

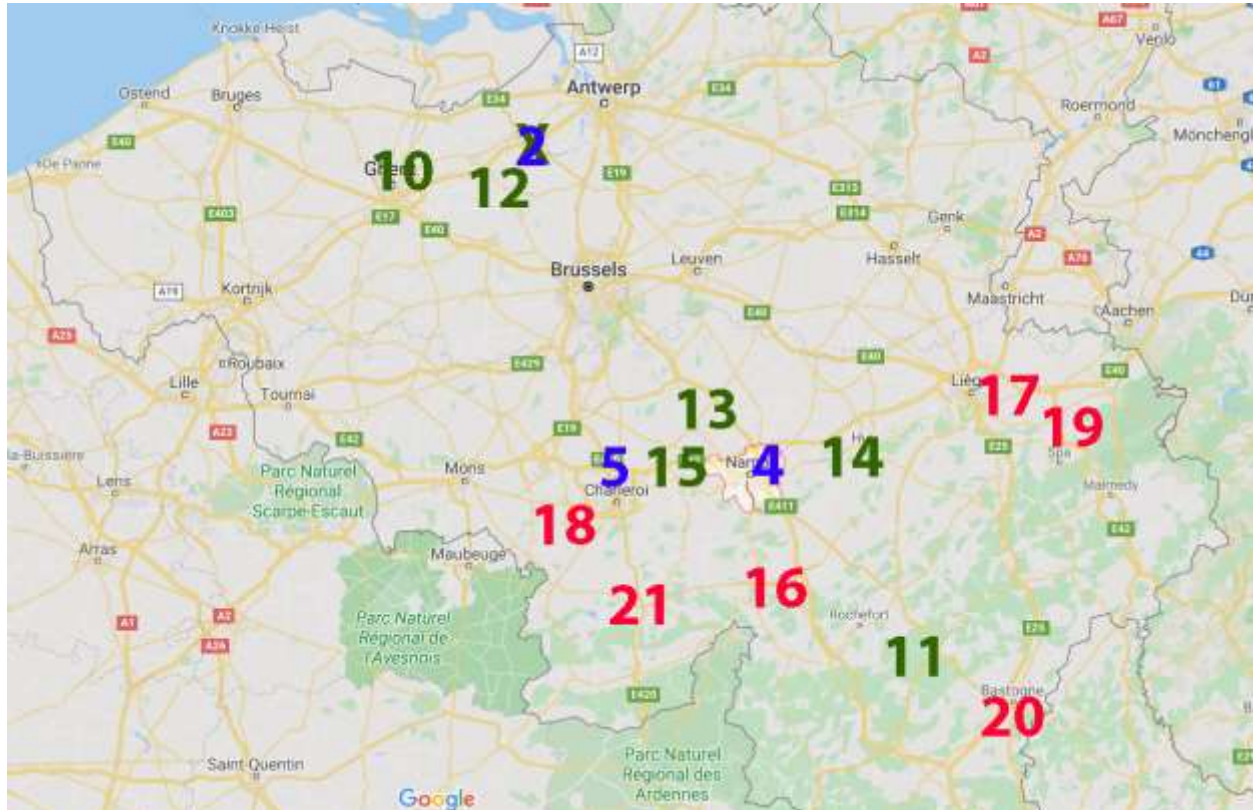
## INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

### TOPIC: Mother St. Joseph: Expansion & the Great Trial of 1835

#### Places:

18 year period (1817-1835) where only 1 new house opened: Verviers

Foundations in existence February 9, 1838:



4. Namur 1807

5. Jumet 1808

10. Ghent 1809

11. St-Hubert 1809

12. Zèle 1811

13. Gembloux 1813

14. Andenne 1813

15. Fleurus 1814

16. Dinant 1816

17. Liège 1816

18. Thuin 1817

19. Verviers 1827

20. Bastogne 1836

21. Philippeville 1837

Founded from Amiens

Founded by 1816

Founded between  
1816-1838

#### People & Relationships between them:

- Sœur Marie-Thérèse: superior at Namur, assistant to Mother St. Joseph
- Fr. Minsart – spiritual director, dies in May of 1836
- Carmelite community: we help welcome 1 to Namur in 1837
- Sœur Ignace: superior of Jumet (1831), superior at Namur & assistant to Mother St. Joseph (1835)

- Sœur Constantine: made mistress of boarders at Jumet when Ignace becomes superior; becomes superior at Jumet in late 1835
- Sœur Francis Xavier – seen as a delusional visionary and with good reason
- Sœur Marie Xavier –is Francis Xavier’s blood sister
- Sœur Borgia – is 30 years old in 1833. She was educated at the boarding school in Namur, and is serving as headmistress of the boarding school in 1833.
- M. Nicolas Dehesselles – ordained in Namur 1812, vicar to Abbé Neujean at Liège, consecrated Bishop of Namur Laetare Sunday 1836, presides at 1836 chapter- proposed modification to constitutions that Superior General serves for life



### **Dates & Events:**

- 1826: elected for 2<sup>nd</sup> 10 year term as Mother General
- 1833: appoints Sister Borgia sub-assistant due to Sœur Marie-Thérèse's illness
- Orders Sœur Borgia to stay out of Sœur Francis Xavier's spiritual direction
- 1835: increasing weakness obliges Mother St. Joseph to lean more and more on counsellors
- Mother St. Joseph investigates "immoral" behavior of children in middle school and finds nothing wrong, Sœur Borgia insists on conducting 2nd investigation and finds lots wrong

- Mother St. Joseph takes matter to Bishop Barrett and The Externat/Middle School is closed for reorganization
- 1835: April – 1/3 of students in boarding school dismissed 1 by 1
- Rumors are spread (by parents and fueled by those following Sœur Borgia) that Mother St. Joseph is suffering from a softening of the brain
- Mother St. Joseph goes against counsellors and halts expulsions from Boarding School after M. Poncelet & M. Collard insist she investigate personally
- Difference of opinion on the council becomes known and community divides
- 1835: Summer – atmosphere at mother house very tense; Sisters returning to local communities communicate concerns to local superiors who write to Mother St. Joseph, letters intercepted by Sœur Borgia, visits cancelled
- 1835: June 13 – Mother St. Joseph invites all houses to make novena to the Sacred Heart
- 1835: June 24 – Sœur Ignace arrives at Namur from Jumet
- After long conference with Mother St. Joseph and Marie-Thérèse at Motherhouse, Ignace is appointed Superior
- Ignace's role in rebuilding Namur schools and reputation of community after Great Trial of 1835
- 1836: Mother St. Joseph re-elected superior General, chapter unanimously votes to make superior general role for life
- 1838: January – takes to her bed
- 1838: February 2 – bishop gives her the last sacraments - she renews her vows; speaks to Sisters for last time
- 1838: February 9 – Mother St. Joseph dies

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

- After 1830 the turmoil is very much internal. It's almost like, once the problem with William of Orange was solved, there had to be somewhere for that energy to go.
- Difficulty because of uncertainty of where the borders of Belgium would be: would all of our houses be in the new country or not?
- Expansion becomes possible

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

- It gets rocky when Bishop Barrett is blamed for the expulsion of the boarding school students in 1835
- Bishop Dehesselles – a collaborative relationship from the beginning

#### **Primitive Spirit:**

Under attack: Francis Xavier's vision for community would have been approved by de Sambucy. Institute choir and lay

Teach only the rich  
Focus on Namur only?  
Our very mission is threatened  
Charity - words to community following Great Trial of 1835  
Unity re-established

**Spirituality underpinning everything:**

- We are the Institute marked by the Cross
- Novena to the Sacred Heart
- Institutes monthly days of recollection
- Manual of Prayer – 1831
- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

**What touched your heart?**

- Both Julie and Françoise undergo a “rejection” by the Sisters towards the end of their lives
- How hard for Françoise to have to deal with rumors of senility, relationships with people of the town and with the hierarchy damaged, having students hurt, some of the beloved poor turned away, etc.
- Her STRENGTH, and the strength of her relationships with her Sisters

**New insights?**

If we came so close to losing primitive spirit in Namur – what would need to be done to protect it as expansion went beyond borders of Belgium?