



**THE BROTHERS OF SAN GABRIEL IN THE
19TH CENTURY-GABRIEL DESHAYES**



THE BROTHERS OF ST. GABRIEL IN THE 19TH CENTURY

SLIDE 1 (Montfort and Deshayes)

The Brothers of St. Gabriel have the particularity of being linked to both St. Louis Marie de Montfort and Father Gabriel Deshayes: to Montfort because of his origins at the beginning of the 18th century; and to Gabriel Deshayes at the beginning of the 19th century (1821). The same name of St. Gabriel dates back to the 19th century. Previously, they were called Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit and, moreover, their history is merged for 120 years with that of the Company of Mary or Montfort Missionaries.

Its beginnings in the 18th century are modest and sometimes poorly known. For this reason, the shadows that enveloped them in the time in which Montfort lived gave rise, centuries later, to various interpretations of the founder of the Institution and have raised a certain number of questions that are gradually being elucidated.

SLIDE 2 (Bro. Augustine + Council of Montfortian Institutes)

The perception of Father Deshayes will vary from time to time. Under pressure from the first Superior General of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, Brother Augustine, Gabriel Deshayes will be officially called "founder" and during that time, Father de Montfort will be ignored.

It was not until the death of Brother Augustine that Montfort gradually recovered his place. **Montfort is fully recognised as a founder internally by the Institute, particularly since the General Chapter of 1888**, and this will provoke a certain amount of controversy externally, which will lead:

- to a deepening of our roots and our Montfortian charism and, in return
- to a rejection, or at least a forgetting of Deshayes' contributions.

It was not until the Second Vatican Council, and then **the historic meeting of our General Council with the Company of Mary in December 1968, that the Brothers of St. Gabriel were fully integrated into the Montfortian family**. And since then, the bonds between the three families have only been reaffirmed, thanks to the various meetings that have multiplied at all levels and on all continents, with the Fathers, the Brothers and the Daughters of Wisdom. Throughout this period of reunions, Father Gabriel Deshayes continued to be neglected.

SLIDE 3 (Dehaysian congregations)

In April 1991 the Brothers received a letter sent to all the members of the congregations linked in one way or another to Father Gabriel Deshayes: Bros. of Saint Gabriel; Company of Mary; Daughters of Wisdom; Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel; Sisters of Christian

Instruction of Saint-Gildas; Sisters of the Guardian Angel; Farming Brothers of St. Francis of Assisi, who will later join the Salesians of Don Bosco... There are more, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of St. Jacut; the Association of St. Philomena or Daughters of the Virgin, The Sisters of the Good Shepherd d'Angers, The Hospitallers of St. Joseph, of Saint-Martin De Beaupréau

Finally, this is already an indication of the prodigious apostolic dynamism that Deshayes displayed in the Church of France after the Revolution.

SLIDE 4:

Therefore, in 1991, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his death, Brother Jean Friant thought it was a good moment **to make amends for this omission and to reconcile himself with the various facets of the Brothers' history.**

Brothers Jean-Baptiste Rolandeau and Louis Bauvineau wrote a monograph by Gabriel Deshayes to be used at the June 1991 **Council of the Institute** in Brazzaville, thinking also of celebrating, in 1992, the 150th anniversary as an autonomous Institute. And in the introduction to this Council of Institute, the Superior General recalled the recommendation made by John Paul II on 5 January 1989 to the members of the new Central Administration: *"I wish you to carry out your mission with fruitfulness, being faithful to the intuitions of your founders"*.

We are going to dedicate this session to discover this priest, also a Breton, who in the first half of the 19th century was to continue the work of Montfort **and who can be considered as the re-founder of the Brothers of St. Gabriel.**

SLIDE 5

But what happened to the Brothers during the years following Montfort's death, until the appearance of Gabriel Deshayes?

The truth is that explaining the early eighteenth century is not easy. We must accept that we do not deal with certainties but, on many occasions, with hypotheses that arise from stringing together data and legal documents.

I will explain this briefly, and with your help, so that we can then focus our attention on Gabriel Deshayes, to whom the brothers owe their name and their autonomy, among many other things.

Monfort, who died on April 28th, 1716, in his will reveals how his thoughts and his heart are with the brothers who have accompanied him since 1705. His will, written on the bottom of 4 different pages, is fundamental for the brothers. Of the 50 lines of the text, 27 refer to the brothers of the community of the Holy Spirit.

SLIDE 6

Let's find out!

Excerpts from the Testament of Montfort: the Four Brothers

...] I put my poor furniture and mission books in the hands of Mr. Bishop de la Rochelle and Mr. Mulot, so that they may keep them for the use of my four brothers, united with me in

obedience and poverty - namely, Bro. Philippe de Nantes, Bro. Louis de La Rochelle and Bro. Gabriel, who is with me, as long as they persevere in renewing their vows annually, and also for the use of those that Divine Providence calls to the community of the Holy Spirit.

I leave all my Calvary statues - including the cross - to the House of the Sisters of the Incurable in Nantes. I have no money of my own. But there are 135 pounds, which belong to Nicolas de Poitiers to pay his pension when his time is over. [...]

From Montfort's will, we know that, at his death, the community was made up of 9 members: "**Mulot, Vatel, Mathurin, Jacques, Jean, Nicolas, Philippe, Louis and Gabriel**", 2 priests and 7 brothers. Of these, the last four, **Nicolas** (from Poitiers), **Philippe** (from Nantes), **Louis** (from La Rochelle) and **Gabriel** (who had remained with him until his death), had taken vows of poverty and obedience for one year. This commitment could be made on **June 9th 1715**, Pentecost Sunday, at **Notre Dame de Toute Patience in La Séguinière**.

There were three other brothers who had not taken vows: **Jacques, Jean and Mathurin**

[...] Mr. Mulot will give ten scudi to Jacques from the mission box, another ten to Jean and ten to Mathurin if they wish to withdraw and not take their vows of poverty and obedience. If there is anything else left in the box, M. Mulot, like a good father, will use it for the use of the brothers and for his own. [...]

It is not known what **Brother Jean** did. **Brother Maturino** returned for some time with his family and then answered the call of Father Mulot. In any case, there is no proof that he taught at Saint-Laurent. **Brother Jacques** taught at Saint-Laurent from 1716 to 1719. He then went to Nantes where he died in 1727.

SLIDE 7

The year 1720 marked a turning point, with the arrival in Saint-Laurent of Sister Marie-Louise de Jesus, Marie-Louise Trichet, who, in June of that year, settled in the so-called Maison-Longue, a house that two people devoted to the memory of Montfort had bought: the Marquise de Bouillé and her uncle, the Marquis de Magnanne. The following year, the same benefactors bought another house, **the Chêne-Vert** for the Brothers, as a notarial deed indicates. Fathers Mulot and Vatel came to settle in Saint Laurent with other missionaries and some Brothers.

SLIDE 8

The house was occupied since 1722, around **Father Mulot**, who was appointed Superior General at Montfort's death. That year, and for the first time, all but one of the Fathers took vows. And one of the new Brothers, **René**, did the same. **Father Mulot** was, at the same time, like his successors, **superior of the Daughters of Wisdom**. In **1723**, as the number of Sisters increased, they exchanged houses. The Fathers and Brothers took possession of the Maison-Longue, which they would leave when their new solid and monumental three-storey building, begun in 1776 and completed in **1788**, was finished, called the House of the Holy Spirit.

From this city, **Saint Laurent**, the whole Montfortian family will develop and make known the work of its Founder.

SLIDE 9

In **1728**, Father Mulot presented The Rule of the Company of Mary for the approval of the Bishops of Poitiers, La Rochelle and Luçon. **The first Rule of Life of the Congregation had been written by Montfort in 1713 and it said...**

Rule of 1713

written by Father de Montfort

"Only priests trained in seminaries are received in this Company... [...]"

Art. 2 "Priests must be called by God to carry out missions in the footsteps of the poor apostles, and not to vicariate, to govern priests, **to teach young people** or to train priests in seminaries, like many other good priests who are called by God to do these things".

Art. 4 "Lay brothers, however, are received to take care of what is temporary, but to be detached, **vigorous** and obedient, ready to do whatever they are asked to do".

SLIDE 10

Well, Father Mulot, as he did not think he had a good handwriting, asked Brother René Joseau to rewrite it. And some surprising omissions appear, knowing Father Mulot's fidelity to the Montfortian Rule.

Rule of 1728

written by Brother Rene Joseau at the request of Father Mulot

"Only priests trained in seminaries are received in this Company... [...]"

Art. 2 "Priests must be called by God to carry out missions in the footsteps of the poor apostles, and not to vicariate, to govern priests, ~~to teach young people~~ or to train priests in seminaries, like many other good priests who are called by God to do these things".

Art. 4 "Lay brothers, however, are received to take care of what is temporary, but to be detached, ~~vigorous~~ and obedient, ready to do whatever they are asked to do".

In Article 2, the clause prohibiting "**teaching youth**" in the early Rule of 1713 is deleted and in Article 4 dealing with the brothers, the word **vigorous** is deleted which applied particularly to the brothers who were responsible for manual work.

Certainly, the brothers were engaged in all kinds of temporary activities. There were those who took care of the house, drove parents and sisters to and from the house, ran errands, were cooks, gardeners, farmers, shoemakers, carpenters, sculptors, painters, tailors, workers, nurses, canteen service... But there were also brothers who dedicated themselves to activities of a pastoral or spiritual nature, as catechists, as singing teachers and, from 1714, in the charity schools as an extension of the missions.

At a historic meeting of the General Councils of the Company of Mary and the Brothers of St. Gabriel, **from December 23rd 1967 to January 5th 1968**, **Father Louis Pérouas** responded to this question by saying that the Rule of the Company of Mary, compiled in 1728 by Father **Mulot**, removes the exclusion that the primitive Rule of 1713 pointed out about teaching

because **there was a change of direction in Montfort's thinking between 1713 and his death in 1716, and that this change would be confirmed by the presence of Brothers in the school for boys in La Rochelle.** And that Father Mulot also removed the word "vigorous" in the article that spoke of the conditions for the admission of Brothers because this requirement was valid for Brothers assigned to manual work, but not for Brothers dedicated to teaching.

SLIDE 11

The 18th century ended in tragedy for the Montfortian family during the French Revolution (1789). Two years later, the civil constitution of the clergy was voted on 12 July 1790.

With the so-called Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the Catholic Church was dispossessed of much of its income and land, which became national property and was auctioned off. Attempts were made to turn the clergy into a body of officials paid by the French state, to whom they must swear obedience. This provoked the rejection of a large part of the clergy and the Pope. Many Catholics became counter-revolutionary at this time. In contrast, anticlericalism spread among many revolutionaries.

Fathers who rejected it were considered to be **refractory** and exercised their ministry clandestinely. This is the case of **Father Supiot, Superior General since 1792.** During the Revolution, like many religious, Fathers, Sisters and Brothers were massacred, guillotined and shot. **In 1795, life returned to the house of the Holy Spirit with Father Supiot, the fifth Superior General.** Only two brothers escaped the Revolution: **Hilaire** and **Pierre**, who died in 1813 and 1819.

SLIDE 12

The first six Montfortian Superiors General, from the death of St. Louis Marie to the arrival of Fr Deshayes were the following ones:

P. Mulot (1722 - 1749)

P. Audubon (1749 - 1755)

P. Besnard (1755 - 1788): he obtained official recognition of the Company of Mary in 1773, but in exchange for some concessions such as the suppression of the Fathers' vows. He also wrote a new life of Montfort, the third after that of Joseph Grandet and Jean Baptiste Blain, both written in 1724; and a life of Marie-Louise de Trichet.

P. Micquignon (1788 - 1792)

P. Supiot (1792 - 1810)

P. Duchesnes (1810 - 1820)

Let us remember that during all this time the Fathers and the Brothers formed one community. This is a presumption because that was the previous situation. In fact, the first **Rule of 1713 was written for the Fathers and Brothers at the same time. There is no doubt that the number of Brother members was smaller, but this was in keeping with the legal and mental categories of the time.** There are those who wanted to draw conclusions by examining one of the expressions in the will, referring to them as *"Brothers of the Community of the Holy Spirit to*

make the charity schools" an entity different from that of the Company of Mary. But Grandet who wrote his biography between 1719 and 1723 saw only a male foundation with two equivalent names: Company of Mary and Community of the Holy Spirit.

In 1820 Fr. Duchesne died. The Community of the Holy Spirit of Saint Laurent in the 18th century had never been very numerous. Even less after the shock of the French Revolution. At the death of the 6th Superior General, Father Duchesne, on the 22nd December 1820, the Community of the Holy Spirit had...

SLIDE 13

Seven Fathers and four Brothers: Brother Jacques, Joseph and Aulaire, employed in manual work; and Brother Élie, who teaches in the parish school.

SLIDE 14

It is then that the man chosen by Providence to "save" Montfort's work appears. But what do we know about Father Gabriel Deshayes? Who was Father Gabriel Deshayes?

VIDEO - BIOGRAPHY OF GABRIEL DESHAYES

SLIDE 15

The truth is that Father Deshayes did not appear out of nowhere. In 1810, Father Deshayes had opened a school for deaf-mutes at La Chartreuse in Auray. On April 30th 1812, he signed the contract at Saint-Laurent entrusting Daughters of Wisdom.

He also had the opportunity to meet the Superior General, Father Duchesne, when he was visiting the communities of Wisdom in France (they had 13 communities) who could appreciate their **pastoral dynamism**. This is how Deshayes, in these meetings with Father Duchesne, learns to know the Montfortian congregations.

SLIDE 16

Father Yves Duchesne (1761-1820), was Superior General of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit and the Daughters of Wisdom from **1818**, but in fact he was Superior General from 1810 because he administered the congregation as assistant to Father Supiot, who was already 79 years old, and who wanted to have resigned, but his resignation was not accepted and he retained the title of Superior General out of deference for having helped the Montfortian congregations so much during the French Revolution, a period in which he risked his life several times, and after the revolution.

Father Duchesne was 59 years old in December 1820. He was young, but suffered from a heart condition that could take him away at any moment. He had taken his Montfortian heritage very seriously and wanted to ensure his succession. Then he thought of Deshayes, the priest of Auray, his friend, whose spiritual value and talent he appreciated. He wrote to him at the beginning of December asking him to come to Saint-Laurent.

On the 17th December 1820, Father Duchesne, in an assembly held in the House of the Holy Spirit, told his confreres that Deshayes was the Lord's special envoy for the preservation and consolidation of the good order and unity of the two congregations of his beloved family.

On 17 December 1820, Deshayes was appointed Assistant to Father Duchesne. **On the 21st December**, Father Duschesne commissions Father Deshayes to exercise his position as Assistant by going to visit the houses of the Daughters of Wisdom in Brittany. But suddenly **on 22nd December, Father Duchesne died**.

SLIDE 17

At the end of December 1820, **Brother Jacques** brought Father Deshayes a letter in which the Superior General, Mother Saint-Calixte, announced to him the dramatic situation in which the Montfortian communities found themselves and begged him to come to Saint-Laurent to inform him of the replacement of the Superior. Mgr Paillou, **Bishop of La Rochelle**, made the same request. **Father Deshayes wanted to consult his bishop and to leave the decision in his hands**; Mgr de Bruc, Bishop of Vannes, gave a magnificent answer: *"If I consider the interests of my diocese, I must tell you: Stay; but if I consider the general good of religion, I must tell you: Leave!"*

On January 13, 1821, Father Deshayes returned to Saint-Laurent. After a three-day retreat with the Missionaries, he was elected Superior of the Montfortian Congregations on January 17. On 25th January, the Bishop of La Rochelle confirmed the election and gave the new Superior wide powers, making him his Vicar General.

SLIDE 18

As we said earlier, when he arrived in Saint-Laurent in January 1821, Father Deshayes found two congregations very unequal in number: **the Daughters of Wisdom had 778 sisters and novices**, spread over 96 houses, and the **Company of Mary had 7 priests and 4 Brothers**: Brother Elie, who had been the Director of the school in Saint-Laurent since 1806, and 3 Brothers who worked on manual labour; Father Deshayes quickly got down to work on the problem of the Brothers of the Holy Spirit. How to bring this small group of Brothers back to life? Very easily, **from his novitiate in Auray**.

On March 17th 1821, **Jean Eveno** and his cousin **Pierre Lemouroux** (the future **Brothers Augustine and Pierre-Marie**) arrived from Auray. And in May more candidates came. As in Auray, Father Deshayes assigned to teaching all the novices who had sufficient intellectual aptitudes. The number of novices begins to grow. But this is not the only formula he uses to multiply the congregation

SLIDE 19:

- Sometimes one may wonder why the Missionaries and the Brothers of the Holy Spirit were few after more than 100 years of existence. It should be remembered that, throughout the eighteenth century, missionaries never became very numerous. The attacks of the Revolution further reduced their number. Father Michel Bertrand, in his "Histoire des Missionnaires Montfortains" (Pontchâteau, 1997), recalls one of the Statutes of the Missionaries of 1817: "The missionaries were not at all embarrassed by their small number, as is shown by Statute no. 11 signed by them on August 8, 1817: "Although their society must be large enough to fulfil at all times the obligations so essential to the centre and the missions abroad, it nevertheless retains the original intention not to expand considerably" (SMM Archives, Rome).

- Fr. Deshayes was careful to find missionaries: **he found them thanks to his good relations with the bishops**. Bishop Charles-François Soyer (1767-1845), originally from Thouarcé

(Maine and Loire), was Bishop of Luçon from 1821 to 1845. Therefore, under his episcopate, Fr. Deshayes is the Superior of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit and the Daughters of Wisdom. Bishop Soyer sent him 4 missionaries: Abbots Marchand, Hilléreau, Gouraud and Duret, who were of great value.

- Due to illness, death or departure of the members of his congregation, Father Deshayes was concerned to strengthen their numbers. To this end, he established in 1823 an ecclesiastical college or minor seminary in a large house on Place des Penitants, called "Maison Supiot", in honour of the former Superior General. The college was intended to orient its members towards the Company of Mary. At one time, the college had up to 60 students, both boarders and day students. It lasted about 7 years. M. Laveau writes: "From this school came secular priests, virtuous laymen who honored religion by their conduct in the world, and zealous Missionaries who rendered great service to the Company of Mary for a long time.

SLIDE 20

In order to run a school, it was necessary to have the Brevet certificate of Capacité, **but the Institute had not yet been authorised by the government.** Until then this certificate had been issued by Father Deshayes on a form intended for the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Since the Institute of the Missionaries was not yet authorized, Father **Deshayes wanted to obtain government authorization for "the Community of 12 Missionaries and those of 50 Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit,** intended to provide teachers for the primary schools in the five departments of ancient Brittany. The two previous requests, in 1809 and 1817, that he had made were in vain. Finally, on **17th September 1823**, the royal order appeared which approved the Congregation under the name of the *Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit, as a charitable association for the instruction of youth, in the departments of the Vendée, Maine-et-Loire, Deux-Sèvres, Vienne, Charent-Inférieure.* On June 25th) 1823, Father Gabriel Deshayes sent the text of the Statutes of the Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit to the Minister of the Interior, in order to obtain legal recognition, which would at the same time allow the Missionaries and Brothers of the Holy Spirit to come out of their clandestinity, for since the Revolution they no longer had a legal existence.

An important peculiarity of these Statutes (cf. DOC. 1 a) and which we do not find in those of the "Brothers of the Instruction of Brittany", is that since Chapter I, Article 1, **it also speaks of the Brothers employed in manual work, which is appropriate for the Brothers of the Holy Spirit dedicated to manual work to help the Missionaries and the Daughters of Wisdom.**

Later on it is stressed that *"The Superior of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit will always be the superior of the Brothers; and among these there will be a Director and a Master of Novices, chosen by the Superior, who will designate, in case of absence, the one of the Missionaries who will have to replace him". "This clearly shows the Montfortian character of this group of Brothers, although the Dehaysian character is underlined by the rest of the Rule".*

The "Statutes" of 1830 accentuated this Montfortian character of the Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit.

- Under this name of Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit and under the same rule all the Brothers lived from **1823 to 1835.** The brothers who were dedicated to teaching and those who were dedicated to manual work formed the same branch of the Montfortian family.

Father Fonteneau insists on these family bonds: *"All the postulants who came to Saint-Laurent to be part of the Community of the Holy Spirit, whether as teaching brothers or manual labourers, as will be judged, certainly had no other idea than to belong to the family of the Venerable Servant of God, whose name was on everyone's lips: It was also the thought of the Missionaries who received them into their homes, as true brothers; it was the thought of the Daughters of Wisdom who made great sacrifices for them; it was also the thought of the priests who were happy to send to Saint-Laurent the most pious young men from their parishes, or to receive the Brothers of the Holy Spirit into their homes to teach their grandchildren; it was also the thought of the public who were not unaware that spiritual family bonds united them closely to the Company of Mary and the Daughters of Wisdom. "*

SLIDE 21

- Returning from Rome to get the Rules of the Company of Mary and the Daughters of Wisdom approved and to see if there was any hope of working successfully for the canonization of Father Montfort, Father Deshayes decided on a new organization for the Brothers. Until then, the direction was two-fold. One Brother held the title of director: he instructed the novices, presided community prayers, provided the money and the habits to those who were assigned to the schools. Father Deshayes was in charge of spiritual direction. **In his absence, a missionary replaced him;** he simply gave some religious instructions, guided the Brother Director who had to report to him on the progress of the Brothers, and **asked his opinion before making an important decision.**

The replacement appointed in **1825** was **Father Labouré**. But he had to meet Father Deshayes in Rome instead of another Father who had fallen ill in Toulon. During the absence of Father Deshayes and Labouré, the group of Brothers went through a crisis: the Brothers who taught and the Brothers who did manual work did not want to live together and the director, **Father René** (Father Labouré's replacement) was unable to restore harmony.

On his return, Father Deshayes understood that the Brothers had to manage themselves and have more authoritative leaders. The Missionaries, moreover, absorbed in preaching, could only provide a reduced and irregular help in the material and spiritual direction of the Brothers. At the end of the retreat of 1825, **Father Deshayes planned to place two people in charge of the Brothers under his authority: a director general and a sub-director who would also be master of novices.** After consulting each Brother, Father Deshayes appointed Brother Augustine to the first position and Brother Siméon to the second. In the absence of Brother Augustine, who is responsible for visiting the establishments, Brother Siméon is assisted by **Brother Jacques. Father Deshayes often met with his two assistants, directed them, advised them and encouraged them. Then, noting their wise administration, he leaves them more and more responsibility and asks the Brothers to write to Brother Augustine and not to him.**

- The apostolic dynamism of Father Deshayes made the Holy Spirit's enclosure become a buzzing beehive. The brothers who were engaged in manual work prevented the missionaries who had to prepare their sermons and those who were engaged in teaching from working. Brother Augustine wanted very much to go out with the teaching brothers and his idea was so definite that he would have preferred to leave the congregation rather than to stay longer in that house.

Complaints followed one another, even reaching **Monsignor Soyer**. On 3 June 1832, Father Deshayes and the Missionaries presented a draft of the regulations to Bishop Soyer of Luçon. On 25th October 1832, the Bishop gave his response, by an Ordinance concerning the "Rules of the Missionaries of Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre" and approving them provisionally, on condition that certain articles be rewritten. And here are the episcopal decisions concerning the Brothers of the Holy Spirit:

+ "Art. VII: The Society will revise the rules according to the spirit of our Ordinance. 2° - to determine the relations of the Brothers with the Missionaries and with the Superior General, so that the latter, having only the direction of this third Society as a whole, will have more time to devote to the double Institute founded by Father de Montfort".

+ Art. XIII: **For rest, recollection, ease of study, and according to the wish of the missionaries, the main dwelling place of the Brothers will be established in a building separated from the Holy Spirit before the taking of vows.** In this last centre only those Brothers who are useful for the common service of the Society of the Mission will remain".

As a result of these circumstances, Father Deshayes sought another house for the Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit. Several solutions were proposed. The choice stopped definitively at the Supiot house, so called because it was bought in 1797 by Father Supiot, Superior General of the Montfortian Congregations. Sometimes a small boarding school run by the Sisters of Wisdom, an ecclesiastical college for future parents and missionaries, finally a military hospital from 1831 to 1834, this house now belongs to the Sisters of Wisdom. The purchase was completed in 1834. Father Deshayes pays 6,000 Francs to the Sisters.

But the house is minuscule, it has only two small courtyards, one at each end. Happily, the owners of the two neighbouring houses, each with a garden, want to sell. They are bought, at the same time as another one with the same garden, which belongs to the parish. Finally, in 1835, the owner of a neighbouring field of one hectare put it up for sale. Father Deshayes bought it for 2,200 Francs. With what finances? Like the Supiot House, Providence, in which Father Deshayes has total confidence, has provided it.

It is the teaching Brothers who will come mostly to Supiot House. Up to this day, they form, together with the working Brothers, one single community: same name, same exercises of piety, common refectory, common recreation, same formation. The new ones all began by studying, then were directed to jobs if they were not successful in intellectual work. Alternating between class and manual work was frequent. The Brothers of the Holy Spirit formed a single congregation. The separation did not imply the opening of a new institute but rather allowed a branch to develop.

The separation into two groups took place on October 15, 1835. Among the 33, 5 were assigned to manual jobs, in order to ensure the subsistence of the Brothers dedicated to teaching. It was Brothers Augustine and Simeon who proposed to Father Deshayes the choice of the Brothers. To the 33, we must add the 42 Brothers located in the schools: when they come for retreats to Supiot House, it will count 75 Brothers. There are still 57 Brothers in the Holy Spirit.

This separation does not destroy the unity of the Brothers who belong to the two houses; transfers from one group to another are easily admitted in the following years. Nor was there any rupture between the Brothers, the Fathers and the Sisters. The Sisters continued to help the Brothers to grind the grain, bake the bread, and procure the material, until the Brothers became

self-sufficient. The Fathers came to say Mass to the Brothers, to hear their confessions, to assure them all religious services. For seven years, the deceased Brothers will be buried in the cemetery of Wisdom, like all the members of the Montfortian family. Given the small number of them, the Fathers could not continue their services: from 1837 to 1852, a diocesan priest, Abbot Toussaint Bourgeois, was the chaplain to the Brothers.

SLIDE 22

If Father Deshayes always gave himself to all his works, there was one for which he felt a special predilection: the education of the deaf-mute. **His love for the deaf marked his thirty years as pastor of Auray and also as superior of the Montfortian Family.** He used to say: *"always alone and isolated in the middle of the world, these unfortunate people cannot communicate with society, let alone get to know the religion, in which the consoling promises and help would be so necessary to soften their miserable life. They must pause for a moment to consider all the misfortunes of such a state and to find the means of coming to the aid of those who are sad victims of it"*.

As for the Brothers, it can be said that the call of Father Deshayes in **1826 to Brother Athanase, one of the novices who came from Auray like Brother Augustine, triggered the mission of the Brothers of St. Gabriel to the Deaf and then to the Blind.** In his obituary, Brother Augustine said of him: *His education was very ordinary, as was his aptitude for science. His success in teaching the deaf and dumb was considered miraculous, and our worthy Founder often spoke of him in this regard. It is because of this success that we are called to teach the deaf-mute. Honour and glory, then, to the pious brother Athanasius, or rather: honour and glory to God, who used him to open the door to the instruction of the deaf-mutes which, according to our worthy father Deshayes, will save our congregation.* ("*Nécrologe du frère Augustin*", n° 60)

Brother Athanase quickly learned the signs and began to successfully help the Sisters in their teaching. The result will determine that Father Deshayes will open a new branch of activity for the Brothers. Other Brothers who stood out in this activity were **Brothers Anselme and Bernard** who did not hesitate to use their evenings to compose each a work of high value: **Method Phonodactylogy and Practical Teaching of the French Language for Deaf-Mutes.** Deshayes, to the last of his days, always had his dear deaf-mute children in his mind and heart.

Deshayes also expressed his concern for the education of young blind people:

- At the end of his life, Father Deshayes will also turn to the blind. A Daughter of Wisdom, while still young, lost her sight. M. Laveau writes: "She shed many tears and Father was deeply moved. But empathizing with her misfortune, she saw in the suffering of one of her children, the suffering of all the blind. Divine Providence," he said, "seems to urge me to provide instruction for the blind as well, for it gives me a blind woman who will be able to instruct her companions in misfortune.

"In 1841, at the end of a session dedicated to the deaf-mute at L'ille, the Sister of the Assumption drew the attention of the assembly to a young blind woman whose instruction was beginning. When, after the written answers and the silent pantomimes of the deaf-mute, the voice of this girl deprived of light and her songs accompanied by a musical instrument were suddenly heard, the interest was as lively as it was general.

"From that moment on, the benevolence of the Authority and public charity was assured to the blind and the deaf-mute alike. The first pupil soon had companions; and shortly afterwards the Brothers of Lille followed the example of the Sisters, dedicating themselves to the education of the blind. The schools at Soissons and Larnay, near Poitiers, also opened a home for the blind".

- Since then, in the congregations of Wisdom and St. Gabriel, this new request of Fr. Deshayes will be extended not only to the blind, but also to the deaf-blind, especially in Poitiers and Larnay. The Sisters and Brothers will perform miracles of love and ingenuity to make the hands of these young people "hands light-coated",

SLIDE 23

- In 20 years, Father Deshayes brought to the Brothers of the Holy Spirit a vital influence, an extraordinary growth. When he arrived in 1821, there were 4 Brothers; at the time of his death, there were 141, not counting the novices (adding those of the "House of the Holy Spirit" and those of the "House of St. Gabriel").

- On 22 September 1824, all the Brothers of the Holy Spirit, including Brothers Elias and James, 42 in number, made their first religious profession. This was an event because since the generalate of Father Besnard, the Fathers and Brothers of the Holy Spirit had not made vows, that is since 1773, because it was the condition for obtaining the Patent of Letters from King Louis XV: Father Besnard had had to remove this important obligation from the Rule of Father de Montfort. Father Deshayes, the new Superior General since 1821, worked to re-establish the vows in the Brothers first in 1824, then in the Fathers in 1835.

- The years 1830 to 1835 would see a significant evolution of the communities gathered in the House of the Holy Spirit. In 1835 the Brothers dedicated to classes and a few dedicated to manual work, to ensure their maintenance, were transferred to the Supiot house. From this date the number increased as shown in the table.

- We are fortunate to have in our Gabrielite Archives in Rome, a very instructive and enlightening dialogue between a 65 year old brother, one of the elders of the Congregation (F. Paulin), and a young brother of 32 years (F Fulgent), a dialogue that allows us to see clearly something important in our Gabrielite history, because it contains an original and unpublished detail about the deep and Montfortian meaning of the title "Brothers of St. Gabriel", given by Father Deshayes himself. The dialogue was as follows:

"During the winter vigils of 1874 and 1875, I was happy to take advantage of the good will and faithful memory of dear Brother Paulin to question him about the childhood of Father Deshayes, his vicariate, his rectory in Auray, his arrival and his stay at Saint-Laurent, as Superior of the community. On the evening of Thursday, February 4, we spoke of St. Jeanne de Valois, Queen of France and founder of the Anunciatas de Bourges and, by a very natural digression, of the origin of our community: "The dear Brother Director revealed to me the name of the Missionary who had made Father Deshayes decide on the name of Saint-Gabriel for our new house (Julien Galliot). The proposal had been made to him by several Brothers, Priests or Missionaries, but he did not seem to agree with it. Reflecting on this, Father Gabriel Deshayes said: "This name Gabriel is all the more appropriate for the Community since a Brother of the same name was present at the death of good and venerated Father de Montfort.

- In fact, I say to Brother Paulin, in his will, written the day before his death, it says: "Brother Gabriel who is with me". Of the seven Brothers mentioned in the will, four had vows and Brother Gabriel, who was one of the four, was the only one present at the death of Father de Montfort, since the other confreres were employed elsewhere. But, dear Brother, according to this will which seems to have been dictated only to affirm the real existence of a community of teaching Brothers, according to all that you have said and according to what is written in the life of Father Deshayes in relation to the Brothers of the Holy Spirit or of Saint Gabriel, how is it that everyone says that Father Deshayes is our Founder?

- That is the general feeling.

- But then, after thinking about it, should we believe quietly what seems true and loudly what seems false?

- Later, when we want to write the history of the Congregation, we will be forced to ask ourselves this question.

- So it is still a question - when will the answer come?

- You, who are young, will be able to see that. (FSG Archives, Rome, 520.778.08)

- Father Prudente Fonteneau, in his handwritten history "Histoire de la Congrégation des Frères du Saint-Esprit et de Saint-Gabriel", bears witness to the same tradition: "On entering their new home, the Brothers considered giving it a name. Several names were proposed which the Superior General did not seem to accept. Finally, after a few days, a missionary proposed the name of Saint-Gabriel, the baptismal name of Father Deshayes. It was also the name of the Brother that the Venerable de Montfort had with him in the mission of Saint-Laurent, as we see in his will. After some observations that his humility suggested, the Venerable Superior agreed. So the house took the name of Saint-Gabriel. This name soon passed to the Brothers themselves, who were called Brothers of Saint Gabriel to distinguish them from those who continued to live in the house of the Holy Spirit and still called themselves Brothers of the Holy Spirit. Under this name they are known everywhere today".

SLIDE 24

DEATH OF FATHER DESHAYES

- During a retreat held in 1841 at Saint-Michel, the Brothers became aware of Father Deshayes' tiredness. He reassures them by speaking of a pain in his foot that makes it difficult for him to leave. After the retreat, he returns to Saint-Laurent, settles his affairs and seeks solitude. Sometimes he shows his brothers the place where he wants to be buried, the monument representing the Holy Sepulchre, **the fourteenth station of the Way of the Cross which he had had erected in the enclosed space of the Daughters of Wisdom.**

But it is in the house of the Missionaries, of the Holy Spirit, that he has his room, the same one where Father Duchesne dies. He did not leave it. On December 15, in the absence of Brother Augustine, he had Brother Simon come and dictated his will in which he bequeathed the greater part of his modest patrimony to the Brothers of St. Gabriel, because "*their needs are greater than those of the other congregations* ».

A last joy is reserved for her on December 21, feast of the Superior General of the Daughters of Wisdom. He presides over the meeting of 300 Sisters and speaks to them about his projects for the instruction of the blind. It is then that he pronounces these words that characterize him so well: "You may judge that I am too old to carry out all these projects. It is true; but even if I have only 8 days to live, I will still take care of my good works".

He only had "eight days to live" left. On Tuesday 28 December 1841, he died at the age of 74. The faithful of Saint-Laurent and the neighbouring parishes came to touch his body with medals, crucifixes and rosaries. His funeral was a triumph: in addition to the members of his religious families from Saint-Laurent, many priests from the dioceses of Luçon, Nantes, Angers and Poitiers came to the parish church. They all accompanied him to the simple tomb that he had prepared and on which he had these words engraved: "HIC JACET GABRIEL DESHAYES, S.G. December 28th 1841". Nothing else.

- Three weeks before his death, Gabriel Deshayes dictated his will to a Brother of the house of St. Gabriel, Brother Siméon.

From this rather short will I extract three passages:

- 1) "All the money that I have in my hands, at the time of my death... my nephew... will distribute it in good works, so that the most important sum will be given to the Brothers of St. Gabriel, because their needs are greater than those of the other congregations.
- 2) "I entrust myself, in a special way, to the prayers of my Brothers and of the Brothers of all the congregations, as well as of the Sisters and of all the pupils, especially the deaf-mute".
- 3) "I entrust to everyone, in a special way, the matter of the beatification of our holy Founder".

In the evening of his life, the "good" Father Deshayes reminds us both of the evidence of his Montfortian affiliation and of the importance that his educational work has in his heart.

- In 1830, Father Deshayes brought out *the Rules of Conduct in the manner of the Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit (Christian Schools, La Salle?)*. This Rule of 1830 takes up again the Directive of 1823, preceded by three short chapters.

The first is **the objective of the Institute**: *The Brothers of Christian Instruction of the Holy Spirit, like those of the Christian Schools, and following their method, teach reading, writing, catechism, the first elements of French grammar and the four rules of arithmetic. They may not take the instruction of children any further without the permission of the Superior General. They are also responsible for the instruction of the deaf. They may be employed in manual labor, in the care of the sick, in the service of the Missionaries, both in the house and in the missions (Article 1).*

The second chapter concerns **the Superiors**: The Superior of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit will always be the Superior of the Brothers; among them there will be a Director, a sub-Director and one or more Novice Masters, chosen by the Superior (Article 1). The third is entitled: Entrance to the Novitiate.

This rule was signed by the Missionaries and the principal Brothers present at Saint-Laurent, including also Brother Augustine, despite his reticence, with regard to Article 1 of Chapter II.

In 1834, Father Deshayes informed Brothers Augustin and Simon confidentially of a modification of the Rule of 1830 and discussed the terms with them. He studied it for three years. It was signed on 7th January 1837 and approved by the Bishop of Luçon on 9th April 1838. But it remains secret. It was not published by Brother Augustin until 1842, after the death of Father Deshayes.

This Rule of 1834, 1837 and 1838, is not a new Rule. It is the one from 1830. But it modifies the article not accepted by Brother Augustine and becomes: *The Brothers choose among themselves a Superior who will be in charge of the government of the Congregation; there will be one or two Assistants according to the growth of the Congregation.* He adds 22 articles to the chapter dedicated to the Superiors and creates three chapters, one on the **Assistants**, one on the **Procurator** (i.e., the Bursar), and one on the **Master of Novices**. The patronal feast is no longer Pentecost but the Annunciation.

SLIDE 25

Gabriel Deshayes: his personality, his legacy

Gabriel Deshayes: a temperamental and active man

Alexis Crosnier, referring to an autobiography by Gabriel Deshayes, which appeared in two volumes in 1917 and 1918, says simply:

"Father Deshayes was never a theorist, he was above all a man of action."

Through the portraits we have of G. Deshayes we discover a person of strong constitution. His physical sturdiness would play an important role in his travels. 60,000 kilometres travelled in a planter (a sort of moving van) with poor suspension, covered with a rubber cloth that provides poor protection from the wind and cold. On these journeys, as his biographer and secretary, François Laveau, states: "he wrote in the car, in the hostels, before meals, during meals, after meals". This activity alternated with a number of written sermons: 158 have been preserved! But the epistolary activity is only one of the aspects, almost secondary, of Father Deshayes' activity.

Pérouas speaks of "a kind of voracity for work" "balanced by a real joviality".

Deshayes' hyperactivity also reveals a man of power, naturally made for the exercise of authority. In Auray, for example, his many initiatives can only be understood in a mixture, to a greater or lesser extent, of apostolic zeal and a not always veiled authoritarianism. He could not prevent the apostolic zeal - which is his - from flowing throughout his life and manifesting itself above all in his innovative enterprises, the least of which was not his tireless activity in opening the process of beatification of Grignon de Montfort, which would bring him to Rome in 1825.

Gabriel Deshayes: His priority option for the poor

Born into a poor family, Gabriel Deshayes wanted to live in poverty and, at the heart of his apostolic action, to give first place to the poor... Evoking with modesty his origins, he said: "If I am tempted to believe someone, I will remember where I come from". All his life he wanted to keep close to him, in the room he occupied, his staff (cane) and his fardel (bag) of shepherd boy. These two objects were a memorial of his humble origin.

As a child he gave the poor not money - which he did not have - but bread, socks, clothes. Deshayes, the parish priest of Auray, is the man close to the people, the one who opens his eyes completely to all the miseries and, full of courage and imagination, works tirelessly to alleviate them?

Gabriel Deshayes: the entrepreneurial spirit, the audacity and the risk

"Daring to undertake something for God." Gabriel Deshayes is truly a bold man who does not fail to take risks. The examples are numerous. Louis Bauvineau highlights eight that follow Deshayes' "chronology":

1 - Before Christians who refuse the ministry of sworn priests: He goes into exile to be ordained a priest and soon returns to his native region to exercise a high-risk ministry for nine years.

2 - In the face of the material miseries of Auray: One year after his arrival, he sets up a charity office with the "liberal" mayor to collect alms for destitute families. He then organised workshops for the unemployed and beggars. To collect funds, he visited the rich, including a prominent anticlerical...

3 - In the face of the disability of deaf children that touches him deeply: He contact the Abbot Sicard (successor to the Abbot de l'Epée), Director of the National School for the deaf-mute in Paris, and created in 1812, at La Chartreuse d'Auray, the first school for the deaf in Brittany...

4 - In the face of the ignorance of the children of the countryside: ¿Gabriel Deshayes, in 1816, welcomed into his parish house the first postulants who, once they were Brothers, would be sent, one by one and not in community, to run schools for children in the countryside?

5 - In view of the low number of Fathers and Brothers of the Company of Mary: he decided to break away and leave Auray in 1821 for Saint-Laurent. He took many initiatives to increase the number of Fathers and Brothers: in 1823 he set up an apostolic school in the Supiot house, and in 1835 he installed the teaching Brothers...

6 - Faced with the spiritual needs of the laity: In 1837, in the important house of Haute-Grange (Saint-Michel), built once again, trusting in Providence, Gabriel Deshayes took up the retreats for the laity, initiated in Auray and then in Saint-Laurent.

7 - Pioneer and founder to the end: Two years before his death, at the age of 72, he founded a new congregation: the Farming Brothers. A week before his death, in front of 300 Sisters gathered at Saint-Laurent for the feast of their Superior General, he asked them to open schools for the blind, and declared: "You think I am too old to carry out projects; but if I had only eight days to live, I would still be doing good works.

8 - The beginning of the process for the beatification of Montfort: From 1825 (trip to Rome) to 1838 (Montfort is declared venerable...) is another example of his enterprising character.

Gabriel Deshayes: Charity and kindness

Charity seems to be the virtue that recommended the most to the members of the first one - undoubtedly the most beloved of all its foundations, the Sisters of Saint-

Gildas: "Love one another, support each other in a spirit of charity, be all one heart and one soul".

But charity shines in a totally different way through the many works she (he) founded or helped to found in Auray:

- Work for the unemployed
- Loans to traders in difficulty
- Charity office

- Active interest in deaf children: "These unfortunate people who cannot communicate with society, let alone get to know religion

- The instruction and Christian education of children in the countryside comes from the same concern for charity.

Love for the poorest is inseparable from goodness. They called him "the good Father". He was known for his gentleness and his discretion towards his inferiors. If he had something to reproach, he found a way. And if he had caused suffering without meaning to, he knew how to repair it with a word or a gesture. We are so accustomed to seeing in him a genius of nature, an outgoing person always in a good mood, that it is useful to remember these traits of goodness told by all biographers...

Gabriel Deshayes: Promoter of Christian education

"Never has a priest been so committed to the education of his people" Laveau says of him. Gabriel Deshayes was "one of the bravest sowers of Christian schools" (Laveille). "He progressively became the axis and nucleus of a vast educational network". (Historical Dictionary of Christian Education).

"The French Revolution had precipitated the ruin of teaching by suppressing the resources that were legally obtained from taxes, by prohibiting religious congregations, by confiscating and selling the goods of schools, seminaries and primary schools". (L. Bauvineau).

The period following the Revolution was one of reconstruction of the educational system by the institutions and society. The organisation of primary schools was assigned to the local authorities, who in many cases resorted to the Religious. Gabriel Deshayes played an important role in this period of reconstruction of the educational system in Brittany.

In the times of Deshayes, the ignorance of the small village of Brittany, as in all rural areas of France, is a form of poverty. It was an emergency that was addressed through its various foundations. *"In 1811, M. Deshayes immediately realised that the neighbouring countryside lacked Christian teachers and that the foundation of schools was the most urgent work for these disinherited parishes" (Laveille, biographer).*

"I wanted the people's instructors to be first of all very religious and very pious, and otherwise to have, with sufficient knowledge, manual work that would not take them away from those among whom they had to live." (Crosnier)

The first biographer, Laveau, confirms and clarifies this fundamental aspect of the founder's "educational project": *"Monsieur Deshayes had no thought whatsoever of providing France with a wise congregation. For the human sciences, his entire ambition was limited to training teachers capable of teaching reading, writing, the first*

elements of French grammar and the first four rules of arithmetic. This small dose of knowledge seemed to him sufficient for the children of the countryside for whom he destined his educators... But he wanted his Brothers to be skilled, very skilled, in the art of teaching the divine science". (Laveau)

Gabriel Deshayes: Pioneer of deaf education

According to Laveau, three particular points determine and motivate Gabriel Deshayes' educational action with respect to the deaf:

- The difficulty and the greatness of the enterprise: "To educate a normal child is the most beautiful and the holiest of missions, but to educate a deaf-mute is not only to beautify and complete his intellectual being; it is, so to speak, to create him ... It is an exceptional work, out of the ordinary, unique.
- The perfectibility of the methods: "the hope of improving the teaching method, the permanent search adapted to the deaf student, seeing how his ideas are linked, how his memory is formed... This pre-psychological observation of the individual has to be accompanied by a reflection on the language of pedagogical communication: not to advance a single word without being sure that it is not beyond the possibilities of your student".
- The immense desire to provide religious education to the young deaf, the first of all educational motivations at Deshayes.

The story of the foundation of La Chartreuse de Auray reports on the success of the method adopted by Father Deshayes:

- The training given by a specialist from Paris: Miss Duler, director of the girls' section of the National School for the Deaf and Mute.
- The stability of the educators in turning to a congregation: the Daughters of Wisdom.
- The royal approval which ensures administrative continuity.

Gabriel Deshayes: Concern for training

This is shown by the importance he gave to the religious formation of the first Brothers in Auray, a formation he himself ensured in his parish house... He undoubtedly wanted Brothers who were "very skilled" in the art of teaching divine science. But he also wanted "young people full of morality and zeal for the instruction of youth, worthy of the trust of their parents...", to quote a letter from the sub-prefect of Ploërmel in 1818, which praised the first recruits of Deshayes...

Another example is the rejection of the mutual mode of teaching, and although this issue contains "political" reasons, Deshayes, while showing his attachment to Lasallians, demonstrates his preference for the simultaneous method because of its undeniable advantages:

- The children are constantly busy and make the most of their school time.
- Taking advantage of "the practice of numbers", he makes full use of that powerful spring of education which is emulation.

- And, above all, because it puts the child "in constant contact with his teacher" and the group of his fellow pupils, thus favouring the educational relationship and socialization.

Gabriel Deshayes' progressive and total commitment to the deaf and dumb also reveals his nature as a pioneer in the field of education. In his "pioneer" initiative, let us remember his steps:

- Getting information and going to find experts wherever they are, even "at the highest level": in the case of La Chartreuse d'Auray, Miss Duler, assistant to Abbot Sicard, successor to the Abbot de l'Epée, the inventor of sign language...

- Train staff promptly and appropriately to what they are asked to teach.

- Ensure the stability of the teaching staff by calling on religious congregations.

- Finally, we will say that, following the Guizot law of 1833, which required a training permit, Father Deshayes would say to all his teachers: "Study, Brothers! Study!"

Gabriel Deshayes: Humility

Just before he died, Deshayes acknowledged that he acted only for the glory of God and not for his own: "My brothers, in all that I have done, I have never set my mind on anything but the glory of God...". The whole life of Father Deshayes proclaims that he never sought his "glory", that is, honours, power, an advantageous position:

1) In 1821, at the age of 55, when he was a parish priest in Auray, he was asked from another place, in Saint-Laurent, for a totally new and undoubtedly more "heavy" task, mission. He said yes. This first break-up prepares all the others, all renunciation of anything other than the glory of God...

2) Elected Superior of the communities of Saint-Laurent, he had a large blouse made, similar to the one he wore as a child, and he put it near his pack saying "if I am tempted to believe someone, I will remember where I come from".

3) In 1840, when he was well known, he went to see the parish priest of Notre-Dame des Victoires to have all the members of his various congregations registered with the archconfraternity. He presented himself as a simple member of one of them. M. Desgenettes, a little intrigued, asks a Sister of Wisdom if he is not her Superior...

4) "When a good work has been started, it is convenient to pass it on to other hands". To attribute to oneself the glory of a work, to appropriate it, to guard it jealously, is very tempting and very frequent. To escape from this, Father Deshayes' solution is to "pass it on to other hands...". He did this with his first two congregations: the Sisters of Saint-Gildas and the Brothers of Ploërmel, one entrusted to Mgr Angebault, Vicar General of Nantes, the other to Father de la Mennais. When the Brothers of Brittany are known only as "Brothers of M. de la Mennais, he is not offended at all".

He seeks neither honour nor power, "to pass it on to other hands" ... Is this not a sign of imitation of Christ?: "*I have not come to be served but to serve...*".

Gabriel Deshayes: His union with God

Disinterest and forgetfulness of self, charity and goodness, unconditional trust in God: those who live all these attitudes in depth recognize that they are inseparable from their union with God, which is permanent and reactivated by many moments of prayer...

From 1821 onwards, without denying all that he owed to St Vincent de Paul, it is clear that, for Gabriel Deshayes, Montfort was going to acquire more consistency. The beatification of Montfort will be one of the objectives of his trip to Rome... What did he know about Montfort? He had been able to read the biographies of Grandet (1724) and Clorivière (1785); he would ask Father Dallin, Assistant General, to write a new one in 1839. It is therefore legitimate to think that he was nourished by Montfort's spirituality, at least as it was known at a time when the "Treatise on True Devotion" (April 1842) had not yet been found and the theme of the Wisdom had not yet been discovered.

Father Laveau tells us that he recited his breviary and celebrated Mass with exemplary piety and that at that time no matter could distract him or hasten these sacred acts. On his deathbed, he would reveal that he had seldom lost sight of the presence of God.

Both (Montfort and Deshayes) have the same motto: "God alone", the same passion for the glory of God, the same sense of man's salvation, the same tenderness for the poor, the little ones, the most neglected, the same unchangeable abandonment to Providence... Both draw from prayer the strength to act: "When, before undertaking a good work, I have consulted God in prayer and have been persuaded that He is asking me, then nothing stops me. If the work is successful, I offer the glory to God; if it fails, I am happy. Even if Mary, according to Pérouas, "was very little present in his personal life (G. Deshayes) and his apostolic activity, we will remember these two phrases spoken in the year of his death, 1841:

"Make your lives a tribute to Mary so that she may offer them to God".

"Put the keys of your institution in the hands of Mary, to whom you must consecrate everything" (to a Brother whom he sent to found the novitiate of Lorgues, in Provence).

Gabriel Deshayes: Trust in Providence

On the day of Gabriel Deshayes' death, December 28th 1841, the Superior General of Wisdom declared: "...I have been able to appreciate the greatness of his zeal, the goodness of his heart, the tenderness of his charity, the vivacity of his faith and his trust in Providence. "His trust in Providence": Alexis Crosnier, his biographer subtitled his book "The man of Divine Providence". And before him, François Laveau wrote: "This word: spoilt son of Providence - the expression is from Deshayes himself, at the age of 62 - is like the summary of Deshayes' life". For him, Providence is at the same time God who in his supreme wisdom governs all things and God who can be counted on to save a desperate situation.

Laveau gives some suggestive examples of this trust:

1 - By installing a few Daughters of Wisdom in a new establishment, he is about to leave when the Superior dares to tell him: "We have no money". He gives her a coin of five francs saying: "It is all I have, but I am happy. Trust in Divine Providence, it has never failed me...".

2 - He set up two "orphanages" in the village of Saint-Laurent called Providence. During a difficult period, the Sisters in charge of the children expressed their anxiety to him, to which he replied: "Oh, I know what to do. There are two girls who are asking me to take them in for free in our house of Providence. I will receive them today! ". They found something to feed the two new girls and the others.

3 - Around 1827, he learned that the abbey of Saint-Gildas was for sale, but that it had deteriorated due to the misfortunes of the time: "I had no money, he would say later, for this purchase. At that time, I never tired of admiring God's work. Some charitable people came to my aid and, on the appointed day, I had 50,000 francs for the purchase".

Such great trust in God is not often seen, even by the founders. Alexis Crosnier is absolutely right in bringing Gabriel Deshayes and Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort closer together on this point. The latter, in the eighteenth century, passed for original because of his missions "to Providence", that is, in a total dependence on the donations that the people were willing to give to the preachers. And the clergy characterized the first disciples of Montfort by their life "to Providence". In keeping with the spirit, if not the letter, of the beginnings of the Institute that had chosen him as Superior, Gabriel Deshayes admirably achieved one of the most characteristic aspects of the founder.

All these characteristics and others that we could add show us that the Montfortian and Gabrielite educator is not a man of immobility, of the status quo, of formalism. He is a man of initiative and invention. He sees in his mission a possible response for a more just society and a better man. He believes in education as a force for emancipation, which frees the individual from his environment and from himself. A man or woman of knowledge, he or she is also in his or her own way a witness who is fully integrated into the environment in which he or she works...

SLIDE 26

END

"It is important to become more and more familiar with the soul and apostolic intentions of those who have presided over the life of our Institute and to put ourselves in their school.

In the school of St. Louis Marie de Montfort first, whose virtues and holiness, writings and spirituality, zeal and apostolic methods must be our fundamental inspiration.

Then in that of the venerable Father Deshayes whose dynamic devotion, admirable abandonment to Providence and practical and supernatural sense at the same time, so profoundly marked our brothers at the beginning of the 19th century. He was our second Founder and the providential guardian who launched the community of the Holy Spirit on the path to the future.

And the historical illusion of Brother Augustine, which has led us to react against a forgetfulness of our true origins, should not make us minimize all that Father Deshayes has given us by favoring the relaunching of the third branch of Montfortian origin.

The life and writings of Montfort and Deshayes must be our reference points. In them and in our educational tradition, we will find the most direct suggestions for our ideal and our action. As

Brother Gabriel Marie tells us in his circular no. 1, "*Children have a special grace to follow in the footsteps of their parents...*"

(circular letter No. 1 of Brother Gabriel-María, 14 May 1953)

SLIDE 27

Bibliography

- LE PÈRE GABRIEL DESHAYES (1767-1841)

Un cœur débordant de foi, d'espérance et de charité: « Le Vincent de Paul de la Bretagne » (Abbot de la Trappe de Meilleray. 3/1/1827), « l'Athlète du Christ » (Bro. Maurice Chotard, f.i.c.).

Bro. Bernard GUESDON, Rome, December 24, 2010

- **Histoire de Frères de Saint Gabriel.** Bro.Louis Bauvineau. Rome 1994

- **Gabriel Deshayes Magazine** n° 102, June 1991. Bros. Louis Bauvineau y

- **Talk number two of the course Nemesian and Gabrielist training course,** Denis Baguenard

SLIDE 28

Meaning of the word "needlework keeper" which can clarify our Dehaysian affiliation given the importance of Gabriel Deshayes in the history of the Brothers of St. Gabriel

María Jesús Ramos