

JANUARY 2017 - NOVENA



«A BROTHER OF BROTHERS»

Introduction

Jean-Marie de la Mennais' greatest concern was the well being of children and young people. But the primary object of his attention was reserved for the Brothers. He had a direct relationship with them: he was like a father to them and they were like sons to him. Let us not imagine Fr. Jean-Marie de La Mennais as a great 'manager' who disposed the Brothers as employees of an effective and efficient enterprise. He knew that the Brothers were the apostles; that what motivated them was the passion for Jesus and his Kingdom, through the evangelisation of children. They were people who devoted their energies and heart to the Christian education, without calculating and often without sparing themselves.

Wednesday 18th January, 2017

After his stay at the Grand Chaplaincy in Paris, where he was in contact with the high authorities of the Court and the Church, Jean-Marie settled in Brittany.

"I, who see with my eyes and touch with my hands the good they do, I am more than ever delighted. The only regret I feel is that I cannot live near them, or rather with them and like them. I would, no doubt, be very happy."

to Brute de Rémur, May 23, 1824

**THANK YOU, LORD,
FOR CALLING THE BROTHERS**

Thursday 19th January, 2017

It was in an annual retreat that the Brothers met as a family and experienced the spirit of unity and brotherly love. And Fathers Jean-Marie de La Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes were like fathers to each and everyone.

"All the Brothers went on foot, in fact we could not travel in any other way: there were neither old nor infirm Brothers among us. Our Founder alone had a horse; he often gave it to some Brothers who would be tired. Our Founder was always in our midst, sometimes getting off his horse so as not to leave us behind and naming all the important places that we could see.

Brother Hippolyte - Retreat of 1812, in Petite vie anecdotique

**HELP US, LORD, TO BE HAPPY IN THE MIDST
OF OUR BROTHERS
AND TO KNOW HOW TO WALK WITH THEM AT
THE SAME PACE.**

Friday 20th January, 2017

Jean-Marie had his Brothers in his heart: in his letters, in welcoming them and in prayer. And the more they were far away and exposed to dangers, the more he worried about them.

"In a month we shall have our retreat; you will certainly not be forgotten, nor will any of our Brothers in the Colonies. Tell them a thousand tender things on my behalf, and again on my behalf encourage them to always strive to be worthy of their holy mission."

to Brother Ambroise, July 2, 1841

**HELP US, LORD, TO HAVE A HEART FULL OF
TENDERNESS AND COMPASSION.**

Saturday 21st January, 2017

Jean-Marie loved all his Brothers as a mother, but his preference went to those who had more problems. He was of an extreme delicacy for the sick.

"In the next week, Brother Anselme-Marie will arrive from Plouguerneau, keep him for a few days so that he may rest until you find an opportunity to send him here without too much fatigue because he is suffering from the chest ...: we should very much know how to care for our sick."

to Brother Laurent, March 29, 1842

**HELP US, LORD, TO LOOK WITH SOLICITUDE
ON ALL WHO ARE WEAK OR SICK.**

Sunday 22nd January, 2017

Praying for one another is a great means to fraternity. Prayer makes us see the other as a brother, it reveals to us his true needs and presents him to us as a person whom God places before us to reciprocally help us. This is what the Founder did.

"Be sure that I do not forget you at all, and that I never go up to the holy altar without asking the good God all the graces of light and strength that you need."

to Brother Gérard, 1 June 1842

**TEACH US, LORD,
TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER;
ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED
TO MOVE AWAY.**

Monday 23rd January, 2017

Being a Brother means having a bond that cannot be suppressed. It means helping, giving strength, knowing how to sacrifice oneself for a Brother, especially in difficult times. This was what Jean-Marie was doing almost in a Eucharistic manner.

"Be convinced that each of you is, according to God, the sole object of my only love, and that for each one of you I offer to God my blood and my life, because the life of all of you who are young can contribute to His glory more than mine, who is old."

to Brother Gérard, 1st June 1842

**HELP US, LORD,
TO OFFER OUR LIVES FOR OUR BROTHERS
EVERY DAY IN THE EUCHARIST.**

Tuesday 24th January, 2017

The desire of a father and of an elder brother is to remain close. The physical distance in space can be overcome by the proximity of the heart, thought and prayer.

"It is in such painful circumstances that one would wish to cross distances and that a father would want to be in the midst of his poor children; I hope that God will pour his consolations and strength into the depths of your hearts."

to Brother Arthur, April 2, 1843

**HELP US, LORD, TO FEEL CLOSE TO YOU,
ESPECIALLY IN DIFFICULT TIMES.**

Wednesday 25th January, 2017

Death cannot separate us from our Brothers. Faith helps us to be united always, to transform physical absence into a spiritual union that already puts us in contact with God and the Reign of Heaven.

I learnt of the death of our holy Brother Damase with a double feeling of sorrow and joy: no doubt such a great loss is painful, but it is also consoling to think that we have in heaven a Brother, a friend and one more protector."

to Brother Gerard, June 1, 1844

**HELP US, LORD,
TO THINK OF OUR BRETHERN IN HEAVEN
AND PRAY THROUGH THEM AS OUR
SPECIAL PROTECTORS.**

Thursday 26th January, 2017

The word of God, Matt. 23, 8-12 : « and you are all Brothers »

You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called "Rabbi", since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. Not must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be raised up.

The Word of the Church: The Spirituality of Communion

Men and women religious, like all other consecrated persons, have been called, as I mentioned, "experts in communion". So I am hoping that the "spirituality of communion", so emphasized by Saint John Paul II, will become a reality and that you will be in the forefront of responding to "the great challenge facing us" in this new millennium: "to make the Church the home and the school of communion." I am sure that in this Year you will make every effort to make the ideal of fraternity pursued by your founders and foundresses

expand everywhere, like concentric circles... Communion is lived first and foremost within the respective communities of each Institute... I also hope for a growth in communion between the members of different Institutes... Consecrated men and women are also called to true synergy with all other vocations in the Church, beginning with priests and the lay faithful, in order to "spread the spirituality of communion, first of all in their internal life and then in the ecclesial community, and even beyond its boundaries".

Apostolical Letter, n 3, Pope Francis, Nov. 21st, 2014

Word of the Founder: "You are present in all hearts"

"All our Brothers, Fr. Ruault and Fr. Guilloux, tell you a thousand tender things: at Ploermel you are not forgotten. You are present in all hearts, and especially in mine, my dear child. I pray the good God to grant you all the graces you need to fulfill the beautiful mission he has given you for his glory."

to Brother Mérite, November 29, 1846

**HELP US, LORD,
TO KEEP OUR BRETHERN IN OUR HEARTS.**

- Choose a suitable song for each day
- We pray for the sick, those in difficulty, and for the following intentions (we can say them out loudly)

**Prayer for the Beatification
of Jean-Marie de la Mennais**

God our Father,
you gave Jean-Marie de la Mennais,
a generous heart and an unwavering zeal
to make known and loved your Son Jesus
and his Gospel.

Grant us to follow his example.
Give us to build united and fraternal Communities.
Help us to proclaim your Gospel
to the youth of today.
For the glory of your Name, grant that the holiness
of Jean-Marie de la Mennais
may soon be recognised
and proclaimed by the Church.
Deign to grant us, O Lord, through his intercession,
the healing of the persons recommended...
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**O Lord Jesus, glorify your servant,
Venerable Jean-Marie de la Mennais!**

