

Mennaisian Novena for January 2019

Jean Marie, a fiery Missionary

The Church of today is strongly called upon to be the protagonist of the new Evangelization. The world is waiting for the proclamation of the Gospel and good news of salvation.

We need a Gospel of **JOY** which gives the young the full and enthusiastic meaning of existence as a gift from God.

Young people need a Gospel of **LOVE** which is against withdrawal into themselves and even in groups, to look for cosy nests; a LOVE that projects them into the gift of themselves, service and passion for others in everyday life and in voluntary service.

We need a Gospel of **PEACE**, which overcomes conflicts and individualisms, and which generates small and big bonds.

We need a Gospel of **JUSTICE**, that projects and realizes a new world without rejecting anyone. A world that will take care of everybody especially the little ones and the defenseless.

We need a Gospel of **FAITH**, that introduces young people into the merciful heart of God, supports them in trials, opens them to a personal encounter with Jesus crucified, resurrected and alive, a Gospel that is at the heart of each and everyone's existence.

Our Founder Jean-Marie de la Mennais strongly felt, in his time, these demands marked by conflicts and loss of faith. He felt them so strongly that by this good news, especially to the children and young people, he devoted his life without counting the cost.

To the Brothers, he addressed this message of missionary work with the passion of a prophet: *"So many peoples in the East and West raise their voices and tell us, "Hasten to teach us the good news of salvation, for we hunger and thirst for it. We will be docile to your teaching; you will not work in vain for us." If we have the misfortune of being unable to distribute this bread of instruction to so many needy people who are deprived of it, and yet beg for it, whose fault is it?"* (S VII 2228)

To the young Brothers he presented the gospel of self-giving, echoing the missionary adventure of the apostles of Jesus: *« May the Lord deign to make you men according to his heart, devoted to his Church, detached from self, poor in spirit, humble, zealous, ready to undertake anything and to suffer anything in order to spread his word. You should be ready to extend his kingdom and light in the world that divine fire that Jesus Christ brought, that fire, purifying and nourishing, that immense, unspeakable love...»* S VII, 2297

This is the Gospel of Jesus: the Brothers were to carry it to their pupils, children and young people, with the same enthusiasm with which they received it. Children, boys, young people, students and workers had to be nourished by the bread of the Gospel through the instruction and education given by these new missionaries who were the Brothers. And that is what became the great mission of Jean-Marie. Féli, his anguished brother, recognized it also: "Little Brothers, here is your work".