

the Marianist Family responsible for handing on the torch of our charism to those who will come after us?

This paper, then, is not just a scholarly study. I will, of course, point out what appears to me to be the best scholarship to date, but I will also be searching the past of Marianist spirituality for clues to its future. Where are we going? Where is God calling us? Where is Mary leading us? These are questions we all care about. This common care and concern is here conveyed by the expressive power of the word *we*.

The Modern Era: Matrix of Marianist Spirituality

Marianist Spirituality Is a Modern Spirituality

When we look back at our foundation amid the dramatic events of the French Revolution, we add the perspective of two extra centuries to the outlook of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists. We can situate the Revolution at or near the midpoint of the Modern Era, the climax of a vast historical process that had begun some two to three centuries earlier and which finally seems to be drawing to a close in our own day.¹ Historians assure

¹ For the last 50 years or so, various experts have been suggesting that the Modern Era is now in the process of ending or has already ended. While the Modern Era may, in fact, be winding down, none of these suggestions has persuaded me that the Era is already over. To give just one example, *postmodernism* is the name that is usually given to the theories and thought of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and certain other intellectuals. This label has always struck me as odd, because these thinkers are or were still fully engaged in the philosophical and epistemological questions that have dominated the second half of the Modern Era. What do human beings know, and how can they be certain that what they know is true? Is metaphysics possible? Is any knowledge objective or certain? Or is all truth hopelessly relative, not much more than some kind of rhetorical trick or disguised power play? These thinkers have taken Modern relativism farther than it has ever gone and in brilliant new ways. They are surely post-Nietzschean, post-Existentialist, and perhaps post-Structuralist, but are they really *post-Modern*? They seem still to be very much *in* the Modern Era rather than *after* it.

I believe the question of whether or not we are still in the Modern Era is an important one for Marianists. In this paper I argue that Marianist spirituality is a Modern spirituality that arose within and as a response to the historical and cultural circumstances of the Modern Era. The evolution of Marianist spirituality

us that there are enough unifying historical elements in the five centuries from 1500 to the present that they can be usefully grouped into a single great period in the course of Western civilization, the so-called Modern Era.

This division of history is more than a matter of academic interest for Marianists. Our spirituality is a Modern spirituality,² and we can grasp the history of our spirituality better if we grasp the history of Modernity. To back up this claim we will make a rapid review of this period and identify several important aspects

has paralleled the unfolding of the *problématique* of the Modern Era. If that Era is finished, what does its disappearance portend for a spirituality linked so closely to the dynamics of that Era?

² Father Benloch and several of the authors in the Marianist spirituality writing project commented on my claim that Marianist spirituality is a "Modern" spirituality. Father Benloch contends that the degree of importance I ascribe to the Modern Era as an influence on Chaminade is out of proportion to the intense experiences of the Revolution and the time in Saragossa. These experiences had much more influence on the birth of Marianist spirituality than all the theologians, thinkers, and movements I analyze in this section of my paper.

Father Roten pointed out that important historical influences on the formation of Marianist spirituality, such as the Benedictines, pre-date 1500 and the dawn of the Modern Era. He also cautioned that care must be taken to distinguish between Chaminade's theology and the means he uses. His theology was not a modern theology, but his means are modern.

Father Amigo believes it is problematic to say that Chaminade is modern. Only in our time after the Second Vatican Council do we look on the modern as positive. There is a need to specify what challenges of Modernity Chaminade was responding to.

Father Arnaiz asked for a better enumeration of the characteristics of a "Modern" spirituality. How, then, does Marianist spirituality qualify as one of these Modern spiritualities?

Father García-Murga contends that the question of whether Chaminade was Modern or not Modern is an open question. There is a need to prove more fully that he was open to Modernity. What, for example, is Chaminade's position on authority? Where does he stand with authoritarianism and the good use of authority in relation to subjectivity and to freedom and the free will of the subject? Chaminade was not explicitly modern; certainly the post-Tridentine, baroque theologians he read were not very modern.

of Marianist spirituality which are connected to the historical circumstances in which we had our origins and which have characterized our relationship with wider culture down through the course of Marianist history. These connections are pervasive enough and have lasted long enough that the Modern Era can be regarded as a matrix of Marianist spirituality.³

The Dawn of a New Era

The turn of the 16th century has come to be seen as a major turning point in European history. Even the briefest listing of the persons and events which crowd this period recalls the host of new trends and movements which began at that time and proceeded to transform culture as they continued into the following centuries.

Columbus discovered America and launched the Age of Exploration. Spain and the maritime nations were enriched by gold they brought back to Europe, and the imagination of all Europe thrilled at the astonishing reports of new lands across the seas. Renaissance humanism coupled a sense of freedom and new learning with a rediscovery of the beauty and genius of Classical antiquity. It spread from Italy to Spain, France, and the rest of Europe. Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo gave consummate expression to the new outlook in art and architecture as did Orlando di Lasso and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina in music. At the same time the new technology of printing was deluging the

³ Several Marianist writers have provided us accounts of France in the 18th and 19th centuries specifically geared to describing the setting in which the Marianist Family arose and to which it was a response. See, for example, Vincent R. VASEY, SM, *Chaminade: Another Portrait*, Chapter 1: "The Climate" (Dayton: MRC, 1987), pp. 1-17. See also Adolf M. WINDISCH, SM, *The Marianist Social System According to the Writings of William Joseph Chaminade: 1761-1850*, Chapter 1: "French Enlightenment and the Eschatology of the Philosophes" and Chapter 2: "Reconstruction and Christian Ideologies" (Fribourg: St. Paul's Press, 1964), pp. 13-57.

continent with books and the ideas they contained. The posthumous publication of the *De revolutionibus orbium* of Nicholas Copernicus provided the tinder needed to ignite the flame of the Scientific Revolution in the hands of Galileo Galilei, of Johannes Kepler, and eventually of Isaac Newton.

The Reformation

However, the most important development of the 16th century and the biggest shock to the Church in a thousand years was the Reformation. Martin Luther precipitated the Protestant revolt in 1517. From that point it unfolded through successive episodes with an irreversible momentum until the fabric of Western Christendom was irreparably torn apart. By the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, a religious boundary stretched across Europe separating the Protestant countries to the North from the Catholic ones to the South. This boundary has remained virtually unchanged down to our own day, lasting far longer than the brief 40 years of the Iron Curtain.

Back then, the secularizing processes of the second half of the Modern Era had not yet begun. Religion was not yet relegated to the limited sphere of an individual's private belief. It was most public, and it was everyone's business. Today, most of us have difficulty grasping the degree to which religion penetrated every aspect of European life and culture in those days. We have to make an effort to imagine the extent and strength of the Church's former political power and the seriousness with which European rulers of the past took religion. Everyone cared about religion passionately and took sides in the ever widening conflict. Repeatedly and sometimes with devastating barbarity the struggle turned into a matter of life and death in open warfare.

France was plagued by the Wars of Religion through most

of the 16th century. When French Catholics finally won the upper hand over French Protestants in the 17th century, a residue of bitter memories remained which has colored attitudes in the country since then. Protestants were castigated as heretics. They made up only a small minority in the population of the kingdom. If their heresy was not completely vanquished, it was confined to a zone of guarded toleration in the land which had maintained its proud boast of being the "eldest daughter of the Church."

When Father Chaminade and the first Marianists were fashioning their program of action in response to the religious devastation which followed the Revolution, they found it quite natural to invoke the specter of Protestant heresy that still needed to be extirpated. For example, in 1838, when Father Chaminade submitted the Constitutions of the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary to Rome, he wrote as follows in his cover letter to Pope Gregory XVI.

How great has been the sorrow, which I have felt for a very long time already, at the sight of the unbelievable efforts of impiety, and of modern rationalism and *Protestantism*, devoted to plotting the ruin of the beautiful edifice of revelation. To erect a powerful barrier against the torrent of evil, Heaven inspired me to solicit at the beginning of this century the title of Missionary Apostolic. ... Philosophism and *Protestantism* favored in France by the powers that be have taken over public opinion and seized the schools. They have endeavored to spread in all minds, especially in children and youth, this license of thought which is even worse than that of the heart from which it is inseparable (emphasis added).⁴

⁴ *Lettres 4*, to Gregory XVI, Sept. 16, 1838, no. 1076, pp. 373-76. Also in *MO*, Document no. 5, pp. 37-39. Also in *Spirit 1*, § 38, pp. 49-52.

In this short but significant document where the Founder is explaining to the pope his plan and the circumstances in which he was led by Providence to found the various branches of the Marianist Family, he does not hesitate to adduce Protestantism – not just once, but twice – as a reason he felt called to launch the Marianist Family. He was keenly aware of the historical circumstances of his time, and he identified repeatedly those factors which were signs of the times that called forth and inspired the Marianist project.

The Catholic Reformation

After the Council of Trent (1545-63), the Catholic Church did its best to consolidate and regroup with the various strategies of the Catholic Reformation. New religious orders sprang up, and among them the Jesuits set the pace. They invented a whole new style of religious life geared for militant apostolic service to help the Church triumph in its struggle against Protestant heresy. The Christian Doctrine movement sought to renew the Church by systematic instruction of youth in the simple truths of the faith according to the method of the new catechisms. Books were not the only medium of catechesis. The exuberant new style of baroque art and architecture was enlisted to reinforce the faith of Catholics by overwhelming them with breathtaking visual beauty in their churches, chapels, and shrines.

Training of priests moved into the new seminaries mandated by Trent where candidates received organized intellectual and spiritual formation. Traditional Catholic theology was reformulated to emphasize the teachings of Trent in the systematic manuals and commentaries of post-Reformation and baroque scholasticism. Today, we look back at this activity through the lens of the neo-Thomist revival of the period between the First and Second Vatican Councils and single out Cardinal Cajetan, Fran-

cisco Suarez, and John of St. Thomas as outstanding representatives of post-Reformation and baroque scholasticism.⁵ These names did not figure so prominently in the world of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists. In the 18th century other authors among baroque scholastic theologians were more popular and widely read.

During the last 40 years, painstaking research by Marianist scholars, especially by Father Armbruster,⁶ has provided us with a fairly complete picture of Father Chaminade's sources.⁷ We can list most of the theologians and spiritual writers he read, studied, and cited in his lectures, instructions, and retreat conferences; and in very many cases we can give the titles of the books he used. There is no indication that he consulted the baroque scholastics mentioned above. His favorite authors were other figures in the same current of post-Reformation and baroque scholasticism who were better known in his time.

⁵ To these three names we could add Melchor Cano, Gabriel Vázquez, and Juan de Lugo, who are also regarded today among the more famous baroque scholastic theologians. For an analysis of why these six have come to be regarded during the course of the neo-Thomist revival of our century as important representatives of baroque scholasticism, see Gerald A. McCool, SJ, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York: Seabury-Crossroad, 1977), pp. 9, 13, 175, 179-83, 203, 233-34, 243-44, 259.

⁶ For summaries of Father Armbruster's extensive research, see the source lists in MW 1, pp. 14-20 (pp. 99-105 in the French), in MD 3, pp. 199-212 (pp. 239-53 in ED 2), and in *Écrits sur la foi*, as well as in the footnote or endnote apparatus of these works. In most of his recent monographs, Father Armbruster discusses these sources further. See, for example, Jean Baptiste ARMBRUSTER, SM, *Devotion to Mary in Chaminade's Life and Thought* (Cupertino, California: Marianist Province of the Pacific, 1998), p. 5-6 and passim. Volumes 2, 3, and 4 of *Écrits et Paroles* will be devoted to a critical edition of the *Notes d'Instruction*. At this writing, in 1999, only volume 2 has appeared, but Father Armbruster's role in the preparation of this volume is evident from the exacting standards of scholarship used in presenting this important record of the Founder's reading and study.

⁷ Father Halter surveys the Founder's sources for the writings on prayer in the commentaries and notes of WMP.

Chief among these was Jacques Marchant, a Belgian priest (c.1587-1648). Chaminade transcribed entire passages, in Latin, from Marchant's *Hortus pastorum*, a book written for priests, preachers, and catechists alike, in which is found, among other developments, a long commentary on the *Ave Maria* from which the founder borrowed freely. Marchant also provided him with numerous quotations from the Fathers and from even more ancient writers. To these we must add a certain number of 17th and 18th century preachers such as Bishops Jacques Bénigne Bossuet and Jean Louis Fromentières; the Jesuits Vincent Houdry, Louis Bourdaloue, and Timoléon de Montaignu Cheminais; and the Oratorians Jacques Joseph Duguet and Jean Baptiste Massillon.⁸

Even his citations of medieval theologians, such as St. Bernard, or Fathers of the Church, such as St. Augustine, are taken out of the compilations drawn up by these authors of post-Tridentine and baroque scholasticism.

While Father Chaminade was not himself a theologian or a writer, it is clear that he was in possession of an excellent theological education which he kept up throughout his life by further personal study. This background gives a sound and broad-based theological foundation to the main elements of Marianist spirituality he bequeathed to us, such as his doctrine of Mary⁹ and his understanding of the nature of faith and its role in Christian life.¹⁰

⁸ ARMBRUSTER, *Devotion to Mary*, p. 5.

⁹ Father Cole's thesis on the Founder's Mariology includes a lengthy investigation of his Marian sources. See William J. COLE, SM, *The Spiritual Maternity of Mary According to the Writings of Father William Joseph Chaminade: A Study of His Spiritual Doctrine*, Part 3: "The Sources of Father Chaminade's Marian Doctrine" (Cincinnati, n.p., 1958), pp. 244-342.

¹⁰ Father Gascón has recently analyzed the Founder's theology of faith and examines a selection of the theologians whom the Founder cites, identifying their place among the writers of post-Tridentine and baroque scholasticism. He acknowledges the pioneering work of Father Armbruster. Antonio GASCÓN, SM, *Defender y proponer la fe en la enseñanza de Guillermo José Chaminade*, Espiritualidad marianista no. 13 (Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones Marianistas, 1998), pp. 72-80. See also Antonio Gascón's article with the same title in *Marianist International Review* no. 17.1-2 (April 1996).

In 17th century France, the Catholic renewal in the spirit of the Council of Trent flowered with particular *élan* as the country moved into its so-called *grand siècle*. All the leaders of the French School were involved with implementing the post-Tridentine seminary movement. They saw themselves as transforming the pioneering work of Charles Borromeo in Italy and adapting it to suit the special context of the French Church. In doing so they introduced into France an orientation and loyalty toward Rome and the papacy which complemented that of the Jesuits and went against the prevailing attitudes of 17th and 18th century Gallicanism and Jansenism. The latter movements believed for varying reasons in maintaining a certain safe distance and independence from Rome, whereas the new post-Tridentine spirit presaged the Ultramontanism of the 19th century.

Father Chaminade's training and early life at the minor seminary in Mussidan puts him squarely into this Rome-oriented stream of French Catholicism.

The Collège of Mussidan was founded within the framework of notions of mission characteristic of the post-Tridentine Church – notions exemplified by the Jesuits and by the patrons of the collège, St. Charles Borromeo and St. Vincent de Paul. Depending heavily on the ability of the Holy See to take a lead in the Counter Reformation, the post-Tridentine Church gave special import and encouragement to missionary groups who would place themselves wholeheartedly at the disposal of the Holy See in the movement of reform. Such groups were particularly favored in France, where Gallicanism and Jansenism resisted the operational primacy of Rome.

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Seminaries were regarded as pivotal in achieving the goals of the Counter Reformation. Already in the thought of 17th century Vincentians, we encounter the phrase that Father Chaminade would later make his own: A superior of the Seminary of St. Lazare pointed to the seminary as a *perpetual mission* which served the seminarians and in so doing bore fruit in resulting missions in the countryside and the cities.¹¹

From our present-day vantage point, we can look back and see how aspects of Marianist spirituality were being shaped in the mind and heart of the Founder long before our actual foundation in 1800, especially during the 20 years he spent in Mussidan.¹²

The Enlightenment

As the many currents of the Modern Era grew stronger and wider, they mutually influenced one another and gave rise to a whole new philosophical outlook. History has bestowed the title "Father of Modern Philosophy" on René Descartes because he succeeded in giving voice to this new philosophical conscious-

¹¹ David A. FLEMING, SM, "Mission", in *Commentary on SM Rule*, p. 832.

¹² Thanks to the excellent research of Father Joseph Verrier, we know a great deal more today about the Mussidan years than was known by our Marianist forebears from their reading of Father Simler's biography of the Founder. A chapter and a half in Simler has been expanded into 6 chapters with more than 500 footnotes in Verrier's *Jalons*. As Father Vasey has pointed out, "the Mussidan epoch of Father Chaminade's life – as dark as it was for a long time – has been catapulted into a new light by the discoveries of Father Verrier on the period." VASEY, *Chaminade*, p. 36. For the results of Father Verrier's prodigious research, see *Jalons* 1, chaps. 2-7, pp. 15-113, and notes, pp. 13-70. See also JOSEPH SIMLER, SM, *William Joseph Chaminade: Founder of the Marianists* (Dayton: MRC, 1986), pp. 9-27. Father Vasey devotes a chapter to the Mussidan years in *Chaminade*, pp. 36-64. See also PHILIPPE PIERREL, SM, *A Missionary Journey with William Joseph Chaminade, Founder of the Marianists: 1761-1850* (Dayton: MRC, 1986), pp. 2-7.

ness that was taking shape in European thinking. This thinking had been going on implicitly for some time, but he formulated it into an explicit program which was carried on by the Modern philosophers who came after him.

The murky speculations of medieval scholasticism were swept away to make room for the clear and precise ideas of rationalism. The kind of certitude which is possible in mathematics became an ideal and goal which philosophy itself set out to attain. Optimism about the capacities of human reason ran high; and, in France of the 18th century, its so-called *siècle des lumières*, this optimism burst forth into the grand vision of the Enlightenment. True human progress was not just a theoretical possibility. It was actual fact. It was proceeding with a dynamism of its own on all sides, and it would continue inevitably as the light of reason dispelled the darkness of ignorance and superstition.

The vision and dreams of the Enlightenment received their widest dissemination through the forum of the *Encyclopédie*. This multi-volume work was edited and published during a 25-year period in mid-century by the untiring efforts of Denis Diderot and his companions. He solicited articles from the leading luminaries of the movement such as Voltaire, Jean d'Alembert, and many others. Science and technology, astronomy and architecture, mathematics and industry – all were described in a way that aimed at changing the general way of thinking. But it was especially the philosophical thrust of the age, articulated by the so-called *philosophes*, which found its way into the volumes of the *Encyclopédie* and which carried the day among the intelligentsia and opinion leaders of France.

A favorite place for discussion of all these new ideas was the lodges of the Freemasons. Here in the quasi-secrecy of lodge meetings, aspiring members of the emerging middle class could come into limited contact with the nobility and *haute bourgeoisie* in a brotherhood of sorts. The Masonic movement experienced a

new prosperity and prestige in the 18th century as more than 700 lodges sprang up across France. The exciting new ideas of the Enlightenment were thus carried from Paris out into the provinces.

Christian Beliefs Brought into Doubt

A central tenet of the vision of the Enlightenment was the steady advance of human progress as the light of reason dispelled the darkness of ignorance and superstition. According to the new thinking, it was Christian religion and especially the Catholic Church which stood accused of being among the main sources of the ignorance and superstition that had to be dispelled. This ascription of blame to Christian religion as a whole was something new and different. It was not the familiar business of one group of Christians accusing other Christians of error and heresy. A new wind was blowing. A dramatic change in the guiding thought of the Modern Era had taken place around the turn of the 18th century. In the two previous centuries, people of both the Reformation and the Catholic Reformation alike had no doubts about the fundamental truth of Christianity, which they based on the bedrock foundation of the bible or magisterial declarations from Rome. On both sides of the religious divide, faith was firm. It was precisely this wall of solid Christian conviction which began to crack and crumble in the 18th century. France and parts of the rest of Europe had their first collective crisis of faith.

If we accept the analysis of French historian Paul Hazard, the change took place during the comparatively brief time frame of some 30 years which coincide with the last years of the life and reign of Louis XIV.¹³ Despite the fact that he wrote more than 50

¹³ See Paul HAZARD, *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1685-1715* (Paris: Boivin, 1935) and *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Boivin, 1946).

years ago, Hazard's masterful evocation of the turn of the 18th century is very helpful in understanding this dramatic and decisive transition in Modern thought. It took people by surprise; it had not been foreseen a century earlier, not even by Descartes and the first Modern philosophers. How could it happen that Christian faith and belief would start to fall apart and collapse in Europe, the stronghold of Christendom for more than a thousand years? And how could it have happened with such abruptness that it can be pinpointed to the time span of a single generation at the end of the 17th century and the start of the 18th century?

Disagreements about Christian belief were no longer seen as serious enough to be grounds for war, much less something to die for. Instead, the whole of Christian belief was brought to a new and supposedly higher tribunal of reason and natural philosophical religion, which eschewed all talk of things supernatural. Certitudes of the Ages of Faith vanished; and people strode forward into a vast open expanse which stretched before them, where they felt free to lay out new axes and coordinates with which to orient themselves.

The emergence of this radically new outlook is significant for us looking back from the present day. We know that the 18th century is the one in which Father Chaminade was born, and we see in this cultural crisis of faith a development of Providential portent for Marianists.

A century and a half earlier, participants in the spirituality movements of Paris had gathered in the salon of Madame Acarie to listen in hushed awe to her conversations with Francis de Sales, Vincent de Paul, and Pierre de Bérulle. Those days were gone and forgotten. Now, the salons of Madame de Lespinasse and Madame Geoffrin became gathering places of intellectuals and *philosophes* who charmed fashionable French aristocracy with lucid explanations of the new mathematics, enthusiastic discus-

sions of economics and wealth, or devastating refutations of religious beliefs laced with clever wit and sarcastic ridicule. The world had indeed changed, and a new disturbing aspect of Modernity was showing itself for the first time.

The withering attacks on religion had an especially vitriolic edge which signaled deep hatred and antagonism toward the Catholic Church that built up steadily during the second half of the 18th century. "It soon became clear that the Encyclopedists were not simply gifted writers of whom educated Catholics might approve, though with reservations, but were determined and implacable enemies of the Church who must be tirelessly combatted."¹⁴

The French Revolution

As the storm clouds of the Revolution were gathering, Father Chaminade was not cut off from these developments, despite his seeming seclusion in Mussidan far from the ferment of Paris. His oldest brother Jean Baptiste, the former Jesuit, returned to Périgueux after the suppression of the Society of Jesus in France in 1762. At the minor seminary in Mussidan, he had the opportunity to relate his views about the suppression and the changing climate of opinion to his younger brothers Louis and William Joseph.

The three Chaminade brothers were exposed to the anti-religious thinking of the *philosophes*. Louis owned a set of the *Encyclopédie*, which he probably acquired before the Revolution. In fact, the *Encyclopédie* was available in the private libraries of many priests who lived in the vicinity of Périgueux before the Revolution. One list of 40 subscribers to the *Encyclopédie* in Périgord

¹⁴ Robert R. PALMER, *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 20. Quoted by Windisch, *Marianist Social System*, p. 16.

included 24 pastors of parishes.¹⁵ Périgueux had three Masonic lodges. Father Chaminade's brother François and his brother-in-law Pierre Laulanie were both Freemasons.¹⁶ Louis and William Joseph Chaminade were corresponding members of the *Musée de Paris*, a learned society founded by Freemasons and whose most important members were Freemasons.¹⁷ Louis and William Joseph were also electors for the representatives of the clergy who went to the 1789 Assembly of the Estates General which started the Revolution. At the meetings of the electors in Périgueux, the Chaminade brothers heard ideas and political opinion that reflected the anti-religious thinking of the *philosophes*.¹⁸

In the spring of 1789, Father Chaminade was 28 years old and reasonably well-informed as the curtain rose on the opening scenes of the Revolution. But no amount of astute premonition could have prepared him or anyone else for what actually happened in the next 10 years. The best and worst sides of Modernity disclosed themselves as events rushed with amazing speed toward the Reign of Terror and its consequences. The same assembly which proclaimed the world's first declaration of human rights also unleashed a campaign of restriction, persecution, and outright de-Christianization on the Church of France the likes of which had never been seen before in Europe. We must look to our own century, to the Spanish Civil War perhaps, or to the anti-religious repression of Communist regimes, for comparable government-sponsored persecution and violence against the Church.

Father Chaminade's whereabouts and activities during the revolutionary period are well known to Marianists. Without re-

¹⁵ SIMLER, *Chaminade*, p. 163. See also *Jalons* 1, chapter 5, p. 58-59, notes 24 and 29, p. 43.

¹⁶ *Jalons* 1, chapter 5, p. 57-58, note 2, p. 41, and notes 14-20, p. 42.

¹⁷ *Jalons* 1, chapter 3, p. 31, note 72, p. 25; and chapter 5, p. 58, note 21, p. 42.

¹⁸ *Jalons* 1, chapter 5, pp. 60-66. See also VASEY, *Another Portrait*, pp. 54-56.

peating the full detail of that familiar narrative, we can all recall his departure from Mussidan, his adventures as an underground priest in Bordeaux, his exile in Saragossa, and his return to Bordeaux to found the Sodality in 1800. That crucial decade is the one in which the large matrix of the Modern Era contracted into a crucible within which the first historical manifestation of Marianist spirituality was forged. That decade was for Father Chaminade the time when the blunt and brutal reality of Modernity came crashing into his life. The experience inspired him with the resolve to found the Marianist Family.

He returned to France filled with a sense of mission. For the rest of his life he consistently and repeatedly claimed that God had inspired him to act in response to the times, to the changes that were being wrought in the Church and the world by Modernity. He felt called to launch a series of foundations that would enable Christians to live and believe in this new Modern world – a series of foundations with a mission, a set of appropriate apostolic means and methods, and a spirituality suited to the times. Today we call those foundations the Marianist Family. From the start, Marianist spirituality has been a Modern spirituality.

We now turn our attention to this first manifestation of Marianist spirituality.

The Dawning of Marianist Spirituality

In the Beginning

In 1800, when Father Chaminade returned to France from exile in Saragossa, he founded the Bordeaux Sodality. This was the start of the Marianist Family and the *début* of Marianist spirituality. Father Lalanne has left us the following description of this auspicious event.

Churches were just beginning to re-open, but they were still devastated and deserted. Christians found themselves so scattered and isolated that, among those who had preserved a spark of faith in this large city, each of them looked on himself or herself as another Tobias going up to the temple and going there alone. From this situation to the foundation of a religious order there stretched an untraversable distance. However, no one knew the power of time and patience better than Father Chaminade. He often compared his way of proceeding to that of a quiet brook. When the brook meets an obstacle, it makes no effort to overcome it. The very obstacle which impedes the brook, makes it grow wider and deeper; soon the brook rises above its normal level, flows over the obstacle, and continues on its course. And so this wise and zealous missionary contented himself with renting a room in the heart of the city, on Rue Saint Siméon, which he transformed into an oratory. Word spread that he said Mass there and preached, too. Some of the faithful began to assemble. He noticed two men in his little congregation, who were still young, and