

Day 2
Champagnat Route

In the
footsteps of
Marcellin
and the
first Brothers



In the footsteps of Marcellin and the first Brothers

MARLHES – Church called Saint Marcellin Champagnat en Pilat

Church of St. Saturninus

- ▶ Bishop / Martyr in 3rd century Toulouse. His altar piece is inside the Church on the right hand side as you enter. It's quite a story, as he was dragged through the streets by a bull. Probably occurred during the persecutions of the Emperor Diocletian.
- ▶ Second patron is St John Francis Regis, the famous Jesuit missionary who visited Marlhès 1635 and 1637. The mission crosses in the countryside mark his progress.
- ▶ Town square, now called Place du Pere Champagnat opposite the Mairie (Town Hall) is where Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin's father, conducted the ceremonies ordered by the revolutionary government. He was also Secretary to the Town Council. Also the treasurer and animator of the Society of Penitents. What an interesting mix of interests and values!
- ▶ Second school in the Institute, was established in 1819 with the support of Father Alliot who had survived the revolution as a priest in the town. Marcellin closed this school in 1822 because of the condition of the buildings provided by Fr. Alliot. Reopened in 1832. It no longer exists but you can view the school further down the street constructed during World War II - Ecole Champagnat.
- ▶ The Beates. Established 1650 from Le Puy as a group of pious women dedicated to assisting the sick, poor, teaching catechism and preparing children for first communion. Their museum is just outside Marlhès.

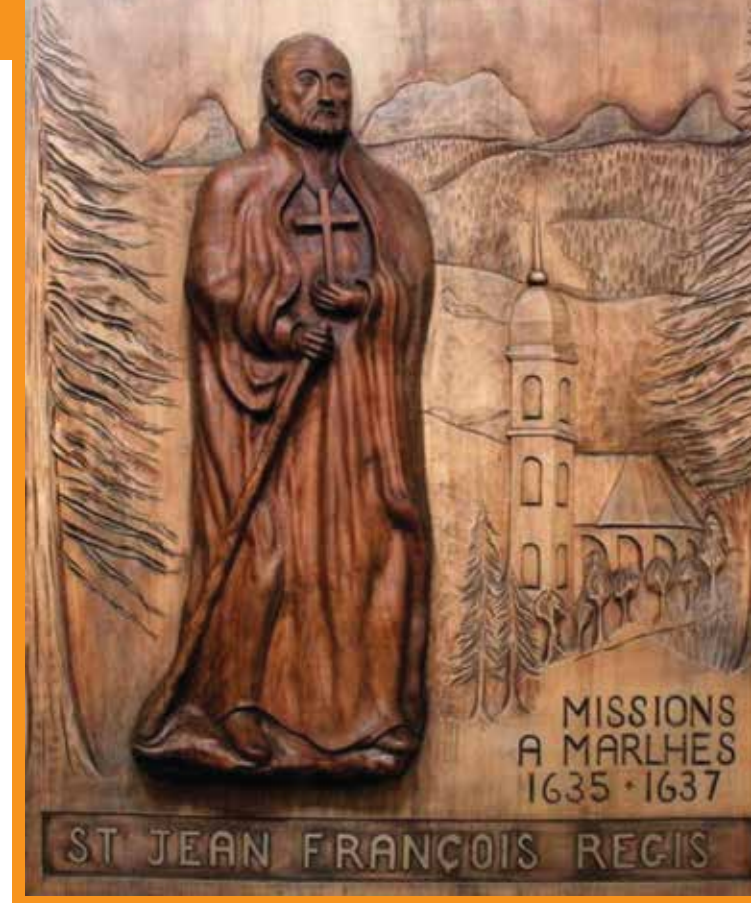
Inside the Church

1. On the left hand side back corner, is the shrine commemorating the baptism of Marcellin. Constructed by the donations of Japanese ex-students in 1985.
Note the signature of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat and his cousin Ducros, an ardent revolutionary murdered in 1797.

Q: What are the significant features of the granite statue of Marcellin?

2. Left-side wall, the wooden statue commemorating St Francis Regis.
3. Reliquary of St Fidelis, a first century Roman martyr, from the catacombs in Rome. Given to the Parish by Pope Gregory XVI to thank them for their missionary efforts e.g Bishop Epalle, (who found the body in Rome in 1845 in a newly discovered catacomb.)
4. Sanctuary area contains a beautiful pulpit from the original church.
5. Right-side transept has a wonderful window depicting Marcellin with his brothers, Brother Francois, the first Director General after Marcellin in 1839 and then Superior General, Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet (author of the Life in 1845 and Assistant who incorporated the brothers of Viviers and the brothers of St. Paul- Trois-Chateaux into the Institute in the 1840's) and Brother Louis Marie who later became Superior General.

6. The statues on the right-hand side are of St Louis Gonzaga, patron of youth and influence on Marcellin's spirituality, St Jean Vianney, in the seminary with Marcellin and famous as the Cure of Ars, St Theresa of Lisieux, and then that representation of the death of Bishop Saturninus.



LE ROSEY /ROZET CHAPEL



Marcellin Champagnat : Born 20 May 1789. Chapel built 1958, centenary of Lourdes and three years after the beatification in 1955. Local granite used. Statue above chapel.

Windows by Borgetto, a Parisian artist.

1. The baptism of Marcellin in the old church of Marlhès.
2. Marcellin and the three violets...Simplicity, Modesty, Humility.. discovering his vocation.
3. Marcellin at Fourvière in Lyon.
4. Marcellin the seminarist teaching catechetics during his holidays.
5. CRIB CROSS ALTAR
6. Marcellin as a priest at La Valla.
7. Marist students from around the world whose donations built the chapel.
8. Pius XII at the beatification of Marcellin, St. Peter's Rome, 29 May 1955.
9. Our Lady of Lourdes. 1858 – 1958.

LE ROSEY HOUSE OF THE CHAMPAGNAT FAMILY

"Ici est né le 20 mai 1789 Joseph Benoit Champagnat prêtre mariste fondateur des petits frères de Marie décède à Notre Dame de L'Hermitage près St Chamond le 6 juin 1840"

"Here was born on May 20th, 1789 Joseph Benoit Champagnat, a Marist priest and founder of the Little Brothers of Mary, died at Notre Dame de L'Hermitage near St Chamond on the 6th of June 1840"



In the Kitchen we look at the following:

- Bust of Marcellin • Hearth • Catechetics • Oven • Stairs • Family portrait
- Family history, work and finances • Bedroom • Bed • Books
- Marcellin's father, mother, aunt, brothers and sisters.
- Visitors book, please sign!

House of the Epalle Family

Now the Brothers residence. Marist Bishop to Oceania and martyr in the Solomon Islands. A former catechetics student of Marcellin.

The Apple story.

Reflection

Marhles & Le Rosey

1. Who are the people who have helped you shaped your life's dream and encouraged you to live it out? In what specific ways did they help you?

2. What events in your life gave you a sense of God's dream for you? The Lord mapped out a journey for you, what milestones along the road helped you find your way?

LE BESSAT

As part of the parish of La Valla, this village came within Marcellin's pastoral care. He received a call that a young man was dying in the hamlet of Les Palais. This young man Jean-Baptiste Montagne, son of Francois Montagne the cabinet maker was indeed gravely ill. Marcellin found the young man of 17 years to be totally ignorant of any religious understanding. The priest spent time with him and prepared him to meet the Lord.



When Marcellin returned later, the young man had died. For Marcellin this moment was a profound experience of the presence of God, directing him to start his project, which he had confided to Jean-Marie Granjon on the bridge near La Valla. What was the project?

Only an old wall of the house remains, just along from the place where a plaque marks the incident of great importance to all brothers, educators, parents, families and students involved in Marist projects.

La Chaperie Memorare House



The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone who
fled to thy protection, implored thy help,
or sought thine intercession was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O
Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I
come, before thee I stand, sinful and
sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy
hear and answer me. Amen.

We remember....

In February 1823, Saint Marcellin learned that Br. Jean Baptiste in Bourg-Argental had come down with a serious illness. Concerned about his condition, the young priest set out on the 20km journey across rough countryside to visit him. Br. Stanislaus was at his side.

On their return trip, walking through heavily timbered territory, the two men were caught in the full fury of one of the regions snowstorms. Both men were young and energetic, but hours of wandering lost on the slopes of Mont Pilat led eventually to exhaustion. Brother Stanislaus had reached the limits of his stamina. Night set in, the possibility of death in the snow increased with each passing hour. Saint Marcellin said; my friend, we are finished, if the blessed Virgin does not come to our aid. Let us have recourse to her and beg her to rescue us from the danger we are in of losing our lives in this woods and snow. Both men prayed the Memorare.

Within a short while, they spied lamplight not too far away in the distance. A local farmer, Mr. Donnet, had left his house to enter a nearby stable. This particular evening, though, he had taken an unusual route, especially with the storm underway. By habit he entered the stable through a convenient door in the wall of the house. For reasons that can only be explained by faith, this particular night he braved wind and snow and chose a route that took him outdoors with his lantern. For the rest of his days, Saint Marcellin saw his deliverance and that of Br. Stanislaus as an act of Providence.

La Valla – Cradle of the Institute

The Village

When Fr Champagnat arrived at this parish there were 2500 inhabitants. It reached the mount of Bessat, 8km away and 1200m of altitude. About 500 people lived in the village itself whereas the other 200 were scattered over more than 60 hamlets.



The “Maison Champagnat” the birthplace of the institute.

The “Maison Champagnat” – the birthplace of the institute.

Fr. Champagnat first rented and then bought in 1816 just a small shelter which extended from the gate of the school to the door of the house as it is now.

On the 2nd of January 1817, he accommodated there the first two brothers who wanted to begin their Marist life. A new extension was added to the house in 1822 to allow more room for the 8 new postulants who came unexpectedly followed by some more.

The house has 3 levels and each represent an element of Marist life:

1. Mission
2. Community
3. Prayer



Prayer around the table at La Valla – ‘Gathered around the same table’



Animator:

In this little house in La Valla in France where the very first community of Brothers learned to live, read, write, teach and pray, stands the table that Marcellin built with his own hands so that the young Brothers could share meals, conversations, study, and laugh just like a family.

Reader 1:

Imagine that the table now, built by Marcellin for his first brothers. Big, rough and sturdy, a little damaged now from the many visitors wishing to take a small souvenir of this important table with them.

Imagine the length of the table, stretching across the width of the small room, but where there is always space to squeeze in one more person.

Imagine Marcellin so happy to be at the table with the diversity of young men in his first family of Brothers. Br. Jean-Marie 15 years of age, a great teacher and deeply religious; his older brother, Br. Laurent, known for his simplicity of faith and love of children; Br. Francois, arriving at La Valla aged just 10 years old, devoted for his whole life to Jesus, Mary and Marcellin.

Imagine Marcellin welcoming the Brothers to the table and inviting them to pray.

(Pause).

Reader 2:

As we gather around this table, may we open to receive the gift of one another. You call us, God of our lives, to believe in you through the love we show for one another. **(Pause)**

Reader 3:

The table of La Valla is a strong symbol of family and service, not just for the Brothers in the early years of the Institute, but for all Marists today.

We think now of each person in our Marist family here joined in prayer around the image of that very same table used by Marcellin and the first Brothers. We pray as One Family... **(Pause)**

Animator:

And as Marists, around the same table, we pray. (Our response will be Welcome)

Let us make room at the table for all the people who are:

- ▶ Excluded from the friendship group.
- ▶ Starved for food,
- ▶ Driven from their homes
- ▶ Denied religious freedom
- ▶ Excluded from economic opportunity
- ▶ Left without work
- ▶ Abandoned by the government
- ▶ Subjected to oppression
- ▶ Disappeared in the night
- ▶ Taken from their families
- ▶ Unlawfully imprisoned
- ▶ Marginalized by poverty
- ▶ Rejected at borders
- ▶ Deprived of education
- ▶ Silenced by violence and injustices

All: Welcome
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Animator:

As he was dying, Marcellin gathered his Brothers around him and challenged them to do for people what Jesus asked of his disciples. Love one another as Jesus had loved you. Be of one heart and one mind. May it be said of the little Brothers of Mary, as of the first Christians: "See how they love one another". Yes, my dear Brothers, listen to the words of your Father, they are the words of our Savior: "Love one another". As Marist today, we try to do the same and so we pray...

Together..

Animator:

Mary, our
Good Mother

Animator:

Saint Marcellin

All:

Pray for us.



Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy
womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now, and at the hour of our death.

Amen



Our Lady of Pity (Notre Dame de Pitie)

This chapel of Our Lady of Leytra, in La Valla, was built in the year 1482. For two centuries, XIV and XV, the village people used to go to the chapel to the Lady of Sorrows that is there. When the plague of 1630 struck, the chapel became the place to accommodate those infected and cast out from the village. Some of them built huts nearby.

The main church in the village was closed during the French Revolution so this chapel, which is not far, was the place of worship and prayer. Marcellin made the pilgrimage here many times to this 17th century chapel. It was also a place of prayer for the sick who could not enter the town. Marcellin came often either alone or with his brothers and some parishioners to pray especially for vocations – “If this work should perish, it is not our work that fails, but yours, for you have done everything for us”.



The modern church of La Valla



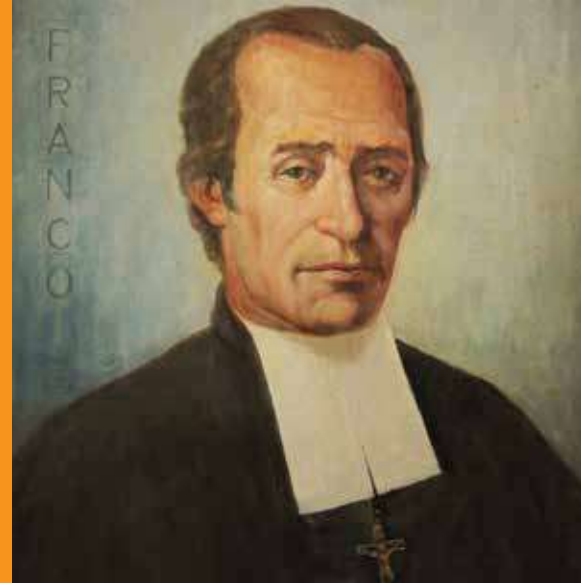
Due to the fact Fr. Marcellin didn't know this church the brothers didn't pay much attention to it for 150 years. Until recently when after some changes the window panes were replaced by the stained glass windows we can see now. From left to right this is what they represent:

1. A memory to the old priest, Fr. Guamont, who was guillotined during the French Revolution. The colours are important: green to indicate that this is a village in the mountains and red for the blood that was shed.
2. Bedoin, the parish priest who replaced Fr. Champagnat and founder of the Sisters of the Holy Children.
3. The burning shrub in Sinai (God appear to Moses).
4. Mr. Champagnat sending his brothers and Mary the Good Mother.
5. Fr. Francois continuing the same mission.

Les Maisonnettes, situated on one of the numerous hills found on the left side of the Ban river, is the hamlet where Brother Francois was born. Somewhat isolated geographically, it is within sight across a slight valley from La Valla.

The young Gabriel Rivat, later Francois, was brought by an older brother to one of Marcellin's catechism lessons. His piety so impressed the founder that he asked the boy's parents to allow him to live with the brothers so as to benefit from a good education. Similar to the relationship between a father and son, over time a profound bond developed between Marcellin and Gabriel who became the first Superior General. La Valla and Les Maisonnettes constitute together a special Marist place of beginnings.

Les Maisonnettes contain the home of the Rivat family. Gabriel born in 1809 has been consecrated at the Marian shrine at Valfleury by his mother and in 1818 she brought him to Marcellin at La Valla.





A talented man, he soon became secretary and confidant to the Founder. In 1839, he was elected Director General, then Superior General and retired to the Hermitage in 1860. During his time the institute expanded rapidly and was legally recognized by the French Government in 1851.

In his retirement years at the Hermitage, Br. Francois became a herbalist and healer of note.

Perhaps you know about the liquor 'Alpestre' and associated herbal remedies?

