



## LETTER TO THE MENNAISIAN FAMILY

October 2019

The General Superior

# Write a New Page in Mennaisian Family

**Dear Brothers, Dear Lay Mennaisians,**

On June 6, 1819, Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes had written their New Page by signing the Treaty of Union whose main objective was to "provide the children of the people, especially those of the countryside of Brittany, masters firmly pious"<sup>1</sup>.

Today, are we ready to write our New Page in the Mennaisian Family? A New Page in Five Paragraphs !

The first must be written "*in Mennaisian Family mode*." That means learning to move together, in the manner of Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes, by accepting ourselves as different yet complementary. It also means supporting each other to go to God and to walk together in the manner of the disciples of Emmaus. Thus, in his time, the risen Jesus will join us on our journey to explain to us the Scriptures, to warm our hearts and to share the bread with us. Without this passionate love for Christ, living in the "*Mennaisian Family mode*" will soon lack

flavour and will no longer be meaningful to today's young people.

Our second paragraph could revolve around fraternity. Indeed, the last General Chapter asks us to open *new pathways of fraternity*. This is the challenge of modern

times. How can we promote this

culture of fraternity as members of the Mennaisian Family?

Pope Francis asks us to be prophets of

hospitality by our

openness, by welcoming the

other, arriving from other countries. Thus, by living the closeness, the Mennaisian Family creates the conditions for it to become a space for dialogue and a place where fraternity is lived. Therefore, we are invited to invent opportunities where young people can touch the beauty of living together. A fraternity lived with empathy and sympathy is able to be a calling for today's youth.

**Returning to the source** could be the content of our third paragraph. In fact, Jesus is the only source to which



<sup>1</sup> Treaty of Union, 6 June 1819.

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the Mennaisian Family must drink and in which its roots are called to feed, if it wants to keep its greenness and youthfulness. The bread of the Word and the Eucharist will give it strength to move forward; otherwise, it may fail along the way. Only Jesus can keep alive its dreams of fecundity and radiating its beauty. Only the one who confides in the Lord can become this green tree that offers sweetness and freshness to pilgrims tired of the journey and which gives fruit at a rate of one hundred to one. May the Mennaisian Family become this source to which many children and young people will like to come to drink, as were Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes for those of their time.

The fourth paragraph could be structured around the invitation of the last General Chapter to **risk the encounter**. In a society that increasingly tends to erect walls and barriers between people, the vocation of the Mennaisian Family offers this prophetic dimension which consists in promoting the culture of encounter by building connections and bridges after the example of Jesus. Our family should think about projects that strengthen, accompany and foster encounter with others. It could create networks that allow its members and young people to join hands in order to move forward together. If the members of the Mennaisian Family do not become experts in relation, we will miss our fundamental vocation which consists in being islands of presence, care, benevolence, listening and attention in our



arid and depressing world. The future of the Mennaisian Family is therefore based on the culture of encounter.

The fifth paragraph that we could write together is that of **daring to go to the peripheries**. It is a constant call from Pope Francis. It is the place where the Church is called to express her credibility by becoming a servant of the poorest. Jean-Marie de la Marie reminds us that *the poor are sacred to us*. These are at our doorstep: in the neighbourhood, in the office, at school, in the family, at work. Will we be able to open our eyes to recognize them, our hearts to love them and our hands to serve them? Only a Mennaisian Family that

manages to enter such a dynamic will be fruitful and meaningful for today's young people. Thus, the love and service of the least should constitute our present and our future.

Today, within the framework of the Bicentenary of the Congregation, "Leaving for mission" means learning to live more and more in "Mennaisian Family mode" and to open new pathways of fraternity by returning to the Source, risking the encounter and daring to go to the

peripheries. What a wonderful New Page we have to write together! To each and every one of them, its pen! The

Lord provides us with the paper! The Holy Spirit offers us intuition and inspiration! Let's write it without fear, with audacity, passion and creativity!

