

MENNAISIAN CHARISMA

God alone



La Mennais

Postulation Bulletin

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1 – THE MENNAISIAN CHARISMA TODAY

“The cause of beatification of Jean-Marie de la Mennais and its meaning.”

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“The cause of beatification is currently suspended, we are back to the start; when shall we finally see our founder with the aureole of the blessed?..”

These are the considerations that spontaneously come to mind after the failure of the “miracle” to be recognized as such - that seemed sure to us – after the cure of young Enzo Carollo of Buenos Aires.

However, let us positively try to look at this event in the light of faith and of hope.

Above all, we must be grateful for the work of the postulators who passionately devoted themselves to the cause of Jean-Marie de la Mennais; Brothers Gil Rozas and Delfin López who sensitised the Congregation about the Mennaisian spirituality and who so devoted themselves to the recognition procedures of the “healing” “miracle” that despite everything, two doctors of the commission considered authentic, and qualifying to be scientifically inexplicable.

We have, among other past Postulators, Brothers who have contributed not a little to the deepening of the Mennaisian spirituality and history, we might here mention Brothers Philip Friot and Vincent Guillerm.

We must also refer to Brother Gabriel Potier, who left many remarkable studies on this spirituality and history.

And even before him, another Postulator, Brother Victor Hyppolite. This latter, with great patience and careful research provided the necessary material to meet the stubborn objections of the Promoter of the Faith, Archbishop Frutaz. This historical work remains one of the reference documents for the cause, the “ Summarium additionale” of 1960, which heralded the declaration of heroicity of virtues, This affirmation was made official on December 15, 1966, therefore 50 years ago, under the pontificate of Paul VI. The Servant of God, Jean Marie de la Mennais, was officially declared Venerable. What now remains is to wait for God to imprint on this cause the seal of the Holy Spirit by a miracle, a sign of his divine intervention.

Favours, healings and special gifts obtained through the intercession of the Founder are countless. But the Church has not yet officially recognised any as miracles.

As for us, we continue to pray, to search, to study in such a way that a “miracle” can be obtained.

But already, while waiting for this great wish to be achieved we continue to act as Mennaisian “sons”

How? Here are some guidelines that each one can take and develop.

1. Get to know Father Jean-Marie de la Mennais, his history, his spirituality, his ecclesial and social mission better. We currently have at our disposal numerous writings: the works of Brother Miguel Angel Merino, of Brother Josu olabarrieta, of Brother Philip Friot, and many others..., together with “Mennaisian studies” and “La Mennais Studies” the new biographies... Let us ensure that they do not remain on our library shelves, but turn them into living materials for prayer and for greater understanding of his Mennaisian charisma.
2. Constantly strive to develop the Mennaisian charisma, especially within the Mennaisian family of lay people, Brothers and sisters. This is not about making a banner, to isolate ourselves or to withdraw in our small Chapel. It is about putting at the disposal of the Church and Society the Charisma that the Holy spirit has given us, to help us resemble Jesus, in this particular aspect. It is a gift received but to trade or broadcast. It comes to organise us so that we can render it more effective and real. We must offer it to the Church, perhaps by associating ourselves with a similar charisma, knowing that the charisma is not ours, but it is a gift for the community to which we must be faithful.
3. Strengthen the Mennaisian family even more. All those who are in contact with people and Mennaisian undertakings are called to join this family.

It is necessary to move from a professional relationship to a fraternal collaboration, and from collaboration to the work of sharing the charisma in co-responsibility, in joint initiatives and in the effective sharing of the Mennaisian spirit.

We do all this not because the West lacks vocations to the consecrated life nor for greater efficiency at work, but just to make the Mennaisian charisma that the Holy Spirit has given to us and which is present in the communion between us vital and more visible.

Therefore, the beatification of Jean-Marie de la Mennais will be the recognition by God of our commitment to incarnate now in the various countries, the charisma received.

This will give a new impetus-also for vocations.-. for all, to live it and spread it in the Church and in the world.

Frère Dino De Carolis

2 - WITNESSES OF THE MENNAISIAN CHARISMA

The charisma does not only belong to the founder or cannot only be found in his writings and examples. The Charisma is like a tree that grows and produces new branches and fruit. This growth is reflected in the “sons” of Jean-Marie de la Mennais who develop all the potentialities of the Mennaisian seed, by living in fidelity to the origins and render them appropriate to today’s culture.

*The first of these testimonies is **Brother Gerard Châtelier** a particularly strong witness that many have known.*



“A tree will grow up”

Bro. Gérard CHATELIER
28/03/1944 – 05/07/2015



We remember Brother Gerard as a man whose face was lit up with a broad smile when he welcomed you to his community or when you met him by chance on a journey or a walk. An engaging smile that immediately put you at ease as if you were long time friends... "We will keep a souvenir of a bright person, full of empathy, extremely sensitive and with an extremely youthful spirit" said one of the many testimonies received since the announcement of his death.

Brother Gerard was born in Chabossière in Couëron, near Nantes. He was the youngest of seven children. We share, on this day, the pain and prayer of his elder sister and his brothers and sisters in law, as well as those of his nieces and nephews to whom he was

It was in 1956 that Gerard left his home to enter the Juniorate of Derval. In 1964, at the age of 20, he entered the novitiate in Jersey to become a Brother.

In September 1968; after his theology studies and educational studies in the scholasticate, he was posted to the community of Nantes where he taught the 6th class at the college of Theophane Vénard. Having opted for co-operation instead of carrying out a military service, he went to Senegal to teach at the Didier Marie college in 1969 where he served for two years. The college was newly opened by Bishop Dodds bishop of the diocese, and run by young Brothers, volunteers like him. The classes were huge, there was a lot of work and the relations with the Fathers of the catholic mission were very good and the

climate in which the four Brothers of the community lived was very joyful.

On his return from Africa in 1971, Brother Gerard was appointed to the Collège of Notre Dame de l'Abbaye in Nantes where, while teaching, he was also preparing for a masters in modern Literature.

In 1977 he arrived at the Juniorate of Saint Donatien at Derval where he taught for one year and then succeeded Bro. Melaine as a teacher and later as Headteacher.

In this delicate position, guiding young people, Brother Gerard was greatly appreciated by both the Juvenists and their families. He listened to them but was well aware of the recommendation of Father de la Mennais "*help the young people with gentleness and firmness.*"

In 1982, he was appointed Delegate for vocations: a difficult and demanding mission which he accomplished with faith and discernment, by accompanying young people with firmness but also delicacy, tact and respect. He participated in pastoral animation of institutions by teaching catechetics, joining other groups to prepare young people for the profession of faith, confirmation, and animating recollections offered to young people in institutions on weekends at the Abbey of Bellefontaine, at the "Foyer de Charité" of Tressaint and else where ...

It was natural that in 1987 the superiors chose him to be the Provincial of the Province of St. Donatien which included schools and communities of Brothers in Loire Atlantique, in Maine et Loire in the Pyrenees, and in Senegal.

A delicate mission and sometimes complex that he assumed, without considering that during 8 years he had to be in charge of communities but also schools, a task that demanded great deal of traveling, meetings, listening, paying attention to people, not to mention the encouragement to offer or difficult decisions to take and of which he needed to know how to accept.

A mission not without difficulties and suffering when it meant helping people in painful personal choices or when withdrawing from places where he could no longer remain.

There again, the Brothers were able to appreciate his simplicity, hospitality, respect for everyone and the way he encouraged and convinced them. He knew how to guide, encourage and inspire....

In 1995, the merging of four provinces of France into one Province released Brother Gerard from his responsibilities as a Provincial. He was called to Rome as an Assistant Director of the Year of renewal (year of spiritual renewal proposed to the Brothers of all countries) He spent nine years at Castelgandolfo, with Brother Merino

– who also died prematurely a year before - they both formed a perfect team and complemented each other beautifully. His knowledge of languages permitted him to easily liaise with the Brothers who came from all continents.

In 2003, he left Castelgandolfo for Paris for a year of rest, spiritual and intellectual renewal at the Centre Seves.

In 2004, he returned to Rome as the Superior and Director of the General House. He served in this capacity for 10 years.

The testimony of his community Brothers: " We are grateful to Brother Gerard for his commitment to the community, his availability without forgetting all the service he ensured to our house and his desire to create unity in a diverse community. How many times did he take it upon himself not to let nothing of his legitimate impatience occur. Upon his arrival he virtually carried out a complete renovation of the General House ... Then another area where we owe him a lot concerns his ties with the various organisations of the parish. He was part of the pastoral council where his opinions were greatly valued. He was also a member of the charity commission of the parish council.

Then concerning his position as Director of the Casa, we can only be pleased with his relationships with the workers, always attentive to all of them, close to each one of them in their joys and hardships they lived in their families, knowing how to underline in a festive manner the great moments of the year. And on this note we cannot forget the way he welcomed the young people of Taizé two years ago ...

In his fight against cancer, which lasted nine years, Brother Gerard was always very discreet about his condition. He never manifested his illness openly. He was being treated at Gemelli Hospital. In a personal way he never asked anyone to accompany him. He sometimes had to wait patiently for hours for his turn.

On the 1st August 2014, the day of his fiftieth anniversary of his entry into the novitiate – which he never celebrated with his confreres - he experienced a new stage in the aggravation of his sickness. It was only with difficulty that he struggled on until his final departure for France on the 23rd October 2014.

Brother Gerard knew the gravity of his illness and the inevitable outcome but he never talked about it. "I am in God's hands," he replied to someone who was worried about him. That is to say, he lived total surrender and absolute availability to God. He fully lived his consecration to Christ. This was his secret and without doubt because he now took another path, the path of suffering and

communion with Christ, he preferred solitude in his room to numerous visits...

Finally, I read you the message of Brother Yannick Houssay, the Superior General of the Brothers. He lived with Brother Gerard in Rome, but now he is visiting communities in Canada:

"I would have loved to be with you to celebrate the funeral of Brother Gerard .

Being in Canada to visit the communities, I will unite myself to your prayers, with the Canadian Brothers, many of whom knew him in Rome or at Castelgandolfo. All those who talk about their experience with him emphasise his availability, his attention, his kindness, his smile, his discretion and his simplicity. He was attentive to those in need, ordinary people. I observed this in Rome. The people he met in the neighborhood. The parish loved him. They liked to confide in him. They felt listened to and welcomed. They felt they were important to him. The personnel at Casa Generalizia, People who came to work for us were treated like kings. He welcomed strangers and outsiders as a Brother. If he sometimes appeared to be demanding, it was because he could not stand someone closed in himself and in his own interests. These are the traits of Brother Gerard that come up whenever the Brothers talk of him during my visits. I am sure he would love the insinuations of Pope Francis to go out to the marginalised.

I pray that the Lord may now open him the doors of his paradise and love, of simplicity and truth. In the Lord, he is close to us and he prays for us. It is our faith. Blessed be God for Brother Gérard he gave to us."

Bro. Michel Bouvaïs
With the testimony of the Brothers of the
community of Rome.

3 - FAVOURS OBTAINED

THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF JOHN-MARY DE LA MENNAIS



We begin by presenting some favours (from America) received through the intercession of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. Let us start by those which were collected in the documents of the Postulator.

The first took place at the hospital which was run by the Sisters of Providence, at Cobourg, near Saint-Malo in 1955. It was the subject of the diocesan process in Redon and then to Rome, at the Sacred Congregation of rites. The preparation of documents was carried out by the then postulator, Bro. Hyppolyte-Victor.

The second was about the healing of a child (always children, great friends of Father de la Mennais) in the United States, again in 1954. We are waiting for more information about other favours obtained through the intercession of our Venerable Father.

According to the postulation archives.

• COMBOURG, OBTAINED FAVOURS

“A little girl at Combourg, a pupil at the school of Providence, aged 5 years, had a fall in January. Her head hit the corner of stove. Shortly after she fell into a coma; her right side was paralysed. –The doctor sent for the surgeon to perform a trepanation. The little Josette was taken to our St. Joseph clinic. At that time, Mother Magdalene of the Sacred Heart, her schoolmistress, asked the nurse to put a picture – a relic of our Venerable Father into the hand of the little patient. Suddenly, the Child called his mother and the paralysed side regained its flexibility. –on arrival, the surgeon declared that his intervention was unnecessary and some days later, Josette was at school.” (Mother St. Andrew f.d.l.p)

• CURE OF THE BRAIN TUMOR:

A mother in a family at Biddeford; Me, U.S.A wrote: “Since 1952, one of my children, now five years old, suffered from very bad headaches. After examining him, several doctors believed he had polio. But the headaches continued to the point of becoming unbearable. I had then recommended him to the prayer of the monthly novena to Venerable de la Mennais. “In the General Hospital of Maine, where I drove my little patient, the radiography disclosed a brain tumor. It was in 1952; but it was not until July 1954 that they tried to operate on him: it lasted six hours. Surgeons discovered a second deeper tumor that they dared not remove. They told me to take the child to the hospital; six months later the little patient then would undergo a series of examinations. “However, in September 1954, when the surgeon took a new X-ray, he noted such worrying growth of the tumor that he ordered an immediate operation. My child entered the hospital for the second time on 17th September. I then requested the Brothers at the school to pray to Venerable Jean-Marie de la Mennais for the success of this operation, more serious than the first, and every day my family united with the community for the prayers of the novena.

“The operation was set for September 23; but the day before, the doctors took a new X-ray, and, to their surprise, none could find any trace of the tumor! It was the fifth day of the novena . Two days later, the child left the hospital. Since that time, he was examined twice. Finally, the doctor declared him cured in an inexplicable way. My little boy now attends school and is in perfect health. Thank you with all my heart Father de la Mennais.