



World Council of the Marianist Family
Consejo Mundial de la Familia Marianista

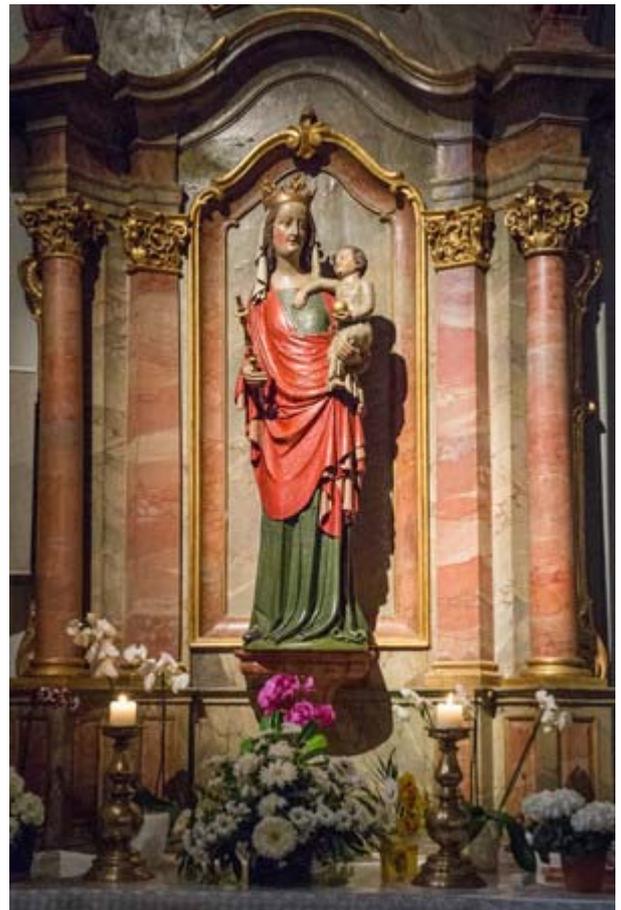
31st World Day of Marianist Prayer
Switzerland, the first Marianist mission outside France

“May the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be glorified in all places
through the Immaculate Virgin Mary”*

1. Harbingers

Even before its birth, links were forged with the Marianist Family of Switzerland. In fact, the maternal grandparents of the little Guillaume Chaminade, before returning to France, lived in Morgues on the shores of Lake Geneva. The Huguenot couple had emigrated when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685 (in Vincent Vasey; *Chaminade, Another Portrait*, p. 20).

Several early Marianists were either of Swiss origin or had links to our country. Father Georges Caillet, who succeeded Blessed Chaminade as superior general, and his sister both became Marianist religious. They came from Alle (today in the Canton of the Jura). Father Louis Rothéa did his first studies at Mariastein, near Basel. He was ordained priest in the chapel of the Ursulines in Fribourg. Three other Swiss joined the Society of Mary during the lifetime of the Founder.



Our Lady of Bourguillon

2. Arrival of the first religious in Fribourg

Seven years after the foundation of the Society of Mary, in 1824, Father Chaminade was already expressing his desire to send religious to Switzerland:

“...you might let him know that until we have provided for our already existing establishments and secured as recruits some other good subjects, we cannot arrange for any establishment in Switzerland, however much we would desire to do so. Assure him of my real interest in the idea, however, seeing as how some of my ancestors are even in Berne; but that, in the works of God, the order of



This was the first school of the Brothers of Mary in Fribourg (1839)

providence must be followed" (*Letter 275* of March 25, 1824, to Fr. Georges Caillet). This desire was fulfilled only fifteen years later.

In his letter of September 4, 1839, Father Chaminade wrote to Brother François-Joseph Enderlin:

Take your two colleagues, Brothers Meyer and David, and get to Fribourg without further delay. There you will have an understanding with the Reverend Pastor, after having paid your respects and mine to His Lordship, and you will make arrangements with him Go in peace, my dear son! The august Mary, who is sending you, will not fail to bless you all, if you are faithful" (*Letter 1166*).

The short prayer so dear to Blessed Chaminade was recited in Switzerland by the Marianist religious: "May the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary."

3. The importance of Fribourg for the Marianists

The work spread out beyond Fribourg. Already in 1842 brothers were sent to Lausanne, then to Sion, Altdorf... Then came the religious turmoil of the *Sonderbund*, with the result that only two Marianist schools remained by 1850: Altdorf and Sion.

As a consequence of the Combes law in 1903, religious orders had to leave France. So the Brothers of Mary returned to the environs of Fribourg. The Marianist Seminary moved from Paris to Fribourg. The Villa Saint-Jean and the agricultural school of Grangeneuve were founded.

After 1903, most of the Marianist priests were formed in the Regina Mundi Seminary. Several general chapters were held in the same buildings. Many seminarians went on pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Bourguillon. There is even an *ex voto* that invokes Father Chaminade. In 1946 the Province of Switzerland was created. In the 1960's it counted more than one hundred religious.



Fribourg: postcard with aerial view of the Regina Mundi Seminary, today the buildings of the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of Fribourg



4. The Marianist Family in Switzerland

After the religious of the Province of France had started some lay groups in Fribourg and with the creation of groups of Affiliates, some lay persons from around Martigny in the early 1990's expressed a desire to learn about Marianist spirituality. They spoke about it with some religious and with friends and acquaintances. Several became interested: thus were created the first groups for sharing and deepening in the Word of God and in the spirituality of the Brothers of Mary. Some MLC's were born, giving a new boost to the Marianist laity in French-speaking Switzerland. The lay council of Switzerland was set up in 1997, after the closing of the Marianist community in Martigny.

The last Swiss to join religious life and to persevere in it made his first vows in 1984. The brothers were growing old; many returned to the Mansions of the Father. Today, there are only seventeen Swiss religious. In our country, not a single brother still teaches in a school. The schools are now directed by the State.

More than ever, the Marianist future is in the hands of God. We are expecting a lot from a dynamic that aims to give more opportunity to lay people to live the charism of our spiritual family. That is the grace we ask for on this world day of Marianist prayer.

5. The shrine of Our Lady of Bourguillon

The shrine of Our Lady of Bourguillon overlooks the city of Fribourg. It is a place of pilgrimage dear to the hearts of the Fribourgeois and of Swiss Catholics. In this spot of peace and spiritual renewal, the faithful have found support, strengthening and cures for centuries in the presence of Our Lady.

After the foundation of the city of Fribourg in 1157, the townspeople built a shelter on the hill to take in lepers. In 1438, a pilgrimage was organized by the authorities to ask for the the cure of Frederick IV of Austria, a leper. He was cured. Since then, the statue of the Madonna in the hospital chapel attracted pilgrims. It was soon placed in the current chapel, built outside the leprosarium in 1466. Already in 1476 the soldiers of Fribourg who had fought in the Battle of Morat came to Bourguillon to pray for their dead comrades. The flow of pilgrims has never been interrupted even up to our own times, as witnessed by the numerous *ex voto*'s that adorn the chapel, including one of Father William Joseph Chaminade.



Chapel of Our Lady of Bourguillon



Ex voto with an allusion to Father Chaminade; 6th line on the right (at the end) and beginning of 7th line

In 1996 the Association of Stretcher Bearers built a reception center in Bourguillon in accord with the purpose of its foundation: the service of pilgrims. The center encourages meetings in a place well set up for exchange of views and making contacts.

Each year the shrine receives four great pilgrimages. On January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the bishop presides over the Mass at 10:15 a.m. On Good Friday the Way of the Cross ends at Bourguillon. The pilgrimage with the sick and handicapped, which since 1932 comes to ask the help of the Blessed Virgin, gathers about 700 persons on the third Sunday of June. The military pilgrimage, the third Sunday of November, is a time of prayer for peace throughout the world.

Bourguillon has its own pastoral team, which includes the rector, Father Ludovic Nobel, a Missionary of Bethlehem, two Ingenbohl religious, Sister Hildegund, the sacristan, and Sister Chiara Francesca, as well as a married couple, Marlène and Nicolas Carron. The shrine is part of the pastoral responsibility of the parish of Notre Dame in Fribourg.



Chapel of Our Lady of Bourguillon, interior

6. Prayer intentions

On this World Day of Marianist Prayer of 2015, O Lord, you gather in spirit all the members, friends and acquaintances of our spiritual family. You invite us to be nourished by your word, to go ever deeper into the charism bequeathed to us by your servants Adèle and William Joseph and their disciples.

We give you thanks for our Pope Francis, for our bishops, our priests, our religious and all the pastoral workers whom you have placed along our personal spiritual journeys. We entrust them to you, so that they might with us proclaim unceasingly:

R. May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

Lord, you have appointed men and women to care for the well-being of the peoples, persons at the service of the most marginalized. May their actions continue to glorify you:

R. May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

On this World Day of Marianist Prayer, grant to us, O Lord, your Spirit. We ask you, raise up new workers in your vineyard. Grant us the grace of unity and let your strength help us to be witnesses of your mercy in our life settings:

R. May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

On this day of prayer, we unite ourselves to all those men and women who have gone before us to the Mansions of the Father. Lord, we confide them to your mercy. With them, may we always proclaim:

R. May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

On this World Day of Marianist Prayer, Lord, you invite us to glorify you in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. We praise you for that call and we ask of you the grace to remain steadfast in that vocation, through Christ Our Lord.



*“At each hour during the day and when awakening during the night, *May the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be glorified*, etc., is to be said.”

From the “Rule of the Religious of Mary”
Chaminade’s *Letters*, November 1819.

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Marianist community house in Sion