



## Bulletin of the July 2018 Postulation

### "The heroicity of virtues" A GENEROUS AND FAITHFUL RESPONSE AT THE CALL OF GOD: "HERE I AM"

In the Cathedral of Saint-Malo there is a statue of the Virgin Mary carrying Jesus in her arms, in a very maternal attitude. The young Jean-Marie often came to pray with fervour in front of this statue. Already related to Mary by his name and by the day of birth, our founder, like her, has matured her "yes" to the call of God. These were the difficult times of religious persecution where God was to disappear from thought and civil institutions, where the Church herself was to disappear from society, and where priests and religious were to be ostracised from the human community. However, little Jean-Marie had already had the intuition that only God gives a meaning and a foundation to life, that Jesus Christ is the true foundation of true civilisation, that it is the Church which is the Mother and the Mistress of a truly human society.

Then, in simplicity and innocence as a child, but in trust in God, he devoted himself totally to the defence of religion, even at the risk of his life. It was his love for God that urged him to receive the Sacraments, to frequent the churches, and to collaborate in the activity of the priests faithful to the Church.

And little by little the project became clear to devote all his life and all his energies to the Church that his "enemies" wanted to destroy. It is surprising to see how, as a teenager, he had already matured the definitive project of his existence: to become a priest, that is to say to devote himself totally to the direct service of the Church. A project that inspired all his youth: his studies with his uncle Des Saudrais and with his priest-friends Vielle and Engerran - to whom, inspired by his faith, he confided - his life of prayer with the preparation of liturgical celebrations close to the monastic style, precise orientation in the choice of values, spectacles, lifestyle, even challenging the lifestyle of the bourgeois society in which he lived; all this as a direct preparation for the priestly life to which he felt called and which constituted the central axis of his life, until the day when he would become a priest, not for a career or worldly benefits, but for passion and at the price of continual sacrifices.

He began with a passionate ministry at Saint-Malo, in the parish, with the young people; He prepared at once to defend the Church by his writings, in collaboration with his brother Féli. He was called at an early age to lead a very vast Diocese and undertook the care of rebuilding the Christian community of Brittany and the French dioceses. He renewed the Catholic presence, thought, fervour, and the fidelity to the Church and the Pope in the Church of France.

The answer to God's call made him, particularly in the second part of his life, to devote himself to the children and youth. It is certain that in his mind he had compassion for the innumerable children and youths abandoned, without guide and without education in the poorest sectors of Brittany.

But it was always the same passion for the reign of God and for the Church that pushed him to open schools and found Congregations dedicated to little children, and especially to the poorest and most abandoned. It was always to "make known and loved Jesus Christ" that he continued to found schools, covering, as much as possible, the whole territory. These schools would be the basis of the building of a new society, which the Christian faith would transform and make more human, making it active in works, respectful of people, even in the laws: a fully human society because based on values of the gospel. This was the vocation of Jean-Marie for which he worked and to which he gave himself thoroughly until his last breath.

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