



***Meinnaisian
Novena
Nº. 38***



PRESENTATION

Dear mennaisian friends. We meet again around Venerable Jean-Marie. I keep on using the same format for this leaflet, idea that originated from our zealous mennaisian Brother, Ovide Fortier, now deceased.

But I have also brought a few novelties.

The proposed theme of this monthly novena is the virtue of **humility**, so important in Christian spirituality. The texts were chosen by Br. Merino, our great specialist of Jean-Marie.

Among our deceased brothers who have left us a message, because of their holiness and apostolic zeal, I have chosen this month two remarkable and quite different brothers. For sure, I could have chosen many others. You can find them in the superb publication of Br. Balanant, our Annual Directory 2012.

We would like you to pay special attention to the '**Letter to Mennaisian Children**'. For some years already, we have been studying the case of miraculous healing of a child, but it is not evident : Rome is still looking into that. And we know that children's prayers hold a large place in God's hearts. Their prayer to the Lord, to Mary and Joseph, can be very effective.

Thanks so much !

Rome, February 1, 2012

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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Thank you, Jean Marie !

From Bilbao (Spain)

Here are some news about my health. During my last visit, my oncologist told me that **I was healed**. The doctor will follow me regularly.

I want to thank God through the intercession of our **Father founder**, and all those who have supported me and kept close to me. I have always

felt close to and loved by the Brothers, my family, families at school, actual and old students, friends, at each stage of my life. And now I feel better.

I spent a long period of time when I had no appetite and I lost many kilos. At the end of my chemotherapy I have recovered appetite, last November, and now I am on a slow but good recovering process.

I hope that your work for the Cause will bear its fruit, as we have been praying for that grace to the Lord. Greetings. Br. Benedicto

From Ploërmel:

Brother Delfin,

I hope that everything goes fine since your return from Buenos Aires, and that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints will study promptly the case of the boy... As for me, in spite of my silence, I have never stopped praying for the beatification of our Father, and the whole community also is faithful to it. Thank you for sending us the novena every month.

In memoriam

**On the occasion of the 2nd anniversary of his death,
the Postulation wants to voice again its gratitude
to brother Ovide Fortier,
our delegate in Canada,
for his help and generous unselfish support.
May he rest in peace and be our intercessor in heaven.
Rome, February 1, 2012. - Br. Delfín López, postulator**

To meditate ... Fidelity, today ?

We know it, a tree can hide the forest... And what if they are numerous ? Yet the forest is still there ! How many the infidelities are in our world, including in our Church ! And how loud the noise is around them. Yet the forest continues to be there...

A month ago we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of a couple, in a slum area nearby. It is the custom to celebrate the Golden Weeding of parents and friends, etc. In our previous issue, we mentioned the Golden Jubilee of two brothers of our community of Rome. And we have only to open the pages of our Annual Directory to see the long list of brothers with more than 90 years of age ! Yes, so many years of fidelity ! This is the forest ! Fidelity still goes on, and how well !

For sure, as an old monk on Mount Athos was pointing out, today fidelity is not so easy. *“The social context where we live, he said, is opposed to prayer – which is the main lever of fidelity, it holds objectives totally contrary to fidelity. Hostile minds completely deny its feasibility.”* Likewise, globalization of culture and the complexity of social relations make the choice of a radical and faithful life more difficult.

But we are not alone : « **God is faithful** », say the Scriptures.

« *The brother walks with assurance and hope because he known in Whom he has put his trust* », says our Rule of Life. In Whom ? **In Jesus and in the power of his Spirit !** In the One who has seduced us one day. The dynamic of this choice helps the brother walk through life faithfully. But beware : each one of us, we must also put our contribution, because, as Br. Obeso wrote, « *in these times of constant change, a fidelity that does not renew itself is no longer fidelity.* »

Let us meditate on that : what new dynamism must I bring out so as to protect my fidelity ? – My generous initial « yes » to the Lord and my life experience so far help me find the answer. And as the old monk was saying, there is only one way, and this is :

Prayer !

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. 6 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. 7)
- c) We read the 2 daily thoughts of Jean-Marie (p. 8 - 9).
- d) We recite the prayer for his beatification, p. 15
- 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 rest of this leaflet is to deepen your knowledge of Jean-Marie and of the Congregation.

Important !

The children ? let us reckon with them !

Indeed the present issue is particularly destined to them. We have written them a short letter, on page 5, asking for their prayers for the Cause of Beatification of our Father Jean-Marie de la Mennais. With each copy of this issue, we will add extra copies for them

The children find a particular echo in the heart of God. We would like that all teachers, catechists, parents, distribute a copy of that letter to each child.

Thanks.

...If to be a mennaisian...

It is always to keep on his formation and to have every day the humility to learn a new lesson.

Collaboration

...If to be a

mennaisian means...

Consecrating your life to a chosen mission

...To be a mennaisian

Is to love - an infinite love for children and youth
Is to welcome others - an unconditional welcoming with heart and soul, the arms wide open...

...To be a mennaisian

Is to be ambitious in a specific project, at good or bad times,
The project of instructing and serving the children and the youth to make of them, children of God...

...Then... to be

mennaisian is

a divine dream
where the last are the first,
where the alone finds a companion,
where solitude is presence of God, where non-sense is plenitude of life.

**Br. Nemesio
Castaño
and the
community of
Madrid**



Prayer of the Mennaisian Family

O Holy Trinity! Father, Son and Holy Spirit, model of every family, in the most perfect unity !

Jesus, Marie, Joseph! Help all the families to live with serenity, the joys and the difficulties, the rejoicings and the sufferings, that make up their life on this earth.

O Jesus, you wanted that Jean-Marie de la Mennais found our “mennaisian family”, listen to our prayer! Assist the Brothers to remain faithful to their Founder, that they become light, inspiration and guide for all the Mennaisian Family!

Bless the children and the young people ! They are our hope. May they commit themselves to the tasks of their formation with enthusiasm and constancy, with love and determination.

Accompany the teachers, chaplains and catechists in their vocation; support them in times of discouragement, and bless them in times of rejoicing ! May they always keep an integral vision of the education of their students, in particular their formation in faith !

Reward the parents of our students, who wished for them to receive a Christian education ! They are the first teachers of their children, in the same spirit as the education the school is offering to their children.

Finally, Lord, may we always extend help to one another, and take special care of those among us most in need. We pray that every day we learn to know you and love you a little more, as was the desire of our Father de la Mennais.

We ask you this, through the intercession of our Mother, the Virgin Mary, and may we one day be all reunited with the family of your Children in heaven. Amen

Letter to the Mennaisian Children

Dear children:

From Rome, where I am now, I am sending you these lines. I am a Mennaisian Brother. When I was young, I studied, like you now, in a mennaisian school. After that, since I liked the life of the Brothers very much, I also decided to become a Brother.

After many years of teaching to children and young people, I was asked to go to Rome, to work to make Jean-Marie be declared a “saint”, by the Pope. It would be something very beautiful to have him proclaimed a saint, because he deserves it.

Jean-Marie loved the children very much, and they also liked him in return. When he was visiting them, it was like a festival in the school.

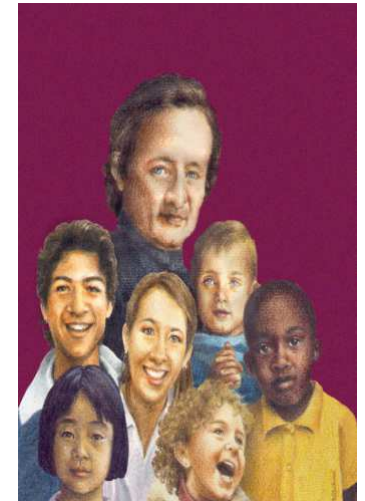
Jean-Marie liked to play with children, and they did also. When the Father died, it is not surprising that many children went to tell him their sorrow, and embraced him, without any fear.

Actually very little is missing to have Jean-Marie declared first “Blessed”, then “Saint”. I am working to have the healing of a child of Buenos Aires, Enzo Carollo, recognized as a miracle. You can help me too, with your prayers to Jesus and the Virgin to help us in our work.

If you have any questions to ask me, write to me and I will send you the answers with pleasure. And if you also want to write a letter to Jean-Marie, send it to me and I will manage to send it to him.

Many thanks for your prayers, and I give you a kiss you and say again: Have a good day, all of you !

Rome, February 1, 2012
Brother Delfin López, Postulator





HUMILITY in a Christian according to Jean Marie de la Mennais

For Jean-Marie, humility was a key-element, essential in the life of a brother and of the whole congregation : this is what made its beauty and its divine seal.

A mennaisian must learn to live in humility : there are found the source of his spirituality, his deep identity as well as the fecundity of his mission. Humility makes us take on Christ, makes us become his image, gives us his own Face. Without humility, the life of a mennaisian would not have its true face, it would lose its unique identity. Maybe a mennaisian can perform a lot of good works, but at the end, he would not even know who he is really.

Humility makes us come out of ourselves and let free the space of our heart, so that Christ can come in and live within us : we no longer live out according to our own image but that of Jesus Christ.

Without humility, for sure, we do not resemble Jesus Christ, we are not his image : his image within us becomes blurred.

Humility is the foundation of all true and authentic relations, of communion. Without it, our relations are perverted, our unity breaks up, each person tries to defend his own image and interests.

Humility is the smithy of holiness.

Only through humility can the Lord achieve great things in us, as in Mary. Only humility can make us worthy to participate in the great divine Plan of Salvation.

Humility is the true source of the fruitfulness of our mission as brothers. It is the wisdom of the Cross that we are called to live in our mission, in a « mennaisian way » !

F. Miguel Angel Merino, a. g.

Meeting of educators at Bilbao (Spain)



Here is a touching story of the meeting of three teachers preoccupied with the renewal of their teaching contract with the school. All was done in a context of prayer and fraternal sharing. They ended up their meeting, as you will see, with the mennaisian prayer of educators, in front the picture of Jean-Marie. **Jesus, you have said : Let little children come to me,**

**And have inspired in me the desire to devote my life to children and youth, to lead them to You,
Bless my vocation,
Help me in all my tasks today,
Pour upon me and upon my colleagues,
Your Spirit of power, charity and humility,
So that nothing will distract me from your service.**

Here is their story :

“It was a time we were free, the three of us. We were then a little nervous, at this very moment that would decide our professional future. For us it was important to remain in this institution for various reasons. We would not consider anything else.

Then we looked at the bottle that had been given to us two years ago, where it was written : « It is worth it! » To have written two years ago on the paper inside that bottle, was something symbolic, something that we still felt at ease with. « Yes it is worthy to belong to an educational community, it is worthy to be an educator in this school. »

... At that time, we had not attached much importance to that symbolic gesture, but now, as we are reflecting upon our career as educators, everything comes back to our memory.

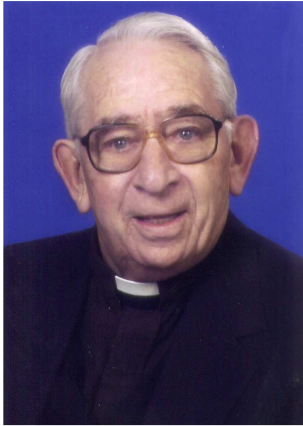
So we decided to contact somebody about it, knowing that, if ourselves we are not so good at composing prayers, we would surely be in his prayers, and that Jean-Marie would surely listen to us.

... Now the only important thing we have to say is that we are proud of being part of this educational community.

(They did not sign !)

RECOMMENDED INTENTIONS

Witness to Jesus in our world today



A missionary and an educator : Brother Joseph Power

There is an educational institution in USA, of which all the brothers of that province – and all Mennaisians as well- feel very proud : it is **Walsh University**, in the State of Ohio.

It had started in 1960 under the name of Walsh College, with a personnel from Alfred. After years of growth, it became in 1993, a prestigious university ! With more than 60 faculties, and 3500

students whose number is increasing, almost 300 professors, a library with 134.000 books and more than a million electronic books, a 45 ha. campus where some 1,050 people live. The Chapel, blessed in 2006, can hold 350 people.

How could they achieve that ? Some 38 brothers have worked there, and we would like to mention one of them who just passed away, **Br. Joseph Power**. He died at age 86, surrounded by the respect and veneration of all...

Birth in Liverpool (England), studies in London and Oxford. After some years of teaching in England, he joined Walsh College in 1965. Literature and Religion professor, he involved himself also in various activities outside campus : a FIC project in the Appalachians, Virginia, preparation of the Pope's visit to Canada, animation of sessions even in Haiti, etc.

But above all that, he left a deep mark as **spiritual director** of a great variety of persons , in a formal and non-formal way. "**A wise and humble disciple of Jesus Christ**". Here is a beautiful testimony :

"When I met Br. Power, I felt like if it was Jesus himself who was speaking to me, bringing to me his compassion."

Thanks, Br. Power !

That at the example of Jesus, and listening to Jean-Marie's Words, we may imite him in his life of humility

* For the young people who feel called to follow Jesus as Mennaisian Brother.

* For the sick people asking for our prayers :

- * *Fernando Nogales* : malignant tumor.- *San Borja (Bolivia)*.
- * *Mr. Godin*, requested by Br. Albert Côté (Canada).
- * *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 arthrogripale infection - *Luján de Cuyo (Argentina)*
- * *Marcos Sosa*, leukemia – *Luján de Cuyo - Mendoza (Argentina)*
- *Bro. Louis Le Guichet*, spinal problems - *Nantes (France)*
- * *Clara Garcia 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 Camprostrini*, lung problems - *Villa Gdor.Gálvez (Argentina)*.
- *Pía Martina*, child near death - *Villa Gdor Gávez (Argentina)*.
- * *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*, deaf and mute child.- *Uganda*
- * *Shelbie Civil* : 16 ans, malignant tumour.- *La Vallée (Haïti)*.
- *David Hillbom*, - progressive ALS, *Regina, Sask. (Canada)*

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

HUMILITY in a Christian Life, Words of JEAN - MARIE DE LA MENNAIS



✘ 18 - X

Humility does not depend on one action or another, but on pure charity, which makes us entirely free from ourselves to “put on” Jesus Christ. »

- “Humility is the most necessary virtue, since without it, we would not have any resemblance to Jesus Christ. »

✘ 19 - X

* Let us ask God that he give us new graces to enable us to progress each day with a peaceful heart in the ways of so beautiful a virtue.

- Let us ask him to fill our heart with his love, so that there remains no place for selfish love.

✘ 20 - X

*The Brothers will endeavour to make continual progress in humility, without which there would be not true virtue, progress in the letting go of themselves, living in this world as if they were not.

- Oh! How far we are from having it (humility) and practising it, as did before us so many saints, whom we should take for our models!

✘ 21 - X

* The Devil will try by a thousand perfidious suggestions to make you lose your divine vocation... by making you conceive a high idea of your poor talents.

- The human reason had been corrupted and came out with the most monstrous errors: and here is the One who will make us discover fully, not only the truth out of half-confused concepts, but the **greatest mysteries of heaven.**

✘ 22 - X

* It is necessary not to worry about rejections and to support in peace and with joy if possible, all the humiliations to which we can be exposed.

- In Him we are new creatures, all our rights have been returned to us, or rather his rights of Son of God have **become ours**; his heritage is our heritage; God is our Father as He is his.

✘ 23 - X

* Where are the really humble men? Do we possess humility when we recognize our nothingness, when we confess that we are weak and poor creatures ?

- *Not necessarily. The philosophers themselves recognize that and yet, they glorify in this knowledge.*

✘ 24 - X

* Is it sufficient, to be humble, to never praise oneself nor seek the praises of others, or to speak about oneself with modesty? ... No ! This manner of speaking is good when one is sincere, but humility is something much more higher and intimate.

- *Do you want to know who are, in a community, the really humble men? It is those who, always and constantly, in small as in great things, give up their own will to achieve God's Will.*

✘ 25 - X

* The Blessed Virgin said while speaking about herself: “He looked on the humility of his maidservant, and the Almighty has done great things for me.”

- *If we want the Lord to work great things in us and by us, it is necessary that he sees at the bottom of our heart a true and sincere humility. Without that, we would not at all live according to his designs.*

✘ 26 - X

* Perfection does not consist in never feeling any weakness of will, it does not consist either in doing extraordinary things.

- *It consists rather in being humble, small, flexible in the hand of God, in being full of compassion and charity for his own brothers, in considering oneself as the most imperfect of all.*