

28. We must have Brothers

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difficile* Around 1815-1816, Marcellin was in complete agreement with his companions in the major seminary about founding a Society of Mary. Yet his own experience of difficulties in attending school in his small village led him to speak up strongly about a very real need that was already bothering him.

However, the plan of the new Association made no provision for Teaching Brothers. It was Marcellin alone who conceived their institution and who alone put his idea into execution. He would often say to his companions: "We must have Brothers to teach catechism, to help the missionaries and to conduct schools". No one disputed the wisdom of having Brothers, but since their existence had not been envisaged in the plan of the Society, the constant repetition, "We must have Brothers", was not taken seriously. In the end, Marcellin was told: "Well, since it was your idea, you see to it!" He willingly accepted the task and from that moment his determination, his plans and his efforts, were all focused on founding the work of the Brothers.

Life of Marcellin Champagnat, Bicentenary Ed., I, p.28

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ble :*" This passage describes how the Marist Brothers came to exist. In a simple, almost banal, description, Champagnat is presented as keenly aware of the movement of the Holy Spirit within himself. His almost obsessive insistence recalls words used of the prophets in the Old Testament: "The Spirit of God took hold of him."

