf. page 5 and others.

c) Read the **two daily thoughts** of John Mary (pp. 6 -7).

d) Recite the Prayer for the **beatification** (p.12).

Other elements could be added, personal or at the initiative of the animator.

e) **End with the sign of the cross.**

This can last two minutes or a quarter of an hour !

And the **reflection** on page. 5 ? – It can be done every day on a number ; or better still, consecrate a certain time, on a given day, to share in a family or in a group.

The remaining part of the review aims at deepening the knowledge of John Mary and the Congregation.

IMPORTANT ! **2010**

A year of reference in the life of
Jean-Marie de la Mennais : we commemorate
150 years of his death,
on 26 December 1860, at Ploërmel.

It will be a year of reference for us if this celebration helped us penetrate and live the ideals, the Charism, that God confided to us through our Father Founder.

New poster of John Mary de La Mennais,

...Leading the children to Jesus

Jesus said :

“Let the little children come to me, don't hinder them”.

Such is the mission that John Mary de la Mennais proposed to himself during his lifetime. Not only did he leave the little children go to Jesus, but he strived to put them on the way towards Him. That is what the poster above shows : we see John Mary himself presenting a coloured child to Jesus, accompanied by others of different races. They also approach Jesus decidedly and enthusiastically... However, they are not alone : they are accompanied by a Mennaisian female teacher and, at the end of the queue, there is a Brother of a new type, bearing his D+S on the chest, and he also showing them Jesus,

Here is the way a Brother of San Borja (Bolivia) sees the poster :

“ Fraternal greetings.

José We have some beautiful packets of posters ready for distribution. We brought them from Chile in January, for the Brothers of Argentina had brought enough for all. I know the poster very well. It represents two realities in sharp contrast : the serious austerity of the Mother House : stonework, history, solidity, contemplation, spirituality... and the freshness, the joy, the rhythm, the agility, the colour and the life of the personages that are part and parcel of the “Mennaisian” family of our days.

Personally, I think the contrary of what others think : I think of the vitality of John Mary, of the Brothers, of the Educators and of the Children, -- something I would like to transmit to the walls of the Mother House.

I know that it is difficult ; but I would have put some wings of youth to the house, to the stonework and to the whole structure, so that, in good faith, we realise that : this Jesus we are announcing is in colours and not in black or white. He has light feet and not the heavy step. His life is of abundance and his heart is of grandeur without meanness or sourness.

Antonio Vivas and his Brothers.

A danger ? To stick to our old designs, classical or insipid, with regard to the representation of Jesus and of John Mary and applying to the children and the youth of today our own criteria, those of some years ago.

We indicate here a way of doing it, by using the materials that we are going to present to you. There would be other ways of doing it. The poster is dynamic and large and, why not, devout, in its own way and in another style.
Buenos Aires, 2009, at the Diocesan Process



Here are your children

Jean Marie de la Mennais

Correspondence of a Mennaisian Family.

The Day of John Mary

This year we had the grace of participating as a family in the Novena preparatory to the celebration of John Mary. It was an enriching experience. And the fact of sharing it other members of the Community was very much appreciated. We lived some moments of prayer, of deep spirituality, and that was very comforting, granting that the daily rhythm of emptiness sometimes made it difficult to find such a time for reflection.

Often, as Mennaisians, on our way back from school, we brought back with us a heart and a mind filled with good things. This time we came back with a very sincere and renewed **engagement**.

We had understood the necessity of being actors, of being participants and of integrating more in the project of life initiated by John Mary and which we have to continue today. The reality we have to live is very complex and not simple at all ; neither was it so for John Mary. However, we were celebrating then what he had done.

It would be marvellous if each one of us reflected, even for a few minutes only per day, and asked himself or herself: What can I do? What do I have to offer? How can I collaborate in this project ? There is a beautiful gift for John Mary and for our Brothers who want us to listen to them attentively and put our hands at their disposal . . .

Many thanks to the organisers of the Novena who help to return to our heart which is sometimes distracted but must always come back on its way to Jesus.

Family Alegre.



JOHN MARY DE LA MENNAIS: *A man of prayer*

Who would doubt that John Mary de la Mennais was an active man?
 + The Congregations he founded,
 + The responsibilities he held;
 + The journeys he undertook;
 + The letters he wrote...

How did he manage to do accomplish all that well, without betraying faithfulness, without lacking supernatural inspirations, and without having his spirituality be swallowed up by material concerns? – Here is the answer:

- He was a man of prayer.

The testimonies on this score abound, and here are some of them...

- Brother Louis, who lived with him for a long time, was able to say: **«In the chapele,, I often saw him prostrated for a long time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament ».**

- Father Maupied, who received him in Paris, was able to say: **“I saw him literally exhausted in Paris ,after two days of travelling in haste. His first concern was to celebrate the Eucharist”.**

And here are some other significant testimonies :

- **“During missions, he was seen coming out of the Confessional at 3.00 am and began to recite the Rosary before going to bed”.**

- **“He never missed reciting the Breviary. In the last three years of his life, that took him more than three hours in stead of the normal forty-five minutes. But he never dispensed himself of it. !**

-When he went upcountry to La Chesnaie it was less for a rest and more ” for renewing his soul in retreat”.

And, in his personal notes, he wrote,: **“O man! Withdraw and leave me alone with my God! All that is not Him makes me sick. My rest and my consolation is in Him alone”.**

John Mary was a man of action, but in a life of prayer and of **contemplation of God.**

Which was the key of this vital attitude ? **His love for God, his love for Jesus . This is what he said::**

“Love, and prayer will become easier. Love, and all your desire, all your joy will be that of praying still for more love”.



* **Biographical Elements .**

Born in Brittany, - Finistère -, in 1813, died at Ploërmel, in 1860, four months before the Father Founder.

* Vocation.- After some long studies beyond the average, he went to Ploërmel and on the 18th October 1839 he is received by the Founder as a Novice. He remembered this date all his life, and his affection towards John Mary which kept growing all the time to the point of veneration.

After the Novitiate and a short apostolate in France, he left for the mission of Guadeloupe. He spent there almost twenty years, always in the town of la Basse-Terre. The last six years, he was the Superior of the Community and the Director of the School. *

Misionary.- He excelled especially as a **Catechist**. It was he who launched this apostolate, notably with those who were preparing for their first Communion : children, youths and adults ; many free, some slaves, all in the best harmony. The preparation would end with a four-day retreat. It would take place in the school, all together. Its success would be assured if it was animated by him.

Then he started the evening Catechism for the adults, as well as for prisoners. He started also a Marian Association... But it was especially for teaching **Catechism to the slaves**, to prepare them for their emancipation, that Brother Hyacinthe gave his very best : a mission as beautiful as it was difficult.

Concerning him, Brother Ambroise, his Provincial, was able to write :

“Brother Hyacinthe draws God’s blessings on all of us.. He is highly respected by the Brothers and everybody. He is a real treasure for la Basse-Terre. All consider him as a saint.”.

...And he added : **“ I would not be surprised if he performed miracles.”** And, in fact, they attributed some to him during his lifetime.

John Mary himself wrote about him : **“He is so holy”.** Mgr. Forcade, the Ordinary of the Diocese rendered the same testimony.

Victim of his zeal, general fatigue and responsibilities, he fell ill. In a mission country, it was not easy to take care of him. From Ploërmel came the order for him to return to France. The voyage was a veritable calvary, but he confronted it with faith and courage. Brother Hyacinthe wanted to see and **greet « his father » John Mary**, before dying..
(A suivre)

Brothers "saints"?



... This perspective has never been left aside in the course of the history of the Congregation. The last general Chapters spoke about it with greater insistence. At least some of them. This instance is the more justified that the Congregation was blessed with the presence, among her sons, the Brothers that were considered as saints. And not without reason.

We are going to present one of the most known... The list remains open. We would be very happy with the collaboration of those who may have known certain Brothers who gained the reputation of being « saints », between inverted comas, of course ! This means that it remains a personal opinion but that it would be a pleasure for us all to see it clarified and examined...

After having received knowledge of one or the other of these heroes of "holiness" (always between inverted comas), we could ask ourselves : Would it not be possible to introduce his Cause? It would be the same for a lay Mennaisian ... why not?

It is a long time since a general Chapter wished to take steps leading to the canonisation of the Father Founder.

Our plan is to present a Brother whose life could help us to live our Congregation following the footsteps of the Brother proposed.

Let us begin with the most known and perhaps the most popular :

Bro. Hyacinthe Fichou, Catechist in the West Indies.

Presentation.- Brother Célestin-Auguste, - great historian of the Congregation -, in the Ménologe, Vol. III, page 1098, presented him thus :

"In the glorious list of our Brothers Catechists of the French West Indies, the name of Brother Hyacinthe shines with singular brilliance. No other, in fact, has ever enjoyed such a reputation of holiness during his lifetime and after his death. His confreres, the Superiors, the ecclesiastics with whom he came into contact, the crowds he evangelised ..., all spoke about him eulogistically and without any reserve : for all, Brother Hyacinthe was a "saint", a "veritable saint".

For reflection

... Before reflecting on the following questions, you should read all the thoughts of John Mary and their explanation, page 4.

- 1.- Am I a man of prayer ? ¿How often, during the day, do I remember Jesus, , the Virgin Mary ?
- 2.- What is prayer for me ? Am I capable of maintaining a familiar dialogue with God ?
- 3.-Do I have a prayer that I repeat all the time , even from memory, at a given moment of the day, for example at the moment of retiring to bed ?

RECOMMENDED INTENTIONS

- + * *That in our daily life, following the example of John Mary, we remembered and thought of God, of Jesus and of Mary and said some prayer.*
- * *For all the young people who feel themselves called by God to follow Jesus Christ as Mennaisian Brothers.*
- * *For the sick people who recommend themselves to him :*
 - Romain Delenne, 6 years; canalisation of his energy (Oppede – Fr.)
 - * Mr. Godin, on the request of Brother. Albert Côté (Canada).
 - Teihotu TAMARII, pupil of Tahiti.
 - * Dominique BLIN, nephew of Brother Michel (France).
 - Natalia Cubillo, a cancer case (Madrid- Spain).
 - * Adela Pertierra: affection of the throat. Nanclares de la Oca (Spain).
 - Fred Karema, seriously sick, a brother of Brother Eugene Mwesigye (Philippines)
 - * Gonzalo Tolosa: hemiplegia – Buenos Aires /Argentina).
 - Patrick Lebeau: tumour in the oesophagus (France).
 - Father Nicolas Guillou.- Fougères (France).
 - M^a. Carmen Vélez Martín: tumour in the stomach. Aguilar de Campóo (Spain).
 - * Olivier Meunier (12 years): amyotrophitis of the spinal cord (Canada).
- + José Antonio García Martínez, avec sclérose multiple - Bilbao (España).
- * Luis Fernando Nogales: brain tumour .- San Borja (Bolivia).
- Guadalupe Morales: congenital osteoarthritis -Luján de Cuyo (Argentina).
- * Jean- Noël Tourcotte: cancer of the pancreas – Longueuil (Canada).
- Jules X.X. : (child of 27 months): tumour of the right eye (France)
- Cure of an ardent promoter of the beatification of John Mary.
- Luz María Land: stricken by a cancer - Reinosa (Spain)
- Marcos Sosa: leukaemia – Luján de Cuyo - Mendoza (Argentina)
- Bro. Louis Le Guichet : backache - Béthanie (France)
- Teresa Soto Mercado: very sick – San Borja (Bolivia)
- + * Clara García Roig: une intention spéciale.- Buenos Aires (Argentine)
and the local intentions

PRAYER, according to JOHN MARY DE LA MENNAIS

Here are his words

✘ 18th

* Man is never so great as in his relationship with his Creator. The most beautiful privilege he may enjoy is to *be* able to talk with God, in prayer.

* *Let us pray with fervour, shaking off our sloppiness and in union with Christ, source of Light, of all Wisdom, of all Life, let us find our counsel, our joy and our strength.*

✘ 19th

* My brothers, if in the Old Covenant, prayer has been so powerful, all the more will it be in the New Covenant because we are made one with Christ!

* *Let us put ourselves, in spirit, at the feet of Jesus Christ. Let us tell him what we would say to a friend, to a father. Let us entrust him, in humble simplicity, all our weaknesses, our faults, our sins.*

✘ 20th

* Let us listen to God in prayer ; let us open the ears of our hearts to welcome His holy Word ; let us nourish ourselves of this Manna of sweetness, without losing any of it ! Let us taste it, enjoy it !

* *Let us show our needs and misery to our Father in heaven, with humble trust. Let us go to Him with the simplicity of a child who lets himself be guided by his hand.*

✘ 21st

• Brothers, remember all that the Lord has done for you ; tell Him all your reasons to hope in His mercy. Do not limit your meditation to dry thoughts : transform them rather into prayers.

In one word, may your faith make Christ present in your lives : believe that you see him and talk to him as you would have done if you had had the happiness of seeing Him and talking to Him when He was still on earth.

✘ 22nd

• “If two or three are gathered together in my name, I shall be in their midst.” Marvellous words by which the Lord expresses his desire to come near to his disciples gathered for prayer.

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- God will provide what you cannot say if only you listen to Him when you pray, because it is then that He speaks to your heart. Welcome with a docile and humble heart the marks of his grace.

✘ 23rd

• It is imperative that you put aside a few moments to talk to God alone, to rest your soul, to refresh it, to strengthen it. And we must consider it a blessing that we can be free from the obligation of caring for people and dealing with them during a few moments of our days, in order to be alone with the Lord.

• *Upon waking up, turn your first thought towards the Lord, make the sign of the Cross and repeat lovingly the holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.*
desire to come near his disciples gathered together for prayer.

✘ 24th

* Who among you does not know by experience, that it is impossible to pray, which is, to speak with the Lord, after having talked much with people ?

* *May they speak with our Lord, or with our Blessed Mother, or with the Guardian Angel, or with the saints, as if they were talking with their father, their brothers or their sisters with the same simplicity and the same trust.*

✘ 25th

* But the place to find ourselves most really, most intimately is at the feet of our Lord Jesus, in whom all times and all distances seem to get fused together, as in an infinite centre...

* *He alone is the authentic place where hearts meet, and can enjoy for a while a foretaste of the eternal intimacy.*

✘ 26th

* The more difficult the times are, the more we must pray and be vigilant. Prayer and vigilance are two sure means of salvation, upon which we can rely.
Hope vanishes in front of me and I have only prayer left. But prayer is powerful. It is said that prayer can change even stones into Sons of Abraham, that prayer can make mountains move smoothly from one place to another.

