

## INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

TOPIC: A Friendship Begins: Amiens, Bettencourt 1794-1803

Beginnings of Congregation & Initial Expansion 1804-1806

### Dates & Events:

- October, 1794 – Julie **arrives at Hôtel Blin**, later that month **meets Françoise** and a friendship begins
- **Père Thomas** gives informal community a little rule
- 1<sup>st</sup> use of “**Mère Julie**”
- July 1795-March 1797 Françoise at Bourdon and Gézaincourt taking care of father; **1<sup>st</sup> letters exchanged**
- 1795: Françoise **renounces property** of Gézaincourt in favor of her brother; gives equivalent in other property to her sister
- 1795: Julie suffers enteric fever (another name for typhoid) and malaria
- 1797 – Françoise makes **10 day retreat** and decides to devote herself and her fortune to Julie’s direction – after that is when Julie tells Françoise fates are intertwined
- June 16, 1799 – Père Thomas, Françoise, Julie and Félicité **flee to Bettencourt**; shortly after Françoise contracts **smallpox**
- 1799-1803 – Bettencourt
- 1801 – **Père Varin** visits Bettencourt, encourages Julie to follow vision, stresses need for work of education
- 1803 – return to Amien and opening of **1<sup>st</sup> house**
- 1803: August 5<sup>th</sup> move from **Rue du Puits-à-Brindil to Rue Neuve** (Françoise helps finance new house)
- 1804: February 2 – **foundation of SND**, vow of chastity made or renewed, 3 receive medal of Our Lady of Guadalupe, pledge to educate poor girls; Père Varin gives them an experimental rule
- 1804: February 20 – **1<sup>st</sup> postulants** received
- 1804: April 5 - Julie signs the petition to apply for **approbation** - without approbation a school cannot be opened
- 1804: April 20-May 27 – great **Mission of Amiens**
- 1804: June 1 – **cure** of Julie on 5<sup>th</sup> day of novena to Sacred Heart
- 1804: June 15-August 10, Julie and Victoire Leleu aid in missions at **St-Valery & Abbeville**
- 1804: May - Bishop Charles Francois Joseph Pisani - Baron de la Gaude, confirmed **Bishop of Namur**
- 1804: December 17 - Bishop Jean François Demandolx – arrives to replace Bishop Villaret as **Bishop of Amiens**
- 1805: July 2, 1805 – Père Varin gives a **2<sup>nd</sup> experimental rule**; **Bishop Demandolx** approves it
- 1805: September – **Père Thomas** departs to do mission work elsewhere in France, Père Varin appoints **M. de Sambucy** as confessor to the community
- 1805: October 15 – Julie, Françoise, Victoire Leleu and Justine Garson **take vows** (final for Julie & Françoise) **and new names**
- 1805: October 16 – Julie elected **mother general**
- 1805: late in the year Père Varin leaves Amiens for Paris and appoints **Père LeBlanc** to serve as ecclesiastical superior of the Sisters
- 1806: February 2 – **vision** of Sisters taking light of the gospel throughout the world
- 1806: June 19 – provisional approbation of community from **Napoleon**
- 1806: June - **Père LeBlanc** takes Julie to Flanders to meet **Bishop of Ghent**

- 1806: first postulants from **Flanders** accepted
- 1806: August – move to larger quarters of **Faubourg-Noyon**; Madame de Franssu is received as a paying guest; large enough to start a school! Postulant sent out with bell...
- 1806: December 17 – foundation at **St Nicolas** in Flanders; **habit 1<sup>st</sup> worn**
- 1806: Julie receives requests for houses in dioceses of **Ghent, Namur** and request to accept sisters and school in **Bordeaux**

### **Impact of War/Political Unrest:**

- Little Reign of Terror
- Wars occupy attention of government and army
- Takes over 2 years to open a school because they couldn't unless they had approbation from Napoleon
- Couldn't expand without approbation – it was required to present to each governmental jurisdiction when a new house was being established
- Bishop de Villaret is moved by Napoleon – Napoleon is putting people in place to run the church the way he wants (he thinks)
- Approbation required a certain number of people (30)
- Needed larger space for school
- Great uncertainty about future of religious life: Napoleon's plan to totally do away with contemplative orders and make 2 large orders: one for teaching and one for nursing
- They had just been through the revolution and so many orders had been destroyed/decimated – would this one last? Also, 1<sup>st</sup> little group fell apart
- Fathers of the Faith were too successful in mission – new government is afraid of their influence with the people – kicked out of Amiens

### **Relationship with Hierarchy & Clergy:**

- Up through this period it is positive. Only after M. de Sambucy is appointed confessor to we begin to see signs of trouble ahead. Up to this point priests, bishops are in collaborative relationship with Julie and Françoise and vice-versa.
- It strikes me how the priests stayed with us at rue Neuve during the great mission at Amiens

### **Primitive Spirit:**

- Bishop de Villaret gave permission for chapel at very 1<sup>st</sup> house in Amiens and that began tradition of chapels in our houses
- Already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> experimental rule is spelled out no choir/lay sisters; purpose is to educate poor girls, and sense of superior connecting secondary houses – mother general inferred but not clearly defined
- Practice of taking a new name
- Three clear vows in October 1805 – final vows – initial formation very short (2 years)
- Habit worn in Flanders – in Amiens they simply dye things violet and wear ugly black cloaks
- Catechetical work

### **Spirituality underpinning everything:**

- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
- Jesuit influence on retreat, daily prayer schedule, meditation comes through the Fathers of the Faith
- The Sacred Heart continues to play very important role in spirituality

- Devotion to St. Joseph and Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Role of the Trinity in early vow formulas

### What touched your heart?

- Grief of Madame Baudoin – need to surround herself with spiritual comfort (Julie and Père Thomas )
- Time in Bettencourt was time for Julie and Françoise to begin to articulate what they would do and how they would do it
- Better mistakes than paralysis – whole new understanding of risk-taking; one tiny step at a time in total darkness – Julie and Françoise have a firm grip on each other's hand, but the other hands they hold in collaboration can be yanked away at any time. 1<sup>st</sup> Catherine is lost, then Bishop de Villaret, then Père Thomas, then Père Varin, then ....
- Another image is a spiral or dance because some are partners for a while, called elsewhere, then back again later in the story
- How loved Julie was by her early Sisters (how Enfantin treated her hurt them)
- Julie's relationships with families –the Goethals, the Vercruysee, Steenhaut families; it's beautiful.

### New insights?

- Deep, collaborative relationship with Fathers of the Faith
- The interconnectedness of relationships between Bishops and priests – did all the non-juring ones know each other???
- Bishop Demandolx – the work he needed to rebuild unity among the secular clergy. He had two needs: get his people evangelized, caught up on the sacraments, educated and unite a very divided clergy. His focus was not on a pesky woman wanting to start a religious order. The SND were simply a means to an end.
- The only example of religious life to this point was monasticism and diocesan orders who were under the authority of the bishop. That was the model. The only model for something being under authority of the pope were the Jesuits and they were outlawed in France at the time. Julie and Françoise were breaking new ground. Fathers Varin and Thomas saw the vision and helped as best they could.
- Difficulty the original application for approbation will cause – the rule is experimental to us, but it is on paper. That may be part of Bishop Demandolx soon to be growing sense of urgency to finalize a rule. He can be held accountable by the government if we are not following what has been set down in the approbation.

### Places:

- **Hôtel Blin**, Amiens: belongs to **Viscount Blin de Bourdon** – brother of Françoise, where Julie and Françoise meet, 1<sup>st</sup> informal community
- **Bettencourt**: estate belonging to the Doria family. **Josephine Doria** makes it available to Julie, Françoise, Félicité and Père Thomas when the “Little Terror” breaks out
- **Rue du Puits-à-Brindil**: 1st house in Amiens 1803
- **Rue Neuve**: 2nd house in Amiens, moved in August 1803
- **St-Valery-sur-Somme & Abbeville**: sites of great missions in summer 1804
- **Faubourg-Noyon**: 3rd house in Amiens, moved to in between August & November trips to Flanders, owned by Bishop, rent was very high & it needed repairs

- **Faubourg-Noyon:** street was childhood home of **Madame de Franssu** and location of college run by **Fathers of the Faith** until it was moved to Montdidier
- **St-Nicolas:** 1st secondary house, 1st SND house in Ghent diocese, was School of St Joseph known as des Berkenboom, we took over from Sisters of St Philip Neri, city promises to repair building, opened Dec. 1806



#### People & Relationships between them:

- **Marie-Rose Julie Billiart**
- **Félicité Dégouy Thérasse:** – **Julie's niece** who continues to take care of her until they return from **Bettencourt**. She marries at that time.
- **Marie-Louise Françoise Blin de Bourdon** (Mother St Joseph)
- **Viscount Louis-Marie-César Blin de Bourdon:** owner of **Hôtel Blin**, brother of **Françoise**; **negative reactions to how she lives poverty**
- **Viscountess Elizabeth Blin de Bourdon:** wife of Louis-Cesar, sister-in-law of **Françoise** (born Elisabeth Pingre de Fieffes)

- **Madame Baudoin:** rents space for herself, **her daughter, Julie, Félicité and Père Thomas** at **Hôtel Blin**
- **Lise Baudoin:** youngest daughter of **Madame Baudoin**; dies young
- **Josephine Doria:** friend of **Lise Baudoin**, becomes a Sister of the Visitation in Paris
- **Gabrielle Doria:** friend of **Lise Baudoin**, married Count de Cornulier and dies w/in 3 years
- **Jeanne du Fos de Méry:** friend of **Lise Baudoin**; marries the Marquis Ignatius de Ferretti of the family of Pius IX
- **Aglaé du Fos de Méry:** friend of **Lise Baudoin**; never marries
- **Père Antoine Thomas:** Doctor of the Sorbonne, non-juring priest, friend of **Madame Baudoin**, becomes Chaplain to **Julie, Françoise and little community** that gathers, long-time advisor to Julie and Françoise, later a **Father of the Faith**
- **Bishop of Saint-Papoul (Mgr. Simon de Maillé):** administers confirmation in Amiens Aug. 6, 1797, also confirms people in **Julie's room** at Hôtel Blin.
- **Isidore Nicholas Daveluy:** confirmed at **Julie's bedside** in 1797
- **Père Joseph Varin:** leader of Fathers of the Faith, encourages **Julie** to begin religious congregation for the education of young girls; 1<sup>st</sup> ecclesiastical superior of the Sisters of Notre Dame
- **Fathers of the Faith:** Jesuits in disguise
- **Abbé de LaMarche:** friend we've already seen who visits Julie and friends at **Bettencourt**
- **Bishop de Villaret:** **Bishop of Amiens** when community founded; visits **Julie** at **Bettencourt**
- **Constance Blondel:** relation of **Père Thomas** who takes Félicité's place as caretaker of **Julie** in 1803
- **Abbé Saunier:** parish priest at **Bettencourt** 1832-1860, gives testimony to work of Julie & Françoise
- **Carmelites in Amiens:** asked to pray for women to join **Julie & Françoise**
- **Catherine Duchâtel:** 1<sup>st</sup> to join Julie & Françoise, 3<sup>rd</sup> to make vow of chastity on 2/2/1804 and receive medal, becomes ill shortly after and dies
- **Père Lambert:** part of team for 1804 Mission at **Amiens**, stays at **Rue Neuve**
- **Victoire Leleu: Sœur Anastasie,** enters 1804, takes vows & new name October 15, 1805, Julie tells her what she saw at Compiègne, will be mistress of novices at Amiens
- **Justine Garson:** enters 1804, **Sœur St-Jean**, will be superior **St-Nicolas**, takes vows & new name October 15, 1805
- **Firmin Queste:** joins community at **Rue Neuve** to prepare for 1<sup>st</sup> Communion 2/1804
- **Louise Lesage:** taught by **Julie at cathedral in Amiens**, became Carmelite Mother Marie-Therese, testified to sanctity of Julie in 1882
- **Père Louis Enfantin: Father of the Faith,** Julie's spiritual director, asks her to start novena that leads to cure, stays at **Rue Neuve** during 1804 mission; has Julie take her meals kneeling in the refectory; helps with formation/education of SND
- **Monseigneur Charles Francis David d'Aviau-du-Bois-de-Sanzay: Bishop of Bordeaux** when Julie is asked to bring **Mother Vincent's** sisters into SND; secretly prepared priests for ordination during the revolution - including **Père Enfantin**
- **Bishop Charles Francois Joseph Pisani, Baron de la Gaude:** confirmed as **Bishop of Namur** in May 28, 1804
- **Bishop Jean François Demandolx:** assigned as **Bishop of Amiens**, arrived Dec. 17, 1804; challenge of reuniting secular clergy; brain tumor; approves 2<sup>nd</sup> experimental rule in 1805; relationship with **M. de Sambucy**, prejudice against **Julie**
- **Josephine Evard:** entered 1805, **Sœur Xavier**, founding stone St Nicholas

- **Angélique Bicheron**: entered 1805, **Sœur Josephine, Montdidier** founding stone, niece of Père Bicheron
- **Adelaide Pelletier**: entered in 1805, postulant who rang bell announcing free school for little girls, **Sœur Bernadine**, niece of Père Bicheron
- **Scholastica Pelletier** - **Sœur Scholastica**, niece of Père Bicheron
- **Père Antoine-Joseph Bicheron**: uncle 3 SNDs; **Father of the Faith**
- **Geneviève Gosselin**: enters in March 1804, becomes **Sœur Geneviève**
- **Elizabeth Michel**: entered 1805, **Sœur Gonzaga**
- **Catherine Daullée**: entered 1805, **Sœur Catherine**, Superior **Montdidier**,
- **Elizabeth-Victoire Boutrainghan**: entered 1805; given the name **Sœur Thérèse**, later renamed **Sœur Victoire**
- **Père LeBlanc**: superior of **Fathers of Faith** in Amiens, appointed by **Père Varin** to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> ecclesiastical superior of SND in late 1805
- Père Louis-Etienne de Sambucy de Saint-Estève - appointed confessor of the SND community in late 1805
- **Napoleon Bonaparte**: signs provisional approbation June 19, 1806
- **Msgr. Fallot de Beaumont: Bishop of Ghent**; asks Julie to consider another school in **Bordeaux** and accepting Sisters from community there
- **Theresia Louvers**: 1st Flemish postulant - arrives in Amiens 8/29/1806, Julie takes her back to Flanders in Nov 1806
- **Marie Steenhaut**: 2<sup>nd</sup> Flemish postulant, becomes **Sœur Marie**, founding stone St Nicolas
- **Franciska Steenhaut**: becomes **Sœur Gertrude** (Ciska)
- **Goethals Family**: family of **Mère Ignace**, live in Courtrai, Julie first visits in 1806
- **Vercruysee Family**: Julie visits in 1806
- **Père Bruno Vercruysee**: People of Courtrai call Julie "**walking love of God**"
- **Madame Jeanne de Franssu**: school friend of **Françoise**, widow, who lives w/community at Fauborg-Noyon and helps with expenses,