

19. Last Words of the Foundress

After many trying years, Mother St Joseph tendered her resignation as superior general of the Marist Sisters. The last years of her life were spent at Jarnosse, a village not far from where she had grown up. There she led a small group of sisters in bringing about a transformation in the lives of the villagers, "in bringing a little warmth to our famished people" - as a visitor to the area put it (RMJ 223: 2). She was weighed down, however, by financial worries, incurred through the building of a school. Illness set in after a long walk in the snow to borrow money. When the foundress knew she was dying, she spoke at length with her niece, Thérèse Millot (Sr Thérèse de Jésus), who was living in the same community at Jarnosse. Thérèse reported these words to Sr Jean Chrysostome.

**"Look child, she is your mother.
Simplicity, the very greatest simplicity
should be your only ornament....
A Marist sister's sole desire should be
to imitate the little family at Nazareth....
Always be a bond of union between your sisters
so that all may have
but one heart and one soul...."**

Recollections of Mother St Joseph
Doc. 108
Reported by Thérèse Millot
to Sr. Jean Chrysostome

- These words of the dying foundress show us what mattered most to her:
1. the place of the person of Mary in our lives,
 2. the virtue which is the hallmark of Marists, and
 3. our communion with one another.

