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Why the beatification of Jean-Marie de la Mennais is important

So many years have passed, more than a hundred years since the Brothers of Christian Instruction and the Daughters of Providence worked to obtain the beatification of our Father Founder. We all have the 'moral certainty' that Jean-Marie Robert de la Mennais is a true saint and that during his long life he lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way. But then, why give so much importance to this recognition on the part of the Church, which would be – one would think - a mere title?

To be honest, that's what we do not want. The beatification of Jean-Marie is not a title that would be brandished or exhibited as a trophy, nor a title of nobility [or a sign] of prestige for the Religious Congregations he founded, and which would be extended to the entire Mennaisian family. Such a search would only be a sign of vain glory. It would oppose the humility and simplicity of Jean-Marie, who had buried the medal of the Legion of Honour in the depths of his large pockets, where there was everything except titles of glory.

But then what are we looking for in this desire to see Jean-Marie de la Mennais declared Blessed? Nothing more and nothing less than what the Church wants for her saints. "These are the best guarantee for the Church. *They are proof that the Holy Spirit is at work in the Church and is transforming it. They are the guarantee that the Church realises it in its mystery. They are the true prophecies of the Church*" (D. Bassoti). This idea, more modestly, applies to our Mennaisian Congregations. The holiness of our Founders is the guarantee of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. And this is an immense gift, but at the same time a commitment and a call, a legacy that demands that we welcome it. The fact that one of our Founders, our main guide, is officially recognised as "Blessed" by the Church is for all his Mennaisian sons and daughters a new call to holiness.

We are called to be consistent with the testimony of holiness of Jean-Marie. We can be disciples, sons of a saint, if we too walk in the path of heroic Christian virtues, without manifestation or ostentation, but in the simplicity and humility of the circumstances of our Christian and religious life.

We can draw from an inexhaustible source of examples, writings, prophetic gestures, discernment, struggles to face trials and persecutions, as our Father experienced them.

Hence the necessity [or need] of "knowing" with the heart and the spirit the life, the writings, the spirituality, the Mennaisian places, like sons who do not leave to the abandonment the still current signs of their Father, signs recognised by the Church as authentic gifts of the Spirit.

We can go forward, open new pages, in the book of spiritual and apostolic adventure that we receive from our Founders, an adventure proclaimed by the Church as a gift of God for the proclamation of the Gospel to the world today.

This recognition will give a new fervour to the whole Mennaisian Family, because it will say that the charism, the mission, the spirituality of the Founders are the work of God. And surely, as in the times and places of the beginnings of their work, even today, the Holy Spirit will accompany the Mennaisian Family, in the novelty of history, in apostolic creativity. It is a secondary fruit, the attraction of young people by such a fruitful charism of holiness and apostolate. New vocations, especially in the Western world, will be born for a mission of education and evangelisation of culture, in today's society in search of certainties and references for our era.

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