

### 33. Mary, First and Perpetual Superior

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Just as the first Marists consecrated themselves to Mary at the end of their retreat in Belle in 1831 and chose her as Superior; so the first Tertiaries constantly gave the same recognition to Mary using Fr Colin's expressions: "I am making her the superior", "It is she who is the mistress, the queen", "She is the superior of this house". The idea of "first" is also central. It urges us always to put Mary first in our decisions.

The bishop seems to be very much inclined towards the Third Order. ... If you take the sisters as they are today, how can you give them authority? Let us get to work, Reverend Father, to work, the old ones who know how to guide souls, get to work to save ours. To work to extend Mary's family and save souls here!

Ah! if only I could talk to the Third Order myself, I would say: Sisters, sisters, do you see the harvest that is ripening? Do you see this old person who is dying or who lives only by a continual miracle of Divine Providence, these souls who are waiting for you to break bread? Come along, with humble and peaceful abnegation, with obedience to her whom you will choose to occupy in your midst the place of the Mother of heaven, our true, our only Superior. Keep your eyes on Her, on all her actions, and you will succeed. Come, come on now!

Letter of Sr Marie de la Croix (Saint Louis) to Fr Poupinel (Lyons),  
December 1, 1874, (OPS IV, 644)

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For Sr Marie de la Croix, Mary was her closest collaborator whom she recognised as Guardian, Mistress and Queen of her home. Such confidence in Mary gave her wings and limitless dynamism despite illness and exhaustion. We can only admire her and envy such conviction.

