



***Mennaisian
Novena
Nº. 44***



PRESENTATION

March is what we could call a ‘productive month’ in many ways, both in the North and the South Hemispheres. In the South, a new school year has just begun, with joy and a tint of anxiety at facing a new year of studies : life goes on and brings out new energies. In the North, it is the time to reap the benefits of the year : this can be decisive for the final result.

And in the life of the Church ? We are at the heart of the liturgical year : with the **Holy Week** first, then **Easter, the Resurrection of the Lord.**

This is why we suggest that the present novena to J-Marie de la Mennais be like a walk with Jesus in his work of Redemption : « *Following Jesus carrying his Cross* », as *F. de la Mennais* would say.

This novena includes many other important themes :

- The role of **St. Joseph**, patron saint of the Church and ours too.
- What does the resignation of Benedict XVI mean to you ?
- **The holy brothers** in our congregation.
- Favours granted through the **intercession** of Jean-Marie de la Mennais.
- And many other things...

Good continuation of this holy time of **Lent.**

Happy Easter !

Rome, March 1, 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

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Thank you,

Jean Marie !

From Buenos Aires, Argentina

In 2010, Juani started his 4th year in our school of Buenos Aires. He has always been considered as a very good student, with proper behavior and showing respect to his teachers as well as to his classmates.

In the month of September, as every year, Juani and his family left for vacation in the South for skiing. It was then that Juani had his 4th accident, with brain damage. After first aid, he was brought to Buenos Aires, for more care

Operated successfully, he had to remain in hospital for several months to convalescence.

During that time, at school, all were praying for him every day, asking F. de la Mennais to intercede on his behalf with our Lord God. Chains of prayer were initiated.

Maybe because of all these prayers and demands, Juani's health improved day by day. In the month of February 2011, he could even take the exam that would allow him to validate his 4th year, though he had missed many classes. He passed the exam successfully and was admitted in 5th year with his classmates.

Another medical operation was scheduled for this year. *The prayers to Jean-Marie accompanied this operation and it was successful.* Now Juani can attend school with his friends.

We have to notice the unconditional support of his family (parents and his sister) as well as the support of teachers, parents and classmates.
September - 2012

From Bilbao (Spain)

My health is improving. Now I am waiting for my next consultation with the doctor this coming April. I am finished with oncology.

Thanks for your prayers ! Thanks to Jean-Marie; I am sure that he listened to your prayers for me and interceded on my behalf with our Good Lord. Thanks.

February 14, 2013

By. Benedicto de Francisco

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.

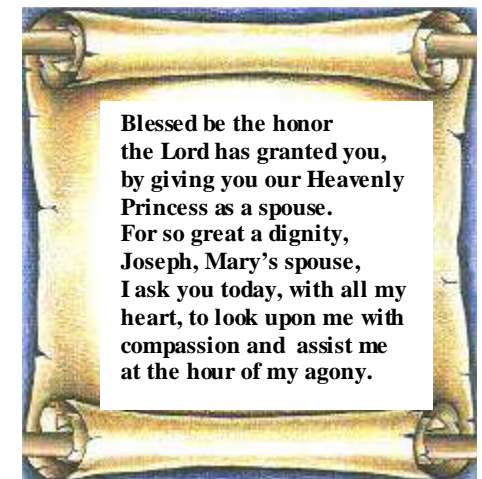
This method is simple, and can last from 3 minutes to... 15 minutes, if you want !

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 TO SAINT JOSEPH

This prayer is addressed to St. Joseph. In its original language, it is a poem of ten eight-syllable verses, with consonant rhymes. It is similar to another well-known prayer to Virgin Mary.



Blessed be the honor the Lord has granted you, by giving you our Heavenly Princess as a spouse. For so great a dignity, Joseph, Mary's spouse, I ask you today, with all my heart, to look upon me with compassion and assist me at the hour of my agony.



Holy Week and Easter

Think about it !...

**Have you ever experienced the JOY
of a good confession ?**

The mission of a catechist is quite beautiful, it is full of sacrifices and unselfish giving of self.

Among the joys I received when I was in charge of the program of catechesis in the parish and at school, I remember two in particular, with the greatest contentment :

- a) *One joy was the First Communion of children : who could doubt that ? But besides communion, there was also something even better for the soul : it was the confession preceding First Communion : the simple and clear confession of these children. After confession, the children would run to me shouting : When can we go to confession again ?*
- b) *Also, maybe a less spectacular but deeper joy, the confession of these 15-19 year-old students before their Confirmation, their First Communion or on the occasion of the Great Novena to Father de la Mennais.*

At first, suspicion and mistrust, then silence and inquisitive eyes, followed by interesting questions :

What if we do not know how to confess? If we do not remember well what to say ? What if we have nothing to say ? And if we are afraid of saying these things ?

Well, it is quite simple : say to the priest that you don't know how to confess, that you don't remember well, that you don't know what to say, or that you are ashamed of saying some things etc. Do it in all simplicity ...

... And, in reality, this is already a confession : the priest will take charge of the rest. You'll see : the fish which came so close is too beautiful to let it go ! The priest will guide you.

And what about contrition, firm purpose and all the rest ? Who can doubt that a young person who has already made this first step (of going to confession) already has these a hundredfold ! It is enough to make only one promise or a promise suggested by the priest.

The most important is to go to the priest with a right intention. Then you will feel the joy of having been truly forgiven and able to receive communion.

Indeed Jesus said to his disciples : 'Those to whom you give your pardon, will be forgiven by my Father in heaven'.

It is said that this is the greatest joy a person can feel while still on earth. Please, make that unique experience !

Thank you, Lord Jesus !



Among his many qualities, Br. Henry was a very competent teacher and an invaluable educator. Often he would invite his students to raise themselves to a more spiritual level. Throughout his life as religious, he gave the image of a man of God. Faith was the characteristic of this religious. Even as a youth, he was considered as a saint by his classmates. And besides those living with him, the other brothers, his family, the adults he worked with or accompanied, all considered him as 'a saint among them'.

For Br. Blais, the motto of the Brothers of Christian Instruction « God Alone » was something vital. Br. Henri liked to spend long hours of intimacy with the Good Shepherd. It was nice to see him in prayer. It was source of edification for his confreres. He was inspiring confidence in the power of his intercession with the Lord.

Among the important moments of renewal Br. Henri benefited from, we can mention : The Grand Retreat in 1940, his Second Novitiate in 1954, and his pilgrimage to Medjugorje in Bosnie-Herzégovine in 1992. These moments surely contributed much to sustain his high level of spiritual life.

Throughout his career as a teacher, Br. Blais spread a 'spiritual wind' : he had a charism that facilitated his contacts with teenagers and adults. The liturgical week-ends which he animated attracted many participants and filled them with enthusiasm.

Br. Henri Blais experienced a fruitful and serene old age during his ten years at the Motherhouse of La Prairie. Through correspondence he would keep contact with many friends, participate in community activities, always with a radiant smile and good humour. The hours he spent in front of the Blessed Sacrament brought to him rest and new energy.

In summer 2007, his health started deteriorating and he had to go to Anna-Laberge Hospital of Châteauguay. The hospital personnel was impressed by this exceptional patient. His death occurred on August 5, 2007. He was then 90 years old. His funerals were celebrated in the chapel of the Motherhouse of La Prairie, followed by his interment in the cemetery of the community.

February 28, 2013

François Boutin, archivist.



"Holy" Brothers ?

Brother Henri Blais

"A Brother with a radiant smile"

Henri Blais was born on November 29, 1916, at Saint-Paul-de-Montmagny (Quebec). The young Henri, only boy of a family of three children, started his schooling at Saint-Zotique's School in Montreal, then administered by the Brothers of Christian Instruction. He entered the Juniorate of La Prairie on January 25, 1930. Two years later, on August 15, 1932, he entered Novitiate under the name of Brother Canisius-Joseph. He professed his final vows in La Prairie on July 4, 1938.

Br. Henri kept on his studies at Montreal University to obtain his qualifications for teaching. He got the following degrees : BA in Arts (1941), BA in Pedagogy (1945), License in Pedagogy (1947) and Certificate of School Careers Advisor (1947). To these he added studies in liturgical music, various sessions in catechesis and liturgy, mostly at Val-Morin.

His career as teacher started in 1935 at St. Michael's, Buckingham. Then we find him at Saint-Jean-Vianney's, in Gatineau, in 1939-1940 and at the Juniorate of La Prairie from 1940 to 1949. He will be appointed Director of the Postulate from 1949 to 1962, then teacher at St. Romuald's, in Farnham in 1962-1963, then back to La Prairie as director of the Postulate in 1963-1964. From 1964 to 1981, Br. Henri Blais was a teacher at Saint-Romuald's, then at Jean-Jacques Bertrand's High School of Farnham, and later on, at Mount La Mennais, the House of Formation in Oka, from 1981 to 1991.

In 1991, F. Henri retired as teacher and went to Rosemont Community in Montreal. He soon got involved in catechesis work. In 1994 he joined a team of brothers in Chambly in charge of the pastoral animation of the parish : Bros Gaston Boucher, Roch Bourbonnais and Philippe Fontaine. There we could see that many parishioners were coming to him with their intentions of prayer and would confide to him. In 1997, Br. Henry retired at the Motherhouse of La Prairie, where the 'holy Brother Canisius' continued to edify people with his kindness, his smile and his piety.

To follow JESUS CHRIST

Carrying his CROSS. as

JEAN MARIE DE LA MENNAIS

... Since his young age, Jean-Marie had an objective, a clear ideal of life : **To become priest**, and to follow his Bishop in exile ! He could not fulfill that dream right away but he never forgot it.

His dream was finally realized in Paris, on the occasion of a Mass : there he expressed his deep desire, and the following day, with his Bishop, he went to the Convent of the Carmelites. The walls of the convent were still covered with blood of martyrs. 'The persecutors are still alive', said the Bishop to him. Jean-Marie replied : 'Yes, I saw many of them in Brittany, but it only reinforced my purpose to become a priest !' He was ordained sub-deacon and later on, priest. He devoted his whole life to the Lord, and followed Him closely.

His difficulties were numerous, those related to his varied apostolic works. He faced them courageously, with faith and joy, with tenacity and enthusiasm, while assuming his many responsibilities :

- Accompanying his brothers in their work;
- Visiting them several times a year, traveling of the rough roads of that time ;
- Writing to the brothers regularly;
- Living a mortified and simple life ;
- Helping children and youth in his apostolic groups and in schools, confessing them ;
- Going forward, in spite of many difficulties and failures ...

...Such was his life until the end, when arrived then the crosses of sickness and infirmities. Nothing could stop him.

"... I almost gave way to the heavy burden of my work, since of beginning of August. I had to preach two retreats, one after the other, with 750 Brothers in all."



During the month dedicated to St. Joseph

In the city of Córdoba (Argentina) a statistical survey was made some twenty years ago, on the name of more than one million and a half people. The result was

quite interesting :

- **Mary**, for women – it is not so surprising.

And for men ? - **Joseph !**

Argentina is a Catholic and ‘Marian’ country, even in its flag ; but... is St. Joseph so important ? – Surely he was, at least for our Lord God : it is to him that he entrusted his own beloved Son on earth, Jesus Christ, and his Virgin Mother Mary.

Joseph played his role well : with courage, tact, union with God, openness to His Word... and without much noise !

And now ? He was declared **Universal Patron of the Church** by Pope Pius IX in difficult times ! Pope Leo XIII wrote a prayer putting the Church under his protection, prayer that is still used nowadays. **Pope John XXIII**, after inserting the name of Joseph in the liturgical Canon of Mass, dedicated a chapel to his honour, inside St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Daily masses are said there every day.

And in our **Congregation** ? Since the origins, he is the patron saint of our recruiting work, to our great satisfaction. The brothers in charge used to visit the schools and ask children : *Would you like to be a brother like us ?* It is like Jesus himself walking along the shore of the Lake of Galilee... They were courageous, these brothers ! That was in the past...

At the time of the Founder, when writing to the missionaries in West Indies (Antilles), the brothers were mentioning St. Joseph as patron of vocations. St. Joseph was also the patron **of most of our Houses of Formation**.

And in our Generalate in Rome, we have **a stone** dedicated to him and put at the foot of his statue, as a gesture of thanksgiving for his action for the promotion of vocations. You can see the picture of that statue hereby.

And now, a fortiori, we are praying and asking him to continue his help. We are in great need of his intercession !

Br. Delfín



Homage to **Benedict XVI**

Still under the shock of emotion, and with the feeling of having lived historical days,

we would like to dedicate a few lines to the retired Pope, successor John-Paul II, as great as him, yet in a different way.

Instead of losing his energies by measuring himself to the charism of his predecessor, Benedict focused on his own charism: to show that God is alive, that Jesus Christ is our Saviour and Guide, that it is on Him we must focus our lives, that we live in a world with much goodness, as God’s own work, but that we also have to look forward to another world, an eternal world. Benedict was conscious that Christians today have to live in an atmosphere of relativism and globalization...

In his last audience, on February 27, we could see a poster that said, *“Jesus Christ will not abandon us ; He is giving us all that we need”*. Words of Benedict XVI; he expressed that conviction in his trilogy on Christ. Millions of copies of these three books were sold : the world was expecting them. As one brother keeps on repeating to me: *“God provides his Church and the world with the Pope they most need of, at a particular time”*.

Usually people come to Rome to **see** the Pope, but with Benedict XVI, people were coming **to listen to the Pope**, ‘**humble worker in the Lord’s vineyard**’, as he introduced himself the first day. We can notice that during his first year, he had an audience twice as large as John-Paul his predecessor had at the same time.

Everything was wrapped up in an attitude of **humility**. **“Benedict, humility has made you great”**, said one poster on the plaza of Castel-gandolfo, when the Pope retired there : he, a very cultured man, very dignified, and yet **so humble !** ... And **“so daring”**, added the daily Paris newspaper *Le Monde*.

One monk also wrote these words :

“The history of the Church shows cases where monks ended up being popes, but only one case we had the opportunity of witnessing : a pope who ended up as a monk. It is not a demotion, but rather a promotion ; he does not descend from the cross but rather goes higher on the cross. ... This wonderful Pope the Lord has given us, leaves the valley for the summit ...”

RECOMMENDED INTENTIONS

Collaborators of the Postulator

Here is something I have wanted to express for a long time, since I was appointed Postulator in 2003: I found many generous collaborators and advisors who have helped me much. To them I dedicate these lines of **thanksgiving**.

First of all, the **“delegates”** of each Province and Vice-Province, upon the decision of Br. José A. Obeso, s. g., at the General Conference at Castalgandolfo. From their collaboration came out the present publication of the **“Mennaisian Novena”**. Its fruits ? – The restoration or intensification of the **Monthly Novena** and of the **Great Novena**, in the Congregation. Their help and assistance have continued without fail until 2009. Among these collaborators, I would like to mention only one name, **Br. Ovide Fortier**, who died in Canada : he helped me a lot. The regular cover page of the Novena is from him.

Then the important work of the **“translators”**, as our novena is published in four languages : French, English, Spanish and Italian. Bros Yvon Deniaud, Claude Beauchesne, Charles Cahier (r.i.p.), Pietro Aresti, Leonard Byankia and often Bro. Joseph Pinel are among the most assiduous.

Something new : **José Luis Cuevas Abad**, former student of our school in Reinosa, has been appointed **assistant-postulator** for the study of the miraculous healing of Adolfo de la Peña who had been suffering from a cancer of the stomach since 1954. This case had been abandoned, but now we are taking it up with much hope and tenacity.

Finally, the eminent **Dr. José Luis Calcagno, specialist**, for the study of the case of Enzo Carollo, presently under consideration. He represents dozens of people who are helping us in the diocesan proceedings at Buenos Aires, with much devotion, perseverance and love for Jean-Marie de La Mennais.

Rome, March 5, 2013

Br. Delfín López, Postulator



- * That at the example of Jean-Marie, we may follow Jesus carrying our cross, and try to help others to carry their own.
- * **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: defoming 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 Brunswick- 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)*
- *Hioatua KIIPUHIA, Seminarian: cerebral lesions-Tahiti, from Marquesas Islands*
- * *Christine KOLA, Sister of Providence of St André, Sotouboa, 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.**

To follow JESUS CHRIST, Carrying his CROSS

Words of JEAN MARIE DE LA MENNAIS



✠ March 18

* Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ was accused unjustly but that **he kept silence**. When the Lord is sending us a difficulty, we have to accept it in a spirit of faith.

- *If we really want to become his disciples, **we must imitate his divine examples** ; I myself try to do it, the most I can.*

✠ March 19

* I have to suffer also, my dear child, and I **thank the Lord for it**.

- *We must carry that **cross by which we have been saved**, and as St. Paul said, « In my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church. » (Col 1, 24)*

✠ March 20

* « O my Saviour, whose kindness and love have appeared in the world, so that, instructed by you and renouncing to impiety and earthly desires, **we may live here on earth in piety, justice and simplicity...** »

- *Lord, seeing how you are like us men in your **external appearance**, may we merit to be interiorly transformed at your image.*

✠ March 21

* Take care not to **love the Cross** only in a speculative way ! It is so easy to have that dangerous illusion.

- *At the sight of a **crucifix**, our faith, our piety are awoken, our hearts are moved ; and sometimes abundant tears come to our eyes.*

✠ March 22

*When it is God's will to afflict you, meaning, to take off even a **small piece of his cross** and give it to you as a proof of his love, our human nature is afraid, our courage weakens, and our good resolutions disappear.

- *It is precisely at such a time that we should rejoice, because then Jesus wants to **transform us into his own image**.*

✠ March 23

* In the pious ceremonies of these holy days, let us grow not only in our faith in the teaching of **our Crucified Lord...**

- *but also in our determination to imitate his examples **and follow after him** on the painful roads he has somehow opened for us.*

✠ March 24

* The religious profession is a participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, because it associates us with the **divine functions of his salvation...**

- *and also with his **love for mankind**, with his zeal for the glory of his Father ; this is why your state of life demands so high a perfection and heavenly virtues.*

✠ March 25

* How great is the mystery that will be realized in your soul : God can love in it only **his own image**.

- *All the work of religious life consists in restoring this divine imprint, **the divine traits that sin has erased**, one after the other, so that nothing is left in man of the image of God.*

✠ March 26

* I know that here below our union with him cannot be perfect; but **we must tend to perfection** by continual efforts

- ***Place yourself humbly at his feet**; ask him to remove your spirit, to invest you, to penetrate you with his and to teach you to be meek and humble of heart, so that you may find rest for your soul.*