

## 23. The main point

*Under pressure from all sides to provide brothers for new schools, Marcellin had difficulty in ensuring enough time for their complete formation. So he made sure that supports were in place for what was essential in the life of the brothers.*

The dearest wish of his heart, however, was to inspire his Brothers with a love of prayer, to lead them to understand its importance and benefits and to train them in this holy exercise. In his instruction, he was always returning to this subject which he called the "main point." It was his view, that to have the gift of solid piety is thereby to possess all virtues. Here is how he developed that idea: "If God bestows on you the gift of prayer, he grants you at the same time all virtues, for it can be said of prayer, what Solomon said of wisdom: 'all good things came to me together with her' (Wis 7:11). In fact it is impossible to converse often with God without acquiring his Spirit, without becoming like him by the imitation of his virtues. So I have always noticed that one who had the spirit of prayer, also had the spirit of obedience, of mortification and of zeal; and that he was wholly occupied with the attainment of perfection".

"Pious Brothers are the pillars of the Institute and no matter what may be their talents in other respects, no matter what their strength and their health, they are useful everywhere; they spread good spirit all around and God blesses everything entrusted to them. ... We must probably owe the blessing of God on the Institute to this or that Brother who is perhaps considered useless because he has few talents or is sick; yet he is extremely dear to Our Lord and his Mother because of his solid piety".

Life of Marcellin Champagnat, Bicentenary Ed., II, pp. 303-305

Solid piety is the essential virtue for all times and places. Champagnat had the spiritual intuition that if his Brothers excelled on this point he could take his leave without worry. That intuition remains valid today. His insistence in this regard is a source of inspiration for personal growth and in ministry.

