

## FAMILY SPIRIT SMA / OLA

**Family Spirit : community life; internationality; simplicity of life..**

**How was this lived from the foundations until 1920?**

**Chantal Dartois OLA**

Our stories, whether it is that of the Fathers of the African Missions or in their wake that of the Sisters Our Lady of Apostles, rest on: two men ... for one mission.

I would like to recall their lives in general terms through the book written by Sr Claude Marie Echallier "*The Fortitude and Faith of an Apostle*" <sup>1</sup>

Little is known about that first meeting between our new recruit and Bishop de Marion-Brésillac who for two years moved heaven and earth to obtain a mission territory. Two lines in the Bishop's diary mention that on the « 6th of November Monsieur Planque arrived, and the first interview was most favorable ».

Who then was the man, inventive and daring, to whom Augustine Planque spontaneously and in complete trust offered his companionship for Africa.....This true Southerner was descended from a line of country gentlemen established in a region of Languedoc.

Warm-hearted, a good mixer, he treated everyone with true courtesy and a kindness that easily attracted friends. But he was no less firm and determined because of that. He was an active man who pursued his objectives with tenacity and of these the one that took first place, the one he had dreamed of since his youth, was the Missions. From the Foreign Missions seminary in Paris where he entered in 1841, he went to India and then was made Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Coïmbatur and devoted 12 years of his life to hard pioneering work. But difficulties he was unable to overcome, obliged him to return and submit his resignation to the Holy See.

At 42, still full of energy and ideas, his only wish was to set out in another direction ... and why not central of Africa? It was in January 1856 that the project of founding a new society was born. From then on, there was no slowing down and it is easily understood with what joy Bishop Brésillac could welcome in May of that same year the first overture made by Augustin Planque.

In contrast with the striking personality of the Bishop (originally from the South) with his passion for action and his astonishing vitality, Augustine is the complete opposite, reserved, restrained in speech and gesture. Inventive and efficient certainly but of too serious a disposition to be able to show his feelings. Nothing in common it would seem at first, between this aristocrat Marion-Brésillac, always at ease and outgoing, accustomed to all kinds of associations, discussions, arguments and Fr. Planque who was just a simple rustic. Modest and unassuming, Augustine belonged to the old French peasantry, noted for its traditions and faith and from which he inherited that true nobility which respects the values that give a man his real grandeur and dignity.

Beyond what might have been expected to separate them, you can see the features which will firmly unite the two men : directness, generosity of heart... In many circumstances they have proved their goodwill and a tenacity which might have been taken for stubbornness if it was not aimed at serving an interest that was beyond them.

Bishop de Marion Brésillac was quite a bit older than Augustine, 13 years, but these two men lived different experiences and overcame difficulties in order to arrive at Lyon. There they are in this Autumn of 1856, two men from very different environments and with different horizons, where their paths have crossed and a common destiny will carry them towards the service of the Gospel in Africa. This common destiny will unite them to each other beyond what they could have foreseen. It is without doubt what explains the trust and esteem that grew among them and even if it would be short, since their common task only lasted 31 months, they would be close collaborators in friendship and in mutual transparency, each vouching for the other, for what they were going to build together : A Society for Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Augustine Planque arrived in Lyon on November 6th 1856 and on the 8th of December, of that same year, in a move that shoed their faith in the future, Bishop de Brésillac, Fr. Planque and some aspirants climbed to Fourvière ; « ... *the day of the Immaculate Conception, seven of us went to offer our enterprise to the Virgin at the feet of her statue venerated on the hill.* »<sup>3</sup>. And this would be the date of the Society's birth.

Bishop de Brésillac wanted to make this Society a society of apostolic missionary life and not a religious congregation.

*"Since the Society is essentially secular, there will be no vows. Later, we will see if it would not be advantageous to make an oath of perseverance after a year of trial in the Mother-House or after a few years of mission. For the moment, we will be satisfied with the solemn resolution to persevere in the Society until the end of our days ... "The Society of African Missions places itself especially under the patronage of the Holy Family »*<sup>4</sup>

In his letters from 1856 to 1859, to Cardinal Barnabo, at Propaganda, as well as to Fr. Planque, he insists on a family spirit and sees himself as the father of this family. It is something that is close to his heart and that he tried to set up in his time as superior of the seminary in India.

He insists on a life **together**, a **common rule**, as we read in a letter he wrote to Cardinal Barnabo: "... It would be difficult and perhaps impossible to formulate forthwith a detailed regulation for the Society of African Missions. However, we need from the beginning to live a common rule, at least provisional. We have therefore agreed on a few fundamental articles of which I have the honour to send you a copy ... "

And in the fundamental articles we find: "Wherever several associates will be united, they will observe **the common life**. They will be able to use, according to their will, income from their patrimony, but everything they receive directly or indirectly from missions, or for missions, will be placed in common."

He wrote to Father Planque on December 28, 1856:

"The family is still small, it is true, but it will grow with the grace of God, provided that we ourselves are faithful to this grace and never let it discourage us ... The essential thing is not that we are at first very numerous, but that our young men should have a good spirit and a perfect devotion to our work »<sup>5</sup>

During a retreat given by Fr. Renzo Mandirola to SMAs, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of Bishop Marion-Brésillac, he addressed the "**family spirit**" desired for his Society and here I take up again some of his phrases :

« *"It is perhaps an expression that is abused even among us, but it seems to me that it is the one that can best explain or give an idea of the spirit that reigned in the small community, which was scarcely founded. Certain features emerge from the texts which make explicit reference to the SMA».*<sup>6</sup>

What interested Bishop de Marion Brésillac was not the number but the **quality of the members**. « *The essential thing is not that we are at first very numerous, but that our young men should have a good spirit and a perfect devotion to our work»*<sup>7</sup>

One aspect he insists on is that candidates must **have the will** to become accustomed to different characters. And this is very important in a society that wants to be international. ...

There are two further clear aspects in the Fundamental Articles of 1856:

*"The 'sinews of war' (the essential) is **concord** in perfect charity, and obedience to those who are appointed more to direct than to govern their confreres. The aspirants, therefore, having all the other qualities, will not be admitted if we find a spirit of independence in them, or a marked repugnance to becoming accustomed to characters different to them".*

He also insists on other aspects : to **render service** and to **help one another**: "*Let us all work for each other, for our perseverance, taking care to establish a spirit of society which ensures the success and development of the work.* »<sup>8</sup>

The founder knows very well that it is not overnight that we can require candidates and members to acquire this spirit and so he invites patience so that what is still imperfect can become perfect. He wrote to Father Planque:

*"I received your last two letters, my dear Mr. Planque, and I confess that we must aim at having a spirit of greater **condescension** and **simplicity** reign in the house... only, and especially in the beginning, from our side let us use much gentleness and patience to lead what is imperfect to good, without discouraging those who have the goodwill to contribute to the success of the work.*

*Let us not despair of correcting a man, as long as he has a way of conversion.*

*Let us all work for each other, for our perseverance, taking care to establish a spirit of society which ensures the success and development of the work.* »<sup>9</sup>

In his letters to Fr. Planque, Bishop de Marion-Brésillac returns often to what the spirit of the society should be :

« Now my dear Fr.. Planque, that thanks be to God, we will be beyond the great boredom of the material side, it is absolutely necessary to work at creating the spirit that should dominate in our congregation. Let us begin with ourselves, by adopting a spirit of great **condescension** on faults, but without weakness, however, and without leaving aside the belief that **gentleness**, from which we do not want to deviate, comes to terms with the principles which alone can maintain good order. » <sup>10</sup>

«The Society being essentially secular, there will be no vows but the solemn resolution will be made to persevere in the Society until the end of our days, considering as the greatest merit to die at work, be it on the missions or at their service in Europe. »<sup>11</sup>

A suggestion already contemplated by Bishop de Marion-Brésillac, and taken up by Father Planque, and which seemed important to the spirit of the Society, was the proposal to **take an oath**. He wrote to Cardinal Barnabo:

« Bishop de Brésillac often spoke to me of an oath taken by the Pupils of the Sacred Heart of the Propaganda ; he told me several times that he would like to examine if it would be good for us to make the same oath in our Society. Your Eminence would you have the kindness to send me the formula and tell me what you think of this project. » <sup>12</sup>

And he wrote to the confreres :

« Not to give rise anymore to this disastrous way of envisaging the resolution, I thought of realizing Mgr. de Brésillac's idea of making a real oath instead of a simple resolution; for that purpose, I asked Cardinal Barnabo for his opinion and for the formula for the oath taken by the pupils of Propaganda. I would also like to have your feelings on this. »<sup>13</sup>

And some months later :

«When I spoke of the oath in accordance with that of Propaganda, I did not at all intend that this oath should be applied to the present members of the Society. Do not think, however, that this idea comes from me: it is from our Holy Founder, who often spoke of it to me as a form which it might be necessary to take later. It seems to me that the foundation of Spain will render this oath necessary for us; Nevertheless you can be assured that I will do nothing without the approval of the Propaganda on this article. » <sup>14</sup>

An important point underlined in the **spirit of the society** is also **internationality**.

« We want to create and strengthen an African Missions work. We need to have subjects and funds. Our first thought in founding black homes in Spain was to obtain both. It seems difficult for the plan of which you are speaking to achieve this double aim. Indeed in this plan the subjects from Cadiz, not ever passing through Lyons, might easily consider themselves as only having bonds of fraternal charity with us. From that moment our work is divided and Cadiz does not attain our goal. You know better than I do the exclusively nationalistic tendencies of the Spaniards and I am convinced that the division of Cadiz will not delay in sailing with full sails in these waters that we do not want

*...It seems to me that at the outset you are giving the Spaniards who have come here an unacceptable reason. It is not the cold which has caused them to leave, but the radical lack of the spirit necessary for our work. As for the management of Cadiz, it must depend entirely on Lyons, who should observe the same method in the choice of directors, that is to say, that as far as possible at any given time they will all be former missionaries. I give you these basics in a succinct manner and I believe that these are the conditions 'sine qua non' to see the Spanish branch approved by Propaganda. ... It is up to us to found the branches in a way that avoids giving them the temptation to separate, and for this we need an ad hoc organization. I believe that even the diocesan missionaries should, after a certain time, be in part either 'former missionaries' or real members of the Society, and not simple associates. This will be for serious examination.» <sup>15</sup>*

*«If we want to make a single and lasting work, it is necessary that the national spirit should give way to the "catholic (universal)" spirit. We should not be concerned with questions of nationalities but of the interest of the Society ... our Founder wanted us to receive subjects from all nations who would submit to our rules. We make up only one family and we must look at all the members with the same eye. I do not hide from you that I am sorry to see that you thus display a spirit which divides the family of the African Missions into categories of nationalities. Let's be one and we will do God's work.»<sup>16</sup>*

Another aspect emphasized several times in Father Planque's letters to promote **unity, brotherhood** and **the SMA spirit is to set up Councils** in the community and in the Regions :

*« In all things, in all measures to be taken, in all the plans to be examined, hold a kind of **council** with your confreres, and determine by **mutual agreement** what should be done. It was in this way, moreover, that Bishop de Brésillac proceeded, and desired to proceed always in his Society. He even put a special article in his draft constitutions so that things would always continue like this .... » <sup>17</sup>*

*« I beseech you not to stop at Mr. Borghero's form, but to see the substance. Remain what you have always been when we talked about this dear brother and do not lose the good ideas that you uttered then. We all have our character and temperament, we have also been subjected to the influence of the environment in which we have lived for a long time, but virtue is found in **mutual concordance, in the most favorable judgment of our neighbour**, in the support of behaviours different from our tastes and in the thousand details of each moment. You know all this better than me and you are used to practicing it. I hope that you will be a home **with a good spirit and good understanding** among all. When a thing seems harmful or useless, let us say it among us with that spirit which seeks in all things the greatest glory of God. Please believe that from my side, in every way I will search for all means of alleviating the difficulties and facilitate you in all things the **support** of the miseries inherent in the life of the missionary more than any other*

*I ask you to believe that in every respect, from my part I shall look for all the ways to limit the difficulties and to make it easier for you in all things to support the poverties, inherent in the life of the missionary even more than in all others ».* <sup>18</sup>

In his letters, Fr. Planque also emphasized **the role of the superior** in the spirit of the community as the one who aids the living out of the common life and who forms:



*« One of the good ways of relieving yourself is to assemble the confreres from time to time, to examine with them the points which interest the running of the mission, to distribute to each one in this little council the tasks to be done. In the following council, you give a little account of what you have done yourself, you have each one give an account, and then share again the points planned and for which nobody has yet taken charge. In these meetings many opinions are given indirectly, and without injuring any one, the confreres are formed and become adapted to conducting business; And you, you run all these operations and are not obliged to do almost everything yourself.»<sup>19</sup>*

*« I believe there are good elements [people] in the current mission; But they must be trained in taking initiative. ... It is necessary that the confreres in each residence be called to participate in the running of the mission, otherwise they will be discouraged and disinterested and will not be formed for anything. It is necessary that the confreres of each residence often have councils among themselves in which they examine all that concerns the running of the residence, in which the principal points and method of execution are decided together, as well as the one who will assume responsibility for whatever point. Another time each gives an account of what he has been responsible for, of the success achieved, of the obstacles encountered; New measures to be taken are examined and the progress of the business is thus assured.*

*Any difficulty is considered together; each one expresses his opinion and a much more favorable result is arrived at: in every case each one concurs and takes an interest in all that is done. Men are formed, gain experience and self-assurance, benefit and little by little show what they are capable of without fear of errors. If there is a difficulty in the school or elsewhere, the course of action to be taken and whether it is good that a confrere other than the one who has the difficulty intervenes to bring it to a successful conclusion is decided together, the method and measure is controlled. **And thus the bonds of fraternity are tightened for common action.** Far from being lost, the Superior in this way gains all the strength that common efforts give; He finds a way of making pertinent observations without offending anyone, something which he could only do with difficulty to one or other of his colleagues. You would not believe how these procedures maintain union between the confreres and ensure the progress of a business matter.» <sup>20</sup>*

We could continue, but we cannot forget that in October 1856, before the arrival of Fr. Planque at Lyons, Bishop de Marion Brésillac, on returning from a questing trip in the region of Albi noted in his journal :

*«Reflection done : I made up my mind to go to Castres to see the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception ... but the Superior General seemed to me not very open to the proposal »<sup>21</sup>*

He continues the process for finding Sisters:

*« It will be necessary to create schools for boys and for girls and , for these, to have Sisters » <sup>22</sup>*

At the same time, Father Planque, on his part, solicited the Sisters of Saint Ursula who occupied the house next to that of the SMA Fathers. Tenacious and persevering, Augustine Planque will continue his research in many congregations ... but he believes it necessary : " to give up this project : we would not find there neither the subjects nor the form that we would like. "

But he continues looking.... And in 1867, he wrote to one of his confrères from Dahomey :

*« I have definitely found Religious who have accepted to go to your mission. »<sup>23</sup>*

They are the Franciscans Sisters of the Propagation of the Faith of Couzon and from March 1867 three of them come to the Seminary to take care of the laundry and the cooking with the prospect of an imminent departure for Dahomey .....and this did not delay, on January 28th, 1868, 4 sisters embark for Porto-Novo, then in 1872 another departure of 4 further religious who some months later will leave for Lagos to open a second mission. In spite of the problems which will arise between Father Planque and the Superior of the Franciscan Sisters of the Propagation, some of the Sisters who left for Africa will stay and will form the nucleus of the new Congregation as Fr. Planque writes to Fr. Durieux:

*« We are beginning to form our nucleus of religious. There are nine of them at the moment, and a greater number of applications are appearing. With the blessing of God, we will do His work. When we have them well enough trained we will send them to you.*

*Encourage the Sisters of Lagos and Porto-Novo. They are of the new family with no other formality than their will. »<sup>24</sup>*

Fr. Planque thought of rules for the new Congrégation and it was from those of Saint Ignatius that he will borrow most, drawing inspiration from the summary of the Constitutions of the Jesuits: "If this rule is the most adapted to the apostolic life it is because it is without austerity ... " and " that it lends itself to all forms of work, it is really adapted to the apostolate. "

One of the special characteristics that, from the beginning and with emphasis, Father wanted to mark the spirituality of the Sisters is: "I do not want anything unusual but only simplicity in its widest apostolic sense»<sup>25</sup>

In the spirit and the will of the Founder, the Congregation and each community must constitute a **true family** in which **simplicity, cordiality, benevolence, team spirit and unity** prevail:

*« You will treat your Sisters with leniency and kindness without weakness. You will cheer them up when they are discouraged, you will help them in their difficulties. I know you will have trouble but I know also that God will be with you because you will be doing His Will and not your own.*

*Later on I shall send a circular to all the Sisters concerning some behavioural matters, so it is needless to mention here the points I'll be bringing forward then. I think it is useful to make one little remark here, which is that in a small congregation the Superiors shall not be called Mothers. I haven't mentioned this in Lagos because this title already existed, but in Elmina where it isn't used yet don't adopt this name. You have seen that I don't give it to anyone, I don't know if later, the Superior of the whole Congregation will have this title.»<sup>26</sup>*

*"I count on **union and good spirit** in the widest sense... From afar and anear, let us close our ranks through **union and the spirit of God**; The zizanie is a bad plant that undermines all good in us and in the souls entrusted to our care. "<sup>27</sup>*

*"I am resolved to maintain the **spirit of union and of family** which I have always endeavored to inspire, and all those who arrive to you will always be your sisters. "*

*« I think you have not quite understood that you yourself must use the trade union of **gentleness and condescension** at first so as to build up from the beginning **community spirit and trust**. This is the cause of all the trouble.... It is not without a solution and this depends on how you will deal with it and heal the wounds for once and for all. Accept with your heart those who arrive: the heart wins the heart. I do not have to elaborate any more on that. For me I pray the divine heart of Jesus unite us all in His Holy charity, and make us **all one heart and in soul** for the greater glory of God. »<sup>28</sup>*

*« When you are all in Agoue see that there is regularity and good order; that the spirit of **charity, kindness, condescension** is established, grows and strengthens among the Sisters .... Obtain all that from your Sisters through a great spirit of charity which however, must be devoid of weakness.....»<sup>29</sup>*

*« Tell the Sisters the corner stone of the religious life and consequently the apostolate is true submission to authority and perfect charity among you in community. I am not just talking about regularity and a spirit of union with God, because we all know we can do nothing of ourselves, but we need God with us to ensure success »<sup>30</sup>*

*« Whatever tasks assigned to you, do them in a spirit of faith and for God alone. All missionary works are one unit and each one participates in this unit in whatever capacity or in wherever she/he is assigned. I have just visited our seminary in Egypt and I also visited the other nine houses. A Sister who works in the kitchen was telling me, with good reason: 'as for me, I feed everybody and I also share in whatever they are doing, because we are one community and if people are not fed they cannot do their work, nor gain any merits.' She is perfectly right »<sup>31</sup>*

**From this family spirit, other practical points also flow:**

- **Reception of young Sisters on mission ;**

*« ... It is necessary when they arrive on mission that they are received and treated with kindness, for themselves and those caring for them. The situation here is not that easy, faced as we are with contradictions and attacks. Before God each one is responsible for their actions and words and heavenly blessings will be with those who work without condemning others who are doing their best with the material at their disposal.. »<sup>32</sup>*

- **The reception given to the first Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles when they joined the former Sisters of Couzon**



« ... in general the new Sisters are received in an unsatisfactory way. Only some of the last arrivals were received without adverse criticism. You speak to me of Sr. Ange who has suffered from this; I know this and in matters where she is very efficient she has been disparaged. It is alleged that she cannot make a button hole whereas here she was most efficient at this work. She may have used a different method but her button holes here were very well made. I am really very unhappy with the lack of Christian charity with which these young Sisters are received. »<sup>33</sup>

- **Respect for Authority;**

« the superior of all the Sisters in the mission who participates in the authority of God, she must be respected, obeyed, honoured in a spirit of faith which is required of all religious. Today it is Mother Veronique, tomorrow it could be someone else, but faith will always recognise in her the authority of God, and will treat her like God himself. Following these principles all should be easy in religious life despite our natural inclinations. And if such principles are lacking obedience and respect towards the mission superior will not happen. What I have just said about the superior of the mission equally applies in proportion to the Superior of each house..»<sup>34</sup>

« Generosity in His service is a real sign of those who love Him. He will not judge us on felt fervour but on our fidelity in doing His holy will. You are correct in believing that obedience to Superiors is the best sign of the love of Jesus Christ and I would ask you to commit yourself to losing everything rather than lose obedience and respect. I will always remember the Christian strength of your good Mother and again I recommend you to walk more and more in the footsteps of that strong woman.»<sup>35</sup>

- **Living Internationally** : in 10 years of existence, six nationalities were present in the Institute and fourteen after 20 years.... from three continents, one of which was a Latin American, born in Cordoba in Argentina.

«The new Sisters are doing well, their numbers increasing gradually and a good spirit among them also. Their training would move forward a bit faster if I were more present and available, or if we had a suitable novice mistress in place. However I believe all are well motivated. We have 4 Irish, two Irish [sic] and a German: You will soon see that we are able to have an English teacher in each residence »<sup>36</sup>

« Tell him... that the Fr. Superior is very much against any partisan spirit in the Congregation; that he wants one heart and only one soul, and never a clique of nationality. We have to work together, with perfect accord, for the common goal which is the salvation of souls, the Fr. Superior suppresses any spirit capable of disturbing this good spirit. »<sup>37</sup>

From 1900-1907, many important events took place in SMA and OLA :

In 1898, Sr Augustin (Marie Louise Planque), was appointed the first Superior General, by Fr. Planque;

On August 23rd 1900 : The Constitutions of the SMA Fathers was approved by decree

On June 17th 1904 : The Constitutions of the OLA Sisters were approved by decree.

In 1901, the arrival of Bishop Paul Pellet who became the Assistant General of Fr. Planque.

Until the beginning of the century, the Fathers and Sisters formed **a single family**, that of the "African Missions". All of them are **close to each other in spirit, united fraternally** in the same life which is known to be hard but exhilarating enough to ensure they strive to maintain it. It has been so since the foundation of Our Lady of the Apostles.

In 1881, Father Planque does not see it any other way and the circular he sends to the communities of Sisters of Benin sheds light on his thoughts. « *The superior in residence is your first superior. The mission superior is invested with authority over all the sisters and missionaries and according to the right and duty of his office he has legitimate control over every move and direction. In the current state of affairs, the superior general of the society is the first ecclesiastic superior of whatever mission you are in, but remember his authority is delegated to the mission superior who must be respected and obeyed just as the superior of the society, they work in unison, except where there are grounds to do otherwise.*»<sup>38</sup>

But if the Superior of the Mission is responsible for all that concerns the works, he cannot be responsible for everything that concerns the communities. Father Planque quickly understood that it was necessary to fix a limit and to give the rule of « *each in their own home* »

He wrote to Fr. Dorgère : «*I call upon you to only have with the Sisters the relations strictly necessitated by the ecclesiastical ministry. You do not have to take care neither of them, nor their houses nor their classes; You are in no way their Superior.*»<sup>39</sup>

To Sr Marie Véronique, he wrote :

« *With regard to the change of residence of the Sisters, it is not for the missionary priests to decide that, but for the Sisters' Superior - such as you now are - for the whole Vicariate. .... It is important to establish that changing a Sister's residence is not in the power of the priest- Superior but of the Sisters'* »<sup>40</sup>

and

« *In general the missionary should not meddle in the interior affairs of Sisters house..* »<sup>41</sup>

He also wrote to Bishop Pellet,

« *In the circular to the Fathers and Sisters, it will be necessary to ensure that the missionary intervenes much less in the affairs of the Sisters. I would gladly say: the less the missionary meddles in the affairs of the Sisters, the better it will be* »<sup>42</sup>.

And Bishop Pellet, as Vicar General, will write to the Visitor for Niger :

*« I understand that Fathers and Sisters consult and agree for common action. But this can easily be done with each one staying in their own house. The Superiors of the Fathers are not Superiors to the Sisters. »<sup>43</sup>*

It will take several years for this separation to be effective because the problems are many: money, goods, ... but it will be done, which will not prevent the spirit of collaboration, solidarity, sharing between SMA and OLA in many countries of mission.

Our founders were men of faith and full of audacity, not retreating in front of all sorts of difficulties, even the succession of deaths of Fathers and Sisters ... striving to replace them on mission lands. And as Sr Claude Marie wrote : *« In the Church of the 19th Century, it was not only a happy coincidence that brought Brésillac and Planque together ; a Divinely inspired meeting which was to bring forth rich fruit in abundance ; it was a new sign that the Kingdom of God was spreading. »<sup>44</sup>*

I shall end with this sentence written by Father Planque to Father Verdelet, which sums up these first years of foundation and which already turns us towards the future, the one we are living today.

*« We sow in sadness but we will reap in joy. The foundations of a building are hidden in the earth but they nevertheless support the construction. Our Venerable Founder often said: we, the first comers of the Society, will suffer much in patience; But after us others will come who will make the building grow. »<sup>45</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> **The Faith and Fortitude of an Apostle** – Sr Claude Marie Echallier, OLA– p. 47-49

<sup>2</sup> **The Faith and Fortitude of an Apostle** – Sr Claude Marie Echallier, OLA – p. 48-49

<sup>3</sup> **Letter from Bishop de Brésillac to Cardinal Barnabo** – 13/12/1856

<sup>4</sup> **Fundamental Articles**

<sup>5</sup> **Letter to Augustine Planque** – 28 December 1856.

<sup>6</sup> Going forward in the joy of our vocation – **Retreat preached by Fr. Renzo Mandirola in 2009.**

<sup>7</sup> **Letter to Fr. Planque** – 28 December 1856

<sup>8</sup> **Letter to Fr. Planque** – 29 June 1857.

- <sup>9</sup> **Letter to Fr. Planque** – 29 June 1857
- <sup>10</sup> **Letter to Augustine Planque** – Saint Briec, 13 July 1857.
- <sup>11</sup> **Fundamental Articles** which would be the base for the regulations of the African Missions – 1858.
- <sup>12</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Cardinal Barnabo** – Propaganda Fide – 17 March 1860
- <sup>13</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to his confrères** – 18 December 1861
- <sup>14</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to his confrères** – 19 March 1862
- <sup>15</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to M. Papetard** – 17 February 1862
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- <sup>16</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Ft. L'Anthoën** – 25 July 1896
- <sup>17</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to M. Borghero** – 17 February 1862
- <sup>18</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Mr Courdioux** – 17 February 1862
- <sup>19</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Mr Cloud** – 20 May 1872
- <sup>20</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to M. Courdioux** – 20/05/1872
- <sup>21</sup> **Journal** – October 1856
- <sup>22</sup> **Letter from Bishop de Marion-Brésillac to Fr. Planque**
- <sup>23</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Fr. Verdelet** – 20 February 1867
- <sup>24</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Fr. Durieux** – 28 June 1876
- <sup>25</sup> **Lettre to a Dominican Sister** – 27 October 1876
- <sup>26</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Claire** – 2 January 1884
- <sup>27</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Fr. Mercier** – 15 April 1877
- <sup>28</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Marie Véronique** – 5 February 1879
- <sup>29</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Raphaël** – 3 August 1892
- <sup>30</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Florence** – 11 January 1899
- <sup>31</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Louise** – 23 April 1894
- <sup>32</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr M. Joseph** – 27 November 1878

- <sup>33</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Raphaël** – 16 April 1884
- <sup>34</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to the Sisters of Bénin** – 21 December 1881
- <sup>35</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Maxime** – 12 August 1889
- <sup>36</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Joseph** – 13 March 1878
- <sup>37</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Sr Raphaël** – 3 July 1890
- <sup>38</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to the Sisters of Bénin** – 21 December 1881
- <sup>39</sup> **Letter from Fr Planque to Fr. Dorgère** – 29 October 1884
- <sup>40</sup> **Letter from Fr Planque to Sr Marie Véronique** – 30 October 1895
- <sup>41</sup> **Letter to Sr Marie Véronique** – 19 August 1896
- <sup>42</sup> **Letter to Bishop Pellet** – 26 November 1896
- <sup>43</sup> **Letter from Bishop Pellet to Fr. Hummel** – 9 December 1903
- <sup>44</sup> Sr Claude-Marie Echallier – **The Fortitude and Faith of an Apostle** – p. 49
- <sup>45</sup> **Letter from Fr. Planque to Fr. Verdelet** – 20 April 1867