

## The re-opening of the Josette Poulain case

After the study of the Enzo Carollo healing had ended (he continues to be in good health, by the way), Brother Gil Rozas was succeeded as Postulator by an Italian, Brother Dino De Carolis. The first requirement that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints places on new Postulators is to take a special course, called the Studium, to learn about all the historical, theological and legal aspects of the causes of saints.

The new Postulator therefore presented himself at the headquarters of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, located opposite St. Peter's, to register for the course. Having heard about the Josette Poulain case, the Secretary of Cours Studium, Bishop Antonio Saldanha Albuquerque (Portugal), exclaimed: "But you are really lucky: you have a miracle ready for your cause!". The Postulator thought the Secretary was joking, when in fact the record of Josette Poulain's healing was indeed already in the Archives of the Congregation of Saints.

After realising this, the Postulator then verified that the Copia Publica concerning this same healing was contained within the Archives of the Postulation at the Generalate. It was indeed there with the seal of the Congregation of Rites and the signatures of the notary, Mgr Cocchetti, all dated October 1962.

All this confirmed that the diocesan process in Rennes had taken place in accordance with canonical procedures. The file was therefore well archived in the Vatican pending review.

Asked if, after so many years, the case could be resumed, officials replied that such a resumption was both lawful and frequent.

The request to reopen the case of Josette Poulain was then presented. The Congregation sent her file to two accredited specialist doctors for general comment and advice. They gave differing answers: one was in favour of an extraordinary, miraculous intervention, the other leaned more towards a scientific explanation. As far as the Congregation were concerned a single favourable opinion was sufficient.

The Congregation for the Causes of Saints therefore requested to reopen the diocesan process in a complementary session with the aim of:

- finding out if the healed person, Josette Poulain, is still alive and, if so, what is her state of health, as well as finding out about her subsequent spiritual journey,
- collecting additional information from witnesses, doctors and nurses who treated the healed person,
- review the reputation for holiness of the Venerable Jean-Marie de la Mennais and the devotion of his religious foundations, as well as Brittany as a whole, in particular at the time when the healing was supposed to have taken place.

This was not easy, as nearly 60 years had passed since the event, and most of the witnesses had died. The Postulator therefore set to work with the invaluable help of Brother Pierre Berthe, Procurer General of the De La Mennais Brothers. Together they searched the Archives and the minutes of the meetings of the Brothers' General Council for anything that could shed light on this cause. They returned once more to the work accomplished by Brother Hippolyte-Victor Géreux who had prepared for and followed the first process in Rennes, in 1957. His preparation of the file for the cause had been particularly meticulous; he had identified the witnesses and he had prepared the answers to the questions expressed by the Promoter of the Faith. Such work was well documented and accompanied by abundant correspondence with witnesses, especially with the Daughters of Providence.