

49. Little Children

In the following extracts from an address in 1845, Fr Colin reveals an instinctive fatherly concern about the need to include children in the Third Order. Father Jean-Baptiste Gouchon began this project for children the following year, but Colin found the approach too complicated and wanted to work on "a little Third Order for children, one that will be much simpler."

COLIN ADDRESSING CONFRERES - SEPTEMBER 9, 1845

"Again, gentlemen, I feel a certain obligation to work on the rules of our Third Order. One of our confreres has a very special inclination for making a start of it among little children. It is a work that greatly appeals to me and I feel specially drawn to second him".

"It is not that I am thinking, gentlemen, that we ought to have all this under our direction, no! But we shall create – what am I saying? – create...Yes, because God uses this little Society which is nothing. Yes, yes, God delights in choosing the small, the weak. We sometimes see great minds unable to manage things that the lowly bring to a successful conclusion. That is because God wants us to see that everything comes from him".

LM Doc. 86. (See 'A Founder Acts' 317, 31-32)

Colin's powerful understanding of the paradox of the small and the weak being used by God to achieve great things is caught up, somehow, in his attraction to the idea of including children among lay Marists.

This dimension is further enhanced in later documents to include those children who have not yet reached the age of reason and even those still in the womb.

The "mother idea" of the whole world becoming Marist and of a confraternity open to all types of people would surely have to include the little children.

