



***Mennaisian
Novena
Nº. 37***

A BROTHER...

Someone who said 'YES' to Jesus

What is ... a **Brother** ? Many people ask themselves that question when they see men who are neither priests nor simple lay faithful. Brothers fill up their days, through their whole life, with works in the Church and for the Church.

A Brother is 'someone' who, as says his Rule of Life, "heard the voice of the Lord urging him and calling him by name", who let himself "be seduced by the person of Jesus, and trying to follow him in a chaste, poor and obedient life". He chose that kind of life to be able to work for that same Jesus, for his Kingdom. He answered "Yes" to the Lord.

But what work ? – By saying "yes" to those preferred by Jesus : the children, the young people, without discrimination, but particularly for the poor.

As it is said in the Bible, in the aramaic language, a Brother is the « amen », the Yes to Jesus, as Jesus himself was the « Yes » to the Father, as Mary also had said her « Yes », her « Amen » to God. And that « Yes » has brought us salvation.

Here are the words – in fact, the conclusion of a recent book entitled « May your hearts be burning », on that same theme :

“Every religious life is a continuous liturgy ; or rather, even more, the expression of unending « Amen », clear expression of sustained fidelity. Moreover, consecrated life is also preparation to our ultimate « Amen », an Amen that some will say in martyrdom, others in service in mission territories, others holding a chalk in their hand, others through a life radiating joy and sustained hope. Because finally, Jesus is our Amen.

*Basically what is a religious Brother if not a continuous Amen, generous and fervent, pronounced in the streets and places of our towns ? It is not an ordinary Amen, said half-heartedly, for the appearances, but rather a vital **amen** of his whole consecrated existence.”*

Thus the **“yes”**, the **“amen”** becomes the symbol of his life.

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

**O God our Father, you have given
John -Mary de la Mennais,
a generous heart and untiring zeal
to make your Son Jesus Christ
known and loved especially by the 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 as 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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THANKS TO YOU, Jean Marie !

It is for us a duty of justice to bring attention on some people – those we remember – who in the past years expressed their thanks to Jean-Marie for some favor that had received or simply for his protection and help, and in some cases giving to the Postulation a small or larger contribution. Out of respect and fairness, we will not enter into more precise details.

These contributions have helped us in our efforts to make the Cause progress, to publish this bulletin with coloured covers, to print new pictures of Jean-Marie, to acquire adapted materials, to offer prizes to the winners of Mennaisian Contests, to give some encouragement to our benefactors and friends of Jean-Marie, etc, etc. Here are some names :

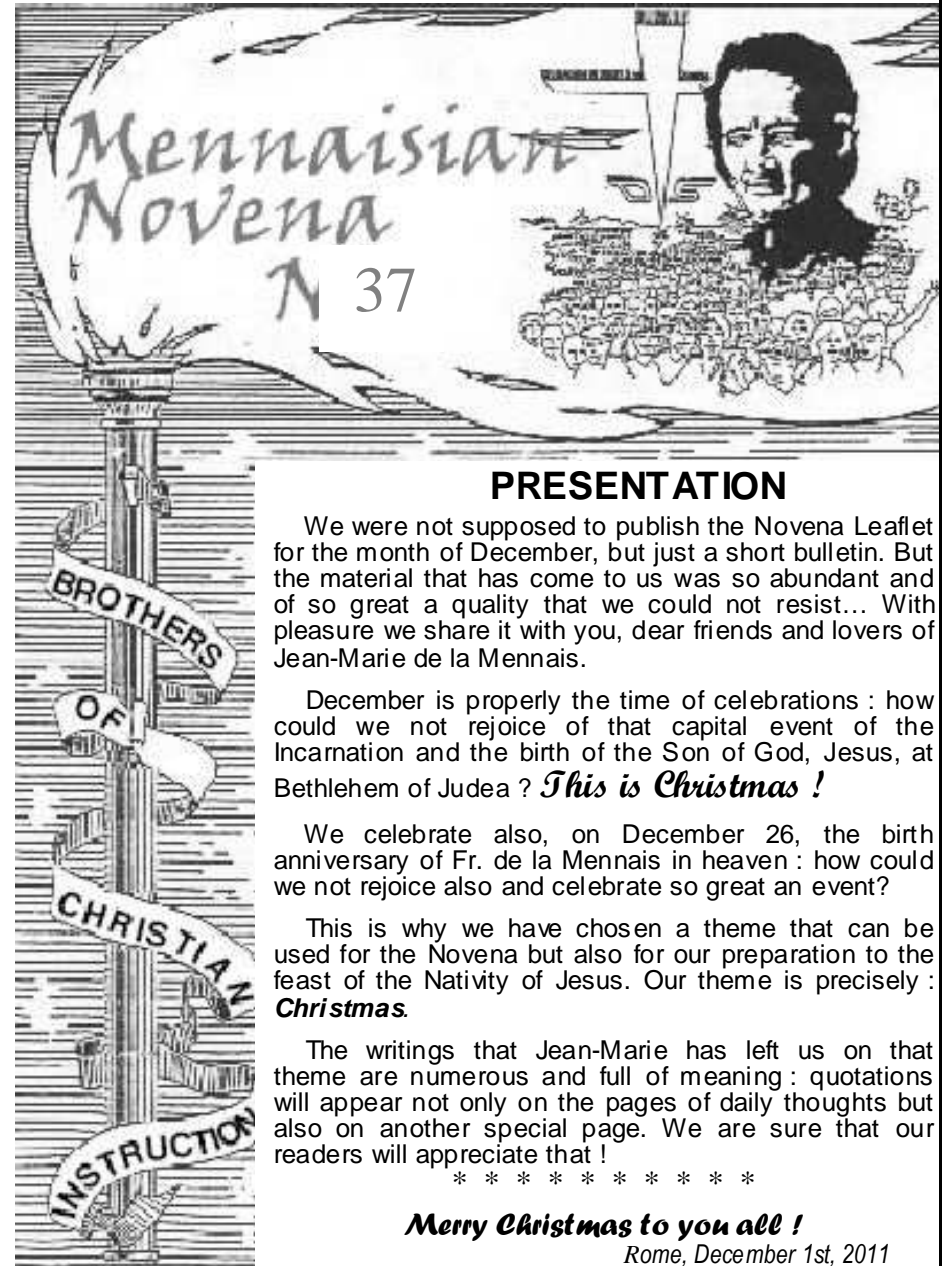
- | | |
|---|---|
| * María Luisa Aresti.- Rome (Italy) ; | * Elisabetta Aresti.- Roma (Italy) |
| * Antonio Gutiérrez Robles.- Santiurde (E); | * Consuelo de Gutiérrez, Santiurde de R. (Spain); |
| * Máximo López.- Reinosa (Spain) | * Br. Robert Smyth & brothers of Canada ; |
| * Domingo Cuevas.- Izara (Spain) | * Isabel Cuevas.- Izara (Spain); |
| * Br. Miguel de la Hera.- Aguilar de C. (Sp); | * Andrea Gutiérrez.-Santiurde de R.(Cantabria); |
| * Br. Auguste Richard, Ploërmel (France) | * Br. Nemesio Castaño & Cmty of Madrid (Sp); |
| * José Luis Cuevas.- Reinosa (Spain) | * Benedicto de Franciso.- Bilbao (Spain) ; |
| * Br. Miguel A. Merino.- Madrid (Spain) | * Estrella Flores.- Madrid (Spain); |
| * Br. Jean Laprotte.- Laprairie (Canada) | * Several Provincials in 2006. |

Thanks ! on the part of Jean-Marie

For your reflection

... Before reflecting upon the following questions, you should read the quotations of Jean-Marie (p. 8 & 9) and the explanation (p. 5).

- 1.- Of all these words of Jean-Marie, which are those which have struck you most ?
- 2.- *What gifts does Jean-Marie suggest that you bring Jesus, as the shepherds did ?*
- 3.- What will be your commitment during this Christmas season
- 4.- *With Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we pray for peace and justice in the world.*



PRESENTATION

We were not supposed to publish the Novena Leaflet for the month of December, but just a short bulletin. But the material that has come to us was so abundant and of so great a quality that we could not resist... With pleasure we share it with you, dear friends and lovers of Jean-Marie de la Mennais.

December is properly the time of celebrations : how could we not rejoice of that capital event of the Incarnation and the birth of the Son of God, Jesus, at Bethlehem of Judea ? *This is Christmas !*

We celebrate also, on December 26, the birth anniversary of Fr. de la Mennais in heaven : how could we not rejoice also and celebrate so great an event?

This is why we have chosen a theme that can be used for the Novena but also for our preparation to the feast of the Nativity of Jesus. Our theme is precisely : *Christmas*.

The writings that Jean-Marie has left us on that theme are numerous and full of meaning : quotations will appear not only on the pages of daily thoughts but also on another special page. We are sure that our readers will appreciate that !

* * * * *

Merry Christmas to you all !

Rome, December 1st, 2011

Br. Delfín López, Postulator

Novena to Jean-Marie : How to do it ?

A remark : It is important to put ourselves in the proper spirit and enter into the suggested theme, as explained on p.1 of this leaflet: the meaning of the theme and how it was reflected in the life, words and actions of Jean-Marie.

This is only a suggestion. There are other ways to make the novena: For example :

Steps :

- a) We start with the sign of the Cross
- b) We mention our prayer intentions (p.6 and 7)
- c) We read the 2 daily thoughts of Jean-Marie (p. 8 - 9).
- d) We recite the prayer for his beatification
- e) We end with the sign of the Cross.

This method is simple, and can last from 3 minutes to... 15 minutes, if you want !

We can also use profitably the suggested reflection on p. 14, reflecting upon one specific question every day, and then choose one to reflect in group and to share with others.

The other texts in the leaflet are put there to help you know better our Founder, the Brothers, the FIC history, etc. .

Important !

December 26 is the anniversary of the death of J-M. de La Mennais.

Let us offer to him our intentions.
Let us pray for his beatification.

Attention !

For the month of January this leaflet and the bulletin will not be published.

You are advised to keep on doing the novena, using past issues to help you do it ...

A Brother for history

Brother MAJELLA NSUBUGA



At the funerals of Brother Majella, we were present more than a hundred religious, men and women, and a great number of Mennaisian brothers. The Requiem Mass was celebrated by a Cardinal, with half a dozen concelebrating bishops.

However, our Brother never held any major responsibilities in the Congregation. What comment can we make then ?

Here is what Br. Yannick Houssay, S.G., wrote to the Brothers of Uganda on that occasion :

“Bro. Majella is a Brother that left a mark in his Province. And in heaven, he will watch over that Province of Uganda...”

And Br. Leonard Biankya, in the power-point dedicated to Br. Majella said these words :

“Now we can see him shining in heaven like a star : we have a new intercessor...”

... He had won over the esteem and affection everywhere : in Rome where he studied, in communities and houses of formation of Spain and France he visited... The young people of that time recall with affection the songs he used to sing, his witnessing, etc. The little stories about him are countless. I remember once he told me in Rome : *“ Brother, we Africans, we are made to die »...* and that turned out to be true in his case, but in such a glorious way !

May you rest in peace, Majella Nsubuga, our brother !

Br. Delfin López



On the occasion of the "Day of our Founder », in Rome

Celebration of a Golden Jubilee

Last November, we celebrated with great joy the Golden Jubilee of religious life of two brothers. They have had a previous celebration in their own respective province but the brothers of the General House, including the Superior General and the brothers of Italy wanted to offer them their congratulations and best wishes for their fidelity. They are :

Br. Claude Beauchesne.- After his initial formation at La Pointe-du-Lac (Canada), he left for the missions : 18 years in Japan, 12 in the Philippines, - founder of that mission -, and 7 years in Central Africa, as vice-provincial. He was Assistant General from 2000 to 2006.

Br. Gil Rozas.- After his work in Spain as recruiter and in houses of formation, he left his country for Argentina, where he spent 14 years at the head of important schools while taking time also to work with the poor.

Br. Pierre Berthe, superior of the House, was the spokesman to express the affection and sympathy of all, and for that he organized a special homage to the two confrères : Mass, special celebration, diner. During the Offertory, the two jubilarians received from the Superior General's hands the Rule of Life, which they put on the altar. Many photos will keep the memory of this event.

Congratulations, Brothers Gil and Claude !

Christmas with the Venerable Jean-Marie de la Mennais

◦

It is with great pleasure that we are offering you this issue of our Bulletin.

The cover page was illustrated by our artist from Buenos Aires, Héctor, Freire: neither the time nor the difficulties could overcome his determination. Thank you, Héctor !

The drawing shows our Founding Father, Jean Marie de La Mennais, bringing two children to the crib of Bethlehem, to introduce them to Jesus, God made man to save us... Who cannot but love him in such a state ? Here is realized the ideal that the Lord has given us through Jean Marie : **"to make him known and loved"**.

This picture, besides the quotations of Jean-Marie and the homily he gave on Christmas day, can help us live in a more Christian way the Yule season.

A special thank to Br. Miguel Angel Merino, a.g., who has collected these quotations of Jean-Marie on the theme of Christmas.

Let us also notice on the back page, the Coat of Arms of the Congregation, prepared in a larger size for the Great Novena, framed with drawn pictures of the Founder and the Deo Soli.

And finally, at the bottom of this page, the "logo" of our coming Chapter 2012 : **"Education, a way to evangelization"**:



Christmas with Jean-Marie de la Mennais

« Come to the crib to learn your duties from the mouth itself of J-Christ. Come with trust, he himself said that he loved children and wanted that we let them come freely to him. But don't you have anything to offer him ?

Give him your heart ; whatever poor that offering may be, he is asking for it : « My child, give me your heart », but before presenting it, purify it. Lay at his feet the spirit of pride and independence, the spirit of envy and dissipation, and he will in exchange, give you back his spirit of kindness, simplicity, humility and obedience ; at his example, you will grow every day in science and in wisdom ; and the divine Child who was born for the salvation of the world will also be your own salvation.

And myself, the last of all, I will offer myself to him in union with you, I will offer him all these children entrusted to my care with so much love, and to whom I want so much to teach how to know and serve Him. I will tell him :

'Good Jesus, divine Pastor, who watch with so much tenderness over the flock you have yourself chosen, look with pity upon these young and feeble sheep you have put under my care, and who come with me to implore your assistance.

Divine Child, who was born for the salvation of all, be our salvation ; may our hearts become your crib ; may you be reborn there, even if you find in that crib just a little straw !

As we are your brothers, your members, whom you have risen through your Incarnation to such glory, protect us always....

Tab. 7. m. de la Mennais

Ploërmel, the relatives of Father, the descendants of his sister Mary... People were singing canticles and psalms, then praying and listening silently to the music performed by the Musical Group of St. Armel School.

From the belfry, built at the time of Father de la Mennais, the bells were pealing out strongly. Then the people entered the cloister of the Mother House. The coffin was laid in the great entrance hall, fully decorated for the occasion.

Verification of the mortal rests. Mass. They had to follow rigorously the prescribed rituals and canonical rules. « The body of our Father looked like a mummy, still dressed in his priestly vestments, and very recognizable » was the opinion of all those who had known him.

The body was put in a new lead coffin, within a coffin made of Norwegian oak, and put in a place visible by all the faithful.

Then in the great Chapel, full of Ploermel citizens, was celebrated a Mass in grand solemnity.

The funeral oration was delivered by the Canon of Villerable, a long, well-learned and moving homily, maybe a little heavy for our present tastes.

Then for three hours, people walked in close ranks past the coffin holding the rests of the Father. Only his head could be seen. Many bent down and kissed his forehead, others touched the body with medals, rosaries, holy pictures... which would become relics soon. All classes of society were there, walking past the coffin. Many children also were attending the ceremony.

Inhumation in the new crypt. At 4 o'clock, the crowd was in the Chapel, waiting for the inhumation in the new crypt that was to be done by his successor, Br. Cyprien. We could feel an incredible enthusiasm : more than a thousand voices sang the *Magnificat* of the Virgin.
(To be continued)





History of the Cause of Beatification of Jean - Marie de la Mennais

(cont'd)

Exhumation of his rests

At the cemetery. At 7 in the morning, the ceremony began.

To facilitate the works and avoid problems, a kind of canopy had been build just above the tomb of Jean-Marie de la Mennais . Were

present, under that canopy, the persons in charge and the workers who had to facilitate the work. The Vicar General of the diocese, in place of the bishop recently deceased, was representing the Church, and in the name of the Congregation, besides the members of the General Council, there were two brothers selected to be the official witnesses among many others who, forty years ago, had attended the funerals of Father de la Mennais. They were bros. Fidantien and Nicandre.

Once finished all the canonical formalities, the lead coffin within the coffin made of Norwegian oak was taken from the tomb.

Transfer of mortal rests : “*What a contrast between this present joyful ceremony and the one of funerals in 1860, so mounful and sullen !*” said some witnesses of the two events. The procession progressed in the oak tree alley... We had never seen that : more than a thousand brothers, scholastics, novices, postulants; almost 200 priests... and a great crowd of people from the whole region. The coffin was carried on shoulders, and everybody was following : the members of the General Council, the Visitors and Directors, missionary brothers from Africa, America, soldier brothers, youth in houses of formation, people from

RECOMMENDED INTENTIONS

* **That, following the example and advices of Jean-Marie, we may respond to the love manifested in Jesus, in this feast of Christmas.**

* For the young people who hear the call of God to follow Jesus-Christ as Mennaisian Brother.

* **For the sick asking for our prayers :**

- Fernando Nogales: with malign tumor.- San Borja (Bolivia).
- * Mr. Godin, upon request from br. Albert Côté (Canada).
- Teihotu T AMARII, student in Tahiti.
- * Natalie Cubillo, with cancer (Madrid - Spain).
- Patrick Lebeau, tumour in the esophagus (France).
- * Olivier Meunier (12 y. old): spinal amyotrophy (Canada).
- José A. García Martínez, multiple sclerosis- Bilbao (Spain) .
- * Guadalupe Morales, congenital arthrogripal infection - Luján de Cuyo (Argentina)
- * Marcos Sosa, leukemia – Luján de Cuyo - Mendoza (Argentina)
- Bro. Louis Le Guichet, spinal problems - Béthanie (France)
- * Clara García Roig, a special intention.- Buenos Aires (Argentina)
- Br. Pierre Tousignant, a serious cancer - Canada.
- * Mercedes A. Alvarez, advanced cancer.- Luján de Cuyo - Mendoza (A)
- Jeannine Robert, sister of Br. Jean Malo: deforming arthritis– France.
- * Lesage Dessalines, in a coma, nephew of Bro. Lamy D. (Haiti)
- Giorgio Mucci: cerebral thrombosis - Roma (Italy)
- * Michael, child of 5 y. old, sick at Santa Fe (Argentina).
- Rafael Gómez: 10 y. old, lymphatic cancer
- * Julián Castro, child with spinal problems, Luján de Cuyo (Argentina)
- Khalid Sid Imorou: brain tumor.- Parakou- Benin (Africa).
- * Romina Campostrini, lung problems - Villa Gdor.Gálvez (Argentina).
- Pia Martina, child near death - Villa Gdor Gálvez (Argentina).
- * Giorgio Mucci, brain thrombosis.- Rome (Italy)
- Ken Latos and David Hillbo - Saskatchewan (Canada)
- * Br. Andrés Pérez, complex cancer (Bolivia)
- Grace Nabagala, breast cancer, Masaka (Uganda).
- * Scholastica Bonabaana, heart problems - Fort-Portal (Uganda)
- Br. Benedicto de Francisco: stomach cancer - Bilbao (Spain)
- John Paul LUWAGA: for success in his studies.- Uganda
- * Stephen Louis KABITO, .- Uganda

*... **And the intentions placed on the tomb of the Father at Ploërmel... and those particular to each location.**

The feast of the Nativity : What was it for JEAN-MARIE DE LA MENNAIS?



✘ 18 – X

* Of all the feasts of the year, none can inspire in us a more tender devotion than the feast of the Nativity.

- *Each time the Church celebrates it, it is like witnessing the birth of the Saviour of the world, witnessing all the marvels that accompanied it.*

✘ 19 – X

* I can picture in my mind the shepherds listening to the voice of angels and rushing to go and offer their homage ; I want to joint them and share their haste to find the divine Child who is bringing us salvation and peace.

- *I knell in his presence, and my soul is overflowing with feelings of admiration, joy, thanksgiving and love.*

✘ 20 – X

* **A Saviour was born to us !** Do you really feel, dear brothers, all what is holy, marvellous, ravishing contained in these simple words ?

- *We must meditate together today at the foot of the crib, and this way, prepare our hearts to celebrate with dignity the great mysteries that we honour during these holy days.*

✘ 21 – X

* **A Saviour was born to us !** The whole universe was immersed in darkness, and then comes the One who will be our Light !

- *Man's reason was depraved, indulging in the worst errors ; and then here comes the One who will reveal fully to man not only the truth that he himself can find some traits half-forgotten, hidden or confused within himself, but the highest mysteries of Heaven.*

✘ 22 – X

* For more than four thousand years, mankind was in a state of slavery. Here comes his Liberator. The past slavery, the empire of sin have been destroyed.

- *We are in Him new creatures, all our rights have been restored, or rather the rights of the Son of God have become ours ; his inheritance is our inheritance, God is our Father as he is His.*

✘ 23 – X

* **A Saviour was born to us !** Yes, let us repeat it often, and in a fit of joy let us repeat also the canticle of the Angels : Glory to God in the highest of heaven, and peace on earth to men of good will !

- *Yes, glory to God, because he can, or rather he must accept this great and holy victim as an immense price of the immense redemption of mankind !*

✘ 24 – X

* Peace to men, because now their debts have been paid, and they are forming together a holy and all divine society : that Saviour who is God, is the founder of that society, its chief and its father.

- *At what signs can we recognize the one who comes to enrich us with so many graces ? The Angels give us the answer : He is born in a stable and rests in a crib, clothed in the swaddling clothes of poverty.*

✘ 25 – X

* How come the King of eternal glory appears in this world under such a despicable aspect ! His all-powerful word has created the whole universe, and here he is, sleeping between two animals in a cave.

- *The Son of God suffers, cries and shouts ! Witnessing that, our mind is deeply troubled and becomes all confused.*

✘ 26 – X

* The more Jesus Christ lowers himself, the more he shows that he is the Saviour that we were expecting ; my own faith, far from becoming weaker or hesitant when I contemplate his state of humility, of silence and poverty, on the contrary rejoices at these marvels.

- *Shout with joy, O Earth, because the Saviour comes to console his people and has pity on the poor.*