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THE DEVOTION TO THE FOUNDER A LIVING CONTINUITY

The relationship of a son with his father is not always easy. Above all, it derives from the father: it is always a great gift, which is simply received, without any reason or logical explanation. It is an unsolicited gift, but it is a gift that starts our existence. Thus, we, the Brothers, Sisters and the Mennaisian Family, have certainly received the gift of our vocation from God, but through our founders, especially Jean-Marie de la Mennais.

We are mennaisians, we are in the Church with this special vocation that comes from the Mennaisian spiritual and apostolic charism. We know how it all began, its history and developments. We have very much studied and deepened its origins in France, the time of the first secularisation, that of the Revolution, the attention paid to the educational work to build a society with a Christian basis, Christian and human evangelisation of the most impoverished and abandoned classes, openness to missions to bring the Gospel civilisation to the excluded, all that with a faith that nourishes a simple but deep and confident spirituality in Providence, and the other nuances that make up our way of being and working.

Certainly this charism is renewed and updated at all times, as the Brothers have already done during these two hundred years of the history of the Congregation on the five continents. The Mennaisian Congregations have written a new story in every part of the world: from the small villages and cities of Brittany, to the distant overseas colonies of the great American continent, to African lands so fruitful in vocations and even to new missionary territories ...

In each of these regions the Brothers have carried the spirit and the charism of the Founder and adapted them to languages, customs and new mentalities. Similarly, in the various periods of history, the disciples of Jean-Marie embodied the initial project and gave it new developments, not only in works, but also in constant dialogue with new cultures, in educational challenges and in the attention to new needs.

And all that is not finished. It is only a continuous beginning, in which we are all called to be the "new" founders of today. Every moment is the "today of God". Of course we must listen to the Holy Spirit, in prayer and in prophetic discernment. We must discover new ways of evangelisation according to the Mennaisian charism. We must launch into the unknown territories and risk missions never experienced. But this is what true and living fidelity to our charism demands. Devotion is not something nostalgic to relegate to the past, but a vital sap that today drives us to live our being Mennaisian in an ever new way.

fratel Dino De Carolis