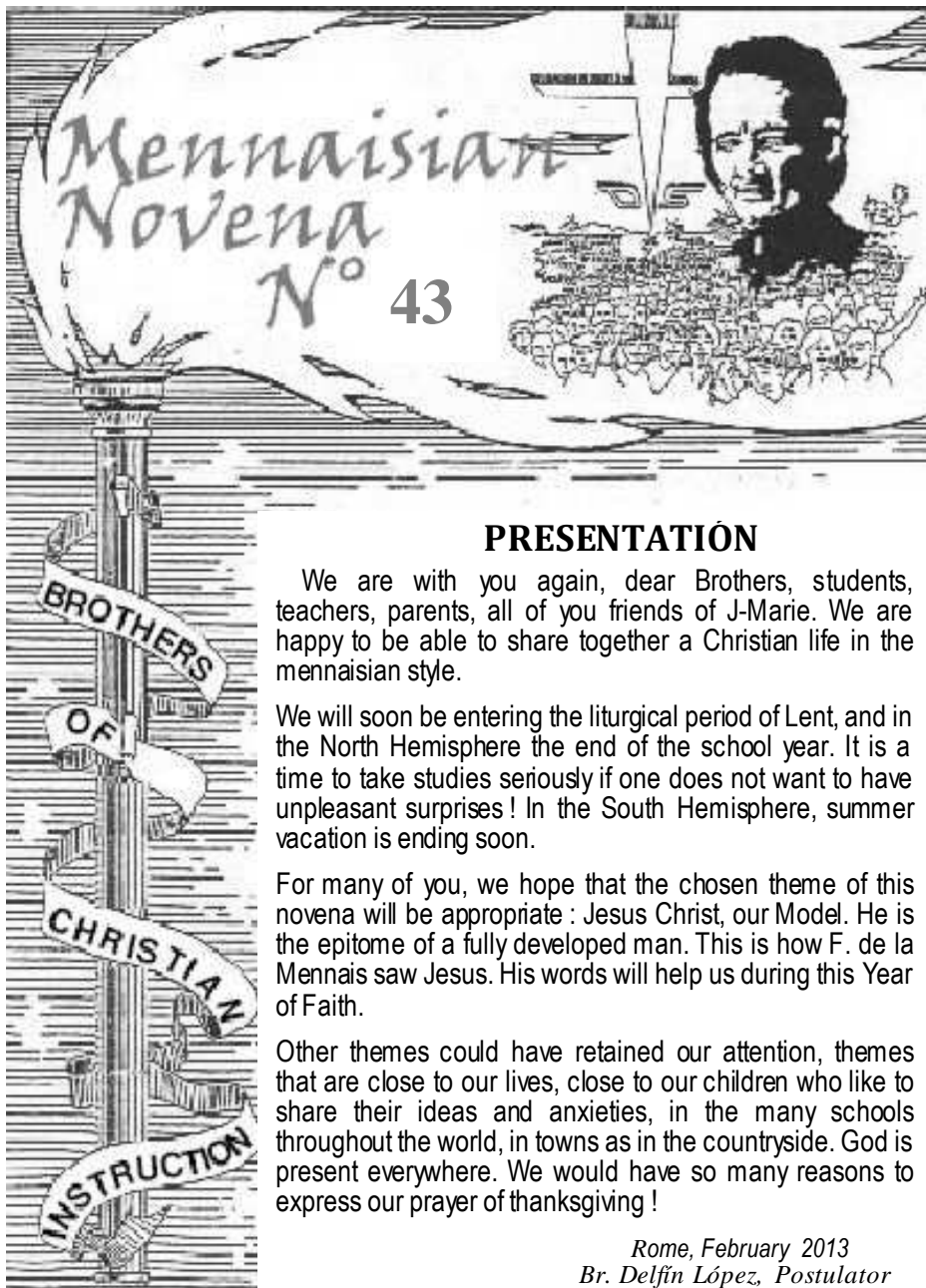


***Mennaisian
Novena
N° 43***



PRESENTATION

We are with you again, dear Brothers, students, teachers, parents, all of you friends of J-Marie. We are happy to be able to share together a Christian life in the mennaisian style.

We will soon be entering the liturgical period of Lent, and in the North Hemisphere the end of the school year. It is a time to take studies seriously if one does not want to have unpleasant surprises! In the South Hemisphere, summer vacation is ending soon.

For many of you, we hope that the chosen theme of this novena will be appropriate: Jesus Christ, our Model. He is the epitome of a fully developed man. This is how F. de la Mennais saw Jesus. His words will help us during this Year of Faith.

Other themes could have retained our attention, themes that are close to our lives, close to our children who like to share their ideas and anxieties, in the many schools throughout the world, in towns as in the countryside. God is present everywhere. We would have so many reasons to express our prayer of thanksgiving!

*Rome, February 2013
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**

"MENNAISIAN NOVENA" N°. 43 – ROME – 1.II.2013

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***Your students are older boys : what pedagogy do you use ?**

They have to take their own responsibilities.

* We have Catholic apostolic groups, and we let the students themselves lead every gathering, sometimes also helped by an animator.

* Likewise, our literacy campaigns, environment and health clubs, French or English groups, all have their own organization, autonomous and yet supervised by a counselor.

*** And for your classes ?**

They study in silence (or almost) because the class president motivates them. Also the sports activities are the results of the own organization. When a special activity takes place in the school – such as Christmas celebration- the students themselves with their animator plan for songs and dances. These students are future educators, this is why we expect self-discipline on their part : discipline is as important as studies. And students enjoy being at school when they know what is expected from them. Our academic results are usually at 100% success.

• And the Brothers ?

The Brothers of Kirambo are totally dedicated to their work at school and this dedication makes them able to live the charism of the congregation : evangelization through education. We respect the time for studies, the classes, the periods of rest, the persons, the time for prayer. It is not always easy but we can see the efforts of everyone.

• Do you have a clear Pastoral Plan for Vocations ?

Our vocation group gathers close to one hundred boys, and about twenty of them ask every year to join our congregation. This is why the pastoral work for vocations is so important to us. In fact, all our present Rwanda brothers still in their twenties come from our school.

• Something to add ?

One particularity of our school worth mentioning is the animation of a catechesis class done by the students themselves every week. It is evangelization of the youth done by the youth !

• Any wish ?

We want to associate other schools to our mennaisian network, to share our experiences and see how we also can collaborate in the common spirit that animates the Brothers of Christian Instruction.

Very, very nice !

Thanks, br. André !

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.

Prayer for the vocations

O Mary, Mother and Patroness
of the Brothers of
Christian Instruction!
You, who, by putting your life
in the hands of God,
you put it at the service
of mankind
* Awaken vocations
that are unknown,
* Warm up
Hidden vocations..

* Encourage
Faltering vocations.
* Give support to vocations
that are opposed.
* Accompany
budding vocations.
* Form the hearts
of the Brothers
like your heart.
* Help us all to be docile
to the voice of the Spirit.



For your reflection...
Our Faith, centred on JESUS

Faith is a pearl, a treasure for which it is worthy to sell everything else. And this treasure is **Jesus Christ**. As St. Paul said, « *For me, to live is Christ.* » Millions and hundreds of millions of people have lived that. This is remarkable, and why ? As Peter in his answer to Jesus'

question, they answered : « *You are the Christ, the Son of God* ». **What can we do to strengthen our faith in Jesus ?**

a) To accept Jesus and welcome his message.

It means, to develop the same vision of man, of the world, of God as Jesus presented in the Gospels. This is what we proclaim in a summary when we recite our Creed every Sunday at Mass. It is not easy to keep that vision without being contaminated by other non-evangelical and popular visions nowadays. How to succeed ? By the **Lectio Divina**, the prayerful reading of the Word of God, in line with the Sermon of the Beatitudes.

b) To perform actions as those performed by Jesus.

Jesus told us : « *It is not enough to say, Lord, Lord. You must also perform the Will of God.* » We are often weak of will, fickle. Every morning or evening, we must take some time to plan or review our day, asking Jesus to send us his Holy Spirit, who is Light and Power, and also pray the Virgin Mary that she may enlighten our minds and strengthen our wills.

c) To have the same attitudes as Jesus.

It will be easy to perform all that if we put Jesus at the heart, at the most intimate core of our person, of our feelings, of our attitudes : **in our heart**. This can be achieved if our **relationship with Him** goes deeper : He is our Lord and Saviour, He is risen from the dead, He is our goal. He was there at the beginning – the Alpha – and will be there at the end – the Omega. He is here, present to us, he who suffered and died for us. In whom can we have better trust ?

* *And Kirambo ?* Our school at Kirambo is located in the Northern Province, near the border with Uganda. It is built on a hilltop, surrounded by many mountains.

• *And now can you share a little on the history of your school.*

In 1986, a parents' association was formed to start a private high school in the region because there was none at that time. The association was named : ADEBU. They opened the school with only three classrooms.

• *And the Brothers ?*

After three years of operation, they ask the Brothers of Christian Instruction to come in. A Brother entered the school, then the following year 1990, he was taking the administration. Then a team of Brothers joined him, and the school was renamed FIC-ADEBU.

• *No particular difficulties at the beginning ?*

Of course ! First, the war in 1992, then the genocide, and in 1998 the school was occupied by rebel troops that were chased later. The Brothers had to leave Rwanda at the time, and came back in 2001.

• *Let us speak about the life at school.*

The school year starts in January since 2005. We have 580 students every year : about 300 boys and 180 girls. The average age is 20 years old. All students are enrolled in the Normal School Program in preparation to teach in Primary Schools, with three options : Social Studies, Languages and Sciences. All students are boarders, they eat and sleep at school.

* *What is your school schedule ?*

Our students have 38 classes of 50 minutes a week. Our 18 teachers must assure 30 periods per week to be considered full-time teachers. The average number of students per classroom is 50.

Students have to pay 200 \$ US per year for their board and lodging – 240 days with 3 meals a day. About 200 out of 580 students cannot afford to pay the strict minimum because of extreme poverty. The school must make miracles to be able to function properly.



ENP/TTC Jean-de-la-Mennais of **KIRAMBO** (Normal School for Primary Schools Teachers)

For a long time I have wanted to introduce to you in this Novena leaflet our school in Rwanda : its participation in the **Mennaisian Contest** in the years 2005-2008 was really remarkable. The students of that school got all the most important prizes !

We receive monthly the newsletter that informs us of the life and activities of the school. It is a school in full growth. Celebrations, meetings of religious, of priests, of important civil officers, all that gives us the impression that that school plays an important role in that small country at the centre of Africa, Rwanda. It is located in the countryside.

As Mennaisians, we can be proud of that school. However they had to face so many difficulties in the past. I interviewed one of the pioneers of that institution, Br. Paul-Émile Lebel. I have no doubt that this interview will interest all the friends of Jean-Marie, no doubt either that F. de la Mennais is quite proud of that school that bears his name.

Some geographical features of Rwanda, Br. Paul-Émile

* Rwanda covers 26 340 km². Its population : 10 387 000 people. (2009). * Border Countries :Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and DR Congo. * Most of people are farmers. * Equatorial climate, with altitude between 1000 m and 4500 m.

There are 4 Provinces and the Capital City is Kigali.

JESUS CHRIST is the life of JEAN MARIE DE LA MENNAIS

W

e all know the famous answer F. de la Mennais gave to Mr. Salvandy, then Minister of Public Education in France :

***"My schools have been instituted
To make Jesus Christ known and loved".***

These words were transmitted to us by Br. *Philéas*, his fellow traveller. The Founder also related that event to a priest friend of his, sometime later, not without any emotions ! But it was not the only occasion – that phrase, he repeated it many times, in other occasions, even in his letters to the brothers.

That was a genius and prophetic intuition, that summarizes well our charis m : JESUS CHRIST must be at the centre of the apostolate and the life of every Mennaisian, Brother or Lay person. Jean-Marie had it at the centre of his own life, and it is in these terms that he was addressing the Brothers : **Jesus Christ is our Model and our Teacher.**

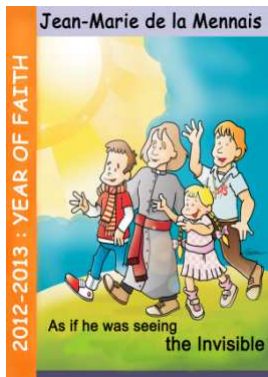
To achieve that, the brother as well as the lay mennaisian must live in intimacy with the Lord. The Founder was recommending it often :
« *Let's take advantage with care of all the abundant and precious graces the Lord is giving us, to make progress in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.* »
Even as a child, Jean-Marie was passionate for Jesus ; young man, he opted for Him ; as an adult, he believed it worthy to entrust his whole life to Him. *He opted for Him, and never wavered in his option, he never abandoned it.*

And all that he did, all that he achieved, was only and exclusively for God : FOR GOD ALONE. That was his motto.

... And he left the same motto to his brothers.

- 1.- Who is Jesus Christ for me : someone I admire as a museum artefact, or rather a person to whom I entrusted my life and all that I am ?**
- 2.- Priest, Laity, Brother... do I try to conform my life to the life of Jesus Christ, in accordance with my vocation ?**
- 3.- Do I try to identify myself with Christ ? Do I follow him ? Do I imitate him ?**
- 4.- What must I change in myself in order to become more like Jesus Christ ?**





OUR DOUBLE COVER PAGE

front page

The title we put on the cover page, *As if he saw the invisible*, is the work of a painter, Mr **Héctor Freire**. This title is in consonance with the theme all Catholics are invited to reflect upon this year :

FAITH

Of Abraham the Letter to the Hebrews says, 'By faith Abraham left Egypt, not fearing the king's fury, for he persevered **as if seeing the one who is invisible**. » (Heb 11, 27) And Abraham, because of his faith, is called, 'The father of all believers'.

Throughout history, this phrase was applied to many saints. It was Br. Carmelo Rizzo, Assistant General, on the occasion of the bicentennial of the birth of Jean-Marie de la Mennais in 1980, who applied it to our Founder. We truly believe it.

* Jean-Marie also remained firm in his faith

* He also, like Abraham, had to face many obstacles, difficulties, trials.

And as he is our Founding Father, we can consider him as our « **Father in faith** », faith that the first brothers could well see in him and were inspired by his example.

It is through them that the same faith has reached us.

... As of now, we are the heirs of that faith, we have to hold **the flaming touch of that faith**, and pass it on...

Back page

It shows the motto D. + S. drawn on the sail of a ship, with the anchor and star of faith. These are elements of mennaisian symbolism. The painting work was done by our artist of Buenos Aires, Héctor Freire.

The original drawing is from Br. Leovigildo Pérez, taken from the magazine CUADERNOS MENESIANOS, N° 32, entirely dedicated to our motto D.+ S. This is the magazine of the Province of Argentina-Uruguay.



... And the children and youth of today also love Jean-Marie. They are interested in his work and want to live in a mennaisian way. There are some of the letters that were sent to us from *Colegio Berrio-Otxoa, of Bilbao (Spain)* :

Good morning, my name is Lucia, I am 11 years old. I was born on September 12, 2001. I like my mennaisian school (Berrio-Otxoa) because people care for us, teach us and encourage us... For me, the Mennaisians are examples of good people and I try to follow in their footsteps.

Seven months ago my father died of cancer, and during that time, the mennaisian brothers gave me advice and great support. When I become an adult, I hope to pass my examinations and become also a teacher in a mennaisian school.

The life of Jean-Marie is very interesting, I have already read two books about him. And if it does not bother you, I would like you to answer three of my questions : Where are you from ? What subjects did you teach ? Where are the mennaisian schools in the world ? I am expecting your letter. Lucia

Good morning. My name is Irati Encinas, a student at Berrio-Otxoa. Bro. Benedicto told us that you were living in Rome ; I would like to ask you : how many mennaisian brothers in the world today, and why you yourself decided to become a mennaisian brother ?

Bisous, November 26, 2012

IRATI 5° B

Good morning. With this letter, I am answering the letter you sent me. As for the Mennaisian Brothers, if you believe in Jean-Marie, I also believe. The holiness of Jean-Marie seems obvious, doesn't it ? He dedicated his whole life at the service of others. Greetings. December 17, 2012 Alaitz 5° B

I write to you because there are things I did not understand well on the life of Jean-Marie. Here are my questions :

- Why did Br. Bernardin build his astronomical clock ?

- Did Jean-Marie open new missions ? How many and where ?

Maybe it was during his life, but Br. « Bene » spoke to us about them and many other things.

Bilbao, December 4, 2012

MAIDER NIEVES 6° D



Children love Jean-Marie Jean-Marie loves children.

That Jean-Marie loved children is obvious ! It is for them and for their education that he gave up so many offers that would have been very advantageous to him in society, in terms of power, possessions or status.

Even as a priest, he was offered many functions in the Church of France. He rather opted to go back to Brittany in order to dedicate himself totally to children and youth, to their education, to their preparation for life.

His love for children was not expressed only in actions but also in words and gestures : he was able to put himself at their level, to speak to their hearts, to write to them... Here is a letter he sent to black children in the Antilles on the occasion of their first communion.

My dear children,

I see that you know me already : without having met me, you remain convinced of the great interest I bear for you. Yes, my dear children, my thoughts are always about you, and my greatest consolation is to learn that we are making progress in the highest and most important science of all sciences : that of faith...

Dear children, let us go to heaven ! All of us together ! Let us live on earth in a way that you and me, with your father and mothers, brothers and sisters, we will gather in the same glory with our Saviour Jesus.

Goodbye, dear children. Never forget in your prayers the one who will remain your friend until his last breath.

Jean Marie de La Mennais

RECOMMENDED INTENTIONS

* That at the example of Jean-Marie, we choose Jesus as the model of our lives and that, like Jesus, we work at making others happy by helping them.

* **For young people who feel called by the Lord to follow Jesus as mennaisian Brothers.**

Sich people asking for our prayers through the intercession of J-Marie

* *Fernando Nogales* : malignant tumor.- *San Borja (Bolivia).*

* Mr. Godin, requested by Br. Albert Côté (Canada).

- *Olivier Meunier (12 y. old) – amyotrophy (Canada)*

* *Natalie Cubillo, with cancer (Madrid - Spain).*

- *Patrick Lebeau, tumour in the esophagus (France).*

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

* *Shelbie Civil (16 y. old) with a malignant tumour. La Vallée (Haiti)*

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

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

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

* *Juan Castro (a child) spinal cord (Lujan de Cuyo, Argentina)*

* *Ken Latos and David Hillbo, Saskatoon (Saskatchewan, Canada)*

- *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*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Hioatua KIIPUHIA, Seminarian: cerebral lesions-Tahiti, from Marquesas Islands*

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

- *Ophélie: cancer of colon.- Niece of Br. Jean Le Jeune (Josselin-F.).*

* *José A. Estébanez Rozas, nephew of Bro. G. Rozas hepatic tumour (Santander-E)*

- *M. Kazuo Hasegawa, cancer of the lungs, Yokohama,(Japan)*

... 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...

propose to us Jesus Christ as prototype of man



✠ February 18

* Let us bless the Lord and carefully take advantage of all the numerous and ggspecific graces he is giving to us to order to make progress in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

- *Let us contemplate only our divine Master, let us long only for Him, let us live in his adorable heart : there is our resting place.*

✠ February 19

* We can be united to Jesus Christ only insofar we walk in his presence. Let us keep that presence even amid all our occupations and work.

- *Let us look only for the glory of Jesus Christ, and let us help by our efforts those who also try to work for his glory.*

✠ February 20

* When God says that he wants our sanctification, it is as if he was saying that he wants to find in us the perfection of his Son.

- *The brothers will free their hearts entirely of all attachment to worldly goods ; they will bear with love for Jesus Christ all the hardships that are imposed on them.*

✠ February 21

« Oh my saviour, you have shown in the world so much kindness and love ; may we learn from you to renounce to impiety and earthly desires, and live here on earth in moderation, piety and justice !

- *I have not yet come across a man with a perfectly sound head: the man whose reasoning is strongest sometimes talks nonsense with painful assurance. Undoubtedly God permits it in order that we might put our faith and confidence in him alone, for he alone is the light and the truth! Someone said it very well: we must forgive the wise for being a little foolish.*

✠ February 22

« Jesus was given to us as King, master and model. He is our leader, we are his members.

- Therefore we must enter into his own designs, work at his mission, and realize his mysteries, continuing his own life ; in a word, to be fulfilled in union with him, as he himself was with his Father.

✠ February 23

* Religious profession is thus a participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, because it associates us to his divine work of redemption, to his charity for all men, to his zeal for the glory of his Father. This is why our vocation requires so high a perfection and heavenly virtues.

- *See how great is the mystery that will be realized in your soul (on the occasion of the religious profession).*

✠ February 24

* « Nobody can be saved unless he bears resemblance to his image : 'He predestined us to be images of his Son.'

- *There is nothing strange in the fact that we are called to live as the One who lived and died for us.*

✠ February 25

* All Christians have received that vocation : none of us will enter in the bosom of God unless he resemble the image of his divine Son

- It is in his Son, as he tells us himself, that he has put all his complacency.

✠ February 26

* And to raise his miserable creatures to him, He has to find in them the traits, and, if I may say so, the figure, the living impression of the One he has engendered before all ages.

- *Hence, the spirit of poverty, of mortification and of obedience is the very spirit we should all have.*