

AUGUST 2011
With William Joseph Chaminade
" BUILT UP IN CHRIST, ESTABLISHED IN THE
FAITH" (Col 2,7)

WILLIAM JOSEPH, MAN OF FAITH
AND AWAKENER OF THE YOUTH

August 14, 1804, by order of the Most Reverend d'Aviau, Archbishop of Bordeaux, the Chapel of the Madeleine was assigned to the Marian Sodality founded By Father Chaminade upon his return from exile in late 1800.

August 17, 1804, Fr. Chaminade is officially appointed as Chaplain of the Oratory of the Madeleine:



Desiring to give Fr. Chaminade, Honorary Canon of our Metropolitan Church, public testimony of our appreciation for his zeal in training in morality and piety the youth entrusted to his care, and to empower him to expand and perpetuate the benefits of the good work he has led for several years with success and edification; we have appointed and do appoint him Chaplain of the Oratory of relief instituted by us in the chapel called the Madeleine." *Archbishop d'Aviau*

MOTIVATED YOUTH ...

Some duties of the sodalists [from EP I-10]:

1. Every day each sodalist recites the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception [and] Psalm 129 and three *Our Fathers* for the deceased sodalists.

4-5 Every Sunday and Holy Day.

- Mass of the Congregation [at 8:00 a.m.]
- The Vespers of the Sodality [at 3:00 p.m.], (...) highly recommended because of the instruction [45 min.] and meetings for games and walks.
- General Assembly at nightfall. They are in common with the Fathers of families five times a year (...).

3 & 6 Monthly: on the first Friday evening, General Assembly and special meeting of each section.

7. Each member of the congregation commits to what he wishes (...) for the expenses of the congregation.

8. Each section takes care of its Sodality members when they are ill.

17. Any sodalist for whom we could not give a testimony of fidelity will not be kept on the list. (...)

18. A section will be formed that will include all absent members of the Sodality who are recognized as being very attached to it. They shall maintain correspondence with the head of this section.



The Chapel of the Madeleine as it was at the time of Fr. Chaminade.

ENTERTAIN TO CONVERT – EMULATION BY EXAMPLE

EP I-54 - Instructions for the young women's Sodality

For the young women of the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, [it is] to preserve them from the obvious dangers they face in the world (...). These hazards are:

- 1 Bad social groups... So good ones must be formed.
- 2 The noisy pleasures of the world... So one must work to make them taste harmless ones.
- 3 Loose and ungodly conversations... So one must inspire a taste for those animated by piety

(...) and tell them about religion only with simplicity and cheerfulness.

4 Profane songs and bad books... So they must be given the opportunity to use their voices in religious songs and, as much as possible, to read interesting books (...) which, while entertaining them, can nourish their hearts with good feelings.

5 Finery... in allowing what is proper to their age, help them to be able to discern that which they must reject, by placing before their eyes examples of decency and modesty.

6 Dangerous occasions to become friends, confidantes of persons of corrupt hearts, (...) people without religious principles... So you have to give them a virtuous friend (...) a friend who attempts to form their heart and guide them in the path of virtue, (...).

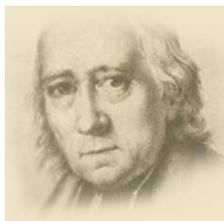
7 A young person is frightened away from piety because she often sees it only under the guise of austere and meticulous externals, and (...) knows that it requires some sacrifices (...), so efforts should be made to convince her that piety is the principle of the most enduring and real pleasures, and that the sacrifices it demands soon become easy to a heart that begins to feel that sweet peace, that holy joy, precious fruits of the practice of virtue.

rites that make an impression

[Every Sunday] at exactly eight o'clock, Fr. Chaminade goes up to the altar. Accompanied by his two assistants, the Prefect [the leader] approaches, receives from the Officer of Honor the register containing the names of the sodalists and hands it to the celebrant, saying: "Reverend Director, the young people devoted to the veneration of Mary recommend themselves for your approval: may their names, from the altar of the Lamb slain for us, be transferred into the Book of Life! ". The register will remain on the altar all during the Mass. (J. Verrier, *The Sodality*, p. 151)

A RICH PREACHING

We have several of Father Chaminade's handwritten notebooks. Some must have been used by him for his homilies: none is a fully prepared text. Composition was repugnant to his spirit. He says himself that he wrote only to concentrate and more often he summarized some author. When the time to speak came, he gave himself over to improvisation. Hence a certain hesitation in the flow and development. (...) A strong accent gave a Perigord flavor to all his expressions, which, in other circumstances, would unleash a noisy hilarity. But the regulars in his chapel did not come there to laugh. They were hungry for truth, not beautiful language. They listened full of goodwill. Often the singing held the attention of the sodalists. One of them directed and everyone loved these songs with simple well known tunes. (Joseph Verrier, *The Sodality*, p. 152)



resolve a difficulty or to start off a discussion with an appropriate exhortation. He left to his young people the satisfaction of considering the evening as their own work. He avoided boredom; the change of speakers, the variety of topics reinforced interest and his own interventions were always appreciated. Thus, everyone went away happy. There were always crowds of people and it was always a new pleasure. (J. Verrier, *The Sodality*, p. 156)

A PERMANENT MISSION



(Work of Sydney Matias, m.c., Brazil)

Under the action of this Perigord priest, the Sodality of Bordeaux became a "permanent mission," ... to "multiply Christians" by every means that seemed appropriate for this universal mission.

The sodalists loved their movement and attracted their peers to it. They were around 600 by 1808.

La Madeleine became a center of missionary outreach. Many priestly and religious vocations came from the ranks of the Sodality. In 1869, Archbishop Donnet of Bordeaux said: "if one goes back to the roots of all our works in Bordeaux, the name of Fr. Chaminade is found at the beginning of each one of them." (JB Armbruster, *La Chapelle de la Madeleine*, p. 31)

A MAN OF FAITH!

ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF THE SODALITY

"One day when I came out of the Faculty of Letters at Bordeaux.," wrote M.J. Meyer, "an old man who had attended the course with me came also and said to me: 'You are a Brother of Mary, sir?'... And I am an old sodalist of your founder, Fr. Chaminade. What a man of faith! When he

spoke about faith, he was inexhaustible: oh, what a man of faith! He was a saint!" (EF I - § 186)

Testimony of Mr. DUMONTET (1813-1903)

"Father Chaminade gave the most practical and the most encouraging advice about the virtue of faith. 'The struggle that you have to maintain will become increasingly easy, winning nonetheless new victories, If you know how to always use faith. With this weapon well wielded, we can still overcome all the invisible enemies of our salvation.' He recommended especially the prayer of faith as a sure way to progress in virtue. 'Know that anyone who prays with faith will always advance more and more in virtue, and in doing so with each prayer, he will gradually arrive at great holiness. He does not see the progress, but it is certain that he advances, just as one does not see the plants growing in a garden, and yet they certainly grow. If we want to move forward, overcoming our passions, let us act with faith.

In practice, we can, for example, exercise our belief in poverty by making acts of faith in this truth, reciting the Creed, saying: 'I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord who was born poor, lived poor', or: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, meek and humble of heart.' And so, we meditate on these truths in applying them to ourselves. We compare our life to that of J.C, we believe that the life of J.C. is our model; and we wonder if our life is consistent with his" (*Positio super introd.*, p. 375).

"I never cease to repeat, become a man of faith; without faith we will not do much good, and if we did, it would be worthless for us." (Letter II - 447 of 28/01/1828, to M. Clouzet)

Dates of the month to celebrate: 13 Blessed Jakob Gapp - **14** Taking possession of La Madeleine in 1804- **15** Assumption (16-21: World Youth Day in Madrid)