

On Marcellin Champagnat footsteps

Marlhes and Le Rosey

Marlhes

Marlhes is the parish and native commune of Marcellin Champagnat. It is located approximately 25 kms away from St Etienne, on the borders of Forez and Velay, on a 1000 metre plateau.



At the time of Marcellin Champagnat, it counted 2700 people and it depended on the Diocese of Puy. In 1802, it depended on the Diocese of Lyon. Currently, it belongs to the Diocese of St Etienne.

Le Rosey

Le Rosey, an hamlet in the commune of Marlhes, 1 km away from the village where was born Marcellin Champagnat on the 20th May 1789. He spent all his childhood and he received his vocation as a priest there. Vocation that he accepted and lived with intensity and faithfulness.

At the time of Marcellin Champagnat, there were only 15 people in the hamlet.

A little lower, along the little stream which flows towards Marlhes, Jean Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin Champagnat's father owned a little wind mill.

The Chapelle at Le Rosey



The Chapel at the Rosey was inaugurated in the honor of Marcellin Champagnat, the founder of the Marist Brothers. It is the work of the architect Moreau who used the granite of the region and the knowledge of Marlies' masons.

M. Longeon from St Etienne, is the sculptor of the statue which is situated above the porch. The bell which rings « angelus », carries the inscription : « Marie 1958 ».

The blessing of the building was given by Mgr. Dupuy, auxiliary bishop of Lyon, in the presence of Canon Brunon, who became the bishop of Tulle.

Marcellin Champagnat was born in an adjoining farm. You can visit his bedroom and the Chapel every day.

Marcellin Champagnat bedroom

In an inventory carried out in 1804, at the death of Marcellin's father, it is mentioned that there was a fir wood kneading bowl on the ground floor (which can be seen today). The oven was also used to warm up Marcellin's bedroom, situated just above. There was a wardrobe which was made by Marcellin Champagnat.



In this place, Marcellin seminarist was gathering children & adults from the parish church in order to explain the catechese during their holidays.

One of the children to whom Marcellin catechism received the missionary vocation when he explained that some of the children did not know God.

This child became Mgr Epalle, Marist missionay bishop in Oceany. He died as a martyr in the Salomon islands.

La Valla en Gier

The red cross

300 metres away at the north of the village, we see a red cross erected in 1927. At that specific spot, Marcellin Champagnat arrived at La Valla en Gier on the 12th of August 1816 ,he knelt at the sight of the village bell tower to entrust his apostolat to God.

The church

The illustration below, shows the church of the village at the time of Marcellin Champagnat.

Surrounded by a cemetry, it was located in front of the current city hall.



The current church built in 1849, reminds us that Marcellin Champagnat was sent as a diocesan priest to a specific population.

It is by serving the population that his vocation got strenghtened .

The Stained glass windows of the choir (1987) replace the old ones and commemorate the fundation of both religious congregations in the parish church (The Marist brothers and the Sisters of the Saint Childhood) as well as the martyre of Gaumont priest, guillotined during the revolution.

The cradle



It is at the location of Notre Dame des Victoires that Champagnat bought a hovel, on the 02nd of January 1817 and lodged the first two Brothers. The « House Bonner » has been completely renovated in 2013.

Today it is called « House Champagnat ». We can visit his bedroom and witness his history through a slideshow.

Outside, features a statue a Marcellin Champagnat welcoming Gabriel Rivat in 1818.

He was from Maisonnettes hamlet. He will become Brother Francois and will be the next successor at the head of the institute.

The Chapel of Leytra

The Chapel of Leytra, was erected at the end of the XVth century, it was a site where Marcellin Champagnat liked to go and meditate to entrust his work to Marie and ask for vocations.

His prayers were often granted. He led the parishioners to celebrate the mass and honor Marie.



Maisonnettes



Maisonnettes is one of the 62 hamlets which existed at the time of Champagnat's father.

In this hamlet, is located the house of Rivat family, where was born Brother Francois, who was the first successor of Marcellin Champagnat.

This house reminds us the rustic setting of peasant life at the time of Marcellin Champagnat. It also evokes the importance of the family life in the growth of a young person.

Little Gabriel Rivat's mother was a courageous & pious christian who devoted her child to Marie. When he was 10 years old, she entrusted the little Gabriel to Marcellin in his growing community.

This house is also very important for the marist community as it was the reliquary of the remains of Marcellin Champagnat for a while. After 1903, when the religious congregations were dissolved, the remains of Marcellin Champagnat were walled up in a bedroom of Rivat's house until 1920.

This house is a place where we like to spend time to share on the testimony of Brother Francois' life, to reflect on the importance of the family in the education, respect of children's rights. Every year, the parishers like to celebrate the Eucharist of Holy Friday in the renovated barn.

Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage

The way that Marcellin Champagnat taught catechism appealed to adults & children who were rushing around him. He was involved himself body and soul in all the missions, specially the administration of the sacraments, requiring him to be on the roads day and night, in summer and winter.

Very quickly, the house at La valla became too small. In 1824, Marcellin Champagnat bought some land at the exit of St Chamond. Helped by his little Brothers, always more numerous, he started to built a new house to shelter the community. It was a place where the Brothers lived, met each other.

Marcellin Champagnat died on the 18th of May 1840. Since that time, NDH did not stop to develop. The last step of building works took place from 2008 to 2010.



Since then, it is possible to visit NDH. The guided visit (upon reservation) last around 1h30. It starts generally in the parc in order to locate the Hermitage in its environment, to be aware of the first buildings built and the different progress of the renovations.

The visit offers to discover the museum, Marcellin Champagnat's bedroom and office, the room of the first community with its frescoes. it is also possible to visit the Chapel.

Created by Marcellin Champagnat when he arrived, it has been renovated in 1989. Today it houses three reliquaries. That of Marcellin Champagnat, that of Brother François Rivat (the first successor of Champagnat) and that of Saint Priscillian (martyr of the 4th century).