

***Mennesian
Novena
Nº. 42***



PRESENTATION

* It is a JOY to publish this novena again... I had the desire and intention of publishing new issues these last months. I had even started one, but, you know, a **Procurator** has to focus on his specific assignment. Indeed I had to travel to Buenos Aires and prepare valid and serious documents, and that has filled up all my time, day and night.

An advantage? After meeting directly with our designer of Buenos Aires, **-Hector Freire-**, I am able to offer you a new COVER PAGE in color, on the theme of **FAITH**.

For sure, I had plenty of materials to put in this issue of the Novena and others. The Great Novena has been a peak moment in our pastoral action, these last months, in both North and South Hemispheres. I will present to you several testimonies of that.

Meanwhile, Br. **Philippe Friot** has passed away. He was my predecessor as Postulator : a refined and very cultivated religious. He leaves us an unforgettable memory through his many writings.

In line with the directives of Pope Benedict XVI, the theme of our Novena this month is FAITH.

A Merry and Holy Christmas !

*Rome, December 1, 2012
Br. Delfín López, Postulator*

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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SOLIDARITY OF THE MENNAISIAN FAMILY

Note.- On the occasion of my visit to Córdoba (Argentina), I received a letter that gave me much joy. I believe it can bring you the same feeling.

Dear Family

Truly I do not know how to start my letter and yet, my heart tells me that I must write it. We are forming a large family, united not in suffering – thanks to the Lord – but in our inner desire to live our lives in the style of Jesus, by being close to the poor, to people who pass through hours of great suffering. We are forming a group of educators (teaching and non-teaching personnel), parents and students of a school located at Biale Massé. The name of the group is 'Mennaisian Family' because the founder of our school was a French priest called **Jean-Marie de la Mennais**.

We would like to tell you that we followed with great pain the suffering you went through: we do not know how to bring you more comforting. However we want to tell you that our hearts are with you, even if we live far away from you. Of course you do not know us personally and we cannot find the proper words to convey our sympathy to you in this time of sorrow, but we want to do our share to lessen your sorrow with our fraternal greeting. Many people keep on praying for the eternal repose of little souls that have departed and for the consolation of the bereaved people. Our hands cross the distance separating us to embrace you with the love of the world.

"God, not we, made his choice, but if you realize that you made a mistake, go back to him and there you will always find your place."

Jean-Marie de La Mennais

May the Lord bless you, dear Family. A warm greeting, at distance.

May 25, 2012

(Letter written by a colleague, Encarnación Bustos) Titi

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 p5- 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 :

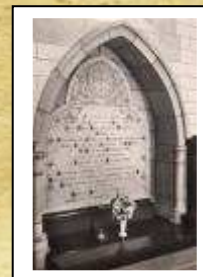
Steps :

- 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.



December 26
Anniversary of the
death of
Jean-Marie de la
Mennais
Ploëmel - 1860

"Achieve my work."



For your reflection ...

Our faith in Jesus...

The theme of faith dominates the whole year that is consecrated to it. In simple words, we can say that faith means: to believe. But **to believe in what ? and why ?** We recite our Creed : 'I believe in God... ' In fact, I have never seen Him. **Nobody has even seen him !** said Jesus (Jn 1, 18). And he adds : 'The only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he is the one who reveals

Him. ' The first letter of John is even clearer : '**What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life...** (1 Jn 1,1)

Thus the chance we have to be able to enter into relation, in history, with the One nobody has ever seen. **O Marvel ! Jesus came among us men to bring light on what God is !** Thus faith means really that to believe in Jesus is also to believe in God.

And what does '**to believe in Jesus**' mean ? Faith in Jesus has three dimensions :

1) **To accept Jesus Christ**, by welcoming his ideas, his vision of God, of the world, of man. This is what we call 'orthodoxy' (right doctrine). The Creed we recite on Sunday is the synthesis of that doctrine of faith. And without omitting or hiding anything that it says, without letting ourselves be taken by false ideologies we hear all around... we must maintain an evangelical understanding of our human life.

2) **To perform actions similar to those of Jesus**, living as He himself was living. This is called 'orthopraxis' (right attitude). This is summarized in the 10 Commandments and in the Beatitudes. Jesus warned us about it : « It is not enough to say Lord, Lord, ... but to fulfill the will of the Father. » We cannot pretend to know Jesus if we remain away from his Teaching. »

3) But that is still not enough : we must also have **the same attitudes, same feelings, same affections as those of Jesus**. This is what we call 'orthopathy'- which entails an encounter with Him, a dialogue, to let ourselves be assimilated and identified with Him. This is basic. We really know only what we love. We practice only what we know. This is the key to Christian faith : **Do we love Jesus ?** – Then we will know him and live as He wants us to live, to please Him, because we love Him.

This is the authentic faith in God.

Every morning, we welcome them with a different gesture :

Monday : candies – the children go to their classrooms in a happy mood

Tuesday : Mission day : we ask them something to do : to say hello, to make a smile, to say I love you or thank you ...

Wednesday : Painted smiles : we welcome them with music and we paint a smile on their face...

Thursday : A birthday greeting for Jean-Marie : we prepare a notebook and when children arrive, in turn they write a short greeting to J-Marie. Then we celebrate the Eucharist in thanksgiving for his life...

Friday : Day of fancy dresses and shaving : the mennaisian community gathers around floats and walk in a parade around Culiprán : we see feast and joy everywhere. Everybody participates: from Primary to Superior Classes, parents and grandparents. We cannot say who are most enthusiast !!!

Every day, our morning prayer brings us closer to Jesus, in the hand of Jean-Marie, with a special text prepared for each school level.

Our readers

Write and speak to us

Of the Cause of Jean-Marie



+ From Kisubi (Uganda)

Dear Brother Delfin,

Greetings from myself and from all the Ugandan Brothers.

Thanks for everything ! These pages of the Novena always bring us much comforting. Let us remain united in prayer.

Br. Vincent Ssekate.

+ **From Tokyo (Japan)** *Thanks for sending us the Novena of November in English. We remain united in prayer with you and with all those who invoke Father de La Mennais.*

Fraternally,

Br. Jean-Pierre Houle, Tokyo





GREAT NOVENA TO JEAN-MARIE DE LA MENNAIS 2012

Cardenal Copello College (Buenos Aires - Argentina)

The novena is a peak time of prayer in community : prayer around the thoughts of each day, around the shared Eucharist and around all the celebrations, competitions and plays which we live together.

To make memory of our Father Founder is the objective of the whole month of September. During this time, we hear these words: "My schools were founded to make Jesus Christ known and loved", - "My sons, my thoughts go towards you from Christ and his Mother", - "Our motto is God Alone", - "My son, complete my work"... and many others that help us know his life better.

"Ploërmel", "St Malo", "Chesnaie", these are the names of the teams formed by the students of Secondary Level to join the contest, after a Mass celebrated on the playground of the college.

Plastic, music, language and history: here are the disciplines devised by the pupils of Primary Level of the second cycle: that way, they can apply their knowledge of the life and work of the Founder.

Sports competitions and catechesis sessions marked the festival of the first Cycle.

And the great festival of Jean-Marie's birthday was celebrated by the school beginners with cakes and lucky bags!

Culiprán (Chile)

Celebrations of Jean-Marie

Today is September 3, a cold day at Culiprán. The fog penetrates our bones; it is seven thirty a.m. and the pupils start arriving. They see that they are welcomed with music and candies... they are astonished. Some looked at each other, they are reassured: it is one special day for all: For sure! ... It is the beginning of the Mennaisian week when we make memory of the works and life of Jean-Marie de la Mennais.

JEAN MARIE DE LA MENNAIS WAS A MAN OF FAITH



When we look at his life or read his writings, when we contemplate his works, ... it is as if **Jean-Marie was seeing the Invisible.**

... That was his Faith, a solid Faith.

Faith, by the gift of his life to the Lord for the good of mankind

Faith, by his commitment to the Church at a time when she was threatened inside and fought against outside.

Faith, by the consecration of his life to the human and Christian education of children and youth.

Faith, by his obedience to the directives of the Pastors of the Church, at the time his brother Félicité was leaving the Church.

Faith, by the renunciation to many human and ecclesiastical opportunities for a brilliant career, and opting for working in a small corner of France, at Ploermel, to be able to accompany and guide his brothers.

...And a Faith that grew throughout the year, by :

- Always more demanding commitments to children, youth and adults;
- Study and publication of books at the service of the Church ;
- Meditation and reading of the Work of God;
- A sustained prayer, in spite of his many activities...

And how could he live such a **FAITH** ? – He himself gives us the secret :

To see everything,
to judge everything
under the light of faith ...

And he lived an authentic faith through the numerous works he performed only and exclusively for God : **God Alone !** was his motto..... and the motto he left to his Brothers.



Testimony on this "Year of Faith"

ONLY FAITH CAN ENLIGHTEN US

From San Borja, Province of Beni, Bolivia

Our Mennaisian family (in Bolivia) wants to send an affectionate greeting to all those who want to live as Christians in the style of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. We celebrate the Year of the Faith and we want to give more dynamism to our confidence, with deeper faith in our Lord Jesus, giver and source of all good.

Fernand and his mother



Every month we receive the Novena. We adapt it according to the date, because it usually arrives around the 8 of each month. We add our intentions to the recommended intentions. We do it in each family of our "mennaisian family".

We continue to pray for Fernando Nogales: the disease persists, he follows a treatment. He is an artist who exposes his artisanal works. He and his family are grateful for your prayers to Jean-Marie for his healing.

The little Eliana Yamilé Cáceres Tapia, daughter of our teachers Victor Hugo and Jeolinda, left for heaven after a long disease. We prayed for her, accompanied her and recommended her to Jean-Marie. She had many of the characteristics of mennaisian children: closeness to Jesus, generosity, optimism in facing life. For the family, the pain of separation goes hand in hand with the growth of their faith.

It is our habit to mention in our prayers the situations of the everyday life that need to be put under the protection of Jean-Marie, so that God grant us the miracle of her cure.

Casimiro Merie



Eliana, before dying, surrounded by doctors, wearing clothes of clowns

In fact, he was a true "bookworm", tenacious, spending a good part of his summer holidays removing dust accumulated on papers in various diocesan, provincial and national libraries, including the Vatican library...

Let us say that all the work of the last part of his life had a prelude in his youth, when he had published some teaching works, historical and of spirituality, either alone or in collaboration with other Brothers.

We will not speak about his work as a teacher, formator of future Brothers, superior of community, director of important institutions... He was all that and much more. In 1984 he received the "Academic Palms" of France.

We will not speak more of his role as regulator of the Chapter General, in difficult times. Others could speak about that better than I.

But we can add that, as Postulator of the Cause of Jean-Marie de la Mennais and of his Beatification, from 1997 to 2003, he remained alert and studied a case of healing in the Seventies: the case of a child, student of the Sisters of Providence of Combourg (France), who had a serious accident. Suffering from a trauma in the head, he remained in coma. The Sisters recommended him to our Founder and hid an image under his pillow. The next morning, when a specialist arrived from Saint-Malo, the child was no longer in coma. The doctor declared that this situation could be attributed to the natural resources of the child, without need of imagining another causes...

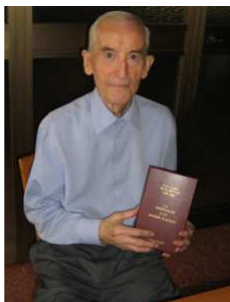
... And the things remained as they were.

Let us thank God for so beautiful a life lived fully, in accordance with God's will... Let us follow in his footsteps.

Rome, November 27, 2012
Br. Delfin, Postulator

Brothers Philippe and Delfin,
Postulators,
preparing the distribution of awards
for the Mennaisian Contest, in 2007.





Brother Philippe Friot

The "historian" of the Congregation

I would like to say some words to you on my predecessor, Postulator General of the Congregation, from 1996 to 2003: Brother Philippe Friot. It passed away on September 16, 2012 at Ploërmel, at almost 86 years of age.

He managed to link in his person two not easily conciliable qualities: culture and simplicity, seriousness and humour... as well as other qualities such as activity and comprehension, prudence and abnegation, discretion and attention...

He leaves to the posterity mainly the memorial of his work as **historian of the congregation and of the Founder**. In his last years particularly, "historian" could be said not only of his work but also of his person.

He arrived to Rome in 1988, with, precisely, the mission of historian. And although holder of diplomas attesting his knowledge in geography, history, philosophy and theology, he did not hesitate to add two more years of studies at the Gregorian University. At same time and immediately he started working on his volume **Jean-Marie, the spirituality of a man of action**. That book has become as of now, a Classic on Mennaisian spirituality.

Heir to Br. Paul Cueff, who had been in charge of the publication of the "**Mennaisian studies**", he enriched the series with 45 new issues, out of which he himself wrote 14. He continued his commitment even when he retired at Nantes, by writing several other issues.

But his main work is without doubt, the edition in 7 volumes, of the **General Correspondence of Jean-Marie de la Mennais** : over 5,000 pages of documents, assembled together, classified, verified on the basis of former publication, and enriched by his own research.

RECOMMENDED INTENTIONS

* **That putting our trust in Jesus and following the examples and words**

of Jean-Marie, our life become an authentic witness to our faith.

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

* **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).

* *José A. García Martínez*, multiple sclerosis- *Bilbao (Spain)* .

- Bro. Louis Le Guichet, spinal problems - Nantes (France)

* Jeannine Robert, sister of Br. Jean Malo: deforming arthritis- France.

- *Khalid Sid Imorou*: brain tumor.- *Parakou- Benin (Africa)*.

- Grace Nabagala, breast cancer, Masaka (Uganda).

* *Scholastica Bonabaana*, heart problems - *Fort-Portal (Uganda)*

- John Paul LUWAGA: for success in his studies.- Uganda

* *Stephen Louis KABITO*, deaf and mute child .- Uganda

* Shelbie Civil : 16 years old, malignant tumour.- La Vallée (Haïti).

- *David Hillbom*, - progressive ALS, Regina, Sask. (Canada)

* M. Maurice Fournier, cancer of the throat.- New Brunswick- Canada

* Clara García Roig: special intention.- Buenos Aires (Argentina).

- *Luisa Aresti*: *Cerebral thrombosis*.- *Rome (Italy)*

* Leticia de Calcagno. Cerebral tumor.- Buenos Aires (Argentina) .

- *Hortense de VIGNERAL*: *a little girl; deformed liver*.- *Savenay (F)*

* Br. Louis Le Roux: cancer of the kidney. From Haïti , hospitalised in France

- Hioatua KIIPUHIA, Seminarist: cerebral lesions-Tahiti, from Marquesas Islands

* Christine KOLA, Sister of Providence of St André, Sotouboa, Togo.

... And the intentions placed on the tomb of the Father at Ploërmel...

* ...And for all the intentions particular to your own place.

JEAN MARIE DE LA MENNAIS...

A MAN OF FAITH ! His words



✘ December 18

* We must not pretend knowing God's secret intentions, nor dream too much about the future. We must not rush the future onto the present, otherwise we would be crushed.

- *In our difficulties, let us learn to accept, as good Christians, the holy Will of God. Then God will bless us all the more we are working for his glory, in a **spirit of faith**.*

✘ December 19

* ...Wait with deep peace, put your trust in the One who can do every thing and never deceive. You have his word, the word that created the universe. Do you imagine you are more powerful than that ?

- *Are you afraid, man of little faith ? –No, Lord, I fear nothing. If You are for us, who then could be against us ?*

✘ December 20

* In our faith, we no longer consider men, things of events in a purely human way, which is often deceiving. Rather we consider them in relation with eternity, in the light of God himself, and we judge them as he himself would judge them.

- *If we are blind, sad and feeble, it is because we did not give ourselves totally to God, through a lively faith and filial trust.*

✘ December 21

* O my Lord ! If only we had faith ! A living faith that can penetrate and enlighten the mysteries of heaven ! A faith that would make us see the dawn of the eternal day...

- *i want to be like that servant waiting for his master's return, to open to him as soon as he knocks on the door... If all my thoughts were geared to that spirit, my life would be just a preparation for my death.*

✘ December 22

* May be become more and more convinced that wisdom, like happiness, consists in seeing God and only God in all things !

- *Let us raise our hearts and our hopes towards these heavenly houses where Jesus is waiting to open the doors to us ! After a few days of suffering, we will rest in peace and happiness. When ? O Come, Lord Jesus !*

✘ December 23

* The written Word of God is full of mysteries, and his Word, fulfilled in events of this world, is no less mysterious. These two books are really sealed.

- *I think that you are too susceptible. You would become the happiest of men if only you would act with greater simplicity towards everyone, and always **in a spirit of faith**.*

✘ December 24

* We must submit ourselves to the **Will of God** and go ahead, closing our eyes, or rather, our eyes fixed on the mountains from where comes our help. All our human thoughts collapse when confronted with what is and what will be... O God Alone ! O Eternity !

- *Put away all bitter thoughts and constantly enkindle within you **a spirit of faith** through prayer and meditation.*

✘ December 25

* I pray that I may always keep, in the midst of all my troubles, a **spirit of gratitude**, which is the same as a spirit of faith.

- *May God's will be done ! I want to work for his glory until the last hour of my last day.*

✘ December 26

* Consider all things **in the light of faith**, and always have eternity in your mind.

- *Get into the habit, by a holy orientation of your will, of doing all your actions for the **GLORY OF GOD**, and unity them to those of Jesus, that they may acquire from his merits an infinite value.*